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INTE 5665
Spring 2018

Professional Learning and Networking Plan

Thought Leadership Goals

As a professional freelance writer interested in publishing YA fiction books, I must create a network with other writers and build an audience for my work. This is achieved through a consistent flow of web content, published work, and social media marketing. Already, I have published a number of short stories and poetry to literary journals, as well as articles to digital publications. Also, I offer to leave honest reviews for indie authors on Amazon and Goodreads in exchange for free ebook copies. This has helped me connect and form relationships with authors.

Being a leader in the writing community--especially for YA fiction--is challenging and competitive considering there are so many talented and established writers already present on the Internet. Nonetheless, earning a B.A. in English Writing and working as a PR content writer/ghostwriter has allowed my foot in the door for achieving a career in writing. Editors and agents look for writers with a background in publishing and professional writing when deciding which manuscript of the hundreds they receive a week to dedicate their limited time to publishing.

Utilizing the a Base Camp and a Network Learning Space to build a web presence (fanbase) will increase my chances, as well as spread my goals for my audience:

- Read for fifteen minutes every day.
- Write everyday, even if it is only one sentence.
- Support indie (self-published) authors.

Professional Learning Network

My Professional Learning Network consists of indie authors, YA fiction writers, and bookworms. Many of whom I have connected with through Twitter or NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month), whereas others I met at writing conferences and workshops. Twitter-based book marketing companies, like Booktasters, has me choose

titles from their collections before connecting me to the authors and ensuring I write reviews (good or bad) for the free copies. This plays a major role in how I not only follow through with my goal as a thought leader to support indie authors but also turn my name into a brand for my work. My next step is to continue expanding my network and begin forming a relationship with my potential readers.

Role of Base Camp Site and Networked Learning Space

My Base Camp acts as a headquarters for my published work, resume, and book reviews. Occasionally, I aim to post an article for my blog once or twice a month. Something I want to look into is creating a “blog book,” or a story that is exclusive to a blog or website. Each week, the goal is to submit one chapter to a page or section dedicated to that story. Many writers are taking this route as an alternative to traditional publishing and to help with website traffic. Furthermore, my Base Camp will soon offer a bi-weekly newsletter for my Network Learning Spaces to subscribers. Not only will this newsletter help engage an audience to my content, but also it will link to other authors who write YA.

Most of my activity will be on Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest. My current Network Learning Space, “Manuscript Workshop,” has gained some followers who are interested in publishing, but I would like to expand my reach to Facebook by creating a NLS that targets YA adult readers and writers. I already started a public page called “I Write YA” and will begin posting content and promoting books--from other authors--on a daily basis. (See Next Steps with Social Networking/Media.) Also, “I Write YA” will encourage followers to participate in discussions and will, eventually, offer book and gift card giveaways.

Strategic Plan for Establishing Web Presence

The following are my responses to some of the strategies for establishing web presence presented in “[Intentional Web Presence: 10 SEO Strategies Every Academic Needs to Know](#)” by Patrick Lowenthal and Joni Dunlap:

Strategy #2: Regularly update your professional websites. Having a website or online portfolio is a given for every writer. Keeping it updated with recent published work is how readers, editors, and agents can track your progress. With this in mind, I aim to update my website once or twice a month with blog posts and book reviews. Also,

whenever I publish a written work, I add it to my “Published Works” section and to my resume under “Lists of Accomplishments.”

Strategy #3: Track your traffic. Traffic for my Base Camp is low considering I am just starting off. I am most active on Twitter; thus, my traffic ranges between 200 and 600 impressions daily--around 4,000 to 5,000 impressions monthly. (This is still on the low-side, but my traffic has increased dramatically in the past few months due to consistent tweeting.)

Strategy #5: Publish your work via social media sharing sites. Whenever I publish a written work or review a book for authors, I always share it on social media. This is the fastest way to channel work to an audience. I plan on looking into SlideShare for sharing tips on publishing and linking to my Pinterest NLS.

Strategy #6: Leverage social networks. Nowadays, writers cannot get away with ignoring Twitter. This is the top social media platform editors and agents use to contact writers. Furthermore, the writing community on Twitter is substantial compared to those on Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. In general, social media platforms are essential for marketing books. Some authors give their books “photoshoots” (with props and backgrounds) for Instagram, and others create book trailers for BookTube. I spend a majority of my networking and marketing time on Twitter and will continue to do so due to my success with communicating with other writers.

Strategy #7: Be a good user of others' content. This strategy is a key component for every author who has been self-published or traditionally published. By reviewing indie books in exchange for free copies, I am supporting authors by introducing their work to my network. Success is not based on what someone does on their own and for themselves, but instead it is based on how the person affect and influence a community.

Strategy #8: Complete all profiles. Nothing says fake or inactive account more than an incomplete profile. While it may be repetitive and tedious, filling out profiles for every social media account is important and gives the audience a glimpse of who a writer is. This is something I struggle with but have been getting better. There are three

things I always make sure to include: a profile picture, a description, and contact information.

Description of Privacy Concerns and Strategies

I am not too concerned about privacy other than I do not want my location and my home life to be involved with my professional accounts. Therefore, I keep my content strictly about writing, reading, and general interests. My biggest issue right now is following fake accounts on Twitter. While creating a web presence, it is important to “follow back” Twitter accounts as a courtesy and way to keep current followers. Accidentally liking and retweeting content from a porn account can be shocking and harmful to any brand. There are a number of Twitter managing websites that can determine a harmful account and block it.

Next Steps with Social Networking/Media

At the 2018 Seattle Writing Workshop, I attended the lecture “Book Marketing from Your Couch” by [Jennifer Bardsley](#), a best-selling author and columnist for “I Brake for Moms” for the Sunday edition of The Everett Daily Herald, which gave invaluable insight on how to develop a web presence with a specific audience and market a book using the right social media platform. According to Bardsley, juggling too many accounts skews the balance of writing and marketing a writer’s book (both indie and traditional). The best option is to choose the platforms specific audiences are most active on.

Age plays an important factor. Readers between the ages of 18 and 35 are more active on Facebook and Twitter, whereas readers below the ages of 18 dedicate their time to Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. Deciding between an audience also depends on genre and how readers will have access and read a book. If YA writers wish to self-publish and primarily promote ebooks, they might consider readers older than early-twenties who are more accepting of ebooks and own an e-reader. Most teenage readers, on the other hand, prefer to have the physical copy of a book. Therefore, after re-evaluating my audience, women YA readers between the ages of 18 and 35, I based my strategy for establishing a web presence off of Bardsley’s advice.

Plan for Twitter

- Follow more readers and writers.
- Post 4 to 5 times a day.
- Use two to three hashtags (mostly #amwriting and #amreading).

- Ensure a “snobby ratio” (having more followers than who you are following).
 - Set up a ManageFlitter account to unfollow fake and inactive accounts.
 - Unfollow accounts you do not like or mean to follow (like porn).

Plan for Facebook

- Create a new Network Learning Space that targets women YA readers between the ages of 18 and 35. (I started one last week called I Write YA.)
- Start out as public, but change to private after gaining more followers.
- Promote books once of every 20 posts (ratio of 1:20).
- Talk about what your audience likes.
- Create reading and writing memes.
- Do NOT use hashtags for Facebook (a rookie’s mistake for book marketing).
- Create a newsletter for my NLS which can be subscribed to through my Base Camp.

Despite my primary audience being most active on Facebook and Twitter, I would still like to reach out to teenage readers on Instagram. Here is my marketing plan for Instagram:

- Spend 15 minutes in the morning “hearting” as many #amwriting posts as possible. (Instagram freezes your account if you go over 300 hearts in an hour.)
- Post once a day using the same book promotion ratio as Facebook (1:20).
- Take photos of physical books with props.
- Use the props to form as many hashtags as possible, while still using hashtags for the book.

Bardsley stressed the importance of providing different content for each platform. While doing so does take a lot of time and effort, the journey to being a successful author is half writing and publishing and half marketing.