

Control Your Content

Channel Theory

The digital world is evolving constantly evolving. This is why you have to understand the basic principles of the digital world. And it would help if you got control over your distribution to build a valuable fan base. Let's go back a bit in time. Before the internet, a long time ago, artists like you were dependent on powerful media companies. They entirely controlled the access to audiences like the TV channels, radio stations, newspapers, and magazines. But the revolution of the internet made it possible for everyone to create their media platforms to reach and interact with other people. You can now easily create your website, send emails, use social media, video channels, music channels, etc. To build your media platforms, you need rockstar content and share it with your audiences on the channels they prefer at the best opportune moment and with content that's super relevant for them. With all the content out there, the crowded news feeds, and the limited time people have to consume all the content, your content and the way you distribute it need to stand out. Your content needs to become so valuable that people want to consume and engage with it and, in the end, will even be willing to pay for it. Your content needs to become the thumb stopper. We define content distribution as sharing content with online audiences in multiple media formats through various channels in a way that is very relevant and easy to consume. We will talk about the channels that are probably most important for you to reach your fans. This is where your goals, audience insights, tactical choices, and creative content are all tested. You can use as many platforms as you like, but the key is to start building one hero platform first. The one most relevant to your fans and the lines that achieve your goals.

Just focus on one first until this is a rock steady platform. Then consider adding channels when these channels are adding a clear value. Start with your fundamentals, the channels you own and control, your website, and your email. Then add your business drivers' streaming channels like Spotify and YouTube. Next, pick your one hero social channel, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, or any other channel where your audience spends time. Keep in mind that the world of distribution channels is constantly changing, so never sit back and relax. Always stay up to date with the newest developments and the newest platforms.

Tips & Tricks

Let's give you five tips on how to use your channels best. After this, we will provide you with some quick wins to start distributing your content.

Tip 1, most relevant channels: Select channels that are most relevant to your use to reach your audience in every phase of the fan journey. For example, use social media to get new fans and engage with your fans. Use your website as a place where fans can buy merchandise and subscribe to your newsletter. Use email to send very personalized content to your fans. Use a chatbot as a place to get questions answered. If you find it hard to select the best channels, analyze to see where most of your followers are actively engaging with you. If you don't have many followers yet, look at some of the artists you will relate to with your benchmark. You can learn a lot from analyzing other artists who reach the same kind of audience as you do.

Tip 2, added value: The second tip is the role and added value of the selected channels. Each channel has a clear added value and role in your digital network for your fans and business goals. The added value and part can differ for each channel. For example, your website is the go-to platform for an overview of everything you provide; your new releases, show calendar, merchandise, etc. Email can be used for highly personalized and relevant updates to your fans. YouTube can serve as a place to watch your videos. On Spotify, fans can listen to your music.

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On Instagram, fans can see more of your personal life and engage with you. Be smart, do much testing, and explore what the fans want on a particular channel. Where do they expect and accept you, and what is in line with what you communicate; your higher goal. Determine the added value for each channel, whether your website, email, Facebook, Instagram, messenger bot, Twitter, YouTube, Spotify, etc.

Be aware that these channels can be divided into owned, rented, and paid. Owned lands are all the channels you own and control, like your website and email. Rented lands are all the channels you might use for free such as social media. They all have their business models, goals, guidelines, and algorithms. They decide if your content is shown to your followers. You don't have any control over these channels. So use them wisely and carefully and make sure you limit the dependency of your business success on these channels. Finally, The paid land. These are all the channels you have to pay for to reach your audience.

Tip 3, defining roles: Define your role per channel. To define success, goals must be set for each channel. In general, we define goals regarding the following aspects: Your audience. You'll have unidentified fans. Those are the number of followers, visitors, subscribers, and listeners you don't know. Then you have the identified fans. Those are the active people in your database with whom you can communicate directly. From the total number of people within your audience, it's essential to know how many you reach with your content. From the people you go: how do they consume your content. For example, video watch time, likes, comments, shares, and convert to your business drivers. Like clicks on streams, tickets, merchandise, etc.

For example, you want more streams. You think you need more Instagram followers, a better reach, more engagement, and more conversion to your streaming channel. So let's say you have 3.000 followers and think you need 10.000 followers in the next six months, and your reach is now an average of a thousand people per post, and you want to improve that towards 2.000 people. Your engagement, likes, shares, and comments are 0,5%, but you want to do better than your benchmark and improve to above 2% engagement within six months. From your Insta stories, about 500 people a week convert to your streaming channel, and you want to improve that to above 1.000 per week. Take notes on how many followers you gain per week in the following weeks. What you'll reach is an engagement. Of course, how they convert to your streaming channel. Based on that, you can estimate for the following months and set your goals.

Regarding social media: don't focus too much on followers and likes. It is not that important. The reach of your content, engagement, and conversion to your business goals matter. That's much more important.

Tip 4, optimizing channels. This tip is about getting the most out of the selected channels. To use the channels successfully, it's essential to follow the guidelines for those channels and how people use them. For example, the best size for visuals, the length of a video, the format of the video, not using links in the text, the percentage of text on a visual, the use of hashtags, location tags, engaging captions, but without engagement bait, and so on.

Tip 5, publication calendar. The fifth and final tip is a publication calendar. This is a great tool to create structure and clarity regarding the timeline of posting, when which stories are posted on which channel, and what purpose it has. In the attachment at the bottom of this chapter, you find a template you can use for your publication calendar.

Quick Wins

Here are some quick wins you can apply to your social media and other online channels to grow and establish yourself in the digital world. Keep the purpose and goals of the platform in

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mind. For example, social media channels want their users to use the platform as long and active as possible. That's in the interest of their business model. So they don't stimulate you to put links in your content that promote using other platforms. So it's better not to use external links in your posts. In the attachment at the bottom of this chapter, we added some formats to keep your content clear and short and use some emotion, humor, or surprise your audience. Stimulate interaction and involvement by creating engaging stories and questions. But be careful with engagement bait. Don't design your content to overstimulate your audience to follow, like, share or comment. You are at the risk that social channels will demote your content reach. So please keep it clean. Be relevant and personal. Use the one-reader rule. There's only one person on the other side of the screen consuming your content, so focus on that person you communicate with while creating your content and distributing it.

Don't use 'we' or 'hi fans' or words like that, but use 'you' instead. Keep yourself updated. Get with the times, like using visual live videos, stories, IGTV, stickers, GIFs, voice, etc. Create a certain rhythm like a digital heartbeat. For example posting every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 6 PM or once a week or every day. Whatever suits you best. But if you want to become top of mind, you need an active rhythm with relevant content for your audience.

Answer questions and respond actively to direct messages and responses. People take time to ask your questions and send you messengers, so don't become a black box where nobody is responding. Instead, build a community and try to engage with as many people as possible. This way, you will be seen in networks of others. If that audience likes you, they will start engaging with you, and your community and converts will grow. Actively promote your content. Getting your content out there doesn't end with hitting the publish button. That's actually when it all starts. So make sure your content will also be seen on other channels by support from your audience, influencers, and some paid content boosts.