

# How to Build a Brand Deal Pipeline

A step-by-step guide for creators who want consistent, well-paid sponsorships

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By the AdReady Team

[adready.app](https://adready.app)

*Free companion spreadsheet included. Download it at [adready.app/resources](https://adready.app/resources)*

# Why You Need a Pipeline

Most creators treat brand deals like lottery tickets. They wait for an email to show up, negotiate on the fly, and hope for the best. The creators who earn consistently do something different: they treat sponsorships like a sales process. They prospect, pitch, follow up, negotiate, deliver, and track every deal in one place.

This guide walks you through building that system from scratch. Whether you have 5,000 followers or 500,000, the framework is the same. A pipeline gives you visibility into what is coming, what needs attention, and where your money is.

By the end, you will have a repeatable process and a spreadsheet template to manage it all.

## Chapter 1: Know Your Value First

Before you reach out to a single brand, you need to know what your sponsorship is worth. Price too low and you leave money on the table. Price too high and conversations stall before they start.

### How to calculate your rate

Start with your average views per video (not subscribers). A common baseline is \$20 to \$50 CPM (cost per thousand views) for a dedicated integration, though rates vary widely by niche. Gaming and tech tend to command higher CPMs than lifestyle or vlog content because the audience intent is stronger.

#### Quick formula:

$$(\text{Average views per video} / 1,000) \times \text{Your CPM} = \text{Your base rate}$$

Example: 25,000 avg views x \$30 CPM = \$750 per integration. Add a premium for exclusivity, usage rights, or multi-platform posting.

*Tip: Use the free AdReady Rate Calculator to benchmark your rate against creators in your niche. [adready.app/rate-calculator](https://adready.app/rate-calculator)*

### Build a rate card with AdReady

Having a rate card ready makes you look professional and speeds up negotiations. Instead of building one from scratch, use the AdReady Rate Card Generator to create a clean, branded rate card in under a minute. Enter your niche, platforms, and audience size. Here is what a generated rate card looks like:

Ad Type	Platform	Starting Rate
Pre-Roll (30-60s)	YouTube	\$850
Mid-Roll (60-90s)	YouTube	\$1,200
Dedicated Video	YouTube	\$2,400
Instagram Reel	Instagram	\$600
Story (3 slides)	Instagram	\$350
Bundle (Video + Reel + Story)	Multi	\$3,100

*Usage rights, exclusivity, and bundle pricing available on request | [adready.app/rate-calculator](https://adready.app/rate-calculator)*

**Generate yours free at [adready.app/rate-calculator](https://adready.app/rate-calculator)**

Your rate card is not a contract. It gives you a starting point and shows brands you take this seriously. Adjust rates per deal based on scope, exclusivity, and usage rights.

## Chapter 2: Finding Brands That Pay

Waiting for inbound emails is passive. The fastest way to fill your pipeline is outbound prospecting. That means identifying brands already spending on creator marketing and reaching out to them directly. But you do not have to do it all manually.

### The two-track approach

The smartest creators run two tracks at the same time: inbound and outbound. Outbound is you pitching brands. Inbound is brands finding you. Most guides only cover outbound. That is a mistake, because inbound deals close faster and pay better since the brand already wants to work with you.

#### Track 1: Let brands come to you

**Set up a creator profile on AdReady.** AdReady connects you directly with brands who are actively looking for creators in your niche. You fill out your profile once (rates, audience, ad types you offer) and brands browse, find you, and send deal requests. No cold emails. No awkward DMs. You keep 100% of what you earn. Create your free profile at [adready.app/create-profile](https://adready.app/create-profile).

While your profile works in the background, you should still be doing outbound. The combination is what fills a pipeline fast.

## Track 2: Outbound prospecting

- 1. Your own feed.** Scroll through your content niche on YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. When you see a creator doing a sponsored segment, write down the brand name. If they are sponsoring creators in your niche, they will sponsor you too.
- 2. Competitor channels.** Check the video descriptions of creators at your level or slightly above. Brands often run campaigns across multiple creators simultaneously.
- 3. Products you already use.** Brands love authentic endorsements. If you already use a product, your pitch is ten times more convincing.
- 4. LinkedIn.** Search for "influencer marketing manager" or "creator partnerships" at brands you admire. These are the people with budget authority.

## How many brands should be in your pipeline?

Think of it like a funnel. For every 20 brands you contact, roughly 5 will respond, 2 will be interested, and 1 will close a deal. Those conversion rates improve as your audience grows and your pitch gets sharper, but the lesson is clear: volume matters early on. Aim to add at least 10 new prospects to your pipeline every week.

*Tip: The fastest way to shortcut outbound is to let brands find you. A complete AdReady profile with rates, audience data, and content samples puts you in front of brands who are already looking to spend. [adready.app/create-profile](https://adready.app/create-profile)*

## Chapter 3: Crafting Your Pitch

Your pitch email is the single most important asset in your pipeline. A great pitch is short, specific, and shows the brand exactly why working with you makes sense.

### The anatomy of a winning pitch

**Subject line:** Keep it under 8 words. Lead with value, not your name. Example: "Partnership idea for [Brand] x [Your Niche]"

**Opening line:** Reference something specific about the brand. A recent campaign, a product launch, something that shows you did your homework. Never open with "I am a content creator with X"

subscribers."

**Your value prop:** One to two sentences about your audience and why it overlaps with their customer. Include a specific stat (avg views, engagement rate, audience demo).

**The idea:** Pitch a specific concept, not a generic "I'd love to work together." Example: "I'd create a 90-second segment showing how [Product] fits into my weekly meal prep routine, which averages 35K views."

**Call to action:** End with one clear ask. "Would you be open to a quick call this week?" Do not attach a rate card in the first email.

## What NOT to do

Do not send mass copy-paste emails with no personalization. Do not lead with your subscriber count as if it is the only thing that matters. Do not write more than 150 words. Do not attach your media kit in the first message (offer to send it if they are interested). And do not follow up the same day if they do not respond.

*Tip: Keep a swipe file of pitches that got responses. Iterate on what works. When a brand reaches out through AdReady, you skip the cold pitch entirely and go straight to deal terms.*

## Chapter 4: The Follow-Up System

Most deals are won in the follow-up. Marketing managers are busy. A non-response does not mean "no." It almost always means "I have not gotten to it yet."

### The follow-up cadence

Touchpoint	Timing	What to Say
Initial pitch	Day 0	Your personalized pitch email
Follow-up #1	Day 4	Short bump. "Just floating this back up. Would love to chat."
Follow-up #2	Day 10	Add new value. Share a recent video or metric.
Follow-up #3	Day 21	Final touch. "Totally understand if timing is off. Happy to revisit next quarter."
Re-engage	Day 60+	New angle or seasonal pitch tied to a campaign moment.

Track every touchpoint in your pipeline spreadsheet. When a brand responds, move them to the next stage. When they go cold after three follow-ups, mark them as "revisit later" and move on.

## Chapter 5: Negotiation Basics

When a brand comes back interested, the negotiation starts. Here is how to handle it without leaving money on the table or scaring them off.

### Key rules

**Never accept the first offer.** Brands almost always have room to move up 15 to 30 percent. A simple "Thanks for the offer. Based on my typical rates and deliverables, I'd be closer to \$X. Is there flexibility?" works.

**Negotiate scope, not just price.** If they cannot increase budget, reduce deliverables. One video instead of a video plus three stories. Fewer revision rounds. Shorter exclusivity window.

**Get everything in writing.** Deliverables, deadlines, payment terms, usage rights, exclusivity period. Before you create anything, have a signed agreement or at minimum a detailed email confirming all terms.

**Payment terms matter.** Net-30 is standard. Push for 50% upfront on larger deals. Never deliver final content before payment terms are confirmed.

*Tip: When you close a deal through AdReady, payment is held in escrow before you start creating. You never chase an invoice or wonder if you are getting paid. The money is already secured.*  
[adready.app](https://adready.app)

## Chapter 6: Delivery and Getting Paid

This is where many creators fumble. You closed the deal, but sloppy delivery or unclear invoicing can damage the relationship and delay payment.

### Delivery checklist

Before you hit publish, confirm: the brand has approved the content, you have included all required disclosures (FTC guidelines), the correct links and promo codes are in place, and you have saved

proof of the deliverable (screenshot, analytics export) for your records.

## Getting paid

Send your invoice the day the content goes live. Include the brand name, deliverable description, agreed amount, and your payment details. Follow up on unpaid invoices at Day 7, Day 14, and Day 30. If you are managing more than a few deals per month, chasing invoices eats into your creative time fast.

*Tip: AdReady handles the entire payment flow. Funds are held in escrow when the deal is accepted, released automatically after the brand approves delivery, and deposited to your account within 48 hours. No invoicing. No chasing. You focus on creating. [adready.app](https://adready.app)*

## Chapter 7: Your Pipeline Spreadsheet

Everything above is useless if you are not tracking it. The companion spreadsheet that comes with this guide gives you a ready-made system. Here is how to use it.

### Pipeline stages

Stage	What It Means
Prospect	You identified the brand but have not reached out yet
Pitched	You sent your initial pitch email
In Conversation	The brand responded and you are discussing terms
Negotiating	You are working out rate, deliverables, or timeline
Agreed	Terms are confirmed, waiting on contract or brief
In Production	You are creating the content
Delivered	Content is live, waiting on payment
Paid	Invoice settled. Deal complete.
Lost / Revisit	Did not close. Note the reason for future reference.

Update your spreadsheet at least twice a week. Move deals through stages, log follow-up dates, and note any feedback brands give you. Over time, you will see patterns: which niches convert best, what pitch angles work, and which follow-up timing closes deals.

***Tip:** If you are using AdReady, you get a built-in deal dashboard that tracks every stage automatically. No spreadsheet needed for deals that come through the marketplace. Use the spreadsheet for your outbound pipeline and AdReady for inbound. Download the spreadsheet at [adready.app/resources](https://adready.app/resources)*

## Start Building Your Pipeline Today

You now have the framework. The spreadsheet template is ready for you to download and customize. But if you want to skip the manual prospecting and let brands come to you, create your free profile on AdReady.

[Create your free creator profile](https://adready.app/create-profile)

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The creator ad marketplace. Free for creators. Always.