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Creative Music Management

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Assignment Title – Element 2: Reflective Summary

## **1. Introduction**

This project began with Gamble, a recent signee to Boon Records approaching me with a demo for his new track “Call me again”. This was a rough acoustic version of the song we know today. At this point I called a meeting with the rest of the team and previewed this track to them. After hearing Gambles vision for the song, we devised an initial plan for the record including the discussion of various marketing strategies as well as a project timeline and subsequent deadlines. As a team we agreed that in order to successfully break Gamble we would need the help of our various industry contacts, therefore we subsequently compiled a list of contacts who could potentially aid in the promotion and placement of the track. It was at this time that we tasked our in-house producer “Devine King” with producing the track, keeping in mind Gambles vision as well as the initial project plan. Studio sessions were then booked, and Devine King alongside Gamble worked together on the final version of the track. The unmastered version was brought to the team, feedback was given and subsequently Devine King delivered the fully mastered version of the track “Call me again”.

After hearing the finalised version of the track, we worked on developing a marketing plan for the track. This involved working closely alongside our marketing director Kyras and our online manager James. An initial marketing plan was created, and strategies were devised with the intention of introducing Gamble to the world. Certain goals were set in order to gauge the success of the project, we decided that the main priority was to build Gamble’s fan base and therefore decided that we would aim to achieve 50,000 streams on Spotify during the first 3-month period.

## **2. Roles & Responsibilities**

Throughout this project I had two main roles, which were to act as the creative director and financial manager. Under the role of creative director I was directly responsible for developing all aspects of Gamble’s brand while also delivering content that aligned with his brand. My duties as the financial manager mainly revolved around compiling a budget and seeking funding through various methods. The following section goes into detail about how I managed the responsibilities associated with these roles.

### **i. Creative Director**

As the creative director I was tasked with creating a complete branding plan for Gamble that aligned with the marketing plan and goals we had set. This branding plan was centred around creating a unique image and narrative that would provide an artist background as well as a unique artist story for potential new fans. After sitting down with Gamble, we compiled a list of artistic influences and set about identifying any brands, artists and marketing opportunities that aligned with these influences. At this point we set about creating a mood board for Gamble, highlighting different styles and images that aligned with his brand. Upon creating the first set of mood boards we then began to work on how we would develop this image in the months after release, as a result we compiled a

mood board reflecting where we believed Gambles image should progress to over the next 6 months. At this stage a photographer was hired in order create headshots and content for the website and mobile app. This involved working closely alongside our digital manager James in order to match Gambles image with his vision for the website and mobile app.

Lastly regarding Gambles image, I began to focus on the creation of artwork for the single “Call me again”. This was mostly done through Canva’s desktop graphic design platform. After an in-depth conversation with Gamble regarding the main themes of the song and any potential ideas he had regarding the artwork I set about designing it. In order to keep the costs low, I searched through various websites and platforms with the aim of finding applicable copyright free stock image. After searching through many platforms that provided stock images I eventually stumbled upon Pixabay. Through Pixabay’s website I searched through many images related to the previously mentioned themes. As a result, I found the perfect image that effectively captured the feeling and underlying themes of the song.

Another responsibility of mine was to design and develop merchandise. We all agreed that in order to promote the single that this should revolve around gambles single cover and his unique artist logo. T shirts featuring both these images were designed and printed in order to sell them at live shows. We all believed that merchandise was an effective tool in order to capture more value form shows and also helped with increasing the exposure of the track.

## ii. Finance Manager

My first role as director of finance was to figure out the initial costs necessary to achieve our goals and execute our plan. On top of our existing expenses stemming from recording and production costs, I estimated approximately how much we would need to cover other expenses. The first step was estimating the total cost of developing a website for Gamble. Our digital manager created a website and mobile app for free on Bandzoogle and requested a total of £99.48 in order to host the website. The savings made on the website would open up the budget for more marketing activities. In order to generate some content for the website a photographer was hired in order to take headshots at the cost of £80.

Live events were my next concern. I estimated that in order to throw a successful single launch event in Tileyard’s Gallery we would need approximately \$200. I also managed to secure sponsorship from neighbouring brewery Two Tribes, who agreed to provide one keg of beer free of charge. In order to follow up this event with recurring live performance, I arranged with one of my contacts in Oblique Live to book Gamble for several their “Introducing” events at no cost to us. We were given permission to sell merchandise and physical records at these events. This again greatly increased our exposure and introduced gamble to a wide and varied audience.

A videographer was hired in order to capture footage at these events for use in a music video. The total cost of the videographer capturing and editing the music video was £250.

In order to effectively meet the marketing plans goals, I set aside £70 pounds in the budget for social media advertising. £20 was also set aside and allocated to our budget for SubmitHub in order to plug the tracks to playlists and radio stations.

We decided that in order to capitalise on our live shows and create more value that we would focus a significant portion of our budget on developing merchandise and limited-edition physical releases. This amounted to £153 in total. The revenue from this activity proved to be vital, which will be shown in reflection section of this report.

At this point the total expected costs for the project stood at approximately £1170. This was well above the budget of £800 that Tileyard and Boon records had set so I sought about seeking extra funding. After contacting the PRS foundation through one of our project leader's contacts I secured a grant worth £250 to put towards the marketing budget. A Kickstarter was launched and promoted through Gambles social media accounts which raised a total of £200. This brought total funding to £1200 which only gave us approximately £80 worth of breathing room.

This budget saw us through until the release of the track. At this time, we as a group decided that in order to fully capture the songs full value that we should seek out sync placements. We contacted Autonomy Music and enquired about hiring them to promote the synchronisation of our track. Autonomy agreed and in return requested £250 in exchange for their help in finding sync placements. This brought us over our initial budget and so we therefore had to use some of our profits from merchandise and physical sales to cover this extra expense. This ended up being a rather good investment as we secured a placement on ITV's reality TV series "Love Island".

### **3. Use of digital technology**

The use of digital technologies throughout this release greatly helped with multiple aspects of this project. Artworks used in the cover art, logo and merchandise were mostly designed using Canva. Canva is an extremely efficient and easy to use graphic design platform. It allowed me to quickly and effectively create artwork without much prior experience in graphic design. I consistently took advantage of this tool while designing merchandise, logos and cover art. Canva was also used by our project leader, Elliot, when creating the diagrams that you can see throughout our portfolio.

After content was created through Canva our digital manager, James, effectively utilised Bandzoogle's platform in order to create and host Gamble's website. Bandzoogle provides a website design platform that aims to allow artists to create sleek and professional websites without needing any prior coding experience. Bandzoogle's platform was essential to our operation as it allowed us to save significant amounts of time and money.

When designing marketing and financial plans we decided as a group to use Google Docs. Google Docs is a very effective tool especially when collaborating on a portfolio that requires constant input and affirmation from the group. Google Docs allowed the whole team to collaborate on one document at the same time. This increased the efficiency of the overall project and allowed for flexibility as we adapted and edited the portfolio.

All digital assets such as artwork, mp3 files, wav files and stems were shared through Dropbox. We created a group folder that everyone could contribute to. Dropbox was an extremely effective way of storing our digital assets and backing them up. Dropbox provided peace of mind that we would not lose any of our digital assets. As well as this drop box allowed us to have full control over who had access to what assets by password protecting certain sensitive files. This allowed us to protect against certain possibilities such as the track leaking before its scheduled release date.

When marketing the track and seeking out blogs to review it we found SubmitHub to be extremely useful. SubmitHub is a service that allows you to submit a track and send it to various different blogs on the platform. This allowed us to target specific related blogs, at a cost, and would ensure that the track was listened to upon submission. As we were essentially introducing Gamble to the industry, making bloggers and play listers aware of his new single was essential. We used many of their reviews in our promotional content and gained some valuable traction on Spotify from some of the playlists.

#### **4. Reflections**

This single release went extremely well with our streaming numbers and revenues surpassing our initial goals. Effective investments into Instagram marketing and pursuing sync deals greatly increased our exposure and therefore drove traffic towards the single. The investment into pursuing sync placements with Autonomy were very beneficial as we expect most of our profit from the single to stem from sync revenue. However, we had to dip into our merchandise and physical sales profits in order to fund this investment. If I were to change anything about the initial budgeting, I would firstly have included this cost or an estimation of this cost in the budget. In future budgeting exercises I would also set aside a sum of money in reserve to cover any unexpected costs. £80 was nowhere near enough breathing room and if we did not have the profits from merch and physical sales to fall back on, we would not have been able to fund our most profitable investment into sync. If this was the case our profits would have only been slightly higher than expenses providing a fairly underwhelming return on investment. Ticket sales were somewhat underwhelming for our single launch event and in hindsight more attention should have been paid towards driving ticket sales. Most of the promotion for this event revolved around word of mouth. If I was to re-evaluate the situation, I would have set aside more money from the budget in order to effectively promote the concert on Instagram through Instagram advertising.

#### **5. Summary**

As a whole this was a very successful release and a great learning experience. The opportunity to work alongside an excellent team and artist made this project an enjoyable and fulfilling venture. Every team member was acutely aware of their individual roles and subsequent responsibilities. As a result, I believe that we have successfully introduced Gamble and his tailor-made brand to the industry and hope to work alongside him on many future releases. The revenues from streaming and synchronisation made this a profitable venture for all and show great promise and potential for gambles future within Boon Records.

Word Count: 2169