



How to Build Your Artist Channel

Your Official Artist Channel (“OAC”) is your main stage for fans and new listeners. It’s their landing page for everything about you—your music, your brand, your presence, and your community.

Build Your Presence

With over 2 billion logged-in viewers watching music videos on YouTube every month, **your channel can reach massive audiences while creating deep, meaningful connections with your biggest fans.**

2B+

Logged-in Viewers
Watching Music Videos
Every Month

Why Create an OAC?

An OAC unites your full body of work and simplifies how your audiences engage with your work by **merging subscribers** under one single channel which you, your label or your manager can control. An OAC is recognised by the **Music Note Icon** next to your channel name. OACs are created from existing YouTube channels.

If your channel isn't yet an OAC. [Learn More About How To Apply](#)

Customize Your Channel

STARTING SET UP

1. Sign in to YouTube Studio
2. From the left menu, select Customization
3. From here you will see three tab options
 - Basic Info
 - Branding
 - Layout

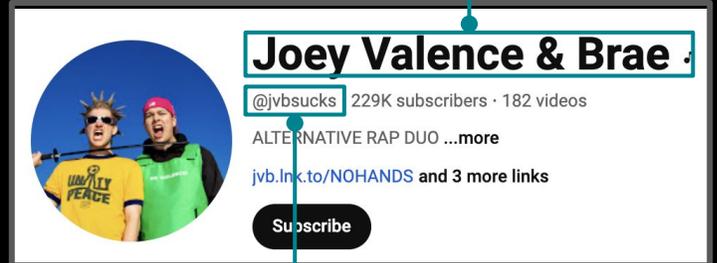
Let's walk through what to consider when setting up each section.



Basic Information

Channel Name

Channel names can help fans easily find your official channel in search results and your official videos across YouTube. **Use your official artist name or band name for your OAC.** Keep your capitalization and spacing consistent with what you use for your official releases. We suggest avoiding extra words like 'Official', 'TV', 'Channel', 'YouTube' 'Music,' or 'Productions' to your name.



Channel Handles

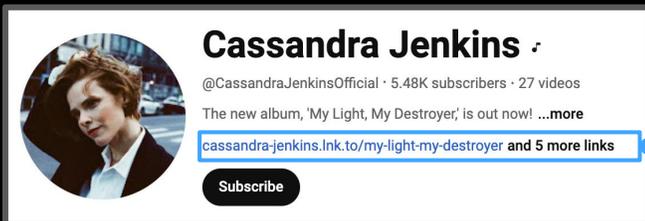
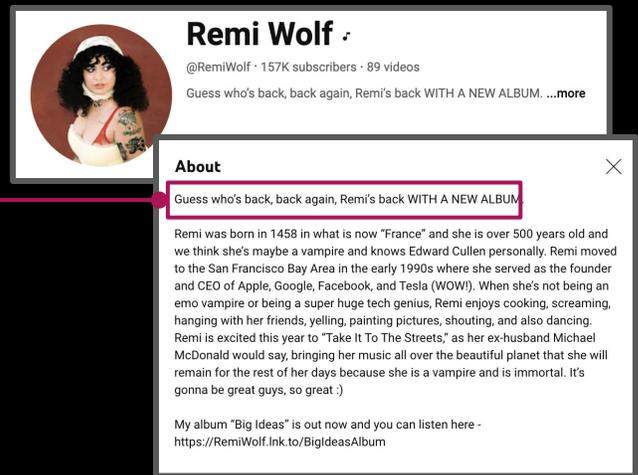
Handles are short unique channel identifiers that are distinct from channel names. Where channel names are used mostly for video and channel discovery, channel handles are used to be specifically searched across YouTube from the Shorts feed down to individual comments. [You can learn more here.](#)

Keep your handle close to your official channel name or keep it consistent with what you use across your other social channels. If your preferred naming is taken, don't worry, this does not impact how videos are recommended! Adding in extra identifiers, phrases, or even jokes that are true to your brand will work to create a unique handle.

Description

The about section of your channel is where you can share who you are. This section should read like an extension of you, your artisty, and humor and less like a wikipedia page.

- **The first line of your description is particularly important as it's visible in your channel header.** Use this prime real estate for calls to action to check out recent releases, tease upcoming projects, or other important announcements.
- Be sure to check-in and keep this line updated over time.
- As an artist, keep in mind that your bio may be used across YouTube search, your individual YouTube channel, and also YouTube Music.



Links

You can add up to 14 links on your channel Home tab, just make sure they follow our [external links policy](#). Your first link will be prominently displayed on your OAC near the subscribe button, and your remaining links will show when your audience clicks to see more links or when they navigate to your about section.

We see many artists using this visibility to feature Linktrees, their official website, or other social platforms they are specifically trying to promote.

Branding

Banner

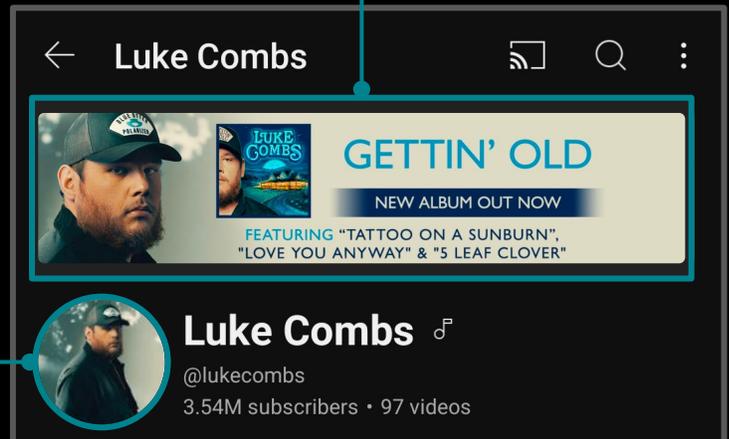
Your banner, also known as your channel art, is the large image at the top of your channel page. It's not just for looks—it can be functional too!

- Use your banner to tease upcoming releases, announce tour dates, or showcase merch.
- Maintain design consistency with your channel icon and other social media profiles to create a cohesive and professional look.

Picture

Your profile picture, also known as your avatar or channel icon, is the image that represents you across the platform. It appears next to your channel name in search results and the comments section.

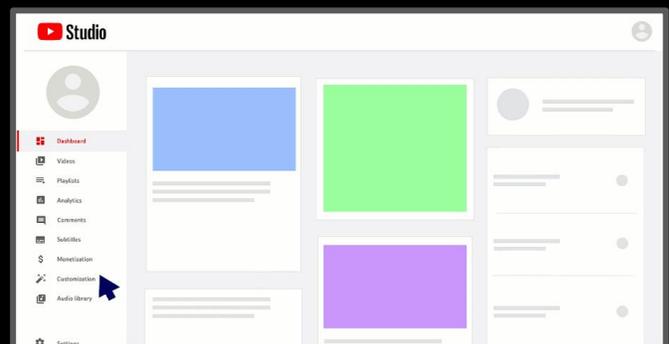
- Choose a consistent, recognizable image that you use across your social platforms. Consistency helps with brand identity and makes it easy for fans to recognize you.



Channel Layout

Channel Sections

Channel sections, also referred to as shelves, let you customize the format of your OAC by deciding what content, videos, or playlists you want to display on your page. These sections appear on your channel page under your featured video and let audiences quickly browse your content. OACs also offer you new options for your channel layout.



In addition to **standard channel sections**, you can include the following tabs on your OAC

Releases

The 'Releases' section is an auto-generated tab that encompasses all of your official releases. This section allows your audience to quickly find all your music consolidated in one place.

Videos, Shorts, & Live

The 'Videos' 'Shorts' and 'Live' tabs automatically pull all of your most recent content from each respective format that live on your OAC. If you don't produce content in a particular format, no worries, the corresponding tab will only populate if you have an active upload!

Standard Channel Sections

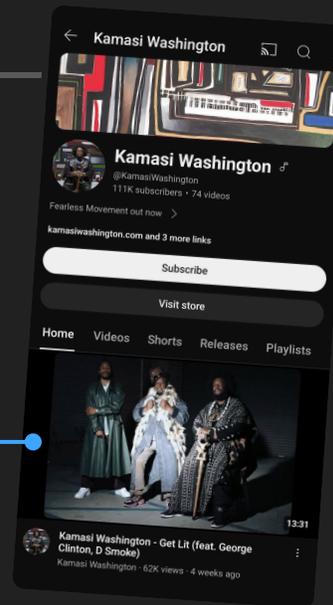
Standard channel sections let you organize your homepage through up to 12 custom sections. These sections are typically created by selecting a specific playlist to display but can also be set up to highlight videos, multiple playlists, members-only content, featured channels, a "For You" section, and more.

Channel Layout Continued

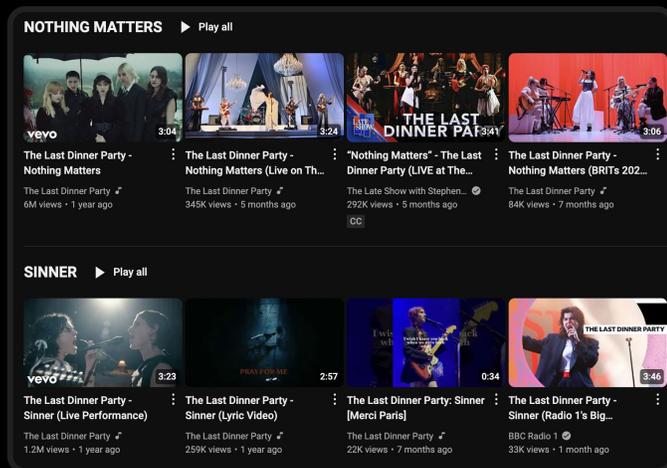
Video Spotlight

Video spotlights let you choose which video you want to show at the top of your OAC—even if it's not a video that you have uploaded.

- Focus on highlighting videos that speak to your recent work.
- If you want to customize your video spotlight further, you can choose different videos for new visitors and returning subscribers.



Other Studio Setup



The Last Dinner Party leverages playlists to showcase relevant videos (including 3rd party uploads) specific to single song releases. They then feature these playlists as channel sections to increase visibility.

Playlists

Playlists are one of the largest traffic sources for music viewership on YouTube. They organize, curate and make content more accessible to users—in turn increasing watch time.

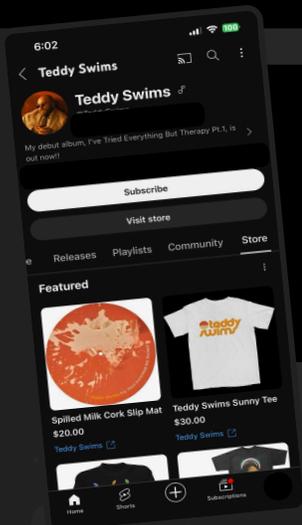
- You should organize and customize your own content into playlists, and update them regularly.
- Think about bucketing your content and creating playlists for interviews, tour content, album-specific content, original content, and more.
- You can create playlists that include videos posted by other channels. Take advantage of this for fan uploads, live performances, and collaborations.
- Looking to increase discovery of these playlists further? Make sure to add playlist links in video descriptions so interested viewers can easily kick off their viewing session.

Access Playlists by Navigating To:

YouTube Studio → Content → Playlists

Channel Store

YouTube Shopping lets eligible artists easily promote products and merch from their own stores across YouTube. Once you've connected your store to your channel, you'll unlock the Store tab, product tagging, and a product shelf. Learn more about connecting your merch directly to your OAC [here](#).



At the Video Level

Increasing Video Appeal With Titles and Thumbnails

Videos are a crucial pillar of your artist strategy on YouTube. Optimizing elements like titles and thumbnails can **increase video appeal while staying authentic to your brand as an artist**. These elements are updated when you are in the upload flow for a video. Although several factors influence video performance, titles and thumbnails play a particularly large role in attracting listeners. They are the first things potential viewers see when deciding whether to watch a video. Here, we will focus on long-form content, as Shorts have different packaging needs.

Titles

Titles appear directly under your thumbnail on discovery surfaces, making accuracy and succinctness essential. **The most significant search terms for music are the artist and song names, so be sure to lead with them.** Additionally, listing the content type (e.g., "Official Music Video") ensures fans know what they're clicking on.

When crafting your titles, consistency is key. This includes capitalization and punctuation. **Your formatting doesn't have to be proper, but you should ensure your style aligns with your brand and remains consistent across all videos.**

Artist Name - Song Name (Format)

- Official Music Video
- Official Audio
- Visualizer
- Lyric Video
- Behind the Scenes

Official Music Video /Visualizers	Use a compelling, high-quality still
Official Audio	Feature album art
Lyric Video	Include prominent text
Behind the Scenes	Show candid shots, often with some production equipment visible

Thumbnails

Thumbnails are your content's billboard. A compelling thumbnail can entice viewers to click while also setting expectations for your content. **Focus on what you want your audience to notice first and highlight that. Use high contrast and compelling imagery without too much clutter, staying true to your brand to stand out.**



TIP: Use [Click-Through-Rate](#) in YouTube Analytics to get a better understanding of whether your thumbnails and titles are enticing viewers to click through to your content.

Need More Help Refining Your Thumbnail Strategy?

Check out [Thumbnail Test & Compare](#). This feature lets you upload up to three video thumbnails to test with viewers, helping you choose the best option. This is more advanced than typical A/B testing, allowing up to three options. Test on a subset of videos to gather initial learnings before applying to new videos.

Your test report

Running time

Thumbnails		Watch time
	Thumbnail 1	40%
	Thumbnail 2	10%
	Thumbnail 3	50%

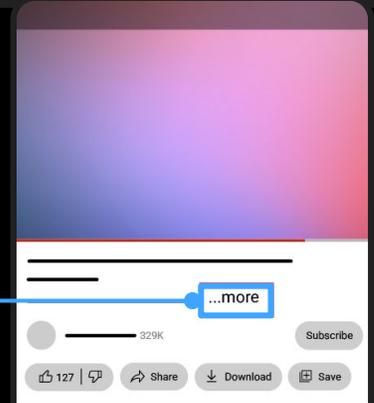
STOP TEST DONE

At the Video Level Continued

Descriptions

Descriptions tell the YouTube algorithm and your viewers what the video is about. You can think about the description as two parts—what viewers see before clicking “Show more” on desktop or “more” on mobile and what they see after.

Take advantage of the space before “Show more” for calls to action while using the rest of the description for a quick video summary, lyrics, tour dates, crediting collaborators, and social links. Additionally, you can add three hashtags above video titles to improve search results.



TIP: Consider refreshing old but popular video’s descriptions with updated CTAs for new releases, active tours, merch drops, etc.

Guidelines, Not Absolutes

All of the above video level guidance are general observations on what we’ve seen work well on the platform. However, they are not strict requirements. **Your videos and channel are an extension of your artistry and should first and foremost represent you authentically.**

Let’s Check out Some Artists in Action

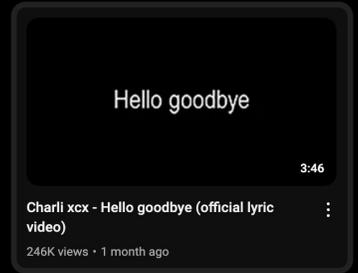


01 ZENTYARB

ZENTYARB adds a date as the main point of focus for his official teaser thumbnail. This strategy immediately conveys to audiences that this is a sneak peak while building hype around an upcoming release.

02 Charli XCX

Charli maintains consistency in her thumbnail and titling strategy. Her use of all lowercase to describe video formats in her titles is a thoughtful style choice and one that works since she leverages it across all uploads. Charli also has a thumbnail strategy of grainy white text on a plain black background for recent lyric videos. This simple yet distinct strategy is bold, capturing viewer attention while also tying directly to her overall album branding.



03 Caroline Polachek

Successful thumbnails can set viewer expectations without needing to read the title. Caroline Polachek leverages a grainy image set through a viewfinder to quickly and effectively convey a behind-the-scenes look, aligning with her content’s theme and encouraging viewer engagement.

Want More Resources for Artists?

LATEST BEST PRACTICES PLAYBOOKS AND ARTIST SUCCESS STORIES ON OUR WEBSITE →