

# 10 SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES FOR MUSICIANS,

## ARTISTS, THOUGHT LEADERS & BRAND YOU

by CARRI BUGBEE

**W**hen we decided to make music and social media the focus of this issue, I was excited to tackle the topic. I first became interested in social media precisely *because* I was a musician (I sing jazz under the stage name Carri Bella) and I wanted to promote my gigs. MySpace was the first social network I ever joined and I was coaxed in by a drummer who persuaded me of the value. I previously thought of social networks as glorified chat rooms or places where kids go to waste time. Indeed, maybe they were. But not anymore.

Social networks and the vast array of other social media sites have changed how all types of people—not just musicians—build their careers. Anyone willing to seek out best practices, work hard to implement them and consistently share useful information can easily build a large following, or even thought leadership. In an era when jobs are in short supply, this can be a game changer.

The opportunities for artists, authors and aspiring celebrities are nothing short of staggering. Social media provide effective, unprecedented ways for individuals to build a personal brand, expand their networks, promote events, and seed discovery of their products or services. It's not that difficult and the hard costs are minimal. It is, however, somewhat time consuming and you must embrace *change*—not just the process of doing things differently, but also the rapid pace at which social technologies evolve.

Following are 10 smart strategies for getting started on just about *any* social media platform. After that, you'll find top tips for using the most popular social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. With these insights, and a commitment to consistent, strategic engagement, you can rise above the clatter and make a name for yourself.

### 1. Stake your claim online

It's impossible to know what networks and platforms will be most useful for you when you're just getting started. Over time, new ones will pop up and old ones will fade away, so you need to reserve your name on every network with serious potential. This could be your real name, your stage name or your band's name—maybe all three.

Ideally, your name should be the same on every network and the same as your website or blog domain name. This might not be

easy. If you have a common name or share a name with a celebrity or politician, consider tweaking your name slightly by adding an initial or another (less common) name. For example, Jane Doe could become Jane Simone Doe. When you're dealing with space constraints (on Twitter, for example) and lack of name availability, you might consider adding a location to your name such as @JaneDoeNYC or making it descriptive like @JaneRockGoddess. The upside of appending your name with a keyword descriptor is that it will be easier to garner followers because people will know immediately what you are likely to converse about.



### Adam Dunning

AdamBossaNova

Official twitter page of singer / songwriter Adam Dunning. With the success of *Sunset Monkeys*, and *Happy New Year*, his new album out in 2012 is sure to stir.

Melbourne | Rio | Los Angeles <http://www.adamdunning.com>

Consider adding a descriptor to your user name if your actual name isn't available on social networks.

Because some networks won't allow you to change your name later, check availability on *multiple* networks before you set it in stone. There are paid services that will search for options and/or reserve names for you (try Knowem.com or NameCheck.com) if you don't want to do this yourself. If your name might frequently be misspelled, you may want to reserve those versions as well and direct people to your actual profiles.



### Carrie Bugbee

CarrieBugbee

I am really @CarriBugbee so please follow me there. I'm also @PeggyOlson, @socialTVtrends, @JazzCrowd, @CarriBella & other get-to-be-revealed personalities :-)

Portland, Oregon <http://www.CarriBugbee.com>

If people often misspell your name, you may want to nab the misspelled name on some networks to direct people to your correct profile.

Once you nail down a name that will work on most or all platforms, stick with it—preferably forever. After you gain traction with search engines, it's not wise to squander that hard work by changing your name.

Of course, bands (and businesses) come and go and often change names when members or leaders change. This means it's





Your biggest win with any direct-to-fan tool is that you can actually see who your buyers are. Unlike iTunes, which lets you know how *many* people bought your album, Topspin and similar tools can show you who bought your album. Over the lifetime of your career, you can track who your top purchasers are for each album or merchandise release and reach out to say thank you or reward them.

Brendan Moore (@WebMusicGuy)

Founder of ReceptiveMusic.com, a digital marketing firm for the music industry

always smart to work on your personal brand in addition to the business entity's brand. Likewise, consider a contract up front to define what will happen to the name and online properties (website and social sites) with the group's name in case it breaks up or changes personnel. The online properties could become quantifiable assets down the road—especially if you garner a large following—so don't wait until you hate each other to figure out what to do with them!

## 2. Think like an editor, not an advertiser

Many people find it hard to get started in social media because they don't know what to write about. In social spaces, you should behave like an editor, not an advertiser (unless you're purchasing ads). The goal is to build fans, friends and followers (your tribe) through shared interests in the same way a magazine keeps readers happy by giving them more of what they subscribed for.

To do this successfully, plan for the type of topics you'll talk about. That doesn't mean you can't be spontaneous, but if you make a conscious decision about a few content categories, you'll never be at a loss for ideas and your tribe will have a reason to seek you out on a regular basis.

As an artist, I'm sure you'll want to post information about your music, writing, etc., but you can't talk exclusively about *your* work—that would be narcissistic and unproductive. Branch out and cover related topics that interest you. For musicians, this could include recording and production, copyrights and licensing, songwriting, changes in the music business, new distribution models, clips and analysis of artists who inspire you, technology and gear, the trials of life on the road, etc. All of these would be great blog categories and you might even be able to establish yourself as a thought leader on some topics if you have (or gain) genuine expertise.



Carri Bella

Do you know about all the ways musicians can earn a living? Great ideas here!



**42 Revenue Streams | Artist Revenue Streams**  
money.futureofmusic.org

If you're a musician or composer, you probably have a basic sense of the ways you can make money. Some revenue streams are simple to understand, like playing shows, or selling CDs or t-shirts. But there are many, many more ways that musicians can earn money from their compositions, performances, so...

Sharing helpful links to friends or fans is the best way to engage in social networks.

These would be suitable topics for status updates on social networks as well, but you'd be wise to expand your topics for social networks to include other things that interest you. This

will give you more opportunities to engage with varied groups of people and expand your network. For example, the topics I most often post about are social media, marketing, music, politics, technology and pet antics or rescues. You could talk about art, sports, travel, fly-fishing or satire—anything you feel passionate about.

After a few weeks of experimentation, you'll figure out where your tribes are and what kind of topics garner the best responses indicated by likes, shares, retweets, reblogging, comments, etc. Of course, you should also look for every opportunity to give props to others in this way. Paying it forward is what social media is about and will help you build a loyal following.

## 3. Tackle one or two social networks or platforms at a time

If you're new to social media, it's easy to become overwhelmed by all the options, so don't try to take on too much at once. Even if you're not new, it can be hard to nurture all your networks when you're spread thin. It's smarter to strive for a critical mass of friends and followers and lots of great content on a few platforms instead of having a handful of fans and barren profiles on multiple platforms. Plus, once you've built up a large network on one platform, you'll find many of the same people will join you on another.

Expect to spend quite a bit of time finding and connecting with friends and followers initially. People won't know you exist (within social networks, at least) until you reach out to them, so this is not a passive process. Search for people you know in real life (IRL) first. Then connect with friends of friends or people with common interests.

Eventually, you can connect with random people who interest you, but wait until you've established a bit of social media "street cred" first. Demonstrate that you're worth friending or following by posting oodles of useful content and logging on frequently enough that people know they can reach out anytime. This may take a while (perhaps months), but if you spend a few hours a week (ideally spread out over the week, not all at once) you'll eventually start adding friends and followers organically. That said, if you want to build a *large* following, you will always have to work at it—unless you suddenly become famous (hey, it could happen!).

Either way, you'll find that social networks are a lot more fun once you've connected with your tribes and get into a groove. Plus, like so many other things in life, you'll find it easier to get friends and followers once you already have some, so stick with it even if it seems slow in the beginning.

## 4. Curate and share content every day

In the parlance of social media, curation means sharing content



you didn't create. This can be news stories, blog posts, photos, music, comments, video clips, etc. Essentially, you're curating content every time you deem it worthy of sharing to your network.

It would be fantastic if you could create lots of content from scratch, but the fact is, there aren't enough hours in the day to create enough content to fill your social feeds. It's unlikely you'll blog every day and you probably won't be able to post a new song or video everyday. Yet, you'll need to share a *lot* of information (actual quantity depends upon the platforms you're using) to build a vibrant network quickly. Here's why: if you only post once a day in the morning and your tribes are checking their networks in the afternoon or evening (or across the world), your juicy tidbit of information will be like a tree falling in the forest. You need to post *consistently* at various times of the day to build a large, highly engaged following. If you only post a few times a week, many people won't follow you at all. They'll assume there's no point in engaging with you because you won't respond in a timely fashion anyway. Immediacy is important!

There are many other advantages to content curation as well. Sharing other people's content is the best way to build social bonds by showing respect for people you like. It will also help you to get noticed by people you'd like to know better (see Tip #5).

There are a few tricks to making content curation fast, easy and personalized. For starters, make sure you have a lot of *incoming* content about your chosen topics. You can set up RSS feeds for your favorite blogs, subscribe to relevant newsletters, search tags on social bookmarking sites, or set up news aggregators (sometimes called personalized newspapers or magazines) via Trove, Flipboard, iCurrent, Ziti, Google Currents and others.

Another way to get a steady stream of topical information is to put friends and followers in lists (circles, categories, whatever you want to call them) based upon interests or vocations. You can easily scan those lists every day to see what other people are sharing about specific topics and then retweet, share, link to those posts, etc. When I'm browsing the Web, I share information quickly with a Bit.ly bookmarklet that automatically shortens and tracks the URL and lets me customize the content for my networks.

Always try to add a personal comment when you share something (if there's room). Think like an editor and add one piece of who, what, when, where or why to the post, such as "You'll want to try this because..." or "Heads up Seattleites..." Your friends will be far more interested in information when they know why you thought it was intriguing enough to share.

## 5. Find and engage with influencers

If you're new to social media, you'll soon discover there is a lot of buzz around the notion of online influence. The idea is that any individual who has developed a large online following

(perhaps even comprised of other influential people) can now drive consumer preferences and activities in the same way traditional news outlets, celebrities, authors and politicians have always done. If you can get online influencers to give you props or talk about you, that could be just as useful for your promotions as getting an article published in a newspaper or magazine.

There are a few online services that purport to measure influence; the two most popular are Klout and PeerIndex. These services have algorithms that score people primarily based upon the quantity of their posts and conversations online, the people they are connected to, how often their messages are amplified (shared, retweeted, etc.) and by whom. Exactly how they do this is their "secret sauce."

Your goal should always be to connect with people who could be influential for *your* career, regardless of whether or not they're ranked online, so don't become overly concerned with those



Gary Armstrong

The average Klout Score among all actors & actresses nominated for #Oscars is 53. @JonahHill tops it off at 75. [klout.com/#/JonahHill](http://klout.com/#/JonahHill)

The Klout scores of famous actors are lower than those of many social media mavens, which indicates those scores measure online activity, not real-world influence.

scores. If all other things are equal, you could give special attention to someone with a high score, but there are plenty of influential people who won't rank at all because they haven't opted into those tools or they're busy doing other things. As a musician, you might be able to connect with a festival producer, for example, who could be instrumental in getting you on the roster, but she might not have a high Klout score—or any score at all. Use common sense.

Finding influencers isn't hard, but it does take time. If you know about people offline you'd like to know better, do some online sleuthing. Look for them on all the social networks, including LinkedIn and Plaxo if they're business people. Every time you find potential influencers to connect with, look at the people they are connected with in order to find even more influencers—or other openings to your primary target if you have friends in common. Look over the lists or circles your influencers have created. Read their feeds to see who they're talking to. Most importantly, start making your own lists of friends and potential influencers on every platform! I have lists on Twitter (under @CarriBella), for example, for musicians, "monster cats" (i.e., famous jazz musicians), music brands, journalists/bloggers/podcasters, clubs/venues, festivals, music teachers, media outlets and more. My twitter lists for @CarriBugbee are mostly about marketing, careers and business categories.



Once you've located potential influencers, don't ask for something (at least right away). Focus on what you can *add* to the conversations they're already having. Start by looking for commonalities and giving influencers props for interesting posts via retweets, shares, likes, etc. Write comments on their blogs. Ask questions to draw out their expertise. Introduce them to other people in your network they might like. Source a link that's relevant to topics they care about. In short, become a valued part of an influencer's network before you start selling yourself. Be human!

Try to connect with at least one influencer in a small way every day. As you build a following, it will become easier because you won't look like a clueless newbie or a desperate opportunist. Over time, you may be surprised at who will talk to you. I've chatted with famous actors, TV producers, venture capitalists, entrepreneurs, prominent journalists and authors—many of whom initiated contact with me because I was already sharing information they were interested in. A few years ago, I had no access to those people. Social media represents a genuine opportunity to expand your network in remarkable ways!

## 6. Avoid outsourcing your social media engagement

By now you might be thinking "This is a lot of work. Can't I just hire someone to do this?" Banish that thought! Social media is *personal*, and you'll experience the most success if you treat it that way. Sure, you could hire a publicist or intern to do *some* of it (research and monitoring, perhaps), but could they "speak" in your voice? Do they know the same people you do? Can they reference your history with those people? Will your real friends figure out that the online you is an imposter and call you out for it? Do you want people to write snarky comments about how you're too lazy to write your own thoughts in 140 characters or less?

Honestly, I know very few people who are too busy to squeeze out a few minutes several times a day for social media. There is always a little free time in airports, in between rehearsals, standing in line at the grocery store, etc. If you have a mobile device, you can engage with your fans any time—no excuses!

If you're developing social profiles for a band or other group, you can share the duties. Just make it clear to your fans which member is posting and responding in the moment. There are tools that allow several people to coordinate posting to the same account to make this easy (see Tip #9). If some are better at engagement than others, you could even split up responsibilities so one person researches influencers, another monitors social accounts, and another writes posts or updates. Just know that the person who engages the most in the voice of your brand will likely gain a larger personal following over time. I wouldn't want to be the guy in the background!

## 7. Coordinate with other musicians and venues

Giving props and helping people out is a huge part of social media success. Take this a step further when you're promoting shows or events by coordinating and linking blog posts and status

updates with the venue, event promoters and others who are performing or speaking at the event.

Of course, the first step is to make sure they *know* about your social profiles and are connected to you (if they're local, they will be among the first wave of friends and fans you cultivate, right?). Work with them to establish a hashtag for the event, then write a few tweets, status updates or short blog posts (including links and/or photos) and email them to the venue (or other bands you're working with) so they can post them on their own social profiles. Offer to reciprocate if they can send similar information to you. You could also email the information to a few friends or fans who like to help.

Event promoters and venue managers will be thrilled that you're taking the initiative and spreading link love in the process. Indeed, some venue managers and event promoters will consider the size and activity of your audience on social media sites *before* they decide whether to book you for a gig. If you've worked hard to build a following, use this as leverage! It's always smart to tell booking agents that you have a promotion "machine" in place to ensure great attendance. If they can go online and see that for themselves, so much the better!

If promoters, other musicians and colleagues aren't savvy about social media yet, spread the love anyway and show them what you did later. This will encourage them to get on board and reciprocate in the future.

## 8. Socialize your website, marketing and live events

Once you're up and running on social media, use every opportunity to make fans aware of your profiles and give them easy ways to connect and share information about you. There are many ways to socialize your website or blog. Obviously, you'll want to add links to your social profiles and you'll definitely need an RSS button so people can subscribe to your posts (give them an email option too). If you want to get super social, look for ways to *pull*

TWITTER — @WEBMUSICGUY



Brendan Moore  
webmusicguy

webmusicguy @thornybleeder @CarriBugbee @michaelsb and @eyesandearsent just launched a cool one for Andrew Bird this morning <http://t.co/H3L8KkTe>  
38 minutes ago · reply · retweet · favorite

webmusicguy @CarriBugbee @michaelsb

Join the conversation

Example of a Twitter feed via a widget at [ReceptiveMusic.com](http://ReceptiveMusic.com)

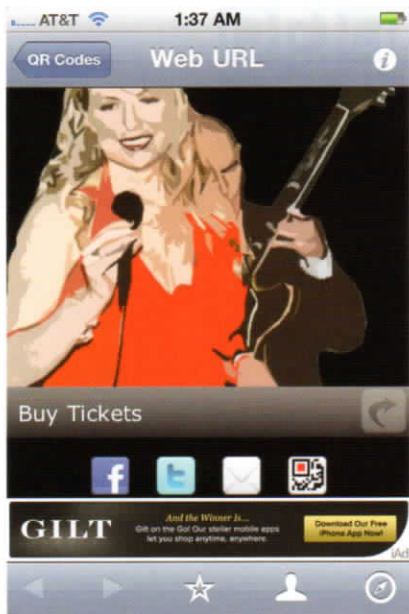


information into your website with social feed widgets and enable ways to *push* content out into the social Web with sharing tools—the yin and yang of social media, if you will.

There are many free, easy-to-install widgets available from Twitter and Facebook. You can find plenty of third-party widgets as well, especially for Wordpress. A quick Google search for widgets + *desired platform* will provide you with loads of options, including helpful how-to guides for installing them. You don't have to be a code-monkey to do it! Facebook, in particular, offers multiple widgets for commenting, a LIKE button, subscribe button and more.

AddThis will allow site visitors to share your content with multiple social networks at the click of a button. Janrain offers sharing to multiple networks from one button along with social sign-on. This means fans can sign into your site via their social networks, which makes the experience speedier and more likely that they'll engage.

You may already have an electronic press kit (EPK) to help generate buzz. There are dozens of platforms and websites where you can create and/or host an EPK (IndieGuide.com has created a partial list here: <http://bit.ly/EPKoptions>). Look for features that allow you to include your social accounts, preferably with large icons that appear above the fold (meaning you don't have to scroll to find them). The key to working with journalists and bloggers is to make the information easy to find and consume. Don't bury social links at the bottom of the page!



Example of a QR code landing page created by Ludvik+Partners for the Carri Bella CD release party.

There are numerous ways to encourage social media engagement at live events. If nothing else, remind people from the stage that the event has a hashtag and that you have accounts on Twitter and Facebook (the most common places your fans are already hanging out). Better yet, put the relevant information on posters or small cards that can be placed on tables or handed out at the door so people know what your profile names are.

If you want some *serious* social media love

at a live event, put a QR code on your print materials that takes fans to a mobile landing page (not your website) where they can find out more and share your information with just a click. If you've never used a QR code before, it's like a bar code that can be read with smart phones via free apps called QR readers. You could also encourage people to check into your event on Facebook or Foursquare.

If the venue allows photography (it's rather hard to prevent these days), let people know they're welcome to take photos or video and upload those to their networks, but ask them to *tag* you so you can find the pics later and give people props. To tag you, they'll have to find your social profiles and possibly friend or follow you (depending on the platform). In addition to helping you with promotions, this may boost your search engine optimization (SEO) and online influence. Search engines increasingly look at "social signals" such as tags, reviews, links, etc., when determining page rankings. When people share your content or mention you on social networks, that can impact your Klout score as well.

### 9. Save time with a social engagement dashboard

After you've built up social profiles on several sites, it can become a chore to log into all of them on a daily basis to monitor your activity streams, which can include wall posts, tweets, comments, photos, video, hashtags, etc. Chances are, you'll skip some networks (or skip some days) because it's time-consuming. Then you'll kick yourself because you missed out on an opportunity!

This is why you'll eventually want to use a social engagement dashboard to save time and help ensure that you won't miss crucial information and opportunities. Think of this as a social media command center where you'll be able to see all (or most) of your incoming and outgoing feeds in one place. Some engagement dashboards may also track keywords or hashtags, allow you to schedule posts on a calendar, provide for team management of accounts (with tags for individual people), let you archive messages, and enable management of lists.

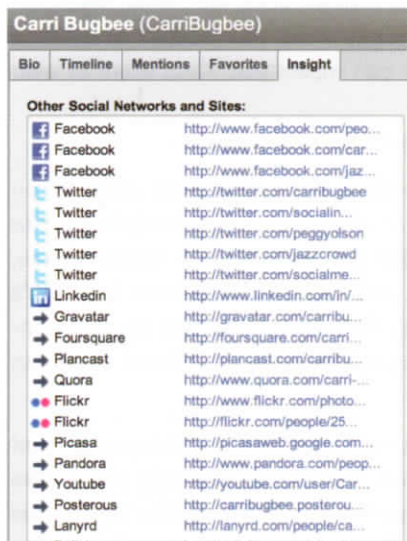
Paid versions (including some that are under \$10 a month) will also measure your progress by tracking fan/follower growth, popularity of posts, influence scores and more. For less than the price of a cocktail at a swanky bar, you can save hours of time each month by using an engagement dashboard. After a while, you'll also learn what works for you so you can become more efficient. If you're on the geeky side, delve deeper into the analytics to gain insight about what makes you successful and identify opportunities for improvement.

If you're a newbie, don't worry about getting a dashboard right away. It's not that hard to log into two or three platforms. Plus, you really ought to learn the functionality and ethos of those platforms



before you start managing them from another app. One of the best parts about using social media is discovering people you would have never met otherwise. That has unequivocally changed my life, but it would rarely happen if I didn't spend a lot of time on the native platforms looking at people's profiles and following my friends' conversations to their friends' profiles. I use several social dashboards, but I still go directly to [Twitter.com](http://Twitter.com), [Facebook.com](http://Facebook.com) and other social media sites every day.

Another way you can save time (without a social dashboard) is by linking your profiles together so when you post in one place, that post will automatically be published in another place. You can link your Twitter account to Facebook, ReverbNation to Twitter, MySpace to Facebook, and so on. *Caution! This can be risky.* You may forget which accounts are connected and spam your fans with duplicate posts. Even if you don't forget, it's often not wise to duplicate your posts (at least not at the same time). I won't say you should *never* do it (though many "experts" do say that). It just depends upon your fans and followers. You may have almost no overlap from one platform to another, in which case it could be fine.



HootSuite's "insight" button shows you other networks where you can connect with friends and followers.

encourage them to build networks elsewhere too). Hootsuite also has a nifty feature called "insight" that allows you to see what other networks your contacts are on. Remember what I said about connecting with influencers? This could be very useful.

SproutSocial offers an attractive graphic interface and a feature that lets you add phone numbers, email addresses, company names, etc. to social contacts so you can create a useful online rolodex. Seismic will let you publish to more social media platforms than any other app in this price range (through Ping.fm), including Tumblr, Typepad and Ning. The caveat is that you can only get incoming feeds in Seismic for popular platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and a few others. Try them all via their free trials to see which will work best for you.

## 10. Take it on the road!

Many social engagement dashboards offer companion mobile apps (usually free) so you can manage multiple profiles on the go. This is crucial for anyone who spends time on the road. Having that dashboard at your fingertips could be the difference between success or failure when you're traveling or if you spend little time in front of your computer.

Of course, popular social sites such as Twitter, Facebook and MySpace have their own apps and there are dozens of third-party mobile apps to upload photos and video, or even to scan tickets (BrownPaper Tickets and EventBrite offer apps). Finally, many music sales and promotions platforms have their own mobile apps, including FanBridge (Fan Collector), ReverbNation, Last.fm, SoundCloud and Bandcamp (Bandcamper). Check out the App Gallery at SoundCloud for more options and ideas.

*Carri Bugbee works with brands to develop social media marketing strategies and she has trained musicians, marketers, executives and students in best practices. She sings jazz under the stage name Carri Bella and just released her first CD, Wicked Muse. Connect with her on Twitter via @CarriBugbee, @CarriBella or @JazzCrowd.*

Only you will know that. If you've forgotten how your profiles are connected, try MyPermissions.org to delete those app connections and start fresh.

My favorite free or low-cost dashboards are Hootsuite, SproutSocial and Seismic. Hootsuite may be the best option for musicians because it integrates with MySpace for both posting and monitoring. I still have many musician friends who use MySpace and there is no reason they should abandon their networks there (though I

