

## The Golden Years of Artist and Brand Partnerships are upon us...

According to Statista, live music sponsorship grew to **\$6.28 BILLION** in 2024.

It's an eye-opening figure and that's before you look at exclusive one on one deals between artists and brands.

The reasons for this growth are easy to identify.

The fragmentation of mainstream media audiences means that more and more brands are trying to capture the attention of their existing and potential customers on their devices by way of engagement around compelling content. And nothing is guaranteed to get the public engaging with content more than their favourite music artist.

Slowly but surely, brands are diverting the budgets they normally spent on mainstream advertising into cultural partnerships.

From an artists' perspective, the stigma of aligning with brands has long since gone and as long as a partnership stays true to the personality of the artist and brings their fans closer to the artist they love, there is no potential blow back.

I've worked on artist and brand partnerships for 24 years including roles as brand partnership director at the artist management company ATC and subsequently, as CEO of Simpatico.

We've worked with everyone from Sheryl Crow to Mark Ronson, Little Simz, Olly Murs, Sugababes and Louis Tomlinson.

Here's our take on the golden rules for artists when assessing brand partnerships.

1. Authenticity - are you a genuine fan of the brand and can you credibly advocate on their behalf?
2. Collaboration - beyond the pure fee, what brand-owned channels, data, retail network or insights could be useful to the artist in their own activity?
3. Beyond the music - what passions does the artist have beyond the music and how could they work with brands to bring these passions to life and create new revenue streams? This could be anything from a wine to a clothing range or culinary products.
4. Fans first - how can we work with brands to enhance the overall fan experience around touring or releases?
5. Think long term - it's not advisable for an artist to be aligned to multiple brands - think long term and develop your relationship with brands organically.

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6. Understand your partner - be familiar with what the brand is trying to achieve and be willing to contribute potential ideas. The most effective partnerships are the ones with some artist input at planning.

For many artists nowadays, brands represent their second biggest revenue stream after touring. It's incumbent upon managers to talk to their artists about their attitude to working with brands and which brands would be on their wish-list.

Offsetting the costs of touring through brand partnerships is another interesting area.

At festivals, artists are often paid lower fees and have an abundance of down time. We've worked with THREE, Samsung, Jagermeister, and Tia Maria at festivals. From the brand's perspective they've realised it's expensive to activate at festivals and there's no value in simply talking to the 30,000 people through the gates. Consequently, more and more brands are creating content on-site with artists on the line up. That content is then posted on brand and artists socials before the festival even ends.

On touring, revenue opportunities from brands range from a full tour sponsorship to VIP experiences, to meet and greets and corporate gigs on off days. And in the world of sports, music performances are now embedded as a key part of the DNA at events from Grand Prix to NFL, Horse Racing and Golf, to name but a few.

As we move forward, the artists who benefit most from the world of brands will be those who integrate brand relationships into their core planning, year on year.

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