



JANICE THOMPSON, AUTHOR

Branding and Platform

 0 Comments



There's only one you. You are unique. One of a kind.

Think about that for a moment. Your plotline might resemble someone else's, but no one—absolutely no one—can write your story like you can. No one can craft characters with your one-of-a-kind imagination and no one can carry the plot to completion with the same individualism. You are, in essence, your own brand. And because you're so unique, you must take the time to create a platform that gives readers the opportunity to get to know you. . .as you.

What's a Platform?

Maybe you don't know what it means to build a platform. You've heard that editors want you to have one, but you don't have a clue what that means. You're wondering if you should ditch this whole writing thing because this part—the "getting known" part—feels overwhelming.

Don't give up! This is the fun part, nearly as much fun as writing the novel. Building your platform, "branding" yourself (setting yourself apart from the pack) is all a part of the journey. Let people know about your unique brand/vision/style is a lot of fun.

Fill Your Tool Chest!

The next couple of lessons will give you the tools you need to:

- 1). Discover your uniqueness.
- 2). Share your uniqueness with others.
- 3). Build a platform to attract future readers and possibly snag the attention of a

publisher.

You are a brand.

Branding? What's that?

About seven or eight years ago I started hearing a lot of buzz about branding. Convinced I didn't need to be "branded" (the whole idea basically reminding me of cattle), I shunned the idea. Told my agent that I'd prefer not to be branded, thank you very much.

That was then...this is now.

Someone recently asked me if I had any regrets regarding my writing career. I responded with, "Just one. I wish I'd come up with my *Love, Laughter and Happily Ever Afters* brand much, much sooner. Yep, I finally conceded and let the powers that be put the hot iron to my backside.

Why? Because I needed readers to know that when they read a book by Janice Thompson, they'd walk away smiling because of the happy ending. I also knew that the tagline would let them know that most of my writing was light-hearted. Most of my novels are wedding-themed or have some kind of wedding element in them, and that works with the brand/tagline, as well.

So, what's in a brand?

Becoming a "branded" name is quickly becoming as important for writers and authors as it is for sodas, shoes, or movie theater chains. Publishing a book is only half the battle. It's marketing the book that becomes the 400-pound monkey on your back, and with a flood of recent authors competing for the same exposure, it's

getting harder and harder to stand out in the crowd. The answer? Personal branding. Getting your name recognized as the “go to” person for author interviews, articles, columns, book reviews, newsletters, and radio or TV interviews on your chosen subject is a coveted prize sought by all writers— but awarded to only the select few who have carefully thought out their own “personal brand.”

(The Importance of Branding Yourself in a Niche Market By Julie Donner Andersen)

Some authors are known by their name alone. (Their name IS their brand.)

Here are some examples: Stephen King, James Patterson Stephenie Meyer John Grisham J.K. Rowling Brandilyn Collins Danielle Steel Beverly Lewis Nicholas Sparks.

You know when you buy a book from any one of these people just what to expect, right? They’re “branded” by their product.

“Known” by a series? It can happen!

- **Stephenie Meyer:** “that gal who wrote the *Twilight* series.”
- **Jan Karon:** “that lady who wrote those *Mitford* books.”
- **Nicholas Sparks:** “that guy who wrote *The Notebook*.”
- **Jerry Jenkins,** (even though he’s written over 100 books), will forever be known as “that man who wrote the *Left Behind* series.”
- **Suzanne Collins:** The woman who wrote *The Hunger Games*.
- **Laura Ingalls Wilder:** that girl who wrote about her life in *Little House on the Prairie*. C. S. Lewis: That imaginative man who wrote *The Chronicles of Narnia*

- **Louisa May Alcott:** “that woman who put much of her own life/story into *Little Women*”
- **Janice Thompson:** “that gal who wrote the *Weddings by Bella* books” (Hey, I couldn’t resist!)

Some are known by their characters:

- **Arthur Conan Doyle:** Sherlock Holmes.
- **Carolyn Keene:** Nancy Drew.
- **Charles Schultz:** Charlie Brown.
- **J. K. Rowling:** Harry Potter
- **A. A. Milne:** Winnie the Pooh
- **Lewis Carroll:** Alice in Wonderland
- **Janet Evanovitch:** Stephanie Plum

What is an author brand?

Today when we talk about an author brand we are talking about building an image, perception or identity that is used to create “emotional Velcro” first, a perception of higher quality second and that little “something special” that no one else can offer third. Here’s an example: When someone walks into a bookstore to purchase a novel by Nora Roberts, they don’t say, “Can you tell me where I can find, The Three Fates?” They say, “Do you have the latest Nora book?” – The Basics of Author Branding by Theresa Meyers/President, Blue Moon Communications

Why do people balk at the idea of branding?

A lot of writers dislike the idea of branding because they're writing in multiple genres. They feel a brand (or tagline) will limit them. That doesn't have to be the case. I write both fiction and non-fiction. In fact, I had two non-fiction devotionals release last summer (one for brides to be and one for moms to be). Can you see how the *Love, Laughter and Happily Ever Afters* tagline works with those books, as well as my inspirational romances? Now I have several contemporary romantic comedies with Revell. All of these things fall under my same light-hearted romantic "brand."

Why should you, as an author, consider branding?

SEVEN REASONS:

1. It gives you a sense of focus
2. Agents are more interested in you
3. Publishing houses know how to market/promote you
4. You look like an expert in the area/field you're writing in
5. You're easier to locate on the Internet
6. You earn the trust of your readers
7. Others in the industry know who to call on when they need someone with your expertise

Here's what the experts are saying:

From Teddy Levron, President of iSuccessAcademy, LLC:

"With the evolution of the internet, it is becoming more and more important to distinguish yourself from the rest of the pack. Targeting a niche and becoming an "expert" is a huge key to success."

From brand-yourself.com:

"Whether you're promoting a business or simply establishing your professional identity, branding is an essential step toward carving out your own unique niche in a crowded marketplace."

From author Cara Putman:

"Branding helped me figure out how all of my diverse books pull together. It was the intentional process of culling out the commonalities that exist in my books whether they are set during WWII or a contemporary romantic suspense. That then helped me craft the image for my website redesign and helps me plot next steps because I know which elements have to be in my books."

From an article titled "Why Branding Yourself is Important"

"Branding yourself isn't entirely about who you are as an individual, but mostly about what kind of services and goods you can offer." ([Why Branding Yourself is Important](#))

Now that you've heard these thoughts on branding, are you any closer to seeing how you could brand yourself? Have you discovered what sets you apart? Let's keep talking about it as we move forward.

By JThompson

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