



NAME:

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MODULE:

CREATIVE MUSIC MANAGEMENT

LECTURER:

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TASK:

REFLECTIVE SUMMARY

A lot of work is involved when it comes to successfully running an artist campaign. What I discovered when my fellow colleagues and I were putting together this campaign is that if the whole project is not carefully planned, activities will bring out nothing but confusion. Therefore, the planning process included agreeing on what exactly was needed in terms of the vision that we had concerning Chhina's single and the remix. Thus, these were the set goals that were agreed upon and these included releasing Chhina's single and the remix within 12 weeks, increasing Chhina's social media presence, gaining the experience of running an artist campaign and lastly increasing the number of connections as well. Chhina, being a member of our group was a perfect candidate because he is the only one amongst us who was actively and consistently releasing music. As a result, we opted for learning through our own as well as helping out our very own.

The next task was to allocate the funds in the form of a budget appropriately, according to the goals that we had as well as the amount that was available. As the main person who was responsible for drawing up a budget, I had to make sure that I had at least three quotations to compare and to choose from. Besides choosing a lesser price I had to do a background check on the service providers as we were also seeking to work with the best. The task was made easy because Chhina is also capable of capturing his own songs, mixing, mastering and edits his music videos. As a result, in terms of the production of the song, he was fully responsible for choosing who to work with and how much was to be spent. Drawing the budget enabled me to interact with a lot of people, which was an advantage as well because the music business requires one to know a lot of people who are also in the same line of work. Again, my accounting skills were put to the test after a long time, serving as reminder that being in the music business needs one to be an all-rounder and has to have an idea about everything.

The importance of the social media analytics was brought to light during this campaign. I was also responsible for analysing Chhina's social media analytics. Personally, I did not know that social media analytics carry a wealth of useful information about an artist. For instance, Chhina's YouTube analytics assisted the team in understanding his audience. That is, he had a good following in Indonesia sitting at 14.3%, Turkey 12.1%, India 11.2% and Brazil 8.4%. That only enabled us a team to include these countries when we were advertising Chhina's promotional video. Although it was a bit of a long shot, we sent the single for radio airplay to most of the radio stations that included the countries that are listed. For future purposes, we advised Chhina to organise some collaborations with musicians especially from Indonesia and Turkey since he had a following there in the hope that

his fan base would increase. The demographics of Chhina's audience were brought out from the analytics. That is in terms of age and sex. Even for future purposes Chhina will be able to compose music and make videos that have a direct appeal to his target audience.

The additional information that was useful in Chhina's analytics was the average watch time of his audience. With the number of subscribers he has, the watch time was fair and it can improve probably by learning how his competitors manage to keep their audience hooked onto their music. An assumption came about from studying Chhina's analytics, I noticed that his engagement rate was too low hence as much as people like his music, he might not be known by his fans. Nowadays artists are huge on letting in their fans into their lives as compared to back in the days whereby the paparazzi would the artist's public and private life with the whole world. Therefore, the growth of Chhina's audience is partly in his hands.

The analytics also served as a hint for Chhina with regards to what time he should upload his songs so as to get a quicker response from his audience. That is the time when most of his target audience will be online. From the analytics I discovered the best social network for Chhina, which is Instagram because that is where he has most of the followers. Instagram seemed to be working for Chhina, this made me realise that with some artists, there are particular social media platforms that work for them whereas some may not work at all. As a result, capitalising and prioritising on the one that works may be favourable. Although this is not a guarantee for a major break in the industry because it is unpredictable. A dashboard tool called Cyfe made it easier for me to analyse Chhina's social media analytics all at once.

A question that I could not get an answer to from the analytics was 'what works and what does not?' when it comes to Chhina's music. This is because of the fact that his genre brings out a bit of some monotony making it difficult to differentiate his songs. His strength may be the use of 3D assets for his videos because that one video attracted a lot of attention compared to his previous music videos. Again, it is one video that is set apart from the rest so it does not justify or give substance to the argument stated above.

The analytics enabled me to check the success of our campaign. I was constantly checking how the promotional material was doing on social media and it served as a guide as to what we ended up rectifying in the final release of the single as well as the remix. During the campaign, I got exposed to a site called Similar Web. This site enables one to analyse how the competitors are doing in terms of following, likes, dislikes, subscribers. In a way I was spying on Chhina's competitors online in order to learn from them as to what makes them be successful. The few pointers that I extracted from Chhina's competitors were that, they interacted with their fans more through live streams and or reality shows, they were invited as guests to YouTube or Television shows for interviews or performances, some established competitors were on tours every now and then or did support acts for big artists during tours. I personally got motivated to look for festivals that Chhina could take part in as he claimed that he could not get opportunities for performances because of the fact that in Canada, rappers are viewed as violent people. All this information was communicated with Chhina for future use.

As a team, we constantly referred to the Agile Release Train for the management of our campaign. Singh (n.d) says that "The Agile Release Train is a long lived, self-organizing team of Agile teams, a virtual organization that plans, commits, and executes together". Singh (n.d) continues to explain that "All teams of an ART are bound by a common Vision, Program Backlog, and a Roadmap." As a result, every team member was aware of the vision of the campaign as well as the calendar. It consisted of a 12-week release program with activities that included the pre-release, release and post release of Chhina's single and remix. The success of the activities or tasks were measured and evaluated over an agreed period of time while making sure that the post release activities promotional activities were taking place as well.

The Agile Release Train worked when we were communicating ideas as a team with the aid of zoom meetings as well as the Trello application and Google Docs whereby any member of the team could update their tasks for everyone to edit and approve. The other project management tool that worked for me as I was carrying out my tasks was the Berenschot model which I am sure that the rest of the team made use of as well. Krtibdewal (2017) commented that "The model breaks down the project into various sub-tasks and works its way from a whole to a part approach. It helps you provide a checklist of the tasks that you should have considered in the planning process." For instance, in analysing Chhina's

social media analytics, the fundamental goal was to boost his fan base as a sub-task.

The strategy of boosting Chhina's social media audience depended on studying his social analytics. I had to further divide this task into sub-tasks and these were Chhina's social media platforms. These included YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. As a team we encouraged Chhina to sign up on Vimeo as well because his visuals (music videos) are good. I further grouped the sub-tasks into Chhina's demographics, gender to mention a few, because it has been mentioned above. Grouping all the analytics assisted me with the understanding of how there are all interrelated. Again, they brought out the true state of Chhina's music. Structuring the sub-tasks and realising the state at which Chhina's music was in triggered some thoughts about how to execute the solutions to the challenges that he was encountering and how we were going to best handle the campaign.

The execution stage of the campaign was the most practical one because we had laid down the road map. This included contacting radio stations for Chhina's single and remix, getting in touch with Sync Vault, the press release by the Upper Entertainment, club live performances and organising the listening party for the release. The progress was easily monitored by the responses we got from the service providers. We got in touch with Kiss radio from Nigeria who managed to play the single, we also had a good number for the listening party. Along with uploading Chhina's single and the remix on Distro Kid as the distributor, we also made an effort of filling the playlist pitching form in all streaming platforms. The competition was and still is stiff, so none of the streaming platforms responded.

In an effort of handling the unforeseen circumstances, the team had to come together so that the hurdles we encountered could be better dealt with. The only way to do that was for us to apply the Deming Cycle model to the campaign. Henshall (2020) describes the Deming Cycle as "a continuous quality improvement model which consists of a logical sequence of four key stages: Plan, Do, Study, and Act." As a team we then planned how we were going to make sure that Chhina's single and remix 'Lifestyle' was going to reach the audience without the assistance of radio airplay or it being listed on the music streaming playlists. A valid

point was raised by one of the team members that TikTok is a good driving force of the music industry and it needs to be given much attention as to how it can be utilised in the campaign.

Whateley (2022) confirmed that “Songs that trend on TikTok often end up charting on the Billboard 100 or Spotify Viral 50. And 67% of the app’s users are more likely to seek out songs on music streaming services after hearing them on TikTok.” The Plan was to drive more traffic on Chhina’s TikTok account. Thus, to encourage his followers to use Chhina’s song as their sound in the videos they were creating. This was to be done in a form of a challenge. Anyone who was going to use Chhina’s sound on TikTok at the same time it being the most watched video was going to receive a call from Chhina and win tokens of his NFT single. Another plan, still under TikTok was to search for an influencer that could use Chhina’s sound so that a wider audience could be reached. We were not in a position of predicting the outcome but we had to reach as much people as we could. On the other end post release advertisements were still running on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram to mention a few. We decided to add the monetization tools as well. For instance, after pulling a significant number of followers, the very same followers can tip the musician so that some form of income could be generated.

We moved onto the next stage of the Deming Cycle, which is the Do stage. This is the implementation stage. As a team we had to implement the plans gradually as we were testing the results. For instance, we messaged 10 of Chhina’s followers on TikTok and got responses of people who were willing to use his single as their sound. We continued to message Chhina’s followers. As for the TikTok influencer, we got in touch with Khaby Lame who has got more than 134.4 million. The Senegalese-born star was perfect for the job because his fan-base covered every continent. The competition was also run on YouTube, for Chhina’s subscribers to use his sound on their short stories.

As much as we were checking the progress, we could only compare the results of the release and post release impact that the song had in terms of views and streams. There was an improvement because Chhina’s analytics revealed growth in geographical locations that the song was reaching, the watch time increased as well. This was a good sign. The number of streams on platforms like Spotify could have increased as well, the number of subscribers too was still insignificant (not what we projected it to be).

According to the Deming Cycle, we had to Act as a team. What we could do now was to encourage Chhina’s followers to add the single and remix to their Spotify private playlists then share it with the public. This is because the fans can influence the algo rhythm in streaming platforms. At the same

time, we were making follow ups on the radio stations, media, streaming platforms playlists curators.

Chhina is more of an independent musician, from the production stage up to the publishing stage. Therefore, I believe that it will be beneficial to his career if he seeks a professional publisher his music can reach an even wider audience. Chhina can also try approaching the sync agents like Music Gateway, Music Vine, Jingle Punks to mention a few. As mentioned earlier that Chhina's hands are full, a manager can also assist with the growth of his career. He needs someone who will be responsible for his social media platforms because there is a need for them to be active every time which is something that Chhina does not have time for. The manager will also organise live performances for him and more.

Overall, working as a group was beneficial because we exchanged ideas and learnt a lot from each other. Having moved from Zimbabwe two years ago, I can safely say that working with this group has broadened my scope as I was used to the way the music business is run back at home. Having the first-hand experience was rewarding to a larger extent. Working remotely was also not a challenge as we met on Zoom and laid out the whole campaign with the aid of recorded meetings to refer back to. The personalities were different and I personally thought that the disagreements that arose were handled in a mature manner with the equal goal of making the campaign a success.

In closing, this campaign has given me a clear picture of the nitty gritty of the Western music business. What really takes place when a song is released and I discovered viable information that I am going to put to good use in my career.

References

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