



Radiohead Marketing Report

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1. Introduction

1.1) Executive Summary

This report aims to critically analyse Radiohead's marketing activity over the previous 12 months in the build-up to the release of their 9th album, 'A Moon Shaped Pool'. The report will examine the band's positioning within the musical landscape in regards to their history, their fanbase, the external factors that surround them, and much more. In doing so, the effectiveness of their recent marketing activity will be accurately analysed and a series of recommendations will be made in order to achieve key marketing objectives across the following 12 months.

1.2) Music Industry Overview

Music is cherished by different cultures across the globe and has been a cornerstone in our society for thousands of years (Kubacki et al., 2013). Music remains as culturally relevant today as it ever has done, with an estimated 84% of people valuing it as a key interest within their life (Repucom, 2015). PRS For Music's (2011) report indicates that the music industry is financially "stable", with the United Kingdom recording an annual revenue of £3.8 billion. The music industry has been greatly affected by recent technological advancements, resulting in a significant increase in digital music sales and the use of music streaming services (PRS For Music, 2011). The drop in physical sales and the popularity of online streaming services may also be due to the impact of the current economic climate (Atkinson, 2008).

1.3) Band History

Radiohead are British band that formed in 1985 whilst the members - Thom Yorke, Jonny Greenwood, Colin Greenwood, Ed O'Brien, and Phillip Selway - were studying at a school near Oxford, UK. Their first single, 'Creep', catapulted the band to international fame in 1993. It wasn't until they released their second album, 'The Bends', however, that they truly cemented themselves as staples of the 90's alternate rock explosion. The newfound critical acclaim led to Radiohead becoming synonymous with the Brit-pop era - along with bands such as Suede, Blur, and Oasis - although they were often labeled as outsiders because of their introspective nature and their refusal to comply with music industry 'norms'. Their 1997 album 'OK Computer' changed the world of alternate rock forever, as unlike their Brit-pop associates, they experimented heavily and pioneered the inclusion of electronic sounds within rock music. The album went 5x platinum and spawned hit singles such as 'Karma Police', 'No Surprises', and 'Paranoid Android', making it the band's most successful piece of work to date.

In the 2000's, Radiohead continued down their route of electronic-inspired experimentation, dividing the band's fan-base in two. Besides putting off many of their fans due to their change of style, their albums continued to be commercial successes' and they developed a cult following during this time. The albums 'Kid A' and 'In Rainbows' also became two of the most critically acclaimed records of the decade. The latter of these two albums, 'In Rainbows', demonstrated the bands dedication to pushing boundaries and innovating within the world of music, as they implemented a 'pay-as-you-feel' process for fans that purchased the album online.

Throughout the past ten years, Radiohead's band members have focused predominantly on individual projects and have released albums under their own monikers. The group reconvened briefly for 2012's, 'The King Of Limbs', but the album received mixed reviews and became their first full length LP not to top the charts since 'The Bends' in 1995. The eagerly anticipated 9th album, 'The Moon Shaped Pool', was released on May 8th 2016.

1.4) Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of Radiohead's current marketing strategy are as follows:

- To improve brand awareness prior to the release of the 9th album via considerable media coverage
- To generate online engagement and build 'hype' for the 9th album
- To build upon relationships with fans by using direct marketing, therefore enhancing brand loyalty
- To establish the band's positioning within the market

2. Background Analysis

2.1) PEST Analysis

Table 1) Radiohead PEST Analysis

Political	Economical
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fans of Radiohead are generally 'left-leaning' in their political views• Thom Yorke, frontman of the band, is an outspoken political activist regarding areas such as: human rights, environmental protection, rights to privacy, corporate greed, and much more.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Record sales have decreased in the music industry, partially due to the popularity of online streaming services• Sales of concert tickets is increasing, and becoming a primary revenue stream for artists• Costs of traditional advertising methods are rising• Radiohead will release their 9th album under their own limited company (Dawn Chorus Ltd)
Social	Technological
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Radiohead have a strong online presence with large followings on social network pages like Facebook and Twitter• The band also have their own dedicated social network (W.A.S.T.E) which includes an email subscription	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Radiohead are known for being pioneers in technological advancements• Their music is available to purchase in different digital formats via their official website

Key Findings

Political:

The political views of the band and its members, and their tendency to speak openly about these topics via both their lyrics and their social media networks, could deter audiences who disagree with their 'left-leaning' political standpoint. However, Radiohead's political emphasis could also be a platform for greater publicity, as political issues are culturally relevant and currently dominating world news.

Economical:

As of 2008, live music revenue outweighed recorded music revenue for the first time (PRS, 2011). This is partially due to the music festival market, which has recorded a growth of nearly 50% over the past five years (Mintel, 2015). Live music revenue now increases year-on-year, whilst physical sales continue to decline because of the emergence of online music streaming services (PRS, 2011).

The cost of traditional advertising space has also increased in recent years (Zdravkovic & Till, 2012,), making social networking a much more financially efficient marketing tool.

Radiohead create new limited companies in which they release each of their individual albums. This makes their musical output legally independent from their previous work, giving the band/organisation a greater degree of legal and financial protection. One of the benefits of

this scheme includes the removal of financial liability for the project. Radiohead's 9th album, 'A Moon Shaped Pool', will be released under the organisation, Dawn Chorus Limited.

Social:

A full analysis of Radiohead's social platforms can be found in '*Table 3) Radiohead's Key Platforms for Communicating With Their Target Market*'

Technological:

Radiohead are renowned for pushing boundaries in the world of music technology. A major example of this is their 'pay-as-you-feel' purchase system for the album, 'In Rainbows', that was available on their official website. High definitions formats of the album are also exclusively available on their website. Sales through the site are also more financially profitable to the band, as they do not have to pay dividends to a retailer.

2.2) SWOT Analysis

Table 2) Radiohead SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Worldwide fan-base• Household name / global brand• Large social media following• Popular membership and email subscription scheme (W.A.S.T.E.)• Critically acclaimed and revered by journalists• 25-year long career has led to a broad range of fans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It has been 5 years since they last released an album• The previous album, 'The King of Limbs', was met with mixed reviews• No major sponsorship or endorsement deals• There has been a decline in sales over the past releases
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct contact with fans through email subscriptions and popular social networks• Multiple festival headline appearances planned• Possibility to reach new younger fans who may not have listened to the band before	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fans and critics have high expectations of the band• Highly-saturated market with lots of competition and 'noise'

Key Findings

Strengths:

A full analysis of Radiohead's audience, social media following, and direct marketing platforms can be found in *Chapter 2.3: Target Markets*.

Radiohead are incredibly popular among music journalists which means that favourable and widespread press coverage is likely. However, the band's critical acclaim could be a detriment as fans and journalists may have unnaturally high expectations that could lead to disappointment and/or overly critical reviews. This possible downside is highlighted under the '**Threats**' section of the SWOT analysis.

Weaknesses:

The band's last album, 'The King Of Limbs' from 2011, gained mixed reviews in comparison to their previous releases and became one of the least revered albums in their discography. This 'drop in form' and five year gap between releases could lead some to dispute their cultural relevance within the current decade of music.

Radiohead lack any major sponsorships or endorsements from global brands, potentially limiting the reach of their promotional capabilities. Artists such as The Rolling Stones, for example, have been involved with various sponsorship deals throughout their career, providing them with both additional finances and increased levels of marketing. This approach may not be suitable to Radiohead, however, due to their outspoken anti-corporate views. A sponsorship or endorsement deal of this kind would have some benefits, although it could potentially disillusion the band's target market.

Opportunities:

Radiohead are due to headline various festivals around the globe in the summer of 2016 as part of their world tour. This provides the band with an opportunity to perform to attendees that are outside of their core audience and target market. The festivals will also promote Radiohead extensively through their own marketing activities, as the headline acts will feature on a vast proportion of the event's promotional content.

It has been nine years since Radiohead last had a number one album in the UK charts and their last top-ten UK single was in 2003. The group has also been on a hiatus since their 'King of Limbs' tour in 2012. Their lack of commercial success in their home country over recent years and their removal from the media spotlight suggests that there may be a new, young generation of music fans that are yet to be exposed to Radiohead. Gaining media attention and commercial success once again would likely lead to an influx of new fans and a dramatic increase of brand awareness among younger audiences.

Threats:

There is a plethora of competition within the musical landscape and the current digital environment amplifies this issue. Online streaming services provide instant access to thousands of different artists and social media networks are often flooded with content due to high-usage and constant, aggressive, promotional activity. It can, therefore, be incredibly challenging for artists to cut through the 'noise' online that is caused by competitors.

2.3) Target Markets

Definition

Market segmentation is a process that is used to group audiences depending on geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behaviouristic factors (Fill, 2011). These groups are known as target markets. Market segmentation has been described as “the bedrock of successful marketing” by McDonald (2012) and, when implemented correctly, it can boost both financial and marketing efficiency (Lamb, *et al.*, 2012).

Radiohead’s Target Market

Due to Radiohead’s 25-year long career in the spotlight, the band have amassed a fan-base from a range of generations, making their specific demographic very broad. Their experimental and introspective output may deter a casual or less-engaged listener. Their tendency to create arrangements with a high degree of musical complexity is also part of the reason that they are often deemed as inaccessible to less-engaged audiences, whilst revered by music fanatics, critics and fellow artists.

A YouGov survey of 4606 fans confirmed that the Radiohead’s following has very little gender or age bias and that music, culture, and the arts are often listed as key interests (YouGov, 2016). The study also found that a large majority of the band’s audience has a strong left-leaning political view and describe themselves as being either “geeky” or “nerdy”; this is emphasised by their preference of technology-based brands.

This data can be used to link Radiohead's target demographic to the market segment - that is defined by the Arts Council England (2011) as - 'Urban Arts Eclectic'. They are characterised by their high-engagement and passion for music, contemporary arts, and culture. They are also technologically confident and often highly educated. However, Radiohead have a vast and generation-spanning fan-base, which is contradictory of the urban arts eclectic market segment as they are defined by Arts Council England as being "typically young" and are comprised of only 5% of the population sample. This data highlights the fact that fans of the band are not easily categorised, although they do possess one universally dominant characteristic: an overarching passion for music.

Platforms for Reaching the Target Market

A targeted approach must be implemented in order to reach Radiohead's target audience, because the band's fan-base does not uniformly fit into a single market segment or demographic. Radiohead's platforms and outlets for reaching their target markets are as follows:

Table 3) Radiohead's Key Platforms For Communicating With Their Target Markets

Platform	Description	Audience Size (Approx.)
W.A.S.T.E.	A dedicated social media network and forum for Radiohead fans that includes an email subscription	52,000 members
Twitter Page	The official Twitter account of Radiohead	1.6 million followers
Individual Twitter Pages	The official Twitter accounts of Radiohead's individual band members	1.1 million followers (cumulative total)
Facebook Page	The official Facebook account of Radiohead	11.9 million likes

Key findings:

- W.A.S.T.E. is an efficient database tool as it collects demographical and geographical information regarding the band's core audience.
- W.A.S.T.E.'s email subscription scheme is also utilised as a direct marketing tool.
- The band's Facebook page has the largest audience of all of their social networks.
- The band member's individual Twitter accounts have a total number of followers that is similar to Radiohead's Twitter page, arguably making the combined output of the individual accounts equally as important.

3. Radiohead's Current Marketing

3.1) The Marketing Mix

Product

Live Shows - The band are doing a 25-date worldwide tour including festival headline performances in America, Europe, and Japan to support the release of their new album. Their London performances were limited to two tickets per person due to the contrast between limited availability and overwhelmingly high demand.

'A Moon Shaped Pool' - The band's 9th album, 'A Moon Shaped Pool' is due to be released on May 8th. The album will be sold via the official website and will also be available on music streaming services. The album will be available digitally, on CD, and on vinyl, as well as a special edition bundle that will include all of the previously mentioned formats plus 32-pages of artwork and a small segment of master tape taken from an actual recording session by the band.

Price

Live Shows - Tickets for Radiohead's live shows varied across the globe, with prices ranging from £50 to £65 face value. This is considerably higher than average ticket prices, and could be considered 'high-end'. The tickets for their UK shows are now available second-hand for prices ranging from £600 to £4000.

'A Moon Shaped Pool' - Unlike the live shows, the album is set at a price that is typical of music industry standards. The CD and digital copies of the album are available for around £10 (depending on the retailer) and the vinyl will be available for £20. The special edition bundle will be priced at £60; this is a clever pricing strategy that creates the illusion of the other products being relatively cheap, and therefore more financially attractive to consumers.

Place

The band is scheduled to perform live on a 25-date worldwide tour to support the release of the album. The group will perform across Europe in The Netherlands, France, UK, Spain, Iceland, Switzerland, Portugal and Germany; across North and South America in Mexico, USA, and Canada; as well as two dates in Japan. These dates are composed of a mixture of concerts and festival appearances. This is fairly limited in comparison to their previous worldwide tour, which included 58 dates across 8 more countries.

The album will be available worldwide upon release, although it has been excluded from the most popular and widely used streaming service, Spotify. The band has been critical of Spotify in the past and this may be the reason for the exclusion.

Promotion

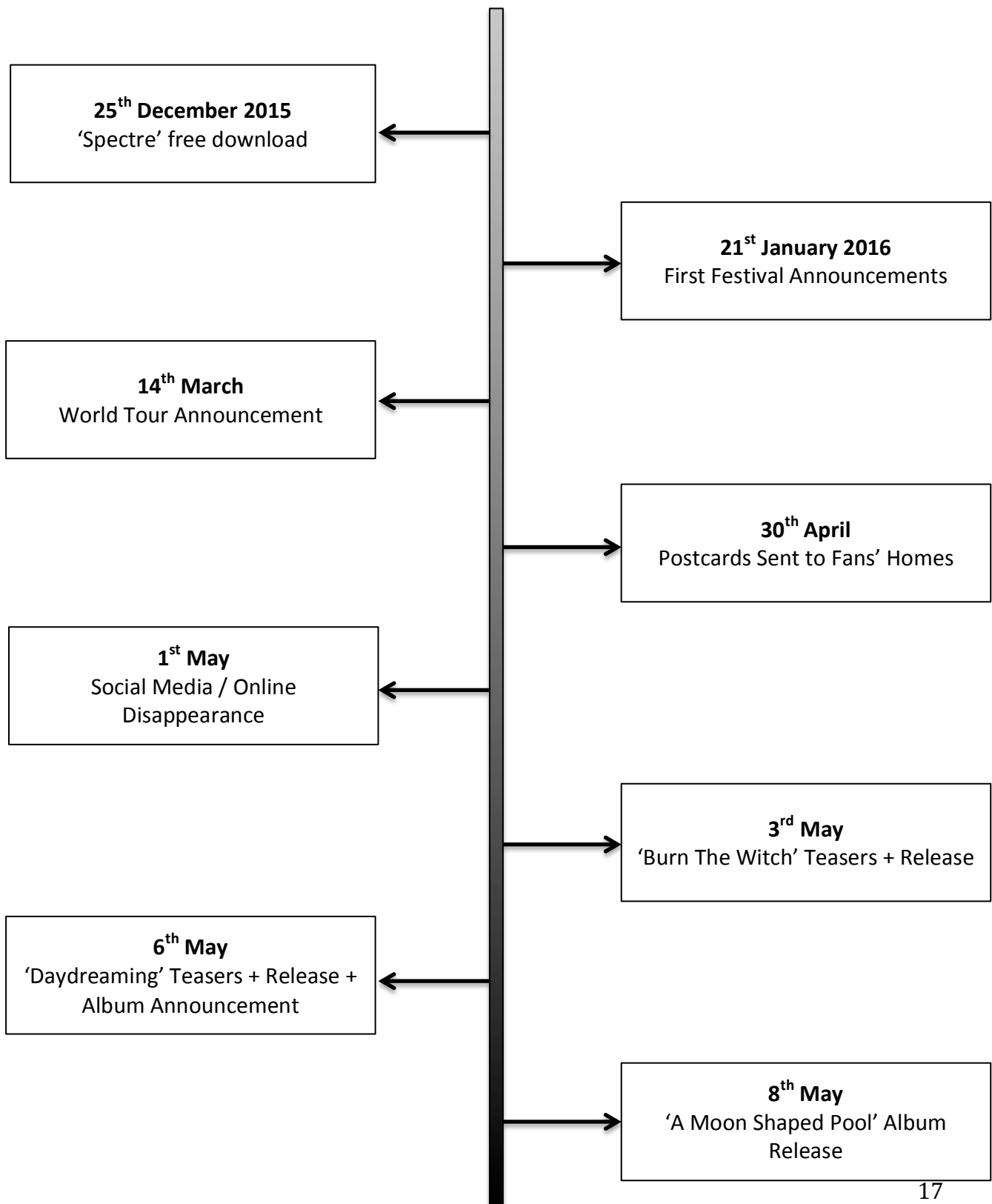
A full analysis of Radiohead's promotional activity can be found in Chapter 3.2: Marketing Activity Analysis

A summary of their primary promotional activity is as follows:

- Festival announcements
- World tour announcement
- Postcards sent to fans
- Social media / online disappearance
- 'Burn The Witch' single release
- 'Daydreaming' single release + album announcement
- Album Release

3.2) Marketing Activity Analysis

Figure 1) Timeline of Notable Marketing Activity in the Last 12 Months



'Spectre' Free Download (25th December 2015)

On 25th December 2015, Radiohead gave fans a Christmas gift in the form of a free download. The song, 'Spectre', was initially intended to be the soundtrack to the James Bond film of the same name although it was never used for the movie. This 'gift' to the fans helped with the group's relationship marketing efforts, as they were able to give something back to their target market and reward them for their loyalty. The fact that the song was intended for a James Bond soundtrack also led to it gaining significant media attention. The release of 'Spectre' also confirmed rumours that the band had been working in the studio again, and hinted heavily towards a new orchestral sound.

Festival Announcements (21st January 2016)

It was announced on 21st January 2016 that Radiohead would be headlining three major European festivals: NOS Alive, Primavera, and OpenAir. This quickly made media headlines, as it would mark the band's first live performances since 2012. In the following four weeks, the bands were sporadically announced as headliners for a series of other major music festivals across America, Asia, and Europe. These announcements gave Radiohead a constant media presence throughout January and February, as the press reported upon every announcement that was made.

One of the primary marketing benefits of headlining a music festival is that the band name will be included in the vast majority of promotional material that is used by the event. This essentially gives the band 'free' publicity and provides an effective method of boosting brand awareness without the need for any financial expense.

World Tour Announcement (14th March)

The announcement of Radiohead's world tour was big news for their fans and gained further media coverage in the countries that they were due to be performing in, as well as in regional publications surrounding the chosen venues. The band's choice of venue within the UK - which is The Roundhouse, a 3300 capacity venue in London - also led to further stories and online conversations, as the amount of tickets available failed meet the huge demand. The UK legs of the tour quickly became

dubbed as a 'once in a lifetime experience' due to a band of Radiohead's stature playing in such a small venue. This made the tickets increasingly sought after and they sold out within minutes, creating yet another series of news stories regarding the time in which it took for them to sell out and the extortionate prices in which people were reselling them for.

'Burn The Witch' Postcards (30th April)

Postcards were sent to Radiohead's core audience within the UK, containing various combinations of: unseen artwork, the new song title 'Burn The Witch', a lyric from the track, the band's logo, and a 'creepy' message stating "WE KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE". Fans were eager to share their exclusive memorabilia and compare the many different variations of postcards that were distributed, making the direct marketing stunt go viral incredibly quickly. There was no explanation or warning of this given by the band, adding to the mystery of the stunt. This led to active conversation among fans online as they questioned the meaning of the postcard and its contents.

The direct marketing activity was implemented using the shipping details of people who had recently purchased something on Radiohead's official website. This form of marketing is an effective way of targeting core audiences who are actively interested in the band.

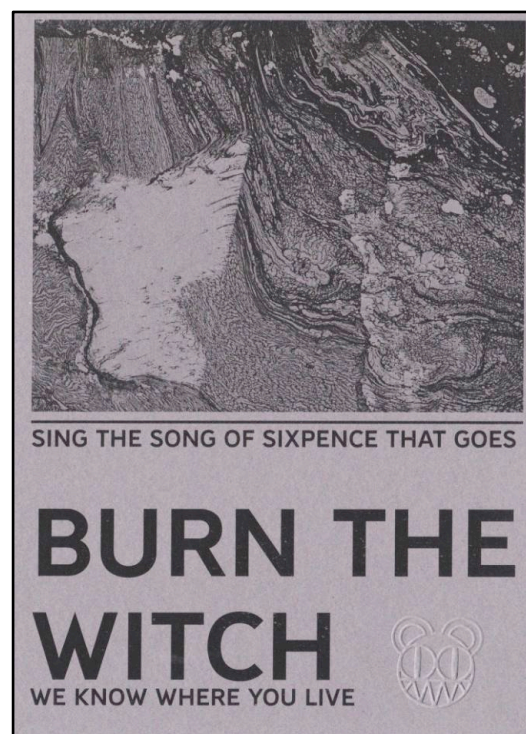


Figure 2) Example of a 'Burn The Witch' postcard received by a fan

Social Media / Online Disappearance (1st May)

Shortly after the postcard direct marketing stunt went viral, Radiohead slowly removed their online presence. The band did this by deleting their entire history of social media activity - on both the band's official accounts and the band member's individual accounts - on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, and replacing their profile and cover photos with blank, white images. Radiohead's official website was also replaced with a blank webpage. This stunt was implemented as an inexpensive method of enhancing the mystery surrounding the band's recent marketing activity and also to further the growing media frenzy. This stunt acted as a direct antitheses of typical social media campaigns; Radiohead completely withdrew their online content and left fans guessing, opposed to the generic tactic of flooding audiences with information in order to stand out among the 'noise' of competitors on social media networks.

'Burn The Witch' Teaser Video + Release (3rd May)

Radiohead continued to oppose standard music marketing tactics and posted a teaser video online at 6am, whilst the large majority of their fan-base were still in bed. The teaser video was then the only piece of content on both their website and their social media pages, giving it the maximum amount of exposure possible. The music video for the song was revealed several hours later with an official release arriving the following day (4th May).

'Daydreaming' Release + Album Announcement (6th May)

Radiohead retained headlines over the week as they kept up their relentless flurry of marketing activity. On May 6th, the group posted another teaser video - this time for the single 'Daydreaming' - and quickly followed it up with a full-length music video and official single release once again. The bio of the music video announced that the, as yet untitled, 9th album would be released digitally on the 8th May.

'A Moon Shaped Pool' Album Release (8th May)

On Sunday 8th May at 7pm, Radiohead released their 9th album, 'A Moon Shaped Pool'. The title and the artwork for the album were withheld right up until the point that the album was made available for purchase; this meant that in order to witness the highly-anticipated announcement of the title and artwork, you would have to visit the webpage in which the album was available to listen to or purchase. This would have likely led to increased sales, as Stanley Donwood's artwork has always been an integral and synonymous part of Radiohead's musical output.

4. Recommendations

In this chapter I will outline my recommendations for Radiohead's marketing activity across the next 12 months.

Music Video Series

Due to the success and appraisal of Radiohead's last two music videos, I believe that they should continue to release engaging video content. Fans embrace the partnership of audio and visual content, and pop musician, Beyoncé, who recently released a 'visual album' to great acclaim, has proven this. If Radiohead were to sporadically release music videos for every song on the 9th album, the content would not only provide the band with continued media coverage, but fans would also anticipate future releases.

Live Streaming

Many fans missed out on the opportunity to get tickets for Radiohead's world tour, therefore I believe that live streaming the shows online would be greatly appreciated by fans worldwide. Live streaming is currently going through a vast surge in popularity, and embracing this would be reflective of the band's technologically pioneering nature. It is also likely to be welcomed by the fan-base, who have been characterised as being 'technologically-savvy'. The success of schemes like this is confirmed by Radiohead's previous live performances that are available in full online, some of which have amassed up to 6.4 million views.

Surprise Festival Performance

Radiohead are not scheduled to perform at any UK festivals this summer, therefore an exclusive surprise performance could generate significant media attention. In 2011, the band performed an unannounced set at Glastonbury Festival to promote their new album and the performance was watched on BBC by millions of viewers. I believe that Radiohead should aim to do a similar performance in 2016 because of the festival's high-volume of attendance, widespread media coverage, unmatched TV and online viewing figures, and the festival's tradition of annual high-profile surprise performances. This would also act as a way to perform music from the new album live to audiences who were not able to attend the world tour, and would perfectly align with the gaps in the band's current touring schedule.

Music Awards

If Radiohead were to win or become nominated for music awards, it would provide a great platform for press coverage. It would also improve their brand positioning, as they would be recognised among the upper-echelon of recording musicians. A live performance at an awards ceremony could also greatly improve their brand awareness.

Additional Music Releases

Among their core audience, Radiohead are admired for their catalogue of B-Sides and releases outside of their full length LP's. If unused songs from the 9th album's recording sessions were released online, this would provide fans with substantial new content and could be used as another revenue stream for the band.

Additional Tour Dates

Lastly, I believe that Radiohead should announce more worldwide tour dates towards the end of 2016. All of the previously mentioned recommendations can be used to sustain the 'hype' surrounding the band throughout the summer, and recordings of live performances can be utilised to encourage fans to watch the band in concert. The announcement could also be tied into the release of either the video series content or the additional music releases

Table 4) Recommendations Budget

Recommendation	Description	Budget (approx.)
Music Video Series	The music videos could be filmed on a medium-low budget. This would involve small crews, a limited amount of actors, and filming taking place in private/agreed upon locations.	£5k - £10k per video £45k - £90k total
Live Streaming	The costs of live streaming rely on the amount of bandwidth required in order to stream to a designated amount of people at the desired bitrate. Only one live stream will be aired per venue to reduce costs, and live streams will not apply to festival performances.	£5k per show £45k total
Festival Performance	There are minimal costs for this recommendation as the band will likely be provided with travel and will be paid for their performance.	N/A
Music Awards	There are minimal costs for this recommendation as the band will likely be provided with travel and will be paid for their performance.	N/A
Additional Music Releases	If the songs are released online via music streaming sites or the bands official website then it is unlikely that there will be any significant costs.	N/A
Additional Tour Dates	Touring is expensive due to the high volumes of travel, equipment, and staff required. The costs, however, are often recuperated through ticket sales.	£750k
		Up to £885k total

5. Conclusion

It is of my belief that Radiohead have successfully marketed themselves in the run-up to the release of their 9th album in a way that is reflective of the bands innovative and unique attitude. The band have managed to gain mass media coverage, implement an effective social media campaign, and communicate with their core audience through direct marketing.

It is difficult to measure the overall success of Radiohead's marketing activity as a lot of the content has only been revealed within the last week (correct as of May 9th). Radiohead's official twitter account, however, has gained 500,000 followers since their 'online disappearance'.

I believe that through the implementation of the recommendations, the band will be able to surpass their desired aims and objectives.

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Appendices

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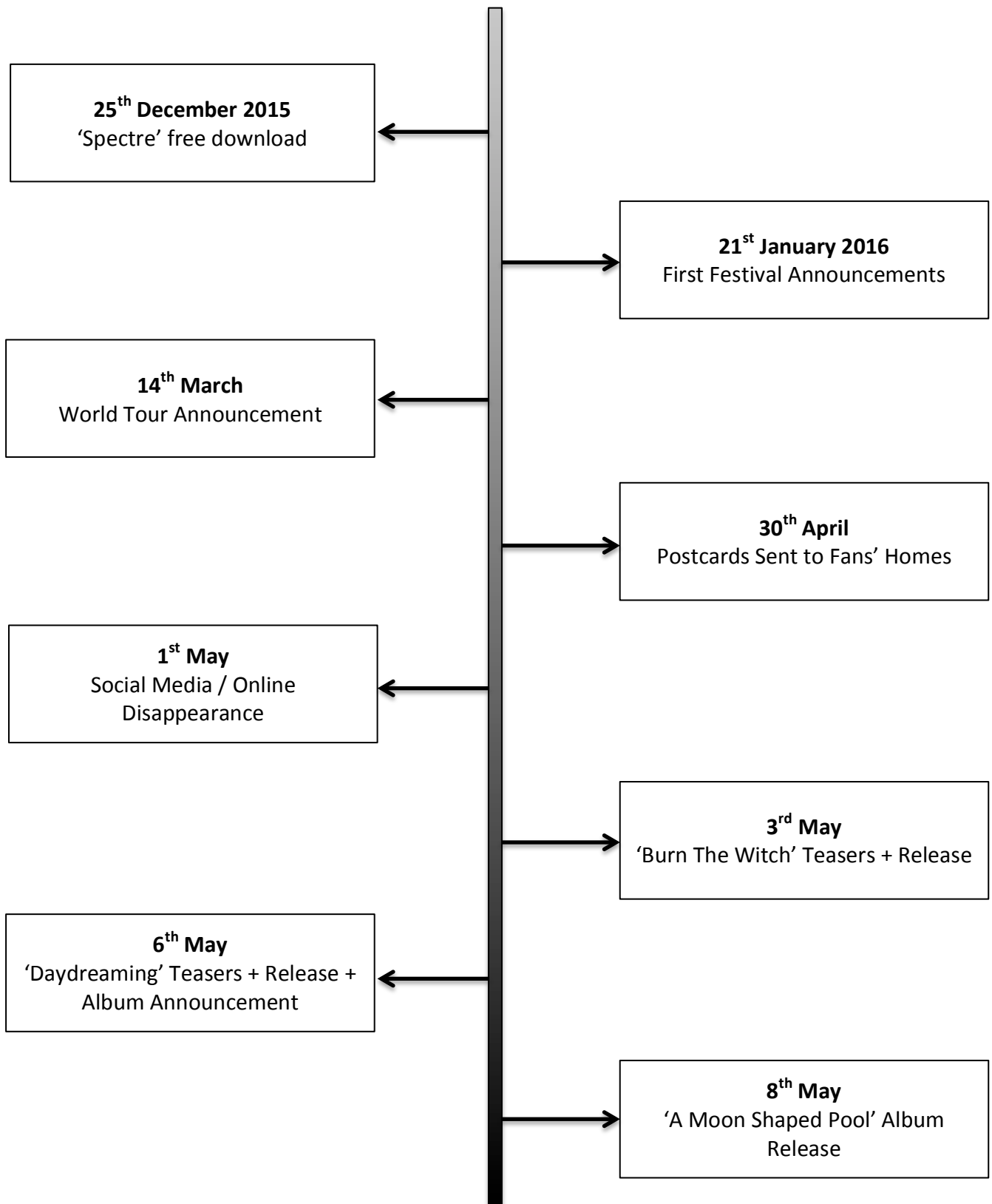


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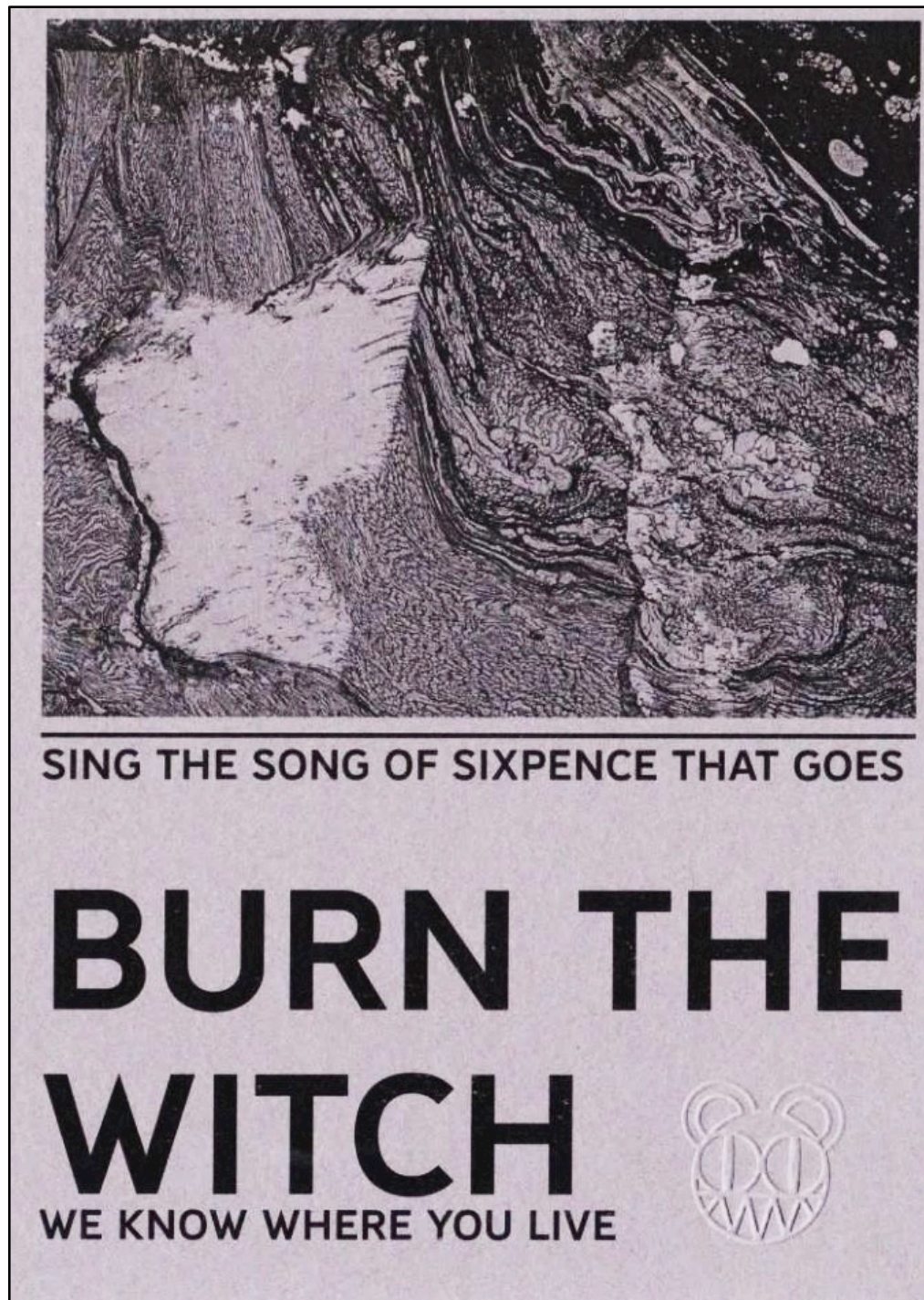


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