

THE CURRENT

M A G A Z I N E DOCUMENTING THE CULTURE AS IT HAPPENS

ISSUE 012

THE TEA

WHO'S TRENDING

CURRENT SPORTS

BEHIND THE GAME

CURRENT BEAUTY

MODELS MAKING MOVES

STREET STORIES

WHAT THEY MISSED

BOSS MOVES /
HUSTLE TO BUSINESS

WHO IS
MESSY
MIKE?



INSIDE ISSUE

The people, conversations and systems moving culture right now

WHO IS MESSY MIKE?

04

COVER STORY

Messy Mike turns personality into a platform

06

THE TEA

Beyonce tests the price of fandom

07

WHO'S TRENDING

Drake's Iceman era controls the conversation

08

CURRENT SPORTS

Milwaukee owns baseball's best record

09

BEHIND THE GAME

AI deals put artist rights on the clock

10

CURRENT BEAUTY

Black beauty builds beyond the moment

11

MODELS MAKING MOVES

Anok Yai turns fashion into authorship

12

STREET STORIES

Milwaukee invests before the crisis

13

WHAT THEY MISSED

Hip-hop classics enter the Grammy Hall of Fame

14

BOSS MOVES

Independent scale changes the business

15

THE CURRENT MERCH

Wear the culture

16

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

Ricarda Amor Tequila



2FAST PRINTS

YOUR BRAND. PRINTED TO MOVE.

CUSTOM PRINTING • BANNERS • BRAND MATERIALS

@ICTRLP • 414-217-0276 • 2FASTPRINTS@GMAIL.COM

CONNECT • ORDER • SUPPORT LOCAL

FROM THE PUBLISHER

KB THEPLAYMAKER BARRELL

THE PLATFORM HAS TO OUTLIVE THE MOMENT

Real momentum begins when attention is turned into structure, ownership and a lasting position.

JEWELS & GEMS FROM THE PUBLISHER

I have watched talented people catch a moment, command a room and make the whole city pay attention. I have also watched that attention disappear because nobody built the structure needed to hold it. The lesson has never changed: getting noticed is only the beginning.

Messy Mike represents the kind of reinvention that makes people stop and ask questions. The name is memorable, the personality is direct and the presentation is built for today's audience. But the real opportunity is bigger than a viral clip. It is the chance to connect the music, the visuals, the appearances and the business into one platform that can keep moving.

THE WORK STARTS AFTER THE ATTENTION

A strong identity opens the door. Consistency keeps it open. Distribution puts the work in front of people, relationships move it through the streets and ownership makes sure the creator still benefits after the moment passes.

That is what this issue is about: people turning visibility into position. The names and industries may change, but the principle remains the same. Build something the moment cannot take away.

STAY INFORMED. STAY IN THE MIX. STAY CURRENT.

**"Anybody can make noise.
Very few can make it move."**
— KB Barrell, ThePlaymaker

THE 12 LAWS OF STREET TEAM MARKETING.

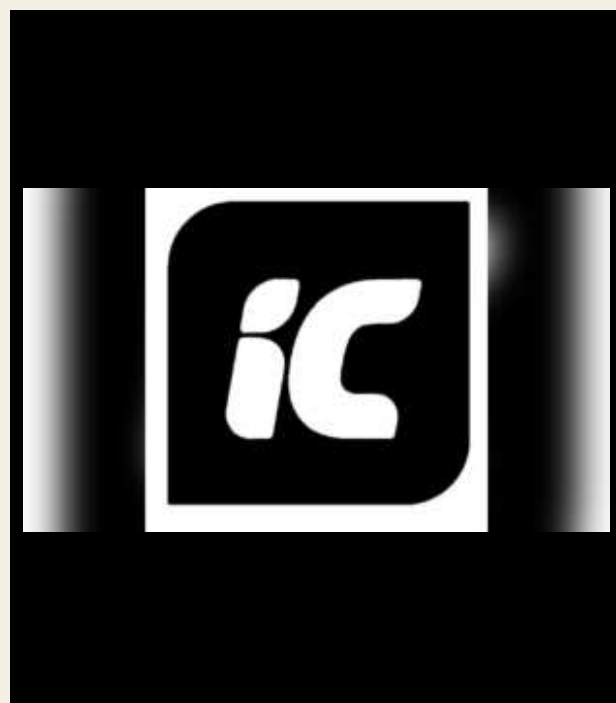
FROM THE MAN WHO BROUGHT
STREET TEAM WORK BACK
TO THE MUSIC INDUSTRY!

**STREET TEAM WORK,
MAKES THE DREAM WORK** KB ThePlaymaker

THE 12 LAWS OF STREET TEAM MARKETING

1. NEVER CONFUSE MOTION WITH MARKETING Motion feels busy. Marketing moves product.	7. CONSISTENCY WINS Daily presence beats random hype.
2. DISTRIBUTION BEATS TALENT The best product loses without reach.	8. SYSTEMS BEAT MOMENTS Structure scales. Excitement fades.
3. OWNERSHIP IS THE ENDGAME If you don't own it, you don't control it.	9. FANS OVER FOLLOWERS Loyalty pays longer than likes.
4. RELATIONSHIPS BEAT ALGORITHMS People convert. Platforms fluctuate.	10. CULTURE OVER CLOUT Hype fades. Community lasts.
5. TOUCH THE PAVEMENT The streets validate what the internet amplifies.	11. CONTROL THE NARRATIVE If you don't tell your story, someone else will.
6. VISIBILITY IS CURRENCY If they don't see you, you don't exist.	12. EXECUTE RELENTLESSLY Ideas don't win. Execution does.

OUT NOW



THE MOMENT CREATES ATTENTION. OWNERSHIP CREATES THE NEXT OPTION.

COVER STORY

Messy Mike turns reinvention into a platform

WHO IS MESSY MIKE?

The name is new. The work behind the platform is not.



THE NAME CREATES THE QUESTION

Messy Mike is the latest chapter in a public platform that already understood attention. The identity is direct, memorable and built to move through social media, but the foundation is the same work that sustains every independent brand: repetition, visual consistency and a reason for the audience to return.

REINVENTION NEEDS STRUCTURE

The red cap, jewelry and direct camera presence establish the character before the first line lands. That clarity matters in a crowded feed. The challenge is converting recognition into an organized catalog, release schedule and business system.

A viral moment can introduce the face. A platform has to connect the face to music, video, appearances and assets the creator controls.

PERSONALITY OPENS THE DOOR

A memorable character gives an audience an immediate point of entry. The name can become a headline, the wardrobe can become a visual signature and the attitude can become a recognizable voice. Those pieces work best when they lead somewhere: a song, a performance, an interview or a product that rewards the curiosity the character created.

The strongest personalities do not depend on one joke or one clip. They build familiarity without becoming predictable. Each appearance should reveal another part of the story while protecting the details that make the identity easy to recognize.

THE SYSTEM MAKES IT LAST

That is the real test for Messy Mike. Attention can arrive quickly, but lasting value comes from a schedule, clear credits, reliable distribution and direct communication with supporters. When those systems work together, the personality stops being a temporary moment and becomes a platform that can grow.

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

PLACE YOUR AD HERE

RESTAURANT - RETAIL - SERVICE - EVENT

Reach readers in every issue

YOURCURRENTMAGAZINE.COM/ADVERTISE

THE CHARACTER EARNS THE CLICK. THE SYSTEM BUILDS THE CAREER.

COVER STORY

Messy Mike turns reinvention into a platform

THE PERSONALITY BECOMES THE PLATFORM

Music and video give the character a repeatable system.



THE RECORDING IDENTITY

Messy Mike's current catalog gives the character a soundtrack. D.S.G.A., HB2U and Baddies Errrwhere extend the public personality into music that can be searched, shared and replayed after a social clip ends.

VIDEO CONNECTS THE PIECES

The official Baddies Errrwhere video featuring Kai Elisee supplies movement, faces and scenes that travel across platforms. The strongest independent releases make every format support the others: clips create discovery, the full video holds attention and the catalog gives the audience somewhere to go next.

OWNERSHIP IS THE NEXT MOVE

The opportunity is to organize the identity into consistent releases, searchable credits, performances, partnerships and merchandise. Messy Mike is a reinvention taking shape in real time - part entertainer, part recording artist and part content engine.

A connected catalog gives every new viewer a next step. Someone who discovers a short clip should be able to find the complete video, hear the records, learn the story and follow the next release without searching across disconnected pages. That path turns casual attention into an audience.

The official video is more than an extra feature. It is a destination where the character, music and collaborators share one frame. Strong visuals make the record easier to remember, and a clear link between the video and the catalog gives the audience a reason to stay after the first impression.

The next chapter will be measured by consistency: how often the story advances, how clearly each release connects and how much of the resulting value remains under the creator's control. The personality earns the click. The structure gives that click somewhere meaningful to go.



WATCH
MESSY MIKE

BADDIES
ERRRWHERE

FEAT. KAI ELISEE

THE CHARACTER EARNS THE CLICK. THE SYSTEM BUILDS THE CAREER.

THE TEA

A luxury release turns fandom into a value debate

BEYONCE TESTS THE PRICE OF FANDOM

A limited collector's box put scarcity, symbolism and fan trust in the same conversation.



THE PRICE WAS PART OF THE MESSAGE

A limited anniversary collector's box used a premium price and birthday symbolism to turn merchandise into a cultural conversation. The debate intensified because published descriptions said the box was designed to hold a vinyl collection while the records themselves were not included.

TRUST HAS TO OUTLAST THE DROP

Scarcity can justify a premium, but a premium product also makes a promise. Independent brands can learn from the structure - a clear story, a limited quantity and recognizable cultural meaning - while making certain the customer can explain the value after the post stops trending.

The real measurement arrives after the first wave of posts. If buyers feel the object matches the story, the release strengthens the next offer. If the price becomes the entire conversation, the brand has to work harder to protect the relationship that made the sale possible.

THE FAN IS ALSO THE CUSTOMER

Fandom can create an emotional reason to buy, but that does not erase the customer's expectation of clarity. A collector wants to understand what is inside, why it is limited and how the object connects to the artist's larger body of work. The best premium releases answer those questions before checkout and continue to feel considered after delivery.

That balance matters beyond celebrity merchandise. Every growing brand eventually asks supporters to move from attention to purchase. Clear photographs, exact product descriptions and honest expectations protect the relationship. Exclusivity may create urgency, but trust is the part that brings a customer back for the next release.

NPI MARKETING & PROMOTIONS
ARTIST DEVELOPMENT - BRAND STRATEGY



VISIBILITY BECOMES POSITION

SOURCES: OFFICIAL PRODUCT MATERIALS AND PUBLISHED ENTERTAINMENT REPORTING.

WHO'S TRENDING

A rollout becomes an environment

DRAKE'S ICEMAN ERA CONTROLS THE CONVERSATION

The real advantage is not one ranking. It is release machinery built to keep every move connected.



A RANKING IS A SNAPSHOT

Drake's Iceman chapter shows how music, livestreams, Toronto imagery, physical stunts and social debate can operate as one campaign. The audience enters the story from several directions and keeps marketing the chapter by discussing it.

THE ROLLOUT IS PART OF THE PRODUCT

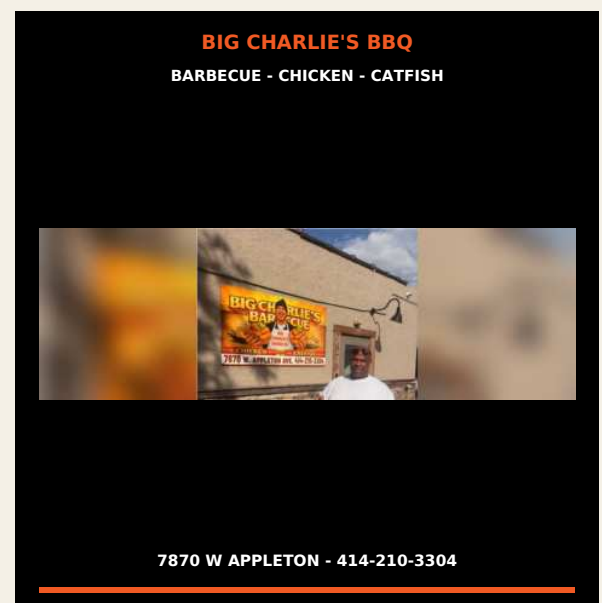
The lesson for independent artists is continuity. Every visual, appearance and clip should reinforce the same chapter. Heat lists change. A system large enough to make every move feel intentional is what remains.

Fans decode images, debate lyrics, repost moments and connect one appearance to the next. The conversation becomes distribution. The artist still needs strong music, but coordinated presentation gives every release more than one day of attention.

A CHAPTER NEEDS A VISUAL LANGUAGE

An era becomes easier to follow when the audience can recognize it before hearing an explanation. Color, wardrobe, locations, typography and repeated symbols can turn separate posts into one connected chapter. That consistency gives fans material to interpret and gives media outlets a clear frame for discussing what happens next.

The useful lesson is not to copy the scale of a superstar campaign. It is to organize the resources already available. One strong concept can guide cover art, short-form video, performance footage and interviews. When every piece points back to the same story, a small team can create the feeling of a much larger release.



SOURCES: COMPLEX AND OFFICIAL ARTIST RELEASE MATERIALS.

CURRENT SPORTS

Milwaukee answers pressure with depth

MILWAUKEE OWNS BASEBALL'S BEST RECORD

The Brewers keep creating wins through young talent, bullpen discipline and organizational depth.



THE RECORD IS THE RECEIPT

Milwaukee entered September at the top of Major League Baseball's standings after another strong stretch. Jackson Chourio supplied one of the clearest statements with a four-hit game and another home run while the bullpen protected the result.

DEPTH CHANGES THE PRESSURE

The advantage is organizational. Young players are trusted, relievers know their assignments and the offense can create runs in several ways. The club is not asking to be noticed; the standings are doing the talking.

A long season exposes teams built around one solution. Milwaukee's position has been strengthened by players accepting defined roles and producing without waiting for national attention. September turns that discipline into pressure on every opponent forced to chase them.

SMALL MARKETS WIN WITH CLARITY

Milwaukee's identity is built around development and defined responsibility. A young player can contribute without being asked to carry the entire season, while veterans and relievers provide stability around him. That structure helps the club absorb slumps, injuries and the daily pressure of a long schedule.

The city recognizes that formula because it resembles Milwaukee itself: steady work, shared responsibility and confidence that does not require constant national approval. The postseason will create a different test, but the regular-season record shows what happens when preparation keeps producing answers before pressure becomes panic.

UNITING GARDEN HOMES INC
MENTAL WELLNESS - ADVOCACY - PREVENTION



UGHINC.ORG - MILWAUKEE

SOURCES: MLB, MILWAUKEE BREWERS AND REUTERS GAME REPORTING.

BEHIND THE GAME

Permission and payment move to the center

AI DEALS PUT ARTIST RIGHTS ON THE CLOCK

Creators want transparency before their catalogs become training material.



THE ARGUMENT IS ABOUT TERMS

Artists, songwriters and managers continue to press labels and technology companies for meaningful consent, compensation and disclosure in artificial-intelligence agreements. The issue is moving from theory into contracts.

OWNERSHIP HAS TO BE READ BEFORE IT IS CLICKED

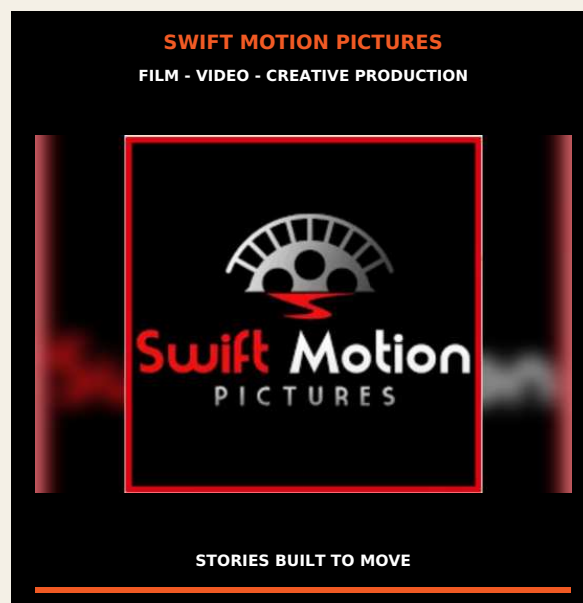
For independent artists, AI is a metadata and leverage story. Who owns the master? Who controls the composition? What uses are authorized, and how is revenue calculated? The tools will keep changing. The traditional rule remains: know what you own and put permission in writing.

Clean registrations, accurate splits and organized agreements are no longer paperwork that can wait until success arrives. They are the evidence a creator needs when a platform, label or technology company asks for rights. Preparation determines whether the artist enters that conversation with leverage.

CONSENT CANNOT BE IMPLIED

A voice, likeness or catalog can be reproduced at a scale that was difficult to imagine when many older agreements were signed. That makes precise language essential. Creators need to know whether a deal covers training, imitation, recommendation systems, promotional tools or future uses that have not yet been named.

Collective standards can help, but individual preparation still matters. Artists should preserve session records, register works promptly and keep contracts where advisers can review them. Technology may accelerate creation and discovery, yet speed does not replace permission. The central question remains simple: who approved the use, who can verify it and who is paid when value is created?



SOURCES: CREATOR-RIGHTS STATEMENTS AND OFFICIAL MUSIC-COMPANY ANNOUNCEMENTS.

CURRENT BEAUTY

Ownership matters beyond temporary attention

BLACK BEAUTY BUILDS BEYOND THE MOMENT

Black founders, stylists and consumers continue to shape the market while demanding more control of its value.

NATIONAL
**BLACK
 BEAUTY**
 WEEK 
 August 17-23, 2025

THE MARKET ALREADY EXISTS

Black consumers and professionals continue to drive product categories, beauty language and cultural demand. The strategic question is not whether the market is real. It is whether more of the value can remain with the people creating it.

LONGEVITY REQUIRES INFRASTRUCTURE

Visibility matters, but distribution, retail access, financing and customer data determine whether a beauty business can last. Recognition is strongest when it leads to durable ownership.

The culture has never lacked ideas or demand. The gap is often found in shelf space, working capital and the systems required to restock after a successful launch. Building those systems allows a founder to keep serving the customer instead of repeatedly starting over.

COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE IS AN ASSET

Black stylists, barbers, creators and customers often identify a need long before a national company recognizes it. Their conversations reveal how products are actually used, which promises customers trust and where existing options fail. Treating that knowledge as business intelligence changes the relationship from trend extraction to participation and ownership.

The next stage requires stronger paths from the salon chair to manufacturing, distribution and investment. Founders need room to test products, protect margins and build teams without losing the voice that attracted customers. Retailers and partners also have a responsibility to support the business after the promotional moment, when inventory planning and repeat purchases decide whether attention becomes longevity.

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT**PLACE YOUR AD HERE****RESTAURANT - RETAIL - SERVICE - EVENT**

Reach readers in every issue

[YOURCURRENTMAGAZINE.COM/ADVERTISE](https://yourcurrentmagazine.com/advertise)**SOURCES: NATIONAL BLACK BEAUTY WEEK AND PERSONAL-CARE INDUSTRY REPORTING.**

MODELS MAKING MOVES

The model helps define the meaning of the frame

ANOK YAI TURNS FASHION INTO AUTHORSHIP

A major runway career becomes more powerful when the subject participates in the story being told.

**VISIBILITY IS ONLY THE OPENING**

Anok Yai's recent run has moved beyond recognition. Major fashion honors and high-profile appearances have placed her inside conversations about beauty, representation and the meaning assigned to the image.

THE MODEL BECOMES A COLLABORATOR

The larger move is authorship. The model is not simply wearing the look; she is helping define its meaning. That shift from subject to collaborator is where cultural influence becomes durable power.

Authorship changes the business relationship. Campaign selection, creative input, public language and long-term representation help determine what the image communicates. The goal is not simply to enter fashion's biggest rooms, but to leave those rooms with greater control of the next opportunity.

THE IMAGE TRAVELS FARTHER THAN THE RUNWAY

A major fashion image moves through magazines, advertising, social feeds and years of visual reference. The person inside that image contributes more than appearance. Presence, movement and point of view help determine why a frame becomes memorable and how audiences understand the clothing around it.

Greater authorship can also expand what a career produces. Creative direction, brand partnerships and carefully chosen public work allow a model to build value beyond a single booking. That does not diminish the craft of modeling; it recognizes that the strongest performers help create the cultural meaning clients are trying to reach.

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

PLACE YOUR AD HERE

RESTAURANT - RETAIL - SERVICE - EVENT

Reach readers in every issue

YOURCURRENTMAGAZINE.COM/ADVERTISE

SOURCES: TIME, FASHION-INDUSTRY COVERAGE AND OFFICIAL PROFILES.

STREET STORIES

Milwaukee connects intervention to opportunity

MILWAUKEE INVESTS BEFORE THE CRISIS

Prevention works best when trusted intervention is connected to wellness, stability and real opportunity.



SAFETY IS MORE THAN ENFORCEMENT

Milwaukee County's Destined for Greater initiative brought together violence-intervention programs, mental-wellness resources and neighborhood partners. Its structure recognizes that prevention cannot be separated from housing, behavioral health, trusted mentors and employment.

THE WORK HAS TO BE MEASURED

Community programs earn trust through transparent outcomes and consistent presence. The strongest public-safety strategy is not built around one announcement. It is built through systems that remain available before, during and after a crisis.

Residents also need to know who is responsible, how resources are distributed and what success will look like six months later. Accountability protects the work from becoming another short campaign and gives effective partners the receipts required to secure continued support.

TRUST IS BUILT BETWEEN EMERGENCIES

Intervention cannot begin only after violence occurs. Credible community partners build relationships during ordinary days, when a conversation, a referral or a safe place can interrupt the conditions that make a crisis more likely. That work is difficult to photograph, but it is often the foundation beneath the result the public eventually sees.

Long-term support also requires coordination. A young person may need employment, transportation, counseling and a mentor at the same time. Programs become stronger when residents can move between those resources without repeatedly starting over. Milwaukee's challenge is to fund that connected work consistently and to listen to the neighborhoods closest to the pressure.

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

PLACE YOUR AD HERE

RESTAURANT - RETAIL - SERVICE - EVENT

Reach readers in every issue

YOURCURRENTMAGAZINE.COM/ADVERTISE

SOURCES: MILWAUKEE COUNTY AND COMMUNITY-PARTNER MATERIALS.

WHAT THEY MISSED

The archive recognizes what the culture already knew

HIP-HOP CLASSICS ENTER THE HALL OF FAME

Canonical recordings receive institutional recognition, but the culture supplied the first receipts.

**THE RECORD CAME BEFORE THE AWARD**

The Grammy Hall of Fame has continued to recognize hip-hop recordings whose influence was established long before institutional approval arrived. The honor matters because it helps preserve the work for future audiences.

THE CULTURE KEPT THE ORIGINAL RECORD

Awards can confirm importance, but they do not create it. DJs, neighborhoods, listeners and artists carried these records through changing formats and generations. The institution enters the archive after the culture has already protected it.

The official plaque should sit beside the mixtapes, radio shows, record stores and word-of-mouth networks that kept the music alive. Recognition is complete only when the path from the street to the institution remains visible.

PRESERVATION NEEDS CONTEXT

A historic recording is more than an audio file. Its meaning also lives in the conditions that produced it, the local scenes that first supported it and the techniques later artists carried forward. Preserving that context helps a new listener understand why the work mattered before an institution placed it on a formal list.

That responsibility belongs to museums and academies, but also to independent publications, photographers, DJs and families holding private archives. Accurate credits, oral histories and accessible collections keep the story from shrinking into a trophy announcement. The culture deserves a record that names the people who created the sound and the communities that made room for it.

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

PLACE YOUR AD HERE

RESTAURANT - RETAIL - SERVICE - EVENT

Reach readers in every issue

YOURCURRENTMAGAZINE.COM/ADVERTISE

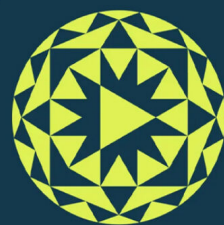
SOURCES: RECORDING ACADEMY AND OFFICIAL HALL OF FAME MATERIALS.

BOSS MOVES / HUSTLE TO BUSINESS

Independent scale changes the negotiating table

OWNERSHIP IS STILL THE ENDGAME

Partnerships can widen reach, but contracts determine who controls the lasting value.


SCALE CREATES OPTIONS

Major partnerships among independent music companies show how catalogs, distribution and infrastructure can create leverage. The opportunity is access to larger systems without surrendering the identity that created the market.

THE CONTRACT IS THE BUSINESS

Artists and executives must measure more than visibility. Control of masters, publishing, data, term length, recoupment and audit rights determine whether growth creates an asset or only a moment. Ownership remains the endgame.

Scale should improve service, accounting and market access. If it only creates a larger machine between the artist and the audience, the independent promise loses its meaning. The strongest partnership is one in which every side can identify the value it contributes and the value it keeps.

LEVERAGE BEGINS BEFORE THE MEETING

A company negotiates differently when it understands its audience, owns organized rights and can show reliable revenue. Those assets give an independent operation choices. It can accept a partnership for a specific service, reject terms that do not fit or wait until the value of the catalog is easier to measure.

Growth should make the business clearer, not more confusing. Artists need statements they can understand, data they can access and responsibilities that are written plainly. The best scale preserves the speed and identity of an independent company while adding capabilities it could not build alone. If ownership is the endgame, transparency is how every side knows the game is being played fairly.

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

PLACE YOUR AD HERE

RESTAURANT - RETAIL - SERVICE - EVENT

Reach readers in every issue

YOURCURRENTMAGAZINE.COM/ADVERTISE

SOURCES: OFFICIAL COMPANY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND MUSIC-BUSINESS REPORTING.

THE CURRENT MERCH



THE CURRENT MERCH



RICARDA AMOR TEQUILA



"JUST A BETTER
TASTE OF LIFE"

**REMEMBER TO
DRINK LIKE A BOSS**



STAY INFORMED.
STAY IN THE MIX.
STAY CURRENT.

THE CURRENT MAGAZINE

**DOCUMENTING THE CULTURE
AS IT HAPPENS**

YOURCURRENTMAGAZINE.COM

