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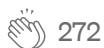
# Metrics That Matter

## 23 KPIs for record marketing



Amber Horsburgh · [Follow](#)

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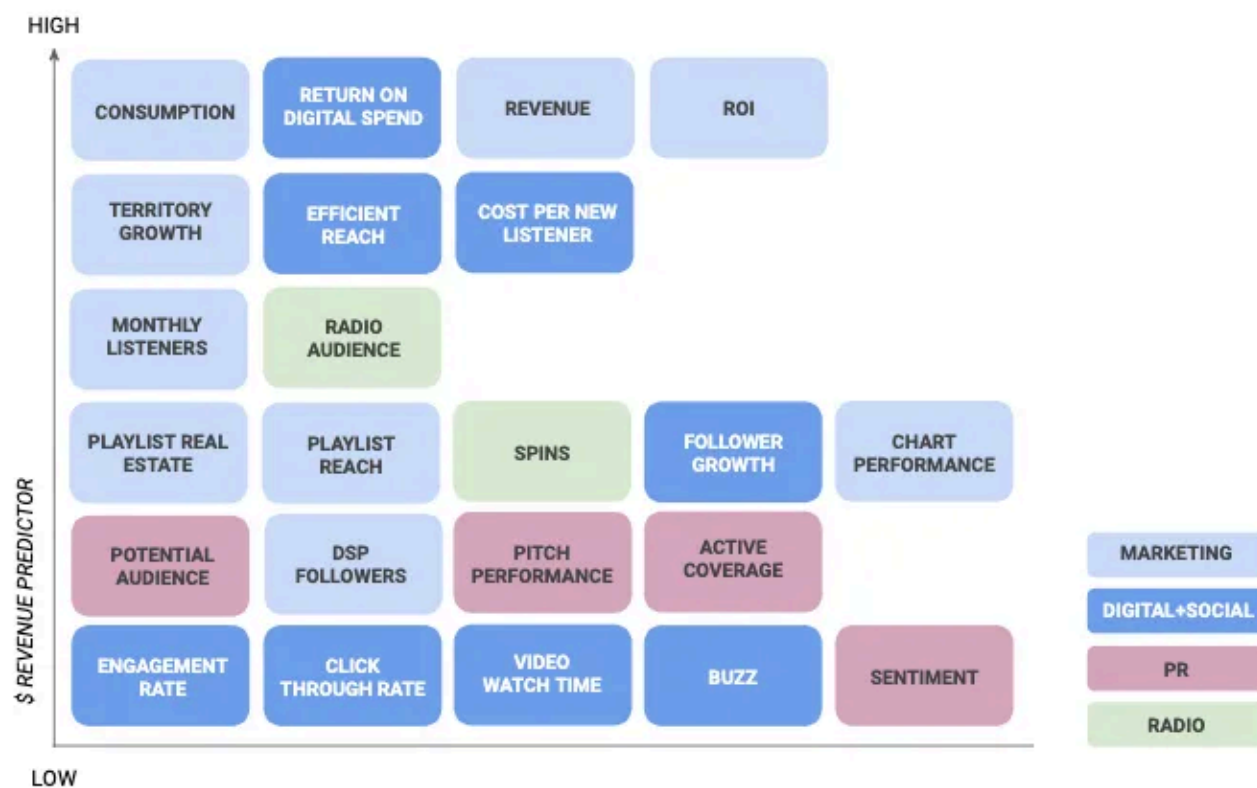


When you start a record campaign, your label lays out Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to evaluate a campaign's success or failure, which govern whether your project continues to be funded or phased out.

Streaming and social platforms allow us to see the real time impact of marketing efforts via a wall of metrics that when pieced together tell a story. However, few artists know which metrics are the right metrics. Some are more accurate at predicting an artist's success than others, and therefore should be more important to music marketers.

This post is meant to **make measuring success simple** by showing which **KPIs are most accurate at measuring the true impact of marketing records.**

## 23 success metrics for measuring record campaigns ranked by business impact →



The above graph plots 23 metrics for measuring the success of an album campaign. The 4 groups represent the core functions of promotion (marketing, digital & social, radio and publicity). The Y axis shows predictor of revenue. Metrics higher on the Y axis indicate better predictor of revenue and therefore bigger business impact.

### Metrics list at quick glance

1. Active Coverage
2. Audience (Radio)
3. Buzz

4. Chart Performance
5. Click Through Rate
6. Consumption
7. Cost Per New Listener
8. Efficient Reach
9. Engagement Rate
10. Follower Growth (Social)
11. Monthly Listeners
12. Pitch Performance
13. Playlist Reach
14. Playlist Real Estate
15. Potential Reach
16. Profile Followers (DSP)
17. Return on Digital Spend
18. Revenue
19. ROI
20. Sentiment
21. Spins
22. Territory Growth
23. Video Completion Length

## Marketing & Sales KPIs



Marketing & Sales KPIs

### 1) ROI

Return on Investment. Dollar amount you needed to spend to yield a result, which can be a positive or negative value.

*Return on investment (ROI) = (revenue from marketing) – (marketing spend) / marketing budget.*

Provides guidance to artist/team on the relative value of a marketing investment, which prioritizes future budgets, cuts initiatives that make little return and informs artist(s) how they best spend their time.

ROI must be considered in context of the wider marketing plan — strong ROI can be created by insignificant investments (e.g.: \$50 Facebook spend that produced 300% growth via ticket sales) and larger activities (e.g.: music videos) may not manifest ROI until years after.

## **2) Playlist Reach**

Total number of followers from each playlist a track appears on. Usually represented individually by each DSP.

### *Sum (playlist followers)*

Shows potential audience size exposed to a track. Labels use this metric to compare support from each DSP and see how reliant the release is on editorial playlists. If an artist has a much higher playlist reach from editorial (Spotify's Rap Caviar, Today's Top Hits, Pollen) than non-editorial (users own, third party's) you have a problem. When they remove you, your growth takes a nosedive.

This metric is bloated on release week with the addition of New Music Friday.

## **3) Playlist Real Estate**

Visibility of a track on DSPs as shown by the weekly change in number of playlists a track is added or removed from, playlist position.





































## SPOTIFY PLAYLIST UPDATES

## NEW PLAYLISTS (9)

PLAYLIST	TRACK	FOLLOWERS	POSITION	ADDED
<u>New Music Friday Philippines</u> By <u>Spotify</u>	<u>Polaroids</u>	603,766	74/109	2019-09-05
<u>New Music Friday Indonesia</u> By <u>Spotify</u>	<u>Polaroids</u>	129,105	62/82	2019-09-05
<u>新歌快遞</u> By <u>Spotify</u>	<u>Polaroids</u>	73,040	63/75	2019-09-05
<u>New Music Friday Malaysia</u> By <u>Spotify</u>	<u>Polaroids</u>	54,198	58/71	2019-09-05
<u>On Point</u> By <u>Spotify</u>	<u>Polaroids</u>	43,427	57/71	2019-09-05
<u>New Music Friday Singapore</u> By <u>Spotify</u>	<u>Polaroids</u>	35,602	54/67	2019-09-05
<u>新歌熱播</u> By <u>Spotify</u>	<u>Polaroids</u>	27,092	54/79	2019-09-05
<u>New Music Friday Thailand</u> By <u>Spotify</u>	<u>Polaroids</u>	23,627	67/80	2019-09-05
<u>New Music Friday Vietnam</u> By <u>Spotify</u>	<u>Polaroids</u>	7,017	50/63	2019-09-05

Pop/R&B act Bravo receives daily email updates of playlist placement + positioning, allowing users to track their daily changes in Playlist Real Estate. This was following the release of his track “Polaroids” in September.  
Source: Chartmetric.

Playlists are how people discover music and a marketers job is about getting the artist/song in front of as many people as possible, and getting them to care, thus visibility on playlists indicates the potential audience size to discover the music

PLAYLIST	TRACK	POSITION	FOLLOWERS	FOLLOWERS 28-DAY CHANGE(%)	MONTHLY LISTENERS	ADDED	DAYS IN LIST
 Navajo Radio (personalized) 	waves - Tame Impala Remix 	48 / 50 	1,371	8 %	2020-02-20	0	
 Slovakia Viral 50 	Lost In Yesterday 	50 / 50 	4,276	1 %	2020-02-20	0	
 Nicaragua Viral 50 	Borderline 	41 / 50 	4,813	1 %	2020-02-20	0	
 Israel Viral 50 	Posthumous Forgiveness 	49 / 50 	4,782	2 %	2020-02-20	0	
 Global Viral 50 	Lost In Yesterday 	49 / 50 	1,596,560	1 %	17,669 2020-02-20	0	
 Canada Viral 50 	Lost In Yesterday 	47 / 50 	53,221	1 %	2020-02-20	0	
 crush 	It Might Be Time 	47 / 80 	33,076	12 %	20,537 2020-02-20	0	
 Indielandia 	Posthumous Forgiveness 	6 / 50 	74,941	5 %	12,229 2020-02-19	1	
 Indielandia 	It Might Be Time 	16 / 50 	74,941	5 %	12,229 2020-02-19	1	

Track current and past playlist performance across Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube + more for the last 365 days.  
Source: Chartmetric

## 4) Monthly listeners

Unique listeners of an artist in a 28 day period. The number of times an individual streams a song does not effect the monthly listener, if one person streams one song and another 300 times, they each count as 1 monthly listener

### *Sum total of unique listeners in a 28 day period*

Monthly listeners and monthly streams are usually lumped in the same reporting. Monthly streams are more easily manipulated than Monthly Listeners, however reporting on these must be considered in the wider growth of the artist long term — which is where profile follows comes into play.

## 5) Profile Followers (DSP)

Unique followers of an artist's profile





SHAKE THE SNOW GLOBE: With 15 million monthly listeners and over 3 million Spotify followers (impressively, more followers than his IG or Twitter), Russ is a perfect example of this 1:5 ratio.

If the goal governing 99.99% of record campaigns is to reach millions of people and earn streaming/sales revenue, then followers suggest how aware people are of your artist. An act with high monthly listeners or playlist reach may generate millions of streams but have low brand awareness — people know the song but not the artist.



Followers to streams ratio is an indicator of interest in an artist vs. miscellaneous streams generated by playlists and algorithms. If an artist has fewer than 1:20 followers to monthly listeners then you have a problem with branding and over-reliance on editorial support, therefore must invest in brand building activities.

Emerging artists (>1M monthly listeners) generally average 1:10, established acts (>5M monthly listeners) average 1:5 followers to monthly listeners.

and therefore you need to invest in brand building marketing activities.

## 6) Consumption

Total sales earned from physical sales (CD, cassette, vinyl), digital downloads, streams, and monetized video views.

Consumption underpins revenue, which is the ultimate goal. Labels base marketing budgets on consumption projections at key campaign periods including: week 1, month 1, month 6 and month 12.

Consumption includes sales from physical and digital, streaming (lean forward and lean back).

## 7) Territory Growth

Difference in consumption in a specific country, region or set of cities

*(consumption this week) — (consumption last week) / number of weeks active campaign*



Ryan Beatty's analytics shows you can see the percentage of monthly listeners from each city, as well as market coverage (compared to potential total listeners) per city. Source: Chartmetric

Streaming and social media has made music more global in that artists and songs can be more readily discovered in different territories before crossing over to larger markets like the US, e.g.: Rich Brian, Lewis Capaldi.

## 8) Revenue

Total money made by an artist over a period of time.

*Sales \$ + streaming \$ + merch \$ + sync/licensing + D2C \$ + touring*

Revenue is often the penultimate goal but as a metric is misleading because it is surface level, not indicating marketing spend or ROI. Revenue alone focuses on short term and immediate returns whereas the impact on specific marketing activities can take months or years to actualize

## 9) Chart Performance

Ranking of the top played, streamed, watched or sold tracks and albums in a given period as reported by Nielsen SoundScan. Includes iTunes, Apple Music, Spotify Viral 50, Spotify Global, Billboard, Shazam, SoundCloud, YouTube and others

*Calculation: \\_(ツ)\_/ nah but seriously, each platform has their own method. If you're interested here's [Billboard](#), [iTunes/Apple](#), [Spotify](#), [Shazam](#), [SoundCloud](#)*

## JUSTIN BIEBER IN SPOTIFY STREAM-GAMING CONTROVERSY AS HE DIRECTS FANS TO PLAY NEW SINGLE ON REPEAT

662  
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JANUARY 13, 2020

BY MURRAY STASSEN



Justin Bieber directs fan army to stream overnight using VPNs to game streaming numbers and chart performance on single 'Yummy'.

Billboard charts are still considered to show the winners in culture however come under scrutiny with chart manipulation through sales techniques i.e.: Travis Scott or Taylor Swift's extensive merch and ticket bundling to nab the top spot, or Bieber telling his fans to stream his new single with a VPN set to the US to game the US charts.

Digital charts like iTunes, Apple Music, Spotify Viral 50/Global 50, Deezer, SoundCloud indicate performance within specific platform algorithms, which is important since the role they play is by steering visibility/invisibility of an artist and attract attention

## Digital & Social KPIs



Digital & social KPIs

## 10) Return on Digital Spend

Dollars generated from specific paid social and digital media buys vs. cost of creating the asset. Measured using pixel trackers and affiliate/microsite links like LinkTree, SmartURL.

$$(\$ \text{ Sales from Marketing} - \$ \text{ Marketing Spend}) / \$ \text{ Marketing Spend}$$

Tracking the return of digital spend means the marketer needs to create a system that identifies sales/streams to digital impressions where each tactic is given credit to its revenue generated. This helps marketers push back or justify creative decisions of an artist.

### **11) Cost per New Listener**

The dollar value of a new listener as determined by the costs of creative assets, media spend and online publicity for a specific marketing initiative by the number of new unique monthly listeners.

$$(\$ \text{ marketing budget}) / (\text{revenue generated by activity}) - (\text{costs})$$

Shows marketing operating efficiency and helps artists and labels determine interest in an artist that is organic vs. paid. This metric is especially important for labels with many developing artist projects as it predicts growth trajectory of one artist over another. If your cost per new listener is higher for artist X than Y, it indicates artist X is not resonating with new audiences as much as artist Y.

### **12) Buzz**

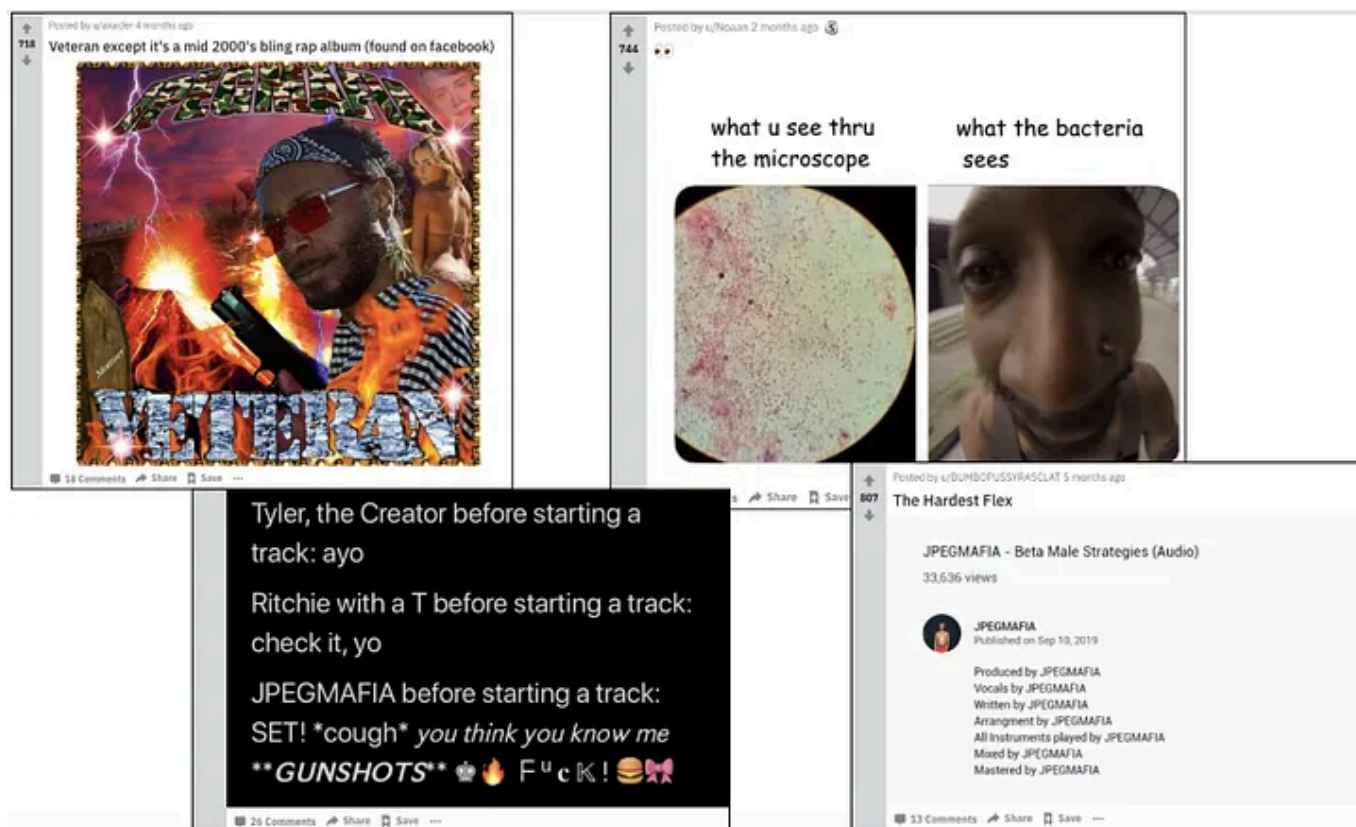
The total number of times an artist or record is mentioned across social media platforms, tracked weekly to determine the growth/decline

*Number of social mentions on social platform*

Helps understand the virality, scale and impact of a release; also used to mine for conversation topics and sentiment.

A positive result when mining for conversation is that audiences are discussing things other than “new music out today”, resharing headlines or posts from the artist.

Things like active discussion in subreddits and comment sections on IG/FB or on Twitter. This tells you that people are more interested in an artist as a whole brand and relevancy doesn't need to be propped up by new music promotions.



A search of “JPEGMAFIA” on r/jpegmafia reveals thousands of active memes, fan art and discussions. This suggests his appeal as an artist doesn't need to be propped up by new music promotions.

That said, people posting on the internet about a release or artist represent a much smaller subset of the entire audience segment and therefore can be



misrepresentative of what's actually going on in consumers' minds.

### **13) Follower Growth**

The difference in profile followers week on week across social media and DSPs.

*(profile followers this week) — (profile followers last week) / total followers \*100*

Can be meaningful as a social cue to people just discovering you and industry gatekeepers who look for social proof before offering opportunities. But more often than not is vanity.

### **14) Click Through Rate**

Percentage of ad impressions from an individual asset or campaign that generated a click.

*The percentage of ad impressions with click-throughs*

Most commonly used for campaigns driving an action, i.e.: album/single pre-saves, contesting, email or text message sign up, new releases driving social audiences to streaming.

### **15) Video Completion Length**

Average length of completion in time (minutes, seconds) of your video

Helpful in understanding how much of a message a viewer has seen and how future videos could be made for better retention. This metric becomes critical in music since the music video is one of the most heavily invested line items in the marketing budget. Video watch time is a more useful metric

than completion rate as you can pinpoint the moment when you begin to lose audiences, which is useful to inform creative decisions.

For ancillary content like tour announcements, interviews, sessions, BTS etc. video watch time shows how much of the message the average viewer is getting. If you made a 2-min tour announcement video dropping all the dates — but most people only watch to :20 — it's likely some people missed their city info.

## **16) Efficient Reach**

The ratio of paid to earned media.

Understand campaigns lead by PR or social media, as well as how much an asset naturally resonated with audiences i.e.: music videos. If earned media is high it indicates “buzz”, that the music video struck a chord with viewers and therefore they shared/commented/sent to friends or wrote about it in the press.

This metric is useful in music for 2 reasons.

1. The standard belief is “content is king” that a great song or great video will break an artist any day of the week compared to heavy investment in paid advertising
2. Paid advertising budgets are usually a smaller % of overall marketing budgets than music video, radio, publicity and touring and therefore every dollar needs to work harder.

## **17) Engagement Rate**

% of impressions that drove consumers to actually interact with the asset — usually applied to social media campaigns as a proxy for fan loyalty.

## *Interactions with digital asset / Impressions of digital asset*

Signals how an element of the campaign is sticking with audiences. For example, a tour announcement, single release or new video. However, it is a vague metric and often influenced more heavily by the platform's algorithm and how it prioritizes and personalizes content, thus rendering assets visible/invisible.

Calculations also vary from platform to platform and can encompass a mix of comments, likes, shares, contest entries, sign-ups to email/text, views, saves to library, adds to playlists etc — can be misleading when comparing across platforms.

## **Press KPIs**



## Publicity KPIs

**18) Potential Reach**

Total viewership for publication, websites and blogs your coverage is featured

*Social impressions from post sharing the article. Estimated monthly website traffic.*

When weighing up premieres, interviews and features of a media outlet, artists use reach to figure out if said media outlet is worth the scoop. If outlet X has a larger monthly website traffic and social following than outlet Y, they will likely get the premiere.

**19) Active Coverage**

Coverage secured by the PR team

*Links, press clippings to public coverage*

Tells you where your music has been pitched and relative feedback. It is helpful to split this KPI into top-tier publications vs. everything else. When you begin the release you sit down with your publicist and go over your goals for coverage (e.g.: late night TV and a NYTimes feature). Group your top-tier publications into one KPI to measure against initial goal and everything else is caught separately.

**20) Pitch Performance**

The number of press releases and pitches you are sending out and how they are performing.

Along with the amount of coverage they generate, you can also measure your progress in building relationships with journalists (a good distribution tool provides metrics on open rates and even internal links clicked).

## 21) Sentiment

Tone of the articles mentioning your name, release or competitors.

### *Qualitative analysis*

Lets you see if your brand is creating positive or negative associations and is useful when going through a rebrand and dealing with media crises.

## Radio KPIs



Radio KPI's

## 22) Audience

Sum total of listeners to specific radio stations the track is played on.

Individual audience members quantified as listening for a set period of time (often 5 minutes) within a given quarter hour segment.

## 23) Spins

Number of times an individual track is played on a specific radio station.

Increase/decrease in spins reflects station support for a song, which can be a measure of local interest in a track by consumers.



**Written by Amber Horsburgh**

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Music marketing consultant. Downtown Records & Big Spaceship alumni. Writes about music, strategy and feels at Deep Cuts <http://bit.ly/2yphFYx>

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