

# 45 IDEAS – HOW TO POSITION YOUR BRAND AS A VALUE

## MODERATOR

**Pat Trowbridge** is Vice President and Group Publisher - Equine & Agrarian Titles for Lumina Media, publisher of *Horse Illustrated*, *Young Rider*, *Hobby Farms*, *Chickens*, HorseChannel.com and HobbyFarms.com. He began his publishing career in 1996, during his over 20 years; he has held many positions including Advertising Sales Representative, Advertising Sales Manager, and Advertising Director for Equine Group Publications, Director of Corporate Special Projects, and Associate Publisher for Trade Titles. Pat grew up riding horses on his family's small farm in Kansas. He resides in Southern California with his family.

## PANELISTS

**Ken Amorosano** is Publisher and Chief Operating Officer for two national consumer magazines: True West, an old west history magazine published since 1953, and Cowgirl, a western lifestyle magazine geared toward women. He is an accomplished editor, photographer, and videographer and received a regional EMMY Award in 2013 as executive producer of *Outrageous Arizona*, a historic documentary for Public Television's affiliate, KAET in Phoenix. His former career as owner of Amorosano Associates Public Relations in Los Angeles has Ken representing such notable clients as Cartier and Piaget Jewelers and actors Fred Ward and Elizabeth Pena.

**Christy Landwehr** is the Chief Executive Officer for the Certified Horsemanship Association, a nonprofit 501(c)3 Association whose purpose is to promote excellence in safety throughout the equine industry. Christy has been active in the horse industry for over 35 years. Hunter/jumper, dressage, side saddle western pleasure, hunter pleasure, barrel racing, endurance riding and saddle

seat equitation are just some of the multiple disciplines. Christy is a Master Level Riding Instructor and Equine Facility Manager through the Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA) [www.CHA.horse](http://www.CHA.horse) and has taught students in 4-H and Pony Club. She is Past President of the American Youth Council and past board member for the Colorado Horse Council. Christy lives in Aurora, Colorado with her husband John and two boys, Sean and Kyle, and still teaches riding on her horses Sox and Chip. You can reach Christy at [Clandwehr@CHAinstructors.com](mailto:Clandwehr@CHAinstructors.com).

**Emily Joyce** has been a proud SmartPaker for over 9 years and in her current role as Marketing Manager of Customer Acquisition, is responsible for helping Riders discover SmartPak for the first time, and showing them all of the way SmartPak's smarts are at their service. As a Rider she is a dressage enthusiast and lucky owner of a wonderful appendix Quarter Horse named JZ.

**Jacqueline Baranov**, a former Executive Assistant to the CEO, Corporate Sales Trainer, and Sales Executive, has come full circle. Currently, she is a Sales Team Lead at MediaRadar. Each day she leads her sales team, ensuring that clients are obtaining key insights to increase ad revenue. She has grown professionally alongside the organization, as her career path has been evolving since she joined the company in 2012. Outside of work, Jacqueline loves to sing – jazz mainly, and shares a love for horses as well. Her fondest memories as a child are of riding at her grandmother's stable.

1. Learn and understand your audience.
2. CHA does a membership survey every three years and each time 80% of our members teach the beginner to ride. So we focus on the first touch experience.
3. Start with why. Not your why, but your customer's why. What fuels them? What moves them? What makes them smile when they think about going to the barn first thing in the morning or at the end of a long day? That's why you exist.
4. Find your special niche.
  - a. Review your competition. See what they cover and what is missing.
  - b. Don't be afraid to challenge the norm, but do your homework!
5. Develop a voice that your audience relates to and trusts.
6. Our members are an even 50/50 split with teaching Western and English riding.
7. Set yourself apart. How do you support your customers in ways no one else can? Identify those differentiators and never stop evolving them (or adding to them).
8. Leverage your audience.
  - a. Demographic
  - b. Circulation
  - c. Cross platform readership
  - d. Social following
  - e. What does your audience turn to you for? What is unique about it?
9. Respond immediately to customer and reader inquiries.
10. Our focus on teaching the beginner a solid foundation of safe, effective and fun horsemanship skills both on the ground and in the saddle has provided CHA the opportunity of becoming educational alliance partners with breed associations such as American Quarter Horse Assn., American Paint Horse Assn. and the Arabian Horse Assn.
11. Position yourself as a partner. The best way to get your customers to care about you is to make sure they know you care about them, and their horses.
12. Leverage brand awareness and brand influence.
  - a. Product reviews
  - b. Your brand has staying power, known in your community. What are you known for?

13. Do what you say you will do.
14. We are a business to business association and not a business to consumer association. Therefore, our members are all professional riding instructors, barn managers, trail guide operators, camp directors and their equine facilities.
15. Find your brand voice. It needs to be relevant to your values, mission, and most importantly, your customer.
16. Be honest.
  - a. They need to trust your word.
  - b. 93% of adult Americans said that a company's reputation for honesty and fairness is important.
17. Maintain a consistent website presence and visitor growth strategy.
18. We separate certification from education, but feel that both are important. We make sure to provide many educational opportunities for not only riding instructors, but horse enthusiasts as a whole with our manuals, DVD's, barn posters, annual magazine ***The Instructor***, webinars, blog, monthly radio show, regional and international conferences and social media.
19. Craft your message. Take your unique value proposition and put it in your brand voice, so it's not just something only you can do; it's something only you could say.
20. Be realistic.
  - a. Don't take money if you can't deliver.
  - b. Set timeliness.
  - c. If you have concerns, talk about them upfront and explain challenges and possible solutions.
21. Maintain a consistent social media presence and follower growth strategy.
22. We market and educate to the equine professional on [www.CHA.horse](http://www.CHA.horse) and to the masses on [www.CHAINstructors.com](http://www.CHAINstructors.com) as we would like the potential riding student to find a certified instructor instead of just "Googling" one that is in their area that might be the least expensive.
23. Educate, don't just sell. If you're only pushing products, your customers will quickly see that your relationship is a one-way street.

24. Be consistent with messaging.
  - a. Stand behind your brand voice and ensure everything you say/do is in line with that message.
  - b. Don't flounder or contradict your stance. If you change your mind on a product endorsement or something, be sure to explain why.
25. Deliver well thought out and pertinent content.
26. We only have items on our online store that are geared towards instructors. We do not want to reinvent the wheel and try to be all things to everyone.
27. Insist on great service. This is the heart of your brand. How you treat customers will resonate from the core of how they perceive your brand. Invest in making each experience great – this includes standing behind your products.
28. Be relevant.
  - a. Make sure your voice/messaging is relevant and important to your audience. Will your stance make sense to them?
  - b. Have you differentiated yourself from competition? Why should someone believe you over them?
  - c. Does your position make sense within your corporate brand?
29. Employ reliable writers, photographers and experts who are honest, professional, and know their subject matter.
30. CHA promotes that there is a difference between an instructor, trainer and coach. The instructor trains the rider, the trainer trains the horse, and coach trains the national level and FEI rider. CHA certifies instructors.
31. Make it personal. Leverage demographic information to provide tailored and relevant content.
32. Shout it from the rooftops and back it up.
  - a. Make sure your brand is consistent across the board.
  - b. Website, promotional materials, content, online and social promotion, sponsorships.
33. Come from a position of authority within your focus subject matter.
34. CHA believes in certifying and site accrediting in person and not by video or online. This is because there are many "teaching moments" that take place when one works around actual horses at our many host sites around the United States and Canada, with 15% of our membership currently in Canada.

35. Focus on the experience. Keep customer experience top of mind throughout all channels. Is your website usable; is your content engaging, can customers easily connect with you?
36. Don't give away the farm.
  - a. Your position is valuable. Charge for it and stick to your guns.
  - b. Create an ROI. This could be an emotional reward.
37. Deliver a quality product that is on time, each and every time.
38. We believe in partnerships with other equine industry entities so that we can share what we are good at with them and they can share what they are good at with us. We do not want to be an island association, but instead a community association.
39. Let customers speak for you – use social proof and customer reviews to give your brand and products additional credibility.
40. Create case studies on independent reviews.
  - a. Work with your best clients to prove your worth to others.
  - b. Leverage testimonials, surveys, or crowd sourcing.
  - c. Create specific case studies.
41. Keep up to date with changing technologies and invest in the future.
42. CHA is a 501(c)3 non-profit membership organization that is run by a volunteer board of directors, regional directors, state and provincial representatives and a small professional staff. We are constantly striving to make sure that we are adhering to our mission and purpose of keeping high standards of professionalism in horsemanship safety and education for our members.
43. Give back. Show your customers that you support their sport/passion by giving back to your industry.
44. Become a trusted advisor
  - a. Form a relationship vs. a sale.
  - b. Up sell when it makes sense.
  - c. Provide guidance to the most from their investment.
  - d. Sell the experience not just the page.
  - e. Reach out throughout the campaign.
  - f. Learn about your client as a person and as a business.
45. Develop a consistent voice across all social media and online channels.