

Fall 2013

## A Guide to Event Promotion: Internet Marketing for a Live Musical Event in Las Vegas

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A Guide to Event Promotion: Internet Marketing for a Live Musical Event in Las Vegas

By

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for:

Masters of Science Degree in Hotel Administration

William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration

University of Nevada Las Vegas

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## **PART ONE**

### **Introduction**

A global industry of festivals and musical events has evolved and developed rapidly especially since the late 1960's starting with Woodstock. The industry continues today with large-scale multiple stage events that bring in over hundreds of thousands of people. Las Vegas is known by many as the city of entertainment, with world-renowned Cirque Du Soleil shows, poolside concerts at the Cosmopolitan, and the thriving Electric Daisy Carnival. The phenomenal growth of this industry coupled with increased consumer awareness and choice requires sustained development and expansion in the future. Concerts and festivals are unique events that attract audiences. Music-based events are a popular form of entertainment; however research exploring the best practices of promoting a musical event to audiences is sparse. Music events are coveted because they attract attendees from all over the world to Las Vegas, whether for traveling, musical admiration, or of course the festival experience. These events are a part of a huge multi-million dollar industry and without them; the hospitality industry in Las Vegas would have a difficult time attracting potential visitors. It is crucial for event managers to identify a clear model to attract attendees, keep up with ever changing trends, and promote appropriately. Social media provides a straightforward method to assess demographics for festivals.

Effective online marketing strategies that promoters use to advertise events will be examined and discussed. First, starting with social media basics, online marketing, other entertainment companies, mobile applications, then leading in to suggested strategies for the event execution. These marketing strategies have been used by other companies and deemed

valuable for the business. These events could not be marketed or advertised without the help of social media. In the past ten years, the Internet and social media have completely changed how consumers view products and brands. Now, instead of purchasing items from a store or magazine, consumers are able to research products, services, and interests online and then share what they have experienced through social media (Hudson & Hudson, 2012).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this professional paper is to develop clear knowledge and provide an instructional guideline for event companies and managers on how to hold a successful live musical entertainment event in Las Vegas using social media.

### **Statement of Objective**

“In today’s society, social media is omnipresent. References to social media occur in business, the news, and normal everyday conversation. Online social media is reinventing marketing, communications, and even how we find information. Social media in business works best when people who represent a brand, event, or company converse with a customer who defines its target audience via area of interest.” (IAEE, 2010, p. )

Event promoters strive to clearly understand the motivational interests of these event attendees to design better products and services as an event is marketed. The use of social media helps companies recognize the interests of potential attendees. This recognition will act as a road map to better understand social media trends of attendees. Utilizing the identified trends, event promoters create new and innovative events for the future. This article discusses the influence and significance of live music events and festivals in today’s society and gives research based

examples that highlight clear guidelines for successful event promotion in Las Vegas through social media and online campaigns. The objective goal is to identify with previous event promotions in Las Vegas, other entertainment companies, and provide statistics of the success rate of musical entertainment events from using social media.

The current generation is fixated on using smart phones for things like social media to discover events. Users can display their interest in certain types of music online and others can view from their online profile. Online identities and profiles can be customized to display preferences and interests. The world is at the fingertips of the technologically savvy young adult who, with one click of a button, sends the newest trends to friends near and far in an instant. The simplicity of using online blogs, networking sites, and music sites to spread the word and stimulate word-of-mouth about interests. Using these sites can be valuable in promoting events and understanding the appropriate marketing strategies. Social media is an effective and virtually free marketing tool for the hospitality industry. According to Leonard (2013) 1.5 billion people in the world own a smart phone and almost 900 million people are on the social media website Facebook.com. Social media, a relatively new technological advancement, simplifies marketing and event promotion to a large population such as Las Vegas.

Las Vegas contains more than 25 of the world's largest hotels in the central location of the Las Vegas strip. Each hotel has its own entertainment venues and shows running several times a day. Visitors may have difficulty choosing which venue to visit or which concert would be the most convenient and ensure the best experience. Users can simply click a button on a smart phone or computer to allow them to search an event near them. Event promoters help companies market to persuade patrons' choice of one event over another using reviews and

comments for the company benefits. The key is to market correctly and be the most appealing in a sea of options. The objective of this paper is to provide all the information and tools one would need to successfully run a live event in Las Vegas.

### **Justifications**

This study is justified because the growing industry of events with live entertainment creates competition for all event marketers to attract the attendees. Ticketfly, a live music-ticketing site, published a 400% rise in customer base in the previous 18 months of business (Dahud, 2012). This amount of growth, within a short amount of time is an enormous achievement for the music industry. Social media, when used correctly, can be a valuable marketing tool. Online blogs, ticketing sites, social media forums, and personal comments can have a huge impact on the outcome of an event and its success in the future (Dahud, 2012). An event promoter must understand the target market, know how to find online interests, and utilize the appropriate techniques to tap into social websites and find the most up-to-date associated trends. An event promoter, proficient in social media marketing and the use of appropriate techniques will make a profit for the company.

### **Constraints**

Possible disadvantages to using social media for online marketing may include internal and external constraints. In a world with so many online options it is easy to get overwhelmed. Some constraints are negative comments or reviews online about a brand or event that can surface and have an off-putting affect. This constraint may cost the company money, credibility and resources (Hughes, 2010). Another constraint is that online event marketing is extremely time consuming and one person is never able to perform all the roles for the brand (Hughes,

2010). A company must be constantly updating and keeping representations accurate for the cyber world. Event promoters should also be careful about legal issues and copyright when using quotes, videos, or photos from other events or musical artists (IAEE). There is plenty of competition, especially in Las Vegas, that is intimidating, but understanding the competition and having a solid marketing plan is necessary for this industry. Social media has some faults but the benefits outweigh the constraints. The next section will start with basic knowledge of social media and then transition into mediums and how to utilize them to market online.

## **PART TWO**

### **Introduction**

There are numerous routes to successful social media marketing for an event. By following a timeline of previously successful guidelines, the process can flow effortlessly, despite constraints. This paper will explore social media, successful entertainment companies, campaigns, and highlight the importance of proper marketing for live music events, which will ultimately offer guidelines to execute. At the end of this paper, the reader will have an assortment of ideas to implement their own live music event in Las Vegas.

### **Understanding Social Media Basics**

It is crucial to understand basic knowledge of social media and its functions. Social media is a combination of terms of user-generated content and consumer generated media (Lange & Elliot, 2012). These terms fall under the category of Web 2.0 as social media platforms are up-and-coming as the leading digital communications channel mainly for people under the age of 34 years old (Chappuis, et al. 2011). As early as 2008, at least 13% were using social networks in the United States. (Hudson & Hudson, 2012). That number almost tripled in the year 2011 to 33% and in the same year the percentage of users over 55 years old doubled (Hudson & Hudson, 2012). As potential customers spent more time on these sites, decisions about what to acquire were based more on what friends and other influencers were interested in. Online, the ideological concept of social media is giving users opportunities to collaborate with others, engage, and share content about an assortment of subjects. This gives the immense World Wide Web a sense of community (Lange & Elliot, 2012). Once social media basics are

recognized, it's important to be able to use them to a marketing advantage. Social media, and its growing popularity, is here to stay in society.

### **Marketing Roles**

Event promoters need to become accustomed to new strategies and outlines to reach to their consumers in the digital world in more avenues than one. There is an incredible amount of value in social media for marketers mainly because it is a free tool to advertise and promote. Marketers can follow simple steps to create an online campaign or advertisement with a simple click of a mouse. It is crucial for marketers and event promoters to understand and utilize these easily accessible tools and use them to their advertising advantage. Several event companies such as Live Nation have embraced social media because of its huge potential engagement and collaboration with consumers (Hudson & Hudson, 2012). There are numerous free online mediums to use for marketing online, each with a distinctive function to spread information.

### **Mediums**

There will be several social media outlets that this paper focuses on including well-known sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. These are among the most popular social media outlets on the Internet. Each of these sites has its own unique online role. Facebook is a social networking website that was launched by a college student in 2004. The site currently has over 500 million users worldwide (Facebook, 2013). Facebook users can add people as "friends," send them private or public messages, update a public profile and notify friends of these updates (IAEE). Facebook is a unique tool that helps people stay in touch and up to date with others lives without physically seeing them. Additionally, Facebook users can join networks for businesses, schools, associations and community clubs. Facebook also allows its

users to “like” certain products, services, interests and activities. The name Facebook stemmed from a book that was given to university students to help them get to know each other.

According to Facebook.com, as of June 30, 2013 there are 819 million monthly active users who used Facebook mobile products and 699 million daily active users on average in June 2013.

Facebook is free to users and Facebook sells ad space and sponsored stories appear on the websites (Facebook, 2013). Facebook is mainly used for social networking.

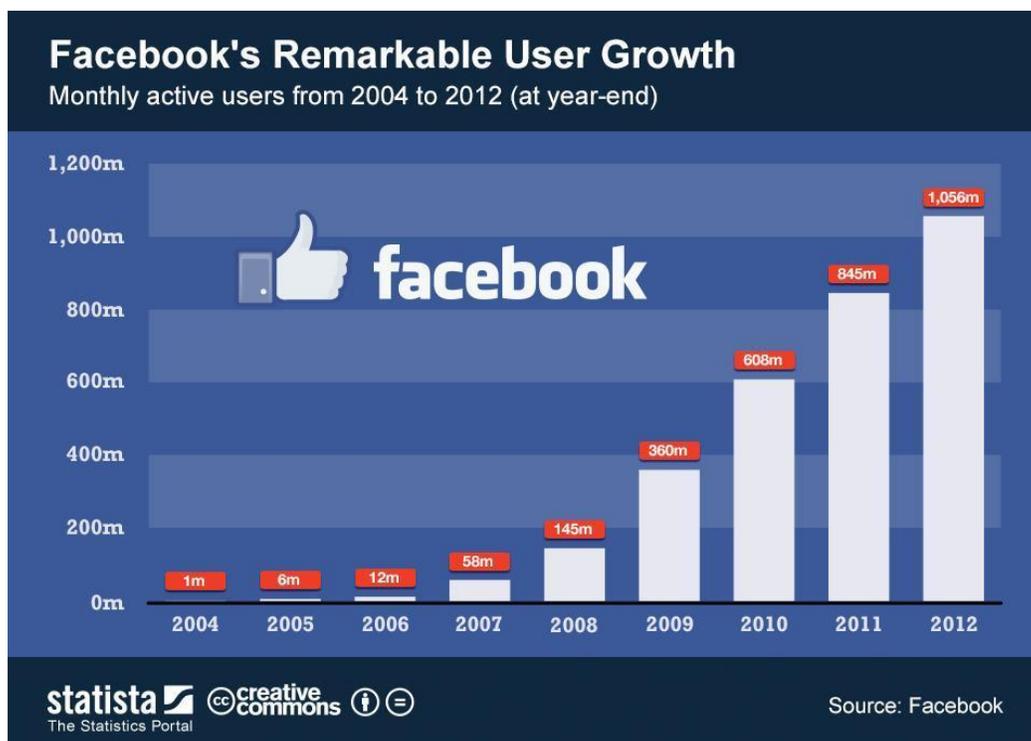
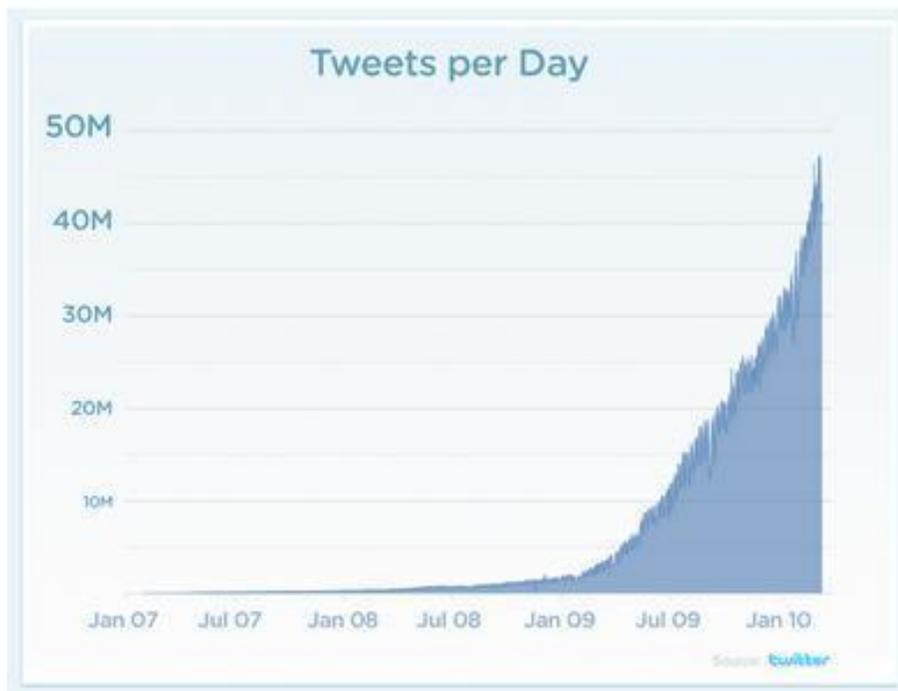


Figure 1. Facebook’s remarkable user growth.

Twitter, another popular social media channel, that is defined as an online networking and mirco-blogging website. Twitter allows its followers to send and read others posts which are called “tweets” (Twitter, 2013). These 140 character long public tweets can be made private. Twitter users can subscribe to “authors,” which consist of celebrities, companies, and regular

users. (IAEE). Users were tweeting 5,000 times a day in 2007, 300,000 times a day by 2008, and by 2009 it had grown to 2.5 million tweets a day (Cruz & Mendelsohn, 2010). Twitter usage statistics report 140 million active users and an estimated 340 million tweets per day, as of March 2012 (Yoon et al., 2013). Twitter is unique because it limits over-share of information; a quick tweet can advertise a business or simply share with others an experience of a new song or concert attended. A graph from early 2007 to 2010 shows (fig 2).



*Figure 2.* Tweets per day.

A recent example of the growing impact of the contagiousness of tweets is seen in the below, in a graph of twitter activity at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas (Topsy, 2013). The graph below illustrates the importance of mobile technology and social media at conferences in Las Vegas; this information is similar to tweets any live event.

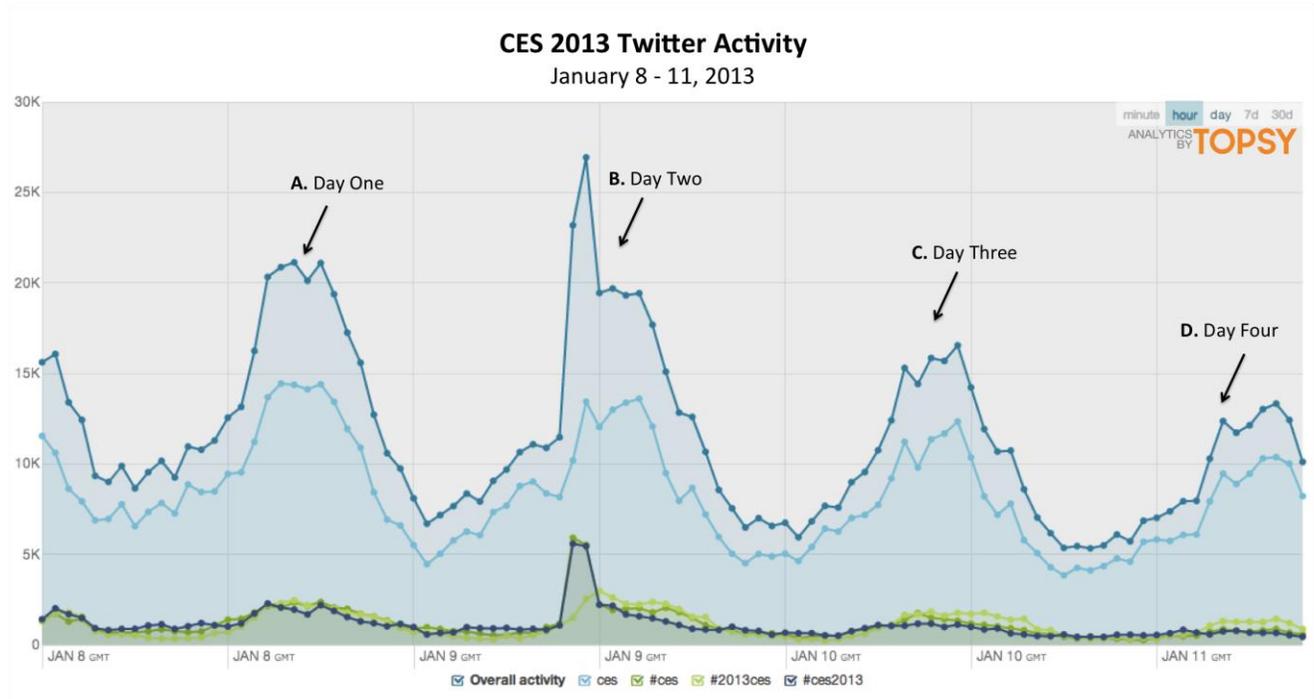
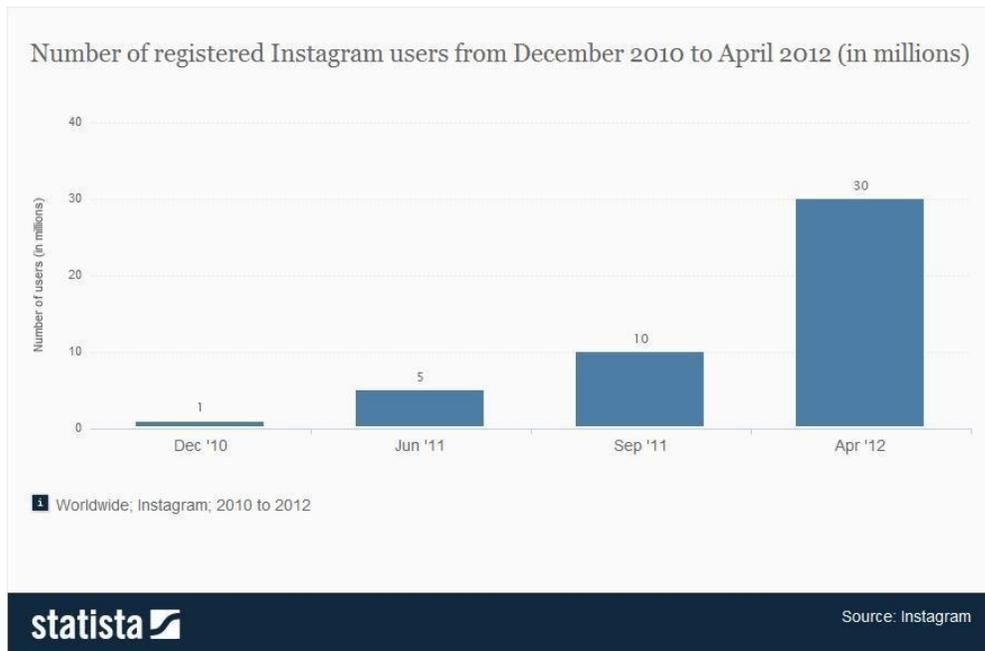


Figure 3. CES twitter activity.

Instagram is entirely about the photograph. Users snap a photo and instantly share it with their followers. Instagram users are able to filter these photos and adjust the image’s contrast and resolution for a unique effect and other users can “like” others photos and comment on them. According to Instagram (2013) there are 150 Million monthly active users and over 55 Million on average, photos per day. Instagram users can take a photo at an event and instantly upload to the site and share with friends.



*Figure 4.* Instagram users

YouTube.com was created in 2007 and allows users to upload, share, and view videos. YouTube offers distinctive channels, which allow users to watch videos of their interests or trending videos for that month. Big name companies such as CBS, VEVO, and BBC have channels on YouTube (IAEE). YouTube uses Adobe Flash Video technology to display groups of user-generated video content, including movie clips, television clips, and music videos. Amateur video blogging and short films are also popular on the site. According to YouTube.com (2013), there are more than 1 billion users that visit the site each month and over 6 billion hours of video are watched each month. YouTube is favorable because it is a video application, live events and concerts recorded, and can be shared with others to give the sensation of actually being at the event.

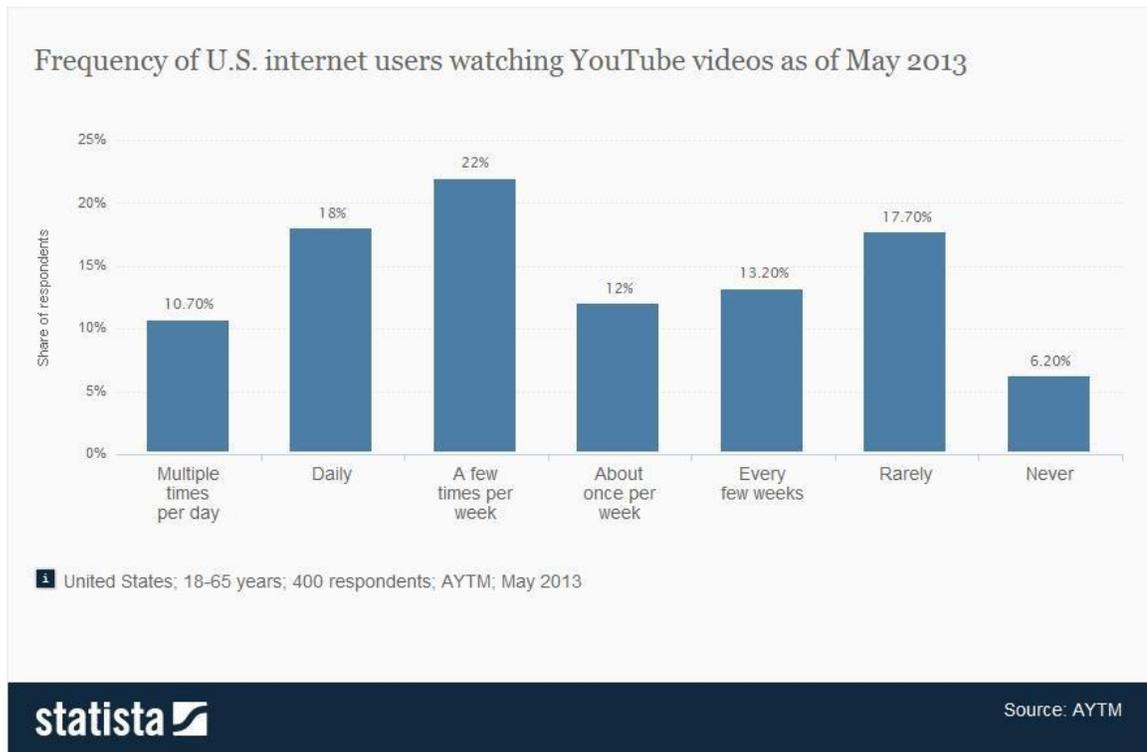


Figure 5. YouTube videos.

### Social Media Standard Requirements

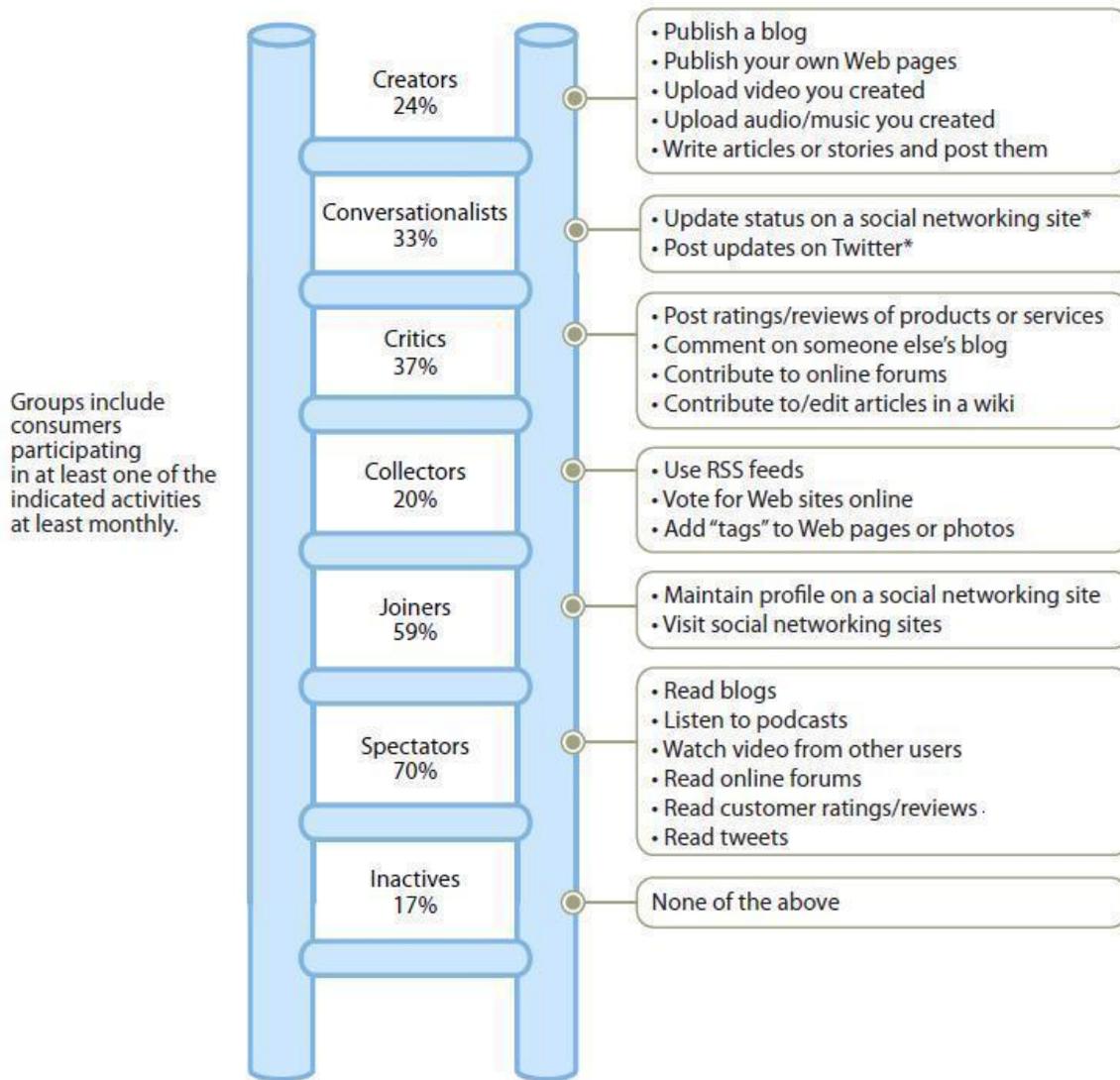
In working with social media, the first step is to analyze where the company or brand stands in the social media world. Brand recognition and social media standing should be aligned so that marketing strategies can be accurate. An event promoter must have a complete understanding of the marketing audience, so that the message sent through social media accurately reflects the target demographic. An event promoter's goal is to send the message to users, they receive the information, and it is clear about the company's intentions. The company's intentions are to create a syndicated message that appeals to the target market. According to Social Media Best Practices (IAEE) it's important to ask the following questions:

- What significance does social media provide to the target market?

- What is the approach?
- What is the overall purpose?

Marketing and communications play a large part in starting a social media strategy. One must look at the target audience and see where their values lie in the virtual world. For example, if a promoter wants to hold an event for a popular music artist who appeals to a younger demographic, it is important to do research on that age group to see where their interests lie in social media and discover what would get their attention most. Adding a student discount to a social media post would allow the marketer to see the reach of the advertisement and make note of the success for future promotions. Understanding the target markets interests will create value and make the event more attention worthy for the right demographic. A strategy for this should consist of a step-by-step list to attaining the ultimate goal for a successful event. The goals are obvious in the sense that one would want to make a profitable event however, it is imperative to have more than one goal for an event and try to set a new goal each time. That way re-inventing the market will help keep ideas innovative.

Figure 6 shows the ladder of social technographics. It is interesting to see that 70% of users are spectators in the online world. That is why a company's online image must remain monitored and accurate. An event marketer can contribute to more than one of these categories and should for the best possible results. Event promoters should be well-rounded in each of these classifications and participate in discussions from each avenue.



Base: US online adults

Source: North American Technographics® Empowerment Online Survey, Q4 2009 (US)

\*Conversationalists participate in at least one of the indicated activities at least weekly.

56291

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 6. Social Technographics

## **Current Culture in the Live Entertainment Industry**

In Las Vegas, the entertainment industry is the classification of what defines the city. Visitors come from all around the world to gamble, dine, relax, indulge, and be entertained. In Las Vegas, there is a live entertainment tax of 10% which applies to events less than 7,500 in attendance, but currently larger- scale events pay a 5% tax (Damon, 2013). This tax includes admissions to places of amusement; sport, recreation or any entertainment. Currently, the state legislator is contemplating changing the law to include larger events to make large festivals more profitable for the state of Nevada (Damon, 2013). In Las Vegas last year exactly 39,727,022 people visited this intriguing city. In a recent study in 2012, 65% of visitors attended an entertainment show during their stay showing people come to Las Vegas to be entertained (GLS Research, 2012). Las Vegas is booming with visitors who have a string desire to be entertained. This city is an impeccable location to hold a live music event.

## **Popular Live Music Events in Las Vegas**

A few popular music events include the Electric Daisy Carnival and the brand new Life is Beautiful Festival. These are large-scale events for Las Vegas and bring in additional tourists to the city. Electric Daisy Carnival (EDC) is the biggest dance music festival in the United States, funded by Insomniac Events (2012). The festival has several locations over the U.S at different times and venues. Each event is very successful in terms of attendance. EDC is an electronic music festival with numerous mainstream DJ's, theatrics, carnival rides, innovative décor, and art installations. According to the EDC website, EDC is no longer simply an electronic music festival and has grown into a one of a kind, full entertainment experience. EDC combines the world's most renowned dance music talent with cutting-edge production to create an unparalleled

experience of sight and sound that one would have to encounter to understand. The EDC team encourages visitors to believe that EDC is their world, so guests are encouraged to play and let their imagination lead the way. While attending Electric Daisy Carnival, guests will encounter a menagerie of performers. Teams of dancers, stilt-walkers, clowns and carnival acts will be ready to entertain and amuse throughout the celebration. The carnival rides are free and operating all night long.

In 2011, Las Vegas was the venue for that summer's EDC. The event brought in over 250,000 people with 6 stages, 140 DJ's with over 173 hours of music (Insomniac, 2012). The year 2011 was the first year EDC came to Las Vegas.

EDC in Las Vegas turned out to be a great success with no deaths and brought in many tourists to Las Vegas. Because of the success, Las Vegas will host EDC again and for future years to come. According to the EDC website, on July 20<sup>th</sup> 2011, Insomniac presented \$75,000 to Las Vegas charities from funds raised through Electric Daisy Carnival ticket sales. The Clark County School-Community Partnership Program, The Smith Center for the Performing Arts and the Injured Police Officers Fund each received checks for \$25,000 (Insomniac, 2012). EDC is based on music festivals as an experience; EDC is a colorful and exclusive music festival experience that is widely known for its distinctive attractions and unique crowds. In 2012, according to Insomniac, (2012) there was an estimated \$200 million in economic impact for Las Vegas from EDC. In 2012, EDC brought in an estimated 345,000 attendees (Damon, 2013). EDC is well-known and has already branded itself into the community and social media. According to Facebook.com (2013) EDC's Facebook profile has over 700,000 likes.

In 2013, Aurelian Marketing Group, Another Planet Entertainment, Maktub Marketing and Downtown Project held the first annual Life is Beautiful Festival in Las Vegas. This one of a kind, first time festival was held over the course of two 12-hour days featured over 60 bands, 50 restaurants, and 25 guest speakers, a handful of gifted artists and 18 cooking demonstrations. (Billings, 2013) The event also showcased new renovations and reinventions of Las Vegas' downtown area. Life is Beautiful custom-built 16 new murals that have brightened up the downtown area. This year there were over 60,000 attendees, and the festival sold 2 day tickets ranging from \$95- \$350 for general admission or VIP (Billings, 2013).

Before the festival, CEO Rehan Choudhry said, "We are assembling an unprecedented lineup of musicians, chefs, artists and speakers to entertain, engage and encourage festival goers all within a historic urban environment. We want the convergence of entertainment and ideas that weekend to inspire people to find the beauty in life" (lifeisbeautiful, 2013, p. ). The Life is Beautiful Festival used social media mediums to promote and advertise the event. On several occasions prior to the festival, there were online campaigns for free tickets to the festival. The Facebook user only needed to provide their email address and "like" the Life is Beautiful Facebook page to enter the contest. The Life is Beautiful Facebook page currently has almost 30,000 likes (Facebook, 2013) there is limited information on the actual revenue for the event, the festival seemed to be a great success and livened up the culture of downtown Las Vegas.

Both of these events generated massive attendance, revenue, and positive economic impact for each marketing and entertainment company as well as the city of Las Vegas. This only emphasizes the importance of music industry events. As an event promoter, it would be

imperative to understand why these events are successful, what the draw is, and how they can use social media as a tool for a profitable event in Las Vegas.

### **Successful Online Creative Agencies and Music Blogs**

This section of the paper will compare and contrast two successful event companies of different sizes and their distinctive marketing patterns. Music and entertainment websites can be used like other social media sites but are solely focused on music events and branding. One very successful creative agency called Dub Frequency (dfm, 2013) based out of Los Angeles, California designs their own signature events with other compatible brand partners and promote these events through print, digital, and social media. Their approach is based off media, digital, marketing, and experimental promotions. Dub Frequencies is very cutting-edge and modern in that the company has come up with their own message syndication platform to better understand what market is receiving their promotions. The message starts with cultural influencers, then to social distributors, and then to the typical customer (dfm, 2013). They pride themselves off holding monumental live music events and are very successful at gaining a mass amount of attendance for their events. Since 2008, Dub Frequencies database has collected over 100,000 email subscribers. This creative agency has analyzed their demographics, their discovery audience, as well as what kind of business they are as a whole. According to Dubs marketing overview and analytics, their target market is described as aspirational, fashion forward, technologically savvy, social media enthusiasts, music fans, who have a high net-worth and income. Dub's demographic consists of 11% of 18-21 year olds, 28 % of 21-25 year olds, 37% of 26-30 year olds, and a close 24 % for 31-35 year olds (dfm, 2013).

One nationally known thriving event that Dub has been involved with is the South By Southwest (SXSW) Music Conference. This event is a music conference and festival held in Austin, Texas with nearly 200,000 people in attendance with 100 plus stages (dfm, 2013). This festival has evolved over the years as a premier destination for up and coming new artists. Dub had their own event at a hotel after the festival, which has been the number one after party for artists, media, and press. Sponsors included high fashion labels, beverage companies, and retail brands. Their event catered towards the music festival attendee and was free to attend with invite. Dub Frequency, although a small creative agency has made a name for itself by marketing and promoting in a unique way using social media and brand awareness. Although a smaller company, Dub has made colossal strides by using experimental marketing to host thriving events that are recognized more and more each year. Though they are a smaller boutique agency, they have a phenomenal online marketing plan that has gained them the respect of music enthusiasts.

On the other side of the spectrum, Live Nation is the world's largest live entertainment and Ecommerce Company, which is comprised of four major market leaders. Ticketmaster.com, Live Nation Concerts, Artist Nation and Live Nation Network. Ticketmaster is a website that distributes event tickets throughout the world (Live Nation, 2013). Ticketmaster has a database of over 119 million enthusiasts who frequent the website. Live Nation Concerts produce of 22,000 shows annually and more than 2,300 artists internationally. Live Nation as a business empire and expanding network has set the tone for other companies that strive to hold successful event promotions. This extremely successful company focuses on concert promotion, venue operations, ticketing solutions, sponsorship and artist management. Live Nation is very active on social media with over 15,000 followers and approximately 1,606,984 likes on Facebook (2013)

This live music community is diverse because of its extensive reach to all music genres. The site encourages fans to stay up to date on artist news, upcoming shows, special offers, exclusive photos and videos and a chance to win prizes. Engaging the social media user with “perks” and keeping an active account up to date is why this business is dominant above the rest.

Comparing these two companies’ approach to the use of social media and music is ineffective because they are diverse entertainment businesses. One is an extremely large company and the other is a boutique agency; however, they both understand how to entice online users into staying faithful to their brand with updates, campaigns, and customer loyalty despite their size.

### **Event Branding and Sponsorship**

It is known that events are a lot more successful with some sponsorship and branding. Branding is crucial to encouraging tourists and locals to attend music festivals and events and continue to return. Brands are something that visitors can relate to, and it shows familiarity. Sponsorship is a significant revenue stream for music events and from a promoters perspective, the opportunities to engage in the targeted market of young people in the audience (Rowley & Williams, 2008) For these events to be successful today, Internet blogs, marketing tactics, and branding are crucial to the success of an event. For example, no one would attend a festival if the reviews written from 14 different attendees saying the festival was not to their liking, and it could possibly influence others decisions to attend. Another example of how branding could have a negative effect on an event is if a cigarette or alcohol company was to sponsor a family event. This could create a negative connotation for that event. Event promoters need to be aware of the numerous aspects of how their event is portrayed and do everything in their power to keep

the event positive. In doing this, they should always strive to put on the best show possible and be cautious of sponsorship. The motive behind event companies using sponsorship as a part of their marketing approach is to increase brand awareness, create an image, and re-position the product or brand in the mind of the consumer, ultimately to increase profit. (Rowley & Williams, 2008). Having a positive, strong brand or sponsor behind an event is most-likely going to increase attendance and awareness of a new event marketer's brand in itself. The brand and sponsorship should always reflect positively on social media or it could affect the attendance for an event (Rowley & Williams, 2008).

### **Online Marketing Campaigns**

Running online campaigns is much like any other traditional marketing process, including online contests, ads, links, and images to encourage users to participate more in depth with the event. When running online campaigns, it is crucial to understand and issue information that is most pertinent to the initial timeframe of the promotion. The company must monitor these online contest and ads and regularly updating with new and inventive eye-catching updates to keep users occupied. Marketing campaigns are not about supporting a brand or having the right tools or assets to do so, but more about achieving the delicate balance of perfect timing and appropriate messaging to the right target market. The social media campaign must engage and intrigue users to participate and build hype for this event.

For example, there is an online program called 'Crowd Campaign' (2013) which uses the power of online advertising. The program is simple, and allows marketers to upload or create an ad and freely write their own opinion so users may view this text. After imputing information into the site and specifying the reach of the message for a small fee, the program will

automatically place the ad on several pertinent websites such as the band or performers blogs, website, search, etc. The benefit of this program is the collection of fan and friend opinions and to see to what extent the ad reached online. This program also allows for online users' participation in two unique ways: the creation of proposals and voting on these proposals (Crowd Campaign, 2013). The user feedback and proposals give marketers insight to what the audience would like to see happen with this campaign. Crowd Campaign can be used to boost marketing agendas by giving the promoter access to users preferences, opinions, and where their message is received in the virtual world. Monitoring the campaign can only assist in the creative process of event goals.

Started in 1999, Steve Jenner, founder of VirtualFestivals.com (2013) created an exclusive website that allowed users to connect with others and plan, document, and share their passion for music festivals. The site's main goal is to promote open information to all festival enthusiasts. Users can sign up, comment, share, search for festivals, buy tickets, watch videos, review attended festivals, and even share festival rumors with others. The site is based out of the United Kingdom and prides itself on being the one-stop shop for anything festival related and possesses strong ideals about achieving the most desirable festival experience for its users. The site has over 2 million customers, 150,000 registered members (Virtual Festivals, 2013). The website encourages creative people to sign up and receive credit for photos or videos they have uploaded online of the events they have attended (Virtual Festivals, 2013).

In April 2012, Live Nation Entertainment teamed up with Starwood's 9 hotel brands worldwide to design a customer campaign in conjunction with Starwood's Preferred Guest (SPG) loyalty program that is titled "Hear the music, See the World." This campaign will allow

SPG members to experience live music events in the many incredible destinations where Starwood's iconic brands are located all around the world (Live Nation, 2012). The Starwood hotel will create a live event from hand selected performing artists to represent this brand. For members, it is free to join and enter the sweepstakes. Through social media, guests can "check in" to one of the hotels for each nights stay to earn extra entries. Guests can also use this to "unlock" a special promotion through Live Nation for \$15 to be used at live event (Live Nation, 2012). An entertainment company teaming up with a hotel chain can be enormously helpful in creating a lucrative event and more events in the future. Evidently, Las Vegas would benefit from live events teaming up with a hotel to create twice the "buzz" and make a profit for the event as well as the hotel. Event promoters should strive to join forces with other successful companies to create unique online campaigns.

### **Mobile Applications**

In the event industry, mobile applications are becoming a norm for attendees. There is an abundant array of apps today that aid the experience and make it more memorable and stress-free. According to Donegan-Ryan (2013) 80% of our smartphone time is consumed by using applications and 64% of consumers view brands with mobile applications more favorably. This will help with brand building and create value for the brand and make the attendees more associated to the brand. (Donegan-Ryan, 2013) Mobile is an important niche to tap into because it influences how users search for information and make decisions based on that information. Smart phones are used as a utensil for efficiency, networking, communication, and entertainment (Donegan-Ryan, 2013). Event planners who prosper in mobile marketing are also the ones who

know how to control it. Event attendees find simplicity in using mobile applications because it is the most convenient way to access information quickly.

EventLink (Core-apps, 2013) is an application which allows users to create their own schedule, stay connected with event updates and have full access to the events latest information. The app alerts attendees if any changes occur, users can upload and share photos, and give feedback on the event. This application is unique in the sense that it also links to other social media sites such as Twitter. EventLink also gives background information and educates attendees with biographies of performers at the event. Attendees sharing their experience on social media, can lead to others searching the event to view uploads and comments, encouraging them to attend the next event. Valuable feedback can increase awareness and attendance in the future. (Core-apps, 2013) Using a mobile application for an event is the easiest and most convenient way for attendees to enjoy their experience and share with others.

## **PART THREE**

### **Introduction**

Now that there is an understanding of social media, its benefits to promoters, the impact of the live music industry in Las Vegas, and other successful event company's strategies, it is time to take the next step and initiate the execution. An event promoter now possesses the knowledge to set out a plan for action in creating a profitable event in Las Vegas using social media.

### **Build A Staff**

Building a staff can be extremely helpful when online marketing. One promoter cannot tackle all aspects of marketing for the event. Hiring a devoted team makes the workload a lot easier. There should be one person identified as the lead organizer and one to delegate tasks. The group or staff could be anywhere from a small group of people to a larger group depending on the scale of the event (IAEE). This group should communicate effectively, make sure all work is corresponding, and ensure social media efforts are aligned with strategy and goals. It is essential to reach out to all mediums such as other industry bloggers, social influencers, and any online community members that are relevant to the event and encourage them to participate. These are all networking connections that will help with promotions (IAEE). The staff can have their own roles in social media marketing and help each other identify and execute objectives and goals for the event.

### **Objectives and Goals**

Setting objectives for the event can be challenging. Identifying and focusing on the desired outcome of the event will lead to the ultimate goal (Cvent, 2013). Social media can

guide a promoter through what can be viewed as a group conversation via many different parties online. For example, a band or performance coming up in the future can stimulate online conversations among friends and this way, the marketer can find out what is attracting the people to the topic and why. The main objective should be to create a ‘buzz’ for the event, get the word circulating, and consistently build, contribute, and strengthen the significance of the event (IAEE). Addressing the audience is another objective; the audience is the reason the event will be successful. One must explore what the target audience is most interested in, with regard to social media channels and then use that to the marketing advantage. This medium could be music blogs, videos, comments, and ratings on any social media website. It is important to keep broad objectives in mind because they can always be narrowed to be more detailed based on the audience reaction. Aligning all the set objectives with goals will incorporate the main task, procedure, and goals together with the overall marketing plan (IAEE). This allows for a clear and consecutive route to understanding how to proceed with marketing the event. Once the objectives are clear for attaining the goal, it is time to define the target market for the specific event.

### **Define Target Market**

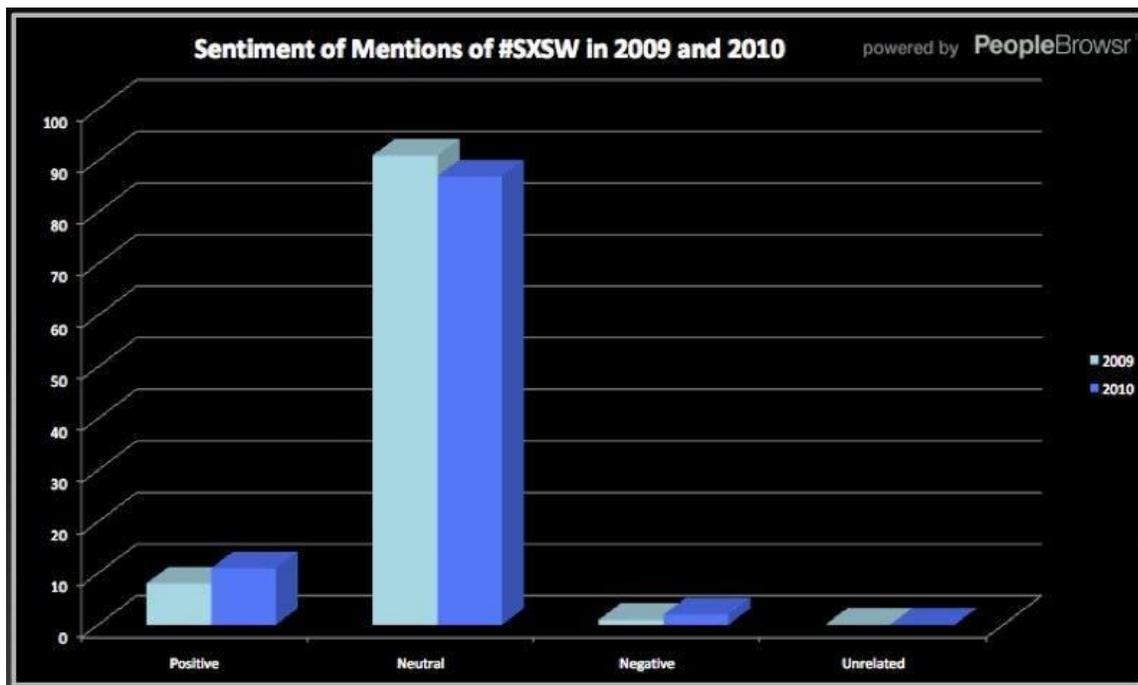
Once the goals and objectives are clear, defining the exact audience for the event helps with the reach of the event. It is important to think about the significance of the event and what demographic would fit most appropriately (Cvent, 2013). Identifying the target market includes categorizing demographics, interests, and social behaviors. Focus on what, when, and how consumers use social media and what words or phrases are most popularly used. The target market is one of the most important factors when creating a marketing campaign for an event.

## **Tracking and Analyzing**

A marketer must use analytical tools to see the viral circulation of the brand or message. Social media analytics are more than just numbers- this information gives an event marketer insight on how to improve social engagement and make appropriate marketing decisions (IAEE). On any social media site, users can opt to receive automatic reports daily, called a social report (Facebook.com, 2013). According to Social Media Best Practices (IAEE), social media sites like Facebook and LinkedIn have already created an embedded code that will display existing registration pages to allow other users to see which “friends” have already registered for the event and are able to invite other friends to join them via social media. This feature on Facebook is a free and easy tool for event marketers to gain publicity from users (Facebook, 2013). The users are able to post on their Facebook timeline that they are attending the event and invite others to join with a simple link that easily guides other users into registration. This allows for the expansion and circulation of the information freely.

Another technique is to monitor key words, and by tracking mentions of the brand that way, it is easy to visualize the words most frequently used in connection with the event or brand (IAEE). This supportive tool can help marketers understand the tone, accuracy, and enthusiasm of the event by users comments. For example, the South by Southwest (SXSW) music conference recorded their mentions of the event (Solis, 2013). SXSW used a unique way to monitor key words to a specific event is the use of the website socialmention.com. This user-friendly website is a real-time search platform that permits users to type in their key word or text and are immediately presented with a list of online uses for that word or phrase. This can also help to identify trends, interests, and social behaviors of users across several platforms of social

media. (Cvent, 2013). This is a first-rate way for marketers to analyze and monitor an online campaign. The site also rates the strength, sentiment, passion, and reach of the world based on online statistics. (Refer to *Figure 7*) Tracking and analyzing feedback will help an event promoter know what works in a social media medium and what doesn't.



*Figure 7.* Sentiment of mentions of SXSW.

### **Strategizing Approach**

The most frequent objectives of using social media are to network, share, and learn from the online experience. This is easily attainable when remembering it is like initiating a conversation and keeping it stimulated and interesting. To make this successful, there needs to be a definite clear approach to attaining the ultimate goal (IAEE). Goals are different from objectives because they are a precise measure of accomplishment, so a campaign should start

with setting a clear goal (Cvent, 2013). When strategizing the approach, an event marketer's main goal is to find out what engages the user to be interested in this event.

### **Engagement**

Social media may seem like it is talking 'at' people but truly, it is talking to people in an online fashion. Engagement is the variance between acting like a machine and being an actual human being. Be conversational, share content and information as much as possible and others will do the same in return (IAEE). Engagement requires being proactive above all things and to build a strong following and audience for the campaign. Engaging users in a two-way discussion helps solidify an amount of earned trust between the promoter and user. It is important to let the user know that they aren't staring at a screen, that there is a form of interaction. The key is offering something of worth to the audience (Cvent, 2013). An example of this would be to actually take interest in the users comments, answer someone's questions and compliment when a post is interesting. That can create more of an authentic relationship between a marketer and consumer. Simple advertising will not make the event 'attention worthy,' and one must include interesting content and valuable material throughout the advertising process (Cvent, 2013). Engagement is one of the most important features in event promotion because that's what triggers enthusiasm. With positive engagement there can also be negative, it is the event promoter's job to recognize this and resolve the problem as soon as possible.

### **Recognizing Risks and Negativity**

As with any marketing, there will always be the element of risk involved. The goal is to minimize risk as much as possible. It is important to learn to take criticism and use it to the company's advantage and learn from it. As discussed earlier, negative comments can happen at

any time, so it is important to have the staff monitoring the brand closely and react quickly to anything off-putting. As a promoter, welcoming honest feedback will help the business grow and improve (IAEE). One must be consistent with all advertising and promoting; the audience does not want to feel that there is something unorganized about the event. It is also important to monitor any audience conversations and focus on what is being discussed. Social media and social forums are an ongoing continuous process. Social media is a forum with freedom of speech; the team must monitor user's posts online very precisely. Legal issues could potentially make their way into posts or updates, so knowing laws of copyright infringement and understanding United States regulations for social media is important (IAEE). People have opinions and blogs now allow people to write freely how they feel about a business or product. The user does have that right and it can be helpful to improve the business or product. However, this can be a detrimental thing to a brand but addressing it in a professional manner can be a learning experience and help with customer and consumer loyalty. The worst thing a company can do is to ignore the comments; the right thing to do is to respond punctually, honorably, and with accurate information. One should always articulate the response to be professional and to the point. (IAEE) It is essential to show that the company is genuinely concerned about negative feedback and also show that there is nothing to hide. Supplying a solution to the comment helps redirect the negativity into a positive outcome (Cvent, 2013). The important thing is to address the negativity as soon as possible. Staying transparent, open, and honest will keep and save a good reputation with consumers.

### **Execution of Event**

Once a social media plan is identified, risks are addressed, requirements developed, goals and objectives set and an execution plan is set, an event promoter is set. Although it may seem repetitive, following the outline of earlier described strategies and staying consistent with them will make the execution easier. Once the event promoter has prepared for the event, it is time to effectively market in the online world. A flawless campaign will create an excitement for users and engage them appropriately. Social media requires users, promoters, and staff to perform at their finest on the day of the event (Cvent, 2013). The execution of the event starts on day one of planning and remains a continuous process for the company (IAEE).

### **Event Promoters Agenda**

After everything has been marketed and prepared, it is time for the event. During the event, it is important to use a smartphone to post and share content, and encourage others to use a “hashtag” for the name of the event so it can be easily searched. It is imperative to offer the attendees observation of the event with photos and videos. Before the event, the manager needs to communicate with the crowd on where content for this event can be found and current running contests via social network. Monitor the content shared and understand what guests and media are saying while the event is in place. After the event, the company should analyze the success of the event and also remain very engaged in social media. For example, the event’s Facebook page should continue to upload and update content from the event, YouTube to post videos, Instagram to post photos, and twitter to track mentions and view conversations from attendees.

After the event, it is crucial to continue marketing and promoting the company so more successful events can happen in the future. According to Social Media Best Practices (IAEE) an event promoter should do the following after the event:

- Track mentions of the event and view content and comments
- Send content to music bloggers to show on another media outlet
- Follow-up with fans and take consideration for their opinions
- Request feedback
- Keep social media sites updated
- Announce contest winners if there was a running campaign
- Announce the next event and its details
- Start marketing and promoting immediately for the next event

### **Keys To Success**

Social media is about establishing relationships, creating compelling content, and give the best return on revenue (Talking Finger, 2013). The keys to success in marketing in the online world are to have confidence and be positive. Having an open mind and optimistic outlook can take the brand further and others will find the positivity contagious (IAEE). Investigate, be informed, and listen to find out exactly what are the most up-to-date-trends in the music social world today. Follow as many industry blogs and websites as possible. Take a look at what the assets of the company are and utilize what free marketing tools are available (Talking Finger, 2013). When engaging with others, do not act like a salesperson, it isn't genuine. Even in the online world, when one is being insincere, it is obvious. Basically, knowing the facts, being fluent in social media marketing, recognizing target audiences and being honest promoter, it will create more value and victory for the event. If one follows these keys to success, it will be an easy and successful event before, during, and after for future events to come. In this paper, there

is a wealth of information for an event promoter to hold a successful live music event in Las Vegas. It is important to follow what works to continue to be prosperous in the future.

### **Concluding Comments**

In conclusion, society uses social media in so many aspects of life it is safe to say it is here to stay. This brilliant tool has changed the online marketing world forever. Event organizers and brand managers can continue to use these social sites as marketplaces for networking and expansion of their company. There are countless ways for social media to boost awareness for events, encourage event attendance, and keep attendees coming back for more (Cvent, 2013). No matter which avenue the event company focuses on, be it Twitter, Instagram, Facebook etc. companies have a better understanding of how to utilize and benefit from these social media avenues and develop a strategy that is catered toward the target audience. Meticulous attention to detail, following social media trends, and focus on objectives and goals will ensure a successful event and continued success for future events. “This is a social revolution that is supported by technology...not because the technology is there...but because we WANT to share and the technology enables us.” – Paul Greenberg, Speed of Light (IAEE, 2010, p. 22).

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