

Pipeline Artists Symposium

TikTok and Other Social Media for Creatives—handy handout!

Thanks so much for attending the session! I hope you benefitted from having me share my experiences—as well as the insights I’ve gathered along the way. Now here’s a summary of what we talked about and more, hope it serves you well.

All things TikTok

- Previously, if you wanted a link in bio, the default was to choose a business account, but as of 2022, you now have to register your business with TikTok to get that coveted link in bio—I created my TikTok account in 2021 so I personally don’t have experience with this new process, but if it seems too complicated, I would recommend sticking to a personal “creator” account, as that will also give you access to the full library of music, and a lot of TikToks go viral when they use popular snippets of songs. PS: you can still get a link in bio with a creator account once you reach 1,000 followers—I’ll be switching from a business account to a personal account once I reach 1,000 followers, because aside from the link in bio, a business account doesn’t seem useful or necessary for writers.
- To avoid getting overwhelmed about what to post, search #authortok and #booktok and #writertok, and watch what types of videos get a lot of views and engagement. The first two are particularly important if your goal is to become an author, or if you have a book releasing soon.
- Once I watched a lot of videos in the above categories, I realized that I didn’t need to dance or sing a.k.a. sell my soul in order to exist on TikTok. In fact, in the writer space, you can post things as simple as sharing your writing space, some behind-the-scenes about your process, some sneak peeks of author life (people seem interested in this if you have a book releasing soon), quotes from your stories, or even fun things like what you do when you’re procrastinating from writing.
- To expand on the above, if you’re shy, you don’t have to constantly show your face in the video. In fact, my posts with graphics and text on screen often perform just as well or better than having my face in front of the camera.
- If you plan on posting regularly and don’t want to be on camera all the time, I highly suggest a Canva Pro account, as you can create every visual under the sun with animated text and graphics, and these assets can also be used on other social media platforms too. Personally, I used Canva Pro A TON in the run up to my book launch for things like cover reveals, sharing what my book was about, sharing excerpts from reviews, etc. I still use it now when I want to bring attention to my book in a new way. If you’re really great at PhotoShop you may not need Canva Pro, but as I am horrible at PhotoShop, this has been a miracle for me.

- I find that mixing video and photos in a single TikTok can add some variety, drama or humor to whatever story you're telling (for example: video + reaction photo + more video).
- You can post videos that are up to 3 minutes long, but I try to limit that due to low attention spans, and generally try to keep them between 30sec to 1 minute max, in case I want to repurpose them on Instagram reels.
- When anyone's speaking in a video or if you're using a voiceover, always add closed captions for accessibility. The voiceover option + the closed captions can be really useful when you're sharing a video but you're not in it, because then it's like the voiceover is taking you on a little tour or journey of what the video's about. Periodic stickers can also add humor to your videos, and you can easily time them for a set duration.
- Before you post each TikTok, you have the option to choose a still for the cover and to add a title. Always do this, as it's the first thing that's shown, and it will give viewers a good preview of what's to come.
- Because I found that there wasn't a crossover between say, my Twitter or Instagram followers, and TikTok, I essentially had to start from scratch in terms of gaining followers. This was hard and I'm still working on it, but what I've found useful is the following: to include my TikTok link in my linktree link in bio, to follow other creators I discovered from searching the "authortok" and "writertok" tags, to occasionally share a TikTok video on Twitter and invite others to find me there, to post a few times a week in the early going, and to utilize the "promote a post" option when there's something I want to promote (this came in handy a lot during the book launch).
- Speaking of promoting posts, for as little as \$6 a day, you can promote a post to either get more video views, likes, followers, or website visits. Because I had a book releasing in May, I found this very useful to help get a base level of followers and more exposure. It's just nice to know that it's there as an option that won't break the bank, and if you have a book coming out, it can be a reasonable part of your personal marketing budget.
- As another example, I found the "promote" option to be useful after my book was officially released, and I wanted to drive users to the book buy link. I customized my audience and made sure to exclude ages 13-18 if I was sharing an Amazon link (since they likely won't have a credit card/Amazon account). I also targeted women as that seemed more relevant for the romance genre. Each time I did this, the result was that I was in the top 25% of click links for a promoted post. You don't really know how many sales you're getting after that link, but you also don't know how many sales you're getting after a print ad, right? The point is, it's cheap and it can be a good way to get exposure (by the way, remember to be creative with your video if you're promoting a book link—for me this was where Canva Pro really came in handy, as I created a video that included scenes from Paris combined with a graphic of my book and some animated text).

Other Social Media Platforms

- **Instagram**

- The big thing these days on Instagram is reels, reels, reels. Why? When you post a reel vs. posting a photo, there's a greater chance of people viewing it in the "Explore" section of Instagram, as reels start playing right away and viewers' eyes are more drawn to them—so it can increase your chances of getting views and engagement. That being said, I am very busy and important (and so are you!), so do you think I want to double my social media work by creating videos in TikTok AND Instagram reels? Absolutely not. Solution? Repost your TikTok videos to Instagram reels and cut your work in half (a bit more on that in the next point).
- The reason I use TikTok as my base for creating my videos is that I find it to be more user friendly and intuitive than Instagram reels (if you find that the opposite is true, you can always do the reverse). Once I post my TikTok video, I save it to my phone, and then all I have to do is upload it to Instagram reels, change the music if I want (Instagram has an amazing music library), and then add a new caption and the relevant hashtags (for authors, these are some popular ones: #bookstagram #BookClub #BookAesthetic #BookReel #BookQuotes). Before you post, always make sure to have the button switched on for "Also share to feed" because that way, it will wind up on your main photo grid and more of your followers will see it. PS: Instagram has a 1-minute limit for reels, which is why I usually try to keep my TikTok videos to 1 minute as well. PPS: if you're making an Instagram reel from scratch, always make sure to use closed captions like you do on TikTok.
- I often tag big bookstores when I'm promoting my book; it's not a sure thing of more exposure, but when you do that, your post will wind up in the bookstore's tagged photos, so there's some potential there.
- The Instagram "boost post" option for me is even more useful than the TikTok "promote a post" option, as on Instagram you can target your audience by region (same as Facebook). This came in very handy just last week, when I wanted to promote a post that advertised a book signing in my hometown! Similar to TikTok, you can control your budget and don't have to spend a lot.
- When it comes to Instagram stories, recently I've learned that another way to save time, is to save to my phone the stories I want to get more exposure, and then upload them right into Facebook stories and TikTok stories. Admittedly, I only get about 10% of the views on Facebook as I do on Instagram, but it's just another avenue, and it doesn't take much extra work. Added note: I find my TikTok stories get even more views than my Instagram stories, so that's an easy way to repurpose content.

- **Facebook**

- Since Facebook and Instagram are owned by the same overlord, you'll find that they have very similar features. You can even connect the two accounts, and

make your Instagram posts automatically post to Facebook, but I don't do that since I only post on Facebook occasionally. I also get way less views and likes on Facebook vs. Instagram, so that might be a self-fulfilling prophecy of being punished by the algorithms, but I don't care! The Facebook newsfeed is hideous to me, and I avoid it whenever I can. In other words, depending on how much you use Facebook, your mileage may vary!

- In terms of boosting posts, I get way more success with Instagram boosted posts than with Facebook (with the same budget and targeting), so that's my two cents on that.
- **Twitter**
 - For me, Twitter has always been the place of building a community and finding cool people, rather than using it as a hardcore promotional tool. Even just from the weekly #pipelinewriters and more recently #pipelineauthors, I've met so many cool people (I even once got a podcast invitation out of just hanging out in the chat). But when it comes to promoting books or my writing? For me anyway, meh. I think it's just because there's so little lasting power to Twitter; you post a tweet and sure, you can get double-digit likes, but then, so quickly, it disappears into the ether (unless you say something dumb and go viral and lose your job over it). In terms of promoted posts, I can give you some inside baseball from my copywriting world where I work—our company almost never puts budget into paid Twitter advertising, because the click-through rate sucks! If your experience has been different, do let me know.
- **LinkedIn**
 - It seems strange to bring up LinkedIn, so I'll just tell you my personal experience: if you wind up publishing a book, and you have a network of former co-workers from various companies, *boy* do they ever think it's cool that you've published a book! The likes, the comments, the confirmations from people that they'll buy my book—such a nice surprise. I also find the organic feed on LinkedIn to be powerful, as so much of it is comprised of what people in your network have liked or commented on. Translation—when people in my network like or comment on my post, it often creates a snowball effect, of people I've never heard of engaging with my post. LinkedIn; who knew!