



THE ARTISPRENEUR ROADMAP

EDITION 1

The plain-English path to \$20,000 a year from your music.

By
Patrick Diamitani

ART MEANS BUSINESS

artispreneur.com

The Artisprenneur Roadmap

EDITION 1

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This is a living document. The music industry moves fast, and this book will move with it: future editions will add chapters, update the industry picture, and expand the templates as the Academy grows.

Educational material only – not legal, tax, or financial advice.

C O N T E N T S

Contents

Introduction: Why This Book Exists	4
PART I · THE MODERN MUSIC INDUSTRY	5
The Players	6
How the Money Flows	8
The Revenue Stack: Your Path to \$20,000	9
Activities, Tools, and Processes	11
PART II · THE ROADMAP	13
Stage 1: Set Up the Business	14
Stage 2: Lock Down Your Rights	15
Stage 3: Build the Brand & Catalogue	16
Stage 4: Release & Market	17
PART BM · BACK MATTER	18
Checklist – Stage 1: Set Up the Business	19
Checklist – Stage 2: Lock Down Your Rights	20
Checklist – Stage 3: Build the Brand & Catalogue	21
Checklist – Stage 4: Release & Market	22
Plan Form: One-Page Artist Business Plan	23
Plan Form: Release Plan	25
Plan Form: Budget Worksheet	27
Template: Course Quiz	28
Template: Lesson Guide	30
What's in Edition 1	32

Why This Book Exists

Every Academy course teaches a move. This book teaches the **order**.

Artispreneur's north star is simple: **help more independent artists reach \$20,000 a year from their music** – real money, from the work itself, on the artist's own terms. The Academy's seventeen courses are the education for that mission. This book is the map: where the industry is, where the money moves, and which moves to make first.

How to use this book

1. **Read Part I once, all the way through.** It is the plain-English picture of the modern music industry: the players, how money flows, and the revenue models an independent artist can actually stack toward \$20,000 a year.
2. **Work Part II in order.** Four stages, each one unlocking the next. Every step points to the Academy course that teaches it in full – video lesson, written guide, and checklist.
3. **Use the back matter like tools.** The stage checklists are meant to be printed and ticked off. The plan forms are meant to be filled in with a pen. The quiz and lesson-guide templates show how future Academy lessons will be structured – and how you can structure your own teaching one day.

How this connects to the Academy

This roadmap is the **overview layer**. The Academy courses are the **skill layer**. Nothing here replaces a course – each stage names the exact courses that carry it. All seventeen courses, in full written form, are collected in **The Artispreneur Academy: The Complete Course Collection**, free at artispreneur.com. The video lessons live on the site alongside them.

Read the map. Learn the skills. Work the stages. The \$20,000 number is not a dream target – it is a stack of concrete revenue lines, and this book shows you which ones to build, in which order.

P A R T I

The Modern Music Industry

Before you run the plays, learn the field: who the players are, where the money moves, and how an independent artist stacks a living from it.

The Players

How the Money Flows

The Revenue Stack: Your Path to \$20,000

Activities, Tools, and Processes

The Players

The music industry looks complicated from the outside. From the inside, it is a small cast of players, each taking a defined role in a deal you already understand: **someone makes music, someone delivers it, someone pays for it.** Here is the cast.

The artist (you)

You are the owner, the product, and the employer. In the independent model, you own your masters – the recordings – outright, and you hire everyone else: distributors, marketers, booking help. That ownership is the whole game. Every player below exists to serve the artist, even when the paperwork makes it look like the reverse.

Record labels

Labels are banks with opinions: they fund recording, distribution, and marketing in exchange for ownership of the masters and a large share of revenue. For some artists that trade is worth it. For most independents, the modern move is to **skip the label or negotiate short, limited deals** – because the services labels once monopolized are now rentable.

Distributors and streaming platforms

Distributors – DistroKid, TuneCore, CD Baby and others – are the plumbers: they put your music on the streaming platforms (Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music, YouTube) and collect your share. You typically keep nearly all of the royalties minus a flat fee or small percentage. The Academy's course on distribution walks the choice step by step.

Publishers and performance rights organizations

Songs have two copyrights: the **recording** and the **composition**. PROs – ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC in the United States – collect royalties when the composition is performed publicly: radio, venues, TV, streaming services. Publishers administer compositions and pitch songs for placements. The MLC (Mechanical Licensing Collective) collects U.S. streaming mechanical royalties. If you write your own songs, **you are your own publisher until you say otherwise** – which means this money is yours to claim, not someone else's to keep.

Sync: supervisors, libraries, and licensing platforms

TV, film, advertising, and video games all need music. Music supervisors pick it; sync libraries and licensing platforms aggregate it; licenses pay an upfront fee for both the recording and the composition. One placement can pay more than a year of streaming.

Live: venues, promoters, agents

The booking chain. Venues sell the room, promoters sell the tickets, agents connect artists to both. Independents usually start by booking and promoting their own shows – which is exactly why the Academy teaches it as a skill, not a favor you wait for.

Brands and sponsors

When your audience overlaps a brand's customers, partnerships become a revenue line: sponsored content, product placement in videos, tour support. This is relationship revenue – it follows the brand you build, not the other way around.

Press, playlists, and tastemakers

The discovery layer: blogs, playlist curators, radio DJs, and social tastemakers who decide what gets heard first. You do not need all of them – you need the right twenty for your genre, pitched well.

The fans

The only customers that matter. Every revenue line below ends with a fan deciding your music is worth their money, their time, or their attention. Build the business around them and the industry stops looking complicated.

How the Money Flows

Follow the money and the industry simplifies further. Nearly every dollar in music traces back to **two copyrights** – and knowing which one pays you, and when, is the difference between leaving money on the table and collecting it.

The two copyrights

- **The recording (the master)** – the actual audio file. Usually owned by whoever paid for the recording. As an independent artist, that is you.
- **The composition (the song)** – the melody and lyrics, the thing that could be covered by someone else. Owned by the songwriters and their publishers – which, again, is you until you sign it away.

Streaming pays both. A sync license pays both. Radio pays the composition side through your PRO. Merch pays nobody but you. Every revenue model in the next section names which copyright it draws from – because **you cannot collect what you have not registered**.

Streaming economics, honestly

Streaming services pay rights holders a fraction of a cent per stream – roughly **\$3 to \$5 per 1,000 streams** on most services, though the rate varies widely by service, country, and account type. Your distributor takes its fee and passes the rest to you; your PRO and the MLC collect the composition side separately.

The honest math: at around \$4 per 1,000 streams, \$20,000 from streaming alone means about **five million streams a year**. That is the number the industry does not like to say out loud. It is also the reason no smart independent artist chases streams alone – streaming is one line in a stack, not the stack.

Where the other lines come from

- **Performance royalties** – radio, venues, TV, and streaming services pay PROs; PROs pay songwriters and publishers. Free money if you are registered; lost money if you are not.
- **Mechanical royalties** – paid when your composition is reproduced, including on streaming. In the U.S., the MLC collects these for you.
- **Sync fees** – upfront payments to license your recording and composition for film, TV, ads, and games. Fewer transactions, much larger checks.
- **Live revenue** – guarantees, door splits, and ticket sales, plus the highest-margin product in music: merch sold at the table.
- **Direct revenue** – merch, brand deals, teaching, and services. No middleman, no split, no waiting quarters for a statement.

The Revenue Stack: Your Path to \$20,000

Here is the part most music advice skips: **the actual models, with actual numbers, against the actual goal.** Seven revenue models are available to an independent artist. The combinations below are illustrative – your city, your genre, and your work ethic will change the figures – but they prove the point: \$20,000 is a stack, not a lottery ticket.

The seven models

- **Streaming** – royalties from Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon, YouTube. Covered by the Academy: distribution, playlist pitching, collaborative playlists.
- **Live performance** – shows you book and promote yourself. Covered by the Academy: promoting your own shows.
- **Sync licensing** – TV, film, ads, games. Covered by the Academy: licensing your music.
- **Publishing and royalties** – PRO performance royalties, mechanicals, copyright enforcement. Covered by the Academy: copyright, PRO registration, adding songs to your PRO.
- **Merchandise** – shirts, vinyl, bundles, sold online and at shows. *Not yet an Academy course – slated for a future edition.*
- **Brand deals** – sponsorships and partnerships built on your audience. *Not yet an Academy course – slated for a future edition.*
- **Teaching and services** – lessons, production, session work, consulting. *Not yet an Academy course – slated for a future edition.*

Three illustrative stacks to \$20,000

Read these as proof of concept, not promises. Every figure below is achievable by working independents – and every one of them takes real work.

Stack A – The Performer

20 shows at \$600 average (guarantee plus door) = **\$12,000**. 300,000 streams at ~\$4 per 1,000 = **\$1,200**. PRO and mechanical royalties = **\$1,800**. Merch at shows and online = **\$5,000**. Total: **\$20,000**.

Stack B – The Licensor

4 sync placements averaging \$3,000 = **\$12,000**. 400,000 streams = **\$1,600**. Publishing backend from those placements = **\$2,400**. One brand partnership = **\$4,000**. Total: **\$20,000**.

Stack C – The Teacher

5 private students at \$150/month for 12 months = **\$9,000**. 15 shows at \$400 = **\$6,000**. 500,000 streams = **\$2,000**. Merch = **\$3,000**. Total: **\$20,000**.

*Notice what every stack has in common: **more than one line**, and at least one line you control directly. The artists who struggle are not the ones with small audiences – they are the ones with one revenue line. Diversification is not a finance word. It is a survival word.*

Pick your stack

Before you touch the roadmap stages, circle the stack that fits your life. A touring performer builds Stack A. A producer with a deep catalogue builds Stack B. A skilled musician with a local reputation builds Stack C. Your stack decides which stages deserve your heaviest effort – but **every artist needs all four stages**, because the business foundation, the rights, and the catalogue underpin every stack.

Activities, Tools, and Processes

An artist's business runs five jobs. Learn the job once, run it forever. Each job below points to the Academy course that teaches it – this is the bridge between this book and the seventeen courses.

The five jobs

1. Legal and money administration

Form the entity, get the tax ID, separate the money, file the taxes, track the pipeline. Boring, unglamorous, and the reason most artist businesses survive their first profitable year instead of collapsing under it.

2. Rights management

Register the copyrights, protect the name, register with a PRO, add every song. This is the job that turns airplay and streams into checks with your name on them.

3. Catalogue operations

Keep every recording organized, tagged, and ready to license or pitch on short notice. A messy catalogue is a catalogue that cannot earn.

4. Release and promotion

Distribute, pitch press and playlists, build playlist presence, network the industry, play live. The visible job – and the one that only works when jobs 1 through 3 are done.

5. Relationships

The industry runs on trust built slowly: curators, supervisors, promoters, fans. Networking is a system, not a personality trait.

The course map

Every activity, the tool that does it, and the Academy course that teaches it. Work left to right: know the activity, pick up the course, run the process.

Every activity, the tool that does it, and the Academy course that teaches it. Work left to right: know the activity, take the course, run the process.

Activity	Academy course
Choose your business entity	How to Set Up an LLC
Get a tax ID	How to Register an EIN

Separate business money	How to Set Up a Business Bank Account
File business taxes	How to File Business Taxes
Track contacts & pipeline	How to Set Up a CRM
Register copyrights	How to Copyright Your Music
Protect your artist name	How to Trademark Your Music
Join a PRO	How to Register with a PRO
Register songs with your PRO	How to Add Songs to Your PRO

Activity	Academy course
License music for TV/film/ads	How to License Your Music
Build your artist brand	How to Brand Yourself as an Artist
Organize your catalogue	How to Create a Music Catalogue
Get on streaming platforms	How to Distribute Your Music
Pitch blogs & playlists	How to Submit Music to Blogs & Playlists
Work collaborative playlists	How to Add Music to Collaborative Playlists
Network the industry	How to Network in the Music Industry
Book & promote your shows	How to Promote Your Own Shows

Merchandise, brand deals, and teaching & services are not yet Academy courses – they are slated for future editions of both the Academy and this book.

PART II

The Roadmap

Four stages, in order. Do them out of order and you pay the tax – the re-filed paperwork, the lost royalties, the release that went nowhere.

Stage 1: Set Up the Business

Stage 2: Lock Down Your Rights

Stage 3: Build the Brand & Catalogue

Stage 4: Release & Market

Stage 1: Set Up the Business

The paperwork that makes you a business before you spend a dollar on promotion.

Before you spend a dollar on promotion, become a business. This stage is paperwork, and paperwork is what lets you keep the money the later stages earn. Do it once, do it right, and it runs quietly in the background of everything else.

The order

1. **Choose your entity.** LLC or C-Corp – the course walks the differences, the protections, and the filing process. Course: *How to Set Up an LLC*.
2. **Get your tax identity.** An EIN separates you from your Social Security number on every form, account, and royalty registration you will ever touch. Course: *How to Register an EIN*.
3. **Open the business bank account.** Money in, money out, never mixed with personal spending. If the IRS or a partner ever asks, the answer is a statement, not a story. Course: *How to Set Up a Business Bank Account*.
4. **Set up your CRM.** Every contact – curators, promoters, supervisors, press – goes into a system from day one, or it evaporates. Course: *How to Set Up a CRM*.
5. **Build your tax system.** Know which forms you file, which expenses you deduct, and when the deadlines hit, before the year you owe them. Course: *How to File Business Taxes*.

Done means

You can show a stranger – an accountant, a partner, a venue – a business that exists on paper: entity, tax ID, bank account, contact system, tax calendar. Until that is true, you are a hobby with expenses.

Courses for this stage: *How to Set Up an LLC*, *How to Register an EIN*, *How to Set Up a Business Bank Account*, *How to File Business Taxes*, *How to Set Up a CRM*.

Stage 2: Lock Down Your Rights

Protect the work, then register it everywhere royalties are collected.

Your catalog is an asset the moment it exists. This stage makes that asset legally yours and registered everywhere money is collected. Skip it and the industry's favorite outcome happens: your song earns, someone else gets paid, and you find out a year later.

The order

1. **Copyright the work.** Register your recordings and compositions. The course covers the process, the benefits, and how registration powers licensing revenue. Course: *How to Copyright Your Music*.
2. **Trademark the name.** Your artist name, your logo – the identity the whole business hangs on. Register it before someone else does. Course: *How to Trademark Your Music*.
3. **Register with a PRO.** ASCAP, BMI, or SESAC – pick one, join, and start the clock on performance royalties. Course: *How to Register with a PRO*.
4. **Add every song to your PRO.** Registration without your catalogue attached collects nothing. Every composition, registered and claimed. Course: *How to Add Songs to Your PRO*.

Done means

Every song you own is copyrighted, your name is trademarked, and your PRO account lists your full catalogue. From this point on, airplay, streams, and placements generate royalties with your name on them.

Courses for this stage: *How to Copyright Your Music*, *How to Trademark Your Music*, *How to Register with a PRO*, *How to Add Songs to Your PRO*.

Stage 3: Build the Brand & Catalogue

Define how the world sees you, organize what you own, and put the catalogue to work.

Rights without a brand are invisible; a catalogue without organization is unusable. This stage makes you recognizable and makes your music easy to buy – because licensing deals die in messy inboxes.

The order

1. **Build the brand.** A cohesive visual and narrative identity across every platform – the thing that makes a fan, a curator, or a supervisor remember you after one encounter. Course: *How to Brand Yourself as an Artist*.
2. **Organize the catalogue.** Every recording tagged, categorized, and ready for licensing pitches – built so a music supervisor can find the right track in minutes. Course: *How to Create a Music Catalogue*.
3. **Learn licensing.** The types of licenses, the platforms and libraries, how to contact supervisors, and how to close. This is where the catalogue starts earning. Course: *How to License Your Music*.

Done means

A stranger can describe your brand back to you, and a supervisor can license a track from your catalogue without a single confusing email. You are findable, memorable, and easy to pay.

Courses for this stage: *How to Brand Yourself as an Artist*, *How to Create a Music Catalogue*, *How to License Your Music*.

Stage 4: Release & Market

Get heard, get booked, get paid – the release cycle that turns work into income.

Now the visible work: releases, press, playlists, rooms full of people. This stage only works because Stages 1 through 3 exist – the business catches the money, the rights route it to you, the brand makes it stick.

The order

1. **Distribute.** Get the music onto every streaming platform through the right distributor for your situation. Course: *How to Distribute Your Music*.
2. **Pitch press and playlists.** Find the right blogs and curators for your genre, pitch them well, follow up professionally – starting weeks before release, not the day of. Course: *How to Submit Music to Blogs & Playlists*.
3. **Work collaborative playlists.** Join and leverage collaborative playlists on Spotify, YouTube, and Apple Music to compound your reach. Course: *How to Add Music to Collaborative Playlists*.
4. **Network the industry.** Identify the key players for your lane, approach them properly, and maintain the relationships that compound over years. Course: *How to Network in the Music Industry*.
5. **Book and promote your own shows.** Secure the venue, negotiate the fee, run the marketing, sell the tickets. Live revenue is the fastest cash in the stack. Course: *How to Promote Your Own Shows*.

Done means

A release cycle you can repeat: distributed, pitched, playlisted, networked, and performed – with every dollar landing in a business account and every royalty routed to your registered rights.

Courses for this stage: *How to Distribute Your Music*, *How to Submit Music to Blogs & Playlists*, *How to Add Music to Collaborative Playlists*, *How to Network in the Music Industry*, *How to Promote Your Own Shows*.

PRINT & USE

Back Matter

Checklists, plan forms, and templates. Print these pages, fill them in with a pen, and work them.

Stage checklists (4)

Plan forms (3)

Quiz & lesson-guide templates

What's in Edition 1

Stage 1 Checklist

The paperwork that makes you a business before you spend a dollar on promotion.

- ☐ LLC (or chosen entity) filed and approved – documents saved
- ☐ EIN received from the IRS
- ☐ Business bank account open – personal money fully separated
- ☐ CRM chosen, set up, and first 25 contacts imported
- ☐ Tax calendar created: estimated payments, filing deadlines, record-keeping system
- ☐ Bookkeeper or accountant identified (even if DIY for now)
- ☐ First quarterly business review scheduled
- ☐ Academy courses completed: *How to Set Up an LLC*, *How to Register an EIN*, *How to Set Up a Business Bank Account*, *How to File Business Taxes*, *How to Set Up a CRM*

When every box is ticked, move to Stage 2.

Stage 2 Checklist

Protect the work, then register it everywhere royalties are collected.

- ☐ All released recordings registered for copyright
- ☐ All compositions (lyrics + melody) registered for copyright
- ☐ Artist name / logo trademark application filed
- ☐ PRO membership active (ASCAP, BMI, or SESAC)
- ☐ Every song added and claimed in the PRO catalogue
- ☐ Splits documented in writing for every collaboration
- ☐ Academy courses completed: *How to Copyright Your Music*, *How to Trademark Your Music*, *How to Register with a PRO*, *How to Add Songs to Your PRO*

When every box is ticked, move to Stage 3.

Stage 3 Checklist

Define how the world sees you, organize what you own, and put the catalogue to work.

- ☐ Brand statement written: who you are in one paragraph
- ☐ Visual identity consistent across all platforms (photo, colors, fonts)
- ☐ Catalogue spreadsheet/database complete: every track tagged by mood, tempo, genre, lyrics theme
- ☐ Stems, instrumentals, and clean versions organized and labeled
- ☐ Licensing one-sheet created for supervisors
- ☐ First 5 licensing pitches sent (libraries, platforms, or supervisors)
- ☐ Academy courses completed: *How to Brand Yourself as an Artist*, *How to Create a Music Catalogue*, *How to License Your Music*

When every box is ticked, move to Stage 4.

Stage 4 Checklist

Get heard, get booked, get paid – the release cycle that turns work into income.

- ☐ Distributor chosen and release uploaded (4+ weeks before release date)
- ☐ Press list built: 20+ blogs and outlets for your genre
- ☐ Playlist pitch list built: 20+ curators for your genre
- ☐ Collaborative playlists joined: 5+ active ones
- ☐ Release-week content calendar written (social, video, email)
- ☐ First show booked and promoted (venue, date, ticket link live)
- ☐ Network tracker updated: 10 new industry contacts this quarter
- ☐ Academy courses completed: *How to Distribute Your Music*, *How to Submit Music to Blogs & Playlists*, *How to Add Music to Collaborative Playlists*, *How to Network in the Music Industry*, *How to Promote Your Own Shows*

When every box is ticked, run the cycle again with your next release.

One-Page Artist Business Plan

Fill this in with a pen. Revisit it every quarter – the plan is a living document, not a one-time exercise.

Artist / brand name

Mission – one sentence: what does your music business do, and for whom?

My \$20,000 revenue stack – the lines I will build first

Write your target stack (see Part I, The Revenue Stack).

Revenue line	Expected \$	By when
Streaming		
Live shows		
Sync licensing		
Publishing & royalties		
Merch		
Brand deals		
Teaching & services		
TOTAL		

Current roadmap stage

Circle one: Stage 1 · Stage 2 · Stage 3 · Stage 4

Top 3 priorities for the next 90 days

Review date – I will revisit this plan on:

Release Plan

One page per release. Start it 8 weeks before release day.

Release title

Release date

Distributor

Singles rollout (title – date)

Press & playlist targets (aim for 20 names)

Timeline

Weeks out	Action
8	
6	
4	
2	
Release week	
+2	

Show / tour plan

Budget Worksheet

Estimate first, track actuals as you spend. The gap between the two columns is your education.

Item	Estimated \$	Actual \$
Distribution fees		
Cover art & design		
Music video / content		
Social ads		
PR / pitching services		
Merch run		
Studio & recording		
Travel & shows		
Miscellaneous		
TOTAL		

Revenue target for this release (\$)

Break-even: this release pays for itself when...

e.g. 40 tickets sold + 50k streams + 1 sync inquiry

Course Quiz Template

Attach one of these to every Academy lesson. Five questions, four options each, one right answer. Passing is 4 out of 5 – the quiz checks understanding, not memory.

Course title

Lesson / chapter

Question 1

- a)

- b)

- c)

- d)

Question 2

- a)

- b)

- c)

- d)

Question 3

- a)

- b)

- c)

- d)

Question 4

-
- a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____

Question 5

-
- a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____

Answer key

e.g. 1-b, 2-a, 3-d, 4-c, 5-a

Passing score

Suggested: 4 out of 5

Lesson Guide Template

Every future Academy lesson follows this structure. Copy this page when drafting a new course – fill each section before recording a single minute of video.

1. Course Description

Guidance: 2–3 sentences. What will the student be able to do that they could not do before?

Course description

2. What You Will Learn

Guidance: 5–7 bullets, each starting with a verb: explain, apply, evaluate, create.

Learning outcomes (one per line)

3. Chapters

Guidance: numbered chapter titles in teaching order. Each chapter is one idea, one video segment.

Chapter list

4. Put It Into Practice

Guidance: one action the student takes this week. If it cannot be done in a week, it is too big.

The one action

5. Reflection

Guidance: 2–3 questions connecting the lesson to the student's own career.

Reflection questions

6. Quiz

Attach the Course Quiz Template from the previous page.

What's in Edition 1

Edition 1 is the foundation. Future editions will add chapters, update the industry picture, and expand the templates as the Academy grows. If you are reading a later edition, this list is what changed from.

- All 17 Artispreneur Academy courses cross-referenced to the 4 roadmap stages
- Part I: industry overview – the players, the two copyrights, honest streaming economics, the 7 revenue models, and 3 illustrative stacks to \$20,000/year
- Part II: the 4-stage roadmap in working order – Set Up the Business, Lock Down Your Rights, Build the Brand & Catalogue, Release & Market
- 4 printable stage checklists (tick-box style)
- 3 plan forms: one-page artist business plan, release plan, budget worksheet
- 2 templates: per-course quiz template and lesson-guide template for future Academy lessons
- **Slated for future editions:** merchandise and brand-partnership chapters, teaching & services revenue playbooks, international royalties, touring operations, and updated platform/streaming economics



Your business should work as hard as you do.

Keep learning at artispreneur.com – the full Academy, your EPK builder, contracts, your catalogue, and an agent for the business of your music.

[**artispreneur.com**](https://artispreneur.com)

ART MEANS BUSINESS

Quality · Professionalism · Accessible · Effective · Fun