

guide to

SOCIAL NETWORKING

indie artist insider resource



SongCast

songcastmusic.com



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About SongCast

Got Digital? SongCast offers a streamlined and affordable music distribution service where artists and labels can release music into major digital stores such as iTunes, Amazon MP3, Google Play, Spotify, Rhapsody, eMusic, and MeidaNet. Plus, artists will have access to all of their respective international stores like iTunes Europe, Amazon UK, and many others. SongCast provides monthly accounting and royalty payments, along with world class artist and label support. And with the tools we have available to promote music, SongCast makes it easy for artists to sell their music online.

Learn more about SongCast and get started selling your music today!

<http://www.songcastmusic.com>

How to Tell Your Story in a 2 Minute Video

A short video bio about you or your band goes a long way in today's YouTube culture. It serves as a sort-of elevator pitch to draw the interest of music biz folks and fans alike. This kind of bio can be used as a visual one-sheet to impress agents, contest judges, festival bookers, radio and TV producers and anyone else who might encounter it online, be it on your website, YouTube or part of a social networking platform. It can be more effective than an actual music video, as you can tell your story while overlaying clips of your song's video within the video bio, so people feel like they are getting the complete picture.

Production

Now comes the hard part: scripting, filming and producing this short clip that could help change the course of your career in the best direction possible. Video is a powerful tool, especially when done right. If done in an amateurish manner, you could become a joke and go viral in the worst possible way. This is why you should hire an experienced professional with all the right audio/visual equipment to help get your message across.

Narrative Arc

Now for the really important part: the story you tell. It should have a distinct and compelling narrative arc — a plot with characters (you and the band) the viewer can relate to, a rise in the action and then a climax. This is all fleshed out in the script. And, yes, you should have a script even for a short two-minute video clip such as this. Consider hiring a professional writer with experience in script writing to help. It's hard to write a good bio about yourself. Most people tend to go the boring, chronological-life-story or "What I Did On My Summer Vacation" route. Yawn! A professional bio writer will interview you, figure out the compelling narrative arc and then draft your script in a way you never could.

If you've garnered positive press reviews in your town ask the journalist who wrote the article(s) if they would narrate, or be interviewed for, the video. Or ask some other credible music biz person who likes your tunes. It adds a lot of content value when a

respected figure with an authoritative title like “music journalist” or “producer” is onscreen talking about how how great you are.

Don’t give too much info, and don’t get too complex or slick. Hit the highlights and accomplishments. If there were any major setbacks, don’t be afraid to explore them as well. It will humanize you. The bottom line is to show how you’ve grown as a person and an act through recording and performing music for people.

Will You use the New MySpace to Connect with Fans?

When was the last time you checked out your Myspace page? If you’re like a lot of musicians, it’s probably been a few years, ever since Twitter and Facebook became the dominant social networking platforms, with Pinterest coming in a distant, but respectable, third.

But now, Myspace is back and trying to regain relevance. No easy task considering the behemoth those other sites have become. This time around, Myspace is focusing on music, musicians and music fans. It remains to be seen if this newest incarnation will take hold. Myspace has become a throwback joke to the early aughts. Justin Timberlake is one of the backers behind new Myspace, which is ironic, since he was a star in a film about the rise of Facebook. But seemingly everything Timberlake touches turns to gold, so maybe they got it right. Or maybe they should’ve just started over with something fresh and new, and a new name.

Everybody’s old friend Tom, whose visage former Myspace users are intimately familiar with, is no longer around, presumably sitting on piles of money somewhere after selling Myspace for \$580 million to Rupert Murdoch in what has to be one of the more money-losing media buys in history. Timberlake and Co. picked it up for a cool, bargain basement price of \$35 million.

The new Myspace is absolutely nothing like the old Myspace. It looks better, it loads better and the new pages aren’t nearly as clunky as the old ones. It’s like Pinterest

meets Ping — the failed Apple service that tried, unsuccessfully, to cater to music lovers on a social networking level.

The question remains for indie acts: is Myspace worth going back to? Since it's a free service, perhaps yes. The larger question is, has Myspace done enough to warrant a mass returning of musicians? An informal poll of indie musicians on Facebook asking for opinions concerning the new Myspace offered the following responses:

"I tried logging in but my account doesn't seem to exist anymore. They said I had to create a new one."

"People are saying the music and artist pages are making a comeback. I have old bands on there. We are no longer together, so no point in paying for a website. Also, I'm glad we made those pages. Recently, I was contacted because of it, but I'm not even sure of the passwords!"

"I just tried to update my old account to the new Myspace and it says I am not eligible to have an account. This will just piss off old, dedicated users and they will not take the time to figure out the problem."

"It wouldn't allow me to sign in and add the old individual page to the new Myspace. I couldn't create or add any account whatsoever no matter which email I used."

The inability to access an old account or carry over an old Myspace page to the new Myspace is the most common complaint, so far. Former users must now start all over again, it seems.

For those who want to be complete-ists with their online presence, perhaps you should jump through all the new hoops and give new Myspace a try. It couldn't hurt, because it's another way to connect with fans. For those who never were on Myspace to begin with, definitely create a new account and let us know what you think. By all accounts, the new, improved Myspace is great for music lovers, but a lot of old users are likely to get frustrated and avoid it, given the feedback we've heard. What's your experience with the new Myspace?

Your Band's Guide to a Rockin' Pinterest

If you still think Pinterest is a website for girls to share pictures of designer clothes and dreamy guys, you're missing the boat. More to the point, you're missing out on one of the web's fastest growing sites, one that more bands and musicians are realizing is perfectly tailored for their promotional purposes. Savvy indie acts have been using Pinterest since it launched. If you've been avoiding Pinterest, it's time to get on board. Bands post fliers to promote shows; Pinterest is essentially a place where people post stuff, but instead of 140 characters, it's pictures and videos. It's a no-brainer. And it's free.

Here are some ways to make Pinterest work for your band

- Have each band member contribute. Make each person in the band an admin and have them link their Pinterest posts to their personal social networking pages. You can give each member their own personal pin board so fans can learn more about a specific member.
- Use the band's name in each board. People have a short attention span, especially on the internet, and can get lost surfing through Pinterest's pin boards. Make sure the band's name is in each board, i.e., TheGreatBand Posters; TheGreatBand Instruments; TheGreatBand Photos, etc.
- Let fans decide what boards should be. If your fans aren't on Pinterest, ask them to sign-up and teach them how to pin and re-pin.
- Don't make it ALL about you and your band. Dedicate a board or two to your influences and current bands you admire and let them and their fans know about it so they will re-pin.
- Always cross-pollinate your pins with your Facebook and Twitter pages, and encourage fans to share.
- Put the "Follow on Pinterest" button on your website.
- Have each band member make a playlist of their favorite music that includes a couple of your band's tracks on library sharing sites such as Spotify and "Pin It." Ask fans to do the same.
- Start a fan photo board where you pin nothing but pictures of the band's shows taken by audience members.

The ideas are endless but the bottom line is to make your fans and future fans feel like they have stumbled across a big, fascinating private scrapbook the band filled with all kinds of info and eye candy. Don't just post about upcoming gigs and releases, give people something they won't find elsewhere, something that utilizes the unique tools and features that Pinterest offers. And you might as well make a board of designer clothes and dreamy guys while you're at it, just for fun.

How to Make Your Facebook Timeline Sing

As an independent musician, you already know that getting the attention of the masses can be quite a challenge. Though social networking sites like Facebook are a blessing for those trying to get their name out there and to develop online marketing strategies, it can also become easy to get lost in the shuffle of other musical acts and artists. If you want succeed and stand out as an artist and with your online marketing strategies, here are a few tips to truly make your Facebook timeline "sing".

Make it a one-stop shop

Visitors to your Facebook page are much less likely to check out your other content and online marketing strategies if they are not synched up to your Facebook page. It is a great idea to consolidate your online presence by syncing Twitter and your Blog to your Facebook page. You can also utilize the YouTube app for Facebook in order to instantly share your personal videos and recordings with your fans.

Get in touch

One great thing about Facebook is that you are able to collect your fan's e-mail addresses so that you can keep them up-to-date on all of your upcoming events. This is ideal because although you may post these events, they can easily become lost in your fan's newsfeeds. Being able to send updates and reminders to fans directly is the perfect way to keep you and your events on their minds.

Promote Events

Take advantage of your ability to create and promote Facebook events for any of your musical shows or events. This enables you to reach countless fans and friends of fans to keep them in the know as to all of your gigs on a website that they visit every day. In order to get RSVPs, you may consider offering discounted ticket prices to the first x-amount of fans to confirm that they will be coming. You will have a better idea as to what the turnout will be and will be able to keep everyone posted should any changes occur.

Let your fans advertise for you!

Facebook is a fabulous online marketing strategy because it enables you to utilize your fans to spread the word about you without them even realizing it. In order for this to occur, you must inspire your fans to be active on your Facebook timeline. Each time a fan posts on your timeline, his or her posting will be recorded on their own timeline for all of their friends to see. Consider adding discussion questions to your page. Another idea is adding a “memories” area...ask fans who were at your gig to share their craziest stories as to what they got up to last night. If anyone takes pictures of your shows, consider finding the funniest one and hosting a “Caption This!” contest with a free piece of merchandise as a prize. Anything you do to get your fans involved is a good online marketing strategy for your Facebook timeline!

Get followers with Giveaways

Giveaways can be an extremely valuable online marketing strategy for independent musicians like yourself. The amount of “likes” that you receive for your Facebook timeline are essential to getting your name out there and reaching new fans. You may consider offering a weekly giveaway of a piece of your merchandise to those who are connected to your page through “liking” it.

Instead of simply fading into the background, turn your Facebook into a brilliant and successful online marketing strategy. When you take the time to care for your site and adhere to these tips, the end result will be a Facebook Timeline that truly sings.

How to Build an Online Community Around Your Music

The digital revolution, including the ability to delivery pristine audio instantly over the Internet directly to consumers, has been a boon for some independent musicians that have been able to capitalize and would otherwise never have had the chance for mass distribution. For many others, having an online presence might have gotten them a bit of exposure, but has not lead to many sales, causing them to lose faith in the self-distribution model.

However, since some bands *are* doing a respectable amount of business online without much label support, it obviously is possible to achieve success by selling directly to fans. So what do these artists do differently? What is the secret sauce in how to sell music online? The answer is to build an online community around your music using social networking.

Social media is effective due to the sheer volume of people who use its various platforms daily. It allows you to expose your music to millions of people and therefore get them to engage with you. Plus, your own fans spread your music for you, helping to build sales organically rather than by spending money.

Here are some specific strategies for how to sell music online using social media:

Facebook

The current king of social media, Facebook is rapidly approaching one billion users. The key to tapping into that user base is to post regularly, at least two to three times per week. The more exclusive and personal the content, the better, as Facebook users expect an intimate experience.

Twitter

Tweet breaking news, opinions about industry happenings, funny quips, and discounted or free song offers. Tweet several times per day.

Myspace

This platform has come back from the dead thanks to new ownership, a site redesign and wide adoption by musicians. Myspace is better for holding evergreen content than Facebook, so upload your photos, videos, podcasts and mp3s here.

Youtube, Vimeo, et al. Video is one of the most shared elements on the web, so capitalize on this by posting music videos, behind-the-scenes tour footage, personal vlogs, recording session footage, unplugged versions of songs, etc.

Blogs

Write about your experiences on tour, provide recording and gear tips, talk about your lyric-writing process, etc. Blog posts should provide an in-depth view into your world and allow fan comments for maximum engagement.

One last tip: connect with other like-minded artists through guest blogs, tagging them in posts and pictures, retweeting them, mentioning them on Facebook, and even uploading a quick interview with them recorded on your smartphone. Each mention and collaboration will connect you with their fans, potentially making them your fans as well.

As you can see, building a community of fans and followers online is an excellent, low cost solution for the “how to sell music online” question that many struggling musicians face. It can also be quite fun, as instead of dealing with corporate suits and marketing teams that might not “get” their ideals and message, musicians get to engage directly with the most important people — their fans.

Google+ for Bands: Using Hangout

Google+, the social networking platform from Google, launched in the summer to selected users on an invite only basis, and went public in September. As an indie artist, the service has a lot of features that are worth checking out, including Circles, Sparks and notably, Hangouts.

Hangouts are essentially a group video chat, with at most ten participants at a time. Hangouts can be public, so anyone can see one in their stream and join in. As an indie artist, imagine the possibilities. Here are some suggestions for you to use Hangouts to your advantage:

Collaborate

You're working on a new song but your writing partner is in LA. You're in New York. Now, you can collaborate – with both audio and visual– and bring on your bassist, drummer and lead guitarist to provide insight, as well.

Virtual Concerts

Want to treat your most hard-core fans to something really special? How about offering them a virtual concert? You can sit in the comfort of your own home – and so can they—as you bring them a unique viewing experience.

Virtual Residency

What if you told your fans that once a week at a set time you'd perform brand new songs and they'd be the first to hear them by joining your hangout? As a musician, it's a great way to try out new material and reward your biggest fans with something special.

Inspiration: Hangouts are also now integrated into YouTube, so you can watch videos simultaneously with friends. This gives you a great way to review music videos of your own, or by other artists and talk about your ideas while watching. You can critique, create and collaborate all at once.

Anytime, Anywhere

Mobile Hangouts are currently up and running, with Android 2.3+ devices with front-facing cameras (and iOS support is coming soon). Imagine the possibilities!

Edit Documents

Hangouts with Extras, currently in a preview state, will allow users to share documents, share a scratchpad and share their screens with other users. This could take writing music to a whole new level.

Google+ and Hangouts provide artists with a great tool for collaboration and innovation, all at no cost. Give it a try and see how you can best utilize Hangouts.

Google+ For Bands: Using Circles

We've talked a lot about the importance of using Facebook and Twitter on this blog. But the newest social networking site, and one that's quickly gaining traction is Google+.

Following a three-month invite only beta test period, Google+ went public in September. The competition between Google+ and Facebook has been heating up, with a lot of attention turned to Google+'s "circles," which have proven to be a great tool, and especially useful for indie musicians. Additionally, this month Google+ released the eagerly anticipated Google+ Pages, so you now can create a band page.

As you may know, Google+ allows users to share links, thoughts, photos as well as video chat, using their "hangout." But what differentiates all of that from Facebook is that you can share what you want *with the right groups of people or "circles."*

Think about it: in real life, you share different information with different people. You tell your mom different information than you tell your roommate. You share details with your drummer that you might not share with your former professor. Circles makes sharing the right information with the right people much easier.

As a musician, Google+'s circles make it easy for you to put your bandmates in one circle, and music supervisors in another. While you can make lists like this in Facebook, Google+'s more visual interface allows you to interact with these people more fluidly, rather than "list and forget" as often happens with Facebook.

When joining Google+, do not immediately dump everyone into the “friends” circle. Take the time to categorize your relationships and create circles that best fit your life and career. It will benefit you greatly in the long run.

Consider creating the following circles:

- Fans
- Family
- College/high school friends
- Booking Contacts for gigs
- Licensing contacts
- Management contacts
- Public Relations contacts
- Web/graphic design contacts
- And more

Remember that Google+ and all social networking platforms work best when there is a two-way conversation. Remember that you’re there to be social and to network. So share information with the right groups of people in the appropriate circles, and respond when others post things you care about.

Ways to Promote Your Music with Social Media

It’s no secret that one of the most important parts of becoming a successful musician is effectively promoting your music. The Internet has made it possible for musicians to reach a potentially huge fan base through social media, but how can you use websites like MySpace and Twitter to your advantage? Let’s look at 3 ways to promote your music with social media.

Social Networking

In recent years, MySpace has shifted its focus from social networking to music. The website now offers users the ability to locate new music by genre and listen to their tracks online, and making a band profile page is an easy way to increase your chances of being seen. However, recent social networking powerhouses Facebook and Google+ boast more page views and monthly hits than MySpace, making it a good idea to cover your bases by setting up profiles with each of these services in an effort to build your overall social network presence. Customize your page to reflect your band's type of music, post some photos from a recent show, and upload some tracks so that your audience is more inclined to follow your page. Ping, iTunes' social networking site, is another great way to promote your music as a part of SongCast's music distribution services. Ping enables users to view your artist profile and follow your band similar to MySpace and Facebook, but it also incorporates the best of these websites by allowing others to see what their friends have recently listened to, commented on, and followed.

Blogs

With the recent popularity of blogging platforms like Tumblr and micro-blogging services like Twitter, blogging has quickly become one of the most popular ways to share interesting information, photos, and videos. Starting a blog is simple and free with websites like Tumblr, WordPress, and Blogger. It's worth noting that Tumblr offers the ability to "follow" other users, similar to following someone on Twitter. This enables you to add others and promote your music by actively reaching out to members of the Tumblr community. In regards to what you can put on your blog, the ultimate choice is up to you, but some ideas are to include behind-the-scenes anecdotes about recent gigs, photos from concerts or album art, and information about your band. Blogging is an informal way of visually communicating with others, so have fun with it!

Sync and Update Frequently

You're not going to effectively promote your music if your MySpace page or blog hasn't been updated in a while. Sync your blog to your Twitter feed so that it's updated whenever you post. Follow users who have similar music interests, and actively engage your audience by updating frequently. Many popular blogs offer the ability to queue posts throughout the day so that it updates even when you're not there, and if you have

a smart phone, posting a Tweet is as easy as sending out a text when you have a spare minute. As long as you stick with actively reaching out to potential fans and keeping them updated, social media can effectively help you promote your music.

Google+ For Musicians

Google's foray into social networking, Google+, allows users to do the usual things like post links, photos and videos. But it also lets users filter friends ("Circles"), video chat ("Hangouts") and keep track of things that interest you ("Sparks").

Currently invite-only to those with Gmail accounts (although keep an eye on this because it may change), Google+ is also a great asset to indie artists. Here are some tips to get you started:

- Do not, I repeat DO NOT create a band profile page. At this time, Google+ is only set up for individual use, so you must use your own name. If you don't, you run the risk of having your profile deleted. So...
- Fill in your personal profile page, complete with photos and a link to your music and information about your musicianship in the "about" section. Since Google+ doesn't have band pages, your personal page will be just that—your own page – until they roll out pages for businesses and brands, later this year.
- Be sure to go "Hangout" and consider the possibilities. It's a great way to perform and interact with fans (or potential fans) via multi-user video chat. Play some songs. Set up a concert and obtain feedback after your performance. It's also a great tool to use for online band and/or business meetings.
- "Circles" allow you segment the people you follow into groups and limit the information you share with them. Consider creating a booking circle, a fan circle, and a friend circle and only sharing specific information with them.
- Invite your fans. The network is invite-only so ask your fans if they need an invite via your Twitter or Facebook pages. They'll return the favor when they bring friends to your next show.

- Remember that Google+ and all social networking platforms work best when there is a two-way conversation. Remember that you're there to be social and to network.

What Musicians Need to Know About Vine

Leave it to Twitter to introduce an app that reduces our attention span even further. If you liked being limited to 140 characters for online postings, how about six seconds for a video? The company released their Vine app in Jan. that lets users film, quickly edit and share six-second video clips on Twitter and Facebook.

Soon after the free app appeared controversy ensued, as people began uploading lots and lots of short pornographic videos. Even Jon Stewart chimed in, doing a segment on "The Daily Show" poking fun at the stir the new app caused after its launch. Twitter quickly rejigged things, released a new version, banned porn-related searches and set an age limit of 17 for users.

Beyond all this hoopla, what does Vine have to offer independent musicians and acts? Well, lots, actually. Mainly, it's another avenue to be creative. Once you get to know the app, you'll see why.

You may think six seconds is too short to accomplish anything in a video. That's because you're used to pressing record, filming, pressing stop, then uploading and editing it on some computer software. With Vine you do that all within the app, then quickly share it.

In the same way Twitter made people get creative by having a limit on characters, Vine forces the visual muse. It also records sound, so you can make a super-short music video. Ernest Hemingway was famously challenged to write a six-word long short story. You wouldn't think it was possible to write a story using only six words, but Hemingway succeeded by writing the heart-tugging words: "For sale: baby shoes. Never used." Let the six-second limit on Vine serve as a similar challenge to your band.

One of the best features of Vine is its stop-motion capability. You press and hold the screen to record, lift your finger to stop and press again to continue filming. You can

pack a lot of shots into just a couple of seconds this way. Make a stop-motion film of all the clubs you play, life on the road, in the studio or of your merch.

Try taking a shot of everyone that buys your CD at a show, ask permission to tag them, then share it. They will most likely be happy to share it with all their friends and followers. Or you could ask fans to “Vine” your shows, tag and share, then give kudos or free swag to whomever made the most creative video.

Vine is currently only available for the iPhone and iPad, but Twitter promises an Android version soon.

The possibilities seem endless on how this new app can benefit bands. Let us know some creative ways you’re using Vine to promote your music.

Tweet it Maybe – 3 Quick Tips for Engaging on Twitter

Did a little birdy tell you how to sell a song on iTunes and other major music distribution sites? You must be following the SongCast Twitter – excellent decision!

What we, like all media-savvy music moguls know, is the answer to the question that’s been killing you: how do you sell songs on iTunes? It’s simple – you go viral, of course! You get a SongCast membership and we distribute your songs across all the major music platforms, so anyone and everyone who’d like to buy your songs can browse, preview, and purchase. But unfortunately, we can’t do all the work for you – you’ve got to promote yourself, as well. And what’s a fun, free, fast way to promote your band without leaving your pajamas? (You can guess where we’re going with this – right?) Social media.

Even if you’re all excited about the new MySpace or you’re loyal to your Facebook fan page, you simply cannot ignore Twitter.

Try these three quick tips to improve your strategy in the blink of an eye:

- Participate in #musicMonday. This one explains itself – every Monday, tweet a link to your sounds!
- Whether it's an eblast, Google+ update, newsletter or piece of snail mail, put your username in your signature.
- Hook up with other bands with a simple follow, shout out, or "favorite." This is the easiest thing ever, guys – so be nice and make friends!
- There you have it! That wasn't so hard, was it? Similarly, learning how to sell a song on iTunes is just as easy – use SongCast!

Instagram Photo Contest for Musicians

For independent musicians, the world of technology and the advent and growth of the internet is one of the greatest resources to tap to reach new fans. With the right online marketing strategies, you can reach anywhere from dozens to millions of people with a few simple keystrokes and a little motivation.

Take a page out of the Deftones' book of online marketing strategies. This highly famous hard rock band didn't find it beneath them to host an Instagram photo contest, in which they asked fans to take pictures of live shows over a two-month period, featuring the winning shots on their Facebook page. The grand prize photo went on their website.

Consider the effect it could have if you asked your fans to take pictures using Instagram, and post them to a contest on your Twitter account. Just holding the contest alone could draw in a ton of additional followers, but think about the free pictures you'll have that you could potentially use on a website, publish on other social media sites, and turn into fan mail, simply by recognizing the name of the individual who took the shot.

Once you've got the entries, pick favorites, and repost to your Facebook page (where hopefully you've already blasted about your Instagram photo contest), so you can reach even more followers. Word of mouth can't spread that fast!

Stay Connected

Keep in mind that, if you are going to embark on this endeavor, it's not a 'set it and forget it' process. Even if your deadline for entries is two months away, you have to remain active for these online marketing strategies to work. You should be updating

information about the contest on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram so that fans don't forget. This also makes it more likely the information will appear in front of another user, who will then become a follower, steadily increasing your overall fan base.

Tagging Images

Have your fans write a short caption when submitting their photos. Why? Because this will give you the information you need to properly tag the photos. Doing so keeps them indexed in a way that users and fans can find them easily, and the less hassle involved in finding the pictures, the more likely someone is to spend more time on your social media site, looking at other information.

Tag the photographer, the show date and location, and if possible, the song you were playing when the picture was taken. This will keep users from getting frustrated as they search for a picture in a photo album.

With online marketing strategies like this, you can really pick up a great many new fans, while keeping the old ones interested, and never pay an outrageous amount of money to get your name out there! Take advantage of social media, and of services like Instagram, to do what they were intended for and draw in parties of interest so you can grow your fan base and feed them the information they crave about tour dates and new releases.

How to use Promoted Tweets to Drive Sales

The world's premier micro-blogging platform has recently opened up the floodgates on its Promoted Tweets program, which means the potential reach of your online music promotion efforts has just increased drastically. Although Twitter is initially going with a beta version that will be available to one in ten of their total number of users, this still represents tens-of-millions of eager tweeters. Basically, instead of having access to just the number of people that follow your username; now you can reach many millions more and drive sales using these techniques:

- The first thing you should probably consider is using Promoted Tweets to build up your cadre of followers. By targeting the right keywords most indicative of your online music promotion efforts, you'll attract users of Twitter's search function, who will then interact with you – and maybe even your website.
- As your list of followers grows, your Promoted Tweets program can expand to local search; which means identifying where the majority of your visitors are coming from. Armed with this information, you can have concerts, meet-ups, signing events or other public-interaction event in the most popular areas. The Promoted Tweets program even supports geo-targeting of keywords, which has the potential of drastically increasing the number of people who show up to a locally-hosted event.
- The continued success of your online music promotion efforts depends crucially on Analytics; which entails using metrics to find out how the content you're putting out there is doing with your followers. Twitter's Promoted Tweets program is fully behind this kind of business streamlining; enabling you to allocate your resources to the most effective methods. You'll be able to see customer response to the events you host; which cities or locales fare better, the content they prefer, and much more.
- As your social network grows larger, you will be able to utilize Promoted Tweets to great effect by setting up contests and give-aways. There will always be a sizable fraction of interested people if you set up a music-giving promotion requiring, for example, your followers to send your link to as many of their friends as feasible. Additionally, you can just use them to inform your audience of price mark-ups on music CDs or band paraphernalia – anything you choose that you think would resonate with fans and followers.
- In addition to having your followers recommend members of their own Twitter networks to your site, you can take a more direct approach for a two-pronged attack: actively search for followers with similar interests to the ones you already have. The chances are good that they'll like the same or similar music – especially with a large-enough stable of followers – and your online music promotion plan can take off.
- One of the most novel features of the Promoted Tweets program is the ability to allow your tweets to “drip”; now, you needn't worry that your post-show, 3 AM tweets aren't being seen by the majority of your followers – especially if they're based in the United States. You can combine the ability to setup scheduled

campaigns with your Twitter Analytics to pinpoint the times when traffic and interaction are greatest, and fire away to your legions of followers even as you are sleeping or otherwise occupied.

- If you can implement all of these into your promotion plans, then you give yourself the chance to skyrocket when Twitter decides to open up its Promoted Tweets program even more, and include all several hundred million of its global users.

Why Social Media Needs You to Promote Your Music

In all likelihood, you're well aware that your band needs to actively utilize its social media accounts to promote your music online. But if you've ever browsed through the seemingly endless multiplicity of your counterparts on Facebook or Twitter, the entire social media rat race can seem almost hopeless. It's easy to feel like another drone in Facebook's army of indie musicians, only updating your status and posting filtered pics because you're *supposed* to.

Allow us to let you in on an empowering little secret – you're actually the one in charge here. Social media giants like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Foursquare would waste away without musicians, who garner the hype and popularity necessary to keep users engaged and sharing.

Say it with us, "Social media needs me to promote my music, or no one would care about social media."

According to Twittercounter.com, the top 5 most-followed Twitter account holders are all – you guessed it – musicians. The top five trending topics of 2011? All music related. Moreover, at least 50% of Twitter users follow at least one musician. Even using the phrase "EDM" to describe electronic dance music was started as a hashtag on Twitter.

Today, Twitter executives estimate #EDM is currently used as many as 3,000 times per day.

Need more proof? Let's examine Facebook's most popular people. The top 10 most-liked celebrity pages all belong to musicians (Eminem takes home the gold at 60 million Facebook Likes).

This raw popularity can be strategically converted into brand building and music promotion. Take, for example, social media's poster boy of success – David Guetta. His Facebook fan page has over 35 million Likes, which he uses to forge his own business model of musical success. While some criticize his commercialism, Guetta has secured a massive revenue stream, bypassing traditional music industry models and getting in touch with his fans directly.

Promote your music online with social media and SongCast, where your music is distributed further!

What Makes a Tweet (more) Sharable?

Using social media isn't just for fun. As an indie artist it's about building relationships with potential and existing fans that will hopefully support you for the long haul. It's about building your following and your fan base, and sharing content on a regular basis as a means to consistently keep your name out there.

If you are creating content and sharing it on Twitter (you should be), then you'll want to make your Tweets as sharable as possible. The more fans that see your Tweets, the more chances you have that they'll share it.

But how? Here are some tips that will help make your Tweets more shareable:

Headlines

Make them matter. You only get one chance to grab the reader's eye, so make it good one. How-to's, statistics and puns are all headlines that can make your Tweet stand out. Be creative, but above all, be concise!

Hashtags

Use hashtags (for example, #nyc, #music) to tap into specific communities and readers. Think about your genre, your city, and more. Check out [Hashtags.org](https://hashtags.org) for more ideas.

Timing

If you have something to share, consider when your audience will be around to read it. If your demographic is on the East Coast, think about the best time to share – is it during the work day or at night? Also consider sharing your content more than once to hit different audiences and ensure that your fans don't miss out.

Include Other Users

If you're sharing a recent news article about your show review, remember to include the Twitter handle of the news outlet to ensure that they see it, and in the hopes that they retweet it. Same goes for sharing news about collaborations with other artists (include their handle), and other cross marketing initiatives. The more, the merrier.

Tell us what you think! Have you had a Tweet that became exceptionally shared? What was the key?

How to Use Instagram to Grow Your Fan Base

Instagram is the online social network based on the sharing of photos. It's a mobile phone app that's completely customizable for online music promotion and visibility worldwide.

Here are some tips for making Instagram work for your band:

Use Hashtags

A hashtag is a clickable keyword, characterized by the # symbol preceding a word or phrase. Include hashtags at the end of your captions and in your comments to increase your discoverability.

Explore: On the Instagram app, clicking on a hashtag takes you to the Explore page where you can see everyone who's recently used that hashtag.

Share on All Social Networks

Since Instagram is a mobile phone app, make sure that you link your Instagram posts to your Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, email list, website, and more – so that all of your Instagram posts are immediately spread through the internet, viewable for all fans, even Instagram nonusers.

Link to Your Store

Keep online music promotion in mind. Ensure that you have a link to your website or online store (iTunes, Amazon, Spotify) on your Instagram. The website you specify in your profile shows up at the top of your Instagram page, so when editing your Instagram profile ensure your music store web address is in your profile's website field. This way when someone visits your Instagram they have the immediate option to further explore your music.

Reach Out

Explore hashtags of fans. Whether you're on tour or staying local, explore the hashtag of the festival, venue, or city you're playing at so you can reach out to fans and potential fans to let them know you're coming.

Tag People

When you tag a user in a post, that user *and* all of their followers are notified of it, increasing the traffic to your post. To tag (or "mention") someone simply precede their username with the @ symbol. This works in photo captions and comments.

Develop a Photo Series

Similar to the draw of a television series – give your posts a sense of regularity and theme so that after people are compelled to become your follower, they will feel the curiosity and excitement of awaiting your next post.

Post Frequently

Post consistently so that your followers can rely on the entertainment of your photos. Instagram feeds update live 24/7. If your photos are fresh in your followers' feeds then your band is fresh in everyone's mind.

Use Photo Personality

Take compelling photos that provide followers with a view of your band they haven't seen before. While behind the scenes shots from shows, rehearsals, and recording sessions are fun because they show followers the secret world behind the music, showing your human side with behind the scenes shots from lunch, the record store, or walking down the street has equal appeal to followers. To keep it interesting, pre-edit your photos using photo combine apps to show multiple shots in one post.

Caption Clarity is Key

Be sure to make your caption to-the-point. Keep it to a few words that tell exactly what your photo is saying. Followers will appreciate the clarity of communication. You never want a caption to come off as mysterious, or even worse, as an inside joke, because you don't want your followers to feel un-included.

How to Grow Your Email List

Whether your band is the talk of the town or you're still in the garage phase of the operation, you can never have enough fans. Likewise, you can never have enough subscribers to your email list.

Connecting with your fan base over email lets you broadcast messages free of charge, keeping your network informed and connected. Whether you just finished a new EP or you booked a gig next Saturday, your fans need to know. And with a well-stocked email list, spreading the word is as fast as your fingers can type.

Think of a large email list as an investment – down the road, it can even help sell your music on iTunes. Follow these tips from SongCast to grow your email list and (ultimately) your fan base!

1. **Write awesome emails:** If you want your subscribers to share your content, it needs to be remarkable. Nobody wants to read dribble copied from Wikipedia – be funny, unique, and tell your fans information they're actually interested in. Write about how your latest song is coming along or other artists who inspire you, whatever's engaging and distinctive.
2. **Give them something:** Whether you host a free online concert or send a free song in exchange for an email address, make it something your fans will be excited to receive. Lots of people are wary of giving out their email address, so sweeten the offer. Better yet, make it something their friends will want in on, too.
3. **Use your resources:** Broadcast your offers on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, whatever! Grow your audience on social media sites, where many people list their emails freely. If you can't just copy their email addresses directly, promote your offers in exchange for an email address over all your media platforms.
4. **Don't get unsubscribed:** To grow a large fan base, you can't lose the followers you've already found. Keeping your subscribers means contacting your fans regularly, but not too often. Though no Miss Manners has appeared to supervise internet etiquette, you probably know from personal experience that you shouldn't bombard your subscribers with hourly emails in all capital letters. On the other hand, one email sent

every 3 months certainly won't hold their interest. Send fans consistent, interesting, unique content they'll look forward to reading. Weekly emails should suffice. For more tips to grow your audience base, stick with SongCast. We're one-stop-shopping to sell music on iTunes and other web platforms we have an established relationship with.

Twitter for Musicians and Artists

Twitter provides a social site that allows musicians and fans to interact with ease. With a constantly flowing conversation, Twitter users are able to send 140 character Tweets to their followers. Artists are able to show their voice clearly. While the stage allows musicians an arena to sing, Twitter gives a voice to their thoughts. As a band or artist it will not only help you to promote your music but also answer the question of how do you sell music on iTunes. By using Twitter as a tool you will be able to gain followers and fans.

Use Hashtags to Promote Your Music

Hashtags provide a way for Twitter users to interact on a specific theme, topic or conversation. Twitter users can click on a hashtag to see search results for recent Tweets also using that hashtag. This type of communication is centered around creative and compelling hashtags that followers find interesting.

Fan Interaction

To better promote your music, use Twitter as a space to interact with fans on a personal basis. As you receive Tweets from recent concert attendees or after a new song release, reply to them. Thank them for the compliments they give and have a conversation. This will build loyalty across your following. Also, use Twitter as a space for fan interviews. Incorporate hashtags such as #Ask(Band Name), and allow your fans to ask questions about your music, band, personal life and other aspects.

Communication

Many different types of communication can take place on Twitter. Bands and artists are able to use it as a space to speak freely to their fans and followers. Be sure that your voice and meaning is clear in your Tweets. Mentioning and replying to fans is important and will build a loyalty base throughout your followers and help you to gain additional followers. Use interactive media such as pictures, links to videos or your band website to keep fans interested.

For more tips on how do you sell music on iTunes and other ways to promote your music read the other blog posts by SongCast.

Also, check out Twitter's site for additional tips: <https://dev.twitter.com/media/music>

Ways to Promote Your Music with Social Media

It's no secret that one of the most important parts of becoming a successful musician is effectively promoting your music. The Internet has made it possible for musicians to reach a potentially huge fan base through social media, but how can you use websites like MySpace and Twitter to your advantage? Let's look at 3 ways to promote your music with social media.

Social Networking

In recent years, MySpace has shifted its focus from social networking to music. The website now offers users the ability to locate new music by genre and listen to their tracks online, and making a band profile page is an easy way to increase your chances of being seen. However, recent social networking powerhouses Facebook and Google+ boast more page views and monthly hits than MySpace, making it a good idea to cover your bases by setting up profiles with each of these services in an effort to build your overall social network presence. Customize your page to reflect your band's type of

music, post some photos from a recent show, and upload some tracks so that your audience is more inclined to follow your page. Ping, iTunes' social networking site, is another great way to promote your music as a part of SongCast's music distribution services. Ping enables users to view your artist profile and follow your band similar to MySpace and Facebook, but it also incorporates the best of these websites by allowing others to see what their friends have recently listened to, commented on, and followed.

Blogs

With the recent popularity of blogging platforms like Tumblr and micro-blogging services like Twitter, blogging has quickly become one of the most popular ways to share interesting information, photos, and videos. Starting a blog is simple and free with websites like Tumblr, WordPress, and Blogger. It's worth noting that Tumblr offers the ability to "follow" other users, similar to following someone on Twitter. This enables you to add others and promote your music by actively reaching out to members of the Tumblr community. In regards to what you can put on your blog, the ultimate choice is up to you, but some ideas are to include behind-the-scenes anecdotes about recent gigs, photos from concerts or album art, and information about your band. Blogging is an informal way of visually communicating with others, so have fun with it!

Sync and Update Frequently

You're not going to effectively promote your music if your MySpace page or blog hasn't been updated in a while. Sync your blog to your Twitter feed so that it's updated whenever you post. Follow users who have similar music interests, and actively engage your audience by updating frequently. Many popular blogs offer the ability to queue posts throughout the day so that it updates even when you're not there, and if you have a smart phone, posting a Tweet is as easy as sending out a text when you have a spare minute. As long as you stick with actively reaching out to potential fans and keeping them updated, social media can effectively help you promote your music.

Claim Your Online Identity

As an independent musician, it's easy to focus entirely on your music and forget about your public and online presence. But if you haven't done a "vanity search" in a while (Google yourself or your band name), now's the time. Your online identity is a major part of your public image; both of which play a very important role in your success as an artist.

If you haven't already, Google yourself. See what comes up. See what's missing and claim pages with vanity URLs. (For example: Facebook.com/TheBestBand). This includes nabbing a website with your band name, as well as pages on:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- MySpace
- Amazon Artist Profile
- Register your band/company name with Google.com/profiles
- Any other social media platform you can imagine

All of these websites will help potential fans find you, while also eliminating the chance of someone else taking a website or a page that you want, with your name.

Social media pages are one of the best ways to increase traffic to your website and further solidify your online presence. As we've mentioned several times, starting a blog is also a good way to gain attention online and to direct potential fans to your other online assets. WordPress.com and Tumblr.com are great blogging sites that offer simple and easy to use platforms for you to get the word out about your music, your shows, share photos, and more.

You can also monitor your online reputation and easily pick up on what people are saying about you by using tools like Google Alerts, RSS feeds like Google Reader and using keyword searches on Twitter. Knowing what people are saying – and where

they're saying it—will help you manage your online presence and solidify your identity, in the right places.

Your online presence is a major aspect of your career. It's important to obtain pages in all the high profile social media outlets and monitor what's being said about you or your band online in order to manage your image appropriately.

Social Media Makeover – James Bussey aka Da-Mind

Welcome to the second Social Media Makeover post! We all know it's important to remain active online, but it's equally important to make the most of these tools by keeping them up-to-date, integrated and streamlined, especially when facing a big event.

This week we're featuring Atlanta-based rapper James Bussey, aka Da-Mind, who will release his new album *I'm Guilty* on August 2, 2011. For Da-Mind, now's the time to get his web properties updated and fully functioning in order to get the word out about his new album.

Da-Mind has the following web properties:

- www.songcastmusic.com/profiles/DaMind
- www.myspace.com/damindakajames
- www.twitter.com/damindakajames

Here are our recommendations for him:

1. **Create a website.** Even if it's a simple landing page with information about your upcoming release and links to your social media pages, it will help with search engine optimization and ensure that fans can easily find you.

2. **Create a Facebook Page.** It's important that you engage with your fans and Facebook is a great place to get the word out about your upcoming release. Here is the page that will help you get started:<http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php>
3. **Choose a cohesive image** to use across all platforms. We suggest using the same logo, photo or album art across all sites, which will help your fans with brand recognition.
4. **Update** events and information across all platforms. Make sure each page includes the most important information: the name and release date of your new album and upcoming shows. (The release date on Twitter states the release is in July. That should be updated.)
5. **Unprotect your Tweets.** Unless you have a major reason to protect your Tweets, we advise against protecting them. The point of Twitter is to allow fans to engage with you. If you protect your Tweets, you're discouraging fans from communicating with you.

Using these five suggestions, Da-Mind is going to begin to implement his social media makeover. We're going to check back in with him in a month to see what his progress is like!

Turn your Personal Facebook Page into a Music Page

If you've been using your Personal Profile on Facebook to get the word out about your music or band, you might be interested to know about a new feature that allows users to turn their Personal Profiles into Business Pages.

As you know, if you're using your Personal Profile on Facebook, your friends might be comprised of actual friends that you know in real life, your family, and then you have your fans – with whom you might not have an established personal relationship.

If that's the case, pages are a better solution for businesses and public figures like musicians. This new feature allows you to move your "friends" to a page, turning them

into what they really are: fans. Pages also have enhanced functionality that can benefit you and help build a larger fan base. Things like:

- Access to Facebook Insights that track engagement levels, demographic data, interactions per post, mentions and more. You're sent weekly snapshot emails of your Page activity, which gives you a great look at your Fans and their demographics, so you can adjust your strategy accordingly. Through this data, you might find that your fans are in a certain age bracket and region of the country. If so, it's time to set up some shows where your fans are.
- Using Pages, you don't have to accept Friend Requests, which means that your fans have access to the information they are looking for when they want it, without having to wait for you to approve the request. This makes you more accessible to your fans.
- Pages are easier for your Fans to share with their Friends, which can help you grow your fanbase. Remember to *ask* your friends to share your page with their friends.
- You can add custom tabs, widgets, etc that allow you to post your tour dates, share your music and keep your fans informed and engaged.

A word of caution: Migrating to a page is irreversible. It is highly recommended that you download your profile — including photos, wall posts, messages and your friend list — before making the switch. The Facebook help center says: "Be aware that when you convert your profile to a Page, your profile pictures will be transferred, and all of your friends will be automatically added as people who like your Page. No other content will be carried over to your new Page, so be sure to save any important content before beginning your migration."

Using YouTube to Promote Your Music

Founded in 2005, YouTube is the world's most popular online video community and provides a form for users worldwide to connect with each other. It is the single best way to upload and share videos with your fans and the easiest way for fans to discover independent artists.

Remember that your fans not only want to hear your music, they want to see you perform it. So be sure to upload videos to YouTube.com and share them across websites, mobile devices, blogs and email.

To create an account:http://www.youtube.com/create_account

Important YouTube Tips for Indie Artists

- As always, remember to choose a username that is close to your name and consistent with your other social media usernames so that you're easy to find and easy for your fans to recognize. This will help with search engine optimization.
- Remember that everyone can see the videos you upload, including A&R reps and fans around the world. Look your best. Make sure the video and **audio** quality is to the highest standards.
- Embed and promote your videos by inserting a YouTube video into Facebook and MySpace accounts, blogs, or other websites to share with your fans.
- Subscriptions: YouTube users can keep track of their favorite new videos, so urge your fans to subscribe to your channel.
- Make videos special by sharing "behind the scenes" footage about your music. Show fans your recording studio, set up interviews to share and record clips from performances.

Using Twitter to Talk With Fans

The most important thing to remember when using Twitter is that it's a forum for conversation **with** your fans, not simply a way to disseminate information.

To create an account: <http://twitter.com/signup>

Note: When choosing a username, the shorter the better because you only have 140 characters per tweet. Try to choose a short name that is as close to your actual name or band name as possible so you're easy to find and easy for your fans to recognize.

Once you've created an account, here are Ten Twitter Tips to remember:

- Now that you have an account, add an image that is consistent with your other social media images so your photo is easy for your fans to recognize.
- Fill in the bio section with information about your band and a link to your website or MySpace URL.
- Use "@" before someone's Twitter name to Tweet at them; use a hashtag (#) to note a keyword that will come up in searches. For example #musicmonday
- Recommended: download an application like TweetDeck or Hootsuite, which act as dashboards to help you manage your Tweets and create lists of users and searches.
- As an independent artist, you should absolutely use Twitter to promote upcoming appearances and shows. You can also use it to share "behind the scenes" information about your music. Tweet about where you're recording, who you're working with, and what inspires you. Your fans are interested in what you have to say!
- Cross promote your social media pages by Tweeting links to recent posts on your website, Facebook or MySpace pages. This is a great way to increase traffic.
- Send out free MP3s of your songs and take requests from your fans. Use Twitter as a way to gauge interest in new songs by asking fans for feedback.
- Keep up with trends by following people in the music industry, listening to what they have to say, and engaging in the conversation via Twitter.
- Tweet on a regular basis. At least four times a day, everyday.

- Don't worry if it takes a while to get the conversation going. Keep at it!

Check out these musicians that have been using Twitter in different ways:

John Mayer (@*johncmayer*) is one of the most well known mainstream musicians to use Twitter. He Tweets a lot about his life and has regular conversations directly with fans.

Ben Folds (@*benjaminfolds*) uses Twitpic to share photos and captions through Twitter with fans.

Matt Nathanson (@*mattnathanson*) has a great sense of humor, jokes with his fans and often posts his #morningrecords picks.

Friends, Followers, Facebook, Oh My!

With over 500 million users, Facebook, is one of the best ways to share your music, make new fans and interact with them on a regular basis. For the first installment of the SongCast social media series, we will address the how to's of creating and promoting your Facebook page dedicated to your music.

To create a Facebook Page for your band:

1. If you don't have one already, you must create a Facebook personal profile by opening an account at www.facebook.com
2. Then, go to this link <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php>
3. Select the "Artist, Band, or Public Figure" button
4. Select "musician" from the drop down menu
5. Enter your artist or band name in the "name of page" field
6. Click the "I'm the official representative" box
7. Click "create official page."

Presto! Now that you have your page, be sure to fill out the entire profile with as much information as possible. Add your profile photo, put your bio in the info section and add links to your website and other social media outlets.

Then, start sharing your page with your friends by “suggesting” it to them! Be sure to update your page on a regular basis with new updates, new photos and new videos.

Note: To take your page one step further, we recommend adding the iLike tab to your Page, which will help you share your music with fans.