



· AN IKONX BLUEPRINT ·

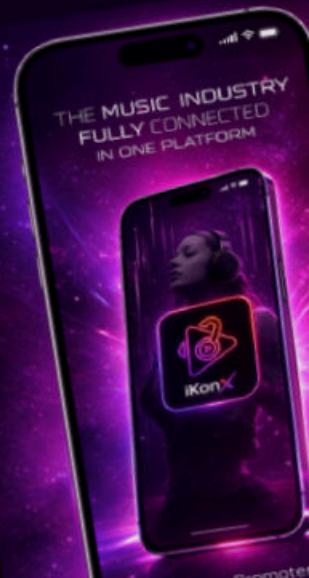
THE MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT PLAYBOOK

The field guide to getting paid in music. Pricing, bookings,
deals, and the business behind the art.



IKONX.APP

WHERE MUSIC MEETS BUSINESS





• AN IKONX BLUEPRINT •

THE MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT PLAYBOOK

WHERE MUSIC MEETS BUSINESS

CONTENTS

How everyone in the industry actually grows, gets paid, and helps each other. One login, ten industries, zero gatekeepers.

	01	Fans How to actually connect with and support the artists you love.	6
	02	Artists How to get paid, get booked, and build your brand.	10
	03	Producers How to sell more beats and stay booked.	15
	04	Managers How to grow a roster and run it like a business.	19
	05	Labels How to find, sign, and develop talent that lasts.	23
	06	Studios How to fill your calendar and keep sessions booked.	27
	07	Promoters How to fill rooms and sell out shows.	31
	08	Events How to book the right talent and run events that profit.	35
	09	Podcasters How to land guests and grow a real audience.	40
	10	Influencers How to turn your audience into income.	44
	11	Sponsors and brands How to back the right talent and get real ROI.	48
	12	The whole ecosystem How everyone here helps everyone else.	52

ALSO INSIDE

A quick word on iKonX · where music meets business	56
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· START HERE ·

WHY THIS BOOK EXISTS

Most "how to make it in music" advice is gatekept, outdated, or trying to sell you something before it ever helps you. We did the opposite.

This is a free field guide for the entire music and entertainment world. Not just artists. Fans, musicians, bands, DJs, singer-songwriters, producers, mix and master engineers, managers, labels, studios, promoters, event and festival organizers, venues and nightclubs, podcasters, influencers, sponsors and brands, and everyone in between. Whatever your role, there is a chapter in here written for you.

THE BELIEF BEHIND ALL OF IT

Everyone is needed, and everyone wins when the people around them win.

That belief has a name where we come from: **Where Music Meets Business**. The art is the soul of it, but the business is how you keep doing the art. This book is the business half, handed to you for free.

We built iKonX so every role is a **door** · one platform · zero gatekeepers. The artist door and the fan door are **open and live today**. The rest of the circle we are building next. But you do not need iKonX to use this book · every move in here works whether you use our app or not.

That is the deal: genuine value, no gate, show love to everyone.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Read it cover to cover, or jump straight to your chapter and start there. Every chapter is a self-contained Top 10 you can act on today. Each one ends with the cross-connections (who in the industry you should be linking up with) and one simple next move. Skim it, screenshot it, send it to a friend in the game. It is yours.

· READ THIS FIRST ·

THE ONE IDEA

Picture the industry as a circle, not a ladder.

The fan funds the artist. The artist hires the producer and books the studio. The studio and the producer sharpen the artist. The manager opens doors. The promoter fills the room. The event puts everyone on a stage. The podcaster and the influencer spread the word. The label and the sponsor pour fuel on it. The fan shows up again, louder this time.

WHY THE CIRCLE MATTERS

**[Pull one piece out and the circle weakens.
Strengthen one piece and everyone around it gets
stronger.]**

SO HERE IS THE MOVE

When you read your chapter, also glance at the chapters of the people you depend on. Your next level is usually sitting in someone else's chapter. Read theirs, and you learn how to make their job easier, which is exactly what makes them want to work with you.

- Start with your own chapter and act on one thing today.
- Then read one chapter of someone you work with. **That is where the next opportunity hides.**

Everyone is needed. Everyone wins when the people around them win.



FANS



THE PLAYBOOK

How to actually connect with and support the artists you love.

For the people who keep the whole thing alive. You matter more than you think.

You are not "just a fan." You are the reason any of this exists. The artists you love eat because you show up. The gap between you and them is smaller than it has ever been. Here are the ten best ways to close it.

1

Message them where a *real* person reads it.

A free DM dies in the requests folder. A paid direct channel is the signal that gets you past it. The smaller the artist, the faster the real reply.

DIRECT MESSAGE

[SEE PAGE 4 →](#)

2

Pay for the shoutout, *don't beg* for free.

A paid shoutout puts real money in their pocket and gets their full attention. Most indie artists go above and beyond for someone who supported them like that.

SHOUTOUT

[SEE PAGE 4 →](#)

3

Buy direct, where *your money* reaches them.

A stream pays a fraction of a cent. Merch, a feature, a song request, or a direct message puts real dollars in their hands the same day.

SUPPORT

[SEE PAGE 5 →](#)

4

Request the *song you always* wanted.

Independent artists take custom requests all the time. A personalized verse or a custom song for a birthday. One of one for you, paid work for them.

CUSTOM

[SEE PAGE 5 →](#)

THE FEELING THIS CHAPTER IS ABOUT

They didn't just hear me. They replied.

5

Know what a fair price looks like.

A custom video usually runs \$30 to \$500. Indie and mid-tier artists often land \$50 to \$150. For business use, expect roughly triple the personal rate. Knowing the number means you ask with confidence and they feel respected.

PRICING

SEE PAGE 6 →

6

Keep your ask short. Two sentences.

Give them the name, the occasion, and one personal detail. A tight ask gets a better video than a wall of text, and makes you the fan they enjoy hearing from.

THE BRIEF

SEE PAGE 6 →

7

Be early. Become the fan they remember.

The fans who back an artist before the world catches on get remembered, replied to, and pulled into the inner circle. Support them now, while it means everything.

LOYALTY

SEE PAGE 7 →

8

Share like it is your job.

A save, a share, a real comment, a playlist add. All of it moves the algorithm and costs you nothing. Thirty seconds can put them in front of a thousand new people.

AMPLIFY

SEE PAGE 7 →

9

Go to the show, *close the loop*.

Streaming is the trailer. The live show and the merch table are the real support. Show up, bring a friend, buy the shirt. You are investing in someone you believe in.

LIVE

SEE PAGE 8 →

10

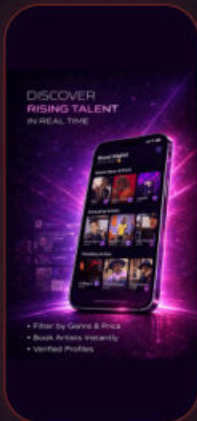
Use tools that *connect, not gate*.

On the iKonX app a fan messages and supports an indie artist directly. 100% goes to the artist, iKonX takes 0% commission. Just make sure the money lands on the artist.

IKONX

SEE PAGE 8 →

100% goes to the artist. iKonX takes 0% commission. That's the whole deal.

**THIS IS WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.**

Open the iKonX app, find the artist you love, and reach them directly. No wall, no gatekeeper, no cut taken from the artist. The reply you didn't expect is one message away.

WHO YOU CONNECT WITH

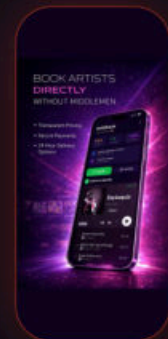
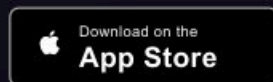
The Artists chapter shows you exactly how the people you support are trying to grow, so you can help on purpose. The Events and Promoters chapters tell you where to find live shows worth showing up for.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Pick one artist you love who is still on the way up, and do one thing from this list today. Message them, buy something directly, or share their music like you mean it.

DOWNLOAD IKONX FREE

Message and support the artists you love directly. 100% goes to the artist. Free to download, free to browse.



Been a fan since day one. Just wanted to say it.

They didn't just hear me. They replied.

● DELIVERED · JUST NOW



ARTISTS



THE PLAYBOOK

How to get paid, get booked, and build your brand.

Streaming will not pay your bills. These ten things will. And your city is not the destination. This chapter is for every kind of artist · rappers, singers, bands, DJs, and songwriters · so wherever you sit in the music, you will find your lane in here.

If you are making music and not making money yet, it is almost never a talent problem. It is a packaging, pricing, and distribution problem. The gap is rarely demand, it is the lack of one clean place to list your work, price it, and collect. The artists who eat treat their craft like a business.

1

Sell what you **already make**, starting with verses.

You write verses every week and some are products. Almost any artist can charge for features and beats, paid messages, bookings, and session work. A feature turns skill you already have into money this week.

[SELL WHAT YOU MAKE](#)[SEE PAGE 4 →](#)

2

Price yourself on **leverage**, not **panic**.

In 2026 the rate follows your monthly listeners. 0 to 50k is roughly \$100 to \$500 per verse, 50k to 250k climbs to \$500 to \$2,000, and established acts at 250k to 1M and beyond command \$2,500 to \$10,000 or more. Raise on evidence, never on ego.

[PRICING](#)[SEE PAGE 4 →](#)

3

Set one flat rate and **put the scope in writing**.

Charge a single flat rate for a standard 16 bar verse with one or two revisions, not per hour. Put bar count, revisions, delivery date, and deliverables on paper. Clear scope kills the free re-do.

[SCOPE](#)[SEE PAGE 5 →](#)

4

Collect **up front**, every time.

Take the money before you deliver. Half up front and half on delivery is standard, full payment before you send is cleaner. This is the biggest difference between getting paid and getting ghosted.

[GET PAID](#)[SEE PAGE 5 →](#)

THE INDEPENDENT MAJORITY

40%+ of recorded music is now independent. About half of Spotify's 2025 royalties went to independents. You do not need a label to eat.

5

Book and *work directly* with other artists.

The fastest growth in music is borrowed audience. Feature, hook, and collab to turn one song into two fanbases. On iKonX you find artists at your level and one rung above and work with them on the spot. Your city is not the destination.

COLLAB

SEE PAGE 6 →

6

Stop relying on streaming. *Stack other rivers*.

Streaming is for reach, not rent. The artists who pay their bills stack features, beats, merch, shows, custom songs, and fan messages. Build at least three rivers, and most of them can run at once off the audience you already have.

STACK INCOME

SEE PAGE 6 →

7

Land brand deals even with a *small following*.

You do not need a million followers, you need an engaged niche and a clear pitch. Brands pay micro-creators with loyal audiences all the time, and engagement beats follower count. Know your numbers and reach out.

BRAND DEALS

SEE PAGE 7 →

8

Get booked by making the *promoter's job easy*.

Promoters book artists who draw and who are no drama. Have your press kit, links, and draw numbers ready before they ask. Show up early, deliver clean, and be the easy yes on next month's lineup.

GET BOOKED

SEE PAGE 7 →

9

Build the brand and keep your handshake current.

A brand is what people say about you when you are not in the room. Treat your profile and links as your handshake, because a stale page costs you deals you never hear about. Post the journey, not just the product, and lean on TikTok sound velocity, the modern discovery signal.

YOUR HANDSHAKE

SEE PAGE 8 →

10

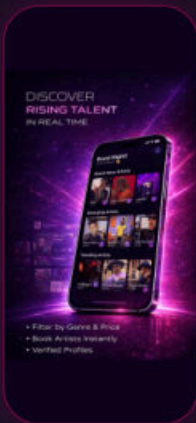
Use platforms that protect your earnings.

Some platforms quietly take a cut of everything you earn. iKonX is built artists-first, you keep 100% of what you charge and iKonX takes 0% commission, the buyer just pays a small 10% on top. The number you set is the number you keep.

IKONX

SEE PAGE 8 →

You keep **100%**. iKonX takes **0%** commission. The number you set is the number you keep.

**A FREE VERIFIED PAGE.**

Sign up on the iKonX app and your verified artist page goes live at ikonx.app/artists. Your bio, your music, your Spotify, your booking link, all in one place where fans and bookers reach you directly and the support lands on you.

M

VERIFIED

J

VERIFIED

D

VERIFIED

S

VERIFIED

SAME PLAYBOOK, YOUR LANE

The ten moves above work for everyone, but the money looks a little different depending on your lane. Here is how it lands for three that often get left out of the "rapper selling verses" version of this advice.

Bands

Agree your splits in writing before a single dollar moves, because the friendliest band in the world still ends up fighting over money nobody wrote down. Put one member on the money and one on the calendar so nothing slips through the cracks. Treat the band like a small business, not just a friendship, with clear roles and clear pay. And remember your real income is live shows and merch, not streaming, so build the show and the merch table like the product they are.

DJs

Your money is live sets, residencies, and selling your mixes, edits, and custom intros, not waiting on streaming pennies. Set a clear rate by set length with a travel minimum, so a one-hour set across town and a four-hour set two states over are never priced the same by accident. Build a recurring night or residency you control instead of only chasing one-off gigs. The room you own beats the room you are begging into.

Songwriters and toplineers

You have real products to sell, toplineers, full songs, and ghostwriting, and you own publishing on what you write, which is the part most people forget. Register your splits before the song releases, every single time, not after it starts doing numbers. The writing pays you for years whether or not your name ends up on the record, so protect that paper like the asset it is.

WHO YOU CONNECT WITH

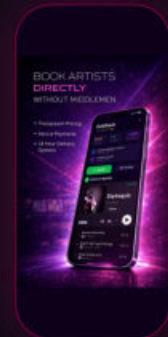
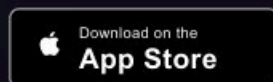
The Fans chapter shows you how the people who support you actually want to help, so make it easy for them. The Producers and Studios chapters are your supply chain. The Promoters and Events chapters are where the bookings live. The Managers and Labels chapters tell you how the next tier thinks, so you can become the artist they want to sign and build with when the timing is right.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Pick one income river from this list you are not using yet and set it up this week. Sell a verse, open feature bookings, or reach out to one artist in another city about a collab. Artists get a free verified website when they sign up for iKonX, plus the free app to list, price, and collect in one place, so download the iKonX app free and give people a real way to pay you. Want the deeper breakdown on pricing and getting booked? Read the full version free at ikonx.app/blog.

DOWNLOAD IKONX FREE

Get your free verified artist page and the app to list, price, and collect in one place. You keep 100% of what you charge, iKonX takes 0% commission. Free to download, free to set up.





PRODUCERS



How to sell more beats and stay booked.

THE PLAYBOOK

For the beatmakers and producers who build the foundation everything else stands on. No artist sounds like themselves without the right beat under them, and that beat came from you.

You make the sound, but the money feels random. A fire beat sits unsold while a throwaway loop pays your rent. The problem usually is not your beats, it is your system for selling them. Fix the system and the same work that earns you nothing starts feeding you on repeat.

1

Know the difference between a **lease** and an **exclusive** before you ever quote a price.

A lease lets an artist use the beat while you keep ownership and can sell it again. An exclusive transfers the rights and you take it down for good, which is why it costs far more. Steady income comes from leases sold over and over; the bigger paydays come from the occasional exclusive.

LEASE VS. EXCLUSIVE SEE PAGE 4 →

2

Build a **pricing ladder** so there is something for every budget.

Stack offers bottom up: an MP3 lease, a WAV lease, an unlimited or trackout lease with the stems, then the exclusive at the top. A broke artist buys in today while a label-backed artist grabs the exclusive. Price your middle tier where you want most sales to land, and one beat serves five different wallets instead of one.

PRICING LADDER SEE PAGE 4 →

3

Put a **producer tag** on every beat and treat it like your logo.

That voice drop at the front of the beat is free marketing every time the track gets played or reposted. Keep it short, keep it consistent, and place it early so nobody can clip it out. When people hear the same tag on ten songs they start asking "who made that," and that question is your whole business.

PRODUCER TAG SEE PAGE 4 →

4

Give your beats **one clean home base** where people can hear and buy 24/7.

You lose sales every time a buyer has to DM you, wait for a reply, then figure out how to pay. You want one link where someone can preview, pick a license, and check out while the inspiration is hot. The artists buying your beats are already on the iKonX app · join the producer waitlist at ikonx.app.

ONE HOME BASE SEE PAGE 5 →

WORK ONCE, SELL FOR YEARS

[A lease sells over and over; an exclusive is the occasional bigger payday. Make the pack once, sell it for years.]

5

Sell **beat packs and loop kits** to stack income on work you already finished.

Bundle 5 to 10 beats or a folder of your best loops and sell it as one product. Packs move buyers who want options and bulk value; loop kits reach other producers who flip your sounds and often credit you. This turns your B-sides and leftovers into a second product line instead of dead files on a hard drive.

PACKS & LOOP KITS

SEE PAGE 4 →

6

Title and tag your catalog the way **artists actually search**.

Buyers shop by vibe and by name: "dark trap," "soulful R&B," "Drake type beat," "afrobeat 100 bpm." Label every beat with the genre, mood, bpm, and an honest type-beat reference so the right artist lands on your sound. The cleaner your tags, the more often the algorithm and the buyer both find you. Give people the exact words they are typing.

TAG FOR SEARCH

SEE PAGE 5 →

7

Turn a single sale into a **relationship**, not a one-off.

When someone buys, follow up. Thank them, ask what they are working on, send a couple of beats that fit their direction. Most producers vanish after checkout and leave easy repeat money on the table. The artist who bought once already trusts your sound, so they are far easier to sell to than a stranger.

REPEAT BUYERS

SEE PAGE 6 →

8

Protect your placements by putting the deal **in writing** before the song comes out.

Save your contracts, splits, license terms, and a record of who has what. When a leased beat blows up or a song gets picked for sync, the producer with paperwork gets paid and the one running on memory gets left out. Agree your producer percentage and publishing split in writing before release, never after. Boring admin today is years of royalties tomorrow.

GET IT IN WRITING

SEE PAGE 7 →

9

Chase **sync and placements** as a real income stream, not a lucky break.

TV, film, ads, video games, and YouTube creators all need music, and original instrumentals with no cleared samples are exactly what they can drop in fast. Keep a set of clean, sample-free beats ready to pitch and lead with mood and usability over flash. One sync placement can out-earn a hundred leases, so build that ready-to-pitch folder on purpose. Send one tidy link, not a messy zip of half-named files.

SYNC & PLACEMENTS SEE PAGE 8 →

10

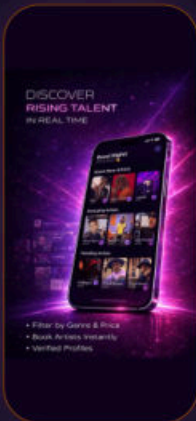
Show up where the artists are and **put your name on everything**.

Drop beats consistently, repost the songs artists make on your work, and hand them the spotlight when they win. A consistent producer tag and profile is your discovery engine, so tag the artist, share their release, and hype their numbers, because every song made on your beat is a billboard for you. A producer who lifts the artists around them gets recommended, invited, and booked far past one city.

BE PRESENT

SEE PAGE 8 →

Booked producers are not always the most talented, they are the ones their clients **never have to go looking for again**.



ONE LINK TO BUY.

One link to preview the beat, pick a license, and check out while the inspiration is still hot. The artists buying your beats are already on the iKonX app, and iKonX is building a home for producers too · join the waitlist at ikonx.app. Never make someone wait to give you money.

WHO YOU CONNECT WITH

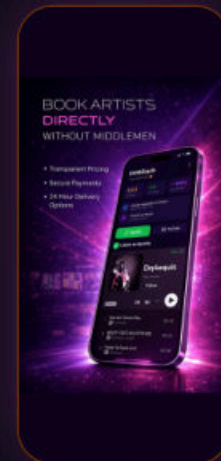
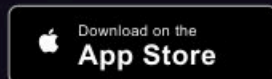
You depend on artists more than anyone · they are the ones turning your beats into songs, so know who is buying and serve them well. Studios and engineers shape how your beats land, so build real relationships there. Managers and labels open the door to placements and bigger budgets, so make it easy for them to find your sound and trust your paperwork.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Pick your five best beats, set a simple lease-to-exclusive price ladder, and put them somewhere a buyer can grab them in one click. The artists you want to reach are already on the free iKonX app, so go meet them there, and read more at ikonx.app/blog while iKonX builds out the producer side.

DOWNLOAD IKONX FREE

The artists you want to reach are already on the free iKonX app · go meet them there. The producer side is coming · join the producer waitlist at ikonx.app, and read more free at ikonx.app/blog.





MANAGERS



THE PLAYBOOK

How to grow a roster and run it like a business.

For the managers who carry the calendar, chase the checks, and believe in an artist before the world does. You are the engine room. Respect.

A good manager is one of the best things that can happen to an artist's career, and a good artist is one of the best things that can happen to yours. This is a real partnership, not a favor you do for free hoping it pays off someday. The managers who last treat the work like the business it actually is · clean deals, a deliberate roster, and money that moves on time. Sign artists when it is right for both of you, and build something that makes everyone in the room better off.

1

Get clear on the job **before you sign anyone.**

A manager runs strategy, protects the artist's time, and makes the calls nobody else wants to make. You are not the booking agent, not the label, and not the babysitter. When you know exactly what you deliver, you stop overpromising, and overpromising is the fastest way a young manager loses an artist's trust.

THE JOB

SEE PAGE 4 →

2

Set commission **like a pro** and earn every point.

Standard is 15% to 20% of gross. A developing artist who needs you to build everything pays the high end, an established act with momentum negotiates toward 10% to 15%. Anything past 25% is above the norm. Never take a cut of money you did not help create, so carve out income the artist earned before you signed on.

COMMISSION

SEE PAGE 4 →

3

Put it in writing, every time, in **plain language.**

A handshake is how good partnerships end in court. Your agreement needs a term length, a clear commission split, the income it applies to, and a clean exit both sides can live with. A two-page deal an artist can actually read beats a thirty-page monster they sign without understanding. Paper protects the relationship far more than it threatens it.

GET IT IN WRITING

SEE PAGE 5 →

4

Write a sunset clause so the deal **ends cleanly.**

When the partnership ends, your commission should step down over time instead of running forever. A common shape is 15% to 10% to 5% to 0 across about two to three years, applied only to deals you set up during the management period. Without it you commission that artist for life on work you may have had nothing to do with.

SUNSET CLAUSE

SEE PAGE 5 →

THE OPERATOR'S MATH

One artist is a job. Three to five complementary acts is a business. Five artists you genuinely serve beats fifteen you ghost.

5

Define what commission **actually applies to.**

Commissionable income usually spans recorded music, live shows, merch, sponsorships, and brand deals · the things you helped build. Carve out anything the artist earned before you came on, and put it in writing so there is no argument later. If the artist has a separate publishing administrator, consider leaving publishing out of your cut rather than double-dipping.

SCOPE OF CUT

SEE PAGE 6 →

6

Build a roster that **does not collapse** on a slow month.

One artist is a job. Three to five complementary acts is a business, because a quiet stretch for one is a busy stretch for another, and your booking, press, and sync relationships carry across the whole roster. Do not over-sign · five artists you genuinely serve beats fifteen you ghost.

ROSTER

SEE PAGE 6 →

7

Run the roster on a **system, not your memory.**

The moment you manage more than one artist, sticky notes fail you. Use one shared calendar, one folder per artist for contracts, splits, assets, and contacts, and one simple tracker for who is owed what and when. The tool matters less than the habit. A manager who never drops a date is a manager artists refer to their friends.

SYSTEMS

SEE PAGE 7 →

8

Get artists booked by making the **promoter's job easy.**

Promoters book the acts that hand them everything ready to go. Build a one-page sheet for each artist · stats, links, a strong photo · then pitch venues with a specific date and a specific offer, not a vague "can we play sometime." You are not begging for a slot, you are solving the promoter's lineup problem.

GET BOOKED

SEE PAGE 7 →

9

Move money the smart way: deposits up front, splits in writing.

Take a deposit before the work starts, because half up front and half on delivery is standard and it protects both you and the artist from a no-show or a vanished payment. Never let a show or a feature happen on a verbal promise to pay after. Agree every split in writing before the money moves, so payday is arithmetic, not an argument.

[MOVE THE MONEY](#)
[SEE PAGE 8 →](#)

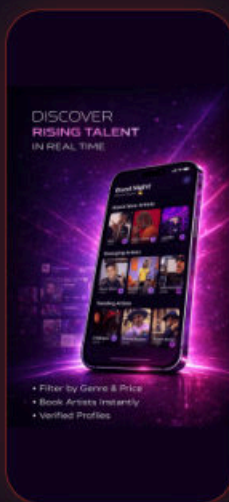
10

Make each artist easy to find, follow, and pitch.

Half your job is making sure fans, promoters, and labels can reach your artist in one tap. Get each act a free verified iKonX profile and page so bookers can find them, with their music, booking link, and a way to take direct support where the artist keeps 100% and iKonX takes 0% commission. Pitch engagement over follower count. iKonX is building the manager side too, so join the waitlist at ikonx.app if you want in early.

[IKONX](#)
[SEE PAGE 8 →](#)

The artist keeps **100%**. iKonX takes **0%** commission. One tap to find, follow, and book every act on your roster.



ONE PLACE BOOKERS CAN REACH YOUR ROSTER.

Get each of your acts a free verified iKonX profile and page, live now at ikonx.app and the free iKonX app, so fans and bookers can find them. Their music, booking link, and a way to take direct support, all in one tap, with the artist keeping 100%.

WHO YOU CONNECT WITH

Artists are your whole world · read their chapter to understand the pressure they carry and what they actually need from you. Promoters and venues are your booking pipeline · the easier you are to work with, the more dates they hand you. Labels and studios are your next-level relationships · know what they want so you can put your artist in the right room at the right moment.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

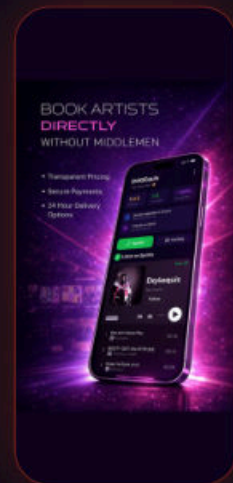
Pick your strongest artist and build them one clean one-page sheet this week · stats, links, photo, booking ask. Then claim their free verified iKonX profile at ikonx.app so promoters and fans have one place to find and support them, with the artist keeping 100%. While you are there, read a few playbooks at ikonx.app/blog to sharpen the next deal you sign.

CLAIM YOUR ROSTER ON IKONX FREE

Get each act a free verified iKonX profile and page, live now at ikonx.app and the free iKonX app. The artist keeps 100% of what they charge, iKonX takes 0% commission. iKonX is building the manager side too, so join the waitlist if you want in early.

Download on the
App Store

GET IT ON
Google Play





LABELS



How to find, sign, and develop talent that lasts.

THE PLAYBOOK

For the independent label owner running A&R out of a laptop and a love for the music · you are the bridge between raw talent and a real career, and that job matters.

86%

TRACKS UNDER
1,000 STREAMS

NEW UNSIGNED
THIS WEEK



A great label is not a bank that owns people. It is a team that hears something early, believes in it out loud, and helps it grow. The math is humbling: an independent label invests an average around \$236,000 per signed artist, and about 86% of tracks ever released get under 1,000 streams. Signing is a real bet. The labels that win the bet do it the same way whether they have five acts or are signing their first · they find the real ones, treat them right, and build something that outlasts a single hit.

1

Sign proof, not potential.

Modern A&R is data first and gut second. The signals that actually predict a career, roughly in order: TikTok sound velocity (does a clip move in the 7 to 14 day window after it posts), save-to-stream ratio, Discover Weekly add-rate, engagement rate over raw follower count, then release consistency, live draw, and a distinct brand. Potential is a story an artist tells you. Proof is a number you can pull up before the call ends.

● STAGE ● GENRE ▲ MOMENTUM

A&R SIGNALS

SEE PAGE 4 →

2

Read engagement, not vanity follower counts.

A roster built on big numbers and dead audiences is a roster of dead deals. 150k followers at 9% engagement beats 1.5M at 0.4% every single time, because the small loud crowd actually buys tickets, saves songs, and shows up. When you scout, divide the energy by the audience size. The artist whose 8,000 fans treat every post like an event is worth more than the one with 800,000 who scroll past.

● STAGE ● GENRE ▲ MOMENTUM

ENGAGEMENT

SEE PAGE 4 →

3

Judge the first ten seconds, then judge the next ten years.

A&Rs make a gut call in the first few seconds of a track · the hook, the tone, the thing that makes you lean in. That instinct is real, keep it. But after the gut yes, dig into the long game: consistency, work ethic, how they handle a setback, whether they finish what they start. A great ten seconds gets you in the door · a great human builds the catalog.

● STAGE ● GENRE ▲ MOMENTUM

THE LONG GAME

SEE PAGE 4 →

4

Scout the rooms and the feeds, not just the charts.

The charts tell you who already blew up. The open mics, the small local shows, the comment sections, the DMs, and the artists already orbiting your world tell you who is about to. Modern scouting lives half in real rooms and half in the feed, so work both. You can also browse verified independent artists right inside the free iKonX app · real profiles, real links, the kind of early act a small label can actually reach before everyone else does.

● STAGE ● GENRE ▲ MOMENTUM

SCOUTING

SEE PAGE 4 →

THE BET YOU ARE MAKING

An independent label invests an average around \$236,000 per signed artist, and about 86% of tracks ever released get under 1,000 streams. Signing is a real bet. Win it by finding the real ones.

SOUND VELOCITY

ENGAGEMENT RATE

RELEASE CONSISTENCY

5

Match the artist to your stage, not your ego.

Do not sign an arena-ready act you can only give garage-band support · you will both end up bitter. The cleanest deals happen when the label and the artist are at the same point in the climb, growing together. A small-but-rising act you can genuinely develop will outperform a name you signed to flatter yourself. Sign the artist your label can actually move forward, not the one that looks good in your group chat.

STAGE GENRE MOMENTUM

RIGHT FIT

SEE PAGE 4 →

6

Sign the work ethic, not just the hot ten seconds.

Talent is everywhere · the ability to show up, finish songs, and grind through a dry month is rare. You are spending real money and years on a person's habits, so watch how they operate before you sign: do they hit deadlines, respond like a pro, treat their own fans well, post on a rhythm? Release consistency is itself a buy signal. Bet on the ones who were already working before you showed up.

STAGE GENRE MOMENTUM

WORK ETHIC

SEE PAGE 4 →

7

Develop the artist, do not just distribute them.

A real label adds something the artist could not do alone: a sharper sound, a better rollout, a network, an honest ear. Put real time into development · feedback, structure, connections, a release plan · not just an upload to the stores. Distribution alone makes you a middleman. Development makes you the partner an artist re-signs with and tells every friend about.

STAGE GENRE MOMENTUM

DEVELOPMENT

SEE PAGE 4 →

8

Make the deal fair enough to brag about.

The deals artists run from are the ones built to confuse them. Put your splits, your term, your recoupment, and what they keep in plain language they could read to their mom. A fair royalty or profit-split signed happily beats a one-sided contract signed scared, because the happy one gets honored and referred. Predatory deals get a reputation that follows you, and in a small scene that reputation arrives before you do.

STAGE GENRE MOMENTUM

FAIR DEALS

SEE PAGE 4 →

9

Treat every artist on your roster like your best marketing.

Your loudest pitch to the next signing is how your current artists feel about you. Pay on time, communicate early, never go dark · word travels fast in a scene. A roster that vouches for you brings you better demos than any scouting tool ever will. The flex is not a logo on a release · it is an artist who would sign with you again and says so out loud.

◆ STAGE

◆ GENRE

▲ MOMENTUM

ROSTER CARE

SEE PAGE 4 →

10

Play the long game · the industry remembers.

You will pass on artists who pop later and sign ones who do not. That is the job. What you can control is your name: never trash an act you released, never burn a manager, never bad-mouth the producer who built the beat. The label that stays generous and honest gets the next great demo first. Reputation compounds harder than any single signing.

◆ STAGE

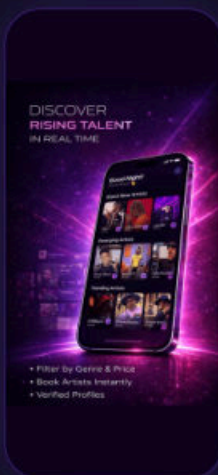
◆ GENRE

▲ MOMENTUM

REPUTATION

SEE PAGE 4 →

Reputation compounds harder than any single signing. The label that stays generous and honest gets the next great demo first.

**FIND THE REAL ONES EARLY.**

Browse verified independent artists right inside the free iKonX app · real profiles, real links, the kind of early act a small label can actually reach before everyone else does. It is the data-first scouting room, built into the app you already wanted.

WHO YOU CONNECT WITH

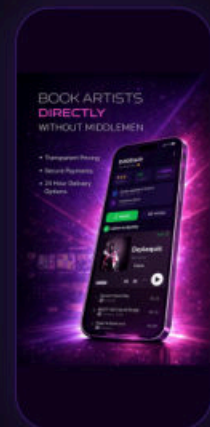
The artists you sign are the whole point · read their chapter so you understand what makes them feel respected and owned, not used. Managers are your day-to-day partner on every roster act · a good one makes development smoother and the artist calmer. Producers and promoters feed you talent and break your releases · keep those relationships warm and they will hand you your next signing.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Write your one-paragraph label identity today · who you are, your sound, the stage you serve · then pull the real signals on the next three demos in your inbox before you reply to any of them. To see who is actually rising, browse verified independent artists on the free iKonX app and at ikonx.app/blog. iKonX is building the label side too · join the waitlist at ikonx.app.

DOWNLOAD IKONX FREE

Browse verified independent artists, pull real signals, and find the early acts before everyone else does. iKonX is building the label side too · join the waitlist at ikonx.app.





STUDIOS



THE PLAYBOOK

How to fill your calendar and keep sessions booked.

For the studio owners and the engineers, whether you have a room you built from nothing or just a laptop and golden ears · the artist makes the song, but you make it sound like a record. That work matters, and you deserve a full calendar.

An empty room is the only thing that costs you money in this business. The gear is paid for, the rent is due no matter what, so every dark hour is profit that walked out the door. Most studios need somewhere between 40 and 60 billable hours a week just to break even, and 70 or more to actually profit, so the gap between quiet and busy is the whole game. This chapter is about turning dark hours into booked ones · the kind of busy that comes back every month without you chasing it.

1

Know your **true cost floor** before you set a single rate.

Most studios price off a feeling, then wonder why a full week still feels broke. Do the math instead: add up your monthly fixed costs (rent, utilities, gear) plus a fair wage for yourself, then divide by the hours you realistically book, not the hours you are open. A room with \$6,000 in fixed costs and around 115 booked hours a month has a true cost north of \$50 an hour before you have earned a dime. Once you see that number, every rate decision gets easier.



TRUE COST FLOOR

2

Price to your **market band**, then climb it on purpose.

Home and independent rooms tend to land between \$20 and \$40 an hour, mid-tier rooms run \$70 to \$100, and flagship rooms in major cities reach \$150 to \$300, often with the engineer billed separately at \$30 to \$100 an hour. Find your honest band, sit at the top of it once your work earns it, and let your portfolio pull you up a tier over time. You are not competing with the cheapest room in town · you are competing for the artist who wants the result you deliver.



MARKET BAND

3

Package your time by **outcome**, not by the clock.

"\$50 an hour" makes an artist watch the meter and stress. "A tracked, mixed, and mastered single for one set price" tells them exactly what they walk out with. A clean approach: charge per hour for tracking, then charge a flat rate per song for the mix and master, so the creative part has a clear price and the open-ended part does not scare anyone. Outcome pricing books bigger sessions and kills the awkward "are we done yet" math.



OUTCOME PRICING

4

Take a **deposit** before the red light goes on.

The cleanest rule in the game is to get paid before you deliver. Fifty percent up front to hold the date, the rest on delivery, is standard and it protects your calendar from no-shows. A booked slot with no deposit is just a hope. A booked slot with a deposit is a session.



DEPOSIT UP FRONT

THE ROOM ONLY MAKES MONEY WHEN IT IS BOOKED

“An empty room is the only thing that costs you money in this business. Most studios need 40 to 60 billable hours a week just to break even, and 70 or more to profit.”

5

Make your room *findable* where artists are actually searching.

Most studios are invisible online, just a dusty Instagram and a phone number buried in a bio. When an artist types “recording studio near me,” you want to be the first name they see. Claim and fully fill out your Google Business Profile, build one clean page that shows your rates and your sound, and ask happy clients for a review after every great session. Local is the one fight the small studio can actually win, because you are right there and the big national names are not.

GET FOUND LOCAL

6

Post the *proof*, not just the gear.

Nobody books a studio because of a photo of a console. They book because they heard a song that came out of your room and thought “I want mine to sound like that.” Post short before-and-after clips, raw vocal to finished mix, the behind-the-glass moment a take lands. Let people hear the upgrade you give them, and the booking ask gets a lot easier.

SHOW THE RESULT

7

Turn one session into a *standing client*.

It costs you almost nothing to keep a client and a small fortune to find a new one. At the end of a great session, book the next one before they leave the room, or offer a block deal so they commit to several dates at once. Keep the block discount in the 15 to 25 percent range, because under 10 percent moves nobody and over 30 percent quietly eats your margin. The artist who feels remembered comes back, and brings their whole crew.

REPEAT BOOKINGS

8

Upsell the parts they *did not know they needed*.

Most artists book to record and forget the rest. Offer mixing, mastering, vocal tuning, stems, and a simple social-ready visualizer as clean add-ons with set prices. You are not nickel-and-diming · you are saving them from sending it somewhere else and losing the sound you built. One good upsell can quietly double the value of a session.

SMART UPSELLS

9 - 10

9

Fill the dead hours with a smart off-peak rate, never a panic discount.

An empty Tuesday afternoon is not the same as a busy Friday night, so do not price them the same. Set a specific off-peak rate or a new-artist intro session to pull fresh faces into your slow windows, and protect your prime hours at full price. The move is to discount the quiet hours on purpose, never to slash the whole menu out of fear. Healthy studios run somewhere between 60 and 80 percent utilization, and off-peak pricing is how you push toward the top of that range without giving away your best slots.

OFF-PEAK RATE

10

Make booking you take ten seconds, not ten texts.

Every back-and-forth message is a chance for an artist to cool off and not book. Put your packages, your open dates, and a deposit link in one spot so a ready client can lock a session without waiting on you. The artists who book your room are already on the free iKonX app and at ikonx.app/blog, so the easier you make the yes, the more yeses you get.

ONE-TAP BOOKING

40-60

BILLABLE HRS/WEEK TO BREAK EVEN

An empty room is the only thing that costs you money in this business.

LET THEM HEAR THE UPGRADE.

Post short before-and-after clips, raw vocal to finished mix, the behind-the-glass moment a take lands. Nobody books a studio because of a photo of a console · they book because they heard a song that came out of your room and thought "I want mine to sound like that."

29

FOR THE FREELANCE ENGINEER (NO ROOM REQUIRED)

You do not need to own a studio to sell the skill. If you can mix and master, you can offer it as a remote service from anywhere, with nothing but your laptop and your ears.

- Price per song as a flat rate, not by the hour.
- State your revision policy up front, something like two revisions included, then a small fee after that.
- Give clients clean delivery specs: tell them exactly what stems and file formats you need from them, and what you send back when done.
- Build a small portfolio of short before-and-after clips, raw vocal to finished mix, because people buy the upgrade they can hear, not the gear list.
- Set a simple package ladder so a client just picks a size: mix only, mix plus master, or the full project.

The artists who need you are already on the free iKonX app, so meet them where they are instead of waiting to be found.

WHO YOU CONNECT WITH

Artists are your lifeblood, and the ones in the Artist chapter booking their first single are your next ten clients. Producers and managers send you whole rosters at once, so treat one well and you get the catalog. Promoters and venues know which acts are about to drop a project, and a project means studio time.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

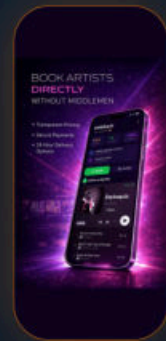
Run your true cost floor today, set your packages and your deposit rule off that number, then write them down where a client can see them. Claim your Google Business Profile this week so the artists already searching can find the room you built.

JOIN THE IKONX STUDIO WAITLIST

The artists who book your room are already on the free iKonX app and at ikonx.app/blog. iKonX is building the studio side too, and you can join the waitlist at ikonx.app.

Download on the
App Store

GET IT ON
Google Play





PROMOTERS



How to fill rooms and sell out shows

THE PLAYBOOK

For the people who take the risk, front the deposit, and turn an empty venue into a night nobody forgets, and for the venue and nightclub owners who program the room. You make the whole thing happen.

Promoting is one of the bravest jobs in this business. You put money down before a single ticket sells, you stake your name on a lineup, and you carry the stress so everyone else gets to have a good night. This chapter is about lowering that risk and filling that room every time, whether you ever touch iKonX or not.

1 Book artists who **already draw**, not just artists who sound good.

A great song does not fill a room · a built-in crowd does. Before you book anyone, ask the real questions: how many tickets have they sold on their own, who shows up when they play, and does their following actually live in your city. A local act with 400 real hometown fans out-sells a slicker out-of-town name almost every time. You are not buying talent, you are buying the crowd that comes with it.

BOOK THE DRAW

SEE PAGE 31 →

2 Build the lineup like a **meal**, not a pile of names.

The opener warms the room, the middle act builds it, the headliner pays it off. Stack acts whose fanbases overlap a little but do not fully copy each other, so every artist pulls a few new faces into the building. Avoid four acts in the same lane back to back, because that empties the room between sets. A smart lineup means people show up early and stay late, and the bar numbers prove it.

LINEUP

SEE PAGE 31 →

3 Sell the **first 50 tickets** to your own people before you spend a dollar on ads.

Every show lives or dies in the first week of sales, and the easiest tickets are the ones you sell straight off your own phone. Hit your past attendees, the artists' inner circles, and the regulars who never miss a night first. Early sales create momentum, and a show that already looks half-full sells the back half on its own. Cold marketing should pour gas on a fire, not try to start one.

FIRST 50

SEE PAGE 32 →

4 Treat every show as a **list-building machine**.

The night is the product, but the email and text list is the asset you keep forever. Capture contacts at the door, at the merch table, on the ticket page, and at the bar, then those names become your free crowd for the next ten shows. The promoters who never start from zero are the ones who built their own list instead of renting someone else's reach. Own the list and every future show begins with a warm audience already in your pocket.

OWN THE LIST

SEE PAGE 32 →

THE FIRST WEEK IS THE WHOLE SHOW

“Every show lives or dies in the first week of sales. Sell the first 50 off your own phone, and a room that already looks half-full sells the back half on its own.”

5 Pick a date like a **chess move, not a coin flip.**

Check what else is happening in town that night before you lock anything: a bigger show, a game, a holiday, or a rival event can quietly kill your numbers. Weekend nights sell themselves but cost more to rent and summer prices everything higher; midweek dates are cheaper but harder to fill. Look at the artists' own calendars too, so you are not the third show they played in your city that month. The right date does half the marketing for you.

THE DATE

SEE PAGE 33 →

6 Put the deal in **writing every single time, even with friends.**

A one-page agreement covers the fee, the deposit, set length, load-in time, who handles sound, and what happens if someone cancels. The standard is 50% to hold the date and the balance on or before show day, and that split keeps everyone honest. Handshake deals are how promoters get ghosted by an act that took a bigger offer the same weekend. Paper protects the friendship more than it threatens it.

ON PAPER

SEE PAGE 33 →

7 Market the room **three different ways, not one loud way.**

Run it through the artists' channels (their fans are your warmest buyers), the venue's regulars, and your own list and local pages. A good flyer answers four things fast: who, where, when, how much. Short video clips of the artists doing what they do will out-pull a static flyer nine times out of ten, so ask every act for 15 seconds of footage when you book them. Three medium pushes beat one giant blast every time.

THREE PUSHES

SEE PAGE 34 →

8 Make the **door experience so smooth people come back.**

A long line, a confused doorman, or a card reader that does not work loses you next month's crowd before the first song. Have a clean ticket scan, clear pricing, a hand stamp, and someone friendly running it. The night a fan has at the door is the story they tell their friends, and that word of mouth is the cheapest marketing you will ever get. Treat the entrance like the first three seconds of a song · it sets the whole mood.

THE DOOR

SEE PAGE 34 →

9 Scout your next headliners locally before they get expensive.

The artist who draws 200 today might draw 2,000 in a year, and the promoter who booked them early gets the loyalty for life. Dig through local open mics and small venue lineups, and scout bookable verified artists on the iKonX app, where each profile shows you a real act with music you can hear before you ever reach out. Build relationships with rising acts now and you lock in your future lineups at today's prices. Loyalty in this game runs both ways.

SCOUT EARLY

SEE PAGE 34 →

10 Know the **real cost** before you fall for a sticker price.

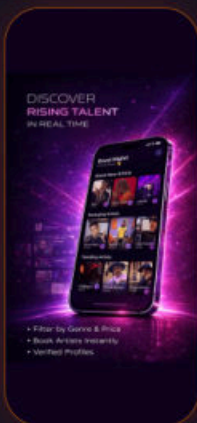
A booking fee is rarely the whole number, so ask up front what it includes: sound, backline, lodging, a rider, and travel, which often runs around a dollar a mile past a set distance. As a rough map, a local or solo indie act runs about \$300 to \$600 for a short set, a live band averages near \$590, an event DJ is about \$575 to \$600 for four hours, and regional or touring names climb to \$7,500 and \$15,000 and up. Match the spend to the room you can realistically fill, and know your break-even before you ever sign. Every show after that is just execution.

TRUE COST

SEE PAGE 34 →



The standard: **50%** to hold the date, the balance on or before show day. ● **HOLD THE DATE EARLY**



SCOUT THE ROOM BEFORE YOU BOOK IT.

Scout bookable verified artists free on the iKonX app, where each profile shows you a real act with music you can hear before you ever reach out. Build relationships with rising acts now and you lock in your future lineups at today's prices.

FOR VENUES AND NIGHTCLUBS (THE ROOM SIDE)

Venues · nightclubs

If you own or program the room, you are the talent buyer, so run your calendar like a business, not a favor list. Weeknights are won with recurring themed nights and residencies, not one big headliner, because a reliable Tuesday that builds a crowd beats a random one-off that empties the room the following week. Build a recurring night you own, an open mic, a genre night, a local showcase, so the room has a heartbeat that does not depend on whoever happens to be touring through. Remember the door and the bar together are the profit, so book acts that drive both and treat the artists like partners who fill your room, not vendors you are doing a favor. One reliable house promoter or a tight booking relationship beats a different stranger every week, because the person who knows your room and your regulars will protect both. The room that gets programmed with intention is the room people learn to show up to without checking who is playing.

WHO YOU CONNECT WITH

Artists who genuinely draw a crowd are your bread and butter · build real relationships, not one-offs. Event organizers and venues are your partners on the room, the date, and the door, so treat them like teammates. Managers help you reach the bigger acts cleanly and keep the deal professional on both sides.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

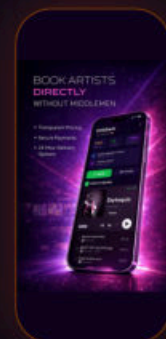
Pick your next date, then list the three local artists who can each bring 100 real fans and reach out to one today. The artists are already on iKonX with verified, bookable profiles, so start scouting free on the iKonX app, and read ikonx.app/blog for more on filling rooms.

IKONX IS BUILDING THE PROMOTER SIDE TOO

iKonX is building the promoter side too · join the waitlist at ikonx.app. The artists are already here with verified, bookable profiles, so start scouting free on the iKonX app today.

Download on the
App Store

GET IT ON
Google Play





EVENTS



THE PLAYBOOK

How to book the right talent and run events that profit.

For the organizers · the festival builders, the venue bookers, the corporate planners, the folks throwing a private party who just want the room to feel alive. You are the reason the artist has a stage. Respect.

An event lives or dies on two things: who you put on the stage and how tight you run the back end. Get those right and people leave talking. Get them wrong and you eat the loss. This chapter is about doing both like a pro, whether it is a 5,000-person festival or a company holiday party.

1

BOOK FOR THE ROOM, NOT FOR THE NAME.

The biggest mistake is chasing a name your budget cannot carry. A packed 200-cap room with the right local act beats a half-empty 800-cap room with a name nobody showed up for. Match the talent to the crowd you actually have, then book the act that moves them.

HEADLINER

2

FIND PERFORMERS WHERE THEY ACTUALLY LIVE: IN THEIR WORK.

Do not book off a one-line bio. Watch the live clips, check the recent set videos, look at how they hold a room, not just how many followers they have. Followers can be bought · a crowd singing back the words cannot. You can find verified, bookable artists on the free iKonX app, sorted by city and genre, and message the maker directly instead of guessing from a stale roster.

MAIN STAGE

3

BUILD THE LINEUP LIKE A STORY, NOT A LIST.

Order matters. Openers warm the room, the middle builds it, the headliner pays it off. A good opening act is gold · they set the energy and make your headliner look even bigger. Find them by watching who is drawing well one tier down, then give them the shot before someone else does.

MAIN STAGE

4

PUT THE WHOLE DEAL IN WRITING, EVERY TIME.

A contract is not you being difficult, it is you being clear. Set the fee, the call time, the tech rider, the payment schedule, the cancellation terms, and who covers what. The standard hold is a 25 to 50 percent deposit to lock the date, with the balance due before or on the day, plus customary gratuity. Money that lives only in a text thread is money you will argue about later.

SUPPORT

BUILD IT BACKWARD FROM THE DOOR

Start with realistic ticket revenue at a conservative sell-through, not a sold-out dream. If the math only works at 100 percent capacity, the math does not work.

5

BUILD THE BUDGET BACKWARD FROM THE DOOR.

Start with realistic ticket revenue at a conservative sell-through, not a sold-out dream. Then stack your costs: talent, venue, sound, security, insurance, marketing, staff. If the math only works at 100 percent capacity, the math does not work. Leave room, because something always runs over.

SET 5

6

LOCK YOUR TIMELINE EARLY · TALENT GETS BOOKED FAST.

Book your best acts about a year out for prime dates, and reach out to supporting acts a few months ahead. Off-season and non-Saturday dates can cut the rate, so flex your date before you blow your budget. Booking late means paying more for less. A live band for a wedding runs most couples \$3,000 to \$10,000 with a national average around \$4,500, a 4 to 6 piece is roughly \$3,000 to \$6,000, a duo or trio \$1,500 to \$3,000, and a full 8 to 12 piece show band climbs past \$10,000. A wedding DJ, for comparison, lands around \$1,500 to \$2,500.

SET 6

7

TREAT VENDORS AND SPONSORS LIKE PARTNERS, NOT LINE ITEMS.

Your sound company, your bar, your food trucks, your sponsor brands · they all want the same thing you do, a great turnout. Bring them in early, give them clear specs, pay them on time, and they show up for you next time. A sponsor is not just a check · the right one brings their own audience to your door.

SET 7

8

RUN THE DAY ON A REAL SCHEDULE EVERYONE CAN SEE.

Print a run-of-show: load-in, soundcheck, doors, set times, changeovers, curfew. Give every artist, vendor, and crew lead a copy. The smoothest events feel effortless because someone did the boring work of writing down exactly when everything happens. Chaos backstage always leaks out front.

SET 8

9

MAKE IT EASY TO SUPPORT THE ARTISTS YOU BOOKED.

The night does not have to end at the door. Point the crowd to where they can follow and back the acts they just discovered · the band they did not know an hour ago is now their new favorite, and you are the reason. Every artist on the free iKonX app keeps 100% of what fans send them, 0% iKonX commission, so a tip or a follow goes straight to the act. When fans connect with talent directly afterward, your event becomes the start of something, and artists remember the room that did that for them.

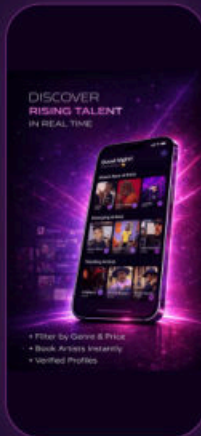
ENCORE

10

PROFIT LIVES IN THE DETAILS YOU HANDLE BEFORE DOORS OPEN.

Most money gets lost to avoidable stuff: a vendor you overpaid, a permit you grabbed late, a refund policy you never wrote down. Tighten deposits, confirm every fee in writing, and know your real break-even before you sell a single ticket. Run a quick debrief after, because this event's notes are next event's edge.

CURFEW

LOCK TALENT
EARLY ·the calendar is the first
thing you lose· LOCK TALENT BEFORE THE
DATE LOCKS YOU**YOUR LINEUP, MAPPED BY CITY AND GENRE.**

Browse verified, bookable artists on the free iKonX app, sorted by city and genre, and message the maker directly instead of guessing from a stale roster. Every artist keeps 100% of what fans send them, 0% iKonX commission · so the support you point the crowd to goes straight to the act.

SAME PLAYBOOK, YOUR LANE

Events covers festivals, venues, nightclubs, corporate, and private parties · the core ten work for all of them. One lane needs its own page.

SCALE CHANGES THE GAME

FOR MUSIC FESTIVALS

A festival is not one big show, it is ten events running at once, so the back end has to be tighter than anything a single night demands. Book your headliners 6 to 9 months out and your supporting acts 3 to 5 months out, because the good ones get spoken for early and the calendar is the first thing you lose. Curate each day as its own story with its own headliner and its own arc, not one long undifferentiated list of names. Tier your tickets · early bird, general admission, VIP · so the people who want more can pay more, and build sponsor activations into the budget from day one, because sponsors are what fund the gap between ticket revenue and what the thing actually costs. Over-staff the unglamorous stuff · water, security, medical, restrooms, signage · because scale punishes every gap you leave, and run a printed schedule everyone follows so a problem at one stage never becomes a problem at all of them. Get those moving parts right and a festival is the most loyal-fan, most talked-about thing you will ever throw.

Venue bookers, corporate planners, and private-party throwers are named in the opener and addressed across the ten core sets above · only festivals need their own lane.

WHO YOU CONNECT WITH

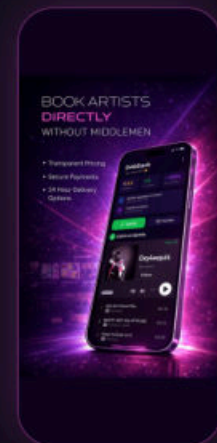
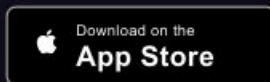
Artists and talent are your lineup · the better you treat them, the better they play and the more they bring their crowd. Promoters fill your room · partner with the ones who know your city and your audience. Sponsors and managers make the money work · sponsors bring budget and reach, managers make the booking clean and on time.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Pick your next event and build the budget backward from a conservative door, before you book a single act. Then go find your lineup: browse verified, bookable artists by city and genre on the free iKonX app, and read more at ikonx.app/blog. iKonX is building the events side too · join the waitlist at ikonx.app.

DOWNLOAD IKONX FREE

Browse verified, bookable artists by city and genre on the free iKonX app · join the events waitlist at ikonx.app · read more at ikonx.app/blog. iKonX is building the events side too, stated plainly as a waitlist, not a finished product.





PODCASTERS



How to land guests and grow a real audience.

THE PLAYBOOK

For the host with a mic, a point of view, and a real love for the music. You are the storyteller who gives artists a room to be human in. That matters.

A music podcast lives or dies on two things: who sits across from you, and whether anybody hears it. Most hosts overthink the gear and underthink the booking. Land the right guests, treat them right, and the audience follows the conversations.

ON THE RECORD

Land the right guests, treat them right, and the audience follows the conversations.



00:00 · BOOKING

00:00 HOST: ON WHO TO PITCH

Pitch the artist, not their publicist. The fastest yes comes from skipping the gatekeeper chain and reaching the artist directly, especially independent and rising ones who answer their own messages same-day. Big-name publicists sit on your email for weeks; a rising musician who sees you actually listened to their last release writes back before the day is out. Go where the maker is, not where their team wants you to file a request.

03:40 HOST: ON THE ONE-LINE PITCH

Make the pitch about them in one line. Prove the fit before you ask. Nobody says yes to "I would love to have you on my show"; they say yes to "I had your track on repeat all week and I want to ask you about the bridge in verse two." That specific line is the whole game: topic and audience fit is the number one factor for roughly 88% of the people who book guests. A pitch that names a real song converts around 15% to 25%; a generic blast converts 1% to 3%. Same hour of work, ten times the result.

08:15 HOST: ON THE TRADE

Tell them exactly what they get out of it. An artist's time is their inventory, so make the trade clear: a clean clip they own, a backlink to wherever they sell, their music featured to your listeners, the episode cut into shorts. Most hosts miss this: you do not need a huge download count. Most music guests come on free for a real spotlight; what they need is for their hour to pay them back. Spell out the deliverables in the pitch, not after they say yes.

12:30 · SOURCING

12:30 HOST: ON FINDING GUESTS

Find guests by digging where the music actually is. The best rising guests are not waiting on a booking marketplace; they are releasing tracks, getting saved, and grinding in scenes you can search. Look at who is putting music out, who fans are tagging, who is playing the small rooms in your city. The iKonX app is a free place to do exactly this: independent artists are live on it with real profiles, so you can find them by city and genre and message them directly. Skip the chain and talk to the maker.

18:05 HOST: ON BATCHING

Book in batches, record in batches. Chasing one guest at a time burns you out and leaves gaps in your calendar. Spend one focused week pitching ten artists, lock five, then record back-to-back so you always have episodes in the bank. A guest is far more likely to commit to a real slot than to an open-ended "whenever you are free." Give them a scheduling link or two to three date options, send one follow-up at day five to seven, then stop. Chasing past that just annoys people.

24:00 · THE ROOM

24:00 HOST: ON RUNNING THE ROOM

Run the room like a pro and they will send their friends. Show up on time, send the questions or topics in advance, keep it to the length you promised, and make them sound good in the edit. Musicians talk to other musicians, and the best guest pipeline you will ever build is one happy guest telling the next one you were easy to work with. Treat every booking like an audition for the referral.

29:20 HOST: ON CLIPS

Cut every episode into clips before you publish. One interview is five to ten shorts for Reels, TikTok, and YouTube. The clip with the artist's best line pulls new listeners in far better than a link to the full episode. Hand the artist their clips too. When they repost to their own followers, their audience becomes your audience, and that is the cheapest growth you will ever get.

33:10 · GROWTH

33:10 HOST: ON CONSISTENCY

Grow by being consistent, not viral. A show people can count on every week beats one that drops three bangers then vanishes. Pick a cadence you can actually hold, even if it is every other week, and never miss it. Audiences subscribe to rhythm. The hosts who win are the ones still publishing in month eighteen.

38:45 HOST: ON MONEY

Monetize past the ad read. Ad money comes slow and small early on, so build the other lanes: a paid membership for bonus episodes, a tip jar, merch, live-show tickets, and affiliate links to gear you actually use. When you point listeners toward the artists you cover, send them somewhere the artist keeps everything: with iKonX it is 100% to the artist, 0% iKonX commission, so supporting your guests actually supports them. Aim for three small income streams, not one big one.

43:30 HOST: ON THE GUEST LIST

Build a guest list that compounds. Keep a simple sheet of every artist you have pitched, booked, and want next, with notes on who connected you to whom. Your tenth guest should come from your fifth. The follow-the-thread habit turns a one-off booking into a year of episodes, because one good guest hands you the next two. Over a year that list becomes the most valuable thing you own.

Same hour of work, **ten times the result.**



MOST GUESTS COME ON FREE FOR A REAL SPOTLIGHT.

Most music guests will come on free for a real spotlight. They do not need a huge download count; they need their hour to pay them back. Spell out the deliverables in the pitch, treat every booking like an audition for the referral, and one good guest hands you the next two.

WHO YOU CONNECT WITH

Artists are your lifeblood, and they are the part of iKonX that is live right now, so treat every guest like the relationship outlasts the episode (see the Artists chapter for how they think about their time). Managers and labels can hand you a whole roster once one of their acts has a great time on your show. Influencers and promoters amplify the clips, so trade shoutouts and you both grow.

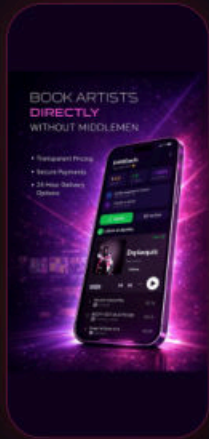
YOUR NEXT MOVE

Pick three independent artists whose music you genuinely love and send each a two-line pitch this week that names a specific song. You can find and reach those artists directly on the free iKonX app today, and there is more for hosts on the way: iKonX is building the podcast side too, so join the waitlist at ikonx.app. For more playbooks like this one, ikonx.app/blog is open and free.

FIND YOUR GUESTS FREE ON IKONX

Find and message independent artists directly on the free iKonX app today · join the waitlist at ikonx.app for the podcast side that is on the way. Artists keep 100% to the artist, 0% iKonX commission.



Artists are live on iKonX right now (find by city and genre, message directly, 100% to the artist with 0% iKonX commission). The podcast side is being built and not live yet, which is why the move for hosts today is the artist app plus the waitlist.



INFLUENCERS



How to turn your audience into income

THE PLAYBOOK

For the creators, the culture-pushers, the ones who can make a song blow up from a bedroom. Your audience is real and so is its value. This one is for you.

You built the one thing money can't buy in bulk: attention people actually trust. They watch what you post, hear what you play, and care what you think. That trust has a cash value, and this chapter is about getting you paid for it the clean way, without burning the audience that makes you worth paying in the first place. Most of these moves cost you nothing but a little structure.

SEAM 1 · KNOW WHAT YOU'RE WORTH

1

Price on **engagement**, not follower count.

A creator with 8,000 people who comment, save, and share is worth more than a dead 200K account, and the smart artists buying promo already know it. Micro creators convert about 20 percent better than the macro names and cost a fraction of the price, because their people actually move. Track your save rate, share rate, and how many finish your videos · on TikTok, 3 to 7 percent engagement is a healthy benchmark to point at. When you pitch, lead with who acts, not who scrolls past.

ENGAGEMENT

2

Know your **rate** before anyone asks.

The first time someone asks "what do you charge" should never be the first time you've thought about it. The 2025 market: nano accounts (1k to 10k) run roughly \$50 to \$200 a post, micro (10k to 100k) about \$150 to \$800, and mid-tier (100k to 500k) around \$500 to \$2,500 · the music niche averages near \$210 per post. Write your own card down: one post, one post plus story, a three-post package. A ready number makes you sound like a pro and stops you leaving money on the table.

RATE CARD

SEAM 2 · GET PAID CLEAN

3

Get paid for the **work**, not the hope.

Take a deposit or the full amount before you post. Fifty percent up front and fifty on posting is the norm · full up front is cleaner and protects you completely. Charging only after the song "does numbers" is how creators get ghosted, because nobody wants to pay for a result that already happened. You're being paid for your craft and your audience, period, whether the track charts or flops.

PAID UPFRONT

4

Treat song promo as a **real service** with real deliverables.

When an artist pays you to push a track, spell out exactly what they get: how many posts, which platforms, when it goes live, and how long it stays up. Then send a short recap afterward with screenshots of views, saves, and comments. That receipt is what turns a one-off into a repeat client. Artists remember the creator who made it easy and showed the work, and they tell other artists.

DELIVERABLES

YOUR CREDIBILITY IS THE PRODUCT

1 You're being paid for your craft and your audience, period. The moment your audience feels sold to, the engagement that makes you valuable starts to leak.

1



THE PAIRING · TRUSTED AUDIENCE MEETS THE ACT WHO NEEDS IT

SEAM 3 · CHARGE FOR THE VALUABLE PART

5

Charge for whitelisting and usage rights separately.

If a brand or artist wants to run your post as a paid ad, repost it on their own page, or use it past an agreed window, that is a separate line item and you say so up front. A post that lives on your page is one price. A post they get to license and boost behind ad spend is another, and it's usually the more valuable one. Most creators hand this away for free and never realize they gave up the best part of the deal.

USAGE RIGHTS

6

Stack more than one income stream.

Paid song promo is great, but the creators who last never lean on a single thing. Brand deals, affiliate links, your own merch, fan tips, a small paid community, and collab revenue can all run at once. The good news on the music side: the independent artists who pay for promo are already on the free iKonX app, so you can connect with the people booking this kind of work without a platform skimming the middle. The goal is income that doesn't vanish when one stream dries up.

STACK STREAMS

SEAM 4 · PROTECT THE ASSET · APPROACH AS A PEER

7

Always disclose, because it's the law and it's the whole business.

If anything of value changes hands, the FTC requires you to disclose it · a plain "Ad" or "Sponsored" right at the top does the job, and the penalties for skipping it run very high. Past the legal line, only promote music you'd actually play, and never flood your feed with promo your people didn't sign up for. The moment your audience feels sold to, the engagement that makes you valuable starts to leak. Your credibility is the product, so guard it harder than your rate.

DISCLOSE

8

Reach out like a peer, not a beggar.

A cold pitch that works is short: who you are, who watches you, one result you got someone, and a clear ask. Skip the long backstory and the "I'd love the opportunity" energy. You're offering access to an audience they can't buy anywhere else, so talk like it. Confidence with proof beats a wall of text every time.

PITCH AS PEER

SEAM 5 · BUILD A BOOK OF BUSINESS

9

Keep a short list of artists who actually pay.

Instead of chasing every viral sound, keep a tight list of independent artists and small labels who book promo and pay on time. A handful of reliable repeat clients beats a hundred one-time strangers. The independent artists buying this kind of audience are live on the free iKonX app right now, so it's one easy place to find the exact people who need what you have. Warm relationships book faster than cold pitches all day long.

REPEAT CLIENTS

10

Package your value so it sells itself.

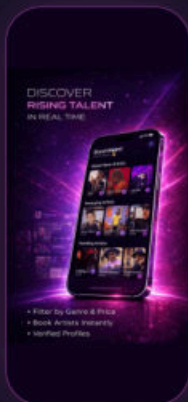
Build a simple one-pager: your numbers, your audience breakdown, your rates, and two or three past results with screenshots. When someone asks about working together, you send one link and look completely in control. Free reads and worksheets at ikonx.app/blog can help you sharpen the pitch, and the creator who can be hired in one click gets hired more. iKonX is building the creator side too · you can join the waitlist at ikonx.app.

ONE-PAGER

MICRO CREATORS CONVERT ABOUT

20%

BETTER THAN MACRO NAMES · PRICE ON ENGAGEMENT

**THE ARTISTS WHO PAY ARE ALREADY HERE.**

The independent artists who pay for promo are already on the free iKonX app, so you can connect with the people booking this kind of work without a platform skimming the middle. iKonX is building the creator side too · you can join the waitlist at ikonx.app.

WHO YOU CONNECT WITH

Artists who pay for song promo and want a real audience, not bots (Chapter 2). Brands and sponsors who need a trusted voice to reach a community they can't buy into (Chapter 11). Managers and labels who book multiple creators at once and become repeat clients when you make the work clean (Chapters 4 and 5).

YOUR NEXT MOVE

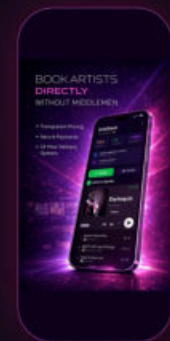
Write your rate card today · one post, one package, one usage-rights line, even if it's rough. Add your "Ad" disclosure habit so it's automatic. Then list five indie artists you'd actually want to work with, and remember the ones who pay for promo are already on the free iKonX app · join the creator waitlist at ikonx.app while you're there.

IKONX IS BUILDING THE CREATOR SIDE TOO

The independent artists who pay for promo are already on the free iKonX app, so you can connect with the people booking this kind of work without a platform skimming the middle. iKonX is building the creator side too · join the waitlist at ikonx.app. (The creator side is being built and is a waitlist, not yet live.)

Download on the
App Store

GET IT ON
Google Play





SPONSORS



THE PLAYBOOK

How to back the right talent and get real ROI.

For the brand managers, local businesses, and sponsors who want to put their name behind real people · you are part of this circle, and the artists need you as much as you need them.

Sponsorship is not charity and it is not a logo slapped on a flyer. Done right, it is one of the most honest exchanges in the whole industry: a brand brings the budget, an artist brings the trust they have built with real fans. Here is the part most brands miss. That trust does not live in a follower number. It lives in the comments, the shares, the people who show up. The sponsors who win are the ones who learn to read engagement and treat artists like partners, not billboards.

[THE DEAL TABLE · FAIR FIRST-DEAL ANCHORS]

Single social post · artist under 10k followers



\$100 to \$500

Single social post · 10k to 100k range



\$500 to \$2,000

Regional tour sponsorship



\$1,000 to \$5,000

In-kind product or gear (cover the artist with what you make instead of cash)



\$500 to \$10,000

Use these as anchors, then adjust up for high engagement.

READ THE TRUST, NOT THE COUNT

That trust does not live in a follower number. It lives in the comments, the shares, the people who show up.

1

Bet on **engagement**, not follower count.

Before you sign anyone, look at the ratio of likes and comments to followers, how often fans tag friends, and whether people show up when this artist plays live. A 4,000-follower artist whose fans actually comment, show up, and buy will move more product than a 400,000-follower account where nobody reacts. An artist sitting at 8 percent or higher engagement can fairly command a 30 to 50 percent premium, and they are worth it, because care is what moves your product, not reach.

ENGAGEMENT

2

You can sponsor well **under 5,000 followers**.

Stop screening for size and start screening for fit and heat. Throw out the idea that an artist needs to be big before they are worth backing. Brands sponsor artists with a few thousand engaged followers every day, and those artists get sponsored because the audience fit is real. A tight, loyal community of 3,000 who trust an artist's taste is worth more to the right brand than a bored crowd of 100,000.

FIT OVER SIZE

3

Go **micro before you go macro**.

Spread a modest budget across five rising artists instead of one star. Big-name artists are expensive, crowded with other logos, and slow to respond. A handful of smaller artists in your lane will run you a fraction of the cost, give you direct access, and treat your brand like it matters because it does. You get five audiences, five content streams, and five times the lessons about what actually works.

MICRO FIRST

4

Make the **fit obvious** before the fit gets paid.

Ask the simple question: would this artist use my product on a normal Tuesday without me paying them? If the answer is yes, the audience will believe it. The fastest way to waste sponsorship money is backing an artist whose audience has no reason to want what you sell. A coffee brand behind a touring band who lives on early mornings is a story · a coffee brand behind a random viral clip is just noise.

REAL FIT

5

Know what a *fair first deal* actually costs.

Use real-world starting ranges as anchors (see the Deal Table), then adjust up for high engagement. Going in blind is how good partnerships start with resentment. A single social post runs \$100 to \$500 for an artist under 10k followers, and \$500 to \$2,000 in the 10k to 100k range. A regional tour sponsorship lands around \$1,000 to \$5,000. In-kind product or gear runs \$500 to \$10,000 depending on the goods.

FAIR RATES

6

Structure the deal in *tiers*, not one lump sum.

Build it in stages: a piece up front to lock it in, a piece on delivery of the posts or the show, and a bonus tied to a result you both agree on, like a promo code redeemed or sign-ups hit. Put every deliverable in writing - how many posts, on which platforms, by which date, and who owns the footage after. Do not hand over the full amount and hope. This protects your budget and motivates the artist to actually push.

TIERED

7

Sponsor the *moment*, not just the person.

Back a specific thing: a tour leg, a music video, a single drop, a merch run, a hometown show. Some of the best ROI comes from a clear deliverable, a clear window, and a clear reason for fans to notice your name. A logo on a six-month "ambassador" deal fades into the background - your brand presenting one unforgettable night gets remembered.

THE MOMENT

8

Build the *activation*, do not just buy the post.

Give fans something to do: a discount code only this artist's fans get, a meet-and-greet you host, a giveaway, a co-designed product, a backstage moment fans can win. A single shoutout disappears in a day. The artist becomes the doorway and your brand becomes the experience on the other side. That is the difference between renting attention and earning a relationship.

ACTIVATION

9

Measure what you *actually came for*.

Decide the one number that matters before the campaign starts, then track it. Give each artist a unique promo code or a dedicated link so you can trace real action back to the exact person who drove it. Tag every artist separately so you know who earned the re-up. Vanity metrics like impressions feel good but pay nothing - code redemptions, email sign-ups, and sales tell you whether to run it again.

MEASURE

10

Pay fairly, pay on time, and make it a **relationship**.

Run a small test, learn what landed, then re-up with the artists who delivered and build something bigger together. The artist community is small and they talk. A brand that lowballs and pays late gets quietly blacklisted · a brand that pays fair and fast gets first call on the next project, often at a friend rate. One great repeat partnership beats ten one-night stands every time, and the rising artist you back for a few hundred dollars today may remember exactly who showed up early.

PAY RIGHT

0%

BROKER CUT

100%

TO THE ARTIST

WHO YOU CONNECT WITH

Artists are your front line · find the ones whose audience already overlaps yours. Event organizers and venues can bundle your sponsorship into real-world activations and stage moments. Promoters and influencers can amplify the campaign past the artist's own following, so loop them in early instead of last.

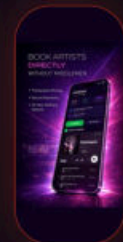
YOUR NEXT MOVE

Pick one rising artist whose audience clearly overlaps yours and offer a small, clear, tiered test deal this week. Find rising independent artists with verified profiles right now on the free iKonX app, and read more on backing talent at ikonx.app/blog.

IKONX IS BUILDING THE SPONSORSHIP SIDE TOO

iKonX is building the sponsorship side too · join the waitlist at ikonx.app. The artists are already here with verified, bookable profiles.







ECOSYSTEM

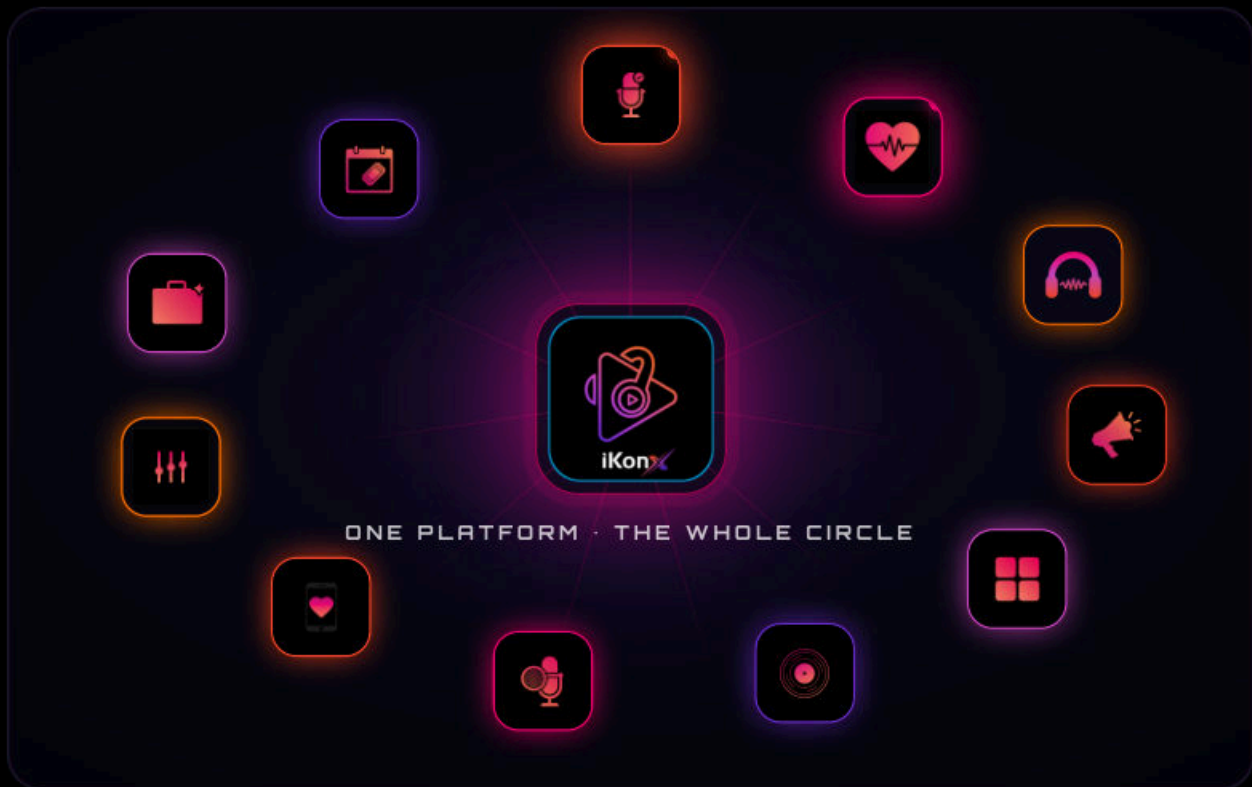


THE PLAYBOOK

How everyone here helps everyone else.

For everyone who made it this far · the artist and the fan, the engineer and the promoter, the manager, the label, the podcaster, the influencer, the studio, the sponsor, and every soul in between. This one is for the whole family.

You spent eleven chapters learning your lane. Now forget the lanes. The music and entertainment industry was never a ladder where someone has to sit on a lower rung for you to climb a higher one. It is a circle, and in a circle there is no top. Everybody is somebody else's missing piece, which means the fastest way up is to reach sideways and pull someone with you. That is the whole idea behind iKonX, and it is the whole idea behind this book. Where Music Meets Business is not a slogan, it is the spin of the circle: real relationships turning into real money for everyone in the room.



THE SPIN OF THE CIRCLE

**「Everybody is somebody else's missing piece.
The fastest way up is to reach sideways and pull
someone with you.」**

1

The artist who tips their people in referrals.

The engineer who mixed your record, the photographer who shot your cover, the artist who gave you the feature, send them the next person who asks. It costs nothing and it builds the kind of loyalty money cannot.

Referrals cost you nothing and they come back around louder than money.

2

The studio that hosts the showcase that fills the promoter's room.

A studio opens its doors for a showcase, the artists bring their fans, the promoter gets a packed room, and everyone in the building leaves with new contacts. One room, four winners, and the studio that hosted it is now the place everyone wants to record.

One night, four winners.

3

The fan who becomes the street team.

Your earliest, loudest fans are not just an audience, they are unpaid staff who already believe. Give them early access, a group chat, a reason to feel like insiders, and they will sell you harder than any ad ever could.

Treat your earliest fans like staff, because the loyal ones already are.

4

The podcaster who breaks the new artist.

A podcast that gives a rising act its first real interview earns something rare: the trust of an audience that now associates discovery with that show. That trust is what advertisers and bigger guests are actually buying.

Trust is what advertisers and bigger guests are actually buying.

5

The brand that backs the local event.

A sponsor who puts a small check into a local scene buys real goodwill, not just a logo on a banner. The crowd remembers who showed up for them, and that memory outlasts any campaign.

Small checks into local scenes buy more love than big ads ever will.

6

The manager who connects two of their own.

A manager who puts two of their artists in a room, or hands a trusted promoter to a peer, becomes the person everyone wants in their corner. Connectors do not chase deals, deals come to them.

Connectors get rich slow and stay rich long.

7

The label that lifts the indie instead of burying it.

The labels that win the next decade are the ones known for opening doors, not closing them, the ones an artist actually wants to sign with because the roster talks. Reputation is the only moat a label has left.

The labels that win are the ones known for opening doors, not closing them.

8

The influencer who uses a real artist's sound.

An influencer who breaks a new song to their audience does not lose anything, they gain the credit for the wave. Tastemakers who back real artists become the ones people trust to tell them what is next.

Tastemakers who break new sound get the credit for the wave.

9

The event organizer who feeds the whole chain.

One good event pays the artists, fills the venue, books the engineer, feeds the vendors, and gives the sponsor a win, all in a single night. Organizers are the heartbeat of the circle, the ones who turn ten separate hustles into one room making money together.

Organizers are the heartbeat of the circle.

10

The veteran who reaches back for the rookie.

The person who has been around answers the rookie's question, makes the intro, shares the hard-won lesson, and asks nothing back. The industry is small and it has a long memory, and one day that rookie is the one who books you.

One day that rookie is the one who books you.

The one move that powers all of it: Connection.

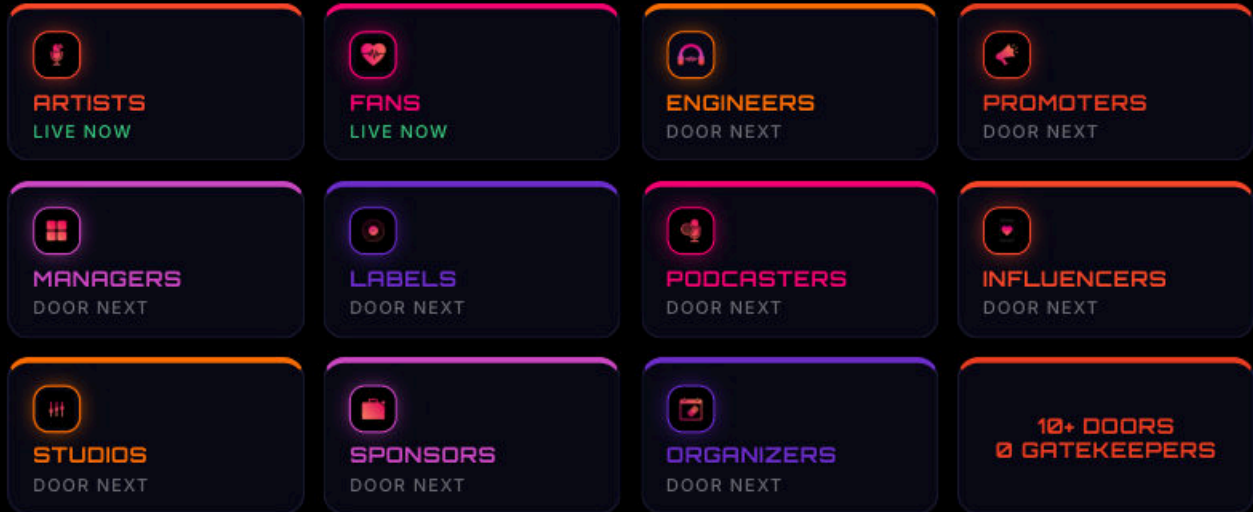
Every play on this list is just two people deciding to show up for each other. That is the entire reason iKonX exists, to make those connections easier to find, easier to keep, and easier to grow, so the circle spins a little faster for all of us.

We see every role in this book as a door · ten-plus doors, one platform, zero gatekeepers. The artist door and the fan door are open and live right now. The rest of the circle, the studios, the promoters, the labels, the podcasters, the sponsors, and everyone else, we are building their doors next.

One platform for the whole circle · artists and fans live now, the rest on the way.



THE WHOLE CIRCLE · ONE PLATFORM



Eleven roles, one circle · the artist and fan doors are open and live right now, the rest we are building next.

THE LIVE TRUTH

On iKonX you can book and feature with other artists across cities, not just the ones in your zip code · artists keep 100% of what they charge, and iKonX takes 0% commission. Use the app or use what works, either way you walk out of this book with something real. The collab that levels you up might be three states away, and the platform is built so you can find them, message them, and create together without a gatekeeper in the middle.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Show love to the next person in your chain, today. Tag the engineer, repost the indie, book the room, answer the rookie, pay the artist, thank the fan. Then download the iKonX app free, and if you create in any of these roles, claim your free verified site · artists, that is live for you right now. Start at ikonx.app, and keep learning at ikonx.app/blog. The industry already has everything it needs. It is all of us. Go connect.

DOWNLOAD IKONX FREE

Artists and fans are live right now · claim your free verified site at ikonx.app, artists, that is live for you today. The rest of the circle is on the way. Keep learning at ikonx.app/blog. Artists keep 100% of what they charge · 0% iKonX commission.





A QUICK WORD ON IKONX

WHERE MUSIC MEETS BUSINESS

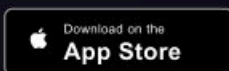
We are iKonX, a place where music meets business and every role is a door. We are building a platform and an app so the whole circle is easier to live in. Here is exactly where we are, no spin: the artist side and the fan side are live right now. Artists keep **100% of what they charge** and iKonX takes **0% commission**. Artists get a free verified website when they sign up, can sell features and messages, and can book and feature with other artists across cities, because your city is not the destination. Fans can message and support the artists they love directly. The rest of the circle, the studios, promoters, managers, labels, podcasters, sponsors, and more, we are building next, and you can join the waitlist for your side at ikonx.app.

This guide is free because helping the scene is the point. If you want to plug in, download the app or visit ikonx.app. If you just took the value and ran, that is fine too. Go build something. Show love. We will be here.

Download the iKonX app free · artists, claim your free verified site · start connecting today.

DOWNLOAD IKONX FREE

Artists and fans are live right now · claim your free verified site at ikonx.app, artists, that is live for you today. Keep learning at ikonx.app/blog. Artists keep 100% of what they charge · 0% iKonX commission.



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