







Over the past two years, we here at Indepreneur have been spending thousands of dollars per month in advertising and marketing to identify, measure, track, and optimize the steps that a person takes from stranger to fan. Through this experimentation, we have been able to develop a business sytem that will work for any musician as long as they have quality sounding music.

# That System is Called "The Buddy System"

Each step in The Buddy System can be accomplished with a fully automated marketing campaign. Using this process, we have been able to acquire new fans at a profit and use follow-up campaigns to deepen the relationship with listeners, which facilitates follow-up purchases.





# **Core Concepts**

# Indepreneur

### ADVOCACY

The most devoted fans of an artist are willing and eager to actively promote for the artist in their area or network. Advocacy campaigns activate fans to execute strategic, time-based promotions while equipping them with the necessary promotional materials...

### REFERRAL

Referral campaigns give engaged fans the incentives and instructions to show their friends an artist's work. While fans will often naturally share their favorite artists, this stage allows artists to orchestrate the referral process and direct new fans to the right place...

### ASCENSION (II)

In this stage, high value fans are selected for more exclusive offers. Continuity products (membership, shirt-of-the-month, etc.), VIP packages, customized/personalized offers, and limited edition products help to create a unique experience for die-hard fans...

### ASCENSION (I)

While some products/offers are great for creating first-time customers, other products are great for creating repeat customers. In this stage, artists consistently make promotional offers to their existing customers so that these offers are always top-of-mind when the time is right...

"Fans exist in different stages of awareness, and marketing campaigns move them from one stage to the next..."



### **AFFIRMATION**

Not all fans make purchases, only those who have received enough value or developed enough of a relationship. Artists affirm the strength of the relationship built thus far by making an introductory offer for purchase, turning fans into supporting fans...



### **INTRODUCTION ©**

The Introduction stage is the first in the framework; an opportunity to make the best first impression. Because entertainment is better "discovered", campaigns that generate "Introduction" should not come on too strong, relying instead on audience's curiosity...

### **EDUCATION**

When we first start becoming a fan of an artist, we educate ourselves by learning how, when, and where to consume their content. The more we learn about an artist and identify with them, the more our interest in that artist grows...

### PERMISSION

One-to-one communication channels (Email List, SMS List, etc.) allow guaranteed communication with engaged audiences. In this stage, artists offer incentives for signing up or subscribing which shifts the fan experience from "one-to-many" to "one-to-one"...

### NURTURING 2

In this stage, fans have just taken a big step by signing up for one-to-one communication or by making a purchase. Because fans have recently reciprocated value, artists must reward that choice by giving tons of value in return, nurturing the artist-to-fan relationship...





"...A 'Marketing Campaign' can be hard to conceptualize, so we need a uniform definition..."

# cam-paign

# /kam, pan/

A message or series of messages displaying content through a certain medium and typically including a call-to-action. Messages are shown to an audience generated through a traffic source. The success of a campaign is measured by a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) and the resulting audience accumulates in a Return Path.

### **CONTENT** /kon-tent/

A piece or collection of media designed to educate or entertain.

### MEDIUM /'medēəm/

A deliery method for a communication or message (video, audio, text, email, social media post, webpage, etc.)

#### **CALL-TO-ACTION**

An instruction or directive intended to induce a user to perform a specific action.

### **TRAFFIC SOURCE**

A source of audience members defined by chosen characteristics (demographics, psychographics, interaction, etc.) that can be served a message manually.

### **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)**

A data point (typically a number or rate) used to quantify the success of a given campaign. Common examples include Conversion Rate, Sales or Sales Rate, Subscribers or Opt-In Rate, Profit-per-Sale, etc.

### **RETURN PATH**

A list of audience members from a traffic source who have completed a specific call-to-action in the past, typically a retargeting audience or subscriber segment.





Introduction "...the Introduction stage is your chance to make a first impression. Introduction campaigns let fans discover you..."

### **Top Campaigns:**

1 FANFINDER (Facebook/Instagram Advertising)

Facebook and Instagram video ads are a low-cost, guaranteed method for putting content in front of users who are likely to enjoy it. By using the FANFINDER method, we have been able to create new fans who feel as if they discovered the content instead of being pushed into watching/listening.

### **COLD2WARM** Machine

Artists with sustained revenue will typically seek to maximize their ability to generate new warm audiences (people who have interacted with them before). For this, we use a set-it-and-forget-it variation on the FANFINDER method that lets Facebook and Instagram choose different content for different audiences on a set weekly or monthly budget.

#### **CONTENT**

Performance Video

### **MEDIUM**

Facebook/Instagram Video Ad

#### **TRAFFIC SOURCE**

Saved Audiences (psychographically targeted) · Lookalike Audiences (algorithmically targeted)

#### **CALL-TO-ACTION**

n/a

### **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)**

Cost per 50-75% View · Quality/Engagement Ranking · Cost per Engagement

### **RETURN PATH**

Custom Audience (targeted by previous interaction)







**Education** "...when we discover an artist we like, we explore their content and learn about them..."

### **Top Campaigns:**

### **Recurring Content**

When we discover content that we enjoy, the natural inclination is to figure out how we can get more of it. Artists with recurring content that follows a release schedule are able to set expectations for their new audience members by directing them to "tune-in" on a weekly or bi-weekly basis for specific content. This ensures that new audience members are likely to return or "follow up" while also building an archive of content that new audience members can "binge".

### \$1-A-Day Growth Plan

As artists gain new audience members, they can ensure that those audience members are kept engaged using low-budget advertising. The \$1-A-Day Growth Plan (also known as "Green Light Warmth Boosting") allows artists to distribute social posts about new content to their warm audience on a recurring basis, guaranteeing that new fans will begin to see more content while also keeping existing fans engaged.

### **Fan Page Optimization**

Because of the power of the FANFINDER method, many of your new listeners will try to learn more about the artist after first seeing their content. For this reason, one of the most powerful Education campaigns is not a campaign at all: to ensure that social media profiles and artist websites connected to Introduction content contain helpful information, content, and clear calls to action.

#### **CONTENT**

Recorded Music · Live Performance · Interviews · Behind The Scenes Content · Vlogs/YouTube Videos · Podcasts · Blog Articles

#### **MEDIUM**

Video Ad · Pinned Post (Facebook Page) · Highlights/Bio (Instagram Profile) · Comments Thread · Social Header Graphic · Website Home Page

### **TRAFFIC SOURCE**

Custom Audiences: 25% · 50% · 75% · 95% Video Views, Page **Engagement, and Website Visitors** 

### **CALL-TO-ACTION**

Learn More · Go Behind-The-Scenes · Tune in every [DAY] at [TIME] on [PLACE] · Watch Video · Subscribe (YouTube, Podcast)

### **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)**

Cost per Conversion · Cost per Click · Subscribers · Facebook Likes · Instagram Followers · Click-Thru Rate · Video Views

### **RETURN PATH**

Custom Audiences · Subscribers (YouTube, Podcast)







**Permission** "...the Permission stage is all about starting a friendship with your best foot forward. It's an agreement..."

**Top Campaigns:** 

1

### Grow Your Permission List (Permission Offer/Bribe)

The best way to generate a constant stream of new email subscribers from an existing fan base is to create an offer that entices fans to sign up. This offer, which we call a "Permission Offer" or "Permission Bribe", can take many forms - from free content to interactive experiences. To help Indies create powerful Permission Offers for their fan base (when the time is right), we've codified a wide variety of Permission Offer ideas (and how to build them) into our "Grow Your Permission List" training.

2

### **Ultimate Album Launch**

The Ultimate Album Launch is a product launch campaign that Indepreneur created in 2016 to promote and sell new albums. Fans sign up to receive the new album before it releases in an online experience, then emails are sent daily to unlock new content and music. At the end of the funnel, fans are made an exclusive offer for related merch and media.

#### **CONTENT**

Release Announcement · Free Content offer · Launch offer

### **MEDIUM**

Ad · Social Post · Website Home Page · Comments Thread · Pinned Post (Facebook Page) · Highlights/Bio (Instagram Profile) · Social Header Graphic

### **TRAFFIC SOURCE**

Custom Audience:  $25\% \cdot 50\% \cdot 75\% \cdot 95\%$  Video Views, Page Engagement, Website Visitors, Page Likes/Profile Visitors

### **CALL-TO-ACTION**

Get Immediate Access  $\cdot$  Join The \_\_\_\_  $\cdot$  Sign Up  $\cdot$  Claim Now

### **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)**

 $Cost\ per\ Conversion \cdot Conversion\ Rate \cdot New\ Subscribers$ 

### **RETURN PATH**

Email List · SMS List







Nurturing "...by never allowing a favor to go unrepaid, artists can ensure a lifetime of favors from their fans. Nurturing follows any fan action..."

**Top Campaigns:** 

### **Automation Series**

When a fan opts in to a one-to-one communication channel or makes a purchase, the best way to nurture them is to deliver value through an automated email sequence. For Nurturing that follows Permission, these sequences should over-deliver content and create a dream-cometrue experience. For Nurturing that follows Affirmation or Ascension, these sequences should personally thank fans for their support, encourage them to submit user-generated content, and offer discounts towards future purchases.

### **Post-Purchase Retargeting**

While most people have come to expect and, in some cases, ignore follow-up emails after a purchase, most businesses are not using the Facebook and Instagram Ad platform to properly nurture customers and fans. Post-Purchase Retargeting uses the Ad platform to thank and nurture customers with follow-up content based on how many days have passed since the purchase. Initially, customers see a personal thank you video from the artist. Soon after, customers start seeing Ads requesting user-generated content. Finally, customers see the offer for discounts on future purchases.

### **Mailbox Excitement**

In other marketing frameworks, the Nurturing stage is referred to as the "Excite" stage, as it is intended to generate excitement about the action that a user has just taken. When a fan makes a purchase from an artist, the most natural and straightforward way to nurture them (or generate "excitement") is in the fulfillment process. With this campaign, artists can go above and beyond by including free stickers, print materials, and other exclusive tangible goods with every order ensuring that, when fans open their order, they get a rush of excitement and a unique experience.

### **CONTENT**

Release Announcement · Free Content offer · Launch offer

### **MEDIUM**

Ad · Social Post · Website Home Page · Comments Thread · Pinned Post (Facebook Page) · Highlights/ Bio (Instagram Profile) · Social Header Graphic

#### TRAFFIC SOURCE

Custom Audience: 25% · 50% · 75% · 95% Video Views, Page Engagement, Website Visitors, Page Likes/Profile Visitors

### **CALL-TO-ACTION**

Get Immediate Access · Join The \_\_\_\_ · Sign Up · Claim Now

### **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)**

Cost per Conversion · Conversion Rate · **New Subscribers** 

### **RETURN PATH**

Email List · SMS List







### **Affirmation**

"...the first sale is always the hardest to make, shifting someone from observer to action-taker. Affirmation offers should be overwhelmingly valuable..."

**Top Campaigns:** 

1

### FREE + S&H Funnel

The first purchase is a psychological barrier - the easiest way through the barrier is to remove it. Website funnels allow artists to offer a free product to customers when they pay for shipping and handling, then, during the checkout process, make exclusive one-time discounted offers to maximize the order value.

2

### **Promotional Calendar**

Successful online businesses that rely on email marketing (most of them do) will run as many promotional sales as possible in a given year to activate any subscribers who are ready to purchase. While Black Friday is the most common promotional sale, there are many reasons to celebrate each month with a Flash Sale or promotional discount on merchandise and content.

3

### **Ultimate Album Launch**

While being a great campaign for generating email subscribers, the Ultimate Album Launch is also a great Affirmation strategy as it ends in a dedicated sale that is intended to create *new* customers.

#### **CONTENT**

Exclusive offer (restricted to specific audience) · Limited Time offer · One Time offer · Discount

#### **MEDIUM**

Email · Ad · Direct mail · Phone · Chatbot · Web Page

#### **TRAFFIC SOURCE**

Email list · Customer list · Website Custom Audience: Content page visitors, Store visitors, Cart abandonment (visited checkout page but didn't purchase)

### **CALL-TO-ACTION**

Save \_\_\_% · Claim Your Free Copy

### **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)**

Cost per Customer Acquisition · Conversion Rate · Profit per Sale

### **RETURN PATH**

 $Custom\ Audience \cdot Email\ List\ Segment \cdot Chatbot\ Segment$ 







### Ascension (I)

"...some fans will make one purchase and then move on. Some fans want to support their favorite artist as much as possible over many years..."

### **Top Campaigns:**

# 1 Promotional Sale

As stated above, the Promotional Sale is an age-old concept for offering discounts on products in celebration of a holiday, anniversary, or memorial event. Promotional sales are not only great for turning subscribers into customers, they can also incentivize repeat purchases as well.

# 2 Product Launch

Many big-name artists have taken a wise cue from fashion brands, releasing a line of products with similar or matching designs much like a fashion designer releases a seasonal line. Artists with integrated merchandise and music can use the Product Launch funnel concept to generate awareness and interest for an upcoming line and generate additional revenue from past customers.

# **3** Early Access Promotion

One way to add exclusivity and value for existing customers is to give them first access to limited edition products and content. Artists can (and frequently do) tip their existing customers off to upcoming sales and products via email or targeted ad.

#### **CONTENT**

Offer/Product Announcement video/image

#### **MEDIUM**

Email · Ad · Chatbot message · Text Message · Phone Call

### **TRAFFIC SOURCE**

Email list · Customer list · Website Custom Audience

### **CALL-TO-ACTION**

Claim 1 of only \_\_\_ · Claim Your Autographed Copy · Get It Before Anyone Else

### **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)**

Cost per Conversion · Conversion Rate · Repeat Purchases Generated

### **RETURN PATH**

Custom Audience · Email List Segment · Chatbot Segment







**Ascension (II)** 

"...fans who consistently support an artist are natural candidates for more exclusive or limited experiences and products that give greater access to the artist..."

### **Top Campaigns:**

1

### **Membership Launch**

For artists who have an established structure in their creative business and are well versed in producing content, a digital membership can be an incredibly valuable product to create, sell, and update. Though they require consistent content production (on top of existing content artists may be producing), memberships are a "recurring revenue" source. The digital membership format is a win-win for both artists and fans - artists get financial security and room to plan their business, which allows them to focus most of their efforts on improving the value fans receive from the membership.

2

### **Meet & Greet/VIP Live Events**

An established, familiar concept for fans of music is "VIP Access" and "Meet & Greets", which give fans an up-close-and-personal interaction with the artist in and around live events. While Meet & Greets and VIP packages are great Ascension products for touring, artists should (and do) seek ways to create VIP experiences through digital formats, such as live streams, video calls, Zoom/ Google Meet rooms, and other forms of digital direct contact.

3

### Shirt-of-the-Month Club

Another successful recurring revenue channel, the Shirt-of-the-Month Club campaign was created by Indepreneur co-founder Corrin Campbell before Indepreneur was even a company. Corrin has helped many artists develop subscription models for their merchandise which allow fans to claim exclusive, limited bundles of merchandise (and, most often, shirts) at a low price. This strategy secures revenue from high-value fans to cover an entire year of releases and sales, while also giving fans a massive discount and exclusive access to merch that others cannot purchase.

#### **CONTENT**

Exclusive offer (restricted to specific audience) · Limited Time offer · One Time offer

#### **MEDIUM**

Email · Ad · Chatbot message · Text Message · Phone Call

### **TRAFFIC SOURCE**

Customer list segment

### **CALL-TO-ACTION**

Meet The Artist · Get Exclusive Access · Be One of Only \_\_\_

### **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)**

Cost per Conversion · Conversion Rate · Profit per Sale

### **RETURN PATH**

Custom Audience · Email List Segment · Chatbot Segment







### Referral

"...when people become fans of an artist, they will want to share that artist. Artists should equip their fans with the materials and information they need to spread the word..."

### **Top Campaigns:**

1 Mailbox Excitement

In addition to Nurturing fans with every shipment they receive by including bonus materials, fulfilling orders for fans presents an opportunity for referrals. Artists can include promotional materials such as stickers, invitation cards, and any other creative material they can dream up, incentivizing fans to distribute the materials. Artists can also include instructions on these materials that direct recipients to a specific destination (i.e. a landing page) that is built to welcome them in.

2 Contests and Giveaways

Building awareness and word-of-mouth using social media is relatively straightforward for companies that master the art of the Giveaway (or Contest). Contests and Giveaways, which are legally separate from each other and must be run differently, are a great way to incentivize existing fans to perform actions on behalf of the artist. The requirements by which fans enter the contest or giveaway can be fine tuned to orchestrate referrals (i.e. "send this video to a friend who would like it", "tag a friend who would like this to enter").

3 Post-Conversion Retargeting/Automation

After a fan takes an action, such as opting in for an email list or purchasing a product, artists can retarget that fan with Ads or send follow-up emails for the purpose of orchestrating referrals. After a successful conversion is the perfect time to do it, as the artist is already top of mind.

4 Referral Program

The most common method of orchestrating referrals is to have a publicly available referral program. While most companies have a standard referral program that works with discount codes (think Uber), artists would do best to employ their creativity in creating a public referral program. Artists can get creative with the method by which fans submit a referral (i.e. take a video with a friend, snap a picture, screenshot your chat with them, etc.) and the prize that is awarded (i.e. store-wide discount, personal video reply, social shoutout, etc.).

#### CONTENT

Personal Invitation · Launch offer · Contest/ Giveaway Announcement · Info card

### **MEDIUM**

Email · Text · Direct mail · Phone · Chatbot · Web Page

#### **TRAFFIC SOURCE**

Email list · Customer list · Email Segment: Most active subscribers, 5-Star Contact Rating (MailChimp)

### **CALL-TO-ACTION**

Invite A Friend · Win A Prize · Enter To Win · Earn Discounts

### **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)**

Cost per Conversion · Contest/Giveaway Entries · Referral Page Visitors · Referral Page Opt-Ins

### **RETURN PATH**

Email Segment (by Click) · Entrant List







### **Advocacy**

"...the most dedicated fans will want to actively promote their favorite artist. Advocacy campaigns onboard fans as active members of an in-person or digital street team..."

**Top Campaigns:** 



### **Street Team Program**

The Advocacy campaign that we are all familiar with is the concept of the "Street Team". In the 90s and 2000s, it was common for bands, managers, and labels to orchestrate marketing campaigns by allowing superfans to sign up for the "Street Team" and volunteer their time distributing promotional materials and promoting the band in their area. This strategy was so commonly used that an entire aftermarket developed around rare promotional materials from popular bands that were only available to street team members (remember "Album Teasers?").

These days, artists promote on a primarily digital landscape. While physical street teams do still exist and can still be very effective, artists must consider how to occupy the digital landscape using street teams as well. A Street Team is simply a group of fans strategically collected based on location for the purpose of distributing promotional materials, giving the artist exposure in that area for a given product launch.

Transferring this concept to the digital landscape, selecting optimal fans for promoting on social media and throughout the web, can be incredibly valuable for artists. And, it presents an opportunity to celebrate engaged fans by giving them exclusive access to promotional materials and rights for using them in their own content online.

#### **CONTENT**

Program announcement · Personal invitation

#### **MEDIUM**

Email · Text · Direct mail · Phone · Chatbot · Web Page

#### **TRAFFIC SOURCE**

Email list · Customer list · Email Segment: Most active subscribers, 5-Star Contact Rating (MailChimp)

### **CALL-TO-ACTION**

Join The Team · Spread The Message

### **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)**

Street Team Signups · Response Rate

### **RETURN PATH**

Email Segment (by Click) · Entrant List







# Acquisition

These three stages - Introduction, Education, and Permission - comprise the Acquisition Chain of the Buddy System. An artist's ability to generate a fan base will rest on the strength of the campaigns used to move audience members through these three stages.

Use the spaces below to write ideas for campaigns in your Acquisition Chain using the Campaign Examples in the previous pages. Think of content, mediums, and traffic sources you can create or employ to successfully move listeners through these stages.















# Monetization

The Monetization Chain of the Buddy System is responsible for creating customers and revenue for artists by giving fans dream-come-true offers and experiences. The profit potential of an artist depends on their ability to move listeners through these stages with exciting campaigns and irresistible offers.

Use the spaces below to write ideas for campaigns in your Monetization Chain using the Campaign Examples in the previous pages. Think of offers and audiences you can create or employ to successfully move listeners through these stages.





**ASCENSION (I)** 



ASCENSION (II)













# **Activation**

Artists with a strong fan base can multiply their efforts by creating a strong Activation Chain, inviting and incentivizing their most dedicated listeners to help them spread their content and grow their fan base by recommending or promoting to friends.

Use the spaces below to write ideas for campaigns in your Activation Chain using the Campaign Examples in the previous pages. Outline plans for referral campaigns/programs and a Street Team that you can eventually create to successfully move listeners through these stages while they add new listeners to your Acquisition Chain.



