

ARTIST HUMAN RESOURCE GUIDE

the mission

a resource guide to assist you in navigating through the current machine.

although geared toward creators of sound, the information suggested here can be applied to many trades.

the goal is to assist as many of you who come from where we come from in your endeavors.

good luck.

table of contents

I. distribution of music

16. merchandise

2. distribution of video

17. concerts

3. social media

18. artist name

4. sync licensing

19. artificial intelligence

5. production

20. llcs, copyrights & trademarks

6. writing

21. publishing

7. mixing & mastering

22. publishing (cont'd)

31. the many hats

8. singles

23. streams of income

32. the industry is cooked

9. albums

24. loans (recording deals)

33. final thoughts

10. cover art

25. brand deals

II. rollout

26. donations

12. music videos

27. attitude & confidence

13. press

28. fans, spectators, haters & bots

14. vinyls & cds

29. budget (or lack thereof)

15. website(s)

30. genre

distribution of music

the point is for the music to be heard. right now, the majority of listeners prefer listening on all the big digital streaming platforms (DSPs) like Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon Music for their conveniency is unmatched.

it is important that you understand, the income from sharing your music on these platforms will not be substantial at the beginning. in fact, we would advise you not to think about the money until you've reached high streaming numbers. they are not your only options of distribution, as you can go physical only or share on your own website(s). However, that is where the eyes & ears are if discovery is important to you. if money is more important to you, find a way to compromise with your audience so that you get what you need and they get what they want also. consider placing your work on platforms temporarily as a limited time "trial" run and putting it for sale after.

in our experience, DistroKid is the most convenient & financially sustainable public music distribution service as they give you 100% of your royalties and are mostly reliable. it's very easy to use and lets you focus on making more music while they do the heavy lifting.

it is also very important you understand that you don't own these platforms or services, nor do you have a say in how they operate. at any point in time, they can change the rules, remove your work, up the price, suppress your reach, etc. consider creating your own take on a DSP or Distrokid one day. that way, you won't need to rely on them forever.

if you're interested in being on the forefront of innovating how we share and make sustainable income from our work, visit howtofixthestreamingproblem.com.

distribution of video

the point is to display talent and/or ethos. make for YouTube. upload everything to YouTube. then distribute that to social media like TikTok, Instagram, X, etc. you came here to be an artist. not a content creator. display your talent to the maximum ability and let short-form be an afterthought.

if you have a music video and you're thinking about uploading it to YouTube via Vevo, understand that it's mostly just for show. it does not increase your reach or truly benefit you in any way other than that it makes you appear "official." Vevo is just a boujee ass Google AdSense. pursue this route at your own discretion.

remember, not every video has to be you either. if you see talent or ethos that you feel needs to be shared, use your platform to share it with the world.

here are some ideas of video format:

- music videos
- live performance(s)
- freestyle videos
- docu-series/reality
- documentary
- talking/one-offs/stories/bits/commentary
- interviews/conversations
- stand up special
- livestreams
- trailers/commercials
- monologues
- films/shows

social media

it's the wild west. nobody knows what the fuck they're doing. do whatever works for you and do it unapologetically.

the name of the game is make the people feel something. make 'em laugh, cry, think, dance, whatever you have, they'll take. just don't do anything that makes you uncomfortable in your own skin. virality is fleeting, but your sanity is forever.

sync licensing

Sync licensing, also known as synchronization license or "sync", is an agreement between a music user and the owner of a copyrighted composition that gives the user permission to use the song in a video format. This can include YouTube, DVDs, Blu-ray discs, film, television shows, advertisements, video games, movie trailers, and wedding videos.

it's very simple. whatever you make, find the media (tv shows, films, video games, etc.) that it would fit in with the most, find out who's in charge and contact them. or work backwards: find out what media you'd like to fit into and create with it in mind.

and if you get the cold shoulder from them, make your own soundtrack. hell, film your own trailers/commercials for it if you like it that much. if you feel like you can contribute to that piece of media in a meaningful way, be boundless. who knows, maybe then you'll get that call.

we live in a superficial world, people kind of want to see if it'll work before they get behind it anyway.

production

beat makers: people who can make beats from scratch combining different elements.

producers: people who can curate a sound that matches the energy being sought after.

that distinction is crucial for this next part. the age-old argument of sampling vs. producing a beat from scratch is a pointless one that can hold you back if you allow it to. make whatever you make however you make it. who cares if you used a loop? sometimes a simple loop is how you genuinely feel inside and adding more to it might distract from that—it's important to simplify. just make sure it's an accurate reflection of who you are, what you feel and what you'd like to align yourself with. it starts from your mind before anywhere else.

we recommend FL Studio for production.

writing

what story are you telling? who's story are you telling? is it a story? are you detail-oriented? is brevity important to you? how are you feeling lately? what setting do your thoughts fit in with best? what are the funniest things you've heard lately? what are the dumbest things you've heard lately? what are the most profound things you've ever heard? what's the last thing that made you smile? what conversations have you had with family or friends lately? do you have family or friends? what are their stories? how do their stories relate back to you? what are their/your hobbies? what movies or tv shows did you watch that influenced how you think? if you didn't watch movies or tv shows, why not? what is your biggest flaw or insecurity? if you could strangle one person, who would it be? what would they have to say to make you stop?

you get the point. we often overlook the lifetime of material we have sitting right in front of us. sometimes through writing, we discover more about ourselves and how we've come to be. don't mistake this with being "deep," sometimes our feelings and our genesis are very simple and surface level. sometimes you just feel like yelling. sometimes it's even better that way, just find out what moves you the most at that moment to express and let the feeling of expressing that takeover, ask yourself questions you've never asked before.

mixing & mastering

two things: throw yourself into it and YouTube tutorials are your best friend. press every button, turn every knob, learn what everything does to your sounds and experiment with plugins til you've found a sound you enjoy. a "good mix" is one you and the listener enjoys. not what sounds the most "polished" or "professional." a "good" mix starts with "good" vocals. make sure you convey your lyrics as close to how they sound in your head as cleanly and precisely as you can. your performance has to lay a good foundation for the mix. we won't provide technical advice as compressors and EQs and all that talk is boring. just get in the game and figure it out from there.

mastering is the same, it's almost optional these days. a lot of hit songs that resonate with large audiences aren't mastered. a lot are too. honestly, it's up to you whether this matters to you or not, we just make that shit sound good.

singles

a quick shot of your artistry. these are a great way to showcase a single message, story or sound that you want to share with the world. whether it's a loosie or a lead, bring what you can to the table to immerse the listener in a moment.

albums

a lot of "gurus" out there are telling young creators not to put out albums these days. they say no one listens to albums from nobodies. but we're not "nobodies." so put out a billion albums if you want to. because they're not who we're trying to become anyway. besides, our biggest successes at TDCO have come from releasing albums, so that's just not true. listeners just want to hear something that moves them.

so yeah, if you have an album full of nonsense that doesn't make people feel something, then yeah, don't put out an album. or at least, don't expect much response from it. but if you have something to say or a story to tell or a sound or a grunt or a snarl that needs to be experienced, Please share that with the world. we'd love to hear it. and if you're going to do it, why stop there? build a whole world around it that allows people to interact with you and be apart of a moment.

there are several pieces that come together to form an album the TDCO way:

- cover art
- rollout
- music videos
- press
- merchandise
- website(s)
- concerts & events

we will speak about all of these in isolation in the coming pages.

cover art

cover arts are important, in some cases, it's the most important piece of the puzzle, it gives your work an identity before a listener even presses play, an effective cover art evokes the emotion that echoes throughout your album/single, in some cases, it's a signifier to the audience that the person who created it understands their taste and/or language, sometimes it's purpose is just to shock (see scrapped album "N*gger" by Nasir Jones), it's an ice breaker to the listener, do whatever it takes to make sure your cover art captures the mood, is distinct and evokes feeling.

we suggest Affinity Photo & CapCut Image Editor for your photo editing.

rollout

the album rollout is a (mostly) calculated series of moments you as the artist curates for spectators following your story. the point is to make the world you're building around it feel more real. music videos, trailers, websites, ads, headlines, events, the things you couldn't predict would happen, the order and manner in which information is presented and shared. it all plays a significant role. as abloh suggested, spend more time designing the room the art sits in and you'll receive a greater response. which is why it's important to understand how people think and feel. the more you understand, the more fun can be had, and that's what it should be—Fun.

every album is different. every artist and the story they're trying to share is different. so it would be disingenuous to suggest a step by step order of events. however, we can share some case studies of rollouts that successfully propelled the albums' commercial success.

- "because the internet" by childish gambino
- "call me if you get lost" by tyler, the creator
- "yeezus" by ye
- "the life of pablo" by ye
- "saturation 1-3" by brockhampton
- · "damn." by kendrick lamar

we'll explain the components that make up a rollout further in coming pages.

music videos

music videos by nature are kinda stupid. we watch people wave their hands at us while they lip sync words. we feel the best music videos at the very least are entertaining, that doesn't mean it has to be a cinematic movie masterpiece with a story, it just means it's entertaining to watch, from a spectator's point of view, no matter the budget, do your absolute best to makes sure the images you put in front of people reflect what you're attempting to convey and that it's more than you showing people how "cool" you look rapping/singing in multiple musty locations, that should be a last resort option, if you have to, at the very least, call it a "visualizer."

music videos during an album rollout could be the "scenes" the music is scoring or can reflect the story that is being told. that helps the audience tremendously in understanding what you're attempting to broadcast.

learn how to edit videos. it's easier to learn than ever right now. we suggest DaVinci Resolve & CapCut for editing.

press

you ever seen when an actor is in a movie & they do a press tour to talk about it? do that, then disappear, the blueprint is out there.

write your own headlines & articles too. the industry is cooked. they won't do it for you until your name is a SEO-friendly buzz word. get some head shots and some studio portraits taken too.

we suggest Hubspot for your press articles.

vinyls & cds

your fans want physical music they can own. this is important, when they grow older, they'll value their collection, you need to be apart of those memories.

we suggest Art Glider for your physical media.

website(s)

websites are off-planet hubs for relevant information about your world. during album rollouts, they can enhance the world-building experience. the more creative, the better. the more minimal, the better.

unfortunately, we cannot in good faith suggest any one Saas for website building as it depends what is important to you. some suck more than others in different areas. after a decade of experimenting, here are some of our best suggestions:

- Shopify: a must for online stores looking to utilize Spotify for Artists, YouTube Shopping & Meta/IG Shop
- Wix: if you want a decent online store with a free-er more customizable look
- Google Sites: if you need a quick, free, minimal and to the point solution—this is our bottom bitch.
- Vev: if you want a creative & responsive solution

merchandise

merch is important. not only because it's a stream of income, but it's the most direct and physical way of reaching your audience. building a connection is the most important thing. assuming you become the rockstar we know you are, you'll never be able to meet and interact with every single one of your supporters. the merchandise they buy from you is an extension of you. so make sure your supporters look fly. make your money, turn a profit—but make it affordable. make sure even if they just buy a keychain, they can get a compliment or question from it. don't cut any corners.

we suggest Printify for basic merchandising needs. we suggest keeping your ear to the streets of Google for other whitelabel products you can deliver.

concerts

it's okay to be a little nervous. it means you care. but don't be afraid. when you hit that stage, attack it with vigor. command the crowd like a platoon. don't just stand there lookin' "too cool." talk to 'em on stage, let them know you're there with them, make sure they're enjoying their self. jump in the crowd and rip some shirts moshing with them. don't perform over the released song, take some of them stems out and display your talent. do attempt creating a stage design—even when you're broke and there's only 3 people watching, make it the best concert those 3 people ever seen. be too big for the venue if it's small. buy a fog machine and some lights. talk to your fans before and/or after (if you can, we know how overwhelming that is sometimes). the point is to create a once-in-a-lifetime unique experience.

give 'em a reason to pull that phone out and share the moment.

artist name

choose a name that is real to you. please don't walk around here sounding like an AOL screen name. i am not bumping poopoobandit69. it's cringeworthy.

artificial intelligence

who cares bro. if you're tight as fuck at what you do, AI shouldn't threaten you. it's happening whether we like it or not. people don't need AI to steal or be dishonest, they've been biting since way before. so use it as a tool or don't acknowledge it all. at the end of the day, it's a challenge of man vs machine—don't let the machine win.

speaking of artificial intelligence...

lles, copyrights & trademarks

hey chatgpt, we're helping young creators learn more about business today, can you explain LLCs, copyrights and trademarks to them in Jayman's terms?

Absolutely! Let's break down each of these concepts in simple terms:

LLCs (Limited Liability Companies)

What is an LLC?

- . An LLC is a type of business structure.
- · It stands for Limited Liability Company.

Why is it important?

- Limited Liability: If your business gets into debt or legal trouble, your personal assets (like your house or car) are generally protected.
- Flexibility: LLCs offer flexibility in how you manage and run your business. You can be a single owner (sole proprietor) or have multiple owners (partners).
- Tax Benefits: LLCs often have tax advantages. You can choose how you want to be taxed, like a sole proprietor, partnership, or corporation.

Example:

Imagine you start a business making custom T-shirts. If you set up an LLC, and someone sues your business, they can't take your personal savings or property—they can only go after the business's assets.

Google "how to get an LLC/copyright/trademark in {your state or country}."
now you have no excuse. save up & get your paperwork in order.

Copyrights

What is a Copyright?

- . Copyright is a legal protection for original works of authorship.
- . This includes things like books, music, art, films, software, and more.

Why is it important?

- Protection: Copyright gives you the exclusive right to use, reproduce, and distribute your creative work.
- Control: You control how your work is used and can earn money from it by licensing it or selling
 it.

Example:

You write and publish a song. Copyright ensures that only you (or those you give permission to) can copy, sell, or perform your song.

Trademarks

What is a Trademark?

. A trademark is a symbol, word, or phrase legally registered to represent a company or product.

Why is it important?

- Brand Identity: Trademarks help protect your brand. They make sure that only you can use your brand name or logo in your industry.
- Recognition: Trademarks help customers recognize your products or services and distinguish them from others.

Example:

You create a logo for your T-shirt business. Registering that logo as a trademark means no other T-shirt company can use it, which helps customers identify your products.

Summary

- . LLCs protect your personal assets and offer flexible management and tax benefits.
- . Copyrights protect your original creative works, allowing you to control and profit from them.
- Trademarks protect your brand's identity, helping customers recognize and trust your products or services.

These tools are essential for protecting your business and your creations, giving you control over how they're used and helping you succeed.

now can you explain music publishing

Sure! Let's break down music publishing in simple terms.

Music Publishing

What is Music Publishing?

- Music publishing is all about managing and promoting the rights to songs and musical compositions.
- . It's how songwriters and composers make money from their music.

Key Parts of Music Publishing:

1. Songwriting.

- . This is the creation of music and lyrics.
- . Songwriters create the "composition," which is different from the "recording" of a song.

2. Copyright

- . When a song is written, it automatically gets copyright protection.
- · The copyright is split into two parts:
 - . Composition (the music and lyrics)
 - . Sound Recording (the actual recorded performance of the song)

How Music Publishing Works

1. Writing the Song.

. You write a song. Congrats! You now own the copyright to the composition.

2. Partnering with a Publisher

- . You can partner with a music publisher who will manage your rights.
- . In exchange, they take a percentage of the income (usually around 50%).

3. Licensing

The publisher finds opportunities to license your song for various uses (radio, TV, movies, etc.).

4. Royalty Collection

The publisher collects the royalties from different sources and ensures you get paid.

Example

Imagine you wrote a catchy tune. You partner with a music publisher who gets your song played on a popular TV show. They also collect royalties when your song is streamed on Spotify, played on the radio, and used in a commercial. The publisher ensures you get paid for all these uses.

Summary

- . Music Publishing is about managing and promoting the rights to songs.
- It helps songwriters earn money from various income streams like mechanical, performance, and sync royalties.
- Publishers handle the business side, ensuring that songwriters get paid for the use of their music.

publishing

3. Publishing Rights:

- . The rights to the composition are often managed by a music publisher.
- The publisher helps promote the song and handles licensing.

Why is Music Publishing Important?

- . Income Streams: Music publishing generates multiple income streams for songwriters, such as:
 - Mechanical Royalties: Money earned when the song is reproduced (like on CDs or digital downloads).
 - Performance Royalties: Money earned when the song is performed publicly (like on the radio, TV, or live concerts).
 - Synchronization (Sync) Fees: Money earned when the song is used in TV shows, movies, commercials, etc.
 - · Print Royalties: Money earned from sheet music sales.
- Administration: Publishers handle the business side of things:
 - Registering the songs with rights organizations (like ASCAP, BMI, or SESAC in the U.S.).
 - · Collecting royalties.
 - · Issuing licenses for various uses of the music.

By understanding music publishing, songwriters can maximize their earnings and focus on what they do best: creating music.

publishing (cont'd)

what sites can you use to collect your publishing royalties?

There are several websites and organizations that can help songwriters and composers collect their publishing royalties. Here are some key ones:

Performing Rights Organizations (PROs)

PROs collect performance royalties when your music is played publicly, such as on radio, TV, or live venues.

- 1. ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers)
 - ASCAP
 - . Covers a wide range of public performances and collects royalties on behalf of its members.
- 2. BMI (Broadcast Music, Inc.)
 - · BN
 - . Provides similar services to ASCAP and is one of the largest PROs in the U.S.
- 3. SESAC (Society of European Stage Authors and Composers)
 - SESAC
 - · Operates on an invitation-only basis and offers personalized services.
- 4. PRS for Music (Performing Right Society)
 - PRS for Music
 - . UK-based organization that collects royalties for public performances.

Mechanical Licensing Organizations

These organizations collect mechanical royalties for reproductions of your music, such as physical copies or digital downloads.

1. Harry Fox Agency (HFA)

- Harry Fox Agency
- . Specializes in mechanical licensing and royalty collection in the U.S.

2. Music Reports

- Music Reports
- · Offers services for mechanical licensing and administration.

Digital Distribution Services

These platforms distribute your music to streaming services and digital stores, often handling royalty collection as part of their service.

1. TuneCore

- TuneCore
- · Distributes your music to streaming platforms and collects digital royalties.

2. CD Baby

- CD Baby
- . Similar to TuneCore, it distributes your music and collects digital royalties.

3. DistroKid

- DistroKid
- . Focuses on digital distribution and royalty collection for streaming services.

Publishing Administration Services

These services help you manage your publishing rights and ensure you collect all possible royalties.

1. Songtrust

- Songtrust
- · Provides global royalty collection and publishing administration.

2. Sentric Music

- Sentric Music
- . Offers a range of services including royalty collection and administration.

3. Kobalt Music Group

- Kobalt
- · Provides extensive publishing administration and royalty collection services.

Summary

To collect your publishing royalties, consider registering with one or more PROs like ASCAP, BMI, or SESAC for performance royalties. Use organizations like the Harry Fox Agency or Music Reports for mechanical royalties. Digital distribution services like TuneCore, CD Baby, and DistroKid can help with digital royalties, and publishing administration services like Songtrust, Sentric Music, and Kobalt can manage your rights and ensure you collect all your royalties.

Each of these services can help you maximize your earnings from your music by ensuring you get paid for all the ways your music is used.

streams of income

as a growing recording artist, your main sources of income are from ad revenue (streams & video views), merchandise and concerts, set up donation links too, at some point, you will have to diversify in the name of sustainability, there's very little money in the entertainment industry for non-executives, so make a list of every business you would be down to start, as you reach new financial milestones, consider pursuing them.

loans (recording deals)

we will not tell you to never sign a deal. if it makes sense and you're confident in a label being a good partner, go for it.

however, educate yourself on the many different deals there are out there before you ever think about it.

a book that explains these deals very well is "made luck" by david airaudi (a player in the success of acts like odd future).

brand deals

creators have been walking billboards since back in the day. it's a mutually beneficial relationship: businesses pay us to advertise their products, everyone wins, what we suggest is that when you finally have action at inviting those sort of opportunities, that you align yourself with businesses that align with your goals, personality & philosophy, it always feels great to make money from doing what you love, but there is a special sense of accomplishment when you're able to bring attention to things you genuinely care for in a meaningful way.

as far as acquiring those deals, you must display your influence. you wouldn't hire someone with no influence to promote you, would you? so focus on that first. perhaps create your own ads until then. who knows, they may be watching.

donations

this is something we don't see enough creators implement. set up donation links on your website(s). it doesn't make you appear weak or broke. allow your supporters to show their support in your craft and they'll definitely show up. just make sure you make 'em feel something. that's the most important part.

attitude & confidence









create your own world.

to create, you must destroy.

do what makes you happy, unapologetically.

use what you have to turn nothing into something.

a lot of things are going to happen on the pursuit of your mission. but through it all, you must persist vehemently. you must be sure you'll be alright whether it works out or not even if all odds are against you. you must have the audacity to look fear & failure in the eyes and move forward with your chin up. that can not be taught. some of us will fail. truthfully, not everyone is built for that battle. but some of us will push through past our limits. you must lay it all out on the field. leave no stone unturned. when it's all said and done, you're the one in that casket. make the most out of your time here. who will you touch and what will they say of you?

fans, spectators, haters & bots

behind your own sanity & your community, fans should be the third most important piece of your puzzle. if you don't listen to anything else we suggest in this guide, please soak this in: obsess yourself with what you put in front of your fans. what you do will determine whether you're successful at acquiring their love or not. it's very simply about love and hate. spectators are folks who don't know whether they love or hate you yet. they may have their critiques, but they mostly don't mean harm. they're just trying to understand what your fans see.

haters are folks who simply don't like you. they may attempt to hurt your feelings or reduce what you do, but they're very important, they're an indicator that you've drew a line in the sand, which is important to do, you shouldn't be for everyone if you're being yourself, don't waste your time trying to convert them to fans, just do you and provide them the material to hate on, besides, that's free word of mouth, bots are just that: robots, programmed to be devoid of any true intelligence outside of what they've been fed, block 'em and move on with your day.

budget (or lack thereof)

teezo touchdown. a true case study that you don't need much to capture the hearts of people around the world.

if you're not familiar with his story, he shot a series of videos in one location leaning into his lack of budget. one video in particular may have changed his life forever. a music video for a song called "Sucka." using absurdity as his weapon of choice, the video found itself in front of the eyes of tyler, the creator who then invited him to join his world stadium tour. teezo never could've predicted that series of events unfolding like that. truly magic.

so use what you have to get where you're going. if you have absolutely nothing, no camera, no laptop, no phone, acquire some start up money and get to it. we don't know when we're out of here. so sitting and waiting for things to fall in place may leave you stagnant as life passes you by. make the complex simple. there's beauty & creativity in simplicity.

genre

genre is a tool that allows you to speak different languages. you shouldn't view it as a set of rules or guidelines. who are you trying to communicate with? more so, what's the most effective or most interesting language to use when speaking to that target audience? you are the one who decides the genre. don't let anyone else pick your pen up.

by the way, who cares what it's called? is that shit bangin' or not?

the many hats

the many hats you must wear these days can be overwhelming. but trust me, the less you must rely on external sources, the smoother things can become. wear your skills with pride and become equally above-average at all of them. the more you know, the less susceptible you are to bullshit too. and knowing is only half the battle.

the industry is cooked

you may have noticed that everything you want to do feels truly impossible. there's plenty of rhetoric out there as to why. all we'll say here is: do their jobs better than them. DSPs, music labels, film studios, press outlets & tech companies have successfully suppressed the independent creator. so our only move should be to take note of their blueprint and use our creativity to improve it for ourselves. let's not get it twisted, their successful for a reason, consumers presumably enjoy their products and services enough for them to be (in some capacity) profitable.

if we do their jobs better than them, they become obsolete. so make your own shit. something you have a say in. the more time we wait to do that, the more powerful they become and the more difficult it'll be to deviate. so today is the second best time to start, yesterday was the first.

OR

unionize and destroy them. but from what we hear, y'all not ready to resort to violence. so stick to option 1 for now.

final thoughts

obviously, the info found here is our opinion. if you feel you know what's better for you, we encourage you do that. we come from a long line of left-of-center rule breakers, risk takers & Earth shakers. sometimes the best advice, is no advice.

however, this guide is for those who have found themselves lost in the machine. we understand not everyone will agree with our philosophy. it's not for everyone. for better or for worse, we exist to push boundaries, but we value tradition.

we are clearly not fans of whatever this "norm" is at this moment in entertainment. so leaving our stamp on directing the generations after us in a different direction is important to us. this is just a foundation.

we wish you luck on your journey.



"good artists borrow, great artists steal." - pablo picasso

