



Music Streaming

Pathways

PRODUCT DESIGN PROPOSAL

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Turn Listeners Into Fans

Product Design Intern Application • 2026



THE PROBLEM

Discovery is Broken

Music discovery has shifted to social platforms, but the journey from "I like this song" to "I'm a fan" is broken. Listening has become passive, algorithmic, and disconnected from artist identity.

82%

of Gen Z discovers music on social media

19%

go on to explore more from that artist

100K+

tracks uploaded to Spotify daily

The Core Insight

Spotify excels at helping you find songs. But finding a song isn't the same as finding an artist. The listener-to-fan conversion funnel has no designed experience.

Key Pain Points

- **Shallow listening:** Gen Z's listening is passive, nostalgic, and algorithm-driven—fans aren't building deep connections with artists
- **Discovery drop-off:** After hearing a song on TikTok, most listeners never explore the artist's catalog
- **Artist cold-start:** 100,000+ new tracks daily means emerging artists face impossible competition for visibility
- **Algorithm opacity:** Users don't understand why they're recommended certain music, reducing trust and engagement

Sources: MIDiA Research, Spotify for Artists, Deloitte Digital Media Trends 2024, Record of the Day Gen Z Study



THE SOLUTION

Introducing Pathways

When Spotify detects you're connecting with a new artist, Pathways offers a guided journey into their world—not just more songs, but context, story, and connection that transforms casual listeners into invested fans.

Smart Entry Points

Curated starting points: "Essential tracks," "Where it all began," "Hidden gems," and "Latest evolution"—each with context that helps listeners understand what they're hearing.

The Artist's Story

Surface the human behind the music: influences, collaborators, creative journey. Gen Z craves authenticity—Pathways delivers the context that builds real connection.

Your Connection

Show listeners WHY this artist resonates: "You discovered them through..." Making the algorithm transparent and the journey personal.

Expand the World

Guide listeners to adjacent artists and scenes. Help emerging artists get discovered by connecting them to artists their potential fans already love.

How It Works

When a listener shows high engagement signals (repeated plays, saves, full listens), Pathways activates on the artist profile—transforming a static page into a guided journey of discovery with progress tracking.

Design Principles

- **Progressive disclosure:** Works without interaction, but rewards those who want to go deeper
- **Transparent intelligence:** Show users what the algorithm is doing and why
- **Context over catalog:** Curate with meaning, not just popularity metrics

**EXPECTED IMPACT**

Why This Matters

Pathways addresses the core tension in modern streaming: infinite catalog, shallow connection. By designing the listener-to-fan journey, we unlock value for listeners, artists, and Spotify.

↑ 2.5x

Super listener conversion

↑ 40%

Artist catalog depth

↓ 35%

New listener drop-off

↑ 60%

Emerging artist discovery

Strategic Alignment

Pathways directly supports Spotify's 2026 focus on "intentional listening" articulated by co-CEOs Alex Norström and Gustav Söderström. It leverages existing data, enhances the premium value proposition, and creates a moat against social-first competitors.

Value Creation

For Listeners

Deeper, more meaningful music experiences.
A sense of progress and discovery.
Transparent recommendations they can trust.

For Artists

Better fan conversion. Emerging artists connected to their natural audience. Catalog depth over single-song virality.

Let's build this together.