

# 45 IDEAS

## Positioning Your Equine Business or Media Career Beyond the Pandemic

### MODERATOR

**Pat Trowbridge** is English Group Publisher at Active Interest Media for Practical Horseman, Dressage Today and In Stride. 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 Project, Associate Publisher for Trade Titles and Vice President/Group Publisher: Equine & Farm.

Trowbridge grew up riding horses on his family's small farm in Kansas. He resides in Southern California with his family.

### PANELISTS

**Wendy Clark** is the President and Publisher of Bird Watcher's Digest and its sister publication, Watching Backyard Birds. She also owns and operates Redstart Birding, a birding optics and gear retail company for bird watchers, and Reader Rendezvous Birding Tours, which hosts birding tours across the US and around the world. She and her "dream team" of thirteen staff members also produce two successful podcasts, host bird watching events for the global birding and ecotourism industries, serve as a leading advertising agency and marketing resource in their niche birding market, and give talks and tours at birding festivals and events around the world. Her background is in marketing, communications, international business, non-profit fundraising, writing, and publishing. Clark has three grown children, two grandchildren, and lives in historic Marietta, Ohio with her one-year-old Borador puppy, Brian.

**Emily Esterson** is founder, CEO, and publisher of E-Squared Editorial Services, which provides high-end custom publishing solutions for clients in the equestrian, cultural services, and tourism industries. Right now, she's updating her website and developing a targeted marketing campaign.

**Kelcie Griffith** is Marketing Manager for Public Relations and has been with SmartPak for over six years. In her position she supports the Brand Team in efforts to maintain a positive image for SmartPak by communicating programs, accomplishments and/or points of view to the public and media. When not in the office, she is an active rider and competitor in the show ring with her horse Quest.

**Barbra Schulte** is a Personal Performance Coach. Her journey began on her parents' ranch in Southern Illinois with 400 horses. Throughout her life and horse adventures, she has always been driven by a singular passion – to help riders grow their potential and their confidence. In addition to coaching, Schulte is a cutting horse trainer, publisher of online programs, clinician, author, and speaker. During her career as a cutting horse trainer, she was the first woman to win three national titles in the show arena. Schulte is an honoree in the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame and in the National Cutting Horse Association Members' Hall of Fame. She was awarded the National Female Equestrian of the Year Award by the AQHA and the Women's Sports Foundation. In May of 2020, Schulte was awarded for 2020 the prestigious Equine Industry Vision Award sponsored by Zoetis and presented by American Horse Publication, which recognizes leadership and a positive impact within the entire equine industry. She lives with her husband, Tom, three horses, two dogs, and a cat in Brenham, Texas.

**L.A. Sokolowski** is a media professional and recipient of the 2017 AHP Chris Brune Spirit Award, 2016 Syracuse Press Club sports writing award, and a 5x winner and 11x finalist since 2008 in the AHP Equine Media Awards for excellence in equine media. Branding herself since 2009 as the original equinista (fashionista + equestrienne), she has more than 10,000 followers across multiple social media platforms while covering the art, film fashion, literature and lifestyles that celebrate the horse world.

**Milt Toby** is an author and attorney. He is the past president of the American Society of Journalists and Authors, the country's leading professional organization supporting freelance nonfiction writers. Toby won the Dr. Tony Ryan Book Award for *Dancer's Image: The Forgotten Story of the 1968 Kentucky Derby*, and American Horse Publications Equine Media Awards for *Dancer's Image*, *Noor: A Champion Thoroughbred's Unlikely Journey from California to Kentucky*, and for longform articles published at [www.bloodhorse.com](http://www.bloodhorse.com). His most recent book, *Taking Shergar: Thoroughbred Racing's Most Famous Cold Case*, was named the best horse racing book at the 2019 EQUUS Film & Arts Fest and was a semi-finalist for the Dr. Tony Ryan Award.

**Christopher Ware** is a media sales expert with 20 plus years' experience in selling print and digital advertising, event sponsorships, and exhibit space. He is the Vice President of Business Development for NAIOP, a national trade association for real estate developers. At NAIOP he's doubled revenue since the end of the Great Recession, doubled conference sponsorship sales, more than tripled the number of companies sponsoring, and tripled digital advertising sales. But he's best known for giving away free burritos to get his calls returned. Ware is a regular speaker and writer on generating sponsorship and media sales. He's contributed thought leadership to the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), Niche Media, Association Media and Publishing (AM&P), International Association of Exhibit Managers (IAEM), Specialized Information Publishers Association (SIPA), American Horse Publications and ExpoNext. He lives in Virginia with his wife of 21 years. He's been to all 30 Major League Baseball parks, over 40 minor league parks, and hopes to one day see a game in every state.

*Panelists were asked to provide tips for preparing for recovery, what you need to be doing during this period of social distancing, coping with layoffs and closures, and thinking creatively for the future. Each participant was selected for their expertise as a professional with knowledge in one or more of these areas: Business Strategies, Media Law, Publishing, Freelancing, Motivation, Sales and Marketing.*

- 1. Connection.** It's harder to stay connected as a team when you no longer work under the same roof, but it is possible to thrive in these new, challenging conditions. Discuss practical ways to stay connected and up your internal communication game.
- 2. Your email list and social media accounts for potential contacts.** Your friends, social media acquaintances, and former clients are ALL sources of potential referrals – A. Contacts, B. Contacts, and C. Contacts. Rotate reaching out to people on one list per week, starting back at the beginning when you've cycled through. If you have touched a contact three times without response, don't contact them again (This is actually an effective Ryan Dohrn sales tip that I use for business marketing).
- 3. Be mindful.** It's important to be mindful of what is happening in the world, and how the impacts of COVID-19 affect everyone differently. Make sure your message is compassionate and you remain a voice that your customers can trust.
- 4. Embrace the change.** Most of us do not love change. It's hard. It's uncertain. We feel on unsteady ground. But there is a positive flip side of things, particularly during this time of COVID-19. We all have the opportunity to step back, re-evaluate our situation, and make new choices in the privacy of our homes. In more 'normal' times, we often get too busy to stop and reflect on where we are in our career or our lives, and what we really want moving forward. But now we can. Seize the opportunity and take your time.
- 5. First, take a breath and remind yourself that in chaos lies opportunity.** Remind yourself that horses do translate into everyday life. Plus, look to the publishers you are working with now, see if they are trying to broaden their professional relationships. I've been a contributing editor for Elite Equestrian for nearly a decade, and through their new partnership with Ocala Magazine I'm creating lifestyle pieces – food, art, travel – that involve horse people. Instead of paralyzing yourself with concerns over magazines closing etc., look laterally – both with the publications you have a relationship with and for yourself. Pitch horses to non-horse media as a "fresh" angle.
- 6. Don't forget to make estimated tax payments for 2020.** Independent contractors and some small business owners typically are required to make estimated federal income tax payments during the year. The schedule for the estimated payments was changed because of the pandemic: deadlines for the April 15 and June 15 payments both were extended to July 15; as of this writing, the third quarterly payment is due on September

15 and the fourth quarterly payment is due on January 15, 2021. Failure to make the quarterly payments may result in interest and penalties. To confirm these deadlines or for more information, check with the IRS at <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/estimated-taxes>.

**7. Live events aren't returning to normal in the next 18-24 months.** If your publication hosts live events of any kind you have to assume that things will not be back to normal for at least a year – maybe two. That's not an easy pill to swallow, but there's no point in denying it. Take time to figure out what that fact means to your revenue – and make plans now for how you can replace that revenue with other opportunities. If you are in a position to host live events – if they can be held outdoors, for example - you have to assume your attendee numbers will be down as people are hesitant to attend large events.

The good news is people still want to have access to your content. And whenever there is content, there is a sponsorship opportunity. Consider this: That hard to get speaker or expert who never travels and rarely speaks? They might be available now. They can speak to your audience from their home or office. You may be able to get your VIP speaker to deliver remarks to a large audience AND stick around for a live Q&A session with a VIP audience. Sponsors can be secured for both options.

**8. Care.** We rely on our subscribers, attendees, vendors, and advertisers for revenue, and everyone is suffering financially right now. We're going the extra mile during this time to extend care to our friends and colleagues who are discouraged and struggling.

**9. Get your financial "house" in order.** Take free tutorials for financial tools such as QuickBooks and learn how to understand your financial statements. Prepare both a budget and cash flow statement *for your business* so you know exactly how much cash you need each month to sustain operations.

**10. Offer reassurance.** As a business, we're taking precautions on our end to keep teams safe, and we want customers to know and feel comfortable understanding what those actions are. This helps to maintain trust and help them feel safe on the receiving end of the product as well.

**11. Lean into fear and anxiety.** With uncertainty come fear and anxiety. What will happen to my job? My family? My career? What will my family and friends think? How will I move forward? What can I do? We all tend to squirm on the inside when we feel vulnerable. We try to get away from our fears, especially when answers are unknown. That might work for a moment, but then the fears return. One approach is to replace our fears with trust and courage. Sit with a fear within yourself until it doesn't feel so scary. Stay with it. Trust you will know what you need and what to do in its own time. Trust that the answers you seek will come to you in their own way.

We all want to have certainty and answers right now, but in these times, that's not always possible. Let go of the need to figure it all out right now. Replace it with a trust in your life's journey, God, the Universe, or whatever your personal beliefs may be. Embrace this time as an opportunity to let go of things you can't control; reflect and take action in small steps. Keep calling up trust and courage, moment-by-moment.

**12. Good journalism hasn't died: spell names correctly; get the basic who, what, when, where right.** With continued isolation, more people are looking at information. They may be feeling inundated with reading material so if you get your basics correct and up front, even if they're just skimming content you'll get your message across.

**13. Review your contracts.** Enforced downtime is a good opportunity to review, and update or negotiate if necessary, your contracts. A good rule of thumb is that you should have a contract – written is best – if the outcome of a transaction matters to you or your business. For publications, this might include your agreements with vendors, service providers, website support, and independent contractors. For freelancers, this should include contracts with your clients.

**14. Keep customers in the habit of spending money with you.** One of the first things to go in an economic recession is the marketing budget. When you call on your clients to renew them for 2021, you have to assume you will hear some version of "our marketing budget was cut for 2021." Mentally prepare for that and practice how you will reply. A message that served me well during the Great Recession of 2008-10 was "we are all in this together – how can we work with you to keep your business in front of buyers? They may not be buying now, but they will again. And you don't want to lose your market share – that will make recovery even harder." And then we had a conversation about what they could afford. I was willing to make some pricing concessions – especially for my long-term customers. I knew once my publication is cut from a marketing budget it is really, really hard to get it back on again. I was ready to take a short-term hit on revenue to keep customers in the magazine. And it worked. Once the economy started to recover in 2012 and 2013 magazine revenue came back. I lost only one major advertiser to the Great Recession – and that was because they went out of business.

**15. Candidness.** Like many of you, we're in a season of regrouping amidst chaos. We've been candid with our subscribers and colleagues about our situation. I've been quite candid with our staff as well as I share real numbers and rather gloomy forecasts for the remainder of 2020 and 2021. Everyone appreciates honesty, and we've developed a culture of candid, respectful communication during this challenging season, with our staff and our subscribers and clients. Learn to share struggles, frustrations and fears and tackle them together.

**16. Do a pricing study.** Track exactly how long it takes you to write one article (for example). Think of each hour in terms of an hourly fee, then figure out your annual wage: \$40x40 hoursx50 weeks. This can help you determine pricing for upcoming projects (this

is different from a Profit and Loss). Factor in the cost of your workspace, vehicle miles, camera equipment, office supplies, or other inputs.

**17. Have a plan B.** In uncertain times, things can change on a moment notice. While you can't predict what happens, being proactive and having some alternative plans on the backburner (be it creative, content, etc.) makes it easier when there is a need to change course of action quickly.

**18. Dig into your values.** What truly really matters to you? How would you like to be remembered if you were no longer here? While that may seem a bit unusual to ask that question, sometimes we go through our lives not really knowing or living by what's *really* important to us. But if we want to live true to ourselves, we need to know what we truly value. Then we can make choices day-in-and-day-out by these values.

Do you want to have more faith? Be more courageous? Be more optimistic? These are just a few of the possibilities for values and character traits we might choose for ourselves. What do you value in your relationships with others? Do you want to be more kind? Be more generous? Do you want to listen more to what others are really saying to you?

Armed with a new awareness of your values, you can grow stronger personally by choosing a few values and then asking yourself throughout the day, "What would \_\_\_\_\_ look like in this situation?" Then take action based on that answer. This simple act can be life changing. You begin to live true to your own heart.

**19. Make sure your social media platforms are in sync.** One post/one effort. Since the pandemic I've made sure to tie my FB, IG and Twitter accounts together. I still have control over switching one or another channel off if a post fits one platform's brand better than another, while increasing my efficiency with a "one and done."

**20. Keep track of your participation in government COVID-19 support programs.** The federal government's response to the pandemic included loan and/or grant programs for small businesses, including the Paycheck Protection Program and Emergency Injury Relief Loans. These programs made funds available to single-owner businesses and freelance writers and photographers may qualify. With some important exceptions, these programs didn't hand out "free" money, but forgiveness of at least some of the program funds may be possible if there is compliance with stringent regulations. Follow the rules and don't miss any deadlines. Another round of relief programs may be coming in the near future.

**21. Webinars and podcasts are gaining market share – what are you doing to take advantage?** Your audience still wants to access your content. And your audience may have more time to consume your content than ever before as normal recreation options like going to see a movie are on hold. Need proof? Look at the most recent Netflix subscription numbers. Your publication has the opportunity to step in and fill this void. If you haven't considered webinars or podcasts before, now is the time. Quick, on demand

content is hot right now. And sponsors are ready to pay for this kind of product as they are looking for ways to stay in touch with their core audience.

- 22. Cooperation.** Now, more than ever, we've got to work together and have each other's backs. These unprecedented times are isolating people, and we feel disconnected. Cooperation is key to moving beyond survival mode to success mode.
- 23. Volunteer for a nonprofit that speaks to you.** If there's an organization you believe in, volunteer to help them. When they're in a position to hire, you'll be at the top of the list.
- 24. Provide solutions for now and later.** If you offer a product or service, show the customer how it can help them during the now and the later. Also, be offering of alternatives and help them meet their needs and goals, in order to support what their current status might be.
- 25. Create a vision.** If you had a magic wand, what would your ideal career/life look like? Be bold. Take the time to create a bigger vision of yourself. You can have a mix of things that can be seen on the outside, but most importantly, how will you experience that vision. For example, you may choose to be a leader who motivates your team to reach high goals... and... each step of the way, you are fair, clear, and confident. Think big! You may or may not reach your vision, but you will move steadily towards it instead of habitually seeing yourself as a mix of shortcomings and unhappiness. Your vision should excite you! Go for the gusto.
- 26. Get comfortable editing video and doing live feeds.** Get a YouTube channel. I've found myself riding more in the past 6-9 months than in 30 years, and on trails that have inspired me to share the rides, so I upload to YouTube (easy), and use those short videos as a 'backstage pass' to what my non-writing life looks like. I also love the ease of Facebook Live, which I used recently to share what Opening Day at Saratoga racetrack looked like (take audio into account. I tried to sync entering Saratoga with Carly Simon's You're So Vain). Plus going live negates having to edit if a video is too long or too large to upload.
- 27. Read and understand your state's equine activity law.** Forty-eight states (all except California and Maryland) have some version of an equine liability law. The purpose is to insulate equine professionals from liability for personal injury resulting from "inherent risks" of participation in an equine activity. Whether exposure to COVID-19 is an inherent risk like being bitten by a horse or falling off is a legal question that almost certainly will be decided in the future. But for now, better to be safe than sorry. Add a pandemic liability waiver and assumption of risk from COVID-19 to your contract. (The suggestion to be familiar with your state's equine activity law is important for many reasons that have nothing to do with the pandemic.)

**28. Confidence.** As a leader, maintaining a sense of confidence and transparency is essential. Leaders set the tone and example, and everyone else follows. I'm digging deep to find confidence in these uncertain times and learning to spread that confidence to those around me.

**29. Over-communicate with current clients.** Let them know you're available to help them with pandemic related communications projects or other work.

**30. Speak to trends and collaborate on content.** As an addition to social media and education, providing content (blogs, print articles, etc.) on trends brings something fun and unique to the customer, and also gives them something to do at home – but again, correlates back to the brand awareness.

**31. Set outcome goals.** Effective goal setting is made up of two kinds of goals. The first is 'outcome' goals and the second is 'performance' goals. Outcome goals are the goals we typically think about. They can be externally measured. An example would be to earn a certain amount of money in a year or win an award. You either achieve the outcome or you don't. Outcome goals have one major purpose...to fuel the flames of your passion. In order, for an outcome goal to be effective, it must excite you (not your boss or your significant other). What's also important to know is that outcome goals cannot be controlled by you. You may or may not earn a certain amount of money or win an award for all kinds of reasons beyond your control.

But if you truly want the outcome goal you set, you will work hard for it. It will get you going in the morning! The key is to set an outcome goal you love, knowing it's your motivation. Then you focus on the way you get there, which is through setting performance goals.

Performance goals are very different than outcome goals. They are the tiny steps you need to take each day to achieve your outcome goal. They are completely under your control. You measure your success each day by if you did a small step performance goal you set for the day.

Here's an example. You need to call three people per day for a certain part of your job. You don't really like to talk on the phone, so it's easy to procrastinate. But setting a performance goal to make three calls a day on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday might be the exact small steps you need for your outcome goal. Taking that action could open doors you never dreamed possible. When you get the performance goals 'right,' they naturally take you to the achievement of your outcome goals, step-by-step.

**32. The industry is a marathon not a sprint.** It's okay to sit back and assess what new online presences may have staying power and which will fizzle out. For instance, I've been following on Twitter TV journalist and rider Soledad O'Brien, since she was keynote speaker in 2018 for a Thoroughbred convention in Saratoga. She was keen on saying she



needed to be on TikTok because of all the coverage and energy it was generating as a media outlet. Now, four months later, it's looking like a platform that will be blocked in multiple countries, so it was probably a good idea not to hurry and jump on that bandwagon.

- 33. For publications, check your worker's compensation insurance coverage.** Employees can be eligible for worker's compensation benefits when they suffer a "work-related" injury. Does a COVID-19 infection resulting from an assignment to cover an equine event count as a work-related injury that qualifies for worker's compensation?
- 34. Construct.** We're using these doldrum months to build a new, pandemic-proof business model. We're changing the way we conduct our tours, the way we communicate with our followers, and the way we approach every area of our business. We want to build, construct, and plan during this time, even if everything around us seems to be crumbling. An attitude of hope always builds and constructs.
- 35. This too shall pass.** We rarely have time to take care of the nuts and bolts of business, such as organizing files, archiving, tweaking website content or upping your social media game. Use the time you have now to prepare for when the economy rebounds.
- 36. Support your internal team.** Making the transition to working remote isn't always the easiest, so in order to keep creativity and production flowing, remember to check in with your team and other partners to see how they are doing.
- 37. Spend time each day reflecting/journaling/meditating on your why, values, vision, goals.** Growing confidence on the inside comes from not only taking the actions we've been talking about but also revisiting these powerful and very personal ideas you know that resonate with you...and motivate you. It is so easy to skip this step of nourishing our spirit. But you are the only one who can take care of your heart. There are many ways to do this. You can simply have a quiet reflective time over your coffee in the morning. You can journal, meditate, pray, or read inspirations. You can do all of these things. What's important is to give yourself time to revisit your why, values, vision, and goals often. You may change them, of course, whenever you like. Keep making sure they ring true for you.
- 38. Use coronavirus as a topic to insert horse people into editorial pitches to 'outside world' media.** It's a great chance to offer a teachable lesson to readers who may have never thought about how the horse world operates – how might a farm balance not offering lessons with still keeping horses fed and cared for? One caveat, from personal experience, is to be very clear up front with an equestrian interviewee if you're going to incorporate coronavirus as a topic. I had a farm manager pull out of a complimentary feature, for nothing more than a corporate sponsor's newsletter/website, about how well the farm handled the pandemic and its responsibility to the public. But horse people can be skittish and despite green lighting the project through several levels of approval, the

farm decided to lean back and refuse to load. So, stay hyper-vigilant about comfort zones.

**39. For freelancers, review your health insurance if you have it, shop for coverage if you don't.** Hospitalization for a serious COVID-19 infection can be financially devastating and health insurance can help soften the blow. Decent health insurance may be difficult to find for freelancers but for now, coverage through the Affordable Care Act may be an option. Don't postpone the search until you need the insurance.

**40. Continue.** We refuse to quit, give up, or wallow in discouragement. Our team is carrying on positively, and they continue to move forward even in our darkest hours. As we continue, we must prepare for the worst, and hope for the best. By endurance we conquer.

**41. Lead generation opportunities.** Because virtual events offer more chances for people to participate, there may be potential customers that you've never worked with before. Utilize these opportunities to drive lead generation and learn more about what these customers are looking for.

**42. Build the skill of managing your emotions at will.** Research in the world of high-performance athletes teaches us that in order to be our best on-demand (in a meeting, giving a speech, etc.) we need to access a combination of highly positive emotions, IE: calmness, confidence, clarity, and focus. But our work lives and our personal lives can get frantic. We get nervous. We feel overwhelmed or angry or just revved up!

There is an entire set of mental and physical skills that can be learned to go from a state of 'negativity' to being grounded and focused and 'on it'. It just takes knowing what those skills are, how to do them, and practicing them. Two actions you can begin doing immediately are:

- Recognize when you become 'over-stimulated' – wound up, going too fast, feeling frustrated, etc. The goal is not to ever feel these feelings. We all do because we're human. But the goal is to replace them with positive feelings in a moment.
- Then get grounded again by taking a moment to breathe. Inhale to the count of four. Hold for four. Exhale for four. Wait for four. Repeat until you regain calmness. Tell yourself, that the next best step action always comes from a state of calmness. It does. Calmness is the super-power emotion.

**43. For publications, avoid misclassifying your freelancers.** Legislation to protect "exploited" gig economy workers is already on the books in California's Assembly Bill 5 and similar legislation has been proposed in a number of other states and at the federal level. Although this legislation is aimed primarily at Uber and Lyft drivers and workers in similar jobs, the regulations touch all independent contractors, including freelance writers

and photographers. Misclassification of workers, even if unintentional, can result in liability for back taxes, interest and possibly penalties.

- 44. The future is in talking about our environment/climate.** We have nine years until damage from climate change is irreversible. Horse people have a responsibility to the ecosystems their facilities and animals live on and should lead a Green New Deal that is not going away. For instance, I will be doing a two-part Green series in my His & Hers column, talking first with R. Scot Evans, creative director behind GreenIsTheNewBlue.com, the movement to raise recycling awareness at equine events; and Robert Dover, about Robert Squared Luxury Vegan boots and accessories. Let's start recognizing the people who are trying to address climate change and, in creating such content, maybe help media outlets' advertising reps bring in new advertisers and services.
- 45. Identify COVID-19 specific resources.** You can find the United States Equestrian Federation's "COVID-19 Toolbox" here: <https://www.usef.org/media/covid19-toolkit>; The American Horse Council's resource page is here: <https://www.horsecouncil.org/5311-2/>.

### BONUS IDEAS

- 46. Embrace cultural pivots while staying topical.** Seek out more varied riders of color, gender identification, economic background. Ask sponsors, companies how they'll evolve their sports marketing choices. OutSports.com just did a great feature on a rider on the SCAD IHSA team, who had transferred from Mount Holyoke after coming out as trans, and my reaction was, what a pity that it still takes sports/news sources outside the horse world to bring such riders to the attention of readers. Such visibility can start rewriting the elitist perception our sport has never shaken off.
- 47. Change.** We've had to bite the bullet and make the necessary changes to move our business from a brick and mortar, in-house model to a remote working model. We're changing HOW we work. Making the safety and health of our staff a top priority has bonded our team and boosted morale.
- 48. Utilize social media platforms.** With many people staying home, they are spending more time online. You can use social media to engage customers in content (challenges, quizzes, etc.), and also provide general feel-good messages, which also helps keep your brand top of mind. Many customers respond directly through these channels, so it's important to also be responsive in a timely manner.
- 49. Find alternatives to in-person events.** Just because we're not physically at a venue, doesn't mean we can't take the same idea and do something virtually. Utilizing digital platforms allows the option for more people to participate in different ideas! If you cannot host a virtual event on your own, work with other partners to collaborate making a win-win for all.

**50. Provide educational support.** Customers want to know how things will impact them and their horses, so utilize expertise and be prompt on providing recourses. Customers are looking for content to learn from and help them expand their knowledge.

**51. Explore your 'big why.'** Utilize this time to design your life and your career moving more proactively forward. Begin by reflecting on your 'Big Why'. Why do you do what you do? What do you bring to yourself, to your family, and to your clients? What brings you joy?

The spirit of this question is to see a bigger purpose for your work. Perhaps if your current situation does not fuel a personal purpose that has meaning for you, it may be time to consider other options. What do you love to do for yourself and for others... and how? Is there a way to do more of this in the future? Reflect on the real value you bring to everyone's lives (including your own). Consider making choices that are not measured by external standards alone. Therein lies your personal fulfillment.

**52. Facebook publisher is still your best friend.** Build out 3-6 month of posts to establish content consistency, free up time for breaking news, pitching fresh stories. Facebook changed its Publisher format earlier this year and if you manage multiple Facebook pages, it's easier to see all current and pending posts in one place. Investing a couple of hours in setting up 3-6 months' worth of posts that will go live every day or couple of days helps keep social media fresh without chaining you to the monitor. I find it especially useful for setting up posts related to holiday humor or well wishes (humor is a great choice to drive clicks and shares).

**53. Apply for unemployment**—The federal CARES Act took effect in late March and made unemployment compensation available to individuals, including independent contractors, who typically are not eligible for those benefits. The application process was made through state unemployment agencies. Timelines and regulations and the application deadlines in your state may have already run. The pandemic isn't going to go away any time soon, though, and at least one more round of government support programs, including an extension of unemployment compensation is likely.

To read additional tips from equine media professionals, visit [www.americanhorsepubs.org](http://www.americanhorsepubs.org)