

Angela's Artist Advice

Angela Marie Eidenmiller is the ISSA Associate Director of Artist Relations. Over the past few years many of our Award Winning Artists have benefited from Angela's sage advice.

Why Independent Artists Can't Afford to Ignore TikTok Anymore!

Let's get this out of the way first.

If you're an independent musician who says, "TikTok isn't my thing," what you usually mean is:

- You don't want to dance
- You don't want to fake trends
- You don't want to feel silly
- You don't understand how it actually works

Good news — you don't need to do any of that.

TikTok isn't a dance app anymore - It's the largest music discovery engine on the planet, and for independent artists, it's the closest thing we've ever had to a level playing field.

TikTok Doesn't Care Who You Are — Only If People Care
Instagram and Facebook primarily show your content to people who already follow you.
TikTok shows your content to people who don't know you yet.
That single difference changes everything!

An artist with:

- Zero followers
- No label
- No manager
- No ad budget

…can still have a video seen by thousands — sometimes millions — if it connects.

TikTok's algorithm asks one question only:

- "Did this hold someone's attention?"

Not:

- How famous are you?
- How polished is your brand?
- How many followers do you have?

Independent artists excel here because authenticity beats polish every time.

A Real-World Example is the Independent Nashville Duo, Sons of Legion.

If you think meaningful growth takes years, Sons of Legion offer a reality check.
Without a major label or traditional industry machine, the Nashville-based duo leaned into TikTok using raw performance clips, storytelling, and personality-driven content.

I hear you saying, “Ang… “but I Don’t Know What to Post…” You don’t need to be clever. You need to be clear. What works every day:

- “I wrote this song after…”
- “This lyric hurts more than I expected…”
- “If you’ve ever felt like _, this song is for you”
- Acoustic clips over studio perfection
- First drafts over final versions
- Talking to the camera, not performing at it

TikTok rewards storytelling, not marketing. The Biggest Myth: “TikTok Is Just for Young Artists”. Nope! TikTok is full of:

- Country artists
- Americana storytellers
- Folk musicians
- Rock and Blues artists
- Legacy acts finding new fans!

Music lovers live there. Period.

And many of them actively want to support independent artists once they feel connected.

TikTok Isn’t the Goal — It’s the Door! TikTok isn’t about going viral for ego.

It’s about:

- Driving people to your email list
- Filling rooms
- Selling merch
- Growing your community
- Owning your audience

TikTok is discovery. You decide where that discovery leads.

Final Thought (Read This Twice)

Independent artists don’t fail because their music isn’t good enough. They fail because not enough people ever hear it. TikTok gives you a microphone that reaches far beyond your local scene — without asking who you know or how much money you have.

You don’t have to love TikTok.
You just have to let it work for you.
And that might be the most independent move of all!

Congratulations, ISSA Member,

You’re receiving this valuable information for free because you belong to the only organization that supports independent artists everyday, all year — all career long!

- No paywalls.
- No gatekeeping.
- No “figure it out on your own.” Not just an awards show in August-
- Just real support, real education, and a global community that wants you to win everyday!

ISSA proudly supports your success

Your friend,

Angela

Keep creating. Keep connecting. Keep contributing.& Start Tik-Toking

The results were staggering:

- Their TikTok following jumped from ~8,000 to 300,000+ in about 30 days spilling over to all their other social media platforms!!
- As of Today, their social footprint includes ~500,000 TikTok followers, ~670,000 on Instagram, and ~1 million on Facebook
- A six-figure fanbase built organically — largely powered by raw, unedited short-form video content, real connection with real people.

This wasn't luck. This was discovery at scale. ***What most artists miss is that they didn't stop at Followers.***

Here's the move that changed everything.

Before releasing their first album, Sons of Legion gave away music in exchange for fans' email addresses funneling followers to their website.

- Not streams.
- Not follows.
- Real Ownership!

By the time the album officially dropped, they had:

- A large, engaged email list
- A primed audience waiting for release day
- Direct access to fans — no algorithm required

When the album was released, multiple songs charted immediately.

That's not hype. That's audience activation.

1. TikTok created discovery.
2. Email created control.

The combination created momentum!

What Independent Artists Actually Gain From TikTok

Let's be practical. This isn't about vanity metrics.

TikTok gives independent artists:

1. New Fans (Not Just Views)
   - People don't follow perfection. They follow connection. Song stories, lyrics that hit, honest moments, humor, heartbreak, joy — this is your advantage.
2. Proof of Demand
   - A song gaining traction on TikTok is data. It's proof that real humans respond to your music — something booking agents, radio, and industry partners actually care about.
3. Momentum Without Permission
   - You don't need approval. You don't need a budget. You don't need to be "ready."
   - You just need to show up!
4. Long-Tail Life for Your Songs
   - On TikTok, a video can take off weeks or months later. Your catalog keeps working even when you're not.