

Creating a Brand that Attracts Fans Panel

Panelists: Trina Boice, Melissa Dalton Martinez and April Hiatt

This is a transcript of a presentation given on September 24–26, 2020, at the annual conference of the Latter-day Saint Publishing and Media Association (LDSPMA). You may not reproduce or publish this material without prior written consent from LDSPMA.

Dr. Trina Boice: Hi. We are so excited to have you join us for this presentation. My name is Dr. Trina Boice.

And I'll tell you a little bit about me really quickly. And we'll dive to the other presenters and then we'll take a deep dive into the topic at hand.

So I am an Amazon Number One best-selling author of thirty-one books. They're all nonfiction. For all of you fiction lovers out there, I admire you tremendously. And I'm an author coach. I help authors with their branding and marketing strategy. Alright, on to Melissa.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: Alright, I have been working in and out of the publishing industry for the last twenty years, and I always stay behind the scenes. So I've been doing marketing PR. I've worked for both traditional publishers, indie publishers, and one-on-one with authors. So today, now, I work specifically one-on-one with authors. I'm a book reviewer, and I work with TV stations, so I get to work with branding all over the place.

Dr. Trina Boice: Awesome. April.

April Hiatt: Right, well I'm April Hyatt, and I'm the person in the background that makes you look really, really good online. So I take your books, and your branding, and all of your colors, and anything that makes you look amazing, and I help you put it on your website and carry it through and just make you look great online.

Dr. Trina Boice: Awesome. Alright, so the topic is branding, obviously. And so what is branding? Why do we need it? How do we do it? We're going to talk about all of those things

today, but first, just to give you a little bit of an idea of how big of a deal branding is, let me share my screen really quickly and show you this chart. It is a good representation of how branding is used by companies around the world.

Ask yourself, “How much is information worth?” Well, branding tells your potential buyers or clients or customers how much you’re worth. There’s a perception that’s involved with branding and the messaging that you give in colors, and fonts, and verbiage, and all of that. These companies are absolutely recognizable, aren’t they. And they have been very clear in their branding, and you know what they’re offering.

Here’s a really good reason to use branding, and that is revenue increase. So this was actually a ten-year study. It was a longitudinal study by the Millward Brown research team to look at the effects of branding. And they found that brands that invested in branding and advertising had a revenue increase of 168% over brands that invested in only ads, not branding. And we’ll talk to you about how do you connect ads and branding? Or if you’re not going to use ads, how do you use branding? So the first question that Melissa is going to tell us is what is branding?

Melissa Dalton Martinez: Yes, so I’ll share a screen as well and give you guys a little bit about what that is. So let me just show you really quick here.

So what is branding? And this is something a lot of people get confused on. They think a brand is maybe just your logo, but it’s not. A brand tells your customer what to expect from you.

They know exactly what they’re going to get with your product, and they know the feeling that they’re gonna get. So if you’re a horror writer, they know they’re going to be scared. If you’re a romance writer, they know the feelings that they’re getting. Its consistency. So they know the experience, and it’s going to be very consistent. So—

Dr. Trina Boice: Hey, Melissa? Oh, sorry. I’m just going to have you expand that image because you’re going to show us some more images. So just expand it next time so we can see it.

But yeah, I love that you said it’s expectations at a glance. People can tell who you are, what you offer, what value you contribute. So I love how you worded that.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: Yeah, you bet. And one quick little example for you guys is if you think of In-and-Out, right. That’s a super popular fast-food place. If suddenly In-and-Out changed their colors to green, their customers would be a little bit confused, right? And their

revenue would just shoot down. So it is the same thing with you. If you suddenly change who you are, you're going to have to prepare your customers for that.

Dr. Trina Boice: Right. And I love that you use the word consistency. And I always tell my clients consistency over perfection. You don't have to be everywhere, but you need to be somewhere consistently, speaking in terms of social media, but also speaking in terms of consistent messaging. Okay. So the big question, everybody's asking in the room right now is, "So if I need branding, do I brand myself or my book? What do you say to that?"

Melissa Dalton Martinez: So I can tell you that you need to do both, and the way that you do that, though, is determined on a number of things. So we're going to talk about really quickly four different things that is going to depend on how you do that. And we'll get a little bit more into details with that, but I'm going to just share the screen with you guys really quickly again so that you can have a better idea. So here we go.

Dr. Trina Boice: And while she's loading that, just so you know, April is going to show us some examples of bad ways to do branding, particularly on your website as well as some good examples. So stay tuned. It's coming.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: Yes. Okay. Can you see my screen better now.

Alright, so what are the elements that you need to decide on when you're creating your brand? So number one, you need to decide on your business goals. So if you are a nonfiction author, are you using your books to drive your nonfiction speaking business or coaching business, or are you using your books just because you're going to sell books? Are you going to write any more books, or are you just writing one series or one book? You need to know your business goals.

The other thing is what feelings do you want your product to give? And that's really important, especially in nonfiction, but also in fiction. And if you're a musician, obviously, you know that music brings out emotion, so make sure that you know the feelings you want to portray.

And then your book or product and its genre. So if you are going to be a romance writer, you need to know that.

And we'll talk more about consistency with that and your personal appearance brand. This is really important. So when you go into public places, you need to be consistent. So let's say you're a science fiction writer, and you always wear black. If you're always going to be wearing a

black shirt in public, that's great. And April had a really good point about this when we were chatting about it earlier, so I'm gonna let her talk to that.

April Hiatt: Oh, I was just going to add, too, whatever your personal brand is, make sure that you carry that through on your website. So if when you do book signings or you're in public, you're always wearing a black button down shirt, make sure that on your website there are pictures of you wearing a black button down shirt. If you're always wearing a vest, if that's your trademark, make sure you're wearing that same vest on your website.

Because when people get there. They have about three seconds to recognize you and recognize that they're in the right place. And most people won't spend the time searching around, so you want to give them a quick two seconds, and they know they are in the right place. And they're looking at the right person.

Dr. Trina Boice: So April. What would you say to somebody who says, "Oh, but I have lots of outfits. I don't want to just wear one"?

April Hiatt: You know, honestly, I would say that you want—it's more important that somebody recognizes who you are and that they're in the right place than it does if you're wearing a floral shirt, or if you're wearing, you know, a green or orange or whatever shirt. The most important thing is that somebody recognizes you, and they recognize that they're in the right place. And so I think it's awesome if you have lots of different clothes to wear. And you can wear them any other time, just not when you're trying to portray your branding.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: Yeah, and that's a great point that April made because it's not meaning, so I'm wearing a blue jacket today. That doesn't mean that every time I go, I have to be wearing a blue jacket, but I should be wearing a nice top when I go somewhere, right. So if I'm going somewhere in a public setting. I shouldn't show up in jeans and a T-shirt.

That doesn't work right. So whatever your image is, be consistent with that image, no matter where you go. So that includes if you're going to be going somewhere. Let's say you're going to go to a comic convention, for example.

Whatever your brand is as an author or a musician or a video person, carry that through wherever you go if you're representing yourself as that professional person.

So yes, that means if you have a booth at a comic convention, you don't get to come in cosplay if that is not a part of your brand. So keep that in mind. If you're going as a public brand, follow that.

Dr. Trina Boice: Awesome. Now let's talk about, there are three specific elements that we need to do to attract fans and subscribers. Melissa, I think you've got a slide about that particular concept.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: I do so. Yes. So here are a few different elements. Actually, we just looked at the elements that you want to decide on, and then you want to look at three things that a brand has to have. And we've kind of mentioned these a little bit, but this is pretty quick and easy. So I'm gonna go ahead and share my screen again and show you that—we'll go into depth about these a little bit more—but your brand has to have three things to be successful. If you don't have these three things, you will fall short. Number one, high quality.

No matter what you do, do it well. If you can't do it well, don't do it. So if you decide that you want to be a musician, make sure you know how to be a musician. High quality.

It's targeted. This is very important. You need to know who your target audience is. Don't try to say, "I want to appeal to everyone. Everyone will like my book." Maybe, but not everyone is looking for your book. So who might be looking for the kind of product that you are selling. It needs to be targeted.

And it needs to be consistent. So we can talk more about this a little bit later, but let's say, for example, that you are a brand new author, and you write regency romance—okay—clean regency romance. If you suddenly switch to Sci-Fi, your regency romance readers are not following you over to Sci-Fi. That's a different brand.

So there are ideas and ways that you can do that, but when you're brand new, you can't do that as well as someone that's got ten New York Times best-sellers. Right. So be very consistent in who you are and what you're doing, and know who you're marketing to. These are the most important things you need: high quality, targeted, and consistent.

Dr. Trina Boice: Right. And, you know, one of the very first things that I do with my clients is help them to identify their avatar. That's what we call it in marketing speak because, like you just said, if you're talking to everybody in the world, you might go over to Pinterest. But what if your audience is a bunch of guys. Guys generally aren't hanging out on Pinterest.

So being very crystal clear on who your target audience is, or your avatar, makes all of the difference because it determines all of your marketing. Where you're going to hang out is determined by where your target audience hangs out, so you don't want to waste your efforts, and you want to speak specifically to them. And so in fact, I even have my clients pick a name, and go online, find a picture, print it out, put it next to their desk so that when they're typing copy, marketing copy specifically, they're talking to Ellen, who's forty-two years old, who lives in Ohio, or whatever your target is.

And that voice becomes very clear instead of being like, "Oh, I don't know what to say in my copy," you know, because you know that avatar very, very well.

We could have a whole class, probably on that alone, but let's now talk about what are the tools that we need to create a brand? And this is where April's specialty comes in and her expertise. So April introduce us to some of the tools that you use in helping your authors create brands on their websites, and as an extension in their social media as well.

April Hiatt: You bet. So some of the tools that you need—and I'm going to share these with you online—but the first thing you want to always make sure that you do is that you're consistent with your colors, whether you have a book cover or you have a logo—that you're really, really consistent with those colors. Don't switch them around. If there's a certain color of blue that you use, make sure you use that exact same color of blue every single time.

If there's an orange that you use, there's lots of different shades. Make sure you use the exact one every single time.

Same goes with fonts on your website. I've seen people, and they just like to have fun, and they'll go in and they'll just make lots of changes to their fonts. And then, you know, you're looking at something, and on one page, it's one font and then later down the road, it's a different font and then they switch to another font.

Stick with whatever is on your cover of your books or what's on your logo, and usually you'll have whoever's designing your books or your logo, they will give you that information. They'll tell you what colors that they're using, and they'll tell you what fonts they're using.

And I think Trina is going to share with you some color psychology and then I'll show you some specific tools that you can use if you don't happen to have that information.

Dr. Trina Boice: Right, so I'm not sure which screen you're looking at, because I have way too many monitors. Do you see two slides at the same time, or just one?

April Hiatt: Just one.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: The red—yeah—brand color psychology.

Dr. Trina Boice: Awesome. Perfect. Okay. So some of you might be saying, "But I don't know what colors I want." So here's just a little guideline: If your brand is something that's very exciting and bold, you might opt for red. If you want to exude friendliness, then you might go for orange.

You can see the words here: "optimistic," "peaceful," "dependable." There is a psychology behind the brand colors that you choose.

And in fact, I like this slide because it represents some of the companies that you absolutely have heard of and the messaging that's very subtle. It's like almost subliminal because of the silent message that they're sending by their color choices.

So if you don't know what you want, go online. Look at some of these charts. There are a million of them out there.

And really, again, think about what Melissa said earlier: what is your messaging? Who are you? what do you want to convey subliminally even in the color choices that you choose for your website? And yes—

Melissa Dalton Martinez: It helps me—oh, I was just going to jump in really quick and say, and make sure if you're an author or musician or whatever genre that you work with, you need to know the colors of your genre too. So for instance, if you are a fantasy writer, almost all big fantasy authors use gold. For example, if you look at the color of the author's name, it's going to be in gold.

So those are really important elements that you understand for your genre when you're making your website. And when you have designers doing your book covers. And the same thing goes with musicians. You need to make sure you understand the colors of your business.

Dr. Trina Boice: That's a really great point and to better understand what that looks like just simply go onto Amazon, and look at the leaders in your genre, and see what colors they're

using, the styles that that they're using, and you can get an idea. Here's just a simple before and after of somebody's Instagram account. So she was posting, you know, just pictures. There they are.

Blah, blah, blah. And probably a lot of our Instagram accounts look like that. Once she actually picked colors and font, her branding changed dramatically, including everything that she posted on social media. So it's immediately recognizable. Alright, April, we want to see your examples.

April Hiatt: Okay, your tools. Okay. Well, I noticed on that slide, too, in the before and after that in the before it was just random pictures, but in the after she stuck with blue and red were her main colors. It looked like to me.

And you'll notice everything that she posted stuck with those same colors, and it was brought all the way through. And again, on your websites you—and so she's got a little bit of yellow in there too, but it's mostly the blue, the yellow and the reds that she has on everything in the pictures.

In the little means and everything that she's got on there, She's got all the colors. So sometimes, you know, you've got maybe one or two colors, and you're thinking, "Okay, that's awesome. But I'm not a color person and I have no idea what colors go together." So I'm going to show you a really nifty, cool tool.

And it is called. It's a website is called colors and it literally is spelled wrong it's c-o-o-l-o-r-s. And then it's dot c-o.

And what's really cool about colors, is that you can pick a color that you like and then, usually if you have a logo, there's usually two colors, maybe three in the logo.

But sometimes when you're doing a website, you might need one or two other colors that are coordinating colors and you're thinking I have absolutely no idea how to figure out what colors go here. So get the hex codes from your designer and put them in here. And if you don't know the hex code, I'll show you another little trick later. But you put it in—

Dr. Trina Boice: April, tell everybody what a hex code is.

April Hiatt: Oh, Okay. So a hex code is basically the color code. So when your designer gives you the logo or gives you the cover, if you're an author, He's going to give you a list and say these are the colors I used. And he's not just going to say red.

He's going to say, "red," and then they're going to give you a little number that goes with the red.

And so you can go to colors, and you can put in the colors that that you have. And you just put those in down here you just click, and you can just put in that code. And you can lock the ones that you have, and then Really cool if you hit the spacebar, it will just change, and it will give you coordinating colors. So once you find some that you like, then you just hit the spacebar and you think, okay, yeah, these are great. This is now my palette. And so then, you can just actually export that.

If you're looking at something, for example, I'm just going to go to my website here, and you think, "Okay, I've got this cool logo, but my designer did it forever ago, and I have no idea what color that is," Google has what are called extensions that you can add. And if you add them, so this one is called ColorPick Eyedropper is what it's called. And if you click on it, and you drag anywhere on a website that's up, it will give you the code.

So this is really nice if you're on a website, and you think, "Ooh, I really like those colors. I'm totally just going to copy those colors." And let me just tell you it's okay to do that. It's not plagiarizing. I know we have authors out there, and they're thinking, "I can't possibly do that it's plagiarizing." It's okay on a website. You can pick colors and you can totally

Dr. Trina Boice: match the color.

April Hiatt: You match the color. And sometimes if you have your book cover, and you don't know the exact color, put it on your screen and then go to Google and get that code. So you just click on the color with the color eyedropper; it'll give you what the code is. You can copy and paste it into, you know, wherever it is that you need it. And so that way you make sure that you're matching your colors exactly.

You can also take that code and put it into all your social media stuff. And I think Melissa is going to talk a little bit more about some of that other social media that ways, but use that same color, write it down so you don't have to maybe get that code every time. Just write it down somewhere, and you'll have it and then everything else you do, you could match that color.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: Yeah, absolutely. So we mentioned a little bit earlier about, do I brand myself as an author, my author name, or my book. So let's say for example that you are an author, and you are going to be continuously writing books.

Well, you need to brand yourself as an author, not your books because if you only brand a series, what happens when you come out with the next series? So if your book is, "I'm the Best Book"—I'm using that so I don't incriminate anyone. If your book is, "I'm the Best Book," and you're not going to ever write any other series other than something that's going to fall under "I'm the Best Book," okay, that's your business goal. So then that's okay. But if you are ever going to write anything else out of that series, then you're going to use "I'm the Cool Author.com," right. So whatever your name is, "I'm the Cool Author.com," but remember we talked about consistency. So now you need to make sure that your social media matches that. Okay so if you are "I'm the Cool Author.com," You're going to then go to whatever the social media platform is and get the handle "I'm the Cool Author" on that social media platform.

If you have a different platform name than your website name, it is much more difficult for people to find you. Okay.

And your goal is to make it as easy as possible on people. So since we're talking about social media, let's talk about your customer avatar that we've mentioned before, right. If your customer avatar is a woman between thirty-five and fifty-five, you are on Facebook. Okay. If your customer avatar is fifteen, you are on Instagram. Okay. Now, also between thirty-five and fifty-five depending on what it is that your book, you may also want to make sure you're on Pinterest. Right.

Because if you're, if you have a nonfiction book where you are giving date ideas, for example, Pinterest, would be a great place for you to be.

Right. Or if you're doing recipes or something like that, you should absolutely be on Pinterest, but be careful because I have seen people with twenty year old audiences, and they are not anywhere else but Facebook. As much as our generation is on Facebook that twenty-year-old may not be on Facebook. Okay, they're probably not there.

So let's talk about this for a second because this is something that a lot of people get confused on. What if you write children's books? What if you write middle grade books? What if your reader is between the ages of nine and twelve. Well the nine- and twelve-year-old is actually not who you're marketing to. Why not? Because the nine- and twelve-year-old isn't buying the book. The parent is buying the book.

So when you are doing the marketing, you have to keep that in mind. Now there are two different ways that you market a middle grade book.

So you have to keep the parents in mind. Now that's not to say you don't also do things for the kids. But if you're online, it's the parents that's online. So then you are on Facebook.

Because now you're trying to market a book for a nine-year-old. Okay, so make sure you are keeping these things in mind, and be where you can be good. Remember how we talked about high quality. So be on at least one social media platform, but don't go and get on four different social media platforms if you're not actually going to monitor and use those accounts.

So don't go and create an Instagram account if you're never going to go on there. So make sure you stick with the quality and the consistency. So if you can't realistically manage being on more than one social media platform, that's okay. Just be where you can be quality, and focus on that because you don't want to put out inconsistencies in your quality.

Dr. Trina Boice: Thanks, Melissa. How are we doing on time? We want to make sure we have time for questions and answers, so Melissa was our clock monitor.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: Yeah, I think we've still got about ten minutes of us talking, so real quickly, something that I wanted to make sure that we talk about, we've talked about how you're using your brand to bring in your followers and fans and readers or listeners. Right. So something that you want to be doing, obviously, you're going to have a social media platform, whatever that is. And you're going to have a website, whatever that is. But you need to be collecting information from your customers.

Because as much as we love social media. We don't own our social media page. So at any time Facebook could decide to take down your page.

And you have no control over that. And this isn't a conspiracy theory thing. This is just you don't own your social media platform, right And also you don't have a way of making sure that everyone sees what you're putting up and out there without spending quite a bit of money. Now, you can do it, but there are some things that you can do much more efficiently. So let's talk about the newsletter real quick. So you've got a newsletter. You absolutely need to have it on your website.

And you need an incentive guys because there are a million people out there that want to have you join their newsletter, and if you're not willing to give them an incentive to join your newsletter, 99% of the time, they're not going to join your newsletter. So make sure that you have an incentive for that.

And then we talked about, again, consistency and quality. Okay, so if you got that newsletter, make sure that you are doing something consistent with that.

Now that's not to say that you're emailing them every day. I wouldn't recommend that. Not in this industry. In other industries, that works, not in this one. So, ask yourself, can you do it once a month. Okay, once a month is totally fine. Now if you're going to be doing it more often, that's okay. As long as you're giving them quality.

Because that's got to be a part of your brand. So if you're going to send them a newsletter, have a reason to send them a newsletter—an event, an article. Even if it's not your event or your article, that's okay, if it's something your customer cares about. Right. So if you have a recipe book, and you don't have a new recipe, that's okay. Share someone else's recipe.

Right, so make sure that you're sending that out consistently, maybe once a month set that goal. If you want to do more, that's okay. Have quality in there, be consistent with your branding in there, and have something unique. It's okay. Now, one thing about the differences between a website, and a newsletter, and social media is they have different purposes.

So social media is a social site. So you're not going to get on social media and say, "Buy my book, buy my book, buy my book, buy my book." You're just going to make people irritated with you.

Dr. Trina Boice: It's all about engagement.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: Absolutely. You're getting engaged, and it's okay to say, "Hey guys, I have a new book coming out." Cool! Say that, but don't hammer them.

But guess what your website's purpose is. Your website's purpose is to sell your product. It is to collect your fans' information. So do that.

Now if you want to do a blog on there, great. You can do a blog on there too. And your newsletter, same thing. It's okay to say, "Buy my book." It's okay to say, "Here's what's going on in my life." Because they may care, but also you have to give them that information. So, April had mentioned when I spoke with her before about ways that you can engage your customers in your website with some of these tools.

Dr. Trina Boice: And before April gives us more specific tools. Sorry, no.

What Melissa is describing on your website is what we call a marketing funnel. And so when she talks about incentives, you're probably thinking, "Well, what is the incentive?" We call that a lead magnet. So on your website, even in your social media, in your newsletters even, but it's less important, because you've now snagged their email address.

The big goal in marketing is to get your customer's or potential buyer's email address, they're not going to just give it to you out of the goodness of their heart.

They do need to have some kind of incentive. So you create a lead magnet. And it should align with your branding and should make sense for your book.

So I was just going to give you an example, but I don't know if I should because it's a secret from one of my clients. So forget I just said that. But let's say you are a romance author, so your lead magnet could be a sample chapter that you give them as a PDF. Or it could be a special report if you're writing nonfiction. Or something that makes sense and has value—something that your audience will say, "Oh, I want that." And so that should be in the top third of your website—free gift. Thank you for subscribing, or join my VIP club, or however you want to word it, but that should be at the front matter of your book. It should be in the front top third of your website saying—free gift, free gift. And then they go, "Oh!" And it catches their eye.

So then they join your newsletter or your VIP club or whatever, again, your insider seat circle or whatever you want to call it.

And then you can continue to drip on them, somebody might be just visiting your social media or website out of curiosity, but now you're extending an invitation; you're giving them something for free.

And then you can continue to market. And if you expand into other series, boom, then you can introduce that in your newsletter. But your branding stays consistent visually throughout all of those pieces. Okay, and then actually in this marketing track during the conference, we have Tiffany Peterson, and she is going to take a deeper dive into the marketing funnel as I do also in the marketing workshop, because you've got to have these certain pieces to drive customers or drive traffic into that funnel, and to retrieve that email address, and to have them take action. And you want to give them a call to action but not so many calls to action that people are confused. So make sure your message is very simple and clear on your website. Okay, now, April.

April Hiatt: Oh, I

Dr. Trina Boice: We want to see examples of this.

April Hiatt: Actually, I was just going to add, you said almost what I was going to say.

In the old world, in the newspaper business they used to say above the fold. So the best test that you can do for your website is pull it up—it's called the five second test—so get a friend or somebody that's never seen your website before pull it up. Don't scroll; just pull up your website on the screen, and give them five seconds to look at it. Then, close your laptop, if it's on a laptop. They looked at it for five seconds and then you just ask them a question. Who am I? What do I do? And what is the visitor supposed to do when they get there? Now they're on your website, tell people what to do. And usually that means a marketing funnel, a great one. Give them something for free because now you're getting their email address. Or what products do you sell. But ask them questions because honestly, people get on a website, and they'll spend between two to five seconds deciding whether or not they're going to stay and whether or not they're going to scroll through. So I'm going to show you—oh, Melissa is going to share a quick screen.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: Oh I just shared it—

April Hiatt: Oh, perfect. That's great. So, but that's it, the five second test. Just have somebody that you know look at your website and then close it up and ask them, "Who am I? What do I do? What products or services do I sell? And what is the visitor supposed to do when they get there? Give them a call to action. So quickly, I'm going to show you a couple of websites. One of them is actually a bad example.

And I came across this one in—first, let me just say a disclaimer. This is just a Wix template so that I wasn't, you know, calling anybody out. I know a lot of people use Wix and that is totally fine to use Wix. Not a problem.

little disclaimer. If you use wicks to build your website, don't use the free one, because at the top of every free Wix website, the first thing everybody sees is, "Go buy Wix. Go subscribe to Wix." And so, people think that they're in the wrong place, or they think that they're on an advertisement website. So if you use that. Just make sure you do the free one. That's my only little disclaimer there.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: Right along with what April is saying, guys, don't give away your prime real estate. So if you do other ads that you allow to be on your website, don't give away your prime real estate. Keep the top for you. Okay, go ahead, April.

April Hiatt: Okay, so this is just an example of what not to do. This is just, so Wix gives you templates, and you get—here you go.

I don't know what the picture is. And okay, it's Agatha Kronberg maybe, but I don't know what she does, and I don't know what I'm supposed to do. And so you just get there, and people go, "I'm probably in the wrong place." And then they'll leave.

So another example I saw when I was looking through some, and this is one of the coolest branded websites I've seen. And I wish I could say I created it, but I can't because I didn't, but you will know as soon as I click on this exactly what the book is.

So, and I'm trying to click guys homepage. There you go. Everybody can see right in the beginning who this is.

The other cool thing that he did on this website that I love: notice he used all of the colors from his book. They're brought all the way through.

And the little caterpillar—this is obviously, you know, the book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*—he brought a little caterpillar through. All the way, it's there. And then the other images from his books, the illustrations, and then this little caterpillar is down at the bottom on every single page. This is one of my absolute favorite websites to show for branding because

Melissa Dalton Martinez: April, can you click on his books page. Can you pull that back up and click on his books page because I want to show you something that this person does that is so, so good for you too. Okay. So if you look at Eric Carl's books, you will notice something he is extremely consistent, on his English language book list, he is extremely consistent on the style of illustration.

You guys need to pay attention to your styles. So if you are one particular genre, make sure the style of your covers are the same.

If you are a children's book author, make sure the styles of your illustrations are the same. So if you can just show just his English language book list. Look at how his illustrations are. So can you click on that?

April Hiatt: It's just a little slow, sorry.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: That's okay. So if you look at these, notice how each of these illustrations, even though they're totally different books, the style never changes. So you're not seeing this style and then suddenly seeing a Disney cartoon style, right. So again, consistency. I just cannot hit that enough. Make sure you are consistent with everything that you do. And it looks like we are actually out of time, so we can leave some questions for everyone.

Dr. Trina Boice: Oh, I wanted April to talk about Canva because I use Canva for everything. It is an author's best friend because it's free. You can pay to upgrade, but April, do you have a quick screenshot on Canva, and we'll end with that. But it is a tool that can help you do all of this stuff including, you know, your social media stuff, your website pages, your author one sheet, your media one sheet. It can create all of that, and it can carry those colors and fonts over.

April Hiatt: Actually, I'm going to have Melissa pull up the slide where we talked about the tools because I'll be totally honest, I don't have Canva prepped on my computer.

But yeah, I love Canva. Another tool that I want to mention too—oh my gosh, my mind is blank. So, okay. It's okay, we'll just go with Canva. Here we go.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: The colors one that April mentioned is on there, so that's actually [colors.co](https://www.colors.co).

So you guys can see that. And then Canva. And you can go in there. And if you guys haven't used Canva before, please go in there and play around. You may find it useful to pay for the upgrade.

I pay for the upgrade and it is absolutely worth my \$10 a month, right, because I have a resize tool that I love.

So one of the things that if you guys are doing social media posts that you need to pay attention to is your pictures are different sizes on every platform. So you have a Facebook size picture, and you have a Twitter size picture, which is totally a different size.

And an Instagram size picture. Please don't use the same picture size all across your formats. It's wrong. So to save you time, all you have to do is create it once and then save it, click resize, and it automatically sizes it for you. Choose that particular thing that you need. So for me, that's

worth it because all I have to do is click resize. Now if you don't want to pay for it, that's totally fine. You can do the same thing. You just have to recreate it every time if you have the free version. The other thing that you can—

Dr. Trina Boice: But the free version, you can hit copy,

Melissa Dalton Martinez: for example,

Dr. Trina Boice: I create my YouTube Thumbnail, I'll hit copy and then I'll open up a template for an Instagram size, and I have to hit Control V.

With the free version, you can't hit paste, for whatever reason, but you hit Control V and it shows you that original size, and then you can stretch it and play around with it, right.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: Well, yeah.

April Hiatt: If you'll stop sharing your screen, I pulled Canva up, and I'll show you something really quick.

I'll go ahead and share on mine. But one of the really cool things about Canva that's really nice is that it will pull in the colors for you also. So for example, I put my logo and Melissa's logo and then when I click on the text, Canvas, so smart, it pulled all of the colors from the logos, and I didn't have to do anything. So then I could pick from those to, you know, to match all of those. You want to try to match the fonts. If you can also, and it'll give you suggestions on that. So Canva's amazing if you haven't played with it.

Dr. Trina Boice: And it's easy enough to; use its drag and drop. And so people can pick up on it pretty quickly. Alright, so we're out of time. In ten seconds or less, Melissa, summarize branding and how you can attract people. And April you're next.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: Alright, so first thing, know your business, know your customer, know your customer, know your customer. Be consistent, be targeted. Make sure you focus it to your customer. Be where they are.

Follow through with quality. Don't be everywhere. If you cannot do it in a quality way. So quality is always first. Consistency is always second.

Targeting is always going to be there. So maybe not in that order. But that is absolutely what you need.

And guess what, when you do that, guys, your life is easier because you don't have to reinvent the wheel. You don't have to come up with a new color. You don't have to come up with a new font. You don't need to do that. So make sure that you are very consistent, targeted, and high quality.

Dr. Trina Boice: That's all great points. Let me just throw something out that we haven't talked about and that is split testing. It's also called A-B testing. And if you're like, "But I don't know which color speaks best to my audience, or I don't know." You can create two websites. Do a split test, and see which one attracts your audience the best.

You know, it doesn't hurt to do a little experimentation. And then once your audience gravitates to one or the other, then you're like, that's me.

Melissa Dalton Martinez: And when only, one quick thing with that. Now remember we talked about making sure you stick with the colors of your genre, and April showed you that ColorPick tool? That means when you are going to Amazon and researching the best-sellers and what colors and fonts are used in your genre, you can use that ColorPick tool—like if you're a fantasy writer, you should absolutely be using gold—you just use your ColorPick tool, pick up a gold, and now you can see that that gold is a great color to use. So you can use these things in your research. Okay.

To April.

April Hiatt: All right. The only other things I have to add: first thing, always go by your name. If you don't own your name as your domain, go buy it, because once you become famous, somebody else will. And then they're going to try to sell it to you for a million dollars.

So go buy your name right now. And then when you become rich and famous, you will own yourself.

Dr. Trina Boice: So that actually happened to me at some Japanese company they bought my name. I hiccupped and didn't you know, refresh it, or rebuy it, or I don't know. So they've been dangling a million dollars—not that much—but a bunch of money at me, and I'm just like, "Argh!" You know, surely, they're getting tired of having my URL. Yes, right.

April Hiatt: If you don't know how to do that, just go to GoDaddy.com. It's really cheap. Domains are about I don't know like \$10 a year, \$12 a year. They're really cheap. So go buy your name.

And then just the other thing, and I'm a website person so specific to your website, the biggest thing you need to know is what is your purpose.

Who is your audience when they get there? And what do you want them to do/ What is the purpose of your website? And it should be very narrow like Trina was saying earlier, you need to have in your purpose. Social media is different than a website. Know what your purpose is, and know who you're talking to.

And when you're on your website. Talk to your audience also; talk to your avatar. That's the person that you want to relate to. Talk to them. Don't be general.

People worry about niching down. Don't do that. You really want to niche down and talk to your audience. And then consistency—biggest thing. I think we're all going to say that. Be consistent in everything that you do.

Dr. Trina Boice: Thanks, girls. You did a fantastic job sharing your knowledge—that much of all of the knowledge that you girls possess. So if you have any questions, we're now going to open it up for question and answers live, and we also will be in the chat box. And if you have specific questions for one of us, you can contact us. I think our bio information will give you that information. So we would love to connect with you and help you to make more income and more impact. Okay, thanks.

Thanks.