

Creative Music Management

BMTY7000

Reflective Summary

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This Reflective Summary will discuss two key areas—firstly, contributions that I made to our group project for Creative Music Management and the role I played within the group to create a successful release. Secondly, I will be discussing how digital technologies have impacted the process of creating and releasing a single. I will be referring and reflecting on how these technologies impacted our group throughout.

a) Your involvement in the group portfolio and presentation task to create a single, remix and associated media assets

In our group project, we all got stuck in straight away, and it became clear that we would have to breakdown the tasks into different roles, agreeing that it would be reducing our chances of success if we continued to overlap tasks. Our team discussed the different options and roles that would need to be undertaken to complete our project successfully. Due to COVID-19 and the current restrictions we were unable to ever meet in person, carrying out all communications either through Zoom meetings or via our WhatsApp group chat. We needed to employ good project management in order to execute our roles effectively and efficiently and bring together a project that successfully met the goals set out for us. Of course, the restrictions due to COVID-19 did impact our group, but we managed to thrive regardless.

Project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements. Project management is accomplished through the appropriate application and integration of the project management processes identified for the project. Project management enables organisations to execute projects effectively and efficiently. (PMI, 2017)

The roles on offer for the project were Project Manager, Promotion, Marketing and PR & Distribution. We started with assigning a Project Manager for this role. Lucy fitted this role well due to her current job requiring her to work with spreadsheets and finance. Jack was tasked with Promotion because he had the most relevant experience with this field having worked as the head of promotion on several projects. Lucan was assigned with PR and Distribution due to having gained knowledge from years of working within the publishing sectors and with links to the PR world at his disposal. I put myself forwards for the Marketing role as I had experience from my undergraduate degree in writing a release plan and marketing strategy, in which I received a first. I was very keen to fulfil this role as it is a core part of my career aspiration, especially within a team. My previous project required that I create a track and then plan the track release, including the promotion, PR, Marketing, and distribution.

I began by researching and investigating my options for producing the marketing strategy, first meeting with the group to discuss what direction we wanted to go in and receive their valued input. I then progressed to looking at how I had created a successful marketing strategy previously. This piece of work would be the foundation for how I went about creating a plan for this project. I believe in utilising the full extent of social media in this technology world. The target audience that we had identified by using social media and streaming analytics was between 16 to 25 years of age. This age range is perfect for reaching using social media platforms and online advertising. The London School of Economics and Political Science (2017) released figures suggesting that over 59% of internet user aged 18 to 29 using Instagram and 17% of teenagers say that Instagram is there most important social media platform. Snapchat has 50% of its users below the age of 25. Their largest demographic is 18- 24, which make up 37% of the app's users.

This data was vital to decide which platforms to use. I decided to focus our efforts on Instagram and Snapchat, whilst also using Facebook as its ad tool Facebook Pixel is brilliant for marketing. Since 2017 though a new platform Tik-Tok has become relevant, especially with our targeted demographic. Peonie already had a significant following on the platform. Jack had also created a promotional campaign using Tik-Tok for the merchandise. He had created a great plan which fitted perfectly with the marketing strategy. The statistics to back up Tik-Tok addition to the strategy; "largest user-base (24%) are aged 18-24 in the UK. Tik Tok currently has over 3.7 million active users, projected to grow to 10 million active users in 2021". (socialfilms, 2020)

We still wanted to use some more traditional methods, including developing a mailing list, which is still one of the most effective marketing tools available and can be used easily in future marketing campaigns (JMB,2020). I then reviewed the idea that had been proposed to us about using a pre-save campaign. By using a pre-save, you can boost the status of the single within streaming services.

A high stream-count on its first day can be an indicator of success for your newest song or album on Spotify, as it shows Spotify that your music might be worth sharing with their users via: algorithmic playlists (such as Release Radar and Discover Weekly), email notifications to your followers, Spotify's official playlists and more. (Robley, 2019)

Once I had decided on all the routes to market the new single, I reported back to the group in our next Zoom meeting on my findings and received feedback supported by the group. I then began to write the final version, which would layout our objectives, key performance indicators (KPI's) and the target audience. Finally, I completed a full strategy and schedule.

The Objectives: Create internet hype around the release “Mistakes and Heartbreak”, to grow Peonie's audience on social media and music streaming services, create new social media accounts on different platforms to reach the target audience effectively, build an Email List which can then be used for future marketing campaigns.

Our goals were clear and easy to achieve. Employing the correct strategy that I had worked on and developed using all the necessary data would ensure we met the KPI's and create a successful release and the best possible results for Peonie.

The Key Performance Indicators: 100k streams across all streaming platforms within 9 months of release, 5-10% increase in follower on social media platforms, 5-10% increase in engagements on social media posts, build and grow Snapchat account to over 250 followers and successfully generate internet hype over the release of ‘Mistakes and Heartbreaks’.

Using past campaigns as a reference, the KPI's were efficient and achievable. Using my practical and efficient marketing strategy, the percentile increases of between 5 and 10 percent would make this an easy target to reach.

I then set out my detailed full strategy and reasonings which included the schedule which would be an eight-week campaign, running four-week prior and four weeks after the release. The prior would be slightly more aggressive with content pushes and advertising in conjunction with the pre-save campaign's rollout. The latter was more relaxed with different content focusing on behind the scenes and touring information.

Overall, I found the marketing strategy and schedule that I had developed and created to be highly achievable and effective in producing the best results for our group and for Peonie. Whilst COVID-19 did limit several of our plans and made group communications harder, I believe that all the team put in 100% effort and created the best piece of work possible.

b) Your reflections on the impact of all types of digital technologies with reference to the creation and promotion of original popular music and team development on creative industry projects.

The modern age and the digital technologies that have become central to our ways of life in the last fifteen to twenty years have radically changed how we operate at all levels. For example, how music is created and promoted and how systems and teams' function locally and globally. It is possible to identify and name the many positive ways in which digital technologies impacted our group throughout this project. The main points I will discuss are the ways in which digital technology has changed the creation of music in the 21st century, the changes to promotion and marketing tools and the significant impact of social media.

Also, especially in a time of pandemic and stay at home orders, how digital technology has made it possible for more efficient and effective teamwork than ever before.

Before the turn of the century, the way music was created and listened too was entirely different. Music creation had slowly been becoming more digitalised throughout the 1990s with more and more people moving towards using DAWs (Digital Audio Workstations). The era of the mp3, iTunes and streaming had not yet begun. In terms of how creative teams worked within the industry, it is fair to say that the way teams operate their release campaigns has changed dramatically with technological advancements. Some remnants of the pre-digital era remain, such as the use of billboards, TV, radio, newspapers and word of mouth. Whilst all these methods are still used, digital technologies have made it far easier to reach your target demographic more efficiently and effectively at a far lower financial cost.

Firstly, I am going to discuss how Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) have changed the way music is created since 1992 when Pro Tools was released. As digital hard drives slowly replaced tape machines, the home studio became a more prevalent option (Future Music, 2011). As this quote from Reverb explains.

Towards the end of the decade, DAWs were being used to host and control hardware, as opposed to just being used as an accessory in an otherwise hardware process. Digital mixing boards allowed for DAWs to automate faders, meaning that engineers were no longer dependent on the band and the studio janitor to push faders during a mixdown. Digital power would give producers and musicians more opportunities than just mixing to get ambitious with production. (DeArcangelis,2017)

The days of large budgets, massive studios and loads of engineers were no longer needed to create professional high-quality original music. It would begin the age that we see today with people in their bedrooms creating music on the level, possibly as good as those in the best and most expensive studios. Nevertheless, this has only been possible with computer processing power increasing dramatically. For example, the iPad Pro from 2017 is a thousand times faster and more powerful than the worlds most powerful computer in 1993 (Offermann,2017). So, thanks to rapid advances in software and computer processing power, almost all pop music is written, recorded, produced, broadcast and consumed on computers (Buchan,2015). The power of digital technology has allowed artists and producers alike to push the boundaries of creativity and musical possibilities.

Turning now to the promotional aspects and how digital technologies have changed this area for the better. For years, the promotional and marketing avenues for music remained unchanged. With the beginning of the internet and the introduction of blogs and websites at the beginning of the 21st century, and with the growing number of social media platforms,

digital technologies impact how music is marketed (WDD,2009). As this quote from a Guardian article states:

A transformation of marketing is underway as we spend more time on our mobiles, tablets and laptops. The challenge for brands is to connect with customers through all these devices in real time and create campaigns that work across social media, display advertising and e-commerce. (Benady,2014)

Social media has made the most significant impact on promotion and marketing and has completely revolutionised it. Now you have a real-time, direct and much more efficient and effective route right to your target audience with plenty of analytics and statistics to create the best possible strategies. All these influences played a massive role in our group project. I created the marketing strategy by looking at Instagram statistics and those available on the internet, such as the paper from the London School of Economics, which I mentioned earlier. However, another tool which is highly effective for building marketing campaigns is Facebook Pixel. Facebook Pixel is a tool that allows you to:

Collect data that helps you track conversions from Facebook ads, optimise ads, build targeted audiences for future ads, and remarket to people who have already taken some kind of action on your website (Newberry 2019)

Facebook Pixel allows one to gather the necessary market research and information. This additional information can help create better Facebook adverts and more effectively targeted adverts.

Through the data that Facebook Pixel has collected, the available tools also offer the ability to re-target and optimise these adverts to reach their maximum potential and further promote the product. You can then use the data collected for use on other platforms.

Digital technologies have had a significant impact on the way we promote and market our music. Add to this mix, the traditional promotion and marketing methods, it is now possible to reach people all the time and successfully push your content.

The final area to discuss is team development and team collaboration and how digital technology impacted the creation of this industry project. Digital improvements and capabilities have had significant testing over the last year because of COVID-19 and its restrictions. Technology platforms like Zoom, the online meetings service, has enabled people, from all corners of the world, to continue to have meetings. Our group held all our meeting via the Zoom platform. Zoom offers the ability to use their services for free until a particular time restriction (Zoom,2021). Despite the significant positives, there have been teething issues with Zoom, and online meeting services don't create the same experiences

as in-person meetings (BBC,2020). As the quote below shows Gianpiero Petriglieri discussing with the BBC.

Being on a video call requires more focus than a face-to-face chat, says Petriglieri. Video chats mean we need to work harder to process non-verbal cues like facial expressions, the tone and pitch of the voice, and body language; paying more attention to these consumes a lot of energy. "Our minds are together when our bodies feel we're not. That dissonance, which causes people to have conflicting feelings, is exhausting. You cannot relax into the conversation naturally," he says. (BBC,2020)

However, Zoom and others similar platforms, for example Microsoft Teams, have allowed meetings to continue and allowed team communication to continue during such a difficult period, something our team found to be a true. Another digital technology that has also had a significant impact on successful team functioning is a shared drive service, such as Google Drive, which our team used to our benefit. Services like this make sharing documents quick and more manageable within the team, speeding up the work process.

The overall impact that digital technologies have had on the creation and promotion of music and on team development on creative industry projects, has been massive. While technology has made life in this new era more effective and efficient, there are also challenges inherent in remote working and reliance on digital technology.

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