BUSINESS PLAN · INDIA

Artist & Talent-Booking Agency

Representing performers and celebrities, and booking them for events and brands

EVENTS

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August 2026

1. Executive Summary

This plan sets out an **Artist & Talent-Booking Agency** in India — an asset-light intermediary that represents **musicians, bands, DJs, stand-up comedians, anchors/emcees, dancers, celebrities & influencers** and books them for corporate events, weddings, festivals, brand campaigns & venues. It earns a commission on the artist fee, and increasingly a management retainer on the artists it represents.

Live entertainment is now a standard line item in Indian event budgets — a celebrity anchor at a dealer meet, a band at a wedding sangeet, a comedian at an annual day, a DJ at a festival. Both sides of that transaction are badly served on their own: buyers cannot reliably discover, price, contract or manage artists, and artists do not want to negotiate fees or chase payments. A talent-booking agency is a **pure intermediary**: its assets are a roster, a buyer network, and the contracting/logistics competence that makes bookings actually happen.

> **How this plan measures revenue — and why it matters more here than anywhere else in this vertical.** A booking agency routes very large artist fees but keeps only a commission of roughly 15–20%. Throughout this plan, **"revenue" means the agency's commission and retainer income only — never the artist fees passed through.** Gross artist fees booked are shown separately as a memo. The distortion here is the most extreme in the events vertical: a ₹14 crore Year-3 booking value corresponds to ₹2.45 crore of actual agency revenue. Any plan quoting the former as turnover is describing a business roughly six times larger than the one that exists.

This plan models an artist & talent-booking agency requiring **₹30 lakh** (₹22 lakh promoter + ₹8 lakh term/WC finance), targeting **₹95 lakh net revenue on ~₹5.5 crore of gross artist fees booked** in Year 1 and **₹2.45 crore net on ~₹14 crore gross** by Year 3. *(Talent booking; bookings × commission %, roster- & relationship-driven, asset-light — figures illustrative.)*

2. Business Description, Vision & Legal Structure

Concept: An artist & talent-booking agency - representing performers and celebrities, and booking them for events, brands and venues on a commission basis, with contracting, rider & logistics management.

Vision: To be the agency both sides trust - where buyers get the right artist without risk, and artists get paid properly without chasing.

Mission: Make bookings effortless and dependable - accurate matching, clean contracts, managed riders, on-time payments and performances that happen exactly as promised.

Legal structure options

- **Private Limited / LLP** — recommended: corporate clients require GST-compliant contracting, artist agreements need a durable counterparty, and handling client money for artist fees demands a properly governed entity.
- **Proprietorship** — possible at a small start but weak for corporate empanelment and for the trust required when holding others' money.

> **Regulatory anchor:** company/GST on commission income (with careful treatment of pass-through artist fees — whether the agency acts as agent or principal on the invoice changes the GST position materially and should be settled with advice, not assumed); **PPL/IPRS licensing** where recorded or copyrighted music is performed; **TDS obligations on artist payments**, and specifically **Section 194E — TDS on payments to non-resident entertainers and sportspersons at 20% plus surcharge/cess**, which is a hard requirement whenever a foreign artist is booked; visa & FRRO registration for

> overseas performers (a performance visa, not a tourist visa — a common and costly mistake); event permissions, venue & police clearance and noise/timing norms for live performance; and artist contracts covering fee, rider, cancellation, force majeure and exclusivity. Roster strength, buyer relationships, contracting discipline & payment integrity determine success.

3. Promoter & Ownership

Led by a promoter with talent-management, entertainment, event or music-industry experience — and, decisively, standing on *both* sides: artists who trust them and buyers who call them. The team includes booking agents, artist managers/relations, event servicing & logistics, marketing/content, admin & accounts. Roster quality, buyer network, contracting rigour & reliability of payment to artists are the differentiators. Ownership, equity & any artist-management partner are editable inputs.

4. Market Analysis — India

Demand is expanding with corporate event budgets, wedding premiumisation, a maturing live-music and comedy circuit, festival growth and brand spending on talent-led campaigns. Supply is expanding faster still, as digital platforms create performers with real audiences outside traditional film and music routes. Demand is event-, brand- & season-driven; the market rewards roster access, matching judgment, contracting reliability & relationships, and is **seasonal, reputation-dependent & structurally vulnerable to disintermediation** .

Demand drivers

- **Corporate events & brand activations** — celebrity and performer engagement as standard practice.
- **Wedding premiumisation** — live acts, celebrity performances & anchors at sangeets and receptions.
- **Live circuit growth** — music festivals, comedy tours, venue programming across more cities.
- **Creator economy** — influencers and digital-first performers as a fast-growing, distinct roster category.
- **Tier-2 city demand** — events in smaller cities now budgeting for name talent.

Market sizing (illustrative framing)

Layer	Definition	Indicative scale
TAM	Artist & talent engagement spend across Indian events and brands	Large, growing
SAM	Addressable buyer segments & represented roster categories	Serviceable
SOM (Yr 1–3)	Bookings closed & artists under representation	Scaling

Target segments

- **Buyers:** corporates & brands, event management firms, wedding planners, festivals, venues & hotels.
- **Supply:** musicians & bands, DJs, stand-up comedians, anchors/emcees, dance acts, film/TV celebrities, influencers.
- **Management clients:** artists seeking full-time career management beyond one-off bookings.

5. Competition & Competitive Advantage

Landscape: established talent-management agencies, artist-owned management teams, event firms booking directly, online talent marketplaces, and — most importantly — *the artist and client dealing directly with each other.* Barriers to entry are low; barriers to *durability* are the real question.

The business's edge

- **Roster access & exclusivity** — representing artists buyers cannot easily reach otherwise.
- **Matching judgment** — knowing which artist actually fits a brief, budget and audience.
- **Contracting & rider competence** — the unglamorous work that prevents bookings from failing.
- **Payment integrity to artists** — being known for paying on time is what keeps a roster loyal, and is genuinely scarce.
- **Risk absorption for buyers** — backup artists, cancellation cover, accountability if something goes wrong.

6. Services & Revenue Model

Revenue line	Model	Basis
Corporate & brand event bookings	Commission 15–20% of artist fee	Core
Wedding & private bookings	Commission 15–20%	Seasonal core
Festival, venue & tour bookings	Commission / negotiated	Volume
Artist management retainers	Monthly retainer / % of artist earnings	Recurring
Brand endorsements & campaign talent	Commission on deal value	High value
Event servicing (rider, travel, logistics)	Service fee	Ancillary

> Revenue is **bookings × artist fee × commission %**, plus management retainers — *not* the artist fees themselves. Economics = booking volume × average fee × commission − (team + overheads); roster strength, buyer relationships, average booking value, repeat rate & cancellation control drive it. **Management retainers are strategically disproportionate to their size**: they convert a transactional commission business into a recurring one, and — critically — they bind the artist to the agency in a way that a one-off booking never does.

7. Go-to-Market — Roster & Buyers

This is a two-sided business, and neither side is worth much without the other.

Building the roster

- **Exclusive or preferred representation** agreements with artists in defined categories.
- **Emerging talent** signed early — cheaper to secure, and loyalty formed before they have leverage.
- **Reliable, prompt payment** — the single most effective artist-retention tool in this industry.
- **Genuine career value** — bookings, positioning, endorsements — so representation is worth keeping.

Building the buyer side

- **Event firm & planner relationships** — the highest-frequency repeat buyers.
- **Corporate empanelment** for brand and internal events.
- **Festival & venue programming** relationships for volume bookings.
- **Catalogue & showreels** making the roster easy to browse, price and shortlist.

Sales approach

Sign a focused roster in categories where the agency has real access → build repeat buyer relationships with event firms and corporates → deliver bookings flawlessly so both sides return → convert the best artist relationships into management retainers → expand into endorsements, where deal values and commissions are far larger. The strategic direction of travel is always *from transaction toward representation*, because that is where the defensibility lies.

8. Operations Plan (asset-light intermediary)

- **Roster management:** artist agreements, availability calendars, fee bands, category coverage, positioning & showreels.
- **Enquiry & matching:** brief interpretation, shortlisting to budget and audience, availability confirmation, quotation.
- **Contracting:** booking agreement covering fee, payment schedule, **technical & hospitality riders**, cancellation and force-majeure terms, and **non-circumvention**.
- **Rider & logistics:** travel, accommodation, ground transport, stage/AV requirements, green room, security — an unmet rider is the usual cause of a booking going wrong.
- **Show day:** artist liaison, arrival & soundcheck timing, performance delivery, handover to the event team.
- **Settlement:** collect from buyer, **deduct TDS correctly**, pay the artist on the agreed date, retain commission, document everything.

Booking cycle

Stage	Activity	Metric
Enquiry	Brief, budget, date	Enquiry-to-booking %
Match	Shortlist & availability check	Shortlist acceptance
Contract	Fee, rider, advance, cancellation terms	Advance received %
Prepare	Travel, rider fulfilment, coordination	Rider compliance
Perform	Show delivery	Zero no-show rate
Settle	Collect, TDS, pay artist, retain commission	Artist payment timeliness

> **A governance point that decides whether this business survives.** The agency frequently holds a client's money in order to pay an artist. That float is *not the agency's cash*. Treating collected artist fees as working capital — spending them and paying the artist from the next booking — is the classic failure spiral in talent agencies, and it ends in roster collapse the moment one payment is late. Artist money should be tracked and, where volumes justify it, held separately from operating funds. Reputation for prompt payment is the only durable asset this business has.

9. Regulatory, Licences & Compliance (India)

- **Business & GST:** company/GST on commission; the **agent-vs-principal position on the invoice** determines whether GST applies to commission alone or the full artist fee — settle this with professional advice, as it materially affects pricing and cash.
- **TDS on artist payments:** standard withholding on resident artists; **Section 194E — 20% plus surcharge/cess on payments to non-resident entertainers and sportspersons**, deducted and deposited by the payer regardless of the artist's own tax position.

- **Foreign artists:** appropriate **performance/employment visa (not a tourist visa)**, FRRO registration, work permissions & ministry clearances where applicable, and forex remittance through authorised-dealer routes.
- **Music licensing:** PPL / IPRS for performance of recorded or copyrighted music at the venue.
- **Event permissions:** venue & police clearance, noise limits & night cut-off timing for live performance, crowd & security arrangements for celebrity appearances.
- **Contracts:** artist representation & exclusivity terms; booking agreements with cancellation, no-show, force-majeure & non-circumvention clauses; morality/conduct clauses for brand engagements.

10. Organisation & Manpower Plan

Role	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Promoter / agency head	1	1	2
Booking agents (buyer-side sales)	3	6	8
Artist managers & relations	2	4	5
Event servicing & logistics	1	3	4
Marketing & content	1	2	3
Admin & accounts	1	2	3
Total	**9**	**18**	**25**

11. Implementation Timeline & Milestones

Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Setup	Month 0–2	Entity, roster agreements, catalogue, buyer outreach
Ramp	Month 2–12	Bookings & repeat buyers; ₹95L net on ₹5.5cr gross
Grow	Year 2	Roster depth & first management retainers; ₹1.75cr net on ₹10cr gross
Scale	Year 3	₹2.45cr net on ₹14cr gross; endorsements & retainer base

12. Financial Plan (Illustrative)

All figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian context, shown so the promoter can replace them with live rates. They are not projections of guaranteed results. ***Revenue below is the agency's commission and retainer income only; gross artist fees booked are shown as a memo line, not as revenue.*** *Roster strength, booking volume, average fee, commission % & repeat rate are the levers.*

12.1 Project cost & means of finance

Capital requirement	₹
Office fit-out & IT	8,00,000
Brand, website, booking platform & CRM	7,00,000
Artist roster development, showcases & content	6,00,000

Working capital (salaries runway + settlement float)	6,00,000
Security deposits (office / vendor)	3,00,000
Total project cost	**30,00,000**
Promoter contribution	22,00,000
Term loan / WC finance	8,00,000

12.2 Projected Profit & Loss (3 years) — NET commission basis

Particulars	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Memo: gross artist fees booked (pass-through)	*5,50,00,000*	*10,00,00,000*	*14,00,00,000*
Corporate & brand event bookings (commission)	42,00,000	78,00,000	1,08,00,000
Wedding & private bookings (commission)	28,00,000	48,00,000	65,00,000
Festival, venue & tour bookings (commission)	15,00,000	28,00,000	40,00,000
Management retainers & endorsements	10,00,000	21,00,000	32,00,000
Total NET revenue	**95,00,000**	**1,75,00,000**	**2,45,00,000**
Team salaries	45,00,000	82,00,000	1,12,00,000
Office, overheads, travel & BD	20,00,000	34,00,000	45,00,000
Roster development, showcases & marketing	11,00,000	18,00,000	24,00,000
Cancellations, write-offs & bad debts	8,00,000	14,00,000	19,00,000
Depreciation, interest & other	4,00,000	5,00,000	6,00,000
Total expenses	**88,00,000**	**1,53,00,000**	**2,06,00,000**
Net profit (before tax)	**7,00,000**	**22,00,000**	**39,00,000**
Net margin (on net revenue)	7.4%	12.6%	15.9%
Effective commission (net revenue ÷ gross fees)	17.3%	17.5%	17.5%

12.3 Unit economics & break-even

- **Per-booking economics:** artist fee × commission %. A ₹6 lakh artist booking at 17% yields ₹1.02 lakh of agency revenue — so this is a *volume and average-fee* business, and moving up the fee band matters more than adding small bookings.
- **Endorsements change the arithmetic:** a single brand deal can carry a value many times a live booking at a comparable commission rate, for similar agency effort. This is why the endorsement and retainer line grows fastest in the model.
- **People are effectively the only cost:** salaries are ~47% of Year-1 net revenue and there is nothing else material. Operating leverage is therefore strong once a booking agent's desk covers its own cost — but equally, an under-performing desk has nowhere to hide.
- **Cancellations are a real deduction, not a rounding error:** artist illness, date changes, event cancellation and client withdrawal all destroy booked commission after the work of selling it has been done. The model carries ~8% of net revenue against this.

- **Break-even:** at the booking volume/commission level covering team & overheads; margins expand with average fee, endorsement mix, retainer share & repeat buyers.

12.4 Projected Cash Flow — Year 1 (quarterly, illustrative)

*Shown on a **net basis**, consistent with the P&L: collections are the agency's own commission and retainer income. The ~₹5.5 crore of gross artist fees flowing in and out is deliberately excluded — it is client and artist money, not the agency's, and including it would misrepresent both liquidity and scale.*

Particulars (₹)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Opening balance	6,00,000	4,50,000	5,50,000	7,00,000
Net collections (commission & retainers)	18,00,000	22,00,000	28,00,000	24,00,000
Team, overheads, roster development & operating	19,50,000	21,00,000	26,50,000	22,00,000
Closing balance	**4,50,000**	**5,50,000**	**7,00,000**	**9,00,000**

Year-1 net collections of ₹92 lakh against ₹95 lakh net revenue — the balance sits in closing receivables.

> **The cash risk here is not the size of the balance — it is the temptation of the float.** A modest ₹9 lakh operating balance may sit alongside many times that in artist money awaiting settlement. The discipline is absolute: collect from the buyer before the performance where possible, pay the artist on the contracted date, and never let a shortfall in commission income be met from artist funds. Agencies rarely fail because commissions were too thin; they fail because the float was spent.

12.5 Key Performance Indicators to Monitor

- **Volume & value:** bookings closed; average artist fee; enquiry-to-booking %; gross booking value.
- **Margin:** effective commission %; endorsement & retainer share of revenue; revenue per booking agent.
- **Roster health:** artists under exclusive/preferred representation; **artist retention rate**; artist payment timeliness (days from collection to payout).
- **Risk:** cancellation/no-show rate; **repeat-buyer share** (the practical measure of whether disintermediation is happening); receivable days; float held vs. settled.

13. Funding Requirement & Bankability

Total ask: **₹8 lakh term/WC finance** against ₹22 lakh promoter contribution — for office & platform setup, roster development and a modest salaries runway. This is a very low-capital business, and the funding requirement is correspondingly small: there is essentially nothing to hypothecate, so lenders should read the *booking pipeline, roster agreements and repeat-buyer base* as the substance. MSME/Mudra & CGTMSE routes fit the ticket size. Year-1 profit thin at ₹7 lakh (ramp, while roster and buyer relationships form) growing to ₹39 lakh as average fee, endorsements & retainers scale. Two disclosures belong in any lender conversation: the **₹14 crore Year-3 gross booking value is pass-through artist money, not turnover** — the business is a ₹2.45 crore one; and the agency routinely **holds client funds in transit** , which should be visible and reconciled rather than blended into operating cash.

13.1 Funding utilisation

Use of funds	₹	% of total
Office fit-out & IT	8,00,000	26.7%

Brand, website, booking platform & CRM	7,00,000	23.3%
Artist roster development, showcases & content	6,00,000	20.0%
Working capital (salaries runway + settlement float)	6,00,000	20.0%
Security deposits (office / vendor)	3,00,000	10.0%
Total	**30,00,000**	**100%**

14. Risk Analysis & Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
Disintermediation — artist and client booking direct next time	Exclusive representation & non-circumvention clauses; be genuinely useful (contracting, riders, logistics, payment security); management retainers that bind the artist; own the buyer relationship across many artists, not one
Artist leaving the roster (the roster is people, not property)	Prompt payment, real career value, multi-year agreements, depth across categories so no single exit is fatal
Artist no-show, illness or late arrival	Backup artists, arrival buffers, contractual penalties, event insurance, clear force-majeure terms
Misuse of settlement float	Separate tracking of artist money, settle on contracted dates, never fund operations from float, reconcile monthly
Cancellation destroying booked commission	Non-refundable advance on contracting, graduated cancellation fees, diversified pipeline
TDS/GST or visa error on foreign artists	Specialist advice on Sec 194E & agent/principal GST position; performance visa & FRRO handled as standard process, never improvised
Artist conduct or controversy damaging a brand booking	Morality/conduct clauses, due diligence before brand engagements, indemnities
Seasonality & discretionary spend	Balance wedding, corporate, festival & brand books across different calendars; retainers smooth revenue
Demand shock halting live events (2020–21 precedent)	Lean fixed cost, digital/virtual appearance formats, endorsement & content work independent of live events

15. SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Very low capital requirement; strong operating leverage; two-sided network compounds; management retainers create recurring revenue; endorsements carry high value for similar effort; reputation for payment builds a durable roster.	Structurally exposed to disintermediation; roster is people who can leave; no hypothecable assets; commission-only economics on large routed sums; cancellation exposure; key-person and relationship dependent.

Opportunities Creator/influencer roster category; tier-2 city event demand; festival & venue programming; brand endorsement deals; artist management as a deeper business; international artists into India and Indian artists abroad; digital appearance formats.	**Threats** Artists and clients going direct; artist-owned management teams; online talent marketplaces compressing commission; live-event demand shocks; commission-rate pressure from large buyers; reputational damage from a single failed booking.

16. Recommended AiSevak Tools for This Business

This artist & talent-booking agency would use AiSevak's Events vertical tools in operations:

- **Bookings & commission:** booking pipeline, commission & average-fee tracking, cancellation & repeat-buyer analysis tools.
- **Roster & settlement:** artist agreement & availability tracking, **float vs. settled reconciliation**, artist payment-timeliness tools.
- **Compliance:** TDS (incl. Sec 194E), GST agent/principal invoicing & contract-clause tools (with Finance and Legal verticals).
- **Practice:** Business Plan, break-even and commission-economics tools to model the agency.

17. Key Assumptions & Notes

- Artist & talent-booking agency: asset-light two-sided INTERMEDIARY - represents musicians/bands/DJs/comedians/anchors/celebrities/influencers and books them for corporates, weddings, festivals, brands & venues; revenue = bookings × artist fee × commission (15-20%) + management retainers.
- **Pure AGENT — revenue is commission ONLY, never the artist fees routed.** The distortion is the most extreme in this vertical: ₹14cr Y3 gross booking value = ₹2.45cr actual agency revenue. Quoting gross as turnover describes a business ~6× larger than the one that exists.
- **DISINTERMEDIATION is the existential risk** — artist and client meet at the event and book direct next time. Countered by exclusivity & non-circumvention clauses, being genuinely useful (contracting/riders/logistics/payment security), management retainers that bind the artist, and owning the BUYER relationship across many artists rather than depending on one. **Repeat-buyer share is the practical KPI for whether it is happening.**
- **The settlement FLOAT is not the agency's cash.** Spending collected artist fees and paying from the next booking is the classic failure spiral — it ends in roster collapse the moment one payment is late. Track artist money separately; reputation for prompt payment is the only durable asset here.
- People are effectively the only cost (~47% of Y1 net revenue), so operating leverage is strong once a booking desk covers itself; cancellations carry ~8% of net revenue as a real deduction.
- Compliance specifics: **Sec 194E TDS at 20%+surcharge/cess on payments to NON-RESIDENT entertainers**; **performance/employment visa (NOT tourist visa) + FRRO** for foreign artists; the **agent-vs-principal GST position on the invoice** determines whether GST applies to commission alone or the full artist fee — settle with advice, don't assume; PPL/IPRS for music; noise/night-cut-off norms for live performance.
- Figures illustrative, exclude GST; seasonal & discretionary, and live-event demand shocks (2020-21) hit this model directly — endorsement and digital-appearance work are the genuine hedges.

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https://aisevak.in/verticals/events — or go straight to any specific tool at **https://aisevak.in/service/<tool-name>**.

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