

MUSIC MARKETING PLAN



CYBER PR[®]

Table of Contents

NUTS AND BOLTS	1
1. Music Distribution.....	1
2. Band/Artist Website & Brand.....	2
3. Social Media.....	2
4. Digital Service Provider – DSPs.....	4
5. E-Mail Lists & Newsletter.....	6
PREPARING FOR RELEASE	7
6. Timeline – Your 12-Week Music.....	7
7. Release Day – Be Ready For It.....	12
8. Publicity & Marketing.....	13
9. Playing Live And Streaming.....	15
10. Real Life Networking.....	16
KEEPING THE MOMENTUM	16
11. Keep The Music Coming – This Keeps Momentum Up!.....	17
12. Fan Nurturing.....	18
13. Create Consistent Content – Ongoing Social Media.....	19
14. Strengthen VIP/Industry Connections.....	20
15. Making Money.....	21

NUTS AND BOLTS

1. Music Distribution

Digital distribution moves a lot faster than it used to, but you should still choose the right distributor for you. There are different distribution channels you can use that allow you to get your music on digital service providers. We recommend CD Baby because they have customer support that you can call and we like their marketing platform which is called show.co. However, there are others such as Distrokid, ONErpm, and Tunecore. Distributors don't cover everything, and independently you need to also be aware of additional distribution outlets for increased reach, a list that includes SoundCloud and Pandora.

Aggregators like 4-5 weeks to get your music to iTunes, Spotify, Amazon Music, and other digital service providers (DSPs). You should speak with your rep regarding the exact release timing to ensure that they have enough time to speak to the major DSPs about the release. If possible, you should upload the entire album when you upload your first, second, etc. single. Apple likes having full albums available for pre-order and that will open additional placement options for you.

TIP: new music used to come out on Tuesdays and now Friday is the official release day so choose a FRIDAY to release your music – even if the release party is on a Saturday or if your astrologer says the best date is a Monday – you will look like a noob if you release on any other day!

TIP: If you are ordering physical copies of your music, make sure that you get them in plenty of time, especially if you are running a pre-sale or having a release party and you want to offer physical products at the show.

2. Band/Artist Website & Brand

The music industry is built on appearances. To be taken seriously it is very important to have a complete and professional looking online presence built into your marketing plan. This starts with your home – your website. You need a modern, functional site that you can update on your own. Your website should have a section where fans can easily get to your music (not a player that automatically plays, please!), a news section with latest happenings, an EPK, and a newsletter sign-up that offers an incentive. Ariel wrote a detailed guide to help you with the architecture.

Please keep in mind that Artist Branding is the starting point and should be well thought out. A brand is an abstract, malleable concept and it may

be difficult to know if you're heading in the right direction. Your brand starts with your bio/signature story (which we will talk about more in Part 2 of this series and it also incorporates colors, style of copywriting, and fonts. Photos and visuals must be in alignment with your brand and make sure to carry this brand across all of your socials. Use your current single artwork with text on top of the images that promote the release date, new music videos, and tour announcements. We love a tool called Canva for fast and easy banner, graphics and social skin creation.

3. Social Media

Time and energy need to be spent building a strong online presence in order to be taken seriously as an artist for when the time comes to start actively promoting. Many artists don't know the basics and try to skip steps by hiring shady companies to swiftly build audiences. This might not be the best idea. Fake followers and limited knowledge of how to use these channels properly will hurt your promotional efforts. A solid social strategy must focus on themes & narrative and you must plan your consistent content so that it is constantly fan nurturing.

Keep in mind that music bloggers and fans will visit your socials to see what kind of existing following you have and they will want to catch a vibe. Stale, overly promotional, or boring profiles will not help your chances of engaging. Your content calendar is a crucial component to your social media success. Don't leave it up to chance. Download our Social Media Organizer above to properly schedule and plan your posts.

Instagram

The most popular visual social platform has experienced a meteoric rise. The best way to get great at Instagram is by using it and emulating people who already know how to use it well.

When you post photos, choose at least two hashtags, as this is how photos are found. Make sure to take the time to select popular hashtags that people are looking for and also create your very own "owned" hashtags i.e. #CyberPRMusic. In addition to hashtags, you can also add captions to your photos before posting. I caution you to be selective about what you cross-post to socials. You want to tell a separate story on each social channel to get people to join you, and not get fatigued by the same posts across channels. Also, post more Stories than posts as they drive more views. We have created two guides to help you take a deeper dive: The Musician's Guide to Instagram & Advanced Instagram Tips for Musicians.

Twitter

Even though a lot of artists are turning their backs on Twitter, we still encourage you to keep an active profile. Journalists and music bloggers still actively use it so if you want to connect to them this is the platform to make that happen. Every single person you interact with in real life should be followed on Twitter (friends, musicians, bloggers, producers, clubs, etc.). Increase your followers by following people and many will follow you back. Target similar sounding artists and follow their Twitter followers, as there is a high probability that they may also like your music.

To keep your profile active with Tweets, use Buffer. In as little as one hour you can schedule a few weeks worth of tweets. Vary the topics you tweet about from career news (which should be no more than 20% of your output) to your interests, passions, and hobbies. News, politics, sports, and/or culture are all great topics to share to engage and connect around.

Facebook

Pay-to-play is the reality on Facebook for a Page to get any real exposure. We suggest you build an ad budget into your marketing plans from time to time but have goals in place before you do, and you should have a complete Page that is active with frequent posts. Make sure your Page has an attractive cover banner (as discussed above) and install apps that work as promotional tools for you and your music. We suggest a store from Bandcamp, a Tunecore or CD Baby Tab, and a mailing list signup form from MailChimp.

YouTube

YouTube is the first place where millions of people go to search for music. It is a powerful platform where artists are getting discovered. For any artist looking to increase awareness, it is imperative to have a presence on YouTube with a professional looking channel, and a cover image that is linked to your socials so people can connect with you across platforms. Make categories to group your videos for easy viewing, such as “Behind The Scenes”, “Official Music Videos”, and “Live Performances”. Also, highlight an official music video in the featured spot at the top.

We often see musicians leaving off their artist name in the title of the video, which is terrible for search engines. Create a list of tags. Make sure to include keywords and place important keywords/ phrases at the start of your tag fields. Use adjectives that describe your music and similar artists also as keywords, the latter of which will show up in the

“related videos section” after your videos are viewed. We often see description sections left blank. This is crucial because it tells the viewer what they are watching and provides links to other content you own, such as your website and socials.

4. Digital Service Provider – DSPs

Digital Service Provider or DSP is another term for music streaming services. This can also mean music stores. You can not build an effective marketing plan without having a working knowledge of DSPs and of course that includes how to drive your fans and followers to Spotify and get included on playlists. Here are a few to get intimate with but remember there are over 70 DSPs. To take a deep dive into 2 vital DSPS – Spotify & SoundCloud click the image above to get our ultimate guide e-book.

Spotify

Once your distributor of choice releases your new songs to Spotify, you are able to claim and verify your Spotify profile with [Spotify for Artists](#). That allows you to review listener analytics, check for any new playlist adds, add an “Artist Pick,” make playlists, and keep your photo and bio up to date. It is crucial that you understand the basics of Spotify and know how it can help you. They have created a great series of videos to [guide you](#) through. The most important thing to you must know is how to submit your tracks [directly to](#) their playlist curators to be considered for inclusion on official Spotify playlists.

Apple Music

Apple Music For Artists launched in August of 2019. You can now view a quick snapshot of your music’s overall performance, identify milestones and all-time bests at a glance, expand your understanding with details of trends over time, discover which of your songs are getting shazamed (Apple owns Shazam) the most and see how many people are listening to your music over time in over 100 countries. Plus you can now update your profile photo through the very same portal. Find out more and sign up for Apple Music For Artists [here](#).

Amazon

It’s a big one and you should make sure your Amazon profile online is updated and that you have reviews of your music posted on this platform as it helps with the search. More and more people are using Alexa to stream music and you should be sure you are verbally findable so check your Alexa or a friend to see if you are verbally discoverable!

SoundCloud

SoundCloud is the go-to platform if you plan to do publicity as this is the main platform music bloggers and many podcasters use to accept tracks for consideration and embeds. Your SoundCloud presence can be a key deciding factor to having your music covered. SoundCloud also allows you to create private links for your music before it is released or select tracks to send to industry folks or anyone you wish to share a preview with. And of course, SoundCloud also has a robust community of music fans and other creators so it's a great place to connect and give and receive feedback.

Bandcamp

While Bandcamp is, in essence, a direct-to-fan e-commerce solution, it's also a vast community of fans who understand that paying artists directly is the best way to support. Discovery features like fan accounts, the music feed, and artist recommendations introduce your music to new fans and can potentially drive sales. Bandcamp also has email collection capabilities and a subscription service (like Patreon) so you can grow your email list and make money. Plus many artists have success showcasing their past releases and selling them as bundles as a great revenue stream.

Pandora

Pandora has over 74 million active users and an artist marketing platform called AMP – Artist Marketing Platform built-in. AMP allows you to record 15-second messages and attach them to any of your tracks plus you can target specific regions and build stories to share. It also pays you royalties (through Sound Exchange so make sure you are signed up with them). Most digital distributors say that your music will be sent to Pandora, but in our experience, you still will have to send your music through to them using their brand new independent artist submissions portal.

Understand DSP Graphics Sizing

Make sure you have put your best foot forward on each DSP. Here is a guide that shows you the exact dimensions for images for each DSP.

5. E-Mail Lists & Newsletter

Your email and your ability to nurture your list is the most important part of the musicians marketing plan release strategy that you will want to skip – DON'T.

It's so important that we have an entire LAB focused on how to improve your email called Level Up Your Email Game.

Social media is key to attracting your crowd and building engagement. That said, email is still the most vital asset you will build for generating revenue. You make relationships with fans on socials, but you turn those relationships into customers with email. According to the Direct Marketing Association, email marketing produced an ROI (return on investment) of 4,300% — or \$43 for every \$1 spent.

But it is not just about writing an effective newsletter and contacting your mailing list once a month. You also need to understand the concept of email nurture sequences. Spend money on a mailing list service provider that can help you design a rich looking email and provide analytics and tracking capabilities so you can measure the effectiveness of your newsletters and make adjustments where need be. A premier solution that many of our clients enjoy working with is MailChimp.

PREPARING FOR RELEASE

6. Timeline – Your 12-Week Music

Release Tasks

Planning is everything as you can't stuff the genie back in the bottle after the release is out! If you struggle with managing your time [this](#) will help.

[Watch this 12-Week timeline come to life](#) in a special video musicians masterclass I gave in New Orleans.

- **Three Months Before Music Releases**

Register With A Performing Rights Organization.

You probably already know this but just in case – to collect your royalties you'll need to sign with both a Performing Rights Organization ("PRO" for short) as well as SoundExchange. The three options in the U.S. for PRO's are ASCAP, SESAC, and BMI.

For live royalties, BMI and ASCAP both offer portals to collect royalties from playing live. Once your songs are registered on the PRO database, you log in and enter any dates you have performed those songs, where they were performed, and which songs. The PRO companies payout quarterly so be sure to enter the performances soon after they are through, otherwise, you could miss a deadline!

You also have to register with [SoundExchange](#), which focuses on royalties for your recording (mechanical rights), while your Performing Rights Organization focuses on royalties for your song (performance rights).

Document the Recording & Creation Journey For Your Fans

What may feel mundane to you – writing, recording, mixing, mastering, being in the studio, etc. can be really exciting for your fans. Taking them on a behind-the-scenes journey of this music release is a great way to form a stronger bond with your current and growing base.

Send updates on how the recording, mixing and mastering is going using videos and photos via your socials, plus capture longer-form stories for Instagram Stories and for your newsletter.

Engage with your following on milestones like artwork and song titles by polling your fans and holding contests to select what cover or title to go with, have your fans weigh in on photos, graphics and get them involved

with the process. The goal of all this activity is to get people excited so they are engaging and sharing your updates.

Choose Your PR & Marketing Plan

A big component when releasing new music is getting PR. You can accomplish this by hiring a team or by going the DIY route. When hiring a PR team make sure you do your homework and make sure your music is a good fit for that firm's approach and philosophy. Be sure that the team talks to you about their well-thought-out plan for your campaign.

A PR company should work with you to make sure you are fully prepared before you are introduced to the press. This is the first part of their job when you engage a firm.

If you're going with a do-it-yourself approach here are some tips for an effective music PR campaign:

Choose Your Playlisting Plan

Submit Your Music Directly to Spotify

Simply sign in to your artist account (or Spotify Analytics if you are a label) and choose your best song. When submitting take extra care to give a detailed description of the song supplying any and all relevant information about the song to easily guide editors to the best place for your music.

Build Your Own Playlisting Initiatives

If you don't know all the steps to set up a playlist follow this step-by-step guide. Start building and sharing playlists. You need to build up plays as this impacts the current song that you are promoting, as well as any forthcoming singles. Use interesting titles and themes to grab people's attention to aid with search

Find Playlist Curators & Pitch

This is, of course, easier said than done! It is not easy to find curators but it is possible with some dedication. Google and all the Socials are great places to start. Reddit has an active Spotify Playlists Page. There are also quite a few on SubmitHub you can access for a small fee.

- **Two Months Before Music Release**

Get Great Photos

Make sure you have at least 3-4 great images and variety is important. Most music blogs feature square or horizontal photos. When getting photos taken think through your brand and think about variety to keep your images fresh as time goes by.

Finalize your Single / Album / EP Artwork

Your Artwork should be ready and look on brand and amazing! Ask your designer to animate it, break it up into tiles for Instagram and or resize it for all your social posts.

Research Which Spotify PreSave / Marketing Platform is Right for You
You will need to run a campaign to get that Spotify track presaved! There are 3 great services to choose from. [Feature.FM](#) has Action Pages to help build your audience. From The Site: Action Pages are highly engaging pages that reward fans for taking the actions you want in the platforms you want and provide you with deep insight into your audience. [Toneden](#) can also facilitate social media follows/likes and/or email addresses for free downloads. You can also optimize Facebook ads via Toneden, and customize those ads. [Show.co](#) is owned by CD Baby and is integrated so you can use it as well.

Focus on Increasing Your Audience

If you have been recording new music you may have taken your eye off of the constant grind it takes to keep your socials and your email list growing. This takes a lot of heavy lifting and your whole band or team should be helping.

Use my [Social Media Tuneup](#) system to diagnose each one of your sites and socials and get them updated.

If you have not kept up consistently find your friends and people you admire (bloggers, other artists, venues, local spots you like to hang out in, etc.) on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook and friend away!

This will increase your audience because as many of the people you follow will follow you back. Also, start reaching out to people in your inbox and outbox and get them on your list (remember it's illegal to just sign people up, so do this with integrity and ask each person). Your newsletter is the place where you will be able to monetize so, don't skip this step.

Prep Your Content Calendar

Your content calendar is outlined with all of the assets that you need for your release with dates for each asset/action needed. Countdowns, art reveals, listening party or live release party announcements, ticket links and calls to action (like Spotify Presaves) are all fodder to add to your content calendar.

Use my [SMM tracker](#) to organize all of your posts and your VIPS. This will help you keep track of all the content that you will post. You can see there is a tab for each platform. If there are several of you in a team or in

a band, assign one platform per person. You will also see a VIP tab here this is where you will add industry people you need to connect with in real life (more on that below).

- **Six Weeks Before Music Release**

Submit Your Music to Your Distributor

If you are leading this music release with a single (or two) make sure to let them know you are releasing a single(s) FIRST before the EP (if this is the case). You must have your single artwork ready at this time! Tunecore, CD Baby, and other aggregators like 4-5 weeks to pitch your music to iTunes, Spotify, Google Play, Amazon Music, and other digital service providers (DSPs).

Launch a Facebook Like Campaign to Get More Followers to Your Page Or if you have not done so in a long time go through your personal Facebook Page and ask all of your friends to Like your Page.

I know this may seem crazy to do during a time when Facebook is catching a lot of heat but promoters, venues, and music bloggers still look at social numbers so make sure yours are consistently growing (and don't buy fake fans ever!)

- **One Month Before Music Release**

Release Your First Single

This is a great way to build buzz, get fans excited, and also get some music bloggers interested. Any reviews you can place will help build your overall online profile.

On the press side of the house aim for appropriate blog targets. If you are a brand new artist Pitchfork is probably NOT appropriate. Go for smaller, more targeted music blogs!

That being said, be sure to reach out to your "within reason" dream targets with your single(s). It's not the best idea to wait to reach out to these loftier sites with your album.

Album reviews take a considerable amount of time and, if you look, most music sites are reserving these full album review slots for the most anticipated albums so don't feel disappointed if you don't get full album / EP reviews (they are not en vogue these days)

[Download and read our Spotify & SoundCloud Guide](#) to make sure both of those platforms are set up correctly and you have done what you need to to get these working for you.

Announce a Music Release Event: Live Show or Listening Party

If you play live shows, book a release show and do something to make this show more special than the others. Decorate the venue, work with the bar to create a special shot or cocktail, pre-sell a merch pack, hire a party bus, ask a food truck to pull outside the venue, etc.

If you don't play out, create a listening party at a small bar, create an after-work happy hour, or choose a local favorite coffee shop. If you are just starting and don't think you can draw a large crowd, hold a listening house party with wine tasting, cupcake bake-off, fondue party, etc. Think about your fans and make this special for them. And, of course, the key is to announce that tickets are on sale and share links!

Launch Your Music PR or Playlisting Campaign

This is a great way to build buzz, If you are hiring a PR team this will be when they will launch.

I Have a New Release & I need a P-L-A-N

- **Two Weeks Before Music Release**

Build the Momentum!

Keep the excitement up on your socials by scheduling countdowns across your socials.

Write your Day of Newsletter so it is ready to go out.

Hold a contest to win the new music or give away tickets to your show or listening party.

7. Release Day – Be Ready For It

Prep Your Website:

- Change the artwork on the landing page to announce the new music
- Add an announcement to the News section

Skin ALL socials with “out now!”

- Use Canva to size and design
- Create CTAs for each platform to post as well

Instagram:

- Change your bio to announce the release – add the musical note or an appropriate emoji too! Add streaming link and CTA to listen
- Create a release tile and post with the album / single art and say “out now”
- Create an Instagram Story video and post

- Go to Instagram Live and talk about the fact that the music is available and ask for fan feedback

Facebook:

- Make a fun video about the release – and Boost!
- Boost or Buy an Ad announcing the release to your fans and a look alike audience
- Edit the “About” section to include the new release
- Post a status update announcing your release, and pin it to the top as a timeline feature.
- Go to Facebook Live and talk about the fact that the music is available and ask for fan feedback

Spotify:

- Header and Profile Photo: Keep these up to date and in line with the rest of your social profiles.
- Image Gallery: Choose images most aligned with your brand and recent music.
- Social Media Links: Add links to your socials. Here’s a [How To from Spotify](#) on adding those and an image gallery.
- [Spotify Bio](#): With 1500 characters to share with your fans, you can update this whenever it makes sense for you. Keep your bio updated, include shows, notable press, and new singles.
- Add an Artist’s Pick: You can designate a song, album, or playlist as the “Artist’s Pick.” This will appear at the top of your profile with a note from you. You can add a custom image to your Pick or share tour dates if preferred. [Read more here.](#)

Twitter:

- tweet out your release announcement.
- Pin the tweet to the top of your profile page
- Go to Buffer and program the tweets for 1-3 times a day for the next 10 days

YouTube:

- Customize the top banner, profile picture to announce the new music
- Add your bit.ly link and mention of the release to the “About” section
- Upload cover art and have track streaming in the background

Newsletter:

Send out a newsletter announcement to your mailing list.

8. Publicity & Marketing

PR takes time and effort to execute well. Sadly, many artists believe that PR = blasting a press release out to the top 100+ music sites that they Googled. This never works, because PR placements start with astute research.

Bio / Signature Story

The cornerstone of your brand is your bio. You will need a solid story to build your marketing and PR from. We suggest hiring a professional to write your musician bio, which we call a signature story around here. Even if you are a strong writer, it can be challenging to write about yourself. A professional writer will be able to craft a compelling bio that effectively conveys all the important details while keeping the audience in mind, which in this case includes press and music industry. [Read our 5 – Steps guide here](#) or We would be delighted to [write one for you](#). If you feel like you still need a boost, listen to the [Signature Story Webinar](#).

Music Press Outreach

The first people to target should be local press and outlets that have covered you in the past (if applicable). When contacting blogs make it personal. Be sure to research which writer/journalist of the site is the best or most appropriate. Always include a [SoundCloud](#) link (set to private until your music is released). Follow our full [music PR guide](#) for more detail on how to handle this process.

Then as we touched on in Part 1, plan ahead so you will have content for multiple press outreaches such as a new music video, remixes, or tour dates, as you don't want to repeat the same message about the new music.

Build Your Targeted Media List

There are many ways to start building a targeted media list. One method – identify a musician or band that is slightly further along and fits into your musical wheelhouse, and take note of the press outlets that they are getting featured on. There is a great chance that those publications may also feature you.

[Learn how](#) to do your own PR with Ariel in her amazing deep-dive course.

Blog Savviness Gets Placements.

Start to familiarize yourself with blogs, podcasts, and outlets that are appropriate for your release. If you live in a smaller town (read: Not in NYC, LA, or Chicago) there may be some local press that you can go for.

Your big goal might be a review on Pitchfork, but what's your backup when Pitchfork doesn't respond to you and then doesn't respond to your follow-ups? Is Pitchfork even the right outlet for you to showcase your project? Sure, they have a large audience, but is it the right audience for you? It's OK if the answer is "no."

Research is not the only thing you need before you send your first pitch. To find out what to do [come download our Ultimate Guide to Music Publicity.](#)

TIP: Keep in mind that a music blog is made up of content written by humans. When it comes time to pitch, you will be pitching to them. Increase your chances that they will be interested in you by first being interested in them. Make a connection by following them on socials. Strike up a conversation on Twitter or Instagram if the opportunity arises. A conversation about literally anything other than your music is recommended. This way when you send an email (or if a publicist does for you), there could be some familiarity and existing relationships that will help in getting your emails opened and help your new music be featured.

Drive Friends, Fans & Family With Marketing Platforms

You are responsible for driving likes and streams to Facebook, YouTube, Spotify, and all other streaming sites. You also need to drive subscribers to your email list. Marketing platforms are key tools that will help you to get your fans to take powerful actions that will pay off forever like saving your profile/track on [Spotify](#), subscribing to your YouTube channel before watching a video or liking your [Facebook Page](#) as they visit.

In a saturated, crowded space (approx. 20,000 new tracks are added to Spotify each day according to DMR) these platforms are vital. Read [this post](#) to understand Feature.fm, Toneden and Show.co. We use all of them here and they are deeply incorporated in our [Total Tuneups](#).

9. Playing Live And Streaming

If you are already building through touring or playing live at home, continue. This builds on the momentum that has been made. If you need a helping hand LAB taught by the brilliant Kyle Weber of Indie On The Move (IOTM) who walks you through exactly how to get better gigs in your hometown or in new markets,

There are undoubtedly limitations on how often you can tour. More than likely won't be able to tour every market and for this, we have a solution...

No Shows? Try Live Streaming!

Streaming a show is also a great way to interact with your fans on a more personal and direct level. A live streaming concert is where the audience is online viewers and can be filmed at your home or any interesting location have access to, a great tool to connect with fans. Artists, big and small, are taking advantage of this to keep engaged and present with their current fanbase, generate revenue and to increase their brand awareness.

You can stream on Facebook and Instagram, however more robust platforms offer features geared towards creating "official" shows. The two major players are Stageit and Concert Window. Picking between the two (they are both quite similar) will allow you to either charge a set ticket price. What many artists do, is use the pay what you want model which gives fans a way to pay you more than what you ask for and can be lucrative.

Keeping the shows fresh and different will help with increasing viewership from show-to-show Play a game at the end of the performance or midway through using the chat features. Trivia would be a very easy game, where fans could win merch or other prizes.

Play New Cover Songs Each Week

Ask your fans what covers you should play. Post the question on Your Facebook Page or on Instagram as a tile. The song suggestion that gets the most likes or comments will be the one(s) you cover.

Have Guest Performers Join You

This is a great way to add a new element to the live stream while cross-promoting to each other's fans at the same time. Our LAB 5: Mobilize Your Fan Army teacher and client Eli Lev did this with 2 other musicians and covered Fleetwood Mac.

10. Real Life Networking

You will not make it in music without mastering the power of live networking. That's the problem with all of the digital tools available to us: Way too many artists believe they can hide behind a screen and launch the careers of their dreams without ever talking to other humans face to face. Building your IRL networking into your planning is key. Many artists are shy and introverted and this part does not come easily.

It is crucial to connect the dots of your digital world to the real world. Even if you only want to be a studio musician and never tour, you still need to be able to meet people and find out about potential work. It can be hard to break out of your comfort zone, and I have met so many artists who struggle with anxiety and a sense that networking means “selling” but the most successful people go out and meet other people who can help them.

3 Reasons Musicians Need to Network

1. Connect with new fans.
2. Gain a sphere of influence, and a source for referrals (more fans) as everyone is connected online and offline.
3. Become a resource for your fans and for yourself.

KEEPING THE MOMENTUM

11. Keep The Music Coming – This Keeps Momentum Up!

A music marketing plan these days is about consistent releasing. Spotify recommends a new release every 4-6 weeks and we do too. Releasing singles and videos will keep fans engaged consistently. This is what you are striving for. You also want to submit each new track for playlisting consideration.

A skill set that you need for this is to understand how to use Spotify. Download my Ultimate Guide to Streaming to brush up on the most effective ways to get the music out there. Remember, you're not limited to just releasing original new tracks. A best practice for keeping fans engaged with Spotify is the plan to release something every 4 to 6 weeks. This does not mean you have to write new songs although that is always great of course.

Create Alternate Versions of Tracks

Get a DJ to remix one of your songs. This does not have to be a famous DJ. Choose someone who is familiar with what's trending on Hype M (if that is a goal), or has worked with an artist you love. If you're interested in holding a remix contest you should contact the folks over at Indaba Music. They put together some great remix campaigns.

Or take a page from Nirvana and release an album of stripped-down "unplugged" versions of your studio tracks. This is a great way to show a different side of the band and appeal to potential new listeners.

Lastly release a live album, preferably from the release show, but any show will work as long as the audio is of top quality.

Make Videos

Video is an integral part of your music marketing plan. Share and upload more videos: official music videos, lyric videos, live videos, vlogs, Facebook Live sessions, Instagram Live, etc.

Record Cover Songs

Music fans love covers. Recording cover songs is a great strategy for your music marketing plan. This works to gain awareness by tapping into what people already know and provides fun content to share. You can cover artists that inspire you, or similar sounding artists. Covering a song outside of your genre can be a great way to tap into a new fan base. This is what the pianist Scott D. Davis did when he decided to combine his love of heavy metal with the piano pieces he was recording. The result was millions of YouTube hits for his metal covers and new fans from the heavy metal community. Scott has been invited to open for Godsmack, Korn, P.O.D., Sevendust, Vince Neil of Mötley Crüe and Queensrÿche.

*Please note, to legally sell a cover song you will need to obtain and pay for a mechanical license. Harry Fox Agency is the foremost mechanical licensing agency in the US. To legally make money from cover songs, work with the company [We Are The Hits](#).

12. Fan Nurturing

In their desperate desire to connect with as many fans as possible artists are forget that not everyone "out there" is the same. You need to understand the differences and create a separate way of communicating with each community. Some may be following you simply because they liked your sunglasses or your cat and have no idea you are even a musician, while others are waiting to like and comment on every post. I

wrote a 3-part series that explains how to nurture each one up to the next level of fan.

Community #1: Your Super Fans

These fans are primarily your closest friends and your live audience. You know them by name. If you play live, they attend your shows regularly and buy merch. They are the first responders when you post on socials and they follow you on multiple channels. It is important to remember to talk to fans at your live shows and get as much face time in when you can.

Community #2: Engaged Fans

These fans are your Active Online Audience. They are newsletter subscribers, blog readers, video watchers, RSS subscribers, active Social Media engagers who frequently comment & engage with you on Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Community #3: Ambient Fans

These fans are your Passive Online Audience and they are your social media friends who are aware of you via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc. but don't actively communicate with you and may not have ever even heard your music (yet).

Don't Neglect Your Email List & Study Write Email Nurture Sequences
Emails should still be going out once a month, and your socials should never go stale. Just because you may not have a big "news" item (a new release) doesn't mean you should stop communicating on a regular basis. You should also be consistently be building your list.

13. Create Consistent Content – Ongoing Social Media Update Your Socials Every Day

Update daily, respond, and interact. Post about things happening in your life. News, food, parenting, fashion, art, sports, and other musicians are topics to engage and connect around. Follow our Social Media Pyramid for content guidance.

Use Hashtags

#mcm = man crush Monday / #transformationtuesday / #wcv = woman crush Wednesday / #tbt = throwback Thursday / #NewMusicFriday

Add hashtags to Instagram of course but also to social media channels are alive and active.

Visualize All Buzzworthy Moments

The more press and social media-worthy moments you can generate the better. Anytime a fan, playlister, or music blog, mentions you share it. Create tiles with CTAs and links to Spotify, SoundCloud, Apple Music, etc.

Ideas to visualize and keep your socials fresh:

- Ask your family, friends, and fans to write reviews of your music on Apple Music, Amazon or CD Baby
- Submit your music to Pandora for consideration if you get accepted use the Pandora AMP program
- Make GIFS or boomerangs to keep the visuals fun
- Check for any new Spotify playlist adds and thank the playlist curator
- Do Facebook or Instagram Lives consistently
- ALL PR – blog, newspaper, magazine, show listing, podcasts, etc.
- PR Quotes – highlights from articles (make a few to share over time to mix it up)
- Radio Adds – Showcase the station logo and tag the DJ
- Live Show Announcements
- Ticket On Sale Dates
- Film & TV Placements
- Milestones – Spotify playlist counts, award nominations & wins, etc.
- Follow CTAs (Follow me on Spotify, Facebook, Twitter, Etc)

Focus On Leverage

The whole point of having a music release strategy in the first place is to leverage it to get your big picture goals.

My client wanted higher profile gigs around his hometown, Denver. He leveraged his PR hits strategically by sharing visuals with the promoters/venues he was targeting. He did this by writing each a personal email saying: “I have retained a PR team to increase my visibility and they will work hard to promote shows I am booked to play.”

Every time he was featured in an article, he posted it across social channels, tagged the venues and artists he appeared with. From his efforts, he began to get more gigs because he had something his competition did not – strong PR and proving he would promote. You can use a similar strategy. The moral of this story? Always share successes!

14. Strengthen VIP/Industry Connections

I have never met a successful musician who does not rely on at least a few people in the music industry. Even if you never want to sign to a label you will need a team to help you. This could include management, booking agents or service based companies to handle things like play listing, publicity, marketing, production, and the list goes on.

Music Conferences

An incredible place to meet all of these types of people and more is at music conferences. Conferences give you the opportunity for networking and self-growth. Once you are there you want to be memorable.

Music conferences are invaluable when looking to learn and to grow in the industry. There are so many types to choose from – small and intimate, huge and overwhelming, hyper-focused or general. No matter which you decide to attend you will have the opportunity to network, meet established professionals, and make connections with other artists all who can be vital to your growth. Here's my guide to my favorite conferences.

Music Mentors

Some artists (I'm looking at you introverts) don't like conferences. Read Industry newsletters and sites to get inspiration and keep up with people and latest industry news. I highly recommend signing up for – DIY Musician, Water & Music, Platform & Stream, Hypebot, and the Billboard Biz newsletters.

And, there are many wonderful mentors you should know about who are working tirelessly to help support artists with free and paid options. I love all of the teachers of my LABS classes and follow Suz The Rock/Star Advocate, Bobby Owsinski, Cheryl B Engelhardt, Eli Lev, Randy Chertkow & Jason Feehan, Brady Sadler, and Kyle Weber from IOTM. I also highly recommend These 19 Rockstars who pitched in with their best advice for marketing including Ari Herstand, Bree Noble, Rick Barker, Bryan Calhoun, Ross Barber-Smith and Ryan Kairilla.

15. Making Money

You want to be considered an artist and not a hobbyist, right? So making money is key to your music marketing plan as it is your ongoing strategy. I made this the last part of the 15 because a lot of building needs to happen before you can monetize. There are so many ways to make money in the business you may not have thought of many of them. LAB 10: Making Money With Music features Randy Chertkow & Jason Feehan, the authors of *The Indie Band Survival Guide & Making Money With Music*. They have come up with over 300 ways to make money.

Merchandise

Merch has become very sophisticated over the last few years, there is no need to order a bunch of XL Mens fruit of the loom T-shirts. Our three favorite Merch ideas are

USB Flash Drives

Different kind of merch item to sell that you can load up with music, pictures, videos, lyrics, sheet music, etc.

Vinyl

Is hot right now. According to a recent Guardian article: “sales of vinyl reached a 25-year high as consumers young and old have once again embraced physical formats of music.” Make sure you keep the fact that ordering can take months and make sure you are prepared to mail it out and carry it to shows (it’s heavy!)

DIY Craft Items

We also love the idea of creating unique DIY items as a vehicle of selling your music, our client Mary Jennings sells bolo ties at her shows and in her Etsy store when she’s not on the road. We loved hanging out with her and watching her fans try on ties after her set.

Please avoid this costly music marketing plan mistake: You do NOT need to create merchandise until you have a fanbase who will buy merch and you need to have a sense of what they want.

Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is a great way to fund an album, a tour or a big idea. By the time your campaign ends, your contributors are invested in the idea and the journey, increasing their loyalty levels to “super fan” status. However you must keep in mind that the average crowdfunding campaign raises \$7,000, according to fundable, and it takes dedication and perseverance to pull off successfully.

Also – no crowd, no crowdfunding, so make sure you have a real dedicated fan base before you try this. In order to raise \$5,000, you would need around 250 backers who would give an average of \$20 each. In order to raise \$10,000, you would need around 500 backers, who would, again, give an average of \$20 each.

My book Crowdstart, will walk you step-by-step through your entire campaign, and it comes with amazing done for you bonuses!

Subscription Sites

Are another area that artists are moving towards, where people sign up to receive music via Bandcamp or support the creation of videos and content through Patreon.

Just because people don't buy CD's anymore and even downloads are in a decline, people are willing to support artists, you just need to give them the platform to do so and interesting items and experiences to offer.

Patreon

Patreon is all about content. This means you want to have consistent content to keep your patrons happy. Make sure to share exclusive content only available through your Patreon page.

Ultimately, the success of any kind of crowdfunding strategy will come down to you reaching out to your network through your newsletter, social media and getting them involved with both the funding and by helping to spread the word about your Patreon to their friends and networks.

Experiences

Backstage meet and greets, private Skype sessions, and dinner with the band before a show are all possibilities and should be built into your music marketing plan. You don't need to run a crowdfunding campaign to sell experiences.

Make Sure Your Fans Know

Mention your Patreon on your website and across socials. Mention it in your YouTube videos and include a link to your page in the video descriptions.

I don't want you to finish reading this 3-part guide overwhelmed! When we write Total Tuneups for our clients the intention is that they will take a

full year to successfully implement. This requires a mindset which will allow you to stay in it for the long haul.

Making the music and playing live are not the parts that are hard to focus on. It's the 15 elements outlined here that can be challenging.

Cyber PR LABS

This is why I designed Cyber PR LABS to address each and every part you may not know all about in an effective and targeted fashion. They cost less than 99 bucks each and they will give you access to a great community of like-minded artists as well as to the amazing teachers I hand-picked to run each LAB.