

FREE RESOURCE FOR INDEPENDENT ARTISTS

The Free Music Promotion Playbook

A practical, modern guide to getting your music discovered — without needing a big label budget.

Release Strategy

Social Media

Short-Form Video

Playlists

Community

PR & Outreach

Collaborations

Paid Ads

Analytics

30-Day Plan

01 Promotion Is Part of the Release

Great music deserves a discovery plan. Promotion means putting the right song in front of the right listeners, giving them a reason to care, and making it easy to listen, follow, save, share, or come back.

Algorithms can amplify signals such as engagement and repeat listening — but no platform can promote a song that nobody is discovering. Consistent promotion creates more opportunities for discovery and gives your release momentum.

The Discovery Funnel



Your goal is not to "go viral" once. Your goal is to build a small audience that keeps growing.

The 5 Rules

RULE 1

Start before release day — build curiosity while the track is still new.

RULE 2

Repeat your message — one post rarely reaches everyone who would love the song.

RULE 3

Show the story — people connect with the artist, emotion, process and meaning.

RULE 4

Make the next action obvious — tell people where to listen, follow, save or share.

RULE 5

Measure what matters — use data to improve the next post and the next release.

SEO tip: Use a clear artist name + song title + genre or mood in page titles, descriptions, captions and supporting content where it feels natural. Avoid keyword stuffing.

Build Your Promotion Foundation

Before spending money or posting everywhere, make your release easy to understand and easy to find.

Your Essential Artist Assets



Artist bio

A short version (1–2 sentences) and a longer version.



Listening destination

One main link or smart link that works everywhere.



Profile photo

A professional image used consistently across platforms.



Song description

Genre, mood, story, and who the song is for.



Cover art & metadata

A clean song cover and correctly written artist/song info.



Content folder

Approved artwork, vertical clips, lyric snippets, BTS footage and press photos.

Identity check: Create a simple artist identity — sound + visual style + story + audience. Consistency makes recognition easier.

Organic Promotion: Free Strategies

Organic promotion means using your time, creativity and relationships instead of paying for reach. It takes longer, but it's one of the best ways to learn what genuinely connects with listeners.

A Short-Form Video

Create multiple short videos from one song rather than inventing a completely new idea every day.

- **Performance clip** — sing or perform the strongest section.
- **Hook clip** — start with the most memorable lyric, beat or moment.
- **Story clip** — explain what inspired the song in 15–45 seconds.
- **Behind-the-scenes** — recording, writing, production or rehearsal.
- **Lyric video** — put one emotionally strong line on screen.
- **Reaction/community format** — ask listeners what a lyric means to them.

Formula: Hook in the first seconds → one clear idea → song moment → simple call-to-action.

B Content Repurposing

One recording session can create weeks of content. Cut a music video into short clips, turn an interview answer into a quote post, turn a lyric into a visual, and turn a fan comment into a response video.

C Playlist Discovery

- Research legitimate independent and editorial playlists that fit your genre.
- Personalize your pitch instead of sending the same message to everyone.
- Never pay for guaranteed streams or playlist placement that promises artificial results.
- Keep a record of where you submitted, when, and what happened.

D Collaborations

- Collaborate with artists whose audience overlaps with yours.
- Work with producers, DJs, dancers, creators, videographers and visual artists.
- Trade value: a feature, remix, content swap, live session or joint release benefits both sides.
- Tag collaborators clearly and give them content they can easily repost.

E Community & Direct Fan Relationships

- Reply to comments like a human, not a brand.
- Ask specific questions about the song rather than "What do you think?"
- Thank people who share or save your music.
- Create a simple email list or fan community so your audience isn't dependent on one platform.

04 Social Media Promotion Plan

Choose 2–3 platforms where your audience is actually active. You do not need to be everywhere.

Content Type	Goal	Example
Discovery	Reach new listeners	Hook + chorus clip
Connection	Build artist identity	Story / behind-the-scenes
Proof	Show real interest	Fan reaction / live clip
Conversion	Drive a next step	Listen / follow / save CTA

Weekly Content Rhythm

- 2–4 discovery clips
- 1–2 story / personality posts
- 1 behind-the-scenes or live performance
- 1 direct listening/follow CTA
- Daily lightweight engagement: replies, comments and community interaction

Remember: Quality and consistency beat posting just for the sake of posting. If you can only make three strong pieces of content, make three strong pieces.

Release Strategy: 3 Phases

Phase 1 — Build Curiosity

7–14 days before release

- Announce the song with artwork or a teaser.
- Share the story behind the track.
- Post short clips with different hooks.
- Ask listeners to pre-save/follow where relevant.
- Contact collaborators, blogs, creators and playlist curators early.

Phase 2 — Release Week

Launch day and the days around it

- Publish your strongest clip on release day.
- Make the listening link easy to find.
- Share a performance or lyric-focused video.
- Thank early listeners and repost genuine fan reactions.
- Send a concise release note to relevant media, creators and contacts.

Phase 3 — Keep the Song Alive

Weeks 2–6 and beyond

- Do not stop after release day.
- Test new hooks, verses, stories and visual formats.
- Release a live, acoustic, remix, visualizer or BTS version when appropriate.
- Keep pitching and collaborating.
- Review data weekly and double down on formats that earn quality engagement.

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DIY Promotion: How To Do It Yourself

You can run a professional campaign with a phone, basic editing software, a spreadsheet and a repeatable routine.

- 1 **Define the listener** — Write down genre, mood, comparable artists and the type of person most likely to connect with the song.
- 2 **Choose the message** — Write one sentence explaining why someone should care about this song.
- 3 **Create 10–20 assets** — Film several vertical clips in one session. Change the hook, angle, location or story.
- 4 **Build a contact list** — Track relevant creators, blogs, playlist curators, radio, venues and collaborators.
- 5 **Publish consistently** — Schedule content across your chosen platforms and keep calls-to-action simple.
- 6 **Measure** — Track views, watch time, saves, shares, comments, profile visits, followers and meaningful listening actions.

Simple Tracking Sheet

Date	Content	Reach/Views	Engagement	Clicks/Streams	What I Learned

Paid Promotion: When & How

Paid promotion can accelerate discovery, but money does not automatically create fans. Use paid ads to test and scale content that already shows signs of genuine interest.

Good Reasons To Use Paid Promotion

- You have a clear release, video or landing page to promote.
- You know which audience or geography you want to reach.
- You have several creative versions to test.
- You can measure meaningful outcomes rather than only impressions.
- You have enough budget to run tests without expecting instant profitability.

Paid Promotion Options

Channel	Useful For	Tip
Social ads	Testing video hooks and audiences	Test several creatives, not just one.
Search ads	Capturing existing intent	Use specific keywords and a relevant destination.
Creator partnerships	Borrowing trusted audience attention	Choose audience fit over follower count.
Retargeting	Reaching people who already engaged	Use a clear next step: listen, follow, watch.

A Safer Paid-Ad Workflow

- Start small — use a test budget you can afford to lose.
- Test 3–5 creative variations with different hooks.
- Compare audience segments and placements.
- Optimize for useful actions where possible, not vanity metrics alone.
- Pause weak ads and move budget toward clear winners.
- Never buy fake streams, followers, likes or automated engagement.

Bottom line: Paid ads should amplify a good message — not disguise a weak one.

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Music Promotion Mistakes To Avoid

- ✗ **Posting only on release day.** A song can have a long promotional life.
- ✗ **Using the same clip everywhere.** Adapt the opening and format to each platform.
- ✗ **Talking only about yourself.** Explain what the listener will feel, discover or relate to.
- ✗ **Chasing every trend.** Use trends only when they fit your sound and identity.
- ✗ **Buying fake engagement.** Real listeners matter more than inflated numbers.
- ✗ **Spamming curators or creators.** Relevant, personalized outreach performs better and protects your reputation.
- ✗ **Ignoring data.** Promotion is testing — keep what works, change what doesn't.

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High-SEO Artist Promotion

SEO isn't just for blogs. It helps people find your artist name, songs and supporting content when they search online.

- Use your exact artist name consistently across profiles and release pages.
- Create an artist website or profile page with a clear bio, music links, images and contact info.
- Use descriptive page titles such as "Artist Name — New Single — Genre".
- Write natural descriptions with relevant terms: genre, location/scene, release name, mood, collaborators.
- Publish useful content: lyrics context, track stories, interviews, production notes, announcements.
- Earn legitimate links from relevant publications, venues, collaborators and music communities.
- Keep artist metadata consistent across platforms and directories.

Avoid keyword stuffing or low-quality pages made only to rank. Search visibility is strongest when the page is genuinely useful to a real listener.

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30-Day Promotion Calendar

WEEK 1

Awareness

Announce • teaser clips • story • artwork • build creator/press list

WEEK 2

Release

Release-day content • strongest hook • listening CTA • outreach • fan replies

WEEK 3

Discovery

New hooks • performance • behind-the-scenes • collaborations • playlist outreach

WEEK 4

Optimization

Review data • repeat winners • retarget engaged people • plan next release

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The Artist Promotion Checklist

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Song, artwork and metadata are ready | ☐ Creator, media and playlist outreach list is prepared |
| ☐ Artist bio and press information are ready | ☐ Fan/community engagement plan is ready |
| ☐ Listening link is easy to find | ☐ Analytics/tracking sheet is set up |
| ☐ 10+ short-form content ideas are prepared | ☐ Paid test budget is defined, if using ads |
| ☐ Release dates and content are scheduled | ☐ Post-release content is planned for at least 4 weeks |

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Final Strategy: Build a Promotion Machine

The artists who grow consistently are not necessarily the ones with the biggest budgets. They are often the ones who keep learning: make content, publish, listen to the audience, measure results, improve the next creative, and repeat.



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