

Development in International Music Marketing (ADAD7012_LON)

Element 2 (Essay) - Part 1

Jarvis Akenteng - 2012468

The importance of producing a level of mastery of a detailed marketing release plan for a music artist is at a high pedigree. With listeners and fans now actively engaging in constructing their internal procedures of consuming new music through numerous platforms, artists at any level must figure out ways to cut through the noise. For Lathrop, the means by which these internal procedures are constructed are always, in the first instance, psychographic: 'A buyers self-concept and personality traits have an impact on purchasing habits and can be useful factors in how you target audiences, package your product, and communicate messages' (Lathrop 2013).

Inspired by the above and other innumerable frameworks, the following literature will employ a micro-decisive, **SMART Objective** approach to the marketing plan. Along with reflections upon the benchmarks used to measure the successes, the reasons for the chosen method, the alternative method available whilst providing a scope across the systems adopted and how all these systems coincide with the marketing plan theoretically and practically. The assignment will explore the evaluations in the developments of the marketing plan presented to the up and coming music artist, instrumentalist and Tileyard Education student **KiLOWEN** and his management team across the artist's two singles, (**Falling Up ft p-rallel**), (**Blood Red**) and ahead of debut his EP release (**From The Outside In**), over a seven-month project timeline.

The chosen approach to the marketing campaign revolves around a specifically tailored plan and digital strategy which focuses on building an actively engaged core fan base for KiLOWEN's upcoming releases. As (Lathrop 2013) again mentions, 'To the seller of music, the opportunities for getting across to audiences are virtually limitless and are made more accessible by cultivating up-to-date intelligence.' The 21-year-old artist, producer, instrumentalist and songwriter from West London and his team describes his sound as Alternative Hip-Hop, Lo-Fi with strong stem connections of Jazz, Rnb, Soul and Rock. (McLeish 2021), and with previous online magazines and blogs support from the likes of; Complex UK, PIT LDN, NTS, DUMMY MAG and BBC 1Xtra/BBC Introducing on prior releases, it was important to conduct primary research i.e. a questionnaire for KiLOWEN before starting on the marketing campaign (Artefact 4, p2 2021). For us to concentrate on collecting key data on the fans who engage positively to KiLOWEN's releases, the findings from the questionnaire granted us access to the artists' algorithms across

their Digital Streaming Platforms (DSPs) and Social Media pages, presenting an analysis of the artist's psychographic and demographic audiences. The objective is to build a highly efficient custom audience for retargeting purposes on future releases, Whilst creating lookalike audience pools e.g. from 'Falling Up' feature artist and Sony Music signee p-rallel and other similar artists to KiLLOWEN, to attract and convert new listeners and followers across KiLLOWEN's DSP profiles and social platforms with creative media content and Digital AD spend, which will be discussed further in the literature. A similar development album release campaign took place with Domino recordings artist Georgia, where the campaign objective was to connect the dots between the audience generated from previous radio play-listing and converting these into followers and on-demand streams. (Sandbox 2019). Another example of fan interaction and release activation is Victor Leksell project 'Catch me when I fall' through Sony Sweden. The fan activation included two segments. First, an analysed and handpicked 100 core fans. One week before album launch, fans were sent branded T-shirt, marked with an AR-trigger logo and a QR code. The fans could then scan the QR code on the sleeve which took them directly to a filter on Victor's Instagram, a filter made through Facebook's tool Spark AR. When fans held their phone up towards the T-shirt logo, an animated filter was triggered revealing a film of Victor falling through the sky, the album title and the release date. When fans shared their video caption on social media, they became the first to announce the album details, even before the media or Victor himself. (Sandbox 2019)

The management team of KiLLOWEN stressed the importance of delivering fresh content, with an updated iconography and brand for the artist. To develop a creative ethos, we began to look further into the psychographics of the artist's consumer base. KiLLOWEN mentioned the reasoning behind the two singles leading up to the EP project titled **From The Outside In**. He explained the piece as a 'record that pushes genre boundaries and offers the listener a wide range of perspectives, whilst combining a range of musical, social and political influences. (Pickston, O 2021).

While continuing to draw on his experiences growing up in a low-income area in London to then drastically moving to Buckinghamshire in his teenage years, allowed the artist to authentically offer a wide range of perspectives on social and political issues, for example, themes of

generational pressure, classism, democracy and relationships in the modern-day world for a young adult, having lived on 'both sides of the coin'.

The input to determine what to benchmark is to recognize the productivity or results of the business unit. (F John Ray 2007). From the primary research on KiLLOWEN and brainstorming with the management team, we were granted an outlook on the artist's current position and presented various performance gauges which could be considered as sufficient benchmarks for success. With KiLLOWEN and his team funding the project independently, it was imperative for the campaign to ensemble their needs and project necessities, by delivering a portfolio which shows the value in the artists to generate a major label interest for future releases, booking agencies for the opportunity to tour nationally across major cities in the UK, national radio attention i.e. playlisting on BBC Radio, Capital as well as elements of commercial press throughout future campaigns.

The portfolio shows a breakdown of 6 to 8 artefacts and the benchmarks of the campaign. As previously mentioned, the literature will now explore the framework used to structure and execute the marketing campaign, Many music marketing campaigns tend to fall apart due to vague and unmeasurable goals. (Harrell. R 2019) Hence the SMART objective; The implemented framework used throughout, the marketing campaign;

- Specific,
- Measurable,
- Attainable,
- Relevant
- Time-Based

According to (Letang. S 2020) S.M.A.R.T. is a tool used to better map out what we want to achieve. It stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed. That means all of the aims we have for our music career should be specific, we should be able to measure them, they should be achievable, they should be realistic, and we should know how long it'll take us to achieve this aim.

To support the above framework, (Artefact 4) provides a structure of the **Release Strategy**. A *specific* objective for KiLLOWEN and his team is to grow the audience and increase listeners, streams and followers on Spotify and Instagram and increase the number of views on Youtube. According to the statistics prior to the releases, KiLLOWEN's numbers are in need of improvement. Instagram - 1072 followers. Spotify - 390 monthly listeners and 36,000 streams accumulated so far, Youtube views - 4514 and 123 subscribers, Twitter - 103 followers and Facebook - 100 likes. For a *measurable* objective, is for KiLLOWEN numbers to increase - 5,000 monthly listeners and 100,000 streams accumulated across both singles, Youtube views - 8000 views and 200 subscribers, Twitter - 150 followers and Facebook - 200 likes.

In order to *attain* these objectives, it will depend on the following variables; i.e. Press releases, on both singles with a pre background of KiLLOWEN and a write up for each release, radio play and playlists / Spotify playlist support, magazines and online blog support, pre-save links to the songs for fans to activate a chance to win merchandise or launch party *KiLLOWEN Live @ LayLow* tickets to attend the launch party via social media and mailing list with guest support from (p-rallel, Luke Gomm and YIIGA), paid Google, Youtube and Facebook Ads with plans to up engagement on each release. Artefact shows how the **Budget** required £11,000 is distributed towards the proposed campaign, highlighting the *relevant* objectives and components needed to execute. i.e. creating a press release, producing press shots, EPK for each single, Artwork design, Media content creation, Music video, editing and Digital Marketing strategy. **Project Management and Timeline** showed on Artefact, for the *Time-based* objectives. Overall the campaign will run from **September 2021 - March 2022** for 2 singles prior to the EP release and Launch Party/ Showcase in June. Contents i.e. Logo design and artwork will be produced and delivered prior to each release which will both have Press Releases and EPK sent to radios, playlists and online to work on the project. Behind scenes footage, single artworks, countdowns with hints to upcoming visual content will be developed for each release. There will be 7/8 weeks between each release, enough time to build engagement across KiLLOWEN's DSPs and social media platforms. Using GIFs, press photos, interviews and Twitch.

Brand Identity and Iconography; This shows the organising of the artist and its content, allowing audiences to recognise and align with subjects that apply to them.

With KiLLOWEN and his current look, style and imagery, we wanted to ensure that the upgraded references are aligned with the current sound of his releases and his audience pool. With a demographic of 18-25 yr olds, Male & Female, with interest in both indie & hip-hop and traits of inner-city, urban, streetwear with the likes of Fred Perry, FILA and Ellesse. The findings also presented a list of similar artists to KiLLOWEN i.e. Gorillaz, Slowthai, Dominic Fike, Bakar, King Krule and Tame Impala. (Artefact 1, p2 - p3) shows a mood board of styles and look in which is likely to be adopted within the new imagery for press shots. (Artefact 1, p4-p5) shows a mood board for the second release 'Blood Red' which showcases elements of punk rock, underground, leather jackets and dyed hair. Whereas the Falling Up mood board is shown in (Artefact 1, p6) shows a slicker back, Urban, High-end fashion, once again aligning with the essence of the song, However, this may draw some concerns due to the sudden switch in style and sound between the two singles, we may lose some core audiences.

To support the notion of cutting through the noise, to reach an audience, it could be considered that an increase of 100% across KiLLOWEN's social media following on Spotify, Twitter, Youtube, and Facebook is a benchmark for success. Research suggests the digital asset market is set to grow from \$1.24bn in 2018 to \$6.9bn by 2024 (Knudson, R 2018) and with digital assets becoming even more critical for businesses to build successful brands and marketing campaigns, (Artefact 2 and 3), the **Media Asset Creation Plan** and **Social Media Campaign Strategy** sections show the development of KiLLOWEN's compelling content. Inviting fans into his world and creative environment and building a level of intimacy and willingness towards his fans. i.e. Beatmaking and production tutorials on Twitch, captivating GIFs, iconic single and EP artwork, Social Competition strategies by fans pre-saving the singles and reposting onto their Instagram story and mention KILLOWEN for a chance to win merchandise (T-shirt, Posters), as well as a chance to hear a snippet of the next single and win two tickets to the EP Launch party at Law Low.

The creative plans towards **release #1-** ('Falling Up' ft p-rallel) ensures that the mood board from (Artefact 1, p6) follows the streetwear, fashion shoot look. To meet the management teams requirements and avoid clashes in the schedule between the artists. A visualizer with lyrics will be the preferred content instead of a music video. This will then be edited into different Media

Assets, as shown in (Artefact 2 p3- p4). Content to be used on both KiLLOWEN and p-rallel stories for extra engagement then amplified through AD spend and digital marketing which will be broken down further in (Artefact 4). The same type of content was put together for **release #2** - Blood Red, (Artefact 2 p5) showcasing elements of Retro, Punk in the visual storyboard for the Music Video. Whether it is used for a release countdown to be posted as an Instagram Feed or a captivating GIF used for a website or Facebook. Each piece of media content gives the campaign room to build anticipation before each release. However It will be interesting to see how the audiences will engage with the social campaigns for both the singles. As studies show that audiences tend to engage positively with more video content rather than visualiser/ lyric video content.

Social media management combined with the digital strategy will ensure that all social activity is in line with the marketing strategy, allowing us to capitalize off surges in organic exposure by sending high quality potential fans to your page based on interest targeting and custom built audience pools. (Artefact 7) revolves around a specifically tailored digital strategy that focuses on building an actively engaged core fan base for KiLLOWEN. This is achieved by concentrating on converting new followers across various DSP's and social Platforms. All the while we collect key data on fan's who engage positively with our advertisements, allowing us to build highly efficient custom audiences for retargeting purposes alongside lookalike audiences which are great for attracting new listeners and followers. The first step was to clearly define the audiences based on interest targeting which is used to introduce KiLLOWEN as an artist to fans of similar artists. By clearly defining the overall goal and timeline of the campaign a digital strategy around key dates ensured potential fans to be exposed to different facets of the KiLLOWEN campaign at the right time. Sub objectives e.g. Merch sales were also taken into account.

The strongest position to be in is to have a thriving organic and algorithmic streaming profile before editorial support. To conclude this literature, it's important to reflect on the current benchmarks achieved. If there's anything that could be improved or changed, the challenges faced and thoughts of the overall. Despite seeing a 78% increase across KiLLOWEN's platforms, it is still shy of the expected target increase target. Did we set our expectations too

high?. Spotify- 5,000 monthly listeners and 100,000 streams accumulated across both singles, Youtube views - 8000 views and 200 subscribers, Twitter - 150 followers and Facebook - 200 likes were expected at the end of the campaign. Did we rely too much on the potential fans collected from p-rallels audiences? After the successful introduction of Falling Up ft p-rallel gaining great reception across radio and online magazines, the campaign across various audience pools began to see a fall off in efficiency which prompted a subsequent change in creative & audience pool configuration. Following the implementation of these changes we saw some initial improvements in the overall efficiency of the advertisements. The additional insights into which audience pools prove to be more efficient helped us launch the Blood Red campaign at a heightened level of efficiency from the get go. The results within the first couple of weeks have been promising and are setting a template for continued success over the coming releases. Looking back at the campaign, We felt the campaign would have benefited from a much stronger ad spend (£50-£100 per day rather than £10) however due to the current position of the artist, it is quite a lot to ask.

Bibliography

Harrell, Ryan. *Music Marketing Plans For Indie Musicians*, 2019.

Jarvis, Akenteng. *Artefacts 1-7*. 1. Brand Identity and Iconography, 2. Media Asset Creation Plan, 3. Social Media Campaign Strategy, 4. Release Strategy, 5. Project Management + Timeline, 6. Budget Breakdown, 7. Social Media_Digital Statistic Progression. 2021.

Knudson, Ryne. 2018.

Ladthorp, Tad. *This Business of Global Music Marketing: Global Strategies for Maximizing Your Music's Popularity and Profits*. Clarkson Potter/Ten Speed,, 2013.

Letang, Shaun. "Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals for Your Music Career." *Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals for Your Music Career*,
<https://www.musicindustryhowto.com/setting-s-m-a-r-t-goals-for-your-music-career/>.

Mcleish, Becca. *KiLLOWEN's Biography*. 2021.

Pickston, Owen. *KiLLOWEN Interview*. 2021.

Ray, F John. *Benchmarking*. 2007.

Sandbox. "VICTOR LEKSELL CATCH ME WHEN I FALL // SONY MUSIC SWEDEN."
VICTOR LEKSELL CATCH ME WHEN I FALL // SONY MUSIC SWEDEN,
<http://sandbox.musically.com/projects/catch-me-when-i-fall>.

Sandbox, . 2019. *GEORGIA SEEKING THRILLS RELEASE // DOMINO RECORDING CO*,
<http://sandbox.musically.com/projects/seeking-thrills-release>.

