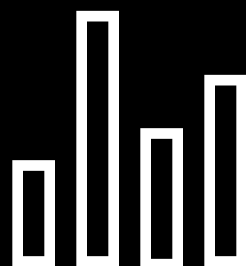
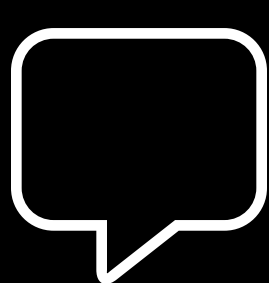


SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MUSICIANS

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE



CREATING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

When you take the first steps to turn your passion into your career, it can be extremely overwhelming. Where do you even start? How do you get from where you are to where you want to be?

DEFINING BRAND GUIDELINES

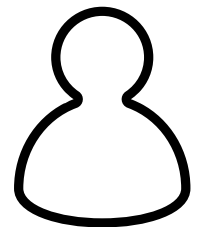
The key is to start thinking of your career as a business, and the first step is to establish and define your product - **you**. Creating your “brand” will help you develop a voice for your promotional efforts and give you a roadmap for how to interact with fans on social media. If you take a look at any of your favorite artists, from Killer Mike (Run the Jewels) to Johnny Cash, they all have a consistent brand. See Killer Mike randomly throw a shoutout to 420 in the middle of October, and it’s just Killer Mike being Killer Mike. Johnny Cash performing at Folsom Prison, while unorthodox for most musicians, solidified his brand of “Outlaw Country Singer.”

CREATING YOUR STYLE GUIDE

A style guide is a set of standards for the voice and look of a brand. In this case, it’s sort of like a manual for how to be yourself. You may think that this is a waste of time, but you’re going to have an onstage persona that’s different from how you are when you’re hanging out with your best friend, and you’ll want to think about what that persona looks like before you start posting.

BRAND WHO AM I?

You’ll answer this question later on in this section, but this will help define how you want to be perceived by fans, peers, executives, and the public at large. Think of this as your 2 minute pitch - where did you come from, what are your musical influences, and what’re you using your music to express?



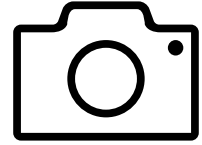
MESSAGING WHAT AM I SELLING?

What do you want listeners to gain from your music? If you’re a ragtag, 15-person folk ensemble, you can afford to be more whimsical and personal on social media. If you’re a solo rapper from Chicago, you may want to be more straightforward and business-oriented until you get a larger following.



TAGGING & CREATIVE WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE?

What vibe do you want to give new followers? Do you want your photos to say hipster/Instagram like Sugar and the Hi-Lows, or do you prefer the mysterious, black and white imagery of Nipsey Hussle? Is your profile straightforward with your artist name or do you want to go with a nickname like Lil Chano From 79th?



VOICE WHAT DO I SOUND LIKE?

Create a consistent and unique voice across all of your platforms. Are you funny, or serious? Politically involved, or neutral? Long-winded, or short and to the point? There's no right answer to this, but it should be a reflection of your usual tendencies towards language.



TAKEAWAYS

Once you create brand guidelines for yourself, it becomes much easier to start interacting with fans, venues, and brands on social media. Think of it as blazing a trail for yourself - carving out your path and staying on course turns the overwhelming task of social media strategy into a manageable and repeatable recipe for success.

The most important thing to keep in mind through all of this is to be yourself. People love categorizing things into boxes, which is why you've probably been compared to dozens of different musicians throughout your career. As cheesy as it may sound, remember that no matter what kind of music you're making or how outlandish your onstage persona is, that you're always in control of your career and the easiest way to connect with fans is by being yourself.

“ If you perceive yourself as just one of hundreds of talented musicians, it is easy to feel discouraged from pursuing the career of your dreams. This is where having a brand can help turn your career around. Once you see yourself as unique, it reduces the pressures of competition because you know that you have something special to offer. It is the start of trusting your gift. The same holds true when you know why are you are the ideal person to satisfy the needs of your target audience. If you truly believe that you are the best person for that audience, it reinforces your uniqueness. ”

— **ASTRID BAUMGARDNER**, COORDINATOR OF CAREER STRATEGIES AND LECTURER AT THE YALE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

CREATING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

WORKSHEET

Knowing the answers to these questions will give you much more clarity about how to speak to both your audience and how to sell yourself to venues and press.

1. How would your friends, family or people who know you best describe your personality? How would they describe your music? What does their social media presence look like? If you were a major Twitter celebrity who would you be?
2. Is there a musician or band who makes music that is similar to yours? Who is it?
3. If you were a major Twitter celebrity who would you be?
4. What do you want your brand to say about you?
5. What's your dream venue?
6. You're opening a show - who's headlining?

Now that you've figured out how to define yourself as an artist, let's talk about targeting your audience.

DEVELOPING YOUR PRESENCE

Now that you've spent some time thinking about your brand guidelines, you're going to want to think about how that works in practice. If your brand message says one thing, how can you drive that message in every element of your social media presence?

WHERE TO JOIN THE CONVERSATION

You should be active on every channel where you have a profile, so we recommend using your energies committing hard to the social channels that benefit you the most. You don't have to be on every channel to stay a part of the conversation, so where should you be creating profiles and fan pages?

FACEBOOK

CHANNEL VALUE High; you should definitely have a Facebook fan page	PROS Most popular social channel; puts your name in front of the widest group of people; opportunities for boosted posts	CONS Algorithm is designed to sink your content if it doesn't receive engagement; separate app required for mobile updates and analytics
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TWITTER

CHANNEL VALUE High; Twitter is a great way to gain more listeners and connect with other artists	PROS Huge opportunities to join trending conversations or live-tweet major events; you can update this network often; easy way to connect with brands, venues, and other artists	CONS Limited character number reduces the amount of content you can post; the network moves so quickly that the shelf life of a Tweet can be as little as 15 minutes
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INSTAGRAM

CHANNEL VALUE Moderate-High; if you plan on updating it regularly, Instagram is a great tool for gaining new fans	PROS One of the most popular social channels; Instagram story lets you easily update fans about your life and is quickly growing in popularity; heavy tagging is acceptable and can gain you more engagement	CONS You may lose engagement if you don't have a diverse range of high quality photos that you can post regularly
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YOUTUBE

CHANNEL VALUE Moderate-High; if you have high quality content that you can keep up regularly. If you don't, you should focus more of your time on other channels	PROS A very popular medium for listening to music; collect royalties on your music played on YouTube	CONS The standard for video quality is high, so you should only post if and when you have high quality content to put out
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SOUNDCLOUD

CHANNEL VALUE Moderate-High; most valuable for Hip Hop and EDM artists, but is not always necessary (especially when you're distributing to larger streaming services)	PROS Most popular social channel; Complete control over your artist page; easy sharing with followers; detailed analytics	CONS You do not earn royalties from plays on SoundCloud; the free creator tier offers a limited amount of upload time
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SNAPCHAT

CHANNEL VALUE Moderate; this channel is the most valuable for artists with a large fan base between 18-24 years old	PROS Snapchat is an easy way to connect with fans quickly and often without seeming overbearing	CONS The popularity of Snapchat has gone down since the advent of the Instagram story; very regular updates are required to keep up with this channel; discovery element for potential new followers is difficult
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MIXCLOUD

CHANNEL VALUE Moderate; this channel is the most valuable for EDM artists and DJs	PROS Focused user network offers easy targeting; build your own radio station options; social feed allows users to view what their Facebook friends are listening to	CONS Not a very popular network; targeted mostly to one or two genres
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“Right now the biggest challenge for an indie artist is over-saturation...Artists really have to find new ways to be creative on their social media outlets to stand out from the crowd.”

— TYLER ALLEN, MUSIC CONSULTANT

HANDLES & USERNAMES

When creating your social media profiles, it's important to consider your fans' experience. Having an overly complicated social media handle can make it more difficult for fans to follow and tag you. On the other hand, using too generic of a handle or hashtag will likely muddy your social media presence. Something short and direct is the best route to go, like @CereusBright or @chancetherapper. If your name has already been taken, you can make a nod to your location, like @inglewoodsir. The easier it is to remember your handle, the easier it is for your fans to engage.

SOCIAL MEDIA BIOS

Think of your bio as your 30 second pitch: who are you, what do you do, what do you like, who do you work with. On Twitter, bios are typically a quick list of different roles and accomplishments. On other mediums, your bio can be slightly longer. No matter what, they should be direct and showcase your best self. It's also good to add an element of humanity in your bio, especially on networks like Instagram and Twitter that tend to have a lot of bots

CREATIVE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

If you've already distributed music, you've probably gone through the stress of deciding what your cover artwork should look like. Having artwork that represents your music is sometimes just as important as the music itself. This also applies to the artwork you use on social media.

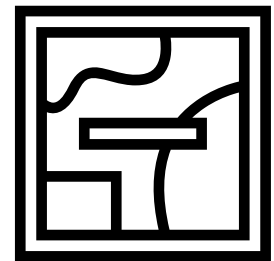
The key for graphics on social media (profile picture, header/cover photo) is simple, clean, and direct. Having a ton of promotional copy on your artwork, having blurry artwork, or having an image that doesn't look like you can all send the wrong impression to fans or industry. After all, your social media presence is the closest connection that you have to your fans day-to-day. The more professional and clean your graphics are, the more legit you'll look - fake it till you make it, right?

STORE ARTIST PAGES

Streaming services like Spotify and Apple Music have made big strides in helping musicians gain control of their artist pages in digital stores. These can be another great opportunity for you to show off those awesome graphics you created, and help keep your fans' experience consistent no matter where they're interacting with you. Keep your Apple Connect profile up to date, and check out Spotify Artists to view analytics and customize your Spotify artist page.

TAKEAWAYS

You don't have to have a giant graphic design budget or a contracted copywriter to make your profiles look professional. If you take some time to sit down and review all of your profiles for consistent, sleek, and direct creative, you're on your way to looking just as legit as the pros.



DEVELOPING YOU PRESENCE

WORKSHEET

Make some time to sit down with this worksheet before you create your accounts to start with a clear, direct message from day one.

1. Have a friend with a good camera? Buy them lunch and have them shoot some photos of you around town. Overcast days already offer great (free!) lighting, so take advantage of the outdoors and get some nice imagery for your profiles.
2. Create a Canva account for free and upload your imagery. Decide on a font and color scheme that you like, and try to use those colors exclusively when designing your graphics. The more consistent the colors and font, the more professional you'll look.
3. Write down a few ideas for usernames or handles. Look them up on Twitter and Instagram, and see if they're already taken. Think about how easy it would be to figure out or remember the handle if someone was at your show and wanted to tag you.

Now that you've created your profiles, let see how can you use this branding in your everyday posting.

FINDING YOUR AUDIENCE

Now that you've explored "who you are" on your social media channels, it's important to think of who exactly you're going to showcase yourself to on social media.

IF THIS, THAN THAT

Every artist has musical influences - and while some folks reserve how much they're willing to let that show in their own music, it's okay to admit that you'd love to share the same kind of fan base. After all, if you're interested in building a social media following to promote your music, there's no sense in being too humble about what kind of music fans should know about you!

What kinds of content are your favorite artists sharing with their followers? Chiming in on current events? Funny memes? Sharing music and art that they love? And don't forget to ask yourself: how is it working? Just because your favorite artist or band has over 10,000 followers on a given channel doesn't mean that they got there following some kind of recipe for strong social media engagement.

Additionally, what's not working? If a band has 10,000 followers and only gets 5 favorites on a tweet, why didn't it get more? Did they diverge from their normal tone? Did it come too soon after a similar post? Did they post at the wrong time of day? Seeing what doesn't work for your role models is just as valuable as seeing what does.

BUILDING A NETWORK

It's also good to think about what kind of relationships these artists have with their music-making peers. If a band is sharing a bill with a few others, are they getting fans excited by showing their excitement about playing on the same stage with friends? By associating yourself with other artists, you're helping to recruit fans ahead of even performing for them.

You can also help connect with fans in a similar way. Fans have started tweeting at bands when they're trying to re-sell tickets that they can no longer use. A simple retweet is all you need to help more fans come to your shows and strengthen the bond you have with your listeners on social media.

TAKEAWAYS

When you're first getting started, you're going to want to find a very clear target audience to market to in the beginning. As you grow your fan base and gain more data using analytics, you can expand and change your audience as need be. For now, though, start small and use your direct connections to help cast a wider net.

FINDING YOUR AUDIENCE

WORKSHEET

If you don't already have a ton of followers, you're in a sweet spot for experimentation. Now's the time to throw things against a wall and see what sticks. So here are some tips to get you started.

1. Let's start by going back to Creating Your Personal Brand. Who did you pick for the question, "You're opening a show - who's headlining?" Take a look at their social media, how do they promote themselves? How does their Instagram differ from their Twitter, Facebook, etc?
2. Heading on the road or playing outside of your local scene? Throw a shout out to the venue you're playing on Twitter. Grab a bite to eat and remember to tag your location! Ask your fans for recommendations of local dives or sights.
3. Update your boosted posts to target new locations as you move through your tour. Playing in Denver in a month? Start focusing your efforts to that demographic now so you can sell more advanced tickets.
4. No tour dates or new releases coming up? Try sharing a YouTube video of yourself performing a cover song! You can pick one that your fans might know and love, or have fun with it and choose one that turns heads. Ask your fans a question! It doesn't have to be super personal, but it should be relatable. This is a good time to see how willing your fans are to engage directly with you and what kind of topics might drive that engagement.

So you know who you are and you know who your audience is. Now we're going to tackle how to engage with that audience.

ENGAGING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

At this point in time, it's become widely accepted that you cannot take the exact same approach to every major social channel. Some people prefer the succinct nature of Twitter; others love the broader conversations on Facebook; and some fans will take scrolling through filtered photos on Instagram over news articles and invites any day of the week. As you build followings on all of these platforms, think carefully about how you approach not only what you share, but also how you encourage conversation among fans.

QUALITY OF CONTENT

The cornerstone of a strong social media strategy is good quality content that your fans want to engage with. Your social media content should be stimulating but still consistent—it doesn't need to all be professional quality, but it's still important to stay true to the brand aesthetic you established in "Creating Your Personal Brand".

POSTING 101

Before you post anything, take a second to ask yourself these questions:

WHO?

Is there a specific type of fan that I'm trying to reach? (ie. I'm playing a show and I want to target fans in a specific city)

WHAT?

What type of engagement am I looking for? (ie. likes or follows, ticket or merch purchase)

WHERE?

Which channel is going to reach the largest pool of fans?

WHEN?

When should I post, based on channel and the desired action? (ie. posting a month before a show versus day of)

HOW?

What type of content is going to best communicate my desired message? (ie. a video will likely be less successful at getting ticket sales than a text post)

CONNECTING WITH FANS OUTSIDE OF MUSIC

When you're first starting out, the professional grind can sometimes make you forget that you're a living, breathing human being. Especially with artists, offering your fans an opportunity to relate to you on a personal level is a great way to enhance brand loyalty. The more your fans feel like they know you, the more they'll engage with both your social media and your music.

Give fans a reason to want to follow you beyond just the fact that they like your music.

A good rule of thumb is the 80/20 rule - 80% Entertain, 20% Sell. If you're constantly swarming people with promotional content, you're going to give off the vibe that you'll shmooze with anyone to get ahead in your career. On the other hand, if you only post about your personal life, people aren't going to take you seriously as a professional musician.

Big network events are a great way to connect with fans outside of just promoting your music. For example, live tweeting the Grammys or the Super Bowl Halftime show are both awesome opportunities to connect about music with a huge range of new people. Political events are typically something to avoid, unless you're willing to double-down on your beliefs and risk losing some followers in the process. Again, as long as you're committed to the brand guidelines you set for yourself in Volume 1, engaging in big national or world events is a great way to get yourself involved in the conversation and maybe gain some new followers in the process.

CHANNEL DIFFERENTIATION

Each social media channel has its own strengths - it's how they can all coexist in harmony, rather than constantly competing against each other. It's important to consider these strengths when you're posting to each channel. After all, why are you going to try to cram an entire Facebook post into a 140 character tweet?

Your fans are also going to be drawn to different mediums based on your brand. Some musicians do really well on Twitter, while others have a devout Instagram following. Figuring out which channel your fans follow the most can give you some insight into what kind of content they're looking to see from you.

“Having a brand also helps you work smarter, not harder, because your efforts are focused on the specific audiences you want to attract. Our first musician will pursue audiences who enjoy a festival atmosphere, where the second musician will direct his efforts to finding people who are eager to host home concerts. They save time because they know whom to pursue and what they are going after.”

— **ASTRID BAUMGARDNER**, COORDINATOR OF CAREER STRATEGIES AND LECTURER AT THE YALE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

WHAT TYPE OF CONTENT WORKS BEST FOR EACH CHANNEL?

It's important to know which content works best for each channel so that you're not wasting your efforts. Each channel speaks its own language, so you should tweak your message ever so slightly to help better accommodate that language.

FACEBOOK

Engaging content that is hyper-targeted to your audience. Longer text posts, videos, photos, and link sharing all work on Facebook fan pages.



TWITTER

Short content that is either trending/topical or non-consequential (like life updates). This is also the best medium for engaging with brands and venues, or getting in on trending events or hashtags.



INSTAGRAM

Great for sharing behind the scenes footage. Share pictures from the studio, your sound check, or even your first Austin breakfast taco. Use stories and live features to offer promotions or sneak peeks of new music.



SNAPCHAT

Great for giving your fans a window into your offstage personality. Share life events, music updates, or offer promotions using your Snapchat story.



POST FREQUENCY

When you're first starting out, you can sometimes feel the impulse to blast people with as much content as you can manage. The more content you produce the more people will see your posts, right?

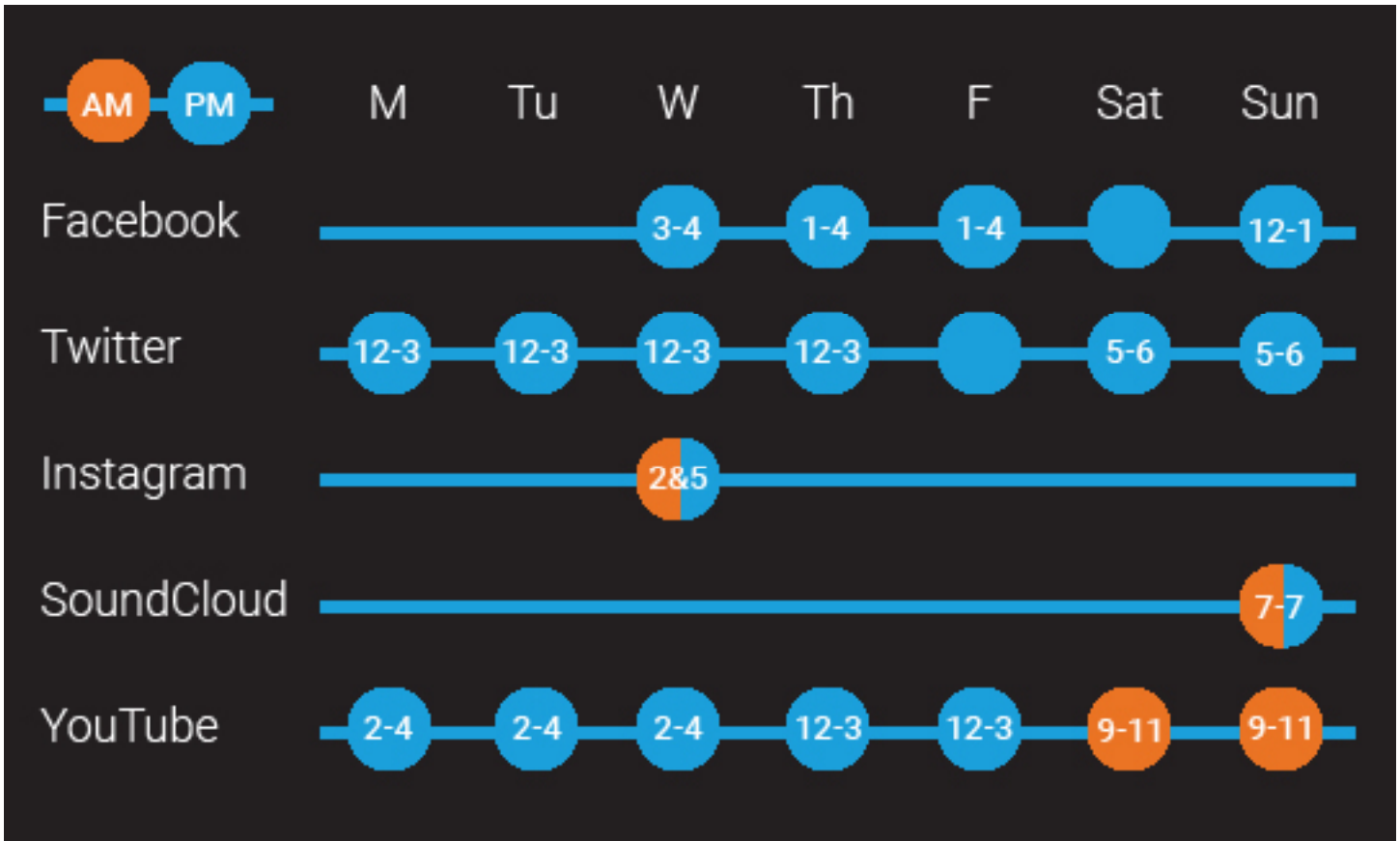
This is definitely not the path to take when you're trying to build your audience. You want to find a sweet spot where you're posting often but not exhausting your fans with an overdose of content.

Have you ever watched a TV show online and been forced to watch the same exact commercial 10 times in one 25 minute episode? What starts off as a normal ad spot quickly starts to feel annoyingly aggressive when you're hearing the same message too many times in a short period of time. Think of your posts, instead, like the Super Bowl. There's a lot of people competing for the same audience, so you should make sure that what you have to say is going to stick with people.

A great tool for finding this sweet spot is scheduling posts. Taking a step back to look at your entire social media strategy at once can give you some much needed perspective on where you can post more, and when you back off. It'll also offer the opportunity to stay engaged without constantly worrying about your posting schedule.

BEST TIMES TO POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA (EST)

Schedule posts within these time frames so that you can maintain engagement, even when you're busy living your life.



TAKEAWAYS

There are a lot of variables for what can make content impactful. If you keep these variables in mind and place value on quality over quantity, you're more likely to increase your followership. There's a lot of social value in sharing quality content that exposes your social network to new and exciting material, so if you offer your fans something worth sharing, they're likely to follow suit.

ENGAGING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

WORKSHEET

If you're looking at your career like a business, consider this section your research and development phase. What is your audience looking for? How can you keep your content fresh while still maintaining your brand messaging?

1. Think of one simple message that you want to get out there, for example, "I'm hosting an open mic at my local coffee shop in two weeks and I want you to come check it out." Post that same message on a different social channel every day for a week. Try to make the message different every time you post, really taking into account the type of content and posting time that works best for the specific channel you're posting to that day.
2. Sit down and plan your whole social media strategy for the upcoming month. Print out a blank calendar or use an online calendar app to map everything out before you start scheduling, trying to balance when and how often you post to different channels. Use TuneCore Social to schedule your posts without having to bounce between different channels.
3. Go to Twitter and check out what hashtags are trending. If something interests you, try and get in on the conversation in a genuine way.
4. Expose your fans to music that you enjoy - if your favorite artist or band just came out with a new video that you're really into, share it with your followers.
5. The next time you play a show, throw a shout out tweet to the band(s) you're playing with and to the venue where you're performing. Retweet if the venue or the other band mentions you in their promotional posts.

So now we know what kind of content to post, but let's check out how to determine what's working and how to improve.

ANALYZING YOUR PERFORMANCE

Ask almost any artist about math and they will bolt for the nearest hiding place. We know it can be an overwhelming undertaking to try and get anything out of social media analytics, so why is it important to keep an eye on these stats in the first place?

WHY NUMBERS MATTER

When you're an independent artist working for and by yourself, you can lose perspective on what's working and what's not. It's why we ask for feedback on our music - we want to know if the messages we're trying to express are being communicated outside of our own experience.

The same thing applies to analytics - they give us objective feedback on whether or not the things we're doing on social media are working, and help us to better understand what to amplify and what to avoid. When you view analytics as feedback instead of a wash of data, you can better understand what your fans want from you.

COLLECTING ANALYTICS

The first step is to collect as much data as you can to help gain a better objective picture of your engagement. The more information you have, the more insightful your findings will be, so you're going to want to collect analytics from every social channel where you have a profile.

Almost every social channel has their own analytics tools, so you can go to each channel individually, gather this information, and funnel it all into a spreadsheet. This is a great way to get a lot of detailed analytics for free, but it's very time consuming and requires some experience using a spreadsheet tool like Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets. This can be overwhelming for right-brain dominant artists who have a different kind of intelligence.

The easiest way to gather these analytics all at once is to use a tool like TuneCore Social. If you distribute through TuneCore, you can try TuneCore Social for free and get a basic overview of your analytics across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, SoundCloud, and MixCloud. If you're in a place where you want more detailed analytics, you can upgrade to TuneCore Social Pro at any time.

UNDERSTANDING THE NUMBERS

Once you've gathered all of your information, you can start interpreting the data. This brings us to the most important advice we can give you when it comes to viewing statistics

Your growth numbers are more important than your follower stats.

This isn't to say that your follower count is a throwaway statistic, but when you're new to the game and your follower counts are still respectively low, it's more important to see how fast you're growing. It's also encouraging to keep things in perspective - you're not going to reach 100,000 Twitter followers overnight, but if you aim to grow at a rate of 5-20% per month, eventually you may get to that number or even higher.

Another benefit of a service like TuneCore Social is that everything is already funneled into digestible and easy-to-read charts.

Find where you're growing the most and use that to inform your content across all of your channels.

INVESTING TIME WHERE IT COUNTS

It's important to target which channel is gaining you the most traction. If your follower count is growing much faster on Twitter than on Facebook, this can send a message about both what your followers like about you, and what they're looking for from social media in general. If your followers are super engaged on Facebook but not at all on Twitter, it's most likely a sign that you don't need to dedicate as much time to Twitter.

Invest your time in the channels that are offering you the highest reward for your time.

UNDERSTANDING AND UTILIZING KPIs

KPIs, or Key Performance Indicators, are ways of determining your growth from a presented set of data. In the case of social media, it's a way of viewing your analytics and figuring out what is helping or costing you new followers.

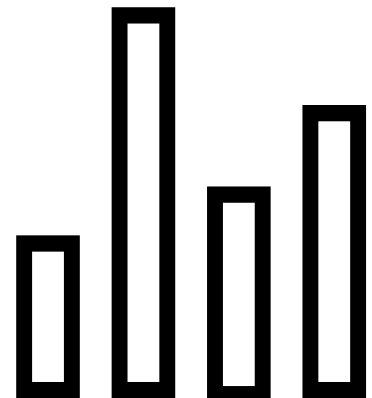
KPIs FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

ENGAGEMENT RATES

How many people engage with your post, versus how many people saw your post.

ON SITE CONVERSION RATES

Out of the people who engaged with your content, how many of them took the desired course of action?



WHAT THIS MEANS

Let's say you have a show coming up in Seattle at the end of the month. You post a Facebook update with a ticket link, encouraging people to come see the show. Of the 530 people who see the post, it receives 24 post clicks and 27 reactions/comments/shares. This means you had an engagement rate of 9.62%. If 10 people follow the link and purchase tickets, you had a 19.6% on site conversion rate.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Engagement rates can look discouraging at first glance, but it's important to keep in mind that most engagement rates on social media are between 1-2%. Seeing a post with an engagement rate of 9.62% may seem low, but it's actually a solid number worth celebrating.

TAKEAWAYS

KPIs are important both in determining the success and failure of a post, as well as figuring out how much time and energy a post is worth. This goes back to determining the value of your efforts - if you're spending time or money to boost a post and it's not getting you a high level of engagement, it may not be worth it to continue investing in that type of post.

Between budgeting and analyzing data, numbers can feel like a major buzzkill compared to jamming out with your friends. But using these numbers to your advantage can not only gain you more followers, it will also save you some time.

“ If every click on your music links were actually an individual fan at your physical doorstep, you would probably take that opportunity to deepen the relationship, right? He or she represents growth potential for your business as an artist. More sales (albums, singles, tickets, merch), more fans through their social sharing and word of mouth, turns into more music – you doing what you love! ”

– DAVIN RILEY, CEO OF MSCLVR

ANALYZING YOUR PERFORMANCE

WORKSHEET

When you look at numbers big picture, it can be overwhelming. Try these tips to break down the numbers into smaller, more digestible steps to help you take immediate action.

1. If you haven't yet, set up a TuneCore Social account and connect every possible social channel you have. Check out your growth over the last 30 days - what was your most successful post? Where did you see the highest growth in followers?
2. Take your 5 most successful posts - what do they all have in common? Try to replicate that strategy for a month and see how your engagement rates change.
3. Take your 5 least successful posts - what do they all have in common? How can you avoid posting like that in the future?
4. Repeat questions 2 and 3 for each channel. Did you find any differences in what type of content works best on each channel?
5. Find any posts where you asked your fans to take a certain action - anything from buying a concert ticket to streaming your music on Spotify. On the same day as your post, did you see an increase in those actions? If so, what type of posts worked best?

Now that you know what your fans are reacting to, let's try to utilize those numbers to your advantage.

IMPROVING YOUR PERFORMANCE

So now you know what works and what doesn't on your social media profiles. What do you do with those analytics? How can you use them to increase engagement and earn more followers?

GEO-TARGETING

Musicians earn most of their money from touring. But, especially in the beginning of your career, to make a tour successful it's important to know where your fans are based. This is where analytics can help you.

Both your TuneCore sales report and TuneCore Social analytics are great tools for helping to refine what you know about your audience. The countries and cities where you're getting the highest play counts should dictate which cities to tour; these stats can both help book you the gig, as well as sell tickets.

PAID ADVERTISING

You've probably heard the term before, "you have to spend money to make money." This especially applies to aspiring artists (as you may already know if you've ever tried to record an album). But you'd be surprised to know how far a few bucks can go when it comes to promoted posts on social media.

BOOSTED/PROMOTED POSTS

A boosted post is a regular status update that you pay to show up more often in the newsfeeds of a target audience. This may seem like a slimy thing to do to increase engagement, but when you take into account the tons of different variables that may result in fans missing your post, it's better to think of these boosted posts more as gentle reminders than aggressive marketing blasts. You don't even need a huge budget for these boosted posts - a \$10 spend over two days can increase the likelihood of engagement and not cost you an arm and a leg. We recommend using boosted posts for call-to-action posts, like asking fans to purchase tickets or download your new single.

GROWING AND BUYING FOLLOWERS

You're always going to want to start your pages with the highest number of genuine, organic followers as possible. Share your pages with everyone you know - ask your friends and family to like your Facebook fan page and follow you on Twitter and Instagram. Put some effort into boosted posts and see how many fans you get this way. You'll probably get a solid amount of support from your direct network, but you're probably not going to reach the numbers you want just from friends and family.

The idea of purchasing followers, likes, views, etc. on social media is nothing new, but it's a method that tends to carry a bad reputation. That said, it can be a huge help when it comes to getting your profiles off the ground and stirring up more engagement.

Think of it like this: nobody wants to go to a party until there are plenty of people there first, right? But if that's the case, how is one supposed to get a party started? The same can be said for your social media profiles.

The trick is to start small and supplement as you grow. Don't go straight for 1,000 Twitter followers if you have less than 1,000 plays on Spotify. Start with 200 or 500 followers, and as you gain more genuine fans, you can scale back on the numbers of bot followers until you've levelled off. From there, you can refocus your efforts on organic growth or buy more followers and continue to grow through this method.

It's also important to consider balance - it's going to look weird if you have 10,000 Twitter followers and 30 Instagram followers. Your most active social channel is probably going to have the highest organic follower count, but you should still keep your numbers pretty consistent if you're going to buy fans.

TAKEAWAYS

Your number one goal with social media should be to get people listening to your music. Using your analytics to help you improve the quality of your posting, as well as building up engagement through boosted posts and buying followers, is going to be a big help in getting more people listening to your music.

““ The bulk of your 'results' – ticket sales and album sales in most cases – are going to come from your existing fans. Using Facebook ads to increase this pool is a separate topic entirely, but once a show is on sale your focus should shift to those who have already identified themselves as fans.””

– DON BARTLETT, OWNER OF NO DOOR AGENCY

IMPROVING YOUR PERFORMANCE

WORKSHEET

So now you know what works and what doesn't on your social media profiles. What do you do with those analytics? How can you use them to increase engagement and earn more followers?

QUICK RECAP

1. Check out your sales reporting or TuneCore Social demographics and rank your top cities. Consider using this information to plan your next show.
2. Try boosting your posts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Where did you see the best results? Use this information to figure out how to best spend your money.
3. Have a show coming up soon? Target your audience in that specific area with three boosted posts over the month leading up to the show. Keep the same message across all three posts but try to mix it up each time. See how each post reacts and assess which was the most successful for the next time you boost a post.
4. Explore audience targeting in your best performing channel. What audiences are most similar to the fans you are looking for? Try to be as specific as the platform allows and try boosting posts to that specific audience.
5. Try buying 200 followers on your most popular channel. See how many organic followers you've gained after a month.

You've created your brand, targeted your followers, engaged with your fans, and reviewed your stats. How do you take your existing success and snowball it into something larger?

REPEAT & FINE TUNE

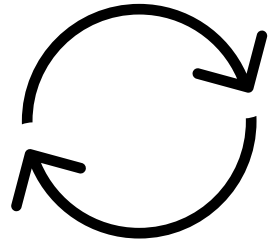
So you've gotten all of this information - now it's time to take the training wheels off and wrap up with a few last tips to help keep your momentum.

- Building a persona with clear brand guidelines will help give you a roadmap for developing a consistent social media presence.
- Finding a specific demographic of potential fans can help focus your marketing efforts and eventually lead to more organic follower growth.
- Keeping content diverse but consistent across your channels and remembering the type of content and time of day that works best for each channel will help improve your engagement rates.
- Gathering engagement statistics from all of your channels will help you gauge where you can improve and what your fans want to see more of.

CAPITALIZING ON YOUR SUCCESS

People are going to judge you throughout your career - it comes with the territory of being a performer. So having hard numbers to back yourself up is going to be important when you're first getting your name out. Bookers, managers, and labels will place a lot of value in your follower counts, so gathering an easy-to-read report of your growth on social media is a great way to show industry executives that you're legit. Use TuneCore Social Pro to download and print up to a year's worth of data, and take copies with you to your business meetings so you're always prepared in the event that you're asked about your follower stats.

REPEAT & FINE TUNE



INCREASING BRAND LOYALTY

The more fans feel like they know you, the more invested they'll be in your success. After all, how many times have you heard some kind of variation on, "I liked that band before they were cool"?

Keeping track of loyal fans can sometimes pay off bigtime - word of mouth is the strongest form of marketing out there, and superfans are the best advertisers you can get. Showing love to those loyal fans over time is going to be rewarding to both you and your fans. You don't have to give them your personal phone number or anything, but showing them special attention at the merch booth, taking photos with them, or throwing them a birthday shoutout on Twitter are just some small things that make a big impact on the people dedicated to your music and create a loyalty that will make them the first people to pre-order your next album.

TAKEAWAYS

While we can't offer you a degree in Marketing after reading this beginner's guide, we can definitely say you're moving in the right direction to get the word out about your music. This beginning phase should be a trial and error period, so feel free to take risks and see what pays off. Eventually, you'll get the hang of everything and your intuition will be sharper. For now, though, put yourself out on a limb and see what your fans are responding to the most.

If you haven't done so yet, now's a great time to get on TuneCore Social and check out your analytics to get yourself moving in the right direction. You can even start to set aside time every week to check in on all of your business stuff - review your new sales postings, check in on social media analytics, and schedule posts all from your TuneCore account. Try it for free with any active distribution, or get TuneCore Social Pro for comprehensive analytics and unlimited access to our mobile app.

Want even more help getting started? Check out our social media educational video series on YouTube, as well as our Music Made Me podcast on iTunes, SoundCloud, or Stitcher.