

Making money in the streaming era: advice for songwriters

(original title of article – Ten Ways to Dramatically Boost the Money You Make from Streaming) by Paul Resnikoff (October 2017)

Streaming is quickly becoming music's most profitable frontier. For many artists, that means skipping gatekeepers and developing a direct following. But with so many different streaming music platforms available, the digital rights management process has become highly fragmented, leaving hefty room for mistakes when it comes to ensuring that your content is being protected. Read this guide and avoid the most common mistakes creators are making — before you get started.

Digital Music News recently interviewed streaming expert and Vydia CEO, Roy LaManna. This is part of our broader partnership dedicated to vastly improving YouTube and streaming monetization. Vydia is changing the game for over 170,000 artists and video creators worldwide by offering a transparent digital rights system with a high level of control and customization. Below, LaManna shares important insight to solve common mistakes creators didn't even know they were making.

1. Understand Your Splits

If you are collaborating with another artist, one of the first and most important things you should do is establish your royalty splits and put them in writing. For example, if you and Sally co-write a song together, and she owns 15% and you own 85% — put those splits in writing and have each party sign off.

This is vital in avoiding any potential ownership issues in the future.

As a digital rights administrator, one of the biggest issues we see artists dealing with is conflicting ownership claims. Without an agreement in place, a long, messy, and potentially costly ownership battle can ensue. This is the leading reason why friendly and fruitful relationships between artists can sometimes end in turmoil.

Prevent complications and be proactive. If you want to make the agreement more official, get a lawyer involved.

2. Get Permission

Just one instance of copyright could negatively impact your reputation. Copyright law is highly complex, and every creator is susceptible. As an emerging artist who is looking to debut a new remix or cover, it is crucial to have all permissions required for music that you do not rightfully own, regardless of sample size.

You can only monetize your content if you have permissions are cleared with all ownership holders. Have your ducks in a row and make it official in the event that you have the world's next big hit.

3. Manage Your Metadata

Filling out your metadata illustrates the difference between an amateur and a professional. In addition to increasing your video's rank in SEO, clean metadata ensures

you receive proper payouts. Take the time needed to thoroughly complete and review all of the information required to avoid a big administrative headache in the future.

Carefully read, and reread every detail related to your video including splits, spelling, addresses, etc., to confirm everything is correct prior to submitting it to any platform. You will also want to avoid any misleading or confusing metadata. That includes using a trending word or term in your description that is unrelated to your content in an attempt to drive traffic to your video.

YouTube will flag these instances and send you a strike, which may ultimately cause your video to be removed.

4. Ingest Your Assets

Ingesting your content and applying your protection policies as soon as possible puts you in control of your work. Depending on the platform, through Vydia, you can monetize, block or permit your content to be shared by third parties and prevent pirates from stealing your revenue.

The earlier you can ingest your entire body of work and register each asset and reference file into Youtube's content management system, the higher chance you have of optimizing your earnings. You can even ingest references before you officially release content. Doing it after the fact works, but it's a lot like buying car insurance after a crash — protect yourself before there's a problem.

5. Clear Your Conflicts

Conflict occurs when two separate parties are claiming ownership of the same asset. Avoiding conflicts entirely is ideal but as you gain notoriety, a conflict is inevitable. Once an asset goes into conflict, monetization stops and no one gets paid out until the conflict is resolved.

What most people don't know is that YouTube has a "hands off" approach to almost all licensing disputes, so the conflicting parties have to resolve the dispute accordingly. The best way to clear conflicts quickly is to sort out splits and agreements early and directly contact the opposing party immediately so there's minimal time missed for your asset making you money.

6. Know Your Worth

Understanding the value of staying independent could make your career more profitable in the end. As an independent artist, you have full creative and managerial control over all your work.

You choose where your content is published based on the specific goals you set. Unsigned artists can sometimes undersell themselves without knowing their true worth. All of which makes them more likely to accept a label's initial offer without taking into consideration how the value of their ownership can increase over time.

Understanding your value and maintaining full ownership and control over your work puts the ball in your court by giving you the proper leverage to hold out for the right

offer that fits your needs.

7. Track Your Claims

If people are re-uploading and or recreating your work, it's essential that you have the proper protection policies in place. Every instance of User Generated Content (UGC) identifying you as the rights holder will monetize that asset and redirect earnings back to you.

In fact, the Head of YouTube for Japan and South Korea credited PSY's success on 'Gangnam Style' to a decision to support and enable every variation video. Even the videos that weren't so flattering. Iteration is the best compliment an artist can receive, especially when it means more money in your pocket.

8. Consistent Content is Key

The more content you are monetizing, the more opportunities you have for collecting revenue. That is why it's never too early to start prepping your next piece.

Constant new material also maintains engagement with fans, establishes relationships with a core base, and increases your chances of being discovered. Promoting your current work is an important factor and can include variations, derivatives, or other creative ways to spread the word about your new song.

9. Stay Authentic and Accessible

Be authentic and do the work. Purchasing views, followers and social stats of any kind will only serve to discredit you. In fact, fraudulent activity could even get you banned from publishers and publishing partners due to the fact that your actions can impact many other related parties.

Increase your credibility by clearly listing your contact information on all your videos . If people want to offer you deals, tour slots or juicy collaborations, make sure it's easy for people to find you.

10. Set Success Goals

Many artists equate success with a record deal. After analyzing over 170,000 artists worldwide, Vydia stumbled on an astonishing fact: After receiving around 20 million YouTube views, artists typically start receiving major label contract offers. Some artists sign those deals, while others don't.

Can signing a record deal be your "happily ever after?" Not always. The question, "should I sign this deal?" depends on many factors. Make sure you understand what your earnings are now as a result of your current ownership percentages and become aware of how that will change after you sign.

Vydia has seen some artists make it big with labels, but with today's innovative technology many independent artists can do just as well by strategically managing their content and maintaining control.

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