



**Understanding 360° deals and their impacts on  
upcoming artists**

**By**

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## INTRODUCTION

It is 2010 and a young Rihanna just received a recording contract that was about to change everything for her<sup>1</sup>. From positioning to marketing, from touring to collaborations with top artists, everything was provided for her, giving her a 360° revolution in her career and leverage to thrive in such a competitive industry as the American music industry. This development however came with a twist: the record label takes a fixed percentage from all revenue streams ranging from royalties to brand ambassadorship deals, fashion, and personal appearance.

This is the concept of a 360° deal, which can be defined as an all-encompassing deal that invests heavily in the artist and recoups the advances and investments from all revenue streams. In simpler terms, a 360° deal is an all-in contract between a recording artist and a record label where the label goes ahead to finance, market and promote the artist, creating a structure where the label earns from all earning platforms such as merchandise, publishing, public performance, tours, brand endorsement deals amongst others.<sup>2</sup>

From the onset, 360° deals have gotten quite a bad reputation in the music industry as a lot of people outside the industry believe it is morally wrong for the artist to do all the work while the record label has a higher influence on revenue streams of artists, particularly those of emerging artists.<sup>3</sup> Despite the negative attribution of 360° deals, there are equally some notable benefits that the emergence of 360° has provided to both artistes and record labels alike. Thus, for some time now, both the academia and media have been replete with debates about the pros and cons of 360 deals.

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<sup>1</sup>David “Report; Rihanna inks new recording contract,” <[thatgrapejuice.net](http://thatgrapejuice.net) > 01-08-2026. Accessed 1st April 2026

<sup>2</sup>Soundcharts Team, ‘What is a 360 deal? Music industry definition ‘ <[soundcharts.com](http://soundcharts.com) > 01-30-2026

<sup>3</sup>‘Why artist should do a 180 on 360 deals’ <[www.billboard.com](http://www.billboard.com) > 22-3-10 accessed on 31st March,2026

## PROS AND CONS OF 360° DEALS

The 360° deal model has remained one of the most controversial structures in the modern music industry. While it has been praised as a comprehensive business and marketing framework capable of transforming raw talent into global brands, it has also attracted criticism for its potential to tilt economic power heavily in favour of record labels, particularly where emerging artists are concerned. 360° deals as mentioned earlier have earned a bad reputation due to how they have been perceived by the public. To an average person, it's seen as an avenue for exploitation<sup>4</sup>, a structure where the label gets more while the artist is left with peanuts, a structure where the artist has nothing to show for his /her works apart from a shiny villa (sometimes) and the stage name which in some instances doesn't belong to them.

A typical example that fueled this line of thought was the G worldwide and Kizz Daniel's 360° arrangement. As reported by Pulse NG,<sup>5</sup> the arrangement involves placing Kiss Daniel on a ₦50,000 (Fifty thousand naira) salary and proscribing him from using his stage name without the company's consent. The artist also alleged against a lack of financial transparency, specifically that the label refused to disclose his earnings. The several concerns by the artist and his legal team had led to constant review of the contract which could barely salvage the conflict and degenerating to legal actions filed in court by both parties.

Although the case proceedings were shielded from the public view, the story left an imprint on the reputation of 360 deals in the Nigerian music industry. Hence, the pertinent question would be "what is the essence of such a deal?" A properly managed 360° deal is more of a bridge between marketing, business and talent where exploited properly by both parties.

One of the major advantages of a 360° deal lies in the investment breadth provided by the record label. Unlike traditional recording contracts that are largely limited to music production and distribution, a 360° deal allows the label to deploy capital, expertise, and industry connections across multiple aspects of an artist's career. This

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<sup>4</sup>Akuia Mase '360 deals, and how they can help or harm' < [www.fordharmip.org](http://www.fordharmip.org) > 19-11-21

<sup>5</sup>Jonathan, "The untold story of singer's time at G-Worldwide, contract issues, collaborations and industry problems" <https://www.pulse.ng/story/kiss-daniel-the-untold-story-of-singers-time-at-g-worldwide-contract-issues-2024080105210276243> 28-12-25. Accessed 1st April 2026

includes branding, marketing, tour support, merchandise production, public relations, media placements, and strategic collaborations.<sup>6</sup>

For an upcoming artist, this level of support can be career defining. The label assumes much of the financial risk associated with breaking a new act, often advancing funds that cover recording costs, lifestyle support, promotion, and visibility in an increasingly competitive market. In return, the artist gains access to infrastructure that would ordinarily be unattainable without significant personal capital or industry leverage.

Furthermore, a properly structured 360° deal can provide career coherence. By centralizing management, marketing, and monetization efforts, the label is incentivized to build the artist as a long-term brand rather than focusing solely on short-term music sales. When transparently managed, this alignment of interests can accelerate growth, visibility, and commercial success.

Despite its advantages, the 360° deal carries inherent risks, particularly for emerging artists who may lack bargaining power, industry knowledge, or competent legal representation. The most common criticism is that such deals allow record labels to participate in revenue streams they did not directly create, including a share in publishing, brand endorsements, touring income, and personal appearances.

Where contracts are poorly drafted or aggressively structured, artists may find themselves surrendering significant percentages of income across all platforms while retaining limited creative or financial control. Issues such as lack of financial transparency, restrictive intellectual property clauses, excessive recoupment thresholds, and long contractual terms often compound these concerns<sup>7</sup>.

Additionally, because labels typically recover their investments before artists see meaningful profit, an artist may appear successful on the surface with high visibility, strong branding, and public recognition, and yet remain financially constrained due to prolonged recoupment obligations. In extreme cases, this imbalance can lead to disputes, strained relationships, and eventual litigation, as has been witnessed in several high profile industry conflicts such as the Kizz Daniel's saga earlier mentioned.

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<sup>6</sup> 'What is a 360 deal in music? Pros, cons and what to look out for' <[musosop.com](https://musosop.com)> accessed 1st April 2026

<sup>7</sup>Nic Burger '10 common mistakes musicians make when signing contract' <[www.musicianin africa.com](http://www.musicianin africa.com)> 23-11-15 accessed 1st April 2026

Ultimately, the value of a 360° deal does not lie in the structure itself but in how it is negotiated, implemented, and managed. When entered into with full disclosure, fair revenue splits, defined scope of rights, and clear exit mechanisms, a 360° deal can serve as a powerful bridge between talent, marketing, and sustainable commercial success.

Conversely, when approached without adequate understanding or legal guidance, it can become a restrictive arrangement that undermines the artist's long-term growth. Overall, when utilized properly, 360° deals are not scams but a shot at stardom.

### **IMPACT OF A 360° DEAL ON AN UPCOMING ARTIST.**

To an upcoming artist who is ready to take the world by storm, a 360° deal is a leverage that can help transform a talent's career. But here is the catch: when it is not properly managed, funds disappear, trust gets broken and relationships shatter.

The perception of many is that incompetent artists are prone to getting the unfair part of the deal due to their burning thirst for success which might lead to desperation, improper documentation, and inadequate or lack of legal representation. While this is not totally false, an emerging artist with real and legal guidance, full understanding of such deals will most likely have a better chance than the first person.

In the music industry, 360° deals have become a game-changing tool for emerging artists, offering comprehensive support that goes beyond traditional record deals. While the financial support and industry expertise can be beneficial, it is important to think about long term goals when it comes to the industry because music is an investment. Thus, 360° deals must be negotiated on a fair ground.

For an emerging artist to fully exploit the bright side of a 360° deal, it is beneficial to employ the services of an entertainment lawyer as they are better equipped with requisite knowledge on how such deals should be drafted, red flags to look out for and most importantly, a negotiation partner and a voice when dealing with labels and recording companies.

### **THE PLACE OF 360° DEALS IN TODAY'S NIGERIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY**

360° deals are still very much in place in the current Nigerian music industry<sup>8</sup> as more and more talents get to sign them from time to time. However, there is a debate

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<sup>8</sup> Deborah Oyedijo 'Understanding 360 deals in today's music industry' <[afrocritik.com](http://afrocritik.com)> 31-03-26 accessed 1st April 2026.

on whether record labels gravitate towards artists with a substantial amount of influence and fame thereby reducing the spotlight on emerging artists on the stage.

Notwithstanding, 360° deals are still prevalent in contemporary musical space, and their impacts on emerging artists in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Considering the large pool of upcoming artists seeking to find their bearing in the music industry despite limited financial resources and career exposure, 360° deals are a practical business strategy for labels and artists alike in the Nigeria creative space.

It is however sad that despite the many benefits 360° deals can potentially offer, many of such deals have gone wrong, eroding years of hard work, inputs and dedication. This is why artists most especially emerging ones should understand the nitty gritty of the industry, their might and place in the contract and the return they are entitled to. They definitely cannot do this alone; they would always require the services of an entertainment creative lawyer to guide them through every stage of the contract negotiation.

## **CONCLUSION**

While it is settled that 360 deals might have gotten a bad reputation due to the way they has been relayed by the media, proper guidance and full understanding of what is being presented helps in guiding the path of the artist while giving them the proper leverage they crave for. It is important to point out that while a 360° deal is beneficial to the artist career when exploited properly, upcoming acts and talents are also advised to work on their craft and build a lasting fan base as this will give them a better stance when dealing with record labels or publishing and distribution records.