

Things to Consider Before You Release an Album - The Questions You Should Ask Yourself Before Self-Releasing Music

BY HEATHER MCDONALD Updated July 01, 2018

Planning on releasing your album? Releasing an album requires a lot of work, money, and effort, and you have to know exactly you're facing before you even take the first step if it is going to work. As you get your album ready for the public, here are five things to keep in mind.

01 Releasing an Album

So, what exactly does it mean to release an album? On a self-release level, it could mean everything from selling copies at shows to landing a national distribution deal, but you have to know one thing for sure: just because you're not working with a record label doesn't mean that you won't have to do the work that a record label does if you want your release to be a success.

Make sure you understand the broad picture, and that your album needs promotion, distribution, and possibly manufacturing to make the process of releasing the album worthwhile.

02 Promoting Your Music

It would be nice if the whole, "if you build it, they will come" thing worked with music, but alas, you've got to generate a lot of promotion to let the world know that your album is out there. You will need to make some decision about how you're going to get that job done.

You can hire various PR companies or handle things yourself. That decision comes down to your budget and what you think you can realistically achieve. If you are promoting your album yourself, decide in advance what your promotion targets are. Your job will be most manageable if you focus on a region plus any markets where you'll be playing shows.

03 Distributing Your Music

Fortunately, in these modern times, there's no particular need for you to manufacture hard copies of your album and start courting distributors to place it in record stores. Tunecore, CD Baby, and other sites can get your music to the people digitally with ease. However, you need a plan for distribution, even if you do it digitally.

04 Planning Shows to Promote the Album

Live shows are the best way to promote just about anything, including your new release. Hitting the road hard will increase your fan base and help you get press for your album, but booking is something that takes time - and time is at a premium when you're releasing your album.

If you're experienced at booking your shows, then you probably have a database of existing contacts to make your job easier. If you haven't booked shows before, be sure to allow some time for getting some gigs set up around your release date.

05 Paying for Your Album

Releasing an album costs money; can you afford it? Putting all of the costs on your credit card is not necessarily a good plan. Be sure to create a budget for your release that doesn't overreach what you can realistically afford.

Don't plan for, say, a massive tour and hope that it turns into a money maker. Settle on an investment you can afford, plan accordingly, and then use the money that comes in to fund your next project.

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