

Creative Music Management: Reflective Essay

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This essay will be a reflective assessment of the group project that I was a part of, where we managed the release and marketing campaign for the artist Peonie's remix of her debut song, *Mistakes and Heartbreaks*.

Our first action was to divide up the roles within the group with reference to our individual strengths. I have had previous experience working in administration and so I took on the role of managing the finances and the project timeline. I also have experience working with Excel and Numbers so I was able to put the numbers and dates into well constructed charts and spreadsheets.

I started by setting out a timeline for the release of the song and the marketing campaign around it. We all agreed that an eight week period would be the right amount of time for this campaign, with four weeks before the release and four weeks after.

Whilst I have managed the release and promotion of a song before, I mostly did not have such a thorough planning as this so it was certainly a challenge to work out how to put a lot of the content into writing and carefully planned that I would normally have only stored in my head. Once I had worked out a brief bullet-pointed list for the timeline, I then put it into a Gantt chart which was very helpful for seeing the release timeline and how it could be changed, as now I was able to see visually where some aspects needed changing much more easily than on a simple bullet-pointed list.

My other role in the group was to manage the finances, with a project like this, we needed to be very careful about what money was going in and out so that we could get an accurate understanding of the profits that we were making. I kept a careful note of the costs that we were running up and made sure that out of our £5,000 budget, we kept some of that as

overhead in case any unexpected or unforeseen costs arose. As well as keeping note of these in a chart, I inputted our outgoing money into a donut chart so that we could see the figures we were spending as percentages of our budget. This was so that we could get a quick overview without having to search through the charts to find what the most and least expensive aspects of this campaign were.

One of the initial challenges that arose from being assigned this project was working with a new team. While I knew the other people on my team from being on the same university course, none of us had worked on a project together. There was also the difficulty of having to work on this project while London was in a lockdown and then tier 4 restrictions due to COVID-19. This meant that we weren't able to meet in person and had to organise this campaign through Zoom meetings and using a Google Drive file to share our resources.

The beginning of this project started well, and we were all pleased with the group that we were put in. When discussing what track to use for this project and if we could find an artist at Tileyard that would be willing to work with us on this project, we soon realised that it was easiest to use an artist that was managed by one of us and would be willing to release a remix of one of their songs. Both Lucan and I had artists that would be up for working with us on this project, but as Peonie, who was managed by Lucan, was further along in the development of her song *Mistakes and Heartbreaks*, we decided to go with that as it meant that we could go straight into organising the marketing campaign and releasing the remix and not have to worry too much about the logistics of recording the song and getting it to the point that it would need a remix. This was particularly relevant in this case as the restrictions put in by the government made any kind of work outside of the home particularly difficult.

We found that throughout this project, the main thing that we needed to pay particular attention to was keeping in constant contact, to make sure that we were all on the same page with the different parts of the project that we were in charge of. There were many overlapping elements that we were each working on and as we were not able to meet in

person, we had to utilise as much digital technology as we could to make sure that we were all working in sync on this project.

This project presented me with many opportunities for developing skills I already had, and for learning new ones. I have experience of working in teams and have also managed releases before, but working with the team that was put together by Tileyard Education was a very different experience. Being able to collaborate as people who have worked and aim to work in the music industry delivered a much broader but also much more detailed marketing campaign than any I have previously worked on. It also showed me new ways of utilising both social media promotion and merchandising, especially when it came to combining the two to bring attention to and interaction with the release.

I also learnt more about the importance of documenting all of the incoming and outgoing money in charts and graphs, realising the importance of recording all of the information in such a way that everyone in the team could understand it quickly. This made monitoring the financial success of the project considerably easier than in previous projects I had worked on.

I learnt a great deal about branding and how the utilisation of merchandise and social media can help to create a recognisable brand for Peonie. This was something that I felt could be easily altered and transferred to other artists and customised to their brand and cater to their fans. This understanding of the brand and the fans that we were appealing to was an extremely valuable experience as it allowed me to understand how creating a specific target audience focused us on knowing who we were aiming this marketing at and how we could tailor it to most appeal to this audience.

I found that working with a team who were all eager to get this project done on time and to a high standard made the work also seem easier. As we were in constant contact with each other while working on this project, it meant that any questions or issues that came up

whilst doing our work could be quickly worked through as a group. This made me really understand how beneficial it can be to a project to work with the right team.

Whilst working on this project, the impact that digital technology had on how we marketed to and targeted our audience was undeniable. We looked at the most popular social media platforms and compared which ones Peonie had the most followers on. We focused on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and Snapchat. We chose these, partly because of the significant following that Peonie has on these platforms but also because of the potential to grow her fanbase and interest in her music through these platforms. We excluded social media that was primarily concerned with messaging (WhatsApp, Weixin/WeChat, Facebook Messenger etc), and focused on the previously mentioned social media platforms. According to blacklinko.com, Facebook has 2,603 million active users, Instagram has 1,000 million, TikTok 800 million and snapchat 382 million. We concentrated on Instagram and TikTok as those were the platforms where Peonie has the most followers and where the age demographic fitted our target audience best.

With over half the world's population using some form of social media, it seemed that this was the best way to get access to our target audience and to introduce new people to Peonie's music. According to blacklinko.com "3.81 billion people use social media worldwide in 2020, up almost double from 2.07 billion in 2015".

After Instagram and TikTok, we focused the campaign on Facebook but with a significantly reduced budget in comparison; as although Facebook has the most users of any social media platform, the people that we wanted to market this release towards were much less likely to be active on Facebook or be interested in looking for new music through that platform.

Social media challenges have proved very effective in engaging the large user bases of social media platforms so we decided to create one to promote the release of the *Mistakes and Heartbreaks* release. Social media challenges allow people to get involved in the song and also spread it around to their own followers, a fraction of whom will also get involved

in the challenge and spread it to their followers. This creates a way of promoting the song without financial investment, which allows us to keep a larger budget for promoted posts and other marketing strategies.

“It is the role of marketers to ensure that consumer behaviour is positively reinforced at every point of engagement. As the marketplace grows with new products, brands and services, it is essential to the survival of businesses to have a steady core of loyal customers. In fact, the industry named this cognitive procedure *shaping*, where the product is seen as a positive or negative reinforcer to the consumer purchasing behaviour (Rothschild and Gaidis, 1981). It is the goal of marketing to ensure that purchasing is positively reinforced at every stage, including in retail stores, as well as its consumption at home.”¹

While this understanding of marketing was written pre social media, the fundamentals of what it is saying have not actively changed all that much. What we were aiming to achieve with this promotional campaign for Peonie’s release was to positively reinforce people’s engagement with her brand. By giving her audience the incentive of possibly being a part of her upcoming music video, by purchasing a hoodie and posting it to social media with them interacting with the song, it not only boosted the engagement with her other content but also made the fans feel as though they were part of the project with Peonie. We also decided that throughout the promotional campaign, Peonie would do several instagram live videos in order to interact with her fans, further emphasising the positive reinforcement of being a part of her fanbase and brand.

Since most people, particularly most social media users, have smartphones and use them to access their social media accounts it was not part of our marketing plan to persuade people to consume Peonie’s music in retail stores and at home. We needed to focus on making sure

¹ L. Meghan Mahoney, Tang Tang P.14

that people were not just casually listening to her music, but also being actively engaged in it.

The positive reinforcement of engaging with Peonie's music works both for the fans and for us, the team working behind the scenes of this song and its release. The fans feel as though they are getting something back from their engagement with Peonie and her music, but we also gain from this by having people spread awareness about Peonie's music of their own accord which saves us from investing more money than necessary in marketing her music.

With this move towards digital marketing as the main form of promoting a brand, it shows that it will most likely continue to move away from traditional media and into having ads far more personalised and directed at their target audience. A brand can pick out a very specific type of person to target their product towards, as we did with finding a target audience for promoting *Mistakes and Heartbreaks*. We established that our target market consisted of people between the ages of 16-25 years old, who were based in urban cities such as London, New York Los Angeles or Paris and who were fans of artists such as Ariana Grande, Dua Lipa, Anne Marie, and Blackbear, as they had a very similar sound and aesthetic to Peonie.

As Jurgita Raudeliūnienė et al. say in their report on social media advertising:

“Advertising campaigns on social media networks, as a part of communication with target customers, create preconditions for expeditious and relatively small investments to strengthen the relationships between the organization and its customers. On social networks, users are given the opportunity to form communities, exchange information, express opinions and discuss topics, and become active content creators. However, to ensure proper communication, an adequate assessment of the effectiveness of advertising campaigns is essential.”²

² Jurgita Raudeliūnienė Et Al. Section 5

This shows that while there are many positive aspects to advertising on social media platforms, the audience that you are targeting must be curated and monitored much more intensively than if using traditional media. It may be that traditional forms of advertising and media will never fully go away as their broad brush approach to targeting their audience means that they do not need to put so much time and working hours into curating their audience.

In conclusion, I have learnt much throughout this project, from working with a new team to putting together a very detailed marketing campaign and understanding the nuances of creating and curating a target audience and how to manage the finances of a large project such as this one. I know that this is all information that I will be able to transfer into future projects and that I would be happy to work with this team again on future projects with new artists.

Word Count: 2,275

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