

Assignment: BMTY7000 Creative Music Management

Name: Esther Cole

Title: Reflective Summary

Due date: 18/01/2019

Course tutor: Steve Melouish

Word length (reflective account): 2368 words (excluding contents page, references and appendices)

I confirm that this work has not been copied, plagiarised or duplicated.

Signed:

Reflective Summary

BMTY7000 Creative Music Management

MA Music Industry Entrepreneurship

Tileyard Education in Association with University of Wales and Trinity Saint

David

CONTENTS

- **Introduction**
- **My Involvement in the Campaign**
- **Analysis and Critique of Digital Technologies Used**
- **Reflective Account**
- **Conclusion**

INTRODUCTION

As a creative artist, it is my vision and mission to be able to empathise and identify with others. To let people know they are understood, know they are not alone and to encourage them to feel better about themselves – particularly women.

As a co-manager of this creative music project – which happens to be of my own music, it was my goal to build a strong following of people who will listen, support, buy and share my music through not only live interactions but digital ones too. It is fans who purchase music, merchandise and event tickets and as a team we established a plan that works best to reach them. We set out to build a following through keeping up to date with the digital age and utilizing the best resources that will help achieve these goals.

The project was to release a single called “Is It True” a R&B/pop ballad and my involvement in the project included audio and video production, marketing plan, budgeting plan, EPK/website design and management, social media management, event booking, iconography/artwork, distribution and live performances.

MY INVOLVEMENT IN THE CAMPAIGN

Audio: I wrote the song ‘Is It True’, a pop/ballad and used Adele – ‘Someone Like You’ as reference for the song. I sourced a producer and got the song professionally recorded at Larkhill Studios, with myself performing on it.

Video: The initial plan was to create a lyric video to upload to my channel and to distribute the song to all major digital platforms through AWAL. However, after great feedback about the song it was decided to shoot a professional video, with hopes that this will showcase me as a performer and help me to gain more followers. I outsourced a videographer and helped to plan and execute the shoot.

Iconography: I decided on the single release artwork to be a snapshot of the music video as it strongly portrayed the message we wanted to give out – “hurt but still strong”.

Digital Distribution: I have distributed through AWAL in the past and it was successful, so the team agreed to continue distributing this way for this project.

Social Media: I regularly updated my social media platforms with general posts and information, maintaining a presence and staying engaged with followers and fans.

Promotion: I helped to create promotional posts, attended events and promoted my performances and single release via word of mouth.

Live Performances: I helped book several gigs and performed at them.

Marketing Plan: I decided that the best plan for the single “Is It True” was to market to women with a focus on feminism. Being that the song is a powerful song pertaining to heartbreak, an emotion that many people can relate to. However, the video is still empowering and encourages a women’s strength.

Budgeting Plan: I helped to create a budget plan, providing my team with costs for services outsourced by myself and negotiated discounts and researched sponsorships in order to help reduce costs for the project.

EPK/Website: I designed and self-managed both website and EPK.

ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES USED

YouTube: A part of our artist campaign plan was to build my artist social media platforms (particularly YouTube) by creating a variety of visual content. My AWAL app tells me that 70% of the YouTube views and 40% of the Spotify listeners for my last single “I Wish I Could” were people between the ages of 25 and 34 (see appendix 3 – AWAL Report). According to a statistic provided by Statista, this age group also makes up 30% of the people who use YouTube (Statista, 2018). This suggested to me that YouTube would be a great platform to reach more of the people who might like my music. Research also says that music videos are one the most powerful tools for an artist as it enables them to “convey a more comprehensive message, portray an image and create a brand for themselves”. With the web becoming the leading platform over TV, platforms such as YouTube make music videos easy to access and share. “For up-and-coming artists, this access gives their fans an outlet to constantly keep up with their progress” and “embeds the look and sound of the artists into the minds of the fans” (Petchers, 2012). Music videos “have also set themselves free from the television set” (Aufderheide, 1986). This empowered the idea of making music a video because they have the power to highlight skills, messages and build a fan base.

E-Portfolio: A website and EPK (Electronic Press Kit) is an easily accessible place where people can see my entire work portfolio at a professional standard and setting, not only are fans gained through these types of platforms but also work-related opportunities. Acting as a music CV, it gives employers a clear presentation of my work and experience. Jesse Cannon said in his book ‘Get More Fans’ that “A website has always been one of the most powerful ways to promote your music and build your relationship with fans. A good website will serve many different purposes.” (Cannon.J, 2017). I can confirm that building one has helped me to trail my work experience and present myself in a well-rounded way that hopefully cuts across to those interested in me who visit my site. I created a website for those who take a liking to me and want to personally know me better. I created an online EPK for industry professionals/employers who want to hear my music and see my experience in relation to business opportunities. Through these platforms, I have an opportunity to present my music, music videos, photos, experience, personality and values all in one place. “A good website will have all that people want to know about you, in a controllable style and will offer fans additional ways to take in your presence better than any other social media platform.” (Cannon.J, 2017).

Bobby Owinski made some interesting points in his book ‘Social Media Promotion for Musicians’. The points that stuck out to me most were; to keep things honest and simple and to be able to differentiate myself (Owinski, 2017). Musically, I am an array of emotions, so I kept my website simple to not confuse my followers. My music can be sad, happy, political, ethical and romantic and I do not feel like one colour, style or image can truly represent me always. Because of this, we decided on a black and white foundation with a hint of red which I believe represents the sass in my current music. This hint of colour will change according to my musical mood or message. My website also has a blog page that showcases posts from my Instagram, showing snippets of my song-writing projects, event promotions, experiences, posters and press cuttings from interviews I have done with blogs and newspapers.

An EPK provides a private and exclusive outlook of an artist’s work and needs. As well as an exclusive preview of my upcoming single release ‘Is It True’, my EPK has a backlog of images and videos that show my past and recent musical experiences which show growth and development and I have plans to update this with a set list. Both website and EPK have testimonials and links to my social media platforms as well as biography’s that serve different purposes for its audiences.

Social Media: I use Instagram because the streaming history from my AWAL app shows me that 70% of my YouTube Views and 40% of my Spotify listeners are people between the ages of 25-34 and I am aware that this generation of people are familiar with social media platforms and will find it a useful and relatable platform for updates and information (Statista, 2018). Social media platforms

such as Instagram are great tools for engagement and general promotion of information but have certain limitations. Instagram cannot show viewers everything an artist has to offer. It does not have effective free purchasing or registering tools that help followers buy merchandise or event tickets. There is also no simple way to link followers to other social media platforms or places to download music. It also cannot be regularly updated like the way a website can. However, I used Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Snapchat to regularly update followers, engage with fans and present snippets of my talent which helped me to gain new followers when using the best hashtags. Social media is a platform that users engage with daily and hourly and is a strong tool for quick information and it is a tool I use daily to repetitively promote the release for my single "Is It True". It is also free, which is a great advantage for an upcoming artist.

Digital Distribution: On the website there is an option to preview the track, with links to stream and purchase the full track. However, after some research I discovered that selling music as a new artist without many fans may not be a good idea. There is this theory that "If people can't hear your music quickly, easily and without paying, you're hampering the ability for them to become a fan." (Cannon, J, 2017). However, I then ask - how will I be taken seriously as an artist and I how can I afford to create new music if I give it out for free? Making music is expensive and is one of the weaknesses listed in my SWOT analysis (see appendix 1 – SWOT Analysis). According to statistics, Spotify has over 70 million paying subscribers (Statista, 2018). Clearly, it is worth having it distributed on these platforms regardless, since the listeners I am hoping for may have apps such as Spotify and can listen to it free with their subscription. However, we decided to make it free to listen to for those who take the time to visit my website, as I can see how this may be a way of gaining fans and website subscriptions, if they know they will get freebies when visiting my site.

REFLECTIVE ACCOUNT

Upon joining the course, I was a little out of the loop, confused and doubtful because I was finding it difficult to establish relationships with my class mates due to me starting late. I had also been having issues with balancing my music pursuits with real life responsibilities, and because of this, was eager to learn about how I could creatively manage my own music through the course and my class mates.

At the start of the course we were taught the importance of developing reflective skills, developing a realistic view of ourselves and identifying our goals and working them out - taking out regular time to reflect and review our progress. What I understood from what was being taught was that having the ability to identify my strengths and weaknesses would help me in general with my personal and professional development. It will help me to be better prepared, aware of what I need, and help me to manage my overall goals more effectively. So, I began planning and reflecting from the start.

This module has taught me the advantages and disadvantages of having a team in place and although they were some struggles with agreeing on ideas, and executing plans, I must say that it takes a team to effectively accomplish a plan to a high standard and simply trying to do everything on your own is difficult. Managing a campaign takes effective research, planning, skill and knowledge for it to be successful. Team work is a must and belief in and dedication to the product is a must. Employing effective reflective and management skills like some I have mentioned above is a must for safe management of projects.

I have learnt through this experience the importance of mental health. I was incredibly overwhelmed because of the pressures surrounding me, particularly with my budgeting and time management. According to an article by the Guardian, musicians are more likely to suffer from depression than other professions and that due to artists trying to make a living and juggling jobs that even simply trying to build a career as a musician is extremely uneasy and damaging to your physical and mental health. (Lindvall, 2016). I have learnt that it is important to only do what you can physically and mentally handle for the sake of your health and that having and using a team effort for campaigns

such as this one can help profusely and would have had an even greater impact if there were more dedicated members in the team.

I have provided a copy of my SWOT Analysis and Personal Development Plan in my appendices. These reflective tools and techniques really helped to guide and support me through the artist campaign project and it is recommended that tools such as this should be employed generally by creative teams, managers and artists self-managing when working on projects big and small.

CONCLUSION

Managing an artist campaign takes strong communication, listening and a variety of skills and knowledge. There were disputes about the best artist name to use. Some members preferred 'Essy', whilst I preferred 'Esther Cole'. The final decision was made to go with 'Esther Cole' which I felt was more empowering. Another campaign management dispute was who to market the single to. Initially, members of the team were campaigning to market the single to churches. However, I believed that the idea was extremely inappropriate being that it's an emotional song about heartbreak and that although I may sound gospel, I am not a gospel singer. I did some research and thinking and designed a campaign marketed towards women between the ages of 18-34 and the rest of the team liked it.

Overall, I believe the project went well, and I am pleased with the results. Team members involved, were supportive in making the vision come true and despite the stress, it was all worth it. There was some added pressure due to the fact that I was the artist plus the campaign co-manager but using reflective tools such as SWOT, PDP and the theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs – which is the foundation of my PDP (McLeod, 2018) - I was able to achieve most of the aims of this campaign.

REFERENCES

- Aufderheide, P. (1986). *Music Videos: The Look of the Sound*, *Journal Of Communication*, 36 (1), pp. 57-78. DOI:10.1111/j.1460-2466.1986.tb03039.x.
- Cannon, J. and Thomas, T. (n.d.). *Get more fans: The DIY Guide To The New Music Business*: (2017 Edition) Kindle Edition. 5th ed. Musformation.
- Lindvall, H. (2016). *Behind the music: Why are musicians more likely to suffer from depression?*. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2010/dec/17/musicians-depression> [Accessed 5 Dec. 2016].
- McLeod, S. (2018). *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*. [online] Simply Psychology. Available at: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html> [Accessed 18 Jan. 2019].
- Owsinski, B. (2017). *Bobby Owsinski's social media promotion for musicians*. 2nd ed. Bobby Owsinski Media Group.
- Petchers, B. (2012). *The Branding Power of Today's Music Videos*, Forbes.com. Available from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/brianpetchers/2012/09/25/the-branding-power-of-todaysmusic-videos/#6f3e2a801c1f> [Accessed 1 August 2018].
- Statista. (2018). *Average age of social media users* | Statista. [online] Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/274829/age-distribution-of-active-social-media-users-worldwide-by-platform/> [Accessed 30 Dec. 2018].
- Statista. (2018). *Spotify users - subscribers in 2018* | Statista. [online] Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/244995/number-of-paying-spotify-subscribers/> [Accessed 30 Dec. 2018].

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – SWOT Analysis:

<u>STRENGTHS</u>	<u>WEAKNESSES</u>
Having a website and EPK is a way for me to store/archive all my music related work in one area in an attractive format which is engage able for my followers and business opportunities. It is also a way for people to get to know me without physically seeing me and be involved with my journey. I have strong vocal ability and stage presence. We have a great song with a strong image and message. We are determined.	We do not have resources to create a website or EPK that is the same standards as other professional artists. I do not have many followers to view my website yet. Nobody in the team can play an instrument or have much competency on a DAW, so how will we produce a track and remix? The message in the song could seem confusing to some if not projected and marketed effectively. It takes money to make money which is something we do not have much of right now. Selling records alone does not make much money. We do not know much about the business side of the music industry and have limited time to look into it.
<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>	<u>THREATS</u>
We have access to experienced tutors who can offer help and support. I also know how to use Wix and can create a decent website and EPK on my own. I can use other social media platforms to promote my website. Such as; Instagram and Facebook. We have access to student's who can song write and produce. I have lectures notes on effective ways to brand yourself and get your message across correctly. We have access to experienced tutors who can offer advice. We have access to free facilities on campus. We can campaign the single and potentially earn money through gigging and selling merchandise. Which is also a good way to promote the single and myself as an artist.	The demand on Tileyard tutors is a lot and other students who do not have as much commitments as I do in terms of work, health and family obligations tend to get their attention and grab opportunities faster than I can. We will not always be at student at Tileyard to get advice or access to their facilities. The increasing demand for money in collaborating, recording and producing is out of our budget. Everyone has a message and is using digital platforms and social media to promote their message so there is a need for some difference and uniqueness from me. A lot of music venues are closing down so there might not be much opportunities to gig and perform to promote the artist campaign.

Appendix 2 - Website Plan: <https://goo.gl/CZpXEg>

Appendix 3 – AWAL Report: <https://goo.gl/VqPksJ>

Appendix 4 - PDP: Next page

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Aspects I want to develop further	How important is this to me? (rated from 0-5)	How essential is it for me to develop now? (rated from 0-5)	Priority Score (added scores from last two columns)	How will I work on this?	Timeframe
Strengthen my motivation	5	5	10	I must ensure that by next semester my basic needs have been met. My finances, housing and work should all in place so that my focus can be on my studies. I must make sure I have the funds I need to get me to campus, food to eat and access to the equipment I need. Once I these things in place my motivation for my work and studies will strengthen.	During the whole of 2 rd term.
Improve time management	5	5	10	I am going to set realistic goals and timeframes. I am going to be honest with myself about what I can do and see them through. It is important that I spread workload time effectively, ensuring that I do action all my plans. My plan for next semester is to give set times exclusively for my work and not allow anything to take its place – anything else that I want or need to do must go around it. I believe the best way and really, the only way I can improve my time management than what it has been so far is by doing the things I say I am going to when I say I am going to do it.	During the whole of 2 rd term.
Develop self confidence	5	5	10	Confidence is at times determined by what we think others think about us. My aim is to develop self-esteem and learn to believe in myself. I need to figure out who I am, change the negative beliefs I have of myself and recognise my strengths and weaknesses.	During the whole of 2 rd term.
Manage change more effectively	4	4	8	In order for me to stay organised with my studies and maintain a steady progression, I have to be prepared for changes. Changes in my timetable, changes at work and changes in my personal life. This way nothing will distract me or take my attention from my studies. I need to identify when I am beginning to feel stressed and intervene early, in order to cope better. I will research some techniques that help deal with stress, emotions and my body and practice them every day.	During the whole of 2 rd term.
Be better at getting down to tasks	5	5	10	I need to start tasks straight away and not leave them to last minute. I will take regular breaks and set myself and earlier deadline to what has been communicated by our lectures. My aim is going to be to always have work done early. If I change campuses next semester, it will also be easier for me to participate in group work. I will give myself more practice time and more independent writing sessions, so that when I need to do a task, I would already have practiced and developed experience making the task easier for me. I also need to read through all my course material and participate in all the activities as they are given, so that when it comes to completing tasks, I will not be confused and waste time trying to get up scratch with what is going on.	During the whole of 3 rd semester.

