

Create a Writer's Platform with Passion, Purpose and Profitability: Tips and Resources:

By Alissa Lukara

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Just when you think you've faced your main challenge - saying yes to writing the book you have always wanted to write, welcome to the next challenge. Creating a writer's platform. A piece of the writing journey that has its own challenges -- and that holds a multitude of joys and gifts of opportunity. Not the least of which is to have the heart of the message you are imparting reach its audience.

What is a writer's platform? It is the following, the audience you bring to a potential publisher before you are published. It is the degree to which your name and work are recognized in your community, in your field of expertise and beyond. It is also the main message that you bring to that audience.

And in today's publishing world, it may be the most important deciding factor----in getting a publisher and an agent. Until recently, platform was talked about in relation to nonfiction, but now it's becoming increasingly important for novelists as well.

Here's the irony. Some writers are natural extroverts. But many are not. They love those hours of solitude required to create. But publishers rely more and more on you, the author to be willing to help them bring the gift of your message, your story out into the marketplace. Fortunately, with the internet -- blogs, websites, social media, you have more opportunities to do that.

Remember, you don't have to be a salesperson. Authentic platform is about creating a way of presenting you and your writing that is fully aligned with who you are, with the authenticity of how you add to benefit the world--be that a specific service, message or simply to bring the joy of entertaining readers. Create something that's true to who you are. It may stretch you beyond your comfort zone at times - or all the time, but it will also bring you gifts you can't imagine that extend beyond the writing process.

Here are benefits of having a writer's platform:

- It helps you develop an audience before your book is published (or afterward). You get to connect to the people who can most benefit from your message, even before your book comes out.
- Having one before you pitch your book helps you get an agent and publisher--and shows them your commitment to your book.
- The gift of your message gets out into the world in multiple ways.
- It can lead to all sorts of opportunities. You can create added income that is not dependent on the book. That happened for me in creating and running a nonprofit website, Lifechallenges.org that served as a platform for my book, *Riding Grace*.
- It helps you get focused on the true messages and gifts of your book and what you want to share with the world.

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If you're already thinking, *I can barely handle writing the book. How can I deal with creating a platform, too?* Join the crowd. The point is to start slowly and build - and if you can hire help, find mentors --and find new work opportunities along the way--all the better. Here are 10 platform basics and some resources to get you started.

10 Platform Basics:

1. Start now: Do Platform One Step at a Time. Finding the Platform Path that best reflects who you are and how you want to present yourself and your book
2. Claim Your “Author-ity”
3. Find a Focus with Heart
4. Target Your Audience
5. Create a Website as your “home” base
6. Develop an Email Newsletter
7. Blog and Guest Host on Other Writer’s Blogs
 - Consider a Virtual book tour on blogs
8. Get viral with Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
9. Speak for free and for fee via
 - Teleconferences
 - Podcasts/Videocasts/You Tube
 - online workshops
 - local venues
 - corporate events
 - create secondary products to sell with books
 - tie speaking to publicity opportunities
10. Write articles
 - For publication
 - Online for free

SUPPORT MATERIALS FOR PLATFORM-BUILDING

Reasonable Business Cards, Postcards, Bookmarks, Products

www.PsPrint.com , www.vistaprint.com, www.cafepress.com

WEBSITES:

Reasonable Domain names and web hosting:

www.godaddy.com, www.hostgator.com

Email List managers

Aweber: www.aweber.com, Constant Contact: www.constantcontact.com

Best Free Website Statistics for any website:

Google Analytics helps you see how site visitors get to your website and what they do once they get there.

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Stock photos for websites/blogs

www.istockphoto.com - small fee

Microsoft Clip Art <http://office.microsoft.com/clipart/default.aspx?lc=en-us> - free.

Free surveys: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/>

BLOGGING: Easy, no cost set up, many template choices

www.wordpress.com, www.blogger.com

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Facebook, Twitter, Linked In and many others

VIDEO:

You Tube, www.youtube.com

Vimeo, www.vimeo.com

SPEAKING: Support for developing speaking skills

Toastmasters

Be Heard Now by Lee Glickstein and his website: www.speakingcircles.com

Teleseminars: Opportunities to present online

www.freeconferencecall.com (free voice mail and reasonable webinars, too)

www.freeconference.com

www.maestroconference.com Paid interactive service.

Teleseminar announcer: <http://seminarannouncer.com/>

Free Audio for podcasts:

www.Audiogenerator.com lets you call into a phone number and create your message.

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>: free audio recording and editing software

Fee-based: <http://www.hipcast.com/> audio and video podcasting service for blogs.

WRITING ARTICLES: Post articles for use by websites, ezines and blogs.

<http://amazines.com>, <http://ezinearticles.com>

PUBLICITY:

Sharing Your Expertise with the Media:

Helpareporter.com

Profnet: <https://profnet.prnewswire.com/>

BOOK PROMOTION:

Book tour: <http://booktour.com/> Lists book tours.

ReadingGroupCenter.com Connecting authors and book clubs

For more information, contact Alissa at info@ridinggrace.com.