

MA International Music Marketing

Development Assignment

Element 2 – Essay

Samuel John Roux

2015726

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## Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to define, critically evaluate and support the strategic methodologies of the 'Amethyst' release campaign commenting on the contemporary marketing theories and practices deployed.

Amethyst is an unsigned Neo-soul/R&B artist who is currently studying at Tileyard Education. She currently has no music released and the core strategy of this campaign is to launch her career and establish her place within the market.

There are a total of four releases included in this extensive campaign, including three individual releases which is then followed with an E.P. The following writing will elaborate on all the elements included in the portfolio and include some areas for personal development.

## Initial Stages

### Campaign Goals

Following an initial consultation in April 2021, the first prominent cause of action was to establish campaign goals. Using the 'SMART Goals' model I set eleven campaign goals adhering to that framework.



Figure 1: Merrihew, M. (2017).

Boogaard K. (2021) states: "*SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) goals are established using a specific set of criteria that ensures your objectives are attainable within a certain time frame.*" Following this model allows for the goals set to be more focused, allows you to keep on target and measure the success of each as you progress through each impact point, in this case: asset release dates.

### KPI's

Key performance indicators (KPI's) were set in relation to each goal to further establish a measurable attribute to quantify the success. "*A KPI measures the goals of the business against the actual quantifiable data over a specified period*" Mosca, L. (2019).

With these stated each goal had a specific measurable component which could be monitored throughout the course of the campaign. Monitoring the quantitative data will allow for any changes to strategic approach to be made at any point whilst keeping each goal on target.

## **Artist Bio**

An artist bio was written to express Amethyst's story. A bio is an extremely important asset for any artist and as stated by Long, K. (2019) it comes in a few different forms:

*"Long form", "Short Form" & bite-sized, suitable for "Instagram/Twitter".* The importance of providing a punchy, succinct, and alluring bio cannot be understated, it is the first port of call for fans, tastemakers, publicists, agents and many more institutions present within the music industry, you want to *"make yourself unforgettable"*. Amethyst's bio has been written with each of these elements in mind, a long version for the website and EPK, along with a shorter version more suitable for a one-sheet, and other *"online platforms"*.

## **Branding, Iconography & Guidelines**

### **Establishing a Brand**

One of the most important things when marketing a new artist is establishing a cutting-edge brand image to move forward with. The importance of this is fundamentally as important as the music itself. Branding is not just imagery, it is how one represents themselves, it shows *"character, your perspective towards various things"* which in turn allows something for your audience to *"connect to"* Bhanja, U. (2020). This is particularly important in copy and messaging when outputting content to your fanbase.

### **Logo & Iconography**

Having established what the campaign set out to achieve, it was prominent to define the Amethyst brand visually to create a cohesive image for deployment across multiple promotional mediums. In order to express how Amethyst saw her graphical representation, I requested that she create a mood-board setting a direction for potential designers to work with ensuring that everybody was on the same page. Mood boards are *"the perfect jumping off point for any design project"*. It allows everybody involved to stay true to a *"coherent design concept without risk of losing sight of the bigger picture"* Bajac, B. (no date). With Amethyst's mood board created it enabled designer Daisy Woollard to create a logo the artist and I both deemed to be a good visual representation for the brand.



Figure 2: Woollard, D. (2021).

### **The Importance of Vector Graphics**

When designing the logo, it was extremely important to ensure that the end-product could be deployed to many different mediums. This means that it needs to retain its clarity when scaled to different sizes to ensure a professional and cutting-edge image. One of the most prominent advantages to using a vector-based logo is *"scalability"* you *"can scale it up and down"* to any size *"without losing quality"* additionally *"you won't lose any sharpness even if you zoom in"* or out, at any size. Ooley, A. (2019). This allows for the Amethyst logo to be published on a wide variety of mediums, such as the website, social media pages, EPK, One-Sheet etc. without a compromise on quality, thus ensuring a professional brand image.

### Incorrect Usage

Having researched the “Beats Music Brand Guidelines” Apple Inc. (2014), I decided it was crucial to display brand guidelines to ensure that tastemaker publications would represent the brand image correctly.

#### **INCORRECT USAGE**

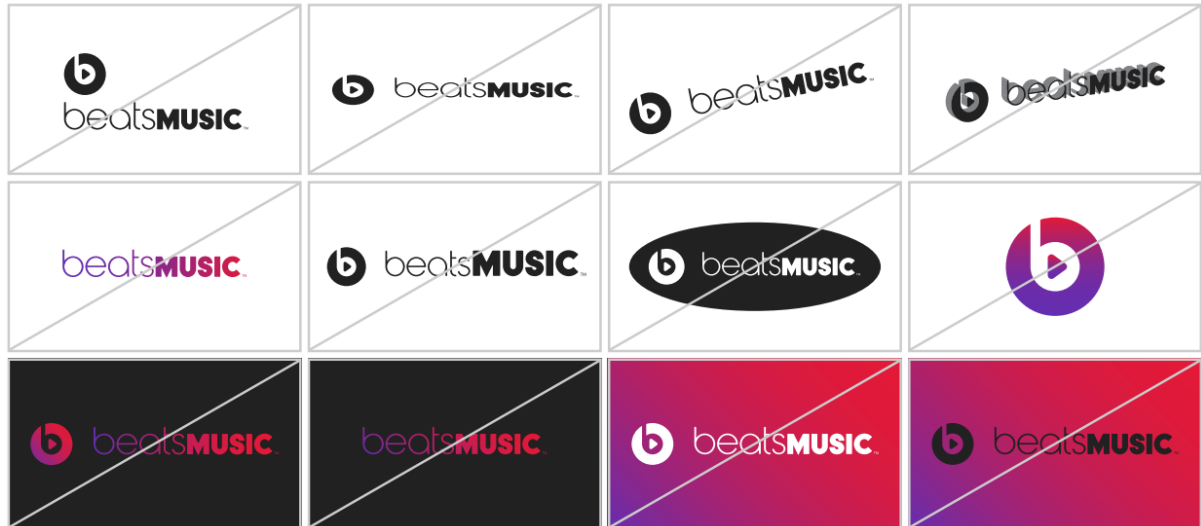


Figure 3: Apple Inc. (2014).

Pictured in figure 3, it displays how the beats music brand should not be represented and as such I chose to include a similar strategy in my portfolio submission to ensure consistency throughout the campaign.

### Brand Aesthetic, Material Release & Corresponding Imagery

#### Visual Aesthetic

Once more, a mood board was designed to represent where I saw Amethyst's image as an artist. After exploring Amethyst's favourite artists and the way they portrayed themselves, it was clear that there were elements of pastel colours, class, sophistication, and memorability. It was with this that helped inform her aesthetic representation.



Figure 4: Roux, S. (2021).

#### Imagery for upcoming releases

*“It’s important that whoever is doing the shoot knows in advance what outcome you desire”.* Holler (2018). It was decided that the theme for the entire campaign should remain on brand with the aforementioned aesthetic adjectives. As a result, multiple photoshoots were undertaken with a classy, sophisticated image, incorporating the use of pastel colours. Lemmon (2009) states: *“An artist’s image should portray their personality and style,”* as well

as “*their individual uniqueness*”. She goes on to say that: “*What an artists wears, their attitude, and their music tell a story about them and creates their unique image*”. An image is something a potential fan lured into the ‘fan funnel’ can resonate with, and if they perceive it to be so, they will invest and follow the brand as it evolves and flourishes. The importance of this cannot be understated.

Four sets of photoshoots were undertaken, three of which correspond to the initial three single releases along with the E.P, and the final including additional press shots. Looks associated with the second, third, and fourth releases are unavailable to share as they remain in the editing stage.



Figure 5: Barroso, C. (2021).



Figure 6: Jane, A. (2021).

Pictured in figures 5 & 6, a cohesive image in line with the Amethyst brand will represent her strategically in line with each release, ultimately tying together a full E.P campaign. Each single will correspond to a particular look, incorporating the same aesthetic with different pastel colouring, glamour, and sophistication throughout.

## Artist One-Sheet




### Artist Bio

Chichester born Amethyst, discovered her love for music by singing along to Disney soundtracks in her living room from age 3 and listening to classical and soca music with her dad on the way to school. However, it wasn't until the age of 16 when she started having singing lessons that music became a serious pursuit. Whilst studying at university Amethyst started writing her own music and performing with other musicians which led her to meet close friends that she still works and performs with now, as well as getting the opportunity to be mentored by Joy Crookes.

"I'm still finding my sound," says Amethyst. "I think it can take us a whole lifetime to really understand ourselves, for so long we've been told to confine to one genre, but I'm inspired by so many different artists I want to show that in my music!" With influences that spread from Ella Fitzgerald, James Brown and Stevie Wonder to Lianne La Havas, Snoh Aalegra and H.E.R., Amethyst's sound has been described as modern R&B/neo-soul production, tied together with a luscious and soothing soulful jazz vocal.

Amethyst's beautiful vocals combined with her unique sound and distinctive look certainly makes her one to watch. With an EP due for release early next year and more singles on the way, we can certainly expect a lot from this young rising star.

Contact [info@amethystmusic.com](mailto:info@amethystmusic.com)







### Upcoming Releases

'Can't Let Go' - 16/04/2021

'Up All Night' - 21/10/2021

'Get Comfortable' - 18/01/2022

Get Comfortable EP - 03/03/2022

## TOUR DATES TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON!

Figure 7: Roux, S & Edwards, A. (2021).

With the aesthetic of the Amethyst brand in place, it was time to create some extremely important promotional material. An artist one sheet serves as a “*sales and marketing tool*” used to present “*new releases that*” are “*contained on a single sheet*” McDonald, H. (2020). It features critical digestible information including:

- Typography.
- A press shot.
- Upcoming releases.
- A note to tour date announcement.
- Artist bio.
- Clickable links to social spaces and the website.
- Contact information.

McDonald, H. (2020) also touches upon the fact that a one-sheet will be “*helpful for labels and distributors in selling the album*”. The music industry is an extremely fast paced environment in which information needs to be strikingly presented, well thought out and digestible whilst maintaining clarity and succinctness. It could also be used to approach agents when looking for live shows to perform, press and tastemaker publications for additional coverage, but not as much as the next promotional asset – the EPK.

### **Electronic Press Kit**

Differently to a one-sheet, in the modern landscape of the music industry an Electronic Press Kit is usually displayed as an artist website, or a PDF document showcasing much more information about an artist. It serves as “*a general online resume that sums up a musician’s career to date.*” Kealey, M. (2021).

It consists of the following:

- Artist branding.
- Long/short bios.
- Additional background information (such as instruments played).
- A press shot gallery.
- Detailed information regarding upcoming releases.
- Quotes from the artist in relation to said releases.
- Tour dates.
- Links to relevant social spaces.
- Contact information.

It is designed to be an ever-evolving body of work in which you can display your finest achievements and relevant release information to allure potential collaboration within all facets of the music industry inclusive of record labels, publishers, live agents etc. but most importantly: press and tastemakers. It showcases “*the appropriate PR materials*” in which a journalist will find useful, “tells people why they should care about your music” and puts everything relevant “in one place for music professionals to review” O’Donoghue, D. (2019). An extremely powerful marketing tool indeed.

### **Advertising, Social media & Release Strategy**

With the brand and means of marketing the artist to relevant tastemakers defined, one of the most important aspects of a campaign is how you bring it to market. Everything discussed in this essay is a culmination of a deeply thought-out strategic approach but how it is delivered to the masses is of paramount importance.

## Advertising

There are multiple ways in which you can advertise an artist digitally, for the purposes of this campaign no out-of-home marketing pursuits such as billboarding, posterage and other guerrilla marketing techniques such as flyering have been undertaken. Upon reflection this could have been something looked at when the artist begins to see a return on investment (ROI).

Advertising methods for this campaign can be defined by the following:

- Social media strategy.
- Spotify Banners
- Print & digital press acquisition
- Digital press exclusive premieres
- Music Videos
- E-mail marketing (via Mail Chimp).

## Social Media

Prior to setting the campaign 'Smart Goals' mentioned earlier, a social media analysis was undertaken to establish where Amethyst is currently without any music released. Owing to her previously using the page for modelling, she has achieved a reasonable organic following which gives us a lot to work with prior to deploying the strategy.

As defined in the portfolio, each release will correspond to a three-stage strategy, pre-release, release day, and post-release.

Detail aside, the whole idea behind social media strategy (and most digital advertising for that matter), is to funnel potential fans through a three-stage funnel consisting of:

- Impression & awareness.
- Engagement.
- Conversion.

First, the impression stage: *"While we WANT new fans, what first NEED is reach"*. The initial stage of this funnel across a social media campaign involves making impressions.

Impressions are a measurable statistic in which one can understand *"how many people are encountering your message, music, artist name"* etc. Once people are made aware of your brand, usually via means of paid promotion you're *"ushering"* them *"to the starting point of the listener journey: awareness"*. Robley, C. (2020).

This leads to the second stage engagement; Robley, C. (2020) goes on to state that: *"you can define an engagement as some action the person took while viewing the ad"*. i.e. interacting with it in some manner, such as watching a video, or taking the decision to *"subscribe to your mailing list"*. Once we have a somebody at this stage we can push them onto the next stage, conversion.

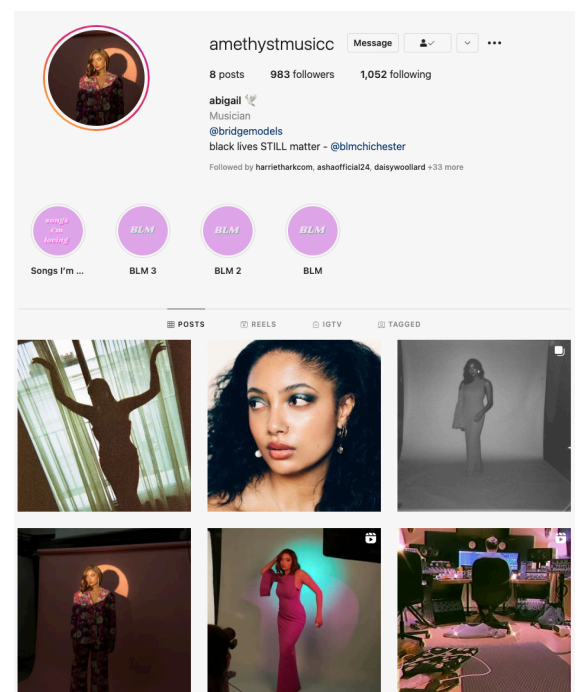


Figure 8: Edwards, A. (2021).

Conversion can be defined by several terms in the music industry. It could be described as somebody becoming a dedicated fan, making a purchase (merch, record, E.P, live concert tickets etc.) or even simply just following an artist on Spotify. This is the aim for the entire campaign, ensuring to make as many impressions as possible via, and thus enticing potential fans into the conversion stage.

Return on investment is crucial when looking at social media marketing. It is imperative to ensure that adverts are performing in a way which offers a return measurable return. If campaign budget is being diminished by means of failed advertising, one must adjust the strategy accordingly. This doesn't necessarily mean converting to purchase; in this case, at an early stage of an artist's career it consists of pushing your ads to "*build audiences you can RETURN TO*" Robley, C. (2020). By building said audiences, you will be able to re-target them repeatedly, thus building a more engaged and dedicated following.

### **Release Strategy**

The release strategy for each asset in this campaign, follows a simple model. Activity will take place four weeks either side of the release date. Defined in the timeline presented in the portfolio, it establishes the following:

- Weeks 1-2: Acquiring tastemaker support
- Weeks 2-4: Pushing teaser content
- ***Week 4: Release Day!***
- Weeks 4-8: Pushing post-release content.

Following this model, tastemaker support is acquired early, and the relevant teaser content can be pushed prior to asset release. As a 3-single and E.P campaign, each single release can follow the same model.

The only difference here is that for the third single, the promotional push will last an additional two weeks since the promotion surround the release is over Christmas; McDonald, H. (2019). States that: "*the time and space entertainment journalists devote to covering music does not increase proportionally with the increase in major releases*" she goes on to say: "*Some things have to get bumped, and that's likely to be your new indie album*". The point here is that it is much harder to break through and acquire coverage for the new release around the holiday seasons. Due to the release being after Christmas, its far more likely to attain coverage by ensuring journalists are made aware of the release in as good time as possible. In a real-world situation, if it proves difficult to attain press coverage for the release in January, the campaign can be shifted to further in the future to ensure that continuous press support surrounds each release.

### **Radio Support & Playlist Positions.**

Included in the release strategy is acquiring radio and Spotify playlist spots. This is one of the core campaign's goals, and will ultimately lead to higher revenue, notoriety and a larger fanbase for Amethyst.

In a modern streaming world, radio playlist acquisition is considerably sought after.

SoundCharts. (2019) states: "*you may be surprised to learn that radio listening still accounts*

*for much, much more than all the streaming services combined.”* It is a “*prestigious and highly competitive*” medium in which it will drastically benefit any emerging artist, but it is recommended to attain “*clout elsewhere first*”. Although we will attempt to achieve radio playlisting in tandem with streaming, perhaps acquisition will increase following the first two releases when Amethyst has a more established position.

Streaming has an equally important part to play in the marketing of any release. Streaming giants such as Spotify and Apple Music have a colossal share of the market, masses of music consumers discover new music via some of Spotify’s own playlists. Shotwell, J (2019) states: “*Playlist placement can mean the difference between an artist’s fans hearing a new single and the fans of that artist’s genre hearing the same song.*” By merely having a release featured, hundreds of thousands of people can come across a song and it can make the difference between an artist’s career blossoming or standing still. For this reason, it is of paramount importance to ensure Amethyst’s music is submitted to multiple Spotify playlists.

### **Tastemaker Support**

Alongside playlist and radio acquisition, it is of paramount importance to market music to digital and printed press. It is an invaluable marketing tool and securing reputable publications will aid traction and elongate any campaign’s impact. Each of Amethyst’s releases are attributed to 4 individual tastemaker premieres. “*The good news is, once you do break-in to the world of media, more doors open and it gets easier*” states Fountain, T. (2019). Knowing the target market, and which writers to acquire is an extremely powerful tool, one in which will benefit the artists outreach and allow for further press acquisition in the future.

### **Additional Marketing areas**

In a reflective manner, I feel it is pressing to discuss live performance and synchronisation. Acting as a marketer in this instance, I can only offer suggestion that each of these areas should have strong focus.

It is felt that throughout the course of this campaign, more efforts should have been targeted towards acquiring gigs. “*Live shows contribute to an artist’s income, and also give them the opportunity to potentially develop their fanbase early on.*” Cornell, K. (2018). Live performance is an immensely powerful marketing tool; it gives life to an entire brand and converts a large portion of listeners into fans. Predominantly an agent’s role, I have recommended that Amethyst seeks expansion upon her team and acquires an agent following the release of her first single.

Synchronisation is also an extremely powerful marketing tool. When attributing an artist’s song to an advert, television program, or product it can resonate with a larger fanbase, and tap into additional markets. If this is done correctly, it can enhance an artist’s image and allow for larger outreach. Sync “*has always been really important*” it’s provided a platform for countless “*new/established artists*” to “*create a bigger awareness of their music by simply being attached to a product, TV or film.*” Kirabo, T. (2016). As a new artist, acquiring sync will not happen instantly. As Amethyst’s career and notoriety grows, it will be pressing

for her to attain a publishing agreement to further expand upon her marketing efforts. It will also serve as a large source of revenue and help propel her career.

### **Personal Development Areas, Reflection, and Conclusion**

Following the completion of my marketing proposal, it is felt that there are multiple areas of development in my professional practice which can be improved upon.

Firstly, release strategy and additional promotional activity, it would be of importance to include live streaming and posting acoustic versions of releases to YouTube. It is an invaluable marketing tool serving to promote the music further and increase engagement with the Amethyst brand. I feel it is an area which has been overlooked, but one in which for future projects will be largely considered, along with lyric videos. Video content is proven to be prioritised via social media algorithms, and this has sadly been overlooked.

Secondly, my deployment of the project management timeline. I feel my ability to create cohesive and detailed Gantt charts needs to be considered. At a professional level, I feel that the detail I have delivered has not been of a professional level, but this is a development area I look forward to improving upon for future pursuits.

Thirdly, another consideration which has been overlooked is the opportunity to create and sell merchandise. Giving fans something tangible to possess creates additional marketing opportunity, especially with items such as T-shirts, tote bags, and badges etc. It creates a word-of-mouth marketing method and serves as an advert for the artist.

In contrast, a strong area to be praised across this campaign is the consideration of branding, aesthetic and outward facing image. Amethyst's brand has been crafted in a manner of which I am very proud.

In conclusion, the marketing campaign I have delivered provides an excellent framework to build upon with even more promotional activity. It is a live, real-world project due for release on the specified dates, and has provided a springboard to include far more activity and additional content ideas.

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## **Images**

Figure 1: Merrihew, M. (2017) – *Smart Goals Diagram* – [Online]

Available at: <https://www.hydratemarketing.com/blog/the-importance-of-setting-smart-goals>.

Figure 2: Woollard, D. (2017) – *Amethyst Logo* – [Unpublished]

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Figure 3: Apple Inc. (2014) – *Beats Music Brand Guidelines, Incorrect Usage*, p.10 [Online]

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Figure 4: Roux, S. (2021) – *Amethyst Aesthetic Moodboard* – [Unpublished].

Figure 5: Baroso, C. (2021) – *Amethyst 'Can't Let Go' photoshoot* – [Unpublished].

Figure 6: Jane, A. (2021) – *Amethyst Press Shot photoshoot* – [Unpublished].

Figure 7: Roux, S & Edwards, A. (2021) – *Amethyst One-Sheet* – [Unpublished].

Figure 8: Edwards, A. (2021) – *Amethyst Instagram Page* – [Online] Available at:

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