

Jarvis Akenteng
2012468

Creation in International Music
Marketing (ADAD7013_LON)
Element 2b
Reflective Commentary

At an early age, I possessed an instinctive curiosity for music and the entertainment business. If there is a term that defines me, it would be 'Self-Starter'. Because of this, I have been fortunate enough to build on the principle of 'Connecting the Dots' from working with companies on content and striking brand partnership campaigns to assisting talent firms to later establishing relationships with record labels publishers, distributors, marketing teams within the Music industry.

I have always been accustomed to working with various teams to ensure projects meet & exceed objectives. My enthusiasm reflects my working on brand campaigns for companies such as Nike (#KissMyAirs campaign, celebrating the Air Max 30th Anniversary). The final content was used across numerous sports outlets Footlocker & JD Sports social media channels. IBM, Capcom & Beats by Dre. It has since been fulfilling to exchange my years of 'guerilla style' music management experience for a Masters academic level of study and understanding in Marketing in Music. The submitted proposal allowed me to re-explore possible adoptions of a new business model for music artists, which I have learned and researched over the years as a music manager.

During the project, I realised that it was important to incorporate primary research data into my marketing campaigns. Furthermore, while it was a generally insightful experience to do this on a theoretical level, I noticed a few mistakes and oversights during the process. I did learn some valuable lessons as a result of this. However, because of my previous experiences as a manager and conversations about new models, I ended up falling into old habits of using past and other sources of data to validate my research, which ends in a result of repetitive campaign deployments and outcomes. The 2018 article of R&B songwriter and producer Ryan Leslie and how in 2013, he built the initial version of SuperPhone, allowing him to run SMS campaigns to sell directly to his fans, bypassing the traditional model and generating over \$2 million in revenue with sales to just 15,000 known fans, (J Constine 2018).

This, along with difficulties for new music artists to cut through the "noisy old world" (Ryan, 2016), of over 15 million songs uploaded to streaming platforms each year. It has left me fixated on the rise of a new artist, musician and making sure that they are all aware of the support available to them, or at least continue to create an alternative for those who are not looking to go down the traditional music industry route. I ended up finding it difficult to create a simple marketing message and identify clearly what the benchmark for success will be for the project.

For further context, the push for an alternative model sparked back in 2017; as an artist manager, you are always looking for new ways and trends to help vouch for your artists and creative careers. I became a member of The Rattle, which offers an alternative to the typical business model for musicians and music-related tech start-ups types. (May, 2018). With regular conversations with Chris Howard, The Rattle Founder and its mentors, i.e. Steve Lewis, Tom Salmon and Cliff Fleur. It was there where I learnt the importance of music artists needing to understand how to run themselves as a business and be looked at as entrepreneurs with value. My time at The Rattle consisted of my putting together investment pitch decks to prove the 'artist-entrepreneur'. This experience was daunting and difficult; however, the experience required me to continue advocating for artists and the level of support needed.

Hence the question and the main reason for this campaign; Is artist incorporation and giving equity rather than their rights the best way to go in order for them to do sustainable business for themselves? With this project, I hoped to obtain a long-term career in music marketing to put my knowledge into practice and gain the necessary experience to add to the ethos of Music artist support. I tend to thrive upon challenging situations and enjoy the prospect of combining and utilising what I have learnt on this project towards my passion for music and talent. Again, despite my recent self-start experience, it is clear that I still need to improve my skills in certain areas. In preparation, I would want to reflect and ensure the use of the Gantt chart was extremely vital. According to (Sharon and Dori, 2017), 'In order for systems engineers and project managers to communicate efficiently, the tool is used for a common language that balances system performance, quality, stakeholder expectations and needs, cost, and schedule.'

(Maylor, 2001), expands on this by saying how Projects are economically important, both as direct value-earners and as means of carrying out organisational change. Indeed, a shift in value-adding activity from repetitive to project-based organisations. I noticed this in my practice during this project, and it was difficult to refrain from repetitive processes and deployment. I would need to make sure that I plan benchmark metrics better and in advance to ensure that each year of the project is value-adding.

The aim was for 'Trakk Selects' to become the London-based music artist incubator, facilitating co-creations with musicians and helping them incorporate as a company and initially showcasing a new wave of music artists as entrepreneurs. The best way to convey this message without exhausting the ethos to new ears is to program this as a competition/program. Artists (over the age of 18) will submit their applications on the Trakk Selects website, including links to their music profiles, songs and music videos, and a 5-minute video explaining why they should be a part of Trakk Selects. I then looked into organisations supporting a similar model to help artists financially and incorporating mentoring and facilities with their scheme, which was encouraging as it showed demand for this program. Most importantly, it was a good way to assess the scheme formats and marketing of each organisation.

The Roundhouse Resident Artist each year recruits artists in Music, Circus and Performing Arts. Alongside training and mentoring, the programme provides opportunities to perform on incredible stages within the Roundhouse. As well as an Artist Membership, access to well-equipped rehearsal spaces and professional equipment. (Roundhouse 2021) 'Vans Most Wanted' is an ongoing online contest that calls upon singers, rappers, drummers to enter for the chance to perform with punk-pop and rock artist YUNGBLUD. Judges will pick a final five to perform in a digital battle for the grand prize. Their content is posted and shared across the Vans website and their social platforms. (Vans 2021). MOBO and Help Musicians have also examined the further needs of musicians' support and planned to empower musicians to drive forward their businesses at a crucial time. (Mobo 2021) The 2020 MOBO Help Musicians Fund awards £3,000 towards artists' creative output, along with business advice sessions tailored to each awardee's individual needs and health consultations. NTS Work In Progress (WIP) scheme is an artist development opportunity that supports six musicians and bands each year. Each NTS WIP Artist receives audio equipment, studio time, performance opportunities, NTS

guest radio shows, press photos, mentoring, and an NTS produced music video, Mixing & Mastering resources, NTS Support and promotion, and Carhartt WIP clothing. NTS WIP supports artists from all backgrounds and across all genres globally. (NTS 2021)

The above enabled me to format Trakk Selects as follows; The five music artists selected for the scheme will be funded £5,000 each towards their project/venture and provided that they incorporate themselves as a company. The aim is to test that through the scheme, we can prove that we can make a business foundation by investing in and operationally supporting five music artists as companies for equity rather than buying their IP in one year. They will have full access to recording studios, artists services, mentoring and other facilities. i.e. recording studios, mentoring, artist services and a stipend. Each group of 5 artists will be allocated an Artist company builder/ mentor who will help guide them through their project for the year. We aim to add 1 Artist Builder to guide five new artists each year. However, for Year 2 to go ahead, it will heavily rely on the success and profits made from the applicants selected for Year 1 to invest a further £5000 for the five artists in year 2. Looking at this compared to the competitors, for example, NTS, they have partnerships with Carhartt and The Arts Council, as well as Mobo and their partnership with ThinkMusic and British Association for Performing Arts Medicine professionals, it would be worth looking into how Trakk Selects and brand partnerships will work for Year 2 and Year 3. Mobo network and help musicians socials, Music Week, MMF, industry trade publications Promotions via NTS network, Carhartt and Arts Council socials, Youth music network. Sponsored ads Music magazines (NME, Kerrang, CLASH) promote YUNGBLUD on social media.

Strengths	Weaknesses
The scheme supports new artists financially and facilitates them to become entrepreneurs in their own right. If done correctly, it could lead to a new wave of artist businesses, making Trakk selects a staple of equity over rights in artists.	The scheme would require quite a substantial spend on advertising and promotion. The new model may take some explaining, which means there is a large room for errors to occur.
Opportunities	Threats
There is a demand for new schemes and new artists' support. Although a few organisations are providing this, it could lead to future partnerships opportunities rather than competition.	Lack of organisation support or partnerships to promote the scheme through external databases compared to others in the same field. We may not get enough applicants or may lose a sense of quality control.

After breaking everything down, the marketing assets needed to be scalable and flexible over the three-year campaign whilst keeping the promotions cutting-edge and using the relevant marketing tools and software. As I mentioned before, I did oversell the potential execution of the project in the proposal. The aim was to employ an aggressive promotional strategy to break the new artist model into the market. Through Industry contacts and other extensive networks within the first 6-8 weeks. Which I know now was extremely optimistic. Without factoring in the costs of marketing, I expected to cover ground across Music Industry trade magazines and websites, LinkedIn, Trade forums, Newsletters, and hire a Social Media and Digital marketing manager to help create Ads across Instagram, Facebook, Twitter. Although most of the methods may be correct, It was not as simple as that.

Starting with website functionality, I wanted a landing page that could be visually engaging and explained the requirements to sign up to the Trakk Selects program for year one. However, before creating the website itself, the domain www.trakkselects.com and hosting needed to be registered. After thorough research, this led to using GoDaddy. In regards to costing, it is £0.99 for one year. However, my first thought was to make sure payment is covered in advance to avoid any failed website maintenance or errors in the future. Looking into the extra add-ons and security on the site, i.e. £5.99 per year- Full Domain Privacy & Protection, Protects against domain hijacking and malicious transfer.

Protects your domain with automatic malware scans and continuous security monitoring and notifies you if anything is wrong. Monitors search engine blacklists to ensure domain reputation is protected. I decided to go for Gmail to have the full use of Google Suite - cloud storage, Gdocs, sheets, with a GSuite account, which will be an extra £4.14 per user/per month. I ended up not factoring in the cost of the email domain, and where we will be planning to manage emails from, i.e. help@trakkselects.com email domain worked out to be £1.49/month. So in total, if you wanted .com + .co.uk + email domain + GSuite (for two users), I was looking at £118.23 for the year.

Squarespace was selected regarding the website design, which gave the Trakk Select site all the necessary tools to build a strong online presence and engage with the audience and grow at a national level. The pages needed to design match the Trakk Select brand using a specific colour palette, graphic styles and suitable imagery. In regards to cost, it came up to Squarespace Business £15/ billed annually.

Projective research approaches, such as scenarios and mood boards, allow participants to express beliefs and abstract ideas without the requirement to put those feelings into words first and are therefore potentially useful with a range of individuals (Pimlott-Wilson, 2012). Logo & Corporate Image Design offers the initial parts of a visual identity system for your brand; this includes logo design, trademark, logo variations, favicon, colour palette and social media assets.

Branding Design				
Step 1 RESEARCH & FIRST CONCEPTS	Step 2 - CONCEPTS SENT & FEEDBACK	Step 3 - CONCEPT REFINED & FEEDBACK	Step 4 - CONCEPT LAST ROUND & FEEDBACK	Step 5 - ASSETS EXPORT
Once the questionnaire is received, I start to evaluate existing brands and competitors. After this I draft the first concepts.	When the concepts are finalised, I send them over and wait for feedback (ideally I should receive the feedback within the next 7 days).	The concept is refined after the feedback and sent over again for the next round of feedback.	After the second feedback the concept is finalised and it will be sent again for final sign off and possible minor amends.	Once everything is approved all the assets are exported on the following formats: PNG, JPEG, EPS, SVG and Ai. Everything is sent in a folder containing the exports as well as other relevant information.

Web Design			
Step 1 - RESEARCH & UX MAP	Step 2 - STYLING & DESIGN OF FIRST PAGES	Step 3 - TESTING	Step 4 - DOMAIN & PUSH SITE LIVE
Once the questionnaire is received, I start to evaluate existing brands and competitors. When this is completed I design a UX map including the customer journey and site architecture.	Having the UX map approved I'd need all the content so I can start designing the first pages applying graphic styles and colours. Once the pages are sent, I wait for feedback.	Once the website is ready it is time to test it, considering usability, easy access to all sections and pixel perfect design.	When the site is tested and ready I'll connect the domain and after a few days the site will be live.

In conclusion, I learnt that when evaluating the foundations of a campaign, I must look for areas that need to be refreshed for the best practices. In some ways, you can say that I achieved this by adding minor colour exploitations to the website and logos. However, I did not show any refreshing marketing tactics to enhance the campaign in the following years.

This would've been a good chance to spark organic digital marketing that provides a comprehensive approach to getting more applicants to sign up for the scheme, rather than solely relying on mailing list promotions and social media marketing. I could have leveraged web and graphic design, content creation and strategy, SEO with the sole purpose to generate more traffic. After all, success is measured by KPIs, and it wasn't something I established clearly before undertaking any new marketing initiatives for Trakk Selects.

I've now learnt that it's important to plan the work, work the plan, and measure your success against established goals.

The Gantt chart and budget helped me list each element that I already have and helped me highlight what would need updating and whether or not to include new assets. However, I could've taken full advantage of this and looked into more Downloadable content offerings for new applicants and infographic videos for the Landing pages on the website.

The project did differ from an album release campaign because since paying for digital marketing, the efforts should be aimed at generating leads and not focus too much on clicks, impressions, click-through rates (CTR), or any other vanity metrics.

In some way, during the project, optimisation of the paid marketing tools and plans for the metrics did take place to get more applications filled out, but that was only because it was what was needed to progress the scheme. Furthermore, this would've helped my paid strategy by integrating this with the organic digital marketing strategy. To create new opportunities and efficiencies that would've been missed otherwise.

Very little research was done during this project as I wanted to advocate the best for new artists. I should look into further interviews with experts in new models and the innovation in music to completely understand all modern and conventional structures and know how to discuss and negotiate an arrangement with a brand that is in the artist's best interest without dispute.

By attending further marketing training seminars and taking part in independent public reading and training days provided by, I want to achieve a good understanding of the different aspects of Marketing in Music/ Digital Marketing, KPI's to communicate and determine the full opportunities for artists.

Further research on demographics and psychographics for the project will ultimately help me learn how digital marketing works and keeps up-to-date with electronic/new media and other innovations, knowing the challenges and opportunities offered by technology advances, and understand the basics of marketing and how to measure KPI's and problems with the present system and develop a basic knowledge of the relationship between them.

I would look for advice on the marketing messaging of the project, as it could have been misleading. This would be helpful to my task to ensure that it is properly conveyed and supported.

And understand how similar schemes and programmes in the UK operate their marketing to get a broader understanding of the international music industry and its complexities in different markets.

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Personal Development Plan

Area for Development	Expected Goal	Relationship of goal to organisation	Actions to take	Resources Needed	Criteria for Success	Target date
Understand and recognise all conventional types of music campaigns from, conducting the right research how to plan how to budget revenue — including new media metrics and know how to make them work without dispute.	To have a complete understanding of Music marketing structures and tactics	I want to reflect and ensure that I can plan a campaign on behalf of a company or artist I work for	Marketing executives and/ discussions about previous campaigns. As well as free content for learning	Availability for a telephone call or brief meetings on music business campaigns	To be able to discuss and negotiate an arrangement with a brand that is in my artist's best interest and to understand the current fair market value	May 2022
Understand the main principles of Marketing; and the different aspects of Digital / Social Media	Achieve a good understanding of the different aspects of Marketing / Assets and Timelines	I need to recognise the potential budgets and elements that would be used before executing a	Independent public reading study Seminars or training days	Receive Music Marketing campaign examples and attend a training seminars	To be able to read and have a good understanding.	August 2022

marketing and how to manage them.		campaign in order to communicate and determine the full opportunities for the project				
Learning how digital marketing works and keeps up-to-date with electronic/new media and other innovations – knowing the challenges and opportunities offered by technology advances.	To recognise how the music industry adaptation to new marketing methods	Develop a basic knowledge of the relationship between customer base and the campaign	to engage in related training / seminar days	Invitation to relevant training/seminar days	To understand the basics of consumer base and how to measure Marketing KPI and problems with the present system	December 2022
Learning how global marketing works for a UK artist and gaining a broad	To get a good understanding of Marketing outside the UK,	It would be helpful to ensure that campaigns are properly	Talks with an experienced Marketers Learning & workshop days	To engage in related training / seminar days	To explain the ins and outs of Music marketing	March 2022

understanding of international music marketing as well as understanding the complexities of different markets and the difficulties of working an act internationally.		prepared and organised				
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