

# The Role of Digital Marketing Strategy in Star Promotion - Taking Taylor as An Example

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**Abstract.** With the continuous development of network communication technology, information dissemination, and consumption patterns are closely related to smartphones and network marketing, which leads to a shift in celebrity marketing strategies transmitting from traditional media to multi-channel digital marketing. This paper examines Taylor Swift's marketing strategies across different periods through a literature review, comparative analysis, and model evaluation. By comparing Taylor's marketing strategies over time, the study reveals that digital marketing can enhance fan loyalty and extend a celebrity's peak period of popularity. At the same time, the increasing influence of stars in the industry brought by digital marketing can also help stars enhance their economic value. However, the findings also indicate that excessive use of digital marketing may diminish fan loyalty and reduce fan base. The study showcases the importance of balancing digital marketing efforts to maintain long-term fan engagement and sustain a celebrity's prosperity in the digital market.

**Keywords:** Digital marketing strategy, Star promotion, Content marketing, Character promotion strategy, Fan portrait.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

In recent years, the use of traditional advertising methods has been declining. At the same time, consumers get their information through a variety of online channels, including social media, search engines, and mobile apps. The emergence of new digital channels has led to a major shift in consumer behavior and access to information[1]. These emerging digital platforms offer brands unprecedented opportunities to engage more effectively with their target audiences, resulting in increased brand awareness and product sales. Therefore, digital marketing has quickly become a major strategy for companies to promote their products[1].

### 1.2. Literature review

In this digital marketing, celebrity endorsements have become a crucial tool for further boosting product sales and brand visibility. Celebrities need to build their persona because, the more relatable and personable a celebrity, the more connected their followers will feel[1]. Media platforms have become an important tool for posting celebrities' daily lives and expressing their values, which enables real-time interaction and engagement between celebrities and fans and helps to solidify the celebrity's persona. Khamis, Ang and Welling argued that content marketing, while effective in some cases, can sometimes backfire by creating a stereotypical image of the celebrity, which may hinder the development of a more complex and multifaceted persona[2]. This is particularly problematic in an era where audiences increasingly value authenticity. Conversely, it is highlighted that when executed well, digital marketing can lead to a successful and dynamic public persona that resonates with a wide audience, as evidenced by the rise of social media influencers who have managed to build substantial followings and commercial success[2].

Celebrity endorsement has been discussed widely on whether it serves as a powerful tool in influencing consumer behavior and enhancing brand visibility. Although scholars of previous studies like Suwitho et al.,[3] revealed that celebrity endorsement does not affect consumers' purchasing



decisions, the previous study conducted by Wijyaningrum et al.,[4], discovered that celebrity endorsements have a positive relationship with consumers' buying decisions, and the recent study conducted by Annissa and Paramita [5], who analyzed celebrity endorsement which also showed that it successfully influences consumer's decisions. Therefore, over-construction can lead to a loss of authenticity, causing fans to perceive the celebrity as overly commercialized or inauthentic[5]. This can result in decreased fan engagement and loyalty. On the other hand, the under-construction of a celebrity's image can result in a lack of clarity and identity, making it difficult for the celebrity to stand out in a competitive market[5].

### **1.3. Aim**

Based on the aforementioned issues, Taking Taylor Swift as an example, this paper analyzes the same or different marketing strategies used by Taylor's company in different periods. Compares these strategies and further analyzes their influence on star publicity, aims to explore effective digital marketing strategies that help celebrities accurately position themselves within the market from the perspective of fan profiling, and enhance their industry influence while ensuring fan loyalty and the sustainability of their careers.

## **2. Method**

The present study employs literature analysis, comparative analysis, and model analysis to examine the marketing strategies used to gauge Taylor's fan base across different periods. Additionally, it aims to investigate the impact of digital marketing techniques on celebrity publicity.

### **2.1. Document analysis**

This paper will study the literature on star marketing, brand marketing, and Taylor Swift, to find out how Taylor Swift can enhance her influence through digital marketing and finally create her unique brand value.

### **2.2. Contrastive analysis**

This study utilizes a comparative analysis approach to evaluate the effectiveness of traditional and digital marketing strategies across different periods that are used by Taylor Swift. Comparative analysis involves systematically comparing specific strategies and outcomes within varying social contexts, which enables an understanding of how similar strategies have led to different results depending on the period and surrounding marketing environment[6]. By analyzing strategies across different periods, this method will shed light on the impact of evolving social environments on advertising and marketing outcomes.

### **2.3. Model analysis**

This method is a technique that makes analysis and inference based on various influencing factors[6]. Through marketing model analysis, this paper explores how to enhance the economic value and social influence of stars through effective digital marketing strategies from the perspectives of marketing strategy selection and role marketing.

## **3. Digital marketing strategy with Taylor Swift**

Taylor Swift (Taylor), a well-known legacy artist of all time, is a leading picture of American popular music. She is also known for the cultural and economic impacts conducted by releasing albums, participating in interviews, and holding concerts[6]. Taylor Swift's career is marked by a remarkable evolution in both her public persona and marketing strategies, which have significantly contributed to her sustained success and ever-growing fan base. Fog Arty and Arnold exemplified Swift's shifting personas ranging from girl-next-door, cheerleader, heart breaker, nerdy girl, businesswoman to

cottage care explorer[6]. She is worth crediting with being a music industry herself before because, for women in the pop industry, it's always a tough sell to convince audiences that they are the producers of their words, images, and sounds, especially when they are young[5,6].

### 3.1. Taylor with traditional marketing strategies.

Traditional marketing strategies such as magazine features and newspaper articles played a crucial role in building her early fan base[7]. Taylor was frequently featured in country music magazines and mainstream publications, which helped to spread her image across different media platforms. These publications often highlighted her songwriting abilities, positioning her not just as a performer but also as an authentic artist who wrote her songs a significant selling point in the country music genre. Her music videos, often set in idyllic, rural environments and focused on innocent, romantic story lines, reinforced this image and made her particularly appealing to a young male audience[7]. The combination of Taylor's marketable persona and traditional marketing techniques allowed her to build a strong, loyal fan base early in her career. However, this fan base was predominantly male, given the appeal of her physical appearance and the straightforward, accessible nature of her music[7].

Considering the limitations of traditional online marketing and media marketing, Early Taylor's design and brand marketing focus on the positioning of the user. Therefore, although the traditional marketing model has laid a certain foundation for the number of her fans and industry influence, there is still great resistance to forming a wide impact (Table 1) [7,8] .

**Table 1.** SWOT analysis with Traditional marketing strategies and earlier Taylor

Strengths	Clear and consistent branding, resonated well with Taylor's target audience.
Weakness	The narrow focus on a specific demographic may have limited Taylor's appeal to a broader audience.
Opportunities	Expanding Taylor's reach through crossover hits that could attract more diverse listeners.
Threats	The highly competitive nature of the music industry, particularly in the country music genre, where maintaining relevance requires constant innovation.

### 3.2. Digital Marketing and Taylor Swift.

As Taylor Swift's career progressed into the mid-to-late 2010s, her persona underwent a significant transformation, largely due to a series of publicized events, including her sexual assault trial, her disputes with former record label Big Machine, and her highly publicized feud with Kanye West. These experiences catalyzed a shift in her image from the innocent "girl next door" to a more complex, empowered, and resilient figure. This transformation was not only reflected in her music, which began to explore more mature themes but also in her marketing strategies, which adapted to the digital age[8].

Taylor's transition to a more mature, self-assured persona was through the transformation of marketing strategy, the use of digital marketing, especially the use of online media marketing timeliness, openness, transparency characteristics, strong, independent, blooming of human marketing. She began to utilize social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube not just for promotion, but as tools for narrative control, which allowed her to engage with a broader and more diverse audience, particularly adult women who resonated with her experiences of overcoming adversity[8]. By sharing personal stories, engaging in direct communication with fans, and offering a behind-the-scenes look at her life and creative process, Taylor cultivated an image of authenticity and vulnerability that deeply connected with her audience. This new image was effectively marketed through the release of albums like "Reputation" and "Lover" which were accompanied by intricate, multi-channel marketing campaigns that included digital album releases, exclusive streaming partnerships, and merchandise lines that further solidified her brand as a strong, independent woman.

Taylor's shift from physical to digital marketing also allowed her to capitalize on the growing trend of streaming services, enabling her to reach global audiences more effectively[8].

With the improvement of Taylor's "Fan Effect", the cooperation with brands and the expansion of channels have also become the focus of Taylor's team in the digital marketing strategy.

Taylor Swift effectively utilized content marketing to maximize the impact of specific events or products. Whether it was through the release of a new song, a strategic merchandise line, or a well-timed social media campaign, she expertly crafted narratives that amplified her message and reinforced her public image. For instance, her albums often came with intricate marketing campaigns that included exclusive behind-the-scenes content, limited-edition products, and collaborations with other brands, all designed to deepen fan engagement and loyalty. By promoting positive, empowering messages through her music and online presence, she not only solidified her relationship with existing fans but also continuously attracted new ones[8,9].

Moreover, before the Reputation tour, Taylor Swift built a partnership with Ticketmaster. This partnership ensures fans a way to obtain tickets for her concerts. Ticketmaster provided fans a chance to spend money on merchandise and albums, which set up a "Verified Fan Program", which enables potential ticket buyers to pre-order and shop Reputation merchandise to unlock access to concert tickets[8,9]. This strategy deepens the emotional connection between the artist and her fan base. Fans feel more invested in the artist, which fosters loyalty and increases the likelihood of repeat purchases. This strategy allows Ticketmaster and Taylor Swift to capitalize on multiple revenue streams effectively bundling products and maximizing sales per fan. This performance also set a record for the highest economic performance in Taylor's tour history (refer with: Fig. 1) [8,9].



**Figure 1.** Revenue for Each Tour with Taylor Swift [9]

### 3.3. The impact of digital marketing on star promotion.

Through comparison, it can be found that the traditional marketing model has great limitations on the establishment and influence promotion of stars. In her early years, Taylor Swift was introduced to the world as the quintessential "American sweetheart" a young, innocent artist with blonde hair, red lips, and a sweet voice[10]. Taylor Swift represents the old American dream whose various representations illustrate the so-called "old normal American", and she may be a monument to an old, white America, but she's also an avatar of a future that is female[6,10]. After Taylor relocated to Nashville, she sought to explore a transformation in her musical style and artistic expression. Nevertheless, despite Taylor and her marketing team's extensive utilization of media marketing channels such as country music channel promotions, radio stations, and Country Music Television, the homogeneous nature of her

media exposure and the loyalty of her early fan base hindered a swift transition. Consequently, Taylor's initial live performances primarily targeted the South and Midwest regions as their main markets[10].

However, Taylor has seized her second chance to make the transition. Although the sexual assault incident and the album incident had a very negative impact on Taylor herself, she and her team made timely use of the already mature digital marketing means, through the exposure of online multi-channel content, and the positive response of publicity, based on ensuring the retention of Taylor's existing fans[10]. To maximize Taylor's influence in society. At the same time, this incident, successfully helped Taylor complete the transformation of adult equipment and avoided the negative economic and social effects brought by the "collapse effect".

At the same time, through the transformation of Taylor's marketing, it can be found that brand cooperation and expanding market effect are also extremely important for the sustainable development of stars. Consumers are more likely to purchase products and engage with brands influenced by well-known actors or popular celebrities. Therefore, this marketing strategy is efficient in enhancing the star power of celebrities to quickly attract consumer attention. Moreover, the success of celebrity endorsements is not solely dependent on the celebrities' fame; it is also intrinsically linked to the design and maintenance of their public personas[10]. Celebrities who aim to enhance their star power and economic value must carefully craft and manage their public image. Through the effective promotion of personas, celebrities can establish a unique personal brand, which could make it easier for them to attract the attention of investors. To be more specific, celebrities with a positive image and exceptional talent can not only gain public admiration but also add substantial value to the products they endorse. At the same time, a celebrity's public persona is a critical factor for brands to consider when they are about to select an endorser for their brands. Therefore, celebrities who continuously make efforts to improve their professional skills and public image are more likely to secure lucrative endorsements and media partnerships[9,10].

In addition to the above-related advantages, excessive marketing under digital marketing may also bring a "bite back" effect to stars and brands. Therefore, in the promotion of stars, it is still necessary to use reasonable and moderate digital marketing means to ensure the "flourishing period or heyday" of stars and the sustainable development of economic effects (Table 2) [8,9,10].

**Table 2.** SWOT analysis with digital marketing in star promotion

Strengths	The ability to engage with fans on a personal level through social media, increased control of the star's public narrative, and increased revenue streams through digital album sales and diversified brand endorsements.
Weaknesses	Overexposure, as constant visibility on social media, can sometimes lead to public fatigue.
Opportunities	Continue to expand the global reach of stars and explore new forms of content marketing, such as partnerships with other artists or brands, to enhance human-created image alignment.
Threats	The instability of digital platforms, where one misstep can lead to a serious public backlash, and a highly competitive environment across industries were staying relevant requires constant innovation.

#### 4. Summary

In conclusion, this study investigates the impacts of digital marketing on celebrities with a particular focus on Taylor Swift's marketing strategies over different periods. The research identifies several key influences of digital marketing on enhancing fan loyalty and extending the longevity of a

celebrity's popularity. However, it also uncovers issues such as the potential decline in fan loyalty and fan base when digital marketing is overused. These findings suggest that while digital marketing can be highly effective, there are inherent risks associated with its over-reliance, which can lead to negative outcomes.

To mitigate these adverse effects, the study suggests optimizing digital marketing strategies by maintaining a balanced approach that integrates traditional marketing methods with digital efforts. This balance can help sustain long-term fan engagement and prevent the erosion of fan loyalty. Additionally, the research highlights the importance of a celebrity's professional skills and the quality of their work in maintaining credibility and influence. This points to a limitation in the current study, as it primarily focuses on digital marketing without thoroughly addressing the role of a celebrity's personal and professional development in their overall success.

Considering that the relationship between digital marketing and celebrities is not only the promotion effect of increasing influence, therefore future research should explore the interplay between digital marketing and a celebrity's professional growth, aiming to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how celebrities, particularly musicians, can maintain a competitive edge in the industry. By addressing these areas, future studies can offer valuable insights into creating more sustainable and effective celebrity marketing strategies.

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