10 Key DIY Release Takeaways

The main thing is to be organized.

1. Get written agreements from all co-writers before recording, so you have clear permission to record and release the song.

2. Join SOCAN and register even a rough demo in both Performing and Reproduction Rights to protect the song and enable royalties from day one.

3. Record at professional quality (minimum WAV 48kHz/24-bit) and be fully satisfied with the final mix and master before starting distribution.

4. Create three master formats for each song: WAV 48kHz-24bit, WAV 44.1kHz-16bit, and MP3-320 kbps, plus a clean/radio edit if needed.

5. Build a consistent folder system—per-song folders with subfolders for formats, masters, lyrics, and artwork—and use strict, consistent file naming so every version is easy to find and correctly recognized. Google or AI research for naming standards.

6. Master codes and metadata together: Track IPI/ISRC/UPC codes and plan metadata (titles, credits, genres, moods, BPM, key, links) in a spreadsheet, then embed it into a dedicated audio set so files carry all programmer and royalty info.

7. Maintain two audio sets: one with full embedded metadata for radio/curators/ download links, and one clean (no metadata) for CD Baby, Mediabase, YouTube, and Bandcamp that strip or override it.

8. Write clear long/short song descriptions using industry-standard genres and mood tags, paired with a one-page artist/release sheet and downloadable links folder (Google Drive/Dropbox).

9. Combine traditional distributors (CD Baby, DistroKid) with DIY research and outreach to community, campus, pirate, and independent radio. Don't forget Youtube (make very simple videos), BandCamp, SoundCloud, ReverbNation and other such platforms.

10. Small Important Details: Make sure all the audio files you will be sending out to streaming or radio stations and Mediadata, are the length (minutes and seconds) that you registered to get the ISRC code. Make sure to use the legal names for credits and ensure correct spellings.