

Social Media and Celebrities:  
The Benefits of a Social Media Presence

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## ABSTRACT

This study analyzes celebrities and their social media presence and how they can benefit from using different social platforms. The rise of social media has caused people to rely on it for news, viewing content, and making connections with others. Celebrities no longer have to relay messages or content through their managers and publicists before releasing it. The way people interact through social media has allowed celebrities to engage their fans, enhance their career, and ultimately increase their stardom. This study investigates how social media impacts a celebrity's career and what the best practices are for receiving positive benefits.

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## **Chapter 1**

### *Introduction*

#### **Statement of the Problem**

This study focuses on celebrities and social media and how the use of social media can impact celebrities' careers and stardom. Over the past decade, social media platforms have become increasingly popular and have had a huge impact on celebrities' lives. "How you present your brand on social media can directly affect your reputation. You may only be physically 'on' while in the room, but online, your brand is 'on' 24 hours a day" (Friend, 2014, p. 12).

However, some celebrities still do not understand the importance of social media use and/or do not use it effectively. Practicing good social media skills can help a celebrity boost their career, increase their fan base, shed light on nonprofit organizations, and make money through endorsements.

#### **Background of the Problem**

The existing literature regarding celebrities and social media use is minimal. Existing literature mainly focuses on Facebook and Twitter, however Instagram is becoming an increasingly popular platform. Additionally, most of the existing literature focuses on how celebrities' and social media endorsements, rather than focusing on other benefits of using social media.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

LaQuishe Wright, a social media expert argues there is a "100 percent benefit" from having a great social media presence (Kaufman, 2013, p. C.1).

However, simply having a social media presence is not helpful unless you're using it properly. There are techniques to help boost a celebrities' career such as the frequency, time, and content of the posts.

Although most celebrities have a social media presence there are some that do not understand the benefits or have a negative view on it. According to Crushable.com, Julia Roberts does not tweet because she prefers to talk to people in person (O'Rourke, 2014). However, the number of people a celebrity can talk to in person compared to the number of people they can reach via social media is drastically different.

Another celebrity, Scarlett Johansson said "I don't know how I feel about this idea of, 'Now, I'm eating dinner, and I want everyone to know that I'm having dinner at this time,' or, 'I just mailed a letter and dropped off my kids'" (O'Rourke, 2014). Johansson is right, if celebrities do not understand good social media practices, it may not benefit them. However, there are ways celebrities can effectively communicate with their audience without sharing every detail of their lives.

By investigating celebrities social media presence and its outcomes, it will benefit public relations, celebrities, aspiring entertainers, and entertainment industry professionals who want to effectively use social media.

### **Setting for the Study**

This study will be done as part of the data collection for a Senior Project at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. Interviews will be conducted with three experts in the entertainment field and will consist of: an entertainer, an agent, and a publicist. The experts will be asked the same set of questions and probes. The questionnaire is designed to

answer the research questions and provide connections to the existing literature on the topic of celebrities and social media use.

## **Research Questions**

The study used the following research questions that were developed to answer gaps as well as make connections using the existing literature on the topic of celebrities and social media use. Each question was created after researching information on the stated topic in order to acquire information and data from experts in the field of entertainment.

1. Why is it important for celebrities use social media platforms?
2. How can using social media improve celebrities' careers?
3. How can using social media increase a celebrities' fan base?
4. What are the best practices for using social media?
5. Are there any additional benefits celebrities may experience by using social media?
6. Who are individuals that use social media successfully?

## **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are defined to clarify several of the terms on the topic and assist the reader and provide context to the remainder of the study.

Hashtag: A hashtag is a word or an unspaced phrase prefixed with the “#” symbol. A hashtag allows grouping of similarly tagged messages, and also allows an electronic search to return all messages that contain it (Hashtag).

Stardom: he status of a performer or entertainer acknowledged as a star (Stardom).

Direct Message (DM): Direct Messages are private messages sent from one Twitter user to other Twitter users. You can use Direct Messages for one-on-one private conversations, or between groups of users (About Direct Messages).

Social media: Social media are computer-mediated tools that allow people to create, share or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks. Social media is defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Social media).

### **Organization of Study**

Chapter 1 included the background of the problem, purpose of the study, and a definition of terms. Chapter 2 will identify the trends regarding personal and celebrity brand development and management by reviewing the current literature on the topic. Chapter 3 will present the methodology of the study. In Chapter 4, the findings will be presented and organized based on the original research questions. The data will then be analyzed compared to the current literature on the topic. Lastly, Chapter 5 will include a summary of the study and recommendations for professionals in the marketing, public relations, and entertainment industry to develop and manage a personal branding campaign.

## **Chapter 2**

### *Literary Review*

The literary review focuses on existing literature on celebrities and social media and the beneficial outcomes of its use.

#### **Importance of celebrities using social media platforms**

With the rise and power of social media, any individual can become their own news platform. That is important, especially for celebrities because they are constantly in the spotlight with media watching their every move.

According to Friend, “How you present your brand on social media can directly affect your reputation. You may only be physically ‘on’ while in the room, but online, your brand is ‘on’ 24 hours a day” (Friend, 2014, p. 12).

MC Hammer states that, “the use of social media outlets effectively shortens the distance between the content that is created and produced for a brand and the consumer like no other medium,” (Stever, p. 341).

Celebrities can now bypass traditional news media and tailor messages the way they please. Not only does this give celebrities their own voice and choose what they want to disclose, it also speeds up the process of releasing news and allows them to connect with their audience on a deeper level.

Thomas Clayton, CEO of Bubbly, said an additional benefit of bypassing standard distribution channels and using their own social media to promote and distribute materials is that it is less costly and produces higher revenues. Not only does it increase revenue but the

unregulated content benefits the fan in that they feel a more person connection to the stars they idolize (Clayton, 2013).

According to LaQuishe Wright, a social media expert there is a “100 percent benefit” from having a great social media presence. She said, “Fans are more prone to go see Channing Tatum’s move if he’s telling them about it, not a studio. An Hollywood is paying attention to that now” (Kaufman, 2013, p. C.1). Since movie studios are now looking at celebrities’ social media presence and how it can benefit them, it brings me to my next topic.

### **Using social media improve celebrities’ careers**

According to Kaufman (2013) utilizing social media is important because, “studio executives and casting directors increasingly factor in a celebrities digital fan base.” Therefore it is important for celebrities to maintain a healthy, strong fan base across a variety of social media platforms (Kaufman, 2013, p. C.1).

Bollywood TV actor Himmanshoo Ashlok Malhotra said, “it’s become a necessity for TV actors to be active on social networking sites. Filmmakers tend to look at the number of followers you have on Twitter or likes on Facebook to determine your popularity. They think that the number of followers you have on Twitter translates into the number of tickets the film will sell” (Bhatia, 2014).

Whether filmmakers or studios focus on a celebrities social media popularity or not, another benefit of using social media is that it extends the duration of a celebrities fame. Google researchers used Google News to discover how fame has changed over the past century. They discovered that although the number of those in the news has increased, the duration of their fame has increased (Aron, 2012).

Additionally, Nathanael Fast, a psychologist at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, investigated how celebrities stay famous. "We live in a time when technology and access to information has really exploded, but what hasn't changed is our psychological need to connect with other people, and famous people become common ground for us to use to connect to each other in conversation," he said (Aron, 2012). This research suggests that the length of fame has increase and it may be caused by celebrities using social media to speak directly to their fans (Aron, 2012).

### **Using social media increase celebrities' fan base**

According to Ekaterina Walter, who wrote "7 Lessons Marketers Can Learn From Digitally Savvy Celebrities", said that brands are looking for new customers, while artists are looking to make current fans happy. This ultimately increases a celebrities' fan base and keeps current fans loyal (Walter, 2013).

"The ultimate truth: you make your current community happy, you appreciate and reward them for their advocacy, they will not only keep coming back, but they will bring new members with them to join your tribe... thus building sustainable brand love," Walter said (Walter, 2013).

Additionally, using social media allows celebrities to interact with their fans, which can have a both positive and negative effect. "Celebrities use social media websites causing their fans to feel like they 'know' them through their tweets and Facebook updates, and they feel more connected and significant to their favorite celebs" (Christman, 2011, p. 1).

Christman suggest that when a celebrity makes their fans feel significant, the celebrity becomes more likable and "down to earth". Additionally, it makes them seem like a "real"

person they could be friends with. The tactic of using social media can ultimately lead to an increase in dedicated fans overall (Christman, 2011, p. 1).

Clayton said “The celebrity/fan relationship has shifted from a one-way delivery channel to more of a conversation. These days, fans' tweets and comments on celebrity posts are actually getting responses,” (Clayton, 2013).

Additionally, Clayton said that fans crave a person connection with the stars and social media allows celebrities to provide that connection, which can affect the size of their fan base. Additionally the authenticity of social media posts is important and can be the difference in building a strong fan base and ultimately a brand (Clayton, 2013).

### **Best practices for using social media**

LaQuishe Wright whose clients include includes Zac Efron, Channing Tatum and, Nicholas Sparks said she makes sure her clients sustain an appropriate tone and share the right content. She also strategizes the best times to post to attract the most viewers and uses search engine optimization tricks (Kaufman, 2013, p. C.1).

According to Ragan’s PR Daily, the best times to post on Facebook are Wednesdays between 6 a.m.- 8 a.m. and 2 p.m.-5 p.m. For Twitter, the best times are on weekends from 1 p.m.-3 p.m. (Piombino, 2015). Although this may be when the most traffic is, celebrities should be timely and update their platforms frequently and timely.

Another good practice is reaching out to other celebrities on social media. If a celebrity creates a post and integrates a higher-level celebrity that celebrity might reply, potentially pulling audiences from one celebrity to another. This can bolster the lesser-known stars image (Ellcessor, 2012).

Hiring people to manage celebrities' social media can lead to positive and negative side effects. "Hiring social media managers- This has several benefits. With a manager on duty, a celebrity is far less likely to engage in any feuds or say something he or she might regret later" (Cohen, 2013).

Gwyn Gilliss founder and executive director of The Actors's Market also created a list of "Do's and Don'ts" of social media for actors and said, "Do have a presence on the Internet...do publish photos that show you at your best...do upload videos that show your recent work...do post frequently...do say something intelligent...do promote your own work on Twitter...don't contact industry professionals if you don't know them" (Gilliss, 2014).

#### **Additional benefits celebrities experience by using social media**

According to Clayton, celebrities can use their social media presence to shape public opinion of an individual or group (Clayton, 2013). This ability makes celebrities great for endorsing brands or spreading the word about politics and other lesser-known issues.

As for celebrity endorsements, Vinita Bangard, a promoter of talent management firm Krossover Entertainment said, "Celebrities who engage actively on the social media space are getting paid at least 25%-30% higher than those who don't, even if the latter have huge mass connect" (Bhushan, 2014).

Many companies, including Coca-Cola have begun inserting a clause in their endorsement contracts specifically dedicated to social media promotions (Bhushan, 2014).

"We leverage our brand ambassadors through campaigns and activation via different mediums," PepsiCo senior director, Ruchira Jaitly said. With social media ad budgets increasing

faster than traditional media, the online celebrity endorsement business is growing 25%-30% faster than the traditional space (Bhushan, 2014).

Celebrities also have the ability to gain attention to less known issues or support nonprofits. “Celebrities have become carriers of cultural meaning,” says David Blake, a professor of English at the College of New Jersey. “We increasingly come to rely on them to have public discussion, to have discourse about what matters to our society,” (Celebrity Advocacy, 2012, p. 440).

Celebrities supporting charitable organizations not only help the organization, but help enhance their own image. “Celebrities understand that they are a brand, and they want to enhance that brand, and they understand that affiliating with a charity can help do that,” says Minutti with Charity Navigator. “And most charities are glad to have that help, (Celebrity Advocacy, 2012, p. 440).

### **Individuals that use social media successfully**

There are many celebrities that already have mastered social media and studying them can help other celebrities or rising stars learn how to use social media effectively. As stated in the literature, a way to build a fan base is engaging with fans. “When Katy Perry launched her single ‘Firework,’ she put the spotlight not on herself, but rather on her fans. She asked them to create videos telling the world who their Firework was (a person special to them, someone who inspired them). She gave her biggest fans a way to tell the whole world about the most important people their lives... In the process, she became a little bit more important to them as well” (Walter, 2013). Through social media, Katy Perry did not only gain additional fans, but she increase their loyalty.

Another example, Lady Gaga finds ways to use social media to connect with her fans. “She has built a custom social network so that she could connect with her fans on a personal level – Littlemonsters.com. She participates in the conversations often through posting/commenting/liking; she conducts contests, encouraging fans to work on projects together such as designing an outfit for her to wear or designing emoticons for her site” (Walter, 2013). Lady Gaga also has 6 million followers on Instagram and 44.9 million devoted followers on Twitter.

Taylor Swift is another celebrity who has a huge following on social media. With 23.4 million followers on Instagram, and 54.2 million followers on Twitter, Swift has gained a huge fan base by making her fans feel like they are friends with her. “One of the biggest reasons why fans choose to follow celebrities on social media is that they want to feel in a way that they are ‘friends’ with that celebrity—to get a deeper glimpse into his or her everyday life. Having a celebrity retweet you has become the new autograph, and Taylor Swift is one of the few celebrities that takes the time to do this. Retweeting content is an effective way to not only let a fan know that you’ve heard him loud and clear, but to create brand loyalty as well” (Lanier, 2014).

Kelly Clarkson, famous American Idol winner, uses social media effectively by sharing intimate moments with fans. For example, sharing photos from her wedding day and reception and kissing her husband at the scene of their farm wedding. “These images of meaningful moments in Kelly’s life were made available to her online fan base first, which essentially allowed Kelly to communicate to them how much her fans mean to her” (Lanier, 2014).

However, other literature states that there are many other ways that celebrities can use social media to effectively benefit from having a social media presence.

## **Chapter 3**

### *Methodology*

This chapter supports the methods used to collect the data for the study, including the data sources, collection, presentation of data, limitations, and delimitations.

#### **Data Sources**

For this study, all experts will be from the entertainment industry. One will be from the music industry, and two from the film industry. The questionnaire was developed to ensure all of the research questions regarding celebrities and social media were answered. The entertainment experts selected were

#### **Participants**

Mackenzie Johnson, an electronic and house music producer who has top hits in iTunes, such as his number one hit, “Countdown” featuring artist Hardwell. Ryan Stylez, a recording artist who has created songs with well-known artist Ray J, The Cataracs, and The Co-Stars. And Chase Lehner, a publicist assistant to Simon Halls, who was recognized as the most powerful publicist in Hollywood by Business Insider in 2012.

#### **Interview Design**

The following questions were asked to each of the participants and served as data sources for the study:

1. What social media platforms do you regularly use? Why do you think it is important for celebrities to use social media?

2. Do you think social media can improve a celebrities' career? Why or why not? Can you describe a time when you used social media to enhance your career?
3. Do you think social media can improve a celebrities' fan base? Why or Why not? Can you give an example of how you have used social media to connect with your fans?
4. What are some of the best practices of using social media? Do you post on your own or does someone else post on your behalf? Why did you decide this?
5. Are there any other benefits celebrities experience using social media? Have you ever endorsed products or services of social media? Did you receive any benefits from endorsing these products or services?
6. Who are some individuals that use social media successfully? Why do you think they are successful?

### **Data Collection**

The method of data collection for this study was three individual interviews with each expert. The interview were conducted during February and March 2015 and lasted approximately 20 minutes each. During the interview each expert was asked questions from the questionnaire designed to provide answers for the original research questions while also inquiring about personal social media use.

### **Data Presentation**

The data was collected during the interview was documented through audio recordings using a voice recorder as well as written notes during and after the interview. This was done to ensure all information was documented and any additional information that may clarify the

context of the responses was added. This method of data collection guarantees that the data collected and presented is accurate and objective.

### **Limitations**

There are limitations to this study such as time, location and access. This study was conducted during Winter quarter of 2015, which lasts only 10 weeks. Additionally, the study took place in San Luis Obispo, California, over three hours away from the entertainment capital, Los Angeles. The access to experts in the entertainment field is also very limited because high profile celebrities are difficult to gain access to and their managers, publicists, and agents have very busy schedules.

### **Delimitations**

Additionally, there are delimitations to this study based on the type of data collected and interview process. The study was conducted to gain insight on celebrities and the benefits of using of social media. However, the answers are based on the assumption that the responses are qualitative and opinion-based. Therefore, they cannot be generalized.

The interview with Mackenzie Johnson was a face-to-face interview conducted in San Luis Obispo, California. However, due to location and time constraints, the interviews with Ryan Stylez and Chase Lehner were conducted via phone. Although the audio from the interviews was recorded, there are some limitations based on clarity, not being able to watch the interviewee's expression or movements, and informality of the interview.

## **Chapter 4**

### *Data Analysis*

Chapter 4 will provide descriptions of the experts interviewed in the study and summarize the respondents' answers to the questionnaire. The data was collected through recorded interviews that lasted approximately 20 minutes and will be presented in direct quotations or paraphrased responses. Then, the answers will be analyzed and compared to the original research questions and the literary research on celebrities and social media as reviewed previously in Chapter 2.

### **Description of Participating Experts in the Entertainment Industry**

#### **Entertainers**

MakJ, whose real name is Mackenzie Johnson is a talent expert for the study. Although MakJ was originally from San Luis Obispo, California, he began DJ'ing at 15 years old while living overseas in China as a professional racecar driver. At 17 years old he traveled back to the United States to further pursue music. At this age he was approached by well-known DJ AM, who taught him more about DJ'ing in personal one-on-one lessons. In 2013 and 2014 he performed at some of the world's largest music festivals such as Ultra Music Festival in Miami and Coachella in Indio, California. MakJ has also toured across Europe and North America playing with other well-known artists. He has a large following on many social media platforms including: 86.2 thousand followers on Instagram, 139 thousand followers on Twitter, and 765 thousand followers on Facebook.

Ryan Stylez whose real name is Ryan Chen is a recording artist from the Bay Area. December of 2009, Stylez Collaborated with The Cataracts, who produce chart topping records.

In 2010, Stylez released his song “Right Here Right Now” on iTunes and caused a favorable stir in San Francisco. Ryan was then contacted by A&R from Universal Republic and moved to Hollywood, California to begin working on a song with The Co-Stars. Stylez has also spearheaded social marketing campaigns for entertainers such as Christina Milian, Jaimie Pressly, Megan Good, films like Anchorman 2 and various other clients. Stylez has 10 thousand followers on Instagram, 6.9 thousand followers on Twitter, and 3.9 thousand followers on Facebook.

### **Public Relations**

Chase Lehner was the public relations expert selected for the study. Lehner began his career in public relations in 2012 working for Ink Media Public Relations in Los Angeles. He currently works at Slate PR as an assistant to Simon Halls who is one of the founders of Slate PR and named the number one most powerful publicist in Hollywood according to Business Insider. Most of Lehner’s clients are A-list celebrities and include Neil Patrick Harris, Jude Law, and Tom Ford. In 2014, after working at Slate PR for two years, Lehner took on an additional position as the personal assistant to Matt Bomber, a 2015 Golden Globe winning actor.

### **Celebrities and Social Media Presence Questionnaire**

Each expert was asked to respond to the following questions and probes regarding celebrities and the use of social media:

1. What social media platforms do you/your clients regularly use? Why do you think it is important for celebrities to use social media?

Question #1 was asked to gain insight on what social media platforms are the most popular and gauged why they believed those platforms were important.

- MakJ: “I use the typical Twitter, Instagram and Facebook... It’s a way for the general public to see what people they like or people you normally wouldn’t talk to are doing... Social media portrays kind of a fake life but it’s a good way people can keep involved with your life” (Appendix A).
- Ryan Stylez: “Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Vine... Social media is the biggest and sometimes the only way to get your content out there. At one time for entertainers and musicians that wasn’t available so they literally had to go into radio stations and hire publicity and now social media makes it a lot easier (Appendix B).
- Chase Lehner: “I think Twitter is most used by our clients. Twitter is a pretty interesting tool because it can be used by celebrities or talent to voice their opinions and what they want the world to know about them without going through their publicist (Appendix C).

2. Do you think social media can improve a celebrities’ career? Why or why not? Can you describe a time when you used social media to enhance your career?

Question #2 was designed to focus on the celebrities’ career specifically. Social media can have an impact on multiple aspects of a celebrity’s life but finding specific examples was important to support my research.

- MakJ: “Everything I’ve done has been over social media... I wouldn’t be here without Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Youtube.” (Appendix A).
- Ryan Stylez: “Yeah, I mean it can improve it or also hurt it... As an entertainer, we value social media a lot just because we do have a chance to have a song or

product that goes viral and without social media that's not possible." (Appendix B).

- Chase Lehner: "It depends on the level of celebrity. If you're a B or C list celebrity and want more people to know about you it can help you gain fans. But if you're an A list celebrity already you may value privacy then I think social media can hurt you." (Appendix C).

3. Do you think social media can improve a celebrities' fan base? Why or Why not? Can you give an example of how you have used social media to connect with your fans?

Question #3 was similar to the previous question but it was to serve as a comparison and focus on a different aspect of a celebrity's life. This question was important to understand how social media can impact a celebrity's fandom as well as have supporting examples.

- MakJ: "You gain fans all over the world you typically couldn't. I have fans all over the world and they can see what I'm doing through social media." (Appendix A).
- Ryan Stylez: "Yeah, I mean everything now has the chance to go viral so these new artist are coming out and getting popular all because of social media... About two years ago I had this marketing team that was working for me and they found a way to get my post featured on another Instagram account... I was getting thousands of new followers and comments just because this marketing program we were running... My fan base really grew over a couple of weeks just because of an Instagram campaign." (Appendix B).
- Chase Lehner: "Yes, I actually do believe that... When you look at people like Beyonce and Rihanna. They all have a huge following with hashtags they created

and other fan accounts that people have created for them. I think social media is beneficial if you're trying to create a fan base like that." (Appendix C).

4. What are some of the best practices of using social media? Do you post on your own or does someone else post on your behalf? Why did you decide this?

Question #4 was created to uncover the best practices for social media. Since the majority of experts believe social media can improve many aspects of a celebrity's life, it is important to know how they can be successful on social media and gain a large following. Also, some celebrities hire publicists or social media experts to post on their behalf. It is important to understand why the celebrity made the choice to personally post on his or her own social media or not.

- MakJ: "Posting videos on Facebook has been huge. If you post pictures or text it doesn't reach anyone... [Facebook] always changes, and that's the problem with Facebook. Twitter is always the same. If you post at 3 p.m. a lot of people will see it. Everyone posts at 10 a.m. PST because that's when people are waking up on the west coast. Because that's when a lot of people wake up and check their phone. On the east coast 5 p.m. is the best time, and that goes for Instagram too... Personal stuff I post myself but 90% of my stuff is posted are people that work for me.." (Appendix A).
- Ryan Stylez: "I think content, and what you post is extremely important and putting up the right things. When it comes to social media everyone has a certain attention span, I think its like six to ten seconds then they'll move on to the next profile so as long as you have good content, that will at least get you in the door." (Appendix B).

- Chase Lehner: “Its also important to keep up with trends... So you have to keep up with what people like and dislike and know who your fans are. For example, accounts that post a lot of crude humor have a ton of followers because our generation that uses social media the most like that type of humor... All of our clients post for themselves... The Kardashians post on their own accounts and I think they’re a great example of how to make yourself present in this day and age. Also, what they post is very personal and it’s not something that someone they hire can do.” (Appendix C).

5. Are there any other benefits celebrities experience using social media? Have you ever endorsed products or services of social media? Did you receive any benefits from endorsing these products or services?

Question #5 was created to discover any additional benefits that celebrities my face that are not as widely known. This question began more open ended to allow the experts to give advice freely. Since celebrity endorsements are very popular on social media a question was also directed toward that to gain more insight on the benefits celebrities experience through endorsements.

- MakJ: “Yeah, I’ve been able to use Twitter to my advantage to reach other producers and get music to them or from them or to work with them in the future. I also do a lot of endorsement stuff and get paid to post basically nothing.” (Appendix A).
- Ryan Stylez: “I mean if its not getting fans or getting the content out there it’s about connecting with other people that you haven’t been able to connect with

originally. Before social media that wasn't possible and you would have to contact your manger who would have to contact their manager and it would be a longer process so I think that's a big plus... I endorse a bunch of clothing lines... They'll send me a box of clothes or like six months supply of hats and bags and accessories or something. Then I just have to go on my social media sites and give them a shout out." (Appendix B).

- Chase Lehner: "If you're just starting out in the industry it's a great way to market yourself and potentially meet new people to work with." (Appendix C).

6. Who are some individuals that use social media successfully? Why do you think they are successful?

Questions #6 was created to discover celebrities' that have used social media successfully. Uncovering celebrities that use social media effectively can help other celebrities or entertainers just beginning their career or social media presence by mimicking some of their practices.

- MakJ: "I think all of them. The best part about social media is that its easy to use and anyone can use it. I think the people who use it most effectively are those who you never heard of before who gained recognition just through social media." (Appendix A).
- Ryan Stylez: "I think a lot of people have. There are also some people you wouldn't think have a huge social media following that kill is as far as social media is concerned. Just the way they engage with their fans is what gets them a huge following." (Appendix B).

- Chase Lehner: “Aaron Paul, guys love him, girls love him. He’s personable and he posts pictures of himself with fans or doing normal human things. He’s not in your face and it allows people to connect with him. People that follow Aaron Paul feel like they really know him, compared to Kim Kardashian who posts her designer clothes. People are fascinated but they don’t feel like they know the real Kim and cant really connect with her.” (Appendix C).

### **Celebrities and Social Media Research Questions**

For this project, the following research questions were created for the study to determine the benefits celebrities may experience while using social media and how to use social media effectively.

#### **Research question 1: Why is it important for celebrities use social media platforms?**

- “How you present your brand on social media can directly affect your reputation. You may only be physically ‘on’ while in the room, but online, your brand is ‘on’ 24 hours a day” (Friend, 2014, p. 12).

#### **Research question 2: How can using social media improve celebrities’ careers?**

- “It’s become a necessity for TV actors to be active on social networking sites. Filmmakers tend to look at the number of followers you have on Twitter or likes on Facebook to determine your popularity. They think that the number of followers you have on Twitter translates into the number of tickets the film will sell” (Bhatia, 2014).

#### **Research question 3: How can using social media increase a celebrities’ fan base?**

- “Celebrities use social media website causing their fans to feel like they ‘know’ them through their tweets and Facebook updates, and they feel more connected and significant to their favorite celebs” (Christman, 2011, p. 1).
- “The ultimate truth: you make your current community happy, you appreciate and reward them for their advocacy, they will not only keep coming back, but they will bring new members with them to join your tribe... thus building sustainable brand love” (Walter, 2013).

**Research question 4: What are the best practices for using social media?**

- According to Ragan’s PR Daily, the best times to post on Facebook are Wednesdays between 6 a.m.- 8 a.m. and 2 p.m.-5 p.m. For Twitter, the best times are on weekends from 1 p.m.-3 p.m. (Piombino, 2015).
- “Do have a presence on the Internet...do publish photos that show you at your best...do upload videos that show your recent work...do post frequently...do say something intelligent...do promote your own work on Twitter...don’t contact industry professionals if you don’t know them” (Gilliss, 2014).

**Research question 5: Are there any additional benefits celebrities may experience by using social media?**

- "Celebrities who engage actively on the social media space are getting paid at least 25%-30% higher than those who don't, even if the latter have huge mass connect” (Bhushan, 2014).

**Research question 6: Who are individuals that use social media successfully?**

- “Katy Perry launched her single ‘Firework,’ she put the spotlight not on herself, but rather on her fans... In the process, she became a little bit more important to them as well” (Walter, 2013).
- ““One of the biggest reasons why fans choose to follow celebrities on social media is that they want to feel in a way that they are ‘friends’ with that celebrity—to get a deeper glimpse into his or her everyday life. Having a celebrity retweet you has become the new autograph, and Taylor Swift is one of the few celebrities that takes the time to do this” (Lanier, 2014).

### **Celebrities and Social Media Data**

For this study, it was important to see what experts said due to the small amount of information that currently exists on celebrities and the potential benefits of using social media. To acquire this data, MakJ, a well-known DJ, Ryan Stylez, a music producer, and Chase Lehner, an assistant publicist at a respected publicity firm were interviewed for the study. They were asked very similar questions that were designed to reflect the original research questions. The following tables present the respondents’ answers in the form of their own perspectives on the original research questions.

#### **Research question 1: Why is it important for celebrities use social media platforms?**

This research question was studied in response to the current literature that exists on the topic of celebrities and social media use. A substantial amount of literature supports that social media is important to the success of celebrities career. According to LaQuishe Wright, a social media expert there is a “100 percent benefit” from having a great social media presence (Kaufman, 2013, p. C.1).

This question was studied to gain insight on the importance of social media when it comes to celebrities and how it can help them in various ways. It is apparent from the literature that most experts agree there are more benefits than drawbacks when it comes to whether a celebrity should use social media or not.

Table 1 summarizes the answers to this question, which were fairly consistent to the existing literature. All three respondents viewed social media usage as helpful to stars careers. Additionally, the experts were asked which platforms they use themselves or their clients use and why those specific platforms are important.

Table 1

*Importance of Social Media*

Respondent	Important social media platforms for celebrities	Why it's important
MakJ	Twitter, Instagram, Facebook	Public can feel involved in celebrities lives
Ryan Stylez	Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Vine	Allows artists to release and expose content
Chase Lehner	Twitter	Allows celebrities to voice their opinions

Table 1 shows that the main social media platforms used by celebrities and entertainers are Twitter and Instagram, although other platforms were listed. All of the experts believe social media does have a positive impact on celebrities overall. The three respondents also gave different opinions on why they believe social media has this impact.

**Research question 2: How can using social media improve celebrities' careers?**

Since the literature supports that social media is beneficial, this question was designed to uncover how it can improve entertainer's careers specifically. While the literature suggests that

social media can ultimately improve their career, the experts interviewed had a few different opinions.

Table 2

*Social Media and Celebrities' Careers*

Respondent	Does social media improve celebrities' careers?	Why?
MakJ	People become famous by using social media	Most content is now released over social media.
Ryan Stylez	It can improve it but also hurt it.	It gives entertainers opportunities they haven't had before.
Chase Lehner	It depends on the level of celebrity.	Allows B and C list celebrities to gain fame but limits privacy for A list celebrities.

Table 2 shows that while all the respondents believed using social media can help an entertainers career, two of them also believed it can have a negative impact on their career. Additionally each expert explained why social media has that effect. MakJ said that he wouldn't be famous without social media because he released his first song using the social media platform Beatport. Additionally, social media platforms are how most all celebrities release their new content in today's age. Ryan Stylez said it can have positive and negative side effects, however he focused more on the positive side effects say that social media gives talent opportunities they wouldn't have without social media. Stylez said the chance to go "viral" by using social media platforms have a huge impact on their career and help them reach stardom.

**Research question 3: How can using social media increase a celebrities' fan base?**

Question 3 was a follow up of the previous question but uncovered a different aspect. This questioned focused on how social media have directly impact an entertainer's fan base. Since the literature supports that social media is beneficial, this question was designed to

discover how it can improve entertainer’s fandom specifically. The literature suggests that, “Celebrities use social media website causing their fans to feel like they ‘know’ them through their tweets and Facebook updates, and they feel more connected and significant to their favorite celebs” (Christman, 2011, p. 1). The experts interviewed agreed that social media has a positive impact when focusing on fan count and loyalty.

Table 3

*Social Media and Celebrities’ Fan Base*

Respondent	Does social media improve celebrities’ fan base?	Why?
MakJ	Yes	It allows celebrities to gain fans world wide that they typically couldn’t reach.
Ryan Stylez	Yes	Using social media allows for content to be spread and have more viewers than ever before, therefore increasing your fan count.
Chase Lehner	Yes	Celebrities create new content and hashtags that are spread throughout social media to build a stronger fan base.

Table 3 shows that all of the respondents agreed that social media strongly improves a celebrity’s fan base and helps them generate more fans. However, all respondents shared a different reason for why social media has this impact. MakJ said that since social media is international, it allows entertainers to reach fan they typically couldn’t reach. Ryan Stylez says that you can go viral through social media and that he used social media platform, Instagram for a marketing campaign. Through this campaign he gained more followers, and thus more fans. Chase Lehner said that social media allows celebrities to generate new content that can be shared with their fans. For example, Rihanna can create a hashtag that is spread throughout a social

media platform through her followers. This hashtag will gain attention of many users that do not follow Rihanna. However, exposing this hashtag to people will eventually create a buzz and she will ultimately increase her followers.

**Research question 4: What are the best practices for using social media?**

Since the existing literature suggests that social media ultimately has a positive impact overall, this questions was to gain insight on how celebrities can increase their chances of experiencing the benefits. LaQuishe Wright whose clients include includes Zac Efron, Channing Tatum and, Nicholas Sparks said she strategizes the best times to post to attract the most viewers and uses search engine optimization tricks (Kaufman, 2013, p. C.1).

According to the literature another good practice is reaching out to other celebrities on social media. If a celebrity creates a post and integrates a higher-level celebrity that celebrity might reply, potentially pulling audiences from one celebrity to another. This can bolster the lesser-known stars image (Elccessor, 2012).

Table 4 shows what the experts believe are some of the best practices for gaining a large following and loyalty on social media platforms.

Table 4

*Best Practices for Social Media*

Respondent	What are some of the best practices?	Do you/your clients post on your own?
MakJ	Posting videos on Facebook. Best times for posting on Twitter or Instagram are 10 a.m. PST and 5 p.m. EST.	Sometimes, but 90% of the time his publicist or others he hired will post on his behalf.
Ryan Stylez	Have interesting content because viewers have short attention spans while browsing social media.	Most of the time he posts himself.
Chase Lehner	Keeping up with trends and knowing your audience and fans likes and dislikes.	His clients post themselves.

Table 4 shows what the experts believe are some of the most important practices when it comes to using social media. None of the experts listed the same practices. MakJ said he usually has someone post on his behalf because he does not have enough time to dedicate to social media. However, Ryan Stylez said he usually posts on his own accounts. Chase Lehner, who has many A-list client’s said that they post on their own accounts but he knows it is common for celebrities to hire a social media manager or someone who will manage their accounts.

**Research question 5: Are there any additional benefits celebrities may experience by using social media?**

This question was designed to highlight other potential benefits celebrities may experience by having a social media presence. The literature focused on celebrity endorsements and suggests that many celebrities are beginning to add social media endorsement to their existing contracts. “Celebrities who engage actively on the social media space are getting paid at least 25%-30% higher than those who don't, even if the latter have huge mass connect” (Bhushan, 2014).

Since social media endorsements are on the rise I added a question specific to endorsements and what they receive from them. All of the respondents said that they endorse products themselves or their clients endorse products on social media.

Table 5

*Additional Benefits to Social Media*

Respondent	What are additional benefits to social media?	Have you/your clients endorsed products and received money or free products?
MakJ	Allows talent to reach other artists and producers.	Endorses products and receives money.
Ryan Stylez	Connects artists with other celebrities and people you wouldn't be able to connect with otherwise.	Endorses products and receives free products such as shirts, hats, and bags.
Chase Lehner	Allows entertainers to market themselves and meet others in the industry.	His clients endorse products and receive either money or free products.

Table 5 shows that all experts believe social media can help celebrities reach others in their industry. This was surprising because there was little existing literature that focused on celebrities using social media to meet producers and other artist. However, the experts suggest social media cuts out the middleman or manager and allows artist to directly connect with others. Additionally, supporting the existing literature, endorsing products through social media was very popular and widely used by the experts and their clients.

**Research question 6: Who are individuals that use social media successfully?**

**Personal Branding Data**

This question was designed as a follow-up question, to discover which celebrities benefit from social media the most and what are they doing that is making them so successful? This

question was important because discovering what others are doing to make them successful can help other celebrities’ increase their fan base, improve their career, and experience other benefits.

The literature suggests that Katy Perry, Taylor Swift and Lady Gaga are social media gurus who have mastered how to use it effectively. All of the celebrities listed use social media to engage with their fans and make them feel like they are friends with the star and build connections with them.

Table 6

*Celebrities Who Use Social Media Successfully*

Respondent	What celebrities use social media successfully?	What makes them successful at it?
MakJ	Every celebrity, especially those who have become famous because of social media.	Making their own content and utilizing different platforms.
Ryan Stylez	Justin Bieber and a lot of celebrities.	The way they engage with their fans and creating a big buzz.
Chase Lehner	Aaron and Lauren Paul.	Aaron Paul posts pictures that make him appear as a normal human, which allows fans to connect with him.

Table 6 shows which celebrities these experts believed to be social media gurus and who use social media to their advantage. All of the respondents suggested that anyone can benefit from social media and use it successfully. However, the specific individuals they named to be successful when it comes to social media were different. Additionally, the expert’s reasons for why they believed the celebrities were successful also differentiated.

## Chapter 5

### *Discussion and Recommendations*

#### **Summary**

This study was performed in response to my fascination with the entertainment industry and social media and how using these platforms can affect a celebrities' status. Today, 74% of online adults use social networking sites. With social media so relevant in society, celebrities have taken to these platforms to further their career and fan base. Although most literature suggest celebrities can benefit from engaging on social media, it was still essential to collect data from entertainment industry experts regarding their opinions on social media platforms.

To find more information on celebrities and the various benefits of using social media, entertainment professionals were interviewed. Two professionals were entertainers themselves while one was a publicist assistant, all of whom are experienced with social media. The experts were interviewed based on a questionnaire designed to answer the following research questions for the study:

1. Why is it important for celebrities use social media platforms?
2. How can using social media improve celebrities' careers?
3. How can using social media increase a celebrities' fan base?
4. What are the best practices for using social media?
5. Are there any additional benefits celebrities may experience by using social media?
6. Who are individuals that use social media successfully?

Each research question was altered slightly for each subject to create applicable questions. The questionnaire elicited a variety of response that mainly supported the literature on celebrities and social media.

## **Discussion**

By analyzing the data collected from Chapter 4, connections made between the industry expert's responses provided during the interview process and the existing literature, it is possible to make conclusions regarding the following research questions.

### **Research question 1: Why is it important for celebrities use social media platforms?**

All three experts agreed that social media was important and discussed their platforms they use themselves or their clients use. While Twitter was listed by every expert as a platform used, Instagram was listed by the two artist. Facebook, YouTube, and Vine were also included. However, each expert suggested a different reason for why social media is important for celebrities to engage in.

The literature also reflects that social media is beneficial to entertainers and some of the same reasons given by the experts were also listed in the literature. Thomas Clayton, CEO of Bubbly, said an additional benefit of bypassing standard distribution channels and using their own social media to promote and distribute materials is that it is less costly and produces higher revenues (Clayton, 2013). This is similar to Ryan Stylez suggestion that social media is beneficial because it allows artist to release their own content. "Social media is the biggest and sometimes the only way to get your content out there. At one time for entertainers and musicians that wasn't available so they literally had to go into radio stations and hire publicity and now social media makes it a lot easier," Stylez said.

Overall, it is possible to conclude that it is important for celebrities to use social media platforms and that they can receive various benefits from doing so.

### **Research question 2: How can using social media improve celebrities' careers?**

The question regarding if social media improves entertainer's careers had varying responses from the experts. While MakJ believes social media platforms can improve celebrities' careers, Stylez and Lehner believe it can help but also have a negative impact on their careers.

The literature reflects MakJ's opinion that social media is beneficial to entertainers careers. Bollywood TV actor Himmanshoo Ashlok Malhotra said, "it's become a necessity for TV actors to be active on social networking sites. Filmmakers tend to look at the number of followers you have on Twitter or likes on Facebook to determine your popularity. They think that the number of followers you have on Twitter translates into the number of tickets the film will sell" (Bhatia, 2014). While the experts listed reasons for how it impacts a celebrity's career, none of them had the same reason as the literature from Bhatia.

Although some experts believe that social media can damage a celebrities' career, they all said it can also have a positive impact on their career. There are a variety of reasons why entertainers benefit from social media platforms. However, it can be established that it is possible for celebrities' careers to benefit from it through the right practices.

### **Research question 3: How can using social media increase a celebrities' fan base?**

When experts were asked if social media can increase a celebrity's fan base they all agreed that it does in fact improve fan relations and growth. However, each expert gave a different reason for why it has this impact. While MakJ said it helps by allowing celebrities to reach fans worldwide that they typically could not reach, Stylez said social media allows artist to spread content that eventually increases viewers and fans. Lehner also had a slightly different reason- it allows celebrities to create hashtags that are spread throughout social media and build a larger fan base.

The literature supports the fact that social media can grow an entertainer's fan base. CEO of Bubbly, Thomas Clayton said that fans crave a person connection with the stars and social media allows celebrities to provide that connection, which can affect the size of their fan base. Additionally the authenticity of social media posts is important and can be the difference in building a strong fan base and ultimately a brand (Clayton, 2013). Although Clayton went more in depth how social media helps generate more fans, he still suggests that social media is a beneficial tool.

Overall, it can be concluded that social media helps celebrities' increase their fan base and therefore increase their celebrity status.

#### **Research question 4: What are the best practices for using social media?**

This question received various answers from the experts. Each expert had their own suggestion for the best practices when it comes to using social media effectively and positively. MakJ said that although he has his publicist or someone from his management team post on his behalf, the best times to post on Twitter and Instagram are 10 a.m. PST and 5 p.m. EST. Stylez, who posts on his accounts himself said it is important to have interesting content because viewers attention spans are short. Lehner, whose clients post on their own accounts, said keeping up on trends and knowing your fans may help celebrities use social media to their advantage.

The literature supports MakJ's response that posting at specific times can cause more traffic on social media posts, however the times suggested vary. According to Ragan's PR Daily, the best times to post on Facebook are Wednesdays between 6 a.m.- 8 a.m. and 2 p.m.-5 p.m. For Twitter, the best times are on weekends from 1 p.m.-3 p.m. (Piombino, 2015). Additionally, literature supports that posting appropriate content will bolster social media presence. This

reflects Lehnern's statement that knowing your audience in order to post effective content is important.

There are various practices that can be exercised by celebrities or those that post on their behalf to create a positive social media presence. However, it is safe to conclude that while there are various practices, the celebrity does not need to follow very strict guidelines and can exercise different practices.

**Research question 5: Are there any additional benefits celebrities may experience by using social media?**

All experts have either endorsed products or have clients that have endorsed products and received benefits from it. While MakJ received cash for endorsing products or services on social media, Stylez receives free items. Lehner said his clients experience both benefits. All experts agree that social media allows entertainers to connect with other people in the industry.

The literature reflects that there are additional benefits and also suggests that endorsing products through social media is a growing trend. "Celebrities who engage actively on the social media space are getting paid at least 25%-30% higher than those who don't, even if the latter have huge mass connect" (Bhushan, 2014). However, the literature suggested that celebrities can use social media to bring awareness to other products and beliefs.

Overall, it can be concluded that there are various benefits celebrities' can experience by using social media appropriately. One of these benefits is connecting with other industry professionals quicker or that they wouldn't be able to reach otherwise.

**Research question 6: Who are individuals that use social media successfully?**

Each expert gave listed a different celebrity that uses social media successfully and also gave different reasoning as to why. While MakJ and Stylez both suggest that all or at least a lot

of celebrities use social media to their advantage, Stylez also said Justin Beieber uses social media successfully. MakJ said successful celebrities make their own content and Stylez said they engage with their fans and create a buzz. Lehner gave specific examples and said that Aaron and Lauren Paul are very successful when it comes to social media because their posts make them appeal as a normal person, allowing fans to connect with them.

The literature also suggested different celebrities that use social media to improve their status. The literature focused on how celebrities use social media to engage with their fans, thus generating more fans. For example, “One of the biggest reasons why fans choose to follow celebrities on social media is that they want to feel in a way that they are ‘friends’ with that celebrity—to get a deeper glimpse into his or her everyday life. Having a celebrity retweet you has become the new autograph, and Taylor Swift is one of the few celebrities that takes the time to do this. Retweeting content is an effective way to not only let a fan know that you’ve heard him loud and clear, but to create brand loyalty as well” (Lanier, 2014).

Overall, it can be concluded that there are various celebrities that use social media to their advantage and the reasons behind their success may also vary. Therefore, there is not one, single answer to how an entertainer can benefit from social media.

### **Recommendations for Research**

There should be more research conducted on the drawbacks of social media. Additionally, there should be studies comparing the pros and cons of celebrities using social media side-by-side. While literature supports that ultimately celebrities benefit from social media, there is still very little literature and research on this topic.

## **Recommendations for Practice**

After completion of the study, substantial data has been collected and analyzed on the topic of celebrities and the use of social media platforms. Given the information's, it is important to highlight the content and present it for future entertainment professionals. Some recommendations for practice include celebrities should create personal social media accounts, celebrities should release their personal content on social media, and celebrities should reap the benefits of using social media platforms.

### **Create a social media presence**

Every celebrity, whether he or she is just starting out in the business or is an A-list star, should have a social media presence. Social media can potential have negative impacts, however more evidence supports that it can have a positive impact on a celebrity's career and fan base. LaQuishe Wright, a social media expert there is a "100 percent benefit" from having a great social media presence (Kaufman, 2013, p. C.1).

Additionally, having various different social media accounts can help you receive various benefits from each one. Social media presence positively impacts a celebrities' career by allowing them to stay relevant for longer periods of time.

### **Release personal content**

Entertainers should release content on their social media platforms that is new and personal. Experts MakJ, Ryan Stylez, and Chase Lehner said that releasing content on social media allows celebrities to bypass traditional way of releasing content. It allows for celebrities to directly share their own views and reaches their audience quicker.

Chase Lehner, an assistant publicist to one of the most powerful publicists in Hollywood said that connecting with fans and releasing content that is personal helps celebrities have a

successful social media presence. Literature agrees saying, “Celebrities use social media website causing their fans to feel like they ‘know’ them through their tweets and Facebook updates, and they feel more connected and significant to their favorite celebs” (Christman, 2011, p. 1).

Therefore, release content through social media can allow a celebrity to receive various benefits.

### **Reap the benefits of social media**

Social media has various benefits and if celebrities use social media properly, they may experience some of these benefits. Entertainers should use social media to reach out to others in the industry. MakJ said he uses social media to connect with producers instead of going through his manager, which makes it more time effective. Additionally, if a celebrity creates a post and integrates a higher-level celebrity that celebrity might reply, potentially pulling audiences from one celebrity to another. This can bolster the lesser-known stars image (Elcessor, 2012).

Whether connecting with other producers or professionals to work with or just increasing their fan base, reaching out to professionals via social media can be very beneficial to entertainers.

Endorsing products on social media has also become a trend and celebrities can either receive money or free products and services by engaging in this. "Celebrities who engage actively on the social media space are getting paid at least 25%-30% higher than those who don't, even if the latter have huge mass connect” (Bhushan, 2014). Artist, MakJ said it is easy to endorse products on social media. “I also do a lot of endorsement stuff and get paid to post basically nothing,” MakJ said.

### **Study Conclusion**

In conclusion, given the general findings of the study, there should be qualitative research done on the topic of celebrities presence on social media. Routine data collection and interview should be conducted based on the fast-paced trends of the subject area. Overall, the study

presented the collective opinions of several experts in related fields and a review of literature on the topic. However, this topic can vary and be somewhat subjective. Therefore, the study and overall recommendations for a celebrity's social media presence cannot be applied to all individuals and professionals. This study is to serve as an educational tool for social media and aid celebrities or professionals in entertainment.

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## Appendix A

### *Interview Transcripts: MakJ*

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from an entertainers perspective based on a questionnaire about celebrities and the use of social media platforms.

Interviewer: Kristin Wright

Respondent: Music producer at KENZ Records (MakJ)

Date of Interview: 3/23/2015

#### *Interview Transcription:*

Kristin Wright: What social media platforms do you regularly use?

MakJ: "I use the typical Twitter, Instagram and Facebook."

KW: "Why do you think it is important for celebrities to use social media?"

MJ: "I think everyone in social media but it's a way for the general public to see what people they like or people you normally wouldn't talk to are doing. Say for example, my mom. I don't talk to my mom that much but she can go on my Instagram and see what I'm doing. Social media portrays kind of a fake life but it's a good way people can keep involved with your life."

KW: "Do you think social media can improve a celebrities' career? Why or why not?"

MJ: "Yeah, I mean I wouldn't be here if I didn't have social media. Everything I've done has been over social media. When I released my first song it was through Beatport, which is an online music platform to sell music. I was able to tell everyone when it was coming out and that it was on beatport. I would have never been able to do that before. I would have had to tell people to go to the record store and told people to check out my music. This way I was able to reach a huge audience and spread the word. So yeah, I wouldn't be here without Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Youtube."

KW: “Do you think social media can improve a celebrities’ fan base? Why or Why not?”

MJ: “Yeah, it’s the same answer as the last ones. Everyone’s on social media. The first thing you do when you wake up is check your social media. You check your Instagram and see how many likes you have. You want to be satisfied instantly and it helps everyone. You gain fans all over the world you typically couldn’t. I have fans all over the world and they can see what I’m doing through social media.”

KW: “What are some of the best practices of using social media?”

MJ: “The best practices? It’s a lot different now. Posting videos on Facebook has been huge. If you post pictures or text it doesn’t reach anyone, but if you post a video now Facebook wants you to buy posts. For example they will say, “You can pay \$100 dollars to boost your post and make it reach all of your fans. It always changes, and that’s the problem with Facebook. Twitter is always the same. If you post at 3 p.m. a lot of people will see it. Everyone posts at 10 a.m. PST because that’s when people are waking up on the west coast. Because that’s when a lot of people wake up and check their phone. On the east coast 5 p.m. is the best time, and that goes for Instagram too.”

KW: “Do you post on your own or does someone else post on your behalf?”

MJ: “I have people do it sometimes, it just depends. Personal stuff I post myself but 90% of my stuff is posted are people that work for me.”

KW: “Why did you decide this?”

MJ: “I don’t spend much time on social media anymore cause I don’t have the time.”

KW: “Are there any other benefits celebrities experience using social media?”

MJ: “Yeah, I’ve been able to use Twitter to my advantage to reach other producers and get music to them or from them or to work with them in the future. I also do a lot of endorsement stuff and get paid to post basically nothing. Like for example, one company I work with will give you money to post twice a day about stupid stuff but if it goes viral they take all of the platforms retweets or reposts and it redirects you to their site. So once it goes to their site they get a lot of traffic. There’s other ways you can do it too but that’s the way most people do it now and it’s a lot of extra money. As for collabs, its not necessarily getting hold of people. On twitter you can just DM someone. Instead of getting a hold of their number and they say ‘how did you get a hold of my number’ you just send them a direct message.”

KW: “Who are some individuals that use social media successfully? Why do you think they are successful?”

MJ: “I think all of them. The best part about social media is that its easy to use and anyone can use it. I think the people who use it most effectively are those who you never heard of before

who gained recognition just through social media. Its like Youtube people who make blogs and now have that as their job. The only way they were able to do this is from gaining followers. Its harder now since everyone is trying to do it and everyone can have a Twitter or Facebook. So I cant really name anyone but its the people who are YouTube producers or producers who made all of their own content

## **Appendix B**

### *Interview Transcripts: Ryan Stylez*

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from an entertainers perspective based on a questionnaire about celebrities and the use of social media platforms.

Interviewer: Kristin Wright  
Respondent: Independent recording artist (Ryan Stylez)  
Date of Interview: 3/24/2015

#### *Interview Transcription:*

Kristin Wright: “What social media platforms do you regularly use?”

Ryan Stylez: “Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Vine.”

KW: “Why do you think it is important for celebrities to use social media?”

RS: “Because social media is the biggest and sometimes the only way to get your content out there. At one time for entertainers and musicians that wasn’t available so they literally had to go into radio stations and hire publicity and now social media makes it a lot easier.”

KW: “Do you think social media can improve a celebrities’ career? Why or why not?”

RS: “Yeah, I mean it can improve it or also hurt it. Like I said before, the amount of people you can reach out to and the changes things go viral is easier now. As an entertainer, we value social media a lot just because we do have a chance to have a song or product that goes viral and without social media that’s not possible.”

KW: Right. Can you describe a time when you used social media to enhance your career?

RS: “Yeah, I mean when I first started doing music it was the reason I got reached out to by record labels and investors. When I made my first song I invited my friends and people that I

knew on Facebook and I had a few people to invite their friends and I think I only had about two or three thousand people on my Facebook group and when I released the song people started posting it on other peoples walls and this was when I was in high school. So people started posting it on each others walls and the views doubled, tripled, etc and I think I got fifteen thousand streams within a week or something and got reached out to by radio stations and music producers.”

KW: “Awesome. Do you think social media can improve a celebrities’ fan base? Why or Why not?”

RS: “Yeah, I mean everything now has the chance to go viral so these new artist are coming out and getting popular all because of social media. Because one person liked it and shared it and it creates a viral effect and increases your fanbase. Its because of sites like Vine and Instagram that allow arist get to so popular so it’s extremely important.”

KW: “Mhm. Can you give an example of how you have used social media to connect with your fans? Or try to build a relationship with them?”

RS: “Yeah, so about two years ago I had this marketing team that was working for me and they found a way to get my post featured on another Instagram account. This was kind of when Instagram was just getting popular and I was getting thousands of new followers and comments just because this marketing program we were running. And just because of that I was able to make it to the popular page a couple of times and my fan base really grew over a couple of weeks just because of an Instagram campaign. Then through that I gained a lot of fans and followers, clothing endorsements and all of that so it was a huge help.”

KW: “What do you think are some of the best practices of using social media?”

RS: “I think content, and what you post is extremely important and putting up the right things. When it comes to social media everyone has a certain attention span, I think its like six to ten seconds then they’ll move on to the next profile so as long as you have good content, that will at least get you in the door.”

KW: “Do you post on your own or does someone else post on your behalf?”

RS: “I post on my Instagram. I’ve had someone else post on my Twitter and other sites. There’s only a couple that are still pretty big, which are Instagram, Twitter and Vine. I think Facebook is dying down a lot. YouTube isn’t so much a social site it’s more for just viewing content.”

KW: “Are there any other benefits celebrities experience using social media other than exploiting content or growing a fan base?”

RS: “I mean if its not getting fans or getting the content out there its about connecting with other people that you haven’t been able to connect with originally. I know artist and celebrities that have met via Instagram and Twitter and it allowed them to work on songs or content together. Before social media that wasn’t possible and you would have to contact your manger who would have to contact their manager and it would be a longer process so I think that’s a big plus.”

KW: “Have you ever endorsed products or services of social media? And did you receive any benefits from endorsing them?”

RS: “Yeah, so I endorse a bunch of clothing lines and how it works with clothing companies is that they’ll send me a box of clothes or like six months supply of hats and bags and accessories or something. Then I just have to go on my social media sites and give them a shout out. I’ve done that with multiple clothing lines. Also technology products too. Like cameras and gear for iPhones and stuff and then I give them a shout out to get them more followers and traffic.”

KW: “Who are some individuals that use social media successfully? And why do you think they are successful?”

RS: “I think a lot of people have. There’s the obvious like Justin Bieber, they’ve created a big buzz for themselves but half of the reason they’re so successful is because of viral content they posted on social media like YouTube or Instagram. I just worked with Christian Millian and she has a huge social following that she got through posting the right content and engaging with her fans. She was able to get 3 million followers. There are also some people you wouldn’t think have a huge social media following that kill is as far as social media is concerned. Just the way they engage with their fans is what gets them a huge following.”

## Appendix C

### *Interview Transcripts: Chase Lenher*

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from an entertainers perspective based on a questionnaire about celebrities and the use of social media platforms.

Interviewer: Kristin Wright

Respondent: Publicist Assistant to Simon Halls at Slate PR (Chase Lehner)

Date of Interview: 3/27/2015

#### *Interview Transcription:*

KW: “What social media platforms do your clients regularly use?”

Chase Lehner: “I think Twitter is most used by our clients. Twitter is a pretty interesting tool because it can be used by celebrities or talent to voice their opinions and what they want the world to know about them without going through their publicist. For example, one of our clients Bryan Singer who is a producer and anytime he has an announcement about his film or hard work he want to share. And those sort of permissions don’t go through our office but its cool because its directly from him and it makes it more personal for followers. So it changed the way talent can share information.”

KW: “Do you think social media can improve a celebrity’s career? Why or why not?”

CL: “I don’t know. I think celebrities need to be careful with social media. We live in this age where, look at the Kardashian’s, their career is fueled by social media. But social media can have

more of a negative impact. It depends on the level of celebrity. If you're a B or C list celebrity and want more people to know about you it can help you gain fans. But if you're an A list celebrity already you may value privacy then I think social media can hurt you. Now, with the creation of memes and stuff celebrities can see things that can be hurtful and we have to remember that celebrities are people too and they have feelings. They read the news and they read Twitter. For example, we had Neil Patrick Harris host the Oscars last week and the reviews were horrible. We didn't want Neil read the review and he said, 'I'm not going to read the reviews, I'm not going to read the reviews.' But sure enough he did, and opened up his Twitter and all it was were people saying negative things about his acting job and he was really upset by it. So in that way its people sometimes its used negatively to hurt people."

KW: "Do you think social media can improve a celebrities' fan base? Why or Why not?"

CL: "Yes, I actually do believe that. I notice when you look at people like Beyonce and Rihanna. They all have a huge following with hashtags they created and other fan accounts that people have created for them. I think social media is beneficial if you're trying to create a fan base like that."

KW: "What are some of the best practices of using social media?"

CL: "I think if you want your fan base to keep growing are to make it a routine to post regularly. We have clients that have social media but don't post regularly so they don't have the biggest following. Its also important to keep up with trends, like in this day in age, our generation finds things that are funny that previous generations would be funny. So you have to keep up with what people like and dislike and know who your fans are. For example, accounts that post a lot of crude humor have a ton of followers because our generation that uses social media the most like that type of humor. Its also important when you can, to respond to your followers."

KW: "Do your clients post on their own behalf?"

CL: "All of our clients post for themselves. I know of some celebrities that have hired people and it's actually pretty normal. But the Kardashians post on their own accounts and I think they're a great example of how to make yourself present in this day and age. Also, what they post is very personal and its not something that someone they hire can do. I think a lot celebrities see that and want to follow what the Kardashians are doing."

KW: "Are there any other benefits celebrities experience using social media?"

CL: "Besides the fact that it's a great way to communicate with fans, it also helps you communicate with other producers or celebrities. Our clients mainly use social media to connect with fans, but if you're just starting out in the industry it's a great way to market yourself and potentially meet new people to work with."

KW: "Do any of your clients endorse products or services of social media? And do they receive any benefits from endorsing them?"

CL: “Yeah, most of our clients have some product or service they endorse. As far as social media goes, it’s been really popular to have celebrities endorse products on Instagram or Twitter. Depending on the product and client they can receive either cash or free products.”

KW: “Who are some individuals that use social media successfully? And why do you think they are successful?”

CL: “I’m a really big fan of Gigi Hadid. Besides the fact that she’s drop dead gorgeous, what I like is that she really appeals to her fan base because she’s honest, open, and vulnerable in her post. It allows people to connect with her compared to someone like Rihanna who posts provocative photos all of the time and sometimes people get sick of it. Whereas, Gigi asks questions and all of her responses seem personal and honest. Also, Lauren and Aaron Paul have amazing Instagram accounts. Aaron Paul, guys love him, girls love him. He’s personable and he posts pictures of himself with fans or doing normal human things. He’s not in your face and it allows people to connect with him. People that follow Aaron Paul feel like they really know him, compared to Kim Kardashian who posts her designer clothes and people are fascinated but they don’t feel like they know the real Kim and can’t really connect with her. If you post normal, everyday things I think people really respect that and respond well to that.”