

Getting Booked at a Festival

Now that we have talked about getting bookings at a club, it is time to talk about festivals. First, you must understand that the objective of a festival is a little different than that of a club. The long-term goal is to maintain a clear musical identity and build a sustainable community of loyal and engaged visitors. But their short-term objective is to sell out the next edition. A festival only has one or a few moments in a year to make money, and the competition in the festival season is enormous! So a festival needs many headliners to sell out. The big difference with the club is that festivals have many stages and many time slots to fill. But it also has a lot more tickets to sell than a club, most of the time. A common way for a festival to attract a large enough audience is by working together with hosting partners. These are usually the organization's labels or other platforms doing well in clubs or online and provide festivals more channels to communicate with the crowd.

Another critical factor in the programming of a festival is the timeline. Festivals usually try to start confirming headliners a year and a half in advance. They need a long preparation time to sell out all the tickets, and everyone is trying to book the hottest names, of course. Programming usually starts top down. So when the headline slots are sealed, they will round off the lineup by confirming the rest of the artists—usually the warm-up DJs and the local rising stars. As a DJ, you need to make sure you are noticed before or during this time; otherwise, you won't have much festival season.

To do: Check out national festival programs to see the headliners, the rising stars, and the young talents. Also, check out if there are any hosting partners and why they are hosting a stage.

It is great to be noticed by a talent buyer. But sometimes you need to help them a little. It will be easier if you have a subscription to our VIP plan. In that case, we take care of your bookings. Here are a few tips from Tom van Wijk (Director of Music at ID&T / Air Events)

- Hand over a USB with your music or set to a talent buyer.
- Keep talent buyers up to date with a monthly or quarterly update about your career.
- Find a job at your local club or festival so you can come in contact with talent buyers.
- Hard work pays off. Maybe not immediately but in the end, it will give something back to you.
- Always make sure your sets and latest tracks are available online. You never know who is gonna listen to them.