

MA INTERNATIONAL MUSIC MARKETING

Element 2b – Reflective Commentary

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In this essay I will be discussing my marketing plan for a gender inclusive alternative music festival in the UK. This marketing plan is made up of models which have been developed through my academic research.

Personal development:

By reflecting upon my involvements and skills in the music industry I was able to look at what I connected with and what I enjoy about the industry. By breaking it down into these subcategories it gave me a place to start researching. Additionally reflecting upon the challenging times of 2021, it brought me to the topic of gender equality. Looking at what experiences around this topic I have had whilst working in the industry. By using my first-hand experience, I thought that it could add some insight into my research and marketing strategy.

My skills are strongest with digital content and design as well as social media management. This is from my education and my past job roles and current employment. I have experience at a record label and in PR and as a touring photographer and merchandise designer. I think that this will help me with the consistency in brand development and allow me to create engaging visuals. By researching into artists and other festivals which are doing similar events and my own skills I will be able to produce a visually consistent campaign.

My time management is an area in which I struggle massively. I find it extremely overwhelming to start big tasks in which all outcomes are solely down to me. I know that is a flaw in my skill set and have been trying to manage it for many years. However, without having a team around me where I can share the pressure and

workload I tend to crumble under stress. I know that this is going to be an issue for me and want to try and work on this flaw during the course of my research.

I enjoy researching into topics that interest me and find new emerging ways of design/technologies as well as social media trends and new artists within the alternative music scene. Even though I do thrive in learning about these subjects and gaining knowledge and insight into an industry I love, starting that task is a huge challenge for me. I tend to put things off for as long as I can, even though I know that it will make it worse for me in the end I can't seem to push past that barrier. It's very frustrating for me I want to succeed and learn however there is something that stops me from doing so. I can't see things in steps but only as the end result, this is where the panic and the pressure kicks in.

I am going to attempt to break this project down into small chapters or individual tasks, each element of the campaign as an individual small topic rather than one big project. By doing this it might help with not feeling too overwhelmed by the bigger picture. These are my intentions but might change during the process.

This is a topic that I feel is very important to discuss and needs to happen now before it is too late. Having personal experience of being discriminated against while being a working professional at a music festival due to my gender sparked anger and frustration but passion to make a change.

Fifty Fifty festival aims to connect with a younger demographic, Generation Z (“The generation reaching adulthood in the second decade of the 21st century”) (Languages, n.d.). The youth culture of today certainly is more vocal than its predecessors. Teenagers are feeling unheard and are wanting to have their voices heard in a space that is safe and respected. My plan is to create a music festival that creates a safe space and equal opportunities for all genders, from the line up through to the crew working it.

My research has shown that the Pop-Punk music genre has had a huge revival in 2021. “Propelled by TikTok, pop-punk has made a bold return to the mainstream” (Badia-Aylin, 2021) mainstream music which is topping the charts “Pop punk has become a defining sound of 2021: Olivia Rodrigo’s splenetic Good 4 U recently spent five weeks at No 1 in the UK, the longest stretch for a rock song for 25 years” (Ewens, 2021) additionally extremely apparent that the genre has captivated a younger generation. “if not all of Gen Z are embracing pop-punk music, they are definitely embracing the message and underlying ambitions of the movement.” (Ruben, 2021) Therefore, I will be creating a marketing strategy for an alternative music festival which key focus is represent all genders and those in the LGBTQI+ community.

Billie Eilish’s debut album is an excellent example of a marketing strategy being executed excellently. Since emerging on the scene Eilish has become known for her iconic coloured hair and grunge aesthetic. Every detail of the When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go? campaign was visually consistent, from social media story posts right down to the labelling on the merchandising range, ergo creating the Billie Eilish brand.

“Everything ‘Pull’s us toward Billie Eilish and piles on this amazing multi layer ‘Brand sandwich’ that has become equal to a mega multi million dollar brand.” (Jax, 2019)

The ‘PULL’ method (Schools, n.d.) that Jax is referring to is designed to draw the consumer in by producing unique and interesting content that the desired target audience would be attracted too. Opposed to the ‘PUSH’ method (Schools, n.d.) which relies on paid advertising and promotional material to place the product or brand in front of the customer.

During my campaign it is important to keep these two methods at the forefront of the strategy. When launching a new brand or company paid advertising and promotional material is necessary in achieving awareness, engagement and sales. These points are the ways to measure success of the launch.

Once those points are in place you can start to implement the pull method, as you have further knowledge of your audience and know what they engage with and can start looking at what others with similar interests would engage with, this allows you to draw them into the brand, pulling them towards you. By using these two methodologies I can breakdown the strategy into smaller categories/focus point that the festival needs to achieve a successful campaign.

Locational advertising, looking at digital billboards or physical wheat paste posters in and around the locations for the festival. As the festival is a multiple location festival over multiple dates there are key target locations where the posters need to be shown. Locational advertising is used to target a specific audience in specific regions and will be very effective considering it’s a multi-location festival.

Additionally, there needs to be timed adverts in and around local venues. This is where the strategy timeline is crucial, these digital and physical posters will be put out when bands of the same genre or our artists that will be on the festival line up are in those cities. By keeping a log of the tours passing through the cities will allow the marketing team to know when and where to launch the ads. Furthermore, this will be a huge part of the advertising budget as it will vary in its longevity and amount. An example of this would be having flyers at an O2 Academy venue which is around 2000 capacity, whom are the desired audience compared to a 200-capacity venue. More physical material is going to be needed for the larger potential audience, ultimately taking up a larger amount of the budget. This is where prioritising physical location advertising may not always be the correct form of promotion, moving to digital may be more appropriate to the budget.

These ads can run throughout the lead up to the announcement of the festival, using the PUSH method to get the name and brand identity in front of the audience.

Teaser posters will start to create intrigue and start a conversation about the festival. One of the core values of the festival which needs to be communicated correctly is the sense of community. By producing interactive and unique visual assets this can start an online conversation or community for people. Having a CTA (call to action) on the advertising material ensures interaction as well as a way to measure the success of the adverts. (McCaffrey, 2014)

Researching into Oliva Rodrigo's Debut Album campaign for 'SOUR' the main thing that was noticeable to me was the continuity across the visuals which accompany the album. The launch of her as an artist as well as the album was hugely successful with her first single reaching "No. 1 in 48 countries on Apple Music, 31 countries on Spotify and 14 countries on YouTube..." (Coscarelli, 2021) . Creating easter eggs in the visuals is a technique that is famously used by Taylor Swift "The Queen of the Easter Eggs" (OBER, 2019) and has been adopted by Rodrigo, a teaser image posted on her social media from the music video for 'Good For You' with the number 514 on the locker and 6 on the dial, representing the release date and track number on the album. Figure 1 Details like this help obtain a

dedicated fan base and can improve enjoyment by generating a buzz around the campaign. When including details like this you can then up the interactions with the media. Having clues in videos for example can then increase the views as the viewer is re-watching over and over to try and find all the clues. This makes it an exciting experience for the audience but also improving the engagement, therefore altering the algorithm to push your content in front of a wider audience.



Figure 1 Olivia Rodrigo Instagram Post

By dropping hint of the artists on the line up in the social media posts. This can be with static images or via video content across multiple platforms.

Sticking to brand guidelines creates a solid visual connection, therefore making them transferable across all platforms and elements to the campaign. This aspect is important for building a new brand. “ It was important to her we got the mood of

‘Sour’ right, including a colour palette we stuck with...” (Shafer, 2021) By limiting the colour scheme, typeface and logo variations you can produce an easily identifiable brand package. By researching into how other festivals do this I was able to achieve a cohesive visual language. It is important to have the target audience in the forefront of the design process, the target audience need to feel a connection or similarity with the visuals in order to engage with it.

The Y2K/90s aesthetic revival is a direct reflection of the revival of the pop-punk/grunge genre of that time period. By matching the visuals with the genre, it creates cohesive marketing visuals. The revival of pop-punk does have a more modern twist to it as do the visuals which work with it. Originally the music genre was born from the punk DIY approach however with developments in technology and mainstream artists adapting into this genre there is more money behind the visuals the music accompanying it. This is reflective of the brand package.

The brand identity is an integral part of the marketing strategy for this campaign. If the visuals are not matching to the values and tone of the festival the message is lost. Visual assets are created as a communicative tool, a bridge between the product and the consumer.

By producing a set of guidelines this ensures that the correct message is always being used. Figure 2 Brand guidelines hit all these visual elements: The logo, colour palette, typography, secondary imagery and tone. Inclusion of these five elements you create a successful communicative tool which can then be transferred across all ADMAT (advertising material). (Digital, n.d.)

Having multiple variations of the core logo allows for scalability options. An icon image on a social media platform is going to be of an alternative size compared to an Instagram story dimension. Having four variations of the logo gives options for the multiple promotional material that will be produced during campaign. The variations

are all using the same elements and colour scheme in order to stick to the brand guidelines. These four logos are broken down into Primary logo, Secondary logo, Submark and brand icons. The primary logo will be used across most marketing materials. The Secondary logo is usually a re-arrangement of the primary logo into an alternative orientation this is to ensure you can have a legible logo across the advertising materials. A submark is a simplified version taking elements from the primary logo. For the Fifty Fifty brand identity I will be using the initials and iconography to create this.

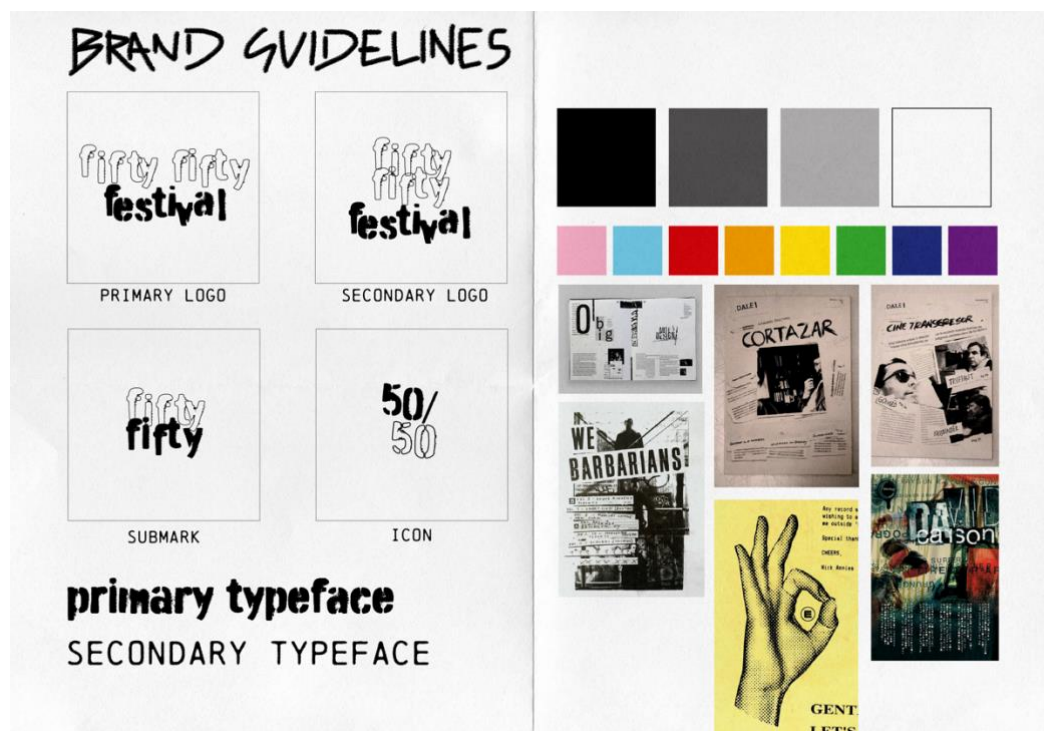
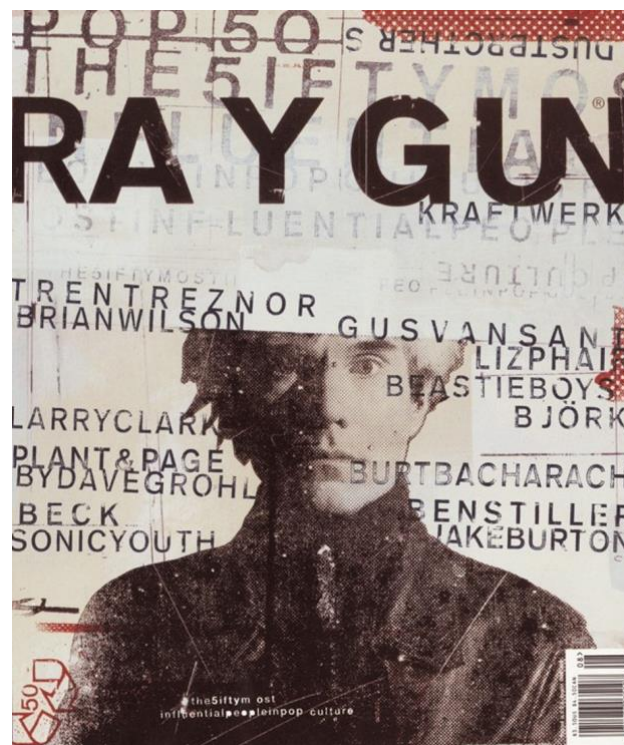


Figure 2 Fifty Fifty Festival Brand Guidelines

I have chosen to use black, greys and whites for primary colours, this is connotes the original underground zines which were produced by photocopying the original. For secondary colours I have chosen to use colours from the LGBTQIA+ flag. As the inclusivity of all is a core values and USP for the festival is essential for the visuals to represent this. Without having the flag at the centre of the design as it is not going to be marketed solely as a pride festival however needs to acknowledge its involvement in that community.

An inspiration for the typography behind the Fifty Fifty Fest logo is David Carson a Graphic Designer who is famously known for his experimental typography. His approach to image manipulation and typography is something that I wanted to use during the brand design process. Carson's style reflects the punk DIY zine visual language with a more refined outcome. This is exactly where I want to place the visuals for Fifty Fifty Festival. By adopting techniques of the past but then adapting them to be pleasing to the Generation Z audience

Secondary imagery, this includes illustrations, artwork other visuals to accompany the logo. Again this will need to be reflective of the genre and the values of the festival. This will include the use of black and white images and traditional zine image manipulation as well as inspiration from David Carson's approach to image treatment. Figure 3



For the tone of the *Figure 3 Ray Gun Magazine cover- David Carson* nesty and openness with the language used. This is how Generation Z feels with brands and artists. A recent Interview with Yungblud for Spotify he discusses the importance talking directly to fans how it makes him feel a closer connection to his audience.

“I run my social media—no one is allowed to touch it. That’s how we have a conversation. You can tell if someone else is posting for someone else—it’s not a conversation. All I want to do is tell the truth. I might be wrong sometimes and with movements in terms of sexuality and race, sometimes I’m f**king wrong. I love that our community uplifts each other to go, “No, that’s actually not right. We should do this,” and it’s great. We’re becoming better people and building a world that is going to be better.” (Harrison, 2020)

This interview from Dominic Harrison (Yungblud) is an approach that will be reflected in the campaign for Fifty Fifty Fest. Creating a safe community for people with similar ‘ideologies’ to come together and celebrate a common interest that everyone connects with. Additionally, his observations on how social media is a platform to have a conversation with those who share the same ideologies is what the festival needs to have. The attendees of the event need feel involved and listened to during the process.

Using engaging and reactive social media platform to listen to what people want. The Instagram story poll feature is a way to obtain direct feedback from the target audience. This can be used to determine venues, line ups, menus, pricing etc. Having the demographic feel involved in the process it allows. Yungblud is paving the way in how to create a passionate and committed fan base in this digital fronted society. This is so he can feel a connection to his fans, and they feel a connection with him but also an extremely clever marketing tactic. The way he uses social media is so that his audience feel he is talking directly at them, as an individual, a personal experience. When announcing a show, a music video, a nomination he can talk to 3.7 million individuals, many in which feel the direct connection and as loyal fans will do what he asks for in order to support him. This is the method in which to adapt for fifty fifty fest, building a supportive and direct connection with our demographic to gain their trust and want to help promote the ideals of the festival as well as spending their money to attend the festival.

Social media has a huge role to play in the marketing strategy. Mainly focusing on Tik-Tok and Instagram. Due to the demographic being Gen-Z these platforms are the most used with that age group. The use of social media influencers to promote a product or service is a technique that is used as a part of the PULL methodology. By working with respected and appropriate influencers you can target your desired audience and directed them towards your brand.

“... A pop-punk resurgence is happening on TikTok. The hashtag #poppunk, which has almost 400 million views ...

The relationship between the chart and viral success is symbiotic: Machine Gun Kelly and YUNGBLUD have inspired people to find out more about pop-punk, and viral videos on TikTok have also led people to the genre, often starting with the bigger legacy bands.” (Bulmer, 2021)

Yasmine Summan a tik-tok influencer/journalist and a host of the We Wear Black Podcast, has been the voice of alternative music on the video platform. With 12.9K followers on twitter, 21.2k on Instagram and 112.4k on tik-tok they are the perfect advocate to help promote the festival. Yasmine not only talks about alternative music but raises issues about being non-binary (which is how they identify) alongside the struggles of being a person of colour in ‘the scene’. Their first-hand experience and knowledge would be a great addition to the marketing team for fifty/fifty fest, not only for their following but how relatable they are to those the festival is designed to include. For this campaign over the three-year plan is essential to include ‘influencers’ who represent those in attendance, this is vital in the inclusivity and equality.

For this campaign I want to include a pool of around 10/15 influencers who all represent the values of the festival. Furthermore, I want to have these influencers have a voice in the festival, making suggestions about the line up or way in how to make the audience feel like they are in a safe space. These influencers would be seen as crucial members of the team, giving them access to the festival social accounts for ‘Live Take Overs’. Other members of the team such as techs and

promoters would have this access. Giving the audience a chance to talk with the faces behind the music directly. Again, adding to the authenticity that the audience (generation z) value and start to build a dedicated fan base and customer.

It is important to keep aside a large sum of the budget to be used for sponsored posts. Ideally most influencers chosen will want to post about the festival in any manor (not all monetary paid) as they stand for what it represents and want to help get the message across. However, one of the morals of the festival is equality therefore all content creators will obtain something in return for their time and effort in promoting the festival. By having a large database of influencers who represent everyone but who have one common interest, the music it allows for the campaign to roll out separate briefs to different influencers depending in their individual follower demographic. Brand content is becoming the most valued content buy consumers and they trust the opinions of people rather than a static image or basic ad. “ Almost half (44%) of Generation Z has made a purchase decision based on a recommendation from a social influencer...” (Williams, 2020)

By using influencers also means you can keep up to date with all current trends, seeing whose engagement is high and how they are producing unique visuals to captivate their personal audience. Each influencer can be involved or interest in certain parts of the festival, for example a photographer sharing and discussing an opportunity for ticketholder to be in with a chance of obtaining a photo pit pass. This then allows use to see the percentage of the target audience's particular interests. Providing the festival with more data about the consumer and how we can reach out to a wider potential audience.

Brand partnerships are essential for a festival, having the trust of well-known brands reflects that the event will uphold to certain standards. The sponsorship of a festival eg, Vans Warped tour or American Express presents BST Hyde Park work in favour for both the festival and the brand. The platform allows for the brand to advertise across everything do to with the festival, merch, posters, ad campaigns etc. It is

becoming more popular entertainment publications are becoming sponsors of events. For Fifty Fifty Fest having the sponsorship of 'Amazon presents Rock Scene' is the perfect pairing.

Respected in the alternative music scene as a platform to celebrate and promote smaller artists. The scene has a live streaming platform where bands perform exclusive sets then sit down to chat with the host Sophie K , Specialist Rock/Metal TV presenter and Kerrang Radio show host. Most shows showcase two artists in which one represents a female or non-binary musician. Having a partnership whose values reflect those of the festival creates trust between the demographic and the festival. Especially working with a brand who are already pioneers in tackling the issues fifty fifty fest wants to raise and start to make a change. Secondly Elise Cobain who works for Amazon and runs the Rock Scene alongside many aspects of alternative music for Amazon. Cobain would be the perfect ambassador for the festival, as a respected female in the industry she has the connections in order to make this festival at the top of its game.

Brand partnerships, similar to influencer partnerships mean you can tap into another's audience. Amazon music has 113K Instagram followers which is a large additional audience for the festival to be exposed to. Figure 4 With a powerful name such as Amazon on board, there is access to digital billboards around the UK. Which work hand in hand with the business model of the festival, with looking at hosting multiple day festivals around the UK.

It is important to build trust between the festival and the target audience, however the main goal is to generate sales in order to the show to run. Partnering up with Amazon music has an unlimited number of opportunities to generate sales. By targeting the audience of the artists who are on the festival line up and artists of a similar sound. This then opens a huge pool of potential consumers.



Figure 4 Instagram Advert mock ups for Amazon Presents Fifty Fifty Festival

The tools that Amazon already provides to its customers with the 'Frequently bought together' or 'Products related to this item' already leans itself towards an option for ticketing when purchasing music or a music related item. Having the site suggest the festival as an 'add on' item would place out product directly in front of our desired customer. Using the PUSH method in order to show the audience the festival and that it exists. This can then switch for when Amazon users search for the festival in the 'related to' section can hold music of the artists playing. Amazon can also be an online retailer for the merchandise of the festival, having a range of fifty/fifty festival designs as well as any artist exclusive designs.

By having the ticketing and merch all under one central platform it will make it easier to post out physical tickets with pre ordered merch. Furthermore, with the Amazon Music platform generating and curating its own playlists there is an opportunity to produce playlists leading up to the festival as well as 'throwback' playlists after the event keeping up the momentum of the brand and at the forefront of the customers interests. Amazon music also have their own YouTube channel, again tapping into the audience which Amazon has already obtained we can have post all teaser videos for the festival on there. Pre-event interviews with artists hosted by Sophie K or members of the influencer team. These videos can then be shared across the Fifty Fifty Fest social media platforms as well as the various amazon platforms.

Overall, I think that is partnership between Fifty Fifty Fest and would be hugely beneficial in the marketing strategy in driving sales as well as building a loyal brand community. There are many other marketing methods and techniques which will play a role throughout this campaign. I chose to discuss a variety of these techniques to explain how my research as impacted my strategic choices and how these can them be measured to see if they are successful or not.

Planning the workload is another issue that I have found challenging. Creating a calendar to plan when I can use my time for research and reflection around my full time job and part time freelance creative job was working for a short amount of time however it was hard to stick to due to projects changing or new projects needing more work than others.

I have reached out to others for support during this process which is something that I would normally struggle with. This is did help me with understand what I needed to do and how I can progress with the work. I do think that I found this project a struggle and there are areas that need improvement and further research, which is the same in any project. However, where my strengths lay, in design and creativity. These elements of the project I am very proud of as I feel that that the research and knowledge is truly reflected in the outcome.

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