

**The brief for this essay is to analyse a company within the Tileyard community and rebrand it. For this purpose I have reviewed Deviate Digital. The following sets out my assessment of the company's current brand image, the strengths and weaknesses of its brand and my proposed rebranding campaign for Deviate Digital.**

It is widely acknowledged that there is now an over-saturation of artists within the music industry which in turn has created a necessity to compete at a higher level for the attention of consumers and fans. We see this over-saturation in the number of songs that are uploaded to Spotify daily, which can reach up to 60,000 (Tim Ingham, 2021).

To distinguish themselves from the rest of the pack, artists, labels and businesses can benefit significantly from the use of marketing agencies. However, with an estimated figure of 221,000 professionals working in the marketing industry in the UK alone (Statista, 2022), it is evident that there is also saturation within this field and these agencies must be creative and distinguishable in order to be successful both for themselves and for the entities they are trying to market.

### **Deviate Digital:**

In this context I have reviewed Deviate Digital as a good example of a company that looks as if it is trying to respond to this over-saturation in the music marketing industry.

Deviate Digital is a “360 creative digital marketing agency” founded in 2017 by industry veteran Sammy Andrews who has an extensive history of working within the digital sector of the music industry. Sammy believes wholeheartedly in the use of digital marketing and data-driven techniques to assist artists and labels in their marketing approaches (Sammy Andrews, 2019).

Deviate Digital specialises in the following fields: artist and product campaigns, creative digital marketing, streaming strategies, data analysis, asset creation, media buying and training (Deviate Digital, 2022). The list of artists that the company has worked with is large and varied and notably includes *Little Simz*, *Annie Lennox*, *Damon Albarn*, *Arlo Parks*, *The Kinks* and many more. This is an impressive catalogue of musicians considering how Deviate Digital was founded only 5 years ago. This striking rise to success in a fairly short period of time is also exemplified by the companies with which Deviate Digital has been working, including AWAL, Tileyard, BMG and Kendal Calling Festival to name just a few.

In February of this year, Deviate Digital announced that their advertising services would be offered directly to artists and their managers (music business worldwide 2022). A client user

interface was also mentioned, allowing artists and businesses to see reports on their advertising and marketing strategies in real time. This shift towards more accessibility and user-friendly interfaces for clients indicates that the company is looking for growth and change, potentially rebranding itself into one that can provide attractive elements to its business model to entice future clients, while at the same time providing a better experience for their existing ones.

### **Branding Strengths and Weaknesses:**

Performing a SWOT analysis has been a useful tool in helping in understanding the company and where it could grow. “SWOT analysis is a framework for assessing a firm’s resources and capabilities (strengths and weaknesses) and external market situation” (Madsen, 2016)

Deviante Digital has many strengths, as follows:

Not only is the company’s network of clients large and varied, but it is also important to note that the campaigns Deviate Digital has been involved with have been very successful. Many campaigns involving the artists mentioned above have resulted in top 10 chartings.

Another strength of the company is its Chief Executive Officer, Sammy Andrews, herself. She is a significant asset in terms of the way Deviate Digital operates as a company. Sammy Andrews is an advocate for discussion and education in the role of digital marketing techniques within the music industry, featuring on many panels and talks, web seminars, as well as having her own column on MusicWeek.com. With the wealth of knowledge and experience she has accrued over her career in the music industry, it is laudable that she is so willing to share her insights into these topics. This sense of education is also reflected in the way Deviate Digital works, where training clients is an important element to Deviate Digital’s business ethos.

In addition, and as explained below, the name and logo of the company are strong and should certainly be optimised in any rebranding campaign.

There are some weaknesses. The primary one to my mind is the lack of an effective website. Currently there is only a simple landing page with a newsletter signup box. The following remark was made in a post by Music Business Worldwide in 2021: *“Despite the nature of the company’s work, to date, Deviate has never had a website. All the company’s work is generated from referral/word of mouth”* (Music Business Worldwide, 2021).

While the current format has evidently sufficed up until now, leading to the successes already identified, there is no stand-out explanation as to why the company should continue without an effective website. One could argue that in this internet-driven world where information is so easily accessible and consumable, holding back that information is a form of standing out from the crowd. This is a practice I would refer to as “mystery marketing.” However, the benefits from creating a website and using it as a platform for business-promotion (including education), search engine optimisation (SEO) as well as ownership of their own content are too vital to miss out on in my view. Chris Anderson writes in *The Long*

*Tail “Along with being the the best word-of-mouth medium ever, the Web is also the most measurable one” (Chris Anderson, 2009).*

While Deviate Digital’s February announcement shows that it is clearly keen on providing information and accessibility to its existing clients, presumably through its back end systems, (see their February announcement above), the opportunity to educate more broadly and develop and own content is something that should be an obvious goal to include in Deviate Digital’s marketing toolbox. As previously mentioned, Sammy Andrews has a wealth of knowledge and is very happy to share it with the music marketing community. However, that knowledge is not being shared through Deviate Digital’s platforms. This is a missed opportunity to associate the brand of Deviate Digital with the altruistic qualities and the expertise provided by this sharing of knowledge. The current website weakness can easily be turned into opportunities and strengths by implementing the right techniques.

### **Proposed Rebranding Campaign for Deviate Digital:**

**The aim of the rebranding campaign is to focus on establishing an effective website to create a strong visual rebranding, optimise the educational and interactive content and increase attention given to Deviate Digital’s social media platforms.**

Using the Berenschot Project Management Tool, I was able to decide on the project fundamentals for this campaign, namely to increase brand awareness, *“how aware customers and potential customers are of your business and its products.”* (Gustafson, T. and Chabot, B., 2007), as well as re-energising the brand in a more inviting way.

Contributing to the industry in an educational way and setting the brand up for their own content creation are also key goals. The objectives would be measured with metrics and KPIs that will be discussed later on.

I used the Berenschot tool to also organise the project as a whole into sub-projects in hierarchical order. The first sub-project is to create a website, which will start with a visual rebranding of the company. The second is to start creating educational and interactive content for audiences to engage with. The third sub-project is to increase the attention given to Deviate Digital’s own social media platforms, with the use of paid advertisements.

In order to critically analyse the effectiveness of these sub-projects, the Deming Cycle will be used constantly to assess whether the correct approach is being taken at each marketing stage.

### **Website:**

To start creating the website, the first step is to review the logo and iconography of the company. Deviate Digital’s logo is excellent. The angular infinite loop gives the audience a sense of longevity and implies the company will put effort into the client’s campaigns as well as the idea that the work done feeds into itself. The angular nature of the logo also reads as two capital “Ds” which signify the name of the company. Consideration went into the name

of the business, and whether or not it may benefit from being shortened to simply “Deviate.” However, as the iconography is so strong, losing the second word and by that logic, getting rid of the second capital “D” within the logo would be detrimental to the branding.

As the name and logo are not going to be changed, I looked towards other ways of refreshing and updating them. On the landing page Deviate Digital currently has, a shade of orange is used to highlight some of the social buttons as well as the newsletter signup box. I had considered using orange already as a colour for the branding as my research into the psychology of colours had shown that it is an excellent choice for conveying youthfulness, determination and success as well as being refreshing. (James Birch, 2021) Considering Deviate Digital is already using a small amount of orange in their branding, I decided to change the infinite loop to the colour orange, reinvigorating the aesthetic of the branding.

The website will have an “About” section to convey the message and ethos of the company, a section on the services provided by Deviate Digital, as well as “News,” “Our successes” highlighting previous work with clients and a blog page that will be the vehicle for the vast majority of educational and informative content. Providing a substantial amount of text on the website will boost the SEO rankings and should increase the chances of Deviate Digital’s website appearing higher up the list on search engines. This in turn will increase the brand awareness of the company. The signup box that is currently on the landing page will be kept in order to capture data and understand the target audience Deviate Digital is attracting even more.

While that sub-project is being completed, work will begin on the educational and informative content. Considering how regularly and eloquently Sammy Andrews is able to produce this type of content already, there should be a lot of it for audiences to consume very quickly. Using Sammy as the figurehead for this element to the business will be very helpful. The intention of the project is to use her existing authority and image as a spokesperson in the music industry and associate that even further with Deviate Digital. The idea of leadership and followers is talked about extensively in the book *Tribes* by Seth Godin. Godin states that human beings need to belong to a tribe and tribes have leaders. We also want to contribute but also take from these tribes and that we’re attracted by leaders and their ideas. (Seth Godin, 2008). By creating a community or a tribe, the audience will develop a greater affinity

The format of the content is also something that should be addressed. Blog posts and email newsletters will be paramount to creating this community but there are more modern and interactive tools available for this sub-project as well. For instance, live streaming web seminars on the streaming platform Twitch will provide an opportunity for the community to engage with Sammy and the brand. Questions and answers segments can provide insight into the workings of the industry, helping artists understand the best methods of marketing themselves digitally. Furthermore, these types of live online events are also able to be monetised, with viewers sending donations in order for their questions to be answered, creating an alternative revenue stream. Content will also be used on social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram. Twitter would be the predominant platform to use

considering one of the aims of the project is increase engagement with the community created by Deviate Digital and that platform is designed for discourse and interaction.

### **Social Media Strategies:**

This brings us on to our third and final sub-project, the implementation of social media strategies to bolster the brand awareness of Deviate Digital. The previous operations of content creation feed into this sub-project. In the same way as using the website as a hub for people to be educated and informed, social media practices can do the same. The ease of sharing online makes word-of-mouth marketing a very tangible and likely outcome, providing the content is easily consumable and relevant.

The strategy for the project will include using sponsored advertising on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Currently, Deviate Digital is not running any promoted posts on Facebook or Instagram (Facebook, 2022) however there are advertisements on Twitter.

Another objective of this part of the campaign would be to increase social media followers significantly. The company's Instagram account is currently at 777, but by the end of the rebranding process and campaign, I would expect that to be above 5000. Twitter being the predominant platform we would use should mean that the rise will be more dramatic, ideally from 1130 to over 10,000 followers.

### **Effectiveness Metrics and KPIs:**

The effectiveness of the rebrand will be measured in various ways. As regards the website, KPIs such as "new and returning visitors," "average session duration" and email signups will be very important to track and maintain. Measuring social media performance has been discussed already, focusing on higher levels of engagement as well as increases in follower counts. The effectiveness of the content feeds into the two other projects, where if the website and the social media are performing well, we know that the content is of a high standard due to their symbiotic relationship.

### **Conclusion:**

As mentioned earlier, Deviate Digital has already announced this year some big changes in the way they plan to operate. The opening of direct advertising services to artists and clients shows that the company is in the process of expansion and that there is a desire and need to provide more for their clients. With the use of the rebrand and campaign outlined in this essay, Deviate Digital will find themselves in the excellent position where their services will become more easily accessible and to a far larger audience.

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