

# GET YOUR EVENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

*But do it strategically with these eight best practices*

By Kell Houston



In today's world of event marketing, gathering insights about your target audience and sharing information on social media channels is indispensable. You should be considering which platforms your audience is primarily utilizing. Examples include Google My Business, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Reddit and LinkedIn, among many others.

But occasional social media posts about your event are usually not enough to make a significant impact. The competitive nature of marketing in this area makes it imperative to create streams of content in order to engage your customer. Bear in mind that you are vying with the landslide of information people are getting from their friends, family and brands/personalities they follow online every day.

Here are eight other practices that will help you succeed in promoting your event through social media:

**1** Create a social media strategy for each event. Set clear expectations regarding the customer you are targeting, what platforms would be best and the budget you want to work with. You always want a goal and a plan to reach that goal. This is the first step.

**2** Your talent buyer, whether inside or outsourced, is key to presenting artist options that fit your plan. Outside talent buyers are linked to multiple regions and typically have very good relationships and opportunities that a standalone buyer does not have. Once you have an artist selected, the next step is to connect with his or her management and get integrated into their own social media platforms. Your buyer will help direct this step and set up the connection.

**3** Look for opportunities to share information on social media channels at each step of your booking process. Each step is an opportunity to interact with your customer. Always document the process with photos, videos, live streaming events and interviews.

**4** From the very beginning, work social media mentions into your offer sheet to the artist. Today's artists are very active on social media. You need to become part of their posts, and they will want to become engaged with yours. Older artists are less involved with social media, but they are receptive to your promotional needs. Just make sure everything you post on an artist is approved by his or her team.

**5** The days of "free" are gone in social media. Social media costs money, but it is a lot less expensive than the old way

we had of marketing and advertising events. Set your budget to include Google Ads, Facebook and Instagram Ads Manager, Pandora Ads, YouTube, Podcasts and all other areas of opportunity. Consider cutting back on your radio, TV and print budgets so you can build more social media, online and mobile ads. Note, however, that in tertiary and some smaller secondary markets, the traditional forms of marketing and advertising are still very strong.

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**6** Ticketing today is much more integrated into your advertising and marketing campaigns. Today, ticketing companies are your marketing partners, so make sure you find the right partner. Your ticketing process should be easily accessible from mobile devices and social media.

**7** You need to be bold and unique. Capturing the attention of your customer today is the primary challenge in today's social media marketing world. Your customer is bombarded with ads and marketing ploys 24/7. How do you stand out? Short teasers with strong visual content always grab people's attention. The use of event hashtags also works well.

**8** Another point to keep in mind is to know your customer. If your event targets younger people, say under 30, social media is a much stronger mode of marketing and advertising. The older customers still do rely on the traditional promotional media.

I would like to thank Justin Shank, with Shank Marketing Services, for his expertise and input into this article. Social media is here to stay. Understanding this powerful marketing tool is key to your success.

*Kell Houston is the owner of **HOUSTON PRODUCTIONS**, a full-service entertainment company with offices in Las Vegas, Minneapolis and Seattle. Since 1982, he has bought talent for the following markets: casinos, fairs, festivals, corporations, colleges and universities, and public and private special events. Houston is the winner of **IEBA's 2014 Casino Buyer of the Year Award**.*