



Creativity Doesn't Stop When the Song is Done.

The biggest reason developing artists aren't developing.

If you can write, produce, and perform a song, you can figure out how to make people care about it. The biggest issue with independent artists today isn't talent. It isn't even the music itself. It's the lack of creative effort put into *how* that music reaches people. Too many developing artists in Australia and New Zealand are completely locked into the creative process of writing, recording, mixing, and mastering but when it comes to actually building an audience, they have no real plan.

Please note: *This article is intended for artists looking to create a sustainable career out of their projects. If you are a hobbyist, this article is not intended for you.*

Please note: *We do not wish to offend any artists, or deter them in any way from their project. We simply wish to highlight a major issue we have continually noted over the past 10 years of Cartel.*

"The biggest issue Christina and I see in local, developing artists these days is their relationship to communications. They are 150% committed to the write, demo, record, mix, and master process (as they should be) but then have absolutely 0 'real' focus or desire to be creative in communicating that release to an audience. For artists looking to develop a real, sustainable project, there must be an emphasis on how an audience will 1. discover their music & 2. care about it."

- Anthony Agostino,
Partner and Head of Artist Development & Digital Strategy at Cartel Australia

The Complaining Culture

The local discourse among developing artists is full of complaints and if you disagree, it means you're probably a part of that culture.

- "The algorithm isn't pushing my music."
- "People don't support real artists anymore."
- "Labels and PR teams don't do their job."
- "Marketing is just for clout chasers."
- "Spotify doesn't support artists"
- "My music is good enough, it should be discovered on its own"

Here's the truth: None of these complaints matter. The artists who reach their desired outcome are the ones who take full responsibility for their careers and inject creativity into *every* aspect of their project - not just the music. That means marketing, branding, performance, finances, and relationships. If you

aren't currently thinking with that mindset, you will not get anywhere. Following that, you will be the ones who will struggle to commit to the project over a sustained period. In reality, most artists quit after a year due to one of the points listed above.

The Unrealistic Expectation Cycle

Most independent artists have had this experience:

1. They finish a song they love.
2. They release it, expecting instant success: millions of streams, sold-out shows, viral moments.
3. The song gets *some* traction, but nothing near what they expected.
4. They feel like the release was a failure.
5. They repeat the process until they burn out, lose faith, and quit music altogether.

It's not because the music isn't good. It's because their expectations are disconnected from reality, and they aren't executing on *process*. If you place all your value on the success of a single song, you are setting yourself up for disappointment. The key is to remain accountable and focus on the *controllables* - the things within your power to execute properly.

The Role of the Artist in 2025 + beyond

Too many artists have no idea how industry roles work. They expect managers, labels, and PR teams to magically make things happen, without understanding their responsibilities or how to hold them accountable.

A manager is not a magician. A label is not a personal bank. PR is not a guarantee of success. You cannot outsource your entire career and expect results unless *you* first have a vision, a strategy, and a willingness to do the work.

Communicating Your Art: How Do Listeners Discover You?

The foundation of a sustainable music career isn't streams. It's *real fans* - people who don't just listen to your music but *invest* in it. They buy tickets, share your work, and become part of your journey. And fans don't connect with stream counts, radio plays, or accolades. They connect with *stories* and *experiences*.

During the creative process, you don't need to think about your audience. But once the song is done, you absolutely *must*.

How to Build Real Engagement:

1. **Identify where your audience spends their time.** Are they on TikTok, Instagram or YouTube? Where do they discover new music?
2. **Understand how music discovery works on those platforms.** In Australia/NZ, 89% of listeners prefer Spotify. Globally, 45% of artist discovery on Spotify comes from algorithmic playlists. How are you feeding that algorithm?
3. **Create a repeatable and measurable process for every release.** Marketing isn't about one viral moment. It's about consistency across multiple projects.

It's not enough to just put out a song and hope people find it. You need to *make* them care. And that requires just as much creativity as the music itself.

There will always be another song, another EP, another album. Your success will not be determined by a single release but by your ability to *continuously* connect with an audience. Creativity doesn't stop when the song is done, it extends into everything you do. If you aren't thinking that way, you're already behind.

If this article, has offended you or there's anything you wish to discuss, please don't hesitate to reach out: info@cartelmanagementaus.com. Our intention to offend; it is to point out legitimate facts and viewpoints that we have experienced daily.