The Ultimate Artist Release Checklist

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By Fluxclaw | 845th Entertainment

Your Complete 8-Week Release System *Everything you need to drop your music the right way — from recording to release day and beyond.*

📋 How To Use This Checklist

1. Start **8 weeks before** your planned release date
2. Check off each item as you complete it
3. Don't skip steps — each one compounds your success
4. Adapt timelines if needed, but keep the sequence

PHASE 1: PRE-PRODUCTION (8-6 Weeks Out)

🎤 Music Finalization

- [ ] Final mix approved and signed off
- [ ] Master completed (reference on multiple systems: car, earbuds, monitors, phone)
- [ ] Master delivered in required formats:
  - [ ] WAV 16-bit/44.1kHz (streaming)
  - [ ] WAV 24-bit/48kHz (archive)
  - [ ] MP3 320kbps (promo)
- [ ] Lyrics finalized and documented
- [ ] Song metadata prepared:
  - [ ] Track title (check spelling!)
  - [ ] Artist name (consistent across platforms)
  - [ ] Featured artists (if any)
  - [ ] Songwriter credits

- ☐ Producer credits
- ☐ ISRC code obtained
- ☐ UPC/EAN code (for albums/EPs)

📝 Legal & Business

- ☐ Copyright registration filed (or scheduled)
- ☐ Publishing registered with your PRO (ASCAP/BMI/SESAC)
- ☐ Split sheets signed by ALL collaborators
- ☐ Sample clearances obtained (if applicable)
- ☐ Producer agreement signed
- ☐ Feature artist agreement signed (if applicable)
- ☐ Distribution deal reviewed/signed

🎨 Visual Assets Planning

- ☐ Cover art concept approved
- ☐ Photographer/designer booked (if needed)
- ☐ Photo shoot scheduled
- ☐ Visual aesthetic/mood board created

PHASE 2: ASSET CREATION (6-4 Weeks Out)

🖼️ Cover Art & Graphics

- ☐ Cover art final design completed
  - ☐ 3000x3000px minimum (300 DPI)
  - ☐ No blurry/pixelated elements
  - ☐ Text readable at thumbnail size
  - ☐ No explicit content visible (unless marked)
- ☐ Square format (1:1) master file
- ☐ Alternate sizes created:
  - ☐ 1080x1080 (Instagram)
  - ☐ 1500x500 (Twitter header)
  - ☐ 2560x1440 (YouTube banner)
  - ☐ Story format 1080x1920
- ☐ Animated cover art (optional but recommended)
- ☐ Visualizer video created
- ☐ Lyric video created (if applicable)

📸 Press Photos

- ☐ Professional press photos taken
- ☐ Minimum 5 usable shots
- ☐ Horizontal and vertical crops
- ☐ High-res masters saved
- ☐ Web-optimized versions created

✍️ Written Content

- ☐ Press release written (250-400 words)
- ☐ Short bio (50 words)
- ☐ Medium bio (150 words)
- ☐ Long bio (300+ words)
- ☐ Track-by-track breakdown (for EPs/albums)
- ☐ Quotes prepared for social media
- ☐ Hashtag list compiled

PHASE 3: DISTRIBUTION & SETUP (4-3 Weeks Out)

📤 Distribution

- ☐ Distributor selected and account set up
  - ○ Recommended: DistroKid, TuneCore, CD Baby, AWAL, United Masters
- ☐ Release uploaded to distributor
- ☐ All metadata double-checked
- ☐ Release date set (Tuesday or Friday recommended)
- ☐ Pre-save link generated
- ☐ Explicit content properly marked
- ☐ Genre tags selected (choose strategically)

🎯 Platform Setup

Spotify

- ☐ Spotify for Artists claimed
- ☐ Artist profile optimized:
  - ☐ Bio updated
  - ☐ Press photo uploaded
  - ☐ Artist pick set
  - ☐ Social links added

- [ ] Canvas video prepared (8 seconds, vertical)
- [ ] Playlist pitch submitted (submit 7+ days early!)
- [ ] Storyline prepared

Apple Music

- [ ] Apple Music for Artists claimed
- [ ] Artist profile updated
- [ ] Animated artwork uploaded (if available)

YouTube

- [ ] YouTube Official Artist Channel verified (if eligible)
- [ ] Content ID set up through distributor
- [ ] YouTube Music profile claimed

Other Platforms

- [ ] Amazon Music for Artists claimed
- [ ] Pandora AMP claimed
- [ ] Audiomack account set up
- [ ] SoundCloud profile optimized
- [ ] Bandcamp page ready (for direct sales)

PHASE 4: PRE-RELEASE MARKETING (3-2 Weeks Out)

📱 Social Media Prep

- [ ] Content calendar created (14 days minimum)
- [ ] Teaser content scheduled:
    - [ ] Day 14: Announcement post
    - [ ] Day 10: Snippet #1
    - [ ] Day 7: Cover reveal
    - [ ] Day 5: Snippet #2
    - [ ] Day 3: Behind-the-scenes
    - [ ] Day 1: Final countdown
- [ ] Pre-save campaign launched
- [ ] Instagram:
    - [ ] Story highlights prepared
    - [ ] Link in bio updated
    - [ ] Countdown sticker used
- [ ] TikTok:
    - [ ] Sound strategy planned
    - [ ] 3-5 TikTok concepts ready

- [ ] Hashtag challenge considered
- [ ] Twitter/X:
  - [ ] Pinned tweet planned
  - [ ] Tweet thread drafted

📧 Email & Direct

- [ ] Email list notified
- [ ] Personal texts to top supporters
- [ ] Direct messages to engaged followers
- [ ] Close friends story list activated

🎙️ Press & Playlist Outreach

- [ ] Press list compiled (blogs, magazines, podcasts)
- [ ] Press kit assembled:
  - [ ] Press release
  - [ ] Bio
  - [ ] Photos (hosted on Google Drive/Dropbox)
  - [ ] Private streaming link
  - [ ] Social links
- [ ] Press outreach sent (2-3 weeks before release)
- [ ] Playlist curator list compiled
- [ ] Playlist outreach sent
- [ ] Blog submissions sent (SubmitHub, Musosoup, etc.)

💰 Advertising Prep

- [ ] Ad budget allocated
- [ ] Target audience defined
- [ ] Ad creative prepared:
  - [ ] 15-second video ad
  - [ ] 30-second video ad
  - [ ] Static image ads
- [ ] Facebook/Instagram ads drafted
- [ ] TikTok Spark Ads considered
- [ ] YouTube pre-roll ads considered

PHASE 5: RELEASE WEEK (7 Days to Launch)

📅 Day -7 (One Week Out)

- ☐ Final push on pre-saves
- ☐ All assets double-checked
- ☐ Team briefed on release day plan
- ☐ Playlist pitch status checked

📅 Day -3 (Three Days Out)

- ☐ All scheduled posts verified
- ☐ Smart links created (Linkfire, Feature.fm, etc.)
- ☐ QR codes generated (for physical promo)
- ☐ Email blast scheduled
- ☐ Hype building on socials

📅 Day -1 (Eve of Release)

- ☐ Countdown posts
- ☐ Stories throughout the day
- ☐ Go live on Instagram/TikTok
- ☐ Set alarm for midnight check

PHASE 6: RELEASE DAY 🚀

⏰ Midnight

- ☐ Verify release is live on all platforms
- ☐ Screenshot and share first plays/streams
- ☐ Thank early listeners

🌅 Morning

- ☐ "It's out now" post across all platforms
- ☐ Story series (listening party vibes)
- ☐ Email blast sent
- ☐ Text personal supporters

☀️ Midday

- ☐ Engage with every comment/share

- [ ] Repost fan content
- [ ] Behind-the-scenes content
- [ ] Twitter spaces or Instagram live

🌙 Evening

- [ ] Thank you post
- [ ] Share streaming links again
- [ ] Run first ad campaigns
- [ ] Update Spotify Canvas if not already

PHASE 7: POST-RELEASE (Week 1-4)

📊 Week 1

- [ ] Monitor streaming numbers daily
- [ ] Track playlist adds
- [ ] Collect and share reviews
- [ ] Continue social engagement
- [ ] Run targeted ads
- [ ] Release content:
  - [ ] Lyric video
  - [ ] Visualizer
  - [ ] Behind-the-scenes
  - [ ] Reaction videos

📈 Week 2-4

- [ ] Pitch to more playlists
- [ ] Follow up with press
- [ ] Create user-generated content challenges
- [ ] Release remixes (if planned)
- [ ] Analyze what's working, adjust strategy
- [ ] Plan music video release (if applicable)
- [ ] Consider acoustic/alternative versions

PHASE 8: LONG-TERM MOMENTUM (Month 2+)

♻️ Ongoing Activities

- ☐ Weekly content about the song
- ☐ Monthly streaming reports
- ☐ Pitch new playlists regularly
- ☐ Cross-promote with other artists
- ☐ Submit to sync licensing opportunities
- ☐ Plan next release to keep momentum

📁 Archive & Learn

- ☐ All assets organized and backed up
- ☐ Campaign performance documented
- ☐ Lessons learned noted
- ☐ Update release playbook for next time

📎 BONUS: Quick Resources

Recommended Distributors

Service	Best For	Split
DistroKid	Speed & unlimited releases	$22.99/yr
TuneCore	Established artists	Keep 100%
CD Baby	One-time fee	$9.95-$29
United Masters	Brand deals	90/10
AWAL	Serious artists	85/15

Key Platforms for Outreach

- **SubmitHub** — Playlists & blogs
- **Musosoup** — Playlist pitching
- **Groover** — Industry feedback
- **PlaylistPush** — Paid playlist promo

Smart Link Tools

- **Linkfire** — Pro, best analytics
- **Feature.fm** — Good free tier
- **ToneDen** — Fan unlocks
- **Hypeddit** — Free smart links

Content Ideas Post-Release

1. "How I made this song" video
2. Lyric breakdown post
3. Producer/writer shoutout
4. Fan cover reposts
5. Playlist placement celebration
6. Streaming milestone posts
7. Behind-the-scenes studio footage
8. Unreleased demo snippets

🎯 Success Metrics to Track

Metric	Week 1 Goal	Month 1 Goal
Spotify Streams	1,000+	10,000+
Playlist Adds	5+	20+
Social Engagement	2x normal	3x normal
Email Opens	30%+	—
Pre-saves Converted	80%+	—

Built from real release experience at 845th Entertainment

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🆘 Need Help?

This checklist is part of the **Fluxclaw Release System**.

For more resources: - Full Notion template with automations - Video walkthroughs for each phase - 1-on-1 release coaching

Visit: [LINK]