



**2020YL\_MP6039BNN01 : Employability Portfolio - Natalie Greener**

**PORTFOLIO LINK: [www.nataliegreener.com](http://www.nataliegreener.com)**

**INTERNSHIP EVIDENCE:**

For my professional placement as part of the Employability Portfolio module, I secured an Internship at Kaleidoscope Artist Management in Newcastle Upon Tyne. The paid placement consists of three hours per week, for a minimum of twelve weeks. I welcomed extra hours to get as much detailed experience as possible. Kaleidoscope describes itself as 'an artist management company and record label that was established in 2015'. The internship programme involves working as a team to set up an independent record label imprint, scout an artist, and release a single. We concluded with the name Intarsia, focusing on R&B artists who are underrepresented in the industry ([www.kaleidoscope-music.co.uk](http://www.kaleidoscope-music.co.uk)).

In this essay, I will critically reflect upon my Internship thus far and provide an overview of skills accomplished throughout. I will also assess how my academic degree prepared me for a work environment and placement.

I think it is imperative to state that a five year portfolio was existing prior to this module; consequently making it easier to secure a media orientated role specific to the music industry. Focusing on developing a creative portfolio in band marketing and management, it was important that I used the concepts learnt in the past to develop new theories about the world, which I could then actively test in my placement (Kolb 1984). Despite the pandemic disrupting the live music sector immensely, I felt secure in my placement and the industry chosen. This is due to the industry's total worth estimating around \$50 billion, with two major scenes that generate that kind of staggering revenue. The first one comes from live performances and ticket sales - nearly half of all revenue, while the second half comes from recorded music, licensing, digital downloads, physical sales, and streaming (World Economic Forum). The Kaleidoscope webinars also took place digitally over Zoom and embraced what the music industry may be like post Covid19. I thought this was reassuring and instilled adaptability in my work ethic.

During my interview, I was able to reflect on my other work placements and assess the skills learnt and how to apply them effectively. This is inline with Kolb's theory that concrete experience provides information that serves as a basis for reflection (1984). My old journalism portfolio took a digital format, showcasing my specific technical skills in PR and social media marketing, as well as Adobe InDesign and Illustrator. In hindsight, I think this really helped me stand out from other applicants as each aspect of my website and CV has been done by myself. These skills were acquired in the Public Relations module of my second year at University, and they've been something I use on a regular basis when building client websites on Wix and Wordpress.

### **Creativity & problem- solving**

There is an oversupply of graduates in the creative sector. In 2010, 55% of the labour force in the creative sector was educated to degree level, 19% more than the national average for other sectors. Interestingly, this does not necessarily respond to employers' demand for whom work experience tends to be a deciding factor when recruiting rather than qualification level (A New Direction 2013). Standing out is crucial.

The primary lesson learnt on my placement was the importance of listening and adapting to a clients' brief. With no experience working with R&B music, I had to explore outside of my comfort zone and in turn, really enjoyed challenging myself! However, things didn't always go to plan; working to deadlines seemed hard as creative projects often take time and can't be rushed. We had to learn how to communicate efficiently, straight away and used apps like Whatsapp and Slack to achieve this.

An example of problem solving can be demonstrated with our artist and the team effort put into making the track, especially when Merunisa wanted to rewrite the lyrics. Instead of falling at the first hurdle, the musician/song-writer team members stayed up in order to prepare for the studio session the following day. This drastically helped things run as smoothly as possible. As an independent and self-employed freelancer, this was eye-opening to me. A varied skill set and being surrounded by talented individuals, it made me realise that I know I *can* work in a team, but that I also *want* to work in a team.

### **Ability to work under pressure**

Creative and Cultural Skills argue that the oversupply of creative graduates has resulted in a pool of overqualified individuals, who often lack the specific technical and professional skills than the vast majority of jobs in the sector require (A New Direction 2013). The ability to adapt under-pressure whilst remaining creative can be the thing that makes you stand out.

In a fast pace industry that is forever evolving, Journalist Philip Eil (2017) highlights the fact that working in the media industry can be extremely stressful and exhausting. PR and Marketing is very client orientated and means being constantly alert and aware of the music landscape every second of employment. To my surprise, I enjoyed the fast-paced environment and pressure that a promotion company endures before a music release.

### **An eye for visual aesthetic and strong marketing knowledge**

The multimedia reporter for the Sheffield Star, Alex Evans, argues that a media job requires “thinking creatively with the resources you have available” (Albeanu 2014). When I began my placement, my biggest struggle was understanding the legal aspect of the music industry. For example; royalties, PRS, Syncs and contracts. Purposefully taking a step away from the visual development aspect of our independent label, I was struggling at first. It was hard to try and get invested in the business aspect of the internship. As a result, I mirrored the project with a friend and made proposal contracts by breaking examples down. According to Kolb, this type of learning can be defined as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combinations of grasping and transforming the experience” (1984). I think the placement instilled in me a bigger drive to complete tasks to the best of my ability as I was getting paid for my services.

### **Understanding of software & design**

Crucial design skills were needed in the Internship that I was not accustomed to. However, the Journalism and Design module armed me with the knowledge to learn more. The sessions run by Mark Davenport in first year gave a great foundation of knowledge to build and improve on, especially apps in Adobe’s Creative Suite. As my degree isn’t solely media orientated, a lot of the skills I’ve developed are self taught but the University’s sessions helped me learn how to figure it out if I wanted to know more e.g. tutorial channels. Consequently, I taught myself basic graphic design skills that I’ve implemented into other aspects of my work, such as my CV (find at [www.nataliegreener.com](http://www.nataliegreener.com)). I have also established the habit of doing online courses/tutorials in other fields of study to further broaden my freelance portfolio in my spare time.

Nonetheless, COVID19 has proven challenging when learning practical skills. Despite being equipped by the university, I still had a lot to learn but this was hard due to lockdown restrictions and offices being closed. However, the digital aspect of the internship proved useful as the flexibility allowed the webinar guests to be located across the world. In addition, I developed technical skills through using Zoom that I now put into practice when conducting freelance meetings with clients. Kolb argues that understanding your own learning preferences may be helpful for work, but it does not

necessarily mean that you can't learn in other ways or that your preferred style will always be the same (1984). I understand this now I've worked in an office environment *and* online from home, but both had the same outcome and standard of professionalism.

### **Confidence and communication**

The biggest part of working in music - especially scouting, is having to approach agencies and artists you've never met. For this, confidence is vital. Thankfully, the fact my team were solely interns on the same placement was reassuring and made it easier to communicate with them. The Hyper-local Journalism module alongside others, helped me overcome anxiety about working with new people as I had to interview multiple strangers for content. The requirement for social media management and press releases meant communication skills were also essential in my internship. When talking with artists, peers and industry professionals, I tried to conduct myself with etiquette. A healthy level of confidence allegedly makes you more likely to engage in challenging but manageable projects, get outside your comfort zone, and allow you to achieve new goals; all of which are valued characteristics of successful workers (Forbes 2012).

In conclusion, my degree has certainly equipped me with essential media focused skills that have led me to perform better at my placement with Kaleidoscope. The internship gave me invaluable insight to the music industry and PR as a career path. Through working with the guest professionals, I have gained invaluable contacts and established a rapport with potential employers. The entire process has helped me reflect on my performance and evaluate areas I may need to work on. Consequently, I will continue to maintain a high-level in the work I produce and remain to seek opportunities that will help me succeed in such a saturated job market.

*Word Count: 1,565*

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