

REFLECTIVE SUMMARY

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Contents

1. Introduction

2. My Roles

2.1. Project Manager

2.2. Music Producer

3. The Impact of Digital Technology

4. Summary

1. Introduction

In this reflective summary I will go over the roles I undertook to ensure the successful release of Gamble's track "Call Me Again" in addition to the remix. I will also talk about issues which arose during the process and how they were dealt with. Lastly, I will talk about how digital technologies affected our creation, promotion and teamwork during the process.

2. My Roles

For this project, I had two primary roles. Those were project manager, which consisted of steering the campaign in the right direction and ensuring success and music producer. The music producer role consisted of working closely with the artist to ensure that the song was of high quality and was release ready. In the following sections, I will talk in-depth about how I went about navigating these two roles to ensure success.

2.1. Project Manager

As the project manager, I was responsible for making sure that the release went as smoothly as possible, ensuring that deadlines were reached and that the team worked as efficiently and effectively as possible. I bridged the gap between the various departments, design, finance, and marketing, to create a detailed project roadmap which allowed us to measure our progress throughout the release process. This role required me to be extremely organised, efficient, with a high attention to detail. As

such, I was responsible for ensuring the project requirements and delivery dates were clearly communicated, understood and executed upon by the whole team. In addition to this, I had to prioritise all resources working across the project based on the project goals. Risk management was also a key part of the job, as such, I had to actively monitor project risks and scope to identify potential problems and proactively search for solutions to address them in advance.

In our first meeting with the team on July the 19th we decided on a number of key performance indicators to measure the status of the campaign. Many of the key performance indicators were growth tracking metrics, because many of the goals set by both Boon Records and Gamble were based around fanbase growth. From this, the target was to hit 50,000 total streams within three months after the release, at least one sync deal targeting reality TV, and an increase in overall social media following by 50%. With the expectation to increase by 1,000 followers on Gamble's favoured social media platform, Instagram.

The key performance indicators are as follows:

Organic social media growth rate – Rather than looking at overall growth we decided to opt for a weekly growth rate to measure the campaign success. This is because it would better allow us to understand which actions were driving growth most efficiently. In comparison, if we had just measured total social media growth, we would not have a clear understanding as to what type of engagement was the most effective.

Paid social media growth rate – This has a similar theory behind the organic social media growth rate but instead was focused around our paid growth. Advertisements on social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Instagram were regularly looked at to ensure that our advertisements were well optimised, ensuring as much reach and post engagement as possible. The majority of this was measured on our Instagram advertisements as that is where the majority of the advertising budget was allocated.

Website Traffic – Our aim was to increase the number of unique visitors to the Gamble website, on either mobile or desktop. This was set as a key performance indicator as having a higher number of website visitors would offer a high chance of conversions by either purchasing a ticket, buying merchandise or signing up to our email subscriber list.

Total streaming numbers – We needed to be able to gauge how popular “Call Me Again” is and with the goal of 50,000 total streams it seemed obvious to have total streaming numbers as one of the key performance indicators. Three months post release we hit 80,000 total streams which made it well over our target. A number of these streams are attributed to the exposure we gained through the sync placement on Love Island. When the episodes aired, we saw a large surge in streaming numbers.

Total revenue – Our overall revenue has to exceed our costs to make this release a financial success. Callum was in charge of keeping track of our financial progress. In his profit report, he surmised that by the end of the third-month post-release the revenue amounted to £1390 whilst expenses totalled £1417.

Although not ideal, this does not take into account the expected return on our £250 spent on Autonomy Music Group. Who gained us multiple sync placements on ITV’s Love Island, with an expected return of £2000. Unfortunately, we will only see that money after a number of months, once the royalties are collected from PRS.

Email subscriber acquisition – We used MailChimp as our email marketing service. We decided on having email subscriber acquisition as a key performance indicator because, firstly, we have full control over it, unlike our social media accounts. Therefore, we don’t need to pay social media companies for us to reach out to our own fans, therefore, nurturing organic growth rather than relying on paid advertisements. Another reason was that we needed a way for Gamble to be able to regularly talk to his fans. Communicating with his fans directly is an effective way to keep in contact with them and not fade away. Thirdly, it allows us to send highly personalised emails to Gamble’s fan base. It is an opportunity for Gamble’s followers to talk directly to him. Allowing for the growth of authentic fan relationships.

As part of my job as the project manager, I worked closely with the marketing department to plan and manage a marketing campaign around the release. Advertising budgets are one such area, in which we decided to test various platforms with small budgets to see which one performed well over a period of one week. Therefore, we allocated £10 to each chosen platform for the test week. The chosen platforms were, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. The advert consisted of a small 15-second snippet of the song and of those platforms Instagram performed best. As a result, the rest of the advertising budget went into Instagram adverts, which came to

£50. This process also gave us an interesting insight into our fan demographics. Before we started advertising, we believed that Gamble would have slightly more female fans. This hypothesis proved correct as Gamble's fans were made up of a 60/40 female to male ratio.

I worked closely with the finance department to ensure that we kept expenses in control and that we would have income from multiple sources. Between Tileyard and Boon Records we were allocated a total of £800 which was vital for the release but not enough for what we had planned. Therefore, we set out to secure other sources of investment, of that we got in contact with the PRS Foundation and after a successful pitch was allocated £250 towards our project release. We also looked to Kickstarter to gain investment from generous friends and family. To encourage greater spending, we offered a limited-edition vinyl release to people who donated over £50. In total, our funding came to £1250 which we saw as a satisfactory amount for our needs.

Due to Gamble being a new artist we knew that it would be very difficult to make our money back from streaming or ticket sales alone. Therefore, we got in contact with Autonomy Music Group who are conveniently based in Tileyard to pitch the track to TV shows for sync. Hiring them came to a total a cost of £250. In January 2020 we found out that ITV's reality TV show "Love Island" had used "Call Me Again" in a number of episodes. From that sync deal, we are expected to make around £2000, but only once the royalties come in.

As the project manager, I needed to employ an effective strategy to deal with problems that arose during the release process. The process I decided to implement is called "The Five Whys", developed by Taiichi Ohno (Ohno, 2006), and is a key part of the Toyota production process. It provides the opportunity to discover the root cause of what a problem might be. The idea is simple when an issue arises ask why it happened 5 times to find the cause of the issue. A small example of when I implemented 5 whys was when we found out that the email sign up failed to work one week before the song was launched. My inquiry went as follows:

1. The email sign up is not allowing new people to subscribe to our mailing list. Why? Because the Sign-up button fails to work
2. Why does the Sign-up button no longer work? Because a piece of code was missing.
3. Why was that code missing from the website? When we updated the website theme it removed that section of the code.
4. Why did an update happen which automatically changes important code on our website? Because we don't use an equivalent of a "child theme" to protect against damaging updates.
5. Why don't we use "child theme" like protection when developing the website? Because it takes a lot of extra time and the team are "too busy".

What began as a purely technical fault was revealed to be a very human and managerial issue. Now with this knowledge, we were able to address the underlining issue at hand and provide the website

development team with the time and resources to ensure that our website is protected against future errors caused by theme updates.

2.2. Music Producer

As the producer of the track, I worked closely alongside Gamble to ensure a high-quality production. The process went relatively smoothly despite the two of us being in separate countries for the majority of the process. Gamble was still in Sweden during the production of “Call Me Again” so we had discussions over the phone about how he envisioned having the track mixed and mastered. At first, Gamble expected to have the track sent off to be mastered by an outside third party, but once Boon Records made it clear that I would be responsible for working as the mastering engineer all talk of third-party engineers quickly evaporated. He decided he wanted to keep it to a more acoustic/minimal feel, which suited Boon Records and the type of releases they wished to put out.

In late August we decided on a re-recording of the vocals as the recording quality that Gamble captured in his home studio back in Sweden a few months prior was not to a high enough standard. At this time Gamble was living in London and joined me in my studio to do a re-recording of the vocals. This did take up time which could have been spent elsewhere, but the recording itself went well and the mixing process afterwards was relatively straightforward. The mastering of the track was also done by me, as discussed earlier.

In retrospect, time could have been saved if Gamble had been based in London from the start, but we saw this as unavoidable and not great enough of an issue to halt the release. The fact that Gamble had moved to the UK a few months prior to the release helped greatly and cut down on a large number of likely travel expenses. Unfortunately, due to Gamble being relatively new to the city, his personal contact list was relatively small. Now, three months post-release Gamble is in a far better position in terms of his contacts and network to stage larger releases going forward.

3. The Impact of Digital Technology

From a marketing perspective, we used track submission website SubmitHub¹ to send our song “Call Me Again” to various blogs, playlists and YouTube channels. For a small fee, we were able to send the track to specifically targeted blogs, playlists, and channels with a financial guarantee that the song would be at least listened to. If they failed to listen to it then SubmitHub returned our spent tokens to be used elsewhere. As such, it has a well-measured impact on our release, especially as the size and scope of our release was relatively small. So, getting access to these music curators was very valuable.

When it came to sharing assets such as artworks, logos, music files, stems, etc, we used a shared folder in Dropbox. Dropbox was an obvious choice for these types of assets as Dropbox offers an easy, secure way of backing up files. Thereby, avoiding any possible loss of critical information, such as the song itself. The file-sharing aspect of Dropbox allowed us to lock passwords and protect important files so that we had full control over who saw which assets. This is an

¹ <https://www.submithub.com>

important measure to take to reduce the chance of the song being leaked early. Dropbox also allows for easy access over many different devices, allowing for work to be done on the go.

For collaborative files such as certain sections of the marketing plan and financial reports we used Google Docs. This allowed multiple members of the team to collaborate with each other on the same document in real-time. This was vital for group work and increased the efficiency of collaborative tasks.

For most of the artwork, including both the song artworks and portfolio diagrams we used Canva². Canva acts as a simplified and easy to use graphic design tool. It allowed the team to create artworks quickly and easily without having a huge amount of graphic design training. Callum utilised this to a great extent when creating the cover artwork and logo, whilst I myself used it to create many of the diagrams featured in the portfolio. Including the front cover page, contents page, release timeline diagram, release event artwork, EPK, and the PESO marketing diagram.

Lastly, we used Banzoog³ to create the website. Banzoog is a website development platform designed with the sole purpose of helping bands and artists create their own websites with ease and without the need to know how to code. Banzoog proved invaluable to us, as it saved a huge amount of time and money in what could have been very costly and time-consuming work. It's responsive templates, easy to use visual design editing and well-developed analytics page made it the obvious choice for our team and for Gamble.

² <https://www.canva.com/>

4. Summary

The team worked well together with each person well aware of their roles and responsibilities. The use of a shared Google Document made things all the easier. Many of the goals we set out were reached and despite not making a profit by the end of the third-month post-release we are on track to turn a profit within the year. A few little issues were present such as logistics regarding the artist and the sign-up button failure, but they didn't hinder the overall success of the release. It would have been nice to have sold more tickets at the launch event, in retrospect more time could have been spent promoting that to local university students.

Bibliography

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³ <https://bandzoog.com>