The Negotiation *Playbook.*

The exact scripts I use with brands — refined across sponsorships with Razer, Logitech, Samsung, Microsoft, Nintendo and a dozen more, and from the other side of the table as the organizer hiring creators. **Copy them word for word, or make them yours. Either way: never guess again.**

I.

The First Reply — never name your number first

The person who says a number first anchors the deal. Brands almost always have a budget range before they message you — your job is to find its ceiling, not guess its floor.

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>
> *"Thanks for reaching out — I love what [brand] is doing and I think there's a real fit with my audience. To point you to the right package: what budget range did you have in mind for this campaign?"*

Why it works: "to point you to the right package" reframes the question as you helping them — not you being cagey. Most brands answer it.

II.

When they push you to quote — open at your ceiling

If they insist you go first, open at the **high end of your Rate Card range.** You can descend gracefully; you can never climb.

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>
> *"For a [format] on [platform], my rate is [YOUR HIGH NUMBER] — that includes one round of revisions and 30 days of the content staying live. If you're working with a tighter budget, tell me the number and I'll tell you honestly what I can deliver for it."*

The second sentence is the trap-escape: it keeps the conversation alive at lower budgets without you dropping your rate — you reduce *scope*, never *price per unit of work*.

III.

The Counter-Offer — when their number is below your floor

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> *"I appreciate the transparency. That's below where I can take this on — my floor for this format is [YOUR FLOOR]. What I can do at your budget is [smaller deliverable: a Story set instead of a Reel / a mention instead of a dedicated segment]. Would that work for this campaign?"*

Rule: your floor is a wall, not a suggestion. Brands remember creators who respect their own price — and they come back with better budgets. Creators who cave get remembered too, differently.

IV.

"We usually pay in product"

The most common trap in the industry. Product is a gift; exposure is weather. Neither pays rent.

COPY · PASTE · SEND

"I'd genuinely love to try the product — but my content rates are separate from gifting, because production time, editing, and my audience's trust have a fixed cost regardless of what's in the box. My rate for [format] is [NUMBER], and I'm happy to include the product as part of the story. Shall I send over the details?"

Exception you're allowed to make: genuinely early days on a platform, a product you'd buy anyway, and a brand logo that strengthens your media kit. Make it consciously, once — not as a habit.

V.

Charging for rights — where creators lose the most money

A post is one price. A post the brand reruns as an ad for six months is a different product entirely. Every extra right is a line item:

- **Usage rights** (they reuse your content in their own channels/ads): **+25% minimum**, time-boxed — "90 days of paid usage" — never perpetual by default.
- **Exclusivity** (you can't work with competitors for a period): **+30% per 30 days.** You're selling future income; price it like it.
- **Whitelisting / ads from your account: +20%.** Your face and handle carry the ad — that's your credibility on loan.

THE LINE THAT ADDS IT PAINLESSLY

"The content itself is [NUMBER]. If you'd like usage rights for your own channels or ads, that's +25% for 90 days — most brands take that option, it performs well."

VI.

The Follow-Up — silence is not a no

SEND AFTER 4–5 QUIET DAYS

"Hi [name] — circling back on this. My calendar for [month] is filling and I'd love to reserve the slot for [brand] while it's open. Should I hold it?"

Why it works: it follows up with scarcity instead of neediness. One follow-up like this, then one final gentle close a week later — then move on.

VII.

Red flags — walk away when you see these

- "We'll pay after we see how the content performs." — **Performance risk is their business model, not yours.** Deposits (30–50%) before production are normal.
- Perpetual, unlimited usage rights buried in a contract for a one-post fee.
- Approval rounds with no limit — cap revisions at one or two in writing.
- No written agreement at all. Even an email thread confirming deliverables, fee, timing, and rights counts. **No writing, no work.**
- Pressure to post within 24 hours "or the campaign closes." Real campaigns have real timelines.
