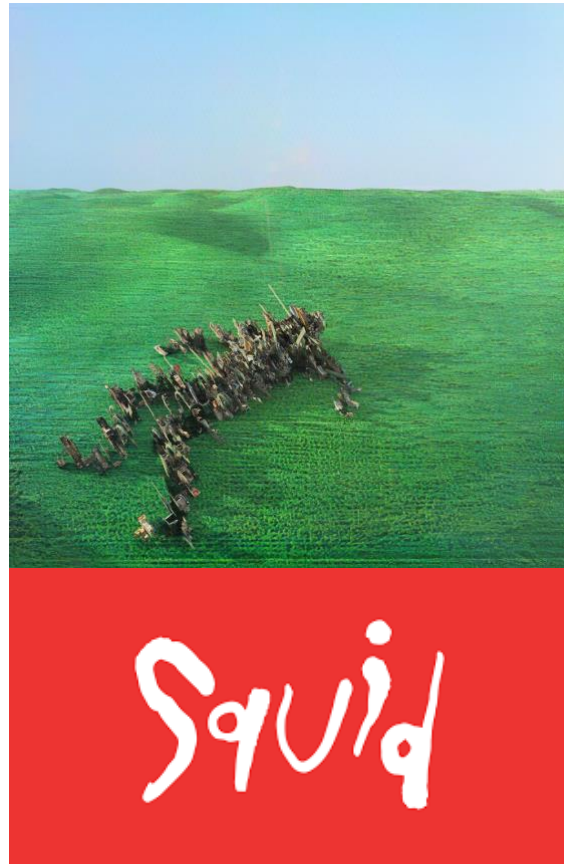




Prepared by:

Nathan Johnstone

Student Number:

2104271

Module Title:

Music Marketing

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Lecturer Name:

Tim Ferrone

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Introduction

This marketing strategy is focussed on Squid, a five-piece experimental post-punk band from Brighton. The band is signed to the Warp label and released their debut album *Bright Green Field* on the 7 Mar 2021. This report will provide an alternative marketing campaign for the release of this album and related and subsequent promotional activities. The band formed in 2017 and value 'an egalitarian approach, each idea is considered on its own merits' (Pearce, 2021). The band has cited such influences as German Krautrock band Neu! and worked with producer Dan Carey who has produced unconventional albums for bands such as black midi and Goat Girl.

For the purpose of this exercise, I am going to focus on creating a campaign for the release of their single '*Houseplants*' through to the release of their debut album '*Bright Green Field*' along with their UK and European promotional tour.

Artist Profile

Squid are a post-punk band hailing from Brighton. Gaining recognition for their unique sound in the late 2010's, the attention surrounding the band grew following appearances at a number of festivals and now the release of their new single '*Houseplants*' prior to the launch of their debut album '*Bright Green Field*' in 2021, they are ready to take on the world with their unmistakable and unique sound.

This 5 piece band formed at university is made up of Ollie Judge (vocals, drums), Louis Borlase (vocals, guitar), Anton Pearson (guitar), Lauris Nankivell (bass) and Arthur Leadbetter (Keyboards). Playing their first gig after replying to an advert for a "Young Persons Jazz Night" they set about piecing together a playlist showcasing their unique sound of half yelped, half sung, jerky and angular vocals, guitars and droney synths, very quickly capturing the imaginations of the UK's underground scene. Playing a series of gigs across London and South-East, Squid are now ready to take on the world.

Marketing Strategy

The principal aspect of this marketing strategy is to engage and grow a fanbase through engagement with a target market. In order to achieve this, I have focussed on the type of individual that is likely to affiliate themselves with the music of Squid and why they would choose this style of music. This question in turn, leads to where and how we reach our target market. In order to answer these questions and to help identify the target market, I have used the 5 W's principle as follows:

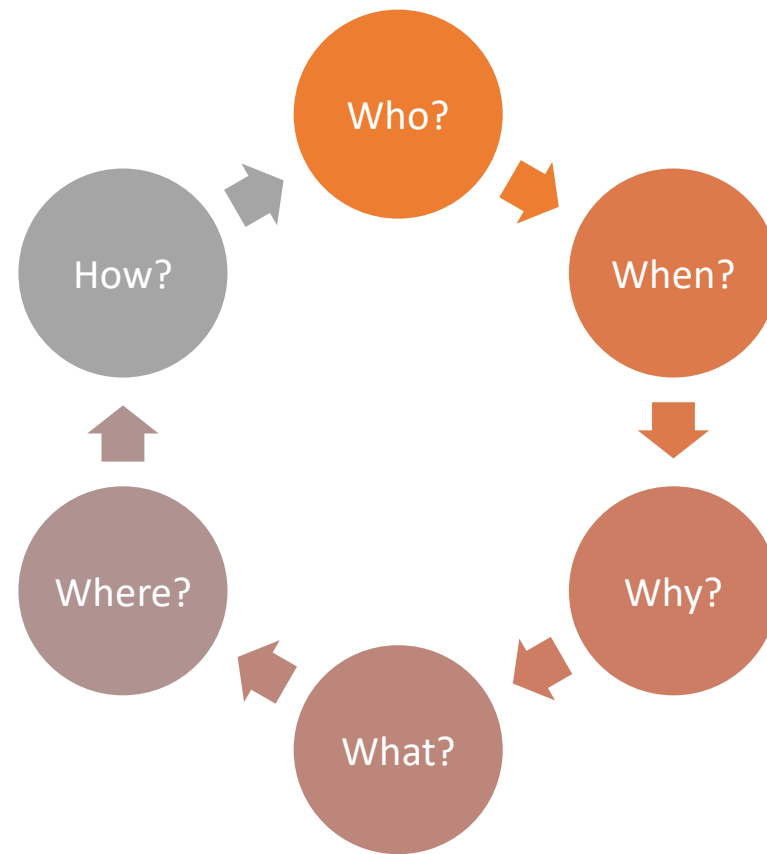


Figure 1 The Five W's

This method has also been used to address the foundation of the whole strategy in alignment with the 7P's (Professional Academy , 2021) devised by Bernard Booms and Mary Bitner in 1981. Which allows us to go deeper into how we refine the strategy to fully construct the overall plan of action.



Figure 2 - 7 P's of Marketing

By using these methods, we will be able to get to the heart of what the band are, what they represent and how we can ensure that the campaign's resources are guided in such a way that makes best use of budget and time in order to achieve a successful campaign.

One of the strengths of a group like Squid is that they are a new band, they are also likely to fit into a bracket of the unconventional; a group that cannot easily be associated with a particular style or genre. However, it is clear that when listening to their music there is a certain definable sound or style that will create a level of attention from consumers. They are a band who do not like to be categorised or placed into a particular box and this is an aspect that thought would need to be considered when promoting the band.

The average age within the band is 24-25. They have been building a following firstly within the university music scene and then gone on to progress to festivals such as End Of The Road. Squid are a band that are receiving a lot of media focus from the very start of their career, with

the press keen to build a scene and movement around Squid along with bands such as D.C. Fontaines. This is something the band themselves are not particularly keen to pursue as they have a more open approach and want to focus on making music in their own style. This is a challenge when trying to market the band and reach a target audience and therefore, it is helpful to concentrate on the individual who might be interested in a band such as Squid.

In general terms, this style of music will filter through to radio stations such as BBC Radio 6 Music, or other alternative radio stations. This listener demographic will include quite a broad mix of listener. Radio 6's listener demographic is aimed at listeners 25-44 years olds. This age group is quite broad, as the station focuses on alternative music from the 60's to the present day. (BBC, 2021).

Marketing Project Plan

Consumer Profile – Target Audience

When thinking about the type of individual that might be interested in a band like Squid, I considered a profile of an individual and what their whole life outlook maybe in order to build a profile and marketing plan than can be targeted to a certain profile.

I have decided to name our typical Squid listener Sam. Sam is into streaming music but also interested in vinyl, he is at university and is aged between 18-21. He is likely to use music streaming services such as Spotify to find new bands he likes and if he is particularly keen on a band he may commit to buying a record on vinyl, especially if there is exclusive content. Ben has an interest in politics and is particularly interested in the current political state of the country. He is likely to be interested in left of centre politics and likes to rebel against the system. His friends are also interested in politics and his group of friends enjoy seeing live music and are also aware of social, economic and ecologic issues such as the environment, a fair state and fairness in society. Sam really enjoys finding new bands and sounds and likes to share music with friends, but prefers to talk about the music he likes in person by going to gigs. Sam is open minded and likes to discover new things and experiences from music, through to food and travel. He is interested in discovering new ways of finding music and has an interest in technology. Sam is altruistic in nature and believes in a society where equality and fairness is a key driving factor in how he lives his life. Sam sees a connection between his political beliefs and how he integrates into society, from the music he listens to through to the clothes that he wears. Sam is not likely to watch mainstream TV but instead streams TV shows on demand and is interested in Box Sets. Sam is likely to use Instagram and Facebook but not particularly interested in Tik Tok. He will use services such as Whats App to stay in touch with friends.

By building this profile, we are able to start to gain an understanding of the type of person who would subscribe to and listen to Squids music.



Figure 3: Source Pexels.com

Marketing Plan - Promotion

When thinking about the market demographic for Squid and how someone like Sam, our typical target market, might discover Squid, we need to think about placement and promotion. The promotional function is essentially creating a need; how this new band provides something new, different and uniquely individual. As with the majority of new artists, there is often a passion for breaking new ground and to do something that has not been done before. As discussed earlier, this can be challenging to the marketing campaign. To tap into the market, we need our demographic to understand more about the band as individuals, who are they? What are they passionate about? What are they trying to communicate with their music? Is it music for music's sake or is there a message?

In order to achieve this, I would look at creating a profile for Squid within Social Media circles, certainly Facebook, whilst becoming less prevalent as it used to be a few years ago now, is a great tool to tap into partnered services such as Instagram, which is a very visual and immediate way of communicating a message to a fanbase.

An aspect of analysing this potential demographic further to carry out a Strengths and Weaknesses analysis of Squid and therefore, understand how our campaign can be refined further in order to ensure we are crafting the message to our target market in the most precise manner.

Strengths and weaknesses analysis.

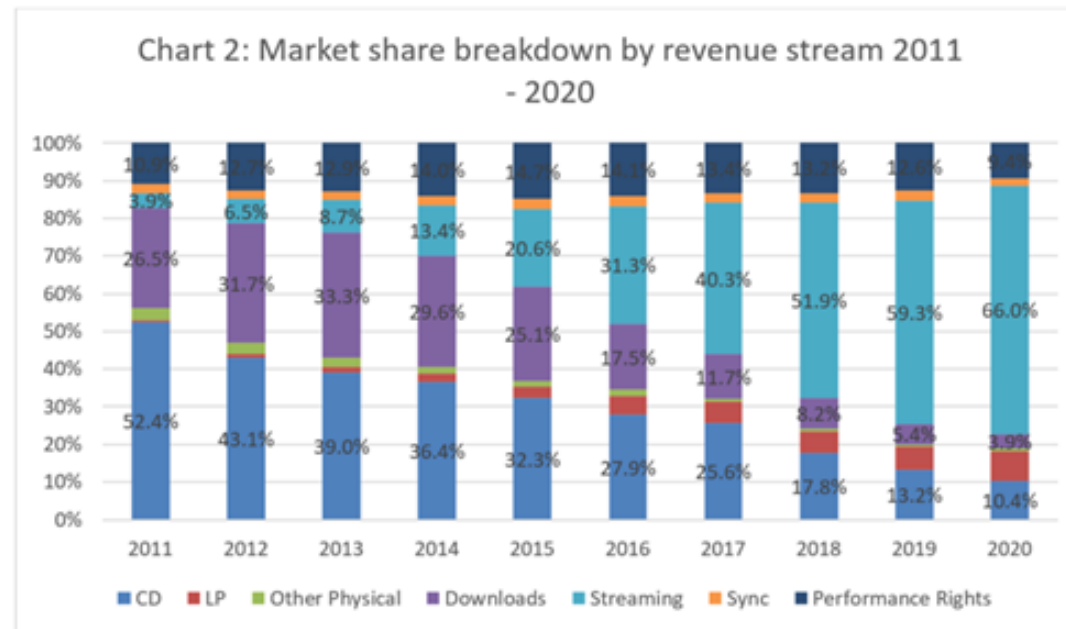


Through going through this SWOT analysis, we can see that some of these attributes may appear in two or more boxes. For example, the fact that Squid have a unique sound can be seen as both a strength and a weakness, however this unique sound can also be seen as providing an opportunity to create their own following, their own unique place in the music market.

One of the ways in which we can do this is to at least try and understand what types of music acts like Squid may be affiliated with through streaming services such as Spotify. As can be seen in the Figure 6, a simple search in Spotify shows us acts that are closely associated with Squid are acts such as Black Midi, Shame, Dry Cleaning and TV Priest. So, by targeting these fanbases we are likely to gain some traction and interest.

Market Analysis

Music revenues have continued to remain strong globally and, in the UK, the British Phonographic Industry reported that revenues rose by 3.8% in 2020 to reach total of £1.118 billion. The highest total since 2006. (British Phonographic Industry , 2021)



Furthermore, the move toward ownership of physical formats such as vinyl continue to remain strong. The past year has had an impact regarding the global pandemic but despite this, sales of vinyl records generated revenues of £115 million. Interestingly, sales of other formats such as cassettes were also high with revenues of £8.2 million, which were at their highest since 2003. (British Phonographic Industry , 2021)

These statistics show that whilst streaming accounts for a significant share of the overall market hard formats such as vinyl offer a long-term sustainable business option for market and therefore, an important aspect of our campaign will be in exploiting these formats for our market demographic.

Goals and Critical Success Factors

With these factors in mind and in understanding the market we are aiming to target, the following goals are to be considered in the overall marketing strategy.

Goals	Success
Establish Squid as a leading band in the underground scene	Significant band awareness and support from peers.
Grow audience	Increase audience by 75% over 12 months
Achieve significant music sales	60K digital and hard format sales of album
Successful tours in the UK and merchandise sales	Significant live performance sales and merch
Create an Online Buzz and media coverage	500 articles in online media over 12 month period
International Tour	At least 2 performances in Europe and US

Figure 4 Goals

Unique Selling Points (USP's)

Identifying the Unique Selling Points (USP's) is a key aspect of defining the strategy for this campaign. Whilst the band Squid, can be defined as having a sound that sits outside the mainstream and therefore, offering something different to the market, the difficulty in defining their particular sound creates challenges in being able to align them to other artists and therefore, make the marketable to consumers. With this in mind it is important to identify the bands USP's in order to hone in on how the market strategy is formulated.

USP's	Outputs
Post punk band providing unique and progressive sound	Single
Explosive and exciting live performances	Studio album
Open to new technologies and methods of access music	A subscription style app and package to access music • Access to exclusive content, singles etc • Live streamed content • Sponsorship of Beehives • Unique artefacts for example Jars of Honey given to subscribers
Supporters of environmental and sustainable matters	Streamed and Digital Content.

Competitor Analysis

By carrying out searches on Amazon Music and Spotify we were able to ascertain the types of artists and bands that Squid would be typically aligned to within the music marketplace.

Again, black midi were present and therefore a connection is clearly seen between their music and the collaboration that the band had previously had with Dan Carey who has been involved with Squid in the early stages of their career. Other bands that are closely aligned to Squid's style of music are Dry Cleaning and Shame. By carrying out further analysis into the listening profiles of these groups we can learn more about our target audience for Squid.

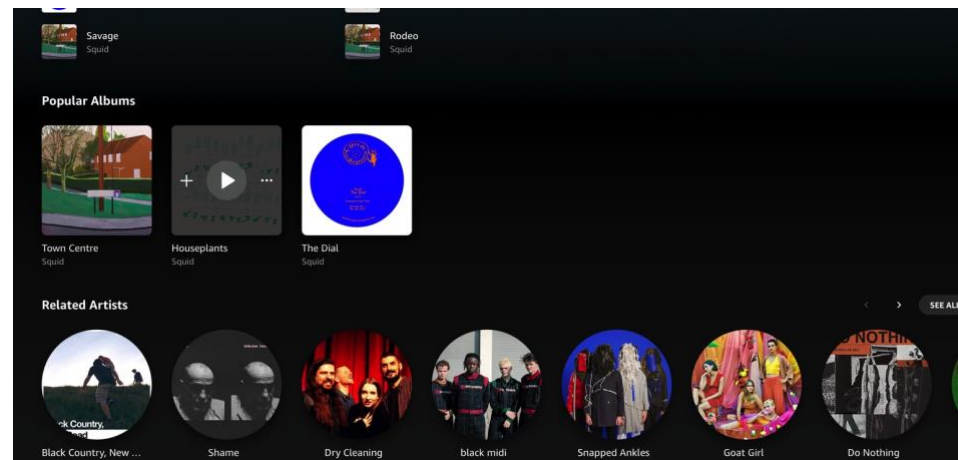


Figure 5 - Amazon Music Artist Search

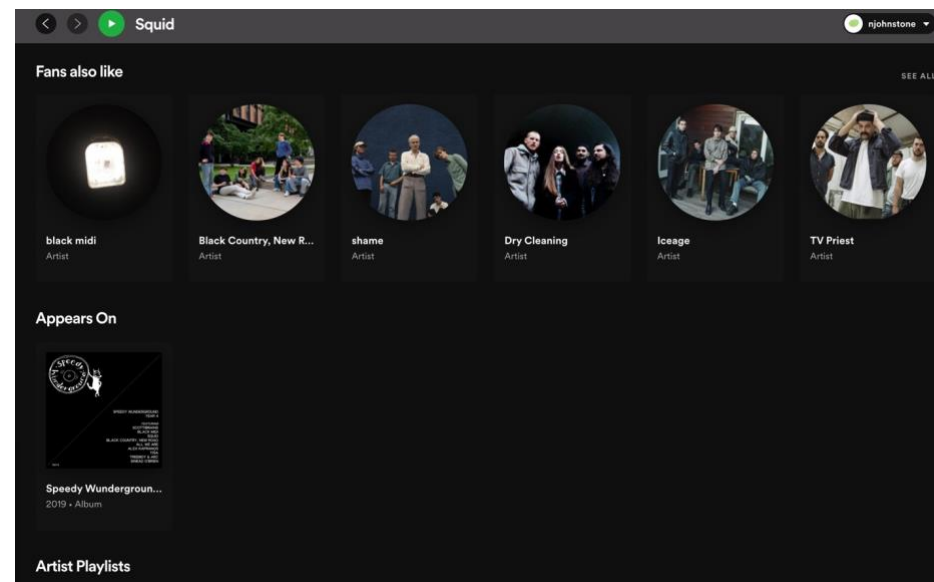


Figure 6 - Spotify Artist Search

Permission Marketing

One of the key methods that I will be using in the marketing strategy is Permission Marketing. We live in an age where the average attention span is considerably reduced in the digital age. Currently the volume of marketing advertisements in the digital world is significant, with the average person estimated to see between 6,000 and 10,000 ads per day. (Carr, 2021). With this in mind it is important that the recipient, Sam, is offered something for providing information, such as regular updates from the group, incentives such as exclusive content or early notice for gigs that the band may be playing. Building this affiliation with the band through this style of marketing builds a sense of community and a feeling that the consumer has a sense that they are part of an exclusive club. By utilising information such as dates of birth, we will be able to send unique, personalised birthday messages to potential fans to further enhance the sense of community.

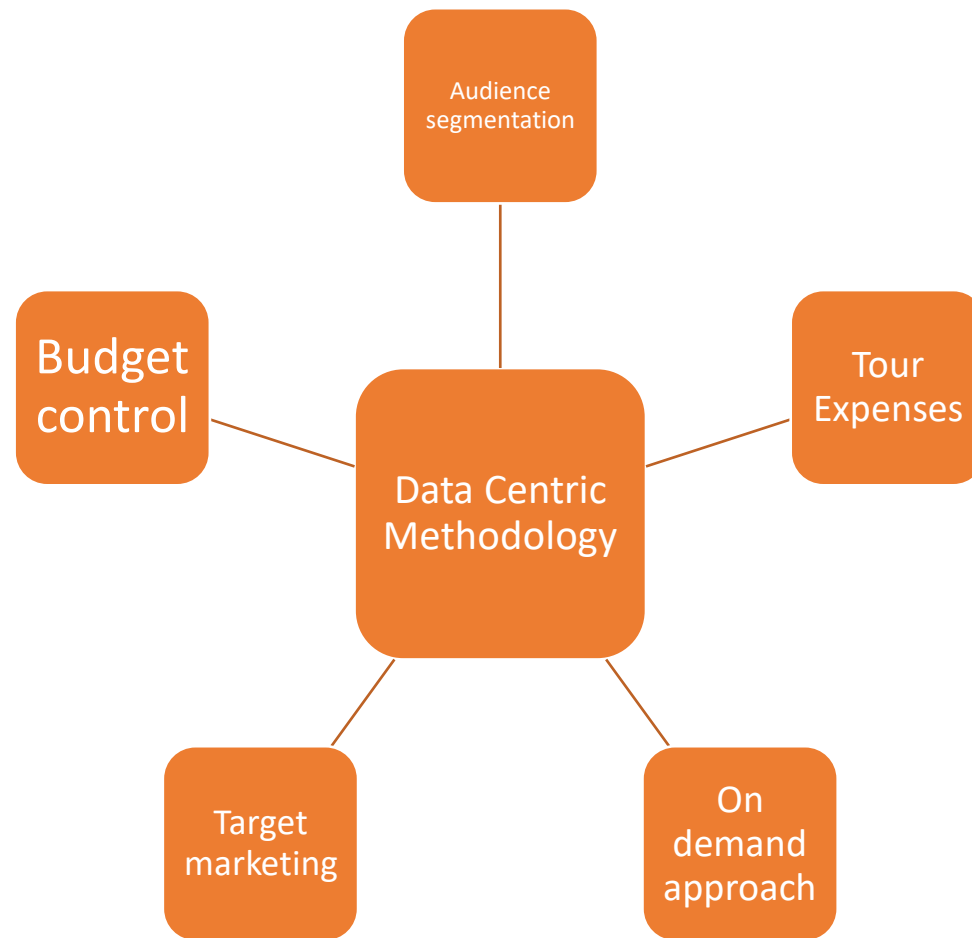
Any marketing data gathered through this process will be used to further push the band more explicitly to the consumer once they have registered their interest in Squid. It is intended that permission marketing opportunities will be exploited through the likes of Instagram and Facebook whilst also placing links to register interest on streaming platforms such as Spotify, YouTube and Apple Music.

This is a relatively low-cost option utilising simple process such as Social Media posts and email.

Physical Evidence – Data

Previously, gaining information as to the success of a marketing campaign was purely measured by sales and to a degree, an element of guess work in that the mindset would be, if sales were good do more of the same, if not try something else. Now we have access to a whole raft of data, gained from such techniques as permission-based marketing, streaming data, distribution data, essentially data can be manipulated into any format that is required by the marketing team. The important thing is to understand what to do with the data. By understanding where Squid might be getting more streaming hits within the country, or by gaining knowledge as to the exact demographic such as, age, occupation/student status, the team will be able to target where the next gig will be, which festivals to focus on how to enhance the strategy further and to, essentially flex the campaign dependant on instant result, by monitoring live data straight from the associated streaming and social media platforms.

This data driven approach will allow the campaign to make best use of its budget and to ensure that the focus is given to the areas that will result in the next result and return.



It is intended that we will engage with a Music Marketing Company for this project so as to ensure we have the best possible exposure. By engaging with a specialist in this area who is connected and able to reach the target markets that we intend to penetrate we will be able to gain maximum exposure and return for Squid's campaign.

Having looked at the market I have identified a potential agency to work with called Startstorm Digital Marketing. Typically, services range between £250-£1,000 per month, with £250 providing a very basic package and £1,000 providing the Pro Package. I have opted for the Pro Package which will offer services such as Spotify Playlist Promotion, market and lead generation services, social media and YouTube advertising as well as Web Design and Public Relation Services. Therefore, I would look to budget approximately £6,000 for this service to cover the main 6 month period of the campaign.

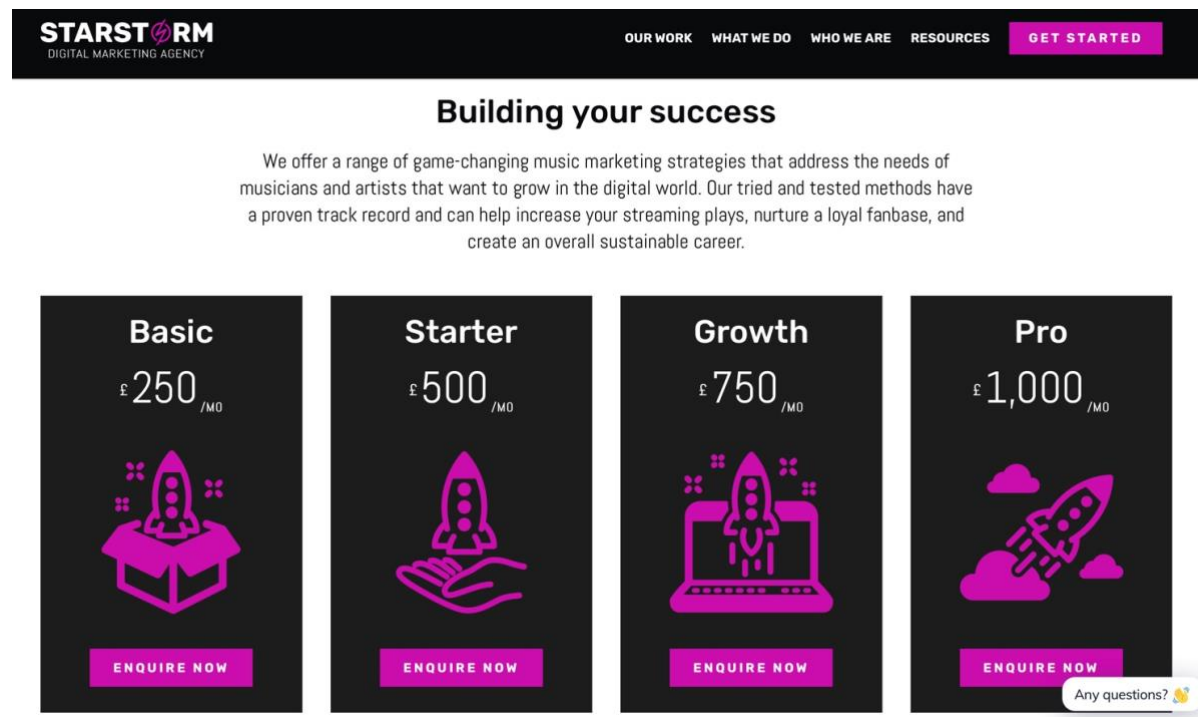


Figure 7 - Starstorm Price List

This is a relatively cost-effective method of gaining exposure for the band. Through constant analysis of the results of this campaign we can adjust the level of focus that we need in order to ensure we are able to ramp up the campaign as we gain more exposure.

Promotion: Doing something new – #Createabuzz

The current music business is very much focussed on exploring new ways of launching and marketing new music, and bands. Radiohead were pioneers in this exploration with the release of their 2007 album *In Rainbows*, where consumers could, effectively choose the price they wanted to pay for the album, with an option to pay for a premium package that would include additional material and a vinyl copy of the album for a premium price. Sales of this album resulted in *In Rainbows* outselling their previous album's by a significant margin.

“Radiohead made more money before *In Rainbows* was physically released than they made in total on the previous album *Hail To the Thief*,” (Music Ally, 2008)

The concept of physical ownership can be seen as a more luxurious indulgence in an age where music streaming is prevalent and artists selling unique versions of their material in vinyl formats. There are other examples where artists have sold a subscription to their material as a whole package such as the example below from an artist called Brawther, a house music artist.

Select a membership level

Baby Brawther	Little Brawther	Big Brawther	BRAWTHER FROM ANOTHER MAWTER
BABY BRAWTHER	LITTLE BRAWTHER	BIG BRAWTHER	BRAWTHER FROM ANOTHER MAWTER
£3 PER MONTH (+VAT)	£5 PER MONTH (+VAT)	£9.50 PER MONTH (+VAT)	£23.50 PER MONTH (+VAT)
Join	Join	Join	Join
A big thank you for your support! This tier is all about access to Archives of all things podcasts / radio shows only available on my Patreon. • Early access to "A Deeper Network" Show more - Includes Discord benefits - Private community - General Support - Early access	Everything from previous tier plus : - Free monthly download in WAV (from my back catalogue / unreleased or a private edit). "Twice a year" get a digital download Show more - Includes Discord benefits - Private community - Early access - General Support - Digital downloads	Everything above plus : Behind the scenes : "Digging in the crates" - Zoom in on my music selection process, my collection and more! Show more - Includes Discord benefits - Behind-the-scenes content - Live Q&As - Exclusive voting power - Early access - General Support	Everything above plus: Get exclusive Interweaved Records perks including : - Your name printed on the cover - Receive a copy* on your download Show more - Includes Discord benefits - Digital downloads - Private community - General Support - Behind-the-scenes content - Live Q&As - Exclusive voting power - Early access - Exclusive Lens Access

Figure 8 - Example of Brawther's Subscription scheme

As shown above this subscription/crowd funding hybrid approach whilst not unique, builds a relationship with the artist. The more the consumer pays the greater the relationship and the more the music fan feels that they are a “true” fan of the artist. There is a sense of ownership that for the consumer and in turn the artist is able to continue to fund their music making activities.

The challenge is how to adopt an approach which offers something different and unique whilst not trying too hard that we actually make the campaign cumbersome and too contrived.

The key is create a story, to identify a unique selling point (USP) for the band and to create an identity for Squid that creates a new and fresh take on a concept.

Squid’s story for this campaign is focussed on a theme that has presented itself through the single and albums name. With the single being named “*Houseplants*” and the album being named “*Bright Green Field*”, it is apparent that there is a connection and link to a green theme that can be exploited. In thinking about our campaign and the aim of creating a “buzz’ around the band, I drew the connection between sustainable issues that might appeal to our demographic target market and the music that Squid are producing. The third aspect and tying into the subscription approach, the final link in the chain is in regard to how we can build use this as an opportunity to do something a little different.

Squid #Creatabuzz Music Subscription



Figure 9 - Squid #Creatabuzz

By partnering with a company such as EcoTree (Eco Tree, 2021) who specialise in sponsoring beehives, we can create an experience that will bring our target market closer to the band through supporting a shared goal.

The idea being that the subscriber would have a choice of three levels of subscription, from a basic £3 per month where they would be able to have early access to new tracks, access to Squid's catalogue of live performances, and exclusive content about upcoming gigs etc. For £9.99 the subscriber would receive these benefits plus access to digital downloads of exclusive content and the sponsorship of a beehive where they would receive jars of Squid Honey on a periodic basis as well as updates about their beehive. For £25.00 per month there are several additional benefits, such a VIP tickets to 6 live gigs per annum as well as the opportunity to have the subscribers name etched onto their beehive along with Squid's name as well as the other benefits including the jars of Squid Honey.



Figure 10 - Illustration of Squid Honey Concept



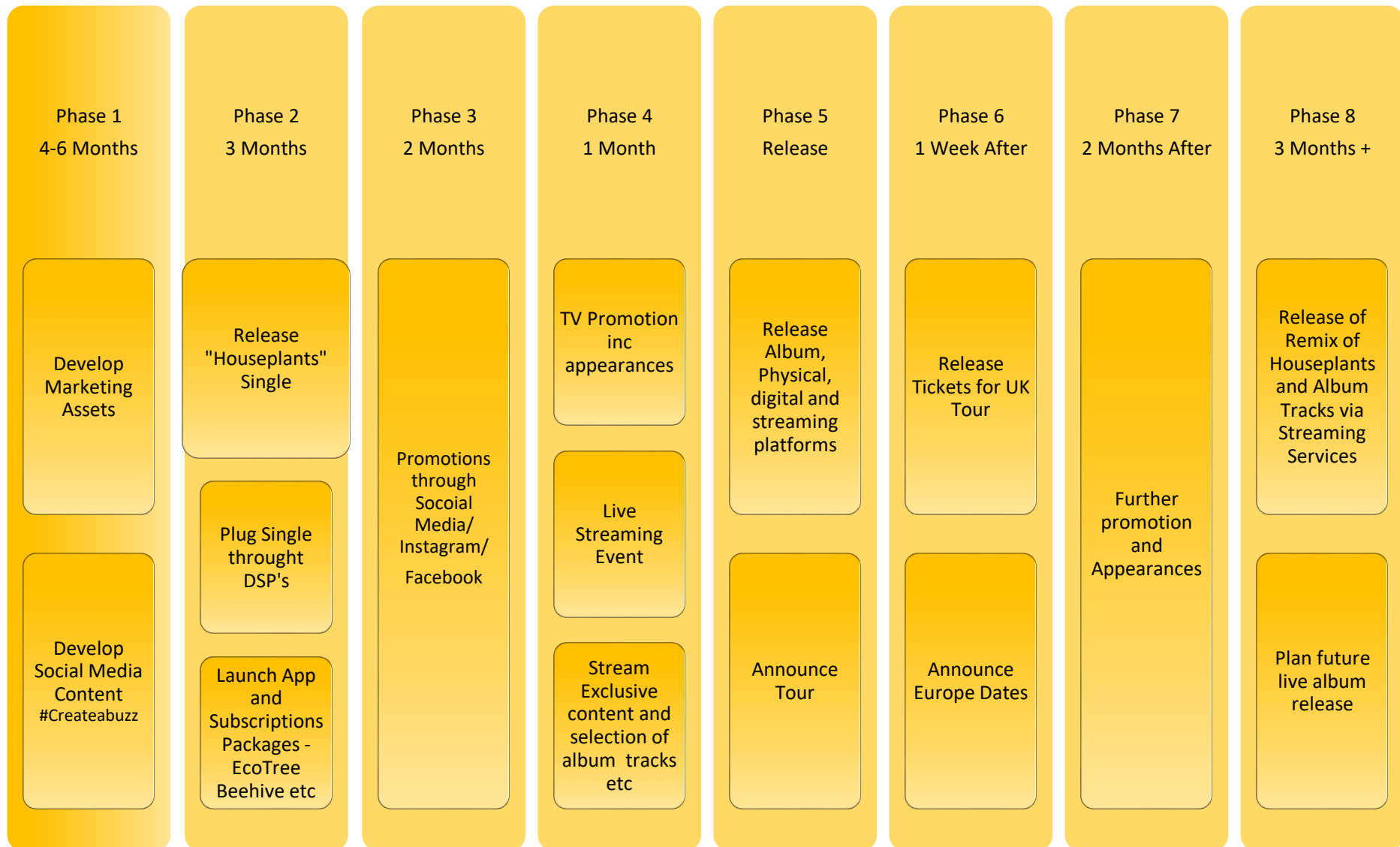
Figure 11 Eco Tree Website

Marketing Budget

The following budget breakdown provides an illustration of the points considered. As the project develops, Actual costs are tracked against the budget cost and adjustments made accordingly in order to ensure we remain in line with the overall plan.

Squid Album and Single Release Budget			
Task name / Title	Detail	Cost	Total Cost
ALBUM DETAILS			
Artist Title	Bright Green Field	-	-
Single Title	Housplants	-	-
Release Date	Aug-21	-	-
ANTICIPATED REVENUE		1,335,475	
Physical Sales			
CD		600,000	
Vinyl		250,000	
App Subscription		77,475	Estimated 5k@£3, 2500@9.99 and 1250@£25.99
Streaming		8,000	Rate .08p anticipated 20k streams
Merch T-Shirts		400,000	
TEAM		11,000	-
Publicist		3,000	-
Radio Tracker		3,000	-
Distributor		5,000	-
RADIO & TV		16,500	-
Radio Tours		5,000	-
Performances		5,000	-
Advertisement		6,500	-
INTEGRATED MEDIA		21,000	-
Starstorm Digital Marketing		6,000	-
TV/radio		10,000	-
Infographic		3,000	-
Partner Organisations- Eco Tree		2,000	-
BRANDING TOOLS		112,500	-
Posters etc.		12,500	-
T-shirts And Other Clothing Merchandise		100,000	-
DISTRIBUTION & MANUFACTURING		300,220	-
Physical Retail (HMV, Indie Retailer, CD Baby, Etc)		100	-
Vinyl		100,000	-
CD		200,000	-
Digital Retail (iTunes, Amazon, PureTracks, Zuniior, Etc)		100	-
Distributor: Ditto		20	-
VIDEO		3,000	-
Music Video		2,000	-
Viral Videos		1,000	-
TOURING		26,000	-
Showcases		1,000	-
Domestic		10,000	-
International		15,000	-
Cost		490,220	
Revenue		1,335,475	
Profit		845,255	

Marketing Timeline



Marketing Asset Deliverables

Electronic Press Kit (EPK)

An EPK will be established in order to support the campaign for music industry promotion. The pack will include a band biography, links to websites and media as well as promotional videos and detail in regard to the promotional #Createabuzz campaign.

Campaign Release Plan

The culmination of all the efforts to this point has been to support the release and promotional strategy for the single *Houseplants* and the album *Bright Green Field*. Of course, a fundamental aspect of this process is the promotional tour opportunities both in the UK and Europe. The timeline for building a profile around the band and their presence would cover a six-month period to coincide with an initial single release, the release of the debut album, and promotional activities.

For this campaign I have considered the listener profile and considered the target market in deriving the release strategy to build optimum interest in the bands activities. This strategy has also been built in consideration of Beal and Bohlen's Product Adaption Cycle (Bohlen, 1951)



Figure 12 Product Adaption Cycle

The initial phase of releasing the single and the subscription app is aimed at their existing and loyal fanbase, the Superfan. These early adopters are likely to want to tap into as much information as they can about the group and their activities and want to be part of a “movement”. The optimum point of the curve will of course be the at the point of album release where we will also carry out the main activity of promoting the album through the streaming event and announcing the tour. This will capture the Early and Late Majority of the listener base; the causal fans. Then we move to the latter stages of the campaign and through continued focus promoting the band through social media we will target the Laggards or occasional listeners. The continued story that is created by the subscription idea and the #Creatabuzz campaign is intended to create a word-of-mouth momentum and them behind the whole strategy that will continue to convert casual listeners and curious consumers into committed fans of Squid’s music.

During Phase 2 the distribution process will commence with a plan to print 40k CD’s and a run of 10k vinyl records. We would look to distribute the product to small indie record shops across locations in the UK such as Brighton, Manchester, Glasgow and the Southwest and in addition partner with a digital distributor such as Ditto. We would also distribute approximately 10% of the product for European consumption to coincide with the touring schedule.

In regard to touring, we would target those locations listed above as the main hubs to carry out performances and also look for festivals that may be located in rural areas surrounding those cities in order to focus on driving the environmental aspect of this campaign. Our European dates would be focussed on performances in Paris, Berlin and possibly Norway.

The live streaming event will be a vital aspect of this release campaign. Subscribers to the app would receive exclusive content to the event and able to download exclusive bonus material.

In terms of Television and Radio performances, our target audience would be as follows:

TV	1. Jonathan Ross – Including content about the app 2. Jools Holland 3. The One Show – Including content about the app
Radio	1. Radio 6 Music 1. Local Radio Stations 2. Capital 3. Radio X

Interviews with online magazines such as NME and possible Music Week would also be a key driver in order to raise Squid's profile both with consumers and within the industry.

It is important that once the main part of the campaign has been completed that we maintain momentum and at the 3-month phase after the release of the album, the campaign will be focussed on releasing a remix album, again, using the subscription process to tap into the loyal fans who have supported the band throughout the campaign. Firstly, releasing an extended version of the album with added live tracks and then developing a live album release. Subscribers to the premium package would receive these releases as part of their subscription. This phase of the campaign will help sustain the interest in the band whilst they plan the next phase of their career and their next release.

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