



CARTEL MANAGEMENT AUSTRALIA

Why music videos are irrelevant.

Outside of creative expression what do music videos actually do?

When sitting down and talking to an artist / project for the first time, one of our first questions (among many) is to ask "What is your processes to develop your project?" and 99% of artists answer with the same thing.

"I'm going to post more on socials."

"We are playing a launch gig."

"We are making a music video."

We can quite easily spend all day writing about how the 3 responses above are actually not specific processes but for the sake of this article, we wish to focus on the topic of music videos. The intention of this article is to discuss the role of a music video(s), and whether they have a role to play in the development of artists in this current climate.

***Please Note** The article is not to judge or to say that putting out a music video that adds to the actual creative vision of an overall artist project is wrong - we simply want to discuss their role as a marketing tool to gain awareness for said artist project.*

In short, outside of the creative expression of the artist (as above), music videos have been completely and utterly irrelevant for some time. A project's reliance upon releasing a music video as a marketing tool is an outdated form of content creation that splits the focus of audience attention (if the project has attention to begin with) between the audio release and the video itself. The general stance for independent artists justifying the importance of music videos generally comes down to them emulating what more established artists have done before them. What these artists fail to understand is that quite often, these more established artists were releasing music videos in the 80s, 90s & early 00s where there was a demand from an audience to actually do so OR current artists who have an in built and loyal fanbase - Taylor Swift etc.

The golden days of channels like MTV, V-Hits, RAGE, ABC and MAX ran from the late 1980s to the early 2000's and audience attention and retention was at an all time high, hence the 'need' for artists / labels and anyone involved in creating music to create music videos as a marketing tool. It is no secret that MTV revolutionized the music landscape over this time arguably forging the careers of many globally recognized artists.

But those days are gone..

With the accessibility to music moving to iTunes and later (currently) streaming, consumption and reliance on music video channels dramatically dipped, and after a failure to reinvent themselves in this new age market, the cost of this marketing tool far outweighs the return of awareness.

Enter YouTube.

In previous articles we have harped on (at length) about the importance of YouTube as a platform. Within the Australian / New Zealand music landscape, artists, independent labels, and music industry operators, all dramatically underestimate and undervalue the power of YouTube. Not only as a global streaming service but as a premiere artist discovery tool. YouTube is a user generated content platform that is brimming with growth potential for independent artists in every genre. Youtube as a whole has **more than 2.6 billion** active users. YouTube Premium and Music together have more than 50 million subscribers in the world. More than ¼ of the world's population use YouTube every month, compared to Spotify, which as of the first quarter of 2022, had **182 million** premium subscribers worldwide. By those numbers alone, it is clear to see that as a global reach and discovery tool YouTube can give artists access to a greater number of people, if used correctly.

Within the AU / NZ music market, anyone involved in a release only really utilizes Youtube channels to release music videos and although its better to release these via Youtube rather than via media outlets like MTV or online media sites etc. the issue for music videos specifically is that, if they are shared on a profile that has very little following on it already - what role do they actually perform to bring audience to the profile? The answer: it doesn't.

For the vast majority of musicians, outsourcing and organizing creative direction, videographers, cast, crew, sets, locations and editing for music videos is an overly time consuming and overly expensive process. On average it can cost artist projects up to \$2000AUD just to create one and the time it takes to actually execute and complete can take anywhere from 2 weeks to 3 months.

Taking the above time and financial factors into consideration, our question to artists would be: why would an artist who has no tangible income via streaming, touring or otherwise spend that amount of money? Essentially putting the finances of the artist project overall into the negative just to create a music video that will have close to zero effect (historically) on the overall development of the artist project.

Our advice to ALL artists is: if you do not have the budget (in the project's pocket), access to resources and most importantly the time to actually create something meaningful, then don't do it, period. Instead, focus on where your audience has their attention and develop processes in that area.