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Marketing Yourself with Free Social Networking Tools from Jay Frank, Author of "Hack Your Hit"

by Echo Propp

Jay Frank?s first book, *FutureHit.DNA*, explores the ways technology has changed how we discover new music and discusses a ?genetic makeup? of what today?s artist needs to make their song more hit worthy. His second book, *Hack Your Hit*, is far less about theory and conjecture, and focuses much more on proven metrics. The impetus for writing the book, says Frank, was to create a guide that would give musicians an opportunity ?to take the ideas of the internet and what you can do digitally, and realize that it?s not complex? by boiling it down into simple ideas and ways to market a product without a high overhead marketing cost.

These boiled down ideas turned into 41 free (or, at the very least, cheap) ways to market music. Each of the ideas is explained clearly and succinctly within its own short chapter. Tips and topics range from the more obvious (be as devoted to talking about your music as you are to creating it, target friends of your fans to gain more of a following on social media sites), to the more controversial (does giving away music for free actually help you gain exposure, or does it lessen the overall value of your music?), but each topic is attacked with a spin ? The Hack.

?What is a hack?? you ask. Well, it?s simple. A hack is just a solution to a problem that is achieved by breaking conventional rules. In today?s world, the word ?hack? conjures up images of some nefarious plot that undoubtedly ends in one of a few ways: your identity is stolen on the internet; the contents of your bank account are magically transferred to someone claiming to know your rich, heirless, deceased uncle in Kenya; or your computer is frozen in ?blue screen of death? mode. If any of you have fallen victim to one of these sorts of hacks, I truly apologize, but I assure you that your identity, bank account and computer are

safe in Jay Frank?s hands.

Hack Your Hit offers explanations of the inner workings of social media and marketing sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and then offers tips and tricks on how to work the system to the advantage of your musical product. Instead of simply telling musicians to upload a YouTube video, Jay Frank encourages them to watch it. Why? Because YouTube placement hinges almost solely on the number of views of each video in a string of search results. Therefore, he says, even **the artist?s** viewing of a video increases its web statistics to help the video gain a higher placement in a relevancy search, which in turn increases the chance of the video going viral.

Not all of the tips are based on social media and online promotion. In fact, a fair few of the 41 tips have nothing to do with any sort of online marketing and focus rather on personal interactions ? creating a dialogue and swapping with similar artists to reach their fan base, and employing the Golden Rule: always promote those who promote you. One of the more poignant ideas Frank conveys is that it?s essential for a musician to become an evangelist, utilizing every opportunity to spread the word about their music ? even if it means repeating the message to the same people, multiple times. He asserts that evangelism is so indispensible to success that the reader should stop reading and give up the hope of ever having a hit if they?re not willing to evangelize.

While the vast majority of the tips and tricks in the book are sound and respectable, there are a few ideas the book explores that stretch beyond what some may consider ethical. It?s one thing for an artist to watch their own YouTube video a few times, but quite another to employ the hack of actually purchasing Facebook fans (it must be noted that even the author considers purchasing fans a bit out of boundaries, but he IS writing a book about cheating the system?). In the end, the book is a go-to idea guide. The reader may not have the time to commit to each and every one of the hacks he describes in the book, and will have to decide which of them will work best for their music.

Frank?s writing style is notably conversational. Part of this, he says, is that he ?doesn?t have it in him to write scholarly text.? But his writing style is also a hack: a gimmick. *Free and Cheap Marketing Tips for Musicians* would have been a fine title, but *Hack Your Hit* is more enticing, and the conversational tone allows the reader to retain the information more readily. In keeping with the gimmick, Frank doesn?t use a ton of industry buzzwords or enter into long-winded explanations of the concepts behind his tips and tricks, but rather uses wit and stories of successes and failures alike to illustrate how aspiring musicians can find and nurture superfans, increase online metrics, and strategically direct their time and energy to hit the places the industry watches.

Quite honestly, any aspiring professional musician may very well know about most of the hacks Frank mentions in his book, but they?re almost certainly not employing all of the tactics he describes, and a glance through the table of contents alone is enough to start a brainstorming session of how an artist can target their resources to best market his or her music. Frank also gives a few reading recommendations for those readers looking for more tips and advice on marketing, and a few for those who need a better grasp on some of the social media sites and online skill sets his book asks the reader to employ. Some of the material he recommends includes Derek Siver?s free e-book (available online at http://sivers.org/pdf [1]) as well as his book *Anything You Want*, Ariel Hyatt and Carla Lynne

Hall?s *Musician?s Roadmap to Facebook and Twitter*, and Bob Baker?s *Guerilla Marketing Online*.

And, in closing, ?Man, you gotta read *Hack Your Hit!* There?s a ton of great secrets on how to become famous.? (Insert secret handshake here.)

Jay Frank is the Owner and CEO ofDigSin[2], a new singles-focused music company that allows subscribing fans to obtain music for free.DigSin[2] signs new artists to deals that leverage new platforms, social networks and analytics that expose music to a wider audience, building popularity outside of traditional methods. Prior to forming DigSin, Frank was the Senior Vice President of Music Strategy for CMT, an MTV Network. Under Frank?s leadership, music video ratings reached all-time highs thanks to an aggressive multi-platform promotional strategy. Frank was also Vice President of Music Programming and Label Relations for Yahoo! Music, responsible for all the company?s music programming. He was instrumental in the exponential growth of Yahoo?s audience bringing in approximately 25 million people a month. He was also senior music director at The Box Music Network, worked in marketing and A&R for Ignition Records, managed a live music venue, programmed broadcast radio stations and created two local music video shows.

Tags:
Jay Frank [3]
Hack Your Hit [4]
Echo Propp [5]
Social Networking Tools [6]
marketing [7]

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