

Creative Music Management

BMTY7000

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LEMONADE

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1. Assessment brief

This assignment brief was to create all of the media and assets needed for the promotion of a single release whilst working as part of a team. The project was to demonstrate our ability to work as part of a team and our understanding of the assets needed to create a successful release campaign whilst working with a theoretical budget of £500 and a 7 week timescale. At our first meeting we decided that we wanted to produce a remix of a track, behind the scenes video, photographs to use for promotional imagery, an Electronic Press Kit, a Press release, working budget and effective social media campaign. We would use engagement from fans to measure the success of our campaign as we wouldn't actually be releasing a track we would be unable to measure success through sales and streams. Our group was made up of three, one of which was an already established artist, Grettel who was confident in her marketing abilities, and myself who had experience in organising live concerts, creating websites and managing figures in a retail setting.

2. Initial planning

When Grettel and I set out to complete this project we were expecting to work with another MA student who already had an established presence and catalogue of music. However, after some weeks of trying to make contact we were informed that we would be completing the project as a duo. Not to be deterred, Grettel was quick to make an alternative suggestion as to who we could approach to work with as her brother Karl was already relatively well known in his home town in Estonia, having twice made it to the semi-finals of the Estonian Eesti Laul and recently signing a recording contract with Warner music. He was due to release a new single 'Skin Tight' and was happy for us to take the lead on the marketing campaign for the track. Unfortunately we had lost a lot of time waiting to hear from the other student who was an original member of our group, and both felt as though we could have been more productive had we arranged for a back up plan much sooner.

At our first official meeting as a pair Grettel and I discussed our strengths and weaknesses and decided on a plan of action. Grettel wanted to work on the marketing campaign for the release, and was happy to work closely with Karl in organising a behind the scenes video and arranging for a remix of his track as she already had established a relationship with him. I was happy to start working on our budget, the EPK and imagery for the single. We also discussed whether or not we would need release forms for photographs, and as Karl had already recently had some promotional images taken, we decided to draft up a release form to use these images. We agreed to work on our individual tasks for a few days then arrange to meet again. We kept in contact over the few days, both updating the other with what we had been doing and at this point I personally felt as though we had the balance right - Grettel was working on artist management and development, while I was working on the administration and researching of PR campaigns.

3. Executing the project

To ensure that we could effectively monitor the success of what we were doing, we broke the project down into smaller parts; Distribution, Marketing, Press and EPK, Artwork, Media and Budget. Before starting anything we set out our budget. We looked at where we could save money and where we could utilise our own skills to save on time.

a) Budget

With a budget of £500 we had to be quite realistic about where we needed to spend money and where we could perhaps afford to do things cheaper. We assigned a budget of £50 to our marketing campaign, allowing for advertisement space on Facebook and Instagram and for

additional marketing, such as promotion of a live stream we allocated an additional £50. For mixing and mastering of a remix of Karls track we allowed a budget of up to £150, and for distribution we allocated a further £100. We allocated £100 for a photographer and £50 for the design of any cover artwork taking our predicted spend to £500.

We found that as we began to research the different assets needed for the campaign, our predicted spend changed, in some instances for the better. We found that we could save money on our Facebook and Instagram marketing, distribution and artwork. One asset where we couldn't save money was the promotional images. Fortunately Karl already had a number of promotional images which we were able to use which, in theory could save us money on hiring a photographer, but to avoid any repercussions in terms of breaching any intellectual property laws, we approached the photographer of these images with a release form asking for permission to use his images on our campaign. We felt that it would be fair to offer the money we had assigned for a photographer to buy the use of these images. When creating our release form we were careful with our wording so that we weren't asking the photographer to give up any of his rights, and found a number of online resources providing draft copies of release paperwork which we could use to draft up our own agreement. Posertemplate.co.uk had a number of documents for various situations so we used a property release issued by Alamy to base ours on.

b) Distribution

For distribution of the single we decided to use the online platform CD baby which allows for artists to monetise their music for a one off cost of \$29.95. This fee includes distribution to Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music, Youtube Content ID, Facebook and Instagram stories and Sync as well as providing instant verification with Spotify for Artists and Apple music for artists. On this level artists are also signed up to worldwide publishing royalty collection as well as affiliation with ASCAP and BMI. There are further options with CD baby for an additional cost which could be considered when releasing an album, as they allow for money to be made off of worldwide CD and vinyl distribution. CD baby keeps 9% of digital distribution revenue allowing the artist to receive the remaining 91% for the singular one off fee of £29.95. The fee also includes free access to show.co to further assist with the marketing of a single release. We considered using distrokid, Ditto and AWAL, but found the interface of CD Baby to be more user friendly, and felt that the one off fee was better value for money when compared to AWAL - who take a bigger cut of royalties - and Distrokid and Ditto - who require further annual payments.

c) Marketing

Based on the analytics provided by Karls social media accounts we were able to establish a demographic of females (70%) mostly aged between 18-24. The majority of TikTok users across Europe are female with 4 in 10 users aged between 18 and 24 (Stokel-Walker, 2020), comparatively 14.5% of Instagram users are women with over half of the global Instagram population being aged below 34 (Tankovska, 2021) so we felt that our plan to utilise Karls Instagram and TikTok accounts would be the most beneficial to generating interest. Grettel took the wheel in terms of marketing as she felt that her skills best fit the requirements needed to create an engaging marketing strategy. Following some research I had found a website which allowed users to download a free checklist for a single release, which we agreed could be handy. Grettel came up with a schedule for the management of Karls social media in the run up to the single release and options for further promotion following release day.

We discussed the idea of using a website called tryfeed.co who were in the beta stages of their website production as they offer social media management for a daily fee of £2 with no

commission paid. We decided that this would be a great way to save money on facebook and instagram adverts and opted to use it as a way to manage our social media marketing.

To further promote the single we compiled a list of non-commercial radio stations to contact for airplay, and looked into BBC Introducing which was as simple as uploading the track to the BBC website. A quick internet search brought up pages of suggestions for online and community radio stations, but rather than send our press release out in a blanket email, we looked closer at the genres played and selected a few which we felt would suit Karls track. The website TuneIn allowed us to narrow down genres and from there we selected five stations to contact; NTS, Soho Radio, Amazing radio, Shoreditch Radio and Brum Radio. We also discussed the idea of creating a PR package to send to bloggers and radio pluggers, so came up with a list of useful contacts who might be interested in receiving these packages.

d) Press & EPK

As I was tasked with designing the EPK I thought it would be best practice to first research other artists' press kits and EPKs before starting to design ours for Karls track. A quick google search brought up many, but I picked out a couple of which I particularly liked the design as I felt they would be in keeping with Karls branding. Andrew Weaver's EPK was sleek, simple and easy to navigate whilst Rainne's was a little more interesting to look at. Further research led me to understand the key aspects to be included in creating an effective EPK - I found the ditto website to be particularly useful for this.

Fortunately I had already dabbled in some web design and development previously, so felt confident in creating something engaging without the use of a third party designer. After a discussion with Grettel we decided to use the website Wix to host our EPK and look into paying for hosting to enable us to change the URL of the link we would be forwarding to media outlets.

I have 5 years experience of working with community radio stations and receive a large number of press releases so Grettel was happy for me to design our press release. We used some examples from radio pluggers who had sent me documents, as well as a press release from Warner music to base ours on. The initial design covered two pages, which we felt was a little long, so after some brainstorming we changed the layout to give us a one page press release.

e) Media

As we had already gained permission from the photographer to use images already taken, we decided for continuity of Karls brand to continue utilising these images. We discussed the options available in terms of hiring someone to do the artwork for us and looked into using Fiverr to find someone freelance. After some further research we came across a website which allowed users to create album artwork for free with the option to purchase a membership and gain full access to further editing tools. After some trial and error we used canva.com to create our own album artwork with the images acquired from photographer Rauno Liivand and made sure to keep the branding in line with the EPK.

Grettel arranged with Karl to video him in a 'behind the scenes' themed video so that we would have more content to share in the run up to the track release date. On the day of the video shoot, Grettel also recorded a quick 30 second clip of Karl asking his fans to listen to his new track, which was easy and effective content to use across all social media.

4. Estimating Revenue

The biggest concern for me personally was the track's ability to generate revenue via the typical channels as streaming services are notorious for low royalty payouts. Initially I was unsure about how to calculate an estimated revenue, but using numbers from Karls previous tracks and a

calculator available on musicgateway.com It was feasible that the track could generate as much as £7862 from Spotify alone before any deductions. Added to the estimated revenue from Apple music, Tidal, Deezer, Amazon, YouTube and Soundcloud this figure could be as high as £66,337. Cold fumes is Karls most streamed Spotify track with 2,285,658 streams in total, whilst the extended version of the track has little over 45000 streams. Using these numbers we could estimate that at the lower end of the scale the track Skintight could generate just over £150 on Spotify or £1200 across all DSPs. In order to ensure we would break even on our initial £500 budget we would either need to guarantee a streaming number above 150000 or come up with additional ways to make money from the tracks release. One of Karls previous releases had gained over 110000 streams having had no external promotion or PR so we were confident that we could get the streams we needed to generate enough revenue with our release campaign in place.

5. Conclusion

Upon reflection our first pitfall was leaving it so long before engaging in regular contact. Personally, I feel that if we had met sooner and had more clearly defined roles there wouldn't have been such a rush to get things done, and the quality of our work would have been vastly different. Things started to happen quickly once Grettel and I had our first proper meeting and I feel that we worked well together, but we had the work of three people to do in a much shorter time frame.

Unfortunately because of the current restrictions in place due to the Coronavirus pandemic, there were some things we were unable to do that we feel would have really helped to further promote this release. For example, we discussed the idea of a meet and greet, and competitions to meet Karl, but these were things we simply could not accommodate. We discussed the idea of Karl doing a live Q&A, but felt that this wouldn't be as effective as being able to meet in person.

In terms of the campaign itself I feel that we produced a good amount of assets and a comprehensive campaign. The feedback we got from Karl was great as he was pleased with everything we put together for him. We were able to gather all of the assets required and additional videos as well as a remix due to the relationship Grettel had with Karl. I believe that between the two of us, Grettel and I had a good enough skill set and knowledge base and we both feel that we put together something which we are both proud of. I think things could have been different if we weren't able to communicate well and work together efficiently. I feel that I learnt a lot from Grettel in terms of marketing, and valued her opinion when she made suggestions to changes in the assets I was in charge of. We didn't let a distance of almost 2,00 miles affect our project, always attending our scheduled meetings, and swapping ideas over text in between time. The only thing I would do differently in future, is prepare better by managing my time more efficiently.

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