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In popular culture, management in the media industry is frequently understood as the work of network executives, studio developers, and market researchers_ "the suits"_who oppose the more productive forces of creative talent and subject that labor to the inefficiencies and risk aversion of bureaucratic hierarchies. However, such portrayals belie the reality of how media management operates as a culture of shifting discourses, dispositions, and tactics that create meaning, generate value, and shape media work throughout each moment of production and consumption.

Making Media Work aims to provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding of management within the entertainment industries. Drawing from work in critical sociology and cultural studies, the collection theorizes management as a pervasive, yet flexible set of principles drawn upon by a wide range of practitioners_ artists, talent scouts, performers, directors, show runners, and more_ in their ongoing efforts to articulate relationships and bridge potentially discordant forces within the media industries. The contributors interrogate managerial labor and identity, shine a light on how management understands its roles within cultural and creative contexts, and reconfigure the complex relationship between labor and managerial authority as productive rather than solely prohibitive. Engaging with primary evidence gathered through interviews, archives, and trade materials, the essays offer tremendous insight into how management is understood and performed within media industry contexts. The volume as a whole traces the changing roles of management both historically and in the contemporary moment within US and international contexts, and across a range of media forms, from film and television to video games and social media.