



**Lower
Manhattan
Cultural
Council**

EMPOWERING ARTISTS,
INVESTED IN COMMUNITY

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS FOR ARTISTS

BOOST YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

QUESTIONS FOR DANIEL GALLANT & NUYORICAN POETS CAFE: INTERNET & SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2012, social media remains an evolving terrain in which artists and organizations must determine which platforms, levels of participation, and tracking methods are most effective and sustainable for their own needs. To inform this process, LMCC invited six artists and arts professionals effectively using social media to share their approaches, successes, and lessons learned.



LOWER MANHATTAN CULTURAL COUNCIL (LMCC): Briefly describe your work as an artist and any other roles or affiliations you have as an arts professional.

DANIEL GALLANT (DG): I'm the Executive Director of the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, as well as a playwright, director, actor, producer and teacher. I've produced plays, musicals, concerts and benefits at dozens of NYC venues. My plays and monologues have been published in several anthologies. I previously worked as the Director of Theater and Talk Programming at the 92nd Street Y's Makor Center and at

92YTribeca.

(LMCC): When and how did you start using social media professionally? How and why do you use it now?

(DG): In 2008, when I started at the Cafe, our only advertising was through print ads and free weeklies, and our ads had no measurable impact. We were missing out on thousands of dollars in potential revenue each year, we had no online presence, and we didn't know if our events were showing up online or in the press, or who/how many people were looking up our events online. We also had no straightforward way to communicate with our fans and followers.

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Between 2008 and 2009, we updated and upgraded our website, added analytics and online presales; launched a Facebook and Twitter account to share event listings, contests, surveys, news items and submission opportunities; customized our Google Places page (which we still update often); created Google Alerts to know when we're mentioned in the press; applied for and received a grant from Google for free Google Adwords to promote a range of different events; increased the frequency and improved the narrative structure of our e-blasts to reach older customers and media contacts; and began using occasional Facebook ads as well banner ads on relevant websites to promote significant events and series. We continue to use all of these mechanisms to promote our programs and our organization as a whole.

(LMCC): Do you use any tools or methods to track readership, website traffic, click-throughs, shares or other evidence that you are reaching and engaging people? If so, which tools and why?

(DG): We have used Google Analytics, Facebook Analytics, Earthlink's website traffic data, promotional codes and Facebook/Twitter-only offers, as well as on-site and online surveys of our fans to gauge the success of our efforts.

(LMCC): If you have one great success story about using social media, please share it.

(DG): Since overhauling our online image and broadening our online outreach, we have *eliminated* all print marketing except for the distribution of our print calendars every month and we have cut our marketing budget enormously while increasing our revenues significantly.

In the last several years, we have grown online ticket sales by 30% and web traffic by 40%. For those events that we spotlight across all our channels (social media, e-blasts, print calendars, Google Adwords and Google Places), ticket sales have grown by an average of 50%. We have doubled the number of our weekly events, more than doubled our annual revenues, boosted our public profile, and used feedback from social networking to create new programs and more effectively target audiences. Social media growth has also correlated to a significant increase in press coverage of our events and of our organization as a whole, and that press coverage has in turn led to increases in earned income.

(LMCC): Please share the most important lesson you've learned using social media—or a “mistake” you think that others could learn from.

(DG): The greatest danger with social media is alienating your fan base through excessive and repetitive promotions. Communicating too sporadically with your fan base is another danger, but you're much less likely to lose fans if you post updates occasionally than if you post non-stop. Establishing a regular rhythm of posting, and a consistent tone to your posts, can help boost your social media efforts.

(LMCC): How do you manage and prioritize your time and effort on social media?

(DG): Maintaining an effective social media presence doesn't tend to take much effort; building a social media presence from scratch (or changing your social

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media strategy significantly) does demand some effort. Currently, our staff only needs to spend a few minutes per day to manage our social media communications, except when we are pushing a particular production, festival or initiative that calls for above-average promotions. Creating our social media presence (across several platforms) and acquainting our fans with it probably took us an average of five work hours per week, over three to four months.

(LMCC): What do you consider to be important “dos and don’ts” for using social media?

(DG):

Do: communicate regularly with your fans; focus many but not all of your posts on your artistic activities; post updates that encourage your fans to act; take into account fan feedback; develop a consistent tone for your communications.

Don’t: communicate incessantly with your fans; go a week or longer without any posts; post entirely about your own activities or entirely about activities that are not your own; re-post other material excessively; allow fan feedback to dominate or significantly alter your strategy.

Daniel Gallant is a theatrical producer, playwright, director and actor based in New York City, and the current Executive Director of the Nuyorican Poets Cafe.

www.nuyorican.org