BRAND PARTNERSHIP

TOOLKIT



AISHA PATTERSON

BREAST CANCER SURVIVOR.
ACTIVIST. LOVER OF GOOD
RESOURCES



HI, I'M AISHA PATTERSON.

I am a 5-year breast cancer survivor, patient advocate, and full-time content creator. I am also a wife, mom of four, and passionate storyteller who believes our lived experiences have the power to educate, empower, and create change. After sharing my breast cancer experience online over the last several years, I have had the opportunity to work with some of my dream brands, travel, and create content that supports the breast cancer community and yes, I made money along the way. Yes, I said money.

Because here's the thing: advocacy is very meaningful work, but meaningful work still has value and advocates deserve to be paid. Along the way, I have learned a lot about evaluating partnerships, pricing my services, negotiating opportunities, and ultimately creating content that is both impactful and authentic and I am excited to arm you with the tools you need to get started navigating working with brands.

I created this toolkit because I know how often breast cancer advocates are approached by brands, especially during the months leading up to October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Many of us are suddenly asked to share their stories, create content, or promote products without knowing what questions to ask, what their work is worth, or how to determine whether a partnership truly aligns with their values.

And I want you to know this:

YOUR STORY HAS VALUE.
YOUR LIVED EXPERIENCE IS EXPERTISE.
YOUR ADVOCACY HAS IMPACT.

Sharing your cancer journey is not simply creating content. It can require emotional energy, vulnerability, and the willingness to revisit some of the most difficult moments of your life in hopes of helping someone else. You deserve to be compensated for sharing your platform, your story, and your expertise.

Now, don't get me wrong. There is absolutely nothing wrong with choosing to donate your time and story to causes that matter deeply to you. In fact, many advocates, including myself, agree to unpaid opportunities because of the impact and how they align with our mission. But volunteering your expertise should be a choice, not an expectation.

This toolkit was created to help you confidently navigate brand partnerships, recognize opportunities that align with your values, advocate for fair compensation, and avoid partnerships that prioritize pink washing over ACTION.

My hope is that this resource helps more people affected by breast cancer step into advocacy with confidence because our voices matter, our experiences matter, and the work we do can save lives.

Let's get started.

BEFORE YOU SAY YES: NOT ALL DEALS ARE GOOD DEALS

If one brand or even 10 brands have reached out to you, congratulations!
Not because your value is measured by whether a brand notices you. Your value goes far beyond that. But this is exciting because it is an opportunity for your story to go farther, reach more people, and ultimately create an even greater impact.
Also, money in your pocket. Yes, we are going to aim for that too.

But listen when I say this: **Not all deals are good deals.**

Say it with me:

NOT ALL DEALS ARE GOOD DEALS.

In fact, especially during the months leading up to October and Breast Cancer Awareness Month,
I say no to the majority of opportunities that come into my inbox.

Not because every brand is bad. Not because every opportunity is wrong. But because every opportunity needs to be evaluated carefully.

I know how exciting it can feel when a brand reaches out. Especially after spending so much time sharing your story, educating others, and advocating for change. It can feel validating when a company says, “We want to work with you.”

But remember this:
Being chosen does not automatically mean it is the right opportunity.

Your story, your brand, and your relationship with your audience are VALUABLE.

Before saying yes, take a moment to make sure the partnership aligns with your values, your mission, and the community you represent.

Here are some questions to ask yourself when a brand reaches out.

BRAND PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST

DOES THIS BRAND ALIGN WITH MY PERSONAL VALUES?

Before agreeing to a partnership, take time to research the company to make sure they are who they say they are and that there are no concerns about their reputation or practices.

Check:

Their website

Social media channels

Previous campaigns

News articles or Google searches

A little bit of research will reveal who they are and what they value and it will be easy to see if they align with your values also.

Ask yourself:

Does this brand genuinely align with what I believe in? Do their actions match their messaging?

Are they supporting the breast cancer community beyond October?

Are they committed to meaningful action, or are they simply using breast cancer awareness as a marketing opportunity?

DOES THIS PARTNERSHIP ALIGN WITH ME, MY VALUES, AND MY AUDIENCE?

One of the biggest assets you have as an advocate is trust.

Your audience follows you because you are uniquely and beautifully YOU. They trust your story, your perspective, and your recommendations. If you start partnering with brands or products that do not align with who you are or what you believe in, your audience will notice.

Before saying yes, ask yourself:

Would I recommend this product or service if I was not being paid?

If the answer is no, that is a sign to pause and reconsider.

Does this provide value to the people who follow me?

Think about your audience. Would this partnership educate them, support them, make their lives easier, or align with something they care about? Would you want them to spend their hard earned money on it knowing that the girls have medical bills???

WOULD I FEEL COMFORTABLE ATTACHING MY NAME AND REPUTATION TO THIS?

As advocates, we are not just creating content. We are representing our experiences and the communities we serve.

Ask yourself:

Will my audience understand why I partnered with this brand?

Does this partnership feel natural and authentic?

Could this create confusion or damage the trust I have built with my audience?

Your reputation is one of your greatest assets. Protect it at all costs!!

For example, maybe a brand approaches you about promoting a new fragrance, and a portion of the proceeds supports one of your favorite nonprofits. That sounds great on the surface. But if your personal values are centered around clean beauty and you would not personally use or recommend the product, it may not be the right fit.

And that is okay.

A partnership can be a great opportunity and still not be the right opportunity for you. Either way, rest knowing that you are on the right track and brands will continue to take notice of the great work you're doing!

WHY AM I SAYING YES TO THIS PARTNERSHIP?

Take a moment and really think about your answer.

Are you saying yes because:

The partnership supports your mission?

You believe in the product or service?

It will help more people?

It helps you build your portfolio or experience?

It feels exciting because you love the brand?

There is no wrong answer. Sometimes the answer is simply, "I want to make money," and that is okay. Advocates deserve to be compensated.

But get specific about your yes. If you are truly excited about the opportunity and it feels aligned, that is a good sign. If something feels off or you do not have peace about moving forward, take a moment to ask yourself why. It's okay to take time to think and move forward when you feel confident in your answer.

BEFORE SAYING YES, ASK YOURSELF:

Does this partnership help me move closer to the impact I want to make?

PINK WASHING RED FLAGS: WHAT TO WATCH FOR

What is pinkwashing? According to breastcanceraction.com, Pinkwashing is a company or organization that claims to care about breast cancer by promoting a pink ribbon product but at the same time produces, manufactures, and/or sells products containing chemicals that are linked to the disease.

Here are some red flags to consider:

A pink ribbon does not automatically equal meaningful action. As advocates, it is important to look beyond the marketing and evaluate whether a company's actions truly support people affected by breast cancer.

The donation sounds good, but the math isn't mathing. A company may donate a small amount per purchase while generating significant revenue from the campaign. Look at the bigger picture and consider whether the contribution feels meaningful and transparent. Personally anything less than 15% is usually a no for me.

- **The donation sounds good, but the math isn't mathing.** A company may donate a small amount per purchase while generating significant revenue from the campaign. Look at the bigger picture and consider whether the contribution feels meaningful and transparent. Personally anything less than 15% is usually a no for me.

- **They want your story, but they don't value your expertise.** Sharing your breast cancer experience requires time, vulnerability, and emotional energy. A free product, small gift card, or "exposure" is not always an appropriate exchange for your platform and lived experience. Use my templates in this toolkit to turn a gifted campaign into a paid campaign.

- **They offer exposure instead of compensation.** Exposure does not pay your bills. While some advocates choose unpaid opportunities because they align deeply with their mission, compensation should be discussed when a brand is asking for your time, content, and expertise.

- **They are not transparent about their impact.** Look for clarity around donations, partnerships, and where funds are going. Vague statements about "supporting breast cancer or a portion of the proceeds" should lead to more questions.

QUICK REMINDER:

Not every imperfect campaign is automatically pink washing. Some companies genuinely want to make an impact and are still learning. Your role as an advocate is not to immediately assume the worst, but to ask thoughtful questions and make informed decisions.

The goal is not to say yes to every opportunity or no to every brand.

The goal is to build partnerships that honor your story, your audience, and the breast cancer community. Now let's talk about the GREEN FLAGS! What Makes a Meaningful Partnership? The best brand partnerships are not simply the ones that pay well or have a recognizable name.

The most meaningful partnerships happen when there is alignment between the brand's mission, your personal values, and the impact you are trying to create.

For me, the sweet spot is when a brand does three things:

They invest in the causes I care about.

They recognize my lived experience as expertise and honor my time and rates.

They respect me as a patient advocate and partner.

That is when a collaboration becomes more than a transaction. It becomes an opportunity to walk alongside an organization and create change together.

For example, one of the areas I am most passionate about is advocating for young women and Black women affected by breast cancer. These communities face unique challenges, and increasing awareness, education, and access are causes that are deeply important to me.

When an organization is actively investing in these areas and their mission aligns with mine, those opportunities feel different. I am not just creating content for a brand. I am using my platform to amplify work that I genuinely believe in and that kind of work will have me dancing and smiling ear to ear.

That is the type of partnership I look for.

Here is an example work flow between an advocate and the brand. Not all will look exactly like this but this will guide you so you know what to expect.

EXAMPLE BRAND PARTNERSHIP WORKFLOW

1. A brand reaches out via DM or email to express interest in working together.

2. Research the company. Visit their website, social media channels, and do a quick Google search to ensure their values, mission, and reputation align with yours.

3. Decide whether the partnership is a good fit. If you're interested, move the conversation to email (if it started in DMs) and request any additional details that weren't included.

4. The brand will typically outline the campaign, requested deliverables, and may ask for your media kit and/or rates.

💡 **Pro Tip:** Before sending your rates, ask whether the campaign includes usage rights or exclusivity. These can significantly impact your pricing, and it's much easier to discuss them upfront than renegotiate after receiving the contract.

5. If you're interested in moving forward, send your media kit and rates. Keep in mind that it may take some time to hear back. Brands often have multiple approvals happening behind the scenes. If you haven't heard back after a reasonable amount of time, it's perfectly acceptable to send a polite follow-up.

6. The brand may accept your rates, negotiate, or let you know the campaign isn't the right fit. Negotiation is a normal part of the process, so don't be afraid to advocate for yourself.

7. Once both parties agree on the scope of work and compensation, the brand will send a contract. Review it carefully before signing.
Never begin work without a signed agreement.

8. After the contract is signed, the brand will usually send a creative brief outlining the campaign goals, messaging, deadlines, and content requirements.

9. Some brands may request content concepts or a script before you begin filming. My best advice is to be as detailed as possible and stick closely to what is approved to help avoid revisions or miscommunication later.

10. Create your content and submit it by the agreed-upon deadline.

11. Complete any requested revisions.

💡 **Pro Tip:** Include a limit of up to two rounds of revisions in your contract. This helps set clear expectations and protects you from endless revision requests.

12. Once the content is approved, work with the brand to finalize the posting date and time.

13. Publish the content according to the agreed-upon schedule. Be sure to follow all FTC disclosure guidelines as well as any requirements outlined by the brand.

14. As soon as your content goes live, email the brand with the live link and ask them to review it. In my experience, it's much easier to make any necessary changes shortly after posting than weeks later, when you risk losing engagement by deleting and reposting.

15. Send your invoice and any required tax documents (such as a W-9 in the U.S.).

16. If requested or outlined in the contract, send your campaign analytics after the agreed-upon reporting period.

17. Get paid! 🎉

Tip: If you enjoyed working with the brand, send a quick thank-you email and let them know you'd love to collaborate again in the future. Some of my favorite partnerships started with a single campaign and turned into long-term relationships.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR VALUE + CREATING A STARTING RATE

Creating your pricing can be one of the most overwhelming parts of navigating brand partnerships because there is no universal formula for determining your rates.
If you do a quick search on how to price yourself as a creator, you will find a wideeeee variety of answers. Some people recommend using pricing calculators. Others suggest formulas based only on follower count. While these methods can be a helpful starting point, they should only be that: **a starting point.**
Your value is not determined by your follower count alone. As a breast cancer advocate, you bring something unique to the table: your lived experience, your expertise, your ability to educate, and the trust you have built with your community.

The challenge is that every partnership is different. The type of content, number of deliverables, timeline, usage rights, exclusivity, and your own experience can all impact what a fair rate looks like.

This is why I don't believe there is a simple formula that can tell every advocate exactly what to charge.

Instead, my goal is to help you understand the factors that influence pricing and give you tools to help you make a more informed decision.

One tool you can use is AI. While AI should never determine your worth, it can be a helpful resource to organize the details of a campaign, identify factors that may impact your rate, and provide a starting range to consider.

Remember: AI is a tool, not the expert. You are.

Here's a prompt that you can copy and paste into the AI platform of your choice and it will give you a range.

Read the prompt in the next page →

AI PROMPT

I am a breast cancer advocate and content creator evaluating a potential brand partnership. I would like help creating a starting rate range based on the details of this opportunity. Please consider the following information:

My platforms:
Follower counts:
Engagement rates (if available):

Audience demographics:
My niche/expertise:
Past brand partnership experience:
Brand:

Campaign details:
Requested deliverables:

Timeline:
Compensation offered (if any):
Content usage:

How does the brand plan to use my content?
(Example: reposting on their social channels, website, email marketing, paid advertising, whitelisting, etc.)
Usage length: How long will the brand have permission to use my content?

Exclusivity:

Will I be restricted from working with similar brands or organizations? If so, for how long? I have also attached the campaign brief and any additional supporting information.

Based on this information, please provide:

A suggested starting rate range to consider.

The factors that are influencing this range.

Any additional details that may impact pricing.

Please remember this is only a starting point for research and should not replace my own judgment, negotiation, or professional advice.

Then in your guide, I would add a small section before the prompt:

TWO THINGS THAT CAN SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACT YOUR RATE

Usage Rights

Usage rights determine how and where a brand can use the content you create.

For example, there is a big difference between:

A brand sharing your Reel on their Instagram page

A brand using your video in paid advertisements

A brand using your content on their website, email campaigns, or future marketing.

The more ways a brand can use your content, the more valuable those rights become.

Exclusivity

Exclusivity means a brand limits your ability to work with certain other companies or organizations for a specific period of time.

Before agreeing, ask:

Who am I restricted from working with?

How long does the restriction last?

Does this limit future opportunities?

Both usage rights and exclusivity can impact your compensation, so they should be considered before agreeing to a rate.

TEMPLATES + SCRIPTS

Copy + Paste Templates

1. MOVING A BRAND CONVERSATION FROM DM TO EMAIL

When to use this:
Brands often reach out through social media DMs, but partnership conversations can quickly become difficult to manage. Moving the conversation to email creates a more professional process and makes it easier to keep track of important details.

Template:

Hi [Brand Name]!
Thank you so much for reaching out. I would love to learn more about this opportunity and better understand the campaign details.

Would you mind sending me an email at [your email] so we can continue the conversation there?

I look forward to learning more about the partnership and how we may be able to work together.

Thank you!

[Your Name]

2.ASKING A BRAND FOR MORE CAMPAIGN DETAILS

When to use this:
Before agreeing to a partnership, it is important to understand exactly what the brand is looking for. Having clarity around the campaign details will help you determine if the opportunity is aligned and accurately price your work.

Template:
Hi [Brand Name]!
Thank you so much for reaching out. I would love to learn more about this opportunity and better understand the goals for this campaign.

Could you please share more details regarding:

- Campaign goals and key messaging
- Requested deliverables
- Timeline and important deadlines
- Budget allocated for this partnership
- How the content will be used (social media, website, paid advertising, etc.)
- Any exclusivity requirements or restrictions

Once I have a better understanding of the campaign, I would be happy to discuss next steps.

Thank you so much!
[Your Name]

TEMPLATES + SCRIPTS

Copy + Paste Templates

3.TURNING A GIFTED OPPORTUNITY INTO A PAID PARTNERSHIP

When to use this:
A brand reaches out offering a product in exchange for content, but the requested deliverables require more time, effort, or expertise than the product value provides.

Template:

Hi [Brand Name]!

Thank you so much for reaching out. I would love the opportunity to explore a partnership because I believe this could be a great fit for my audience.

At this time, I am not accepting gifted partnerships that require dedicated content creation.

However, I would love to discuss a paid collaboration. My rate for [deliverable] is [$___]. I am happy to send you a copy of my media kit with additional information about my audience, previous partnerships, and the value I bring to brand collaborations.

Please let me know if this aligns with your campaign budget. I would love to learn more about your goals and discuss how we can create meaningful content together.

Thank you!
[Your Name]

4.PITCHING A BRAND YOU LOVE

When to use this:
You do not have to wait for brands to find you. If a brand, nonprofit, or healthcare organization aligns with your values, you can introduce yourself and pitch a potential partnership.

Template:

Hi [Brand Name]!

My name is [Your Name], and I am a breast cancer advocate and content creator. I am a huge fan of [specific product, initiative, or mission] and especially appreciate [specific detail about the brand].

I would love to explore a potential partnership and share a few ideas that I think would resonate with my audience and support your goals.

Could you please connect me with the person who manages partnerships or creator collaborations?

Thank you so much! I look forward to connecting.
[Your Name]

TEMPLATES + SCRIPTS

Copy + Paste Templates

5.FOLLOWING UP AFTER NO RESPONSE

When to use this:
Brands often have multiple approvals and conversations happening behind the scenes. A polite follow-up is professional and shows continued interest.

Template:

Hi [Brand Name]!

I hope you are doing well. I wanted to follow up and see if there were any updates regarding the potential partnership opportunity.

I know things can get busy, so I completely understand if there have been delays. I would love to continue the conversation if this opportunity is still active.

Please let me know if there is any additional information I can provide.

Thank you so much!

[Your Name]

ONE THING I WOULD ADD AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS SECTION:

A note before using these templates:
These messages are meant to give you a starting point. The best partnerships happen when you bring your own personality and voice into the conversation. Customize them so they sound like you.

BRAND PARTNERSHIP GLOSSARY

Brand Partnership
A collaboration between an advocate/content creator and a brand or organization where both parties work together toward a shared content goal.

Campaign
A planned marketing initiative with a specific goal, timeline, messaging, and content requirements.

Deliverables
The specific items you agree to provide as part of a partnership. Examples include a Reel, TikTok video, Instagram Stories, blog post, photos, or other content.

Creative Brief, Campaign brief or simply brief
A document provided by a brand that outlines campaign goals, key messages, required talking points, deadlines, content expectations, and other important details.

Media Kit
A document that shares information about you as a creator, including your audience demographics, platforms, previous partnerships, experience, and partnership opportunities. You an create one on Canva by search and plugging in the information.

Brand Guidelines
Requirements provided by a brand that explain how they want their product, messaging, logos, or campaign details represented. This is usually included in the brief

Gifting / Gifted Partnership
A partnership where a brand provides a free product or service in exchange for potential exposure or content. Gifted partnerships may or may not include payment.

PR Package / PR Box
A product or package sent by a brand without guaranteed content requirements. Sharing the product is typically optional unless you agree otherwise.

Paid Partnership
A collaboration where a brand compensates you for creating content, sharing your platform, or providing your expertise.

UGC (User Generated Content)
Content created by a creator that a brand uses on its own channels, such as its website, social media, advertisements, or email marketing. UGC does not typically require the creator to post the content on their own platform.

Usage Rights
Permission given to a brand to use your content beyond the original post. This may include use on the brand's social media, website, email campaigns, advertisements, or other marketing materials.

Organic Usage
When a brand shares your content on its own platforms without using it as paid advertising.

Paid Usage / Advertising Rights
When a brand uses your content in paid advertisements. This typically has additional value because the brand is using your content to promote their business beyond your original audience. You should charge for paid usage.

Whitelisting / Partnership Ads
When a brand uses your social media content or account permissions to run advertisements through your profile or identity. You should charge for whitelisting and partnership ads.

Exclusivity
A requirement that limits your ability to work with certain brands, products, organizations, or competitors for a specific period of time. You should charge for exclusivity because it directly affects your income.

Ambassador Program
A longer-term partnership where a creator represents and promotes a brand over a set period of time.

Affiliate Partnership
A partnership where you earn compensation based on sales, clicks, sign-ups, or other actions completed through your unique link or discount code.

Call To Action (CTA)
A direction given to your audience encouraging them to take an action, such as visiting a website, signing up, purchasing a product, or learning more.

Engagement Rate
A measurement that shows how actively your audience interacts with your content through actions such as likes, comments, shares, saves, and clicks. You can calculate your engagement rate via - https://thesocialcat.com/tools/instagram-engagement-rate-calculator.

Analytics / Insights
Data that shows how your content performed, including reach, views, engagement, clicks, saves, shares, and audience information.

Revision
A requested change to content after it has been submitted to a brand for review. Many partnerships include a specific number of revisions.

Contract / Agreement
A legally binding document that outlines the expectations of the partnership, including deliverables, payment, usage rights, timelines, and other terms.

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Invoice
A document requesting payment for completed work. It typically includes your services, payment amount, due date, and payment information. You can download a free invoice template on www.canva.com

W-9
A tax form commonly requested by U.S. companies before paying independent contractors. You can download a copy here - https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf

FTC Disclosure
Requirements from the Federal Trade Commission that creators must follow when sharing paid partnerships, gifted products, or other compensated relationships. Disclosures should clearly communicate the relationship between the creator and brand.

Pink Washing
A term used to describe when a company uses breast cancer awareness messaging or imagery primarily for marketing purposes without meaningful commitment, transparency, or action toward the cause.

Link in Bio
A temporary placement of a brand's website, product link, campaign page, or call-to-action link in the creator's social media profile. Because this uses valuable real estate on your platform and can impact your audience experience, it may be considered an additional deliverable and should be included when discussing partnership terms.

THANK YOU!

I hope this toolkit helped you feel more confident navigating brand partnerships and gave you practical tools to evaluate opportunities, ask better questions, and advocate for the value of your work.

Most importantly, I hope you walk away knowing this:

Your story has value.
Your lived experience is expertise.
Your advocacy has impact.

Your voice has the power to educate, empower, and create change within the breast cancer community and beyond. Never forget that meaningful work is still valuable work. Whether you choose to partner with brands, nonprofits, healthcare organizations, or simply continue sharing your story with your community, your contribution matters.

Keep using your voice. Keep asking questions. Keep advocating.

YOU GOT THIS!

If you have questions,
I would love to connect.
Follow along:
@aisha_patterson
on all platforms