

# Sound Mind

## THE CHALLENGE

As part of Sallie Mae's mission to behave as a "student support system" – and not just a loan company – they want to show up for students in meaningful ways throughout their educational journey. Not just at the end when it comes time to pay for loans.

And sometimes, this means creating tools or resources that have absolutely nothing to do with finances or loans.

Reported to be the most stressed-out generation, Gen Z has already lived through two recessions and a global pandemic before they finished puberty. Yet they're still expected to show up to Psych 101 and make the Dean's List.

Sallie Mae needed to find a way to help this audience take a breath, relax, tune out distractions and study, so they could achieve their educational goals ... and a sound mind.

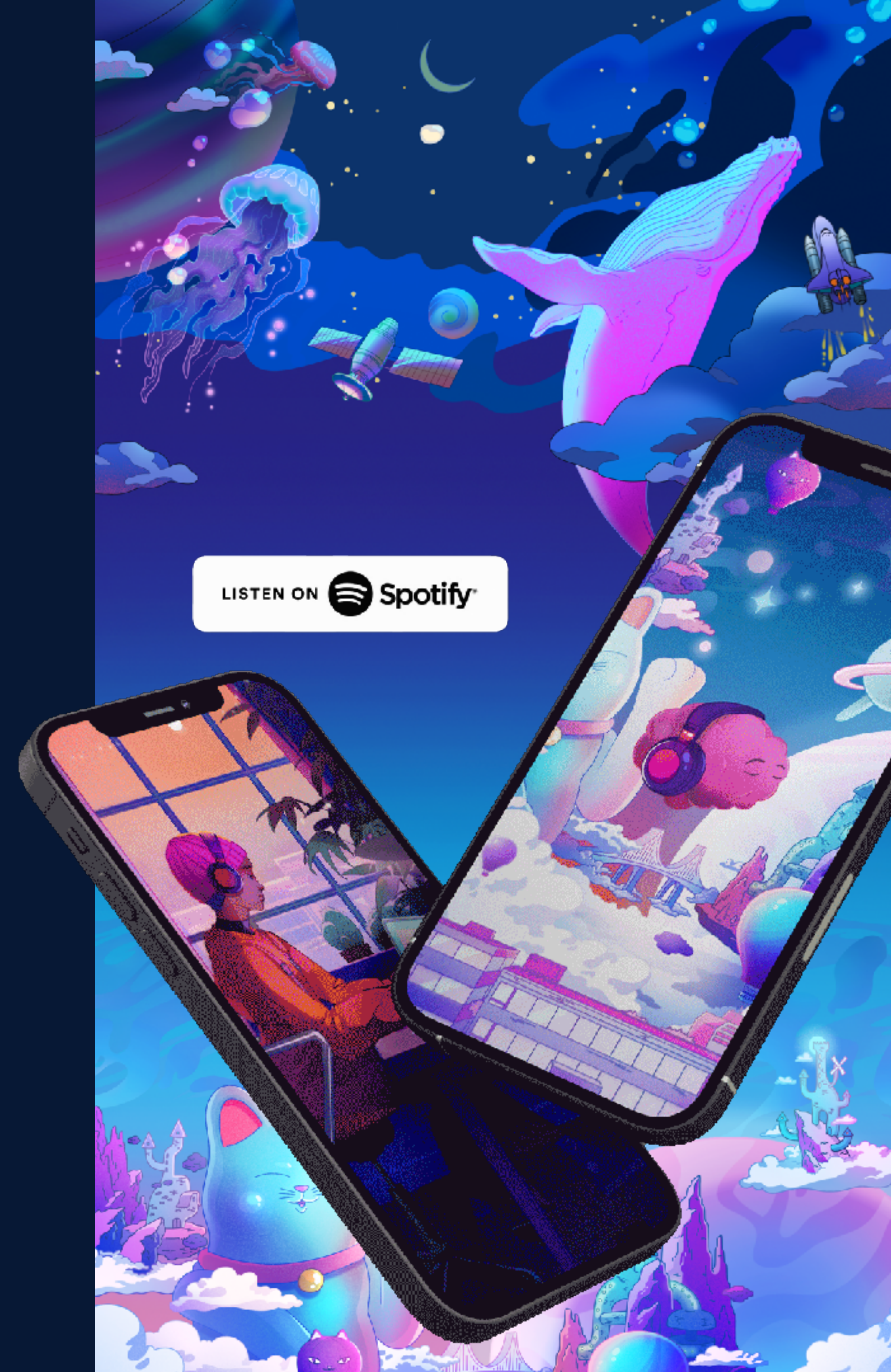
## THE SOLUTION

In April 2023, just in time for the infamously stressful final exam season, Sallie Mae dropped a Lo-Fi music album: "Sound Mind." They selected the low fidelity genre based on its proven ability to increase concentration, stimulate learning, and boost mood, and its popularity among students (73.4% of Lo-Fi listeners are ages 18-34).

Grounded in science and structured using the Pomodoro Technique, Sound Mind features 17 original tracks produced by several popular Gen Z artist partners. Each track falls within a range of 50 to 80 beats per minute, with natural sounds and ambient instrumentals woven throughout, and the album itself has 25-minute focus and 5-minute break intervals.

Knowing students have different studying styles and platform preferences, **Sallie Mae made Sound Mind available to stream on Spotify and created custom content for YouTube.** A 55-minute long "album visualizer" features all tracks set to a looping sequence of artwork that transports viewers into a Zen world that pays tribute to the Lo-Fi genre aesthetic.

As the Spotify algorithm took hold, Sound Mind tracks were organically pushed out to the combined 2+ million monthly listeners of artist partners like Melina Mae Cortez Duterte (Jay Som), Issac Dunbar, TOLEDO, Juan Ariza (musicariza) and Chris Plante (modslee), with the album appearing on discoverable playlists. The musicians also helped increase exposure to Sound Mind by sharing it with their networks.



LISTEN ON  Spotify

## THE RESULTS

Costing only \$.06 per minute of listening based on media spend, Sound Mind captured 25,000 hours – or 1.5 million minutes – of students' attention across Spotify and YouTube.

The YouTube album visualizer received 400K views through the end of 2023 and a completion rate of almost 80%, blowing away YouTube benchmarks by 77%. And despite being nearly an hour long, nearly 10% of all YouTube viewers watched the whole album.

What's more, 50% of people who watched the video fell between the ages of 18-24, proving you can capture and hold this notoriously fickle audience's attention when you create something worthy of their time. Even if it's coming from a bank!

