

Module 9, Lesson 4 Worksheet: Building Your Author Brand

Part 1: Research and Reflection

1. Author Branding Research

- **Task:** Research the branding of your favorite author.
 - **Questions:** Do they have a recognizable brand? How would you describe it?

2. Discovering Your Unique Voice

- **Task:** Reflect on what makes your writing unique.
 - **Questions:** What is unique about your author's voice? Your writing style? Your stories?

3. Identifying Your Audience

- **Task:** Think about who enjoys reading your stories.
 - **Question:** Who is your target audience? How can you tailor your branding to appeal to this group?

Part 2: Visual and Thematic Identity

4. Visual Identity Planning

- **Task:** Visualize the aesthetic of your author brand.
 - **Questions:** What colors, fonts, and images represent your writing? What platforms will you use to share your work?

5. Themes and Values

- **Task:** List the recurring themes and values in your writing.
 - **Questions:** What themes and values are important in your books? How can these be incorporated into your online presence?

Part 3: Storytelling Your Brand

6. Crafting Your Brand Story

- **Task:** Write a short narrative that encapsulates your journey or vision as an author.
 - **Questions:** What is your brand story? Look at your favorite author's branding for inspiration.

7. Webpage Wishlist

- **Task:** Imagine your ideal author webpage.
 - **Questions:** What features and information would you include on your website? How would it reflect your brand and engage your audience?

Part 4: Setting Goals

8. Writing and Publishing Goals

- **Task:** Set specific goals for your writing and publishing journey.
 - **Questions:** What are your short-term and long-term goals as an author? Use the sample five-year plan as a guide to write your own personalized plan.

Bonus Activity: Brand Board Creation

- **Task:** Create a visual brand board that includes your chosen colors, fonts, logos, and any other visual elements that represent your brand. You can use digital tools like Canva or a physical collage with magazine cutouts and art supplies.

Start a monthly email newsletter:

Creating an email newsletter is a fantastic way for students to promote their novels to friends and family! Here's a step-by-step guide to help get started:

Step 1: Choose an Email Newsletter Service

- **Option 1:** Use a simple email service they already have access to, like Gmail or Outlook, for a straightforward approach.
- **Option 2:** Sign up for a free email marketing platform like Mailchimp. These platforms offer templates, subscriber management, and analytics.

Step 2: Gather Email Addresses

- Collect email addresses from friends, family, and anyone interested in their writing. Get permission before adding anyone to the newsletter list.

Step 3: Set Up Your Email List

- If using an email service, create a new contact group for the newsletter subscribers.
- On a marketing platform, create a new email list and add the collected addresses.

Step 4: Choose a Template or Design Your Own

- For a personal touch, they can design their newsletter using the platform's templates or even create a simple design in a Word document to be sent via regular email.

Step 5: Create Content for Your Newsletter

- **Introduction:** A brief welcome and what readers can expect from the newsletter.
- **About the Novel:** A short description of the novel, its themes, and what inspired it.
- **Progress Updates:** Share the writing journey, including any new chapters or milestones.
- **Exclusive Sneak Peeks:** Include a short excerpt from a chapter or a glimpse of character sketches.
- **Engagement Section:** Ask readers for feedback, suggestions, or questions about the novel.
- **Upcoming Plans:** Share plans for the next newsletter or any upcoming events.

Step 6: Add Images

- Include a cover image of their novel, author photo, or related illustrations to make the newsletter visually appealing.

Step 7: Craft a Catchy Subject Line

- The subject line should grab attention and encourage recipients to open the email. For example, "Sneak Peek of My Upcoming Novel Inside!"

Step 8: Send a Test Email

- Send a test email to check for any typos, formatting issues, or broken links.

Step 9: Schedule or Send Your Newsletter

- Decide on a sending frequency (e.g., once a month) and stick to it. Consistency is key to keeping readers engaged.

Step 10: Review and Adjust Based on Feedback

- After sending the newsletter, ask for feedback from readers and adjust future newsletters based on their responses.

Always respect subscribers' privacy by not sharing their email addresses with others and providing an option to unsubscribe from the newsletter. This project not only promotes the novel but also teaches valuable marketing and communication skills.

Five Year Author's Plan:

If the first year of your journey involves completing the AI Writers Guild program, where you've successfully self-published a novel on Amazon KDP using ChatGPT, Microsoft Word, and OneNote, the next four years can build on that foundation to expand your skills, audience, and brand. Here's how the plan could evolve:

Year 1: AI Writers Guild Completion and Self-Publishing

- **Objective:** Complete the AI Writers Guild program and self-publish a novel.
- **Achievements:**
 - Wrote and edited a novel using ChatGPT, with organization and planning in Microsoft Word and OneNote.
 - Learned the basics of self-publishing and published the novel on Amazon KDP.
 - Started building an initial readership and understanding the importance of marketing and branding.

Year 2: Building an Audience and Exploring Further Education

- **Objective:** Grow your audience and explore further education in writing.
- **Actions:**
 - Engage with readers through social media and email newsletters, sharing insights from the writing and publishing process.
 - Start a new writing project, possibly in a different genre, to expand your skills and portfolio.
 - Attend writing workshops or online courses to refine your writing craft.
 - Explore writing competitions or anthologies for young writers to contribute to and gain recognition.

Year 3: Networking and Advanced Publishing Strategies

- **Objective:** Network with other writers and learn advanced publishing strategies.
- **Actions:**
 - Join writer's groups or online communities to network with other authors and learn from their experiences.
 - Consider starting a YouTube channel or podcast about your writing journey to reach a wider audience.
 - Research and experiment with advanced self-publishing strategies, such as exploring different online platforms, audiobook publication, and translations.

- Begin planning or writing a sequel to your first novel or start a new series to maintain reader interest.

Year 4: Diversifying Your Portfolio and Professional Development

- **Objective:** Diversify your writing portfolio and pursue professional development opportunities.
- **Actions:**
 - Publish short stories, novellas, or another novel to expand your portfolio and attract different reader demographics.
 - Attend writer's conferences or literary festivals (virtually or in-person) to learn from established authors and industry professionals.
 - Explore mentorship opportunities with experienced authors to gain personalized guidance and feedback.
 - Start building a personal website to consolidate your online presence, showcasing your work, blog posts, and reader reviews.

Year 5: Establishing Your Brand and Exploring Traditional Publishing

- **Objective:** Establish a strong personal brand and explore traditional publishing avenues.
- **Actions:**
 - Develop a consistent branding strategy across all platforms, focusing on what makes your stories unique.
 - If interested in traditional publishing, research agents and publishers that align with your genre and prepare to submit query letters.
 - Consider collaborating with other authors on joint projects or anthologies to broaden your exposure.
 - Reflect on your growth as an author and plan for the future. This might include setting goals for further expanding your audience, exploring different genres or mediums (like graphic novels or screenwriting), and continuing your education in writing and publishing.

This five-year plan leverages the successful completion of the AI Writers Guild program as a springboard for ongoing development, aiming to help students evolve from novice writers to established authors with a strong personal brand and a diverse portfolio. Encourage students to remain adaptable, to seize opportunities for growth, and to enjoy their journey in the world of writing and publishing.