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MA Music Industry Entrepreneurship

Entertainment Marketing Report

Marketing Report – Billie Eilish Debut Album

Develop and present detailed, innovative and sustainable professional strategies and best practice for the exploitation of music and media intellectual property and skills.

Introduction

This marketing report details the release of Billie Eilish's debut full-length album and includes the strategy, timeline and budget relating to its release. The artist has built a significant fan-base in the USA as a result of her EP *Don't Smile at Me*, released in August 2017 and *Ocean Eyes*, a viral single that has amounted a total of 14m views on YouTube and more than 50m plays on Spotify. Despite this, her rising popularity has not yet reached the UK and European market in the same extent. Therefore, the release of this album will have a primary focus on these markets to start expanding Billie's brand on a global scale.

Much of the marketing for this album will focus on building upon the brand that Billie has already been built from the EP and building it on a geographical scale, at the same time as expanding her audience through collaborations and brand partnerships. In terms of press support from the UK, Billie was featured in the BBC Sound of 2018 longlist alongside the likes of Sigrid, Khalid and Pale Waves (BBC, 2017).

Billie's current brand values present her as aggressively genuine, provocative, outspoken and sarcastic. These are clear in both her music and particularly in interviews with the press, as shown in a recent interview with TIDAL: "'Fame fucking sucks,'" says alt-pop singer-songwriter Billie Eilish. "I hate it. But it's great, though'" (Martin, 2018). Alongside this, the imagery that's used in album covers, social media and press shots also go with this trend. The photos use sharp colours that stand out because of how bright they are. In these shots, Billie is often not the centre of attention – the focus tends to be on fairly extravagant clothing being worn, rather than her physical appearance.

By creating a multi-faceted brand, we aim to create 3 primary categories of revenue streams:

- Recorded Music
- Live Music
- Fashion

Recorded Music will be generating revenue through album sales, streaming and radio play. Live Music will focus on selling tickets to tours and live appearances on TV or Radio. The fashion side of the brand will provide revenue through brand partnerships, endorsements and selling merchandise. This structure allows the artist to diversify as a business and mitigate some of the risk that would come from relying solely on music sales to generate an income.

Marketing Goals

- Sell out a 1,000-capacity venue in London for Album Launch show
- Increase Facebook likes and Instagram follows by 50%
- Achieve a Top 10 album chart position in USA & UK
- Achieve 2 Top 10 singles in USA & UK from 4 singles released
- Generate a revenue of \$50,000 from brand partnerships

Audience

As it stands, Billie's current audience is typically between 16 and 22 years old, 70% female and based predominantly in the USA. Alongside music, her fans are interested in Fashion, Photography, Art and Dance – all similar to Billie's own interests.

Because this audience is of a young age and in the 'millennial' generation, it's clear that they will be active on social media. Taking their interests of fashion and art into account, it's likely that they are most active on Instagram over any other platform. This is backed up by the figures currently on Billie's social media: 1.5 million followers on Instagram compared to just over 250,000 on both Facebook and Twitter.

Market Analysis - Streaming

In the last few years, the music industry has moved into a more service-orientated sector where the majority of music is consumed through streaming subscriptions. Industry reports show that streaming now makes up 65% of global revenues in the music industry and continues to grow. This has caused a decrease in digital downloads, with customers opting to stream or purchase physical formats. Last year, physical sales overtook total revenues of digital downloads (Friedlander, 2018). It's also a very real possibility that Apple will be discontinuing their iTunes Store in the near future (Resnikoff, 2018). With this in mind, the album will still be available to pre-order and purchase as a digital download however there will be no explicit promotion to it – all advertising and promotional material will direct mainly to physical sales at pre-order stage and primarily to streaming services post-release.

Successful Artists and Campaigns

Campaigns that have been successful recently tend to have politically motivated music. Childish Gambino's *This Is America* has been incredibly popular on a global scale. Although artists gain more attention by releasing music that makes a statement, it can occasionally backfire. Recently, Rita Ora's track *Girls* has seen a significant backlash as it was seen to be insensitive to the LGBTQ community. In contrast, Dua Lipa's *New Rules* gained widespread praise: "the video furthered the idea of female solidarity" whilst "the package felt elegant

and uncontrived” (Snapes, 2017). If artists are to convey an important message, it has to feel natural and respectful at the same time as being powerful.

A format that seems to achieve success on a regular basis is the partnership between a male producer with a female featured vocalist. Recent examples include Marshmello with Selena Gomez and Anne-Marie, Zedd with Maren Morris, Calvin Harris with Dua Lipa and Rudimental with Jess Glynne. Whilst the format is not new, it has been quite prevalent in the charts in 2018. To capitalise on this, one of the singles from the album will be a collaboration with a well-known producer.

A good example of marketing in the style that Billie Eilish’s campaign will be run is Dua Lipa. Although Dua Lipa isn’t as extravagant or outspoken as Billie Eilish, her brand inextricably links music and fashion whilst also presenting her personality as a way of allowing fans to relate to her on a personal level. This is achieved by setting up a large number of interviews across print, video and radio – particularly with fashion magazines. Magazine cover features on Elle, Vogue Turkey and V Magazine help to expand the promotion of her music into other markets and attract a wider audience to her overall brand.

Recently, Dua Lipa released her first new single that wasn’t included in her eponymous album. A collaboration with Calvin Harris, *One Kiss* went straight to the top of the charts in the UK and other European countries including Ireland, Germany and The Netherlands. The success of this track exemplifies the potential that collaborations have when they are done well. By combining the two fan bases of both Calvin Harris and Dua Lipa, the track gets much more exposure.

The strategy for Billie Eilish will include similar ideas where her personality and image will be expressed and promoted through a combination of music and fashion press. She has already been featured in mid-level press such as tmrw magazine and W magazine. Once the promotion for the album starts to get some traction, approaching more established press such as Teen Vogue and Elle becomes feasible and it’s realistic that they will want to work with her.

Building a Fan Base – Fans and Tribes

Because Billie Eilish has an extremely close relationship with her fans, and vice versa, we want to encourage this bond and take it further. Seth Godin talks about the important difference between building a crowd and building a 'tribe'. He states: "A crowd is a tribe without a leader. A crowd is a tribe without communication" (Godin, 2008). To use Godin's terminology, 'tribes' have an emotional connection to their 'leader' – in this case, the fans to the artist. Therefore, the artist should be presented as the leader of their own tribe. This is why fan bases for high-profile artists are regularly dubbed as 'armies' – whether it's "Beliebers", "Directioners" or "Swifties", these fans have a sense of identity and a community with these other fans. The artist becomes a leader that many people have a strong emotional connection to.

This emotional connection can also go the other way, with the artist feeling protective over their fan base. Our artist, Billie Eilish has already tweeted "u guys are like my own lil [sic] army [...]" which clearly shows a relationship where she is the focal point connecting the people in her tribe (Eilish, 2017).

Similarly, Kevin Kelly coined the idea of generating "1,000 True Fans" which describes an ambitious reasonable target of finding 1,000 people that you can generate £100 of profit from every year (Kelly, 2008). By creating a significant relationship with 1,000 true fans, this should be able to sustain a source of revenue over a long period of time from their purchases but also their influence on people around them, dubbed 'Lesser fans'. Kelly describes the relationship in this way:

This small circle of diehard fans, which can provide you with a living, is surrounded by concentric circles of Lesser Fans. These folks will not purchase everything you do, and may not seek out direct contact, but they will buy much of what you produce. The processes you develop to feed your True Fans will also nurture Lesser Fans. As you acquire new True Fans, you can also add many more Lesser Fans. If you keep going, you may indeed end up with millions of fans and reach a hit. I don't know of any creator who is not interested in having a million fans.
(Kelly, 2008)

By concentrating on this relatively small number of fans who feel passionately about the work an artist does, it will passively generate an income from less-passionate fans who will only make purchases occasionally. This model was designed specifically for an individual solo artist and so it is particularly relevant to an artist like Billie Eilish. We will aim to generate True Fans in the UK and Europe market by using Whitley's "3 E's: Engage, Equip, Empower" (Whitley, 2014). Engaging by actively participating in conversations with fans on social media and in person at live events, Equipping them by providing interesting products and experiences, and Empowering through encouraging fans to interact with Billie and each other. Using these 3 elements effectively will simultaneously build a 'tribe' and generate 'true fans'.

Streaming and Physical Sales

Now that digital downloads have more or less become obsolete, the primary focus for this album will be on streaming and physical sales. As part of offering exclusive and special products to the early fans, we will produce a limited run of 100 vinyl that should sell out fairly quickly in the pre-order stage.

Another important aspect of providing a holistic offering of products to dedicated fans will be bundle deals. Because the existing and target audience have an interest in fashion, giving the option to purchase the album 'bundled' with clothing, merchandise, and tickets to live shows. Baker encourages the idea of bundle deals to "create incentives" for people who are undecided about whether or not to make a purchase (Baker, 2007). Whilst the primary purpose of this would be to encourage album buyers to purchase merchandise as an extra, it can also go the opposite way. Where a fan might usually just stream an album, if they're looking at purchasing some merchandise, they might be encouraged to purchase a physical version of the album at the same time.

During the pre-order period between announcing the release date and the album being released, most marketing and advertising will be directed to physical pre-orders. Once the album is released, it is more beneficial to direct to streaming services where people can listen to it on demand. At this point, physical sales will be heavily promoted at live shows along with merchandise.

Fashion & Merchandise

Because Billie Eilish already has a personal brand that focuses heavily on fashion and clothing, this can be used as a foundation to build upon to sell merchandise alongside music, which "expand[s] an artist's brand through a global program of different consumer products" (Vlasic, 2017). In the years before digital consumption was the norm, fans were able to have a physical connection to the artist they purchased from through Vinyl, Tape and CDs. It could be argued that merchandise is now filling that void and creating the physical relationship in the absence of physical music. If we are to generate 1,000 true fans, we want to be creating the closest connection as possible with them so that we can "tighten the tribe" (Godin, 2008).

By tapping into her fans' interest in fashion, it's possible to offer a wide range of clothing products to the point where Billie can essentially curate her own fashion brand. This brand can then be something for fans to fully identify with in their everyday lives. This will work particularly well if the clothing is designed by Billie Eilish as that will exemplify the emotional connection between the fan and the artist. Other creative ideas such as exclusive designs, brand partnerships and the potential to include fashion in her live shows will continuously promote the fashion side of the artist business and subsequently promote the Recorded Music and Live revenue streams.

Brand Partnerships

Billie Eilish is already dubbed as a role model for young girls and teenagers in general in the way that she isn't afraid to say what she thinks or express how she feels. By also showing that she's a versatile 'brand' that covers music and fashion, corporate brands will inevitably want to work with her on partnerships and endorsements. This can become a separate but important revenue stream to exploit as, according to Eventbrite, "Sponsors spend \$1.4 billion on the music industry in the United States each year, and that number is only going up" (Eventbrite, 2017). Because Billie's style is quite versatile, she could endorse high-end fashion brands such as Gucci or Burberry, to sports brands like Nike or Adidas, so long as they work with values similar to her own. She is likely to have her own opinions on particular brands and it will work better to endorse a brand that she's already a fan of herself. This will make the promotion more genuine and avoid the issue of it looking 'staged', which would go against Billie's values of authenticity.

Live

Live shows will be an extremely important part of this album cycle, for financial reasons and reaching out to new fans. Performing live is becoming increasingly important and is a growing part of the industry.

Using Godin's idea of "tightening the tribe" instead of focussing on making it larger, the tour to promote the album will not be in over-sized venues (Godin, 2008). By going for smaller venues between 1,000 and 1,500 capacity rooms, we can aim to sell out shows and create a more intimate experience for people attending. As a result of this, a show that's in high-demand will be more likely to create a word-of-mouth hype around it, as opposed to only half filling a larger venue.

As part of this album release, we will host an exclusive 'Album Playback with Q+A' the week before the official release. The event will be small, at a capacity of around 100 people, and will provide a special, personal experience to the fans who attend as they will be able to hear the album early, meet Billie and get to discuss it with the people who were involved with creating it. A competition to win tickets to this event will be hosted on Instagram which will provide some extra press for the album. The event itself will feature an open bar and a space that has the opportunity to browse and purchase merchandise before it's released.

Whilst the event is primarily to provide a special experience to a small number of dedicated fans, it is also designed to create an organic 'buzz' on social media. By creating a strong visual design at the venue, along with the exclusive access to merchandise, people will be naturally posting on their social media accounts about the event and the upcoming album release. This is an effective method of promoting the album as it can increase the reach of the promotion to people who are not necessarily fans of Billie already – these people are also more likely to respond more positively to an album being promoted through original content from their friends, as opposed to an advert from the artist themselves – Whitler notes that "92% of consumers believe recommendations from friends and family over all forms of advertising" (Whitler, 2014). Aside from social media, people attending such an

exclusive event will end up talking about it before and after, spreading a lot of word-of-mouth promotion, something Whitler hails as “the most important social media” (Whitler, 2014).

On tour, we would like to provide an innovative experience that combines the two worlds of live music and live fashion shows. By doing something relatively simple like hosting a fashion show before Billie’s headline set or in between each act would provide a significant amount of added value to ticket holders. At the same time it is likely to increase sales of merchandise on the night, by featuring clothing that can be purchased immediately. Long term, it can also be used to attract brand partnerships, particularly if they’re interested in promoting themselves in the live industry – having a model showcase a fashion brand is much more powerful than just having a brand logo stuck to a wall.

Budget

Due to this being a debut album, the budget will have to be large enough to provide enough promotion to get enough exposure but can't be large enough to take a huge risk. The budget has a significant concentration on merchandise, where we hope to make a decent profit margin over Year 1.

Estimated Expenditure	
Distribution	£ 1,000.00
Launch shows	£ 15,000.00
UK/EU Tour	£ 100,000.00
Physical Production	£ 20,000.00
PR	£ 80,000.00
Merchandise	£ 50,000.00
Advertising	£ 40,000.00
Sub-Total	£ 306,000.00
Contingency	£ 30,600.00
Total	£ 336,600.00

Target Income	
Physical Sales	£ 140,000.00
Streaming Royalties	£ 300,000.00
Live shows	£ 200,000.00
Merchandise	£ 90,000.00
Sync Deals	£ 20,000.00
Brand Partnerships	£ 50,000.00
Total	£ 800,000.00

Est. Profit/Loss	£ 463,400.00
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If the target incomes are reached, the release cycle should generate a healthy profit by the end of the first year after the album is released.

Project Plan and Timeline

The project plan (Appendix 1) details a comprehensive timeline that covers 3 pre-release singles and 1 post-release alongside a 19-date tour around UK and Europe before moving into festival dates in the summer. Content creation during this time will primarily be focussed on music videos to be released with each single, live performances and a cover – all of which are to be included in a deluxe version of the album, released 6 weeks after the initial release. Content releases are scheduled to be spread out to maximise the momentum created by each piece of content and to promote the next relevant piece of content, such as a single or live show.

Conclusion

By separating Billie Eilish's brand into 3 distinct parts, the marketing can be targeted individually to suit 3 audience types who may respond better to each sector. At the same time, each of the 3 sections will complement each other and generally make a wider target audience – creating revenue streams from Live performances, Recorded Music and Fashion. This creates a holistic brand that offers a huge amount of value to fans – which in turn makes it easier to convert them to a 'True Fan' and be part of the 'Tribe' that is being created.

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Appendix 1 - Project Plan and Timeline

	Day	Production / Content Creation	Marketing / Socials	Live / Interviews	Management
Week 1	Mon				Start pitching Single #1 to Playlists and Radio
	Tue				
	Wed				
	Thu				
	Fri				
	Sat				
	Sun				
Week 2	Mon				
	Tue	Deadline to receive Mastered Album			
	Wed				
	Thu				
	Fri				Secure Radio play exclusive for Single #1
	Sat				
	Sun				
Week 3	Mon		Announce Single #1 Radio Play		
	Tue				
	Wed				
	Thu		Release Single #1	UK Radio Interview #1	
	Fri				
	Sat				
	Sun				
Week 4	Mon				Start pitching Single #2 to Playlists and Radio
	Tue	Receive Final Single #1 Remix			
	Wed			Fashion Press Interview	
	Thu				Send out Album for Reviews
	Fri		Release Single #1 Official Video		
	Sat				
	Sun		Promote Fashion interview		
Week 5	Mon				Confirm Radio Interview #2 (Single First-Play)
	Tue		Release Single #1 Remix		
	Wed				
	Thu		Announce Single #2 Radio Play		Approach Press for interviews in lead-up to album
	Fri				Confirm Radio Interview #3
	Sat	Record Acoustic Version of Single #2			
	Sun				

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	Day	Production / Content Creation	Marketing / Socials	Live / Interviews	Management
Week 6	Mon				
	Tue				
	Wed				
	Thu		Announce Album Date + Release Single #2	UK Radio Interview #2	
	Fri				
	Sat			UK Radio Interview #3	
	Sun				
Week 7	Mon				
	Tue			Music Press interview	
	Wed				
	Thu			Intimate UK Gig (Sofar Sounds etc)	
	Fri				
	Sat				
	Sun				
Week 8	Mon				
	Tue		Release Music Press Interview		
	Wed			Music Press Interview #2 (Album Promo)	
	Thu		Release Single #2 Acoustic Version		
	Fri				Confirm Radio Interview #4
	Sat				
	Sun				
Week 9	Mon				
	Tue				
	Wed				
	Thu		Release Single #3 (Collaboration)	UK Radio Interview #4	
	Fri				Deadline to confirm tour dates
	Sat				
	Sun				
Week 10	Mon		Announce UK + EU Tour	UK Radio Interview #5	
	Tue				
	Wed		Open Album Pre-Order		
	Thu			Press Interview #3 (Album + Tour Promo)	
	Fri				
	Sat		Competition to win Playback tickets		
	Sun				

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	Day	Production / Content Creation	Marketing / Socials	Live / Interviews	Management
Week 11	Mon		Promote Album reviews		Finalise Live Album Playback
	Tue				
	Wed		Single #3 Official Video		
	Thu				
	Fri			Live Album Playback and Q+A	
	Sat				
	Sun				
Week 12	Mon				
	Tue				
	Wed	Record Live show for live videos		Album Launch Show - London	
	Thu		ALBUM RELEASE		
	Fri				
	Sat				
	Sun				
Week 13	Mon				
	Tue				
	Wed				
	Thu				
	Fri				
	Sat				
	Sun			Radio Interview - Germany	
Week 14	Mon			EU Tour - Berlin	
	Tue			EU Tour - Hamburg	
	Wed			Radio Interview - Amsterdam	
	Thu		Release Single #4	EU Tour - Amsterdam	
	Fri			EU Tour - Brussels	
	Sat	Record Cover song at show		EU Tour - Munich	
	Sun				
Week 15	Mon			EU Tour - Zurich	
	Tue			EU Tour - Milan	
	Wed				
	Thu			Radio Interview - Paris	
	Fri			EU Tour - Paris 1	
	Sat			EU Tour - Paris 2	
	Sun				

Appendix 1 - Project Plan and Timeline

	Day	Production / Content Creation	Marketing / Socials	Live / Interviews	Management
Week 16	Mon		Release Single #4 Official Video	UK Tour - London 1 (smaller gig)	
	Tue		Release Single #4 Remixes	UK Tour - Nottingham	
	Wed			UK Tour - Liverpool	
	Thu				
	Fri			UK Tour - Glasgow	Deadline to confirm Festival dates
	Sat			UK Tour - Edinburgh	
	Sun				
Week 17	Mon			UK Tour - Manchester	
	Tue			UK Tour - Birmingham	
	Wed		Announce EU + UK Festival Dates	UK Tour - Brighton	
	Thu			TV Appearance - London	
	Fri	Record entire show		UK Tour - London 2	
	Sat	Record entire show		UK Tour - London 3	
	Sun				
Week 18	Mon				Continuous pitching for Sync deals
	Tue				
	Wed				
	Thu		Release live cover track		
	Fri				
	Sat				
	Sun				
Week 19	Mon				
	Tue				
	Wed				
	Thu		Release Album Deluxe Edition		
	Fri			Festival Warm-Up Show - EU	
	Sat				
	Sun				
Week 20	Mon				
	Tue				
	Wed				
	Thu				
	Fri	Behind the scenes festivals vlog		EU Festival #1	
	Sat				
	Sun				Confirm Live Lounge

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	Day	Production / Content Creation	Marketing / Socials	Live / Interviews	Management
Week 21	Mon				
	Tue				
	Wed		Release 'Live in London' video + tracks		
	Thu				
	Fri				
	Sat				
	Sun	Behind the scenes festivals vlog		EU Festival #2	
Week 22	Mon				
	Tue				
	Wed		Announce Radio 1 Live Lounge		
	Thu				
	Fri				
	Sat	Behind the scenes festivals vlog		UK Festival #1	
	Sun				
Week 23	Mon				
	Tue				
	Wed		Radio 1 Live Lounge Performance		
	Thu				
	Fri				
	Sat	Behind the scenes festivals vlog		UK Festival #2	
	Sun				
Week 24	Mon				
	Tue				
	Wed				
	Thu				
	Fri				
	Sat	Behind the scenes festivals vlog		UK Festival #3	
	Sun				