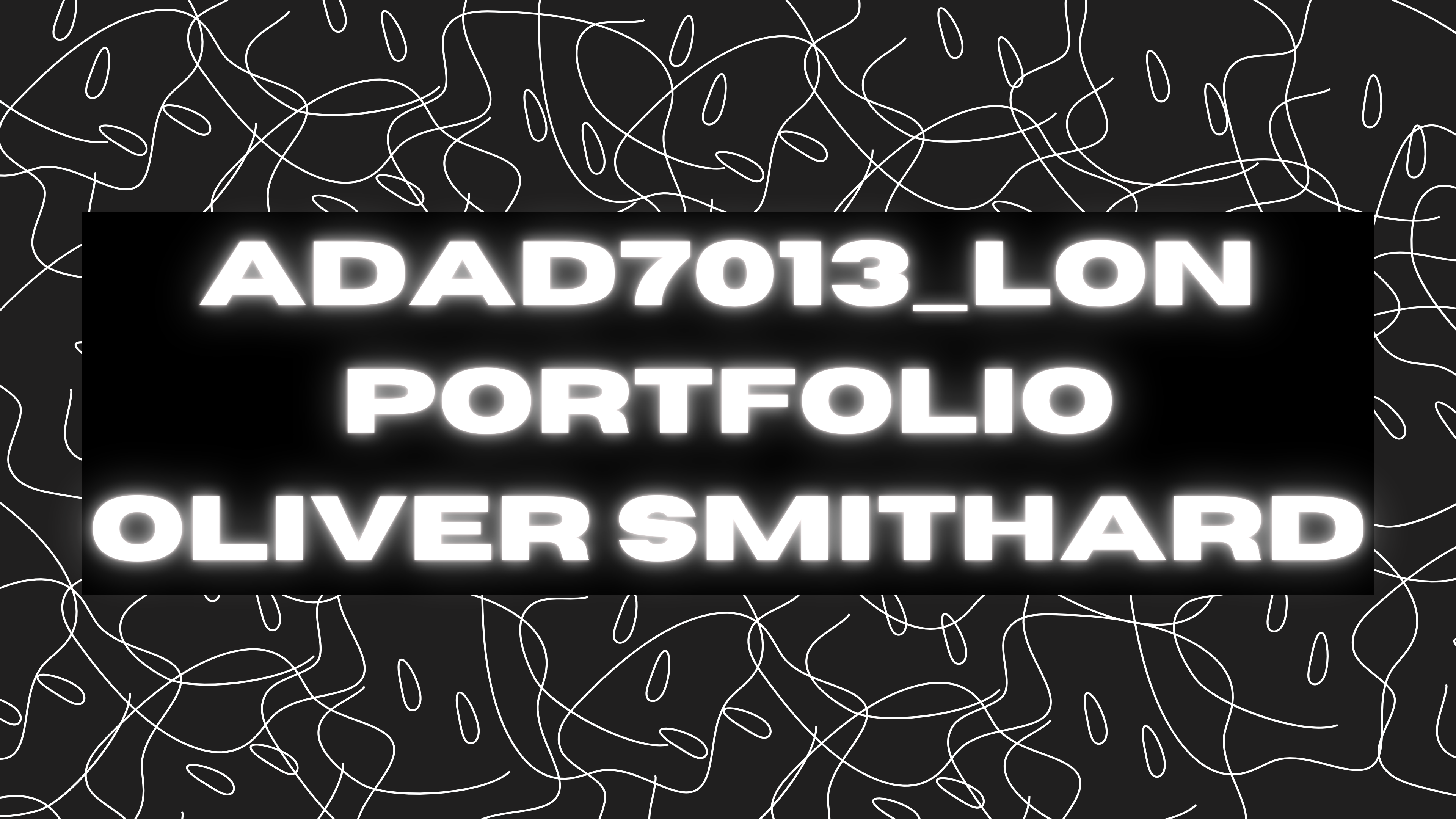




ADAD7013_LON
PORTFOLIO
OLIVER SMITHARD

STERN RECORDS

OVERVIEW

Overview

The product in question for this assessment is a record label called Stern Records that will eventually incorporate events, a regular print and online magazine, and finally spawn an offshoot marketing agency company by the end of year 3.

One of the key objectives is to create a space that not only propagates the culture surrounding UK Dance music but also solidifies the history of this music and its effect on modern-day club culture.

The musical focus of all these elements of the business will be on UK underground Dance music, primarily, Jungle, Rave, UK Garage, House & Techno. With such a varied offering of styles of music from UK clubland, the label will be able to cater to a wide variety of audiences who enjoy these types of genres. It is important to note that the vast majority of those who enjoy one of the listed genres will also enjoy the others as well, therefore this decision to avoid cornering a specific music market will not be to the detriment of the label.

The label will aim to provide a home for fresh new artists in the Dance music scene. While at the same time, the label will reinvigorate older artists and their back catalogue for the generation of fans who are now older but are nostalgic for the tracks they heard when they were clubbing. Re-releasing these older tracks to bring them to a new audience is another goal.

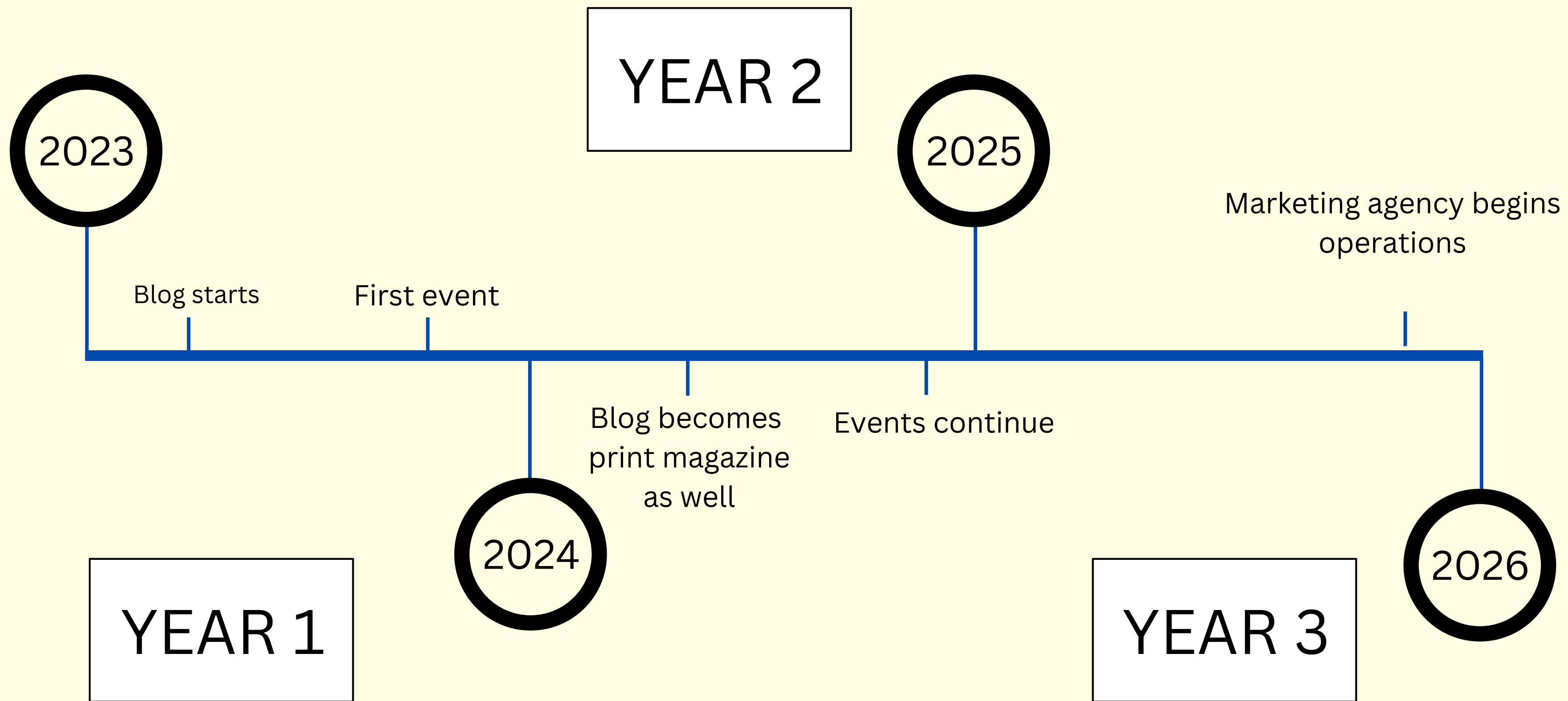
Overview

Building an emotional connection with fans is vital. I want to tap into the sense of "anemoia," nostalgia for a time you were not a part of. This emotive sense is built from an idea that music used to be better back in the day. If the integrity of the music combined with modern day marketing techniques is used correctly, I believe this field of music can be really pushed on.

The label will have an accompanying blog initially in Y1, highlighting artists and releases across the scene. It is an aim to eventually turn the blog into its own standalone print magazine by the end of Y2, which will offer PR and marketing opportunities to other labels and artists, providing additional financial income. Articles on the blog and magazine will feature interviews with artists, reviews of events and festivals, research articles on the history of UK Dance music and much more.

By the end of Y3, my ultimate goal is to create an offshoot from the label, a dedicated marketing agency, assisting independent artists and other record labels. This will aid them in marketing themselves within the UK Dance music scene. The operation of the record label for the three years before the agency launch will build up a substantial network of contacts within the industry and hone and sharpen my understanding of marketing within this field.

TIMELINE





OBJECTIVES & SMART GOALS

Objectives

- Create a record label that provides a home for new artists in the Dance music scene while also reinvigorating older artists and their back catalogue by re-releasing their music.
- Set up a print and online magazine that helps promote the label and its artists as well as independent musicians.
- Programme live events that can act as showcase opportunities for artists as well as alternative income streams, both from tickets and merch sales at the events.
- Build marketing assets (curated playlists, in-house press and blogs, social media marketing opportunities) that are successful for artists post year 3.
- Use these assets to set up a marketing agency that can assist other labels and artists in their music marketing endeavours

SMART Objectives

Record Label

- S** **Specific:** Release 12 Vinyl records and digital downloads.
- M** **Measurable:** 12 releases, one every quarter for the 3 year campaign
- A** **Achievable:** Based on production time for vinyls and campaign cycle per release this is highly achievable
- R** **Relevant:** Releases are fundamental to the operations of any label, vinyl is synonymous with dance music therefore very relevant
- T** **Time-Bound:** Goal is set across 3 year campaign, however if Stern Records is able to release more, that is even better

SMART Objectives

Events

S

Specific: Launch event series towards end of Y1. These will consist of club nights, community talks, photography exhibitions.

M

Measurable: Club nights will coincide with releases, quarterly. Additional events will occur twice a year, all from Y2 onwards.

A

Achievable: Initial costs will be high, but providing a good turn out and incorporation of merch at the events, will be profitable and help fund future events.

R

Relevant: Clubbing is part of the ecosystem of Dance music, very important to incorporate into the business plan. Additional events such as community talks help build a sense of a tribe and following, increasing emotional connection with the brand.

T

Time-Bound: By starting the events at the end of Y1, the record label will be able to build a big enough following to ensure the first event is a success,

SMART Objectives

Magazine



Specific: Create a print and online magazine that highlights emerging talent in the Dance music scene as well as reviews of events, interviews, journalistic pieces on the history of club culture etc.



Measurable: Posts on the blog/online magazine will be bimonthly in Y1. When the print magazine is created, this will be released twice a year.



Achievable: Y1 work will be done by myself, by Y2, contributing writers will be required to ensure pieces are made regularly



Relevant: I want every aspect of the business to become almost a mecca for the fans of this music, therefore providing as much content for those fans to consume is vital.



Time-Bound: Y2 will be the start of the print magazine but blog posts will occur from Y1.

SMART Objectives

Marketing Agency.

S

Specific: Launch a marketing agency which will be focused on assisting other labels and emerging artists in the Dance music scene.

M

Measurable: The launch will take place as long as all other business endeavours have been completed and are successful longterm.

A

Achievable: Successful endeavours with all other elements to the business will ensure that the agency is a success. This is as a result of being involved and learning about how to operate in the marketing field of this section of the industry.

R

Relevant: I believe there isn't enough importance put on marketing underground music, therefore creating an agency will assist artists and labels

T

Time-Bound: This will occur at the end of Y3, once all other elements to the business are successful. This will be because I want to ensure I have the knowledge to execute the agency side effectively. Also the events and magazine elements will provide marketing assets to use for future clients in the agency.

MARKET CONTEXT

Understanding the Market

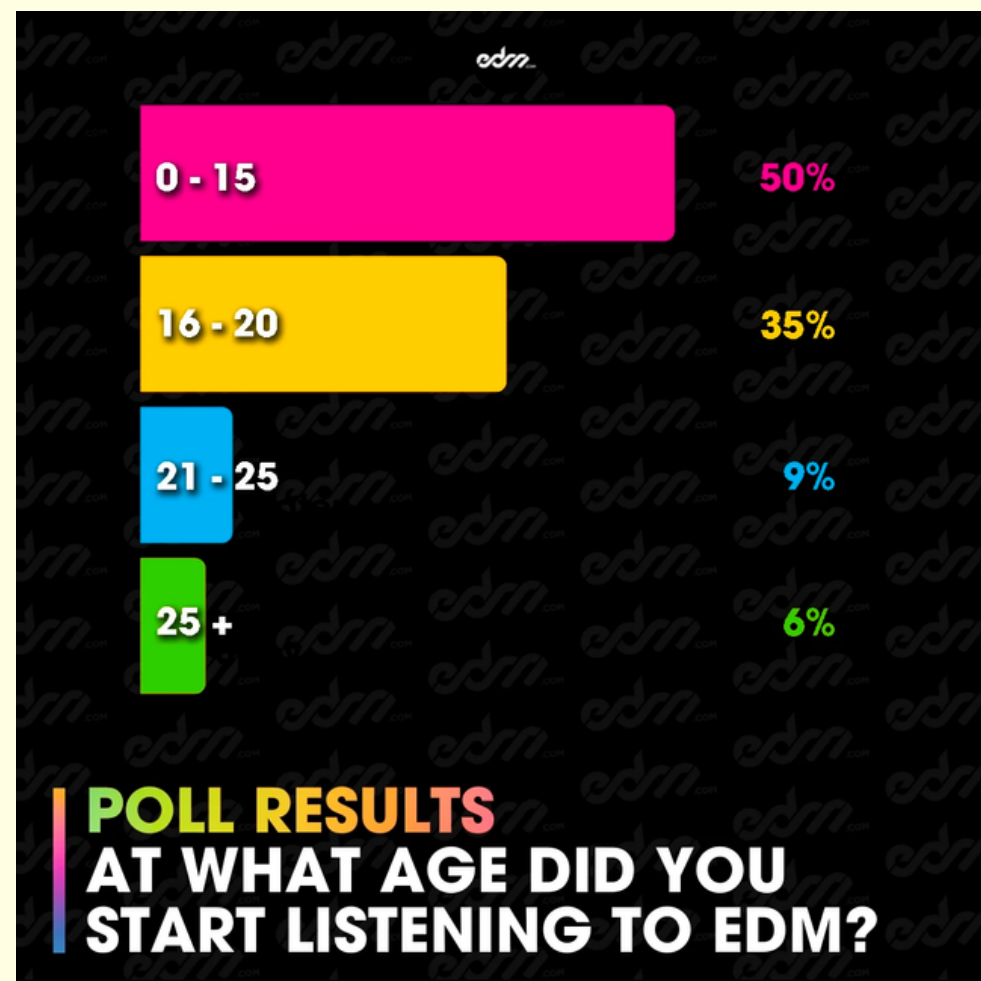
Background

- It is important to note prior to talking about the market and its audiences, that the audience groups for the label, the events and the magazine will be different to the potential consumers of the marketing agency that will come about at the end of Y3.
- The UK dance music scene is alive and kicking. Post-covid, clubbers and fans of this type of music are springing at the chance to engage with and enjoy club music at any opportunity.
- Lockdowns forced people to enjoy this type of music from the comfort of their homes, which in turn has created a market that still appreciates live music but is not, as it was historically, partially dependent on it.
- This has provided labels and artists with more opportunities for marketing their products.
- A report by Spotify into Dance Music in July 2021, highlighted 3 main points:
 - 1. There is going to be a rise in bedroom and underground production, which will also translate into more bedroom and underground DJs
 - 2. Social Media virality will play a fundamental part in the expansion of Dance music.
 - 3. Pop music is adopting Dance music, this is exemplified recently in the charts with B.O.T.A by Eliza Rose, a House/UK Garage DJ and inspired song reached No. 1 in the UK Charts.
 - (Spotify, 2021)

Understanding the Market

Audiences

According to a poll conducted by EDM.com, 50% of those participating in the poll had started listening to electronic dance music between the ages of 0 - 16. See figure:



(EDM.com, 2021)

The music we listen to in our formative years is some of the most important to us in terms of our habits and spending trends as we grow older. There is a deep-seated emotional connection between many fans of Dance music and the genre and its surrounding culture which will carry on into adulthood.

This concept of an emotional connection will be used in the marketing of the label and its offshoot consumer-facing businesses.

Understanding the Market

Audiences

The buying personas and demographics that are going to be receptive to these products will be people who are currently enjoying nightlife and Dance music, going to clubs and DJing but also people who used to participate in that lifestyle. Those people who used to go to raves in the late 80s and early 90s may have a family now and cannot afford the time to participate anymore.

It would seem a waste of an opportunity to ignore this group which will have a higher level of disposable income compared to the expected demographic who are younger and possibly earning less.

Understanding the Market

Products

- **Vinyl Sales**
 - Inserts + Stickers
- **Digital downloads**
- **Merchandise**
- **Membership Cards**
- **Magazine**
- **Events**

A variety of products for sale from the record label is vital not only from a business aspect, diversifying revenue streams, but also from an emotive one.

With more engagement from consumers with sales as well as simply owning more Stern Records products, a greater emotional connection will be developed between the brand and the consumers.

BUYERS PERSONAS

Understanding the Market

Buyers Personas

The Bedroom DJs

Demographics

- Age: 16-24
- Occupation: Student/Young Professional
- Location: London, Bristol, Manchester, Leeds (Big University cities)



Psychographics

- Passionate about new and old dance music.
- Happy to share their passion with peers across social media and in person at events.
- This excitement for this style of music means they are happy to part with their cash for merchandise and releases.
- Aspire to DJ at events in the future.
- Want to support the label and feel part of the "tribe" but also values experiences heavily.

Understanding the Market

Buyers Personas

Out-Every-Weekenders

Demographics

- Age: 25-35
- Occupation: Young Professional/Established DJs
- Location: London, Bristol, Manchester, Leeds (Big University cities)

Psychographics

- Semi or Established DJs partygoers who enjoy going out most weekends.
- May have their own radio shows, play out at clubs regularly as well.
- Defined as mid-level to high-level tastemakers.
- Perhaps less inclined to share music as they want to keep tracks for themselves, making them the only ones who are playing them out at clubs.



Photo © Tony Davis

Understanding the Market

Buyers Personas

Vinyl Dads

Demographics

- Age: 35-50 (predominantly male with a family)
- Occupation: Employed with disposable income
- Location: Across the UK

Psychographics

- Used to go out raving and clubbing in the late 80s and early 90s. Reminisce about that time heavily.
- Have a penchant for the "old school" way of doing things i.e. vinyl, flyers, posters, physical items



LABEL OPERATIONS

Record Label Overview

Releases

Releases will be both on vinyl and digital. Vinyl is an important element for music in the dance music scene and it transcends the label of merchandise for artists. Releasing on vinyl also taps into the idea of scarcity marketing, limiting the supply of a product to increase the demand for it “Record consumption is a direct byproduct of the music fan’s emotional, material investment in the art” (Sonnichsen, 2017).

I have existing relationships with vinyl pressing companies and vinyl distribution networks which will ensure a smooth initial start-up for the business. Manufacturing the records will take 6 months. Distribution will allow for the records to be sold internationally. Initially, there will be a unit split of 70% of records sold through this distribution network and 30% sold by Stern Records in Y1.

This is to maximise the reach and brand awareness of the releases but will incur a higher cost/unit as the distribution will take some of the profits. In Y2, this will move to a 50/50 split and in Y3, a 30/70 split, gradually maximising profit for the label as the reach and awareness of the brand increase. Budget distribution and cost analysis will be explained later in the Budget section of this portfolio.

Record Label Overview

Membership

A service will be devised to cater to die-hard fans of the label, a membership service where purchases of releases, merchandise, tickets to events, magazines and more will be able to accrue loyalty points to spend on future products. This will come in the form of a physical card, tapping into the physical memorabilia sentiment that is so prevalent in the dance music scene.

Membership will also grant the customer:

- Early access to releases
- Early access to merch drops
- Early access to event tickets
- Queue jump at events
- Access to private live-streaming events



EVENTS OPERATIONS

Events Overview

"Events are effective tools to ingrain your message in the audience's mind. They are perfectly suitable for adding a layer of emotional value to a product or service. Visitors to an event undergo the event and experience it, and the event gives them lasting memories to cherish. As a result, the message of the event will stick - provided that it is communicated in the right way, of course. In a time when products and services, and cities too, become more and more alike, this is a good way to distinguish yourself." (Rask, 2017)

Clubbing is a vital element to the dance music scene therefore it is imperative to participate in this business venture.

Creating a regular event series provides a platform for artists who have released on the record label as well as artists that I think deserve a platform to perform for our audiences.

However, the events that will be put on are not just clubbing and musical events. To build that sense of community, I want to incorporate discussion and talk events about important topics within the dance music scene, asking industry experts to come and give their opinions, as well as photography and gallery exhibitions featuring works from photographers such as Tony Davis, Derek Ridgers and Matt Smith who documented the early rave scenes as well as photographers who capture moments in clubs and raves today.

ASSETS

**STERN
RECORDS
PRESENTS**

**NIA ARCHIVE
SKIN ON SKIN
BLUETOOF
DONNY D**

£6
£10
£15
+ OTD

**CALL +447933487521
FOR MORE INFO...**

OR BE BORING AND SCAN THIS:



31/07/23

£6
£10
£15
+ OTD



**JOY ORBISON
ELIZA ROSE
MALL GRAB
YAZZUS**

CALL +447933487521 FOR INFO

MAGAZINE

Magazine Overview

The aim of the magazine is to create content that audiences want to engage with and read, whether it be articles on new releases, both in-house and externally, interviews with artists and key figures in the scene, reviews on events or historical articles on the evolution of dance music.

The magazine will be released twice throughout the year in Y2 but will move to quarterly in Y3 to ensure time management is kept initially. However online articles will be made regularly, attracting audiences to the Stern Records website.

MARKETING AGENCY

Marketing Agency Overview

The agency will focus on assisting other labels and independent artists successfully market their music within the dance music sphere.

All previous work creating the various marketing tools and assets will ensure the agency is effective.

The marketing techniques for advertising the agency will primarily be word-of-mouth marketing. A focus on more B2B advertising will yield a better return on investment as opposed to B2C marketing techniques such as paid ads on social media.



BRANDING & ICONOGRAPHY

Branding & Iconography

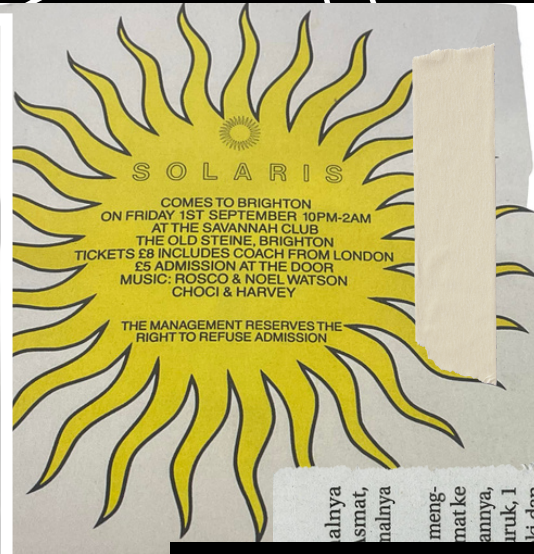
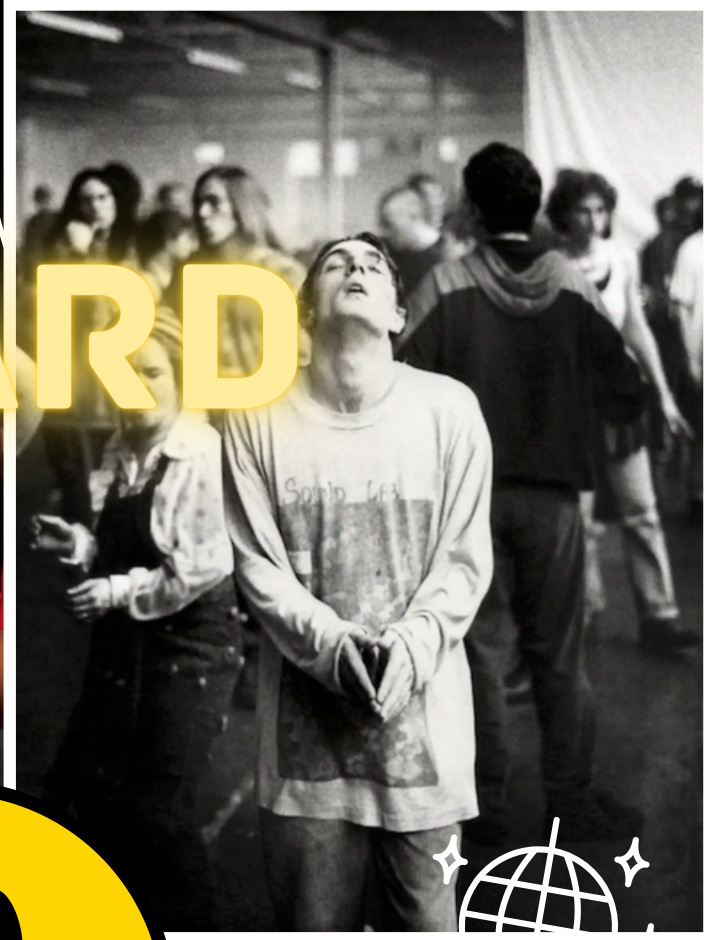
A strong logo and brand image is imperative to cement the record label and its subsidiary businesses into the dance music scene.

While the tone of the branding has to be in line with current trends, I want it to be based in the aesthetics of 80s and 90s rave culture.

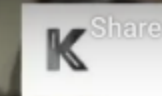
The name of the label is **Stern Records**, the definition of which is "serious or unrelenting" with the idea that Dance music should be taken seriously and that hopefully with the actions of Stern Records, it will grow and continue to be present in pop and subculture moving forward.

It also implies intense energy and therefore thrilling music which will be put out on the record label.

MOOD BOARD



1989 Illegal Rave, Acid House



Watch on YouTube



Mood Board Credits:

Derek Ridgers

Ewen Spencer

Ted Polhemus

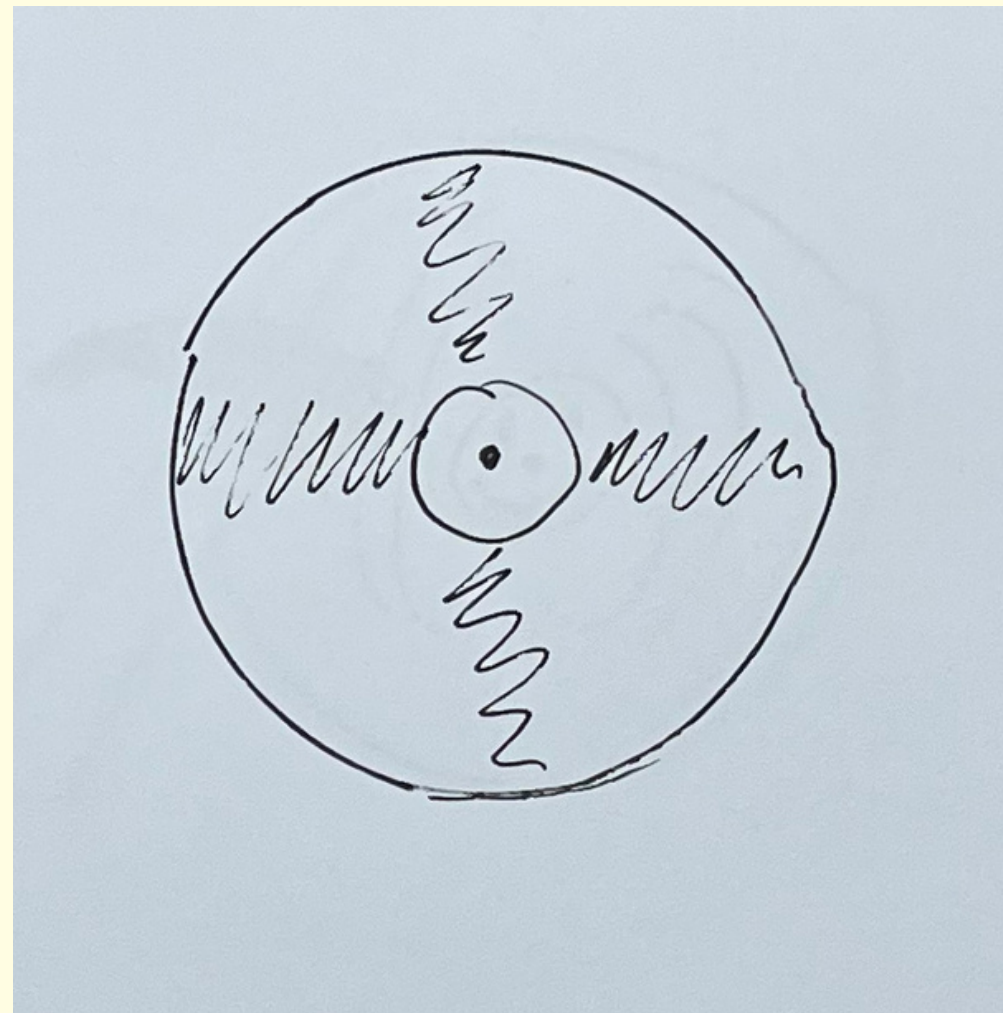
Chelsea Louise Berlin and Moore, 2018

Branding & Iconography

Logo Development

Simple base logo of a vinyl. Record is important to the label therefore a good representation of the brand

Logo 1



Branding & Iconography

Logo Development

Addition of a smiley face on the label of the record, synonymous with rave music and the acid house scene.

Logo 2

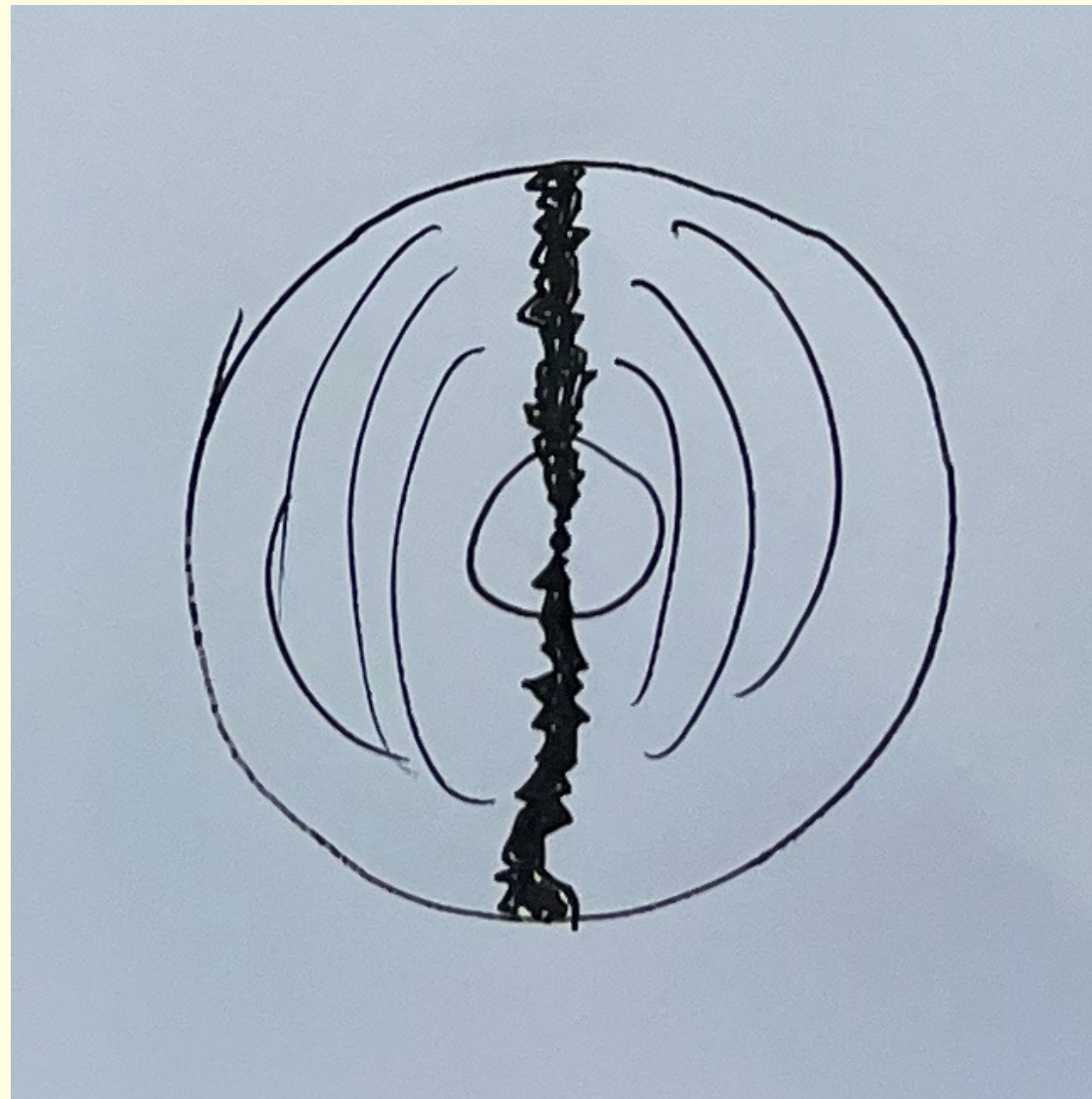


Branding & Iconography

Logo Development

Logo 3

The record has a break across the middle of it. Showing the age, an implication of history and legacy.

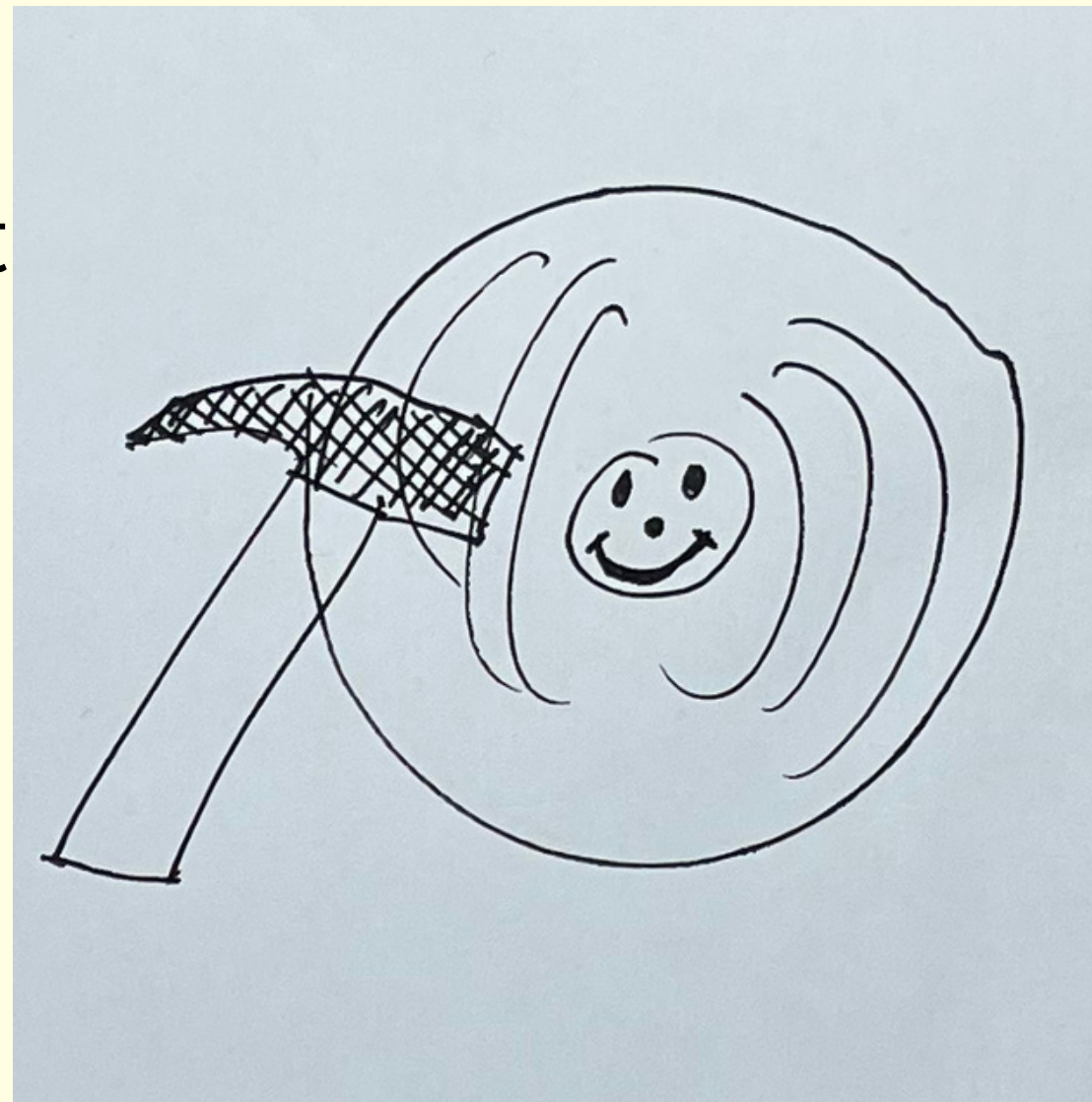


Branding & Iconography

Logo Development

Logo 4

Smiley face returns but addition of hammer hitting record implies the strength and integrity of the music.

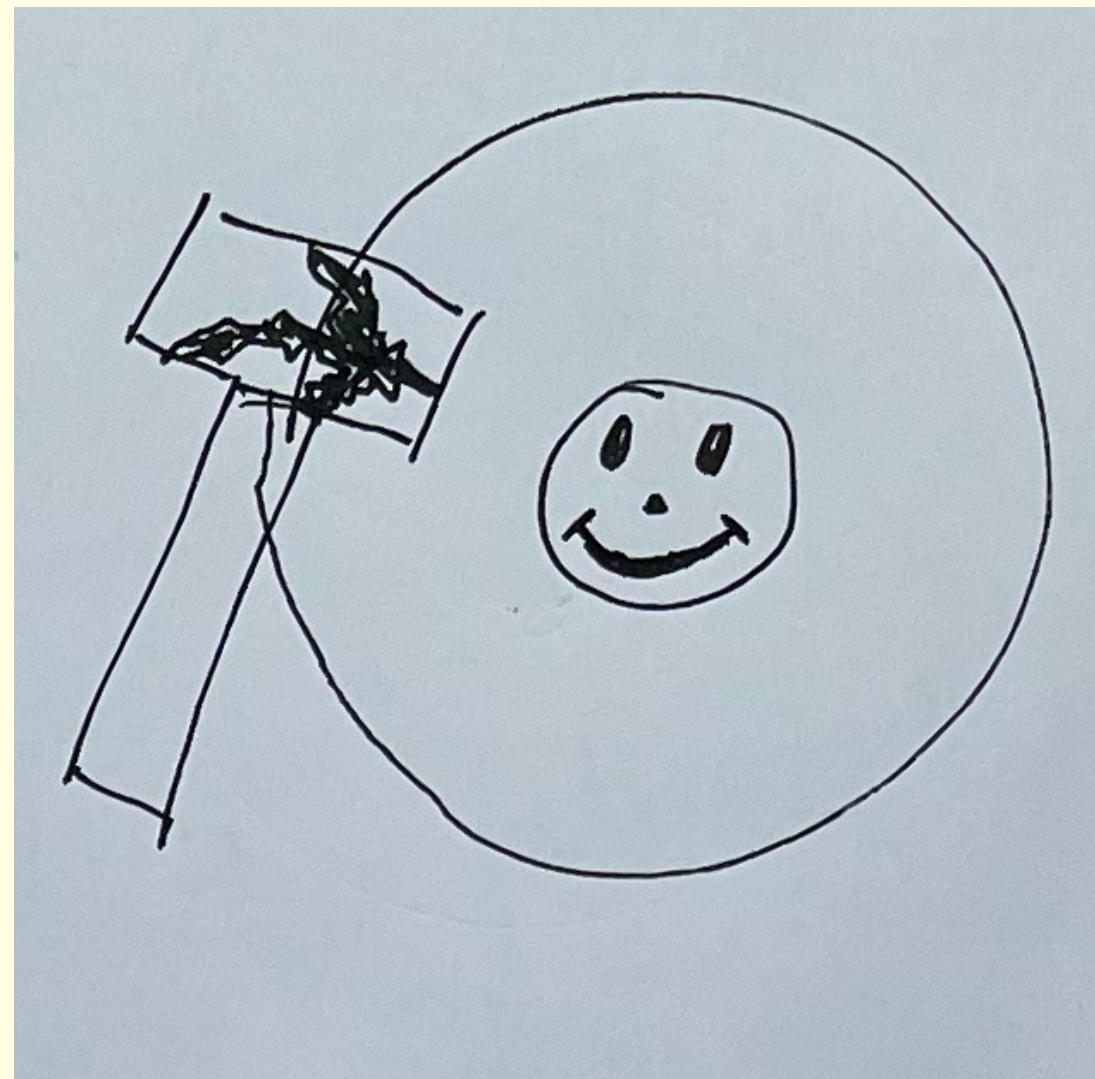


Branding & Iconography

Logo Development

Swapped hammer for a mallet as looks cleaner and added a crack in the head of the mallet, compounding the sense that the music is "unbreakable."

Logo 5

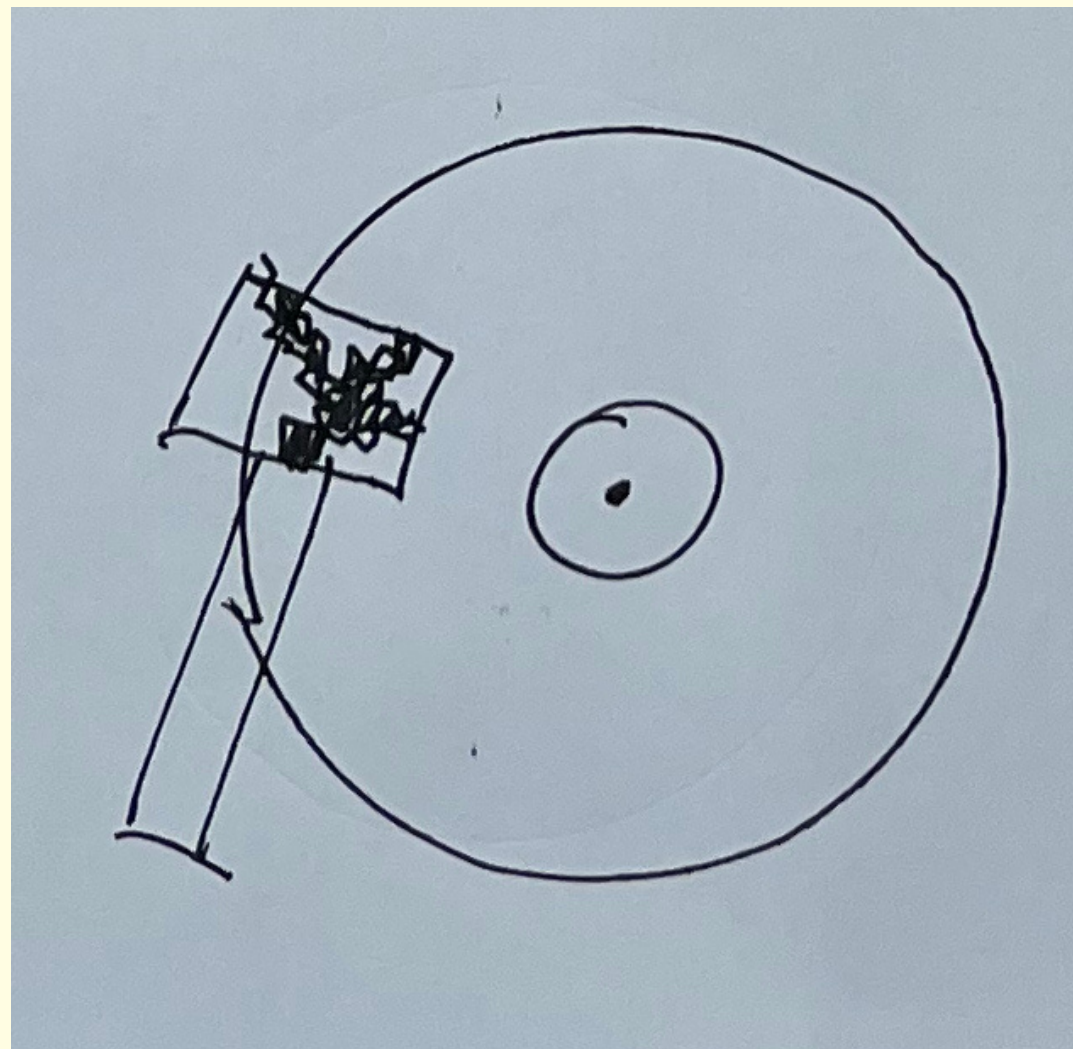


Branding & Iconography

Logo Development

Logo 6

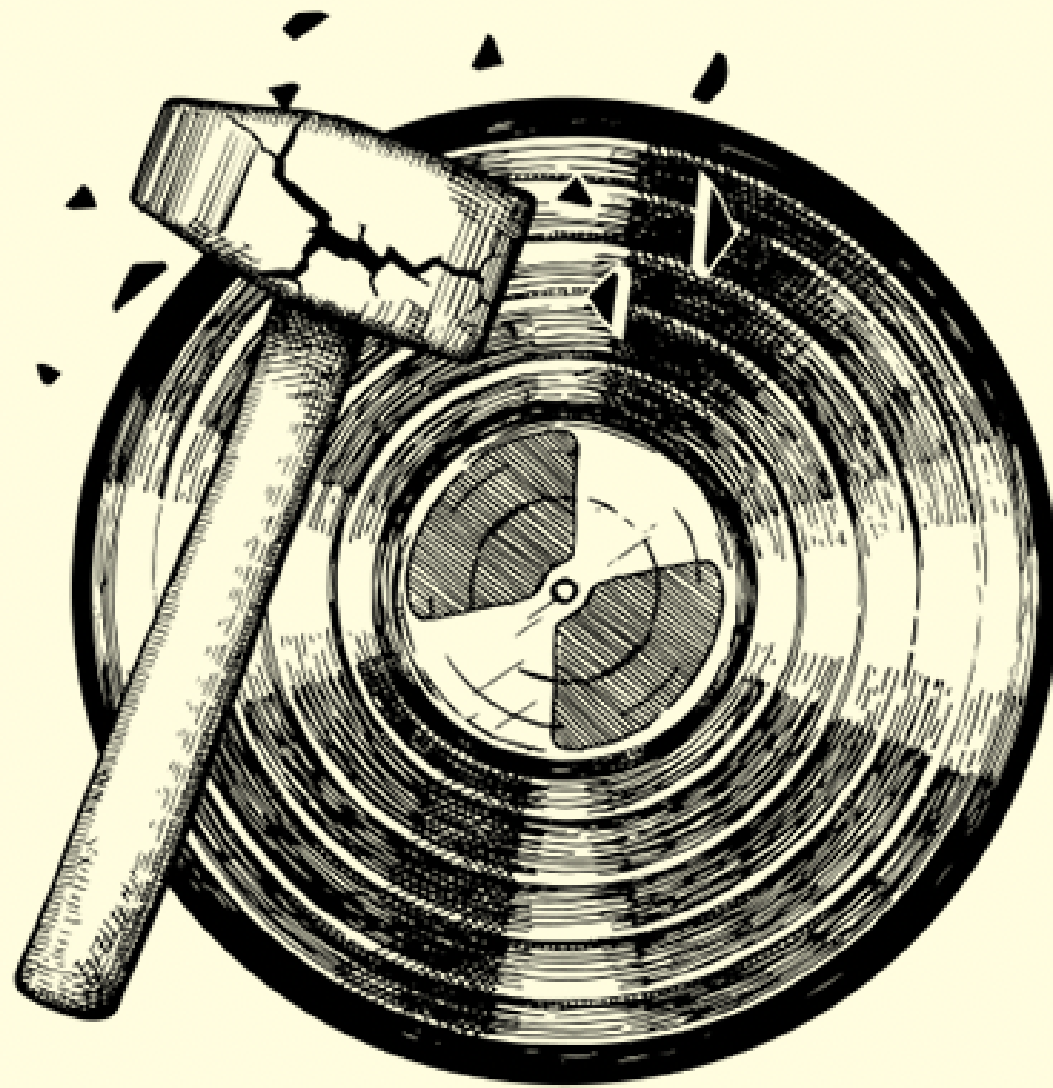
Removed the smiley face as felt like the logo was too busy otherwise. Very happy with this logo and sent it off to a graphic designer to be created.



Branding & Iconography.

Logo Development

Graphic Designers Rendition



Branding & Iconography

Logo Development

Final Logo Design

I added some personal touches to the design, such as giving it a more distressed look and feel, as if it was made in the late 80s and has felt some effects of time and weathering over the years.



STERN RECORDS

Branding & Iconography

Logo Development

Inspiration



Bicep (DJ) Logo



Bandulu (Record Label) EP Cover



Warp (Record Label) Logo

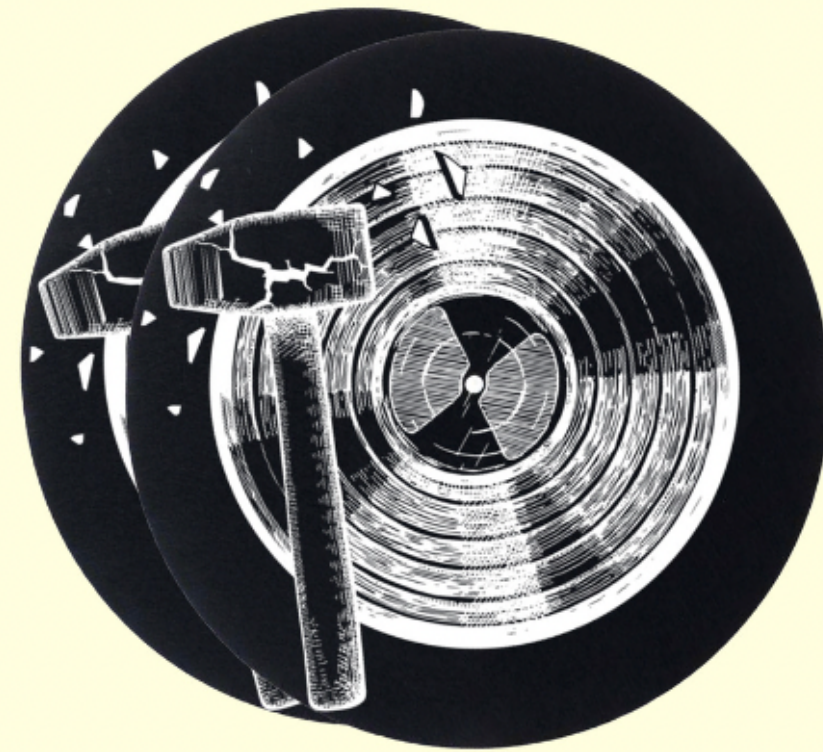
BRANDING

MERCH:



BRANDING

MERCH:





MARKETING STRATEGIES

Marketing Strategies

Social Media:

Primary SM accounts used will be Instagram and TikTok:

- TikTok caters to the allows quick consumption of content
 - But it has to be engaging, visceral and energetic attracting audiences the most.
- Instagram helps maintain the brand's visual aesthetic, which is vital to this brand and company.

Marketing Strategies

Social Media Content

Examples of Content:

- Album cover art
- Teaser campaigns for releases
- Merch release lookbooks
- Video interviews with artists
- Footage from events
- Event posters
- Competitions
- Brand partnerships
- Journalistic content
- Snippets of articles from the magazine

Marketing Strategies

Social Media Ads

Ads will be deployed in the following circumstances:

- Post-release
- Pre-merch drop
- Pre-event
- Pre + Post magazine release

Ads groups will be determined by the buyer personas listed earlier.

The groups will target specific areas based on where the events are being held. For example, if an event is occurring in Bristol, an ad will be set up to target that location.

Marketing Strategies

E-Commerce Marketing

Previous studies of "neuromarketing" in the context of selling items online will be beneficial. This is important given that revenue streams will be impacted by selling items.

- Records (physical and digital)
- Merchandise
- Tickets to events

Marketing Strategies

E-Commerce Marketing

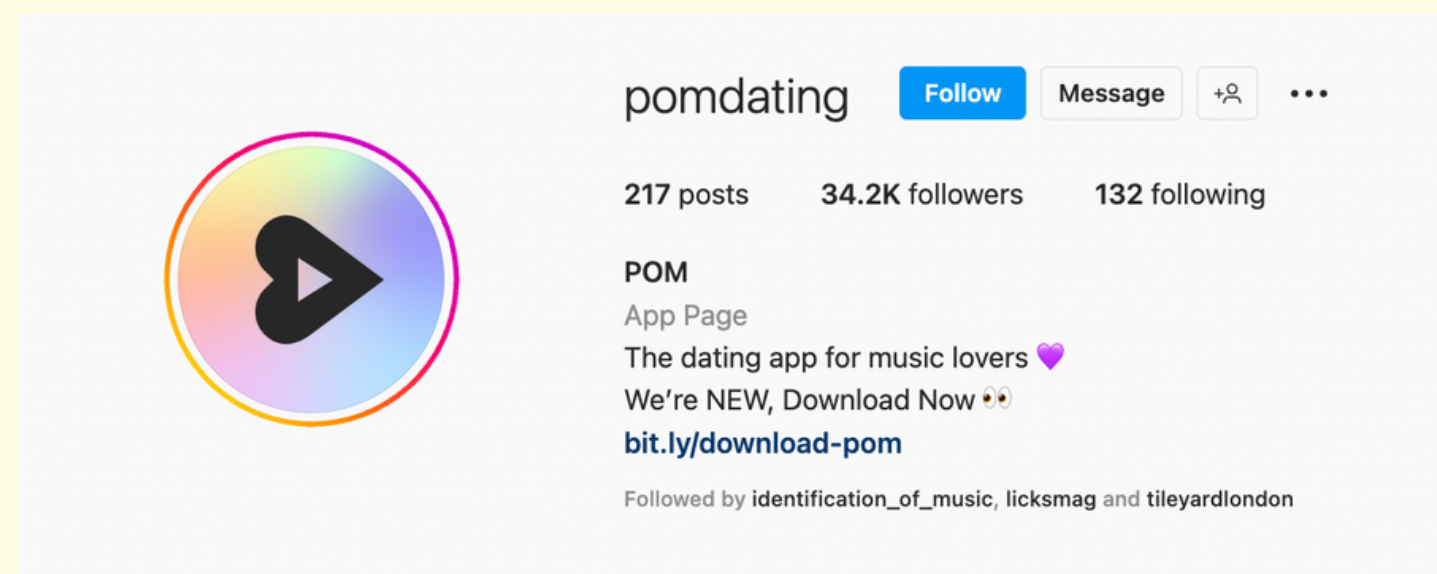
Examples of Neuromarketing techniques include:

- Up/Cross-selling
 - Suggesting buying other items at checkout
- Use of FOMO tactics
 - E.g. limited numbers of records or merchandise available to purchase, once gone, gone forever.
- Loyalty points based sales/reductions and rewards
 - breeds a sense of community and a gamification of the buying process
 - more purchases lead to more points which accrue and can be used to redeem discounts or early-bird tickets/merch.

Marketing Strategies

Partnership Marketing

Highlighted companies that could work well with Stern Records

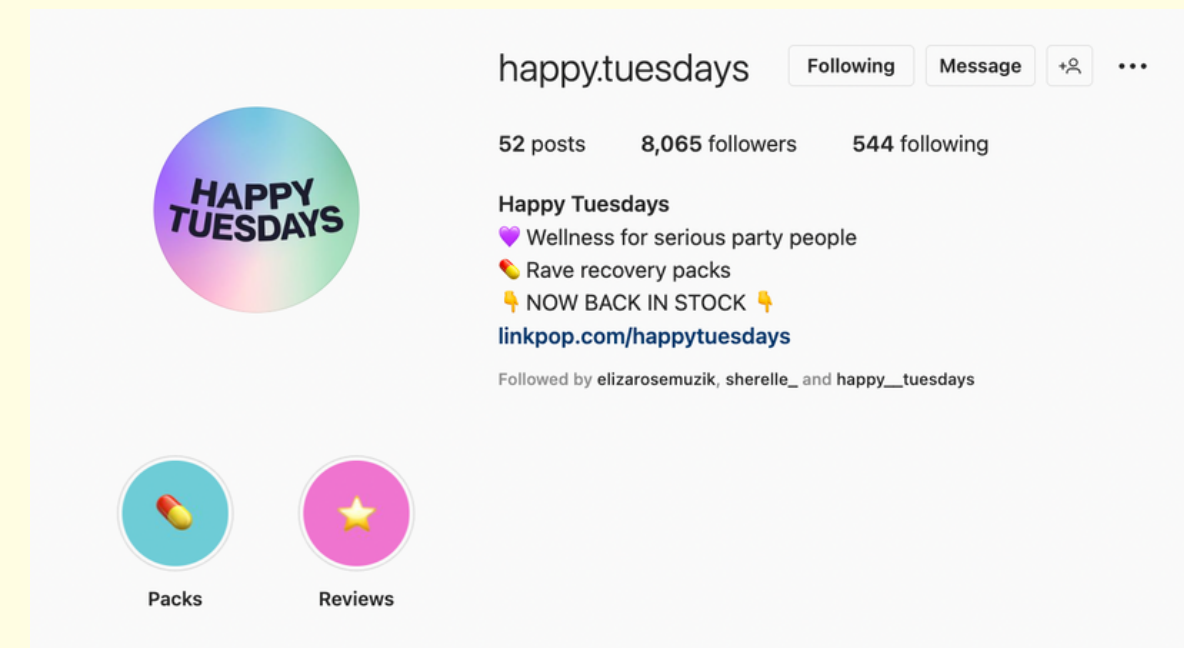
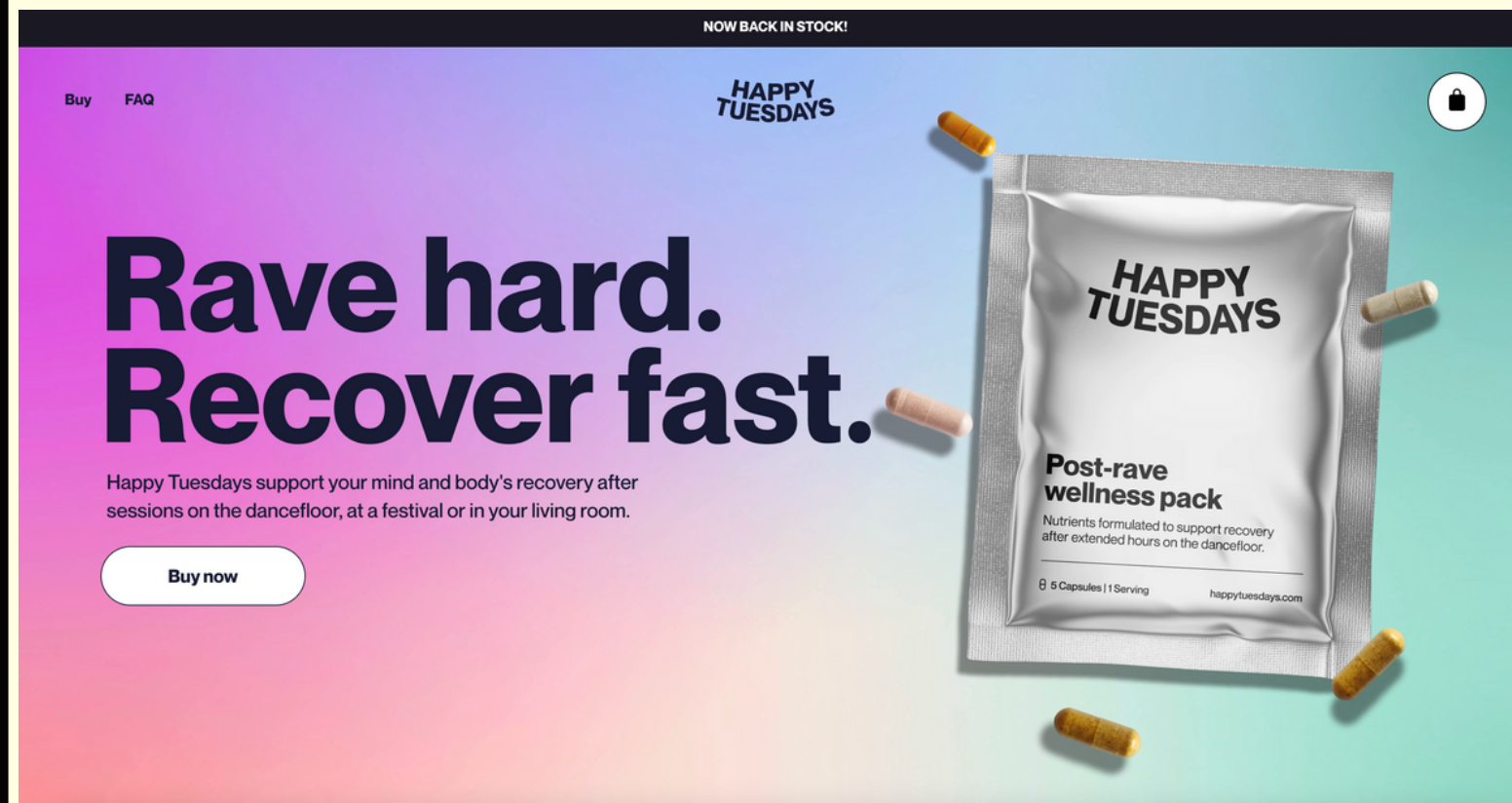


A dating app that connects people through their love of music:

- There are POM Live events, where the app partners with music events and potential couples with shared interests in that kind of music can arrange to meet up there.
- Provides an opportunity for advertising on the POM application.
- 25,000 users currently (Crack Magazine, 2021).
 - While this is small, the user base will be fully targeted towards musical events.

Marketing Strategies

Partnership Marketing

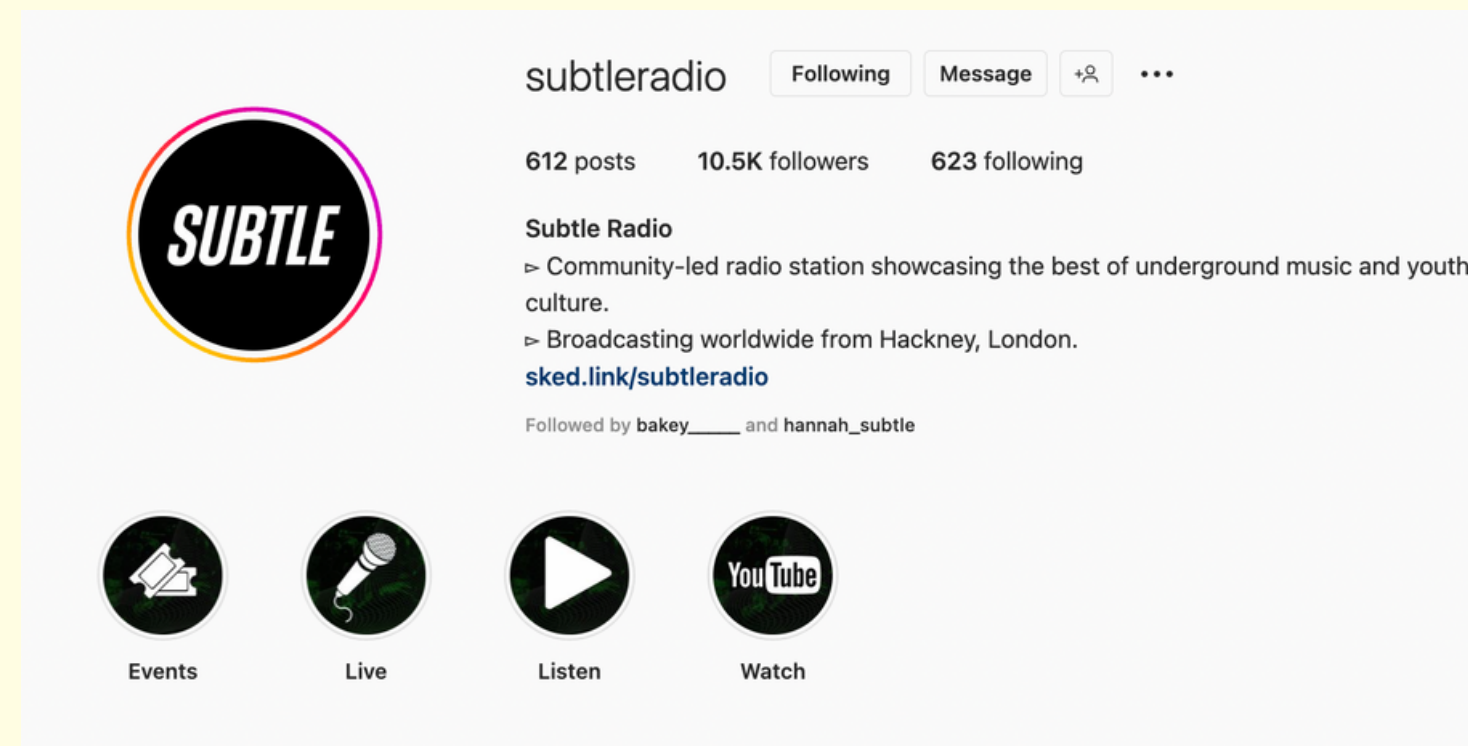


Happy Tuesdays is a company that sells legal supplements that help recover after a heavy night.

- The supplements are meant to be taken once home from a club night before bed and promote healthy sleep while detoxifying and recuperating the body.
 - The packets could be co-branded with Stern Records iconography and sold at events for ravers to take home and not feel the effects of their night too harshly the morning after.
 - With the supplements needing to be taken right before bed, consumers will wake up with the branded packaging in the morning, reinforcing the brand image the following day.

Marketing Strategies

Partnership Marketing



Subtle Radio is a station that plays a wide variety of music. I have an existing relationship with them from when I used to have a radio show.

- Put on regular events in collaboration with labels and artists.
- Their merchandise sells very well, opportunity to collaborate on merchandise

Marketing Strategies

Influencer Marketing

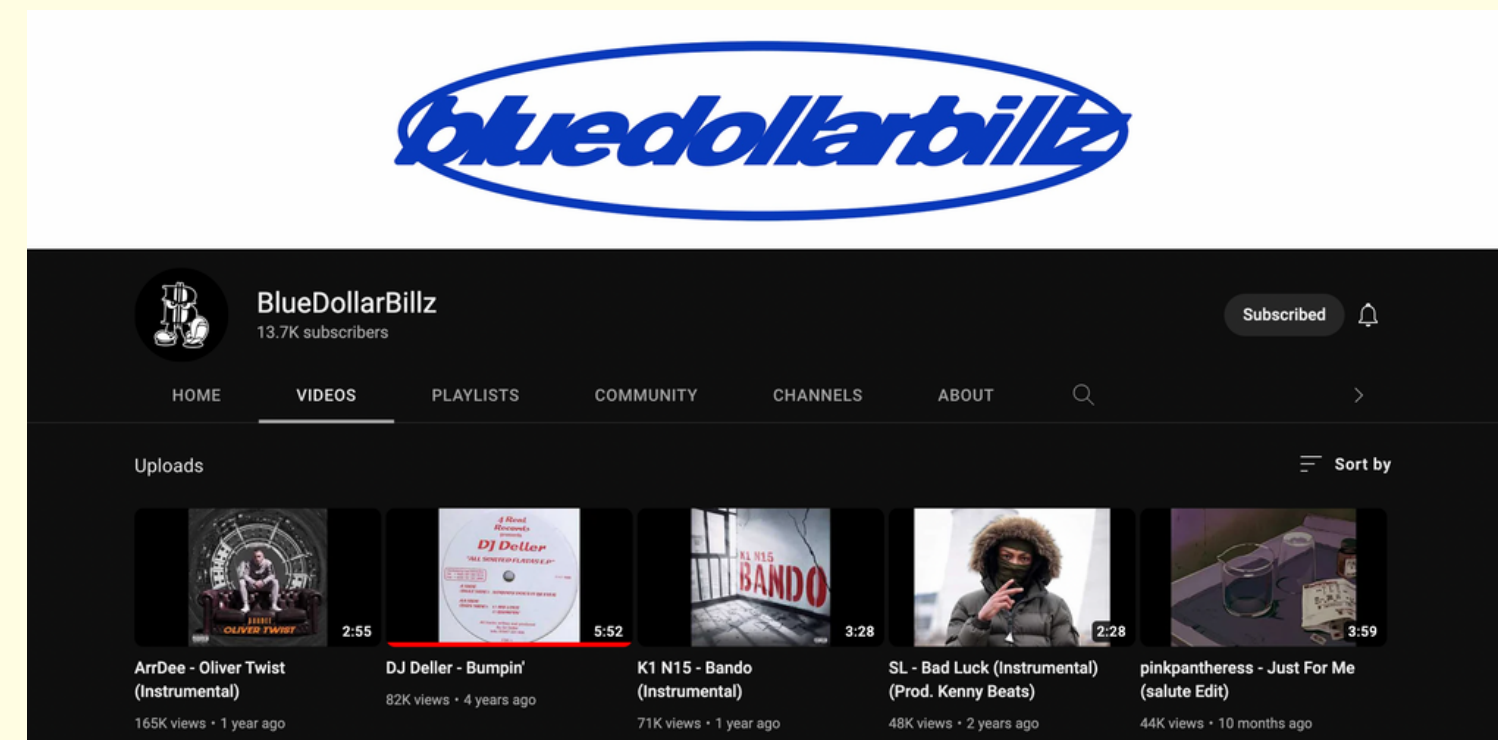
Social Media is full of dance music tastemakers, on micro scales and larger ones too.

- Many of these tastemakers are constantly looking for fresh music to add to their platforms and give their fans a taste of.
- Here are some targeted tastemakers that will be used to promote releases:

BlueDollarBillz

Very small following on Instagram but substantial following on Youtube.

Has a high retention rate of audience, fans keep coming back to the youtube channel to hear the latest music.



Marketing Strategies

Influencer Marketing

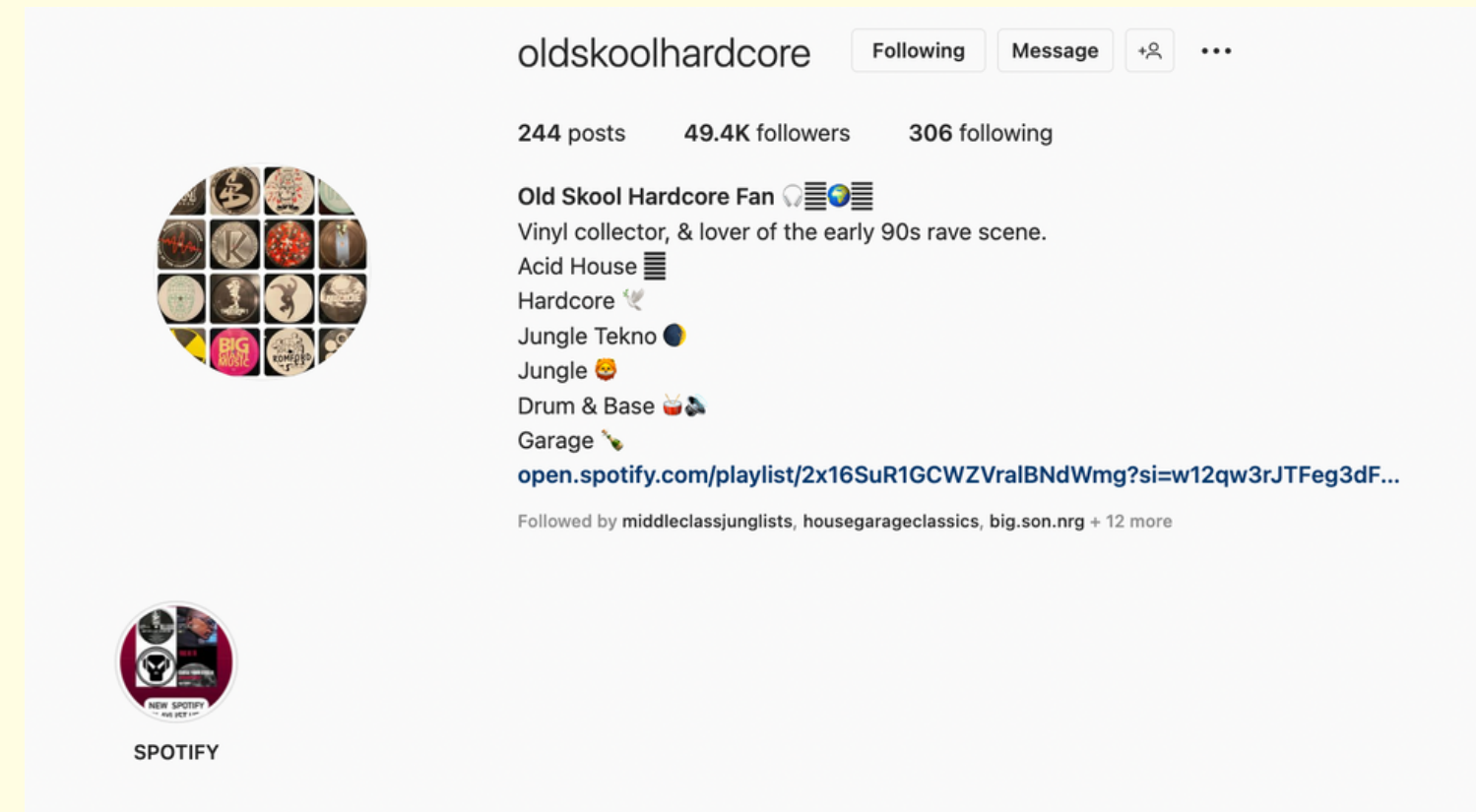
Oldskoolhardcore

Big following, with a wide range of genres promoted on their page.

They also have their own Spotify playlist which can assist with boosting streams for releases.

Housegarageclassics

Very big following but only for house and garage, therefore only some releases would fit within their brand.



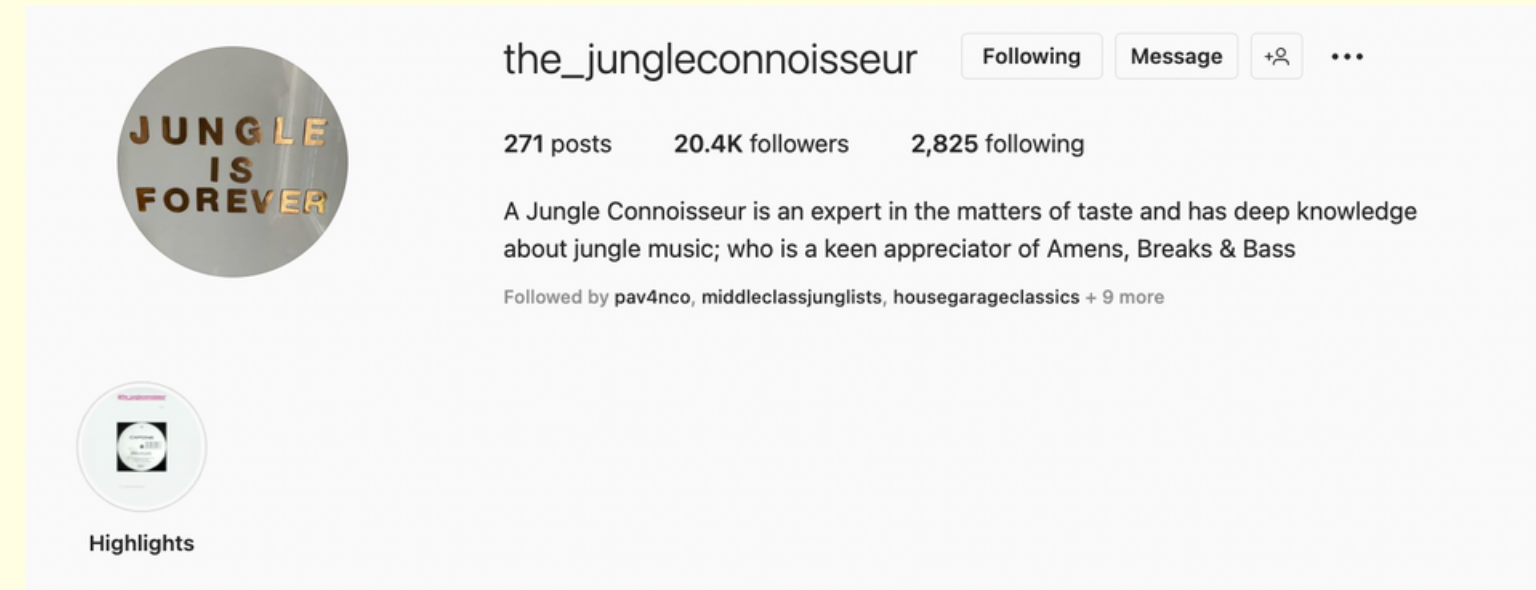
Marketing Strategies

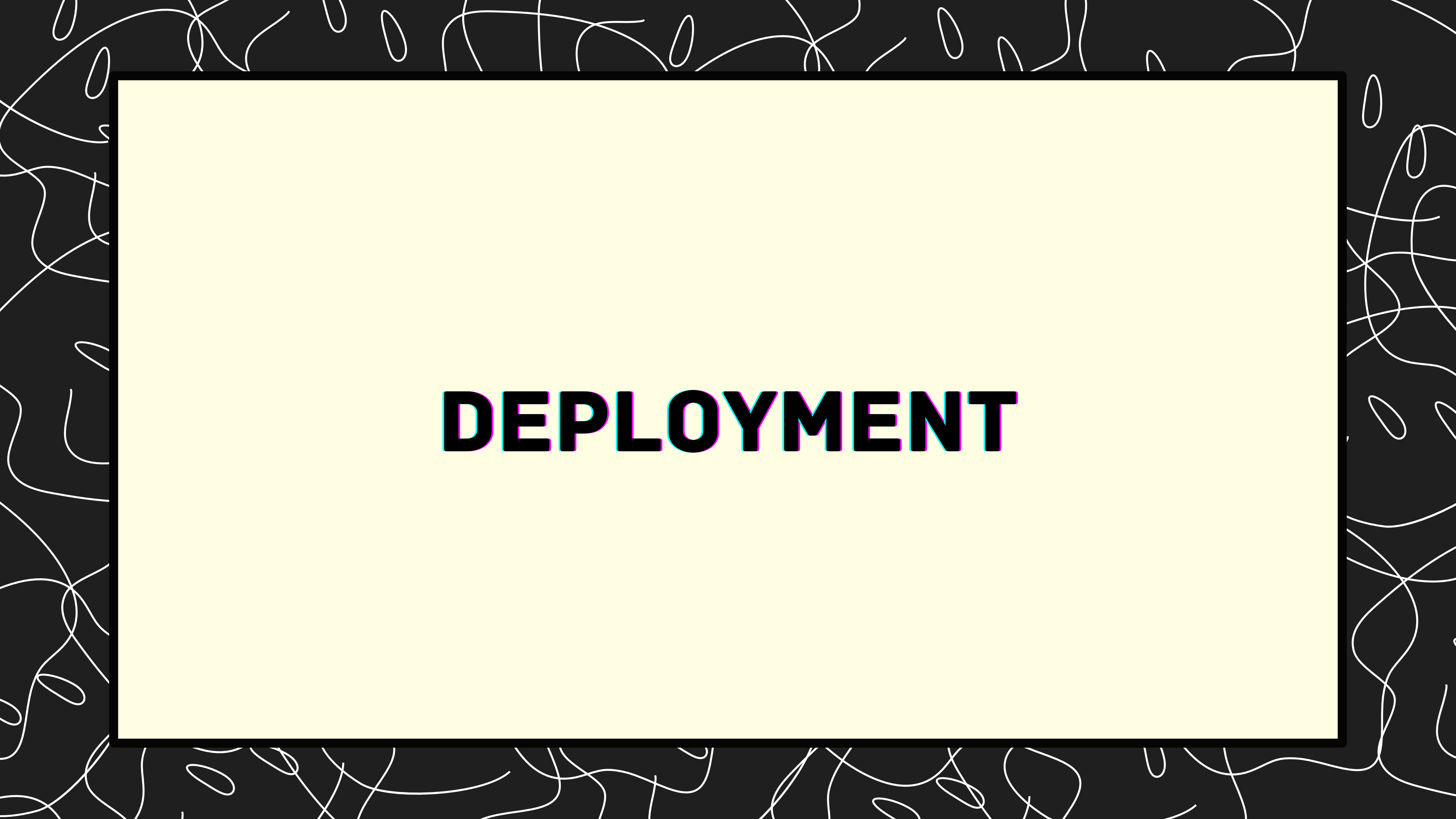
Influencer Marketing

The_jungleconnoisseur

Medium-sized following but specific to Jungle music.

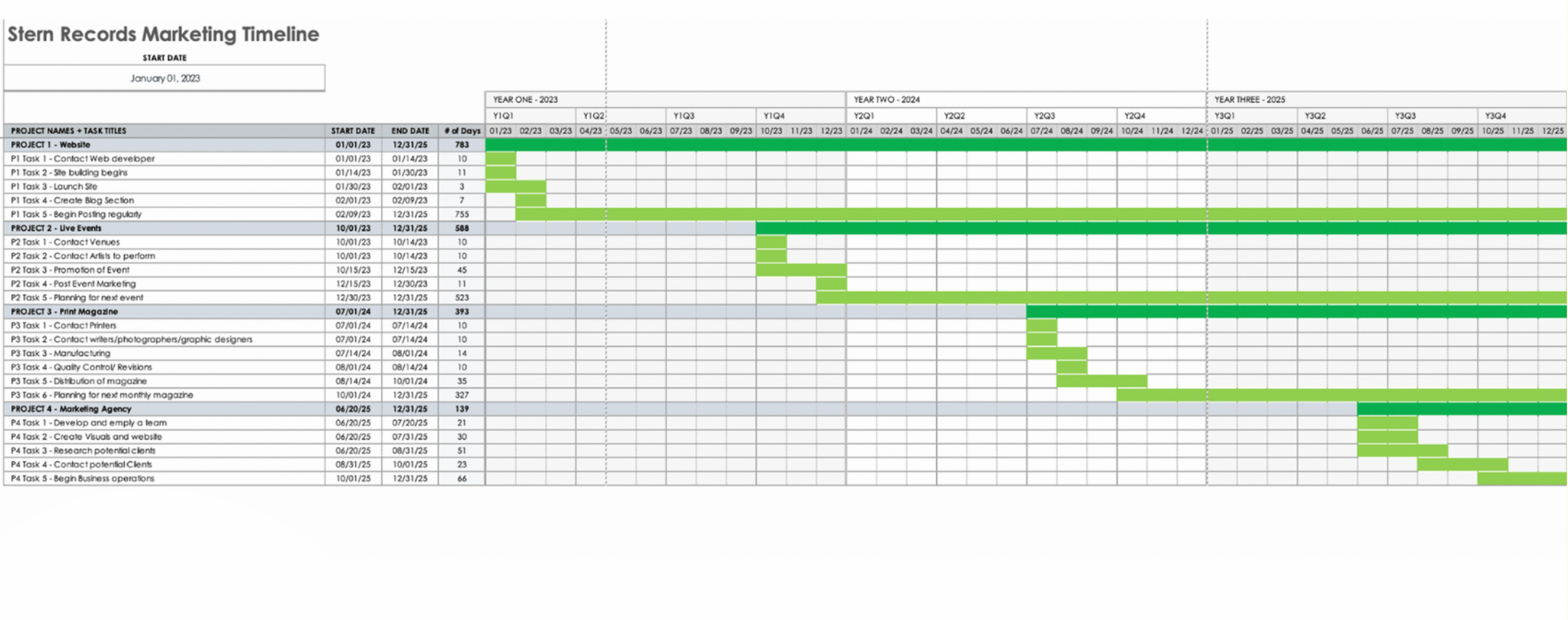
A more niche genre in itself so fans will be more receptive to releases promoted on this page.





DEPLOYMENT

Deployment Gantt Chart



BUDGET

Budget

Budget for Y1 will be £20,000.

This investment will come from me personally, from savings and an inheritance.

Budgets for the years following will be dependent on the success of the operations of the label and events in Y1.

The budget is accurate for 250 units of vinyl records produced with 4 releases and 2 events during the first year.

Projections for revenue will follow after the Year 1 budget breakdown.

Budget

Vinyl Records

Column1	AMOUNT
Production	£1,785.00
Mastering For Vinyl	£150.00
Shipping	£75.00
Other	£0.00
Total	£2,010.00
Total per annum (x4)	£8,040.00

Events

Events	AMOUNT
Venue Hire	£500.00
Security deposit on bar	£1,250.00
Advertising	£2,000.00
Artist fees	£500.00
Artist transportation	£100.00
Total	£4,350.00
Total per annum (x2)	£8,700.00

Budget

Projections

Records:

250 units sold at £14.99 =
£3747.50

For the entire year -
 $£3747.50 \times 4 = £14990$

Digital release:

350 units (projected) sold
£6.99 = £2446.50

For the entire year -
 $£2446.50 \times 4 = £9786$

Total Rev. at max sell out, $£14990 + £9786 = £24776$

Profit - $£24776 - £8040 = £16736$

Budget

Projections

Events:

Capacity = 200

Ticket pricing allocation at £10, £15, £20 will be 10%, 60%, 30%

20 units x £10 = £200

120 units x £15 = £1800

60 units x £20 = £1200

Total at max sell out = £3200

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