

MA Music Business

Creative Music Management
Lecturer: Harry Leckstein

Reflective Summary
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I/. Introduction

This report will focus on the method of organizing a promotional campaign for a single release. This will cover financing, the development of supporting marketing assets, the study of the target demographic, the usage of social media as well as the use of new technologies.

The artist: DÆMON is a Berlin-based independent rapper hailing from Oakland, California.

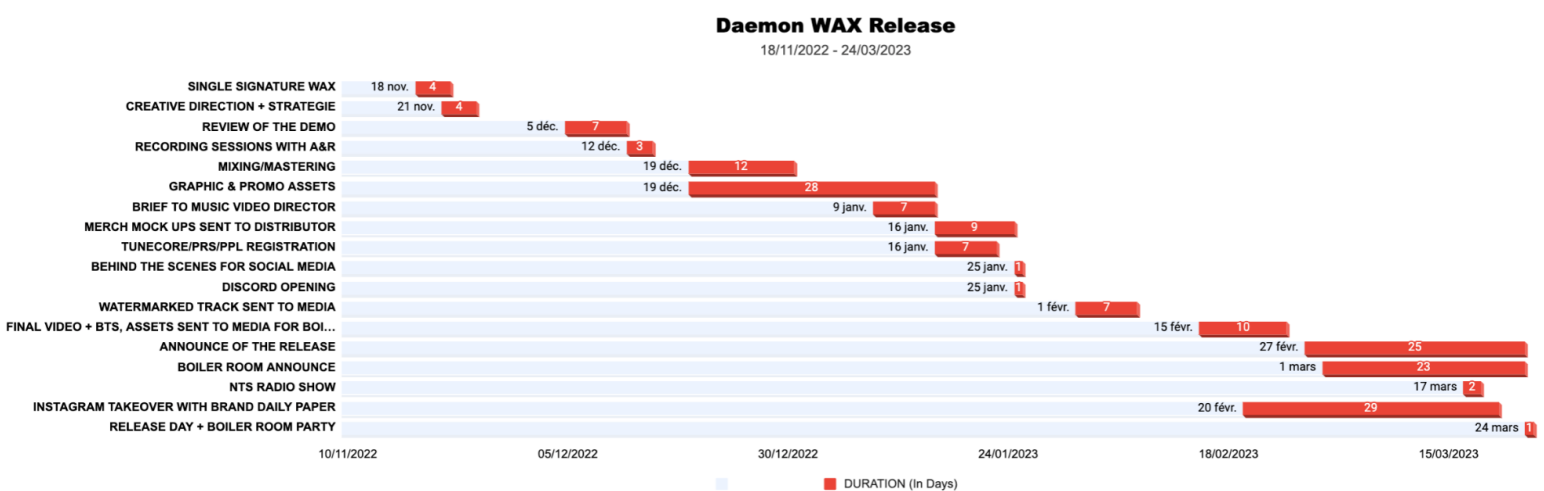
The artist's music is a forward-thinking study of underground club music and futurist rap that draws inspiration from lyricists like Playboi Carti and Lil Uzi Vert as well as underground dance music genres like Jersey Club, Breaks, and U.K. garage. DÆMON began writing poetry, and his distinctive rhymes separated him apart from other rap artists. His songs are an experiment in worldbuilding that examines capitalism, vice, and human relationships against the backdrop of a not-too-distant dystopia.

DÆMON's first release of 2023, "WAX", was produced by Zurich-based "Modulaw". This two-minute earworm begins with a vintage piano rave theme until his processed vocals transition into intense breaks, heralding a new movement in futurist rap. WAX will undoubtedly brighten the club.

The visual assets used for the release campaign are:

- Original artworks
- Photoshoots
- Music Video
- NFT Campaign
- Merchandising
- Press communication
- Playlisting
- Live event
- Social media development (takeover)
- Remix contest
- Flyers/Posters

The campaign is based on a precise Timeline to follow. As followed.



The planning was also based on a precise accounting a budgeting sheet (which we will take a deeper look at in this reflective summary), to allocate as efficiently as possible the £5000 budget we were allocated.

II/. Dragon Force V

First of all, all of the members of the group had the desire to be as close as possible to the reality of a “proper release campaign project” as a real team we quickly did some tasks and sector allocation. In order to achieve so we decided to create a fake Record Label under the name of “Dragon Force V”.



The allocations of the tasks were quickly made at the first meeting. Although we worked as a team on every aspect of the campaign with at least one meeting per week to discuss the progress of each of us, new ideas, and improving assets or ideas already started.

The roles were clear, Shannen has been in charge of the release schedule for the key dates of the project, partnerships such as Autonomy which we used for playlisting and radio plugging and marketing. George was in charge of some specific aspects of the live event and a potential tour but more importantly of the NFT collection release. Isabella was in charge of the data analysis being able to create a target and a brand style guide closely linked with the audience growth. Personally, I was in charge of the accounting, budgeting, viability of the project and merchandising but also potential turnover.

III/. Personnal implication

1) Accounting, Budgeting and provisional costs.

As I already had done some accounting and budgeting in previous jobs, it seemed natural for me to take the lead on the subject. Money is obviously the most important thing about any plans, projects and ideas. To build the following sheet I asked every member of the team to send me any costs or potential costs related to the task they were developing between our weekly meetings. This is why the sheet presents two different tables with differing prices. The first projection cost (Figure 1) quickly showed how the campaign was not viable considering all the variable factors and the allocated budget.

Figure 1: Total budget allocation without Boiler Room partnership.

BUDGET ALLOCATION (Without Boiler Room)	
MARKETING	£2 216,00
REMIX	£100,00
VIDEO	£700,00
MERCH	£0,00
GRAPHICS	£950,00
LIVE EVENT	£1 350,00
RECORDING	£684,00
PUBLISHER	£13,00
TOTAL (in £)	£6 013,00

Thank to the accounting sheet, we could then decide early enough how to develop the project reducing the cost in specific sectors such as Marketing taking 44.32% of our total budget of £5000. $(2216 \times 100 / 5000) = 44.32$.

But because we find out about the issue early enough, we decided to focus on trying to optimise the budget in collaboration and potentially add a source of revenue. This is where we entered into contact with Boiler Room to host a show. They accepted and gave us an advance of £2000 and a film crew to share between the four artists performing on the evening (including DÆMON) which offered us another £500 and a saving of £600 on the initial independent film crew (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Total budget allocation with Boiler Room partnership.

BUDGET ALLOCATION (With Boiler Room)	
MARKETING	£2 216,00
REMIX	£100,00
VIDEO	£700,00
MERCH	£0,00
GRAPHICS	£950,00
LIVE EVENT	£250,00
RECORDING	£684,00
PUBLISHER	£13,00
TOTAL (in £)	£4 913,00

Figure 3: Detailed costs of the live event without Boiler Room partnership.

LIVE EVENT (Peckham Audio - 80 seats, 220 standing)	
VENUE	£300,00
Tickets	Personnal benefits
Bar	Peckham audio benefits
Photographer Videographer	£600,00
Door Staff General Staff	£200,00
FLYERS	£250,00
TOTAL (in £)	£1 350,00

Figure 4: Detailed costs of the live event with Boiler Room partnership.

LIVE EVENT (Peckham Audio - Boiler Room)					
Boiler Room	-£500,00				
PECKHAM A.	£300,00				
Tickets	£0,00				
Bar	£0,00				
Door Staff General Staff	£200,00				
FLYERS	£250,00				
TOTAL (in £)	£250,00				

With good planning and previsional costs, we could determine quickly how to allocate the budget and optimise the release campaign.

2) Merchandising.

Having some contacts in the textile industry and some knowledge of the print-on-demand business model, I decided to take the responsibility to find the merchandising supplier at the best possible cost.

To do so, I contacted one of the two Chief Executive Directors of the brand French Sudiste: Leo Cabrol.

Leo and his associate Sam have been developing their brand with high-standard textiles and eco-friendly products for the past 4 years. (Cabrol, 2022)





This contact led to a phone call on November 7 where Leo gave me important pieces of information about textile quality, the economy of scale depending on the product, and what details to pay attention to when ordering from a factory or from a print-on-demand service.

French Sudiste print its products in a factory based in France called Katanga. Katanga prints about 6000 individual and personalised units per day. (Katanga, 2022)

However from Leo's experience to have some good quality products, applying economies of scale, the order should count at least 500 pieces of a product. We did not plan to order as many pieces.

Without economy of scale, the average cost of production would be around £10,99 + delivery from

France for a t-shirt and £29,99 + delivery from France for a high-quality sweatshirt.

This exceeded by far our budgeting prevision, so I asked him about an alternative. He sent me a website offering similar products based in Wolverhampton: PrintFul.

Printful is a specialised dropshipping and print-on-demand business. This was a huge advantage considering we did not have to invest any money in the merch except for the design. The website will print the desired design as soon as an order from a fan is created. (Printful, 2022)

Even if the production prices per product are about the same £10.99 for a t-shirt and £19.99 for a sweatshirt, the delivery will be at the buyer's cost and the services also offers a classic delivery under two open days. (Printful, 2022)

After analysis, Printful is the final producer chosen for the project among other competitors such as Spreadshirt or Redbubble which offered lower prices, but however, a bad quality product.

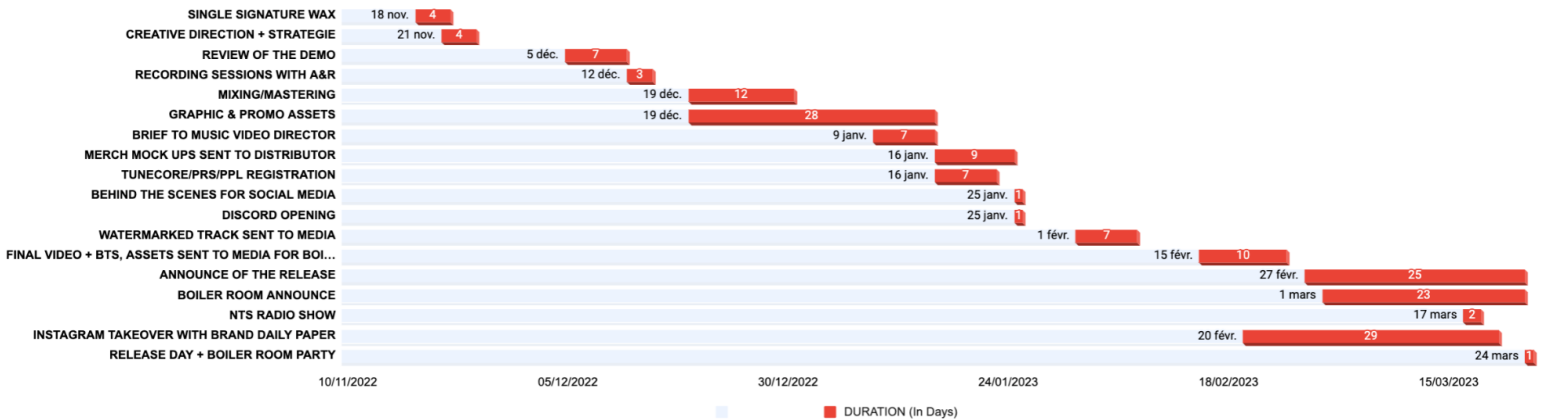
3) Timeline.

Benjamin Franklin said, "Time is money."

To optimise the time spent on the campaign and be able to make sure Dragon Force V was not losing the aim of its objectives, I made a Gantt Chart shared among all the members of the team.

Daemon WAX Release

18/11/2022 - 24/03/2023



In addition to evaluating or re-evaluating our objectives, this chart allows us to see where the budget has been exceeded if there are unanticipated additional costs for an asset, if so, what projects for the release are remaining and where would it be possible to reduce the expenses.

IV/. Application of digital technologies

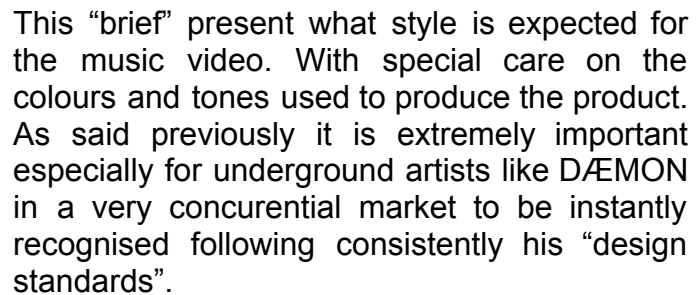
A musician's work is complemented by graphic design since it offers a visual representation of their brand. Graphic design components are used frequently and serve as an extension of an artist's creativity in anything from album covers and website design to social media and merchandise. Everything would feel incomplete without the visual components. (College Of Contemporary Music, 2022)

As the image of an artist is so important in the modern music industry, having very professional and powerful visual assets was primordial for the marketing and communication of the release. The photographs we used of DÆMON were initially purposed to figure in a magazine. However, we believed these assets were so powerful, we decided to base the main part of our campaign on developing other assets from this shooting.

The visual identity also contains fonts and specific colours. For instance, both the artworks for the single release as well as the remix released are issued from the photographs only adding "WAX" on the cover with one of the four fonts related to the visual identity of the artist, in this situation the font "*lobster*".

Obviously, one of the main assets presenting visual identity is the music video. In addition to being an incredible communication and marketing asset, listeners can perceive music videos in many different ways. Listeners are now able to see in addition to hearing.

The asset sent to the director is the following:



As seen, the asset given for the communication and marketing for the Boiler Room launch party, also respects the same criteria, colours, figures and font.

As this is the first time NFTs and blockchain technology will be merged into DÆMON's artistic portfolio, the distribution will be restricted to 5 unique NFTs that will be suggested on Discord to create a form of "hype" en concurrence. The major goal of this is to evaluate the marketability of this technology as well as how DÆMON's target audience and current fan base would react.

To create these NFTs, we used one of our existing assets from the photoshoot and uploaded it to an Artificial Intelligence program with the describing word: "DEATH". This led to 5 designs evolving from the original photo to a much darker photo, the evolution of the design is also representative of the artist's world where he keeps evolving into the underground scene.

VI. Further Recommendations of Best Practice

Across the meetings and brainstorms Dragon Force V had, the team came up with many more assets idea, however with a lack of budget and information about the receptivity of the fanbase, we decided to keep things straight and produce a conventional campaign in line with artists of this music genre. One of the ideas we had was to produce a 45 Rpm vinyl with WAX on the A side and the remix on the B side. However, we met issues with, first of all, the price: £200 for 100 45 rpm pieces of vinyl without any artwork. (Ontwerpers, 2020)

More importantly, to save some money and build some interest in the single release, the remix will be released one month after the release following a competition among the producers of the community. This means the vinyl production would only start one month after the single release + delays of production and delivery. This is a huge loss considering the commercialisation of the 45 rpm on the internet and in local stores and misses out on the opportunity to do sales at the boiler room live event where multiple communities and fanbases will be there considering they are three other underground artists in total. This was too much of a loss considering the investment, storing the physical media in good conditions/temperature and taking care ourself of deliveries as personalised pressing websites do not produce "press-on-demand" due to unit price production.

VI/. Conclusion

In fine, the campaign for the single release of “WAX” by DÆMON was a very interesting perspective of the industry to work on. The project allowed us to work and develop our knowledge of online marketing, live event planning, professional photoshoots, and how to use available assets to develop an already existing project such as the NFTs. It also taught us how to properly plan, project costs and allocate budget in specific areas to improve performances and when problems are met, be able to overcome them as a team. If a big portion of the budget was allocated to marketing, it is the result of the team's reflection to reduce costs wherever we were able to, by finding alternatives such as the Boiler Room and Autonomy partnerships, or entering into contact with some people from a specific industry such as Leo Cabrol from french Sudiste for merchandising, which gave us valuable information about the textile industry that we will be able to use again in the future for similar projects. The project could probably be improved with more budget to allocate to physical material such as a vinyl release with a collaborative London shop to do a showcase in a “Tiny Desk” form. Overall this project was a good way to build up a team and take some responsibility regarding the tasks we were allocated to join every asset everyone had made and deliver a confident portfolio to professionals.

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