



HOW TO **SUPERSIZE** YOUR SHOW'S **SOCIAL MEDIA**

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE
EXECUTION PLAN SERIES

PRO

INTRODUCTION

SUPER-SIZE YOUR SHOW'S SOCIAL MEDIA: HOW TO START YOUR ONLINE BRAND, STRENGTHEN YOUR FOLLOWERS, AND SELL TICKETS

You may have heard a thing or two about building word of mouth for your show. Many argue that word of mouth is the biggest determining factor of sales and a property's overall life.

And strong word of mouth doesn't necessarily mean critical acclaim. Many Broadway hits have raked in millions at the box office when critical response was just so-so. Why?

A wide audience liked it and more importantly, talked about it.

While a rave review in *The New York Times* is a sweet perk . . . that's just one person's opinion. Wouldn't you be more likely to buy a ticket if you heard a rave review from 5 of your close friends? I know I would.

Nowadays, the place where we talk to each other the most isn't Sardi's or your local happy hour spot—it's online. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Tumblr... [insert your favorite platform here].

Social media channels allow us to play a bigger role in shaping word-of-mouth for our projects. It helps us raise awareness, get closer to our target audience, and yes, even make sales.

I'm going to let you in on some of the secrets I've learned over the years marketing my shows, projects and products on social media.

And by the end of this packet, you'll be equipped to super-size your social media and convert an online profile into a profit. #LetsGetStarted



HOW TO HANDLE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLES

I can't tell you how many people rush through the process of choosing their social media handles. Would you hastily decide on a title for your play or musical?

You'll want to be strategic about claiming your social media channels because you'll be directing all potential buyers to these channels. The process is fairly easy if your show title shares no similarities to other social media handles. However, you may find yourself in a situation where you have to adjust due to character limits or if your desired handle has already been claimed.

Check out handle character limits below (as of August 2018):

- **Facebook:** 50 characters
- **Twitter:** 15 characters (keep it short, people!) Note: Your Display name can be up to 50 characters but the actual handle is just 15.
- **Instagram:** 30 characters
- **Sample Display Name:** Once On This Island on Broadway
- **Sample Handle:** @OnceIslandBway



BRAINSTORM AT LEAST 5 POTENTIAL HANDLES FOR YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS BELOW:

What's the best way to ensure your handle hasn't been claimed? I use Namechk.com. This tool lets you enter in your desired username and shows you if it's available or unavailable across networks. Not only does Namechk.com search across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, it also lets you check domain names and usernames for platforms like Etsy (great for show merch!) and Foursquare (great for your in theater check-in!)

If you use Namechk.com to find that your handle is already in use, you may need to get a little creative. Keep in mind your social media handle is a calling card for your show. . . so keep it simple and direct when possible.



PRO TIP: You may find out that your handle is available on two networks like Facebook and Instagram but taken on Twitter. If this is the case, it's best to settle on a username that is available on all three. It's more user-friendly and will make it easier to direct potential followers (and ticket buyers) to your profiles.

HASH OUT SOME HASHTAGS

Establishing some strong, clear hashtags is crucial for creating engaging content. Beyond that, it's also a powerful way for potential followers to discover you and vice versa.

You'll want to start by settling on 1-2 brand hashtags. A brand hashtag is not unlike your handle. It should help users identify you right away. Frequently, the brand hashtag is the title of your show. If the title is too long, try an abbreviated version.

Often, shows will also use a tagline or popular phrase from the show as a recurring brand hashtag. One recent example is *Hamilton*, which utilized #theroomwhereithappens to engage followers.



BRAINSTORM 3-5 BRAND HASHTAGS BELOW:



Once you've settled on a brand hashtag, you should be sure to start utilizing it right away. The brand hashtag(s) should appear in places beyond your social media channels including your website, direct mail pieces and other marketing assets. (I've got another idea for you but let's not #getaheadofourselves)

GET CREATIVE WITH YOUR CONTENT

Once you've established a handle and brand hashtag, you and your team should get to work on a social media plan. Most social media users are online at least once per day so you'll want to deliver dynamic content regularly. In fact, once a day is ideal.



This is easier said than done. You don't want to exhaust your followers or give them the impression that you have limited content to share. (There's nothing worse than seeing a show's social media pages filled with the same artwork posted over and over or the words "Buy tickets now!").

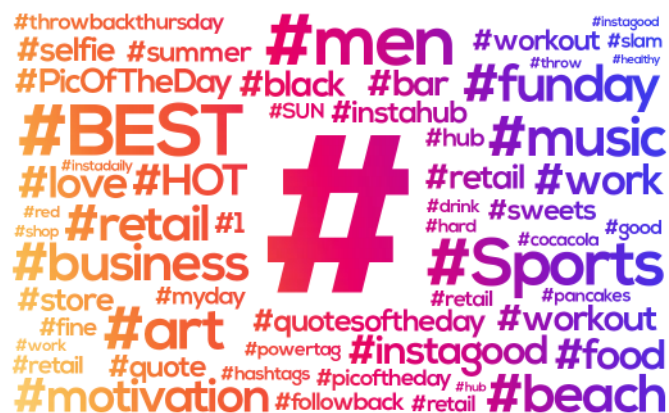
When producers or artists ask me for help with their social media, I tell them to start with hashtags. Now I know we

The world's most popular example? #ThrowbackThursday or #tbt, which you've probably seen or used countless times. Hashtags like #tbt are great because it trains followers to get excited about a certain type of post every Thursday.



...Ok, you may be experiencing some brainstorm. (I bet you thought I wouldn't give you any homework in this execution plan 😊) Here are some tips for conquering a social media brain freeze .
...which by the way, I get ALL the time:

- Log on to your social media platforms and check out the “Trending” sidebar to see what hashtags are popular
- Follow people & organizations you admire and see what they are doing; Share it with a comment or re-interpret the post in your show’s “voice”
- Social Media Holidays: Check out some ideas at <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-holiday-calendar-2017>. There’s everything from #OppositeDay to #CleanOffYourDeskDay!



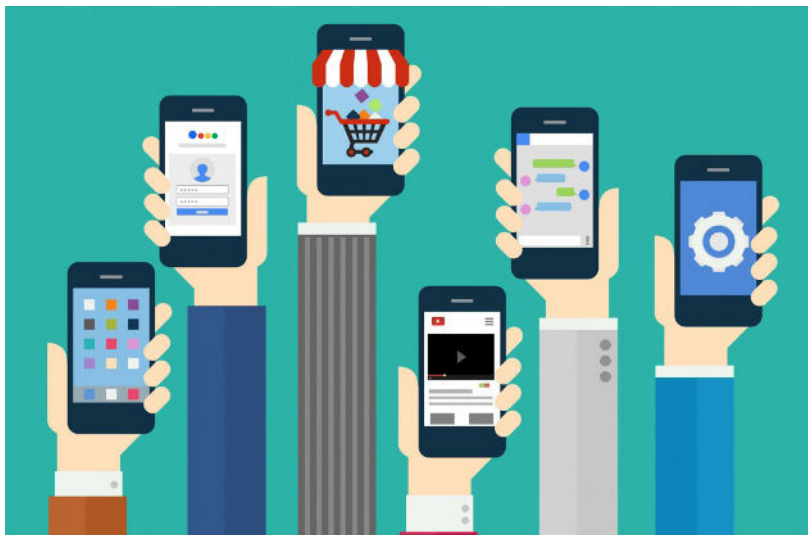
GET PICTURE PERFECT

DID YOU KNOW THAT, ACCORDING TO FORBES, YOU CAN GET 3X MORE ENGAGEMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA FROM IMAGES AND VIDEOS?

You'll want to make sure any images you post are professional and formatted in the correct size.

Ideal Photo Sizes (in pixels):

- Facebook: 178 x 180 (profile image), 828 x 315 (cover photo), 476 x 714 (image post)
- Twitter: 400 x 400 (profile image), 1500 x 500 (header photo), 440 x 220 (image post)
- Instagram: 110 x 110 (profile image), 1080 X 1080 (image post)



In the event you need to resize your photos, the best tool to use is Photoshop. There are also some free online programs including picaresize.com and picmonkey.com.



PRO TIP: Be sure to “clean up” any links on your pages to maximize sleekness. Overly long urls can make your profile look ugly and unprofessional. Here’s how to do it:

- **On Facebook:** After you’ve copied and pasted the link, a preview of the content will show up. Once the preview is loaded, delete the link. (The content will still be there!)
- **On Twitter:** Use bitly.com to save characters. Simply copy and paste the link into bitly.com and share the new shortened link on Twitter.
- **On Instagram:** While you can’t link in your individual posts, you can now add links, hashtags and mentions in your Instagram bio. Be sure to use bitly.com (just like on Twitter!)

FIND YOUR FOLLOWERS & FAST

You have your profile set-up and you've even started posting. But there's a problem. No one's liking or sharing your content. Maybe you don't even have more than 15 followers.

The first step? Take a breath. Remember building a brand takes time. Just like there's no such thing as an "overnight sensation," there's also no such thing as a "overnight social media star." There's a myth that going viral happens in a matter of seconds but for most long-lasting brands... this isn't the case.

Luckily, there are few steps you can take to maximize your number of followers in a relatively short period of time.

1. KNOW YOUR NICHE & WHAT THAT MEANS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

The first step of your marketing plan should have been identifying your target audience. Once you have that set, you'll need to find out where your target audience "hangs out" on social media.

Complete the exercise below:



- My Target Audience is _____
- Broadway Shows They Probably Follow On Social Media Are (List at least 5):
- Movies & TV Shows They Probably Follow On Social Media Are (List at least 5):
- Books Or Publications They Probably Follow On Social Media Are (List at least 5):
- Hashtags They Likely Use on Social Media Are (List at least 5):
- Celebrities or "Influencers" They Probably Follow on Social Media Are (List at least 5):

2. FOLLOW FOR A FOLLOW

Once you've completed the exercise above, I want you to go to all of the pages listed. Start adding/following any user who follows those pages. Believe it or not, following someone, only to get them to follow you back, does work.

And by the way, don't be shy with that 'like' button. Add extra incentive for these users to follow you back by liking or even commenting on a few of their posts.

By taking this "follow for a follow" method, you are making that first impression with not only a potential follower but also a future ticket buyer.



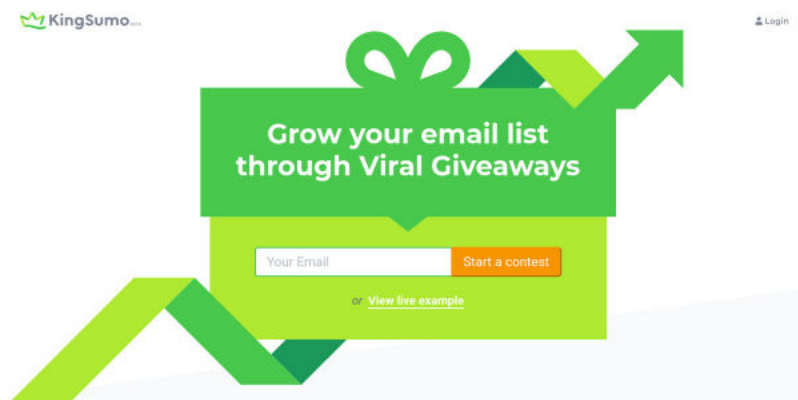
PRO TIP: To invite people you aren't "friends" with to a page, use the Facebook Page "share" feature. Go to your Page and look for the bar located directly under your cover photo. Look for the "Share" button. This will also you to reach people who are not connected to you as friends.

3. GIVE(AWAY) TO GET MORE

Nothing gets people interested quite like free \$@#!. Considering launching your social media pages with a fun giveaway contest. This could be comp tickets to your show or a donated prize from one of your marketing partners.

My favorite place to launch social media giveaways is KingSumo. It's user-friendly and you can run your first contest with them at no cost. (Nothing quite like free stuff, am I right?) Once you've decided on an appealing prize to give away, log on to KingSumo. From there, it only takes a few minutes to set-up your giveaway page. Share the link to your giveaway across social media platforms.

The best part of a KingSumo giveaway? You gain your participants emails. This will come in handy for your e-marketing campaigns. But did you know you can use emails to attract followers to your social pages? Read on!



4. EMAIL ADDRESSES = MORE FOLLOWERS

You can now invite potential followers to like your page by uploading your email list to Facebook and Twitter. Take any emails you've acquired (via your giveaway or your marketing list) and organize them into an Excel document. Once you have that ready, you're ready to import contacts to your Facebook and Twitter pages.

On Facebook:

- Click on the ellipsis (...) button; next to the Share button
- Select Suggest Page
- Click Upload Contacts next to Contact List File
- Select the contacts you want to invite (all of them!)
- Click Preview Invitation to approve
- Note: you can upload up to 5,000 contacts per day

On Twitter:

You'll need to import your Excel document into your email platform first. Once uploaded, go to Twitter and...

- Click Who to Follow > Find Friends
- Select email type
- Type your credentials and sign in
- Grant access and start following. You can upload approx. 2,000 contacts at a time

5. SUREFIRE WAYS TO GAIN FOLLOWERS

- Add link to social profiles in email signature
- Add social media widgets to your show's marketing emails
- Add an Insert with Social Media Channels into your show's Playbill
- Organize a social media "takeover" on a partner channel
- Add your hashtag and social media info to "photo opp" at your theater



PRO TIP: Ask one of your partners if they'd be interested in a Facebook pixel swap. This allows you to reach their audience with a simple trade of information. Talk about a productive partnership! 😊



BUDGET FOR A BOOST

When planning your ad spend, I suggest leaving some room for social media spend. Since Facebook owns Instagram, you are able to coordinate Facebook and Instagram ads in the Facebook Ads Manager.

I suggest starting by promoting your page. This allows you to direct people to like your page through targeted marketing. (Use our exercise from page 5 to help decide what demographics to target!)

The next best thing is boosting an individual post on your Facebook/Instagram pages. My advice? Boost your giveaway contest (we talked about this on the last page) so you earn likes AND emails in one spend.

As you earn more sales, you should consider implementing a more advanced social media ad campaign. (But that would be another execution plan entirely!)

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BE CRITICAL TO YOUR SHOW'S SUCCESS?

Check out my webinar “How To Use Social Media to Sell Tickets” at
www.TheProducersPerspectivePRO.com

Hear from a Digital Marketing Guru at my **Super Conference** in NYC
theproducersperspective.com/conference

Schedule a consult with someone from my team by emailing our
Community Manager Summer Groh at summer@davenporttheatrical.com