

Creative Literary Branding

Branding is a term most authors don't like to hear. It sounds officious, and like something we really don't want to do. The problem with procrastination, however, lies in the missed opportunities. Is there any difference between sales, marketing and branding?

In simple terms –

- Sales is when you're face-to-face or one-on-one with a potential customer
- Marketing is an action or movement that creates disruption and gathers interest from a collective public
- Branding is defining who you are as an entity

Why is branding important to an author who just wants to write?

- “Think of an author brand as a bundle of perceptions and expectations that form in readers' minds over time. A brand is a promise; it's what readers expect from an author. Smart brand building is how unknown authors become known authors.” – Mark Coker, founder of *Smashwords*
- Being a brand equals visibility, an important element of your platform. It gives leverage in negotiation, fosters recognition and promotes familiarity with which to grow a fanbase.

Formula of successful marketing/branding –

- Well written work
- Strong book design; invest in this because it's a reader's first impression
- Recognition; saturate the world with your name/face/work
- Consistency; create the image you want to put forth, and use it as a guide
- Maintenance; build a solid structure that pays off in the long term

Always be on the lookout for creative ideas, whether from other authors, from corporations, from social media stars/influencers. Research how they arrived at their big moment or why they stay relevant.

It's important to understand how to achieve success by examining the formula, learning the rules, and painstakingly working out an equation, but as artists we generally want to burst out of the box and let our fabulous talent show. Wearing our creative cap, take what's been done and put *your* spin on it.

How to stand out to a crowd –

- Try the impossible. It may fail, but what if it works?
- Have an open mind. Don't dismiss any ideas
- Don't ignore trends, especially on social media
- Seize an opportunity. Putting off execution could be losing your big moment

And keep in mind, too, that if you really abhor the tasks outlined above, hire it out and move on to the work that you love to do. These ideas are to inspire, not to dictate. It's important knowledge to have but when doing something just to save a buck when you could be buying peace of mind is something to weigh out in your head. Also, ask around the club for references, offer to trade favors, engage with your village. But... don't let fear win. Try!