



# THE LANGUAGE OF FOOTBALL AGENTS



# INTRODUCTION

*"Players transfers are big business yet few managers now control a club's transfer policy alone. It is the Agents therefore who facilitate the most crucial elements of a club's strategy including making a breakthrough late in a transfer window".*

*(From the Book 'The Deal – Inside the World of a Super-Agent' by John Smith - 2016)*

***"Knowing the word helps us know the concept. Knowing the concept helps us know the word".*** This quote from leading American author and podcaster Seth Godin got me thinking. There is so much unique language, concepts, terms of phrase and words that Football Agents use in advising and representing players, dealing with clubs and engaging in transfer deals, however there has never been a published guide setting out the vocabulary that Football Agents use in the worldwide football business.

**This concise guide intends to fill that void as the first comprehensive research study, compilation, glossary and seminal piece of work into the language of the football agents.**

# About Us!

Peter Paleologos, Founder of Libero Consulting is a Australian football agent/intermediary (held FIFA player's agent licence pre-2015) and football lawyer with over fifteen years' experience in the international football market. Over the last decade, Peter has been analysing and researching the Football Agent industry, player transfer regulatory landscape and the fast moving football agency business trends. Peter's recent football industry credentials include being appointed a FIFA pro bono counsel in 2019, Australian Editorial committee member for Football Legal (the leading international football law journal), Author of the 'Australian Youth Footballer Regulatory Guide' in 2020 and President and Secretary of the Australian Football Agents Association Inc.





# OBJECTIVES

The major objective of this research and survey study guide, is to collate and chronicle the phrases, sayings and language commonly used by football agents in the world of football. Further, the additional aims of this guide is to:

- Identify unique words or terms which are commonly used by Football Agents that apply to player contract negotiations, various regulatory frameworks, player types and when engaging and dealing with clubs.
- Compile a select collection of the words, terminology and language used by Football Agents from different countries and leagues around the world.
- Provide both agents and persons interested in the agency business, with insights into the language, tools and phrases that reflect how Agents operate in the international football business.



# “ DATA and METHODOLOGY

Both a questionnaire and online survey (via the SurveyMonkey platform) of over 50 Agents worldwide was conducted to obtain responses to specific research questions directed to ascertain the language, phrases and words used by football agents in the representation business.

Further, Peter Paleologos also reviewed significant literature including books covering the Agent industry (*Done Deal by Daniel Geey, The Deal by John Smith, Football and the Law edited by Nick De Marco*), various compelling media articles and football law tomes in order to undertake an deep-dive analysis into the phrases and terms used by football agents in the business of international football.



# **The Football Agent's Language – An Index**

**What we call Football Agents worldwide?**

**Agent's Impact and Influence**

**Doing a Deal**

**Player Positions and Characteristics**

**Significant Contractual clauses**

**Types of Bonuses**

**Operating Landscape**

**Regulations**

**Unique phrases**

**It's a Relentless, Ruthless Business**

**Commercial and Endorsement terms**

**The Agent's Toolkit**



# What we call Football Agents worldwide?

<b>Agent</b>	<b>Manažer - Manager in Czech</b>	<b>Player representative</b>
<b>Football Agent</b>	<b>Contratista (Uruguay)</b>	<b>축구에이전트 Soccer Agent (Korean)</b>
<b>Intermediary</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Empresário (Brazil)</b>
<b>Super Agent</b>	<b>Representante (Spain)</b>	<b>Intermediário (Portugal)</b>
<b>Manager</b>	<b>Agente (Italy)</b>	<b>Mediator or Middleman</b>
<b>"Agen Resmi" Means Authorised Agent or Official (Indonesia)</b>	<b>Football Intermediary</b>	<b>Ατζέντης, Διαμεσολαβητής – Agent or Middleman (Greece)</b>
<b>Spielervermittler - Intermediary (Germany)</b>	<b>Player Intermediary</b>	<b>Dairinin / Chuukainin - Agent and Mediator/Intermediary (Japan)</b>
<b>Vermittler - Intermediary (Austria)</b>	<b>Authorised representative</b>	<b>Licensed Agent</b>
<b>Scout</b>	<b>Businessman - Business</b>	<b>足球经纪 - Football Agent - Zúqíú jīngjì (China)</b>
<b>Athletenmanager - Athlete manager (Germany)</b>	<b>Finder - Man of Power (France)</b>	<b>Procuratore Sportivo (Italy)</b>
<b>Berater - Counselor (Germany)</b>	<b>FIFA Agent</b>	
	<b>Registered intermediary</b>	
	<b>Zakenwaarnemer - Business observer (Netherlands)</b>	



- He's a deal-closer
- Incredibly good networker
- Can influence the club influencers
- Deal Maker
- Problem solvers
- Reputation of a skilled practitioner in the market
- Linking and connecting
- Makes a player available
- Seals the deal
- Forces a bid from a club for the player
- Gets Clubs showing interest
- Ties the dots between the two parties
- Full control of the player
- Terms agreed by all parties involved

# Agent's Impact and Influence

What defines an Agent's influence in the market

- Commission share
- Someone who is always looking for his commission
- Due diligence
- Working on a variety of brokered deals
- Exclusive with player or club
- Been the difference maker
- Shapes teams
- Creates astronomical value in world football
- Adds more value to a deal than their own cut
- Aligns the deal
- Fiduciary duty
- Player contract negotiations
- They are not only an Agent to the football players, also an Agent to the clubs



# Doing a Deal – Part #1

(Phrases and terms related to dealmaking and the promotion of players)

- ❑ Agents' commission fees
- ❑ Transfer arrangement
- ❑ Ability to wheel and deal
- ❑ Give me a ball park figure
- ❑ Offer and demand
- ❑ Club Requirements
- ❑ Net result of fees (Netto) (Italy)
- ❑ Negotiate personal terms for player
- ❑ Component parts of the deal
- ❑ Closing the deal
- ❑ Framing the negotiation parameters with the club

- ❑ A bid has been made
- ❑ The deal falls through
- ❑ Two clubs agree on a fee
- ❑ Out of contract or under contract
- ❑ The loan deal
- ❑ Transfer record
- ❑ (Club) snapped player up
- ❑ (Player) open to offers
- ❑ Employment contract negotiation
- ❑ 'Extras and add ons' in the contract

# Doing a Deal – Part #2

- ☐ Package (package of any fee and salary occurring for player transferring) (Japan)
- ☐ There is guaranteed compensation for the Agent's fee and player's sign on bonus
- ☐ Financial Conditions
- ☐ Weiterverkaufswert (resale value) (German)
- ☐ Urgent request
- ☐ Definite interest in player
- ☐ Operación – Deal (Spanish)
- ☐ Player wants Guarantees
- ☐ What is the Budget?
- ☐ Transfer fee
- ☐ Salary requirements
- ☐ Professional Contract
- ☐ Contract Terms
- ☐ Intermediary Fee
- ☐ Conditions (transfer value, salary etc)
- ☐ Transfer targets
- ☐ Remuneration
- ☐ Commission rate
- ☐ Benefits package for player



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# Player Positions and Characteristics

## "Attacking and Creative"

Target man (tall strong number 9)  
Point striker  
Fantasista or Trequartista (playmaker)  
Doctor or Pixie (Number 10 - Serbia)  
Number 10  
"Machine" - used for a good striker  
(West Africa)  
'Horse' - used for a good winger that  
runs very well (West Africa)  
'Shadow or shadow striker' - a second  
striker (Japan)  
'Under the top' and 'Top Shita' used  
instead of the term second striker  
(Japan)  
False 9 - a striker operating more as a  
number 10  
Extreme - fast winger (Greece)  
Top striker

## "Various Positions"

Sweeper-Keeper  
'Grasscutter' - a good defensive  
midfielder that can intercept very  
well (West Africa)  
Roaming destroyer (No. 6)  
Box-to-Box midfielder  
Repertoire of a holding midfielder  
'Volante' - defensive midfielder  
(Japan)  
Marquee player  
Maestro  
Complete player  
Team player  
Unterschiedspieler - Player that  
makes a difference to the team's  
overall performance (Germany)  
Positional dominance

## "Player Attributes"

Can he Razzle, Is he a Razzlor?  
This player is Mint  
This player has Tekkers (Technique)  
Loyalty  
This player may affect squad  
cohesion and player stability  
Mentality  
Adaptation  
Character - To help the new players  
to adapt in a new country and  
league  
Tactical maturity  
Technical skills  
Game reading  
Finishing and Hustle  
Sets the tempo  
Physicality and Speed



# Significant Contractual Clauses #1

Terms used by Agents in contracts and negotiations

Wages guaranteed clause

Salary schedule

Future transfer fee

Signing-on fee

Club option

Release clause

Permanent transfer

First refusal clause

Scholarship agreements

Defined release clause

Relegation release clause

Appearance fee

Match highest earner clause

Club buy-back clause

Sell-on fee or Sell-on clause

Buy out clause

Grounds for Termination or Reduction of Fees

Good faith release clause

Loan deals with options to buy





## Significant Contractual Clauses #2

Sign on / Stay on fee - *which is money the player gets when he signs for a club or stays with the club for a period of time*

Gross salary and incentives

Sell on percentage

Free release clause

Option

Cesión – Loan (Spain)

Transfer clause

Nominal fee clause

“Rental” instead of loan, eg. rental transfer/period (Japan)

Penalty clause

Loan plus option to permanently transfer the player

Conditional transfer fee

First contract offer clause

Altre Scritture (Addendum in Italy)

Consent to being traded clause (MLS)

Transfer fee paid in instalments

Net salary

Part exchange of Players between clubs

Academy contract

# Types of Bonuses

Incentivising the Player's contract

**1**

Signing-on bonus

Loyalty bonus

Performance  
bonuses

Clean sheet  
bonus

Buyback bonus

**2**

International  
Competition  
bonuses

Win/draw bonus

Pay performance  
incentive clauses

Club bonus pool

**3**

Bonus Incentive  
Schedule

Match Bonuses

Consecutive Win  
Increase bonus

Cup Competition  
Bonuses

Bonus Trigger

**4**

Appearance  
Bonus

Bonus schedules

Playing bonuses

Variable Bonuses

Goal Assist Bonus

Squad List and  
Teamsheet Bonus

**5**

Goal bonus

Acceleration of  
bonuses clause

Ethics bonus  
(France)





# Operating Landscape

**(Agent, Club and Player considerations and transfer market dynamics)**

- Player Agent Representation contracts
- Third party players
- Transfer speculation
- Draft or player combine (USA)
- Buying club and selling club
- Free agent deals
- When the window opens
- Free transfer
- Conflict of interest
- Transparency
- Transferencia (Uruguay)
- Commissions – Comissão (Brazil)
- Window transfer
- Trials
- Visa player request
- EU passport only request
- Foreign players request
- Asian passport request
- Asean passport request (South East Asia)
- Dual representation
- Compensation
- 'Pass' - used in South America to describe economic rights
- Letter of invitation for employment (India)
- Player swap between clubs
- Negotiations
- Success fee
- Deal driven clients
- Management driven clients
- Intermediation
- High-profile signings, draw other players to an Agent dealmaker



# Regulations – Part #1

## (FIFA, Confederation, National Federations and League Rules and Frameworks)

Third Party Investment (TPI) and Third Party Ownership (TPO)

FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (RSTP)

FIFA TMS transaction

Foreigner visa player work permit

Financial Fair Play (UEFA)

Clearing House requirements (England)

Designated player (USA)

Salary cap

Transaction

Bio bubble (Hub set up for games and training due to Covid)

Need league confirmation/approval 'single entity' rules (Major League Soccer)

Authorisation to Work with Minors

GBE - Governing Body Endorsement is the endorsement issued by the Football Association and subsequently filed with the Home Office permitting an overseas player the right (visa) to work for a club in England

EPPP - Elite Player Performance Plan is the programme that underpins the development of junior players at clubs in England

YD Forms - Forms related to the release and retention of youth and academy players (as part of EPPP) (England)

Collective Bargaining Agreement

Rule K Arbitration (England)

Solidarity Contribution (paid to Player's Junior development clubs from a transfer fee)

# Regulations – Part #2

**P11D** - A tax form filed in the United Kingdom detailing all payments made to an employee (i.e. player) by an employer (i.e. club) including salary, expenses, benefits, bonuses, 'benefits in kind' (including agents fees)

**Benefit in Kind** - is a payment made by the employer/club on the employees/players behalf (eg. agent fees/commission) and as such is usually adjudged part of their salary and is therefore taxable

**Training compensation or Training rewards** (paid to Player's Junior development clubs)

**Traspaso – Transfer** (Spanish)

**International Transfer Certificate**

**Player clearance**

**Age declaration**

**Homegrown player** - player that came through academy system or local area (USA)

**Generation Adidas** - joint program with Adidas/MLS for collegiate players and youth national team players (USA)

**Designated player** - a player who exceeds the maximum salary budget (USA)

**Application to the FIFA Dispute Resolution Chamber**

**Registration Period**

**National Dispute Resolution Chamber (CNRD)** (Brazil)

**Club Third Party Ownership form and Player Third Party Ownership form** (Asia)

**'Strata Kompetisi- Verifikasi Pemain Asing'** or translated as **'Competition Strata- Foreign Player Verification'** which defines that the incoming players must come from clubs playing at a certain level in their respective leagues and the player must have played at least 50% of the games for their last club (Indonesia)

**Salario Basico – Basic Professional player salary** (Argentina)

**Transfer Levy** (English Premier League)

# Unique Phrases Part #1

**Sayings and Phrases Agents use to describe an event or expectation**

- At the 'right price', most clubs will be interested
- Submit a transfer request
- Wasted approach made to a club
- Moving parts of various deals
- Getting the deal over the line
- Player moves to another club on a free
- Leaving on a Bosman (free player who can move clubs)
- Tearing up the contract (by player)
- Floating the player to clubs
- There are no takers (for the player)
- Player aggressively marketed by agent
- (Player) Hands in a transfer request
- Clubs are showing interest
- Vows to stay with the club
- Open to offers
- Reaching out to club



# Unique Phrases Part #2

- The player believes moving to the club will take their game to another level
- Let's come to an agreement
- Let's have a working relationship
- Split the commission
- I'm more concerned about playing time for my player
- I don't split commission
- Self sponsored players that are available for transfer
- Is he a good player?
- Negotiating tactics or lack of tactics
- Jogador Livre – Free Agent (Portugal)
- Do you formally represent the player?
- Push the player
- Offer the player to the club
- Try harder to convince the club
- Are you direct? (do you have a direct relationship with the club or player)
- Make a deal happen
- (Club) comes in for the player
- Mark of a good agent
- Lets walk through the scenarios
- Welke club? - Which club (Dutch)



# It's a Relentless, Ruthless Business

## The negative aspects of the Agent business

- **Front/Fronting** - is when an Intermediary (Agent) who is licensed by the Football Association to represent players signs-off on paperwork falsely as representing the player and/or club whilst an unlicensed person(s) is actually representing the player
- **Need to get rid of the player**
- **Runner** - junior agent that usually works for bigger agency and sources players
- **Club expectations not met**
- **Tapping up** - illegally approach by club of a player already under contract with another club
- **Agent cut out of the final negotiations**
- **The deal fell through**
- **Poaching** - inducement to breach the agency contract of a player signed with another agent
- **Bungs** - known as hidden payments in order to facilitate future transfers
- **Agent has complete and utter lack of local knowledge and completely misunderstands the culture**
- **Untrustworthy and Greedy Agent**
- **Quack Agent (Fraudulent or Scam agent)**
- **Random Agents cutting into the player's deal**
- **It's a Deal breaker**
- **Ying and Yang contracts (China)** - were one contract is given to tax office and the other is the one with the real financial terms
- **It's a tough business**
- **No reasons given to player after a failed club trial**



# Commercial and Endorsement terms

## Club and Player arrangements

- Commercial terms have been agreed
- Any 'side deals'
- Players' commercial deals
- Player Boot Deals
- Player Shirt Deals
- Image Rights Contracts
- Marketing communication
- Economic Rights
- Client portfolio
- Player Data and Analytics
- Player care
- Player as a commercial brand
- Marketing personality goals
- Commercial potential
- Sponsorships
- Key Endorsements
- Morality clause
- Post-career planning
- Social media management
- Karriereplan - Career Plan (German)
- Commercial Agent
- Personality rights
- Testimonial agreements
- Brand management
- Brand ambassador agreements





L I B E R I O  
C O N S U L T I N G

# The Agent's Toolkit

Must have tools and relationships to engage in the Agency business

- Global contacts
- Club Network
- Mandate or Exclusive mandate
- Contact book
- Media leaks
- Player Trials
- Transfermarkt
- Wyscout and Instat platforms
- Analytical data reports
- Representation contract
- Transfer windows
- Gross or Net salary
- Per direct (direct with club)
- Scouting Reports - Olheiro (Brazil)
- By WhatsApp
- Is it concrete or is it a concrete offer?
- Player CV and Video
- Profile (of a player)
- Model intermediary contract (Switzerland)
- Pre-contract for player
- Preferred Agent status
- Contract Upgrades (when player meets targets)
- Connections
- Networking for transfers
- Dual representation agreement with player and club
- Deadline day planning and paperwork

# “ Conclusion

The fastmoving, dynamic and deal driven landscape that Football Agents operate in, makes them key figures in the international football player transfer market. As part of this international dynamic, where many Agents are required to speak foreign languages in order to operate in the transnational transfer market, a unique language of Football Agents has emerged.

This colourful yet compelling 'Agent's' language is full of nuances, football business strategy and interesting concepts and sub-contexts. Indeed this unique language now both defines the role of the Agents and what they bring to the negotiating table, whilst also enriching the football industry at an international level with a new vibrant lexicon.

*In essence, the Football Agent's language is now football culture.*



# THANK YOU!

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