

Building Your Brand

by Elaine Marie Carnegie

In 2017 someone asked about my Author Platform and all I could say is... *What is that?*

I put it on the back burner, but in my spare time, I began to research and consider what needed to be done. “Branding” I found was about the Author... not so much the work product. In this era of socialization, people want to know you and what you care about. If you want to be a successful Author today you must blend the Business Platform (Marketing and Exposure) which consists of Branding, Website and Social Media with a personal touch...

I downloaded a list of questions designed to help me decide what I wanted my brand to look like. They read like a visit to a psychotherapist. I only used three points that I believed relevant to my *personal* “Branding.” What readers are you trying to reach? How do you want those readers to perceive you as a person? What makes you different?

I didn't like having to put myself out there, but you realize through this process that your photos, blurbs, and the emotional and visual texture of your marketing tools along with your interaction with your followers, blog posts, etc., are all part of your “Brand” to your reading audience.

That is what will lift you above the competition. It's why someone will choose to purchase *your* book among the hundreds of others in your genre. Because they know you from your website or social media. A friend told them about you... They've seen that picture. They've heard your name... they feel a *connection*.

Branding is simply the feeling that people relate with you as an author and a person. “It's the whole ball of wax.” For myself, I have two photos I use widely, the picture in the hat with pigtailed which was taken as a fun prop for a fundraiser. It was a little different and had a Texas feel, as well as a kind of “fun-loving” persona that I wanted to convey. The other is the photo in

the Bluebonnets. That is also a “me” kind of portrayal. Texas already has a wide persona, so I decided to ride that wave in my Branding. I want people to have a “feel good” emotional reaction when they see my photos and equate it with that peculiar *Texas* impression.

I now have 13,000 plus Followers across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn that recognize those photos. It’s not huge but coupled with a growing Website and Blog, it is at least a running start!

As a bonus, many of those people have become virtual friends. The Writing Communities have a genuine camaraderie. It surprised me and helped me over the hump of “fear” as I began to venture into that world.

Your Brand is ultimately all about you. Tell a story, make people laugh or identify in some manner with who you are and your work. It really is all about the connection!

Won the Competition 5-1-2020 To be published in Writer’s Circle Magazine