Social Media and Emerging Musicians

Capstone Project

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Music is everywhere. A simple Google search shows over 50 different music concerts in Salt Lake City, Utah, in one weekend. Unlike popular artists such as Taylor Swift and Maroon 5, thousands of aspiring musicians struggle to create both quality music and name recognition. The negative connotations of the words "music business" add to the struggle. An aspiring musician who avoids the "business" of music misses out on a great opportunity to increase their fan base. This project explored how social media can be manipulated to positively influence an emerging musician's exposure to and retention of potential fans, ultimately leading to and providing a reasonable and primary income as the musician evolves into an established professional.

Customer relation management (CRM) is constantly evolving to monitor the consumer environment, giving companies the best advantage when seeking consumers. The current change in CRM and business evolution is in the direction of social media. Social media changes the landscape for businesses and organizations worldwide. Businesses and organizations that properly use social media are seen as more trustworthy and dependable (Du & Jiang, 2014). Emerging musicians often see social media as a free and easy marketing or exposure tool, however, only when used correctly and efficiently does social media become a tool that can help propel an artist or band from cultural entrepreneur to established professional.

The foundation of this capstone project is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). The ELM discusses two routes to persuasion: the central route and the peripheral route. The central route is one of high processing. Decisions are carefully researched and examined to determine the validity of a persuasive message. Whether a message is accepted or rejected is determined by the quality of the argument (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). When an individual processes music in the

central route to persuasion, their acceptance of the music could be determined by the perception of quality of the song, album, or artist based on deliberate and thoughtful decisions. Does the listener like the song? Do they like the voice or instrumentation? Do they like the message? There are many factors that could form a listener's opinion. When actively pursuing any of these factors, the central route to persuasion is present.

The peripheral route to persuasion is based more on incidental cues rather than active thinking. In the peripheral route to persuasion, less relevant factors become the basis for acceptance or rejection of a persuasive message, such as the attractiveness of the cues or the popularity of the subject (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). When an individual processes music in the peripheral route to persuasion, their acceptance of the music could be determined by the music video of a particular song or the attractiveness of a performer.

This capstone project found social media to be present in both routes of persuasion. Sites such as SoundCloud and YouTube support direct requests and active participation in listening to music. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+, and a blog are useful within the peripheral route to persuasion. These sites rely on attractive messages and images to persuade (Lazard & Atkinson, 2015).

Social media began to emerge in 1997, with the introduction of blogging. The term "weblog" was coined in 1997, and shortened to "blog" in 1999. In April of that year, Blogger emerged as the first free blog creation service (Thompson, 2013). At the end of 2012, there were 147.2 million blogs worldwide on WordPress and Tumblr alone (Internet in Numbers, 2012). As of April 7, 2013, there were over 238 million blogs on WordPress, Tumblr, Livejournal, Weebly, and Blogster (Pangburn, 2013). These statistics do not include blogs hosted on Blogger,

Blogsome, or Posterous. A blog is defined as a specific website where regular posts are made, sorted in reverse chronological order, and where readers can make comments and interact with the presumed author of the blog as well as other readers. It should not be confused with a business's website, although it may be included as a specific portion or page of the company's main website.

Social networking sites found a space complementary to blogs in the early 2000's. Facebook debuted in 2004 exclusively for students at Harvard University. In 2005 Facebook launched a version for high school students. YouTube was founded in 2005. In 2006 Facebook became available to anyone over the age of 13. Twitter was introduced in 2006. In 2008 Facebook surpassed MySpace in terms of unique monthly visitors. Facebook users doubled in a year, moving from 200 million users in 2009 to over 400 million users in 2010. In 2014 approximately 25% of the world's total population used social media, while three-quarters of the online population used one or more social networking sites. Around the world, there are about 1.28 billion Facebook users, 540 million YouTube users, and 255 million users on Twitter (Anthony, 2013).

It seems logical for advertisers to take advantage of the millions of people digitally gathered in one place. Facebook alone has 1.2 billion monthly users (Adler, 2014). Emerging musicians have this same opportunity, however many emerging musicians participate in social media only as a user and not as a brand or business. It is important that emerging artists and bands understand how to advantageously manipulate social media sites. For an emerging musician, effective manipulation of social media sites includes posting or sharing content at

proper times and days and using best practices to maximize online presence and generate increased fans and followers in order to become an established professional.

Literature Review

Social media has changed the landscape for businesses as customers connect with each other, companies, and organizations in non-traditional seller-consumer relationships (Pombriant, 2009). The music business is no different. Billboard, one of the leading sources of music information and trends, releases weekly charts including the Social 50. This chart "incorporates... weekly additions of fans across Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram; reactions and conversations across Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Facebook; and views to an artist's Wikipedia page, according to music analytics provider Next Big Sound" a reliable source of music trends (Social 50, 2014). At the time of this writing, four artists were in the top ten on both the Artist 100 and Social 50 charts (Social 50, 2014; Billboard Artist 100, 2014). The Billboard chart is only one measurement of the impact social media has on musicians. Social media also is also related to music sales, ticket sales, and relationships with consumers.

Social Media and Music Sales

The music business is driven by sales. Radio play is consistently and positively related to album and song sales. Blog buzz, which should not be confused with social media buzz, is unrelated to album sales and negatively related to song sales (Dewan and Ramaprasad, 2014). Additional research on the matter shows even more intriguing statistics. In the United States, sales correlate most with local BitTorrent (a peer-to-peer piracy site) downloads, followed by global Last.fm plays and Spotify streams. Sales are least correlated with global YouTube plays and Facebook fans. SoundCloud plays were not analyzed in this study (Peoples, 2013). Sales

figures released from the 2013 Billboard Latin Music Awards showed that while there was only a 3% increase in viewership (3.2 million total viewers) from the previous year, there was a 70% increase in social media interaction, resulting in a 60% sales increase, and a 48% increase in digital downloads (Gruger & Mendizabal, 2013).

Social Media and Ticket Sales

While there are differing reports as to the effectiveness of social media on album and song sales, there is consistent information found when the relationship between concert ticket sales and social media is discussed. In March of 2010, Conan O'Brien tweeted "Hey, Internet: I'm headed to your town." Within hours, online tickets to his just-announced cross-country tour were completely sold out (Peters, Peoples, and Waddell, 2012). Companies like Ticketmaster and Live Nation have used Facebook-integrated applications to increase ticket sales. Independent ticketing company Ticketfly CEO and founder Andrew Dreskin says his clients sell five times as many tickets via social media channels like Facebook and Twitter as they do through traditional email newsletters (Peters et al. 2012). Tickets for Enrique Iglesias' 2011 US tour were sold at higher and faster rates whenever there was activity on his Facebook or Twitter account. Surprisingly, sales declined around TV appearances on the Today show and Jay Leno (Peters et al, 2012). Artists are also utilizing social media during concerts. Katy Perry introduced a Twitter feed during her concerts where approved tweets from audience members showed up on a large screen, including the Twitter handle, or account identifier, of the audience member. This moves the concert from within the arena to a global audience experiencing the show through Twitter (Peters et al, 2012). Artists like U2 and Tori Amos use assigned concert attendees to live-tweet set lists to online communities to increase the global feel of each live concert (Bennett, 2012).

Social Media in Practice

While it is important to understand the relationship between social media and album, song, and ticket sales, it is also important to understand how social media communication techniques can be put into practice. Emerging artists are increasingly taking part in what has been called "cultural entrepreneurship."

Lounsbury, and Glynn define cultural entrepreneurship as "the process of storytelling that mediates between extant stocks of entrepreneurial resources and subsequent capital acquisition and wealth creation" (2001). In other words, cultural entrepreneurs are independent and emerging artists who produce art or music for the sake of exposure. They are defined by lack of economic success (Scott, 2012). Artists can transition from cultural entrepreneurs to professionals with the help of social media. The transition to professional musician has been demonstrated by several well-known musicians, including Imogen Heap, Justin Beiber, Franz Ferdinand, and Lorde.

British musician Imogen Heap used social media to involve her fans in the production of her album Ellipse. Using social media, Heap asked for input on demos, kept fans updated with the album's progress, and included fans in the production process, including album art design and the writing of her press biography (Morris, 2014). Justin Beiber was propelled forward via YouTube. He had four number one hits before the release of his debut album, largely in part to the 50 million YouTube subscribers he had prior to the release (Suddath, 2010). Scottish band Franz Ferdinand recently released their first album in nearly five years. Online humorous videos have impacted social media statistics, pushing the band's Facebook fans to over 1.3 million and

Twitter followers to 137,000 (Sutherland, 2013). These musicians exemplify new and unique ways to involve fans through social media.

Perhaps one of the most intriguing examples of the power of social media is that of musician Lorde. The New Zealand artist was turned down by several radio stations who told her there wasn't a niche for her song "Royals." The song was added to the social radio Spotify "Hipster International" playlist and stayed on the viral chart for weeks. With the success found through online streaming, Lorde's record label took the song to the radio with success behind it, propelling international airplay (Snider, 2014).

The examples of Imogen Heap, Justin Beiber, Franz Ferdinand, and Lorde illustrate the impact social media can have on a musician's success. While there is not a one-size-fits-all solution to social media for emerging artists, there are general principles that can be applied to increase brand awareness. Virtual interaction between musician and fans give individuals the feeling of being an insider. In the case of Imogen Heap, she provided the "illusion of inclusion" to her fans (Morris, 2014). British musician Ellie Goulding participated in a Google Hangout with 60 of her fans who each had a turn to be on screen, simulating a "face-to-face experience." Austin-based band Suite 709 increased their Google+ followers from 20 to 20,000 after using Hangouts for four months (Pham, 2012).

The illusion of inclusion can be explained using parasocial interaction. Schartel & Nisbett describe parasocial interaction as "perceptions of intimacy...directly related to perceptions of... credibility." Users find brands more credible when interacting with a Facebook page compared to interacting with a brand's website (2014). Imogen Heap, Justin Beiber, and Franz Ferdinand all increase this parasocial relationship using virtual interaction.

Virtual interaction can be used in addition to social media sites such as SoundCloud, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and MySpace. Fred Wilson, an investor in Turntable.fm, says the road to über-fandom¹ "begins with free" (Pham, 2012). Emerging artists can offer free discovery with sites like YouTube, SoundCloud, and LastFM, which allow artists to upload and distribute music for no cost (Chappell, 2012). At Billboard's FutureSound Conference, BandPage CEO J. Sider said artists can help fans find them by having five basic components: music, photos, videos, bios, and shows. He added that a Facebook band page is not enough. One additional site boosts traffic by 50%. Two sites increases traffic by 75%. Sider suggests Google+, YouTube, and a mobile presence, such as Instagram or Twitter, are crucial (Pham, 2012).

Kit Watson, of RockItGirl Media, offers a six-month marketing plan leading to an EP² release. An EP is often released by emerging artists because the cost of production is less than the cost of producing a full album. Watson's suggestions include being active on Twitter preproduction. Five months prior to release she suggests artists begin utilizing hashtags³, creating a unique hashtag from the name of the project. Watson also suggests putting video blogs, or vlogs⁴, on YouTube at least every few weeks. If crowdfunding⁵ is part of an artists plan it should begin

¹ Über-fandom is defined as extreme loyalty to an individual artist or band, including financially supporting the artist by purchasing tickets, music, and merchandise, or even crowdfunding (Pham, 2012).

² An EP, or Extended Play, is a recording that contains more than one song, but is shorter than a full length album. An EP usually contains three to five songs and is kept under 30 minutes (Watson, 2013).

³ A hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by a hash or pound sign (#) and used to identify messages on a specific topic.

⁴ A vlog is a blog posting format where users watch and listen to the post instead of reading the post, as with a traditional blog.

⁵ Crowdfunding is a process where small amounts of money are collected from a large number of people in order to fund a project.

four months prior to the EP release. Enough buzz⁶ has been generated on social media at this point to make crowdfunding effective. Three months before release, a teaser⁷ should be distributed on YouTube, and fans should be encouraged to share it on Twitter and Facebook. Artists should contact bloggers of any relevance — not just music bloggers — and offer free merchandise or other promotions two months before releasing the EP. In the month leading up to the release, Watson suggests a digital release of the album, generating buzz on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. Following the release of the EP, artists should maintain an online social presence with vlogs, blogs, newsletters, and social media buzz (Watson, 2013).

Justification

Thousands of artists enter the music scene every year. It is estimated that 7,500 artists are signed to the major five record labels every year, with about 20% being new artists. Tens of thousands of artists are signed to independent labels (Investing in music report, 2014). This capstone project is important because it applies general social media principles to emerging music artists. If an artist can effectively use free social media tools available, using both central and peripheral routes to persuasion as explained by the Elaboration Likelihood Model, they may be able to transition from a cultural entrepreneur to professional musician without a significant marketing budget.

Because of the ever-changing nature of social media, a template schedule with set ideas proves ineffective. Instead of a universalized template, general strategies and methods are much

⁶ The term buzz, or social media buzz, refers to a general sense of anticipation and excitement about an event or product, such as the release of an album or a particular song (Watson, 2013).

⁷ A teaser is a short preview of upcoming music presented in audio or video format (Watson, 2013).

more effective and useful. Using general methods can allow artists to develop individualized social media plans that apply best practices and proven techniques to a unique audience.

Research Questions and Method

This capstone project explores how social media can positively influence an emerging musician's exposure to and retention of potential fans.

How can social media be best used as low- to no-budget marketing communication to aid emerging music musicians?

What are the best practices that should be used?

For the purpose of these research questions, an emerging artist is defined as a musician or band with no recording contract, no label, and income from music that is lower than a reasonable or primary income. A reasonable or primary income varies by location and individual situation, but is generally defined as income that supports an artist and any dependents by providing enough monetary support for basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, and a general sense of well-being. Social media is defined as sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, SoundCloud, Instagram, and Google+.

In order to answer the research questions, documentation relative to social media and musicians was examined. Very little documentation described how musicians had actually used social media. A few specific examples were found, including an in-depth analysis of British artist Imogen Heap. However, no information was found that related directly to emerging artists actively campaigning on social media to increase their fan base. The musicians whose social media use was analyzed had developed significant fan bases prior to the reported social media campaign. Scholarly articles were researched, supplemented by pertinent industry material. Due

to the nature and variety of social media used by emerging artists and musicians, a specific plan was not found nor could be given universally. General principles and best practices will be discussed to aid emerging musicians in developing a personalized social media plan to create the most effective marketing communication on a small or nonexistent budget.

Process

This capstone project used emerging artist Kristina Evonne as a case study. Kristina is a 16-year-old emerging singer/songwriter. She released her debut single during the course of this project, and is completing production of her debut album entitled *On My Way*, which is scheduled for release mid-June 2015.

The literature researched was used to generate a social media plan for Kristina Evonne. A four-week social media plan was generated using best practices discovered throughout the existing literature. Seven social media sites were used for this project: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, SoundCloud, Google+, and a blog on Kristina's website. Key performance indicators (KPIs) were established for each site to measure effectiveness. In social media, traditional metrics such as return on investment (ROI) are difficult, if not impossible, to measure. Instead, KPIs are introduced. These indicators include increasing interaction, increasing post shares, and increasing followers. Baseline KPIs were collected to measure progress over the course of four weeks. The initial KPIs for each social media site are found in Appendix A. The proposed social media plan is found in Appendix B.

Four "content buckets" were created that blanketed the social media plan (Schaffer, 2013). For this project, all posts and content created fell into the content buckets of songwriting,

⁸ Content buckets are general categories within which all social media posting falls (Schaffer, 2013).

recording, personal, or music. To schedule posts in advance, accounts were created on HootSuite (www.hootsuite.com) and If This Then That (IFTTT, www.ifttt.com).

The four-week plan was extremely detailed. Each post on each site was carefully crafted, including hashtags and images when appropriate. Blog titles and subjects were organized, videos were scheduled, and tracks on SoundCloud were determined. Questions to be asked on Facebook were created in advance. Links to external sites were organized and planned in detail. Actions that would be repeated in every instance, such as an Instagram post appearing on Facebook or a SoundCloud link being tweeted, were scheduled in advance with HootSuite and IFTTT. Appendix C shows a calendar outlining posting dates and times for each social media site used in the four weeks of this project.

This capstone project aimed to build momentum leading up to the release of Kristina's debut single. This goal was measured by monitoring KPIs for each social media channel using free analytic tools such as Google Analytics, Google Insights, Facebook Analytics, Twitter Analytics, Simply Measured, and SoundCloud analytics.

Results

Facebook

A Facebook page for Kristina Evonne had been created prior to this project. Before this project began, Kristina's page had 68 likes⁹, the most recent post had a reach¹⁰ of 384, and no additional KPIs were being monitored.

⁹ Facebook likes are unique users who follow a page.

¹⁰ Facebook reach measures the number of people who saw a post in their news feed

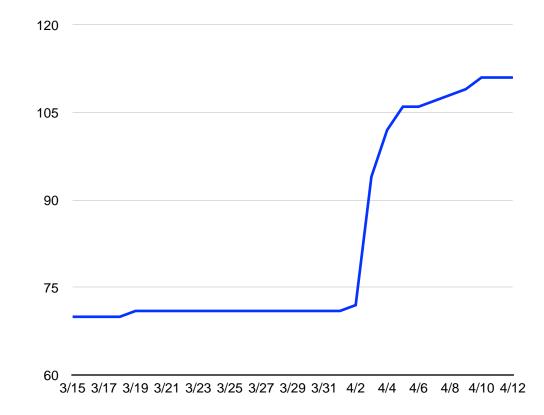


Figure 1: Facebook Likes.

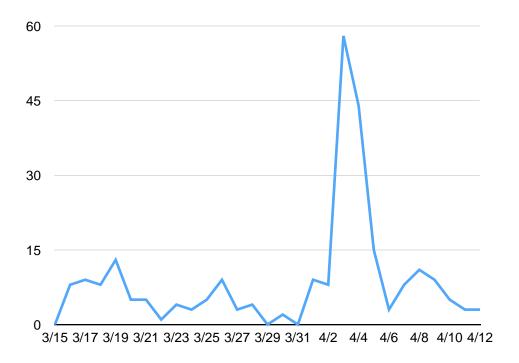


Figure 2: Daily Page Engaged Users

The number of unique users clicking or creating stories on a page.

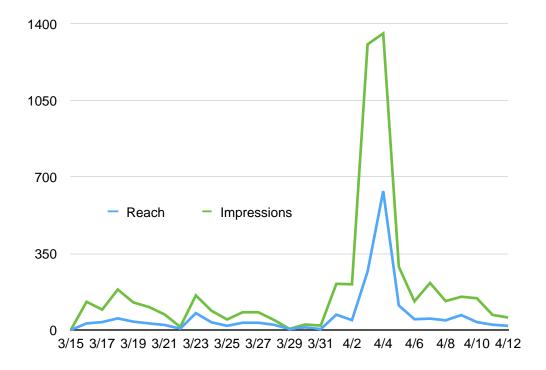


Figure 3: Daily Organic Reach and Impressions

Facebook posts were planned intending a peripheral route of persuasion. Photos and questions were posted to encourage user engagement. Facebook posts were often linked to a post on another social media site, including Instagram, SoundCloud, YouTube, and the blog.

Facebook posts were scheduled using HootSuite. Instagram posts were posted to the Facebook page using IFTTT. Blog posts were added to Facebook using the WordPress sharing connection within the WordPress framework.

At the end of the four-week project period, likes on Kristina's Facebook page had increased by 46% to 111 (figure 1). User engagement and organic reach and impressions¹¹ remained consistent, with a significant spike on April 3, the day of her single release (figures 2)

¹¹ Organic reach measures the number of users who visited the page, or saw the page or one of its posts in their news feed. Organic impressions measure the number of times posts were seen in news feeds or on visits to the page. The term organic measures the natural result of posts without paid promotion of posts or pages.

and 3). This spike is significant because it shows a noticeable and measurable social impact with big events, such as a single release. Several additional KPIs are now being monitored, including post reach and engagement, post type insights, and demographic data.

After analyzing the four-week period, subtle changes will be made to improve Facebook performance in the future. Greater focus will be given to attractive images when sharing external posts. Additionally, posts unique to Facebook will be scheduled. At least one in every three posts will include an image and a question or shareable content, such as an inspirational quote.

Twitter

A Twitter account had been created prior to this project. Before this project began, Kristina's Twitter account had 19 tweets, 21 followers, and she was following 33 accounts. No additional KPIs were being monitored.

Tweets were not planned in advance. Using IFTTT, a daily email reminder was sent prompting a retweet. Any activity on SoundCloud, YouTube, Instagram, or Kristina's blog was tweeted using automatic sharing options within each of these sites. This practice was supported by the peripheral route to persuasion within the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM).

Tweet impressions (figure 4) and engagements (figure 5) showed a steady decrease over the course of this project. The tweets garnering the most attention were those directed towards another account. The tweet with the most impressions was on March 25, which read:

"@ManagersPro thanks for the suggestions! Always nice to have external input!"

At the end of the four-week project period, Kristina's Twitter account had 116 tweets, 68 followers, and she was following 159 accounts. Additional KPIs were being monitored, including engagement rate¹² and demographic data.

Throughout the course of this project it was challenging to use Twitter consistently.

Despite the apparent simplicity of the site, it was difficult to tweet at appropriate times regularly.

After analyzing the four-week period, major changes will be made to improve Twitter performance. In the future, original and curated posts will be scheduled in advance using HootSuite and IFTTT to lessen the time spent on Twitter daily. Four tweets will be original or curated content, three will be retweets, and two will be self-promoting. Greater effort will be

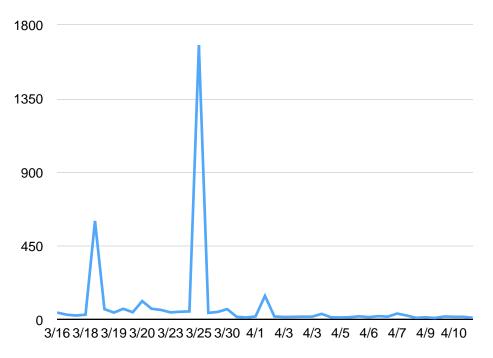


Figure 4: Twitter Impressions *Twitter impressions are the number of times a tweet appeared on Twitter timelines.*

¹² Twitter engagements are the number of times a tweet was favorited, quoted, retweeted, or an outbound link was clicked.

made to include images with tweets in an attempt to increase the attractiveness of the persuasive cues, as explained by the ELM.

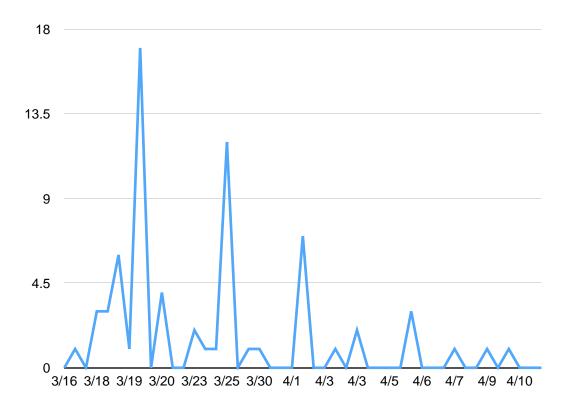


Figure 5: Twitter Engagements

Instagram

Prior to this project, Kristina had a personal Instagram account which was restricted to approved viewers only. During the four-week project period, this account was changed to allow public access and the account name was changed to Kristina Evonne to reflect her brand. Before this project began, Kristina's account had 260 posts, 183 followers, she followed 194 accounts, and no additional KPIs were being analyzed.

Instagram posts were outlined in great detail and were to be posted daily. Reminders were set up and sent through IFTTT to Kristina's personal email, including details of what to post.

At the end of the four-week project period, Kristina's Instagram account had 305 posts,

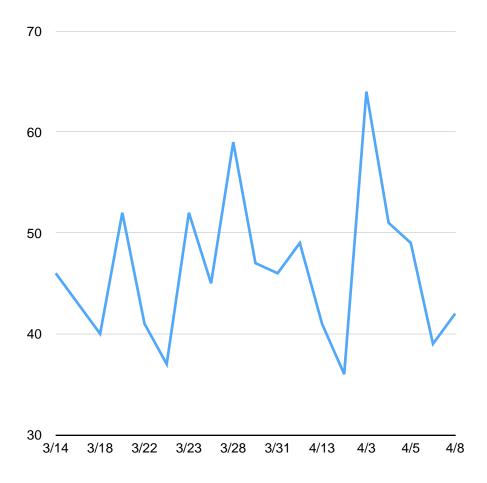


Figure 6: Instagram post likes

223 followers, she followed 228, and additional KPIs were being analyzed including individual post likes (figure 6), individual post comments (figure 7), most used keywords, and follower demographic data.

After analyzing the four-week period, subtle changes will be made to improve Instagram performance in the future. The biggest change is in the planning of the posts. In an attempt to be more authentic, Kristina will plan her posts in advance, with the aid of a consultant, introducing

her audience to who she is as a person. Kristina has been encouraged to educate herself regarding appropriate posts in order to maintain a level of safety with her public account.

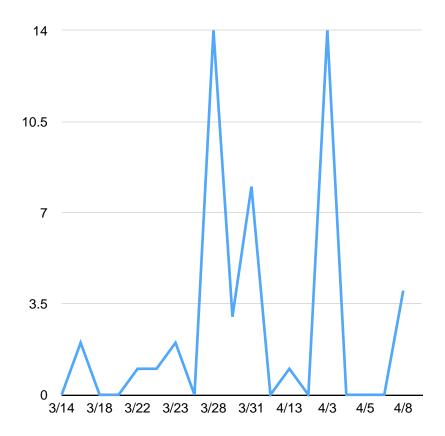


Figure 7: Instagram post comments

YouTube

A YouTube channel had been created prior to this project. Before this project began, Kristina's channel had 2 videos, 0 subscribers, and a best reach of 76 views, with no additional KPIs being analyzed.

YouTube was used as a channel for video blogs and sharing music. Videos were posted weekly throughout the four-week project period. Each was planned in advance. For the purposes of this project, YouTube was considered a central route to persuasion for videos containing music, and a peripheral route to persuasion for vlogs.

YouTube videos were filmed with an iPod camera, edited using iMovie, and uploaded from the iPod to YouTube. Videos uploaded in advance were scheduled to become available to the public using YouTube's scheduling tool.

The most attention was drawn to Kristina's Facebook page on April 3, the day of her single release. This video now has the most views and engagement on her YouTube channel (figure 8).

At the end of the four-week project period, Kristina's YouTube channel had 10 videos, 3 subscribers, and a best reach of 157 views, with additional KPIs being analyzed such as demographic data and user engagement.

After analyzing the four-week period, subtle changes will be made to improve YouTube performance in the future. The changes will be in video production, ensuring better lighting and sound to achieve a higher quality video. This change is supported by the importance of attractive cues within the Elaboration Likelihood Model.

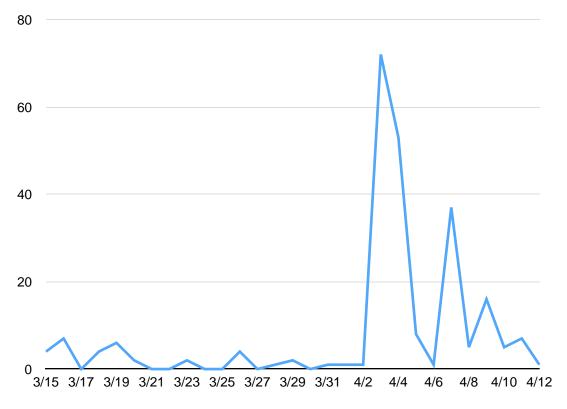


Figure 8: YouTube views over time

SoundCloud

Prior to this project, Kristina had no presence on SoundCloud as a social media platform for storing, hosting, and sharing audio tracks.

SoundCloud tracks were planned in advance but posted manually at a scheduled time each week. Some recordings were done on an iPod using the Røde mic lite app, which allows direct posting to SoundCloud. Additional recordings were done at Thirteen/Eight Productions, the studio where Kristina is recording her album. Her engineer provided these clips which were manually uploaded. SoundCloud was important to this project because it was the only social media site that was strictly a central route to persuasion. The quality of the recordings was critical in order to achieve positive persuasion.

SoundCloud tracks were shared on Facebook, Google+, and Twitter. A SoundCloud player was embedded onto Kristina's website. The most popular track was a practice session prior to the release of her debut single.

At the end of the four-week project period, Kristina's SoundCloud page had 111 plays (figure 9), with additional KPIs being monitored, including comments, shares, and listener demographics.

After analyzing the four-week period, the first change that will be made is to install Google analytics within SoundCloud. While SoundCloud provides easily accessible analytics for free accounts, there is not an option to export data. Google analytics will provide for more comprehensive data within SoundCloud.

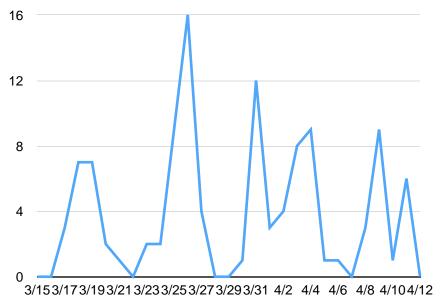


Figure 9: SoundCloud plays over time

Google+

A Google+ account had been established prior to this project. However, it was a standard Google+ account generated with the creation of a Google account. A brand page had not been created prior to this project. Before this project began, Kristina's personal page had no posts, one follower, and 755 page views.

Google+ posts were planned with links to external content, such as YouTube videos and blog posts. Images were included whenever possible. No effort was made to generate unique content on Google+. For the purposes of this project, Google+ was considered a peripheral route to persuasion within the ELM.

The most attention was drawn to Kristina's Facebook page on March 18. A link to SoundCloud was posted this day. There is no indication why this particular SoundCloud link performed better than others.

At the end of the four-week project period, Kristina's Google+ brand page had 1 follower, 301 views, and 1 action¹³ (figure 10). No additional KPIs were being analyzed, including demographic data, hashtag usage, and user engagement.

After analyzing the four-week period, subtle changes will be made to improve Google+ performance in the future. Specific content will be generated unique to Google+. More effort will be made to expand Circles, or groups on Google+. Comments will be left in groups and on posts of others. Posts will be made more frequently. Opportunities for virtual interaction in the form of Hangouts will be researched. Finally, links that are shared will include link-specific images.

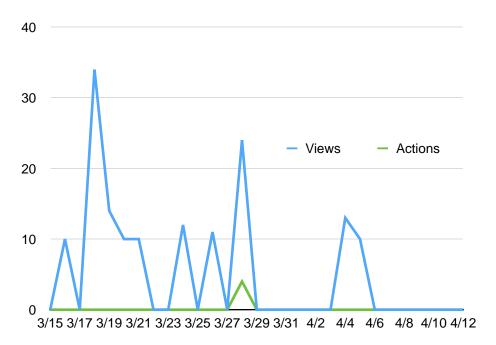


Figure 10: Google+ views and actions

¹³ Actions are any engagement with the post, including clicks, +1s, and comments

Blog

A blog had been created prior to this project. The blog was built with the WordPress framework and was integrated into Kristina's official site. Before this project began, Kristina's blog had 18 posts, an average of 250 views per month, and no comments.

Blog posts were planned with the four content buckets in mind. Images were included whenever possible to increase the attractiveness of the message, as explained by the ELM. Video blogs were posted weekly. Headlines were crafted to increase the click-through rate¹⁴ on shared social media sites. Every blog post was shared on Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. Blog posts were written ahead of the scheduled posting time and scheduled with the WordPress post scheduling option.

At the end of the four-week project period, Kristina's blog had 36 published posts and over 300 monthly views. Her blog received no comments. The most attention was drawn to Kristina's blog on April 3, when a lyric video containing her official single was posted (figure 11). Additional KPIs were being monitored, including demographic data, time of user engagement, outbound links, and search engine optimization (SEO) analysis.

After analyzing the four-week period, subtle changes will be made to improve blog performance in the future. Posts will be planned with a stronger tie to the content buckets. Subtle changes will be made in the SEO, which is the likelihood that a post will show up in a search using sites like Google or Bing. Google analytics will be integrated into the blog page specifically, to better analyze blog views versus site views. Greater emphasis will be given to the

¹⁴ The click-through rate measures the number of times a hyperlink was clicked to view content on an external site.

inclusion of images and video blogs will be created with greater quality in an attempt to increase

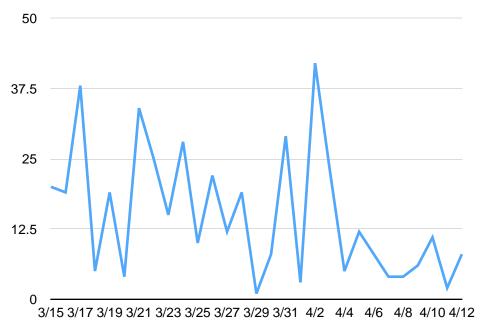


Figure 11: Blog sessions per day Unique IP addresses visiting the blog

the attractiveness of peripheral cues.

Discussion

The results of this study show how difficult it is for an emerging musician to initiate momentum. It was difficult to increase followers, likes, and interaction with fans. The increase was slow, though steady. Significant spikes in activity correlated to big events, such as the release of the single, are important because a change in momentum is created. Social momentum should be initiated, maintained, and improved to make social media an effective tool.

Based on the research performed and upon completion of the case study, it became clear that social media should be regularly and carefully planned, measured, and revised in order to effectively aid emerging musicians as a low- to no-budget marketing communication. While there are many suggestions regarding appropriate posting times, it was discovered to be more

effective to use recommended posting times until enough data was available to analyze when a target audience was active on specific social media channels. Best practices for social media posting include regular and consistent posting, consistent image use, and attractive, attentiongrabbing headlines.

It was surprising how difficult it was to initiate quality conversation. Questions were asked on Facebook, Google+, Twitter, and Kristina's blog with the goal of eliciting a response. Despite various questions posed on these different sites, no conversation began. In the future, more questions will be asked at different times and in different formats in order to discover what will generate a response from the current audience.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Through careful planning, scheduling, and monitoring of seven social media sites, initial exposure for emerging musician Kristina Evonne increased. In the three weeks leading up to the release of her debut single, key performance indicators showed an increase in social media buzz.

Based on the research and the case study performed as part of this capstone project, it is recommended that when initiating a social media plan, great effort should be given to carefully plan, measure, and revise social media posting and communication. It is recommended that, due to the fluid nature of social media, an initial social media plan be analyzed and revised every month for three months, every three months for the first year, and every three to six months after the first year. It is important that emerging musicians are aware of the large time commitment that social media can be, especially in the initial stages of a social media campaign. Tools such as HootSuite and IFTTT, which were used in this project, are highly recommended to maximize time and energy spent on launching a social media campaign.

Emerging musicians should understand the importance of the quality and attractiveness of posts, as explained by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). Even more important than the attractiveness of the posts is the quality of the music produced by emerging musicians. It can be easy to get distracted with social media. Emerging musicians should be careful to improve the quality of the music before focusing on the quality of a social media campaign. By having a high quality product, the central route of persuasion within the ELM becomes an applicable process. The central route is a more permanent pathway to persuasion which can be used to build lasting and loyal fans.

There are many factors which play into the success of a musician. Social media is simply one of these factors. Emerging musicians can give themselves a better opportunity at finding success by remaining authentic, creating the best product possible, and utilizing best social media practices.

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Appendix AInitial Key Performance Indicators



Kristina Ewonne

Snapshot of social media presence

Blog

Averaging 250 views per month 18 posts No comments

Facebook

68 likes Last post reach - 384

Twitter

19 tweets
Following 33
21 followers

Google+

No posts 1 follower 755 views

YouTube

2 videos 0 followers Best reach - 76 views

Instagram

260 posts 183 followers 194 following

SoundCloud

No presence

Appendix BSocial Media Proposal



Social Media Plan March 2015

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has become a source for individuals to share, connect, and sell to others at the click of a button. But gaining a social presence online can be difficult with the hundreds of products, services, and ideas competing for consumers' attention.

Social media is especially enticing to emerging musicians. It is seen as "free" marketing. While there is usually little to no financial cost associated with social media, time is easily overspent trying to maintain various sites. This social media plan is designed to create the most efficient and effective use of your blog, Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, YouTube, and SoundCloud.

Searching for followers can seem like a daunting task. However, if you are willing to use the personal associations you currently have, this task will become slightly easier. You already have hundreds of followers on your personal Facebook and Instagram accounts. Those followers are a good start for base users. In addition to established relationships, anytime you have an opportunity to plug your social presence, you should. A casual conversation can turn into a loyal user.

GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA principles

Listen. Listen to your friends, followers, and fans. They will tell you what they want to know. Their comments, whether compliments, critiques, or anything in between, can guide your social media presence.

Create quality content. Content is key. Make sure you are generating content that matters to your fans. Don't post just to post. Ensure you are providing something of value.

Be consistent. Keep your voice true to your brand and personality. Give your fans and followers what they expect. Be consistent throughout your interactions both online and offline. Use consistent branding throughout your social media sites. Make sure your fans and followers find the same brand and person on whichever social media site they find you.

Have fun. Social media is just that: Social. You're interacting with people, not machines. Remember to have fun and enjoy the ride!

Throughout this guide you will see use of professional and personal posts.

Professional posts are related to you as an artist, your music, your creative process.

These posts are from you as Kristina

Evonne, the singer/songwriter. Personal posts are everything else about you. Your style, your hobbies, your life outside of your music. These posts are from Nina, the student and real-life human being.

GOALS

General goals are to increase exposure, likes, fans, and followers.

Goals specific to social media sites:

Blog: Increase blog traffic.

In 1 month, site should average 250 views per month
In 3 months, site should average 500 views per month
In 6 months, site should average 750 views per month

Facebook: Increase fans and engagement.

In 1 month, page likes should surpass 80

In 3 months, page likes should surpass 100

In 6 months, page likes should surpass 250

Twitter: Increase post engagement, increase followers.

In 1 month, followers should surpass 50

Interaction with 5% of posts In 3 months, followers should surpass 100

Interaction with 15% of posts In 6 months, followers should surpass 300

Interaction with 30% of posts

Google+: Increase page views, prove a quality account to obtain specific URL.

In 1 month, at least 100 page views
In 3 months, at least 250 page views
Ability to secure a specific URL
In 6 months, at least 500 page views

YouTube: Increase traffic to videos

In 1 month, at least 5 subscribers
In 3 months, at least 20 subscribers
Video views surpass 100
In 6 months, at least 50 subscribers
Video views surpass 250

Instagram: Increase followers and interaction

In 1 month surpass 200 followers
In 3 months, at least 250 followers
Comments on 15% of posts
In 6 months, at least 400 followers
Comments on 25% of posts

SoundCloud: Create a presence, regularly post music

In 1 month, account created & at least 4 songs posted In 3 months, at least 12 songs posted In 6 months, at least 24 songs posted

BLOG

Blogs - Quick facts:

- 70% of users say they read blogs in the morning
- 11am is usually the highest traffic hour for an average blog
- Mondays are the highest traffic days for an average blog
- Comments are usually highest on Saturdays
- Blog posts receive most social shares on Thursdays Data courtesy of kissmetrics.com

Blogs & Kristina Evonne:

- Traffic dramatically dropped since posting stopped
 - November 2014: 257 views (21 posts)
 - December 2014: 135 views (3 posts)
 - January 2015: 110 views (1 post)
 - February 2015: 64 views (2 posts)
 - March 2015: 37 views (no posts)
- No comments

Kristina Evonne's blog future:

Posting schedule:

Monday (9:00 am): Industry news

Post headline examples:

- "Billboard announces first change in over 20 years"
- "New artist Grammy nominations announced"

Notes:

 Post should include a simple connection to you, such as "I can't believe Sam Smith has only been

- around this year! It feels like I've known him my whole life."
- Post should include a call to action, such as "What do you think of these nominations? Who did they leave off the list?"

Thursday (11:00 am): Video blog / Personal

Post headline examples:

- "What no one tells you about performing"
- "New music! Fresh from the studio, here's 'On My Way'"

Notes:

- All videos should be embedded from YouTube
- At least once a month the video should be music, whether it is a new song, an acoustic version of one of your songs, or a cover of another song.
- These posts should have a personal feel to them. What do you want your fans to know from Nina, the person?

Saturday (11:00 am): Professional post

Post headline examples:

- "5 Tips for Busy Musicians"
- "How listening can inspire your lyrics'" *Notes:*
- Include a call to action, such as "What tips would you add to this list?"
- These posts should blend a personal feel with professional information. What do you want your fans to know from Kristina Evonne, the singer?

FACEBOOK

Facebook - Quick facts:

- Photo posts get 39% more interaction
- Posts below 80 characters get up to 66% more engagement Data courtesy of jeffbullas.com/

Facebook & Kristina Evonne:

70 likes • 46 people reached on most recent post • 14 post clicks and 6 likes/comments/shares on most recent post

Kristina Evonne's Facebook future:

Posting schedule:

Thursday (1:00 pm): Link to Thursday blog post (Video blog)
Friday (2:00 pm): Personal post (with a picture)

Saturday (11:00 am): Post from blog

Post example:

 Picture of guitar and notebook with headline "Inspiration hit today when I talked to an amazing person who has overcome so much!"

Notes:

- Include a message with each post
- Include a picture as often as possible!
- Ask a question similar to your call to action, such as "Tips for busy musicians - what would you add?"

TWITTER

Twitter - Quick facts:

- Twitter engagement is 17% higher on weekends
- Retweets are highest around 5:00 pm
- Click through rate is highest at noon and 6:00 pm Data courtesy of fastcompany.com

Twitter & Kristina Evonne:

21 tweets • You follow 32 people • 18 followers

Kristina Evonne's Twitter future:

Posting schedule:

Monday (12:00 noon): Tweet blog post Tuesday (6:00 pm): Personal tweet Wednesday (12:00 noon): Personal tweet Thursday (6:00 pm): Tweet youtube link to video

Friday (12:00 noon): News (with a picture). Ask for a retweet (include full word "retweet")
Saturday (12:00 noon): Personal

Additionally:

Retweet something Monday - Friday at 5:00 pm

Live tweet any performance, including pictures

Notes on Twitter:

Use hashtags, such as #LesPaul and #NewMusic
Monitor mentions on Twitter.

Acknowledge them in some way (retweet, favorite, or respond).

GOOGLE+

Google+ - Quick facts:

- 80% users login at least once a week and 60% users login everyday
- 625,000 people join Google+ every day
- There are over 500 million monthly active users of Google+ Data courtesy of huffingtonpost.com

Google+ & Kristina Evonne:

No posts • No followers • 114 views in last 30 days

Kristina Evonne's Google+ future:

Posting suggestions:

Repost all blog posts Wednesday (10:00 am): Personal post Friday (10:00 am): Personal post

Notes on Google+

Google+ has groups called "Circles." When you post, you can specify who sees each post. Create circles, join circles, and stay involved. Make sure blog posts are publicly visible. In the future, look to creating exclusive circles for your most dedicated fans, sharing exclusive content with them.

YOUTUBE

YouTube- Quick facts:

- Over 1 billion unique monthly visitors
- Every minute 700 YouTube videos are shared on Twitter
- Second largest search engine on the internet Data courtesy of jeffbullas.com

YouTube & Kristina Evonne:

2 videos • 0 subscribers • Best reach - 76 views

Kristina Evonne's YouTube future:

Posting suggestions:

Once a month upload a new original song

If no original song to upload, create an acoustic version of an original song Once a month upload a cover

Notes on YouTube

Any video posted on any social media site should be originally uploaded to YouTube

Videos should be no more than 5 minutes long

Every song posted should be set to a music video or lyric video

INSTAGRAM

Instagram- Quick facts:

- 7.3 million daily active users
- Strictly a mobile app, so timing is different than many social media sites Data courtesy of iconosquare.com

Instagram & Kristina Evonne:

280 posts • 214 followers • 223 following

Kristina Evonne's Instagram future:

Posting schedule:

Monday (9:00 am): Personal post Tuesday (1:00 pm): Professional post Wednesday (2:00 pm): Professional post Thursday (9:00 am): #TBT Thursday (5:00 pm): Short video Friday (2:00 pm): Personal post (If you have a concert that night, make this a professional post) Saturday (11:00 am): Professional post

Notes on Instagram

Use hashtags. Jump on board with hashtags such as #TBT (Throwback Thursday). Use hashtags similar to Twitter, as well, such as #LesPaul, #KristinaEvonneLive, etc.

SOUNDCLOUD

SoundCloud- Quick facts:

- 40 million registered users
- 200 million listeners

 Data courtesy of USAtoday.com

SoundCloud & Kristina Evonne:

7 plays • 2 likes • 0 comments

Kristina Evonne's SoundCloud future:

Posting suggestions:

Upload one song every two weeks Reference new song on other social media sites

Notes on SoundCloud

SoundCloud will tweet every time a song is played. Widget for website should be used as soon as SoundCloud account is created.

Appendix C Social Media Calendar

March 2 =9:00 AM Instagram =9:00 AM Google+ =12:00 PM Twitter =4:30 PM Facebook =5:00 PM Twitter		7 = 10:00 AM SoundCloud = 10:00 AM Google+ = 12:00 PM Twitter = 2:00 PM Instagram = 5:00 PM Twitter	= 9:00 AM Instagram = 11:00 AM Blog post = 11:00 AM YouTube = 11:00 PM Google+ = 1:00 PM Facebook = 5:00 PM Twitter = 6:00 PM Twitter	20 = 10:00 AM Google+ = 12:00 PM Twitter = 2:00 PM Facebook = 2:00 PM Instagram = 5:00 PM Twitter	= 11:00 AM Blog post = 11:00 AM Google+ = 11:00 AM Instagram = 11:00 AM Twitter = 11:00 AM Facebook
= 9:00 AM Blog post = 9:00 AM Instagram = 9:00 AM Google+ = 12:00 PM Twitter = 4:30 PM Facebook = 5:00 PM Twitter	= 1:00 PM Instagram = 5:00 PM Twitter	= 10:00 AM Google+ = 10:00 AM SoundCloud = 12:00 PM Twitter chat Use #DIYMuscian) = 12:00 PM Twitter = 2:00 PM Instagram = 5:00 PM Twitter	= 9:00 AM Instagram = 11:00 AM Blog post = 11:00 AM YouTube = 11:00 AM Google+ = 1:00 PM Facebook = 5:00 PM Twitter = 6:00 PM Twitter	= 10:00 AM Google+ = 12:00 PM Twitter = 2:00 PM Instagram = 2:00 PM Facebook = 5:00 PM Twitter	= 11:00 AM Twitter = 11:00 AM Facebook = 11:00 AM Google+ = 11:00 AM Blog post = 11:00 AM Instagram
= 9:00 AM Google+ = 9:00 AM Instagram = 9:00 AM Single cover art = 9:00 AM Blog post = 12:00 PM Twitter = 4:30 PM Facebook = 5:00 PM Twitter	= 1:00 PM Instagram = 5:00 PM Twitter	= 10:00 AM Google+ = 10:00 AM SoundCloud = 12:00 PM Twitter = 2:00 PM Instagram = 5:00 PM Twitter	= 9:00 AM Instagram = 11:00 AM YouTube = 11:00 AM Google+ = 11:00 AM Blog post = 1:00 PM Facebook = 5:00 PM Twitter = 6:00 PM Twitter	2 3 = 10:00 AM Google+ = 12:00 PM Twitter = 2:00 PM Google+ = 2:00 PM SoundCloud = 2:00 PM Instagram = 2:00 PM Inacebook = 2:00 PM Google+ = 2:00 PM JouTube = 2:00 PM Blog post = 5:00 PM Twitter	# 11:00 AM Instagram = 11:00 AM Twitter = 11:00 AM Facebook = 11:00 AM Blog post = 11:00 AM Google+

April 2015

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
= 9:00 AM Google+ = 9:00 AM Single cover art = 9:00 AM Instagram = 9:00 AM Instagram = 9:00 AM Blog post = 12:00 PM Twitter = 4:30 PM Facebook = 5:00 PM Twitter	== 1:00 PM instagram == 5:00 PM Twitter	= 10:00 AM SoundCloud = 10:00 AM Google+ = 12:00 PM Twitter = 2:00 PM Instagram = 5:00 PM Twitter	1 = 9:00 AM Instagram = 11:00 AM YouTube = 11:00 AM Blog post = 1:00 AM Google+ = 1:00 PM Facebook = 5:00 PM Twitter = 6:00 PM Twitter	2	3 = 11:00 AM Google+ = 11:00 AM Facebook = 11:00 AM Twitter = 11:00 AM Blog post = 11:00 AM Instagram
5 = 9:00 AM Instagram = 9:00 AM log post = 9:00 AM Google+ = 12:00 PM Twitter = 4:30 PM Facebook = 5:00 PM Twitter	= 1:00 PM Instagram = 5:00 PM Twitter	= 10:00 AM SoundCloud = 10:00 AM Google+ = 12:00 PM Twitter = 2:00 PM Instagram = 5:00 PM Twitter	8 = 9:00 AM Instagram = 11:00 AM Google+ = 11:00 AM YouTube = 11:00 AM Blog post = 1:00 PM Facebook = 5:00 PM Twitter = 6:00 PM Twitter	9 = 10:00 AM Google+ = 12:00 PM Twitter = 2:00 PM Facebook = 2:00 PM Instagram = 5:00 PM Twitter	10 = 11:00 AM Instagram = 11:00 AM Facebook = 11:00 AM Google+ = 11:00 AM Twitter = 11:00 AM Blog post
12 12		14	15	16	17