

# PRO TRAINER

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONAL REINING TRAINERS WINTER 2022

**NRHA** 

## **POWER IN COLLABORATION**

**Work With a Coach  
to Boost Your Business  
Learn About Collaborative  
Study Groups**

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## **PLUS**

- **Build a Media Kit**
- **Try New Instagram Tools**
- **Use Helpful Podcasts  
and Blogs**



Winter/22



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ON THE COVER: Photo by Carolyn Simancik

**PRO TRAINER**  
**NRHA**  WINTER 2022

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NRHA Pro Trainer

# PRO TRAINER NEWS

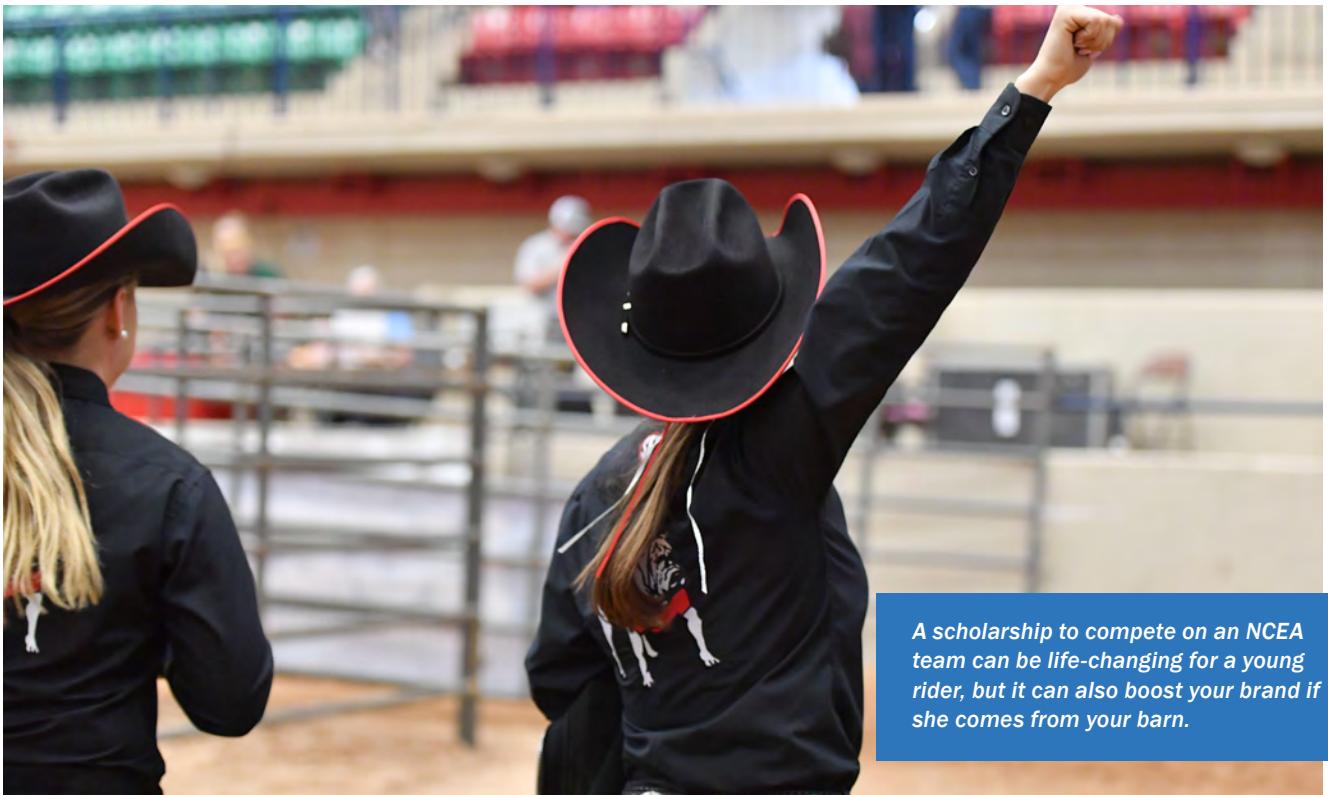
PEOPLE, REPORTS, EVENTS

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## Getting the NCEA Spotlight

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR YOUTH RIDERS CONTINUE HER RIDING IN COLLEGE, AND HOW CAN THAT HELP YOUR BUSINESS? READ ON TO FIND OUT.

IMAGES COURTESY OF MCKENZIE LANTZ, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



*A scholarship to compete on an NCEA team can be life-changing for a young rider, but it can also boost your brand if she comes from your barn.*

Often, the decisions about a young person going to college and all that entails remain between parent and child. However, when you have a standout youth rider who wants to pursue a collegiate riding career, that process involves you, too.

The National Collegiate Equestrian Association (NCEA) represents the elite equestrian teams at

colleges and universities across America. NRHA Manager of Youth, Professional, and Affiliate Programs Sara Honegger recently recorded a video with three coaches to cover the ins and outs of navigating the process to be recruited, which can be found [here](#). We'll cover the basic highlights below, but it's a great resource to provide to parents of your youth riders who have questions. →

## What's in It for Me?

You're a busy NRHA Professional. You might think you don't have time to participate in this process with your youth riders. But the fact is you need to make time. The publicity for your program that comes with one of your riders being selected to an elite equestrian team is akin to winning a world title. There are three immediate benefits.

1. You're cited as the rider's coach that got her to this point of being chosen to compete as a collegiate athlete, which builds name recognition for your business.
2. Your program can be tagged in social media posts publicizing the news, and your name can be part of press releases that come up in Google searches.

3. Young riders and their parents recognize your program as one that builds a future for young horsemen, making them seek out you as their next coach.

The marketing potential is limitless, and you can capitalize on the recognition to build your business and name recognition for years to come as just one rider progresses through four years of eligibility. Imagine if you had an ongoing crop of riders who go on to ride in college!

## Main Points to Know

Here's a rundown of key points to get you, your rider, and her parents on the right road to an NCEA berth.

### Know the dates and rules for outreach.

Coaches aren't allowed to respond to queries from potential athletes until June 15 of their junior year. However, riders can begin reaching out to coaches at any point in time. When you recognize potential in a young rider and she expresses interest in riding in college, encourage her to reach out to collegiate coaches with basic information such as her name, who she rides with, her skills/accomplishments, and any goals. Riders can also send videos (more on that below). This allows coaches to familiarize themselves with potential athletes.

### Obtain high-quality video, and send it to the coaches, post it on social media, etc.

NCEA competitions require riders to pilot many different horses with varying training and skills. Help your rider show that she can manage that task by videoing her on many different horses. When things go south, don't stop filming; keep rolling to show how your rider handles the situation. Coaches also request full-ride videos as opposed to clip mash-ups so they can see from start to finish and not wonder what happened next. In terms of quality, be sure the videos have ample light, that they're shot close enough to see what's going on but not so close



*Help your rider collect videos of her riding various horses, under different circumstances, to show her versatility as a horsewoman.*

that things get cut off, and that they're in high resolution.

**Highlight diversity.** Your focus with your rider might be all things horse, but encourage her to highlight diverse activities—clubs, church groups, charitable work, sports, and other interests. Coaches want to see well-rounded candidates, and juggling things outside horses and school can demonstrate good time management, leadership, and teachability/coachability.

**Use social media in a positive manner.** First of all, if you have a relationship that allows it, speak with your rider about responsible use of social media. Her parents have probably already covered this, but a second reiteration doesn't hurt. Second, work with your rider and her parents to set up a YouTube channel or Instagram account that's specific to the rider being recruited to an NCEA school. They're both great ways for your rider to highlight riding clips, successes, and activities. Provide links to these accounts to recruiting coaches so they can keep up with your rider.

## Let the Parents Lead

While you can be as big or small a part of this exciting opportunity as you're comfortable, the relationship between the rider and her parents is important, too. Help initiate opportunities and step in where they ask. ■

# NRHA Event Calendar

Please visit [nrha.com](http://nrha.com) and ReinerSuite™ for the most updated information.

## November 25–January 10

### Sire & Dam Auction

Visit [nrha.com/siredam](http://nrha.com/siredam) or contact Haley Carmen at [hcarmen@nrha.com](mailto:hcarmen@nrha.com) for more information.

## December 3–February 1

### NRHA Buy-A-Pro Auction

Visit [32auctions.com/2022BuyAProAuction](http://32auctions.com/2022BuyAProAuction) to bid on private lessons with NRHA Professionals to benefit NRHyA and NRHA affiliates.

## January 10

### NRHA Nominations Due

Nominations are no longer accepted via email or fax. Visit [nrha.com/nomination](http://nrha.com/nomination) for more information, and nominate online through ReinerSuite or by mail.

## January 14–16

### Judges' School

Oklahoma City, OK

This event will be hosted at the NRHA office, and pre-registration is required. For more information, contact Kristen Liesman at [klieman@nrha.com](mailto:kliesman@nrha.com).

## January 15

### First NRHA Futurity Payment Due

## January 16–18

### Judges' School

Oklahoma City, OK

This event will be hosted at the NRHA office, and pre-registration is required. For more information, contact Kristen Liesman at [klieman@nrha.com](mailto:kliesman@nrha.com).

## January 29-30, 2022

### International Judges' Schools

Holambra, Brazil

Hosted at: Espaco Cultural Terra Viva

Contact: Luis Gregorio Campagna Cruz  
[administrativo@ancr.org.br](mailto:administrativo@ancr.org.br)  
+55 1999199-9279

## February 3-6, 2022

### International Judges' Schools

Location: Bologna, Italy

Facility: The Sydney Hotel

Contact: Cristina Serra

[cserra@itrha.com](mailto:cserra@itrha.com)

+39 0521819151

## February 13–16

### NRHA Winter Meeting

Denton, TX

This event will be hosted at the Embassy Suites Denton Convention Center. Reserve rooms by Jan. 14 for discounted NRHA rates. For more information, contact Christa Morris-Stone at [cmorris@nrha.com](mailto:cmorris@nrha.com).

## March 1

### RHF Scholarship Application Deadline

Applications for 2022 Reining Horse Foundation Scholarships must be postmarked by this date. More details are available at [nrhya.com](http://nrhya.com).

## March 9–10

### Judges' Applicant Seminar

Oklahoma City, OK

This event will be hosted at the NRHA office, and pre-registration is required by Jan. 10. For more information, contact Kristen Liesman at [klieman@nrha.com](mailto:kliesman@nrha.com).

## March 11–13

### Judges' School

Oklahoma City, OK

This event will be hosted at the NRHA office, and pre-registration is required. For more information, contact Kristen Liesman at [klieman@nrha.com](mailto:kliesman@nrha.com).

## March 18-20, 2022

### International Judges' Schools

Location: Victoria, Australia

Facility: TBD

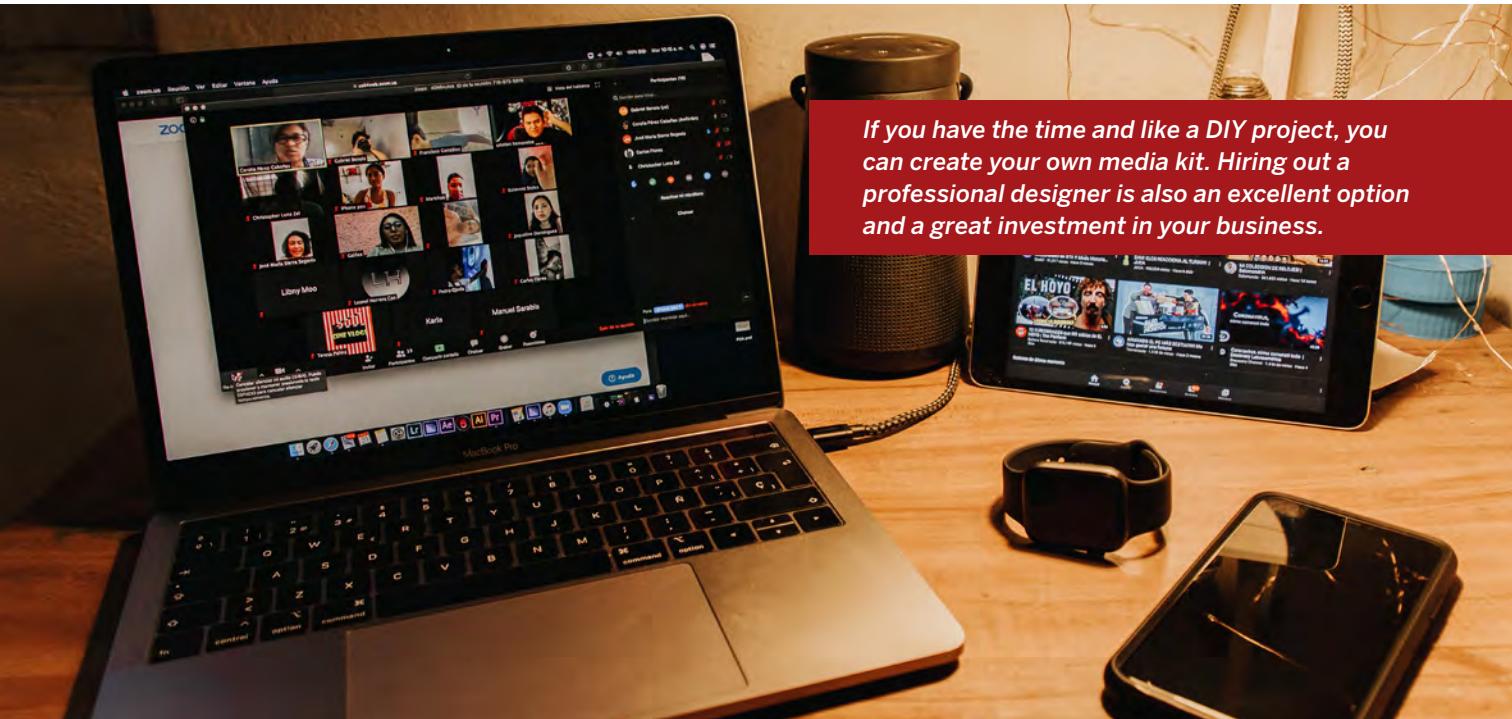
Contact: NRHA Oceania Council  
[oceanianrha@gmail.com](mailto:oceanianrha@gmail.com)

## April 1

### Second NRHA Futurity Payment Due

# ENGAGEMENT

ADVICE FOR THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY



*If you have the time and like a DIY project, you can create your own media kit. Hiring out a professional designer is also an excellent option and a great investment in your business.*

## Media Kits: How and Why

A MEDIA KIT COULD HELP BOOST YOUR BUSINESS, FROM GAINING CUSTOMERS TO PARTNERING WITH SPONSORS TO BECOMING A RELIABLE RESOURCE.

**BY JENNIFER PAULSON**

**M**edia kits might be something you associate with big brands, but a personal media kit for yourself and your business could be a game-changer in your efforts to promote your training operation, gain attention, and highlight your brand.

Here, we'll cover what goes in your media kit and why having one on hand can elevate your brand's presence, your prominence, and your visibility to potential new customers.

### Your Media Kit Checklist

All media kits vary, because they're hyper-focused on a single business' goals, but most personal branding kits include the following.

- ✓ **Contact information.** Obviously, this is a critical component and must be kept up-to-date. Include a phone number where the inquirer can reach you or a business manager, an actively checked email address, and your website and social media handles.
- ✓ **Your background.** Tell your story of how you got to where you are, what inspired you to become an NRHA Professional, other pros who mentored or inspired you along the way, and any personal details that connect you to the person viewing the kit.
- ✓ **Your services.** Detail what your business focuses on—coaching non pros and youth

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riders, aged events, colt-starting, multi-discipline training, problem-solving, etc. Your mission statement might be a great fit for this portion!

- ✔ **Links.** Your media kit will likely be print and digital, so in the digital version, provide links to articles about your business, magazine features you've contributed to, and podcasts you've joined. Links help free up space in your kit, so use them.
- ✔ **Photography and your logo.** If you haven't yet, it's time to invest in some photography of your facility, yourself at work, and the stock you train. Show-arena photos serve their purpose, but custom photography allows you to stand out and tell your story. The same goes for your logo—if you haven't invested in professional logo design, the time is now, and you'll want to include it in your kit.
- ✔ **Testimonials.** People value reviews, and testimonials are great ways to share your reviews with your potential customer, sponsor, or promoter.
- ✔ **Accomplishments.** Don't go overboard here, because you can fill pages upon pages with placings at various events. Stick to the major events, lifetime earnings, special awards, and recognition your riders have received.
- ✔ **Video.** If you've had a commercial produced for your business, embed it in your digital media kit to increase engagement. To promote the video on your print kit, consider creating a (free) snapchat to direct the user to your video online.
- ✔ **Social media and website stats.** If you're particularly active on social media and get great traffic to your website, include those stats to show your audience engagement and reach.

## How-To

Media kits can come in two ways: you invest in yourself and make time to create one, or you hire it out to a trusted professional. Either way, you'll need to gather all the information and high-quality images that will go in the kit and be part of the design process.

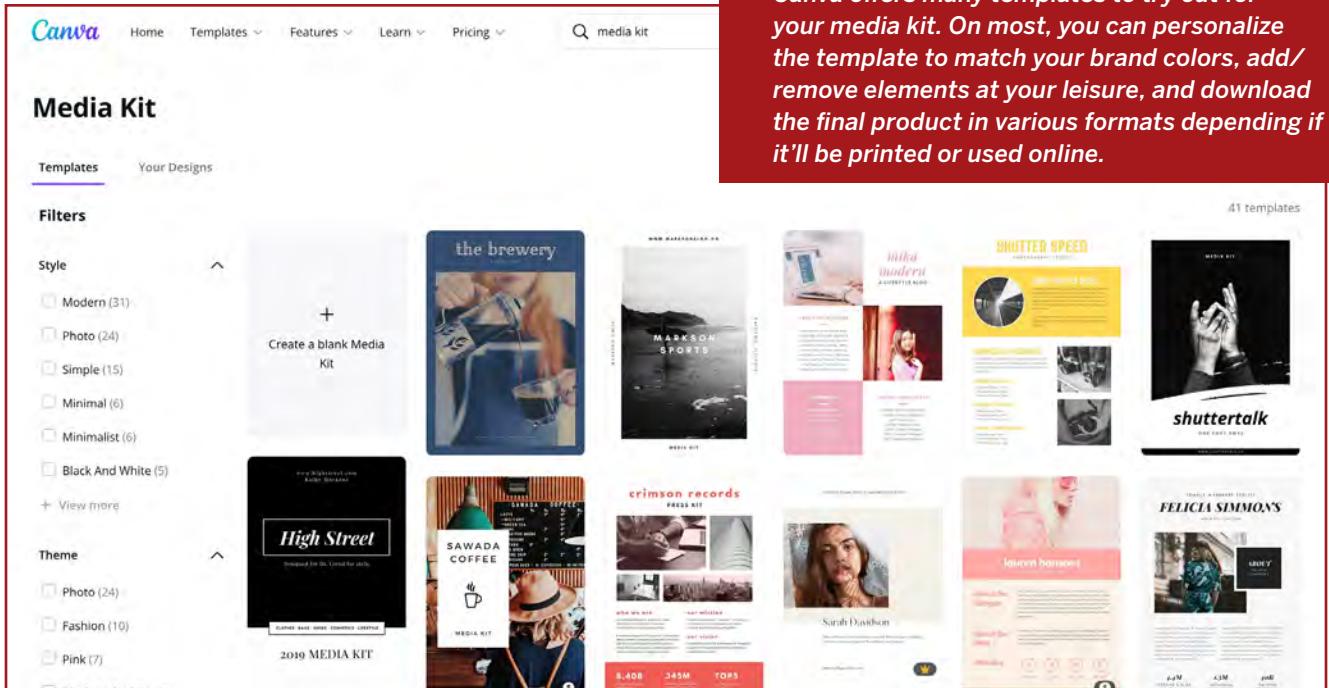
If you're the DIY type, Canva is a great option for developing your media kit. It has predesigned templates to work with that you can customize to work with your branding. Just pop "media kit" into the search bar, and you'll get access to a variety of templates, both free and paid. It takes time to mess around with the platform and learn how to use it, but in the end, you'll probably end up with a product you're proud of and happy to share.

If time is a premium in your life, hiring professionals could be the best way to go. First, you'll want to find a writer to put the copy together. Then you'll find a designer and provide all the materials—copy, images, logos, video. Ask if the designer can share a working template so you can continue to tailor the kit as needed, otherwise you'll likely face additional fees for changes along the way when you want to update your kit for a particular audience.

## Why a Media Kit Matters

You might be thinking, "I have a website and social media that feature all of the above-listed items." If you do, high-five! It's a great start, and repurposing that information into a media kit will be easy for you. The thing about a personal-brand media kit is it sets you apart from others and is a highly targeted way to gather all the bits and pieces that might be more spread out in your other marketing efforts. Here are six reasons a

Canva offers many templates to try out for your media kit. On most, you can personalize the template to match your brand colors, add/remove elements at your leisure, and download the final product in various formats depending if it'll be printed or used online.



media kit can elevate your marketing game and help you get closer to your goals.

**Complete control.** This is your opportunity to tell people who you are in your own words. You can represent your core values that drive your business, in words, photos, and graphics, exactly as you choose.

**Time savings.** When a potential new sponsor or customer inquire about your business, providing them with a specially tailored media kit can answer a lot of their questions, saving you time on the phone or in person going over the answers.

**Custom-tailoring.** Once you have your main template constructed, it's easy to specially tailor a media kit for a specific person or entity. For example, if you're courting a new sponsor, tailor your messaging to solving their problems and choose testimonials from other sponsors. When it's for a potential new customer, slant it toward their needs. If they have a youth rider, tailor the content to highlight your experience working with young riders.

**Promotion.** If you're just starting out on your own, a media kit can be a great way to introduce

yourself to your community. Same if you've recently relocated. When a media representative asks you for bio information, you can easily send your media kit so they have all the information you'd like them to share at their fingertips.

**Tone-setting.** When you present yourself professionally, those around you follow suit, including your help and your customers. Your media kit can nail down some processes of your barn, too, when tailored for potential customers, including basic fees, deadlines, and other expectations you have of those around you.

**Confidence- and reputation-building.** Just as a professional website builds your brand and your potential customers' confidence in you, so does your media kit. When you conduct yourself as a professional business person, others take notice and feel comfortable doing business with you. ■

## Resources

[How to Create a Media Kit, 5wpr.com](#)

[7 Things Brands Want to See in an Influencer Media Kit, TheShelf.com](#)

# DOLLARS & SENSE



Tune in to the *How to Market Your Horse Business* podcast for weekly episodes that can help elevate your marketing efforts.

## Listen and Learn

THIS WEEKLY PODCAST CAN HELP YOU ELEVATE YOUR MARKETING.

If you're a podcast fan, we found one for you that specifically focuses on marketing tips for owners of horse businesses—including horse trainers and those who manage breeding operations—called *How to Market Your Horse Business*. You can find it just about anywhere you listen to podcasts and at [stormlilymarketing.com/podcast](https://stormlilymarketing.com/podcast).

Host Denise Alvarez of Stormlily Marketing aims to help owners of horse businesses market their offerings with purpose in ways that allow you to put most of your focus on what you do best—train horses, coach riders, and breed champions.

In the weekly podcast, Alvarez covers pertinent topics such as building your website, social media, and email marketing.

“Each week, I’ll break down marketing into bite-size bits and give you actionable and doable tips and strategies that you can apply to your horse business,” she explained. “Plus, you’ll hear from your fellow horse business owners who are in the trenches with you as they share specifics of what’s working for them. And then I’ll help you see how you can take it and do it in your business, too!” ■

## Sonic Stress Relief

Do you listen to music to calm yourself when stressed? Boehringer Ingelheim (BI) has hard facts about how certain music can help calm the horses in your barn.

As we know, stress can cause equine gastric ulcer syndrome, which can impede your horses’ training and performance at shows. BI partnered with Janet Marlow, founder of Pet Acoustics, to develop a music track specifically for horses and to calm them in stressful situations.

“When Boehringer Ingelheim expressed an interest in doing something to help manage stress in horses, I was extremely interested based on my research in this area,” Marlow said. “It’s all about composing music and modifying the decibel and frequency levels of each note for the comfortable hearing range of the animal. Using this process, we have tested music through clinical studies at veterinary hospitals, barns, etc. to see the music elicit a release of physical tensions and stress behaviors.”

You can access the special track [here](#), where you can play the music track and video, as well as gain access to additional resources on stress, EGUS, and ways to help prevent it. The audio only version can be accessed at [here](#). ■



If what the photo says is true, then calming music can help ease your horses' anxiety, which reduces incidences of equine gastric ulcer syndrome.

PHOTO BY MOHAMMAD METRI



Try these helpful financial blogs to manage and grow your business's resources as well as your own knowledge.

## Financial Blogs to Help You Grow

SHORT ONLINE ARTICLES GIVE YOU THE LATEST TIPS.

**F**inances can be a tough topic to tackle. Luckily, there are a few websites out there dedicated to small businesses that can help answer your financial questions. They're not horse-business specific, but you can pull tips and ideas from the various articles on each site.

**Kabbage.com** offers a robust resources center that tackles many financial concerns small businesses face, from invoicing to licensing to hiring employees.

**SmallBusinessBonfire.com** provides a variety of free resources, but notably has an entire section dedicated to monetary topics, including tips for getting loans and filing taxes.

**BusinessCreditBlogger.com** offers strategies to build credit, how to use it, and where to find funding. ■

PHOTO BY VISUAL STORIES || MICHELLE

# Winter Marketing Calendar

*The first of the year brings a little time for some rest and relaxation and, hopefully, a lot of motivation to kick your marketing game into gear! Spend a little of your down time planning the first few months of your 2022 marketing strategy to set yourself up for success the entire year. Here are a few ideas to get your New Year efforts off to a great start.*

**Reflect on 2021.** Spend time sharing your reflections on 2021 to highlight successes, key learnings, and gratitude. Record a video or write a blog post about the year's achievements, and post it to your social media accounts and in your newsletter.

**Blog about new goals.** The benefit of sharing your goals is threefold. First, sharing your aspirations for the year inspires your audience and shares your process for what you want to accomplish in 2022. Second, there's a written record of your goals to hold you accountable. Third, you have great content to build from the entire year! It's a jackpot of a post. Share your goals blog on your social media accounts and via your email list for amped-up engagement, and provide updates all year.

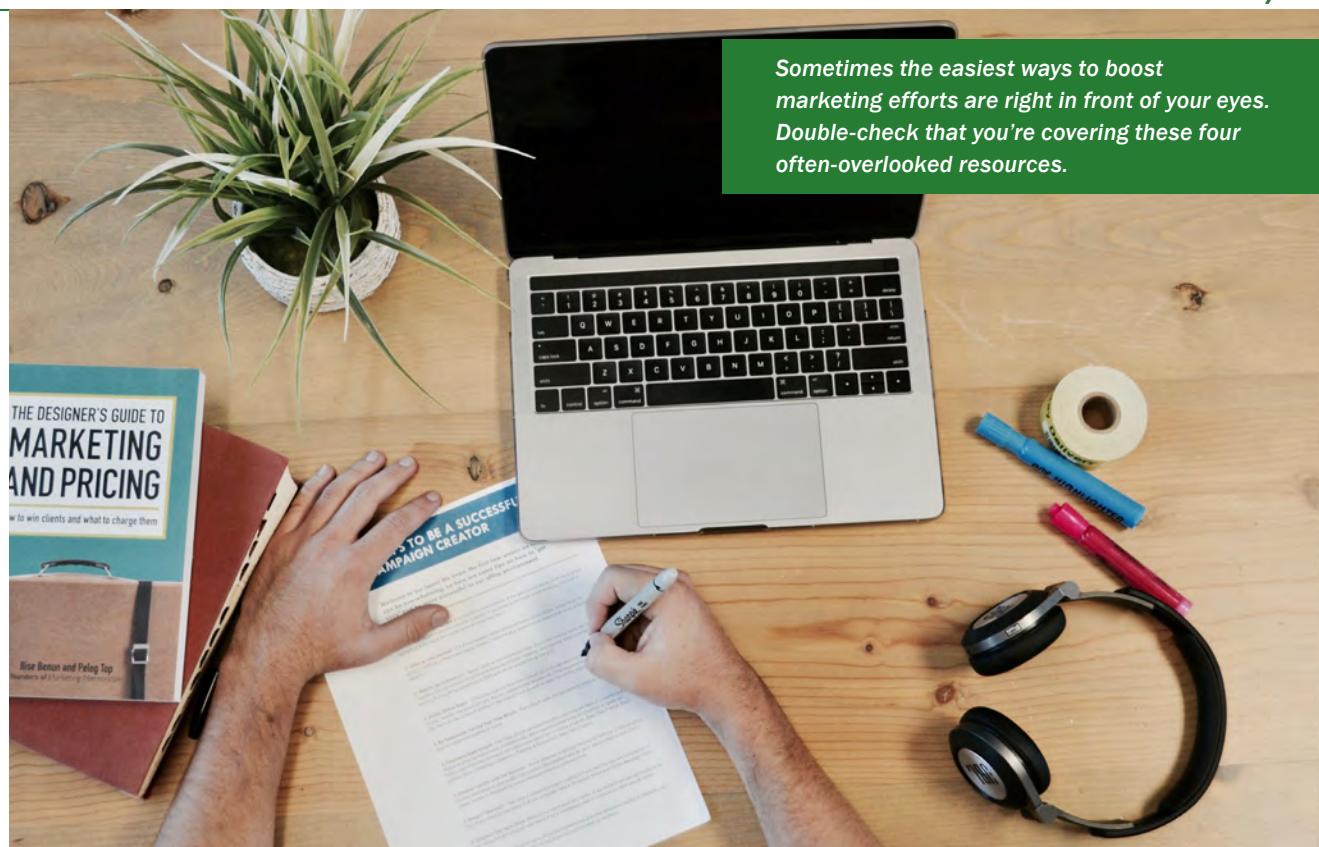
**Keep highlighting your stars.** If you chronicled your horses' trips to year-end events such as the NRHA Futurity & Adequan® North American Affiliate Championships, don't stop now! Share how you help them recover from a strenuous major event, what your vet goes over to ensure that their health is 100%, and how they get to unwind. Use Instagram Stories to post short video diaries of your horses to give people a look behind the scenes.

**Share winter travel tips.** Safety is a top concern when hauling to events in unpredictable winter weather. Share your best tips—especially if they can be tied to your sponsors—for weathering winter travel to help keep everyone safe on the road.

**Post your show schedule.** By sharing your potential show schedule, you demonstrate openness and accessibility to fans. Only post it if you're willing to do two things: keep the calendar updated and meet with fans who come to a show to watch you.

**Share “inside” tips.** If you spend cold days reorganizing your tack room, cleaning gear, or straightening up your trailer, share these moments with your audience. They'll engage with the content, which boosts your visibility and provides educational service to your fans. ■

*Sometimes the easiest ways to boost marketing efforts are right in front of your eyes. Double-check that you're covering these four often-overlooked resources.*



## 4 Easy Marketing Tips You're Overlooking

DON'T SLEEP ON THESE SIMPLE, LOW-EFFORT WAYS TO PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS AND SPECIAL EXPERTISE.

It's easy to get bogged down in intense efforts, and in that process, you might overlook a few of the easiest ways to market your business. Be sure you've completed each of these basic tactics to boost your presence.

### 1. Get Listed on Google My Business.

This is the listing that appears when someone searches for your business on Google or Google Maps. Visit [google.com/business](https://google.com/business), and follow the prompts to add details about your operation.

### 2. Learn Basic SEO for Your Website.

It sounds intimidating, but basic search engine optimization (SEO) comes down to four cornerstones to use behind the scenes on your

site: relevant and helpful content, compelling and accurate meta titles and meta descriptions, image alt text that describes the images on the page, and the Google Search Console (watch tutorials online to get the jist).

**3. Get Listed in Directories.** Many local horse groups offer directories for horse professionals. Be sure your listings are accurate and complete to get the best results. This includes your profile on ReinerSuite™, which populates [nrha.com/findapro/](https://nrha.com/findapro/)

**4. Activate Your Social Media.** Take a hard look at how you use social media and if you're activating all of its possibilities. ■

# SOCIAL MEDIA TRAINER

BECOME THE SOCIAL MEDIA EXPERT YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS

## New Tools for Instagram

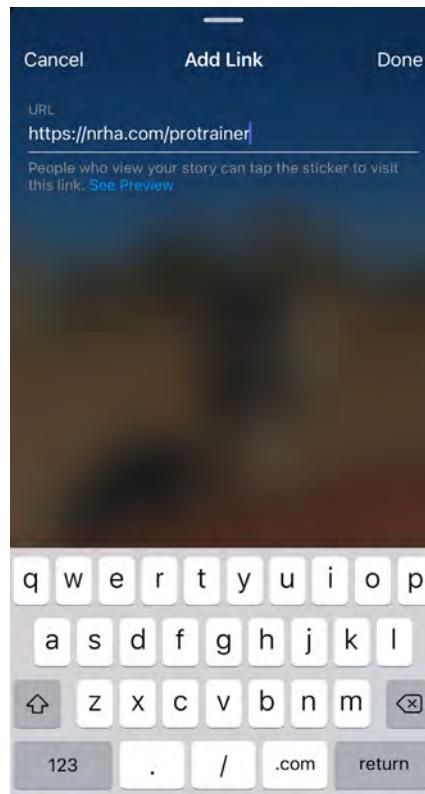
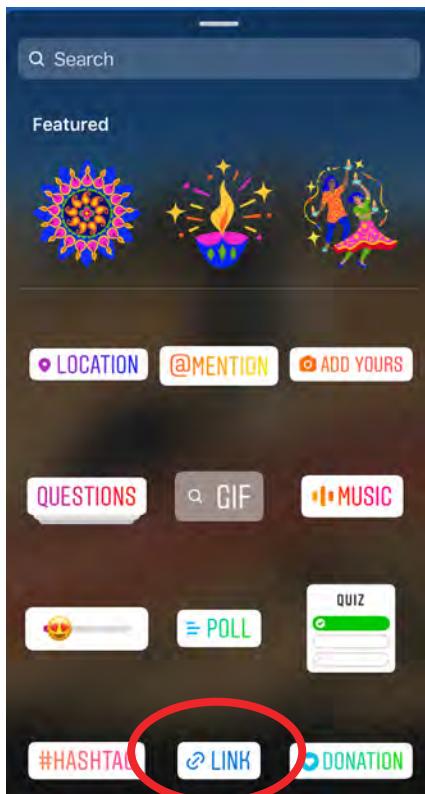
TRY THESE NEW RESOURCES TO BOOST YOUR INSTAGRAM'S ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION, WHICH INCREASES YOUR PRESENCE.

BY JENNIFER PAULSON

**B**y the time this article reaches you, Instagram very well could've introduced even newer tweaks to its platform, but two exciting changes emerged this fall that could help your business grow engagement and increase your audience. Both are simple to use and are great ways to interact with your audience.

### Link Stickers

Instagram has always been a bit of a challenge for its lack of link-ability to websites. To start, the only option was to use the link space provided in your account's bio. Then came along link-housing pages such as [Linktree](#), where you can provide many links from one landing page



*Instagram's Link Sticker could be a big benefit for driving traffic to your website and others associated with your business. When you create a Story, tap the Sticker icon at the top menu. Choose the Link Sticker (it'll be located somewhere in the first few stickers.) Drop in the website you want to promote and click "Done." Move the sticker where you want it on the image or video, and post!*

to take you to other pages. Next was the swipe-up feature to take users off Instagram and onto a specific web page with the related content. However, that feature was only available to users with 10,000 or more followers—a steep requirement for most small businesses.

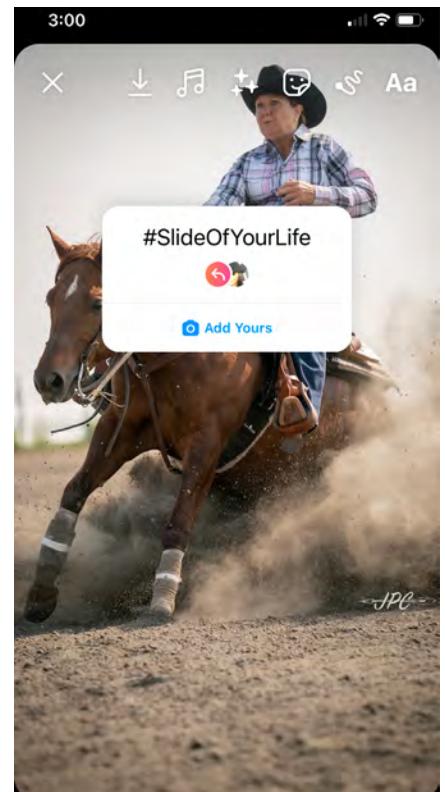
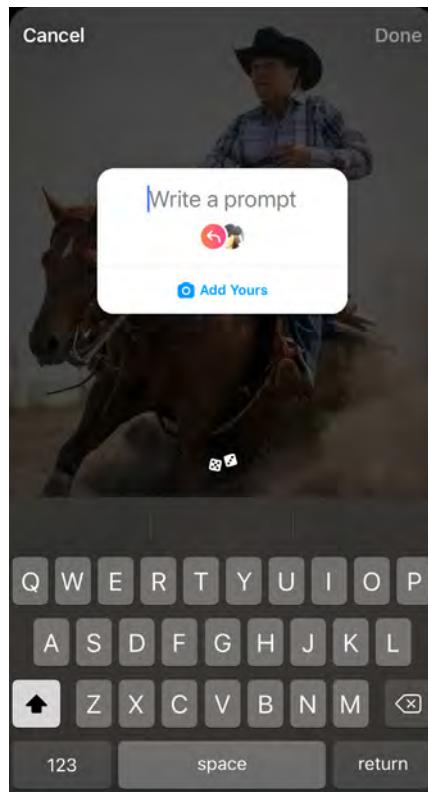
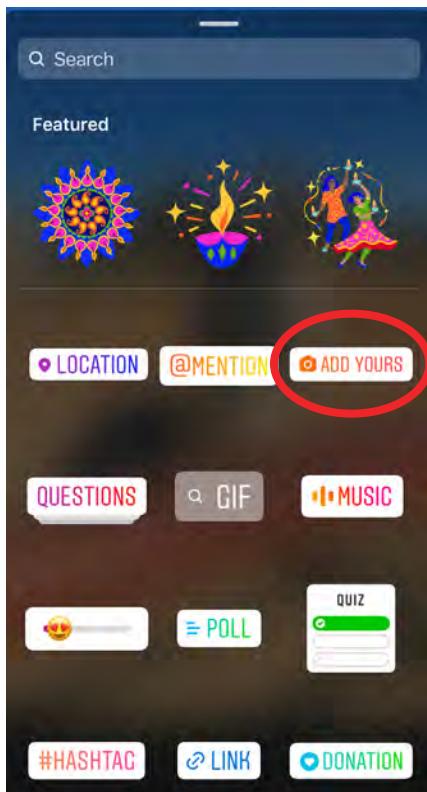
Now Instagram is rolling out Link Stickers. The rollout began in October.

“We made this decision based on feedback we heard from the community about how impactful it would be for creators and businesses of all sizes to benefit from link sharing to grow in the same way larger accounts do,” Instagram said in a statement.

Why did it take so long to come to this decision to allow anyone to link to outside pages? Safety. The platform was concerned about spreading of misinformation, phishing links, and spam. If you engage in these activities on Instagram using the Link Stickers, you’ll be blocked from using the resource.

You can easily find access to the Link Stickers from the navigation bar when uploading or shooting a Story. After selecting “Link Sticker,” add your link, and tap “Done.” Then move the sticker anywhere you’d like on your photo or video for your user to tap.

How can you put this to use? →



**Instagram's Add Yours Sticker can increase engagement and visibility across the platform. When you create a Story, tap the Sticker icon at the top menu. Choose the Add Yours sticker (it'll be located somewhere in the first few stickers.) Create a catchy call to action and click "Done." Move the sticker where you want it on the image or video, and post!**

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Here are a few ideas to get you started using the Link Sticker on Instagram.

- **Stallion promotion.** When you post images of your studs or their offspring, use a link to direct the user to learn more about the stallion and your breeding program.
- **Sponsor support.** Post images and videos of the products you endorse, and provide a direct link for the user to find more information—and even buy—the products you’re promoting. Big results can happen if your sponsor reposts your link.
- **Website traffic.** If you’re an active blogger, use the Link Sticker to drive your audience directly to your blog to read your latest post. Or when you add new content or horses for sale to your site, use the Link Sticker to provide more information—think sale videos.
- **Self-promotion.** When you’re featured in a publication, blog, podcast, or other media, promote it via a Link Sticker.

### ‘Add Yours’

If you’re a TikTok user, this might seem like a copycat move, but Instagram has added an Add Yours Sticker, found in the same place as the Link Sticker. This lets your users respond to your Stories with their own images.

Take the example in the images on the previous page. Your users can add their own favorite stopping photo to the post. When users respond, their profile photo is added to the others on the screen, and users can scroll through those images, too.

This could be a great engagement-builder in two ways. First, people are interacting with your posts. Second, you can interact with other posts and possibly gain followers when people look at your Add Yours image on accounts they already follow and choose to follow you, too.

This takes effort on your part, but it could pay big dividends when it comes to gaining followers who like to engage with content that’s similar to what you produce, as well as adding exposure to potential customers and sponsors.

Here are a few thought-starters for using the Add Yours Sticker to your Instagram Stories.

- **Foal photos.** Who can resist baby photos? No one. Baby season is upon us, so capitalize on it! Post images of your foals, and use the Add Yours sticker with a prompt such as “Share Your Foal Photos!”
- **Sponsor support.** Your new cowboy hat arrives from your sponsor. Use their hashtag, such as “Show Your #FeltHatSeason,” to promote their tag and encourage users to participate in using the hashtag while engaging with your brand and your sponsor’s products that you endorse.
- **Capitalize on events.** If you’re at a high-profile event—even if you’re not competing—leverage its notoriety by asking users to engage. For example, if you’re at The Run for a Million, share a selfie and ask others who are there to do the same. Even if you’re at a rodeo or a non-Western event, brainstorm ideas to tag along with the event’s hype.

### Can’t Find Them?

For all new releases of resources on your social media apps, you’ll need to be sure your app is up-to-date. Go to your app store, search for the app, and check if it says “Open” or “Update.” Updates should happen fairly quickly, especially over wifi.

If you still can’t find new offerings, power down and restart your phone. If that doesn’t work, the new tech could be rolling out over a period of time to keep the app from crashing due to high use around the world. ■



# UNLOCK YOUR FULL POTENTIAL

*You might coach non pro and youth riders every day, but have you ever considered what a professional coach could do to enhance your business and elevate it to the next level? Learn more here.*

THE KEY TO LEVELING-UP YOUR BUSINESS COULD LIE IN HIRING A PROFESSIONAL COACH TO HELP GET YOU ON TRACK.

**BY JENNIFER PAULSON**

If you've played any sports, you've no doubt benefitted from the insight and motivation provided by your coach. You might've even developed a coaching relationship with a fellow NRHA Professional to help you when you're stuck training a horse or putting the final polish on before a major event. In either case, your coach helps you find ways to develop your skills, find a framework to meet your goals, and cheers you on as you progress (and picks you up when you stumble).

But have you ever considered enlisting the help of a coach to level-up your business?

Katie Hollingsworth is a familiar face around NRHA, having provided her coaching services to NRHyA delegates and officers and to NRHA employees. She's also married

to the rodeo coach at Oklahoma State University, and is a barrel racer herself. Most notably (and important to you as a business owner), Hollingsworth is a performance and leadership development coach at [Krave Coaching and Consulting](#).

Here, Hollingsworth details how a professional coach can be the best investment you make in your business and in yourself.

### **What's a Coach?**

You might be scratching your head, saying you understand the traditional definition of a coach, but how can a person in that role help me as a professional and business owner? Hollingsworth gets that question a lot and begins her explanation with three scenarios in

which she helps people reach their full potential.

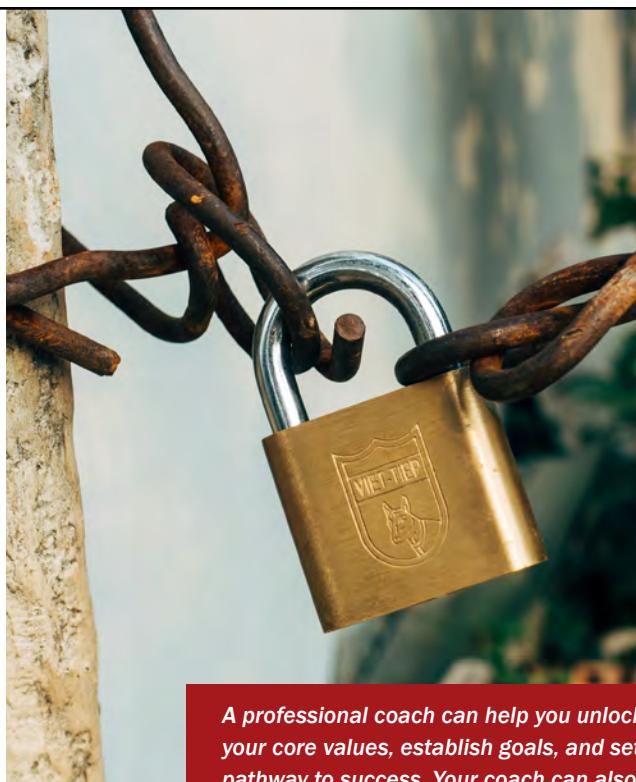
- **Mental coach**—involves mindset and motivation.
- **Small business coach**—helps you establish where you are, where you want to be, and how you'll get there.
- **Leadership coach**—establishes how you can be the best leader of your team, whether it's a three-person staff or a 30-person roster.

As you can see, all three of those roles can pertain to your career as a professional trainer; small-business owner; and leader of your team of assistants, grooms, and other employees.

Hollingsworth says people come to her in a few common situations.

- You've reached an impasse. You want to do better, but you're not sure how.
- You want to compete more presently. Distractions weigh you down—whether business or personal—and keep you from achieving your goals.
- You want to be a better leader. Maybe you've lost a few key employees and want to improve your management to retain your help.
- You want to get sharper, faster. This can apply to your business and in the show pen.

“Most people don't come to me from a place of distress,” Hollingsworth shares. “I function differently than a mentor or therapist. A mentor comes in and tells you exactly what to do for your business to flourish. A therapist helps you manage things in your past—such as deep trauma and mental health. Coaches help clients gain clarity and focus about their lives, expand their creativity, and discover solutions to life's challenges, focusing on the root (or core) of a challenging and shifting underlying



*A professional coach can help you unlock your core values, establish goals, and set a pathway to success. Your coach can also act as your accountability check-in to ensure that you keep progressing and moving forward.*

energy that feeds thoughts, emotions, and life experience. This approach provides a cutting-edge framework and research-backed metrics to inspire our clients to achieve extraordinary results in whatever they do.”

## Getting Started

With the beginning of a new year, you're probably thinking about your future. What's next for you, your business, your training program? It can leave you feeling overwhelmed to come up with plans to make 2022 your best yet, but it's a crucial step in leveling-up your business. And a coach can help.

But where do you begin?

“Your coach needs you to come with an understanding of where you want to go, what goals you're trying to achieve, and what you're willing to commit to,” Hollingsworth says. “What have you already tried? What do you believe is standing in your way? Answers to



*Coaching can come in the way of group sessions and seminars or one-on-one programs. Work with your potential coach to find the best situation for your needs.*

these questions—and an open mind—will start the conversation on a productive note.”

Hollingsworth cautions that a coach isn’t there to give you answers or systems—that’s more a consultant’s job. Rather, coaches create the space to allow you to succeed.

“I’m not the expert in my client’s life or business,” Hollingsworth points out. “I ask the strategic questions so you can create the plan for yourself. My questions usually start with what’s most important to you? Is it revenue? Brand recognition? Reach and influence? Wins in the show pen? Someone might say all of it! But then we have to break it down to the most basic elements to develop a system to find success. Your goal doesn’t distinguish your success; your systems of how you get there do. Everyone in your business wants to win the big check at the next event. Your systems for getting there, ability to pivot when you face an obstacle, and commitment are what allow you to be the one who achieves that goal.”

## **SMART Goals**

If you’ve done any goal-setting, or helped your customers set their riding goals, you’ve likely heard the phrase “SMART goals,” which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely.

“It’s fine to have a huge, overarching goal,” Hollingsworth explains. “but you must have a goal for each step along the way. Break down your big goal into the SMART components, and then identify obstacles that could get in your way and how you’ll hold yourself accountable throughout the process.”

Accountability is key! It can come in the form of an accountability partner (your spouse, a peer, or a friend who checks in on you to ensure that you’re sticking to your goals) or your coach, but more importantly, via self check-ins with your actions and your values.

“Goal-setting and the work toward your goals are very personal processes,” Hollingsworth says. “Setting goals and processes that align with your

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personal values is critical. Don't set goals about what you think you're supposed to be. You'll quit. Connecting to your core values will keep you on track and help you work toward achievement."

Once you identify your core values, begin with steps toward your goal that you can take immediately. Find ways to stay connected to your goals every single day, and recognize those achievements.

"Confidence comes from recognizing success," Hollingsworth says. "People say they want to stay humble and hungry, but acknowledging

what you've done is what keeps you going. For example, think about writing a done list instead of a to-do list. A to-do list is constantly growing and can wear you down. A done list inspires your confidence."

### **Put Your Mind to It**

Mindset can be a tricky topic. We all talk about it a lot, especially when we're in an inspiring moment. But, Hollingsworth says, we often don't do anything about it.

"People give a lot of rhetoric to mindset," she



*Accountability is key to progress. A peer in the business whom you trust can be a solid person to help keep you moving forward when you get stuck or need a push.*

PHOTO BY JENNIFER PAULSON

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explains. “But how many of us do anything about it? We give credence to the importance of mindset, but we don’t act on it. After you read an inspiring book or listen to a motivating podcast, what will you actually do to enact what you learned and capitalize on what inspired you? You can do all the workshops you want, even hire a coach, but unless you’re consistently growing, you’ll revert to your former tendencies.”

So, when setting your goals and making your path, be sure to include how you’ll mentally and physically move forward. Hollingsworth calls it “inspired action.”

“You can have motivation to the moon, but when you turn off the podcast or put down the book and walk away, what’s next?” she asks. Your coach can help you identify ways to harness that inspiration and keep it moving in the right direction.

## Staying on Track

There will be times when things go sideways and interrupt your progress. It might be a family or health problem, or maybe two weeks at a major event causes you to get off track. Don’t become discouraged or upset with yourself. Hollingsworth advises jumping back in.

“Step back into where you were before you went off track, and evaluate what happened with curiosity,” she says. “Talk to your coach about why you got off track—was it time, resources, the weather, or something else? That’s a step of accountability. Then consider the aspects of that lapse that you can control in the future, such as how you allocate your time. Also realize that sometimes you just need a break.”

When working with a coach, periodic check-ins also help maintain motivation. Hollingsworth says most of her clients begin with weekly check-ins, then move to biweekly,

and then once a month. Your process might take you 12 sessions to get where you want to be and on track, and then you move on and self-coach. Or you might be a lifetime client.

“It all depends on the amount of feedback you need and want,” Hollingsworth says. “Coaches are judgement-free. Some people want to get in, get a plan, and move on. Others love the coaching space and having a sounding board. As with most aspects of coaching, it’s very individual and personal. The goal is to find what works for you to get you started, take the first steps, and stay on track.”

## Finding a Coach

“Connection is key,” Hollingsworth begins, “but finding a coach with International Coaching Federation credentials is the way to start. Coaching is a fairly unregulated business, but ICF requires 200 hours of education, along with coaching and mentoring hours. You’ll see more bang for your buck with an ICF-certified coach.”

Many people find coaches via word of mouth. They hear peers and friends sharing success stories, and follow the same path. But it’s important to ask questions and do research. Some coaches are more suitable if you need a lot of pushing; others are better for more aggressive personalities. Most coaches offer a free “exploration session” where you can get to know each other and see if it’s a good fit.

“I tend to work with a lot of people in the Western industry,” Hollingsworth says. “The horse world has its own vernacular, and you don’t want to waste time in your sessions explaining every detail of what you do. It’s best to work with someone who gets the language, and that offers a connection to your lifestyle, too. Trainers have a very different lifestyle, so someone with a base knowledge of that would be a coach to consider.” ■

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*It might be hard to imagine collaborating with your competitors, but when done with foresight and within legal limits, it can benefit all of your businesses, as well as the industry as a whole.*



*Learn*

# TOGETHER

HOW CAN COLLABORATION, SHARED EXPERIENCES, AND LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER'S EXPERIENCES ENHANCE YOUR BUSINESS? ONE 'GROUP STUDY' EXPERT (WHO'S ALSO A REINER) SHARES HER INSIGHTS HERE.

**BY JENNIFER PAULSON**

**Y**ou work in an inherently competitive industry. Show-pen success and NRHA Lifetime Earnings aside, you vie for horseflesh, customers, sponsors, and more to keep your business moving in a positive direction and your revenue numbers growing. So it might seem as if collaborating with fellow NRHA Professionals on matters of business would be counterproductive to your goals.

Dr. Marsha Heinke, EA, CPA, CVPM disagrees and has experience to support collaborative efforts. The Grafton, Ohio, reiner owns and operates Veterinary Practice Made Perfect, a firm that provides business consulting, accounting, and tax advice to veterinary practices. Additionally, she's involved with Veterinary Management Groups,

which is where small groups of veterinarians come together to learn from each other—through both triumphs and failures—to improve their business practices in everything from accounting and personnel management to regulations and taxes.

Called “study groups” or “groups of 20,” these collaboratives haven't yet been developed in the horse industry that we know of. However, Heinke's insights and key learnings from working with veterinarians can open your mind and your eyes to the opportunities that lie within collaborative group work.

## **A Little History**

The concept of study groups goes back to the 1970s. The idea came to the veterinary

community by way of a veterinarian named Robert Featherston of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

“He was a very innovative thinker,” Heinke explains. “He wanted to find ways to make veterinary practices better at business so they could provide better care and support to their clients and patients. He spoke with his peers and found out that his jogging partner, who also owned a Ford dealership, collaborated with his fellow dealers to make their businesses the best they could possibly be through client service, marketing, inventory management, financials, and managing personnel. Bob was fascinated.”

Featherston attended one of the Ford meet-ups and brought the idea back to his peers at the American Animal Hospital Association. They listened and decided to adopt the practice and set a scheduled to meet a few times a year following the Ford model Featherston had described.

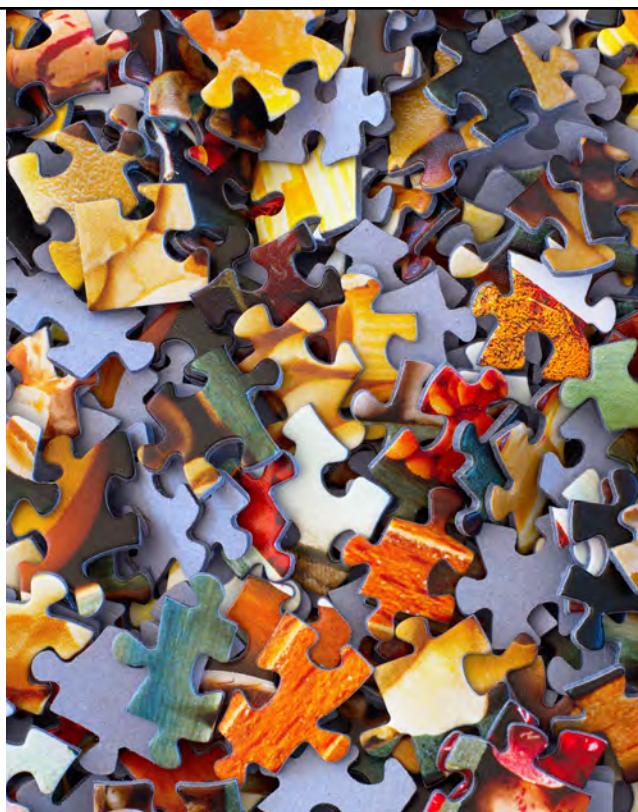
Heinke came to be involved with Veterinary Study Groups via her boss at the time, Owen McCafferty, CPA, in Cleveland, Ohio, who picked up Featherston’s idea when it stalled out.

### Keys to Success

As in any successful group, certain attributes help ensure the success of a study group. It might seem too formal and structured to some, but that’s really what makes them effective resources for every member of the group.

Heinke cites five main points that allow success for these study groups.

- Groups consist of one person from each of no more than 20 individually owned entities. This keeps the group discussions manageable and the costs easier to distribute across the group. Too few means the costs get too high; too many, and the discussion are difficult to manage and ensure that everyone gets what they need.
- Each group has a facilitator to organize speakers, content, and discussions during the



*The right facilitator for your group can help each of you start putting the pieces of your business puzzle together to ensure that you’re following all the legal requirements the government has set forth in terms of taxes, payroll, employee management, and more.*

meetings, as well as setting a meeting site, ordering meals, and handling post-meeting accounting. This person also plays a key role in ensuring that the group follows all legal considerations. (More on that later.)

- The groups are governed by bylaws and rules and have a set structure, which ensures that all members meet their obligations.
- Everyone in the group must contribute. This means being vulnerable, sharing data and ideas, fessing up to mistakes, and celebrating accomplishments.
- The group should meet in person at least twice a year. Virtual meetings outside those two main meetings can be helpful when schedules and budgets allow them.

“It takes a certain personality to make this work,” Heinke shares. “When we go into business

doing something we love, we never have to work a day in our lives. But we're not trained in business operations unless that's our area of passion—which isn't likely for most reining professionals. Most entrepreneurs have some level of discomfort with these topics, and a successful study group can help you admit what you don't know."

### Legal Standards

This is where things can get complicated and why a CPA must be part of your work with a study group, even if it's not in a highly structured method such as those the Veterinary Study Group uses. Things can get dicey legally when members of the same industry, working in the same geographic area, meet up to discuss business practices. From the outside, and even to government entities, it can seem as though the members of the group are price-fixing, colluding, and working against their clientele, which can get your business in hot water.

"In the vet industry, there's an effort to have group members live a far distance from each other," Heinke explains. "They're not competing for the same handful of clients in their own backyard. This helps avoid trouble with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in areas such as setting prices and employee compensation. An umbrella organization or leader helps keep you on the straight and narrow. Dues and an organizational structure set up your group as a business."

Heinke notes that smaller groups could work through an accounting firm in a similar manner, but members need to plan to compensate the organizer for the large investment of time and effort, as well as to pay the experts who share their knowledge with the group.

### How a Group Can Help You

This all might make sense in a veterinary-practice context, but you might be wondering how a study

## What's It Worth?

An article by John J. Bowen, Jr., CEO of CEG Worldwide, LLC, a study of career insurance agents done by CEG Worldwide principal Russ Alan Prince, illustrates the potential success of study groups. They found that agents in the non-expert study groups (the less-formal version discussed in this article) produced \$16,000 for every \$10,000 of first-year commissionable premiums produced by those who did not participate in a group. And those in the expert study groups (those with structure and under a business model) were even more effective, producing \$82,000 in first year commissionable premiums for every \$10,000 produced by the non-participants.

group could help you. The truth is, in very similar ways as it elevates your veterinarian's practice, even though your focus lies in breeding, training, and showing horses; coaching youth and non pro riders; and everything else horse-related.

"As a business owner, it's expected that you have expertise or hire someone with expertise that helps you stay in line with laws and regulations to keep you out of trouble," Heinke warns. "You don't want to go outside those laws and incur fines and penalties that lead you into bankruptcy. That's a real risk. We talk about all of these things in our study groups."

These topics include inventory, buying and selling, security, banking, revenue collection, internal control structures, marketing, promotion, and human resources.

"The largest risk often is the human resources part of it," Heinke says. "A couple people make claims against you, and you're in litigation that can leave you bankrupt, whether the accuser is telling the truth or not. You can hope that you're awakened by things that happen to those around you, but you have to be attentive to everything.

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Anyone can sue you for just about anything, and you have to pay to defend yourself. It's better to have your house in order and do everything you can to minimize risk from the start. You might be a great horse trainer, but these other components are what make or break your business."

““ When we go into business doing something we love, we never have to work a day in our lives. But we're not trained in business operations unless that's our area of passion—which isn't likely for most reining professionals. Most entrepreneurs have some level of discomfort with these topics, and a successful study group can help you admit what you don't know. ””

—Marsha Heinke, EA, CPA, CVPM

Heinke shares the entrepreneurial mindset and sees that NRHA Professionals want to make a mark on the world and do things their own way. Entrepreneurs share that desire to show that you can do it on your own—and better than anyone else. When you start with a great business model that alleviates risk and follows the letter of the law, it allows you to do what you do best and do right by your horses.

“Sharing the best way to run your business is one of the ways you can be the best you can at serving the horse,” Heinke says. “When you're not managing things well, you have to cut corners. Or you're not able to show your financials to get a

loan when you need one. In cases like those, what suffers? The horse. When your business is in order, you don't have to take on clients who don't share your values. You don't have to accept horses that don't fit your program. You owe it to yourself and your horse to do the best you can in your business. It takes money to do things the right way. Strong business knowledge allows you to build the capital to do things the right way.” ■

## Additional Reading

Heinke encourages all entrepreneurs to read *The E-Myth: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It*, by Michael E. Gerber.

“The revised version of Gerber's acclaimed *The E-Myth* (1977) refines the author's theories on entrepreneurialism and the evolution of a typical business start-up's birth, growth, stagnation, and possibly, failure,” Heinke says. “The first third of the book explains the psychology of the entrepreneur: why people start their own businesses and the problems that evolve as business activity ramps up without adequate systems or governance. The second third of the book highlights the turnkey revolution and franchise concept, starting with Ray Kroc's now-classic model of McDonald's. In the last third of the book, Gerber outlines practical solutions and gives advice that all small-business owners should heed, if they are truly serious about developing a world class organization.”

# NRHA Professional Code of Ethics

We, 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.

- 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 in any way alter or modify the NRHA rules.

*The members of the NRHA Professionals Committee created the NRHA Professional Code of Ethics to further promote the humane treatment of reining horses and ethical business practices. If you have questions regarding this code, please reach out to Sara Honegger at [shonegger@nrha.com](mailto:shonegger@nrha.com).*

