



Digital Strategy for Independent Music Releases.

META, YouTube, and Streaming Optimization

Releasing independent music in Australia presents a unique opportunity for artists to harness the power of digital platforms and marketing tools to reach a global audience. This guide outlines strategies for utilizing META advertising, optimizing YouTube, and leveraging digital streaming platforms like Spotify and Apple Music to elevate your music release.

Before moving forward, it is important to note that although these strategies are widely accessible they are not VITAL to every release, as leveraging paid advertising should always come down to availability of budget and the digital strategies placed within the wider communications strategy. For independent artists, understanding your budget and priorities is crucial before committing to digital ad spend. It's not always necessary, but when used strategically, it can enhance your reach. Following, it's also important to note that a digital strategy is different from social media strategy. Social media is the connection point; digital enhances the process of that connection.

An effective digital strategy ensures that the journey of discovery on platforms like Spotify, YouTube, Google, social media is seamless and targeted. This might include optimising your profiles or using paid promotion to push your music to the right audiences. This part of the process ensures that you are supplying each platform with specific data around who your niche audience is + have a process to develop and navigate it.

Below are some strategies that can help assist independent artists with their digital strategy.

1. META Advertising & Ads Manager Strategy

META platforms (Facebook, Instagram) are essential for artists looking to build awareness, connect with fans, and drive traffic to streaming platforms. With targeted ads, independent artists can effectively allocate their budget toward high-value audiences. For the purpose of our digital strategy it is important to distinguish the difference between running **boosted posts** and running **ads**.

Boosting a Post: This is a quick and simple way to promote an existing post on your profile. It's designed to increase engagement (likes, comments, shares) or drive traffic to a particular post. You can set limited goals such as increasing visibility, promoting a link, or encouraging message interactions.

Running Ads: Ads created through the Ads Manager offer far more flexibility and customisation. You can choose from a wide range of objectives, such as website conversions, lead generation, app installs, video views, or promoting a specific product. Ads can be completely different from your organic posts, giving you the flexibility to design campaigns from scratch.

[For more information regarding setting up ads manager account please see here.](#)

Steps for a Successful Ads Manager Campaign:

1. Define Your Audience:

- Use tools within META Ads Manager to create custom audiences. You can target people who engage with your music, social content, or those similar to your current followers.

- Break down your audience into segments (e.g., fans of similar genres, geographic areas in Australia or abroad, demographics, or even by behavior such as active music listeners on streaming platforms).

2. Choose the Right Objective:

- For a music release, select objectives like "Traffic" (drive users to Spotify or Apple Music)

- Use the Conversion objective to push streaming platforms if your goal is to increase streams or purchases.

3. Optimize Ad Creative:

- Showcase engaging visuals like a snippet of your music video or behind-the-scenes content.

- Use vibrant, attention-grabbing thumbnails and concise captions. Text overlays can capture attention on auto-play silent videos.

- Include 'Call-to-Action (CTA)' buttons like 'Listen Now' or 'Watch,' leading directly to your music or a buy link for release.

4. Monitor and Adjust:

- Track metrics like 'click-through rates' (CTR), 'conversion rates', and 'Cost Per Click (CPC)' to understand performance. The Higher your CTR and the lower your CPC is the better the advertisement.

- Adjust your audience targeting and creatives based on what resonates the most.

5. Budget Tip:

- Begin with small budgets across multiple ad sets and gradually scale the ones that deliver the best results. A/B testing different versions of ad copy or visuals can give valuable insights.

2. Optimizing YouTube for Music Releases

YouTube is the second-largest search engine on the planet and the most powerful platform for discovering music. Youtube averages 2.9 billion visits a month, with each user spending (on average) 23 minutes on the platform, and during that time, they only utilising the search tool once. Whether you're releasing a music video, lyric video, behind-the-scenes footage, or just want to focus on your distributed topic audio, optimizing your channel and content can significantly boost visibility.

Key Steps to YouTube Optimization:

1. Create a Consistent Channel Brand:

- Make sure your YouTube channel aligns with your brand. Use your artist name, cohesive cover art, and a strong description.

- Add links to your streaming profiles (Spotify, Apple Music) and social media platforms.
- Understand your strengths and weaknesses on the platform. If you are uncomfortable in front of the camera / do not have the budget to meaningfully and consistently upload content, then understand ways you can communicate the audio being distributed.

2. SEO for Music:

- Optimize titles and descriptions using relevant keywords (e.g., your genre, song title, location keywords like "Australian indie music").
- Use tags effectively to describe your music style and any associated movements (e.g., progressive house, alt rock).
- Incorporate timestamps for videos like "behind-the-scenes" or "interview" content to enhance engagement.
- Add End Screens and Cards to every video
- Have a specific feature video for all returning subscribers + one for all new profile viewers.

3. Leverage Playlists:

- Create YouTube playlists that group your music videos with similar artists or genres. This helps YouTube's algorithm understand your music and recommend it more widely.
- Submit your video to independent and popular YouTube curators, which can increase exposure through shared playlists.

4. Engage with Your Audience:

- Regularly engage. Replying to comments and engaging with fans can help grow a loyal subscriber base. Every engagement outwardly on other creators' content clearly supplies YouTube with data around who your audience is, based on who you engage with. This is arguably more important than sharing content that 'may' or 'may not' connect.

VIDIQ

A tool that we have used consistently for artists & labels we work with is [VIDIQ](#). It is an online education website that offers video tutorials and analytics on YouTube channel growth. The website also has a Google Chrome extension, which allows users to analyze YouTube analytics data. The key for artists here is to ensure that their content is being placed in the right rabbit holes, and essentially what vidIQ can help artists do, is ensure that their content is automatically placed, after a video that a potential fan will view.

What you'll need to do:

- Do a bit of research into how similar artists (who have a high subscriber following) structure the title and description of their videos
- Look into what keywords / tags they are utilizing
- Apply this to your video
- vidIQ will then give you a percentage of how many times your content will show up in comparison to your similar artists search.

EXAMPLE:

*-X artist is a hip hop act who has just released a single that takes a lot of inspiration (sounds like) Drake
-Drake has 26.7million active subscribers on his YouTube profile, and average 1.8 million views on every bit of content.*

-X artist utilizes vidIQ in the above manner.

-Whenever anyone watches content from drake on YouTube, X artist has ensured that their topic video for their new single is the next automatically loaded video after drake content.

What X artist has achieved by utilizing vidIQ, is narrow the target audience on YouTube, from everyone, to an audience who is actually likely to like what they are doing. It is important to note that exposing their content to this target audience will not boost their views and subscribers dramatically. They are likely to see a slight boost but nothing too major. The return comes when an audience member comes past X's content 5-6 times, which creates a situation where the audience member feels like they have organically discovered X rather than X pushing their music onto the potential fan.

An audience member that feels like they have discovered you are more likely to 1. follow you and 2.go to other platforms and engage with you.

Ultimately what this allows artists to do is escape the feeling of posting content and hoping for the audience to come across it. It allows them to post and actively target their niche in an organic way. vidIQ is a paid platform, but we would suggest trialing the free subscription, as that is all artists really need to utilize this strategy.

3. Optimising Streaming Platforms (Spotify, Apple Music, etc.)

Maximizing your presence on Spotify, Apple Music, and other streaming services is essential for independent artists as this is where the majority of our audiences are consuming their music. To ensure your music stands out, effective curation, metadata optimization, and strategic playlist pitching can make all the difference.

Steps for Success:

1. Pre-Release Strategy:

- Submit your track to Spotify for Artists and Apple Music for Artists at least four weeks in advance. This helps with playlist consideration by editorial teams and algorithmic playlists like Release Radar, Discover weekly and Daily Mixes. [45% of all artist discovery globally comes from Algorithmic playlisting on Spotify]

- Have a database of independent playlists ready to be pitched to on release day. The focus of independent playlist placement is NOT to grow stream numbers, it is to supply the platform with data and expose the song to a niche that all share a similar taste profile. This makes placement in Algorithmics more effective and therefore assists in repeat exposure which builds discovery. Having your database ready to go pre release allows you to not feel like you are cramming in at the last minute.

2. Optimise Metadata:

- Ensure your track information is complete and accurate. This includes proper genre tagging, song credits, and lyrics. Accurate metadata is essential for being picked up by algorithms and editorial playlists.

- Use Canvas (Spotify) to create looping visuals for your song. This helps with fan engagement and makes your song more likely to be shared.

3. Leverage Streaming Data:

- Utilize the insights available on Spotify for Artists and Apple Music for Artists to understand where your listeners are located, what age groups they fall into, and what other genres they're interested in. These data points can help inform future campaigns and even tours.

4. Collaborative Playlists:

- Consider teaming up with other independent artists to create collaborative playlists. This can expose your music to each other's fanbases and provide new networking opportunities.

There are many more elements covered within a digital strategy such as, Google search, SEO, Hypedit and SoundCloud campaigns and Youtube Ads that can help assist in a well-executed digital strategy. For the purpose of this article and keeping things relevant to every genre incorporating META advertising, YouTube optimisation, and streaming platform best practices, can significantly amplify the reach of your music release. By focusing on targeting, engagement, and metadata, independent artists in Australia can navigate the ever-evolving digital landscape and build sustainable, long-term success.