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DIGITS

## Singer Tiffany Alvord Explains How to Become a YouTube Star

*By Eva Tam*

Mar 26, 2015 3:28 am ET



Internet celebrity Tiffany Alvord is one of most popular unsigned female singers on YouTube. She gained fame from her video covers of Taylor Swift, Iggy Azalea and Pink, while also performing her own original music.

The doe-eyed 22-year-old now has 2.5 million subscribers on her YouTube channel.

The Wall Street Journal sat down with Alvord to talk about how she grew her fan base in eight years. Edited excerpts:

### **Did you always want to be a singer?**

I actually wanted to be an actress at first. I took acting classes. I loved singing but I loved songwriting more. That's my real passion and that's what came along with singing. I started pursuing that when I found YouTube.

### **What was it like starting out on YouTube?**

I feel like when I first started in 2008, it was a lot easier to be heard and found. There were a lot less people doing it. I post[ed] my first cover and after a couple of weeks, I had 300 views. It's insane to think how gradually with time, there's been this momentum. It's a lot harder to be noticed if you're just starting out and just trying to make it.

### **How do you grow your fan base?**

Collaborations are one of the most important parts of growing your fan base. I've collaborated a ton of YouTubers. When you collaborate, you introduce your fans to their fans. There's a crossover of fans. It's great because it ties in the whole YouTube community. It makes people realize that it's a family, not a competition. We're all in this together and living our dreams and pursuing what makes us happy.

### **Do you edit and shoot your own videos?**

When I started, I used Sony Vegas, and I'd edit my own videos. When I started making content and producing better quality, I decided to outsource it to people who can do it better and faster. There's a long process of recording. First, you got to decide the song get into the studio, takes a day to record, plan filming and then you edit the video. Sometimes I'll edit it when I have free time. I think it's cool to be part of the process and what goes into it. You have your own vision and you know what you like.

### **How do you use social media to grow your fan base?**

My strategy to keep my fans engaged is to be authentic, and to be me. That's one of the biggest things that make YouTubers successful because fans don't see us as some unreachable idol, but actually regular people living their lives and sharing that with them. I try to connect through Twitter a lot. I love tweeting because I can connect through my fans regularly.

### **What's your advice to aspiring YouTube singers?**

A lot of times there will be haters and negativity. I feel as YouTube grows, there's more and more people, [and] they will troll you. They try to get a reaction. My other advice for singers is to do covers because that was one of the big things [that helped] other people find my music.

*Watch the video above to see the rest of the interview with Tiffany Alvord.*

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