



strategy + support for
musicians creating change

Air Traffic Control

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BEST PRACTICES IN CAUSE-RELATED CONTENT ON BAND WEBSITES

ON-LINE ACTIVISM: An underutilized opportunity –

We looked at more than 300 websites of artists engaged in activism, and were surprised by what we found. These artists had each shown support for causes through the full range of activities, from participating in a benefit show to establishing their own foundation or nonprofit. Yet few used their websites to educate fans about their work or engage them in the cause. Of the sites we reviewed, fewer than 70 made any mention of their philanthropic work. In some cases, even artists with their own established organizations that are actively raising funds from the community did not promote their involvement on their webpage.

Below are mini-case studies of best practices we identified in the artist community. While no artist need employ all of these tactics to successfully leverage their website, they should be considered as part of a broader community engagement strategy.

DAVE MATTHEWS BAND: Demonstrating service – The Dave Matthews Band shows fans they don't just talk about issues, they engage in them. It is one of the few to comprehensively list all benefits in which the band has been involved. It also clearly explains the band's philanthropic priorities (supporting local organizations in Charlottesville) and gives links to the more than 150 organizations the band has funded. www.davematthewsband.com/#/bamaworks

FALL OUT BOY: Integrating updates – A large proportion of Fall Out Boy's news updates relate to their activism. By encouraging fans to check out organizations or read more about causes of interest to band members on a regular basis, Fall Out Boy both keeps in touch with their fans and engages them in important causes. These updates also leverage other technology platforms, such as twitter, and relate to posts on band members' individual pages. This repetition further engages the audience, integrating it in some of the more intimate ways the band communicates with fans. www.falloutboyrock.com

GREEN DAY: Promoting a partnership – A narrowed focus can increase impact. Green Day channels much of its activism into a partnership with the environmental organization National Resources Defense Council. It promotes this work under the "vote" section of its website, providing a link to a designated partnership page that provides calls to action for US and international fans. It is engaging and easy to understand and execute, and by routing fans that want to take action through NRDC's site, Green Day is helping to grow the constituency of a nonprofit they support. www.greendaynrdc.com

HILLARY DUFF: Knowing your audience – Hillary Duff uses her website to speak to her fans where they are. Her charities tab highlights her own work, providing plenty of pictures of her in action, and includes a list of opportunities appropriate for younger fans wanting to volunteer or

get involved in their communities. Descriptions of organizations include quotations from Hillary that explain her interest and enthusiasm. www.hilaryduff.com/page.asp?id=15886

JACK JOHNSON: Leveraging a fan community – Jack Johnson uses his online community All at Once to support and encourage activism. Members are offered a free music download and can discuss issues, learn more about nonprofits, and volunteer while utilizing social networking components of building profiles and sharing videos and images. www.jackjohnsonmusic.com/allatonce

JOHN LEGEND: Building an organization – John Legend’s Show Me Campaign is a fundraising effort centered around the song of the same name. His website educates readers about the campaign’s work funding sustainable development projects in Africa and clearly articulates how and why fans should support it. Few artist websites facilitate contributions, and this site couples a tasteful ask with enough information to provide credibility. www.johnlegend.com/us/give

RYAN ADAMS: Keeping it simple – In the wake of the devastating earthquake in Haiti, Ryan Adams replaced his website with a single page encouraging contributions to Partners in Health. While not all causes require or are conducive to this type of action, it shows how an artist can powerfully express his beliefs with relatively little additional work. <http://ryanada.ms/>

WILCO: Prioritizing activism – Wilco’s homepage gives activism the same prominence as news, shows, and recordings. Information about their activism is compelling, contextualized in terms of their own participation and described in an engaging manner. Most posts provide links to images, video, or more information about the organizations involved. www.wilcoworld.net/

Air Traffic Control (ATC) exists to help musicians play an effective, unique and vital role in the promotion of social justice. Musicians and managers established ATC five years ago to assemble an experienced and trusted team of leaders, resources and tools that would help them to create more effective social change collaborations with each other and with social justice organizations. As a result, ATC became an artists’ air traffic control—one that develops capacity, efficiency, and coordination to produce stronger and more creative social change partnerships. For more information, please go to www.atctower.net.