

CREATION

IN INTERNATIONAL MUSIC MARKETING

ADAD7013_LON

Reflective Commentary

Methodology: Atkins and Murphy/Gibbs'

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Awareness

I started a course in Music Marketing for a couple of different reasons, one of them was to help my own music career; second one was to become a music industry professional and secure myself a decent office job in the field I am passionate about; third was to become a live music promoter. I thought, if I am a musician and love going to gigs, then the music industry is where I belong. It makes sense as it works for a lot of people but after getting a degree in Music Technology and now (hopefully) Music Marketing, the desire to work in the music industry has diminished, and so has the passion for my own musical endeavours. Which made me think, am I actually on the right path?

They say, *do what you love and you'll never work a day in your life*. Then why doing what am I supposed to love feels like a burden, to the level of me not wanting to do it anymore? My family has been telling me that music is just a hobby and I wanted to prove them wrong by working in the music industry. But what if they were right? Turning my passion into work has not been fruitful yet, if I wanted to be a music producer, I would have already been one, if I actually did want to work in Nuclear Blast as I first thought, I would have knocked on their door. I came to the conclusion that I made myself believe I wanted to be a music industry professional. When it comes to music, all I want to do is just sing and write, release new music, successful or not, and have fun doing it.

After the second term, I was dissatisfied with the quality of the course, and I wasn't alone. But it didn't stop my peers from finishing it on time and getting jobs in the industry, because that's what they came to do in Tileyard. I reached a point where I wasn't sure what I wanted anymore and made a decision to quit. But with the support from Tileyard Education, I decided to push myself through after a realisation that it's probably my only chance to actually get an MA.

This is the second time I wanted to quit a music degree. It took me five years to finish my BA with a 2-year deferral and now I've requested another long extension. I thought

that finishing a degree would turn me into a professional but then I am getting frustrated when it doesn't happen. I kept asking myself if I am a failure or am I just lazy? Now I think that I have just been figuring things out.

I was given the opportunity to spend a week at Tileyard Music, and now, when I think about it, my first day was somewhat symbolic. I was very excited, I even woke up on time, but when I opened the doors to leave the house: all roads were flooded - the main pipe has burst. My neighbours couldn't leave for work, cars were trapped, someone fell into a sinkhole, people had to move home and close their businesses because of the terrible damage done. I wasn't sure what to do but thought I would risk it, so I walked through knee-deep in the street water, telling myself "You need to show your determination, maybe that's your future employer".

I came to the office late but that wasn't a problem because everyone else was too. I was given tasks over Zoom to create TikToks for a few artists, so I sat down in the corner, researching those artists and looking at the clock. I just felt weird and unmotivated, sitting in an office being invisible while wearing my brightest yellow shirt. And I understand that's how most people start out, feeling invisible and then proving their worth with quality work. But is that necessarily how it should be? Whenever I have new people doing a trial shift at work, I will do my best to make them feel comfortable, get to know them and show how great the workplace is, so those people actually try harder for the job. That's how my mother was when she worked in a film studio, no one cared about the new runners, but she would always support them and just be nice. You never know when you might run into those people again and life can work in funny ways, according to Alannis Morissette. So, after a week at Tileyard Music I never wanted to come back again. It just felt awkward being there.

People turn to music for comfort, but another thing that worked for me when loud music didn't, was professional wrestling. When I just moved to London in 2017 to finish my BA, I wasn't in the best place, a break-up, the fears of surviving in the big city and the worst of them all – no internet. Luckily, I had a whole year of old-school wrestling on my hard drive and got immersed. Eventually I started following new promotions, going to shows, reading blogs,

listening to podcasts and following YouTubers, even started attending a wrestling school. At first, I wasn't sure if pro-wrestling was a form of escapism but recently I realised: well, I don't want to work in an office generating TikTok ideas for artists I don't care about, and I can barely keep myself motivated while creating my own music marketing campaigns. But pro-wrestling universe excites me, and I learn new things about it every day.

Seeing backstage footage from wrestling shows and how much fun people are having, the weirdness that happens in the ring, it was a breath of fresh air. There is so much seriousness in the music industry, where a lot of people are very concerned about their image, looking cool and edgy and are afraid to look silly. Well, wrestling is whacky and that's why I love it.

When it comes to self-awareness, I would like to think that this academic journey in becoming a music professional has led me onto a new path that I never thought I would pursue.

Description

After years of self-exploration and a few tuition loans later, I came to a conclusion that I want to be involved in something that is even more out of the normal than the music industry seemed like at first.

"It's so sad that when you see someone as they really are, it ruins them." - said by BoJack Horseman when he realised his fierce and somewhat crazy love interest was actually just a normal person. The quote seemed applicable when describing my own feelings, though I do understand that music industry is very diverse and there are plenty of fun projects and interesting people. But why should I waste even more time chasing exciting opportunities when I could be the one creating them?

I started this course thinking I just want a job in the industry I am passionate about which kept my options wide but didn't provide with anything specific to create professional goals for. I had a plan A, a plan B, plan C but nothing that would motivate me. Now, I have

narrowed down the list of companies I would like to work for and on top of it is PROGRESS Wrestling.

After a series of events, one of the directors gave me his number and that's when I realised, I am given a great opportunity to prove that I am worthy enough to join their team. They might not be looking for staff at the moment, and I may lack expertise, so my only chance is to present an idea with a plan that would impress them. My idea for *Wrestlemelomania* is not a finished project yet, but the polished version could open the doors to working for someone once voted the best boss in UK, and that's what motivates me.

Analysis

After brewing the idea for a couple of months and now reflecting on it, there are some flaws within the initial concept that I have to acknowledge.

First of them is the focus on new talent straight from the training grounds. Having an established promotion like PROGRESS on board, they will want their roster in the spotlight. And understandably so, they are the main draw. The reasoning behind me wanting to include newcomers is, first, I am not even sure what their actual roster is because it's nowhere to be found on their website, unlike Revolution Pro. Wrestlers in the United Kingdom are rarely tied to a specific company, so same faces perform in different shows across the island. I have been to enough PROGRESS shows to notice that there's not many new faces, seemed like they would rather invite already well-known talent from across the seas than growing new stars. I might be wrong about this because I don't know what is happening behind the scenes. PROGRESS and RevPro kickstarted some amazing careers (Tessier, 2023). Seeing how many people attend London wrestling schools, it just makes sense that some of them might be future superstars, they just need opportunities. But inexperienced wrestlers bring the risk of injury and stage fright. But even if PROGRESS don't want to include newbies at the first ever *Wrestlemelomania*, I think we should still scout for talent who haven't received the right exposure yet and include them.

After making these changes, the promotional method of creating online drama is not so relevant anymore. Even if we did use this method, it doesn't guarantee that people would get invested in it when it's someone they don't know. It might work for stars with big followings, but most of the audience would not care about what's been said on Twitter, shows usually have screens to help the audience to keep up with storyline. While it's still worth trying to come up with something outrageous that could go viral, dealing with mainly talent from PROGRESS, we would have to keep in line with what's already been planned for the performers by the writing team. Instead of creating individual feuds involving the musicians to confuse the internet, I believe creating a story for one night only would be more successful.

On the other hand, many wrestlers, new or not, *"seem to see self-promotion as a secondary element of learning the craft."* (Colla, 2019). While musicians these days are more aware of self-branding and the importance of marketing, the independent wrestlers are a bit behind. A lot of people still think that their in-ring ability and hard work is what going to lead to success, but The Rock, Undertaker and even WWE as a whole, got to where they are thanks to clever marketing.

"A corporation isn't wrestling. Vince McMahon made wrestling synonymous with WWE so effectively that it's the first thing you think about when someone says 'wrestling'." (Kail, 2019)

Having that in mind, when we have decided on the performers, musicians and wrestlers, we will have to work on their image and social media presence individually which would benefit our storyline in *Wrestlemania*.

Spending so much time focusing on the wrestling aspect of the festival, there is a risk of leaving the musicians as an afterthought. We can't have bands while matches are happening and we can't just have them at the end of the night because people might start leaving, so we need to plan out the performances so that people direct their attention where we want them too. With so much going on already, it's easy to lose focus and the festival could turn into chaos. Battle Of The Bands does not seem like such a great idea anymore, people will not be coming to the show to vote, they are coming to have fun. Having this in mind, we will

create a story that would include the musicians as well, if they wanted to. While I understand that some bands would just want to play their set uninterrupted, having their drummer body slammed could be great content for their TikTok.

With the expansion of *Wrestlemania*, I stated that I would make the event international in three years' time, which now I think is a bit unrealistic and unnecessary. While bringing talent from Europe and other parts of the world is great, it should not be the main focus. Also, it brings the risk of people getting stuck because of Brexit. Creating partnerships with companies within the UK is more than enough for a multi-tent festival. Quality, not quantity, and *Wrestlemania* becoming a reputable festival is the main goal. Eventually having guest promotions from other countries is still a valid option but my proposed timeline might be moving too fast.

Instead of collaborating with international companies, I would consider expanding our team and creating a new department – a music label. We could take on the bands that we have worked with and offer them our label services. Our expansion would focus more on creating a *Wrestlemania* tour across the country, inspired by Smashing Pumpkins' *The World is a Vampire* tour. Lead singer Billy Corgan is the owner of National Wrestling Alliance and has set his promotion to compete against the Wrestling Alliance of Australia at their upcoming tour/festival with Jane's Addiction, Amyl and the Sniffers and other music acts (One World Entertainment, 2023).

The biggest concern is if Two Tribes Campfire is actually the perfect place for our pivot event. *Wrestlemania* being an outside event is one of our unique selling points, and even if we get the required equipment to protect us from unpredicted weather changes, there are other factors to consider like, is there actually enough space? A ring measures between 14 and 20 feet each side, will we actually be able to accommodate 500 people? Campfire does not have a backstage, which would mean we would either have to squeeze in a tent somewhere for the performers, which is not ideal, or ask our neighbours like the Gallery to accommodate us. So even if I pictured Campfire being the perfect venue, I have to find a secondary option to be safe.

I thought that facing the potential downsides of my event would scare me off, but instead it made it more real. Instead of seeing *Wrestlemania* as a fantasy, I am now treating it as a work in **progress** and am open to making more changes if needed.

I believe in the event, but do I believe in myself? I wouldn't be me if I didn't doubt my abilities, so I had to find confidence in myself by finding strengths instead of dwelling on my weaknesses.

To ensure that *Wrestlemania* is a success, my strategy is to build a strong reliable team. As presented in the proposal and the portfolio, the festival is a collaborative project and involves a lot of people which would be too much for one person to handle. I have pitched the idea to *PROGRESS* and could just let them run with it, but I want to be involved in every step and turn this dream into a reality. My only experience is high school events, working in hospitality and volunteering at festivals. That is why I had to research how festivals are being run and use my people skills to create connections.

"Most of the festivals whose names everyone knows today are nothing more than the consequence of a dream that some crazy people one day had, and that they simply had the audacity to carry them out." (Festnoise, 2021)

The Perfect Team

Teamwork makes the dream work, as people say, and to run a festival we need a trustworthy team with diverse skillsets.

"When music festivals start out it is not unusual to have just a few people and some volunteers to help out. With these small teams it is often the case that everyone will need to perform multiple tasks in planning and organising the events." (Robertson, 2021)

Just being a group of like-minded people driven by passion does not necessarily mean it is a good professional match. A good example is my failed band. Yes, our music tastes matched, we got along, we valued each other as musicians and wrote good songs. But we broke

up in the end, and even though we blamed the pandemic, I saw it coming to an end sooner or later. No one was an actual leader, and all decisions were made by raising hands, sometimes we would come up with good ideas but that's where we would leave most of them – just as good ideas that we were too lazy to accomplish. I spent too much time on minor details of my vocal production that eventually pushed back the E.P. release. People would not turn up to meetings or disappear for a couple of days. If we had someone to babysit us, maybe things would have been different.

Finding out about the strategy by Patrick Lencioni, *The 6 Types Of Working Genius*, gave me the answer why the band did not work out and what should I be looking for in my next venture.

***“Wonder:** identifies the need for improvement or change*

***Invention:** confirms the importance of that need, and generates an idea or solution*

***Discernment:** assesses the merit and workability of the idea or solution*

***Galvanizing:** generates enthusiasm and action around the idea or solution*

***Enablement:** initiates support and assists in the implementation of the idea or solution*

***Tenacity:** commits to ensuring that the idea or solution gets completed and that results are achieved” (Quintana, 2023)*

Based on these six talents, our band lacked **Enablement** and **Tenacity**, we all had ideas, we were all creative and coming up with new material, got excited about things, evaluated them, but that's where it would stop until someone stepped up and said, “We are doing this”. But that was always the uncomfortable part.

When it comes to my own Working Geniuses, I am not completely certain. I thought **Wonder** was the one because I am dreamer and have a vivid imagination. But **Invention** seems more applicable, I wondered how I could combine the things I love and came up with *Wrestlemelomania*. Also, even though I am not an inventor, I believe that every problem has a

solution, and I will find it. **Discernment** is the other one I am leaning towards to because whatever idea I have, I instantly question it. The more time passes, the more critical I become of my ideas and without **Enablement** and **Tenacity**, most of those ideas I reject and put away in a drawer.

I believe that *Wrestlemelomania* is a great idea and I need people on board who have the strengths that I lack. I don't have much time to become someone else, but it doesn't mean that I am not willing to learn new skills.

"So if you're finding that you're consistently failing or falling short on the goals you've set for yourself, it may be time to consider trying to improve where you're already strong rather than focusing your efforts on getting better in the areas where you're weak." (Greene, 2019)

I might not be a great graphic designer or a video editor, but these are things that I enjoy doing and would like to explore more. As much as I don't like posting on social media, I see myself coming up with ideas and creating content.

I love meeting new people and having conversations with strangers, I tend to be bubbly and usually follow this rule in life: if you want something, ask for it. I would rather ask for directions with the chance of being rejected than being lost. Sometimes I get scared of asking those questions but usually it's easier than finding things out myself. Acquiring pieces for *Wrestlemelomania* will be a lot of asking and even more talking.

Working in hospitality has taught me that every single customer matters. Even if they are being rude, I would rather be polite and avoid conflict. Being in charge of venues, one needs to constantly watch the room and keep a close eye on details, delegate jobs and deal with inconveniences that often occur. My experience being a supervisor in different sites will play a key role in overseeing the festival.

"A Festival Director works behind the scenes of an event, from the earliest planning stages to when the performances are taking place. They liaise with vendors

(people/organisations selling something), city officials and on-site staff as well as production / logistics managers of the festival.” (Get Into Theatre, 2019)

Unfortunately, organisation and meeting deadlines is not my strongest suite, in personal and academic life at least. I need to feel like everything around me is burning and that people depend on me to be productive. Which means that I work better under pressure and could potentially turn this weakness into a strength. I do not want to live in self-induced stress forever. I want to prove to myself that I am a problem solver and if my problem is me not being organised, I will have to change that.

One of the team members I currently have on board shows signs of **Galvanising** and **Enablement**, he said he wants to introduce me to all the right people and make *Wrestlemelomania* happen. He shared his wrestling merchandise idea and we discussed the possibility of building a brand. Is it *Wrestlemelomania* or is it going to be a different name, the future will show. He’s also got music management experience which will definitely come to use.

“Festival Director. They are the piece that articulates everything, the conductors of the orchestra, the persons with a global perspective of the entire festival and its most visible face. They must supervise all areas, with special attention to the economic part (budget, purchases, sales, ticketing, hospitality, sponsorships and so on). On many occasions festival directors are partners of the festival itself.” (Festnoise, 2021)

Wrestlemelomania will be dealing with a few partners and PROGRESS Wrestling is the main one. Working with them, we will have to deliver, that’s where **Tenacity** comes in. They have a team that makes things happen and I want to become a part of them. They will take over the technical aspect of running the wrestling side of things simply because they’ve been doing it for years.

We will need a person to watch over the music tech side of things, and luckily one of my wrestling friends is a professional music producer and has worked in the business for over 20 years. In his words, “Just tell me what to do, and I will do it, I want to be a part of this!”, which is the attitude we need.

When it comes to vendors and the hospitality aspect, I will work closely with Two Tribes Campfire to make sure the event runs smoothly.

Even though I have never seen myself become a festival director, I believe I can pull it off by assembling a trustworthy team that have the Geniuses I lack.

Evaluation

I believe that the idea for *Wrestlemania* is promising and it could truly become an unforgettable festival for years to come. But when it comes to evaluating my actual assignment, I could have done better if instead of dwelling on my feelings, I did more research and was more hands-on with the project. I have only started developing this idea after I was granted the extension, so I had limited time to work on all different elements of the Creation module.

On the other hand, before meeting certain people in the professional wrestling world, *Wrestlemania* was just a hypothetical event and after putting my thoughts into words, it became real. If I had treated this idea as a real opportunity from the beginning, my written work would have been more substantial and detailed.

The work I am submitting now is not the best, but it shows my creativity and ability to adapt what I have learned in music marketing to a slightly different field. The course did not cover much of live music promotion and event marketing but was more aimed at music artist marketing, so I had to find the connections to answer the given briefs. I believe I showed a fair knowledge of branding and different marketing methods but also could have used more research materials to back me up and show better academic skill.

Identify learning

I have used the Atkins and Murphy model of reflection as base to this reflective commentary because differently than the Gibbs method, instead of talking about feelings, it states *“it is essential to gain knowledge or awareness about the triggers that have caused discomfort.”* (Nursing Answers, 2020) In my personal experience, I felt uncomfortable in the field of music marketing and had to identify the issue. I have learned that all this time I have been sabotaging myself because the music industry is not what I actually want to pursue. Yes, I do find joy in performing and singing, but not working on music marketing campaigns. Instead of looking for faults in the music industry and getting frustrated, I learned that maybe we are just not a great match.

Throughout the course I learned about different strategies and terminology, I have learned about different P's, C's and S's in marketing and that every plan needs a structure. Structure is what I have been lacking most of my life and that is mainly because I kept everything in my head which made me forgetful and overwhelmed. Learned how just making lists can help prioritise and keep better track of time.

Additionally, I have learned that the world benefits from people with different outlooks on life. Very rarely a person can be a master of all and having a diverse team is what makes a project successful.

Action

Submitting my assignments might be the end of my experience in Tilleyard Education, but it's only the beginning for *Wrestlemania*.

I will have to remake my portfolio into a presentation that I will show to my future partners. I will contact the director of PROGRESS and ask if he would be willing to see my presentation before a show on the 23rd of April and if he likes it, I will invite him and his team to Two Tribes Campfire so they could assess the venue. Given the green light, I will ask to be involved in the creative process and start scouting for bands and wrestlers. My other partner is

starting a merchandise business, so I will be involved with that as well. Will go to as many shows in London as possible to make my face recognisable and create a decent network.

I would love to quit my job in Campfire because hospitality and the lifestyle surrounding it takes too much of my energy and time. I will have to build a new CV because I didn't need it for years and now it is outdated. Maybe I will apply to a few music industry jobs and prove myself wrong again, I am open to all possibilities. Creating *Wrestlemania* is not a paid full-time job, so I need to find a way to support myself while having space to breathe. I don't have guarantee that PROGRESS will hire me full-time either, so even though I feel I have a better direction in life, I am still uncertain about my future. Researching other companies that I would like to work for could and possibly signing up for a course in graphic design could lead to new opportunities.

Conclusion

This year has been a rollercoaster, I have learned much about myself but still don't have the answers I need. I have found motivation in a great idea that is *Wrestlemania* and built an understanding of marketing. Hopefully I am on the right path this time and can find the self-confidence to take on the risks of creating a business.

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