

# NRHA PROFESSIONALS' MARKETING TOOLKIT



## SECTION 3

### YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA

STAY CREDIBLE

FEED THE CONTENT  
MACHINE

BRAINSTORM IDEAS

CREATE GRAPHICS

PHOTO BY JENNIFER PAULSON

**NRHA**  
**PROFESSIONAL**



*Respect the Horse. Respect the Sport.*

# WELCOME

ARM YOURSELF WITH KNOWLEDGE TO MARKET YOUR BUSINESS

**R**ight now, social media probably seems like it's the end all, be all of your marketing efforts. While it's an essential part of your marketing plan and you need to understand its intricacies, remember that it's just a part of your marketing plan. It's one tool to leverage to promote your business among others—all found here in this kit.

In this section of the NRHA Professionals' Marketing Toolkit, we'll highlight why credibility in all your social endeavors is key to positively positioning your business as well as offer content ideas and hashtags that'll get you noticed, and tips for developing social graphics that can go viral and further your business' reach.

Section 1 of the toolkit covered your marketing strategy, which influences every aspect of your marketing plan, and Section 2 provided insight into your website and why it's probably the most important part of marketing your business. Throughout each section, you'll find bold, underlined words and phrases. Those are live links to take you to other pages within the toolkit and to websites that offer more insight. Use this information to amplify your marketing efforts. ■

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PHOTO BY KAYCE TIMM

## Social Media on the Up-and-Up

CREDIBILITY AND INTEGRITY MEAN EVERYTHING IN BUSINESS. ENSURE THAT YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA SHINES A POSITIVE LIGHT ON YOUR TRAINING PROGRAM.

**D**eveloping content for your social media platforms is work. It requires a time commitment that rivals the hours you spend in the barn. You know it's an essential component of marketing your services, but you might be tempted to take an easy way out.

As in horse training, the shortcut isn't the best way to go. In a world of screenshots and copy/paste, it might seem easier to "borrow" content created by someone else and share it as your own or just do the minimum. Don't be tempted to sacrifice your integrity for time. Here are 10 checkpoints to consider every time you post on social media that will make your business stand out while preventing the conflict that can come with copycatting.

**Sharing is caring.** When you like someone's content and feel it represents your brand, go ahead and click "Share," write a few words about how the post represents your business, and click "Post." A quick share allows the content creator to maintain ownership of that post and allows your followers to check out their page. The same goes for your sponsors. Sharing their messaging shows your support of their brand and elevates their analytics. And they might share your content when the fit is right, exposing you to an entirely new audience.

**Accurately represent your business.** If coaching beginner riders isn't part of your program, don't share that kind of content on your platforms and certainly don't promote that you offer that service. Save yourself and your audience time by always representing what your business does offer. This is where your business' mission statement can be handy.

**Copy and paste with credit.** Let's say you contributed to an article in the *Reiner*. It's a great marketing tactic to pull those words from the article and share them on your social media platforms. But always remember to give credit where it's due. Note the author's name and the publication the quote

comes from, or share a link to the digital version of the article to highlight your connection to a notable brand and your contribution.

**Share links.** When you contribute to a blog post or find an article to which you contributed online, share the link to the webpage. It'll likely post with a nice preview image and your article's title. This looks better (and performs better) on social media than simply taking photos of magazine pages with your phone and posting them to your feeds.

*'The shortcut isn't the best way to go...it might seem easier to "borrow" content created by someone else and share it as your own. Don't be tempted.'*

**Use images as agreed.** All professionals want their work represented accurately and positively. When you purchase an image from the show photographer, be sure to buy the size you'll use across all needs, from print ads to digital placement. If you buy an image for social media use only, it's sized for use on social, which means it's not of high enough resolution for a print ad or a large banner you might put outside your stalls. This means the photographer's work isn't accurately represented in that low-res image, and neither is your business. When in doubt, buy all rights so you can use images without limitations.

**Show what you love.** Keeping your social media positive shines a positive light on your own business. When you post or comment negative content—e.g., "The judges at show ABC got it all wrong," or "I really don't like Discipline Y"—it's hard for your audience to

# SOCIAL MEDIA

– CONTINUED

see you as a positive contributor to the industry. It's as simple as promoting what you love instead of bashing what you dislike, and it speaks volumes.

- ✓ **Identify your endorsements.** It's fantastic to share products you use and why you use them. If you have an agreement with a sponsor, be sure to include that the product is provided to you by the sponsor. If it's simply a product you find useful and want to share, state that you're not sponsored by that brand, which can add authenticity to your post. Either way, tag the brand in your post so your followers can go to their pages and give them follows.
- ✓ **Follow through.** If you say you're going to do something, do it and create a post to show you did it! Contests are great examples. It can be effective to host them to generate followers, but the ethical piece involves ensuring that you follow through on the back end. This includes notifying the winner, sharing the winner's name, and sending the prizes. With a busy schedule, these elements can fall through the cracks and cause fallout for your business. Follow-through is crucial for your credibility.
- ✓ **Ask for help.** There are many content and social-media experts you can turn to for assistance, whether it's answering a simple question or hiring someone to handle all your social media needs. These creatives understand the implications of unethical behaviors and why being on the up-and-up is critical for your growing brand.
- ✓ **Use credible sources.** In reference to the first checkbox, "sharing is caring," be sure that anything you share comes from a credible source and is from a brand or person you want to be associated with. Sharing bad information makes you look bad, and info from sources that don't align with your brand weakens your message and causes your audience to doubt you.

Social media is a great way to promote your business and engage with new clients, but the keys to success lie in using it correctly and ethically to represent your brand in the best light possible. ■



PHOTO BY CHARLES BROOKS

## Feed the Content Machine

CONTENT IS KING. LEARN HOW TO BUILD YOUR CASTLE. **BY JAMIE SAMPLES**

**T**he foundation of all things marketing is content creation. Content creation isn't writing a 1,000-word blog, although it could be. It isn't recording a five-video series on a certain topic, although it could be as well. Content, well-created, is human. It shares more of you and your zone of genius with the world. Don't let the words "content creation" paralyze you. If you think about it, there are ways you create content every day that's ready to share with the world. All you need to do is sit down and put it together.

In Mark Schaefer's book, *ROI: Return on Influence*, he shares, "Compelling content doesn't have to be profound. It doesn't have to be a PhD thesis. But it does have to be human."

I share this to encourage you to think simply. What are you good at? What do people love about your training style? What are the top 10 questions your students or clients ask you? What do you spend your days thinking about?

The content you share should begin with your answers to those questions. As business owners, we tend to overthink things. Content creation includes social media posts, blogs, videos, podcasts, emails, interviews, magazine articles, and so much more. And some of these, you don't even have to produce! A blogger, podcaster, or magazine editor could come to you and do the legwork for you!

I'd also encourage you to get out of your comfort zone. You may not love the thought of doing a live video on Facebook or Instagram with your spouse filming. Putting yourself out there is hard! Do it anyway. Stretch yourself. You never know how wide that door of opportunity can swing open!

How can you create content that's human and showcases you, your skillset, and your business? The answer is simple: You must carve out the time in your calendar to create it. Block out time and set a goal. Make it a priority to work on your business!

Here are a few quick tips.

- Really busy? Use a **scheduling app** like Later to schedule content in batches.
- Not a graphic designer? Create **eye-catching graphics** using an app like Canva, where you can access thousands of templates to match your brand colors.
- Don't have a blog of your own? Consider guest-blogging on another blog.
- Refer to the **developing content page** for pro ideas about what to write and post about when you feel creatively tapped.

**Elbow grease needed:** Sit down and make a list of 10 to 20 things you can easily share about, then set a deadline for when you'll have them completed, as well as how you'll share them (blog, video, social, etc.). ■

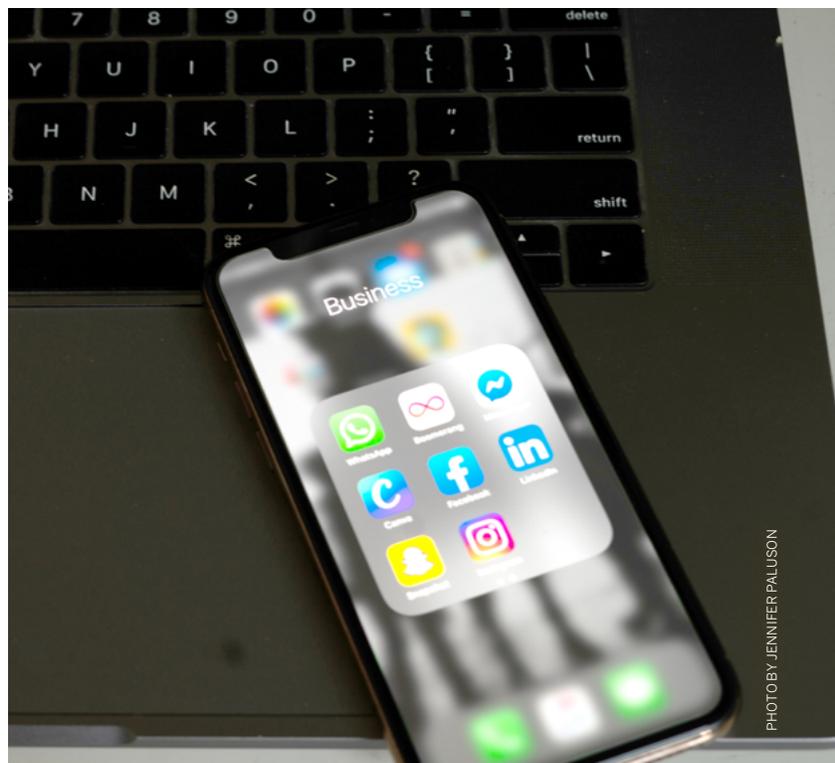


PHOTO BY JENNIFER PALUSON

## 45 Killer Hashtags for NRHA Professionals

Hashtags might not make a lot of sense to you—you're not alone. But they're critical for new customers to find you on social media. A prospective customer can search any of these hashtags—and many others—on Instagram and find you, giving you a head start in the engagement game.

Here are 45 hashtags to use on your Instagram and Twitter posts (Facebook, too, but they're less effective there). Carefully consider the content of your post and how it aligns with the hashtag to ensure that they support each other. Highlighted portions of a hashtag need to be customized by adding the year or location, etc.

#NRHA  
#RespectTheHorseRespectTheSport  
#SlideOfYourLife  
#2020NRHAFuturity  
#2020NRHADerby  
#AdequanNAAC  
#NRHAProfessional  
#Rein  
#Reiner  
#Reining  
#TexasReiningTrainer  
#HorsesOfInstagram  
#ReiningHorses  
#ReiningHorsesOfInstagram  
#HorseShow  
#HorseLove

#ILoveHorses  
#HorseHealth  
#WesternHorses  
#ReinersForSale  
#FoalingSeason  
#ReiningFoals  
#ReiningMare  
#ReiningStallion  
#ReiningGelding  
#ReiningLife  
#LetsRein  
#ReinOn  
#BarnLife  
#YouthReiner  
#HorseLife  
#Farrier  
#EquineMassage  
#EquineTherapy  
#QuarterHorse  
#PaintHorse  
#ReiningQuotes  
#PerformanceHorse  
#ReiningProspect  
#ReiningLessons  
#ReiningStyle  
#ReiningTraining  
#ReiningSpin  
#SlidingStop  
#Rollback ■

## More on Hashtags

Follow these basic guidelines when using hashtags, especially on Instagram. For more in-depth information about hashtags, read [this article](#) from Later.

### Why Hashtags Matter

1. They're the best way to get noticed by new audiences.
2. They increase visibility, which leads to increased engagement.
3. They're a way to organize content and make it visible to more users.
4. They're searchable. For example #ReiningHorses is used in more than 1,000 posts on Instagram and can be followed so people see any post with that hashtag.
5. A hashtag following can lead to more followers of your account as well as likes and comments on your posts.

### Things to Remember

1. If your account isn't public, all your hashtag work won't matter. Only hashtags in public accounts are cataloged for searches.
2. Numbers are allowed, but special characters (\$, !, &, etc.) are not.
3. You can use up to 30 hashtags on a post and 10 on a Story.
4. It's best to use smaller, more niche hashtags that directly relate to your business. For example, #PhotoOfTheDay is very general and might not get you as noticed as those more relevant to horses and reining.
5. Pay attention to hashtags other accounts use that are related to yours—your associations, sponsors, etc.

## Social Media and Blog Thought-Starters

RUNNING LOW ON IDEAS FOR YOUR POSTS? START HERE.

Coming up with enough content to support a website and social media feeds is hard enough when it's your full-time job, let alone when you already have a full-time job training and caring for horses, giving lessons, and running other aspects of your business.

Here are thought-starters for different platforms that most NRHA Professionals use. Implement them when you're low on inspiration and use them as springboards for your own ideas.

### Text/Image Posts

Sharing a post from a sponsor or brand you use/believe in is great. But it's even better to create your own posts and content. When you do, think about things that solicit engagement—that is, likes, comments, and shares. Posts with photos will generally perform better than text-only posts; posts with video tend to perform even better. Ideally, you'll create a variety of posts—those that end on Facebook and those that link to your or another website, videos and text-only, shared posts and original content. Here are ideas for that kind of content.

- Show results
- Advice and favorite quotes—preferably **created into a meme** that people can share
- News—be sure to cite a reliable source
- Articles—those you contribute to for magazines, digital resources, etc.
- Podcasts—those you listen to and contribute to
- Livestreams and draws—share links and post when your horses will compete
- Holidays—both traditional bank calendar holidays and those that are specific to the horse industry, e.g., National Farriers' Week is the second week of July, National Day of the Cowboy is the fourth Saturday in July, and National Day of the Horse is December 13
- Any content from your website

### Videos

Length isn't essential for social media videos. Instagram Stories videos can be especially low-effort because they disappear after 24 hours unless you choose to save them. Videos in your Instagram grid (main feed) stay there

forever (unless you delete them), so should have a more professional approach but can be short. Facebook videos tend to be a little longer, require more editing, and need more thought but the rewards in terms of reach are worth it. Try some of these video ideas.

- Barn tour
- Tack-room tour
- Finer points of your arena
- Tips, tricks, and hacks
- Storage
- Feed prep
- Farrier shoeing a horse
- Body-work specialist working on a horse
- Mane being banded
- Training tips
- Interviews with your team and customers

### Blogs

The beauty of a blog post is it can be as long or short as you need it to be. Have a quick tip for keeping a horse's tail from getting caught in a stop? Write a quick 1-2-3 step process. Want to share insights about a more in-depth topic? Write as many paragraphs as you want. The extra bonus is your images don't have to be of high resolution.

- Seasonal health tips
  - Vaccinations
  - Fly prevention
  - Biosecurity at shows
  - Fall viruses
- Goal-setting ideas
- Share your own goals
- Detail your show schedule and how you pick where you'll go
- Who do you look up to/admire?
- Show results
- Hauling tips
- Preparing for a first show or a big show
- Packing your trailer
- Past mentors
- Major events
  - Which horses are being shown by whom
  - Stories about those horses and riders
  - Past wins ■

## Make Social Media a Snap

TRY THESE RESOURCES TO MAKE CREATING AND POSTING SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT EASIER.

**C**reating posts for social media can be overwhelming. But with planning and by thinking ahead, it can be a lot less daunting. Here are a few tips and apps that can make it easier on you.

### Post in Batches

Taking time a few days per month to create posts and schedule them can save you the day-to-day grind of using social media to market your business. It also allows you to capitalize on posting when you see trends in engagement without chaining you to your computer.

For example, you notice that posts on Tuesday afternoons are performing well, so you can schedule great content for every Tuesday afternoon for the next few weeks.

There are a few scheduling resources that can help you with this to make the process easier and take less time, allowing you to focus on other parts of your business.

**Facebook Scheduler:** This is free and available on the Facebook site on your computer and through the Pages Manager app on your mobile device.

- On a desktop, go to your page. Click “More” at the top of the page, and choose “Publishing Tools.” Click “Create a Post,” and create your post as you would if you wanted it to go live immediately. When you’ve edited the post and are sure it’s what you want, click the arrow beside “Share Now,” and choose “Schedule.” Set the date and time you’d like that post to go live, and click “Schedule.” If you want to change the post or delete it after you’ve scheduled it,

go back into the Publishing Tools and choose “Scheduled Posts.” From there, you can click on a post to edit, cancel, or reschedule.

- On mobile, download then open the Pages Manager app. Tap “Publish,” and create your post. Tap “Next,” then “Publishing Options,” then “Schedule for Later.” Set your date and time, then tap “Done.”

**Later, HootSuite, and others like it:** These programs/apps allow you to schedule Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest posts in batches. You can create a free account on most of them, but the capabilities will be more limited. On the free level for most providers, you get one login, and it can’t be shared.

### Create Graphics

You’re a horse trainer, not a graphic designer. Use apps and programs that can help you with design to make your social media stand out.

**Canva:** You can use Canva on your desktop or via the app on your mobile device. Choose templates based on where you plan to post the content. The program saves your past designs and lets you start a “brand kit” where you can store your logos, colors, and fonts to keep your designs consistent.

**Stencil:** Touted as a “light” version of Canva, Stencil not only has design tools but also a library of 100,000 quotes to use in social media posts for creating that perfect #MotivationMonday post. The free level allows you to create 10 posts per month. ■

# RESOURCES

PLACES TO FIND HELP

## You're Not Alone

TURN TO THESE RESOURCES FOR HELP IN YOUR MARKETING ENDEAVORS.

**W**e know—this is a lot to take in, can feel completely overwhelming, and seems impossible. Don't let those feelings stop you in your tracks. There are lots of great outlets to help you find your way to marketing success online and in your quarterly *Pro Trainer* magazine. Focus on adapting. Learn from other small businesses, and then adapt them to yours. The horse industry has its own quirks, so the key is applying information in a way that makes sense for your business.

**Social Media Examiner:** You'll find downloadable guides galore on this robust website, if you're willing to share your email address. Regular posts keep you up-to-date on all aspects of social media marketing, from beginner to advanced. Follow them on Facebook, too, for regular live sessions and direct links to new content.

**Social Media Today:** A list of the top stories viewed by users keeps you on top of what's new and essential (e.g., image-size requirements and new offerings for each platform). It's pretty "newsy," but you can scroll through to find some gems to put to use in your efforts.

**Convince and Convert:** Stick with the blog on this site; the main site is used to sell services. The blog offers ideas

to develop your own content, including "101 Content Ideas to Add to Your Editorial Calendar."

**HubSpot Marketing Blog:** Find all sorts of free downloadable guides, including a template for a social media calendar that can help keep you on track.

**The Social Media Hat:** Social media articles are categorized in a drop-down menu by platform—so you won't waste your time searching through information about apps you don't use.

**American Horse Publications:** By joining this group as a business member, you have the opportunity to promote your business, learn from experts about marketing and social media, and get access to a robust list of members who can fulfill any need you have if you want to hire out your marketing efforts.

**Work Your Own Network:** Talk to people—other professionals, media you know, those who provide marketing services—to learn and find out what's best for your situation. Your network can tell you who they've had great results partnering with to do their marketing or where to go for advice. ■

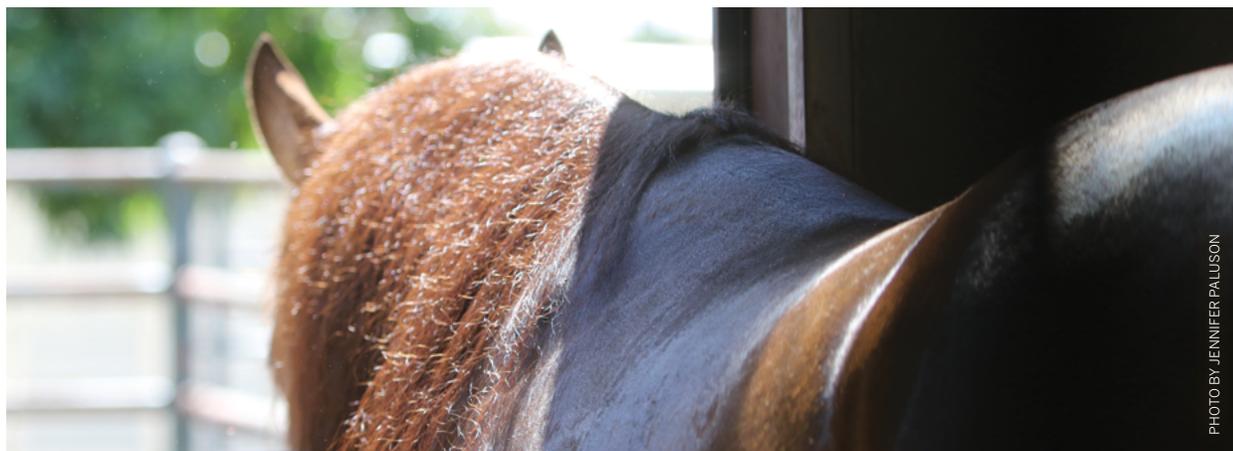


PHOTO BY JENNIFER PALUSON

# NRHA PROFESSIONALS' CODE OF ETHICS



**W**e, the members of the National Reining Horse Association Professionals, in carrying out our role of providing service to the reining horse industry, recognize the need to do so in a professional manner, and to represent the sport of reining in a professional manner with the highest degree of integrity.

Therefore, we have set forth the following code of ethics, which shall govern our endeavors in the industry. By signing this application, I agree to be bound by the rules of the NRHA Professional Code of Ethics. To participate in this program, I concede to maintaining a continuous individual membership with NRHA.

As a member of the NRHA Professionals, I will:

- Adhere to the professional standards of the NRHA and work to further its goals and objectives.
- Ensure that the welfare of the reining horse is paramount and that every horse shall always be treated humanely and with dignity, respect and compassion, regardless if the horse does not reside under my direct supervision.
- Positively influence all members to refrain from any perceived misconduct or inappropriate actions towards either horses or other members.
- Conduct my affairs in the sport of reining with integrity, sincerity, and accuracy in an honest, transparent, and forthright manner.
- Act with integrity in my dealings with reining clients, other NRHA members, and the public when representing the sport of reining. In this regard, any horse shown by my spouse, client, or child will be economically owned as prescribed by applicable NRHA rules.
- Handle my reining horse business, operations, and communications (including those through social media) in a manner, which promotes a positive image of the reining horse industry.



PHOTO BY AEGAIL BOATWRIGHT

- To fully disclose to customers the actual sales price and commissions involved in the sale or purchase of a horse.
- To not charge or receive a monetary commission, or other remuneration constituting a commission from both buyer and seller of a horse.
- Model the proper ideals of positive sportsmanship and fair competition, and show cordial courtesy to fellow competitors, members and Judges.

The Professional Code of Ethics is intended as a general guideline for reining professionals' behavior and is not intended to be an exhaustive list of conduct for NRHA Professionals. NRHA Professionals' conduct is also governed by NRHA Rules. This Code is intended, however, to state basic standards which should govern the conduct of all professionals and to provide guidance to assist professionals in establishing and maintaining high standards of conduct within the Reining horse industry.

This Code of Ethics generally identifies the ethical obligations of NRHA Professionals and does not substitute for, nor is it intended to substitute for, or any way alter or modify the NRHA rules. ■