



Process over Expectation.

Focus your energy on the process, rather than the subjective response to 'one' of your songs.

Most, if not all independent artists have had the following experience. They finish a song, they really love what they have created, and their expectation after release is to immediately receive hundreds of millions of streams, tour the world and make millions of dollars - just because the music is 'good'. What actually happens when the song is released is very different. Generally, it will receive a fraction of the amount of streams artists expect. The release may achieve some good development in terms of awareness in certain areas but will not reach the expectations set initially by the artist. A common artist response when this occurs, is to view the release as a failure.

Has this happened to you?

In our experience, prior to, and after starting Cartel Management we have seen multiple artists continue the above cycle, over and over until unfortunately, they fall out of love with their own creative process. We are by no means saying that artists should not hold themselves in high regard or saying that it is impossible for music to be organically accepted, BUT the consistent 'perceived failure' is due to lack of execution on process and having too much value placed on the merit of any one song. This ultimately can (and does) result in artists stopping their projects and leaving music for good.

"Back in my artist days, (every time I would finish a song that I thought had potential), my first instinct was that following release, I would be travelling on a yacht in Ibiza and my whole life would be a fairy tale. In reality, the single may have done really good things for my development but because of the unrealistic value that I placed on the song, I saw it as a complete failure.

It was so narrow-minded of me to be focussing all of my attention on one single, when it was only one small part of the overall journey." - Anthony Agostino (Former Artist / Co Founder of Cartel Management Australia)

How do artists combat this cycle?

The simple answer to the above question is to create and consistently refine processes that allow artists to get the music to the 'right' audiences, industry and media over a sustained period of time. Focusing on the process allows artists to have actual control of the responses to the music and also keeps them accountable to the actions that they must put into every release cycle.

Any job has processes - if you work at a supermarket, there is a stocktake process; if you work at a movie theatre, there is a ticketing process; if you buy food from McDonald's drive through, your experience is dictated by their process. Developing and sustaining an artist project is no different, being able to create meaningful processes outside of the creative space that ultimately allows artists to be creative in all areas of the project for all aspects of their journey.

Below are some things to consider on how to create processes for your artist project.

- Understand how to navigate your social platforms that the music will gain exposure on:

The main tool to gain maximum exposure that an artist has in their arsenal is through their own social media channels. A lack of imagination and a lack of communication to audiences is often what will affect the release - especially in a COVID world with such a high importance placed on digital attention. A lot of artists only focus on their

audience profiles when it's time to release and that is way too late. It is not about the number of likes you get or the number of followers on any given account, it's about how many of the followers are willing to act upon a prompt from you. We want to challenge whoever is reading this to assess your social media accounts and ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do I know who my target audience actually is?
(if not read one of our previous articles titled [Understand Your Audience](#))
2. Do I just post content and hope for people to come across it?
3. Do I actively engage my followers?
4. Who cares about my project?

Ultimately, your social media profiles are the main driver in creating sustainability for your project. When thinking about creating processes to benefit your release, create a situation where you actually give your followers value. (i.e engage with their content that you buy into, curate content specific to a direct audience, reply to every comment etc.) By focusing on your content and expecting external buy-in, you are essentially cutting off the lifeline of your project - your audience.

With the saturation of the music industry (due to the accessibility of music), you need to go out of your way to create meaningful connections with your audience. Coming back to the process, we urge artists to structure daily time (15-20) minutes that is dedicated to growing social media and creating value for your audiences. To break down more of the process refer to our [Time Is Your Best Asset](#) article. Whether you're posting content, planning assets, scheduling, commenting etc. that time consistently allows you to engage - even when you aren't in the midst of a release cycle.

Building leverage on your socials is the leverage that will turn the heads of industry and media to buy into your product. Artists often view the process in reverse, where you receive industry (PR) praise first, and receive following off the back of that, and while sometimes that is the case - we urge artists to give themselves and their releases the best chance at success and sustainability (whatever that means to them) by developing a process that you can rely on, rather than just 'hoping' for support, release after release.

Prioritize a process for your socials.

- Understand how to navigate industry platforms that the music will gain exposure on:

Within the AU / NZ there are various industry / media avenues that artists pursue for exposure. Outside of connecting with managers, labels, publishers, agents and the like, an artist's main focus for exposure comes in the form of 'delivering' or 'pitching' to online media (blogs + online magazines), DSP's (Spotify, Apple Music etc.) & radio (commercial, community & digital).

It is important for all artists to understand that gaining exposure on these platforms happens over time and multiple release campaigns. Repeating and refining the process over multiple releases is where the growth comes from.

We urge artists to have set actions in place each week, both prior to and after the release to ensure that the music is reaching the right media and industry. Remember, the role of an artist (or team) in this scenario is just to make these outlets aware of the music. The market ultimately decides whether the music is viable for them or not. For this reason, we suggest that targeting these outlets should occur over multiple consistent releases. By doing that you're giving these outlets the opportunity to remember you and assess your growth over a period of time.

Below we have broken down our processes on how we attack the three main media points for releases as well as how we structure releases.

[Process to attack online media read here](#)

[Process to attack radio here](#)

[Process to attack DSP's here](#)

[Create Release Plans here](#)

- Romanticize the process not the product:

It is easy to get caught up in the hype of something you are really proud of creating. What's important to remember is that there will always be another song, another EP, another album, another project to communicate your art. Let your expectation turn into actioning a measurable PROCESS. Doing this will allow you to remain accountable and focus on the controllables rather than a subjective view of your art.

Consistent process over time is the antidote for sustainability as an artist.