

Reflective Summary

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Creative Music Management

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Introduction

This task was a group project to develop an original artist campaign culminating in the release of a single. It required us to work as a team across all fundamental aspects of the real-world music industry, including marketing, timetabling, creative design, budgeting, website and social media design, and live events. As a group we wanted to achieve a well-rounded campaign that was successful in all aspects, and to achieve this it was helpful to specialise our skills by splitting the workload into sections. Having said this, it was also essential that we remained involved in all aspects of the campaign, including those which were not our specific, assigned roles.

Within this introduction I would like to state that I am extremely happy with how the project went and with the portfolio we are able to present at the end. The project was not perfect or without any problems, but this is always to be expected in life, and so, overall I am very satisfied with both the performance of the team and my own, individual performance within this team.

In this reflective summary, I will endeavour to concisely analyse what we did throughout the process and why, with particular attention to my personal contribution. I will also reflect on the impact of digital technologies on the music industry as a whole, and how these influenced our decision making throughout the process.

Early Campaign Stages

The first group decision was to agree on what track we wanted to build the campaign around. It was really important to me, and the rest of the group, that the track itself was one we all liked and believed in. Creating a portfolio and entire campaign around a song that we do not truly believe in makes the process significantly more difficult throughout. Furthermore, I believe that a lack of belief in a product is recognised, and arguably even transferred to the consumer, who can easily see whether or not the product has the full support and backing of those trying to sell it.

When one member of the group introduced us to *Call Me Again* by Gamble we all agreed that this was a track we could get behind. Furthermore, Gamble showed us a fantastic work ethic and a strong desire for success: two fundamental attributes for success in this industry and ones that are essential for me when I look for artists to work with. The track itself is an acoustic pop song with melancholy, easy to follow lyrics. It has catchy melodies and a simple but satisfying chord structure. Upon deciding which track we wanted to use I think we all felt excited to start developing the campaign to make the track as successful as possible!

The next thing we did was allocated roles within the group based on our experiences and skills. Given my experience with web design and running a travel blog, I nominated myself to take charge of all web-related content, a role I was really excited for. I also offered to take

the minutes at all group meetings, a less exciting but equally important role. Below is a breakdown of our individual roles:

GROUP MEMBER	ROLE
ELLIOT	Project Manager (Elliot also produced the track with Gamble)
CALLUM	Creative Director and Financial Director
KYARAH	Marketing Manager
JAMES	Online Manager & Secretary (Minute-taking in meetings)
GAMBLE	Artist
BOON RECORDS	Record Label

I felt very satisfied with this allocation of roles because I was confident that they matched with each group member's skills and experiences very well. Elliot is a natural leader and very good at keeping us on task while retaining an involvement across all areas of the project. Callum has a bachelor's degree in Business and Economics so was a perfect selection to take a lead on the financial front, and Kyarah has experience of marketing so was confident to fulfil this role effectively.

The campaign began in July and we set a release date of Friday 18th October 2019 to work towards. We chose Friday because we wanted to target the Spotify 'New Music Friday' playlist, however we were unsuccessful in this. In the modern age of digital service providers such as Spotify and Apple Music, playlisting and getting tracks into playlists has become increasingly important. Consumers, especially younger consumers, tend to listen to music exclusively on playlists, and we were very conscious of trying to place Gamble's *Call Me Again* on a popular playlist to increase the stream count and Gamble's exposure.

We held monthly meetings but kept in constant communication throughout the campaign and this communication was essential; I worked particularly closely with the creative director, Callum, as we developed online content.

Campaign Goals

In our first meeting we established the goals of the campaign as well as key performance indicators which would allow us to assess our performance. The first key goal we set was that we wanted to reach a total of 50,000 streams after three months of release. This is an ambitious target given that this was Gamble's first release, but we felt with a good campaign and a little bit of luck that this was achievable. This target would hopefully become easier to achieve if we could achieve our second: to get *Call Me Again* at least one sync deal. We all felt the song would be an appropriate fit for reality television shows such as Love Island and Made in Chelsea and so we targeted these in particular, employing the services of Tileyard's Autonomy to help.

Specific to my role as online manager, we also set a target of increasing overall monthly website traffic by 100% during the release month. I felt this was a very achievable target because of Gamble's limited fan base, predominately just family and friends, when we began the campaign. We also set a couple of social media targets: increasing Gamble's

following across all platforms by 50% in the release month and specifically gaining 1,000 extra followers on Instagram. Again, these targets were both achievable because of the relatively small starting figures.

We all recognised the importance of social media within this campaign, especially given the target audience that we were pitching Gamble's music and image to: a young (15-35), predominately female fanbase. This demographic is the most active on social media, particularly Instagram and TikTok, and so these were the platforms we targeted. The prominence of social media marketing today is one of the biggest, most important changes to consider in the creation and promotion of original popular music, and so we knew that this would be an extremely important area to focus content.

Remix Competition

One unique element to our campaign was the running of a remixing competition to create a more electronic version of the single *Call Me Again*. To host this, we used the online platform wavo.me. This competition proved to be a valuable marketing tool that created some noise and ultimately benefitted the streaming figures of both original and remixed versions. The standard of remix was incredibly high, but we had a clear winner by producer Greta Boomberg.

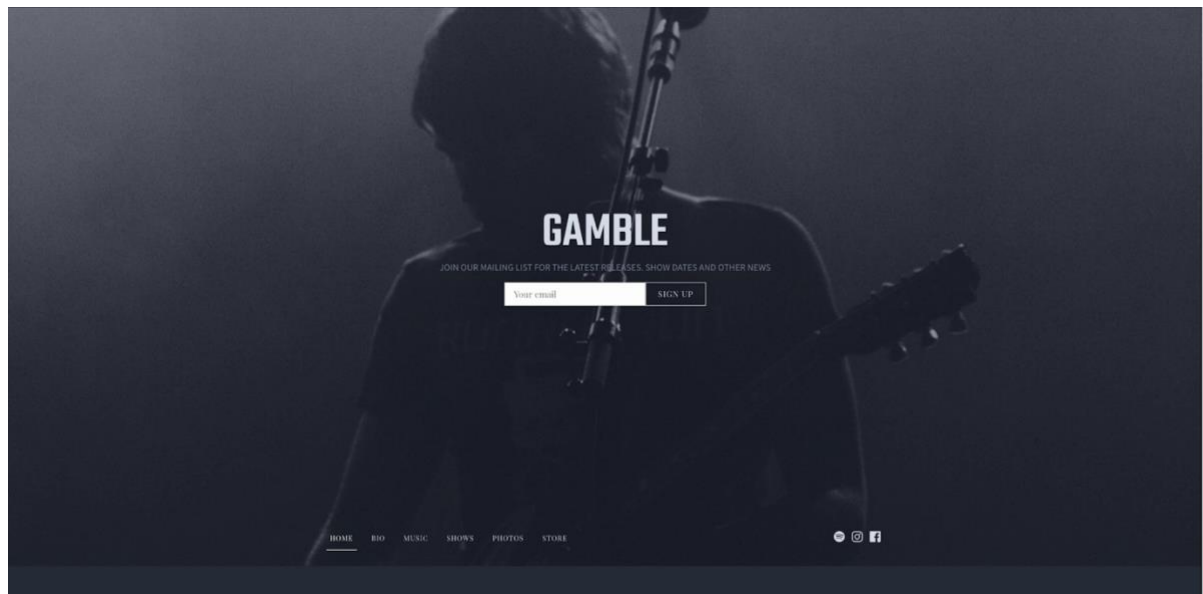
Website Design

As Gamble is a very new artist the website had to be designed from scratch. This included the overall design and layout of the site as well as all content and images to go on the site. I began the design process by returning to Bandzoogle, a web design platform that I have experience using. Bandzoogle is easy to use, requiring no coding skills, and is specifically for building websites for musicians. The platform has the capability for e-commerce, essential for selling Gamble merchandise, and also the capability to upload music to the site, meaning that visitors are able to listen to the single, essential as we attempt to build Gamble's fanbase.

I worked very closely with the creative director, Callum, in the early stages of the website development to create content. The artist sent us a few images he had of himself that we could include on the site, which Callum and myself sifted through to select those which matched our projected image of Gamble. It was very important that I worked closely with Callum, as well as the rest of the team, to ensure that the web design was on point with the overall image of Gamble that we were trying to develop.

What we designed was a dark, moody and minimalistic website which I am very happy with. The colours used are mostly navy and dark grey to create a smoky, dark aesthetic. As well as the overall look of the site, the layout of the website was carefully thought through. The design uses the 'news-feed' style scrolling as this is a website style that Gamble's young

target audience will be familiar with. The first thing the audience see on this 'news-feed' style page is a mysterious image of Gamble with a link to add their emails to the mailing list. This was deliberately placed as the first thing visitors see on the website because we actively want to increase Gamble's mailing list. Although we have taken a very direct approach by putting this as the first thing visitors see, we think (and hope) that fans will engage with it. We want fans to keep listening to Gamble's music, purchase merchandise and buy event tickets. By pushing hard to build a large mailing list, we hope to quickly get an extremely effective method for marketing directly to these fans.



The next feature on the website are the details of the single (and remix). This is the product that we are trying to sell so obviously needed to be near the top of the page. The website includes a preview playback feature allowing visitors to hear 15 seconds of the songs, as well as a link to Gamble's Spotify page, where they can listen to the entire track. I opted to do only 15 second previews because I wanted to direct people to Gamble's Spotify page, hoping that from here they may add the track to a playlist or even download the track to play offline. Although potentially counterintuitive to direct people away from the website, it is on Spotify where most people consume music and therefore it is more beneficial in the long run to direct people towards Gamble's Spotify page: if they love the music, they'll come back to the website!

The final main feature on the website is a brief bio about Gamble. This is designed to help visitors understand and get a sense of who the Gamble is. Having said this, it was kept relatively short as we felt Gamble should not be an open book but maintain an aura of mystery.

Due to the demographic of the audience we were targeting in the campaign, the compatibility of the website on mobile devices was essential. As the target audience was young, 15-35, we estimated that most of them would visit the website on a phone rather than on a computer: as of December 2019 53.29% of internet users are on mobile (<https://gs.statcounter.com/platform-market-share/desktop-mobile-tablet>). The importance of the mobile traffic was another reason I selected the 'news-feed' style layout,

as I felt that this would be familiar to most of our audience, especially if they were accessing the site on a phone.

Overall, I am very satisfied with my performance in designing the website and it is something that I very much enjoyed the process of. The aesthetic of the site became a starting point from which the group developed creative ideas about Gamble's artistic image, and I feel very happy that I could contribute in this way to the group.

Campaign Performance

Overall, the campaign was a big success. The track was released on time, with all supporting content also released, and has so far achieved over 80,000 streams, smashing our initial target of 50,000. The standout success of the campaign was the track's sync placement on ITV's hugely popular reality TV show *Love Island*. This show matches our target demographic perfectly and we saw a real spike in streams following the show, which is undoubtedly the major reason we were able to smash our streaming target.

On a personal level, Gamble's online performance was also, on the whole, a success. Following the sync placement on *Love Island* the number of Gamble's Instagram followers did surpass 1,000, therefore hitting this target. This is fantastic as we look to move forward, as these are fans who will see any new content posted on this account and therefore it is essential that we continue to upload professional quality and engaging content to Gamble's social media.

The website traffic did not perform as well as we had hoped and as such the mailing list remains very small, which is a little disappointing. I do not think this was necessarily because of the design of the website, which I believe was on target with Gamble's general brand image. To help try and understand the reasons for this poor website performance I will look into the analytics of the web traffic as it is important to know whether a larger group of people were visiting once and not returning, or if the traffic was a very small group who continued to return to the site. Another reason for the poor performance could be the viewing habits of our relatively young target audience, who may prefer to discover and follow artists on Spotify and Instagram rather than accessing the artist's personal website and signing up to a mailing list.

Another small regret I have about the campaign is that we did not target TikTok enough. It has become clear with hindsight that the track appealed to young people, particularly female. TikTok is the fastest growing social media app, is extremely popular with this demographic, and allows for tracks to be tagged, meaning that it is a popular platform for music discovery among young people. I have learnt now that we should have targeted this app much more and utilised this pool of potential Gamble fans, and certainly if there is another Gamble release campaign then this is something I will look to do.

Conclusion

Despite these two small regrets, the campaign was clearly a success. We remained within budget, returned a financial profit and achieved a 60% higher stream count than we had targeted (an already ambitious target!) The success of the *Love Island* sync and the increase in Instagram followers are great building platforms from which we can continue to develop Gamble's career.

I found the entire project thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding. The excitement of my website going live and the creative license I had creating and designing it were very memorable experiences. Having said this, for the next project I would be keen to take on a different role to gain new experience and skills, maybe building on my online content skills and switching to a broader marketing role. The team were great to work with and I hope to be able to work with them again, be it with Gamble as the artist or on a completely new project.

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