

Capstone Final Report (Draft) – Jacob Posz

Executive Summary - Overview

For my capstone project, I ran a single song campaign with a musician that I currently help manage using Chartmetric, Spotify's 'Marquee' tool and Spotify's 'Discovery Mode' tool. My goal was to use data analytics to correctly pitch his single (with the help of Chartmetric), promote his single (with the help of Spotify's 'Marquee' tool) and grow his single (with the help of Spotify's 'Discovery Mode' tool) with the eventual goal of getting the single onto a Spotify editorial playlist. After collecting data for exactly 90 days, I'd like to share my results, what worked for me, what didn't work for me, what I learned and what I can do better next time.

Executive Summary - Chartmetric (Pitch Stage)

The first tool that I used was Chartmetric (pre-release and pre-pitch). I used it to figure out what micro-genre(s) my artist fell under so that I could figure out the correct playlists to target when pitching my artist's song to Spotify (suggesting the exact name of the playlist you think the song should be on is highly recommended). The feature I utilized the most on Chartmetric was its "Playlist Journey" feature. This feature essentially tracks the "journey" of all songs on a targeted playlist; it visualizes the tracks' commonly occurring playlists and displays the percentage overlap between the playlists. Through Chartmetric's "Playlist Journey" feature, I ended up figuring out that my artist's song fell under the micro-genre of "hyperpop," "indietronica" and "bedroom pop"; all three of which I had never heard of / did not know existed prior to using Chartmetric. Moreover, through the "Playlist Journey" feature, I ended up finding a few smaller Spotify curated playlists that fit my artist's single's micro-genres; we ended up pitching to these playlists.

Executive Summary - Spotify's Marquee Tool (Promotion Stage)

The second tool that I used is Spotify's Marquee tool (post-release). Spotify's Marquee tool is a full-screen, sponsored recommendation of an artist's new release to Spotify Free and Premium listeners who have shown interest in an artist's music and have the potential to listen more. When a listener clicks on an artist's Marquee, they are guided to that artist's new release—and that artist's release alone. With the goal of promoting my artist's single, we saw great results from Marquee. We reached (people who saw the campaign) 1,712 listeners, had 233 clicks (clicks to the release), 149 converted listeners (people who streamed the release after seeing the campaign), an 8.68% conversion rate (percentage of people streamed the release after seeing the campaign), 8.71 streams / listener (average number of active streams per converted listener who streamed the song after seeing the campaign), a 39.6% intent rate (number of converted listeners who saved or playlisted the song after streaming), 28 total playlist adds for the song and a 30.2% save rate (number of converted listeners who saved a track).

Executive Summary - Spotify's 'Discovery Mode' Tool (Growth Stage)

The third and final tool that I used is Spotify's 'Discovery Mode' tool (post-release). I used 'Discovery Mode' for my artist to give his song more algorithmic exposure on Spotify through Spotify Radio and autoplay. The only caveat being a lower royalty rate (however, I wasn't too concerned about this). The results were quite staggering. Through Discovery Mode, my artist's single gained 2,091 new listeners, 2,967 streams, 25 saves, 15 playlist adds, 155% listener lift, 195% stream lift and a 1.48% intent rate (the percentage of listeners who saved or playlisted the track after streaming it).

Chartmetric Background (Pitch Stage)

The first tool that I used to help correctly pitch my artist's single was Chartmetric. Chartmetric is a music analytics solution, which helps digital marketers, music supervisors and artist managers monitor chart performance, social key performance indicators (KPIs), albums and audience demographics to streamline decision-making processes. Anyone with a Chartmetric Pro account can track playlists' acoustic characteristics or follower counts and search for similar artists based on genre. Moreover, Chartmetric enables Pro account users to gain insights into artists' performance across multiple music streaming and social media channels including YouTube, TikTok, Spotify, Apple Music and Instagram. Chartmetric Pro users can export data tables in PNG, JPEG, SVG, CSV and XLS file or image format. Additionally, Chartmetric Pro users can utilize an artists and repertoire (A&R) dashboard to discover new talent by sorting or filtering playlists. Lastly, Chartmetric allows Chartmetric Pro users to summarize music charts data in the form of graphs based on duration, genre or age, among other categories.

Why I chose to use Chartmetric (Pitch Stage)

The reason why I chose Chartmetric is because it's widely used by both music marketers and musicians and highly-acclaimed by music marketers and music labels. Chartmetric is essentially a database for music, but it also provides a bunch of really cool features that have been gaining traction in the music industry and that I'm familiar with from experimenting with it over the past couple of months through my Chartmetric Pro account. One of the features that I used a lot pre-release and pre-pitch was the "Playlist Journey" feature. This feature essentially tracks the "journey" of all songs on a target playlist; it visualizes the tracks' commonly occurring playlists and displays the percentage overlap between the playlists. I found this feature to be extremely helpful and is what helped me find the correct Spotify curated playlists to pitch my artist's song to based on the song's micro-genre. Other features that I used during the pre-release and pre-pitch phase of the single was how long songs last in a specific playlist, how new the tracks are in a specific playlist (based on date added) and date and time of when songs are added and removed from a specific playlist.

Prior to using the "playlist journey" feature to figure out the exact micro-genre of my artist's single, I used the "similar playlists" feature to see what other artists were in my artist's micro-genre and the exact playlists that their songs were being added to. After doing some research, hours of listening to songs and using Chartmetric's "Playlist Journey" feature, I ended up figuring out that my artist's single fell under the micro-genre(s) of "hyperpop," "indietronica" and "bedroom pop"; all three of which I had never heard of / did not know existed prior to using Chartmetric. Moreover, through the "Playlist Journey" feature, I ended up finding a few smaller Spotify curated playlists that fit my artist's single's micro-genres; we ended up pitching to these playlists prior to release day.

Chartmetric Conclusion (Pitch Stage)

Overall, I really enjoyed using Chartmetric. I thought the information and data was super accurate and up-to-date. Moreover, the UI was brilliantly designed and very well-organized. I was blown away by how specific I could get with the filters. Overall, my main takeaway was how much it helped me find the specific Spotify curated playlists that I eventually ended up pitching my artist's song to. I'd definitely recommend Chartmetric to any music marketer who is looking to target specific playlists, find out the micro-genre of a song, etc. In conclusion, ***the pitch stage of the release was a success.***

Spotify's 'Marquee' Tool Background (Promotion stage)

The second tool that I used to help promote my artist's single was Spotify's 'Marquee' tool. Marquee is a full-screen, sponsored recommendation of an artist's new release to Spotify Free and Premium listeners who have shown interest in an artist's music and have the potential to listen more. When a listener clicks on a Marquee, they are guided to an artist's new release—and that artist's release alone. To qualify, an artist needs at least 15K streams in the US over the past 28 days (which my artist had), or more than 2.5K US followers (which my artist also had). The way that Marquee works is that when members of an artist's "reachable audience" open the Spotify app, they're greeted with a full-screen recommendation to check out that artist's new release.

Why I chose to use Spotify's 'Marquee' Tool (Promotion stage)

The reason why I chose to use Marquee post release is because I wanted to drive as much traffic as possible to my artist's song during the first month, as the 1-month period post-release is when curators evaluate to see how a song performed over the month if the song was not originally added pre-release. In short, more traffic increases the probability of a curator adding the song to their playlist, if they did not originally add it when it was pitched.

Unlike other paid marketing tools, Marquee allows artists to target listeners based on their listening history rather than broad demographics or interests. It also reaches listeners right when they're deciding what to listen to rather than when they're scrolling a feed. Finally, Marquee's reporting measures the impact on music listening and fan engagement. I thought it was the perfect tool to use post-release to promote my artist's single.

Marquee Results (Promotion stage)

With the goal of promoting my artist's single, we saw great results from Marquee. The campaign ended up only spending \$116.50 total out of the \$210.00 we had invested. What does this mean? It means that Spotify over-estimated what my artist's reachable audience (a group of listeners who have followed my artist or shown interest in his music and are likely to find the Marquee campaign relevant) was / was not as efficient at promoting my artist's single as Spotify thought it would be. Nonetheless, through Marquee, we reached (people who saw the campaign) 1,712 listeners more listeners, had 233 more clicks (clicks to the release), 149 more converted listeners (people who streamed the release after seeing the campaign), an increase in conversion rate of 8.68% (percentage of people streamed the release after seeing the campaign), an increase of 8.71 streams / listener (average number of active streams per converted listener who streamed the song after seeing the campaign), a increase in intent rate of 39.6% (number of converted listeners who saved or playlisted the song after streaming), 28 additional playlists adds for the song and an increase in save rate of 30.2% (number of of converted listeners who saved a track).

Moreover, 21 of the converted listeners from the Marquee campaign also streamed my artist's other releases after seeing the campaign. We also had a 9.67 average streams of my artist's other releases per converted listener, 5 total tracks of my artist's other releases added to playlists by converted listeners and 2 total tracks of my artist's other releases saved by converted listeners. The only caveat about using Marquee was that Spotify only considered people in the United States who they thought would listen to my artist; listeners in every other country where Spotify is currently available were not considered. However, Spotify has announced that they are going to make Marquee available to the rest of the world by 2024.

Marquee Conclusion (Promotion stage)

Overall, I really liked what I saw from this Marquee campaign. With Marquee, Spotify is trying to drive its artists/artist's marketers to promote their music through Spotify, rather than third-parties like Facebook ads and Google ads. In my opinion, they are succeeding in doing this. The two questions I had after using Marquee was if this specific campaign was even worth it and would it eventually pay dividends to my artist? To help answer my own questions, I did a little bit of research and found a popular music blog, called 'Music Growth Machine,' who conducted a survey and collected previous Marquee campaign results from various different artists and computed averages. Music Growth Machine stated, "Spotify Marquee not only has a reasonable price point of around \$0.50 per USA listener, but the listeners engage with the music at a high rate. You can expect save rates of around 25%, playlist add rates of around 15% and a stream / listener rate of 4.56."

Comparing my artist's Marquee campaign to the reported average numbers above, our campaign exceeded industry averages in every category. My artist had a save rate of 30.2% (well above the expected value of 25%), a playlist add rate of 15.44% (above the expected value of 15%), and a stream / listener rate of 8.71 (well above the expected value of 4.56). Therefore, one out of two of my questions have been answered; the campaign that I ran was indeed worth it (actually well above worth it). However, as far as answering whether this campaign will end up paying my artist dividends, there is no way of actually knowing; instead, we will just have to assume that this campaign will drive future traffic to my artist's Spotify page which will hopefully compound and add up over time.

In conclusion, not only did Spotify's Marquee tool help promote my artist's new single, but it showed my artist's song to new listeners which will help drive more traffic to his future releases. Moreover, the Marquee campaign that we ran outperformed the industry average by a significant margin. Therefore, I can conclude that ***the promotion stage of the release was a success.***

Spotify's 'Discovery Mode' Tool Background (Growth Stage)

The third and final tool that I used to help grow my artist's single was Spotify's 'Discovery Mode' tool. Discovery Mode is essentially a program where Spotify helps drive more listeners to a song by inserting an artist's songs into other artists' radio stations and general "autoplay" sessions – the caveat being that Spotify withholds 30% of the revenue generated from Discovery Mode streams. If an artist opts in (eligible) songs to Discovery Mode, these songs will start to appear more often in other artists' Radio playlists. Moreover an artist's songs will also autoplay more frequently after people finish listening to similar artists' albums and playlists. In short, when opting a song into Discovery Mode, Spotify will essentially test your artist's song in more Radio playlists and prioritize your artist's song within the autoplay feature.

The way I used Discovery Mode to grow my artist's single was by waiting 30 days post release then making sure that the song had at least 1 radio play (which it did). I also had to make sure that the song had at least 500 streams in the past 28 days (which it did) and had to make sure that my artist had at least 25,000 monthly listeners (which he did). After this, I was able to opt in the song for Discovery Mode for the entire month of March. It was honestly a very straightforward process.

Why I chose to use Spotify's 'Discovery Mode' Tool (Growth Stage)

I used Spotify's 'Discovery Mode' tool solely to grow my artist's single and to connect it to new listeners. According to Spotify, their data shows that artists with tracks in Discovery Mode find 40% more listeners on average. Moreover, Spotify stated that 44% of those new listeners had never listened to the artist before – so the Discovery Mode recommendations seem to be working (at least according to Spotify). However, there is a caveat; the Discovery Mode algorithm can be unpredictable. Spotify states, "There's no guarantee that your music will be recommended to the right listeners at the right time." This was concerning to me at first so I thought about it for a while before making the final decision to go through with it. I concluded that the potential benefits outweighed the potential risks. Moreover, since Discovery Mode is so new, there was also the element of the unknown which was a risk, but one I was willing to take.

Discovery Mode Results (Growth Stage)

With the goal of growing my artist's single, we saw great results from Discovery Mode. After opting my artist's song in for the entire month of March, the results are pretty much all in (there is only 1 day left of the campaign) and I am happy with the results for the most part. However, just like with the Marquee campaign, I was left with the same two questions: was this 'Discovery Mode' campaign even worth it and would it eventually pay dividends to my artist?

Through the Discovery Mode campaign that I ran for my artist's song for the entire month of March, we saw an increase of 2,091 listeners (total number of unique listeners streaming from Radio and Autoplay, including new listeners), an increase of 155% in listener lift (the rate at which my artist's average number of daily listeners changed during this campaign period), 1,120 new listeners, an increase of 25 saves (the number of times a song was saved by a listener reached in Radio and Autoplay), an increase of 15 playlist adds (The number of times a song was added to a playlist by a listener reached in Radio and Autoplay), an increase of 2,967 total streams (the total number of streams in Radio and Autoplay contexts), a 195% increase in stream lift (the rate at which your average number of daily streams in Radio and Autoplay changed during this campaign period) and an increase of 1.48% intent rate (the percentage of listeners who saved or playlisted the track after streaming it).

To answer the two questions I had about the campaign, I had to do some research to find what the average numbers from a 'Discovery Mode' campaign actually were. I loved 'Music Growth Machine's' study on 'Marquee' campaigns so I checked to see if they had one on 'Discovery Mode.' However, since Discovery Mode is so new, they haven't been able to conduct a survey yet. However, on Spotify's website, Spotify states, "Statistical modeling shows that, on average, artists see +50% in saves, +44% in user playlist adds, and +37% in follows during the first month of Discovery Mode." Obviously this sounded super encouraging and seemed to be the perfect tool to use in the growth stage of the campaign, but I still questioned whether or not Spotify was being truthful about the potential results.

Compared to Spotify's projections for a 'Discovery Mode' campaign, the 'Discovery Mode' campaign I ran for my artist's single underperformed Spotify's average projections in every category. My artist saw an increase of only 25 saves, compared to the previous month's of 20 saves (only a 25% increase compared to Spotify's projection of +50%), an increase of only 15 playlist adds, compared to the previous month's of 12 adds (only a 20% increase compared to Spotify's projection of +44%), and only an increase of 24 new followers, compared to the previous month's of 21 new followers (only a 20% increase compared to Spotify's projection of +37%).

Discovery Mode Conclusion (Growth Stage)

So, in conclusion, while the Discovery Mode campaign I ran for my artist's new single didn't match Spotify's projections, we still saw an increase in growth in every category (saves, playlist adds, and followers); it just wasn't as high as Spotify projected. However, since Discovery Mode is so new, there's a chance that Spotify is overestimating how beneficial Discovery Mode actually is. Nonetheless, since our results didn't meet Spotify's projections, I can't say that the growth stage of the release was a success. However, I also wouldn't say it was a failure. I'd say that ***the growth stage of the campaign was passable***.

Did I get my Artist's single onto an editorial playlist? (Project Conclusion)

In conclusion, after using Chartmetric's 'Playlist Journey' tool to figure out what micro-genre(s) my artist fell under so that I could figure out the correct playlists to target when pitching my artist's song to Spotify (suggesting the exact name of the playlist you think the song should be on is highly recommended), I found 3 playlists that I thought the song would fit perfectly in: 'ödev var,' 'Hits forreals,' and 'tear drop.' After submitting the pitch 30 days before release day, we never heard anything from any of the playlist curators. So, unfortunately, we did not achieve our final goal of landing on a Spotify playlist (at least originally). However, due to me promoting the song (the promotion stage) through Marquee and attempting to grow the song through Discovery Mode (growth stage), the song still has a chance of getting selected for an editorial playlist by the end of March (in 2 days). However, until April 1st, I will not know; I will update this section for the final report submission.

In conclusion (as of March 30th), I did not succeed in meeting my ultimate goal of getting my artist's single onto a Spotify editorial playlist. However, that doesn't make this project a complete failure; I'd say that it is quite the opposite actually. According to Spotify, they receive 49,000 new song pitches per day and less than 1% of them get onto Spotify editorial playlists. In other words, it's extremely difficult to get onto a Spotify editorial playlist. Moreover, I'm competing with artists signed to major labels; the major labels have marketers / managers that personally know the curators of these editorial playlists and get their artist onto them essentially automatically. Therefore, it's close to impossible to get onto one as an independent artist; however, it does happen and that is why I attempted to do so for my artist's single.

Although I did not succeed at meeting my ultimate goal of getting my artist's single onto a Spotify editorial playlist, I did succeed at pitching my artist's song to the right playlist (through researching and parsing through databases like Chartmetric), promoting it to 1,712 new listeners (through Spotify's 'Marquee' tool) and growing it by over 2,900 streams (through Spotify's 'Discover Mode' tool). Not only did I successfully pitch, promote, and grow my artist's single to the most listeners he's ever seen before in a 1 month period, but I set him up for downstream growth and increased traffic for future releases. Although I did not win the war, I won a bunch of the individual battles and that's success as far as I'm concerned.

Things I would do differently

In all honesty, if I had to do this project over again, I would only change a few things; for the most part, I'm proud of what I did and am confident that I did everything the right way and did the best that I could with the hand that I was dealt.

For the pitch stage, there is only one thing I would do differently (although I'm torn about whether it'd work or not). I spent hours parsing through Chartmetric to find the exact

micro-genres, similar artists, editorial playlists those artists are in, etc. I also spend hours listening to songs by similar artists and trying to determine where exactly my artist's song fit into amongst micro-genres and other artists. The only thing I would do differently is get a few other outside listeners to give me their opinions as to what micro-genre they think my artist's song would fit into. However, the issue with this would be that most people wouldn't know the names / sounds of each individual micro-genre (because I didn't know either prior to doing hours of research). Therefore, I'm torn on this idea and am not even confident it'd work.

For the promotion stage, the only thing I would do differently is be more conservative on the Marquee budget, as only \$116.50 of the total \$210.00 was spent. Spotify said that they would reimburse me for the money that wasn't spent on the campaign but I have yet to be refunded and it has been almost 60 days. Nonetheless, Spotify overestimated what my artist's reachable audience (a group of listeners who have followed my artist or shown interest in his music and are likely to find the Marquee campaign relevant) was / was not as efficient at promoting my artist's single as Spotify thought it would be. I would be more cautious and aware of this if I had to do it again.

For the growth stage, I would've added another growth strategy in addition to using Spotify's Discovery Mode. For example, using Facebook ads / Google ads in addition to using Discovery Mode. The reason I say this is because even though my artist saw an increase in saves, adds and followers, the numbers weren't as high as myself and Spotify projected them to be. In other words, Spotify just isn't there yet with its 'Discovery Mode' tool. Therefore, I think that combining Discovery Mode with another means of growth would be more effective if I could do it over again.

In conclusion, as I stated in a previous paragraph, although I did not win the war, I won a bunch of the individual battles and that's success as far as I'm concerned.

Sources

Believe and Tunecore Help Artists Get the Most from Discovery Mode Test ...

<https://www.tunecore.com/blog/2021/06/believe-and-tunecore-help-artists-get-the-most-from-discovery-mode-test-in-partnership-with-spotify.html>.

"Discovery Mode – Spotify for Artists." Discovery Mode – Spotify for Artists,

<https://artists.spotify.com/en/discovery-mode>.

"Getting Started with Marquee – Spotify for Artists." – Spotify for Artists,

<https://artists.spotify.com/en/blog/getting-started-with-marquee>.

"Marquee – Spotify for Artists." Marquee – Spotify for Artists,

<https://artists.spotify.com/en/marquee>.

"A Music Data Analytics Tool with Insights Driven by Data Science." Chartmetric,

<https://chartmetric.com/>.

"New Study: Marquee Delivers 10x More Listeners per Dollar than Social Ads, on Average – Spotify for Artists." – Spotify for Artists,

<https://artists.spotify.com/en/blog/new-study-marquee-delivers-10x-more-listeners-per-dollar-than-social-ads>.

“Playlist Analytics.” *Chartmetric*, <https://chartmetric.com/features/playlist-analytics>.

Seekhao, Nuttiya. “Playlist Journeys: A Chartmetric Playlist Analyzer and Playlist Tracker.” *How Music Charts*, How Music Charts, 11 Aug. 2022, <https://blog.chartmetric.com/a-tracks-journey-through-playlists/>.

Southworth, Andrew. “Spotify Marquee Review - Music Growth Machine.” *Music Growth Machine - Learn How to Build a Machine That Spreads Your Music*, 30 July 2022, <https://musicgrowthmachine.com/spotify-marquee-review/>.

“Spotify for Artists Marquee: Made for Marketing Music to the Right Listeners - Music Ally.” *Spotify for Artists Marquee: Made for Marketing Music to the Right Listeners - Music Ally*, <https://musically.com/2022/12/06/spotify-for-artists-marquee-made-for-marketing-music-to-the-right-listeners/>.

“Spotify Opens up 'Discovery Mode' Wide Enabling Artists to Get More Listeners and Streams - for a Cost.” *Ari's Take*, 21 Feb. 2023, <https://aristake.com/spotify-discovery-mode/>.

Stassen, Murray. “Indie Labels Loathe Spotify's Discovery Mode – but DIY Giants Are Loving It.” *Music Business Worldwide*, 30 June 2021, <https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/indie-labels-slam-spotifys-discovery-mode-but-diy-giants-love-it/>.