

Campaigns create the attention.

Listener behaviour decides what happens next.

We analysed 28.1 million streams, 34 releases and 9,246 logged predictions between 1 April and 30 June 2026. This report shares what separated the releases that kept growing from the ones that faded, including a campaign that lifted an artist's daily streams by half until the day it stopped.

28.1M

STREAMS ANALYSED

9,246

PREDICTIONS LOGGED, 4,833 GRADED SO FAR

34

RELEASES TRACKED DAILY

<1%

OF ALGORITHMIC STREAMS CAME FROM DISCOVER WEEKLY

All artist, song and label identities are anonymised. Every figure is computed directly from observed daily Spotify for Artists data, no projections, no estimates, no fabricated benchmarks. Days without captured data are treated as gaps, never zero-filled.

THE DATASET

Q2 in numbers

28,125,725

streams analysed across the roster

25.2M

listener-days observed

778,924

saves recorded (2.8% of streams)

18

artists tracked daily

34

new releases in the quarter

179

songs with daily-level data

9

campaigns active during Q2

9,246

model predictions logged

31.5%

of May–June streams were
algorithmic

Based Audio ingests daily Spotify for Artists data, streams, listeners, saves, playlist activity and algorithmic surface breakdowns, and scores every artist state daily. Q2 was the first quarter with surface-level algorithmic tracking (Radio, Mixes, Discover Weekly, Release Radar), which switched on at the start of May, so surface figures cover May and June.

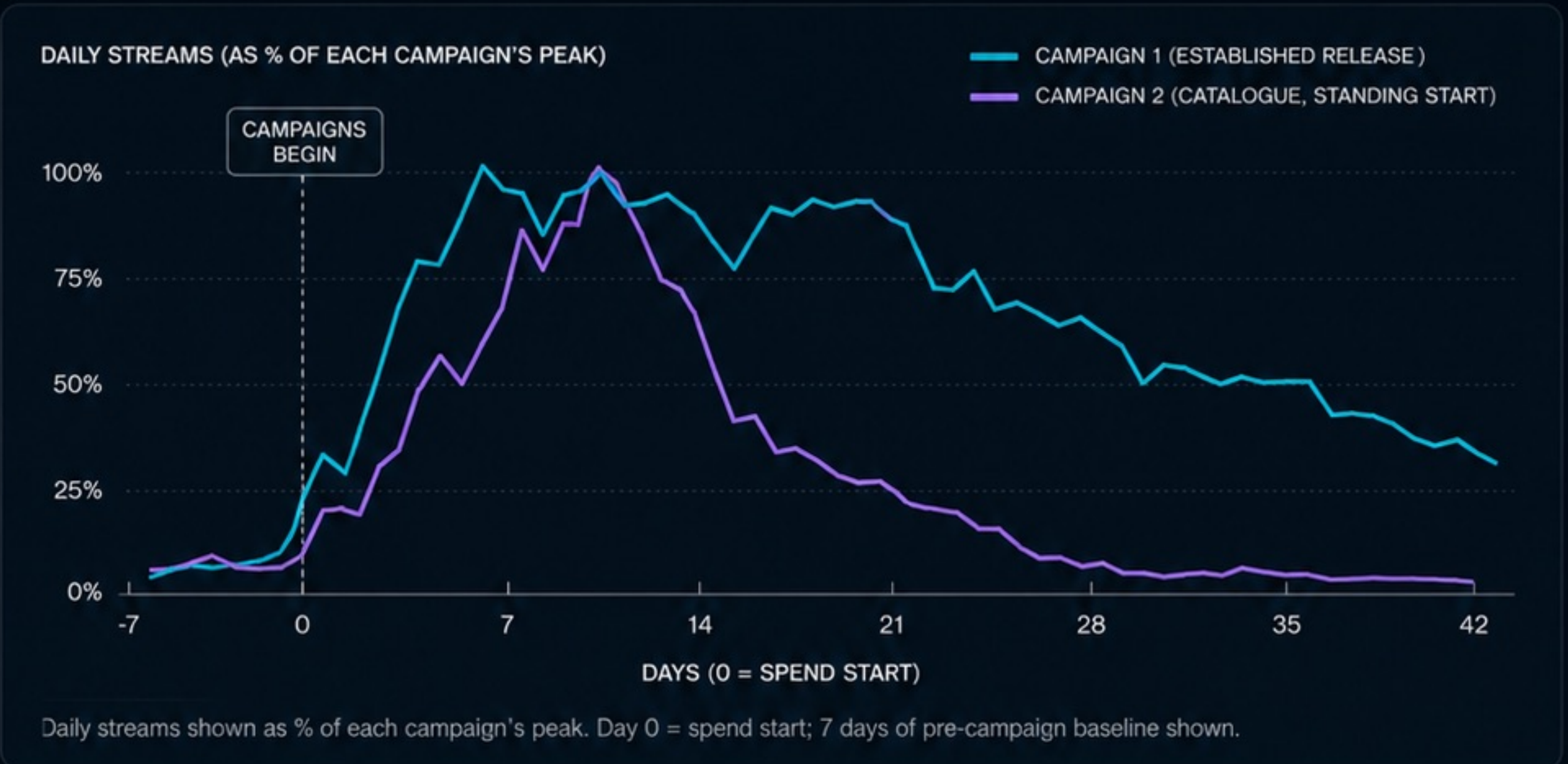
The dataset spans independent label, distribution and management-driven campaigns across pop, R&B, dance and house, Afro and amapiano, Latin, folk, reggae, and rock and metal rosters. This was not five indie artists in one genre.

A note on honesty: where a metric was only tracked for part of the quarter, we say so. Days with no captured data are treated as gaps, never zero-filled.

Campaigns create attention. Behaviour decides what happens next.

Two paid campaigns ran across the roster in Q2. Both created a clear lift in daily streams once spend began, but what happened next was very different. One release held momentum and kept growing. The other faded as soon as the paid exposure stopped.

Initial attention is temporary. Listener behaviour determines whether Spotify keeps recommending.



+48%

AVG. DAILY STREAMS WHILE SPEND WAS ACTIVE (CAMPAIGN 1)

~2,000/day to ~2,900/day

-83%

BELOW ITS DURING-CAMPAIGN AVERAGE WITHIN 10 DAYS OF SPEND ENDING (CAMPAIGN 2)

-91%

FROM PEAK BEFORE SPEND HAD EVEN FINISHED (CAMPAIGN 2)

EXPOSURE IS THE START OF THE JOURNEY, NOT THE END.

Both campaigns delivered while they ran. Campaign 1 lifted an established release from roughly 2,000 to roughly 2,900 streams a day for a month. Campaign 2 took a near-dormant catalogue track to a peak in the low thousands within two weeks. Neither set of paid streams sustained itself.

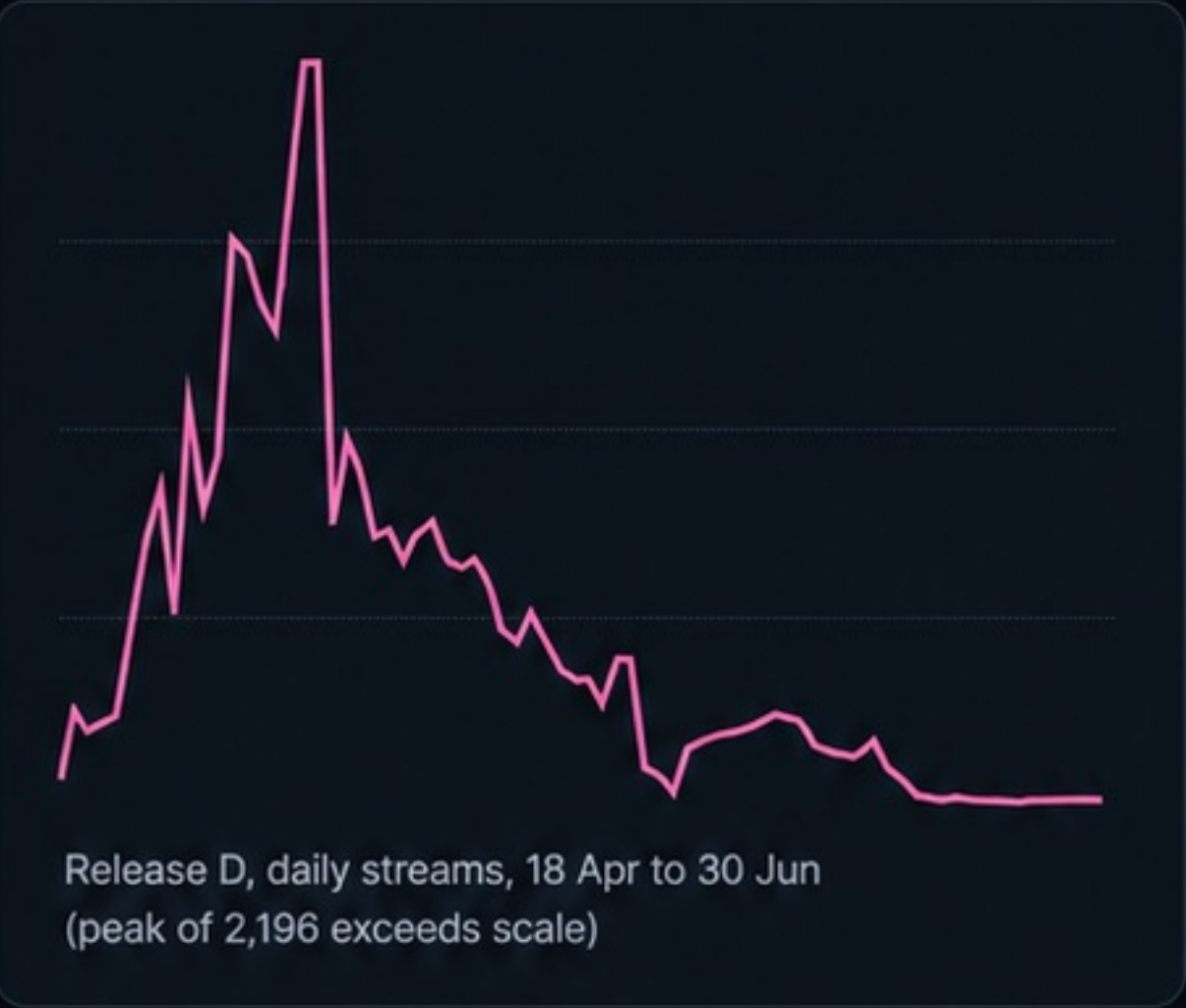
Campaign 1 fell to roughly a quarter of its pre-campaign pace within ten days of spend ending, and Campaign 2 had already fallen 91% from peak before its spend finished. But the quarter-end was not the end of the story. Within days of Campaign 1's spend finishing, just past the edge of this reporting window, Discover Weekly picked the catalogue up entirely unpaid, to roughly 1,400 algorithmic streams a day at peak.

The paid exposure was temporary; the algorithmic momentum it helped create wasn't. That handover, from paid exposure to algorithmic pickup, is the outcome every campaign is chasing, and it belongs to the Q3 report.

FINDING 02

Two releases, two save rates, two very different quarters

Two tracked releases sat at opposite ends of the engagement spectrum in Q2. The clearest difference between them was how often listeners saved the track. One faded to almost nothing; the other held a steady base for the entire quarter.



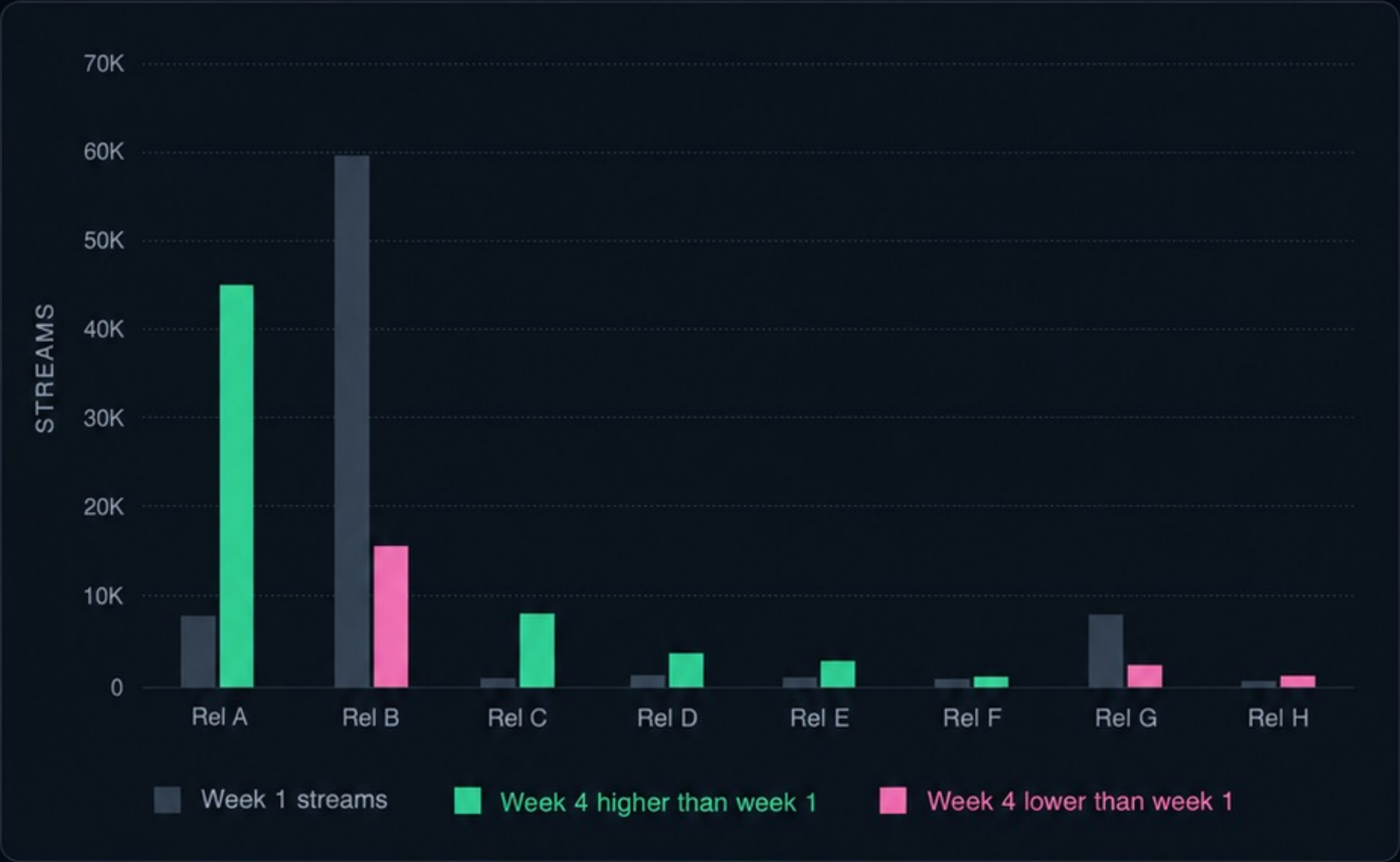
	Release D	Release J
Save rate across Q2	0.7%	20.7%
Daily pace, late April	~500 streams/day	333 streams/day
Daily pace, June	~5 streams/day	380 streams/day
What the quarter left behind	Almost nothing	A steady, durable base

Release D got real exposure in late April and early May, peaking above 2,000 streams in a day. Saved by fewer than one in a hundred listeners, it fell to single digits within weeks. Release J, saved by one in five listeners, never had a dramatic peak, and never needed one: its base held steady from April through June at a level Spotify kept feeding. Exposure opens the door; saves keep it open. (Two isolated single-day capture anomalies in Release J's June data were excluded and are shown as gaps.)

FINDING 03

Launch size predicted nothing.

We compared the first 30 days of every Q2 release with at least four weeks of observed data, week 1 vs week 4 stream volume, each release anonymised.



Release B had by far the biggest launch of the quarter, 59,726 week-1 streams, and had lost two-thirds of that pace by week 4. Release C logged five streams in its entire first week and was doing 7,500 a week a month later. Across all eight releases, week-1 volume simply did not predict which group a release would land in.

One caution from the daily data: several week-4 totals were inflated by one-day exposure spikes rather than steady acceleration. That is exactly why we judge releases on trajectory plus engagement, not on any single week’s total.



THE PATTERN

Every exposure surge we observed in Q2 decayed. What separated winners was the floor left behind, and that floor tracked engagement (saves, repeat listens), not launch size.

FINDING 04

Where algorithmic streams actually come from.

From May, when surface-level tracking began, 31.5% of all streams we observed were algorithmic. The mix surprised everyone we showed it to.

Q2 ALGORITHMIC STREAMS BY SURFACE



Remaining algorithmic volume: smart shuffle, autoplay and unlabelled surfaces.
Total algorithmic streams observed in Q2: 7,021,818.

THREE NUMBERS THAT SURPRISED US

12x

Radio + Mixes delivered 12 times the streams of Discover Weekly and Release Radar combined

<1%

share of algorithmic volume that came from Discover Weekly, the surface artists obsess over

2.5:1

algorithmic streams out-delivered editorial-playlist streams over the quarter

THE JOURNEY WE OBSERVED REPEATEDLY:

Release

>

Campaign exposure

>

Listener signals accumulate

>

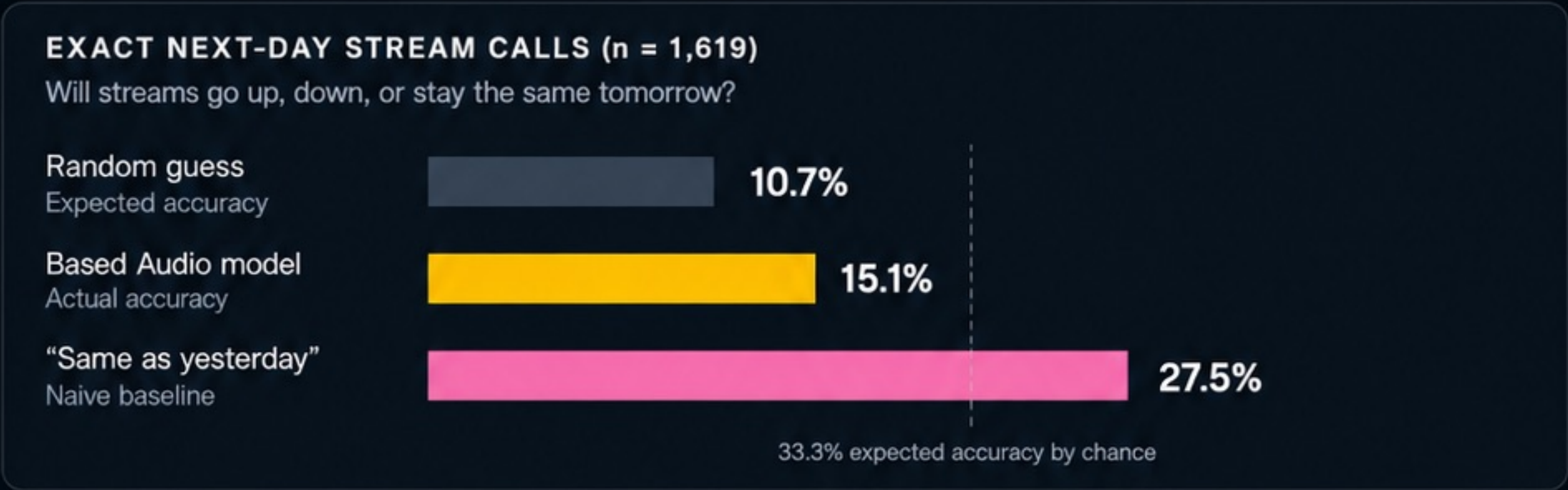
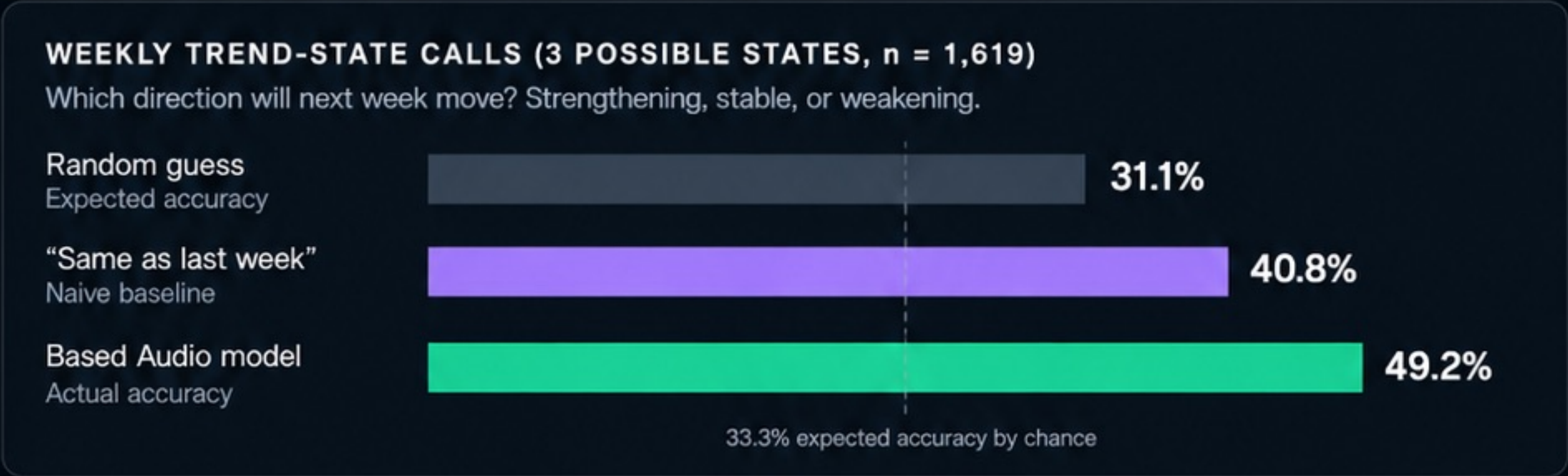
Radio / Mixes pick-up

Sustained growth

The biggest gains consistently arrived after Spotify gained confidence in a track, not on release day. Campaign spend created initial exposure, but listener behaviour decided whether Spotify kept recommending.

What was predictable: measured, not guessed.

Based Audio logs a prediction for every artist, every day, then grades it against what actually happened. In Q2 we graded 4,833 predictions. Here is the accuracy, shown against two honest benchmarks, so the numbers mean something.



How to read this: a weekly trend-state call picks one of three states (strengthening, stable, weakening), so uniform random guessing is expected to land near 33.3%. Our logged random draws scored 31.1% on this specific graded set; the small gap from 33.3% is ordinary sampling variation. Simply assuming “same as last week” gets 40.8%, because artist states persist week to week. The model’s 49.2% is a genuine 5-point edge over persistence, meaning direction is learnable. Next-day is the opposite story: even our model only hit 15.1%, and naive “same as yesterday” beat it. We publish that number because it is the point. Single-day stream moves are dominated by noise, and nobody should be making decisions on them alone.

METRIC	PREDICTIVE VALUE
Engagement floor after exposure (saves, repeat listens)	High
Algorithmic surface pick-up (Radio / Mixes)	High
Weekly trend state (direction)	High
Save rate	Medium – supportive, not sufficient alone
Launch-week volume	Low
Single-day stream moves	Noise

Three myths the data disproved.

MYTH 1: “The biggest first day wins”

The quarter's biggest launch (Release B, 59,726 week-1 streams) faded to a third of its launch pace by week 4. Release C logged five streams in its first week and was doing 7,500 a week a month later. Across all eight fully-observed Q2 releases, launch-week size did not predict which releases were still growing a month later.

MYTH 2: “Discover Weekly is the goal”

Discover Weekly delivered 64,750 streams across the entire roster in Q2, under 1% of the 7.0M algorithmic streams we observed. Radio (1.64M) and algorithmic Mixes (2.26M) did the heavy lifting. Editorial playlists contributed 2.78M streams across Q2, real, but far from everything: algorithmic surfaces out-delivered editorial roughly 2.5-to-1 over the quarter.

MYTH 3: “Daily numbers tell you how you're doing”

We graded 1,619 weekly trend-state predictions (49.2% correct against a 40.8% persistence benchmark, direction is learnable) and 1,619 exact next-day calls (15.1%, worse than assuming nothing changes). Reading meaning into a single day's rise or fall is, statistically, reading noise.

CONCLUSION

The biggest Q2 takeaway

“Campaign spend generated exposure. Listener behaviour decided whether Spotify kept recommending.”

Every paid campaign we measured lifted daily streams while spend was active, and in every case the paid streams themselves decayed rather than compounding. What differed was the handover: one campaign gave the gains back entirely, while the other seeded an unpaid Discover Weekly pickup just past quarter-end. Meanwhile Release J's 20.7% save rate held a steady base no quarter with no campaign at all; Release D, saved by 0.7% of listeners, faded from hundreds of streams a day to single digits.

What this means in practice:

- Don't judge a release, or kill a campaign, on week-1 numbers.
- Watch for Radio and Mixes pick-up; it was the most reliable precursor of sustained growth we observed.
- Track weekly trend-state, not daily streams. One is learnable; the other is noise.
- Treat paid exposure as an audition in front of the algorithm: budget for it, but know that saves and repeat listens decide what survives.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Based Audio analyses daily Spotify for Artists data to understand how releases build or lose momentum, when Spotify increases algorithmic exposure, and when artists should push, hold or stop spending. All figures were computed from observed data for 1 April – 30 June 2026. Identities are anonymised; days without captured data are treated as gaps, never estimated.