THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF ADVERTISING/PUBLIC RELATIONS

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MUSIC:
ARE ARTISTS ABLE TO ACT AS THEIR OWN LABELS?

KATHERINE FORMICHELLA
Summer 2018

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for baccalaureate degrees
in Advertising/Public Relations and Psychology
with honors in Advertising/Public Relations

Reviewed and approved* by the following:

Gregory Woodman
Instructor in Engineering Entrepreneurship
Thesis Supervisor

Steve Manuel
Assistant Teaching Professor
Honors Adviser

* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.

ABSTRACT

The music industry is a rapidly changing industry. With the changes in technology, the industry has been opened up to more people. An artist can produce and publish their music in their basement. They can promote their own music to the entire world via social media. This research examines social media in music for promotion. A series of case studies are presented regarding the use of current, popular musicians' social networking pages. In the main research of this thesis, a series of interviews with artists working to build their music careers were conducted. An analysis of these interviews found that musicians differ in their social media use. However, all of the interviewed artists would prefer to focus more on their music, rather than their branding, as quickly as possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the course of a year, I have completed this thesis with multiple people to thank. First and foremost, I need to thank my Thesis Supervisor, Greg Woodman, for his continued support. He has stuck with me through this entire process and has offered tremendous advice in regards to this thesis and beyond. I am grateful for everything he has helped me with in my college career.

Additionally, I would like to thank Rick Weyer, who was another backbone to this process. I do not think I would have my thoughts developed, let alone a topic, without his guidance.

Thank you to Steve Manuel, my Honors Advisor. He has helped me develop my public relations skills throughout my time at the Pennsylvania State University and given me invaluable career advice.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of my friends and family. They supported me through thick and thin during this entire year. Even when I thought this research would not be completed, they were there to push me forward.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The music industry has rapidly changed over the past few decades. As music continues to evolve, the world is seeing the path lead to the digital convergence of music. The invention of digital music and the continued usage of the internet allowed anyone to push their music into the public view through digital technology. Music is easily accessible online.

Additionally, more people are able to establish themselves as artists without the help of an outside entity, such as a label. A musician can record a track on their own personal digital audio workstation (DAW), edit it, and then publish it on their chosen platform. Most recently, these platforms could be Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and SoundCloud in terms of social media. For streaming, these platforms often include Apple Music, Tidal, Spotify, Shazam, and more. There are plenty of options and tools for artists to create and distribute their own music, which is something that has been left to mostly larger music labels.

For years, artists used to dream of getting picked up by a record label in order to solidify their career in music. However, with the emergence of digital platforms, record labels have begun to take on a different role. Instead of focusing mostly on pushing the physical copies of music, they have been looking for other ways to make money in the industry, such as touring and merchandising (Marshall, 2013).

Many news and academic outlets have even reported on the lack of record labels currently in existence. In 2012, four major record labels dominated landscape, EMI, Sony, Warner, and Universal (Marshall, 2013). However, during that year, Universal acquired EMI, and the industry was confined to three companies (Universal Music Group, n.d.). These labels

hold most of the wealth of the industry, and they have control over how most popular music is distributed

      With so few labels in existence now, it is a tiring journey to get signed to a label. Artists want to make it big with their music, and that still often means getting signed to a label. However, the creation of social media has led to a saturation of the market.

      Artist & Repertoire (A&R) is the division in these labels that search for and sign new artists. They have many methods in place to discover artists. Now, these individuals have additional access to thousands of performers online to recruit for their label.

      Online presence is crucial for artists' promotion. Artists must understand how important social media is for their career. Many musicians have made it big because of their postings online, and other artists have the potential to do the same.

      Additionally, some artists maintain a large following without signing to a label due to their social media presence and personal marketing skills.

      Yet, are artists able to promote themselves online in the same way a label might have in the past? With the tools available to them today, there is a possibility.

      In this paper, a brief overview of the current music industry and social media platforms is given. Three case studies of artists who used social media to build their brand are examined and analyzed. Finally, the main research question is investigated: are artists able to act as their own labels? Additionally, how do they feel about this method of promotion? The findings, limitations, and potential for future research are discussed.

Chapter 2

The Music Industry

Recording contracts were the end game for musicians in the past, but with the use of the internet and the combination of labels into four entities, it is much harder to get signed to a recording contract and much easier for some musicians to promote their music on their own.

Some artists who have been in recording contracts for long periods of time feel as though these contracts are restricting and hold them back from other opportunities. Creedence Clearwater Revival, for example, struggled with their recording contract. Compared to others in the industry at the time, the band was receiving extremely low royalties for their music. It caused the band many legal and monetary problems throughout their career (Bordowitz, 2012).

Prince felt confined to his record label, often calling himself a "slave" to his label. He would write the term on his face during performances. In 1993, he changed his name to a symbol to show his disdain for his label. The remaining time on his contract required his name to be written as 'The Artists Formerly Known as Prince" to complicate things with his label (Hall, 2002).

Currently, some artists are signing something termed the "360 deal". These deals cover everything music-related for the artist. This could cover touring, recording, events, and merchandise. The artist signs the contract and gets all of the money upfront, but then they are at the liberty of the contract for the period of time they agreed on (Marshall, 2012).

These contracts are typically signed with a promoter rather than a label, showing the potential shift of power in the industry away from the labels. Some artists enjoy that they do not

have to worry about their marketing or putting together their tours. However, others feel as though, like Prince, this makes them a slave to their contract (Marshall, 2012).
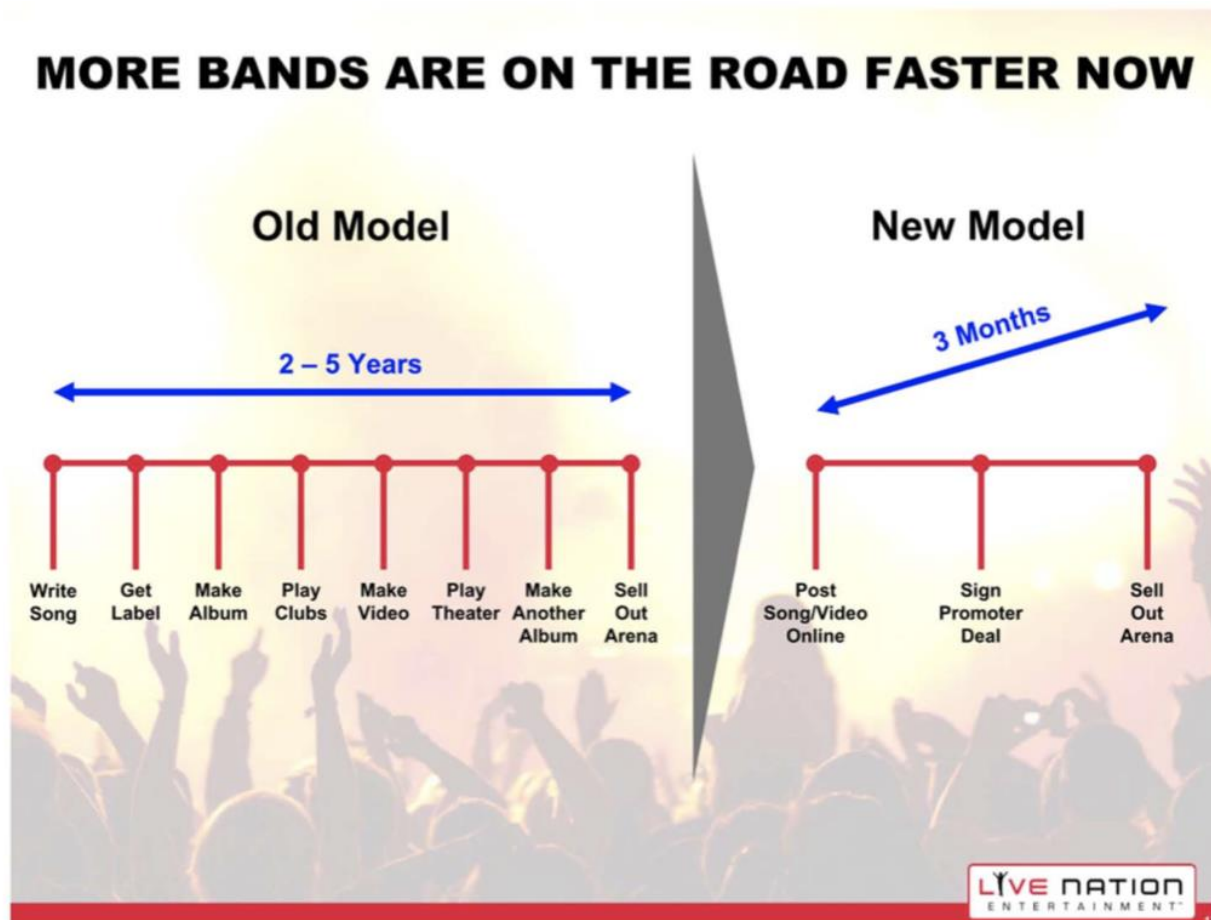
Figure 1: Slide from Live Nation Presentation

from Figure 3 (Marshall, 2012)

The above slide shows how Live Nation has seen these deals play out. An artist will post a song or video online, sign a deal with Live Nation, and then the artist sells out the show (Marshall, 2012).

With recording contract horror stories, some artists never want think about signing to a label or with a promoter. Others find that it will help their career in the end.

Yet, the movement of digital music has allowed anyone to post their content for the world to find. It has made people pickier about the music they listen to. In fact, the album itself is dying out (Owsinski, 2016).

The digital distribution of music allows artists to release music over a longer period of time rather than all at once. Therefore, the record label has more time to spread out the marketing campaign and promote the future songs on social media (Owsinski, 2016).

With music moving to an online platform, musicians can post their music to their social media, and a fan can listen to the new song or album right on that post. Before, there would be extensive campaigns to get fans to buy an entire physical album.

Additionally, platforms like SoundCloud allow artists to post any content of their choosing. Instead of having a series of steps to go through to ensure quality, an artist can put up an unmastered demo and still get traction (SoundCloud, n.d.).

For musicians who do not want to sign to a label, the ability to interact with fans without going through a standard form of media, such as a magazine or television, is crucial. Social media is a free way for these artists to organically build a fan base. Artists can also directly communicate with their fans in a way that was not possible in the past.

Chapter 3

Social Media

Social media now is a large piece of every marketing campaign. For musicians, it is crucial to interacting with fans and building a following. Artists are expected to have a bit of a following before they even enter into a recording contract. Therefore, their growth online is potentially essential to their future career.

In London, a genre called Grime, which is a blend on hip-hop, dance, and old school garage, has seen its rise through social media. The artists within these genres can publish their music and videos directly online for their fans to view. Those in this genre saw their follower count increase when they were "authentic" or "real" with their followers (McGrath, et al., 2016). For the case of the Grime performers and many other artists, authenticity helps them to connect with fans online. By showing that they are real people, that connection helps to build and maintain more fans.

Many artists are also looking to create online communities for their fans through a series of steps. Social media users have various different motivations for creating their profiles and interacting online. For most of them, finding a community is one of those goals they are looking to meet through their profiles. They will seek out content that is related to how they feel and act as individuals (Salo, et al., 2013).

Artists have begun to create social pages online for their fans to interact and connect on, with each other and with said artist. Street teaming has become increasingly popular online throughout these pages. "Content communities" have also become popular through Spotify. These communities connect fans with different artists the primary musician has a connection with or sounds similar to (Salo, et al., 2013).

In Salo, et al. (2013), the researchers conducted focus groups with musicians regarding their usage of social media. The social media landscape at the time was different in terms of platforms, but many of the strategies remain the same. For the musicians, the goal is to build a community online. If a community is built online, they have loyal fans that will continue to post their content and spread it (Salo, et al., 2013).

For strategies, these musicians would target groups who could be interested in their music by selecting the right social media platforms. To build their community, they would ensure they had good communication with their fans through consistency in posting and understanding the needs of their fans to feel connected. They supported interactions between their fans and made them feel special by personally interacting with them. In the end, they made sure all the content they posted was relevant to themselves as artists and how they wanted to be represented (Salo, et al., 2013).

The musicians in this study found these strategies led them to connect with the most people online. The central part of this research discovered the importance of creating that "community" for fans (Salo, et al., 2013). Social media itself is a community with a series of niches. Each artist needs to find their own niche and their fan base from there.

The current social media scene has grown tremendously since the previously mentioned research. For the purposes of the research outlined in this paper, the most popular social media platforms, in order, are YouTube (73% of adults surveyed), Facebook (68%), Instagram (35%), Pinterest (29%), Snapchat (27%), LinkedIn (25%), and Twitter (24%). In young adults, YouTube is also the most used social media (Smith & Anderson, 2018).

Chapter 4

Social Media and Music

The digital movement of music has led artists to look for various ways to promote their music online. Many artists have found that the promotion they may receive from a label is the same as what they could do themselves. For some, social media was the tool that allowed them to break free from a traditional label and distribute their music the way they wanted to. In this section, three different popular artists are looked at for their use of social media. Chance the Rapper promoted his music online and, to this day, does not use a label. Justin Bieber rose to fame via YouTube and was discovered by his manager in this space. DJ Khalid cultivated a memorable online persona that boosted his recognizability in the music industry.

Chance the Rapper

From the beginning of his career, Chance the Rapper has been against major record labels. On his website ChanceRaps.com, he promotes the importance of independent music through a section titled, "Let's Bring Independent Music to the Airwaves". Here, website visitors can put in a request to have various independent artists' music played on their city's radio (Chance, n.d.).

Chance is a Grammy winner, despite never signing to a record label. In an interview for Yahoo Global News, the rapper discussed why he does not want to be held to a recording contract. "The artist is completely owned by a label…I don't like being owned. That's not my thing. That's not what I'm into," he said. Because of this choice, he gets to make important

choices about his career, such as how much his music costs and who he gets to tour with (Hahm, 2017).

Since he does not use the marketing services that a label provides, many of his primary communications with fans come from social media. Chance has 7.83 million followers on Twitter (Chance the Rapper, 2017), 1.9 million likes on Facebook (Chance the Rapper, n.d.), and 8.3 million followers on Instagram (Chance, n.d.). On these accounts, he connects with his fans about his music, as seen in the tweet below, where he announces a new feature on SoundCloud.

Chance The Rapper ✔ @chancetherapper · May 9
New verse 🚨

Drowsiness ft Chance The Rapper
2nd Single off of SideFX
soundcloud

💬 63   🔁 849   ♡ 3.8K

Figure 2: Chance "New Verse" Tweet

from twitter.com/chancetherapper

Chance also uses his social media to show his own personal voice. He often tweets things unrelated to his music. For example, he recently tweeted the following. By showing his authenticity, he is building his brand online, which is crucial to increasing a following as discussed previously.

Figure 3: Chance "Antz" Tweet

from twitter.com/chancetherapper

Chance also retweets and shares music by other artists frequently in addition to interacting with his fans via the same methods. This strategy creates a community on his social media that would not exist if he simply pushed his own content. As mentioned before, social media growth occurs when there are interactions between accounts, not just a one-sided conversation.

The rapper's social media growth story began with SoundCloud, an online streaming service. Artists can directly upload their content without hoops to jump through, and they can post content they choose without a filter (SoundCloud, n.d.). The online streaming service regards themselves as a type of social media within the music industry space. Chance utilizes his account to connect with his fanbase and keep them engaged (Dredge, 2018).

Chance's marketing on SoundCloud began with a mixtape and continued through his communication with fans on the platform and connection with fellow artists (Clarke, 2017).

The rapper also utilizes a series of marketing strategies on his social media that built his brand and made him recognizable. His classic "3" for example is on all of his online digital content, banners, videos and album artwork. Because of this, people now associate Chance with the number 3 (Clarke, 2017)

Justin Bieber

Justin Bieber's rise to fame is a well-documented online case study. As YouTube began to gain more traffic, musicians began to post their content on the website. Justin Bieber went through playing guitar on the streets to posting covers on YouTube. In an interview with ABC News, Bieber said, "[My video] had a hundred views, then a thousand views, and then ten thousand views, so I just kept posting more videos and more videos," (Adib, 2009).

Figure 4: Justin Bieber Video

from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csymVmm1xTw

Justin's first video on his YouTube Channel, as seen above, has 8.8 million views currently. His other covers vary in popularity, but are still high up in terms of the view count.

His music began to gain traction within the industry. Music producer Scooter Braun found Justin on YouTube and was impressed with his talent. He reached out to Bieber and got him signed to a record label. Without his discovery online and the ability to push out his content, Justin would not be where he is today (Goldstein, 2011).

DJ Khalid

DJ Khalid's rise to fame does not begin with social media. Yet, social media was a mechanism for him to create an online persona that thousands more people recognize. In every aspect of his life, he is marketing himself.

Online, he creates a persona of positivity and "staying humble" despite his rise to fame (Pigeons, 2018). According to Khalid, "Being authentic always wins," as he said in an interview with CNBC. DJ Khalid has prided himself on showing his day-to-day life on Snapchat in particular to connect with his followers (Castillo, 2017).

On social media, Khalid uses specific phrases that have become part of his brand. These include "Key to life" and "Bless up". He uses these phrases consistently and has created his own brand on his various platforms, even though Snapchat is his preferred medium (Kulkarni, 2016).

Figure 5: DJ Khalid Major Key Snap

from https://medium.com/@RhapsoDani/major-key-dj-khaled-an-unlikely-source-for-motivation-inspiration-e865c3421c4a

Chapter 5

Method

The purpose of this study is to understand how musicians feel about their relationship with social media. Additionally, the study investigates the current posting habits of these musicians and if they feel capable to be running their own promotion. In order to best comprehend how musicians related to social media, a series of interviews were conducted over a period of two months. IRB certification was received to perform the study.

Interviewing became the primary research method due the chance for the participants to discuss issues further. Qualitative approaches, including interviewing, give researchers the chance to gather information that would not be given in a quantitative context. Elaboration often occurs in an interview, uncovering important points that would otherwise be hidden (Gibson, 2017).

Recruitment

Participants of these interviews were recruited through social media groups on LinkedIn and Facebook as well as through email. On Facebook, these groups included "Musicians / Producers & Singers Network", "MUSICIANS", "Songwriting", "Penn State Songwriters Club", "Penn State Thespians", "No Refund Theatre", and "Hip Hop Artists / Rappers / Producers / Musicians". On LinkedIn, the groups included "Opportunities for Musicians, Bands, Producers, Managers, A&R, Music Labels, & Music Supervisors", "Music Industry Forum", "Music Industry Network", "Music Professionals", and "Music & Marketing".

The selection of these groups began with the subject of the group. All of the selected groups have members who create their own music and work to promote it. The group also needed to be currently active, meaning there was posting occurring within it at least a week prior.

Within these groups, a message was then posted to briefly describe the type of research that was being conducted. Interested musicians were provided an email to reach out to the researchers to discuss the research further, ask any questions, and schedule their interview.

Additional participants were recruited via email through the researcher's contact network. They were contacted about the research and were given the opportunity to ask questions if interested. An interview was scheduled if the musician was interested in participating.

Interviews

Interviewees were given the option to do the interview over the phone, through web camera, or in person. Two interviews were done in person, and all others were done over the phone.

Because of the location of the Pennsylvania State University and the current music scene in the surround area of State College, the importance of gathering participants outside of the area was crucial to the generalizability of findings. According to Holt (2010), telephone interviewing can be one of the most practical alternatives to face-to-face interviewing.

The interviews were then transcribed for further reading by individuals outside the research team. All identifying information, including names and company information, was removed for the anonymity of the participants. All interviewees were asked the same questions

and could decline to answer a question as needed. The list of questions asked in addition to the transcribed answers of the participants are listed under Appendix A.

Questions, Reasoning, and Predictions

The questions used in the interviews as well as the reasoning behind their creation are listed below.

1. How are you currently using social media for your music career?

This question aimed to get at the current social media usage of the musicians. As the introduction, the goal was to have the musician begin to think introspectively about their online presence. It was predicted that participants do not currently utilize a social media strategy or think in depth around their online persona.

2. What social media platforms do you currently use?

It was predicted that the musicians would use Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as their main sources of social networking. Currently, these are the most popular platforms used by the public. This question searched to get an answer for that in terms of the interviewed musicians.

3. Have you seen any spikes or drops in your social media over time? What do you believe was the cause of this?

The goal of this question was to identify if a musician experienced a change in their social media engagements and followers over time. More specifically, it was created to identify what specific posts or interactions lead to this. It was predicted that a lack of consistent posting

would lead to a decrease in engagement over time. Additionally, musicians would experience an increase in engagement when they post a well-produced music video or song.

4. Do you follow any fellow artists? Was it helpful to you to do so?

This question prodded the musician's use of social media for networking and partnership purposes. Mainly, the goal was to see if they see social media as a platform to do this.

5. How do you interact, if at all, with your current fan base on social media?

As mentioned in Chapter 3, interaction is an important part of building a social media following. The goal of the question was to identify if musicians were currently doing this. Because of the amount of time it takes to interact with followers, it was predicted that the musicians do not currently do this. If they did, they did it minimally.

6. What strategies do you currently use, if any? How effective do you feel they have been?

A strategy is an important part of effective social media. However, it was predicted the musicians would not have a strategy for their pages since it takes significant time to build an effective strategy.

7. Have you worked with a label or communications agency for social media? Do you feel their efforts have helped you?

The goal of this research was to look at those musicians who have not utilized a label or a communications firm to promote or manage themselves. This question would rule out those who

have done so. If the musicians had used these groups, it was important to identify why they may

have no longer been using the services of these organizations.

8. What is your ultimate goal with social media?

   This question aimed to look at what they were looking to achieve through their online

presence. Some potential examples were an increase in exposure, a larger fan base, or a platform

to post their music.

9. How often do you post your music on social media?

   It was predicted that the musicians would post at least once a week. They would post

more if they had a performance coming up or a release of their music.

10. How often do you post in general across platforms?

   The goal of this question was to identify how often the musicians post the same content

across the channels they utilize. For example, if the create a new music video, they post it on

both Instagram and Facebook.

11. Does certain content get more engagement (engagement is defined as share/retweets and

likes)? Why do you think that is happening?

   This is trying to get at the same issues presented in question #3. However, instead of

looking at their engagement over time, the musicians were asked to focus more on the specific

content they post. It is predicted that more post that have to do with their music will get more

engagement. An important piece here is the "why", since the goal of the research is to figure out how musicians feel about their social media use.

12. Do you focus more on posting content or interacting with your followers?

While the musicians may not have a strategy, answering this question will show how they currently focus on their social media. As mentioned previously, most social media users center on putting out content rather than interacting with the people that follow them.

13. Do you interact with influencers on social media? Do you feel it is useful?

On social media, influencers can have a big effect on the success of an individual. One retweet by a known influencer can cause a drastic increase in the following of a musician. Liking, sharing, or retweeting the posts of an influencer can bring attention to the musician. However, it sometimes can be pointless since the influencer gets hundreds of interactions per day.

14. What is your goal as a musician?

Devotion to self-promotion can often come from how devoted a musician is to his or her career. If a musician has the goal to become a big star, their social media activity will potentially show that. However, there are many other factors at play in regards to their social media habits. Despite what their online presence shows, this question aimed to get at the futures of the interviewed musicians. All of the musicians interviewed were required to want to pursue music as a full-time career. Yet, that could be defined differently between each person.

15. What are the current problems you are facing in terms of your musical career?

This question searches for the current stressors the musicians were feeling in their career. Because the other questions in the interview leaned towards their promotion, it was predicted the musicians would respond with answers concerning their fan base, social media presence, or overall marketing.

16. What is your ideal role on social media?

Musicians were predicted to give their goal for their social media usage. As in, they would provide what their ultimate follower goal is in addition to what their content posting goals were. This question could also be answered in the perspective of how they interact on their social media accounts. Would they prefer to not have a social media account? Would they be more interested in creating their music instead of working on their "brand"?

17. Do you have anything else you would like to share?

This was left up to interpretation by the musicians. Elaboration was a key reason for choosing interview-based research. The musicians could share any additional information they felt pertained to the research and was not covered in past questions.

Chapter 6

Analysis & Discussion

While certain assumptions and hypothesis were made regarding the creation of the research, many of the questions were taken differently between the participants. Additionally, many of them varied in terms of their musical career and their understanding of social media. All of the interviewed musicians were looking to boost their music career in some way, particularly to build their overall fan base.

The Platforms

Each artist used their own unique combination of social media platforms. All of them used Facebook in some way. Those in bands indicated that they used a Facebook Page to promote their music. However, all of the participants used their own personal Facebook pages to share music and get their name out there.

For the other popular platforms, such as Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, not all of the artists had accounts across these platforms. Additionally, their use of these various platforms depended on the demographic they were trying to appeal to. The artists in Interview #1 and Interview #5 performed mostly in bars. Therefore, they used social platforms with a younger population on them (Instagram and Twitter).

Some of the participants used unique platforms, such as Reverb Nation and Nimbit (Interview #3) and Periscope, which is a live streaming service (Interview #6). The musician in Interview #6 also utilizes Patreon to make money online for his content.

Reverb Nation promotes itself as a tool for emerging artists. It helps artists connect to venues, festivals, brands, and labels. The service helps artists management and market themselves. It also acts as A&R to connect artists with the major record labels discussed previously. A free account will allow you to sell your music and find places to play. A paid account gives you more opportunities for marketing and networking (About, n.d.). This website truly allows the artist to act as their own label for the time being before they are officially signed to a label.

Nimbit is similar to Reverb Nation, but it focuses on growing fanbases, fundraising for the artists, and selling content. While it is a smaller company, the service allows a musician to do more for free, including selling tickets and tipping (Nimbit, n.d.).

Patreon is a website where people can pay you money for the things you create. Artists and creators can offer additional incentives through Patreon for larger donations as well (Patreon, n.d.). It is a service where someone can give money to their favorite artist or musician so they can keep creating the content the person enjoys. For musicians, like the one interviewed, it is a way to get paid when you are not creating songs or content online.

While these platforms are not necessarily social media, they play an important role for many in the music industry. Reverb Nation is fairly well known in the musician space, and many artists utilize the platform for social media management.

The musicians interviewed were all looking to improve their presence on these platforms, however. None indicated that they had an interest towards joining an additional social media platform.

Posting on Their Accounts

Each artist interviewed had a different perspective on the frequency of posting for their social media accounts. Some had guidelines that they followed for posting, such as Interviewees #3, #6, and #7. Others felt it was only necessary to post when they had a gig, new music, or an announcement.

As mentioned in Salo, et al. (2013), looking at the fanbase of the musician is essential to determine the sweet spot of content for the musician to post. Many of the musicians interviewed did not have much of a strategy put into place for their growing fanbases. For those who had set places to perform (i.e. bars, retirement homes), it was easier for them to understand how to utilize social media. Those who performed in bars posted more about when they were going to play. The musician in Interview #7 performed in retirement homes, and therefore, they did not previously post on social media as much due to the demographic.

Some of the artists interviewed only post their music or performance dates on their social media. Others post things that are more consistent with who they are as people. The musician in interview #5 is a good example of this. As seen with Chance the Rapper and DJ Khalid, posting one's authentic self can appeal to a growing fanbase and create connection.

Overall, it seems understanding the demographic one's music appeals to is the way to figuring out the right content to post and how much to post it.

Content vs. Interacting

On Question #12, all of the interviewees, except Interview #5 and Interview #6, stated that they focus more on the content they are posting over interacting with their followers. The

participants in these interviews are mostly at the beginning stages of creating their followings on social media. Interview #7 had just created their first Facebook and YouTube page after recently completing an online social media course.

In Salo, et al. (2013), the researchers found that the content posted is essential to creating growth, yet creating and nurturing an online community with interaction is as well. Without building that online interaction space, the musician could potentially be missing out on major growth. While this is only one strategy that can lead to more followers, as seen in the previous case studies, it is one that can work if executed properly.

Means to an End

All participants indicated that they would like to make money off their music or pursue their music full time. However, some, especially Interview #6, wants to have another entity take over their management and marketing in the near future. They said, "[My ideal role on social media is] to only livestream my performances and to be able to pay someone to take care of the rest."

However, Interview #7 stated that they would never want to be signed to a label. The fact that they can post their own content on social media and make the music they want to is empowering to them. They can still make money off music even though they are not stuck in a recording contract. In regards to their ideal role on social media, Interviewee #7 said, "For me, it's a tool to an end that cuts out having to have a recording contract with a label."

For many artists, the recording contract allows them to focus more on the music. All of the managing, marketing, and publishing of the music is handled by the label. For some, the

confines of that contract do not work with their brand nor their personalities. Chance the Rapper

is a great example of that as seen in the earlier case study.

Limitations

One of the major issues faced in this study was recruiting and retaining interested

participants, especially those who were recruited online. The overall recruitment strategy online

was to post in the previously mentioned groups each week during peak times of usage. The peak

usage time was determined by when the most posts were created. Looking back, this strategy

may have led to the posts getting lost in typical traffic of the group.

Additionally, the language of the posting may have not been appealing to the members of

the groups. The Facebook groups in particular were created for fellow musicians to communicate

and promote their own music. The researcher used formal language to promote the study online,

instead of a friendly tone that many other people used.

Email was also used to recruit participants whose contact information was already

possessed by the researcher. Many of these individuals did not use social media anymore, and

therefore, they did not qualify for the study.

Despite this, multiple participants reached out to the researcher after seeing the posts on

social media or receiving the recruitment email. However, many of them stopped answering

emails or did not answer the phone during the time of their interview. Some potential participants

provided feedback on the research method, saying a survey may have been easier for them to

complete.

Furthermore, many of the participants were located in State College, Pennsylvania, despite there being multiple posts online to recruit participants. This definitely affects the generalizability of the findings in this study. The population of the town is mostly college students, and therefore, the marketing to citizens of that area is different than a larger city or a much smaller town with varying demographics throughout the population.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Artists believe that social will help to further their music career. With the interviews given, most do not have a particular strategy they are using. Posting their content is crucial to them growing their following, and interactions can help them grow a community.

As seen in the case studies, social media can be used in a variety of ways to build the following of an artists. Whether they build their own unique persona or simply post their music, being online is essential for an artist in this day.

To answer the beginning research question, "Can artists act as their own labels?", simply, they are able to. There are multiple social platforms for them to promote themselves on and varying music distribution sites for them to publish their music. Social media allows artists to potentially grow their following by simply posting a video. However, from the research conducted, social media is not the only piece an artist can use to act as their own label. It is a tool for them to fuel musical journey.

According to the artists interviewed, some want to continue to run their own social media and enjoy acting as an independent artist. Yet, others want to focus more on their music than the administrative tasks a label could potentially handle, specifically marketing. For these artists, running their own social media is a means to an end, and they cannot wait for that end to happen.

Future Research

If this study were to be duplicated, it seems a survey may reach more people and gather results that are generalizable to the wider population of independent musicians. Additionally,

some of the questions that many artists did not respond to, specifically Questions #13 regarding

the influencers, could be removed in the future. Creating various surveys honing in on specific

aspects of social media may also lead to more participants responding.

The questions asked in this research look at the overall breadth of a musician's

interactions with social media. Future research could look more specifically into the platforms or

strategies that could be used. Over time, researchers could collect growth data to identify which

strategies are improving their follower counts.

Lastly, most of the interviews conducted in this research looked at musicians with a

relatively low social media following. Future research could be done on artists who have a more

established social media presence and a moderate social media following.

Appendix

Interviews

Interview #1

1. How are you currently using social media for your music career?

"We try to post every time we get together for practice, recording, or gigs, along with advertising new songs, upcoming shows, and various other announcements."

2. What social media platforms do you currently use?

"My band primarily uses Instagram, SoundCloud, YouTube, and Facebook for social media content. Instagram is where our younger audience is. Facebook is where our older audience is. YouTube is where we upload music videos and live show. SoundCloud is where we upload our recorded music."

3. Have you seen any spikes or drops in your social media over time? What do you believe was the cause of this?

"We released our first album last summer. There was definitely the most traffic then as the album's release was building up."

4. Do you follow any fellow artists? Was it helpful to you to do so?

"We try to follow and communicate with as many various artists as possible. Connecting with other artists gets our name out, and making friends in the industry is always a plus."

5. How do you interact, if at all, with your current fan base on social media?

"We get comments on some posts about when shows are or for more information regarding new music. We usually comment back in response."

6. What strategies do you currently use, if any? How effective do you feel they have been?

"Our posting habits are mostly controlled by what we're doing in regards to our music. If there's a gig, we post about the gig."

7. Have you worked with a label or communications agency for social media? Do you feel their efforts have helped you?

"We've been contacted by a couple labels about advertising but we feel doing it ourselves is a more personal strategy. We also believe it gives us more control over our product."

8. What is your ultimate goal with social media?

"Our goal is to grow our following through social media. Live shows are great, but social media is an additional resource that would be a waste if not utilized."

9. How often do you post your music on social media?

"Pretty often. We post clips of practices or recordings right in our posts. We like to show our community the process at which we create the music."

10. How often do you post in general across platforms?

"Again, our posting depends on how busy we are. Summers are very active; multiple posts a week. But, being at school and away from other band members things can slow down. We try to post every week or so just to remind people we're here."

11. Does certain content get more engagement (engagement is defined as share/retweets and likes)? Why do you think that is happening?

"We definitely get more engagement on announcements like our album, as well as new shows."

12. Do you focus more on posting content or interacting with your followers?

"Probably focus more on posting content."

13. Do you interact with influencers on social media? Do you feel it is useful?

"We try not to stem too far regarding interactions with influencers. We like to build from within our community."

14. What is your goal as a musician?

"The main goal is probably to make enough money to live off. But, we wouldn't be doing it if we didn't love it."

15. What are the current problems you are facing in terms of your musical career?

"It's hard to make a following through social media alone I will admit. It's a great tool but it shouldn't be used as the only outlet for advertisement."

16. What is your ideal role on social media?

"I've always wished we could get more comments and overall interaction on posts."

17. Do you have anything else you would like to share?

"I can give you the list of my accounts."

[accounts not transcribed to keep identity anonymous]

Interview #2

1. How are you currently using social media for your music career?

"I use it as a means to update people with performances, achievements, and small snippets of performing."

2. What social media platforms do you currently use?

"I like Facebook and Instagram."

3. Have you seen any spikes or drops in your social media over time? What do you believe was the cause of this?

"No, I haven't dedicated myself to social media enough to notice a difference."

4. Do you follow any fellow artists? Was it helpful to you to do so?

"Yes, I find it very helpful and use it as an inspiration."

5. How do you interact, if at all, with your current fan base on social media?

"I don't currently have a fan base, but I would like to."

6. What strategies do you currently use, if any? How effective do you feel they have been?

"I promote my accomplishments to keep people up to date as I'm currently attending school. So far, the feedback on there has been mostly positive."

7. Have you worked with a label or communications agency for social media? Do you feel their efforts have helped you?

Declined to answer

8. What is your ultimate goal with social media?

"I want to keep people updated with my musical journey."

9. How often do you post your music on social media?

"Rarely. I want to build myself first."

10. How often do you post in general across platforms?

"When something positive happens in my life or career."

11. Does certain content get more engagement (engagement is defined as share/retweets and likes)? Why do you think that is happening?

"My actual performances get more engagement because people would rather see me do something than have me talk about it in a written post."

12. Do you focus more on posting content or interacting with your followers?

"Definitely posting."

13. Do you interact with influencers on social media? Do you feel it is useful?

"No."

14. What is your goal as a musician?

"To entertain and give people an outlet to express themselves."

15. What are the current problems you are facing in terms of your musical career?

"Living in [my current city]. The gigs are kind of lacking."

16. What is your ideal role on social media?

"I want to be known."

Interview #3

1. How are you currently using social media for your music career?

"We have a band page on Facebook and post content to that. We also use Twitter, but less frequently, and also Reverb Nation and Nimbit."

2. Have you seen any spikes or drops in your social media over time? What do you believe was the cause of this?

"We see obvious spikes when we post videos. Videos seem to be very popular and not always music only 'vids'. Sometimes just behind the scenes stuff where we are just fooling around. Videos where we get stuff wrong, always popular, too."

3. Do you follow any fellow artists? Was it helpful to you to do so?

"Yes, we follow a bunch of other artists. It's been very helpful. They sometimes share our stuff, and it's allowed us to expand our following."

4. How do you interact, if at all, with your current fan base on social media?

"We comment on threads and also enter into direct conversations. It's time consuming, but worthwhile."

5. What strategies do you currently use, if any? How effective do you feel they have been?

"We don't have a fixed strategy other than to post regularly but not 'for the sake of it'. We prefer to concentrate on worthwhile content rather than just posting unnecessarily."

6. Have you worked with a label or communications agency for social media? Do you feel their efforts have helped you?

"We are our own label and 'comms' agency because that's what I do for a living. I would say the insider type knowledge has been very useful for our band."

7. What is your ultimate goal with social media?

"Build up our following and ultimately sell our original material through Google Play or Spotify. We aren't doing this right now though. We tend to give away our stuff at the moment."

8. How often do you post your music on social media?

"We try to post something once a week, although not original stuff. Clips from rehearsals or quick cover versions of songs."

9. How often do you post in general across platforms?

"Two or three times a week."

10. Do you focus more on posting content or interacting with your followers?

"Posting content."

11. Do you interact with influencers on social media? Do you feel it is useful?

"Hmm…we don't really have access to any huge influencers. We try interact with some people who have more followers that us, mainly other artists or in specific groups for our genre."

12. What is your goal as a musician?

"Just to do it full time and make ends meet. We want people to hear our songs and like them. I personally would like the opportunity to write for other artists too."

13. What are the current problems you are facing in terms of your musical career?

"Having the time to concentrate on it fully. We all have regular old jobs and being a musician doesn't always pay the bills."

14. What is your ideal role on social media?

"We enjoy posting stuff on social media, and it's a good way to get our name out there, but largely, it's a means to an end. Every second we spend on it is a second we don't spend creating new music, so it's a necessary, but worthwhile evil."

15. Do you have anything else you would like to share?

"The paid options on Facebook especially are quite good. You can get a lot of eyes on your posts for not a huge amount of money. If we post up something we think is really cool we sometimes stick a few pounds behind it to amplify it a bit more."

Interview #4

1. How are you currently using social media for your music career?

"I use social media to promote performances, new songs, let people know what I'm working on, and keep conversations going online about any subject. Generally, I use it to keep the interest of people, and hopefully gain new interest through discovery with hashtags and paid advertising."

2. What social media platforms do you currently use?

"I use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn."

3. Have you seen any spikes or drops in your social media over time? What do you believe was the cause of this?

"The most obvious spike is when I do paid advertising through Facebook and Instagram. I also get spikes with popular posts, which may include an engaging photo. I notice drops when I'm not active on social media."

4. Do you follow any fellow artists? Was it helpful to you to do so?

"I follow a lot of fellow artists, mostly in my regional area. It's both helpful and hurtful, and it may be more frequently hurtful. That's because I compare myself, and when they have good gigs or their career is advancing, it makes me feel bad about myself. It's hard to stay positive."

5. How do you interact, if at all, with your current fan base on social media?

"People send me private messages, and I usually respond. They're very light, usually, like people saying, "Hi!". Also, people click "like" on my posts, and sometimes make comments. And then, I thank them."

6. What strategies do you currently use, if any? How effective do you feel they have been?

"I have not been using any set strategies, but I am looking into that for my upcoming release."

7. Have you worked with a label or communications agency for social media? Do you feel their efforts have helped you?

"I have not worked with any agencies, but I may in the near future for my new release. If you have recommendations, please send them my way."

8. What is your ultimate goal with social media?

"My ultimate goal with social media is to increase brand awareness, grow streams, and engage music lovers. I'd like to connect with music lovers and have some sort of relationship with them. Knowing their preferences may affect my future strategies and show locations."

9. How often do you post your music on social media?

"I post my music on social media not very often, actually. Maybe once or twice a month in some form or another. I don't like to "beat a dead horse" per say if the music is already out there, and most of current social followers already know about it. But, maybe I should."

10. How often do you post in general across platforms?

"This is a hard question because Instagram does not let you post links, and Instagram seems to be the hottest social media app right now. But, I do post across Instagram and Facebook when I have a photo to share. And with music or audio, I usually cross post with Facebook and Twitter."

11. Does certain content get more engagement (engagement is defined as share/retweets and likes)? Why do you think that is happening?

"It seems that my biggest engagement is when I post about a sync license with a TV show or brand people know about. For example, I made a post that [company name removed] used my song for a commercial in Europe, and that got a lot of likes. Also, there is something else I do on Facebook that I discovered is great for engagement and new page likes. I post a picture of a place where my music has had some exposure. I can see countries in various stats on like YouTube, Spotify, etcetera. For example, my music was being played a lot on YouTube in Thailand. I posted a picture of a famous site in Thailand and wrote 'Thank you, Thailand for discovering my song', and then, I boost that post to the country of Thailand to people with music interests. Those posts got me huge responses in post likes and some new page followers/likes. This is probably happening because I'm acknowledging their specific place, and they feel special."

12. Do you focus more on posting content or interacting with your followers?

"I focus more on posting content, but I interact with followers when they comment. I don't really know how to interact with followers unless they engage with me first, through likes, comments, or messages."

13. Do you interact with influencers on social media? Do you feel it is useful?

"I'm a little intimidated to interact with influencers because it's delicate. I want to make a positive impression and increase their awareness of my work, but I don't want to get negatively labeled. I have interacted with influencers to a limited extent. It's not uncommon for me to simply like the posts of influencers, though. I do that somewhat frequently, but I don't reach out or comment much."

14. What is your goal as a musician?

"That's a good question. My goal may be a little uncommon. I, personally, want to share the gift of music with the world. I want to uplift as many people as possible, make them feel good, tell them it's okay, make them reflect, or help them to heal from their pain. I want to help people lose themselves in the beauty of music, and sway back and forth and forget their stress for a little while. I want to spread this joy to as many people as possible and the whole world if I can. At the same time, I want to be compensated and live a comfortable life, while living an amazing life and connecting with people at their hearts."

15. What are the current problems you are facing in terms of your musical career?

"Influencers blowing me off completely, not giving my music a chance or a listen is the biggest problem. I call and send nice, thoughtful emails, and get absolutely nothing in return. That's hard because my work is not low quality. Also, even finding the influencers is very, very difficult, like playlist curators."

16. What is your ideal role on social media?

"Professionally, my ideal role on public social media is to be part of conversations of engaged music fans. Specifically, people that have some level of interest in my music or genre. I'd like to get to know and understand them and know what they're looking for so I can better serve them. I also would like to share information about other topics that they find useful or can make them feel better about themselves."

17. Do you have anything else you would like to share?

"It's a constant struggle to tune out the noise of the mass media and major label artist promotion and branding. I don't want to be another pop artist, and there are so many copycats out there. I have no interest in being hip or cool, and I do struggle with wondering if I'd do better if I crafted an image that seems that way. But I'm middle age. I'm not a kid. I just want to be myself and do my art, and I feel the music I make is high quality and deserves a chance. The way I see it, image is superficial and often gets attention when the music is nothing special, and so I find myself going against what society perpetuates with music artists. Influencers want hip, and a hip, trendy sound. But I want simply to keep getting better at what I do and make great music that touches people in a positive way."

Interview #5

1. How are you currently using social media for your music career?

"Currently, I am using social media by advertising when my bands, [name removed] and [name removed], will be playing. It is really easy to send a quick 'Playing tomorrow at 10!' message to all of our followers since most of the time we find out we have an unscheduled gig the day of or before. For [name removed], we also use social media to send out links to our EP or singles. We also use it to sort of hype up any upcoming music."

2. What social media platforms do you currently use?

"Currently we use Facebook, but previously we used Instagram and Twitter. We saw that Twitter really didn't help that much, and we were not gaining followers. Same with Instagram. Facebook is really helpful because people seem to be a little more mindless of who they follow while they are pickier on Instagram and Twitter. We can make Facebook events for upcoming shows and invite people one by one, which can get way more responses and interactions. "

3. Have you seen any spikes or drops in your social media over time? What do you believe was the cause of this?

"We have seen drops in our social media since we first got online, which I believe is mostly because people who followed us mostly graduated. Since we cater mostly to twenty-one plus students, there is an entirely new group of people that we have to attract. We do see spikes when we play more popular time slots. Like occasionally, we will play a Saturday night at [name removed], or we will play a full night at [name removed], which will get us a couple extra likes."

4. Do you follow any fellow artists? Was it helpful to you to do so?

"We only really follow bands that play around [city removed]. We like to interact with them especially if we play a show together. For instance, we went onstage and played with [name removed] a couple months back. So, we both posted about how great the other band was. That was helpful. Since they have such a large fan-base, we were able to attract some of their fans."

5. How do you interact, if at all, with your current fan base on social media?

"We honestly act like a**holes, in a funny way, when we interact with fans. Mostly, this is because we are friends with the people who interact with us. Like, my friend, [name removed], will post something about us and in all caps, I'd say 'We love you. You are the light of our lives.' or dumb stuff like that."

6. What strategies do you currently use, if any? How effective do you feel they have been?

"None, we just post whenever we have a gig coming up. It helps to add pictures."

7. Have you worked with a label or communications agency for social media? Do you feel their efforts have helped you?

"Nope, no need."

8. What is your ultimate goal with social media?

"We are only going to be around until May, so our only goal is to inform people about when we play"

9. How often do you post your music on social media?

"Not often at all. [name removed] only posted music when we first released it"

10. How often do you post in general across platforms?

"Maybe once a week. Or, longer really, just to say we are playing that night or something. Or, if we have special shows, like Saint Patrick's Day,"

11. Does certain content get more engagement (engagement is defined as share/retweets and likes)? Why do you think that is happening?

"Definitely posts with pictures. I do not know why. It just seems to be more personal when our followers can see our faces."

12. Do you focus more on posting content or interacting with your followers?

"It is about fifty-fifty, but we do not receive much interaction with our followers since we are a small-time band."

13. Do you interact with influencers on social media? Do you feel it is useful?

"Nope."

14. What is your goal as a musician?

"Personally, I would like to continue making music after I leave the band, but I would not advertise myself until I have at least a full album recorded."

15. What are the current problems you are facing in terms of your musical career?

"Gear is so d*** expensive. There are so many things you need, like programs, microphones, guitar/bass pedals, midi keyboards. I am broke and can't afford any of it."

16. What is your ideal role on social media?

"Really just to let people know we are still around and still playing!"

17. Do you have anything else you would like to share?

"Since we are a small band with an expiration date, we do not go too hard at the social media game. I would recommend asking [three band names removed for anonymity] these questions too because their social media game is way better."

Interview #6

1. How are you currently using social media for your music career?

"I currently use social media to promote my albums and to live stream my performances for my small, but growing army of fans."

2. What social media platforms do you currently use?

"I currently use Twitter, Facebook, SoundCloud, YouTube, Instagram, Periscope and LinkedIn."

3. Have you seen any spikes or drops in your social media over time? What do you believe was the cause of this?

"I see occasional spikes in the number of people visiting my personal website, which I sell my CD from. I seem to get one or two new followers on Instagram in particular after I've live streamed a performance on Periscope. The former will likely be because I mention that I have a CD for sale in my live broadcasts. But, with Instagram, I guess it's just because it's becoming increasingly popular. So, folks just go looking for me there."

4. Do you follow any fellow artists? Was it helpful to you to do so?

"Yes, I follow fellow artists on Twitter, Instagram and Periscope, and I'm connected with some of them on Facebook. It's helpful because when these musicians go live themselves, I get notified that they've done so, and I watch them. I think because I do, many of them watch me when I go live, and that's why some of them tip me while they're doing so."

5. How do you interact, if at all, with your current fan base on social media?

"I make a point of liking as many of their posts as I can, retweeting ones which I think will be of benefit to others and sharing at least one inspiring or motivational post on LinkedIn each day that one of my contacts as posted."

6. What strategies do you currently use, if any? How effective do you feel they have been?

"I make a point of using the platforms I've referred to every morning of everyday. I like twenty-five Instagram posts, ten LinkedIn posts and I share one, as I mentioned before. And, I always either retweet one tweet or like five tweets from the Twitter profiles of anybody that's retweeted me in the previous twenty-four hours. I think it's been effective because it reminds my supporters that their support doesn't go unnoticed, and on Instagram, it keeps me in people's notification feed and, therefore, on their radars."

7. Have you worked with a label or communications agency for social media? Do you feel their efforts have helped you?

"No, I've not done that."

8. What is your ultimate goal with social media?

"To use it to attract at least another nineteen patrons on Patreon. That way, my books balance, and I can afford to make music on an indefinite basis and not just for the next twelve months."

9. How often do you post your music on social media?

"I post new music on social media perhaps once or twice per week, and I never post the same recording twice."

10. How often do you post in general across platforms?

"On Facebook, maybe once or twice per day, or every couple of days, and the same on Instagram. I share one post per day on LinkedIn, but on Twitter, I post a lot less. Largely because I like to use a lot of words, and Twitter obviously has a two-hundred-and-eighty-character limit."

11. Does certain content get more engagement (engagement is defined as share/retweets and likes)? Why do you think that is happening?

"I think posts without links get more engagement, and posts where I mention a song I've uploaded, 'My [name removed] 2018 Audition Video' for example. People have this blanket disapproval of anything, which they immediately label in their minds as 'spam'. Because people are obsessed with fame and celebrity culture, the second they think that you might one day be 'famous', they immediately want a piece of the pie."

12. Do you focus more on posting content or interacting with your followers?

"I focus more on interacting."

13. Do you interact with influencers on social media? Do you feel it is useful?

"I see everybody as an 'influencer', so yes. For famous people, or notable public figures, no. Virtually never in the case of the former, and not very often in the case of the latter."

14. What is your goal as a musician?

"To make a wage from music without having to dip into my savings account each week to pay my bills."

15. What are the current problems you are facing in terms of your musical career?

"Getting people to realize that for me to be able to keep making music on a full-time basis, then the people that claim to 'love' my music need to start paying for it at some point, or I won't be able to."

16. What is your ideal role on social media?

"To only live stream my performances and to be able to afford to pay somebody else to take care of the rest."

17. Do you have anything else you would like to share?

"No. But, I hope you find my answers of use, and I hope you have a great day!"

Interview #7

1. How are you currently using social media for your music career?

"Collecting fans for future sales."

2. What social media platforms do you currently use?

"Facebook and YouTube."

3. Have you seen any spikes or drops in your social media over time? What do you believe was the cause of this?

"There have been some changes in Facebook, but it has not really affected me too much."

4. Do you follow any fellow artists? Was it helpful to you to do so?

"Yes. I began following in the early stages and at present. I hope it will be more helpful in the future."

5. How do you interact, if at all, with your current fan base on social media?

"I try to put up interesting items on a regular basis, but I'm not targeting anyone specific with my posts."

6. What strategies do you currently use, if any? How effective do you feel they have been?

"Time is an issue for me, so I pre-schedule a lot of what I post on Facebook."

7. Have you worked with a label or communications agency for social media? Do you feel their efforts have helped you?

"No, I have not."

8. What is your ultimate goal with social media?

"To sell my music and maybe my songs, too."

9. How often do you post your music on social media?

"Only when I have recorded a gig and taken the time to cut it into individual songs. My focus at the moment is getting my songs, both music and lyrics, to a top quality state before I can record them."

10. How often do you post in general across platforms?

"The plan was to post one to four times every day, but I have been a bit slack lately to work on my CD."

11. Does certain content get more engagement (engagement is defined as share/retweets and likes)? Why do you think that is happening?

"Paying for a post does get a lot more engagement for me."

12. Do you focus more on posting content or interacting with your followers?

"Posting content."

13. Do you interact with influencers on social media? Do you feel it is useful?

"No."

14. What is your goal as a musician?

"To sell my CD once it is recorded."

15. What are the current problems you are facing in terms of your musical career?

"My CD engineer has been too busy, but I have just hired a new one. And, things are rapidly getting underway."

16. What is your ideal role on social media?

"For me, it's a tool to an end that cuts out having to have a recording contract with a label."

17. Do you have anything else you would like to share?

"I am of the older generation and have been involved with music most of my life, but in a small way. I make my own backing tracks on the computer using a variety of instruments. After deciding to go back to school and get a diploma of musical arts at the local jazz school, it has revitalized my goals. I am a jazz singer and a singer/songwriter. I am currently writing songs and plan to record my second CD this year. The first one was only for family and produced in-house. I currently gig at retirement establishments, and my music suits the older generations. I got involved in social media when I was at jazz school and then did a course called the Online Musician by Savvy Musician Academy, showing musicians how to get their music out without

using a label. Through this course, I now have a Facebook page, YouTube account and website

[website removed]."

Bibliography

About. (n.d.). Retrieved June 21, 2018, from http://corporate.reverbnation.com/

Adib, D. (2009, November 14). Pop Star Justin Bieber Is on the Brink of Superstardom. Retrieved from https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Weekend/teen-pop-star-justin-bieber-discovered-youtube/story?id=9068403

Bordowitz, H. (2012). The 1969 Creedence Clearwater Revival recording contract and how it shaped the future of the group and its members. *MEIEA Journal, 12*(1), 69-89. doi:10.25101/12.3

Briones, R. L., Kuch, B., Liu, B. F., & Jin, Y. (2011). Keeping up with the digital age: How the American Red Cross uses social media to build relationships. *Public Relations Review, 37*(1), 37-43. 10.1016/j.pubrev.2010.12.006

Castillo, M. (2017, June 15). 'King of Snapchat' DJ Khaled explains how to succeed on social media. Retrieved from https://www.cnbc.com/2017/06/15/dj-khaled-how-to-succeed-on-social-media.html

Chance the Rapper. (n.d.). Retrieved June 17, 2018, from http://chanceraps.com/

Chance the Rapper. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/chancetherapper/

Chance the Rapper (@chancetherapper). (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/chancetherapper/?hl=en

Chance the Rapper. (2017, December 19). Chance The Rapper (@chancetherapper). Retrieved from https://twitter.com/chancetherapper?ref_src=twsrc^google|twcamp^serp|twgr^author

Clarke, T. (2017, March 28). Music Marketing Case Studies: Chance the Rapper on SoundCloud.

   Retrieved February 20, 2018, from https://buyplays.co/music-marketing-case-studies-

   chance-the-rapper-on-soundcloud-1/

Dredge, S. (2018, February 20). SoundCloud: 'Do not think of us [just] as a streaming service…

   we're a form of social media'. Retrieved March 02, 2018, from

   http://musically.com/2018/02/20/soundcloud-streaming-service-social-media/

Geek Chicago. (2017, May 10). How Chance the Rapper Became a One-Man Digital Marketing

   Machine. Retrieved March 07, 2018, from https://www.geekchicago.com/blog-

   categories/how-chance-the-rapper-became-a-one-man-digital-marketing-machine.html

Gibson, C. B. (2017). Elaboration, generalization, triangulation, and interpretation: On

   enhancing the value of mixed method research. *Organizational Research Methods, 20*(2),

   193-223. 10.1177/1094428116639133

Goldstein, E. (2011, June 12). Justin Bieber: A Social Media Case Study. Retrieved from

   https://www.socialmediatoday.com/content/justin-bieber-social-media-case-study

Hahm, M. (2017, February 27). How Chance the Rapper got big without a record deal. Retrieved

   from https://finance.yahoo.com/news/chance-the-rapper-grammys-record-deal-

   independent-artist-unsigned-213355505.html

Hall, P. W., Jr. (2002). Smells like slavery: Unconscionability in recording industry contracts.

   Hastings Communications and Entertainment Law Journal (COMM-ENT), 25(1), 189.

Holt, A. (2010). Using the telephone for narrative interviewing: A research note. *Qualitative

   Research, 10*(1), 113-121. 10.1177/1468794109348686

Marshall, L. (2013). The 360 deal and the 'new' music industry. *European Journal of Cultural

   Studies, 16*(1), 77-99. 10.1177/1367549412457478

McGrath, S., Chamberlain, A., & Benford, S. (2016). The Grime Scene: Social media, music,

creation and consumption. Paper presented at the 245-250. 10.1145/2986416.2986433

Milton, J. (2016, September 27). Where do record labels stand in music's streaming wars?

Retrieved February 20, 2018, from https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-

entertainment/music/features/where-do-record-labels-stand-in-music-streaming-wars-

spotify-tidal-apple-music-industry-frank-ocean-a7333381.html

Nimbit. (n.d.). Retrieved June 21, 2018, from http://www.nimbit.com/

Owsinski, B. (2016, July 07). The Album Is Dying-- And Good Riddance. Retrieved February

20, 2018, from https://www.forbes.com/sites/bobbyowsinski/2016/07/07/the-album-is-

dying-and-good-riddance/#680839034dbd

Patreon. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.patreon.com/

Pigeons. (2018, March 06). 8 Artists Using Social Media to Build a Brand - DJ Khaled.

Retrieved from https://pigeonsandplanes.com/in-depth/2018/03/music-artists-using-

social-media-to-build-a-brand/dj-khaled

Salo, J., Lankinen, M., & Mäntymäki, M. (2013). The use of social media for artist marketing:

Music industry perspectives and consumer motivations. *The International Journal on

Media Management, 15*(1), 23-41. 10.1080/14241277.2012.755682

Smith, A., & Anderson, M. (2018, March 01). Social Media Use in 2018. Retrieved from

http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/03/01/social-media-use-in-2018/

SoundCloud. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://soundcloud.com/

Universal Music Group. (n.d.). EMI. Retrieved March 13, 2018, from

https://www.universalmusic.com/label/emi/

Academic Vitae
Katherine Formichella

119 Locust Ln, Apt. A4, State College, PA 16801 | kformichella@gmail.com

Education

Pennsylvania State University — University Park, PA   2014 — 2018

- **Bachelor of Arts**: Advertising/Public Relations (Public Relations Focus)
    - o Honors Thesis: "Social Media and Music: Are Artists Able to Act as Their Own Labels?"
        - ▪ The central thesis searched for an answer to the question "Does an artist need a label after the rise of social networking?". This thesis was found after literature reviews were conducted on the music industry and social media. Through several artist interviews as well as social network analyses, the question was answered. The findings were summarized in a 40+ page thesis.
- **Bachelor of Science**: Psychology (Business Focus)
- **Minors**: Music Technology and Entrepreneurship & Innovation
- **Certificate**: Business Fundamentals (classes in accounting, finance, marketing, and management

Honors & Awards

Schreyer Honors College   2014 — 2018
Pennsylvania State University
- Researched and wrote a 40+ page honors thesis; Took 36 honors credits, completing more extensive assignments (papers, research, etc.) each class; Maintain a 3.4 GPA each semester; Received $2,000 scholarship per semester

Paterno Fellows   2014 — 2018
Pennsylvania State University
- Specific requirements were as follows: Completed senior thesis; Held a leadership position on campus for at least 50 hours (Public Relations Director of State of State); Completed a second major; Completed an internship for 150 hours of work (Public Safety Intern, City of Pittsburgh); Demonstrated Global Awareness (taking 12 credits of international classes beyond the required credit level); Took 3 credits focused in ethics

College of Communications, Dean's List   2014 — 2018
Pennsylvania State University
- Achieved a GPA of over 3.5 for every semester

College of Liberal Arts, Belfast Family Scholarship   2018
Pennsylvania State University
- Received $2,000 for academic and extracurricular achievement

Research Experience

Research Assistant   August 2017 - Present

Pennsylvania State University

Underrepresented Perspectives Lab

- Principal Investigator: Dr. Jes Matsick
- Cleaned and prepped data for analysis; Researched grant opportunities; Conducted literature reviews on underrepresented populations in STEM, online recruitment procedures, attitudes scales, and the benefits of certain behaviors; Created surveys in Qualtrics; Provided feedback on research design; Recruiting new participants; Coded in SPSS; Attended lab meetings (training, collaborate on survey design, reading pertinent articles)

Work Experience

Supervisor / Sound Engineer   March 2016 – Present

Pennsylvania State University

Schwab Auditorium & Flex Theatre

- Lead a team of student workers to create events for student, community, and professional organizations; Live mix audio for concerts, lectures, panels, and theatre performances; Conduct load ins and loud outs for sound, lighting, and staging; Design microphone placements for instruments and performers; Open and close the venue on show days

Marketing & Communications Intern   May 2017 – August 2017

Pennsylvania State University

Penn State Center Pittsburgh – Pittsburgh, PA

- Create physical marketing materials for the Center to utilize; Draft social media posts for the Center social media; Create videos for to introduce the Center and for their social media

Public Safety Intern   June 2016 – August 2016

City of Pittsburgh – Pittsburgh, PA

- Coordinate National Night Out Logistics; Meet with departments in the City to create a hospitality business orientation guide; Design and write the hospitality business orientation

Public Relations Intern   June 2015 – July 2015

Pittsburgh Cultural Trust – Pittsburgh, PA

- Organize press releases and media kits; Provide grass roots marketing efforts for various events put on over the summer

Organizations

State of State   September 2015 - Present

Pennsylvania State University

- Club Description: State of State is a conference put on Penn State students for the Penn State community. Through TED talk-like speeches, speakers have a platform to discuss issues at Penn State.
- Operations Director

- o Communicate with vendors (production, catering, venue, and livestreaming) to put on the event the day of; Create master conference PowerPoint; Create master timeline and ensured event was run according to schedule; Create and administrate contracts
- Public Relations Director
  - o Run three social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram); Plan events in the student center to promote the organization; Design marketing materials
- Public Relations Committee Member
  - o Design graphic materials for the organization to utilize; Write social media posts on the day of the conference

Penn State Thespians   August 2014 - Present

Pennsylvania State University
- Club Description: The club puts on five shows each year, two main stage productions, two children's shows, and one annual cabaret.
- Sound Designer
  - o Create sound effects from director's vision and script; Live mix audio from the show (instruments & vocals); Design audio systems for each production based on the set and sound needs; Lead a team of two assistants and crew members
- MasquerAIDS Chair
  - o Fundraise for Thespians' philanthropy, Centre County AIDS Resource Center; Act as producer for the yearly cabaret; Coordinate day of logistics for the cabaret
- Marketing Chair
  - o Coordinate events promoting each show; Post on social media accounts; Communicate with graphic designers on marketing material designs and due dates

Movin' On   October 2016 – May 2017

Pennsylvania State University
- Club Description: The organization works to put on a festival with five artists at the end of the school year.
- Production Coordinator
  - o Coordinate load in and load out for the festival; Work on stage movements for during the festival
- Promotions Team
  - o Promote the festival on social media; Host promotional events to spread the word of the festival and its lineup