A Brief Inquiry Into My Online Presence

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Almost ten years ago, I sat on my desktop computer and created my very first facebook account and felt on top of the world. Although at the moment I understood the gravity of creating the account, what I did not realize was that moment was even more significant for underlying reasons. It was a perfect indicator of the times ahead and the digital firestorm my generation would experience in the years to come. Social networking and technology as a whole has ruled our kingdom for as long as I could remember, but it was not until recently that I understood the power of how to brand yourself through a digital landscape and how it can benefit you and your intended goals. Throughout these next few pages are some of the most prudent observations I have made about my personal uses of social media and how I plan to amplify those spaces in order to create a better online persona for myself to ensure that I am prepared for the ambiguous views of the outsider looking in.

When I think about describing my online presence I would like to think of it at moderate volume because there are specific web spaces I am more consistent in using than others. Although I am constantly online, my most used social networking sites are Instagram, Tik Tok, and Twitter but I post most consistently on instagram. I've always loved how easy and aesthetic Instagram can be; sharing the most simplest thing can create a lot of traction and engagement. I started using Linkedin my sophomore year of college and really enjoy it mainly as a way to connect with professionals in industries I want to pursue and searching for jobs and internships in the listing section. I would say about 90% of my time on the website is used looking through job postings.

Furthermore, I would consider the brand I project on my social media sites as very charismatic and "happy-go-lucky". I have always had a very deep love for the music industry and fashion and that's most of the content I try to share about. Mainly because I would like to work within either industry, attract a target audience with similar interests, and most importantly an audience of mutual understanding. In a Forbes magazine article entitled "Keeping It Real: The Importance Of Having an Authentic Social Media Presence" Leslie Licano states "Being genuine is a vital part of connecting with followers as, now more than ever, consumers are seeking authentic experiences and holding brands accountable for their content." If I am hopeful about either working within the music or fashion industry, I must show that I have a genuine love and passion for it. Without that, I wouldn't show my true nature and would be just another twenty one year old that is into the same things other twenty one year olds are into. There is no better way to express your authentic passions than online social networking pages. Currently, I intern for Sony Music as a college marketing representative and a lot of my story posts and twitter likes are mostly about artists, new music, and marketing projects I am working on. On Linkedin the bulk of Posts I've shared also emphasize the behind the scenes things I do with the company.

Additionally, for me engagement is very skewed, mainly because of what I stated earlier in that I am most consistent through one social networking site– Instagram. I actually have a business account on instagram to track engagement and what I've garnered from it is that in total I have 1,377 followers, an average of about 350 likes per post, a reach of about 1,000, and impressions of about 1,000. It is roughly the same number for my stories. On Tik Tok, my average reach is about 300, with likes of 50 to 60 per post. I don't interact as much on twitter and

do not post often (something I would like to change) so there's not really much engagement to grasp. Through Linkedin I have about 123 connections and do not really post as often, very similar to twitter. Engaging followers is really important to me and I'll use graphics and music within my stories to gain more traction on my posts. It's nice when someone chooses to comment or reply to something, because I love starting conversations with my audience.

Although I'm active on mostly all social media sites, I do feel a little discouraged more often than not in my interactions online because I feel like there is A LOT of room for improvement and growth both personally and professionally. There are several goals that I have outlined for myself to achieve the personal brand I would like to convey, starting with targeting the appropriate audience.

My main goal is to work in the public relations department of a major music or fashion label. Ideally, the perfect target audience would be young professionals, recruiters, and others within the music and fashion industries that are willing to lend a hand (and voice) to industry hopefuls. In his mashable article "10 Ways To Create An Engaging Social Media Presence" author John Rampton states "Think of a persona as a way of summarizing a group's demographic and psychographic tendencies. Armed with this information, it is much easier to create compelling campaigns that engage the target audience." Once armed with the right target audience of professionals in the industries I would like to pursue, there will be room for conversation, and the possibility of connecting with a mentor. Through Linkedin I plan on increasing my connection count (one of the biggest weak areas for me) and finding professionals within the public relation sector of the industries I am interested in, in order to connect with them for advice. It's such a simple thing to do but I truly believe that this might be a great way to build an encouraging audience that might look to you for future projects or job opportunities if they

see you are fully invested in what you are doing. Mentorship can go a very long way, if you find

the right people to connect with.

Consistency is extremely important in any project, therefore, I plan on providing more

content for users to view on my accounts of behind the scene projects or any exciting news I

come across relating to my professional goals. For example, about a week ago Sony Music U

posted a soundbite of an answer to a question I asked during a masterclass they held with Adam

Alpert (CEO of Disruptor records), which I reposted to my linkedin and added some

commentary explaining the importance of the post and its background to my followers. In a

Forbes article written by Lisa Roepe entitled "Three ways to use social media to impress

recruiters," Rachel Bitte, the chief people officer of Jobvite states in an interview that "We love

to look at what candidates are sharing (...) The overarching theme is this: Are candidates sharing

information to brag, or are they sharing information to educate?" There is definitely a definitive

line between posting to educate as opposed to posting for reassurance, which also relates heavily

back to authenticity. I plan to educate my followers on my personal endeavors in an authentic

way that shows that I truly care about the work I am sharing. Aside from posting more on

Linkedin overall, I plan on sharing more (with interesting graphics) on Instagram and Twitter. A

lot of people within the industry target both of these platforms seeking information on how

people feel about certain artists or brands.

A couple of other miscellaneous aesthetic touches I plan on doing to enhance my social

media presence is to take a better Linkedin picture and create a better header for my profile. As

of right now my profile picture and header are very bland and do not say much about my

personality or interest– it could seriously use a lot of improvement. On Instagram I plan on

keeping an aesthetic and consistent feed theme because it would definitely be more attractive to

look at when people visit my webspace. Keeping it consistent could also be a good indicator that I am good at keeping things "on brand", another VERY important skill set for an AD/PR major, and one recruiters might enjoy seeing. Most importantly, I plan on basing content on the different platforms they are being posted to. As stated in several articles we have observed within class, you have to know where to post what. Therefore, I will be posting more on a schedule, while also keeping in mind the times engagement works best for each platform. The biggest platforms I will target for more posting are definitely Linkedin, Twitter, and potentially Tik Tok.

One of the best pieces of advice I've been given is to make yourself stand out in a way that your competition does not. Whether that's creating a creative profile or having a unique skillset most people do not, it will help you garner more attention. In a Mashable article titled "10 Ways To Create An Engaging Social Media Presence" author John Rampton suggests "To accelerate your social media growth, study direct competitors who have already made good use of social media. What do they do that engages followers?" There are two things that I've been wanting to do to make myself stand out, as opposed to other people pursuing the same intentions and after inspiration from my research, I plan on moving forward with it.

The first is to create a website or blog with multiple sections including a bio about me, a page featuring projects I've worked out, a resume page with both a black & white content based resume and a more creative resume so that I can showcase my skills, achievements, and qualifications in ways that individual companies will prefer. The idea is to create a one-stop-shop for recruiters and other people in the industry to reference my skill set and personality when evaluating whether or not I would fit within their job function and as a way to answer any questions they would still be posing. This website can also be posted to places such as Linkedin as a second reference for professionals to look at. I think this would also be a great way to

showcase my writing skills because we all know how important it is within the public relations world. It is very evident that employers love to see diversity in skillset so the second thing I am hoping to hone in on is creating a youtube channel and/or a more amplified Tik Tok page to showcase my cinematography skills that could come in handy when working on projects. It could also be a better way to put a personality to the face, and I could include my best work in a portfolio. I hope to represent myself in a way that is appealing, easy going, and confident in my abilities to professionals. The most important thing for me is to simply try to stand out in any way possible and by maybe sharing parts of my personality in a cinematic way, people will be more attracted to it. As stated in The Atlantic Article "Why Facebook and Google's Concept of 'Real Names' Is Revolutionary," Alexis Madrigal states "Every statement you make on Google Plus or Facebook is persistent and strongly attached to your real identity through your name (...) However, participating in public life on the services requires attaching your name to your statements." If my name is going to be publicly attached to everything that is said, I want sentiments attached to it to be the best versions possible and the most authentic and candid personas you can find.

Overall, this brief inquiry into my online habits has taught me alot about online social presence and how to be the best version of yourself through different platforms. It is one thing to say you're going to do something, but to actually act upon it is something completely different. Therefore, through this paper, I pledge to myself to make the necessary changes moving forward in order to ensure the best version of myself exists in all different spaces and that I allow myself the chance to create a space that represents my intentions in the best way possible. I cherish the information learned and will apply it to any further work I find where I must brand myself.

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