

Reflective Summary

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1.0 Preparation

The task set out for our group was to create a single of commercial music, a remix and a business plan about how to release both tracks. The portfolio was created by me and three other members who all had roles allocated to specifically fit our strengths. Fortunately, our team worked well together as we all get on at a personal level, I believe that this is an essential attribute to any team task. At an early stage it is important to establish roles for each member of team, this was done on a consensus basis to ensure full commitment.

1.1 Roles

I personally particularly enjoy video production, and the visual aspect of art and music. Ollie expressed interest in doing the music and artwork, as it was something he was already established at. Charlie handled the budget, and Fergus proceeded with Marketing. Whilst these roles were individually allocated to each of us, we were open to contribution and cooperation for each of the sections.

1.2 Communication

Through the course of a few meetings, we could establish what research we had to in our own time. This was especially important as most of the work and research was undertaken in the holiday period, which meant it was not possible to have frequent meetings. Therefore, we created a WhatsApp group so that we could share any doubts or queries with one another. This was incredibly important as it allowed us to ensure that we were all on the same page when it came to the general tasks and aims. We attempted to utilise relevant resources available to us to further improve communication between each of the members. This also meant creating a Google Drive file, where each member can contribute online into the same document to see each other's notes and progress.

I feel that we had adequate preparation for the task, and good communication throughout. This was mainly due to our group chat and Google Drive Document. Whilst these were very effective, there could have been other ways to increase organisation through meeting records or group calls. When looking back at our conversations on WhatsApp, there were often times of confusion which could take a while to sort out due to people being away from their phone etc. A way in which this could have been tackled, and will be enacted in future assignments, would be to have either a skype or WhatsApp group call. This would ensure that everyone was completely up to speed, and that any queries could be sorted out instantaneously.

2.0 Video Choices

For my personal task, the video can only be discussed once the song is agreed upon. This is because a music video acts as an asset to a song, not vice versa. Once the choice was made to create a pop/upbeat commercial track, then I could proceed with planning what type and style of music video would be most effective.

It was decided that two promo videos would be made, to post on our social media pages to build hype and expand reach. Deciding what to include in these videos is very important as it would be the first visuals people would see in relation to the new release. First

impressions account for a lot, especially with the younger generations who have grown up with high quality and high definition videos. This also put more pressure on us to ensure that the videos are to the highest quality, due to the expansive competition available on YouTube and social media that I came across. Fortunately, there are many promo and music videos which could be used as reference points when deciding the details of the videos. Whilst these reference points are important, it is also vital not to make them too similar, uniqueness is an undeniable strength in the music industry.

2.1 Lyric Video Decision Process

A lyric video was unanimously agreed early on. It was important for us to decide as a group the fundamental decisions such as the type of video we would do as it has a direct effect on the rest of the business plan. We decided that creating a full music video on or just after release wouldn't be feasible with the budget we had to work with. I felt this was the right decision, and I then started planning the exact details of our lyric video. Once I had listened to the track multiple times and decided what style it should be, I began researching existing lyric videos for inspiration. There are many different websites that offer their services in producing lyric videos, and for a range of prices. Lyric videos differ, from amateur (Basic functions, standard text), intermediate (Simple, but with various animations, colours and effects) and professional (Advanced graphics or lyrics in-front of commercially shot videos). To decide which of these would best suit our vision, I searched the highest viewed lyric videos on YouTube for inspiration. Whilst there was no sign of amateur style videos, the mix between intermediate and advanced was very useful, as it showed artists as big as Ed Sheeran, Justin Bieber and Major Lazer using intermediate level lyric videos.

I felt that I was capable of finding the best style of lyric video for our track, as I am very interested in music videos and enjoy researching videos for inspiration. After this extensive research, I found Ignite Design, which offered a variety of packages catering to specific requirements. Another, deciding factor was that the company had worked with many big artists before (Katy Perry, Nicki Minaj, Snoop Dogg etc.), and also some that bared similarity to our track, such as Daddy Yankee.

This process helped me understand the need for a perfect mix of inspiration and original creativity. I feel that using one or two examples that have aspects which you would like to resemble is a useful starting point and guide. I also believe however, that creativity and originality is vital to producing a result that is unique and shows people who you are, and what you are about. Whilst I was generally pleased with the process of deciding the lyric video, there are some lessons I have learnt in which I would enact upon should there be another opportunity. Firstly, I would change the order in which I proceeded to create the video. For this task, I tried to imagine what colours, styles, pictures etc, would be used to fit the song first. Retrospectively, it would have been more effective to have a guide/reference video from the start, which I could have then developed my artistic vision for the video.

2.2 Promo Video

The promo videos were also an essential part of our marketing plan. Deciding the promo video took me a while as I wasn't certain whether we should expend further revenue for two short videos. Whilst I recognised the importance of the videos, the focus at the time was on the lyric video and how I could make that as good as it could be. This meant using our video budget mainly for the lyric video. Therefore, I came to the decision that the promo videos should be two short versions of the lyric video, the first being an acapella snippet of the video to tease the track to our audience, and the second being the same snippet of the track but with the added instruments.

At the time I felt that this was a clever alternative that meant we didn't have to expend any more of our budget. Whilst I still think that this was a plausible and sound choice, I personally believe that the process could have been improved upon in various areas. Retrospectively, I should have focused earlier on the promo videos and what content it was to display. This is because the promo videos were to be released first, and they are also the first opportunity to make an impact on peoples first impressions of the track. If I were to redo the plan, I would have put more resources into the promo videos and possibly commissioned an established artist to produce animated graphic designs that fit the genre. This idea, I believe would have been more suited to the style of song and the image that we were trying to get across as a team.

2.3 Spotify Canvas

I decided very early on in the process that I wanted to include a Spotify Canvas upon release of the song. Whilst the canvas may not be a video, it is a very important piece of work as it is what everyone streaming the song on their phone will see. It is therefore incredibly important to make sure the visuals connect with the song and artist.

I have a very strong personal interest in this innovative system that Spotify has created. I also felt that our track styles would be a perfect fit for Canvas. Using the original artwork was an idea I had so that there would be increased association with the album artwork and the song, which would add to the promotion of the song. I also decided that it would be best not to have the song name or artist name on the canvas, this was an idea I got from the official Spotify Canvas recommendations, which turned out to be incredibly useful. Creating a canvas is a relatively simple process which Spotify doesn't charge to display on the platform, which is ideal for keeping costs down whilst also expanding visual reach. I also felt that it would be an effective strategy to ensure that the swaying of the palm trees, and movements of the stars in the sky on the canvas move in time with the beat. Deciding to add a canvas into the mix was a good idea that I would do for any track.

Whilst I was happy with the Canvas created, there could have been alternative ways of going about it. By deciding to not spend money on creating it, I limited its potential and professionalism. If we had a larger budget from launch for the video production segment of our business plan, I would have researched professional animators or graphics creators to create a more enhanced version of the one I made. Even though this would have been the preferred option, I would not have changed the choices I made due to budget constraints.

2.4 Music Video

Due to family loan of one of our team members, we realised we had the budget and capabilities to create a commercial music video. This came later on in the process, after the two promo videos and lyric video were released. I therefore unfortunately did not have a large amount of time to plan the video. However, I decided that the music video must be kept in similar styles to the canvas and lyric videos. We had a budget of £2000 for the video, so I decided to split the budget in half and focus on two core expenditures, camera hire and location. The decision to not include the artist, but instead convey a story of an area is one I came to after seeking inspiration with similar songs. The location budget meant we could find an attractive, sunny area with palm trees as to replicate the general vibe of the song. I felt this was a good choice and kept the video simplistic, as well as vibey and appealing.

Because I had some time constraints with the music video, I feel that not everything was planned or executed to the best of my potential. Retrospectively, I should have persuaded my team to delay the release of the video to ensure it was to the highest standard possible. More time would have given me a better chance to research the best way of maximising our budgets potential. This process taught me the importance of not rushing into decisions, especially when there are large resources at stake.

3.0 Digital Technology's Impact

Digital Technology has rapidly evolved in recent years and has had a huge impact on the entertainment industries, especially the music industry. Utilising various online platforms such as YouTube, Spotify, Instagram and Facebook have created a new way of promoting one's self entirely. It is not only the promotion and consumption of music that benefits the music industry, there are also multiple programmes and platforms which boost team development and planning.

3.1 Promotion

It would be a struggle to find an artist nowadays who doesn't have an online presence. With artists such as Taylor Swift and Justin Bieber having 125 million followers on Instagram alone, it highlights the importance of these platforms and the influence it has on people. Platforms such as Facebook and Instagram are generally used purely for established artists informing fans of release dates, tour dates and merchandise. Other platforms such as YouTube, Soundcloud and Spotify act as streaming sites and promotion boosters, due to low pay-outs from streams.

Another way digital technology has helped to promote musicians would be through adverts. Adverts are now embedded in a huge number of websites, streaming platforms and online applications. This allows artists to get more involved in where and who their adverts connect with. For example, a summery pop song is to be released in the run-up to the summer weather, an effective targeting advert strategy would be to push your ads into retail sites that sell summer merchandise, such as sunglasses, shorts or t-shirts. These can be incredibly influential and even further boost artists potential to promote themselves.

3.2 Team Development

The birth of the internet spawned a new generation of increased connectivity between people online. For any profession, the internet is a vital tool that is the backbone of a company's structure,

whether that's record keeping, transfer of assets or communication. For the music industry in particular, platforms such as Auddly are extremely useful. Auddly is an effective tool to manage your songs, collaborations and music rights. Songwriters and producers alike utilise this platform due to the simplicity of resolving issues that would otherwise become complex. Also, as mentioned in the reflection of our portfolio, we used Google Drive which allows us to all upload individual work into the same document.

Other notable digital technologies that have had a positive impact on team development in the music industry include the Cloud and Video conferences. The Cloud services allow you to store data away from hardware, and also allows you to access the data from anywhere with internet capabilities. This creates numerous opportunities for the music industry as a whole, and means more IP content, back catalogues and information can be stored and accessed in studios across the world. Video conference platforms such as Skype are also incredibly beneficial for the music industry, especially for major and independent labels who may have offices abroad. Being able to have a virtual meeting with an office halfway across the world further improves company communication and allows the head office to convey their business and marketing strategies for foreign markets, almost instantaneously.