



CREATIVE MUSIC MANAGEMENT

Reflective Summary

BMTY700

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Abstract

This report is a reflection of the creation of a single release plan for the song “Who We Are” by Aramu Mura featuring Yemi Bolatiwa, crafted by the group Raspberry Beret of the Creative Music Management module at Tileyard Education. The text outlines the meaning and importance of reflective summaries, describes and analyses team management and task delegation. The process of completing my tasks of writing the contracts and distributing the budget is also described. Finally, the impact of technology on music creation, promotion of original popular music and team development is discussed in relation to the project.

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Reflective Summary and its Importance

A reflective summary is an “activity in which you analyse experiences, or your own practice/skills/responses, in order to learn and improve” (University of Birmingham, 2014). In the case of this assignment, the reflection takes form of an essay describing and analysing the process of creating a marketing plan for a song, what was learned and how future projects could be improved. In a reflective summary, one is able to “internally examine and explore an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, creating and clarifying meaning in terms of self” (Boyd, Fales, 1983). That way, the conceptual perspective of a certain issue is changed. This means that reflections result in critical thinking and help the writer realise where their ideas are coming from and how they can be translated to reality and then improved.

Reflective summaries are important as they help improve one’s analytical skills since they “require you to express what you think, and more significantly, how and why you think that way” (Trent University, 2021). They also help to “make sense of and learn from your experiences” (University of Birmingham, 2014).

Team Management

For the Creative Music Management module, we created a campaign for a single release of a newly created artist with a limited budget of 500 GBP. The Tileyard Education Music Business Online course was divided into four groups. I was initially placed in Strawberry Letter 23, however the people in the group left the university. So, I chose to join another group – Raspberry Beret. Aidan, Ben and Emma were welcoming and introduced me to the project quite quickly. All of us had different roles that record label employees would be responsible for.

The types of teams our group could be defined as are both project team and self-managed team. We are a project team because an organisation (Tileyard Education) formed us to complete a certain task – to create a campaign for a single release for academic purposes. Self-managed teams are defined as “groups of employees who work in an extremely integrated and collaborative way because they do not have a formal leader”

(Veyrat, 2017). We were the ones that divided the labour, made decisions and supervised each other. We did not have a designated leader, which allowed for a friendlier environment and the confidence to share ideas freely. All of us were responsible enough to complete our tasks on time and with quality, so a leader was not as necessary.

Task Delegation

Since I joined the group later, I was not present at the initial meeting where the members had discussed their strengths and preferences on areas to work on. Furthermore, I was informed that both Emma and Aidan had suggested artists to work with. However, the group collectively had decided to work with Ben and his friend Danny who had written a song together called “Who We Are”. They had talked about releasing it under a new artist duo, which gave birth to Aramu Muru – the act for which this campaign is for.

Once I joined the group, some of Emma’s tasks were given to me. I was responsible for the contracts and the budget. I was happy with this outcome because these are areas I have less experience with and I do not find very enjoyable. Whenever I work on releases what I like doing the most, besides the creation of audio and video material, are the social media plan and press release. I also took the initiative to create the targeting and budget of the social media ads we would run a bit before and after the release. This helped me understand Facebook and Instagram ads more.

This time, the press release was assigned to Ben, as he works in a music PR firm. He also was responsible for writing down the marketing plan. Since the song is his, he also managed the mixing sessions and the communication with the feature artist Yemi Bolatiwa. Emma had to work on the social media plan and generate ideas surrounding creative social media marketing. Aidan created different promotional assets or found people on Fiverr to craft them if he found difficulties. The fact that we did not have great technological skills when it came to photo or video editing was a drawback because small amounts from the budget were spend on animation.

Using the Nine Belbin Team Roles, I have allocated roles to each of the group members. Aidan is a teamworker because he is co-operative and listens patiently when ideas are discussed. He was always quick to respond to WhatsApp questions and willing to help me when I was unsure how he had spent part of the budget. Ben is the co-ordinator because he is mature in the business with a music PR job and is good at identifying talent. This is because he suggested the vocalist Yemi Boloatiwa to feature on the track. He also contacted various labels for A&R feedback demonstrating he is active and confident to communicate with others. Emma would be the plant of the group, as she is creative and has good ideas. When making the social media plan, she had interesting thoughts about making “be yourself” TikTok content to the song and was able to implement tools such as Adobe InDesign and Photoshop. I believe I am the implementer because, in this project, I was practical and reliable. I joined the group late and was responsible for the more straightforward jobs: contracts, budget, and social media ads. I started working right away and did not let the group down, even though late joiners often tend to be less motivated and engaged.

A SWOT analysis for my own work in this project was created (Appendix 1). I discovered that my responsible character helped me finish my tasks on time without leaving the rest of the group unsatisfied. However, I could have finished my job a lot faster if my time management was better. I discovered that there is opportunity in developing ads – I found targeting very interesting and would look into Facebook and Instagram ads in more depth in the future. A threat I experienced is that deadlines overlapped with a very busy work period, so writing the analyses was difficult to manage.

Contracts

My most challenging job was to create the contracts. I had to write a split sheet for the composition. Ben, Danny and Yemi had decided to split the song royalties among themselves. So, Ben sent me the addresses of all parties and I crafted a short split sheet giving each 33.3% of the composition royalties. I used an agreement I had found on Songtrust as a template. It did not have a column for the artist addresses, which is an essential part when signing a document like this. This is why I only used the paragraph stating that no samples were used from the Songtrust template.

For the remix contract, I used a contract a lawyer crafted for me to give to musicians that play on my songs. She usually writes them in Bulgarian but this one was in English because the musicians I work with are British. There were some wording mistakes and awkward phrases, so I spent a lot of time editing the writing. I also had to remove some clauses citing Bulgarian law. Editing the contract really helped me understand the structure and importance of such documents.

Budget

Budgeting “identifies current available capital, provides an estimate of expenditure and anticipates incoming revenue” (Banks, 2018). This way, cash flow can be more carefully observed, costs could be reduced, and profits increased. There is high risk in our budget because the return on investment is not certain. The fact that we decided to launch a new act means that revenue would not come in for a while simply because we do not know if the song will be successful. In order to break an artist, one needs a lot of capital, industry connections and a robust creative portfolio, which is still not necessarily the case.

With the limited budget of 500 GBP, we spent 166.56 on the song production and the creation of promotional assets. The rest of the budget was left to me to distribute. So, I decided to spend it on promotion. 200 GBP was budgeted for Facebook and Instagram ads, as well as paying one or two TikTok micro influencers. The rest of the money will be spent on an article in *We Rave You* – a magazine with a focus on electronic music with a very large following. In my opinion, the budget is distributed well, as it is a well-known music industry tip that one has to spend the same amount or more for promotion as spent for making the product.

Technology & Music Creation

Contemporary music has been adopting technology for decades. Utilisation of computers and DAW software changed the industry and created many exciting new ways to produce sounds. The Internet facilitated collaboration with some DAW’s sessions being able to be edited and supervised by a producer in one place that is recording a band somewhere else in the world. Online video communication platforms such as Skype and Zoom allow

artists to collaborate wherever they are. In fact, Ben contacted Yemi through one of these platforms to discuss the collaboration. She then recorded her vocals at home and sent the tracks to the producer thanks to the Internet.

Technology & Promotion of Original Popular Music

Social media has drastically changed the way in which music is promoted online. All major social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok have music heavily implemented into their customer experience. Music stickers on Facebook, Messenger and Instagram allow users to add a song to their stories, so listeners can share their latest favourite song. A study by MusicWatch revealed that 90 percent of social media users participate in “a music- or artist-related activity on social platforms” (Cole, 2019). It was discovered that “two-thirds of social media users discover new artists on social media and then almost 60 percent of them visit online streaming platforms to listen to a song after seeing a post” (Cole, 2019). This shows how powerful social media is in building a fanbase. Hence, our group developed a four-week social media plan to make sure all social media tools are utilised. There will be daily updates on Facebook and Instagram stories, as well as a few posts a week on these platforms and TikTok.

Another way technology changed the promotion of original popular music is through distribution. With the rise of streaming, music distribution services such as DistroKid or TuneCore were created to let musicians upload their music online and monetise it. Independent musicians follow “a diversification strategy, aiming to capture the business opportunities provided by technological changes in the distribution of music” (Eiriz, Leite, 2017). This is why many turned to these services with excitement and the belief that they can make it in the industry without a record label. In this project, we created a new DistroKid profile for 35 GBP to be able to upload the song to all major music streaming platforms. The ability to do that will allow radio stations, magazines and music blogs to listen to the track and potentially write about it, thus promoting it to new audiences.

Promotional materials for any single campaign are done using technology. For instance, Adobe After Effects was the program that helped in creating the animation of the artwork of “Who We Are”. Hence, the skillset for graphic design is very important for

independent musicians to have. As stated in *The Financial Post*, “combining in-depth knowledge of marketing and illustration creates eye-catching results that will set any company promotion apart from the competition” (StackCommerce, 2020). This applies to musicians on a budget too. If the capital of an artist is limited but their creative software skills are high, then their promotional assets would stand out from the other indie musicians.

Technology & Team Development

Technological improvements such as integrated cameras on laptops, computers and smartphones have facilitated one very important tool for team development – video conferencing. It can help “keep a cohesive group even though the members are across town, the country, or even halfway around the globe” (Sarokin, 2020). The group Zoom conferences or WhatsApp calls made it easier for us to communicate during the pandemic.

The project management tools that we used – Milanote, Monday and Google Drive, helped us stay on track with the project and how everyone was getting on with their assigned tasks.

“Effective communication remains one of the keys of success when working with teams of all sizes” (Beech, 2017). Our group had effective communication throughout the whole process. The WhatsApp chat allowed us to receive quick answers to questions and feedback on work. Our weekly meetings also contributed to a well-organised and productive workflow, as we were able to keep each other updated and feel the group dynamic. According to an article in *Forbes Magazine*, “online feedback should be encouraged – whether through video calls, collaboration platforms or even emails – to allow team members to find it safe and acceptable to share feedback without the formality of online communication” (Forbes Technology Council, 2020). I never felt uncomfortable to ask a question or share my opinion on a certain topic regarding the assignment, demonstrating that the group dynamic was positive and welcoming. Thus, feedback was encouraged.

Conclusion

It is difficult to reflect on the effectiveness of our campaign as the song will be released on May 7. The teamwork and work ethic of the group proved to be successful in the planning process of the campaign. However, actions are what matter. If we had been able to release the song earlier, aspects such as regular social media posts and PR communications would have been assessed. Another drawback of the project was that the timeline was not complete and detailed enough to help group members have clearer goals and be motivated. Furthermore, choosing to develop an act from zero was a challenge when having to discuss the income. Without a fanbase, planning for income streams is not very effective. The only certain income we could be working towards is revenue from streaming.

To conclude, I was able to improve my music contracts skills and social media ad making. Technology facilitated group communication, as well as the creation of all assets used. The single campaign of “Who We Are” by Aramu Muru featuring Yemi Bolatiwa demonstrates an understanding of industry-standard marketing techniques.

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Appendix 1

Personal SWOT Analysis:

STRENGTHS: • Responsible • Positive attitude • Team player	WEAKNESSES: • Poor time management • Joined the group late, so took a while to adapt
OPPORTUNITIES: • Social media ad skillset future development • Potential future work with group members	THREATS: • Busy schedule • Not currently based in the UK