

connecting the dots: creativity in nonfiction

DEVELOPING CREATIVE FRAMEWORKS OR STRUCTURES

Learn what is already out there

Give people a way to understand/process/evaluate

Boil content down to universal truths and then look for patterns

Can I group content based on a common thread or idea?

How does story relate to current climate or culture (social issues, news, etc.)?

Is there a way to draw parallels?

Find a twist—is there a new way to look at an old or common thing?

Does going in the opposite direction give me a new story from a different perspective?

What constraints have I imposed that I shouldn't? What constraint could I impose that I haven't?

What other stories contain similar or opposite ideas? Is there a way to combine or connect them?

How does story change with a different narrator?

MARKETING & PROMOTION

Know your audience so you know how to reach them

- Apply character development questions; describe or define your readers
- What tools would be helpful for them? What hobbies or interests might be related?

Determine key symbols, concepts, or physical objects in your book

BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS & TIPS

What words come to mind? (Wordstorm or word association)

How would someone else approach this (The President of the U.S., the Pope, Steve Jobs, Laura Ingalls Wilder, your grandmother, a middle schooler, someone of another religion/race/culture)?

Use visuals as a way to inspire

Embrace the ridiculous and unrealistic

Engage the other side of your brain (draw, make Play-Doh models, use Legos)

Define the problem. Try reframing it. Ask WHY. Ask WHAT IF.

If you can't think outside the box, simply try a new perspective. Look at the box again. What does it look like from the top? Right side? Left side? Bottom? Inside? Outside? From far away? Inches?

sources of inspiration

Promotional products companies, like solutionsbymuse.com

Online printing resources such as overnightprints.com, moo.com, vistaprint.com, uprinting.com

Google auto-complete

Stock photography websites (istockphoto.com, gettyimages.com, shutterstock.com, blendimages.com), Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest

Library—let yourself wander

mindmapping.com

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/oct/20/brainstorming-book-ideas>

CREATIVE MARKETING IDEAS

Use your book's theme, location, or time period for inspiration and making marketing connections. A character's (or audience's) hobbies, occupation, lifestyle, values and interests can be jumping off points for developing promotional strategies. First, study what your competitors do. Then think: What sets you or your book apart? Use that as a filter for all of your promotion.

Marketing ideas for book proposal:

- Extending line of books (applying concept for other audiences)
- Companion journals or workbooks
- App development
- Webinars
- Speaking/teaching
- Online communities
- A Facebook page to submit examples, involve readers, or sustain a discussion
- Digital banner ads for popular websites
- Daily or weekly email devotional or inspirational quotes
- E-blasts to conference organizers, Bible study and small group leaders, and other databases
- Publish Individual chapters as stand-alone articles on websites and blogs
- Merchandise to sell to support your book: greeting cards or calendar (quotes or profiles of characters each month), notecards (with inspirational quotes), jewelry, keychains, t-shirts, drinkware, tote bags. Can design shirts, mugs, or bags through site like zazzle.com or printaura.com.
- Gift books with related or excerpted content

Blog freebies to build mailing list (subscribe to get free content):

- Printables—top 10 lists, trusted resources
- Inspirational quotes
- Wallpaper for phones or computer desktops
- Free e-books: lost chapters, short stories, character profiles, manifesto, repurposed content (inspirational book might lend itself to daily devotional or daily prayer)
- Poster—truths to remember; verses to inspire

Shareable memes for social media (taken directly from book content or create something related)

Swag—bookmarks and pens are obvious (yet do have their place), but try to find something different. Consider luggage tags, USB drives, stylus pens, tote bags, post-it notes, umbrellas, drinkwear. Be creative with imprint—do some kind of teaser or headline.

Participation contest (Art people create; pics of where they're reading; photos of a key word or concept. Use hashtags and offer prizes.)

Book giveaways (online and at community events or conferences)

Key influencers—who are they in your field? Send gifts to help keep your book at the front of their minds (books and coffee mugs to radio talk show hosts, t-shirts to speakers, notepads to conference organizers).

Team up. Brainstorm which companies, experts, businesses, organizations or groups you can approach for joint marketing ventures. (Not just end users, but who else is trying to reach the same audience?) Advertise in newsletters. Provide swag for conferences or groups (and select it based on the event, not necessarily your content).

Video book trailer or videos introducing various chapters

Spotify playlists on your website for main characters or each book

Pinterest inspiration boards