

Targeted Market Saturation

A Senior Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Music Business, Entrepreneurship and
Technology

In partial Fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

BACHELORS OF SCIENCE

By

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December 2019

I don't believe in doing what everyone else does. Everyone has done the same album rollout for years. Artists start hinting at something coming out at the top of the year. Then, by the end of that year, you have received 3 new singles, a few videos, and a new album from your favorite artist. However, in the music industry, new approaches are welcome. In recent years, the cycle for music releases has shrunk greatly. The concept of 15 minutes of fame has become more like 5 minutes of fame. This has bred experimentation by artists to go try multiple genres and shorter songs, but still longer release cycles. However, some have tested the idea of shrinking the release cycles of the music down to the point that they are supplying more than what is demanded. However, they aren't just randomly flooding the market with unwarranted music, but rather targeting unsaturated gaps in the music industry that they can tap for new exposure. Artists took note.

From 2013 on, releasing albums with little to no warning has almost become the norm. If You're Reading This It's Too Late, Blonde, and more all used this strategy to surprising success. The influence of concision didn't end with just announcements and releases; the way with which artists promote their album in between was bound to change as well. (HNHH) A few notable examples are G.O.O. D Music, Brockhampton, and Lil Nas X. They all targeted the fusion of genres that weren't fused and saturated those markets to create a new market for their music.

For my research project, I decided to test out this method. I decided to do an intense abbreviated version of this controversial tactic. I decided to release 3 albums and 6 music videos in 3 weeks with a full marketing and distribution cycle. I did this much content to have enough analytics to back up my research. I am trying to prove and potentially name this release tactic. Given the current trend of microwave music and 15 minutes of fame getting shorter, I believe a rapid abbreviated album cycle which I call, A **Targeted Saturation Album Roll Out**, breeds more success compared to a traditional album cycle.

Before an artist can decide whether to release using the *targeted saturation* method, they have to first understand what it is first. The average album rollout is between 6-18 months. That gives time to gain hype, momentum, strategize, and more times than not, do major numbers. An article I found on NME.com breaks it down pretty well when they say,

“And that’s because somewhere along the way in the ’90s and ’00s musicians fell victim to the dreaded “album cycle””. Instead of just releasing music when it was ready, there was a need to release an album every couple of years leaving time for months of touring, time for a summer (or two) full of international festival dates (and for bigger artists, a reason *why* they should headline these festival shows, apart from, y’know, being good), and time to release a handful of singles, each a few months apart.”

However, the way the music industry is swaying, these new quick launch releases seem to be doing astronomically better and create a wave of hype that a long album cycle just can't do. It's what labels want, but it doesn't work anymore. Here's why it doesn't work.

People have short attention spans and aren't going to wait a year for anything anymore. Point-blank. People want new work constantly and a lot of it. That's why multiple SHORT projects work like a charm now. There's so many reasons why. When an artist puts out a short project with short songs, the replay value of that record goes up. When those songs are all different genres targeting different markets, then the ability for the song to be playlisted goes up as well. Lastly, with a bunch of small projects, your discography will grow exponential at a fast rate.

Now, let's explore the multiple genres' aspect to this release cycle. An artist would be genius to try to target as many genres as possible. As you know, multiple genres means multiple charts. Also, multiple genres means that everyone has a chance to connect with your music. Some people like rap, while others like country. If an artist charts in both genres, then both fan bases are happy. The days of major labels dictating album releases or manipulating consumer interest are gone. The age-old formula of dropping an act's lead single,

announcing a release date, then shipping said act off on a promo tour of free performances and media interviews is a dinosaur model. As artists increasingly drop albums with little or zero advance notice, the pre-announced release date is nearing extinction. “They're the enemy of creativity,” as preeminent hip-hop producer Dr. Dre says in the HBO documentary *The Defiant Ones*. (NPR)

Let's look at a few examples. G.O.O. D Music's 2018 summer roll out is a fun one to look at.

a) G.O.O. D Music

i) May 25th - Pusha T /Rap/ Prod. By Kanye.

Pusha T made a 7 song/short 24 minute rap album that transcended past rap audiences. It had pop acclaim

ii) June 1 - Kanye /Rap Pop Rock/ Prod. By Kanye

Blended 3 genres and had music placed in multiple type genre playlist.

iii) June 8 - Kids See Ghost /Pop Rock Rap/ Prod. By Kanye

Blended 3 genres and had music placed in multiple type genre playlist.

iv) June 15 - Nas /Hip-Hop/ Prod. By Kanye

v) June 22 - Teyana Taylor /R&B Pop/ Prod. By Kanye

This roll out was strategically new, and was honestly well-timed. People didn't understand the roll out at the time, but its impact is so far stretching, that it can't be ignored. As mixtapes began to shape the climate of rap in the early to mid-2000s, suddenly that model had begun to rescind. Now, an artist could release songs whenever, with little to no notice, and as new, original production became even less of a necessity they could release songs often. (UPROXX)

Each project was a different genre, but was from the same team, which created a web of music that is all connected. With the way music is consumed, all musicians knew they had to shift their release for the same impact as usual. For example, In March, Drake announced to the world that he would drop his anticipated *More Life*, a global cornucopia of a rap album the Canadian MC referred to as a "playlist" with multi-genre, short songs. (NPR)

Compared to the old, traditional norm for an album or EP release is as follows: An artist drops a single or singles aimed at radio consumption in order to gain as many ears and eyes as possible, when enough eyes and ears are gained said artist then begins marching towards a release and even offers a scheduled release date, said artist does a press tour to remind fans of the album and eventually the album releases.

With all of my research, it proved that targeted saturation really does works. It's questionable, but it works. I proved and believe I successfully named this release tactic. Given the current trend of microwave music and 15 minutes of fame getting shorter, I believe a rapid abbreviated album cycle which I call, A **Targeted Saturation Album Roll Out**, breeds more success compared to a traditional album cycle.

Sources

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