CREATOR PLAYBOOK · BRAND DEALS

MY FIRST BRAND DEAL PLAYBOOK

How a brand with **12M followers** paid me for 3 videos when I had **2K followers**, the mistakes that delayed my payment by 45 days, and the exact steps and emails to land your own deal.

2K
my followers when the brand reached out

12M
followers of the brand (Temu)

$120
for 3 videos

45
days to get paid, because of 3 avoidable mistakes

ABOUT ME

Karthik · @is2karthik

Tamil engineer in Finland · Avadi → Finland, 7,000 km · Tesla engineer. I help you get IT jobs in India & Europe.

INSIDE

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2 · Get deal-ready
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01 · THE REAL STORY

WHY THEY CHOSE ME WITH 2K FOLLOWERS

Temu reached out to me, not the other way round. They weren't buying reach. They were buying a **trusted voice in a clear niche**. These three things made me worth paying:

01

Niche > followers

A clear bio, “Get IT jobs in India & Europe”, told them exactly who watches me. A small, focused audience beats a big random one.

02

Saves > likes

My content gets saved and shared, not just liked. Saves mean people come back to it, and that's the signal brands care about.

03

Trust

A real journey, not ads. I show how I actually use a product. Audiences trust that, so brands do too.

What brands usually check before they message you

SIGNAL	WHAT THEY LOOK FOR	HOW TO SHOW IT
Niche fit	Does your audience match their customer?	Bio says who you help, in one line
Engagement quality	Saves, shares, comments that ask questions	Screenshot insights for your media kit
Audience location	Are your viewers in the countries they ship to?	Top countries from Instagram insights
Content quality	Clean hook, clear voice, good lighting and sound	Pin your 3 best reels
Consistency	Are you active, posting on a steady schedule?	Post regularly for at least 4 weeks before pitching
Brand safety	Nothing that could embarrass them	Keep the feed clean and on-topic

“1K–2K followers is enough. Small brands and affiliate programs want niche micro-creators.”

02 · BEFORE YOU PITCH

GET DEAL-READY

01 **Fix your bio: who you help + proof**

Example: **Tamil Engineer in Finland | Get IT Jobs in India & Europe.** One line on who it's for, one line of proof, one link.

02 **Post 3 niche reels that get saved**

Useful, specific, re-watchable: roadmaps, templates, “how I did X”. That's your portfolio.

03 **Switch to a professional (creator) account**

You need insights (saves, reach, audience countries) to prove your value.

04 **Make a 1-page media kit**

Who you are · niche · audience (age, top countries) · followers, average reach, saves · 3 best reels with links · what you offer (reel, story, UGC) · contact email.

05 **Use a separate business email**

Something like name.collabs@... Put it in your bio contact button so brands can find you.

03 · WHERE TO FIND BRANDS

PITCH BRANDS YOUR AUDIENCE ALREADY NEEDS

Start with what you actually use

Products already in your workflow are the easiest, most honest pitch. For a career and tech niche: resume and portfolio tools, online courses, laptops and gadgets, language-learning apps, travel eSIMs, money-transfer and banking apps for people moving abroad.

Brand creator & affiliate programs

Shopping platforms and many apps run creator programs with an application form (Temu and the Amazon Influencer Program are examples; availability depends on your country). Apply, and pitch their partnerships team too.

Follow the #ad trail

Search your niche for posts marked #ad or “Paid partnership”. A brand that already pays creators like you has budget. Pitch them a fresh angle.

Inbound DMs: check them first

Real brands use an official email or verified account and never ask you to pay. Ask for the brief and contract in writing before you film anything.

04 · THE PITCH

ANATOMY OF A PITCH THAT GETS REPLIES

Keep it short enough to read in 20 seconds on a phone, about 120 words. Every line has one job:

Subject	Brand + your handle + niche. They should know what it is before they open it.
Hello	The brand team or a real person's name (find it on LinkedIn).
Who you are	Name, handle and niche in one line.
Who watches	Your audience, described as *their* customer.
The idea	One concrete reel concept: hook → demo → result. Show you've already thought it through.
Proof	Link to your best reel + one real number (saves, shares or reach).
The ask	Product link, campaign goal and budget. Ask for budget: it starts the money conversation.
Sign-off	Name · handle · location · media kit link.

Your original template — works: keep this structure

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Subject: Collaboration | @your_handle — [Your niche, e.g. Career & Tech]
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Hi Team [Brand Name],
I'm [Name] — creator @[handle] — [Your niche]. My audience: [who they are, e.g. students looking for IT jobs].
I create real-use content — showing how I use the product in my workflow, with hook + demo + result.
Would love to try [Product] and create a reel for my audience.
Can you share the product link, campaign goal and budget?
Best, [Name] | @[handle] | [Location]
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Do

- Send one email per brand, personalised
- Name a product you'd really use
- Attach or link your media kit
- Follow up once after 5–7 days

Don't

- Copy-paste to 50 brands with “Dear Sir”
- Lead with your follower count
- Offer to work for free
- Send long paragraphs about yourself

05 · COPY-PASTE TEMPLATES

EMAILS FOR EVERY STEP

A · Cold pitch (improved) — Day 0

Subject: Reel idea for [Brand] × @handle — career & tech creator

Hi [Name / Team],

I'm Karthik, a Tamil engineer in Finland. On @is2karthik I help students and early-career engineers land IT jobs in India & Europe.

Why it fits: my audience is [who], the people who [use your product for X].

Idea: one reel showing how I use [Product] in my real [job search / workflow] — hook → demo → result.
Recent example: [reel link] ([N] saves).

Could you share the product link, campaign goal and budget? Media kit: [link]

Best, Karthik | @is2karthik | Finland

B · Follow-up — Day 5–7

Re: Reel idea for [Brand]

Hi [Name], just bringing this back to the top of your inbox. Happy to adapt the idea to your current campaign. Should I send it to someone else on the team?

Thanks, Karthik

C · Reply to a brand that DMs you — Inbound

Re: Collaboration

Hi [Name], thanks for reaching out! I'd love to hear more. Could you share the brief, deliverables, timeline, usage rights and budget? Media kit attached.

Best, Karthik

D · Quoting your rate — Negotiation

Re: Campaign details

Thanks for the brief! For [3 reels] my rate is [$X] total, including [1 round of edits]. Ad usage or exclusivity is quoted separately. Payment: [50% upfront / within 14 days of posting]. Does that work?

E · Payment follow-up — After posting

Invoice [#] — @handle × [Brand] campaign

Hi [Name], all [3] videos are live and the links are uploaded in the portal: [links]. Invoice [#] for [$X] was sent on [date]. Could you confirm the payment date? Thank you!

06 · PRICING & NEGOTIATION

NEVER WORK FOR FREE

$20-40

per video to start

A fair starting point at 1K–5K followers. Raise it after every deal.

+ %

product + commission

Fine for affiliate programs, as long as the product is useful to your audience.

✖

extras cost extra

Ad usage rights, exclusivity, extra edits and raw footage are each quoted separately.

Get these in writing before you film

- [ ] Deliverables (how many reels/stories, length)
- [ ] Posting dates and approval steps
- [ ] Number of revisions included
- [ ] Usage rights: organic only, or ads too? For how long?
- [ ] Exclusivity (no competitor deals for X days)
- [ ] Fee, currency, payment method
- [ ] Payment terms and due date
- [ ] The exact name and handle the payment goes to

07 · GET PAID FAST

3 MISTAKES THAT DELAYED MY PAYMENT 45 DAYS

1 · Code box

Show the brand name + your code (e.g. XXXX) on screen for **at least 5 seconds**, inside the box they give you.

2 · Background

No world-map stickers or posters in the video. It's a cultural issue for some brands and causes rejection.

3 · Username change

Don't change your Instagram handle after signing. Payment fails because the name doesn't match the contract.

Brand rules from my campaign

- [ ] Say the approved line exactly in the voiceover: **“Use my code to get some benefits in Temu.”** Don't say “discount”, “cheaper” or “price reduction”.
- [ ] Caption format: start with **#AD [Brand] Code: [Your code]** + your story + link. Also turn on Instagram's “Paid partnership” label, since ads must be clearly marked.
- [ ] After posting: upload the publication link in their portal and give heating (ad boost) authorization if asked.
- [ ] Read the full brief twice and screenshot every rule. Check your video against it before you post.

These rules were specific to my Temu campaign. Every brand has its own brief, so always follow the one you're given.

08 · YOUR 30-DAY PLAN

FROM 1K FOLLOWERS TO YOUR FIRST DEAL

WHEN	DO THIS	DONE WHEN
Week 1	Fix your bio (who you help + proof). Switch to a professional account. Set up a collabs email.	Bio reads in 3 seconds
Week 1–2	Post 3 niche reels built to be saved: templates, roadmaps, “how I did it”.	3 reels with saves
Week 2	Build a 1-page media kit with insight screenshots and your 3 best reels.	A PDF you can link
Week 3	List 10 brands you actually use or that already sponsor creators in your niche. Find a real contact for each.	10 names + emails
Week 3	Send 10 personalised pitches (template A). Apply to 2–3 creator or affiliate programs.	10 sent
Week 4	Follow up once (template B). Quote your rate (template D). Get the terms in writing.	First “yes”
After posting	Check the brief, upload links, send the invoice, chase politely (template E).	Paid ✓

Pitch tracker: copy this into a sheet

BRAND	CONTACT	SENT	FOLLOW-UP	STATUS	FEE

Niche + saves + trust. That's what brands pay for, not follower count.

Free CV template + roadmaps → link in bio **@is2karthik** · We grow together, across 18+ countries.