

A STAR IS BORN ONLINE

**The Showbiz Up-And-Comer's Guide To
Social Media Marketing**

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SHEER SOCIAL

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Social Media In Casting & Talent Decisions



Eric Kuhn Social Media
Agent, UTA

"If you have have more Twitter followers, it helps in the casting process," says Kuhn. "A Facebook account has the ability to move product, whether it's ticket sales [or] whether it's downloads."

"No longer is raw acting ability always sufficient to snag a leading role--a star's social media power may become a determining factor, especially for TV or independent films." – Gregory Ferenstein, Mashable.com May 31, 2011

Social Media has changed the game in entertainment! You've got "the look", the perfect headshots, a respectable list of credited roles and performances, guild memberships, and plenty of talent, but all that may NOT be enough to win over casting directors and talent agents in this current digital age. Not to mention, in this competitive business of show, almost everyone has the basics! So what will set you apart from the competition? **Your social influence or social media power!**

At a glance the thousands of followers, fans, and friends you have on a social network may be impressive because it appears you've got an attentive audience of potential customers.

But **social influence** isn't just about the numbers, it's about the power you have online to affect behavior or certain actions. And now that influence is more important than ever as the industry churns out more content for the web and mobile to meet the growing demand.

Can you convenience people to watch, comment, or buy products like tickets or albums? Along with your talent, that's the potential many show biz execs are now looking for. Are you prepared?

Social Casting Campaigns

Thanks to the popularity of online video, casting auditions can now take place online, cutting the time and budget spent on traditional casting calls. Remember Oprah's "[Your OWN Show](#)" talent search? It not only led thousands to upload videos to the show's website, but millions more to watch and vote on who the next talk show queen or king should be! Talk about web traffic boost!

Not only did that highly publicized campaign bring attention to the show, it brought attention to potential television hosts, reality stars, and entertainers all thanks to active participation in social media. But how does one contestant video



get over eight million views while another only a few hundred? Again, social media! Imagine the promotion individuals did via their social profiles to get people to watch and vote on their video.

From a producing standpoint it was a win win! By giving potential show viewers the opportunity to vote and comment on their favorite video contestants,

producers were able to narrow down their decisions and the audience felt it had some involvement in the success of the show.

Similarly, [Gotcast.com's](#) CEO, Adam Shankman, says that more and more the casting industry is seeking to meet the industry's need for on camera experts, "big" personalities types, and "every day people" through the internet.



"Talent seekers are now launching formal casting campaigns on social networking and talent-oriented sites. These campaigns are effective, quick to set up, and simple to manage. This has resulted in the creation of a new category of interactive online casting tools and resources that are growing in popularity and use." –Adam Shankman, Mashable.com, June 18, 2010

Adam Shankman,
CEO, Gotcast.com

5 Things Up-and-Comers Need Online

Are you “Google-able”? Do you have a POSITIVE online presence? Whatever your answer there are five things that social media can do to help YOU stand out in the crowd online. Besides your natural talent and elevator pitch, these are the four things you should have on online to impress an internet-searching director, producer, or executive.

- **CONTENT:** Impromptu performances before the powers that be may still work, but have a follow-up online. A video, songs, audio samples, a podcast, a blog, some content online that demonstrates your expertise and talents that will make that first impression a LASTING impression.
- **ENGAGEMENT:** Do you receive “likes”, Twitter mentions, online comments, and do YOU respond in a timely fashion? Being able to generate conversations online is a key element to real online social influence.
- **COMMUNITY:** Your fans, followers, and friends are your community. But don’t focus totally on the numbers; focus on cultivating relationships. Yes, having thousands or millions of fans *appears* impressive, but if no one truly engages with your content nor buys it, the numbers mean NOTHING.
- **REACH:** Do you have the potential to connect with people, their people, and new audiences? In order to go “viral” online your content must get beyond your known community to those outside of it.
- **CONSISTENCY:** Regularly updating your sites with new information and fresh content is a MUST! As an up-and-comer you cannot afford to lose your audience’s attention. Posting good content on a consistent basis keeps the momentum going.

The foundation of it all is CONTENT, but don’t worry about it always being professionally done. Set a quality standard for your content, but don’t waste valuable time and money at this phase stressing over perfection. Learn the basics, the begin creating! Up next...the tools you need to get started.

The Tools

As an up-and-comer you must become a D-I-Yer, a “do-it-yourselfer,” or someone with D-I-Yer friends. So begin thinking of yourself as a documentary filmmaker or historian chronicling your performances, growing talent, and life experiences. In your new role you’ll need a computer and these tools:

- **Website or blog:** THIS IS YOUR ONLINE HOME so invest in a domain name and hosting. Posting content to social networks is useful, but remember on those sites your content is in steep competition for attention with chats, messaging, games, related content, and other distractions.

No blog nor website but need something QUICK? Try AOL’s new [About.me](#) profile pages. They provide room for creative flexibility and graphic links to all your social profiles.

- **Smartphone:** These mini-computers are great for not only talking, but also capturing video and photo and connectivity to the internet. Ideally, you want the capability to post content on the go to your social profiles and not be stuck always needing a traditional computer on even an Ipad. 
- **Digital Camera:** Capturing moments and experiences on your journey to stardom are paramount. A camera that takes high quality photos AND video is ideal and not as expensive as it used to. So do some research before you buy.
- **Online and mobile applications:** Creating and posting content takes TIME! Whether using your iPad, smartphone, or computer it’s the apps that help you record, edit, post, schedule, and even search content on the go!
- **Email Marketing Provider:** Email is STILL one of the best ways to share info and content to the masses. As you grow your business, collect emails from fans through your website or online application. When you’re ready to promote events, do special invites, or launch a campaign your list will already be available.

Building Your Fan Base

Simply having Twitter and Facebook accounts or a blog IS NOT enough as an up-and-comer. Until you become a major star, you have to bring the attention to you and your content. How do you do that online without a marketing budget? STRATEGY! YOU will have to put in the work online just as you do offline in preparing for auditions, performances, pitch meetings, etc!

Here's four steps to building a responsive and loyal following as you make your way to stardom:

- **Listening: Google's alerts** and **blog search** are GREAT tools for listening to the online conversation about you or brand. Google Alerts sends you an email with a link to the content mentioning your name. Google.com/blogsearch will also find those online posts about you. Get your FREE Google Alerts account at Google.com/alerts.

Free tools like SocialMention.com and Addictomatic will also help find mentions of your name online across various platforms including tweets and Facebook updates.

Search periodically too on other popular search engines like Yahoo, Bing, MSN, and others. Everywhere your name is mentioned, there are potential fans!

- **Outreach:** Contact those mentioning you online via the information they provide. BUT DON'T BE A SPAMMER! Introduce yourself and develop an online relationship BEFORE you push your content.
- **Promotion:** Email signatures, business cards, social profiles, swag, even your video content should have mentions or links to your website or other social profiles. If friends and peers have websites/blogs, cross promote each other by link and content sharing.
- **Be A Fan, Friend, Follower, & Commenter:** In growing your fan base, the main topic of conversation doesn't always have to be about you and your work. Find other topics you're interested in and share info about them as well on your profiles or website.

Comment on related blogs and join online groups and communities where your potential fans exist. Answer questions, start discussions, and engage with others' content. OCCASIONALLY post links to your own content when relevant to the conversation.

Measuring Success

Once your social media strategy is put to work, in a matter of months you'll begin to see measurable progress. At a glance you'll notice an increase in numbers, but what other indicators should you be noticing?

- **Engagement:** Likes, comments, and shares, oh my!
- **Impressions and reach:** How many people in and out of your social network saw your content?
- **Mentions:** Where and how often were you mentioned online?
- **Actions:** Clicks, downloads, plays, purchases. These measurable actions will give you an idea of how many people are genuinely interested in the content you provide.



Facebook fan page administrators and YouTubers are provided analytical tools with their profiles. *Free* tools like [Twitter Counter](#) and [Klout](#) will share insights on your Twitter progress. Adding **Google Analytics** to your website or blog will further help measure activity and sources of traffic and links.


Decision-makers will seek your visible numbers (fan page likes, followers, video plays) first, but keep in mind your reach and engagement are also important, especially when it comes to building an audience or reaching customers.

How often should you measure? Monthly! Things can change quickly in social media so checking your stats regularly will help you stay abreast of what's happening within your network. It will also help you see if your strategy is working or if you need to take a different approach.



Tips For Your Blog or Website

Your website and/or blog is YOUR online home! Again, it is one of the few places online where YOU have visitors' undivided attention. To ensure visitors come back here are a few tips:

- Submit your site to the main search engines. Also, add a [Creative Commons License](#) so that YOUR content remains yours and can't be used by others without your permission.
 - RSS and Email: Give visitors the option to receive your content through email and Real Simple Syndication feed readers.
 - Add share buttons and plug-ins so that readers can increase your content's reach.
 - Use [TwitterFeed](#), [Hootsuite](#), or Facebook's RSS application or others to automate importing your site's feed to your fan page or profile. Opt to have only a portion of your individual posts viewable.
- 
- Be sure to post your best content on YOUR site first, then links to it on Facebook, Twitter, etc. The goal is always to bring traffic back to YOUR website.
 - Ask for comments and respond to them in a timely fashion. And remember to comment on other people's related blogs as well.
 - Key Word Optimization: Use [Google's Keyword Tool](#) to find related terms and phrases that people may use when searching online for you or your industry. Then integrate those words throughout the meta tags and written content of your site.
 - Inbound Links: The more links your website, blog, or individual pages receive from sites with higher Google Page Ranking than yours, the higher those pages become in search. So begin link sharing with bloggers and site owners that support your efforts. And if featured in a web article, always ask writer to include a hyperlink back to your website.



Facebook Tips

As an up-and-comer are you fast approaching 5,000 friends? If so, then consider starting a fan page. This is especially true when building your brand as an up and coming star. Thus, you'll want to separate friends from general fans gained through your work as an up and coming entertainer.

- Don't focus solely on increasing fans focus on increasing **EDGERANK**. EdgeRank is Facebook's way of determining what content reaches users' newsfeeds. The more comments and other engagement your content receives the higher it's EdgeRank, thus the more it will appear in fan's newsfeeds.
- Photos receive more engagement than videos. Post a mix of photos on your profile or fan page to enhance it. But photos or videos featuring celebs or great performances post to your website or photo hosting site like [Flickr](#) first, then a link to them on Facebook.
- Mix up your content. Ask questions, use polls, applications, share other page's content, and conduct contests and giveaways to further engage fan page members.
- Use Tagging of fan pages and friends when needed so that your posts show up on their walls for everyone to see.
- Periodically post your content (pics and videos) on related fan page walls you've liked. Likewise keep your wall open to allow fans to comment and post related content about you.
- As a fan page admin, like and comment on other pages as your page. This helps bring attention to your page.
- Consider using Facebook to feed your Twitter profile via an application or vice versa **ONLY** if the audiences are similar. Try Hootsuite, Tweetdeck, or other applications to schedule posts.
- Statistically Wednesday to Sunday is when people are most active on Facebook. But check your Insights to see when your audience engages with your content most and schedule posts then.



Twitter Tips

As an up-and-comer you may consider having 2 Twitter profiles, one for business and one for personal use. If one is all you need be sure to tweet wisely and again focus on engagement not mere numbers. Here are more tips:

- Choose an avatar that BEST represents you or your brand, then add a link to your website in your profile along with a little info about yourself. People will be quicker to follow you when they know more about you.
- Consider customizing your Twitter background layout. The layout should complement your website/blog's imagery...colors, fonts, logo, etc. Use tools Twitip.com suggests.
- You do NOT have to follow everyone that follows you! Being selective will help save time and keep undesirable tweets from your twitter stream. BEWARE OF SPAMMERS!
- As an up-and-comer follow those that your favorite people follow. Also notice who is following them! They could become your followers too.
- Use applications such as Hootsuite, [Tweetdeck](#), [SocialOomph](#) to schedule tweets in advance. This will save you time!
- Consider using [TweetBeep](#) to alert you when mentions of your name, company, or brand occur.
- Generating Twitter lists will help de-clutter your twitter streams so you will see tweets from those you're interested in most in whatever category you designate.
- Start or participate in twitter chats when appropriate. Answering questions and adding good content to the chat WILL gain you attention and new followers.
- Track the hits on the links in tweets using url shortner, [Bit.ly](#), or those provided by Hootsuite or Tweetdeck.
- Don't overuse hashtags nor create them without a specific purpose in mind.



LinkedIn Tips

Show biz *is* about the BUSINESS of entertainment, so you'll find plenty of artists, companies, and executives on LinkedIn including studios and guilds. Even better is seeing who's working where and with whom! It's all about your connections! If you're a business minded up-and-comer then you'll want to tap into this great resource of decision-making movers and shakers:

- Use a more professional pic for LinkedIn than other social profiles, particularly one that shows your face, not your logo nor avatar.
- Use your legal name. If you use a different name professionally and more people are familiar with it, then use it.
- Add a video to your profile showcasing your talents and expertise in your field.
- Use the [Creative Portfolio Display](#) application to showcase headshots, marketing materials, sketches, etc.
- Ask for recommendations from co-workers and associates. To complete your profile 100% four recommendations are required.
- Consider importing your blog's RSS feed and your tweets
- Use industry related keywords and phrases in the summary and specialties section of your profile. Like regular web pages, LinkedIn profiles are searchable and indexed by Google.
- See what groups the people you'd liked to connect with are in and join. But LISTEN to the conversations there before jumping in. Provide useful info or insight within the group and people will take notice.
- When commenting or answering questions, add a link to your website OR social profile under your name in your close. DON'T create a mini billboard; keep it simple.
- When possible respond to discussions posts first or to those with the least amount of comments. It will help you stand out and possibly gain you new business if your response is useful.

In Summary

Social media marketing appears to be a lot of work! But it doesn't have to be IF you schedule time to do it and integrate it into your overall strategy for success. Those who do will get the attention online, far more than those who don't.

So do you have to do everything at the same time? No! Spend some time **FIRST** figuring out how you want to present yourself online. What's your brand, your persona? How does it look? What's your voice or message?

Once you've decided on how your online presence will look, sound, and feel start small and build on that foundation. Do you have to be on every social network? No, again! Have a strong presence where you find your audience to be. But remember, your goal for being there or anyplace online is to generate **AWARENESS** and develop **RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE** not just profiles and numbers.

One key to building that awareness is **CONTENT**; the other is **COMMUNITY**! Showbiz decision-makers want to quickly and easily see your talents and how **USEFUL** you can be in generating an audience. If all things are equal between you and another performer, your online social influence could sway the decision in your favor. **IT'S LEVERAGE!**

So up-and-comer start strategizing and creating! Set reasonable measurable goals and be consistent! Find creative ways to show the world your star power. Sooner than you think in this digital age, the world will start to take notice!



About Sheer Social

Sheer Social is a boutique social media marketing business that helps companies and individuals manage social media better. We generate tailor-made strategies that fit individual needs.

Most importantly, we deliver measurable results by focusing on the *quality* of your engagement with your online audience not just the quantity of fans, followers, and friends. Our ultimate goal is to turn your audience into loyal customers and brand ambassadors.

Consulting, training, and managing of social media campaigns are our specialties. We also provide blog creation, online video and mobile application production.

Some of Sheer Social clients include companies AARP, CoachArt.org, MS&L PR, Eaddy Perry & Associates, BlackNLA.com, and actors, Suzanne Whang ("House Hunters", "Las Vegas") and DaJuan Johnson ("General Hospital").

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