

INDEPENDENT PRODUCT CASE STUDY / 2026

/Spotify regional discovery

Choosing the smallest test that could improve discovery for regional listeners while keeping evidence, assumptions, and proposed outcomes separate.

Start with one focused discovery surface.

Test a personalized **Regional Today shelf. Defer mood playlists, social features, and free-tier policy changes until the shelf proves it can improve listening behavior.**

This is a proposed product decision, not a description of Spotify's roadmap or shipped work.

What is known, constructed, and assumed.

OBSERVED

Interview themes

Notes from 12 exploratory listener interviews about discovery habits and friction.

CONSTRUCTED

Synthesis artifacts

Personas, journeys, user stories, and scenarios created to organize the research.

ASSUMED

Business inputs

Eligible audience, conversion rate, price, and exchange rate used only for scenarios.

NOT CLAIMED

Company outcomes

No Spotify internal baseline, retention result, revenue result, or production launch.

Twelve interviews produced directional themes, not population estimates.

METHOD

Exploratory conversations

- 12 listeners discussed routines, discovery, skips, ads, and regional music.
- Responses were grouped into recurring needs and moments of friction.

AVAILABLE CONTEXT

Behavioral profile

- Participants described commute, work, exercise, and casual listening.
- The study focused on free-tier and regional-listening experiences.

LIMITATIONS

Do not overgeneralize

- Recruitment source, field dates, and theme frequency were not retained.
- The findings generate hypotheses; they do not represent all listeners in India.

The interviews point to discovery friction, but not its prevalence.

REPETITION	Participants described familiar mixes becoming less useful over time.	Observed theme / frequency unknown
REGIONAL ACCESS	Regional and language-specific music was described as harder to reach than expected.	Observed theme / frequency unknown
LISTENING FLOW	Forced shuffle, skip limits, and ad timing were described as interruptions.	Observed theme / frequency unknown
OUTSIDE DISCOVERY	Short-form video and recommendations from others sometimes supplied the next track.	Observed theme / frequency unknown

The study did not record counts for each theme, so no percentages are assigned.

The product question is narrower than retention.

How might Spotify help a regional listener move from one completed track to a relevant next track with less searching and fewer dead ends?

USER GOAL

Continue a listening session in the same language, region, or moment.

OBSERVED FRICTION

Repetitive recommendations and regional content that feels buried.

OUTCOME TO TEST

More qualified track starts and deeper listening after shelf exposure.

A transparent decision score replaces unsupported RICE precision.

CANDIDATE	USER VALUE 35%	LEARNING 30%	FEASIBILITY 20%	STRATEGIC FIT 15%	WEIGHTED
Regional Today shelf	5	5	4	4	4.65
Mood playlists	3	3	3	3	3.00
Friends activity	3	3	2	3	2.80
Free-tier policy changes	4	2	1	4	2.80

Scores are directional judgments on a 1-5 scale. They rank learning value under uncertainty; they are not measured RICE inputs.

One shelf isolates the discovery hypothesis.

FIRST RELEASE

Regional Today

- One home shelf for an eligible regional-listening cohort.
- Language and recent listening signals influence the selection.
- A visible refresh promise and lightweight feedback controls.
- Instrumentation from impression through qualified listening.

DELIBERATELY DEFERRED

Not in the first test

- Mood-specific playlist creation.
- Friends activity or social graphs.
- Changes to shuffle, skip limits, ads, or pricing.
- A broad redesign of Spotify Home.

Deferring adjacent ideas keeps the experiment attributable and lowers implementation risk.

The shelf shortens the path to a relevant next track.

01

See

A Regional Today shelf appears on Home for the eligible cohort.

02

Understand

> Language, region, and refresh timing are clear before the first tap.

03

Listen

> The listener starts a track without leaving the current discovery context.

04

Signal

> Save, skip, and feedback behavior improve the next shelf selection.

Measure discovery behavior before making a retention claim.

MEASURE	DEFINITION	DECISION ROLE
Primary	Qualified regional listening minutes per exposed eligible listener.	Tests whether the shelf creates useful listening.
Leading	Shelf impression-to-play rate and time from impression to first play.	Diagnoses discoverability and relevance.
Secondary	Return sessions and D7 retention for the eligible cohort.	Evaluates whether behavior persists.
Guardrails	Early skips, hides, complaints, catalog diversity, and Home latency.	Prevents a local lift from harming experience quality.

Proposed test: randomized holdout, pre-registered metric definitions, and a sample sized after measuring the real baseline and variance.

An 8% conversion rate is not the same as an 8% relative lift.

$$7,000,000 \times 8\% \times \text{INR } 49 \times 12 / \text{INR } 84 \text{ per USD} = \text{USD } 3.92\text{M}$$

SCENARIO A

8% of the cohort converts

USD 3.92M in gross annual subscription revenue. This assumes 560,000 paying users for a full year.

Both are illustrative scenarios, not forecasts. Neither supports a launch without measured baseline conversion, retention, and unit economics.

SCENARIO B

8% relative lift on a 5% baseline

The rate moves from 5.0% to 5.4%. The incremental scenario is about USD 0.20M annually under the same price assumptions.

CONCLUSION

The decision is to learn narrowly before expanding the concept.

Ship one regional shelf to an eligible cohort. Scale only if it improves qualified listening and later retention without worsening skips, diversity, or performance.

Independent concept by Lohith Regalla. No affiliation with or endorsement by Spotify.