



**cdbaby™** Presents

# THE COMPLETE MUSIC PROMOTION CHECKLIST



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You've recorded great music. Now you're eager for it to meet the world.

But you only get one shot at releasing a new song or album, so you want to do it right.

In our companion guide, [The Complete Music Distribution Checklist](#), we listed all the assets you need in order to put your music on digital music platforms like Spotify and Apple Music – things like hi-res cover art, a UPC, ISRCs, songwriter info, and more.

**THIS** list is something different. It's about promotion and planning.

As a musician, you don't need to have **ALL** this stuff ready in order to succeed, and missing some of this shouldn't delay you from putting out your music. (It's more "in an ideal world..") But if you have time before your release date, you should consider the following things.

## How to get more out of your music promotion:

### Things to do:

#### 1. LAUNCH A SHOW.CO CAMPAIGN.

[Show.co](#) is free for CD Baby account holders (no distribution required), giving you access to the same marketing tools used by major labels to grow their artists' social followings, boost streams and saves on Spotify, and much more. Not sure where to start? Try a campaign to build your Spotify following.

#### 2. INSTALL YOUR FACEBOOK PIXEL.

Add your Facebook pixel to your website, Show.co campaigns, and any other eligible web property, so you can [advertise to your audience based on their previous actions](#) (retargeting!)

- ❑ **3. GET INSTANTLY VERIFIED AS AN ARTIST ON SPOTIFY.**  
With CD Baby, you get [instant artist verification](#), so you can jump right in and claim your Spotify for Artists account.
- ❑ **4. SUBMIT YOUR BEST SONG FOR PLAYLIST CONSIDERATION AND RELEASE RADAR ON SPOTIFY.**  
Use Spotify for Artists to [suggest your new track or album to their editors](#). (This must be done at least 7 days in advance of the release date.)
- ❑ **5. USE PANDORA AMP.**  
With [Pandora's marketing tools](#), you can instantly reach your listeners on the platform. You can even record audio messages that play before or after your songs, so you can tell fans about your new music.
- ❑ **6. CLAIM YOUR APPLE MUSIC FOR ARTISTS ACCOUNT.**  
Go [HERE](#). Then customize your profile picture, take a look at the analytics, and see what it says about your audience.
- ❑ **7. ORGANIZE YOUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL PAGE.**  
[Optimize!](#) Be sure your playlists and sections reflect what is most important, and be sure to put your newest video or album trailer as the channel's featured content.
- ❑ **8. INVEST TIME IN YOUR EMAIL LIST.**  
If you've already got a list, use it! Keep your fans informed about your new music, tell them how they can help spread the word, and [create an automated sequence](#) to welcome brand new subscribers in a way that takes them on a journey from casual listener to diehard fan. If you don't have an email list, set one up today. For real. Email is still a way more powerful marketing tool than social media.
- ❑ **9. LINE UP A PREMIERE FOR YOUR NEW MUSIC OR VIDEO.**  
Easier said than done, of course, but premieres can still be a good way to get attention for your new music. Check out more info [HERE](#) on how to get blogs interested in a premiere.
- ❑ **10. LIVE STREAM!**  
Regular live streaming on IG or FB or YT can deepen your connection with your audience, and give you fresh content to promote each week that reflects back on your new music. Play songs. Tell us stories. Be you.

## □ 11. REACH OUT TO INDIE PLAYLIST CURATORS, COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY RADIO DJs, AND PODCASTERS.

There is a whole underground world of music lovers who still personally decide what they want to share with their audience. [Locate them](#), see if your music is a fit, and send a polite pitch.

## □ 12. SHOOT PLATFORM-SPECIFIC VIDEO MESSAGES FOR SOCIAL.

For instance: “Stream my new single on Deezer!” Then use Ads Manager in Facebook to target those videos to users of the specific DSP.

### Stuff you need:

## □ 13. BUILD A SMARTLINK.

Or [have HearNow create one for you](#) instantly! A smartlink is a simple promo page for your new release that links visitors to their preferred platforms (Spotify, YouTube, Apple Music, etc.). You can't make assumptions about where your fans consume music, so you should always share a link that can take them where **THEY** want to go.

## □ 14. REPURPOSE YOUR COVER ART.

The design and aesthetic of your artwork can inform web design; [social posts](#); merch items like t-shirts, mugs, and posters; and much more. Find ways to put that cool art to extra use.

## □ 15. TAKE GREAT PRESS PHOTOS.

You're going to need them for your own web presence and media coverage, so get some keepers in landscape and portrait orientation. Visuals create the vibe and expectations that make a stranger either want to check out your music or move on with their lives. Avoid brick walls and train tracks!

## □ 16. BURN ADDITIONAL AUDIO.

Take your session tracks and create stems, alternative mixes, and instrumental mixes. (If you can do this while you're still mixing the primary release, all the better!) Having these files means you can get extra attention for your music in the form of remixes, sync placements, and bonus content.

## □ 17. BUILD A LIST OF CONTACTS — AND USE ‘EM.

It’s time to hit up your network. If you don’t have a list of professional contacts who can support your new release in some way, consider talking to publicists, buying the [Indie Bible](#), or looking into something like SubmitHub. Whether you do it yourself or pay for a pro PR campaign, publicity doesn’t come to you. You go get it.

## □ 18. WRITE A PRESS RELEASE.

You gotta send **SOMETHING** to that list of contacts, right? Capture their attention with the story of your new music, and focus on what sets it (or you) apart.

## □ 19. COMPOSE (THREE) BIOS.

Now that new music is on the way, it’s time to update all your bios. Have a long one for press, a medium one for your fans, and a short one for social profiles.

## □ 20. COME UP WITH COMPELLING AD COPY.

“Copy” is text. And maybe emojis. What message gets you the most reach for the least \$\$? What’s the hook? If you’re going to do paid ads, you need to grab people. Ask yourself: “What would stop me in my tracks if I was scrolling through my feed?”

## □ 21. SHOOT A VIDEO.

[It doesn’t have to cost you a fortune.](#) It just has to be interesting. In fact, casual smartphone videos often perform better on Facebook. And videos are often the best form of introduction to someone who’s never heard of you before.

## □ 22. MAKE IG STORIES WITH YOUR MUSIC.

If you’re using CD Baby as a distributor, [your music will be available in Instagram’s music catalog](#) for use in Stories. This opens up a whole world of casual, fun video promotion. Stories self-destruct after 24 hours, so experiment!

## □ 23. CREATE OR REFRESH YOUR WEBSITE.

A Facebook page isn’t enough. You need a space that is YOURS: A place where you control the experience, capture email addresses, and track visitors’ activity. If you don’t have a website yet, you can [make one in minutes with HostBaby](#). No coding required!

## The big picture:

### □ 24. HAVE A GOAL AND MAKE A PLAN.

You need to know the mission objective before you can plot the best course. When your goal is clear for a new release, you'll know what's important, what to measure, and when to shift tactics.

### □ 25. KNOW YOUR STORY AND YOUR U.S.P.

Your "unique selling proposition" is what differentiates you in the marketplace. It's your "brand." Find what makes you unique as an artist, and put it into words.

### □ 26. IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE.

If you know who your fans are, great! How can you grow that base? If you don't know, you'll need a way to test different assumptions about your listeners, and find the group that's most engaged. Running ads on Facebook or Instagram is one low-cost way to effectively identify your fans.

### □ 27. SET A PROMO BUDGET.

Again, you don't need \$20k to get results. Even \$1 a day can go a long way if you spend wisely over time. Just know what you're working with beforehand.

### □ 28. ESTABLISH A PRESENCE ON AT LEAST ONE SOCIAL PLATFORM.

If you've somehow avoided the Internet for the past two decades, it's time to join and master at least one social media platform. Gonna do ads? Facebook! Good at photography and design? Instagram. Videos? YouTube. Witty quotables? Twitter.

### □ 29. GATHER YOUR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TEAM.

Promoting new music is hard work. It helps to have a few people you trust standing by to tell you what you're doing well and what you're doing...less well.

### □ 30. KEEP YOUR CHIN UP.

Your music will do what it will do. You'll experience happy surprises, as well as disappointments. A good attitude can go a long way. Remember this is about a life in music, not a moonshot to success.

## Ready, Set, Promote!

As mentioned above, you definitely don't need to check every item off the list in order to have a successful release – and to be sure, there's a lot MORE you could do as well, if time and budget allow. But hopefully this guide gives you an overview of some of the ways DIY artists these days are getting attention for their new music.

If your music isn't available yet, CD Baby would love to help you [get your songs out there](#), and provide you with [powerful promotion tools](#) as well.

GET STARTED TODAY!

[www.cdbaby.com](http://www.cdbaby.com)

