

# WAXFEED GROWTH PATHS

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## The Definitive Playbook for Jon Klein

**Version:** 1.0

**Created:** January 15, 2026

**Purpose:** Answer Jon Klein's question: "How does WaxFeed grow?"

**Status:** STRATEGIC DOCUMENT

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## THE FRAME

Jon Klein isn't asking "will this work?" He's asking "**show me the path.**"

He's a media executive. He's seen a thousand pitches. He knows most fail because founders wave their hands at "growth" without showing the **specific, logical, step-by-step path** from 0 to 100 to 1,000 to 10,000 users.

This document answers that question definitively.

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## COMPARABLE COMPANIES: WHAT ACTUALLY WORKED

Before we design WaxFeed's path, let's study what worked for similar products.

### Letterboxd (Film Logging → Social Network)

Metric	Value
<b>Users</b>	13M+ (2024)
<b>Launch</b>	2011
<b>Time to 1M</b>	~8 years
<b>Inflection point</b>	2019-2020 (Film Twitter + pandemic)

**How They Grew:**

Phase	Strategy	Why It Worked
<b>Early (2011-2016)</b>	Film forum seeding, critic adoption	Cinephiles needed a home
<b>Middle (2016-2019)</b>	Film Twitter integration, shareable reviews	Content became social currency
<b>Explosion (2019-2022)</b>	Pandemic + TikTok film culture + aesthetic screenshots	Perfect timing + viral format

**Key Insight:** Letterboxd grew through **cultural identity** — being on Letterboxd signals you're a "film person." The product became a badge.

## RateYourMusic / Sonemic (Music Database)

Metric	Value
<b>Users</b>	500K+ active
<b>Launch</b>	2000
<b>Growth</b>	Slow, organic, SEO-driven

### How They Grew:

Strategy	Why It Worked
<b>SEO dominance</b>	"Best [genre] albums" queries → RYM results
<b>Community depth</b>	Lists, charts, discussions kept users engaged
<b>Data completeness</b>	Most comprehensive music database

**Key Insight:** RYM grew through **utility** (the database) and **authority** (the charts). They own search intent for music discovery queries.

## Last.fm (Scrobbing)

Metric	Value
<b>Peak users</b>	30M+
<b>Launch</b>	2002
<b>Growth driver</b>	Scrobbing integration

### How They Grew:

Strategy	Why It Worked
<b>Scrobbing</b>	Automatic data collection → zero friction
<b>"What are you listening to?"</b>	Real-time social signal
<b>Compatibility</b>	Friends with similar taste → discovery

**Key Insight:** Last.fm grew through **passive data collection** — users didn't have to do anything, their listening was captured automatically.

## Untappd (Beer Check-ins)

Metric	Value
<b>Users</b>	10M+
<b>Launch</b>	2010
<b>Growth driver</b>	Brewery partnerships + gamification

### How They Grew:

Strategy	Why It Worked
<b>Venue check-ins</b>	Distributed through bars/breweries
<b>Badges/gamification</b>	Collecting behavior drove engagement
<b>Brewery partnerships</b>	Venues promoted app to customers

**Key Insight:** Untappd grew through **venue partnerships** — the places where beer is consumed became distribution channels.

### Strava (Fitness Social Network)

Metric	Value
<b>Users</b>	100M+
<b>Launch</b>	2009
<b>Growth driver</b>	Segments, leaderboards, social proof

#### How They Grew:

Strategy	Why It Worked
<b>Segments</b>	Competitive leaderboards on real routes
<b>Social kudos</b>	Public validation of athletic activity
<b>Integration</b>	Works with every fitness device

**Key Insight:** Strava grew through **competition** — every run/ride became a competition, and competition is shareable.

## THE WAXFEED NICHE

### What WaxFeed Actually Is

**WaxFeed = Letterboxd for Music + RYM's Authority + Last.fm's Compatibility Data**

Competitor	What They Do	What They Miss
<b>Letterboxed</b>	Film logging + social	No music equivalent
<b>RateYourMusic</b>	Music database + ratings	Outdated UX, no social
<b>Last.fm</b>	Scrobbing + compatibility	No logging culture, stale
<b>Spotify</b>	Streaming + playlists	No logging, no social depth
<b>Apple Music</b>	Streaming	No social at all

**The Gap:** There is no modern, mobile-first, socially-native platform for **music taste as identity.**

## Target Users (Specificity Matters)

Segment	Size	Behavior	Acquisition Channel
<b>Music Twitter/X users</b>	~5M globally	Tweet about albums, share takes	Twitter/X content
<b>Letterboxed users who also love music</b>	~2M overlap	Already log films, want music equivalent	Cross-promotion
<b>Vinyl collectors</b>	~3M US	Physical album collectors, catalogers	Reddit, Discogs
<b>College radio / music students</b>	~500K US	Passionate, influential, early adopters	Campus ambassadors
<b>Music podcast listeners</b>	~10M US	Deep engagement, discovery-oriented	Podcast integrations
<b>Album review readers</b>	~2M US	Pitchfork, Fantano, etc. audiences	Critic partnerships

**Beachhead:** Music Twitter/X + College radio + Letterboxed crossover users

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# THE FIVE GROWTH PATHS

## Path 1: MUSIC TWITTER/X DOMINATION

### The Opportunity:

Music Twitter is one of the most active niche communities on the platform. Every day: - Album of the Year debates - "Your top 10 albums" threads - Hot takes on artists - New release discussions

**The Gap:** All this activity happens with no native home. People screenshot Spotify playlists, type out lists in tweets, use clunky image templates.

### The Strategy:

Phase	Action	Timeline	Target
<b>1. Seed</b>	Create WaxFeed account, post taste cards, engage	Week 1-4	1K followers
<b>2. Tool</b>	Launch "WaxFeed Card" — shareable taste visualization	Week 4-8	10K cards shared
<b>3. Viral Loop</b>	Every card links back to WaxFeed	Week 8-12	5K signups
<b>4. Influencer</b>	Partner with Music Twitter personalities (5-10K followers)	Week 12-16	50 partners
<b>5. Scale</b>	Paid promotion of best-performing organic content	Week 16+	20K signups

### Specific Tactics:

Tactic	Implementation
<b>Taste Cards</b>	Beautiful, shareable image showing top 10 albums. "My 2025 wrapped" but for all time.
<b>Weekly Threads</b>	"Drop your WaxFeed link, let's find people with similar taste"
<b>Album Release Days</b>	Real-time threads on new releases, link to rate on WaxFeed
<b>AOTY Debates</b>	"Rate your Album of the Year on WaxFeed — see who agrees"
<b>Quote Tweet Hooks</b>	"What's your most controversial 10/10 album?" → Link to WaxFeed

### Metrics:

Metric	Month 1	Month 3	Month 6	Month 12
Followers	1,000	5,000	15,000	50,000
Cards Shared	500	5,000	25,000	100,000
Signups from Twitter	200	2,000	10,000	40,000

**Cost:** \$0-2,000/month (organic + occasional boost)

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## Path 2: TIKTOK ALBUM CULTURE

### The Opportunity:

TikTok has created a new album culture: - "Albums that will change your life" videos - Album tier list content - "Rate this album 1-10" duets - Music reaction content

**The Gap:** All this content has no call-to-action, no way to engage beyond comments.

### The Strategy:

Phase	Action	Timeline	Target
<b>1. Content</b>	Create WaxFeed TikTok, post album content daily	Week 1-4	10K views/video
<b>2. Format</b>	Develop signature format: "My WaxFeed top 5"	Week 4-8	1 viral (100K+)
<b>3. Creators</b>	Partner with music TikTokers for reviews	Week 8-12	10 creators
<b>4. Duet</b>	"Duet with your ratings" → link to WaxFeed	Week 12-16	50K signups
<b>5. Scale</b>	Spark Ads on best-performing content	Week 16+	100K signups

### Specific Tactics:

Tactic	Implementation
<b>"Rate This Album"</b>	Show album, ask for 1-10, reveal your rating, link to WaxFeed
<b>Tier Lists</b>	Rank albums in genre → "Make yours on WaxFeed"
<b>Taste Match</b>	"Find someone with your exact taste" → WaxFeed link
<b>Album Reaction</b>	First listen reactions → "My full rating on WaxFeed"
<b>Controversy Bait</b>	"Is [popular album] overrated?" → Hot takes drive engagement

### Metrics:

Metric	Month 1	Month 3	Month 6	Month 12
Followers	5,000	25,000	100,000	500,000
Avg Views	5,000	20,000	50,000	100,000
Signups from TikTok	500	5,000	30,000	150,000

**Cost:** \$0-5,000/month (organic + Spark Ads)

## Path 3: REDDIT MUSIC COMMUNITIES

### The Opportunity:

Reddit has the deepest music discussion communities on the internet: - r/indieheads (2.3M members) - r/hiphopheads (2.5M members) - r/LetsTalkMusic (300K members) - r/vinyl (800K members) - r/listentothis (17M members) - Genre-specific subs (r/metal, r/jazz, r/electronicmusic, etc.)

**The Gap:** These communities want tools for logging/sharing. RYM is ugly. Last.fm is dead. There's no modern option.

### The Strategy:

Phase	Action	Timeline	Target
<b>1. Lurk</b>	Understand community norms, what they want	Week 1-2	Research
<b>2. Value</b>	Post genuinely useful content (not promo)	Week 2-8	Karma + trust
<b>3. Introduce</b>	"I built this" post when app is ready	Week 8-12	1K signups
<b>4. Integrate</b>	Weekly threads: "Share your WaxFeed profile"	Week 12-20	5K signups
<b>5. AMA</b>	Founder AMA on relevant subs	Week 20+	10K signups

### Specific Tactics:

Tactic	Implementation
<b>r/indieheads</b>	Announce AOTY voting integration with WaxFeed
<b>r/vinyl</b>	Collection logging feature → "Catalog on WaxFeed"
<b>r/LetsTalkMusic</b>	Deep discussion threads → WaxFeed reviews
<b>r/hiphopheads</b>	Fresh album threads → rate on WaxFeed
<b>Genre subs</b>	Specialized outreach to niche communities

### Metrics:

Metric	Month 1	Month 3	Month 6	Month 12
Posts	10	50	150	500
Karma	500	5,000	25,000	100,000
Signups from Reddit	100	1,000	5,000	25,000

**Cost:** \$0 (purely organic)

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## Path 4: COLLEGE CAMPUS NETWORK

### The Opportunity:

College students are: - Most passionate about music discovery - Most social / word-of-mouth driven - Most likely to become lifelong users - Concentrated in physical spaces (dorms, parties)

WBRU is **literally a college radio station**. This is the ultimate advantage.

### The Strategy:

Phase	Action	Timeline	Target
<b>1. WBRU Launch</b>	Launch to Brown community first	Week 1-4	200 users
<b>2. Radio DJs</b>	Every WBRU DJ has a WaxFeed profile	Week 4-8	30 DJs
<b>3. Campus Ambassadors</b>	Recruit 1 ambassador per dorm	Week 8-12	20 ambassadors
<b>4. Events</b>	WaxFeed launch party, album listening nights	Week 12-16	500 attendees
<b>5. Expand</b>	Spread to URI, RISD, other Providence schools	Week 16-24	1,000 users
<b>6. National</b>	Campus ambassador program at 20 schools	Week 24+	5,000 users

### Specific Tactics:

Tactic	Implementation
<b>WBRU Integration</b>	"Find your DJ's taste on WaxFeed"
<b>Dorm Takeover</b>	One dorm adopts WaxFeed → spread through social proof
<b>Party Integration</b>	QR code at parties: "Rate this playlist"
<b>Music Club Partnerships</b>	Partner with music clubs at each school
<b>Album Listening Events</b>	New album drops → listening party → WaxFeed ratings

### Campus Ambassador Program:

Role	Compensation	Expectations
<b>Ambassador</b>	Free premium + merch + event access	5 posts/month, 50 signups/semester
<b>Lead Ambassador</b>	Above + stipend	Manage 5 ambassadors, 200 signups/semester

### Metrics:

Metric	Month 1	Month 3	Month 6	Month 12
Brown users	200	500	1,000	2,000
Providence users	200	1,000	2,500	5,000
National campus users	0	0	2,000	15,000

**Cost:** \$5,000-15,000/year (ambassador stipends + events)

## Path 5: MUSIC CRITIC & INFLUENCER NETWORK

### The Opportunity:

Music critics and influencers drive discovery: - Anthony Fantano (The Needle Drop): 2.8M YouTube subscribers - Pitchfork, Stereogum, The Quietus readers - Music podcasts (Dissect, Song Exploder, etc.) - Twitter/X music accounts

**The Gap:** Critics have no way to engage audiences beyond content consumption. WaxFeed gives them a platform to see how their ratings compare to fans.

## The Strategy:

Phase	Action	Timeline	Target
<b>1. Seed</b>	Create profiles for top 50 critics (with permission)	Week 1-4	50 profiles
<b>2. Compare</b>	"See how your rating compares to Fantano"	Week 4-8	Feature launch
<b>3. Outreach</b>	Personal outreach to critics for endorsement	Week 8-12	10 endorsements
<b>4. Integration</b>	Embed WaxFeed ratings in reviews	Week 12-20	5 publications
<b>5. Podcast</b>	Guest on music podcasts	Week 20+	10 appearances

## Specific Tactics:

Tactic	Implementation
<b>Fantano Integration</b>	"Compare your rating to Fantano" — viral potential
<b>Pitchfork Comparison</b>	"Do you agree with the 8.7?" → WaxFeed discussion
<b>Podcast Mentions</b>	Guest spots on music podcasts, mention WaxFeed
<b>Critic Profiles</b>	Verified critic profiles with their rating history
<b>Review Embeds</b>	Widget for publications to show WaxFeed community rating

## Metrics:

Metric	Month 1	Month 3	Month 6	Month 12
Critic profiles	50	100	200	500
Critic endorsements	0	5	20	50
Signups from critics	0	500	5,000	25,000

**Cost:** \$0-5,000 (free product access, occasional paid partnerships)

# THE VIRAL MECHANICS

## What Makes Content Shareable

Mechanic	WaxFeed Implementation
<b>Identity</b>	"My taste" is personal and shareable
<b>Comparison</b>	"See who matches you" drives curiosity
<b>Competition</b>	"Who has the best taste?" creates engagement
<b>Controversy</b>	Hot takes on albums drive discussion
<b>Nostalgia</b>	"My 2000s albums ranked" taps emotion
<b>Discovery</b>	"Found my music twin" is compelling

## The Shareable Artifacts

Artifact	Format	Sharing Mechanic
<b>Taste Card</b>	Image with top 10 albums	Tweet/post with WaxFeed link
<b>Compatibility Score</b>	"You and @friend are 87% compatible"	Tag friend, they join to see
<b>Year in Review</b>	Annual wrapped-style summary	Seasonal viral moment
<b>Controversial Take</b>	"I gave [album] a 3/10"	Rage engagement
<b>Perfect Match</b>	"Found someone with 95% match"	Success story content

## The Referral Loop

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User A rates albums
  ↓
WaxFeed shows "3 friends have similar taste"
  ↓
User A invites friends to compare
  ↓
Friends join to see compatibility
  ↓
Friends start rating
  ↓
Friends invite THEIR friends
  
```

REPEAT

## THE FUNNEL: AWARENESS → ACTIVATION → RETENTION → REFERRAL

### Awareness (Top of Funnel)

Channel	Content Type	CTA
Twitter/X	Taste cards, hot takes, album debates	"Make yours on WaxFeed"
TikTok	Album rankings, reactions, tier lists	Link in bio
Reddit	Community threads, AMA, genuine value	"Check out WaxFeed"
Instagram	Album art aesthetics, taste visuals	"Link in bio"
Podcasts	Guest appearances, mentions	"wax-feed.com"

### Activation (First Session)

Step	What Happens	Target Time
1	Land on WaxFeed	0:00
2	Understand value prop	0:05
3	Sign up (Apple/Google/email)	0:30
4	Rate first album	1:00
5	See first match/recommendation	2:00
6	Rate 5 more albums	5:00
7	See compatibility with someone	7:00
8	Share first taste card	10:00

**Activation Target:** 50% of signups rate 5+ albums in first session

## Retention (Weekly Engagement)

Trigger	Action	Goal
New album release	Push notification: "Rate [Album]"	Weekly return
Friend rates album	Notification: "@friend rated [Album]"	Social engagement
Compatibility milestone	"You hit 90% match with @user!"	Surprise moment
Weekly digest	"Your taste this week + who matched"	Email return

**Retention Target:** 40% weekly retention, 25% monthly retention

## Referral (Viral Growth)

Mechanism	Implementation
Taste Card Sharing	Every card has WaxFeed link
Compatibility Invites	"Invite @friend to see your match"
Leaderboards	"Most matched user this week"
Referral Rewards	1 month premium for 5 referrals

**Referral Target:** 20% of users invite at least 1 friend

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# THE NUMBERS: YEAR ONE PROJECTION

## Conservative Path

Month	New Users	Total Users	MAU	Source
1	200	200	150	WBRU launch
2	300	500	300	Campus spread
3	500	1,000	500	Twitter traction
4	600	1,600	700	TikTok starts
5	800	2,400	1,000	Reddit threads
6	1,000	3,400	1,300	iOS launch
7	1,200	4,600	1,700	Critic partnerships
8	1,500	6,100	2,200	Campus expansion
9	2,000	8,100	2,800	Viral content
10	2,500	10,600	3,500	TikTok scale
11	3,000	13,600	4,300	Referral loops
12	4,000	17,600	5,500	Compound growth

**Year 1 Total: 17,600 users, 5,500 MAU** (exceeds 500 MAU target by 11x)

## Aggressive Path (If Viral Content Hits)

Scenario	Users	MAU
1 TikTok goes viral (1M+ views)	+20,000	+8,000
Fantano mentions WaxFeed	+15,000	+5,000
Major artist uses WaxFeed	+10,000	+4,000

**Aggressive Year 1: 50,000+ users, 15,000+ MAU**

# THE UNIT ECONOMICS

## Cost Per Acquisition (CPA)

Channel	Spend	Users	CPA
Twitter/X (organic)	\$0	5,000	\$0
TikTok (organic)	\$0	10,000	\$0
Reddit (organic)	\$0	3,000	\$0
Campus (ambassadors)	\$10,000	2,000	\$5
Paid social (Year 1)	\$10,000	2,000	\$5
<b>Blended</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>22,000</b>	<b>\$0.91</b>

**Target CPA: <\$5** (industry average for social apps: \$2-10)

## Lifetime Value (LTV) — Future

Monetization	Year 2+	Per User
Premium subscription	\$5/month × 5% × 12	\$3/year
DJ booking fees	10% × \$500 × 1%	\$0.50/year
Artist promotion	\$100 × 0.5%	\$0.50/year
<b>Total LTV</b>		<b>\$4/year</b>

**LTV:CAC Ratio: 4:1** (target >3:1)

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## WHAT WE TELL JON KLEIN

### The One-Liner

"WaxFeed grows through **five interlocking paths**: Music Twitter/X domination, TikTok album culture, Reddit music communities, college campus network, and music critic partnerships. Each path feeds the others, creating a compounding flywheel."

## The 3-Minute Version

1. **Music Twitter is our beachhead.** 5M+ people tweet about albums daily with no native home. WaxFeed becomes that home. Shareable taste cards become social currency.
2. **TikTok is our scale engine.** Album content gets millions of views. We own the "rate this album" format. Every video drives signups.
3. **Reddit gives us authority.** The deepest music communities on the internet adopt WaxFeed as their logging tool. We become the modern RateYourMusic.
4. **College campuses give us density.** Starting with Brown/WBRU, we create concentrated user bases that spread through word-of-mouth. One dorm at a time.
5. **Music critics give us legitimacy.** "Compare your rating to Fantano" is viral. Critic endorsements drive awareness. Publication integrations drive SEO.

**The flywheel:** - Twitter drives awareness - TikTok drives viral moments - Reddit drives community - Campuses drive density - Critics drive legitimacy - Users invite users - **Growth compounds**

## The Question We Answer

"How do you get from 0 to 500 MAU?"

Month	Action	Target
1	WBRU launch + Brown campus	150 MAU
2	Twitter content machine starts	300 MAU
3	TikTok content begins	500 MAU ✓
4-12	Scale all paths	5,500 MAU

"How do you get from 500 to 5,000 MAU?"

Path	Contribution
Twitter/X	2,000 users
TikTok	3,000 users
Reddit	1,500 users
Campuses	2,000 users
Critics	1,500 users
Referrals	3,000 users
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,000 users → 5,500 MAU</b>

### "What's the cost?"

Item	Year 1 Cost
Content creation (internal)	\$0
Campus ambassadors	\$10,000
Paid social tests	\$10,000
Events	\$5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>

**Cost per user: \$1.42** (industry benchmark: \$2-10)

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# THE COMPETITIVE MOAT

## Why Competitors Can't Copy This

Advantage	Why It's Defensible
<b>WBRU Partnership</b>	60+ years of music community legacy. Can't be replicated.
<b>First Mover</b>	No modern music logging app exists. We define the category.
<b>Network Effects</b>	More users = better matching = more users. Compounds.
<b>CCX Technology</b>	Patent-pending taste alignment algorithm.
<b>Content Flywheel</b>	User-generated ratings = infinite content for SEO/social.

## If Spotify Tried to Copy

- They optimize for engagement, not community
- Their data is passive (listens), not active (ratings)
- They're too big to focus on niche
- Their brand is streaming, not social

## If Letterboxd Tried to Expand to Music

- Different user behavior (albums vs films)
- Music licensing complexity
- We'd be 12+ months ahead
- Network effects already established

# THE ASK FOR JON KLEIN

## What We Need

1. **Time** — 12 months to prove the paths work
2. **Capital** — The budget we proposed (\$860K Year 1)
3. **WBRU Assets** — Radio promotion, artist network, event platforms
4. **Trust** — Let us execute while reporting progress

## What We Commit

Metric	Target	Timeline
MAU	500	Month 6
MAU	2,500	Month 12
Organic Reach	100K/month	Month 12
Cost Per User	<\$5	Ongoing

## The Bottom Line

*"We don't need luck. We have paths. Five of them. Each one is logical, feasible, and based on what worked for comparable companies. We know exactly how to get from 0 to 500 to 5,000 to 50,000 users. The only question is: are you ready to fund the execution?"*

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## VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date	Changes
1.0	2026-01-15	Initial growth paths document

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*"Growth isn't luck. It's paths. We have five of them."*

— CD