

BUILDING BRANDED COMMUNICATION TOOLS TO SUPPORT YOUR AUTHOR PLATFORM

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WHAT IS AN AUTHOR PLATFORM?

Your ability to reach contacts and ideal readers in order to promote your unique expertise or perspective.

WHY DO YOU NEED AN AUTHOR PLATFORM?

Publishers may pay advances/contract with you for completing nonfiction manuscripts or for your fiction, but *contacts* can help sell books, and *readers* buy books. The more readers know about you, the more likely they are to buy books. The more you expand your readership/contacts, the more desirable you are to publishers. The more desirable you are, the greater your negotiating power with publishers.

TO GROW YOUR PLATFORM, YOU NEED COMMUNICATION TOOLS.

The best tools are not managed by organizations where you work, by book publishers, or even by a publicist. They are owned, managed, and expanded by you.

ARE YOUR EXISTING COMMUNICATION TOOLS SUFFICIENT?

Answer the below “yes” or “no.”

Do you have *a single location* online that provides a place for:

- Publishers to find information about your credentials, events, and news?
- Readers to find information about your books and where to buy them?
- Representatives or book clubs who organize speaking events to see a list of presentations?
- Anyone to communicate with you (directly, or via a form or info@email) about your author life?
- Anyone to sign-up to get information about your area of expertise, your book tours, book launches, or publishing news directly from you?
- Viewers to find you in other places online (social networks, or other websites)?

If you answered “yes” to all the above, you might have sufficient tools.

If you answered “no,” then you definitely need to build tools to connect with readers.

If you answered with a mix, you may need an analysis or update of your current tools.



TOOLS FOR AN AUTHOR PLATFORM

While the types of communication tools, how they look and sound, and how they are used by authors can vary, the below is a list of potential author platform tools and how they can be helpful. Keep in mind, these are not components your publisher is likely to build or manage.

1. An Author's Brand Standards

You want to look authentic and consistent

- Name usage (first, middle, last)
- Logo or identifying font treatment
- Tagline (that will become #hashtags)
- Color palette/imagery/style
- Business cards

2. Website/SEO

Your author platform's main hub. Where we direct/funnel almost all traffic.

- Allows readers and potential speakers to hear *about you from you*.
- Hosting/URL is owned by you and directly links readers to you through blogs, contact info and newsletters.
- Sets the tone for how you're presented/speak.
- Written using keywords for how your audiences (readers and publishers) search for you or others like you. (Helps SEO).
- Immediately improves the impression of the level of professionalism of you/your work.
- Provides book info + links where they're sold
- Includes email addresses for your own name, plus an info@ for contact forms
- Coordinates with an email signature that provides links to it.

Minimum website navigation/pages:

Home – Bio – Books – Events/Presentations – Blog/News – Contact

A newsletter sign-up – links to social media

3. Photo Standards

How do you want to be seen?

- Take professional photos in attire that is naturally you.
- Headshots are needed for press/bios/website.
- Wide/horizontal/landscape shots are needed for website/social media.
- Consider having them taken at a location rather than just in a studio.

4. Reader Communication Tools

A newsletter AND blog enable you to reach your specific audience of readers and influencers directly and regularly. Using a professional service like Constant Contact or MailChimp, allows your readers to choose to follow you without violating acts against spam (or just being pushy).

- Establish content + schedule.
- Build a database of email addresses along with zip codes to target locations of events.
- Newsletters content summarizes the work behind-the-scenes, highlights your expertise, and provides social media links.
- Blogs are shorter pieces posted regularly to your website that allow it to rank higher and be more searchable online.

5. Social Media

To communicate in-the-moment content and engage with readers directly where they communicate.

- LinkedIn
- Amazon & Online Bookseller Profile
- Goodreads Profile
- Facebook Author Page
- Twitter Account

6. Presentation Tools

- PowerPoint or Keynote Template
Cover/opening slide, image slide, text slide, and closing slide with contact details
- Sign-up sheet to capture emails/newsletters
- Press kit PDF. Includes bio images, frequently asked questions, book info, contact info.

7. Specific Book Launches

A publisher may participate in book launch publicity, but it typically lasts between 4–6 months. Once the above platform tools are all created then when it comes time to launch a book, you use those tools plus you can build a marketing plan that includes:

- Announcing covers, blurbs and that builds excitement toward launch day
- Collaborates with independent booksellers
- Adds a media list for article submission
- Encourages pre-sales to capture sales figures

