

MUSIC MARKETING PLAYBOOK

Five pages for independent artists: distribution, release plans, labels & sync, and a promo engine that compounds. Built for desks — not daydreams.

ADMIT ONE ARTIST

FREE FIELD MANUAL

Distribution · Plans · Pitch · Promo

FREE

Get on DSPs without the chaos

Distribution is infrastructure, not marketing. Partners like CD Baby, DistroKid, and TuneCore deliver your masters and metadata to streaming platforms and digital stores, then collect royalties. You keep your rights unless you sign them away elsewhere.

Choose for how you release

- Volume artists: compare annual unlimited plans and delivery speed.
- Rare releasers: per-release fees can beat subscriptions.
- Read live royalty terms — flat fee vs percentage models differ.
- Only pay for extras you will use (publishing admin, Content ID, etc.).

Prep before you upload

- WAV/AIFF masters from your engineer — not low-bitrate proxies.
- Artwork typically 3000×3000, RGB, clean of banned storefront text.
- Consistent artist name spelling across every release.
- ISRC/UPC (generate or reuse), explicit flags, contributors, genre.
- Street date with enough buffer for QC and pitching windows.

Submit → verify

Create the release, upload audio/art, enter track metadata, select territories and stores, then review slowly. After submit: watch QC emails, confirm dashboard status, spot-check DSPs on street date, and test your smart link. Archive the release ID.

Boring distribution is successful distribution. Lock this so campaign energy hits a live release.

Plan the campaign before the drop

A one-to-three page brief beats a scramble. Write positioning, audience, goals, assets, timeline, channels, budget, and risks — then execute.

Positioning (one sentence)

Who it is for, what it feels like, why now. If friends paraphrase it differently, tighten it. That sentence filters creative and press angles.

Audience layers

- Core: existing listeners / list / ticket buyers — size honestly.
- Adjacent: fans of comparable artists — collab and lookalike targets.
- Discovery: cold reach — cap budget and expectation.

Goals that can fail

Pick 2–3 measurable outcomes with dates: list growth, pre-saves, save rate, UGC count, press placements, merch. “Buzz” is not a goal.

Four phases

- Seed (T-6 to T-4 wks): upload, links, film batch, soft announce.
- Heat (T-4 to T-1): pre-saves, cadence content, pitch, ad tests.
- Peak (street week): coordinated posts, email/SMS, reply mode, boost winners.
- Extend (wks 2–6): remixes/live cuts, secondary press, convert to list.

Channels & budget

One primary + two support channels. Spend first on compoundable assets, then warm retargeting, then tiny cold tests. Track cost per pre-save and email. Keep a risk register so launch week stays calm.

Get pitchable — labels and sync

Labels buy risk reduction: traction plus taste. Sync teams buy cleared, searchable emotion on deadline. Build proof in public, then pitch like a partner.

Proof sheet (one page)

- DSP trends across multiple releases — not one spike.
- Owned audience: email/SMS size and engagement.
- Social completion/shares; live tickets; press; even small syncs.
- Next-90-days plan so momentum is visible.

Pitch kit

One-sheet, EPK (bios + photos), private stream links, catalog map. Clean filenames. Short cold emails: who, one proof point, one link, one ask. One follow-up max.

Deal awareness

Know album, license, distro-plus, JV, and 360 shapes at a high level. Write non-negotiables (masters, term, options) before paper arrives. Hire an entertainment attorney when terms appear. Sometimes strong distribution + PR beats a weak deal.

Sync-ready habits

- Clean edits, instrumentals, stems; accurate metadata; cleared samples.
- Tag mood, BPM, key, vocal/instrumental for supervisors.
- Routes: libraries, agents, publishers, composer/editor relationships.
- Hooks in the first 15–30 seconds; flexible structures that cut to picture.

Never fake numbers. Cadence wins: release → document → refresh kit → pitch short list → improve music → repeat.

Socials, email, PR — one machine

Four loops: Attention → Capture → Conversion → Amplification. Most artists stall on Attention. Capture (email/SMS) is the hinge that makes releases compound.

Social & YouTube

Batch-film 10–20 clips per session. Hooks in second one. Pillars: performance, process, personality. One CTA per post. YouTube holds visualizers, lives, and SEO; Shorts point back to full assets.

Owned channels

Lead magnets, bio-link capture, merch-table QR, peer list swaps. Emails sound human — one primary link. SMS only for street morning and onsales.

PR & creators

25–40 targeted outlets; personalized first line; one-sheet + stream + embed. One follow-up. Seed creators with 15s/30s cuts and a two-sentence brief. College/internet radio still matters in niches.

Paid & scoreboard

Test tiny, scale winners, retarget warm first. Kill ads that miss cost-per-action targets. Weekly sheet: posts, email growth, smart-link clicks, PR, ad CPA, one fan quote.

Street-week sketch

Mon teaser email · Tue creators · Wed YouTube · Thu press bump · Fri all-hands + SMS · weekend UGC. Assign names to days. Between releases: maintain lists, links, and relationships.

2LIVE. Release like a campaign — not a wish.

Read the full guides at the [2LIVE Blog](#) · [Free playbook companion](#)