KYMENLAAKSON AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

University of Applied Sciences

International Business/International Marketing

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ONLINE MARKETING OF A RECORDING ARTIST

Bachelor's Thesis 2012

ABSTRACT

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NIEMINEN SAMPPA   Online marketing of a recording artist

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This applied thesis deals with online marketing and online marketing channels and tailoring them to fit the goals of the company.

This thesis' main purpose is to find the suitable online marketing channels for a recording artist and explain effective ways to utilize these channels to the fullest.

The end goal is to grow the company's fan base, build the brand, get more visibility/hype and increase overall growth of the business.

The data was gathered from different books, e-books, online articles, and websites. The company data was gathered via email interview. Understanding of online marketing and implementation was supported by personal work experience from a 3 month training period at Rebstar AB.

Effective use of online marketing channels has been seen as an important part of marketing their business at Rebstar AB. The company has been having positive results implementing these strategies in their business.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä toiminnallinen opinnäytetyö käsittelee internet-markkinointia ja internet-markkinointikanavia ja sitä, kuinka käyttää niitä, jotta niillä päästäisiin yrityksen asettamiin tavoitteisiin.

Tämän opinnäytetyön päätavoite on löytää sopivat online-markkinointikanat, jotka sopivat musiikkiartistin markkinointiin ja selittää, kuinka hyödyntää näitä kanavia tehokkaasti.

Lopussa tavoitteena on, että yrityksen fanimäärä ja brändi kasvavat, yritys saa näkyvyyttä ja pystyy kasvattamaan liiketoimintaansa kokonaisvaltaisesti.

Tietoa kerättiin eri kirjoista, e-kirjoista, internet-artikkeleista ja internet-sivustoilta. Tiedot yrityksestä saatiin sähköpostihaastattelun avulla. Henkilökohtainen työkokemus työharjoittelusta Rebstar AB:lla tuki internet-markkinoinnin ymmärrystä ja sen toteuttamista.

Tehokas internetmarkkinointikanavien hyödyntäminen on todettu tärkeäksi osaksi markkinointia Rebstar AB:lla. Yritys on saanut positiivisia tuloksia toteuttaessaan annettuja strategioita liiketoiminnassaan.

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1.INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This is a thesis for the Rebstar AB a Swedish (a private limited) company that operates in the music entertainment business (music industry).

I approached Rebstar AB first when I was looking for my second practical training placement so once I got the job, it also made sense for me to propose a thesis project with them and they accepted my proposal.

The company wanted to find new, innovative ways to promote their artist (Rebstar) through online marketing. They want more exposure, more hype and increase of fan base by using the internet as their main marketing tool.

By having work experience as a part of my practical training for the Rebstar AB, supported the writing process of the thesis. The training and the thesis connected very well because in the training I worked on the same type of topics that this thesis covers.

1.2 The objectives of the thesis

The objective is to find and implement ways to promote and build the brand of Rebstar AB by using the ways of online marketing. Ways of building and communicating with the fan base, finding new online marketing channels and the ways to use them, connecting with new fans, building the brand and getting more visibility for the products offered. This should be done in an understandable way, where the meaning of each step is carefully explained.

The personal objectives are to learn as much as possible about the topic of the thesis and learn ways to apply theoretical and practical knowledge.

1.3 Rebstar AB

1.3.1 The Company

Rebstar AB (a private limited company (Ltd.)) is an independent music company operating in A&R, publishing, producer- and artist management. It was founded in 2009. The company is located in Malmö, Sweden and has 4 employees (publishing, chairman, A&R, management & legal affairs) and three artists. One of the artists (Rebin Shah) owns the majority of the company and carries the same artist name/alias as the company is named after. The company is mostly built around 'Rebstar' (the artist) and it gets additional income from offering songwriting and producing services to other music labels and artists.

1.3.2 The artist

Rebstar is a Swedish hip-hop artist who has been doing music since 2001 and during that time, he has reached a strong fan following around Europe and even across the pond in the United States. Rebstar has created a strong presence on the internet with over 3 million hits on his website and 1 million downloads. His fan base is rapidly growing and with 30 000 followers and friends.

Rebstar has been featured in magazines, newspapers and blogs such as: Ozone Magazine, Kingsize Magazine, Cred Magazine, Sydsvenskan, Expressen, Aftonbladet, World Star Hip Hop, Broken Cool. 2dopeboyz, Xclusives Zone, On Smash, Hot New Hip Hop, RnB Xclusive, Chicago Now, IllRoots.

In 2008 he released his debut single "Without You" featuring Grammy-nominated singer 'Trey Songz'. The song garnered airplay all over the globe and the accompanying music video racked up over 3 million views online. "Without You" was a smash hit in Sweden, becoming the 3rd most requested song on 'The Voice' radio station and coming in at #81 on Sweden's Top 100 songs of 2008. In addition to his hit with Trey Songz, Rebstar has released 3 albums (for free) and collaborated with artists such as Drake (debut album

sold over 1.5 million), Ray J (one of the biggest acts in RnB music) and Rich Boy.

1.4 Description of research problems

With the development of internet and its constantly evolving landscape, the businesses have a whole new world of opportunities to explore when it comes to growing their business. The way companies do their business and marketing have changed dramatically. Social media and other online tools have opened doors for huge amounts new marketing possibilities, mostly limited by lack of innovation, old-fashioned thinking and ignorance on how to use these tools that the internet provides.

Rebstar AB is very dependent on their operations on the internet as it's the best way for a company of their size to reach their target audience and grow their brand. The music industry is also the industry that has gone through one of the biggest transformations out of all the industries, after digital music was introduced to the world. Physical albums/records don't sell nearly as much as they used to and visibility and "hype" on the internet is crucial for many artists and bands.

Two main research problems arisen are:

1. Which digital marketing channels to choose in this particular case?
2. How to utilize them to the fullest?

2. METHODOLOGY

There are usually two ways to this type of thesis topic: basic research and applied research. Basic research aims to study advance knowledge without applying it to existing problems in view. Applied research aims to help solve particular, existing problems. (Venkataram, 3)

This thesis is a basic research aimed to help a company find methods and ways to choose the right e-marketing channels and maximize their potential.

2.1 Research outline & Data collection

- First, I formed a framework by studying the literature concerning the thesis topic, research problems and the goals for the thesis.
- Then, I researched (from the books & internet) and studied the different online marketing channels and tools to decide which best serve the purpose for this thesis.
- I start by introducing online marketing to the reader
- Once I chose the suitable online marketing channels and the tools, I explain them first briefly to the reader
- Lastly, I explain how to best utilize these tools to maximize their potential and come to conclusions to end the thesis

All the data is gathered from the company representatives via interviews, books, online websites, online e-books and online articles.

2.2 The advantages and limitations of the research study

The advantage of this study is that it is up-to-date with current and reliable information based on the wealth of information that was available. The information gathered was checked and compared with different sources to make sure it is reliable. Each method/tool was carefully chosen by what best serves the company's needs.

There are always variables that are hard to forecast, especially with smaller companies. What if the company suddenly gets bigger? Can the same techniques and methods still be applied when the demand increases? Internet is also ever-evolving and new phenomena's can take over old ones.

3. ONLINE MARKETING

3.1 Introduction to online marketing

"Now we have a better option: publishing interesting content on the Web that your buyers *want* to consume" (Scott 2009, xxi)

Online marketing is also referred to as e-marketing (electronic marketing), digital marketing, internet marketing and web marketing.

The forms of online marketing can be for example: websites, web ads, e-mail advertising and mobile marketing. With the help of internet and these new marketing tools, companies can attract new customers, get leads on new potential buyers, provide information about their products/services with more versatile ways, build and strengthen their brand and brand visibility, involve customers to product development, learn about their customers' needs, interests and experiences, as well as launch products faster to the market. (Merisavo, Vesanen, Raulas, Virtanen 2006, 15)

The progression of e-marketing has advanced in 3 different waves. First stage was the introduction of Information Technology as a tool for marketing. As a result of Database Marketing (form of direct marketing using databases of customers and potential customers) Customer Relationship Management/CRM (managing of customers, clients and sales people) was created and together these strategies became valuable tools for businesses in the 1990's. In the late 1990's web technology was introduced and it opened a whole new world of marketing possibilities and channels in the form of internet. The third wave of progression is called ubiquitous computing, which basically refers to the information- and communication channels which are present everywhere (e.g. electronic papers, smart cars, interactive notice boards etc.). (Merisavo, Vesanen, Raulas, Virtanen 2006, 27-28)

The current trend and wave is the ever evolving social media and its tools. The services and tools of social media are available both on the open internet and private intranets. These tools are, for example: blogs, wikis and message

boards. These are all websites with different structures. Social media always creates a community. Communities can be temporary or permanent, official or unofficial. The people in these communities are connected by their mutual interest in the same type of things, issues or topics. (Otala, Pöysti 2008, 18-19)

Social media is built on three key elements: content, communities and Web 2.0. Content refers to user created content (e.g. photos, pictures, videos, information and reviews etc.). Social is based on communities and social interaction amongst users. Social media applications enable communication either directly or via media objects (cameras, camera phones, broadband connections etc.). The development of digital technologies for content creation and sharing, together with web technologies and applications that let people on the internet, is the third corner stone – web 2.0. (Ahlqvist, Bäck, Heinonen, Halonen 2010, 4)

Figure 1 Social media triangle (Ahlqvist, Bäck, Heinonen 2010)

3.2 The advantages and benefits of online marketing

 "Word of mouth has always been important to business. When I helped run a Silicon Valley camera store in the 1980s, about 80 percent of our sales came from it. 'Where should I buy a camera this weekend?' you might have heard in a lunchroom back then. Today that conversation is happening online. But, instead of only two people talking about your business, now thousands and sometimes millions (Engadget had 10 million page views in a single day during the Consumer Electronics and MacWorld shows in January 2006) are either participating or listening in." (Scott 2009, xvii)

With online marketing, the businesses can now potentially reach millions of consumers around the world with very little money spent in relation to old ways of marketing when there was no internet. It is also the fastest way to reach huge amounts of potential customers.

Online marketing also has the benefit of being accessible 24 hours a day 7 days a week and there is no need for warehouses because internet has unlimited space to store information.

The ability to change and update information quick, cheap and easy is also a big advantage.

The companies can also interact much easier with their clients through internet. For example, clients can give their feedback through the company website and ask questions regarding the products and/or services. Through different surveys, feedbacks and visitor tracking the businesses can also gather information about their clients' interests, what they are looking for and so on.

3.3 The disadvantages and dangers of online marketing

There are lesser negatives than positives in online marketing, but they still exist and companies must be very careful in how to handle these issues.

Firstly, there is the lack of personal face-to-face interaction with the customers and there are still quite a lot of people who are used to doing things the old traditional way. This can also have an effect on how long the customer stays loyal to your company (long-term customer relationships).

There are also lots of security issues on the internet, which can make many consumers hesitant and apprehensive to give their information or signing up on anything. Security issues can also cause a lot of damage to the company itself (e.g. website or emails being hacked into).

The biggest difficulty is the competition. The competition is fierce and there's a lot of it. Almost every company has a website and it doesn't matter if it's a big or a small business, they all got one. In addition to companies' own websites,

there are all the other social networking sites, such as Facebook, Google, Twitter, Blogs etc.

Negative issues spread as fast as the positives. If there's an error or a mistake made by the company or a company representative (e.g. unreliable product, bad behavior) the negative news can spread rapidly in the internet and the business can receive a bad reputation very quickly.

Since everything happens fast in the online world, businesses have to make sure they update their online information (products, services etc.) on frequent occasion and respond to feedbacks quickly.

3.4 Online marketing channels

Online marketing has enabled the consumers to choose the content (what is needed to know), the channel (where) and the timing (when). That's why it's crucial for the companies to know their clients' interests, timing and channel preferences. (Merisavo, Vesanen, Raulas, Virtanen 2006, 32)

3.4.1 Blogs

Blog is a type of website. It allows the owner (the blogger) to post text, pictures, audio and video and make them available for the public. Blogs can also be made private (e.g. companies putting up internal blogs for their staff). There are millions of blogs all over the internet and even a novice user can quickly master the usage of blogs. The power of blogs comes from the network effect, which means that if one posts a blog that interests' a lot of people, the word/subject spreads rapidly amongst blogging world ('word of mouse'). (Phillips, Young 2009, 12)

3.4.2 Online viral marketing

Viral marketing is very similar to buzz marketing or word of mouth marketing. The aim is to get consumers to pass the word on to others. With online viral

marketing, the aim is to make the same thing happen on the internet through different online communication channels and social networks (e.g. YouTube).

It's crucial to understand the motivation behind internet users' need/willingness to forward online content to other users since it's completely a voluntary action by the consumer. If the content is initially shared to people who are more motivated to pass it along in general and if the particular content fits well with the person's own forwarding motivation, it will have bigger chance on reaching a large amount of online users / become viral. (Ho, Dempsey 2008)

3.4.3 Video-sharing & YouTube (PR)

YouTube is the most popular video-sharing site on the internet. People can upload videos easily without charge. All you need is a video recorder and even most cell-phones and basic digital cameras have video recording features.

Businesses can create and post videos and send the link of the content to consumers. They can also have YouTube videos embedded to their blogs, which is called video blogging, also known as "vlogging". Some companies also sponsor contests where they invite the customers to submit short videos and the winners will get a prize and/or a feature on the company's website for example. (Scott 2009, 226)

3.4.4 Website

Websites are most commonly accessed through internet by using computers, mobile phones and local area networks by means of a "web browser" such as Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox etc. Almost anyone can create and own a website and it can be available worldwide by a hosting service free of charge. (Phillips, Young 2009, 29)

3.4.5 Wiki & Wikipedia

A wiki is a form of website (public or private) which allows a group of people to create, reference and edit web pages to form a knowledge database based on information of all the people who have access to the wiki. The owner of the wiki ("wikimaster") decides who gets the editing right for the wikipage. (Phillips, Young 2009, 31-32)

Wikipedia.com is the most popular public wiki website where anyone worldwide can create wikis, update and edit information (within the limits set by "wikimaster") on any given topic to form a comprehensive database of it. Wikipedia is one of the largest reference websites and there are more than 75,000 active contributors working on 5,300,000 articles in more than 100 languages. (Phillips, Young 2009, 31-32)

3.4.6 Permission based e-mail marketing

Permission-based email marketing means that the consumers agree on receiving e-mails from the company, where they "opt in" to a firm's e-mailing list to receive material that interests them. The e-mail usually contains promotional offers or just news. It is a great tool for companies to build and maintain customer relationships. Companies can send promotional messages to multiple people at the same time with very low set up and distribution costs. (Chadwick, Doherty 2011)

3.4.7 Banner advertisement

Banner ad is a graphical web advertising unit (a linked picture) that an internet user can click on and be moved to a website of choice by the advertiser. Banner ads are one of the dominant forms of advertising online and its effectiveness has declined in recent years, but so has the price of buying the ad placement. It's still possible to make banner ad a success with combining good placement and design. (Marketing Terms)

3.4.8 Spotify

Spotify is a digital music service that gives the consumer access to millions of songs. It's a program a user downloads to his/her computer or a smartphone and then creates an account (registers) by choosing a username and a password. After that, the user is free to search for any music out of millions of songs. A user can choose to be a free member and is limited to hear each one song 5 times and is also subjected to banner and audio ads. With 10€ / month a user gets unlimited listens on every song, is not subjected to audio advertisements and gets to use Spotify on his/her cellphone and in offline-mode also, where the internet connection is not necessary. According to Spotify (2011) it has over 2.5 million paying subscribers.

3.4.9 Message boards / Internet forums

Message board, also known as internet forum is a website where people can have online conversations about different topics in the form of posted messages. Forums are usually dedicated to a particular topic, such as motorsports, fishing, music etc. People then discuss about everything related to the topic the forum is dedicated to.

It's very useful for a company to monitor what is being said on forums that relate to their business. They can find about peoples thoughts on different subjects and it's all free. It's also good for the company to participate in forum discussions, especially if something negative is said about them and it will also help you to get closer to your potential customers.

3.5 Social networking sites

Social networking sites are websites that allow people to exchange interactive, user-submitted content among a network of friends (Phillips, Young 2009, 26). The examples of such sites are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+ as a new arrival that's worth mentioning. Popularity of these sites is immense.

Marketing in social media web pages can be difficult because people don't want to see commercials in such sites. However, there are some ways to optimize the usage and marketing in social networking websites as Scott (2009, 238-239) describes:

- By targeting a specific audience you make sure you create a page that reaches the audience that's important to your company.
- By being a thought leader you have to provide valuable and interesting information that people want to check out.
- By being authentic and transparent you don't need to try to impersonate someone else, because it can harm your company's reputation.
- By creating lots of links you link others to your own sites (e.g. blog) and those of others in your industry and network.
- By making others to contact you, you have to make it easy for people to reach you online. Participating means you create groups and participate in discussions. For making it easy to find you, you should tag your page and add it into the subject directories. By experimenting you can try out new thing in new pages and tweak them as you go or abandon them and try out something new.

3.5.1 Facebook

Facebook is the most popular social networking site in the world and according to eBizMBA (2011) it has an estimated 700,000,000 monthly visitors. The site connects members via "friend request", which means that until you approve someone as your Fb friend, your extended profile remains private (Scott 2009, 231). Facebook isn't only popular amongst regular users, but also amongst companies who want to learn about their customers or prospects and promote their own business by connecting to the consumers directly.

Facebook provides businesses an option to build, find and be part of communities, which are built around topics, products, brands, celebrities and so on. Facebook is a very personal social network and it gives businesses a great opportunity to humanize their brands. Through the type of content a company chooses to share on their Facebook Page or Group the

organizations can show they're more than just a logo. Developing a presence in Facebook allows businesses to provide their followers / fans a community where they can interact with each other and with your company. (Levy 2010, 33&43)

3.5.2 Twitter

Twitter is a simple social networking service where you can get instant updates from your friends, industry experts, celebrities and about what's going on around the world. You can choose who you 'follow' (you have subscribed to this person's Twitter feed) and that person's/organization's updates will appear on your screen when you log in to your Twitter account. You can also send private messages to your friends, upload pictures, videos and share links with your 'followers' (people who subscribe to your Twitter feed) or the people that you 'follow'. Twitter posts ('tweets') have a maximum of 140 characters and people mostly tweet about what's happening in their life at that particular moment. Twitter a great tool for marketing and promotion, because of its networking possibilities.

3.5.3 Instagram

Instagram is a free photo sharing application that allows users to take a photo, apply a digital filter, then share it on a variety of social networking services (e.g. Twitter) including Instagram's own. Instagram is compatible with smartphones (=advanced version of a cellphone) such as iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad or an Android camera phone. Instagram has over 10 million users. (Wikipedia, edited 3 April 2012)

3.5.4 Google+

Google plus is Google's version of the most popular social networking website Facebook. It's not yet as popular as Facebook, but its consumer base is

growing rapidly and according to Wilcox (2012) Google+ has already topped 100 million users.

The big draw on Google is how it makes users to separate family members, friends and acquaintances into separate groups called "circles". Users can also create their own custom circles. Another unique thing in Google+ is the "Hangout" feature, which allows up to 10 people have a video chat together simultaneously. Google+ also has a feature called "Sparks" which allows the user see news articles based on his/hers interests. (Newman, 2011) As a new feature Google+ has introduced the "+1", which is similar to Facebook's "Like". It's a social component so that users can recommend particular search results to friends by pressing a +1 button. You see the +1 buttons on Google searches and web sites across the internet. (Robley, 2011)

3.5.5 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social networking site which emphasizes business aspect of networking. Registered users are allowed to maintain a list of contacts with whom they have some level of relationship, called 'Connections'. Users can invite anyone to become a connection. A contact network is built up consisting of their direct connections, connections of each of their connections (second-degree connections) and also the connections of second-degree connections (third-degree connections). (Wikipedia, edited 31 March 2012)

LinkedIn has a feature called "LinkedIn Answers", which allows users to ask (potentially more business-oriented) questions for the community to answer and identity of the individuals participating (asking and answering) is known. LinkedIn also has a feature "LinkedIn Polls" and "LinkedIn DirectAds" feature as a form of sponsored advertising. LinkedIn also enabled an "applications platform" that allows other online services to be embedded within a member's profile page (e.g. Amazon Reading List that allows the LinkedIn members to display books they are reading). Other notable applications are WordPress (blogging platform) and TypePad (allows members to display their latest blog postings in their LinkedIn profile). (Wikipedia, edited 31 March 2012)

According to Verde (2012) LinkedIn has reached 147 million members and the standard user is male (57.9%) and aged between 25 and 64 years (67.7%).

3.5.6 SoundCloud

SoundCloud is a music community website, where users can upload and share their own original (self-made) music on and then interact with the other registered users on the site. The unique feature is that the users (friends, fans etc.) can leave timed comments to the specific moments/parts of the track. Registered users can follow people whose music they like and also create and join on different groups (similar to other community sites such as Facebook). Users can also share their music with people who are not registered on the site and connect their account to other networking sites and services such as Facebook, Twitter, WordPress. (SoundCloud 2012)

SoundCloud had 10 million registered users on January 23, 2012 (blog.soundcloud 2012).

4. UTILIZING THE ONLINE MARKETING CHANNELS

Knowing about different online marketing channels is one thing, but how to utilize them to fit your needs is a different story.

4.1 Using blogs for marketing and PR

Once you get started, there are three different ways to use blogs for marketing and PR. One is to monitor what people are saying about you, the market you are into, your organization and its products/services. Second way is to participate in those conversations by commenting on other people's blogs. Third way is to shape those conversations by creating and writing your own blog. By monitoring blogs you get a sense of the important bloggers and how influential/popular they are online (online voice). By participating in conversations you can leave comments on blogs that are important in your market/industry, which will help you to get visibility amongst other bloggers.

Once you feel you've made yourself comfortable with blogs and bloggers, you can start creating your own blog. (Scott 2009, 50)

There are several websites that offer the tools to create and upkeep blogs, which are called blogging platforms. The biggest blogging platform is WordPress with 54,283 of the top million sites on the internet using it. One blog worth mentioning is Tumblr, which emphasizes its ease of use and it allows users to "re-blog" posts they like. Tumblr has 6 million blogs, and The New York Times even went on to call It "Facebook's and Twitter's new rival". (Marcus, 2010)

Once you've started your own blog, the first step is to name it. Use your artist name as the title; it makes it easier for people to find you. Second step is to start writing: write often and keep your tone conversational, it will make your fans / blog followers feel like you're sharing things directly with them. Blogging allows you to connect directly with your fans, so use it, but go beyond than just promoting your music or yourself. Write about your experiences on the road, in the studio and your daily life as an artist. (McDonald)

Promoting your blog is important to gain more readers and potential fans. Announce your blog wherever you can: on your Facebook, Twitter and other social media networks you are using and make sure you reference it whenever you can through these channels. You should consider running your blog introduction in your social networking pages and put up a link back to your blog to get people click through. (McDonald)

The important thing to remember is to keep writing and updating your blog frequently, it gives a reason for people to keep reading. Also, remember to blog about other things than your music. Mixing things up will make your fans feel more like they are having a personal connection with you. (McDonald)

4.2 Online video marketing – YouTube

The first thing to do is to create your own YouTube channel. Your channel is automatically generated for you once you sign up for a new YouTube account. There are several advantages of having your own channel. You have the

ability to arrange your content in a single location with its own YouTube URL (e.g. www.youtube.com/Rebstar). You have the chance to create a profile for yourself and your content, and link back to your website and other social media channels. You get the opportunity to create playlists from your own music and the opportunity to lay the foundations of your YouTube presence. Once you have signed up and started uploading your video content, you should start customizing your YouTube page by going to "your channel settings" once you have logged in to your account. There are several options for you to customize to your liking. In addition to that you can select nine (9) highlighted videos that will be displayed on your channel profile. (Pick, 2007)

Next step is to choose your account type. In this case, you should choose a musician account. In addition to your custom logo and choice of music genre, you can also display tour date information and other links on your profile pages. (Pick, 2007)

Important thing to remember is that in the vast majority of the cases, your best change to get views on your video is to make sure that your running time is around five minutes, or less (do not upload several songs, or long vlogs in to one video clip). If you have an interesting longer piece, it can be often broken up into segments, and can always be combined together in a playlist. This way you can give your viewers a chance to skip to relevant parts of the content if they choose to. (Pick, 2007)

Once you have created your video, it is important to choose the right category and tags for your video. Categories aren't always as easy to choose as they seem, and it could be that your content doesn't fit perfectly into any of the options available. If this problem arises, the key is to run a search on similar content by keyword and explore how that content has been categorized and tagged. When it comes to tagging, don't be shy to add as many keywords as you can and see if you can match them to other existing content. Start making playlists of your content by categorizing them in to music videos, video logs, and individual songs / albums (etc.), so that the content is easily distinguishable for the user who is browsing your channel. (Pick, 2007)

One effective for you to promote your YouTube channel is to leave responses to another user's video clip. Just remember to keep it relevant and civil, choose your target video well and strike at the right time. (Pick, 2007)

Another way to promote your channel is to join and create YouTube groups. You should start by looking for groups that matches your content-niche (e.g. music, hip-hop, RnB etc.). Joining a group will provide you with well segmented and targeted audience for your content. You can then add videos and discuss them and interact with people on the same group. This will help you build a network of YouTube contacts and potentially getting new subscribers for your channel. You should also consider building your own YouTube group around your niche-interest or your business. It is also a great way to boost your YouTube presence and gain more views/subscribers. (Pick, 2007)

4.3 The elements of a good website for an artist

There are 6 essential elements that should be on every artist's homepage: great header image, short bio, music/video, call-to-action, latest news/blog and social media links. (Dufresne 2012)

Header image is like to be the first thing that people see on the website, so one has to think which image best represents his/her music and who you are as an artist. (Dufresne 2012)

Having a short bio on your front page will let a potential new fan immediately know who you are and what your music is all about. What is your artist name? Where are you from? What do you sound like? What are your influences? (Dufresne 2012)

First time visitors should be able to hear your music quickly and easily with one click. You should have a song on your homepage that people can listen to right away. The song can also be an embedded video the visitors can watch; visual experience catches both ears and the eyes. (Dufresne 2012)

A call-to-action is made so that it directs people's attention to something specific while they are on your website. It could be your mailing list, your latest

album, your latest track et cetera. However, it is best to limit yourself to maximum of one or two calls-to-action. (Dufresne 2012)

Your website should have a blog but it shouldn't be fully integrated in to the website, meaning most (80%) of people usually don't want to scroll down a web page and usually just read what they immediately see on their screens. What you should do is to post only the top news (3-5 items) that directs the visitors to your full blog (e.g. info about your new album or a new show etc.). (Dufresne 2012)

If people are busy checking out your website, it is a good idea to give them a quick link to connect with you on social media websites. Examples: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. (Dufresne 2012)

Last thing to keep in mind is that do not overdo your website, meaning do not put too much links and material to be seen – keep it clean. (Dufresne 2012)

4.4 Creating and getting approval for your Wikipedia page

Getting your artist Wikipedia page approved can be very tricky if you're not following certain guidelines, but it can also be great for building credibility and gaining exposure. (DIY Musician 2011)

First rule is to be balanced. It is very important to know and remember that Wikipedia is not meant to be a promotional vehicle and if you treat it that way, your wiki-page will probably be deleted. (DIY Musician 2011)

Second rule is to be notable. If the article isn't notable or important, it will be deleted quickly. Ask these questions: Have you ever done anything notable as an artist? What are you known for? What do your critics say? Make sure you answer these questions on your wiki-page. (DIY Musician 2011)

Third rule is: do not write your Wikipedia page yourself. This is one of the first reasons to get your article removed. Wikipedia wants unbiased articles. Ask your friends and fans if they contribute to Wikipedia. A contributor will have a much better chance of getting an article published. (DIY Musician 2011)

Fourth rule is to be thorough. Make sure that your page has all the details it needs. Include dates, awards, discography etc. (DIY Musician 2011)

The fifth (and the last) rule is to include references. Find everything and anything that references you (an artist) online. All the well-known magazines, newspapers, blogs that you are featured on should be referenced. (DIY Musician 2011)

4.5 How to use email to promote your music

First thing to remember is that email isn't free, although it may feel like it is. In business terms wasted time is called "opportunity cost". For regular people, it is called a hassle or something along those lines. By sending out an email, you are taking up on someone's time and resources, such as: bandwidth and hard-drive space. (Weidenbaum 2011)

Second thing to remember is: do not send attachments, use links instead. Do not send out heavy files that take time and space to download. Include URL (e.g. www.rebstar.com/music) linking to the files you want to show. (Weidenbaum 2011)

Third thing to realize is that you're selling your music, not clicks. The success rate of email marketing is usually mentioned in terms of "conversion". Conversion refers to the once opened emails that lead to someone clicking on something. The only true "conversion" when marketing music is transitioning from sending an email to getting a response from a recipient – either in a form of request for additional information or a mention of some sort. (Weidenbaum 2011)

Fourth important thing to remember is to pay attention to your inbox. If someone writes back to you, you must reply. It is important so people realize you are actually a person and not a "bot" that is programmed to send trash mail. (Weidenbaum 2011)

Do not ask the same question of someone twice. If someone already received an email from you and gave you a response, you better remember it. If you

send the same email later to that same person asking the same thing, you will lose a lot of credibility. (Weidenbaum 2011)

Remember to describe your music. People need to have some idea about what your music is like before they want to check your music out. If you have a hard time describing your music with your own words, just quote someone else. Quote an article, or a blog review, or tweets from your fans, or something else similar. (Weidenbaum 2011)

Do not treat your email recipients the same. You might have general press, genre press and long-time supportive press etc. You have hardcore fans and you have the occasional listeners. Different audiences should be receiving different emails. (Weidenbaum 2011)

Do not be too consistent. You don't want your every email to look exactly the same because it reflects poorly on how personally you take your music. (Weidenbaum 2011)

Lastly, when composing an email, get to the point quickly. Summarize what you want to say and end the email. Do not write an essay. (Weidenbaum 2011)

4.6 Using banner advertisement to promote your music

The most important thing for using banner ads to promote is to decide the place (=website). Preferably you want the website to have a lot of traffic and prospects who are interested in music. However, the website should not be competing with your business. This can be a tricky task, even though banner ads are usually relatively cheap, unless the website has a lot of traffic.

My suggestions for banner ad websites are www.Facebook.com, www.thepiratebay.se & Spotify's music program also has promotion solutions artists, such as banner advertisement (more on this on the next chapter). Piratebay.se offer free banner advertisement campaigns for independent artists and such, which can lead to huge visibility increase and gaining of new fans. I go more into Facebook's banner ad system on the "Maximizing the potential of your Facebook fan page" chapter.

4.7 Promoting on Spotify

Every artist has a chance to join and get their music on Spotify. Artists don't need to be signed or have a record deal to make it happen. Spotify also offers different promotional campaigns for artists including banner ads, audio ads, and social networking promotion (Spotify blog, Facebook, Newsletter, Twitter) which can be used to promote an album, for example.

The Bronze promotion campaign (below) pricing vary depending on the artist (can be free of charge). (Spotify 2012)
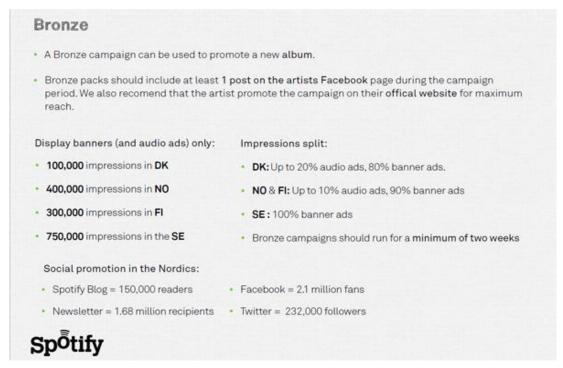
Bronze

- A Bronze campaign can be used to promote a new **album**.

- Bronze packs should include at least **1 post on the artists Facebook** page during the campaign period. We also recomend that the artist promote the campaign on their **offical website** for maximum reach.

Display banners (and audio ads) only:

- **100,000** impressions in **DK**
- **400,000** impressions in **NO**
- **300,000** impressions in **FI**
- **750,000** impressions in the **SE**

Impressions split:

- **DK:** Up to 20% audio ads, 80% banner ads.
- **NO & FI:** Up to 10% audio ads, 90% banner ads
- **SE :** 100% banner ads
- Bronze campaigns should run for a minimum of **two weeks**

Social promotion in the Nordics:

- Spotify Blog = 150,000 readers
- Newsletter = 1.68 million recipients
- Facebook = 2.1 million fans
- Twitter = 232,000 followers

Spotify

Figure 2 (Spotify 2012)

4.8 Promoting your music on message boards / internet forums

Online forums are not the most effective way to promote your music, compared to social networking sites, but it can still be useful, though. Message boards are where to most keen /enthusiastic/hardcore fans are. These are the fans that go and tell their friends about the new music they have found. (Live Unsigned Blog 2011)

What you have to do is: join two or three forums that (at least closely) represent the music you do, and visit them regularly. You need to build relationships with other forum members for a while (sometimes even months or years) if you want people to listen what you have to say. Reply to posts on the forums where you have something to add and then later on "slip" in the occasional mention of your music. (Live Unsigned Blog 2011)

Ask your committed fans to post about your music on different forums because you can't engage on every potential forum, where people might want to hear your music. It is also much more authentic if someone else does it, instead of you. (Live Unsigned Blog 2011)

Remember to fill in your profile on the forums if someone finds you interesting and wants to know more about you. Have quotes from others about your music and links to your website and social media. (Live Unsigned Blog 2011)

Pick your forums carefully. You want to join forums where the music is similar to yours. You can also ask your fans about the forums they use and visit. (Live Unsigned Blog 2011)

4.9 Maximizing the potential of your Facebook fan page

First thing you have to do is to choose a header picture for your Facebook fan page. Make sure the photo is engaging. Add a single message to the image, for example: spotlight a new release, upcoming show etc. Change the message periodically and keep it updated. (Jacobson, 2012)

Use the "Speak in three voices" method, where the voices are "You (50%)", "We (20%)" and "I (30%)" when updating your statuses on your Facebook fan page. "We" updates should be about: you the brand, artist news, new releases, video, on sale, free downloads, reviews, airplay and upcoming gigs. "I" updates should be about who you are - behind the music & artist: access to you, personal opinions, activities, interest and likes. "You" updates (the virtual high five) is the most important voice. It's a 2-way conversation/interaction with your fans. You should recognize and reward the fans and thank them for

their support. Include them in your decision making by creating polls "what do you think?" (Jacobson, 2012)

The best tool you have to introduce people to you is free music. Free isn't "free" if you capture a fan's interest to you. The example scenario: you share a free track in one post and ask the fans to listen to it. Ask them if they like it and if they really like it, ask them to share it. Results: tens of shares, over hundreds of downloads and many, many new fans. (Jacobson, 2012)

When advertising on Facebook, you should target your audience carefully. There are a few questions to ask to help decide who to target: Who are your current fans? Who do you sound like? Who are your influences? Who are the artists you've worked with and what is their fan base? The example scenario: Target your fans & influences with a Facebook ad, call out a promo code (e.g. in radio appearance) and offer a free download which is redeemed on when downloading/buying the track. Results: Facebook fans growing from 5,000 to 20,000 and 60% of downloaders purchasing it later. (Jacobson, 2012)

There are two advertising methods on Facebook to consider: Cost per impression (CPM) and Cost per click (CPC). *CPM* refers to measuring the worth and cost of a specific ad being displayed in an ad campaign. This pricing model is used with banner ads, text links and e-mail advertisements. An online ad impression is a single appearance of an advertisement on a website or e-mail. Each time an ad loads to the user's screen, the website's server counts that display as one impression and you will pay every single time your ad is send to a user's screen and displayed. *Cost per click* refers to an advertising payment model wherein you, the advertiser pay for the advertisement only when that ad is clicked by the user. (Dunay, Krueger, Elad 2011, 65)

4.10 The nine (9) steps for businesses to promote on Twitter

1. Create the account for your business
   - Make sure it is both the brand name of your company and includes a website name
2. Use your twitter link on all marketing materials

- Website

- Facebook account

- Other online promotions

3. Master the use of hash tag (#)

- Hash tag is the "#" symbol followed by a keyword

- Examples of keywords could be your business name, or keywords that people use to find your business

4. Find people to follow by using a twitter directory

- Twellow.com and Justtweetit.com are twitter directories, where you can find people to follow

- Twitter users receive e-mail when someone if following them so add a few people every day and many people will follow you in turn.

5. Avoid hard sales tactics / Too aggressive promotion

- Twitter accounts that do this can rarely keep a large amounts of followers for very long

- Post links and statements that show that you are in touch of industry standards and innovations.

6. Encourage employees to communicate with the company Twitter account using their personal accounts or specifically-made company twitter accounts.

- Remember to use the "@" symbol before the Twitter user name to direct message people or mention them in your tweets

7. Announce all new events or products on Twitter, using product shots and details

- Make hash tag for each event e.g. #event

8. Use Twitter-based contests to promote your product

- Do this once you have enough followers

- Give away items e.g. gift cards, free music etc. to people who "retweet" or direct message your Twitter account (Wikihow, edited March 3, 2012)

9. Follow the "Trending topics" on Twitter and use these common hash tags when they apply to you

- Trending topics are listed on the right side of the Twitter home page.

- Remember to try to stay away from political trending topics to avoid controversy

(Wikihow, edited March 3, 2012)

4.11 Nine (9) Instagram tips for bands and artists

1. Share Across All Social Networks

- Instagram allows users to share snaps on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, Tumblr, Posterous and Foursquare

2. Come Up With A Photo Series

- Add a unifying principle instead of snapping random photos

3. Use Hash tags

- By doing this, you can include your fans in the action

4. Use Instagram's API

- It allows developers to grab photos around tags, locations and geographies as they're posted to the service.

- For example, you can have your website feature fan and band photos with the hash tag #Rebstar

5. Go Viral – Get New Fans

- Share photos and images that reflect the personality of you as an artist

6. Mundane Doesn't Mean Boring

- Human, mundane moments can really let fans into the artist's life and make them feel closer to your music

- Post wisely and often and don't be too afraid to share, because sometimes the "every day stuff" is what gets the biggest reaction

7. Choose Your Name Wisely

- Name your account after your artist name

8. Add Words (=caption) To Your Pictures

    - Make the caption as revealing as possible

9. Have Fun

    - You are an artist. That is supposed to be cool and fun so let
      everyone see it.

      (Ehrlich 2011)

4.12 Google+ for musicians

Google+ isn't nearly as advanced as Facebook, when it comes to promoting
your music. But it is still a developing social media website with huge amounts
of users and the backing of one of the biggest companies in the world, which
is why you should promote your business there also. One great thing about
setting up a Google+ profile is that once the profile is created, Google
recommends other profiles and pages for them to add to their circles, based
on the people and businesses they have interacted with. As your fans join
Google+, your page will be amongst the ones recommended for them.
(Hundley, 2011)

You can start by creating your profile and the page on plus.google.com by
following the instructions. You should then begin to share your music, but
since there isn't a band feature (yet), your best option is to upload videos with
your music. There are two ways to put up your videos on Google+: You can
either share it in your status update (by providing a link e.g. YouTube), or you
can upload a video to your profile. (Hundley, 2011)

The next thing that should be done is to link your website, blogs and other
social networks to your Google+ page. That can be done through the "Edit
profile" -> "Other profiles" buttons. There's also the "Contributor" tab where
you could add a link to your blog. Under the "Contributor" tab, there is the
"Recommended links" tab where you should put a link to your website. Make
sure you choose "Anyone on the web" to make your links visible to the public.
Linking your other websites is important because, when people Google your
name, the other links to your websites/social networks will appear under the
site description on the search page. (Hundley, 2011)

4.13 Promoting on LinkedIn

First thing you have to do is to create a LinkedIn profile. Make it look professional and do not exaggerate things. LinkedIn allows up to three links on the profile page so add in your website and social media sites like Facebook/Twitter/blog/YouTube - which ever you think represents you the best. (Appleby 2009)

Once you've established your LinkedIn profile you can begin networking with people in your industry. Do a group search for "music" and you will find tens of pages of networking groups from all areas within the music industry. There are management, media, publicity, marketers and other musicians et cetera. (Appleby 2009)

The important fact you have to remember about LinkedIn is that you must showcase that you know the contact you are adding to your network in some way. It could be through a common group membership or an ex-colleague or something similar. You should first use LinkedIn's contact import tool from your existing email address book to import contacts to your LinkedIn profile. (Appleby 2009)

Use the question and answer features of groups to build your reputation amongst the group. That way you have a bigger chance of getting new people to join your network. You can also post your own news in groups and link those items back to any of your websites. Many members get notices on updates of group activity so your news will be delivered straight to their emails. (Appleby 2009)

Once you have joined a group you can start discussions in that group and other members can comment back or contact you directly. This is useful in creating new contacts or in case you want help / advice from a marketing professional, for example. Remember not to spam and stay on topic. (Appleby 2009)

While other social media networking sites may be helping you build your fan base, LinkedIn can help you gain valuable business contacts and advice that will help you later on. (Appleby 2009)

4.14 Sharing on SoundCloud

First you have to create your own profile page on soundcloud.com. Remember to add your biography, and website and social media links on your profile page. You want the new interested listeners to know who you are and where to find you. (Peterson 2011)

Each track you upload has its own page and its own control panel. By adding all the correct metadata for each track increases your chances of getting more traffic to your music, and to your own website and your other social networking sites through your SoundCloud page. The metadata includes: description (describe what the song is about), image (add an image for each track), type/genre, tags (usually used in describing more targeted genres), select license and show more options (here you can add label info and links to your videos). (Peterson 2011)

Next step is to start following other artists. You should find artists and bands that target your specific niche or genre. Best way to do this is to type in your music style into the search function of the site. You should also listen to the tracks of these artist / bands to make sure they represent that particular genre and market you are in. Leaving positive comments on their tracks will help you create contacts and have their fans to visit your profile and listen to your tracks. (Peterson 2011)

While you are on these other bands' and artists' profiles, find out some of the groups they belong to and join groups where you think your music fits. You can then add your tracks to the group page and all the people on that group will have chance to listen to your music. Do not overdo it by uploading too many tracks at the same time. (Peterson 2011)

Lastly, it is important you communicate with your fans and respond to all the comments and questions they leave you. By registering yourself as a premium

(paying) member, you get more additional features, such as getting more information on who is listening to your music. (Peterson 2011)

4.15 Evaluating the work process

According to the feedback from the company, this study has been helpful. Many of the marketing channels mentioned were seen as very useful. Also, the usage of these channels has been implemented with positive results. The company was satisfied with my work and informed me that it reached its objectives and goals that were set initially.

I personally had a lot of fun doing this project and I learned a lot about all the topics this thesis covers. Online marketing and everything it involves is such a huge topic, that I first had some problems figuring out which way to take this study and which are the things I should focus on. It took a lot of time to research all the different marketing channels and decide which ones are useful for this study. The most fun part was to find ways to implement all the marketing tools to fit the needs of the company and I think I did a good job on that. I think I definitely should have done a more thorough job on planning this project before I started actually writing it down. It would have helped me later on and I maybe would not have had some road blocks I had during the making of this thesis. All in all, I'm happy about how this thesis turned out, since I also received positive feedback from the company.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Online marketing / e-marketing / digital marketing / web marketing is the most rapidly developing form of marketing. New websites, new social media sites and their tools are constantly formed all over the internet. Some of them grow up to be huge, industry leaders and some fade away to make room for others.

Online marketing has opened possibilities and revolutionized the world of marketing and not just for big companies, but also for small businesses and even individuals who are able to market themselves with little to no budget at all. And if it is done right, at the right time and with the right product, the impacts can be astronomical.

Internet marketing is cost-effective, it has worldwide reach, and it takes much less time and space than traditional marketing tools. In addition, you can involve consumers to the process of shaping up your business by receiving feedback quickly and effectively. Your customers can also act as your marketing channels by spreading the word through social media.

Just because internet marketing has grown to be a huge force, it doesn't mean that the traditional ways of marketing are disappearing. Some people prefer the traditional face-to-face interaction and TV and radio aren't going anywhere.

Pretty much anyone can upload a YouTube video, and create a Facebook profile and upkeep a blog. This means the competition is fierce and the amount of "junk" on the internet makes it hard for the consumer to filter out the interesting content. The hardest part for a business promoting online is to figure out how to differentiate themselves from the competition and the "junk" and use the internet marketing tools to their advantage.

Digital marketing is very crucial for an independent music artist such as Rebstar. In today's music industry, you can't really get a record deal or a big offer from a label or a promoter before you have what they call "hype". You have to create that hype yourself. By hype I mean recognition, a fan base, big number of YouTube views, lots of likes on Facebook, many followers on Twitter, plenty of readers for the blog and considerably many visitors on the website. After the hype, you have to have an extensive contact network of

people who can open you the doors. Today's artist has to have all that; he has to "take over" the internet before anyone pays attention.

There are ways to use the online marketing tools to fit the purposes of almost anyone, including a music artist. However, as there are so many different ways to use these tools, it is very difficult to choose a clear path to success. As a positive note, there are common guidelines for the use of these marketing channels that are usually same for almost everyone. It is also rather easy to learn what not to do.

The same tools that internet provides for marketing, were also the same tools that helped me tremendously on making this thesis and getting the correct and up-to-date information. All the blogs, the message boards and the articles gave me a much deeper understanding on the world of e-marketing and social media.

There are several millionaires, billionaires and success stories all over the world thanks to internet and its marketing channels and tools. That to me is an undisputed proof that online marketing works and it is here to stay.

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