

Straight Forward Music Group Rebrand Marketing Plan

Company's Bio and Analysis

Straight Forward Music Ents Group, founded by Dani Stephenson in 2009 is an all-round music related organisation that offers talent management, record deals, music publishing, music distribution and music recording studios. Located and operative in Stockholm, London and Amsterdam, SFMG has had global successes working with many Top40 Billboard artists like Diddy Dirty Money on their hit album "The Last Train To Paris", Big Sean's platinum single "Marvin & Chardonnay ft. Kanye West & Roscoe Dash" on the "Finally Famous Album", Tinie Tempah's Brit & MOBO award nominated single "Girls Like" ft. Zara Larsson on "YOUTH Album", Nevada's global Top40 hit single "The Mack" ft. Mark Morrison & Fetty Wap. Most recently its roster was involved in "Skepta Interlude" on the "More Life Album" which was the 28th most consumed record of 2017, Drake's hit single "Passionfruit" and his last album "Scorpion" that now holds both the US and global streaming records and the debut is the largest single-day streaming total for any album on any streaming service to date. With a client list of great talents such as Maejor, a Grammy nominated singer-songwriter, rapper and music producer who has written and produced songs for big names like Justin Bieber, Trey Songz, Keri Hilson, Ciara, T-Pain, Ne-Yo, Wiz Khalifa; Nevada a Stockholm-based American artist, DJ, producer and songwriter, that climbed the Top20 charts in multiple countries with the deep house rework of English R&B artist Mark Morrison's 1996 hit "The Mack" featured Mark Morrison and special guest Fetty Wap on vocals and the new born star singer-songwriter and music producer Nana Rogues who has co-written and produced on records for groundbreaking artists such as Tinie Tempah, Skepta, Stormzy, has recently collaborated on Drake's "Passionfruit" and "Don't

Matter To Me” singles and has been featured on RAYE’s “Confidence” and the latest “ISSUES” with MS Banks is a company that is so quickly making a name for itself that it is almost impossible to keep up with and is soon to blow up into one of the top sub labels in circulation.

The company gets its revenues from streams, songwriters cuts, production cuts, management cuts and percentages from its roster, publishing deals and royalties, record deals and royalties and recording studios fees and bookings.

The company clients are its roster, the future talent acquisition and UMG with all its subs. SFMG has already partnered with Interscope, Def Jam Recordings, Colombia Records, Universal Music Latin Entertainment, Virgin EMI Records, Republic Records.

The core values that the company lives by can be sum up with its owner and collaborators quotes:

- “Constantly be on the hunt to make or find global hit records”.(Billboard, 2018)
- Great passion and ambition and as Ted Cottle, President of Virgin EMI, said the company is driven by an “energy that could light up a city”. (Billboard, 2018)
- “Not see any borders to music”. (Billboard,2018)

Straight Forward Music had its last big achievement in 2018 partnering with EMI and enabling collaborations the biggest sub labels of Universal Music Group and has since grown substantially but has yet to make a decisive move into the market. It is now the perfect time to undertake a re-brand, not only through an updated website layout or a new logo design but also rethink its business strategies and adapt them to the current music industry situation. The goal of this re-brand will be simply to make the organisation grow even faster than its current timing in order for it to gain the popularity tasted back in 2018.

The engine of the company is fully working but it needs a fresh touch, an updated approach to clients and a light polishing. A careful analysis of the organisation’s overview is fundamental to start.

A successful tool to pinpoint what has so far been done correctly, what has not, what the opportunities are for the re-brand and what potential threats is a SWOT analysis.

Below a more detailed examination of the SWOT analysis present in the Portfolio.

- Fast-growing organisation.
- Powerful hit-making roster.
- Major record labels as clients/assets.
- Big hits on repertoire.
- Streams revenues constantly flowing.
- Offers a variety of services to customers: publishing, distribution, record label, consultancy, management.
- Branches in three different cities known to have a prolific music industry.
- Young and openminded CEO.



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- The last website update dated on 2018.
 - The information and bio about the organisation are hard to find online.
 - Tileyard London's description of SFMG is dated and incorrect.
 - The logos for each sub-company are different.
 - The website itself is hard to navigate.
 - Poor social media content and confusion on branding.
 - Limited roster of six artists.
 - Not enough engagement and content creation on social media.
 - Confusion on whether the recording studios are bookable or only available to the signed artists.



- Website rebrand and reorganisation.
- Fresh new Logo.
- Social media new layout, content creation and engagement to be pushed to divulge valuable and clear information, increment the fanbase for the organisation and its clients.
- Create a website Newsletter with the aim to gain subscribers and their demographics informations for artist development purposes.
- Broaden the roster.
- Develop talent/artist management.
- Branch opening in LA with recording studios.

A blue circle with a gradient from light blue at the top to a darker blue at the bottom. The word "OPPORTUNITIES" is written in white, uppercase letters in the center.

OPPORTUNITIES

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- Marketing rebrand deadline compromised.
 - Contract withdrawal from any artist of the Roster.
 - Worldwide state of emergency due to COVID19 creating economic stress and severe money loss of the global music market.
 - Budgeting expenses not covered.
 - Active competitors hardening the organisation's expansion.

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THREATS

Strategy Timeline

“Any refresh will need a strategy to support its rollout. A communication plan needs to be developed and rolled out to present the new branding or logo and the reasons for the update. Internal communication also needs to be included to get employees on board with the rebranding.” (Taylor, 2020)

Three months and two weeks:

Hypothetical dates: 23/03/2020-06/07/2020

23/03/20 - 06/04/20

- Invitation to pitch: marketing research, company and market analysis.
- Skype call with CEO Dani Stephenson and marketing responsible to discuss common goals for the rebrand.
- Rebrand ideas and budgeting plan, launch strategy pitch to SFMG followed by feedbacks in order to come up with the final idea for the rebrand.

06/04/20 - 05/06/2020 Creative Phase:

Logos refresh (06/04/2020 - 19/04/2020).

Website rebrand (20/04/2020 - 05/06/2020):

- The website will be put on standby during the whole process with the opening page title stating the come back on June the 8th.
- HD London and Amsterdam recording studios photographs need to be taken on the first two weeks of the plan to have them ready to upload. (06/04/2020 - 19/04/2020)

Social media refresh (20/04/2020 - 08/06/2020):

- The process involves post/stories sharing with new template every three to four days to get as much info out about the company and artists as possible before the relaunch. Instagram bio to refresh at the start of the plan and logo + Highlights Cover (for Instagram) to be uploaded on 08/06/2020.

Relaunch strategy:

- Logo to be added on website standby page when completed.
- Logo to be advertised on social media, when ready, explaining the rebrand and announcing the relaunch date.
- Website and social media launch on the same day with new logos and layouts.
- Social media running throughout the whole strategy plan.

08/06/2020

SFMG rebrand launch.

08/06/2020 - 06/07/2020

Aftercare:

- One month of 24/7 assistance for website possible issues
- Potential adjustments on payments due to “COVID-19” economic stress.
- Freelance digital content creator to keep working for SFMG when needed.

REBRAND IDEAS PITCH

Logo Refresh

A fresh new logo design is the absolute first step of this rebrand. A general coherence between all logos of all the company's divisions is necessary.

SFMG offers publishing, recording studios and record deals as services all with their own specific logos but the main issue revolves around them having the same font for the titles but all different shaped logos. Even though the designs are similar between each other the differentiation can cause confusion and a lack of attention to details in the eyes of a client.

As explained on the "Logos Mood-board" the choice to make one unique round shaped logo for every subdivision of the organisation and use different colours for each service's target is the logical and more clear choice. Clients need to identify SFMG by the round shaped logo and easily be able to access the specific services of the company. The pitched Mood-board gives the option of two different colours to choose from. The first logo has a green detail in the middle area to connect it to the original one which contains a different feature but has the same shade of green as the new one. The second is entirely black and white as to retrieve the idea of straight forwardness and simplicity. That said, researches on brand design trends report that one coloured logos are the the newest choices for companies to "make their logo more simple, iconic, consistent, and memorable" (Finkle, BMB, 2020). This last one is suggested for all the subdivisions' logos that then differ from each other with the usage of the original tones for the titles: light blue for the of SF Publishing, red for title of SF Recordings and gold-yellow for the one of SF Studios. The font used initially, "Rf Dewi Extended Bold", should be used for the rebrand.

Website Rebrand

SFMG is a growing business that needs that final touch to flourish even more. A website rebrand is what directly follows a logo rebrand as it is the most important platform to share the new logo with to the public. "Your website is the only salesperson that works on your behalf 24/7 - it's selling, answering questions and making connections even when you're not. The more time and money you invest in it, the more value you'll get out of it".

(Gaeta, [impact.com](https://www.impact.com) , 2019).

It's first and foremost function is incrementing the business's visibility and fuelling its image with minimal supervision so it has to look sharp and contain everything a client needs to know.

What is currently missing from the SFMG's website, which has not been updated since 2018, is some key information about the business: its history, a newsletter subscription portal that clients can use to keep up with the latest news, updated newsletter, updated artists' bios, contacts information, recording studios pictures and booking system.

The first page opening when pressing the website URL is the HOME. This should contain a quote from the CEO Dani Stephenson regarding the company's values and achievements, a very impactful choice and great first impression on whoever is interested in SFMG.

Having quotes on the accomplishments make every customer more inclined to trust the capacities and skills of a company.

The main menu needs to be clear and easy to navigate with the same font as the logos.

The new one should be positioned on the left hand side and should appear when the mouse moves on top of it. In order:

HOME Page

The background should incorporate the new logos to help clients get on board with the new look of the business. The more a human mind sees an image the more it will remember it. Coming after the quote there should be a News section about the company and its artists' latest releases/ accomplishments. Every hit an artist is releasing has to have its article on the website that should be sent out to the current contact list plus the new contacts gained through the newsletter subscription inbox located on the footer of the HOME page. This list will help the company acquire more demographics and psychographics of its subscribers and artists' fanbase, very useful for future marketing strategies and artist development.

ABOUT

Here an extended biography of the company (Portfolio) starting from the beginning and describing its performance throughout the years up until now. Transparency is key so a potential client can gather all the informations he/she needs to make the decision to work with SFMG. All other platforms used to advertise the company should be linked on this page too, social media links added, using the corresponding icons.

ROSTER

On the main menu this feature needs to expand when the mouse clicks on it and change colour to green, like the main logo.

The roster is the biggest asset this Indie Record Label has so it needs to be highlighted and visible. The focus point of anybody's research on the site is the roster.

First occurs an amend on all the artists' bios as the website has not been recently updated.

Nana Rogues has released two very big hits for his career that the company needs to advertise (“I Don’t Know” with Emeli Sande and the latest “Issues” ft. Ms Banks), same goes with Nevada (“The Dirt Nevada Remix” - Benjamin Ingrosso) and Maejor. All social media platforms of these artists must be linked to the social media icons for aesthetic purposes.

STUDIOS

A big money-making opportunity for the company here can be having studios partially available for bookings with a booking system on the footer.

This section should have the new logo on the header and HD photos of all the SFMG studios. Only the Stockholm studios are shown and the page must contain a specific email at the bottom used only for bookings to speed up the process and utilise these spaces at its best.

SF PUBLISHING / SF RECORDINGS

Both pages need a bio and logo refresh. The information here should be in bullet points listing the releases and publishing deals of all the records with correspondent cover artworks.

CONTACT US

Last page of the website containing the vehicle between client and business, the contacts addresses. Here there should be the main company email and customer service telephone line, a message inbox, all social media and other platforms used by SFMG for advertisements purposes linked through icons, all the offices addressed and opening hours.

The ideal layout/style and navigation logistic of the website which respect perfectly all current web design trends and new tricks to make clients have the best experience when entering the website can be found in the web design skills of Alison Leon (alisonleon.com) an emerging freelance web designer who is familiar to the Tileyard community as she designed some Tileyard based companies's websites in the past (decademgmt.com) helping them grow their profits and visibility.

Social Media Rebrand

The focus on the social media re-brand goes on clarity and on a layout refresh.

All bios need to be amended and updated to the new version (Portfolio).

All social media has to be linked together so latest news are simultaneously released.

Instagram needs a full modernisation as it is the most used platform for social content creation. The main bios should contain all the artists' profiles tagged as it is important for engagement and for users to easily access the accounts of all talent of the Roster, also fundamental for visibility and prestige to clarify that those big names are related to SFMG. As the company has already two profiles, "@straightfwdmusic" and "@straightfwdrecordings" all the content for the publishing division should be added on the main profile and put on the Highlight section with its new logo as Cover.

As Instagram would still be running throughout the rebrand process post/stories are going to be shared using a new template every three to four days to get as much info out about the company and artists as possible before the official relaunch. All releases should be advertised with their artwork rather than screenshots taken from the artists' posts or stories as it looks more professional, attractive and gives a higher impression of quality.

SF Studios should have a Highlight space too with the HD photographs of all three locations. All the images posted are used to share all the great valuable assets of SFMG

so they need to be as clear and original as possible. Users should consider it as a hit platform to follow for music updates and news. A digital content creator should be involved in the whole process and used after the relaunch for aftercare and digital growth purposes. He/she would establish the templates for any content release that the company should adapt to keep the engagement and following flowing.

Budgeting TOTAL: £6030 +20% VAT

Website rebrand/refresh (cost of two months of work) : £3000 +20%VAT.

- This includes freelancer and affiliated copywriter for all bios.

Logo refresh (cost of two weeks of work): £1000 +20% VAT.

HD photographs of London and Amsterdam Studios (cost of two weeks of work): £780.

- Two professional photographers are hired for this task for both locations (£30 hourly rate for a max of three hours each plus £300x2 for full editing of all pictures).
- Five photos for each studio, lighting, other props with insurance to be considered on the price.

Freelance digital content creator (cost of two months of work) : £1250+20% VAT

- One paid week for analysis and creation of digital content release template (35 hours) £30 hourly pay +20% VAT.
- Contract for 20 Instagram posts spread over eight weeks starting on April the 6th. £20 per post + 20%VAT.

For a stronger rebrand the organisation should also think about acquiring more talent.

As they have already, with great success, developed their artists' careers making them of great value for the music industry they should be searching for the next big talent who will keep them rising and gaining steady stability on the market.

Dani's focus, as he expressed in many occasions, is to find the next hit making talent but there has been more of a focus on the current clients rather than finding new ones.

To cite SFMG's CEO "My ambition is to develop Straight Forward to break a variety of records from all genres and all cultures, to create the next generation of top 40 global stars" (Stephenson, 2018) the goal for this rebrand is to make this happen as powerfully as possible. The rebrand will not only give a sharp and modern look to the company but also make the credibility it already has a lot stronger so it will climb all charts and markets with the best possible tools and with style.

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