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Module: Creation in International Music Marketing

Assessment: PROPOSAL

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“The marketing process typically starts with a “vision”—a declaration that defines that ultimate place you’d like your company to be in about seven to ten years down the road. […] So then, what are your strengths and passions, and what is your overall musical vision in about seven to ten years? Do you see yourself playing a style of R&B, rock, folk, hip hop, jazz, or perhaps some new subgenre you aim to create? Do you aspire to be a major recording/touring artist known all over the world, or forever a local independent musician happy to be surviving on your music? Will you sell records, tour, and create merchandise, or will you write and produce? What kind of artist identity will you project to your target fans: wholesome and sweet, gangsta and badass, intellectual and socially conscious, or something else? Do you want people to see you as a role model? Do you want to make people happy and hopeful? Will you be the voice for the oppressed and unfortunate? Or will you stand for certain values in the world that are important to society as a whole?” (B. Bobby, pg 77-78. “Music Marketing for the DIY Musician”)

When it comes to our future career plans and goal, most of all when it is regarding a field as specific and competitive such as the Music Business, there’s a lot of things that an artist has to take in consideration in order to eventually succeed. As an independent artist acting as my own manager, without any third party currently employed in my career, it means that I have to go in depth to study how to progress and what to do in order to achieve my goals as a singer and songwriter.

First Step: The Goal

As Bobby Borg states in his book focused on “DIY” musicians, the main thing an artist has to know before starting their journey pursuing a music career is the objective, the final goal, their vision. A long-term goal is the main point of focus - it helps you in studying your next steps in the most efficient way and helps you in aiming to the best ways to achieve what you want to achieve via short-term goals.
My long-term goal is to become a signed artist within the next 5 years and to being able to sustain myself financially via my music within the next 2 years.
Although things can change with time (visions, goals, etc) I will start building a rough plan based on short-term goals, previous experience, comparisons and assumptions on outcomes based on the current market and researches.
The marketing campaign plan will cover a three year period starting January 2023 and ending in January 2026.

The Subject: Becky Black

When analysing how to approach the creation of a marketing plan, authors Donham, Macy and Rolston highlight how important it is to first evaluate the “product” and how it compares to the competitive landscape and overall marketplace. (Tammy D., Amy Sue M., Clyde Philip R., p 141) The “product” in my case would be my own act, presented as “Becky Black”.
Creating a stage name was my first approach, exactly the way a company would choose a name to sell their product to the public. With an international audience in mind, I opted for a stage name instead of keeping my own name. Becky Black wants to be my stage persona, in the same idea author and sociologist Erving Goffman would explain in his book, “The presentation of self in everyday life”, where he analyses his concept of “persona" and how every day settings bring a different “persona” out of us, or in the way Italian author Luigi Pirandello would call it, following a similar current of thought as Goffman, a “mask” in his book “One, None and a Hundred Thousand”.
Treating my act as a “product” is in no mean trying ti dehumanise it but, rather, help me in understanding my final goal as an artist, how to brand myself, my target and my long-term goal in a more attentive way.

Genre

The genre of music you decide to work with is important for two different reasons: it helps you in narrowing down your target (audience) and it helps you in narrowing down your “competitors”, aka other artists from the same or similar genre. By knowing the artists I aim to become like, I can study their marketing strategies, their scenic presence, branding, sound and so on to take inspirations and make comparisons with my overall act. From this, I took in consideration three artists that I admire and with similar style and levels of popularity: Lady Gaga, Halsey and Bishop Briggs.
Their genre includes different - yet similar - categories: pop, electronic, dance, rock, indie pop, R&B. Therefor, my music falls in some of these categories, aiming to be electronic pop with rock and R&B influences.

Branding

“Strong artist brands do not happen overnight. It takes years of cultivation on behalf of the artist and the artist’s team. To be successful at branding, one must have a firm understanding of how to create the artist’s brand, how to promote and build the brand, and how to maintain the brand.” (Tammy D., Amy Sue M., Clyde Philip R. p 109)

A strong brand makes it easier for your audience and the general public to recognise you and remember you. Just like any product, a strong brand is as important for a recording artist. It will

help not only to create an EP or Album by having a clearer idea on the approach, but also with collaborations (a brand may also have core values represented by the artist which can help in finding collaborations in similar fields of interest) and merchandise (a logo, an image, any visual representation that can help by also broadening your audience). My brand will be a result of my personal core values and the inspiration taken from the artists I admire and the artist I'd like to become.

Target Audience

I will study my audience by existing data available through previous personal releases and by studying the audience of artists similar to my act; I will also invest in some paid ads on Facebook (and potentially other social media platforms) to monitor the response of the ads and better understand my target audience.

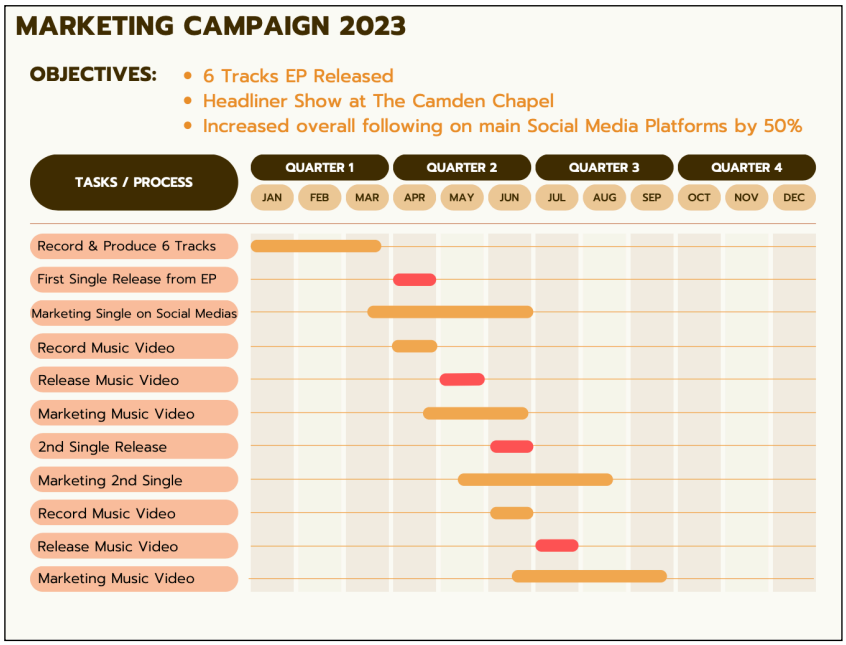
I will study their demographics dimension which "includes everything from age to social class to religion" (B. Borg, 2020), the psychographics dimension which, as George and Micheal Belch explain in their book *Advertising and Promotion*, helps to better understand the personalities of the targeted consumers through an "AIO" assessment which stands for "activities, interests and opinions" (G. Belch, M. Belch, 2009) and the behavioural dimension which, from authors Richard Czerniawski and Michael Maloney, in their book *Creating Brand Loyalty* (R.Czerniawski, M. Maloney, 1999), is one of the most important things you can understand about your audience.

The Budget

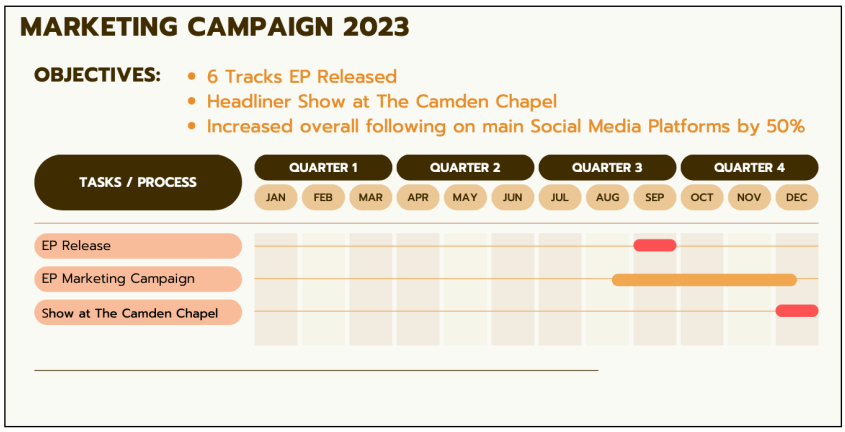
My ideal budget is set at no more than £5,000 per year. The budget can fluctuate to a max of £6,000 per year if necessary, but the aim is not to surpass (ideally spend even less of it) the £5,000. This budget comes from personal savings and does not take in consideration ideal help or support from a label or third parties.

The Strategy

"A **marketing plan** is a single -or album- specific plan that describes activities selected to achieve specific marketing objectives for that release within a set period of time. Record labels create an initial marketing plan like you might see at any other company. The document allows the label to develop a timeline and coordinate the plan with the artist, their management, and other external partners. For a record label, the marketing plan is the blueprint for each release and is a living, breathing document that is to be adjusted in response to the market. Every record released has its own unique marketing plan based on expectations of sales performance and tailored to the target market." (Tammy D., Amy Sue M., Clyde Philip R., p 139)



As stated previously, the marketing campaign will start in January 2023 and end in January 2026; my long term goal is to get signed by a label (independent or major label) and become financially stable via my releases, shows, collaborations and anything related to me making music or writing songs. By "being financially stable", my meaning is to reach an average net income of £2000 per month by the end of 2025.



January 2023 - December 2023

The first Marketing Campaign sees as objectives the release of a 6 tracks EP, an headliner show a The Camden Chapel via the music agency TalentBanq, and an increased overall following on my main social media platforms by at least 50%, the platforms being Instagram, TikTok, Youtube and Facebook.

The first thing will be to finish the recording of the EP by the first quarter (March 2023). The budget I aim to invest towards it is of £1,000.

During the second quarter, I will start advertising the first single from the EP during mid March via free social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and Facebook. If deemed necessary, I will invest £200 to go towards the marketing campaign for the single release. The single will be released in April with its advertising happening till June.

In April I aim to also record the Music Video for the first single, with a budget of £400. The Music Video will be released within 4 /5 weeks from the release of the single, to keep the public interested while also having more material to manage the marketing campaigns.

The second single will be released in June, with its marketing campaign starting mid May. £200 will be used to reach a wider audience via the social media platforms Instagram, TikTok and Facebook. Depending on the response, the money invested in the advertising may vary. Its music video will be recorded in June with the release set at the beginning of the third quarter. The whole EP will be released in September 2023, with the marketing campaign starting mid August. The budget for advertising will be higher - £300 to £400. Live performances will also help me advertise the EP and the show at The Camden Chapel set for December 2023. Budget for the show (hire venue, FOH and any other necessity) will be £500.

BUDGET 2023	£5,000
EP Production	£1000
Ads	£700
Music Videos	£800
Show	£500
Merchandise	£200
TOTAL EXPENSES 2023	£3,200
BUDGET LEFT	£1,800

The EP will also have its own merchandise (tshirts). By making the design myself, the creation of 40 t-shirt via the website “Clothes2order” will cost me around £200.

The total budget left from this year’s marketing campaign from the starting £5,000 will be £1,800.

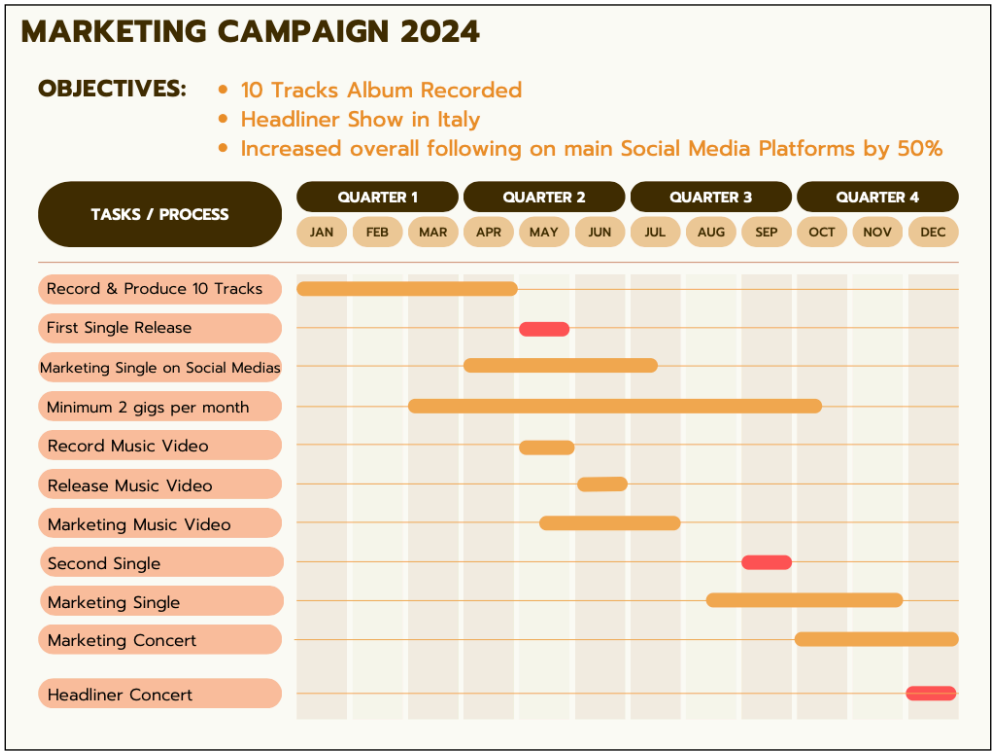
January 2024 - December 2024

The objectives for the year 2024 will be to record a 10 tracks Album ready for release in 2025, hold a headliner show in my hometown in Italy and keep increasing my social media followings (at least 50% from the previous year’s gains).

Being it an Album, the time length set for its recording and production is set at 4 months - from January to April - with a first single release in May. The investment expected to go towards the Album will be of £2,000. The approach will be similar to previous year - budget for the single

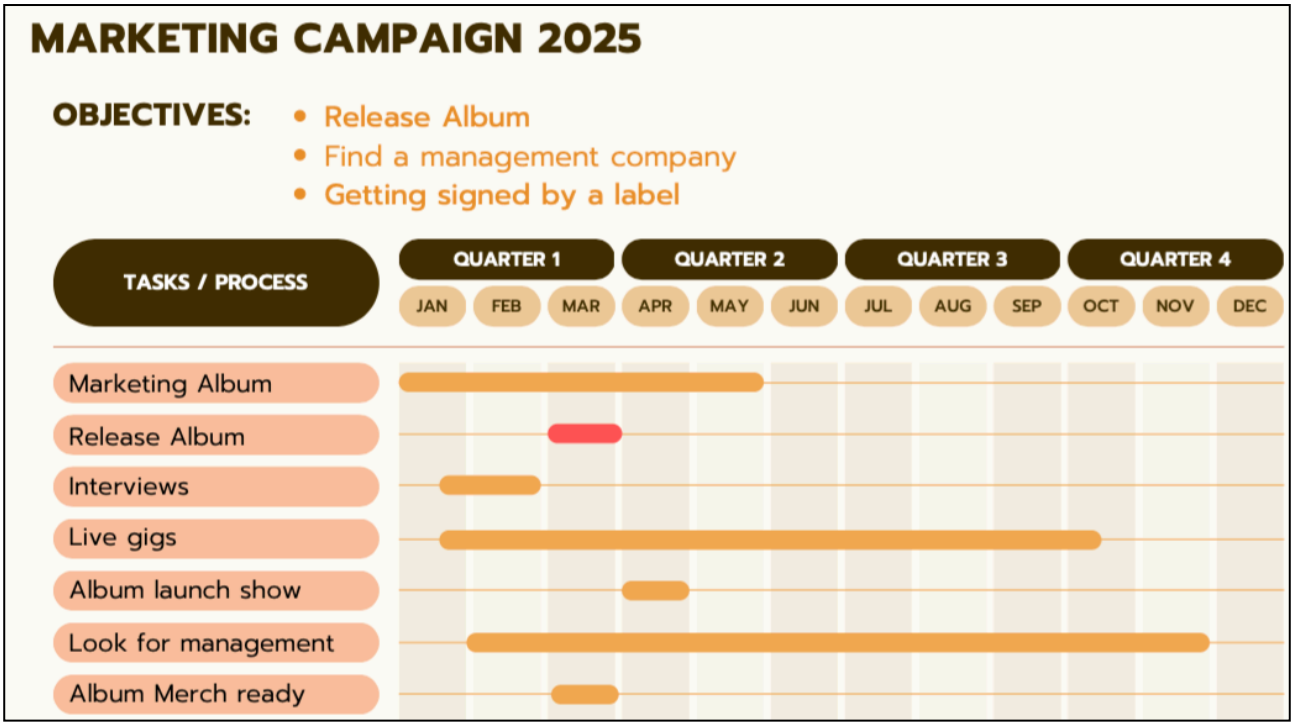
release marketing will be around £200, the music video for the first single will be recorded on the release month and will be published the following month (June) with its marketing via social media platforms happening a few weeks prior and a month after.

The second single from the Album will be released during the third quarter, in September, with a £200 budget for its marketing. The main objective for my 2024 campaign will be the headliner concert in Italy. Marketing will start two months prior and will include interviews with local radio stations and local newspapers, while also advertising it on my main social media platforms. Budget going towards the concert's marketing will be of £300.



BUDGET 2024	£5,000
Album	£2000
Marketing	£700
Music Videos	£400
Concert	£400
Merchandise	£200
Session Musicians	£450
OTAL EXPENSES 2024	£4,150
BUDGET LEFT	£850

January 2025 - December 2025



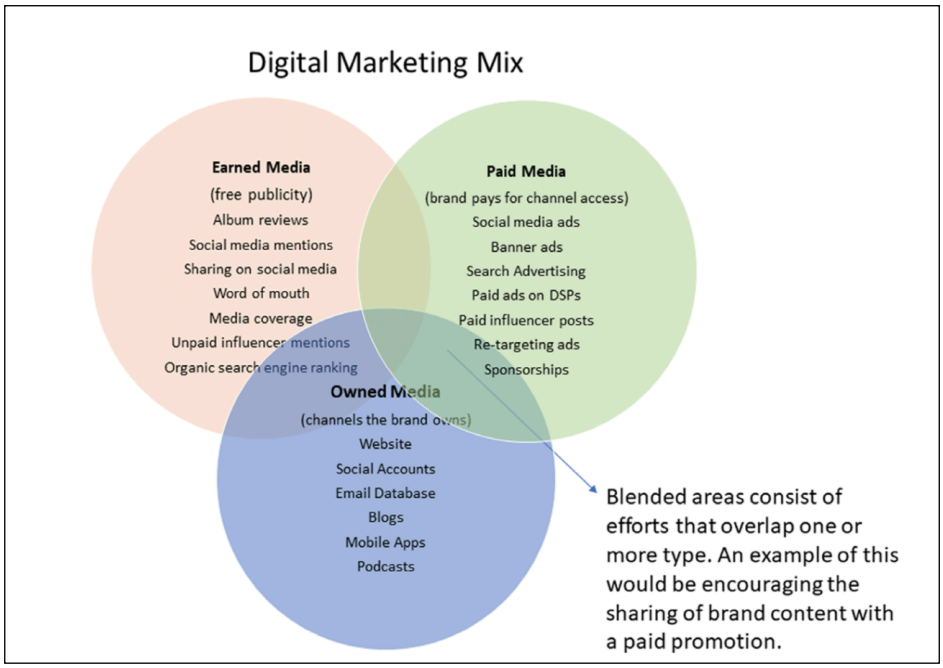
BUDGET 2025	£5,000
Album Marketing	£400
Album launch concert	£600
Merch	£300
Session Musicians	£450
Photoshoot	//
TOTAL EXPENSES 2025	£1,750
BUDGET LEFT	£3,250

The objectives for the third year of the marketing plan will be the release of the Album (10 tracks), to find a management for my act (this will be an active research throughout the years but, depending on the response of my releases from previous years (therefor having more achievements to show up for) it might be easier to find a management company and, as per stated in the chart, also find a label to get signed with.

The marketing of the Album will start in January with a budget of £400 and will go on till late May. I will try and look for interviews with either online blogs, newspapers or radio station in the month before the release while also playing an average of 3 gigs a month for the whole year.

The Album will be released on all major platforms in March with its launching concert in April. The decision on where to hold the show will depend on the response I will get from the audience, but the set budget will be around £600, with £450 going towards the session musicians.

[Figure 14.1 from pg 326 of "Marketing Recorded Music" by Tammy Donham, Amy Sue Macy and Clyde Philip Rolston]



The budget is indicative, meaning that it may change depending on different factors such as extra unplanned expenses, different response from the marketing paid ads and the different response from the public, but the plan will serve me as a guideline to have a better understanding on how to achieve the goals I've set for my career.

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