

# The Reluctant Marketer

by Michael Lake  
JazzDigitalMarketing.com



## **The Reluctant Marketer**

is someone who wants to make more money from their skills but they're conflicted because they're uncomfortable doing what they need to do in order to promote themselves and their work effectively.

Why? For many, self-promotion feels wrong. We look around and see products we don't want being pushed with obnoxious hyperbole.

As a musician, we're promoting something

very personal—our soul! It can feel like we are selling that for money.

On the other hand, you might feel self-conscious because self-promotion seems somehow to be an admission of need or desperation.

Another reason might be that you believe that good marketing will be too expensive and take more time that you have to give it.

So, how can you get past all of that?

**JAZZ**  
*Digital Marketing*

## Good marketing starts with a mindset

Consider: if you don't go out there and promote yourself, your products, and your talents, you are depriving the musicians who need you most.

They need you for gigs, playing your arrangements, using your teaching materials, taking lessons, leading clinics, reading your books, listening to your CDs, and everything else you have to offer the musical world.

You are solving a very real need people have. Sometimes, by the way, we don't even know we have a need to be filled until the solution is put in front of us.

*“People don't want what you make. They want the way it will make them feel.”*

- Seth Godin, *marketer, entrepreneur, best-selling author*

## Good marketing for you

Before knowing how to promote yourself, answer a few questions:

- What are your greatest skills?
- What do you want to promote and make money from?
- What is unique about your personality, your music, and the things you can offer people that they cannot find anywhere else?
- What stage are you in your life and career?
- How much effort are you willing to put into learning and doing of marketing yourself?
- What do you fear most about marketing and selling?
- What is the big-picture outcome you most desire?



## How can you make more money for yourself?

- Gigs
- Private teaching
- School clinics
- Studio work
- Writing (original compositions or arrangements)
- Books
- Video lessons or courses
- Instrument repair
- Consulting

## Marketing is a broad topic.

So within the following pages, let's focus on just three key aspects of it.

- 1 Your website
- 2 Engaging your audience
- 3 A strategy for converting your good work into money

## 1 Your Website

Your site can be your store, your public identity, and your professional showcase

Do you have a website? If you do, think about how long ago it was built. Have you done anything with it since? I'm not trying to make you feel bad, just helping you think about why you might want to rebuild it.

Technology is evolving rapidly, so the foundation of your site may be legacy technology that no longer provides what it once did. And given the advances in security both from the bad guys and the good guys, a site built on modern technology is critical these days.

Also, the tools for things like search engine optimization, calendars, audio/video display, and design are miles ahead of even ten years ago.

Is your site too old to be effective?

- Is it a small square space in the middle of the screen?
- Does it use those glass-type 3-D buttons?
- Does it take a long time to load?
- Do your site show up nowhere near the top of a search on your name?
- Were the photos of you taken more than 10 years ago?

Those are just a few of the indicators that your site could be the Internet equivalent of a 1976 Ford Pinto. It needs an upgrade.



But at least your old website won't explode if it crashes!

**JAZZ**  
*Digital Marketing*

## What if you don't have a website?

There's no site for you or your band? Then there's nothing to rebuild (or for me to shame you on!)

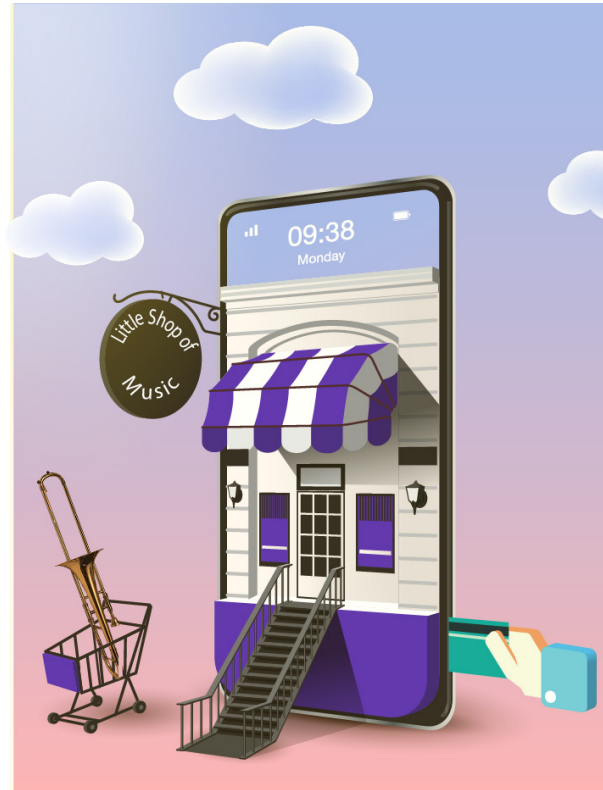
The question now to answer is, will you benefit from having a website?

There's no right or wrong reasons to have a website. Your site could be as simple as an online space to show off your writing or just a way for your fans to know where you are playing.

You could have a scrolling one-page site or a bigger site with several pages and a navigation menu.

If you have produced music or other things to sell, creating a place on your site these days to display and sell is relatively easy to manage.

Gone are the days when putting a shopping cart on your site and collecting credit card payments was technically difficult and expensive.



## 2 Engaging your audience

A main purpose of your marketing is to make and promote remarkable stuff for those who need it.

Audiences come in all flavors and sizes. Your audience might consist of fans of your local live performances, the students you teach, or people who know and buy/stream your recordings or published music.

They are out there but do you have a way to find and engage with them?



## Using social media

Sure, you may be on social media, but that's "rented" space over which you have little control.

On Facebook and the other popular social media platforms, you cannot email your followers. You can only post things, hoping they see it, and direct message them but that's limited in what you can send.

More and more, the content you post is being scrutinized, and not always in a good way for you.

Also, directly selling your stuff in most social media outlets isn't effective. People prefer not to be sold on social media.

With your own website, you own the platform and determine what you say and how you say it.

## Attracting and collecting your audience

To attract an audience from your website, offer people something they value in exchange for their name and email address.

We all get too much email, let alone spam! You have to trade people something of value in order to get their permission before you add to their daily email load.

It should be more than just, “Sign up for my newsletter.” We don’t know what your newsletter is or if we will benefit from it.

So post a piece of written, audio, or video content on your site to give away free in exchange for people leaving their name, email, and other information.

*“Trade people something of value in order to get their permission before you add to their daily email load.”*

## Ideas for things you can offer for your website’s visitors name and email

- A classic solo transcription
- Your review of instruments, mouthpieces, microphones, etc.
- A discount on something you sell
- An short ebook like this one on your chosen topic
- A written or video interview with someone well-known
- Unique playing tips
- Technology advice and/or resources
- Members-only access to a portion of your site
- Little-known but interesting music resources

### 3 A strategy for converting your good work into money

This is where you ask for the money in return for delivering remarkable value.

Have you heard the saying, “Nothing happens until the sale is made?” It is easy to be consumed by all the effort it takes to produce an album, write a book, post to social media, teach a student, build a website, and so forth, so how do you turn all that effort into money?

You do so by:

1. Being comfortable asking for the money you are worth
2. Not being afraid of the basic mechanics of online business
3. Charging the right price
4. Providing remarkable service to each client.

Are you comfortable asking for money? You may be thinking, “I don’t have a problem. When the gig ends, I ask for my money.”

But I’m referring to something different. The ‘asking’ I’m referring to is after you’ve put your albums, charts, books, teaching, and other products out into the world, encouraging people to buy them. Does asking for that money make you uneasy?

*“Your price should be the highest amount you can get from the greatest number of people.”*

If you are like most of us, you probably charge too little for your good work.

I don’t have magic solution for you if selling makes you uneasy. Maybe just thinking about it right now is a first step.

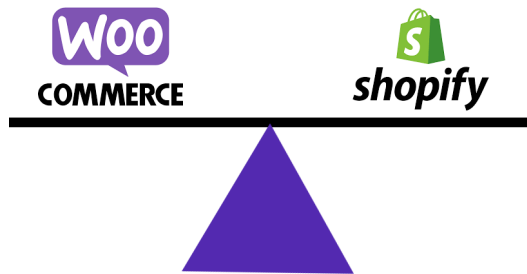


## Let's talk about the mechanics.

Setting up an online store to accept payments is pretty easy. I use Spotify (they do not pay me for this mention) and have been for over ten years. Their big competitor is Woo Commerce. Kind of like McDonald's and Burger King of third-party online commerce.

You'll want Woo Commerce if you love tinkering and having lots of customization options so that your store looks more integrated with the look of your website.

You'll want Shopify if you want an easier interface, and customer support that is available and willing to take you by the hand. Most of the time, their support has been the best of any vendor I've ever used.



## The price is right

One difficulty of selling goods and services is deciding on the right price.

Price is not based on your time or your cost. Your price should be the highest amount you can get from the greatest number of people.

You might sell 1,000 people lessons for \$1 each or maybe one person is willing to pay you \$1,000 for a lesson. But the right price is somewhere in the middle. What is it?

If you need to, it's easier to start with a higher price and work your way down than it is to raise your price. Although, you could always blame inflation!

Regardless, get out there and test your price. If you are selling your time for things like lessons or commissioned music, your price should be the highest price you can get so that all your available time is filled, whether that available time is 10 hours a week or 60.

## Serving the people who buy from you

Great service is a something everybody brags about but so few really provide.

**Do this for the people who pay you money for what you provide and they will tell others about you.**

- Be honest
- Respond to them quickly whenever they have a question or request.
- Solve the problem or provide what they asked for quickly
- Do not make excuses - accept blame for mistakes you make
- Help them feel special
- Do a little bit more that they expect
- Did I mention, “Be honest?”

These may seem simplistic and obvious, but look around and ask yourself: how many of people from whom you buy do rave about to others?

Do your students rave about you? Do your listeners rave about you? What do the buyers of your music say?

---

Marketing is so much more than just logos, advertising, and Black Friday sales. Marketing is fundamentally about the quality of your good or service, and how you show up for your clients and customers.

The world is changing. The means for making money as a musician is changing. The tools to promote yourself and your wares is changing.

There is no better time than the present to take a fresh look at the direction of your career and become less reluctant to promote your skills, talents, and the products and services you do best.

**JAZZ**  
*Digital Marketing*

## Who is Michael Lake and Jazz Digital Marketing?

Michael is a Grammy-nominated jazz and latin trombonist, author, and composer living in his beloved state of Arizona, USA.

A writer of over a dozen books on trombone, jazz, improvisation, and business, Michael has also created multiple online courses on jazz.

In early 2020, Michael held the week-long Jazz Master Summit. Over 10,000 jazz players watched his live interviews and his video interview series with some of the greatest jazz players in the world.

Using his creativity and technical skills, Michael now helps musicians and others in the music business promote themselves through his company, Jazz Digital Marketing.

Reach out to Michael below if you want to know how he can build you a great website and/or help you determine how best to raise your visibility and sell whatever it is your do best.

[mlake@JazzDigitalMarketing.com](mailto:mlake@JazzDigitalMarketing.com)

[www.JazzDigitalMarketing.com](http://www.JazzDigitalMarketing.com)

**JAZZ**  
*Digital Marketing*