

Creative Music Management *BMTY7000*

Lecturer: Harry Leckstein

Reflective Summary

By **Rabia Soomro**

Student Number: 22394554

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Project Outline](#)

[Project Management](#)

[Merchandising](#)

[A&R](#)

[The Release Show](#)

[Finance](#)

[Marketing](#)

[Promotion](#)

[Creating a Unique Selling Point](#)

[Final Thoughts](#)

[References](#)

[Appendix](#)

[Figure 1- Group Roles](#)

[Figure 2- Record of Meetings](#)

[Figure 4- Temporary Tattoo Websites \(Merch\)](#)

[Figure 5- Custom Lighters Website \(Merch\)](#)

[Figure 6- Artist's Instagram](#)

[Figure 7- Instagram Age Demographic](#)

[Figure 8- Instagram Location](#)

[Figure 9- SWOT Analysis](#)

[Figure 10- Social Media Manager Email](#)

Introduction

This essay will reflect on the process of planning and promoting the release of a single by the artist Tae Hawfa with a budget of £5000. It will include a spreadsheet estimating the outgoings and potential income generated from ticket sales and merchandise, as well as details of group and individual involvement in the creation and promotion of the single. It will contain an appendix with relevant supporting pictures and tables and is intended to exist alongside a portfolio evidencing the work that is detailed throughout this report, throughout which digital technologies and their utilisations and limitations will also be discussed.

Project Outline

The purpose of this project was threefold; to release an artist's single, to facilitate the remix of the single, and to promote the release of the song through the planning and execution of a 'release show', in which the artist will perform with supporting and guest performances. The group's aims were to optimise the artist's branding through social media presence and merchandising, and by advising on the creative direction of his music by providing Artists and Repertoire (A&R) services.

Project Management

Each group member fell into roles very naturally based on their skills and experience (*see figure 1 for more details*). I took on the role of Project Manager which included managing other members of the group by directing them to tasks and overseeing every aspect of the project. My main focuses were on marketing, branding, A&R, merchandising, budgeting and some organisational tasks expected of an artist manager; such as accommodation and travel arrangements. In addition to these responsibilities, I took charge of certain admin and organisational tasks that enabled the smooth operation of activities and communications between each team member. For instance, I created a Google Drive folder to

collate all of our individual work in one place so that we would all be able to access the creative media assets in order to discuss our thoughts on them at our meetings. In this folder, I included a Google Document with a checklist of tasks we needed to complete as well as other key information that we all needed to access. I believe that this increased our level of efficiency as when a group member had completed a task they were able to consult the Google Doc to find a new job to complete.

As Project Manager, I organised our weekly meetings and checked in with each member to see what progress they had made and how we could move forward with any issues that they were facing. I documented our group meetings and made notes of the things we had talked about and completed (*see figure 2*).

Merchandising

Fulfilling our managerial roles, Serine and I had a phone call in which we allocated each member tasks based on their abilities and interests (*see figure 3*).

I was impressed to note how well-suited Marina was to her role as Visual Director and merchandising manager as she had some very creative ideas that combined Tae's artistic aesthetic with out-of-the-box merchandise ideas like tattoos and lighters. She had suggested hiring a real tattoo artist to work at the venue and, while supporters would have the option to get anything small tattooed, the tattoo artist would recommend Tae's artwork as designs. This was a promising idea and there were many tattoo artists that we knew personally who would do this for a reduced cost, however, we were not sure about the health and safety requirements for this endeavour. Instead, we settled on using temporary tattoos, which is easily done through websites such as Inkbox or INKWEAR (*see figure 4*), however, we could not guarantee that Tae's supporters would engage with the idea as his followers are mostly over the age 25 years old and this idea might be better suited to teenagers. Marina also had an idea to make custom lighters, as this suits Tae's edgy brand and I found a good website to buy these from (*see figure 5*).

I began thinking about potential designs for clothing that we could sell at Tae's show. He already has a fashion line connected to his brand called Renegade Militia, so his supporters associate his image with a certain style that also translates to his other art. We decided that we would have only a small number of T-shirts and Hoodies available at the release show to reduce our costs, and instead employ an online made-to-order system that will be mentioned in more detail in the Finance section.

A&R

Tae Hawfa is a 30-year-old American rapper who releases music regularly and uses Instagram as his main tool for online promotion, in which he has over 5000 followers (*see figure 6*). Instagram's user demographics are relevant to note, as the majority of Tae's engagement comes from users between the ages of 25-34 (*see figure 7*) and this is the age group that most use Instagram in 2022 (Barnhart, 2022), so it seems appropriate that Tae continue focusing on Instagram as his main social media platform. However we realised that it may be beneficial for Tae to create more content on Tiktok in order to engage younger fans with his music, this will be addressed in the Promotion section.

Tae is very active in creating and releasing new music so choosing the song that would be released was the first task. Tae sent me potential new songs for me to listen to and decide which would be best and help direct his career the way. His inspirations are ASAP Rocky and Lil Wayne, but he is often likened to Tyler the Creator and Travis Scott. Whilst all of these artists have a comparable sound Tae really wanted to lean into his heavier hip-hop/rap roots and move away from the more popular sounds like that of Tyler the Creator. So I believed that the best song for him to release would be *I need it all*, as it reminded me of ASAP Rocky's *Fuckin' Problems* song, and I felt that this was the true direction that Tae wished to go in with his music (Rocky, 2012).

The Release Show

I began completing some of the tasks that other members of the group had yet to begin doing, just to ensure that we could keep up the momentum of the project. I researched ideal locations based on Tae's audience by looking at his Instagram engagement and the ticket sales of previous shows. Tae was not able to provide details on ticket sales but said that the average show sold 10-15 tickets and the average venue capacity was 100-300 depending on the popularity of the other artists playing the show.

Tae's Instagram showed that London was his most popular location (*see figure 8*). Although Instagram does not give specific details about areas of London, Tae's shows mostly take place in North London around Camden and Islington and occasionally in South London in the Brixton area. I collated my research with Andre's and we spoke about potential locations and collaborations/ opening performers for Tae's release Show. We knew that having a well-known guest performer would generate more interest in the show and would maximise ticket sales, so we contacted the Congolese London Based artist and rapper Backroad Gee as he was a friend of the group (*Backroad Gee, 2022*). Serine decided that The Camden Assembly Pub was the best location for Tae to perform and she began planning the budget for this.

Finance

After some initial cost estimations were noted, I created a spreadsheet and began inputting the outgoings and potential income and profit we expected to generate. Due to the expectations of the artist and guest performer, we factored in the after-party costs into the budget. We planned to have the event catered by a local black-owned restaurant as that is the brand identity direction we wanted to go in.

In order to increase ticket sales the show would be streamed so that Tae's supporters in America could watch it. We also planned a tiered ticket system that had discounted early bird tickets when bought online in advance, standard tickets when bought online less than a week before the show, and tickets available at the door. NFTs have been shown to increase fan engagement and better monitor ticket sales by reducing the risk of fraud from secondary ticketing (Takyar, 2022). So I planned to use an

NFT Ticket system to increase security for the show as well as increase incentives to buy in advance. When buying a ticket online in advance the consumer would receive a free lighter and temporary tattoo that they could pick up from the venue on the day of the show. There would also be an option to buy show-specific merchandise online through a pre-order system. The website Printful is an online personalised clothing store that charges £20 to sign up initially, and then has varying costs based on the items of clothing desired. They charge a base cost to the buyer, and then the artist has the option to adjust how much they wish to charge in addition to the base cost. By using this site we would eliminate the need to store large amounts of merchandise, and the made-to-order system would ensure that we do not buy more than we sell.

Whilst the group were very receptive to the idea of offering free merchandise with a ticket purchase, there was slight resistance to the NFT tickets. Members of the group were unsure of the entire process of creating an NFT and of the extra costs we might incur. This can be a difficulty with blockchain technology, as it can feel inaccessible to the less technologically inclined consumer. The “perceived ease of use” (Sadhya & Sadhya, 2018, p.3) has been noted as a potential barrier to adoption and this can be seen by the group’s lack of enthusiasm to integrate an NFT ticketing system. Meaning unless new digital technology is seen as accessible, it can seem too difficult to implement.

Marketing

In order to determine any extra costs that may need to be factored into the budget, I created a SWOT analysis (*see figure 9*) with Tae as I thought it would be a good point of reference when creating the budget as we could factor in things like social media managers and merchandise creators.

We discovered that Tae does not enjoy creating and posting content on social media as he claims that the Instagram algorithm makes it very difficult for people to get noticed unless they are already famous and get a lot of engagement, or they pay for Instagram to promote them. This presents a challenge as it is a great platform for musicians to promote their music and interact with fans (Duncan, 2020), but since they moved the algorithm away from reverse chronological order (Barnhart,

2022), artists like Tae find it hard to get enough engagement from their followers to get noticed by potential new followers. This is perhaps done to encourage users to spend money on promoting themselves with Instagram Ads, but there is little information to be found in articles or academic papers to suggest that Instagram's algorithm was created to encourage spending on advertising. Nevertheless, the best way for Tae to reach a wider audience was through the use of Instagram and Google Ads (Landrum, 2022), so we factored a large amount into the budget for this to reach his target audience with paid advertisements.

Promotion

Due to Tae's lack of enthusiasm for posting online content, we thought about hiring a social media manager, and so Tae and I scouted for one at the Ostereo night that was hosted at Tileyard. Tae is very happy to network and meet new people, and so made a great impression on one social media manager who wants to work with him. The manager said that the services he usually provides include setting up photoshoots and creating enough content to post 3 times a week, and he recommended doing this 6 months prior to the release and 6 months after. He said that we could work out a deal but his ballpark figures would be between £100-£300 per month. This seemed like a viable option to both Tae and myself, however previously in the day we had a talk from a guest lecturer, George James, the creator of BeHook'd- a successful social media management company that controls the social media of a large number of well-known artists, brands and celebrities. George mentioned that they offer their services to new artists on a percentage basis, so I emailed them to see if they would be interested in working with Tae (*see figure 10*). I have not received a response yet but feel confident knowing that we have two very good leads for social media managers and event promoters.

George from Behook'd also mentioned some creative ways that they promote and encourage ticket sales. One of their campaigns used Twitter to create excitement for The Script's concert by giving away free tickets in specific locations that were only visible to people who tweeted using the hashtag

‘get me to The Script’. This inspired me to start brainstorming creative ideas for generating interest for Tae’s show.

Tiktok trends can facilitate the *blowing up* of a song as so I felt that if we created a Tiktok video featuring Tae’s single we could increase streaming revenue and better promote the release show. To do this we could create an easy-to-copy, fun dance routine to the song like that of Beyonce’s new song Cuff it (Beyonce, 2022) which went viral on Tiktok because of its easy dance and catchy sound. Or we could create a trend focused on the lyrics “I need it all” in which creators post photos of their younger selves and photos of themselves currently. These ‘glow-up’ trends are particularly popular and can catapult, even an old song, into new success like that of Simple Plan’s *I’m Just a Kid* which went viral in 2020 because Tiktok users were creating videos featuring photos of their younger selves (Simple Plan 2002). If we could get Tiktok influencers or celebrities to create content like this with Tae’s song, I believe that it could become a trend and direct more traffic to Tae’s streaming platform pages.

Creating a Unique Selling Point

Tae has a strong sense of fashion that aligns well with his music and brand, however, it was part of my personal mission to find a way to create a more unique selling point. We thought that by leaning on his African-American identity he would better stand out amongst rappers in London. We considered aligning Tae with a black-owned fashion company such as Trapstar (Trapstar, 2022) and so I reached out to them proposing a collaboration so that Tae would wear their clothes and promote them at his release show. Trapstar said that they would be interested in the partnership in the future once they could see that Tae’s branding aligned with their own. For this reason, I have suggested to Tae that he would benefit from being more vocal on social media about his racial identity and alignment with smaller black-owned businesses.

Marina also reached out to Boohoo and proposed a collaboration with Tae and Boohoo Man, they have yet to respond but we remain hopeful that they will accept our deal before the release show date, as Tae's collaboration with Backroad Gee makes him very attractive for sponsorship deals.

Final Thoughts

I believe that this project was ultimately a success and that through exploration of branding awareness and marketing Tae can increase his social media engagement and increase streaming and ticket revenue, which will increase his overall success as an artist. Following the model of the Gibbs reflective cycle, a notable challenge was communication between the other group members and finding ways to encourage and support them to complete their scheduled work within agreed timeframes. My learning from this is that in the future when doing such projects, there should be an equal distribution of workload to ensure that no one team member was too heavily burdened with tasks. In this case, one member of the group took on more than they were able to deliver in the timeframe and I, as project manager, completed their tasks for them.

From a personal development perspective, I believe that I have gained insight into the marketing and promotional process required to optimise the success of a release. Through meeting the owner of the successful social media management company, BeHook'd, I have learned that innovative creative promotional campaigns can be invaluable to the success of an artist.

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Appendix

Figure 1- Group Roles

Group Roles

Rabia- Project Manager

Admin, A&R, Marketing, Finance

Serine- Artist Manager

A&R, Finance

Tae- Artist

Marina- Merchandising and Visual Director

Andre- Events Manager, Visual Co-Director

Figure 2- Record of Meetings

Meeting Record

10/10/22- First meeting: decided that we would release one of Tae's songs and we would host an A&R listening session to decide which demo would be best for a single release.

19/10/22- A&R session- "I want it all" single release

27/10/22- Andre was added to our group, we showed him Tae's single and allocated him and everyone else's tasks

04/11/22- Tae's producers finished the final master of the track, we discussed ideal locations for Tae's release show and began plotting out potential costs.

09/11/22- Check-in point: Marina presented ideas for merchandising, Serine began the budgeting plan, we decided on The Camden Assembly Pub, Tae uploaded artwork to google drive.

23/11/22- Tae and Rabia created his SWOT analysis and presented it to the others, we discussed competition and people the artist could collaborate with. Serine began planning the remix.

08/12/22- Serine and Rabia finalise budget, organising content for engagement. Marina, Tae and Andre summarising lighting and set design.

10/12/22- Serine, Tae, and Rabia call to discuss marketing and income projection.

Figure 3- Allocated Tasks

Task Allocations:

KEY follow your **name** AS WELL as colour code to see responsibilities. If your colour is used on someone else's sections it means you are working together on it.

Management:

Serine - Promo/ marketing, budget via spreadsheet, Overseeing final touches, managerial duties, contacting sponsors, speaking to live agents, guest/ opening performer

Rabia- A&R, PR: Contacting radios, magazines, quality assurance mixes: single master, radio mixes.

Events Organisations:

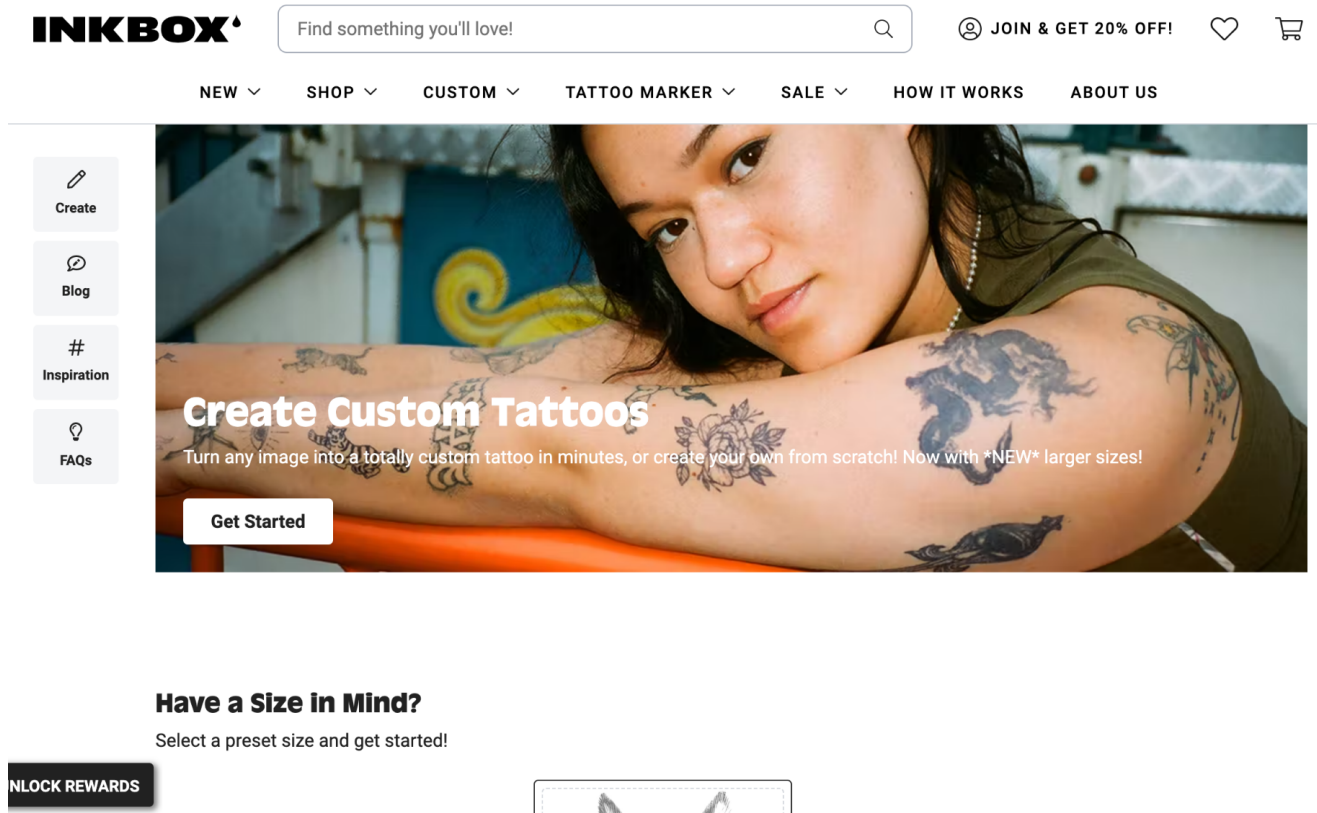
Andre- Research ideal locations for audience, find photographers (Instagram), check the capacity of venues and check rough numbers and ticket sales, AT THE VENUE check lighting

Marina- Contacting promoters, liaising with the artist to see traction for headcount, double checking sound systems, Marina and Tae set design, create poster, online ads,

Artist:

Tayshawn- Financial contribution, release weekly content: fan interaction, have creative ideas for weekly competitions, Data analysis updates: Google AdSense, graphics and artwork

Figure 4- Temporary Tattoo Websites (Merch)





PRICE LIST for Standard Colour Inks:

All tattoos have a sheet size of at least 1.5 x 1.5", prices below are in £ sterling, all subject to 20% VAT but include shipping to one UK address. For example, 1,000 2*2" tattoos would be £310 + vat. Larger orders & sizes also available Email custom@inkwear.co.uk to place an order, request samples or for a quote.

Inch/Quants	500	1,000	2,000	3,000	5,000	10,000
1.5x1.5	234	255	270	320	380	580
1.5x2	270	295	340	370	430	630
1.5x2.5	282	310	360	390	450	650
1.5x3	295	330	380	400	480	700
2x2	282	310	360	390	450	650
2x2.5	295	330	380	400	480	700
2x3	305	340	395	420	490	750
2.5x2.5	305	340	395	420	490	750
2.5x3	310	350	410	440	570	800
2.5x3.5	325	355	420	460	610	905
3x3	325	355	405	455	610	905

Want to stock Inkwear's own stock designs? Contact adam@inkwear.co.uk for more info.

Our gold and silver foils, prices on request:

Figure 5- Custom Lighters Website (Merch)

The screenshot shows the Fluid website product page for a 'Bottle Opener Lighter'. The page features a large image of the lighter, which is white with a black cap and a 'TAURUS' logo. A 'Fast Track' badge is visible. The product details include the reference number '1263315', a price of '£0.64 per unit', a minimum order quantity of 120, a lead time of 5 working days, and a price based on full color printing. A color selection dropdown is set to 'Black'. A table shows the price per unit for different quantities: Buy 120 (£1.70 each), Buy 250 (£1.02 each), Buy 500 (£0.92 each), Buy 1000 (£0.90 each), and Buy 2000 (£0.76 each). A 'Buy 5000' button shows a price of £0.64 each. A quantity selector is set to 120. The subtotal is £204.00 (ex. VAT).

Buy 120	Buy 250	Buy 500	Buy 1000	Buy 2000
£1.70 each	£1.02 each	£0.92 each	£0.90 each	£0.76 each

Buy 5000
£0.64 each

Choose your quantity: 120

Your Subtotal: **£204.00** (ex. VAT)

Figure 6- Artist's Instagram

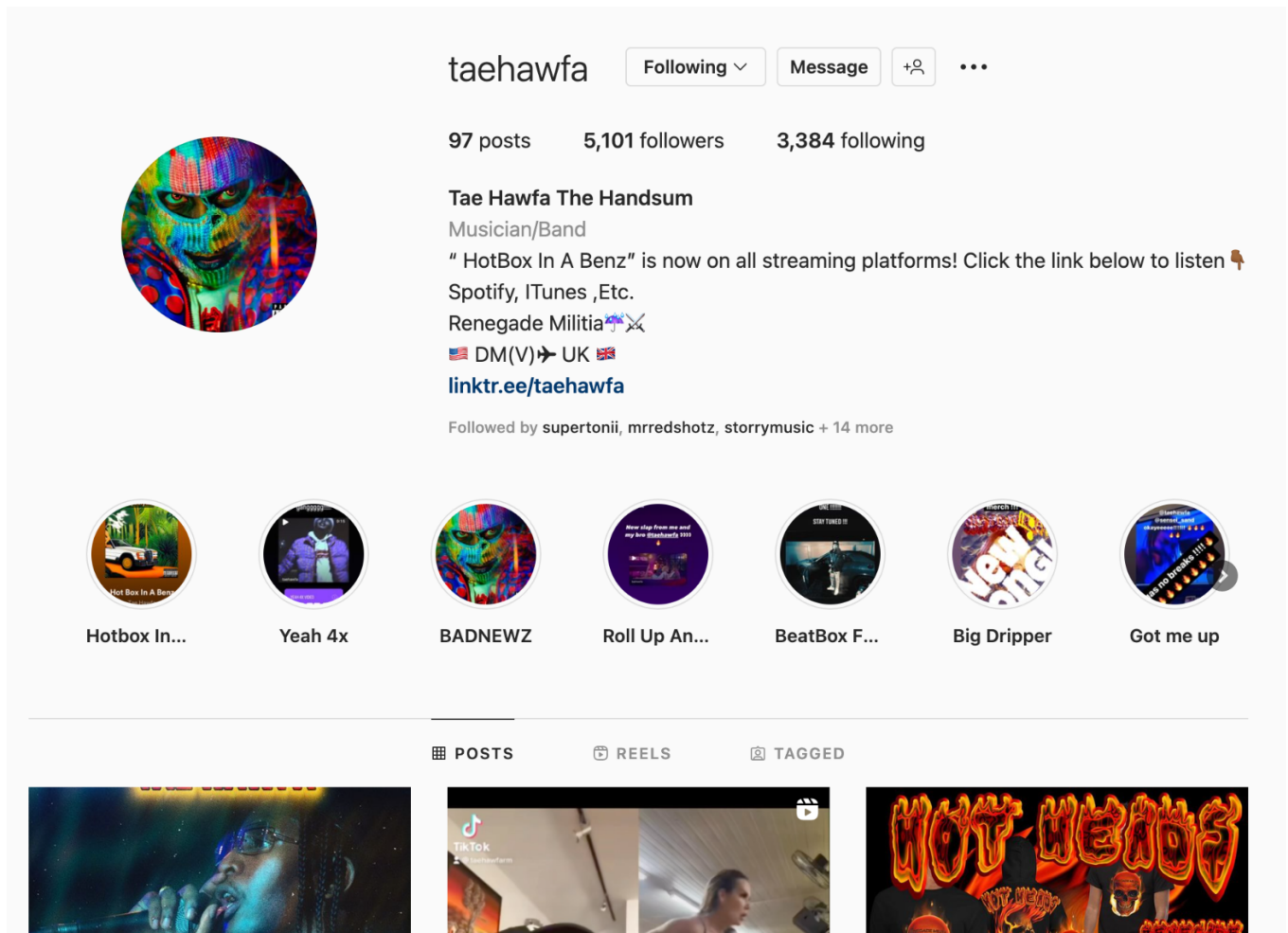


Figure 7- Instagram Age Demographic

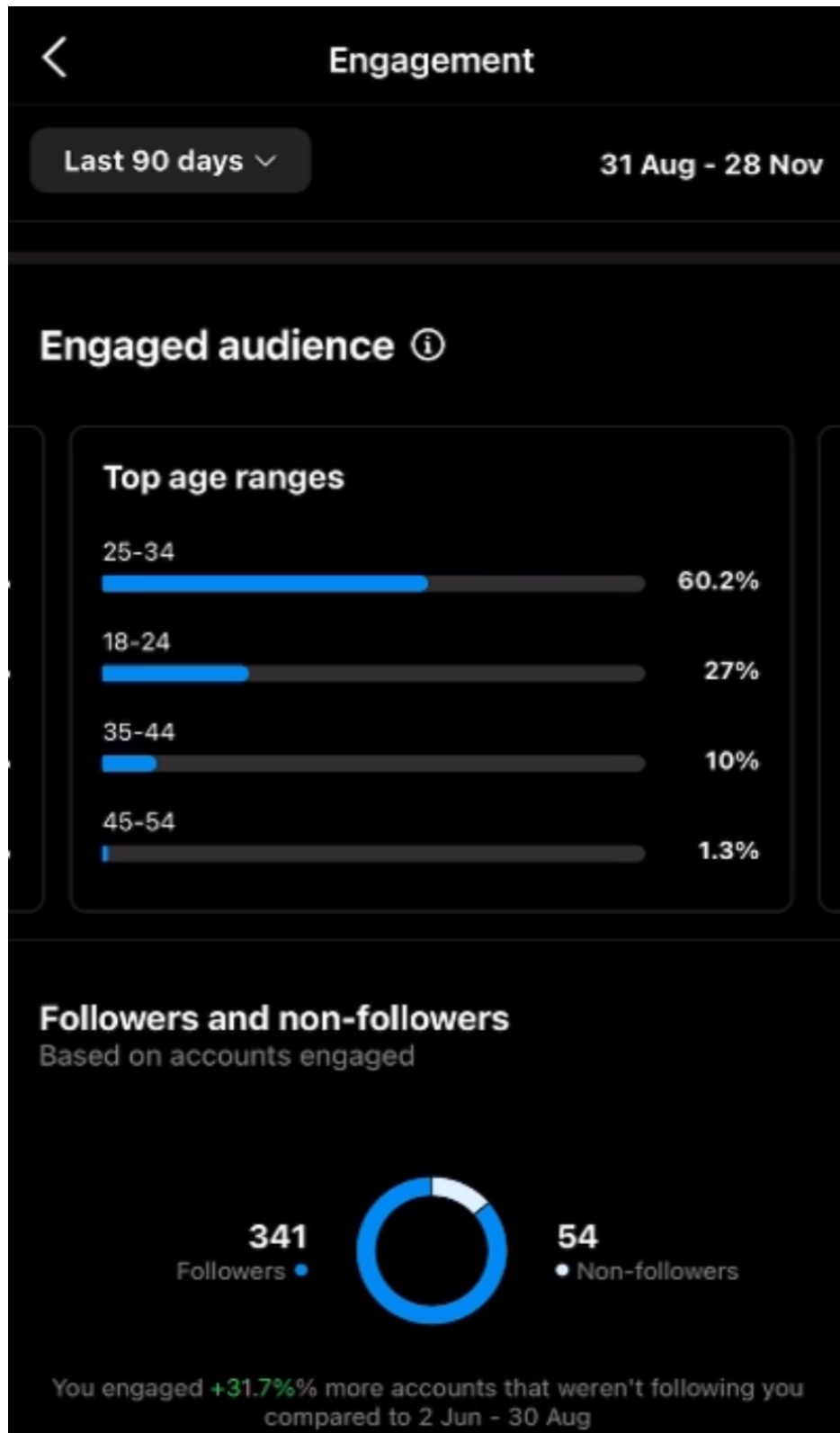


Figure 8- Instagram Location

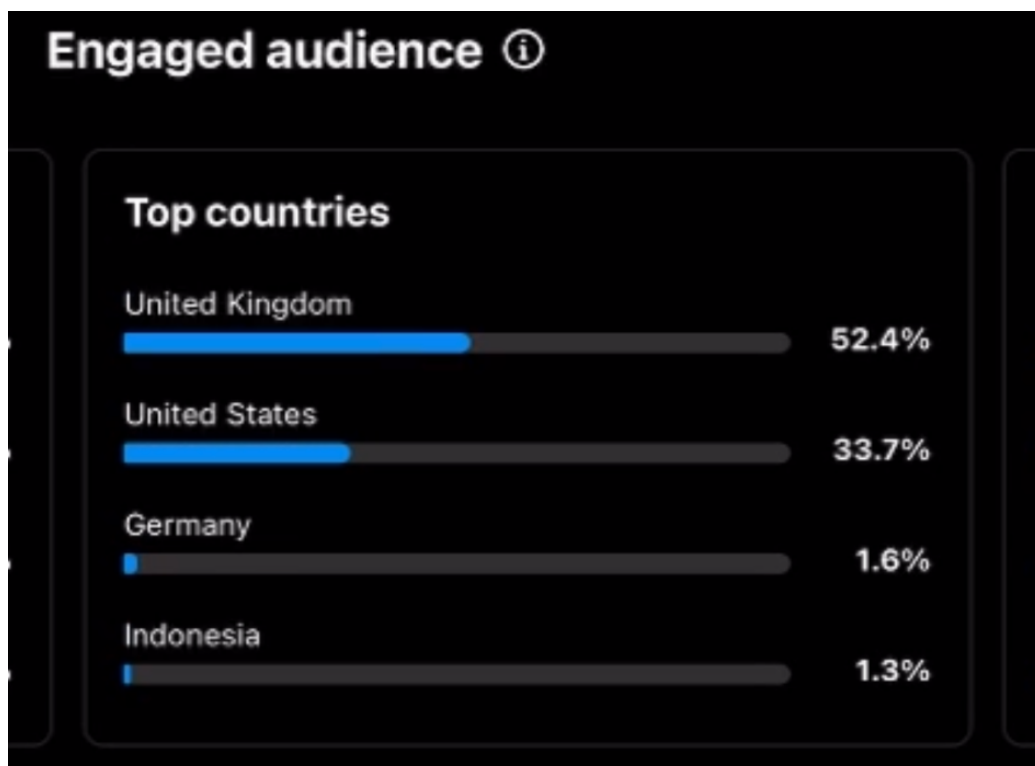


Figure 9- SWOT Analysis



Figure 10- Social Media Manager Email

