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Creative Music Management

Reflective Essay



Figure 1: Who We Are Single Artwork

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Abstract

This essay reflects on my involvement in the single release campaign created by Group Raspberry Beret for the Tileyard Creative Music Management assignment. The first half of this text analyses the importance of a reflective summary and the importance of team development when working on creative industry projects. The second half of the essay will discuss the impact of digital technologies in relation to the creation and promotion of popular music.

Importance of a Reflective Summary

A reflective summary is a piece of text that analyses the writers experience of carrying out a task or project. The purpose of a reflective summary is to be able to recount the experience and reflect on the process, evaluating how they grew and what they learned from it along the way (Oxbridge Essays, 2020). The reflection has a focus on personal growth, allowing the writer to critically analyse their performance in order to develop their skills and make improvements. There also needs to be an explanation of the task and the literature that was created for it, so that the writer can refer back to the task when talking about their experience, being able to recognise what went wrong and what went right.

The Project

Me and my team were put into a group (Raspberry Beret) for the Creative Music Management assignment, tasked with developing a release campaign for an original song. The team included me, Ben, Aidan and Kalina. We were given a theoretical budget of £500 for the campaign, which involved recording the song along with a remix, and planning its digital release, creating media assets for promotion. After hosting an A&R session over zoom and collating all of our ideas, the group decided to focus the project on the deep house track 'Who We Are', that one of the team members had been working on for a new music venture with a friend. As the duo were new, they did not have a name for themselves at the start of the project, nor did they have any social media presence. They eventually came up with the alias 'Aramu Muru'. As I had previous knowledge of social media marketing, I was given the responsibility of creating the Aramu Muru social media pages and building a following leading up to the release of the track. It was important that the group were present on social media, as these platforms are significant when promoting music. Social media helps to build a fanbase, especially for new artists, and can increase sales and downloads by boosting engagement and reaching new markets and audiences (Lz, 2019). I created a social media release campaign, exploring the different social platforms that Aramu Muru could promote their music on, and developing a plan to implement a Tik Tok campaign for the track after release. I also drew up a social media schedule, highlighting key dates and promotion that should be carried out before, during and after release. The other member of the team each had their own areas of the project to focus on, including the creation of the song and sourcing a vocalist, public relations, marketing, creating artwork, drawing up contracts and overseeing the budget. The next sections of this essay will go into detail about the distribution of roles and how the team was developed to efficiently carry out the project, with a focus on the team management tools that were used throughout the process.

Team Roles

In this section I will discuss the development of the team in relation to the distribution of team roles, using the theory of the Nine Belbin team Roles as a reference to analyse the team's performance throughout the project.

The Nine Belbin Team Roles is a theory created by researcher Meredith Belbin. The theory states that within any team, there are nine roles which need to be filled in order for the team to work and be managed effectively. These roles are Shaper, Coordinator, Plant, Resource investigator, Monitor Evaluator, Specialist, Team worker, Implementor and Completer Finisher (Imperial College London, 2021). Each role carries different characteristics, strengths and weaknesses that complement each other and boost efficiency within the team. Implementing the nine team roles does not mean that there has to be nine team members, as people can possess the skills for several of the roles. When deciding on the roles, a team needs to analyse their objectives and the tasks that need to be distributed (Belbin.com, 2021).

The shaper role involves driving the team and making sure that everything runs smoothly, helping the team to keep focused and making sure the project stays on track. Characteristics of the shaper include challenging, dynamic, driven and being able to work under pressure. The Coordinator focuses on the objectives of the team, delegating the workload. Their characteristics include being confident, able to identify talent and skills, and map out goals. The Plant member of a team is usually very creative and possesses good problem-solving skills, their characteristics being creative, free-thinking, imaginative and the ability to generate ideas. The resource investigator is usually someone with an inquisitive nature who researches ideas to relay back to the team. They are commonly outgoing and enthusiastic people who like to explore new ideas and network. Monitor Evaluators tend to provide a logical mindset, being able to make impartial judgements and evaluate the pro's and con's straight-thinking way. The characteristics involved being strategic and having the ability to weigh up all options. The specialist within a team provides in-depth knowledge of specialist areas and are usually single-minded self-starters. Team Workers help the team to come together and can identify the workload that needs to be finished and completing it on behalf of the team. They are cooperative. Diplomatic and effective listeners. Implementors are the members of a team that map out a strategy and aim to successfully carry it out as planned. They are practical, organised, and able to turn the ideas of the team into actions. The final team role is the Completer Finisher, and this involves being able to analyse the work of the team, highlighting any areas for improvement and tying up the loose ends, usually towards the end of a project. They tend to be perfectionists, conscientious and have the ability to spot errors (Belbin.com, 2021).

At the beginning of the project, the team hosted a Zoom meeting to decide which members were going to be responsible for the different areas of the campaign. We wanted to find out the skill set of each member so that we could all play to our strengths and focus on an area that we had prior knowledge in. Ben, who is a member of Aramu Muru, took on more of a lead role in the project as he produced the track. He was responsible for recording and mastering the track, marketing, and public relations, as these are roles that he carries out in his day job. The Belbin roles that I believe Ben embodied throughout the project were Plant, Coordinator, Shaper and Implementor. Ben made sure that the team stayed on track throughout the campaign and was a strong delegator. He also possesses a lot of creative and specialist skills within music.

Aidan was given the task of commissioning artwork and assets that would be used for promotion for the tracks release. I believe that Aidan was also a coordinator and shaper within the team, and in addition, possessed the characteristics of a Monitor Evaluator, as he had a logical mindset and was able to weigh out the pros and cons of the team's activities. I think that the Resource Investigators of the group were myself and Kalina. I was given the responsibility of managing the social media aspects of the project due to my previous knowledge of social media marketing, and Kalina was delegated the tasks of drawing up contracts and the campaign budget, as she is an artist herself and has prior experience. Throughout the project, I believe that we were the inquisitive members of the group who took the team's ideas and carried out research to see if they would be effective. In addition to the separate roles that we played, I think that all members of the team were specialists, team workers and completer finishers. We all came from creative backgrounds and possess our own skills in specialist areas, making it easy to delegate tasks. We were all team players and the workload was shared evenly, with every team member working together to analyse our work towards the end of the project.

Team Management

As previously stated, Ben took more of a lead role in the project, however I believe that all team members played a role in the management of the team. As creatives, we all had our own specialist areas that we excelled in from the start, so we were able to manage our own areas independently and then come together as a team to monitor the progress of the whole project. Although this was a positive thing for the most part, there were sometimes issues when it came to deadlines, as everyone was focusing on their own areas which meant our deadlines did not always sync up, and we would sometimes have to wait for each other to complete a task so that the other tasks could be carried out. We utilised some project management tools, such as Milanote, Monday and Google Drive, to help us keep on track. These allowed us to combine all of our ideas and work in one space that was easily accessible for everybody. In 'Digital Technology in relation to the creation and promotion of popular music' section of this essay, I will be analysing the digital technology that was used for team development.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a technique used to assess Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, usually in relation to a business, but can be used to analyse the performance of an individual (Mindtools.com, 2021). I am going to carry out a SWOT analysis of my performance throughout the project.

- **Strengths-** My main strengths throughout the project were my skills and knowledge of marketing and social media. My prior experience allowed me to swiftly make decisions for the implementation of a social media strategy for the project, helped by my experience with working with software such as Adobe Indesign and Photoshop. I also believe that I am a team player, a characteristic that allowed me to work well as a collective with my team to complete the project.
- **Weaknesses-** My weaknesses were my lack of prior knowledge of the music industry compared to my other team members, which meant I was unable to help with certain tasks. I also believe I have room to improve my time management skills.
- **Threats-** My threats were the time restraints for the project, as I usually work at my own pace and I was worried that I may not be able to keep up with the rest of my team.
- **Opportunities-** My opportunities were that working within a team of experienced creatives gave me the chance to build my industry knowledge and broaden my skill set.

Digital Technology in relation to the creation and promotion of popular music

I am now going to discuss digital technology in relation to the creation and promotion of popular music, analysing its impact on team development in creative industry projects.

Music Creation and Promotion

Digital Technology has had a significant impact on the creation of music for many reasons. Firstly, the development of music production and distribution technology is changing the way music is created. Music creators have made the shift from analogue to digital methods, improving convenience and decreasing costs. Digital workstations such as Logic for example, have made the process of recording music more accessible, and the actual process of making music has been made simpler by the development of music technology such as controls, synthesizers, compressors and so on (Sean Cole, 2019).

The evolution of digital streaming services and social media has also had a great impact on how music is created and promoted. These technologies have changed the way we consume music, giving us instant access to an extensive catalogue of music, and decreasing physical sales (Sean Cole, 2019). The internet and Social media have made it easier than ever to share and access music, with many artists now being able to share their music for free without the input of third parties. Social media site Tik Tok has had a remarkable impact on the music industry, as its collaborative nature has allowed for rising artists and creators to gain popularity in a short space of time (Richard Yao, 2020), and has had an impact on the type of music that already established artists are creating, with many profiting off of the site by creating music that will go viral.

Team Development

Digital technology can be used to improve the efficiency of team development, as it allows for collaborative sharing and management of projects. (Businesswales.gov, 2021). Project management tools such as Milanote and Monday, which were used by the team, enables teams to monitor the progress of a project and coordinate tasks. It helps to stop confusion about which areas of the project have been completed, providing the tools to create timelines and collate ideas in one space to boost efficiency. File Sharing software such as Google Drive allows teams to easily share files and information with each other. It helps the collaborative process by allowing members to update materials without the hassle of having to chase people up. Additionally, Video conferencing technology such as Zoom makes it easy for teams to come together who do not have the option to work face to face. It can build effective communication whilst working on a project by giving the opportunity to have conversations with other team members instead of relying on written communication, which can sometimes cause confusion and may not be efficient if important matters need to be discussed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Creative Music Management project was an experience that allowed me to reflect on my own skills and experience when working to a creative music industry brief, something that I had not had the opportunity to do before. I believe that my team were effective in implementing strategies and combining our individual skills that allowed the project to run smoothly. Emerging digital technologies were significant to the way we worked throughout the process, with our campaign having a big focus on digital marketing and the use of project management tools to ensure that the project was managed effectively.

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