SIGNAL & STRIDE

SCALING SPOTIFY STREAM AND FOLLOWER GROWTH WITH PERFORMANCE MARKETING

AGENCY EXPERTISE
AT STARTUP SPEED

OVERVIEW

The Rough Edges, an independent modern-grunge band, set an ambitious goal for 2024: **double their annual Spotify streams compared to 2023, without increasing their marketing budget.**

With limited local reach and no label support, the band needed a system that could build momentum, increase algorithmic visibility, and consistently reach new listeners globally. We developed a holistic release plan paired with a performance-driven ad strategy to achieve exactly that.

WHAT WE FOUND

There were three key areas of opportunity common in independent bands/artists:

1. Release sequencing didn't fully support algorithmic growth
Past singles were released intermittently, leaving gaps in engagement that limited Spotify's ability to build long-term momentum.

2. Strong music and strong visuals, but under-amplified
The band had compelling songs and creative assets (performance clips, lyric-driven visuals), but no scalable mechanism to extend reach beyond their existing audience.

3. No structured A/B testing framework
The band had never tested copy or visuals, resulting in flat performance over time.

WHAT WE DID

1. Built a Smart, Staggered Release Calendar to Maximize Algorithmic Signals

Instead of releasing the full LP at once, we structured a sequence of singles leading into the album, creating repeated touchpoints with listeners and the Spotify algorithm.

This included:

- A four-week single release leading into the LP
- Leveraged prior singles (*Over You, Fairweather Beggar, Remedy*) to re-engage legacy listeners
- A timeline aligned with algorithmic behaviors like Release Radar

By the time the LP launched, listeners had already saved new singles, added tracks to playlists, and built familiarity with the sound, resulting in over 100,000 streams on LP release day from pre-release activity alone.

WHAT WE DID
(CONT.)

2. Launched Global, Genre-Aligned Paid Media Campaigns

To grow beyond the artist's local audience, we launched a digital-first, worldwide paid strategy targeting:

- Fans of genre-adjacent artists
- Listeners in high-engagement regions
- Users of platforms we wanted to grow (Spotify, YouTube, Instagram)

3. Introduced a Structured A/B Testing Framework

- Hook variations (heavy sections, melodic sections, lyric moments)
- Different visual styles (live clips, studio shots, animated text)
- Messaging formats (lyrics-first, vibe-first, performance-first)
- Audience segments by genre affinity, location, platform, and behavior

This allowed us to quickly identify high-performing ad variants and scale them while retiring underperformers.

THE RESULTS

The band doubled their previous year's Spotify streams by October.

- 2× total streams YoY (86,000+ compared to 34,000 in 2023)
- Significant listener growth and higher save rates
- Algorithmic playlist placements, boosted by both Release Radar and Discover Weekly
- Expanded global audience across multiple platforms
- A repeatable release and ads system the band can now use for every future project

This performance was achieved entirely independently, with no label budget.

WHY IT MATTERS

Independent musicians often assume they need:

- A label
- A large budget
- Industry connections

But what they truly need is a system that aligns releases, ads, and testing so every dollar and every song works harder.

A clear release calendar, smart targeting, A/B testing, and consistent optimization can deliver major growth, even with limited resources.

It's the same creator-focused model Signal & Stride uses to help independent musicians reach their next level. We're efficient, data-driven, and deeply aligned to real listener behavior.

READY FOR MORE PEOPLE TO HEAR YOU?

We help artists test quickly, refine fast, and build reliable systems that scale.

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