

Berklee College of Music

Reflection Paper

Marketing and Communications Manager
for the 2019 European DIY Musician
Conference

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Degree of Master of Arts in Global Entertainment and
Music Business (Live Events Concentration)

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Event & Position Summary

About The Position

When I got accepted to Berklee College of Music, I made it my top priority to make the most of my time in Valencia by refining my current skill set while taking on projects that would challenge me to learn something new. The opportunity to do exactly that came up when open positions for the CD Baby DIY Conference were emailed out to my class. I initially applied for the Project Manager position but proudly accepted the Marketing and Communications Manager role, which is what I ultimately picked to be my Culminating Experience here at Berklee. Some of my responsibilities listed in the job description sent out included the following:

- produce creative communication materials (videos, website, program...)
- manage the website of the conference
- prepare the marketing campaign in relationship with CD Baby and Berklee teams
- manage the social media accounts of the conference (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram)
- evaluate the satisfaction of the attendees and the speakers
- create a community and maintain the contact with attendants of the conference

The Marketing & Communication Manager's role is to design and implement the communication strategy before, during and after the event and this year managed all ticket sales, distribution and credentialing. This was a big aspect of my work for the European DIY Musician Conference, which will be explained in further detail in the following pages. The Marketing and Communications Manager position was a relatively new one, in response to the feedback given by students who built the first DIY Conference last year and deemed necessary by both the CD Baby team and Berklee Valencia for a successful event.

I worked very closely with Danielle King, CD Baby's Marketing director, and Kevin Breuner, CD Baby's Marketing Director, the rest of their marketing team, and Berklee's communications team to create "the story". It was vital that we delivered the value of participating in the DIY Conference to potential attendees because it would also serve as an opportunity to gain new customers or students for the respective parties.

About The Event

The European DIY Musician Conference to Europe is first and foremost an opportunity for aspiring artists and music professionals to learn from industry experts, get one-on-one mentoring from Berklee faculty and CD Baby staff, and meet a pool of talented musicians from all over the world who are making a living in music without the help of big labels or managers. By providing this space and access to certain people for our attendees, we help nurture lasting professional relationships, can help give them more revenue stream options and learn how to better network or perform all in the span of three days.

After hosting many successful DIY Musician Conferences in the United States, CD Baby was proud to announce the first ever European DIY Musician Conference in 2018. CD Baby continued collaborating with the Berklee College of Music's Valencia campus in Spain and presented their second edition on April 5th, 6th and 7th 2019. The conference is to be spearheaded by a team of students from the Global Entertainment and Music Business masters program, completing the Culminating Experience requirement if selected and successful in their position. There are dozens of music industry conferences, but most offer very little takeaway value to independent artists. The DIY Musician Conference is the antidote to all of that. The

programming, speaker selection and networking events are geared towards independent musicians hoping to have their music reach a global scale.

Why Attend the DIY Musicians Conference?

The DIY Musician Conference provides independent artists with the knowledge, encouragement, and guidance needed to set aspiring artists apart in the international music market. The conference covered a variety of topics like branding, contract management, bookings, self-releasing your work and more. Attendees also spoke directly to industry experts during general sessions and received one-on-one mentoring from the CD Baby and Berklee staff, providing valuable insight for all those who attended. The CD Baby conferences have been a massive success in the United States, completely selling out event passes and receiving rave reviews from both upcoming and veteran industry professionals. Attendees reap the benefits of both the strategies presented by CD Baby and the educational influence from Berklee's faculty and students. In a world selling you the same path and stories to success, The DIY Musicians Conference truly stands out and works to do the same for your music and career as an artist.

Important Details

The European DIY Musicians Conference is hosted inside of Aula Magistral of the prestigious Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía in Valencia, Spain and on the campus grounds of Berklee College of Music in the heart of Valencia, Spain. The weekend is full of workshops, networking opportunities and more, passes were sold at affordable rates so aspiring musicians felt the conference would be accessible to them. The DIY Musician Conference was hosted from April 6th to April 7th, with early attendee registration on Friday, April 5th, and produced a program in

which the majority of workshops and speeches were in English but made sure to include a room for sessions in Spanish only. I suggest maintaining this format due to over half of this year's attendees being from Spain, so it complements the audience of the DIY Conference perfectly.

Objectives

Full Attendance/Ticket Sales

The main objective of the 2019 team was to once again sell all tickets and possibly surpass our goal and last year's sales. Having a high attendance rate was also vital to us, even if all tickets were sold, because it meant that we were able to deliver the value of the conference to our attendees enough to compel them to travel to Valencia, Spain.

Customer Satisfaction

We were conscious that over 200 individuals would take time off, have expenses for travel and accommodations and were eager to learn something new, so customer satisfaction was an important factor in our process. Within our early meetings, we brainstormed programming and potential speakers with one question in mind: would this be interesting to informative to our audience? It was essential to understand their expectations along with our own if we wanted to succeed.

Brand Recognition: Berklee Valencia and CD Baby

The DIY Musician Conference is ideally hosted on both the Berklee Valencia Campus and within the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia auditorium. It was important to guarantee all speakers, attendees and staff felt comfortable within these spaces but also aware of the beautiful, inspiring

environment they were hosted in. If attendees and speakers had a positive or negative experience, it would reflect and possibly affect CD Baby and Berklee's brand itself. We wanted to ensure that everyone had a great experience so they would either return next year, consider using CD Baby's services or begin looking into applying to Berklee College of Music.

Results

Sold Out Event

We were proud to report that the 2019 European DIY Musician Conference sold out on all ticketing tiers and surpassed last year's sales, due to the addition of tickets sold at the door and the price increase. The Eventbrite platform made ticket purchasing easy, generated data and sales reports that were extremely useful, and has a mobile application designated to make attendee check-in efficient by either scanning a QR code or crossing them off the guest list.

Ticket Tier	Ticket Price	Tix Sold	Total Revenue
Loyalty Early Bird	39,00 €	19/ 30	741,00 €
Early Bird	49,00 €	121/ 160	5929,00 €
General Admission	59,00 €	57/ 136	3363,00 €
Berklee Student Discount	10,00 €	30/ 30	300,00 €
Berklee Summit Make Up	10,00 €	2/ 2	20,00 €
Berklee Student Discount 2	20,00 €	26/26	520,00 €
Door Sales Walk Up	69,00 €	6/10	414,00 €
Total Ticket Sales		261/394	11287,00 €

The final gross sales amount was 11.334,24 € for 261 passes sold. The ticket prices included all taxes and service fees, admission into both the conference and concerts, free merchandise provided by Berklee and CD Baby and the opportunity to grow musical careers. I am glad we met this specific expectation and were able to cover our costs, now it's a matter of improving and

growing further! I would consider a price increase and making a sort of VIP tier where you can schedule a practice room and have a Berklee professor teach a private lesson.

Customer Satisfaction/Demographics

Unfortunately, last year's Marketing and Communications Manager did not leave behind data that would've been useful for me at the beginning like all the passwords, audience demographics, attendee feedback, and the master document for the program. However, this year I made it my priority and was able to include final numbers within my Outcome Paper section. I measured customer satisfaction through a SurveyMonkey form and received useful comments even if only a small portion responded, either due to sending it out so late or the length. Next year, the form should be made weeks in advance and have ready to be used during and after the event.

Social Media was our sole way of getting an idea of what our target audience may look like as the Eventbrite purchase form does not require attendees to state their gender. We also had no firm idea of the median age as it was an option field as well. These two pieces of information should be made a priority and should be acquired when a purchase was made. Still, we were able to conclude that our target audience would be men who are 25 to 34 years old, this demographic takes up 24 percent of our total Facebook Page Followers. We were also able to determine the top five countries when it came to who purchased tickets; People from Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, and Austria purchased the majority of tickets sold.

Reflections

Internal Disorganization People you work with will have their own way of organizing information, so looking for compromise is key to effective communication. I wish I had working documents we shared earlier on and more communication when speakers were confirmed or artists were being contacted, it would've helped me market and promote the value of the conference earlier and better. I practically knew nothing about the majority of speakers for up until three weeks out, didn't have names of the selected artists and felt like CD Baby just checked in and didn't offer many dedicated resources. I felt pressured to put out a conference schedule and content, compiling text, graphics, and printed materials on my own knowing that it would take me longer to piece together information last minute. I think my team members could've been more aware of the workload I had to take on, collaborated with me closer or maybe started earlier as I had suggested internally. I would've felt better about this project had I felt like they took more initiative in communicating with me.

Programming/Venue Issues From personal experience, conferences announce their speakers, artists and event program at minimum three months before the official start date. We had unique circumstances that led us to reveal the "finalized" program a mere three weeks before. The team had the same concern most professional event planners must keep in mind: things will not always go according to plan. So, my expectations of last-minute changes came to be, and I was able to tackle this issue as the information came in.

The Process

Initial Tasks

The main focus of my position is to get the value of the DIY Musicians Conference across on all platforms and convert that interest into ticket sales. The biggest takeaway from last year's conference was the need for a consistent marketing plan that both developed the event's brand identity while pushing for profits. This resulted in me creating graphics assets, organizing last year's photos, and actively posting onto Facebook, Instagram and Twitter along with sending informative emails to confirmed attendees.

Digital

I assisted with CD Baby with updating the website by creating our account to Eventbrite and passing them the live link, re-wrote last year's press release, researched accommodation and food options, and provided whatever text they requested. As a graphic designer, I was more than happy to help create assets if needed. However, I didn't expect the amount of work I'd need to do myself and it may have impacted my quality of work and possibly my studies negatively. If I was able to access CD Baby's graphic designer directly, instead of waiting for them to look at a Trello card, important information would've been sent out quicker since it didn't require approvals from the Marketing Director.

We wanted to develop an engaging social media presence on all social media channels, so I was asked to create weekly social media plans. However, I did not think it was necessary or effective because, between time zone differences, more urgent meetings or a lack of response from CD Baby pushed back the approval time for my requests. I had an original goal to reach 10,000

people total at the end of our promotional campaign, but it did not happen due to not having a dedicated budget for online promotion. We realized within the first month of sales that we had a steady revenue coming in so we could possibly retain more of our earnings to let it sell itself organically. I was skeptical but sure enough, we were able to sell all the tickets with only reaching around 3,000 people. It's up to the next person in my position to decide if they'd like to do ads but would suggest that CD Baby handle this aspect since they're the ones sending out the larger email newsletters and have the in-house graphic design team on call.

Offline

Next Steps

Organize For Next Year I will make sure to leave behind all the files I wished I had at the beginning of this culminating experience

Facebook Group/Testimonials Some attendees had taken the initiative to create a Facebook group where they could stay in contact with one another, share what they've worked on after the conference or support projects that are posted. Berklee nor CD Baby had no direct access to it, so I contacted the admin of the group who added myself and my advisor. Alexandre Perrin, our advisor, now had admin permissions so he'll be able to add the next Marketing Manager in there, which would be a fantastic tool to communicate with over 300 previous attendees. If I had access earlier, it would've greatly impacted early promotional strategies. We did have testimonials posted onto our website but I personally found the posts made by the attendees themselves on Facebook. They were organic, honest, and positive reviews which definitely helped make the conference's brand more visible to our target audience. I would recommend following up with attendees and speakers and ask if they could be quoted officially on the 2020 website

Professional Impact

The first professional contribution I saw immediately after the conclusion of the event was that problem solving is vital in any job or industry. It made me come to terms that not everyone works or thinks the same way I do, but that there is no true wrong and right method. Marketing and promoting a music business conference was extremely different than presenting a concert, and this one happened to be a combination of both. This also meant that I underestimated the number of responsibilities I'd have to juggle, so I had to be flexible with my time, patience and abilities in order to get the job done.

The second biggest professional contribution would be having a deeper understanding of working with a client instead of yourself. I had to adhere to their aesthetic, deadlines and workplace procedures, even if I disagreed with their decisions. We needed to maintain good communication with them due to their brand being directly affected whenever we made decisions about the conference. Differences of opinion and frustrations will arise but this experience taught me to be more patient and mindful on how my actions or inaction would reflect onto Berklee and CD Baby's name. I definitely respect the "corporate" manner of thinking a bit more, because of these rules, standards and workflow kept us on track and in the end helped us build a strong structure for next year's students.

Finally, this culminating experience challenged me to be more accountable. It's easy to reflect on what a fellow team member did or didn't do, but much more difficult when it comes to evaluating yourself. I put pressure on myself to excel so I would take it particularly hard when a deadline wasn't met or when someone didn't meet my expectation to deliver the same amount of

effort. I realized this negative narrative in my head was playing in my head so I changed my perspective and gave more importance to my reactions instead.

Do your absolute best but don't forget to support one another without being asked is the best advice I could give to next year's students. In summary, these are the professional impacts my culminating experience gave me:

- Became a professional problem solver
- A deeper understanding of developing new projects or working with big clients
- A greater sense of accountability and empathy towards colleagues during overwhelming moments.

Professional Contribution

I am proud to have been the Marketing and Communications Manager for the 2019 European DIY Musician Conference because it allowed me to show my skill set, creativity, and adaptability outside of the electronic dance music scene. I would enjoy taking on a similar project, probably more than a concert or night club event, after graduation in July. I noticed that I like focusing on organizational structure, brand identity and building professional relationships, all concepts that aren't as highlighted within nightlife. This experience opened up more career options as well and has given me the confidence to tackle event types I do not have experience in, maybe special corporate getaways or private events like weddings or retreats. If I was able to juggle the DIY Conference and Musaico Music Festival, then I can really accomplish anything I set my mind to, that realization was invaluable.