

How to Build the Perfect Playlist

by Manny Ocampo '18



The party you are hosting is coming up. DJ Manny Fresco can't DJ your event, so the next best option is to make a playlist. Music-streaming services have made it easy for anyone to make their own music playlists, but creating a good playlist requires some rules. These are the steps to create the perfect party playlist.

Manny Ocampo '18 (aka DJ Manny Fresco) started getting into music and learning about different musical genres as a toddler. His grandfather and dad were both DJs. Manny launched his own DJ business in 2009 and has performed extensively at parties and weddings and on the radio, and he opened for Steve Aoki at Dickinson's 2016 student concert. He also played in a traveling band for four years, playing at Disneyland, House of Blues and other public venues. He earned a B.A. in Africana studies from Dickinson and is based in California. Learn more at deejaymannyfresco.com and on Instagram @deejaymannyfresco.

- 1. Audience:** Good playlist creators think about their audience and never themselves. Most importantly, consider the average age of your audience. That will dictate the genre of songs in the party playlist.
- 2. Genre:** For this purpose, let's say undergraduate college students are the audience. They would be born in the late '90s/early 2000s. The safest genre of music would then range from '90s to today. Hip-hop has become the most popular party genre amongst this age demographic. Even the Top 40 chart contains mostly hip-hop. So the playlist will mostly consist of hip-hop.
- 3. Tempo:** There are songs that I enjoy but the beat is slow or mellow. I avoid including slow songs at all cost. I leave these songs in my cruising road trip playlist. I stick with songs around 70-130 BPM.
- 4. New Music:** I'm cautious about adding songs that just released the day before. It might disturb the vibe because people are less receptive to unknown songs. Most people still use radio as their main source for new music. Radio stations are infamous for being late with new music—unless it's new Drake music.
- 5. Hits Only:** If a song is not a hit, don't add it. I don't recommend including "filler" songs. They aren't needed and only negatively affect the dancing. The playlist should be at least four hours long but no more than six hours.
- 6. No Ads:** Many streaming services offer free subscriptions, but ads will play after a couple of songs. Absolutely no ads at the party.
- 7. Crossfade:** I use the crossfade feature on my iPhone. The goal is to keep the music going and avoid the silent transition between songs.
- 8. DJs:** Alternatively, you can head over to my website and stream my mixtapes at the party. It would be like I'm DJing—kind of.

Hopefully your next party is a hit!