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Insta-Promotion: Here's Why (and How) You Should Be Using Instagram to Market Your Music

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Insta-Promotion: Here's Why (and How) You Should Be Using Instagram to Market Your Music

By Jennifer Morrow

Since its [launch in 2010](#), Instagram has been a leading social networking application, connecting people around the world one pixelated square at a time. However, with advancements to the program throughout time, such as the introduction of video posts and, most recently, the new stories feature, Instagram has become an invaluable tool for musicians to quickly and efficiently share their content and image with their audience.

As a self-proclaimed internet kid, I've been exploring the ins and outs of Instagram for years. I've had account since 2013, when I was a sophomore in high school and had very poor photo-editing skills. I posted my first music-related content in 2014, when I uploaded a grainy, black and white, 15 second cover of Taylor Swift's "Blank Space." The post got 80 likes, many of which were strangers that found the post via hashtags, which at the time seemed like phenomenal exposure. A few months later, I tried posting an original song, a finger-plucking ballad called "Hey There Mr. Right," which garnered even more likes and comments. I was just an awkward high-schooler at the time that had only taken up guitar lessons a few months prior, but it was really exciting to have an avenue to share my music so easily and receive enthusiastic feedback instantly.

A lot has changed since I first posted those clumsy video clips. Starting college meant becoming much more busy, so promoting my music hasn't been at the top of my to do list.

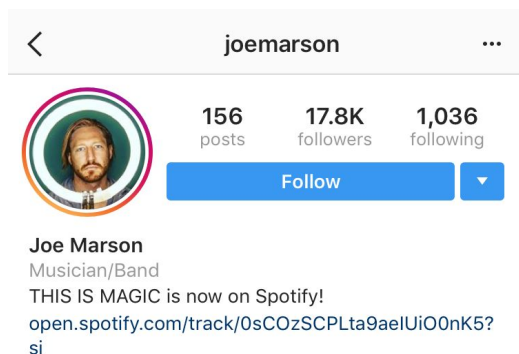


However, I am now interested in getting back into my craft, so I did a little research and poking around on the app to create a game plan of how to get back on the map (aka instafame...or maybe just a little more exposure). Here's a to do list for anyone interested in getting the most out of Instagram as a musician:

1. Make a separate account for your music

You might love your daily selfie posts, but that doesn't mean your followers want this content to clog up their feed. A few personal posts here and there are okay, even encouraged, but it's definitely a good idea to have a side account for music promotion. Additionally, there might be some pictures you want to share with your friends but would feel uncomfortable sharing with an audience of strangers who followed you to see your acoustic covers.

Crafting the perfect Instagram page for your music



needs is somewhat of an art. [According to singer/songwriter](#)

[Joe Marson](#), an ideal music account would have 50%

music-related content and 40% personal posts (such as

selfies, funny posts, life updates, etc.) The goal is to maintain

the focus on your music, but also share a little of yourself

with your audience so they can get to know you. Which leads

me to...

2. Interact with your followers!

The great thing about social media is interactivity. It's awesome to be able to share your content with people, but it's very important to also follow up and get to know your audience. If someone comments "OH MY GOD this is amazing!!!!," respond with a quick thank you to show that you appreciate the support. This is the bare minimum, but there are countless other ways to

interact with your followers. You can do giveaways, give shoutouts, direct message (and respond to direct messages), live videos, and more. Interacting directly with your audience is the best way to make them feel invested in you (and your music). It's easy to gain a follower, but more difficult to keep a follower, so remember to treat them well!

3. Increase your audience!

But wait, let's take a step back. If it's so easy to gain followers, how do you do it? Well, there are lots of options. One tried and true method is the F4F, or "follow for follow." Basically, all you have to do is find other musicians on Instagram, comment something nice on one of their posts, give them a follow, and ask for a follow back. Chances are they want to increase their fan base as much as you do, so they'll be happy to oblige. Also, who knows, maybe you'll make some valuable connections for future collaborations!

However, you don't need to limit this approach to other musicians. Try to reach out to as many people as you can, starting with friends, moving to friends of friends, and go from there. It doesn't cost anything to follow people, so go for it! You can always unfollow later if they don't take the bait.

Another quick tip: Utilize hashtags!! They're there for a reason. Some of my favorite hashtags are:

- #musicians of instagram
- #singer-songwriter
- #acoustic



But whatever you do, be sure to keep your hashtags relevant. Include the name of the song and artist if you are covering one of their songs, as you might find fans of that artist that would like

your covers. Also, genre-specific hashtags are a great way to build a fan base, such as indie rock or rap.

4. Use Instagram Stories!!

[Stories](#) are one of the newer features on Instagram, and they are an excellent tool for musicians. One way to use this feature is to do short, chatty, videos that your followers can view to catch up with your life, but it will not stay on your main page. This way, you can keep your profile ordered and professional, but can quickly reach out to your followers without prior planning.

Stories also incorporate more ways to interact with your followers. You can use the live video feature to talk to your audience in real time, and your followers can comment with questions that you can respond to immediately. This is a great way to build a more authentic relationship with your fans. Also, you can create polls that your followers can weigh in on, or links that followers can look at by swiping up on your story.

Stories are also great for sharing little pieces of your day, like lunch outings or maybe even a behind the scenes look at studio recording. This way your fans can get to know you a little better, but you won't clog up their feed and cause them to hit the unfollow button.

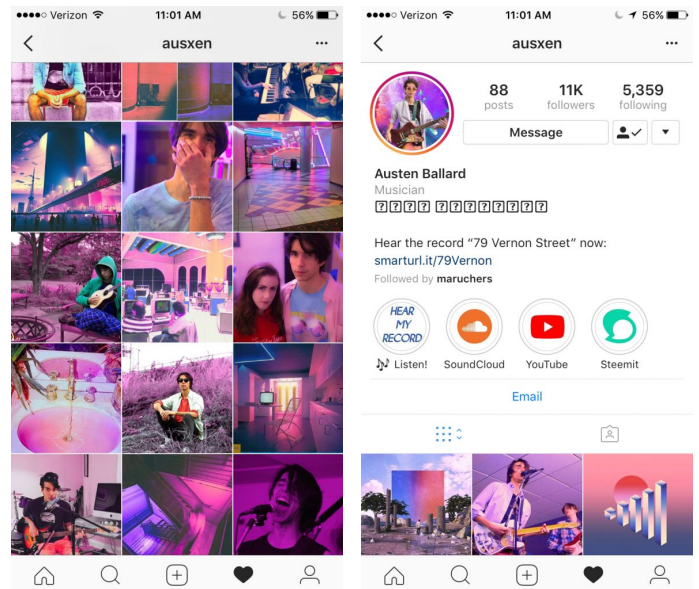
5. Instagram Stories continued...use highlights!

What are highlights, you might ask? Well, Instagram now allows you to post “highlights” from your story on your main account page. Instead of disappearing after 24 hours, these posts remain on your page until you remove them. They are organized into categories, so as a musician, for example, you can have a highlights link for covers and originals. One of the best applications of this tool that I've seen came from a musician named [Austen Ballard](#) (who, by the way, I found because he used the follow for follow method!). His profile contains four highlights: “Listen,”

“Soundcloud,” “Youtube,” and “Steemit,” which are all links to different avenues to find his music. Simply tap on the icon for each and you’ll be lead directly to his content.

Additionally, Austen uses Instagram’s business tools to label himself as a musician on his account, creating a more professional presentation. He also maintains a polished account page, with a set color scheme and focused aesthetic. Although he is an indie musician, he has used self-promotion to garner 11k followers, which is certainly nothing to complain about.

So, in conclusion...



This is just a brief list, but I hope this gave you a glimpse of all Instagram has to offer musicians. Anyone can utilize these tools, so why not give it a shot?

Sources:

[Instagram Help Center](#)

[Joe Marson](#)

[TIME](#)

[Austen Ballard](#)