

Communications Corner | Tricks of the Trade

by **Hannah Johnson**

This time last year the American Hereford Association (AHA) and its members were gearing up for the “The Brand” Marketing Summit. The *Hereford World* featured five reasons to attend:

- Develop a better understanding of social media
- Gain insights into trends and marketing in the industry
- Rejuvenate your current brand
- Make your mark at a low cost
- Network and idea share with other Hereford breeders

For all of you who attended, I encourage you to think back on the event and reflect on how far you have come with your marketing efforts. These five reasons can help measure those efforts, and you can evaluate what is working for your operation and where improvements can be made.

Marketing skills are everchanging and extremely necessary when it comes to running a business. The lessons from The Brand are applicable to everyone and I want to remind you not to lose sight of improving and expanding these skills.

While listing the five reasons above, I started to think about my

own marketing and communication skills and would like to share some tips and tricks I have learned for making my mark at a low cost.

Become a graphic guru

During college, I wanted to build a portfolio for job interviews, so I had to find inexpensive resources. A great graphic design resource is *Canva.com*. This is a free design platform that is perfect for making social media graphics, posters, cards, etc. You can upload your own artwork and pictures, which are ideal to maintain a consistent look for your brand. This website makes designing simple, and the options for creating content are endless.

Freaked out by photos?

When it comes to photography, I think the whole concept is a little overwhelming. There are countless options for cameras, lenses and editing software. Where do you even begin? If you do not want to splurge on a camera and all of the extras that can come along with it, remember smart phone cameras have come a very long way and can produce high-quality images for social media.

Using your cell phone to capture candid moments around the ranch

shows the viewer what this lifestyle really looks like. Not to mention, your phone fits in your pocket, and if you are like me, you have it at all times. I encourage people to play with the different modes on their phones. You can spice up your social media by posting a panoramic photo or using portrait mode to focus on a subject. Remember, while cell phone photos work great for small, digital screens, they do not capture high-quality images needed for print designs.

Planning perfectionist

Social media content scheduling platforms are a useful tool to help get your content in front of your audience. There are many scheduling services available, but the most cost effective and simple option I have found is to create an Excel file to plan out social media and website updates.

It is important to plan your content because you want it to strategically coincide with what’s happening on your operation. The best way to do this is to stay organized and to plan ahead, which can be done by creating a content calendar and gathering graphics and pictures. The next step is to create your posts. One of my favorite features on Facebook is the ability to draft and schedule individual posts. This allows you to have content ready in advance.

I hope you’ll consider these tips and tricks when continuing your marketing efforts. I enjoy seeing social media posts from the Hereford membership and exploring members’ websites, and I look forward to seeing our marketing skills improve and grow. **HW**

Hannah Johnson is the American Hereford Association’s associate director of marketing and communications. She can be reached at hjohnson@hereford.org.

Check out AHA webinars

Last month various American Hereford Association (AHA) staff hosted webinars as part of the AHA winter webinar series. These are great learning opportunities not only for new members but also for someone who has been a member for years.

Don’t worry if you missed a webinar because each one was recorded and is available on the AHA website for viewing. To locate the webinars, visit Hereford.org and hover over “Member Services” and select “Educational Videos.” I highly recommend checking out these videos because they cover many communication and marketing topics. The available webinars are:

- **Herefords On Demand:** Your Complete Sale Resource
- **AHA Commercial Programs and Marketing Opportunities**
- **Hereford.org:** Tools and Resources
- **MyHerd.org:** Overview and Planned Features **HW**