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Potential Markets

Punk music appeals to a diverse demographic, however, the most likely target market for Don't Panic Records and Distro is young adults aged 18 to 35. This demographic is able to be deeply engaged with the punk scene and live out many punk-based values around anti-capitalism, rebellion, and community. Geographically, the primary market is located in Chicago and its surrounding suburbs. The centralized location of the bands encourages local fans to attend shows regularly and build stronger community bonds. Another attribute of the target audience is being at a relatively lower to middle-class income level. Punk has a history of low-cost DIY personal expression and anti-consumerist attitudes. Don't Panic can further stand out by continuously welcoming diverse audiences that may feel underrepresented by broader media, including the punk scene. Don't Panic's identity should continue to reflect these longstanding sentiments in the community by keeping this market at the forefront.

Unfortunately, punk music has a relatively small market share within the large music industry. However, Don't Panic Records still has the potential to increase demand for its artists' music. Don't Panic's initiatives should focus both on reaching current local punk listeners and bringing in novice fans. Targeting genres on the periphery of punk, such as metal or grunge, can expand the punk market Don't Panic resides in. Consideration also needs to be paid to the potential growth in the national market outside of Chicago. While not as effective as the local market, national audiences can bring increased online engagement and expand growth opportunities. By leveraging social media, the label can extend its reach beyond local confines, driving online streams and sales beyond Chicago.

Media Channels

Given the young target market, social media will be the primary channel for engagement. Social media offers a cost-effective method for reaching a broad audience and facilitating interaction. The media strategy includes micro-blogging through X (Twitter) for real-time updates and engagement, short-form videos on TikTok and Instagram to capture attention with dynamic content, images on Instagram to showcase artists and events, and long-form video content on YouTube for deeper engagement through behind-the-scenes footage, interviews, and music videos. Music distribution on platforms like Bandcamp, Soundcloud, and Spotify ensures accessibility and convenience for fans as well. An official website should also be used as the central base for information regarding all things Don't Panic Records and Distro and improve SEO visibility.

Establishing a local presence beyond the internet is essential for targeting punk fans in the Chicago area. Strategies include hosting artist performances at local venues, distributing physical merchandise such as stickers and artwork, and participating as a vendor at festivals like Riot Fest. Posting flyers in punk venues is another simple method for establishing a physical presence in the areas that target audiences frequent. Additionally, engaging with local radio for artist airplay, announcements, or introductions aligns with the punk audience's tendency to enjoy traditional media formats, similar to listening to vinyl or cassette. It will also provide another way for listeners to discover Don't Panic artists aside from social media.

Duration and Frequency of Marketing Efforts

Three scheduling strategies—continuous, flighting, and pulsing—each have potential advantages. For Don't Panic, a pulsing schedule is most effective. This approach balances continuous and flighting schedule advantages, ensuring consistent engagement without oversaturation or high costs. Maintaining a higher frequency of steady social media presence with regular updates and interactions is essential to avoiding irrelevancy. Peaking marketing efforts around significant events, such as album releases or major shows, builds anticipation and drives sales. This allows fans to be always aware of Don't Panic's presence while also enthusiastically tuning in for large updates. Social media posting also allows for a large reach for promoting online products. Local marketing, on the other hand, will mainly be used around live artist performances. Local promotion will be utilized at the most effective times for the nearby audiences most likely to attend shows. This balance of duration and frequency is cost-effective for maintaining excitement and relevancy.

Search Keywords

To enhance online visibility, Don't Panic will need to improve its SEO. Keywords should include a combination of general words like Chicago, punk, music, label, distribution, vinyl, scene, bands, store, shop, merchandise, records, releases, DIY, and label. Different versions of Don't Panic Records and Distro" should also be considered, notably removing the words "records" or "distro" and the apostrophe in "don't." Names of its artists, including names of individual band members, as well as names of their songs and albums. Going further, keywords mentioning venues and festivals in the Chicago punk scene and even individuals not signed with Don't Panic

but still connected. Finally, genre names that are similar and perhaps confused with punk like heavy metal, grunge, and forms of alternative rock are also worth considering..

The Zones of Social Media

Don't Panic's target audience joins the punk music community to fulfill needs for affinity, personal utility, and comfort. One of Don't Panic's primary social media zones is its social community. Interaction with fans through posts, replies, and comments is essential for building brand loyalty and keeping audiences consistently engaged between artist releases. Elevating the community through these platforms attracts more potential fans, who follow the accounts to stay updated on the brand and music releases. Further maintaining this connection helps establish repeated intended behaviors and potentially turns fans into brand ambassadors within the larger punk music community. This can be expanded by encouraging further community interaction through contests, Q&As, and creating a moderated fan-specific chat space on a platform like Discord or Don't Panic's website. Fostering more fan-to-fan interaction speaks to punk music's unique role in building a safe community for a sense of belonging through Don't Panic.

The zone of social entertainment is essential for Don't Panic's operations. Music and videos are currently distributed through entertainment platforms like YouTube, Bandcamp, SoundCloud, and Spotify. Visual material is also published on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. These platforms are effective because they align with the young target audience. Distributing art on these popular platforms helps reach new audiences and raise brand awareness. The downside to these platforms is the lack of control over censorship and shadowbans, which can affect visibility. Punk music often explores sensitive political and social topics, and exposing artists to online censorship can hurt the Don't Panic brand and its ability to represent its artists

fully. Establishing an official website is a potential solution, as Don't Panic would have full control over the published content. While popular platforms are important for sparking awareness, a website allows interested audiences to delve deeper into the content without censorship or suppression of important topics.

Don't Panic currently relies on Bandcamp, Spotify, and Apple Music for the social commerce zone of social media. Since music sales are at the core of Don't Panic's business model, its approach to this social media zone must be reliable and effective. While well-known platforms are effective, there is an opportunity for improvement. Hosting a private e-commerce website for music sales offers the same benefits as a Bandcamp storefront but with more control over the interface and analytics collection. Don't Panic can also provide sales, discounts, and donation opportunities to further incentivize audiences to purchase through its website.

The last zone that should be optimized for Don't Panic is social publishing. Most of Don't Panic's active social media accounts, such as X, Instagram, YouTube, and Bandcamp, produce published content. These platforms serve to provide information, address audience curiosity, and encourage further engagement with the brand. Maintaining information on these platforms is crucial for fans who want to deepen their knowledge of Don't Panic and its artists. Opportunities for Don't Panic include producing a larger variety of content, such as long-form blog posts or podcast episodes, to provide deeper information for audiences. If audiences are interested in the brand, they will be curious about behind-the-scenes information and updates on artists' plans. Addressing this need will maintain trust and encourage repeated visits to Don't Panic's hosted platforms.

Content Strategy

Music can fulfill many impulses, including affinity, comfort, personal utility, and self-affirmation. One of Don't Panic's strengths is its existing effort toward appealing to the altruistic impulse as well. Through social media, Don't Panic currently addresses social and political issues, promoting values of community and action against oppressive systems. Audiences are called to action to donate and spread information for disenfranchised groups and individuals through Don't Panic's social media messaging. These actions can be furthered by setting up more official donation opportunities linked to the music itself. Promoting donation proceeds tied to albums, merchandise, and ticket sales supports audience purchasing incentives and highlights Don't Panic's values. Another avenue is hosting fundraising performances by Don't Panic artists, with in-person and livestream options on Don't Panic's YouTube channel. Fans may feel comforted knowing that their engagement with Don't Panic musicians benefits the community and important causes. This strategy increases loyalty and fulfills a unique audience need.

Another strength of Don't Panic is its existing community of fans. Authentically connecting artists with each other and their fans on Don't Panic social media is a great way to offer further comfort and community. Content like collaborations, Q&As, and behind-the-scenes vlogs with Don't Panic artists are not fully explored on any of Don't Panic's current social media feeds. Depicting Don't Panic as a unified group of artists, team members, and fans reinforces feelings of belonging and identity in the follower base. When fans become invested in one artist or group, they are especially likely to be loyal to other artists under the label when encouraged. The end goal of this content strategy is to encourage fans to become ambassadors for Don't Panic, spreading awareness of the brand and routinely engaging with more of the music.

Viral Marketing

A potential viral marketing campaign for Don't Panic should reflect the catharsis of emotions that punk music brings. Emotions that are not socially acceptable to display in most settings can be expressed through the punk genre. Don't Panic can highlight this aspect of the punk scene through campaigns that display a burst of energy, relieving the tense constraints many feel in daily life. For example, a photography campaign depicting action shots of mosh pits and intense experiences with a sense of accepted vulnerability can be powerful. Photographing real consenting fans displays a closeness to the audience. The campaign will reinforce that the depicted intensity is what Don't Panic's music makes you feel.

Beyond addressing the audience's need for an enjoyable experience, the campaign promises a more fulfilling life that allows audiences to temporarily escape their daily shame and worries.. The online conversation around the campaign should spark curiosity about whose concert the subjects are attending and what their stories might be. The campaign should encourage viewers to share their own experiences at concerts and in mosh pits, creating a space that entices fans and curious novices to crave similar experiences. The final goal of the campaign is to encourage new visitors to join in and improve ticket sales.

Influencer Marketing

Punk culture is not very receptive to the mainstream understanding of influencers. As a result, the common influencer-collaboration routes of brand deals and paid brand trips will not resonate with the intended audience. Traditional influencers are not prevalent in the space because of the negative associations between influencing and consumerism, in the minds of punk fans. This poses a challenge for Don't Panic to employ influencer methods without implying support for

consumerism or promoting inauthenticity. Collaborations will need to be with online personalities that do not register as influencers in the minds of audiences.

To begin working with these online figures, Don't Panic needs to start small with someone already connected to the brand. Adam Warren from the band Oceano is a Twitch streamer and appears on many podcasts. Warren is an excellent first choice because he is already friends with a member of Hostages, a Don't Panic band. This collaboration would feel natural to audiences because of the already established proximity between Adam Warren and Don't Panic. As a Twitch streamer, Warren can find opportunities to play music from Don't Panic and provide links to the albums on Don't Panic's website for his viewers. He can also invite band members from Don't Panic to join his streams to talk about their music and the label. Since Warren makes music in the metal space, this can also be an opportunity to find new listeners from peripheral genres, expanding the target market size.

Another social media personality who can be collaborated with early on is Chris Garza, founder of the band Suicide Silence and host of the Garza Podcast. Garza interviews musicians and industry members, including the previously mentioned Adam Warren, and discusses the state of the industry. He is a trustworthy voice in the general countercultural music community with influence that spans multiple genres, including metal and punk. Similar to Warren, Garza can introduce new listeners who are fans of similar countercultural genres like Metalcore to punk musicians. Garza can interview Don't Panic founders or musicians on his podcast or consider a direct sponsorship. Garza is a trusted figure and can allow Don't Panic to obtain a boost of awareness and a trustworthy reputation through genuine conversations on the podcast. Garza and other "influencers" who value honest expression can support the audience's association of Don't Panic with valuable authenticity.