

Culminating Experience Reflection Paper

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Introduction:

This is it. These are my famous last words...well at least regarding this degree. It has been a very short but magnificent ten months for me. I wish it was a bit longer, but at the same time I have learned so much in such a short period of time that I can't really complain. With that said, I will reflect on my Culminating Experience. Everything I have learned. Everything I have spent. And most importantly, what are the next steps after this great project.

Background on my CE:

Before coming to Berklee Valencia I have always had an affinity for business. I think it comes from living with two parents who run their own business, both independently and together, and who never hesitated to teach me a thing or two about the business. While in my Third and final year of my undergrad studies I had a music business class, and even more important than the class content was the professor who taught it. He showed me a different perspective to see the music business, in particular the record labels and their true purpose in the industry. He showed me that although there might always be some people with not-so-nice intentions working at a label, and most likely at a major label where there is more money, but really most of those who truly want to work in the recording industry for the right reasons is because they too, just like artists, have a passion for music and a huge desire to help the artists' music to reach to as many people as possible. Since then, I have tried to learn as much as possible

and prepare for one day start working at a record label and maybe even in the future, run my own. This is what led me to choose a Business Plan as Culminating Experience.

Summary of my CE:

As I mentioned before I decided to do a business plan on a record label. To be more specific, it is a business plan for a record label for mission-driven artists, in other words, artists who want to share a message or have a specific mission, such as campaigning on or against a particular social issue or raising awareness on mental health challenges and offer solutions, and they desire to do so through their music.

The record label will be based in London, England, and it will start with only me running the business and outsourcing everything when necessary. The first two signings are: Lauren Alex Hooper, a singer-songwriter based in Brighton who writes songs and blogs about how she has dealt with autism and anxiety in the hopes of sharing some light in the subject and give some support to those in need; and Will Caminada, a Brazilian singer-songwriter based in London who has a passion for teaching others how to live a healthy and happy life and to love themselves more. It is ODL Records' mission to boost these two and every other artists who will like to sign with the company and help them on their own missions.

The company will run as any other record label providing services like A&R, booking studio time, developing market and promotion campaigns, booking venues and some publishing services as well. At the beginning artists will be signed on a 360 deal.

What have I learned?

First and foremost, I have learned how to write a business plan and learned a lot more on how record labels work. It was a challenge as I don't come from a business background or even worked on a record label before. It proved me that it is no simple task to run your own business. It was hard for me to even write a business plan for a business that is not anywhere near on launching. But challenges are what drive me and I can certainly say now that I am many steps closer to one day achieve my goal of running my own label. This CE was fun, insightful and very inspiring for me.

What didn't work?

As I mentioned before, I do not come from a business background. To add to it, I did not took the Entrepreneurship Practicum during the spring semester as I wanted to familiarize myself more with the recording industry ins and outs. And yet I decided to go with a business plan as my CE (great idea...). With the challenges came a couple of complete meltdown moments. The first was right after proposal because I wasn't sure if what I had just proposed was a good enough idea. Sure enough, once I met with my supervisor and he gave me feedback on my proposals then the idea started developing better in my head and I regained composure for a few months. The last meltdown happened just 2 weeks before submission. I had realized that time was running out and I haven't worked as much as I would've liked to on my CE. So I contacted my CE supervisor again, the amazing Alexandre Perrin, and he helped a lot. I admit I would have probably make an even better outcome paper if I had dedicated more time and effort to it.

My biggest mistake was I spent too much time on other assignments, job applications and conferences, and did not meet regularly with my supervisor for guidance. I have now learned my lesson.

Overall reflection

This year at Berklee Valencia has been an amazing one for me, not just personally but professionally as well. I have learned from the best, met amazing people from different areas of the industry. And most importantly, met the future of the industry, they were sitting all the time right beside me in the classrooms, and got lucky enough to even make friends with these amazing people. Yes, with all of them!

In regards with my CE I learned that making a business plan is not fun at all. But it is not too bad either, and it is definitely very important. I have once again regained inspiration and desires to work in this industry, and more specific in the recording industry. Who knows, I might actually have my own label one day.

Next Steps

As I said millions of times now, I have learned a lot throughout this academic year, but it was mostly theory. It is time for me to move on and start putting this theory into practice. In order to do this, I plan on:

- Maintaining and developing even further the network I have created during my time at Berklee.

- Start working on an already established record label in order to learn even more. Even if I have to start by making coffee for the other employees!
- Develop even further my business plan for ODL Records so that one day I can properly launch it and work full time on it.
- Make a name for myself by collaborating with as many people and businesses in the industry.
- Keep loving, breathing and living music.

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