

EVALUATING THE USE OF FACEBOOK BRAND PAGES BY TELEVISION  
JOURNALISTS TO PROMOTE THEIR PROFESSIONAL BRAND

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Master of Arts

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by

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

EVALUATING THE USE OF FACEBOOK BRAND PAGES BY TELEVISION

JOURNALISTS TO PROMOTE THEIR PROFESSIONAL BRAND

presented by JoDee Kenney,

a candidate for the degree of master of arts,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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## DEDICATION

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to my loved ones who have supported me as I looked to deepen my knowledge and build on my professional expertise. To my husband Donovan, you offered unwavering support even before you understood that support meant taking on many home responsibilities that you didn't even know existed. For all the dinners you prepared, lunches you packed for me, coffees you set, forms you filled out, carpool trips you had to take, printer resets that frustrated you, parent/teacher meetings I needed you there for, trips to the urgent care, honey-do items I just HAD to have done, and all the other chores I asked you to take care of- I truly appreciate it.

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# EVALUATING THE USE OF FACEBOOK BRAND PAGES BY TELEVISION JOURNALISTS TO PROMOTE THEIR PROFESSIONAL BRAND

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## ABSTRACT

Television journalists have taken note that social media sites have transformed how and when viewers/users consume news content. Controlling the flow of information is becoming more of a challenge and viewers are seeking gratification from a variety of sources. Facebook has become a powerful tool for television journalists to develop a professional brand that goes beyond the image a user sees on the nightly news. By cultivating a user following through sharing personal interests and goals, some journalists are seeing great success in maintaining and building their influence with an audience. The overall purpose of this study is to learn how journalists with a large following on Facebook are building their name into a brand, how that brand is satisfying the user and how that brand's development affects a journalist's ability to maintain authority when controlling the flow of information. One-on-one, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six television journalists. Each of whom had more than ten thousand page likes and high user engagement on their Facebook brand page. The interviewees work in a variety of market sizes from one to 100. This research discovered that most journalists receive their highest user engagement when they post non-news content. In order to satisfy users, journalists created feature (non-news) content in hopes of when they did have to share important news content, they would be the trusted source for information. High-performing journalists have a clear definition of their professional brand and create content that cultivates a relationship with the type of user they are targeting. Finally, authenticity rules as the number one attribute that research participants say contributes to their success.



## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Creating social media content is now a mandatory part of a television journalist's job. Posting on social media sites is an essential daily task for those looking to be successful in their careers. According to Adornato (2017), journalists are spending more time online and interacting with users is not optional; it is expected. There is a multitude of social media sites including Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook. Each offers journalists a unique way to share their content and engage in the process of professional branding.

Facebook created brand pages with the focus of allowing journalists and celebrities to connect with their audiences. A brand page is different than a traditional Facebook profile page. According to Hicks (2010), a brand page is public by default, allowing users to opt-in for updates and interaction, as opposed to profile pages that can have security settings that limit what people can see. As noted by Lavrusik (2013), Facebook created brand pages in 2012 to be a professional tool that allows for connection with users and added benefits including access to insights that tell you who is interested in your brand and what posts are performing best. Facebook brand pages also allow a user to purchase promotion of certain posts to reach more users, and it allows for multiple people to post under the brand name. This information is leading journalists to understand how to develop their brands and, in the process, increase their capital with not only users, but also the journalists' employers.

### **Statement of Research Area**

While Facebook offers insights that help journalists understand what content is

resonating most with their users, academic literature is lacking when it comes to how Facebook brand pages are helping journalists build their brand. Furthermore, there is a clear need to hear from journalists who are excelling at the use of Facebook brand pages. Hearing directly from journalists who show proficiency on Facebook brand pages can help other journalists looking to use the platform to improve their own brands. This study will also contribute to the growing body of academic research on social media and its effect on journalism.

**Study Importance.** This research aims to uncover how journalists can use Facebook brand pages to develop a robust professional brand that will increase their worth in the eyes of users, help the journalist take steps that may lead to increased job security and leverage their influence so the brand can flourish and lead to more opportunities for the journalist. As the reader will learn in this thesis, there is a need for this research because journalists are facing tightening budgets and increasing job insecurity. This research can lead journalists to learn how to improve their value in the eyes of their employers.

*Goal of this study.* The purpose of this study is to hear from journalists showing excellence in communication skills through Facebook brand pages. These journalists share their knowledge of how to build a brand, how to satisfy users and how to leverage that brand to gain influence and opportunities.

*Definitions.* Facebook brand pages: It is important to note Facebook brand pages are different than traditional Facebook profile pages. Facebook brand pages have a different look that allows users to invite people to their communities, and a user-friendly menu bar to the left where visitors can access videos, photos and events. For the

journalist, there are a great deal of “behind the scenes” benefits including access to key insights. Insights refer to data reports on aspects of a page's performance such as which posts are performing well, who is interacting with the content, and which posts are gaining the most reach. Facebook brand pages also allow the ability to add multiple administrators to post under the brand name and the ability to schedule posts ahead of time. It is a page a user is allowed to “like” and “follow.” According to Goldman (2013), a “page like” means the visitor is welcoming the page owner to market the message to them. Neo (2017) describes the difference between “like” and “follow” here:

Users on Facebook can choose to either, "like" a page and “follow," or choose to "like" a page but not necessarily "follow" that page. By "following" a page, users will see most of the Page's updates and posts directly on their timeline. Some choose to "like" and not "follow" just as a show of support to the Page. When you "follow" but not "like" a Page, you may see updates from the Page in your News Feed. (p.1)

**Brand.** According to Lair and Sullivan and Cheney (2005) branding was first mentioned in 1997 and emerged out of the self-help movement.

Lair and Sullivan and Cheney (2005) found the following:

Rather than focusing on self-improvement as the means to achievement, personal branding seems to suggest that the road to success is found instead in explicit self-packaging: Here, success is not determined by individuals 'internal sets of skills, motivations, and interests but, rather, by how effectively they are arranged, crystallized, and labeled—in other words, branded. (p.2)

This paper will review the significant literature on the topic of journalist use of Facebook. It will review how journalists are employing branding methods into their job responsibilities. This report will also discuss the research design and methods in which this researcher conducted the study. This report will discuss the qualitative approach to studying how journalists use Facebook brand pages to develop their professional brand. This report will reveal three central questions and several sub questions. The questions aim to get to the heart of why journalists are using Facebook brand pages for professional branding. It will further explore the benefits they are seeking as a result of their professional branding efforts on Facebook. This report will also outline the theoretical framework in which the content will be analyzed and explain why the theory is relevant to the research.

This report contains an overview of how this researcher conducted the study. Included will be an explanation of how many people this researcher interviewed. There will also be an explanation of how this researcher selected the participants. Furthermore, there will be discussion on how the responses are analyzed and reported. This researcher takes special care to outline information about current knowledge, experiences, and history with this topic to provide readers a candid view of perspectives this researcher brings to the issue.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Framework**

Twenty-first-century journalists are now facing more demands as a result of the invention of social media. As stated by Chan (2014), digitization has led to tightening resources, increased demands to work longer hours and the requirement to assume a variety of roles in the news delivery process. As a result of shrinking newsroom budgets, journalists are searching for ways to increase their value among users and employers, hence improving their job security. Job security continues to be a growing concern among journalists. According to Holton and Molyneux (2015), journalists feeling nervous about cutbacks are taking steps to enhance their brand, share their original content and engage users on social media. As identified by McGrath (2017), 39 percent of users turn to social media to stay up to date on news and current events. News consumption comes in right behind the need to stay in touch with people as the top reasons users are on social media (McGrath, 2017, p.1). According to McGrath (2017), also topping the list include networking, entertainment and meeting new people. These motivations offer a journalist an opportunity to fill the needs of users by providing content that addresses what the users are seeking from the social platform.

There are many social media sites in which journalists can share their content. Each platform offers a different interface through which to share content with the user, create dialogue and connect with people. As discovered by Larsson and Ihlebæk (2017), Facebook emerges as the most commonly used social media site. As of June 30, 2017, the company reported 2.07 billion monthly active users (“Company Info,” n.d.). 68 percent

of U.S. adults use Facebook, compared to its closest competitor Instagram with 28 percent (“Social Media,” 2017). When considering factors such as age, gender and education level, Facebook out performs in all categories by 30 percent or more over other major social media sites including Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and LinkedIn (“Social Media,” 2017). Seventy-seven percent of college graduates use Facebook (“Social Media,” 2017). Seventy-six percent of Facebook users earn \$75,000 or more and the majority of Facebook users, 70 percent, live in an urban setting (“Social Media,” 2017).

Many journalists know the importance of staking a claim in real estate on Facebook. As noted in the introduction, Facebook created brand pages in 2012 as a tool for business and celebrities to connect with fans (Weaver, 2012). Brand pages offer added benefits to a journalist in the form of access to user demographics, insight into which posts perform best, and multiple administrator posting capabilities. Access to these benefits opens the door for journalists to gain a deeper understanding of who is consuming their content, when it is getting consumed and what matters most to their users. This knowledge allows the journalist to then hone in on posting the content that can make him or her the most effective communicator.

With the relative newness of Facebook brand pages, journalists are left without guidance to analyze the benefits of this platform. They are trying to make sense of what content resonates best with users, why it performs so well and the best mode of communication in this medium. Each audience is different in its particular topic of concern because of a variety of factors including geography and cultural and societal differences. Even so, some themes emerge when it comes to best practices for communicating through the platform of Facebook pages when evaluated through the eyes

of journalists displaying a superior level of proficiency. Identifying those themes can help all journalists looking to develop their professional brand and contribute to the growing body of academic research on social media. This study aims to assist in determining those contributing factors that lead journalists to manage a strong brand presence on their Facebook brand page and develop and maintain social capital. Woolcock (2001) said "social capital refers to the norms and networks that facilitate collective action" (p. 6). While Chandler and Munday (2011) say social capital is based on social relationships and supports cohesion.

According to Wellman, Quan-Haase, Witte, and Hampton (2010), the internet supplements and supports face to face or telephone social capital. The more active a user is online, the more he or she is active offline (Wellman, Quan-Haase, Witte, & Hampton, 2010). Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe studied how college students valued the use of Facebook when building social capital. As found by Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007), there is a strong connection between Facebook use and the building of social capital that could lead to connections that benefit users in the forms of jobs, internships and other opportunities. The more people used Facebook, the more they had a stronger ability to maintain that social capital (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007).

Since the start of media creation, journalists have been gatekeepers of information. The origin of the gatekeeping theory traces back to Psychologist Kurt Lewin's research on food selection and further developed as a theory of how journalists control the flow of information. According to Shoemaker and Vos (2009), gatekeeping theory helps to frame how and why information is selected, rejected, structured, positioned and timed. Gatekeeping theory offers a lens through which this report can be

evaluated to understand the relevance of the role of power in content selection, sharing, and mode of delivery.

The role of journalism has been to have firm control over dictating what content is important enough to be shared with the masses. While social media sites create a closer relationship between journalists and their audiences, the journalist still maintains ultimate control over what gets published and is ultimately read by the audience ("2016 Global," n.d.). But there is no doubt the power is shifting in the realm of 21st-century journalism. Social media sites have altered the power of who can share content. Social media sites are further strengthening the user's role in what and how journalists are posting. According to Adornato (2107), journalists still decide what information to share, but audience influence has altered the concept of traditional gatekeeping of sole journalistic control.

If users are not responding to posts, interacting with content, or finding value in it, the journalist loses key influence needed to maintain control over gatekeeping responsibilities. It has become a shared responsibility linking the journalist to the user. As found by Adornato and Reeves (2012), the interactive nature of social media sites have led journalists to use the medium as a source to find stories to cover because the user is noting their importance. Furthermore, Adornato and Reeves (2012) noted users have become influential in the newsgathering process, and this active role has led journalists to understand that managing online relationships is a key part of their daily job. Journalists looking to develop their professional brand and maintain relevance must consider this delicate balance when crafting content to share with their user.



The successful journalist uses this shared role as a gatekeeper with the user to his or her benefit by building a professional brand. If the journalist is posting content that speaks to the users, the journalist become more valuable to the user and earns rewards with increased brand loyalty. According to Martin (2010), when users subscribe to a social media page, they agree to regular updates from the page owner. The more content the owner shares that speaks to the users' needs, the deeper the relationship. The ability to deepen that relationship depends on the owner's social voice. As found by Goldman (2013), the owner's voice, personality and how he or she interact with users significantly defines how people know that owner online. If the owner has a clear social voice, the owner's content will shine and resonate with users who may find that owner attractive (Goldman, 2013).

This research aims to identify how journalists are using their Facebook brand pages to grow their professional brands. A journalist's Facebook brand page is a community meeting space that the journalist controls. According to Goldman (2013), when customers become Facebook fans, they are asking to communicate with the brand and journalists can capitalize on a user's need for love and belonging. However, the journalist cannot only post mindless content that does not speak to the user because the brand can suffer and the journalist can lose influence and control. Goldman (2013) found a primary contributing factor to brand failure is when engagement is off target and the user does not feel the brand meets his or her needs. Furthermore, a skeptical audience may perceive the journalist as an extension of the news organization and can challenge the role of gatekeeping. In the cluttered age of digital and social media, users are becoming increasingly inattentive and, as a result, people perceive news shared by a

friend is more trustworthy than content from a news organization (Turcotte, York, Irving, Scholl, & Pingree, 2015).

Creating a community meeting space is essential for journalists looking to grow their brand. Research indicates that highly invested users, or thought leaders, can be influencers that can help the brand community grow. According to Phua, Jin, and Kim (2107), those who significantly participate in communicating with the brand help affect the community identification, interaction, dedication and intent for those who are members. Journalists may look to employ those influencers to build the brand by creating content they enjoy. Journalists may ask those influencers to engage the content through comments, sharing the post or participating in a social event in hopes they share that experience with their social circle.

While there is a variety of individual reasons users turn to social media sites, research indicates there are five core motivations. As found by Johnson and Kay (2015), users are turning to Facebook for social value. Social value refers to a personal, digital community in which users can find others with whom to bond (Johnson & Kay, 2015). According to Johnson and Kay (2015), the second reason people turn to Facebook is it provides personal fulfillment and is an enjoyable, amusing or compelling medium with which to gather data or information (Johnson & Kay, 2015). According to Johnson and Kay (2015), another reason people turn to Facebook is enlightenment, which refers to guidance for making decisions. Johnson and Kay (2015) also note the final reason people turn to Facebook is to learn an alternative view to traditional media. Distrust in and a lack of appreciation for traditional media delivery lead to the final reason people turn to

Facebook (Johnson & Kay, 2015). The journalists taking note of those reasons may identify ways to build their brand to their benefit.

It is also important to stress social media habits can influence gratification received and may predict future behaviors. Palmgreen and Rayburn studied public television viewing habits and found they largely depended on if the user was the person deciding to watch the content or a passive viewer allowing someone else to decide. According to Palmgreen and Rayburn (1979), social constraints on viewing decisions impacted the user's level of gratification and predicted future behaviors. Larose and Eastin studied adult internet use in two Midwestern towns. As concluded by Larose and Eastin (2004), if a user had received gratification in the past and formed a strong habit of accessing the content, that user was likely to reach out for it again. This discovery is a reference to uses and gratification theory. As found by Chandler and Munday (2016), this approach to mass media is concerned with user motivations and why people use the media. According to Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973), "Studies have shown that audience gratifications can be derived from at least three distinct sources: media content, exposure to the media per se, and the social context that typifies the situation of exposure to different media" (p.6).

According to Matsa (2017), local news viewership has declined significantly in the morning, early evening and late night, which has suffered the largest loss (31 percent) in viewership since 2007. Through effective branding, journalists can connect with users interested in their content using social media sites, which are part of an emerging medium for news consumption. Research from Gottfried and Shearer (2017) found the number of Americans watching television for news dropped 7 percent from 2016 to 2017 to 50

percent, and Americans online news consumption increased 5 percent, from 38 to 43 percent in the same timeframe. Journalists can leverage this knowledge when creating a brand on a social media site. According to research by Lavrusik (2013), when a journalist shares his or her authentic voice and expert analysis with a link to a story on a social media platform, 20 percent more people will click the link to view more content.

Furthermore, journalists can harness the energy of opinion leaders in a way that their brand grows. The term “opinion leadership” derives from research into voter decisions conducted by Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld. Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) found those who changed their vote did so because of personal influencers in their lives. According to Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), opinion leaders are not predetermined based on status or any other factors that would qualify them to be considered a leader, and any given potential network can provide opportunity for the leader to emerge and play a key role in communications. Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) discovered a two-step flow of communication emerged with the media providing information to opinion leaders who then shared information with people who were less active. The journalist looking to develop a strong brand should consider providing superior service and attention to opinion leaders so they are gratified. According to Turcotte, York, Irving, Scholl, and Pingree (2015), considering opinion leadership is an important step in news sharing because a level of trust is put into opinion leaders and it is wise to communicate effectively with users to gain a more engaged audience.

There is a variety of ways the journalist can use Facebook brand pages to share content. Videos, pictures, simple text and live webcasting all offer a variety of means to share information. This paper evaluates which modes of delivery lead to higher

engagement from the user and gathers journalist's perspectives on the process. Evaluating this topic will lead to identifying ways to best control the flow of information and serve the user. It furthermore can lead a journalist to determine how to create a niche audience. According to Batsell (2015), a niche audience is an audience comprised of more motivated users than the general consumer because they are seeking specialized and localized content. As noted by Batsell (2015), journalists can earn a higher degree of user loyalty if they adequately serve their niches.

User gratification is a key motivator for journalists. The more gratified a user is by certain content, the more likely the person is to find value in and interact with that content. According to Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973), the study of gratifications dates back into the 1940s with research on soap operas, music, newspapers and children's comics. These were qualitative looks into topics in an attempt to group gratification statements (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973, p. 509). In the 1970s, the study evolved. As noted by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973), the research became more operational, looking at how gratification is derived from people's psychological needs and expectations and what happens as a result of those needs and expectations. As found by Katz and Blumler and Gurevitch (1973), the uses and gratification model is now a way to explain how consumers use media to satisfy their needs.

According to Chan (2014), users who actively identify with a Facebook group will be robust advocates of the brand, are more satisfied with the brand and will be more willing to participate in actions on behalf of the group. This feeling of belonging is a powerful motivator for users to act. Those actions can include sharing and liking content. Lee, Hansen, and Lee (2016) found social media platforms have a unique power to

provide gratification in the form of entertainment and also help people maintain social relationships. While this theory is grounded in the focus of user gratification, there is also gratification on behalf of journalists.

Journalists are motivated by the positive feedback and are more willing to share more of the content that is received best by the user. This virtual endorsement supports the journalists' efforts to build a trusted brand.

Lee, Hansen and Lee's (2016) research noted the following:

Virtual endorsement as a form of public support for others in online communities happens through individual actions within a virtual culture. "Like" on Facebook has shifted "personal" likes in one-to-one communication to online public endorsement via a one-to-many platform. (p.339)

Journalists may interpret that public endorsement as support for their professional brand and motivation to post more of the content that best resonates with their users.

While this research will discuss what role the user has in the gatekeeping process and the journalist's mode and the operation of sharing information on Facebook brand pages, this study does not outline how the user continues the flow. It does not address user manipulation or opinion in the further sharing of content. Furthermore, it does not explore the views of users as the focus will be from the perspective of the journalist in ownership of the Facebook brand page. The study hears only from journalists who display a level of expertise in the management and communication of their Facebook

brand pages. Finally, it should be noted the view of uses and gratification of the user will be evaluated by asking the journalist how the users' gratifications lead the journalist to try and satiate the user.

**Previous Studies.** There is no denying the importance of using Facebook to maintain journalistic influence and relevance. It is a powerful tool to build a professional brand. In a paper prepared for the national convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Burzynski Bullard highlighted the growing importance of social media and, in particular, Facebook. According to Bullard (2013), 100 percent of news organizations surveyed said they used Facebook in some way, 69 percent used it to promote their work and 53 percent used it to build their brand.

As discovered by Quan-Haase and Young (2010), users are motivated to join Facebook and are gratified by doing so because they want to be connected with their network of friends and with social information. Research by Quan-Haase and Young (2010) noted users found satisfaction when using Facebook through six key dimensions including sociability, social information, problem sharing, passing the time, affection seeking and perceptions of fashion by others. Also noted by Quan-Haase and Young (2010), Facebook allows the user to become a member of a peer community.

Greenberg and Kates studied the significance of digital marketing for brand development. According to Greenberg and Kates (2014), it is important to understand the importance of a robust digital strategy to market a journalist's brand, find users, and expand the brand's reach.

Greenberg and Kates (2014) said traditional brand loyalty is declining as a response to modern technology providing easy access to a variety of options. As a result, developing a strong brand strategy is important. That starts with understanding the audience. According to Greenberg and Kates (2014), journalists need to pay attention to what their audience wants.

Facebook has helped journalists serve as a barometer for reader interest (Batsell, 2015). It is a place where journalists can get instant feedback as to the importance, pleasure, or lack of need in a user's life. As a result, Facebook is a platform helping journalists understand what is important to their users and, in return, allowing the journalist to provide the most relevant information. It is furthermore a location where journalists should work to bring their users into the conversations about topics of relevance. Batsell's (2015) research found the following "An engaged journalist's role in the twenty-first century is not only to inform but to bring readers directly into the conversation through digitally powered techniques such as real-time coverage, alternative story forms, crowdsourcing, beat blogging, user-generated content, and comment forums." (p. 43)

As noted by Adornato (2017), journalism has become a two-way conversation that has altered how journalists share content and communicate with their audiences. Scholarly research warns that journalists will become irrelevant if they do not begin to listen to the user and bring them into the conversation that shapes the news. This argument further supports the evolution of users becoming partners in the gatekeeping role of news dissemination. According to Skoler (2009), people do not want to be fed information; they want to share it. Skoler (2009) further states people will trust those who



take part in the meaningful engagement in the form of talking with them and listening to their concerns. In this study, experienced journalists speak about understanding the value in building a strong relationship with the user. As further noted by Skoler (2009), the most astute journalists are harnessing the power of social networks in providing real value, listening and establishing meaningful relationships.

News organizations understand the importance of communicating with users on social media sites as well. They are further encouraging news staff to engage in social media conversations but warn that using it as a news gathering tool should come with checks and balances for reliability and accuracy. According to Lysak and Wolf (2012), 85 percent of stations post links to stories on Facebook and reporters and news managers alike are using social media sites to increase their profiles. However, research has shown that some journalists have still not fully bought into the benefits of creating an online presence. As found by Hedman and Djerf-Pierre (2013), there are three distinct types of journalists; the skeptical shunners (journalists who avoid social media), the pragmatic conformists (journalists who use it regularly but with wisdom and selection), and the enthusiastic activist (journalists who lead an online life). Hedman and Djerf-Pierre (2013) said it is the enthusiastic activist who is continuously connected. These journalists understand that social media platforms can be used to their benefit. According to Hedman and Djerf-Pierre (2013), the enthusiastic activist goes beyond sharing information and to frequently use social media sites to network, collaborate and for personal branding. However, even the pragmatic conformist may benefit from their strategic communication efforts.

It is the skeptical shunners who may find themselves at odds with their employer as the increased importance of social media prevail. According to Adornato (2014), 94 percent of television stations integrate social media and traditional newscasts. Research by Adornato (2014) revealed 90 percent of news directors cited the importance of audience participation and increased viewer loyalty for reasons of incorporating social media into news broadcasts. Adornato (2014) found 48 percent of news organizations are even swayed to cover topics trending on social media and further assert the argument that users have altered traditional gatekeeping roles in the news dissemination process.

Even so, Molyneux and Holton (2014) found journalists' understanding of branding should be among the most important career practices. Establishing a brand is a way to establish authority, value, and relationships critical to the user. But, how do journalists go about branding? According to Molyneux and Holton (2014), journalists struggle with the traditional ways to promote their brand, like television and online advertisement. Molyneux and Hilton (2014) learned journalists believe they can provide the best value by offering their insights about topics they cover with the ultimate goal to create an individual identity the user sees is worth creating a bond.

The following are the three main research questions that will be addressed and their sub questions.

RQ1: How do television journalists use Facebook pages to build their professional brand?

RQ2: What benefits do television journalists earn by engaging in professional branding on Facebook pages?

RQ3: How can journalists maximize their professional brand with Facebook Pages?

## Chapter 3: Methods

### Research Design

Exploring the topic of journalists using Facebook brand pages to build their professional brand is a qualitative study. “Qualitative research methods were introduced to social science researchers to study and interpret social and social-cultural phenomena” (Greenwood, 2016). According to Greenwood (2016), this mode of research was created to help researchers gain a deeper knowledge of humans and where they conduct their social and cultural lives.

This report explores three central research questions. According to Creswell (2014), these are broad questions exploring the central phenomenon of research. The researcher asked numerous follow-up questions along with each central question. According to Creswell (2014), while the central question is a broad question, the follow-up questions hone in the focus of research while allowing the questioning to remain open.

**Interviews Plan.** This is a semi-structured interview research project. The researcher interviewed two television journalists representing each of the largest three market groupings identified in major research projects conducted by the Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA). According to Paper (2017), those markets are 1-25, 26-50, and 51-100. These television markets were determined based on Nielsen research identifying 210 local television markets (“What people,” 2017). By interviewing two journalists from each of the three top market groupings, this research gathered views from people working in similar-sized markets and evaluated how each is using the social

media site to further his or her professional brand. While there may be differences between the market groupings, insight into differences and similarities were sought by talking with journalists who work in similar market sizes.

This researcher selected participants from a list of recommended television journalists. The recommendations came from responses to a Facebook post this researcher posted in a private female newscasters networking group consisting of more than 4,800 women who work in the US television industry. These journalists were requested to suggest both male and female television journalists.

To be a participant in this study each journalist had to meet the following standards:

- Must have a Facebook brand page. This research focused on the impact of having a professional platform; therefore, journalists not using a Facebook brand page were excluded.

- Must have a minimum of 5,000 followers. For the purposes of this study, this number ensured that the journalist was reaching a large enough audience in which there is an opportunity to evaluate ample user feedback.

- Posts on the journalist's Facebook brand page must appear on at least five days a week over a month's period. This guideline helped ensure the journalist was regularly interacting with the user and aiming to create bonds that foster the user's investment in their brand.

- Journalists must use a variety of means of communication with their users: video, written, photo, live, links to external content, etc. This requirement allowed the

researcher an opportunity to evaluate the variety of ways in which the journalist is trying to get his or her message out and determine which means is most effective.

-Must be willing to share metrics about users and posts for research insight. This information is not publicly available and requires the journalist's willingness to share.

This researcher conducted interviews between January 6, 2017 and February 3, 2018 via Skype or Facetime. This researcher also took handwritten notes while recording participants to provide a backup means of documentation and communicated with participants through social media sites and email. The identities of the interviewees are kept confidential to allow the journalists anonymity, which enabled them to communicate sensitive information on their social strategies freely.

According to Fontana and Frey (1994), interviewing is a familiar form of research and it can lead the researcher to a deeper understanding of a respondent and how those experiences are contributing to the effort to develop a professional brand through the means of Facebook brand pages. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), one-on-one interviews are conversations between a trained moderator and a subject who meets a certain level of criteria unique to the topic being researched. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), researchers select these individual interviews for a variety of reasons including the ability to get more in-depth information because of the intensive time spent on the topic. According to Creswell (2014), including data beyond typical interviews can create reader interest. This researcher also analyzed each journalist's Facebook brand page to discover more about the journalist's perceptions and practical uses of the platform related to professional branding.

Success in this study can be measured in several ways. Each participant will have met a level of success based on the minimum number of followers they have. As noted in this research proposal, a person “liking” a brand page amounts to an interest to hear more of that brand message being communicated. Another means of measuring success focuses on journalists who post a minimum of five times a week. According to Martin (2010), with a consistent delivery of messages through social media platforms, the poster’s authenticity and credibility will appeal to his or her most passionate users, and they will be motivated to respond. It is also important to consider user engagement such as post likes, comments, and shares as a measure of success. According to Goldman (2013), when developing a brand, the aim is to gain Facebook likes and comments, which display customer engagement. For the purposes of this study, user engagement success will be measured based on market size. Journalists working in markets 1-25 with an average of 20 or more post likes, comments or shares will be considered successfully engaged. Journalists working in markets 26-50 with an average of 15 or more likes, comments, or shares will be considered successfully engaged. Journalists working in markets 51-100 with an average of 10 or more, likes, comments, or shares will be considered successfully engaged. These standards were determined based on an examination of multiple pages of journalists working in these market sizes and found to be a reasonable representative of engagement numbers.

This researcher will analyze and report the data according to emerging themes that arise from the interviews. Grouping themes that emerge enables this researcher and those interested in the study to gain greater insight into the uses of the medium of Facebook brand pages. Categorizing via theme further helps to identify how the

journalists' brands benefits from this effort. This research aims to address how the role of gatekeeper has changed into one that depends on the user response to provide guidance and focus to the message. The theory of uses and gratification also provides a lens for interpretation. That theory can be explored through an approach which will assert that not only are users gratified when using a certain medium, but also that journalists are gratified by positive user response. A positive user response leads the journalist to provide more material that the user wants because the journalist is also gratified by the positive response.

It is important to point out this researcher is a television journalist who has worked in some, but not all of the Designated Market Area (DMA) sizes encompassed in the study. With 24 years of experience as an on-air television news journalist, this researcher has worked in Anchorage, Alaska (DMA 148), Reno, Nevada (DMA 106), Louisville, Kentucky (DMA 49), Syracuse, New York (DMA 84), and Albany, New York (DMA 59).

This researcher has experienced corporate and user influence on branding. As a member of a handful of journalist networking sites on Facebook, this journalist relied on those avenues to make contact with interviewees. This journalist does not have any personal ties to respondents. This journalist does not feel these factors will harm an accurate interpretation of the data, rather believes it will help provide a deeper understanding of the emerging themes.

**Research Questions.** This qualitative study seeks to answer how journalists are using Facebook brand pages to build their professional brand. By responding to this



central issue, this research highlights means and processes that are successful in staying relevant in 21<sup>st</sup> Century journalism. This research further explores the different types of posts made by these journalists, which posts received favorable responses and seeks takeaways to share about content creation and deepening user connections. The perspectives of journalists are documented to find out why they believe they are effective communicators and how they develop their brand in this digital means to find anecdotal trends that may emerge.

Facebook as a site for news consumption has grown significantly. Since 2010, referral traffic from Facebook to the average media organization increased by more than 300 percent (“Facebook & Social,” 2011). News organizations and their journalists are realizing it is important to meet viewers/users where they are. A journalist’s effort to remain relevant, influential and valuable depends on one's ability to communicate with the user in the most successful way. It is evident from the research outlined above that brand development has become an essential component of journalism. Journalists must become skilled digital communicators. This study highlights the relationship between Facebook brand pages and the journalist’s professional brand development.

**Credibility Checking.** This researcher conducted credibility checking by verifying understanding when participants made complex statements. This researcher sought clarity in comments as needed with participants. Furthermore, this researcher verified that each participant met the minimum standards to participate in this study and were willing to share confidential data about their user base.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Findings

**How Journalists are using Facebook Brand pages.** Users have many options where they consume news, from television to radio to print to a variety of online sources. Because of that access, most of the journalists in this study said they are not looking to compete in that realm. They are instead they are using Facebook Brand Pages to capture a niche of the audience that may identify with them as a person and working to build their influence in that manner. The journalist's gatekeeping efforts are focused on building a professional brand that can grow an audience. The journalist is working to control how the user perceives them and the content shared on the journalist's page. This signifies that the role of gatekeeping is still being performed, but in a different manner as a result of social media and news availability.

The journalists interviewed in this study are still looking for ways to be gatekeepers of information. However, that role has changed into one that is less about gatekeeping news content and more about crafting a brand and finding a niche. Developing that niche enables the journalists to connect with users who want to hear their messages. The Facebook brand page offers the journalists control over the content that is shared. It also allows the journalists to provide a meeting place for those who like them. Participant 3B noted “It gives them a place to find you. Like a clubhouse they like to visit. The more people you bring into the tent, the better for your brand and ratings.” The journalists may then be able to leverage that influence over users when they do feel it is important to share news content.

This research found that journalists are working hard to provide user gratification. The participants in this study noted the value of a passionate, loyal group of users. Journalists who have successfully identified their ideal users are working very hard to please those users. The journalists note the more satisfied the user is the more they return for content. This user response also led the journalist to feel satisfied.

It is clear the journalists interviewed in this study are working to satisfy the five core motivations that lead people to go online, as outlined in Johnson and Kay (2015). The journalists in this study are working to show the users they have social value. Journalists are also providing entertainment, information, and enlightenment. There is also an active effort to build trust. The journalists in this study are making all of these efforts to grow their influence, which can benefit their brand. It can also increase user gratification which may lead the user to value the content created and come back for more. The journalists in this study are working to stand out from the crowd and develop relationships that users find meaningful and satisfying.

**Benefits to Branding.** The participants in this study saw significant benefits as a result of their branding efforts. The majority of journalists in this study recognizes the more satisfied the user is, the more benefits there are, providing a clear acknowledgement of the theory of Users and Gratification. As noted above, the more satisfied the user is the more likely that user is to come back and consume more content, strengthening the bond between user and journalist. Increased influence may prove beneficial to the journalists during contract negotiations with their current employers or a potential new employer. Participant 1A believes news managers look at how well journalists are communicating on social media sites and the better one is at it, the more job security one can have.

Participant 1A estimates that at least 60 percent of a journalist's value to a manager is based on that journalist's social media prowess. But while managers may value journalists with a higher level of users, several of the participants noted that their managers did not understand social media and would urge the journalist to post content that would not work with their users. Participant 1B admitted to disregarding management advice and attributes success to focusing on how a journalist's page can be used to impact people's lives positively. Participant 3B noted a higher user following leads to job security, the potential for a more lucrative contract and autonomy. "My bosses stay out of my business and page and that's why it works. They are happy I have so many followers. So, they leave me alone."

External motivators are also a big reason some journalists build a brand and aim to gatekeep control over the content they post and the brand they develop around their name. Participant 1A has a goal to create an independent brand. "One day I get to be my own boss because TV's old and that's where we're going." Participant 3A noted that the longevity of television talent has changed and aspires to be published by a nationally-known newspaper to become more recognized as a writer.

Participant 2A noted the benefits of engaging in professional branding could lead to power. "I think it always leads to leverage. So, whether I'm leveraging that within television or once the point comes that I decide to get out of television and I can leverage that name recognition and identity." Participant 1B believes social media have become the new resume for journalists. "I can show you a five-minute reel of my best work, but you can't get to know me that way. You can't see my day-to-day work that way." Participant 1B also said a strong Facebook presence can help a journalist stand out from

the crowd when applying for a job. Gatekeeping how the journalist's brand is viewed is an important role these journalists perform because they know it can lead to how a potential employer will view their abilities.

**Maximizing Brand.** There are several ways journalists can maximize their professional brands through a Facebook brand page. It starts with being genuine and creating a meaningful space where the journalist can grow a niche. Being genuine extends to not just personality, but the interests and content the journalist shares. Once that niche is identified, the journalist can work at satisfying the users by finding and creating content that will resonate with them. The more satisfied the user is, the more influential a journalist's brand becomes and the more the user will come back to the journalist's page.

The journalists in this study found that influence leads to opportunity. Participant 1A noted the better known one is, the more people will choose that journalist to emcee events. While unable to take advantage of this because of contract restrictions, Participant 1A has had public relations companies offer to pay the journalist to post about a product on a social media platform. This visibility may lead to a future opportunity for that journalist should the journalist decide to get out of the business. Participant 1B has found great satisfaction using influence gained on Facebook to help people overcome health challenges, to challenge people to get back in shape and has raised money for charities. Participant 3B also noted that loyal users may provide benefits that might help the journalist and the television station. "I have gotten so many stories that were exclusive because of my page. People view me as a trusted friend, so they come to me with

stories.” These responses indicate that providing user satisfaction is key to developing bonds and can lead to benefits for the journalist.

### **Significance**

The way in which journalists look at their profession has changed significantly as a result of the power they have gained through their use of social media sites. They no longer identify solely as a representative of a television station. Many journalists now recognize they have an independent brand that can be crafted and controlled through social media. Facebook Brand Pages allow journalists a platform to gatekeep the brand they want to display and the content they wish to share. The brand belongs to the journalist and can travel along through a career that can lead to many opportunities including increased income and job security, new jobs and increased influence. Facebook brand pages offer journalists a powerful, yet easy to navigate platform to build that brand and find their niche.

The journalist benefits from this brand development and the journalist’s employer can see benefits as well. As a journalist grows a user base, the journalist develops increased influence. While many of the respondents in this study said they did not share much content produced by their news station, they all agreed the bigger their social media audience is, the more reach they have when it comes time to share significant information that their station is reporting. This indicates that while the journalist is focused on developing a lasting professional brand, the journalist also knows that brand can—and in some cases should—benefit the employer.

**Analysis of Journalistic Standard.** While this research set a minimum standard of page likes at 5,000 for a journalist's brand page to be utilized as a participant, respondents included in this study far exceeded that number. Therefore, standards were increased to allow for each journalist to have a minimum of 10,000 likes. Participants fell into the range of having between 10 thousand likes and 90 thousand likes. This more substantial number provided a stronger group of journalists to evaluate and led to varied and unexpected results.

**Type of Journalist.** The six participants all appeared to fall into one category of journalist type as identified by Hedman and Djerf-Pierre in their 2013 research. All of the journalists were pragmatic conformists. Hedman and Djerf-Pierre (2013) define pragmatic conformists as journalists who use social media sites regularly, but with wisdom and selection. The wisdom and selection were displayed on several vital issues; sharing personal information, brand development, and news sharing. This wisdom and selection were an attempt at gatekeeping and the need to control the flow of information when it came to their brand and their message.

Each participant was very clear on where he or she drew the line on how much personal information to share with users. Each performed the role of gatekeeper when sharing personal information, citing personal security as a considerable concern. Participant 1B said "You can't get too personal because of stalkers and trolls. So you have to be very careful when it comes to post-dating places that give away your location as well as not keeping steady schedules for places people know you will be." Participant 2A goes by an on-air pseudonym, does not reveal birthday or year, and is careful to only post about travel or weekend activities after they occurred. The journalists noted the

importance of keeping their presence in the community known, however all took steps to protect specific details that could put them in harm's way.

Participant 2B felt the need to protect family members. "I won't post about my kids, and they don't need to know about my bathroom habits or if I just had a fight with someone I love. [It's] none of their business." Participant 1A blocks abusive users without hesitation. "I draw a line when it's vulgar comments. When they ask about where I live, obviously I try to hide that. What my neighborhood is. That's for safety reasons. I don't post too much about my personal life, like my marriage and stuff like that. So, yeah, there's a lot of limitations that they don't know about, but they think that I'm sharing a lot, but I'm really not."

This gatekeeping and selective sharing resulted in participants building a sense of familiarity and intimacy with their users, but it was clear that they realized many of these were not genuine relationships being made online and therefore acted with an abundance of caution. However, all feel they were able to navigate that privacy in a way that did not alienate their user base. All of these limitations that journalists place on the information sharing process indicate that they feel it is essential to control the flow of personal information to users.

The journalists acknowledge the effort to create bonds yet control the flow of information is a delicate balance of protecting their privacy and creating a sense of community and friendship with their users. "My posts are genuinely aimed at starting a dialog and having a real sense of community with the people that follow me," said Participant 1B. By providing that community and friendship for their users, they are working to gratify the user so they come back. But it is clear they feel a need to control



the flow of information to protect themselves and their loved ones. They also note the importance of providing user satisfaction to continue building bonds.

**Controlling Brand Development/Message.** The gatekeeping and control of information sharing extended into brand development. Each journalist had a clear vision as to how he or she wanted users to identify the brand and as a result, produced content to reaffirm that brand and court users who would buy into that brand. For example, Participant 1A's brand is fitness, food, and weather. "You got to have that niche. Most of the time like, I love to share about fitness, and so I get that type of audience and those looking for weather as well." Upon evaluating Participant 1A's Facebook page, it is clear that fitness, food, and weather is the content the journalist posted and users responded by liking and commenting on the content. Participant 2A wants to be identified as sophisticated, smart and a great personality. "I'm always looking for opportunities to build my image as not just a newscaster within the market, but also somebody who has a great personality. I'm looking for those things that kind of showcase me as a more well-rounded person." Participant 2A's brand page reaffirms that message with posts that range from clips of witty on-air banter with co-anchors to videos of public appearances and posts about family.

The brand identities were self-selected and identified. The journalists performed the role of gatekeeper when selecting what words they wanted to be identified with, based on qualities they hold high and believed would be representative of who they believe they are and what they hope users would value. They also noted that, in choosing their brand, they wanted to display values to truly portray who they were, as authenticity was going to be key to their success. The journalists understood the user would be more

satisfied if they felt the journalist was communicating in an authentic manner. All but one of the journalists held the role of anchor. In those roles, the journalists noted that likeability was key to forming bonds with their users and therefore put a lot of thought into how they wanted to be viewed. One participant was a reporter and, as such, took the approach that a reporter's particular brand must be one of high moral standards, credibility, and reliability.

Many of the journalists interviewed in this study said they realize the user is not primarily turning to them for news content and as a result knew they were not the gatekeepers of news content. Participant 3A conceded to posting a lot of news at the beginning, but now, after years of experience on Facebook, realizes hard news posts there do not serve the user or the professional brand the journalist is developing. "Once I started learning more in the last four or five years I started, kind of, tailoring to who my audience was. They don't get the news of the day. They're going to go to a station website or our political reporter. They know my page is going to be parenting tricks, parenting hacks. It's going to be emotional stories, heartwarming stories." Participant 3A admitted to sharing news content that had the potential to go viral from a national news organization more frequently than content from the station's website, except severe weather or school closings. "I might share something from my station's website maybe once a week or so, but they're not going to my page for that faster time of news."

This limited news content sharing indicates that most of the journalists in this study understand that the relationships developed with users may derive from the user watching them on television, but the bond is developed through sharing personal content that will resonate with users. That is why most of the journalists prioritized posting

content that led to high user satisfaction. Most of the journalists in this study realize that when there is a major breaking news event happening, they can at least establish their authority by alerting users to it, but there appears to be a concession that the users will look elsewhere for more information.

Participant 2B was the exception to this finding. Participant 2B's self-identification of a brand is legitimate, accurate, reliable and wants to be considered THE gatekeeper of that market's news. Participant 2B even went so far as to say "My posts will push that if you have something in our community that you want to know, you come to me." This brand has led Participant 2B to post a significantly higher amount of content on Facebook, with mixed results. While experiencing low engagement on many posts, the benefit has come through contacts. Participant 2B can call on users to help identify potential interviewees for a story and the users respond. Participant 2B has also been able to craft stories that others in the market cannot because users and authorities from various agencies will help to coordinate people to be where the journalist wants them to be.

This power to get a robust response when the journalist needs it may be a result of the fact that Participant 2B bucks the trend discovered in this research. Most of the participants prioritize the importance of engagement as a way to increase user satisfaction, but Participant 2B does not prioritize engagement with users. Participant 2B mainly engages on Facebook to end a dispute between users, to praise users for working through differences, or to ask for user assistance. As a result, Participant 2B admits that there may be a missed opportunity to grow the user base. "I'd bet that if I did (engage more), I would have even more (users)." The response indicates that Participant 2B's

users want more engagement and feel satisfied when they can get it, but don't often get it and that may be why there is sporadic user engagement.

**Brand development has little to do with sharing news.** All but one journalist acknowledged that the content they share on their Facebook brand page falls more in line with their brand development or what they believe their audience would appreciate rather than the news seen on television. As noted above, the one journalist who was the exception to this trend viewed the brand page as not one that represented the journalist, but rather the community the journalist served. Participant 2B shunned most professional branding that highlighted oneself and instead looked at the page as a mini-television station Facebook page for the community. The journalist was concerned that the community in which the journalist worked did not receive enough on-air coverage in the station's news programming and, as a result, posted all news pertaining to that community on the journalist's brand page. Participant 2B made a genuine effort to be the gatekeeper of the community in which the journalist covered. Participant 2B's threshold for determining what to post was based on asking just one question: Did it affect the local community? "Good, bad, school government, weather, you name it. I put it on there, because our newscasts are only so much time and I know that everything that's happening cannot be in everyone's cast. So my page serves as the everything that you need to know." This journalist aimed to gatekeep news by posting a large amount of content.

The remaining five journalists noted that they spent more time giving users content that aligns with their brand so that when they do need to post serious news content, the users will be more open to the message. Many of the five journalists who

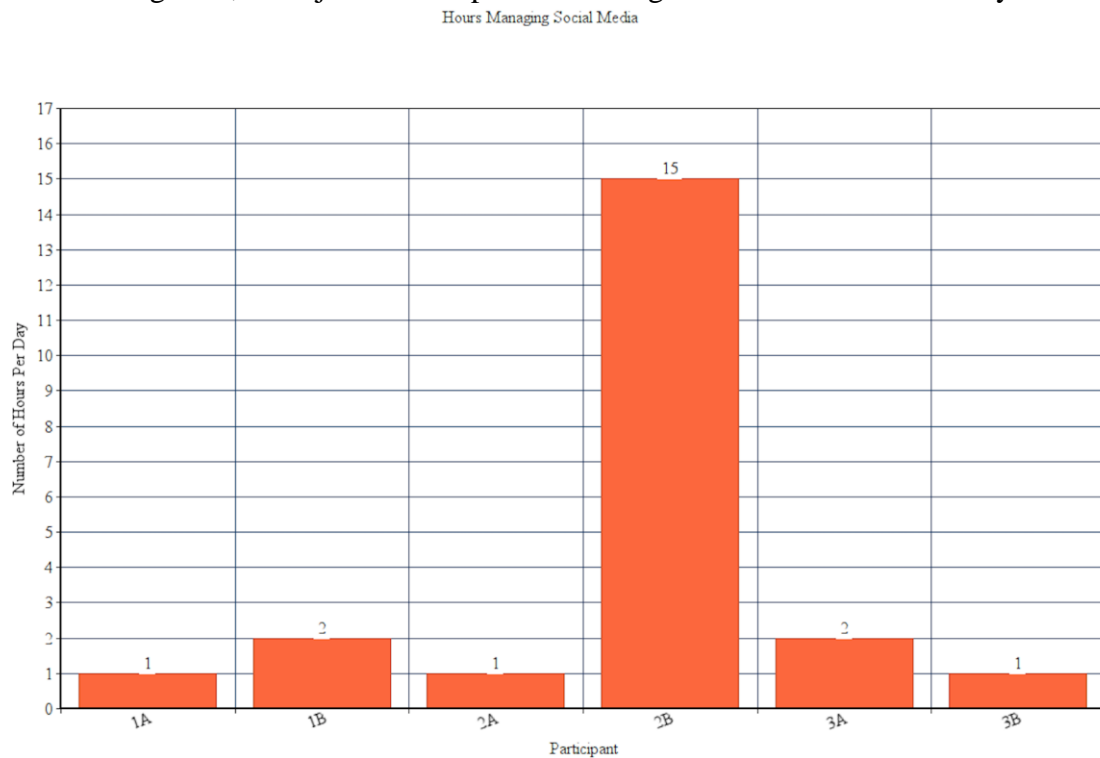
subscribed to this mode of news delivery likened it to giving users what they *want* as much as possible so when it was time to give them what they *need*, the users would be more receptive. Participant 2A said “I’m very specific about what kind of news stories I share. I do not overshare news stories on my Facebook page because I feel like it doesn’t do anything for my brand. What I post is personality-driven content, and I get the most engagement from that. If it can be related to content in the news, then it’s a win-win. But that’s not always the case.” Participant 1A notes that sharing news content alone hardly ever gains engagement, but understands the power of selfies in that participant’s user base. “And I kind of force the content on them through the caption of a selfie, but that’s what works for me.” Participant 1A even admitted to reluctantly using a selfie to bring attention to an impending severe weather event. The journalist did not like having to do that, but knew the message would get across that way the best. This proved to be an attempt at providing user gratification while trying to gatekeep information that could provide value to the community.

Value to the user was a big concern for Participant 3B. “I ask myself, ‘What will help my followers today be it, important information, something thought-provoking or something amusing?’ That’s what I choose to share. There is so much negative stuff on the internet. I seek out the positive.” Participant 3B noted that while many posts have nothing to do with promoting one’s professional brand on the surface, there is a benefit because the user will begin visiting that page more frequently and when there is something serious to share, those users will be there ready to listen and consume the content.

**Time Spent on social media.** The role of brand development requires each of the study participants to dedicate time and attention to managing the Facebook Brand page.

**Figure 1.**

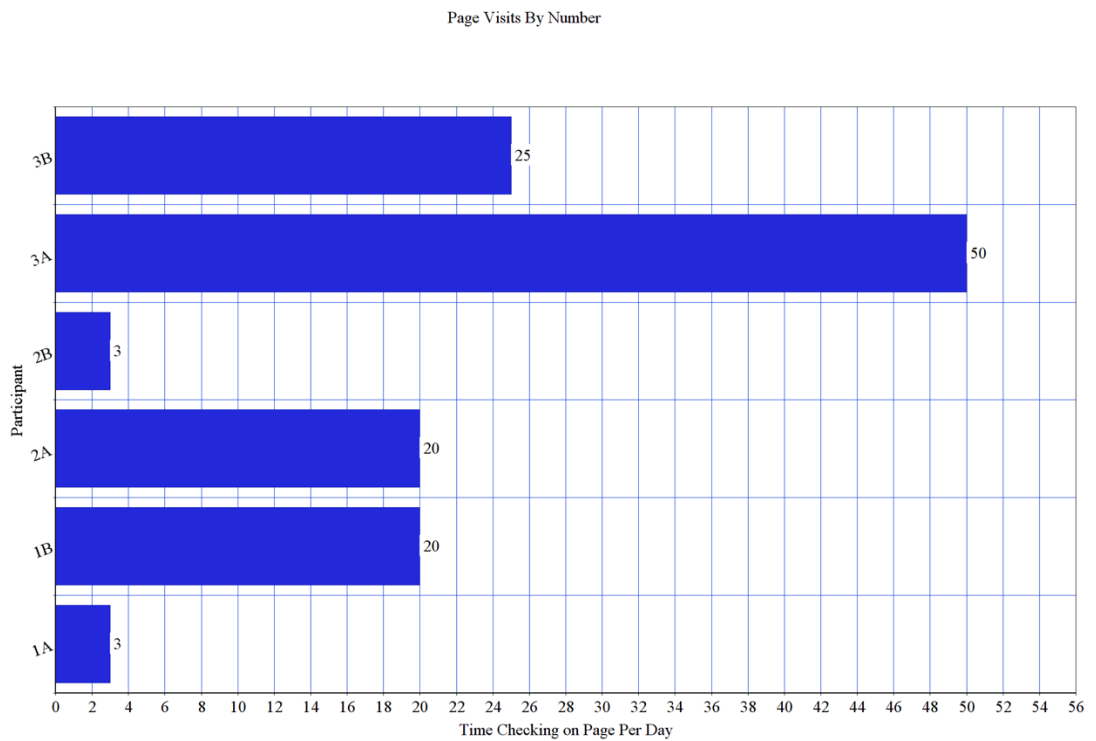
As seen in Figure 1, most journalists spend an average of one to two hours a day



managing their Facebook Brand pages. This report defines managing as posting content and or interacting with their users in an effort to provide user gratification. Participant 2A said, “If I’ve made a post that I know is going to get a lot of reaction, I know I need to

foster that, and I babysit it all day.” Participant 2B spends 15 hours a day on Facebook. The journalist aims to be a gatekeeper of the community's news and uses the page as a mini station page. The journalist said that 15 hours is mainly spent finding local content from official entities (such as the local police station’s Facebook page) and posting it. “I’m in the business of delivering news and I’m not going to stir something up and I’m not going to get involved in a conversation that I don’t need to be because I don’t have an opinion. I’m not supposed to have one.”

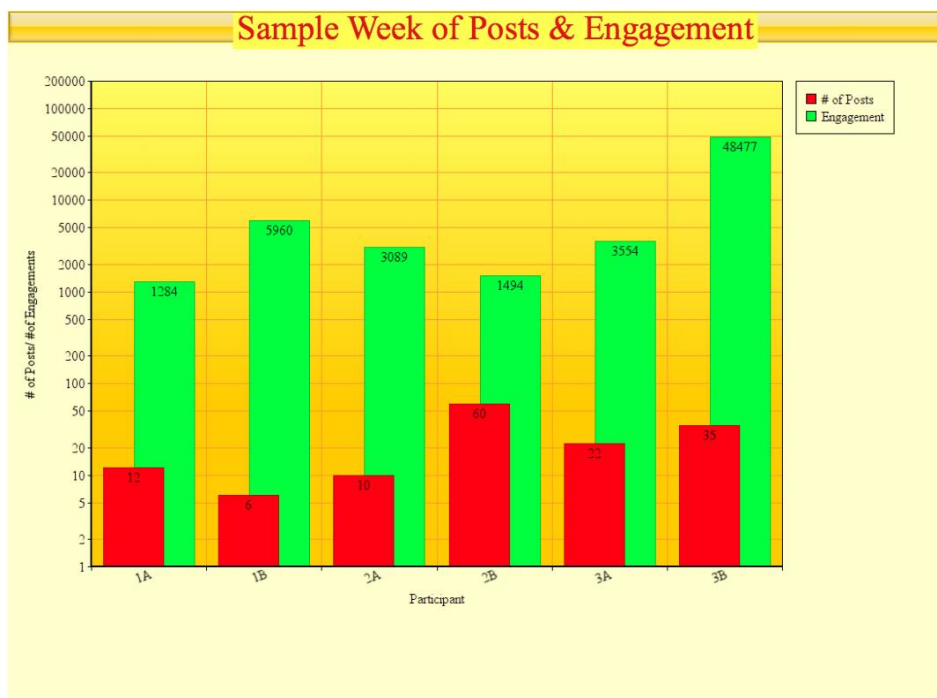
**Figure 2.**



While the majority of the journalists spend one to two hours a day managing their Facebook pages, Figure 2 shows it was clear that most of the journalists

use short bursts of time to do so. Posting content or check in on how that content was performing led the journalists to visit their page multiple times a day. For all but one journalist, they make it a priority to visit their page numerous times a day from morning to night to interact with users and possibly post new content as a way to increase user satisfaction. Gatekeeping, in the form of brand control or information sharing, is performed during these short bursts on-line.

**Figure 3.**



This research in Figure 3 shows the number of posts each journalist made in one sample week and the engagement those posts received. This report defines engagement by likes, comments, shares, and video views. Figure 3 revealed the number of posts ranged from as few as 6 all the way up to 60. However, it is noteworthy that post success



was subjective in nature based on whether the content satisfied users enough for them to take actions such as liking or commenting on a post. Participant 2B created 60 posts that week, but only received 1,494 engagements from users. That is the second-lowest number for engagement out of all the participants that week. Many of Participant 2B's posts had little to no engagement, but because of the large volume of content shared, the posts that did get significant engagement resulting in the 1,494 engagement report. Participant 1B only created six posts and received the second highest engagement number of 5,960. This participant was strategic to post what users historically responded to the most. This allowed the journalist to provide high user satisfaction with little effort. The most influential performer, Participant 3B, posted the second highest number of posts, 35, and received an outstanding 48,477 user engagements. A number of factors may have contributed to the engagement results including on-target content creation that users liked, how the content was delivered (video, Facebook live, text, etc.) and if the content aligned with the journalist's predetermined brand.

**How Demographics and Insights Factor into Success.** Not all of the journalists maximized the use of demographics and insights provided with their Facebook brand page. But those who did found it was beneficial to their brand and led to higher user satisfaction because they understood more fully what content the user liked the best. As noted, Facebook brand pages provide journalists insights into who is following the page by age and gender. Brand pages also offer information on the optimal time to post to reach users, what stories are performing well with those users and data on how users are reacting to that content. Data alerted Participant 3A of an increased international audience after being featured in an international publication. Now that journalist is

incorporating stories that resonate with that new user base in order to provide user satisfaction. That same journalist is keen to post content at 7 pm when most of that journalist's users are online. The material is also very gender specific since 97 percent of following users are female. "I know what works and so that's how I use that sort of research, I guess you could say that post-performance to say 'oh that really went over well, I should do that again.'"

While many of the journalists cater to their ideal users in an effort to provide satisfaction, some note that they can change that user base by creating content that speaks to a new demographic. Changes in the personal life of Participant 1A have led that journalist to start targeting users who are more family oriented. "If I see that I'm leaning too young or too old, I try to focus a post or two on the groups I'm not hitting." This participant also notes having a skill for identifying posts that will go viral but, tries not to let that dictate what is posted. "I really try to make sure that what I'm posting is more beneficial than trying to be deliberately manipulative." Participant 2A has been on Facebook for more than 10 years and attributes that experience to intuitively knowing what content resonates most with users. Data collected through Facebook Insights showed Participant 2A that news content performed very poorly with users, indicating they were not satisfied with the content. The data on poor performing posts led the journalist to lower the amount of news-related content shared.

Facebook Insights can provide journalists with a powerful lesson on the importance of relevant content sharing. Participant 1B said, "The more relevant the content, the more people will find it useful, the more they will interact, the more we interact with them, it should be a positive feedback loop." This indicates that not only do

users derive satisfaction from content, but that the journalist receives it as well when the user rewards the post with views, likes, comments and shares. Participant 3B said if a post does well, a mental note will be made to revisit it in the future but if it bombs, that will not be repeated. Participant 3B noted pets and certain celebrities go over well with that journalist's user base and plans to post about that celebrity again. "Why not give them what they love?"

**Authenticity is the Key to User Satisfaction.** While participants noted they gatekeep information and draw some clear lines between their public and private lives, they said it was essential to build caring and trusting relationships with their users, which often meant offering a level of intimacy. User gratification is key. Participant 1A said, "They want to know that you truly care and that you're not just there. So you have to be genuine and I think now is the time to be a little bit more raw and honest with your viewers than before because that's what they're looking for." Participant 2A said the most important step journalists can take to build a great brand is to open up and be more than just a story or a talking head. "Facebook exists to highlight who you are." Participant 3A believes users want to see journalists as real people and the more open, honest and raw a journalist can be their brand will benefit.

When implementing a Facebook social media strategy, it is important to share content that is true to brand. Participant 1A believes users will spot when a journalist is uncomfortable, and therefore, a journalist should only share content that comes naturally. Participant 3B thinks it is essential, to be honest, and accurate. Honesty also resonated as a critical quality to display with Participant 1B. "Honesty is key. People will see RIGHT through you if you're being manipulative or fake. I try to avoid posts that aren't

productive.” Being likable and having a pleasant personality also counts. “Be nice on your page and watch it grow. Be negative and watch it wither,” said Participant 3B. This feedback reaffirms that users will reward a brand that is authentic and representative of the journalist because the user is feeling satisfied.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions

### Effects of social media use

The journalists interviewed in this research clearly pointed to social media as a valuable tool to build bonds with users and gain worth with employers. References to making more money, leverage in contract negotiations and potential for future career opportunities indicate that these journalists see the benefits to building a strong brand. The journalists noted the importance and challenge of gatekeeping their brand and providing user satisfaction.

#### **Takeaways for journalists looking to grow their brand from participants.**

- Be authentic.
- Understand journalists are no longer able to control the flow of news but can work to control (gatekeep) their professional brand.
- Strategically identify one's brand to align with true interests and personality.
- Create a niche audience based on that brand and provide content that will lead to high user satisfaction.
- Gatekeep the personal brand through consistent monitoring, quality content creation and conversation.
- Post content users will like to increase their gratification.
- Engage users in a meaningful way to build trust and value.
- Use Facebook Insights to maximize reach and effectiveness.
- Understand that external opportunities, such as hosting events and keynote speaking, can result from a strong brand.
- Understand that increased visibility will result from a strong brand.

- Engage users in a way that builds trust so they provide story ideas.
- Understand that the highest user engagement in this study came from non-news content.
- Understand that high-performing journalists have and convey a clear brand.
- Build a real relationship with user as a journalist to make those users feel valued.
- Create a brand that goes beyond one's job title to include personal interests to gain increased value with users.

**Limitations.** This study did not explore the users' perspectives, motivations or beliefs about this project. This study focused on the journalists' perspective, how the journalists work to maintain some control over gatekeeping and how the journalists are motivated to share content based on user response. While this report looked at uses and gratification as a lens of theory, this study also studied how the positive reaction of the users to particular media can motivate the journalists to use that media more frequently. This report highlighted how gratification on behalf of the journalist can be satisfied when the users are satisfied as well. While the users' perspective is valuable, this study did not focus on the motivations behind their use of the product. It did not seek to speak with the users to find why they invest in the journalists.

**Directions for Future Research.**

**Spousal Impact.** There are several areas of social media use warranting further research. It was noted by many of the participants in this study that social media management and brand development have a significant impact on their personal relationships. When Participant 2B was asked how much time was spent managing the

Facebook brand page, the response was “More than my \*spouse would prefer.”

Participant 3A responded to that same question “My \*spouse would say 24 hours a day.”

Participant 1A’s spouse has advised a post be taken down for fear of revealing where they live. These comments indicate that there is a significant impact on personal relationships that could cause journalists to believe they need choose between that social media management and important relationships.

\*gender omitted to allow participant to remain anonymous

**Mental Impact.** The adverse mental effects that trolls or internet harassment can have on a journalist is another area worth exploring. Participant 1B has been bullied on a daily basis and witnessed users harass other users. “It can completely ruin the engagement of even some of the best out there. There’s a lot of mental strain and depression in the journalist community, and we aren’t talking about it enough.” The mental impacts of negative social media engagement may lead journalists to question the value of creating, building, and maintaining an online presence. It is also worth exploring to evaluate whether the negative online interaction may also affect self-esteem and relationships.

**Facebook Changes.** Continually changing Facebook algorithms were noted as concerning to some interview participants. Participant 3A said “It’s hit or miss really. Something that may have done really well, it might have been luck that day or the algorithms for Facebook have changed and, that happens a lot where posts that used to do well a year ago, they might not be seen today.” Participant 2B noted, “I feel like that’s really going to make or break the real pages from the not real pages.” Further research

can explore how maintaining and building a superior online presence can be challenged with an ever-changing set of rules and targets.

**Manager's Role in Social Media Management.** Each of the journalists in this study noted varying levels of interaction with managers when it comes to social media. Some noted that managers were inept at identifying what works on social media. Other journalists noted posting standards. Several noted that managers left them alone because of their high user numbers. Future study into management oversight and impact would be an interesting area to study.



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## APPENDIX I



Visual Example of a Facebook Brand Page

## Appendix II

### Detailed interview sub-questions

- How do journalists choose the content they share?
- How do journalists choose what delivery type (Facebook live, picture, video, text only) to share content?
- What type of content elicits the most response?
- What type (Facebook live, picture, video, text only, links to stories) of content sharing elicits the most response?
- What do these posts have to do with promoting a journalist's professional brand?
- How do journalists define the success of a post's performance?
- What do journalists do to try to increase user engagement?
- What content resonates most with a journalist's users?
- What surprises a journalist most about user response?
- Facebook brand pages provide brand page owners insights into key demographics of who is consuming your content and their reaction to your posts. How does that data influence a journalist when create content for the brand page?
- How are journalists using post insights (data on post performance provided by Facebook) to craft content?
- How do key insights such as top reacted posts, top shared post and top commented posts influence a journalist's content sharing habits?
- How does insight into previous post performance influence a journalist's likely hood to post similar content again?
- How do user demographics (age, gender) influence what content a journalist posts?
- How much time does a journalist spend managing a Facebook brand page per day?
- How many times do journalists check in on a Facebook brand page per day?
- How do journalists cultivate and build brand loyalty with users?
- What are the limitations when communicating/sharing personal content with users?
- How does a Facebook brand page help a journalist develop a professional brand?
- How often do journalists post content on their brand page?
- How do journalists try to innovate new ways to connect with users on their Facebook page?
- How does the promptness of a journalist's response to user interaction affect the brand?
- What do journalists think is the most important strategy used when building a brand and communicating on their Facebook brand page?
- What is a journalist's basic motivation when promoting their professional brand on Facebook?
- What is the journalist's definition of professional branding success on Facebook?
- How well have journalists met the definition of success professional branding on Facebook?
- How do journalists use their Facebook brand page to expand their influence?
- How do the journalist's efforts to expand influence through Facebook benefit brand development?
- How does employer response to a journalist's branding efforts on their Facebook brand page motivate a journalist negatively/positively?

- How do journalists feel their professional branding efforts benefit their job security?
- How do journalists feel their professional branding efforts benefit their career as a whole?
- How does user response to a journalist's branding efforts on their Facebook brand page motivate them negatively/positively?
- How do journalists feel their professional branding efforts benefit their relationship with their user community?
- What benefit is there for a journalists to build that relationship with their user community?
- How does the response to a journalist's branding efforts motivate them to further participate in branding?
- How does peer social media performance influence a journalist's performance on social media?
- How do journalist's branding efforts on their Facebook page benefit peer relationships?
- How important is brand development to a journalist's career?
- What motivates a journalist to work on brand development?
- What do journalists hope these branding efforts lead to for them?
- How do journalists see developing your professional brand to be beneficial?
- How do journalist efforts of professional branding on Facebook contribute to increased user influence?
- What benefit do journalists most see as a result of their professional branding efforts on Facebook?
- What do journalists hope result from their branding efforts on their Facebook brand page?
- What are the most important steps journalists can take to grow their professional brand on their Facebook page?
- How can a large number of users "liking" a journalist's page help a journalist's professional brand?
- What steps can journalists take to influence users to help grow the professional brand?
- How can Facebook pages help a journalist grow their brand?
- How can journalists benefit from relevant content sharing through Facebook Pages?
- How can increased influence, earned through social capital, help build a journalist's professional brand?

### Appendix III

List of all questions and participant answers.

Q1: How do you as a journalist choose the contents that you share?

1A. Well, I specifically gear it to for example in my case weather. Since that's what I've been doing for years, so everything about whether any big stories. Most of the time I would do local weather just because since that is what we're working on as a local station. But, social media is open to everyone around the world. You don't want people from Europe, that I've got before, to go in there because you really don't have that much information for them. But I do provide enough information to entertain like at least North America and bigger stories. So yes apart from my own local forecasting tips that I share on Facebook I do include major stories that are going on in the country because social media does reach out to others than just our city.

1B. What's timely. What's helpful information? What will teach them something? I specifically do not use my page as a forecast page because it binds you to the task of forecast even when you're off-duty. So mine is purely brand-building driven. The content I share is specifically chosen to either connect with my audience or inform them of something useful or entertaining.

2A. The only news content I share are stories that I think are things people need to know. So a significant weather event I will always share because I know about the Facebook algorithm. Most people don't have their feeds set up so that they see the newest stuff they have it set up to where whatever's getting the most engagement is what actually gets shown. So I'm only posting news stories that I know need to be seen. And even if it's seen eight and 10 hours later, it still applies. So those I'm very specific about. I do not overshare news stories on my Facebook page because I feel like it doesn't do anything for my brand. And I also get very little engagement on news stories. But the main thing that I'm always looking for is personality driven content, and I get the most engagement from that. If it can be related to content in the newscast, then it's a win-win. But that's not always the case.

2B. Because my job is directly related to a geographical area, anything that happens here-good, bad, school, government, weather, you name it- I put it on there. Our newscasts are only so much time, and I know that everything that's happening cannot be in every newscast. So my page sort of serves as the everything that you need to know. If I see something there that I think is worthy enough to share or if I want to help an organization



put something out I will share it.

3A. Once I started learning more in the last probably really four or five years I started tailoring to who my audience was. Now, as a family person, that's my audience. And people don't go to me for their news from my page. You know they don't go to get the news of the day. They're going to go to a station website or our political reporter. They're not going to go to my page. They know my page is going to be parenting tricks, parenting hacks, it's going to be emotional stories heartwarming stories.

3B. I ask myself, what will help my followers today be it, important information, something thought-provoking or something amusing? That's what I choose to share. There is so much negative stuff on the internet; I seek out the positive.

Q2. How do journalists choose what delivery type (Facebook live, picture, video, text only) to share content?

1A. I can get into more depth about Facebook Live that that's the way that I've gained my followers because people want to see and they appreciate the rawness of being not live on TV because they still are a little skeptical, but live on your own personal, even if it's your fan page. It makes a more personal connection with them, so you really, really want to communicate something and really want that impact the way they understand the information. I would always suggest Facebook Live. I didn't have time to do Facebook live every single time, but it was a priority for example. We have severe weather, it's for sure that I would do a Facebook Live, but then I noticed that even if we didn't have any severe weather or anything like that just connecting with your audience for two minutes, for example, today's a gorgeous day here in our area, you just say hello I'm thinking of all of you. Hope you're enjoying the great day and then it's just a personal touch that they appreciate very much now. Text and pictures, I try to do daily at least once a day. It just reminds them you are their people. At first, would think that that's annoying, but it's not it's actually just creating this lifestyle with your audience and just to remind them that yeah you care and that you're still there. So at least I'd like to put visuals myself, so I always try to post at least one picture per day.

1B. I try to let the content speak for itself. Would a video communicate the best? Then that's what I use. Just a picture? Boom. Sometimes only text is important. I do try to switch it up so that it doesn't get monotonous.

2A. I never do text only because of the algorithm. Facebook doesn't prioritize content that doesn't have an image. Video is king. I will post that well before I post a still image because I think it boosts my brand and I know Facebook likes video more so they give preference to videos over still images. And then also through what I've been taught through research from consultants and managers about Facebook and how people consume it.

2B. I rarely do Facebook Live. I will only do that in the event that there is something truly visually happening right now that I'm the first one there and I want to show you what I'm seeing as I see it and I've got enough information to where I feel comfortable. Only when I am sort of first arriving to something that is visually happening so more so. Breaking news your spot news type stuff. Also, weather-related people love weather. That is big. So if you've got something weather related to show to compare to what they're seeing where they're at. That's a Facebook Live movement in regards honestly a lot of my posts are really just in their press releases. Primarily it is copy and paste of press releases or shares of posts from other entities.

3A. I'm going to mix it up and do a video post; maybe then I'll do a Facebook Live post. I only do about one a week Facebook Live and it because I know if I don't want to oversaturate and so I do that then I may do a picture mixed in there and then I may throw up an article that I like or one that I've written. I don't do Facebook live; I think it gets tedious after about 90 seconds no matter who is doing it. Everything I do is pretty calculated. I normally don't share something from my station's website, maybe once a week or so, but they're not going to my page for that.

3B. I almost never post without a photo attached. It grabs their attention. I rarely post video because it gets less of a reaction.

Q3. What type of content elicits the most response?

1A. Honestly, since I've been branding my page any major weather story or weather video that I share, that gets the most response. Well, that gets the second most response they love. Unfortunately, it is a visual place: selfies. That's the first thing that they love. I've gotten over 2000, 3000, 4000 likes on a selfie. If that's going to draw the attention, what I do is try to at least attract the attention with that selfie. But in the caption, I'll put we're talking about severe weather 5 and 10 pm. So I feed it a kind of forcefully through that selfie because I know that selfie works. I kind of like force the contents on them through the caption of a selfie but that's what works for me.

1B. Posts about things that are cute, like dogs. Philanthropic posts where I do things that serve the community or personal growth posts also do quite well. If I try to push learning too hard, it does hurt my numbers. I have to post a segment question that we do on the show that's meant to be controversial or elicit passionate responses, but that's not something I would post on my own.

2A. Always personality true content always 100 percent no question.

2B. It's almost unpredictable. It will be gossipy stuff. I do not do a lot of personal posts but recently my dog and I were involved in a fundraiser in our community, and I shared a picture of me and the dog waiting for it. That picture's done really well. You have people in small towns either they know the alleged criminal, or they know the victim, and they started going at each other. And then you had other people who would have their own allegations and another people who wanted to defend the alleged criminal of all their great experiences. And somewhere along the line in there-there were people who came in to attack me for even posting about the arrest so that in itself just everyone fighting with each other was popular.

3A. Something that's going to go viral. I know that there are certain videos I see this is starting to get a lot of traction. Or I can look at a video on another website that I follow and say oh wow that's had a thousand shares that are going to do very well on my page. Also microblogs, three to five hundred words of a blog with a picture and that goes crazy. I have been fat-shamed on tv, and I've written about that. I'm honest, and people really seem to respond to that.

3B. Things that trigger emotions. Sadness, Happiness, Love.

Q4. What type (Facebook live, picture, video, text only, links to stories) of content sharing elicits the most response?

1A. What gets the most Facebook Live. Definitely and that's what got me as many likes on my page.

1B. Absolutely depends on content chosen and the relevancy of comments. Facebook lives generally get the most responses, but many times those aren't good interactions. I do not count random responses or comments about appearances or trolling comments as genuine interaction. I would say the best interaction comes from photos.

2A. Personality-driven content. Those kinds of things that have nothing to do with news always get way more comments and sharing than anything news related. That's why if you look at my feed you'll see not much news. Everything I post is personality driven content.

2B. I would say pictures regardless of what they are pictures tend to be the thing that they get a lot of shares but truly because majority my posts are text only. It's all about the content.

3A. Videos that seems to be because when you're scrolling through Facebook and someone sees a pop up it automatically starts going so it might grab someone's attention. So if you do the right video even if it's just sharing. Ninety-nine percent of the time it's not my videos.

3B. Anything that makes them say, "Wow. I want to share that with my friends."

Q5. What do these posts have to do with promoting a journalist's professional brand?

1A. When I go on Facebook I think I don't care what was on TV I'm going to tell you again because I care about you guys. Please be careful on the roads here. Please do this or like I tell them. Share with me. We see your neighborhood, and I ask them to share with me their information their local neighborhood information so that just creates a natural conversation and it just again is strengthening the relationship with your viewers. I'm on social media to strengthen that relationship. They want to know that you truly care and that you're not just there. You have to be genuine and I think now is the time to be a little bit rawer and honest with your viewers than before because that's what they're looking for and that's what the Facebook life works a lot better.

1B. They are brand-building in a sense that they make a connection with the viewer. My posts are genuinely aimed at starting a dialog and having a real sense of community with the people that follow me.

2A. I've identified the words that I want to be seen as I want to be seen as sophisticated as smart as attractive as a citizen. Everything that I post centers around that.

2B. If you want news in this community, this is the place to get it.

3A. I would say a good 75 percent are tied to who I am. It's doing a mixture of sharing my own story of videos but also my blog. It's a mix of that throwing in some memes that might show some humor of parenting, and that's who I am. And then also sharing some pictures and different things that I do. That shows me as a parent and kind of shows my personality, and that's also on Facebook. People get to know me that way.

3B. Very little on the surface but if you engage them and they find themselves coming to your page more frequently when you do have something serious to share they will be there and listen.

Q6. How do you as a journalist define the success of a post-performance?

1A. Likes and comment. Just the more interaction there is obviously that's more success. Sometimes you don't have to have a lot of likes. Reach is important too. I may only have a few likes, but thousands of people viewed that video as well. That's success too.

1B. As much as I hate to admit it, I do track likes and comments, but I'd rather see a post with low likes and comments with a good dialog than just high likes and comments from empty responses about appearances or trolling.

2A. Well I mean it's all the metrics Facebook gives. It's number of people who see the post, number of comments, and number of shares. Those three things.

2B. To me, a successful post is something that either has people talking or gets people talking. And again it's a double-edged sword for me because of a lot of times when they're talking and talking. But I guess the main point is that you know that you've gotten the information out because you've got people talking about it which means they're spreading the information. So if our goal is to provide information and spread information, then the measure of success is those who are spreading it to, and that would be through communication. So I would say comments and shares.

3A. I'd like to define the success by saying that if I can touch one person with what I share then that success to me. I don't think that's how Facebook defines it, so I know that if I get a certain amount of likes on a post or it's been shared 50 times or 100 times, yeah that's success, In that sense.

3B. Likes, comments, and most importantly shares.

Q7. What do journalists (you) do to try to increase user engagement?

1A. Myself I have noticed that Facebook Live has been my tool in order to increase likes and viewership and you know relationship in general with everyone. Know your brand. I post a lot about whether. I make sure that I'm on top whenever there's crazy weather.

1B. I try to be as genuine and responsive as possible. I try to stay as far away as possible from the 'talking head' image and genuinely connect with people. I answer questions, joke around, and when people disagree I try to encourage them to question each other's ideas and not let the conversation devolve into attacking each other's appearance.

2A. Good posts. I realized I am the target demographic. I am the demo and so everything that I post I am trying to be that and emphasize that and so that has a very strong influence on what I'm trying to capitalize on.

2B. This is a double-edged sword. You know there are some crafty people out there, and so I don't really like to deal with them. But again with user engagement, the biggest opportunities that I do choose to make to do that is today's any kind of weather days. And that is simply one letting them know what's going on the weather and to asking them to tell me what's going on with their weather specifically and that truly is the best. Benchmark is engaging with them on that.

3A. I post things that I know are going to get a lot of a lot of traction and interest.

3B. Ask them for it. If you are having trouble with garbage pick-up, ask them if anyone can relate? If you got a foot of snow at your house, show them and ask for photos of their yards.

Q8. What resonates most with your users?

1A. When I personalize it a little bit more. If I come up with a coined phrase that my fans know and understand it creates that bond or that relationship with them, even more, It's almost like a little inside for the people, who know you.

1B. Real talk. Where you get down and dirty and talk about the things that really matter. Not clickbait. Not selfies. Not polarizing political crap. Posts that encourage connection and discussion.

2A. Personal content. Family non-work related.

2B. The best is when it's something positive going on in their community. People are super invested in their schools here, and you know whether they're the working mom who can't be there and be the homeroom mom they love to be able to see the things that are going on their kid's schools and the great things that teachers are doing.

3A. Anything parenting or anything to do with a personal matter I have felt comfortable sharing with my audience. I've just kind of found my niche. And when you find it, that's what you go with.

3B. Anything that elicits an emotional response. Anything with animals.

Q9. What surprises you the most about this response?

1A. The shameless selfie response, a lot of likes. You have to be careful how you pose, so you are communicating correctly.

1B. The negativity from both men and women when it comes to appearance. I cannot remember for the life of me the last time that someone criticized my work. It's literally been months. But my appearance? I'm bullied on a daily basis. I also have users that bully other followers. Instead of blocking, I try to use it as a learning experience where I call someone out for their behavior and try to get them to see how it's more a reflection on their character than the person that they are bullying.

2A. When I write a post to a specific demographic, for example, female-centric posts and men resonate with the content and comment.

2B. When they're negative about a good story. Somebody will inevitably, whether it's a troll or not, be negative. I have this rule I have a post on my page. People are more than welcome to have conversations about stories, but the moment you make it personal to

anyone else or me you're going. I block trolls real fast. I can spot them real fast when they're there to just kind of make something go negative when it didn't need to be. I automatically bump them out, and then I post a message that says those who started to engage: just to let you know that person is a known troll. I gave him a warning prior. I've now bumped them. They were just being mean. Don't engage me more you won't see any more. So it truly is discouraging for me when I see someone go there just to stir something up. I'm in the business of delivering news, and I'm not going to stir something up, and I'm not going to get involved in a conversation that I don't need to be because I don't have to have an opinion I'm not supposed to.

3A. When I publish something I think will resonate with thousands of people and there are crickets. Then sometimes I may quickly post something in between newscasts and the post will go crazy.

3B. How much they pay attention. I posted a photo recently of my kitchen, and multiple people commented on a dish in the picture. No kidding. They don't miss a trick.

Q10. Facebook brand pages provide brand page owners insights into key demographics of who is consuming your content and their reaction to your posts. How does that data influence a journalist when creating content for the brand page?

1A. The demographics will be your primary audience. You know you resonate with a certain age range of men or women. It does influence it a lot, and I can tweak that audience myself. It doesn't matter my viewership will go a little bit down for a little while and then it will you know other types of viewers will come in and start engaging. So. You got to have that niche. What do you really want to share with your audience? Most of the time like I love to share about fitness and weather.

1B. It keeps me from posting sexualized or self-centered posts. I try to keep things as even across the board as possible.

2A. No, I'm not looking for the insights. It goes back to who I'm trying to position myself as, what type of talent I'm trying to position myself as, and the posts I make are based on the type of people I want to attract not the type of people who are already on my page.

2B. I don't look at my data, so it doesn't drive me at all. For me to post the info needs to do to two of the four: Does it help? Does it inform? Does educate? Does it hold accountable? If it does two of those things, I'm putting out.

3A. I do pay attention to the age of my fans, but much more so the sex of my fans.

3B. I ignore it. My page is successful because I trust my instincts. If I start trying to manipulate things the authenticity goes out the window. I like the data to see when I should post. I follow that very well, and I know that my key time is seven at night. That's going to do the best post. Sometimes I know if I'm going to post something at 8:00 in the morning no one's going to look at that. So I really use the data.

Q11. How are journalists (you) using post insights (data on post-performance provided by Facebook) to craft content?

1A. If I know, I want to get the point across I will think of the age and range of the people I'm talking to and what type of post will get the most attention and I will do that.

1B. If I see that I'm leaning too young or too old, I try to focus a post or two on the groups I'm not hitting. For instance, my 18-24 is pretty low. So, I've tried to boost my interaction on eSports, which is a passion of mine, to see if I can include them more in the conversation.

2A. I know intuitively what's going to work because it's been second nature for so many years.

2B. The only way that I will do that is if I noticed a morning pitch you know obviously our web people will give their rundown of what on their pages and there are things they're seeing that people are responding to. I will weigh in on that and tell them this is how it's doing.

3A. You know I think that I'm learning what not to post. If I see something that really isn't doing that well I don't I'm not going to try that again. I use that sort of research to say Oh that really went over well I should do that again.

3B. If I see something do really well, I'll make a mental note and revisit it. If something bombs I do the same thing.

Q12. How do key insights such as top reacted posts, top shared post and top commented posts influence a journalist's content sharing habits?

1A. I do see there's a lot of engagement when I share crazy weather videos as well. Because that has been my brand for a while so of course, I'll look for something that's crazy going on today. That and the selfies.

1B. I'm pretty good at spotting what will go viral and what won't, but I try not to let that dictate what I post. I really try to make sure that what I'm posting is more beneficial than trying to be deliberately manipulative.

2A. It's everything. A few years ago when I realized that news post got no interaction I really I stopped doing it that way. I realized no one comments on news posts. And so I think of it more as a personality page a branding image personality page.

2B. It only it will only influence any kind of content that I would pitch to do in an actual newscast. It may lead me to you know to keep more of a close eye on that thing if it called for a follow-up or even try to find a way to come up with a follow-up. But it's not necessarily something that will. Really it won't make me think at all like oh I remember



the last time I posted something even. The last time I post something about the military got great won't that doesn't. That doesn't influence my thought.

3A. I don't pay that much attention to that because I've learned over the past year really what works, so I know that the videos are going to do well. But I also learned that it's hit or miss. Something that may have done really well, it might have been luck that day or the algorithms for Facebook have changed, and that happens a lot where the post that used to do well a year ago, they might not be seen today.

3B. Again if something does amazingly well, I'll look to try that again. I once posted something really nice about a specific country singer, and it ended up reaching more than a million people. This guy has lots of fans. So if I ever get the chance again, I'll mention him.

Q13. How does insight into previous post-performance influence a journalist's likelihood to post similar content again?

1A. Really high.

1B. I used to post a lot of dog related posts because they did very well on my page. We have a segment that is devoted to dog rescue, and I'm also involved in the community, but then my page lacked substance. I'm really trying to treat my page like a multi-course dinner meal. I still want people to eat their vegetables and learn something, BUT I also want them to have some dessert, a.k.a. cute puppies.

2A. It's everything.

2B. It really doesn't.

3A. Very much so. I will definitely take that if I know that something did well even if it's say a blog post that I share and that did very well. I kind of pinpoint that and remember it and say you know what I'm going to share that again in six months.

3B. Greatly Every post about my dog with special needs does well so, I know people love seeing him. Why not give them what they love.

Q14. How do user demographics (age, gender) influence what content a journalist posts?

1A. For me, I mean whether it's just for everyone. So. I really didn't tweak my professional information at all. According to the demographics. Anything that's food anything that's fitness. I think that applies to both genders.

1B. For some, I'm sure it's a lot. It's not something I try to focus on.

2A. I'm looking for people who value the same things that I'm trying to portray.

2B. So really the only time I will ever have that thought is when I am thinking about that educated young professional working mother that my station says is my audience. But it's really rare too that I do that.

3A. So I can use that to my advantage and share little insights or different special especially some of those kind of viral videos the sweet ones that are targeted to my audience. It also leads me to get story ideas.

3B. It doesn't with me, but I'm respectful. No bad language, no graphic photos.

Q15. How much time do you spend managing your Facebook page per day?

1A. About an hour.

1B. I'd say two hours.

2A. One hour.

2B. Fifteen hours.

3A. Two hours.

3B. One hour.

Q.16 How many times a day when you say check your Facebook page?

1A. Three times.

1B. Twenty times.

2A. Twenty times.

2B. Three times.

3A. Fifty times.

3B. Twenty-five.

Q17. How do you cultivate and build brand loyalty with your users?

1A. I post about anything that can help them prepare for their day or prepare for severe weather. That creates credibility and loyalty. They know you can count on me for one there's something that they need to prepare for. Also if they see a little bit of that personality, of course, the credibility will go up.

1B. Honesty is key. People will see right through you if you're manipulative or fake. I try to avoid posts that aren't productive.

2A. Once you begin interacting with people, they feel more connected to you more likely to post again. And then when they're engaging with your content, you are likely to show up in somebody else's feed as a suggested follow. And that's what it's all about.

2B. I believe number one because of the geographic area but to the credibility that they know and the reliability. They know that if they hear something from me they're going to get it and it's accurate if they're going to get it from me. Somebody will start a conversation on their personal Facebook page, and somebody will come into the

conversation and tag me and say she's going to know what's up.

3A. It's something that I haven't been as good at, but I've tried to. The larger I get and the more content of mine that is shared it gets tougher because you want to interact with people but also to grow my brand. It's gotten tougher, the more followers I have. But I try to go back to certain posts and make sure that I like everyone. I may not comment on all, but that way they see that I saw their comment. I think that by having that engagement with people that gets loyalty for sure and especially when I can comment back or when people message me.

3B. By responding to them when they talk to you on the page and getting them an answer if they ask for one.

Q18. What are the limitations when you communicate and share personal content with your users?

1A. Sometimes they ask where I live. Sometimes they ask you out or say improper things, and I'll block or delete the comments to try to keep it you know clean page professional page. I draw a line when it's vulgar comments. For safety reasons, I don't post too much about my personal life.

1B. You can't get too personal, because of stalkers and trolls. So, you have to be very careful when it comes to post-dating places that give away your location as well as not keeping steady schedules for places people know you will be.

2A. I don't share my real name. I don't share when I go out of town until after the fact.

2B. I rarely post about me. It's always something else. It's never me personally.

3A. I think that I really am an open book other than telling him where I live and my real last name.

3B. I won't post about my kids. And they don't need to know about my bathroom habits, or if I just had a fight with someone, I love. It's none of their business.

Q19. How does a Facebook page help you develop that professional brand?

1A. You can definitely tweak it to what you really want to be known for. And obviously, niche markets work everywhere and anywhere. So niche market your self towards what you enjoy doing professionally and personally because it will be easier for you to brand yourself on social media.

1B. To me, it's my main page. It allows me the most interaction with my viewers. Instagram is too superficial and lacks substance, in my opinion, and Twitter limits characters.

2A. I think when you start to see what people interact with and the kind of information they like to consume I think at that point you begin to feed more of that content into the page.

2B. It's an outlet. It's a forum to let people know if you want your news this is the best place to find it. You're not going to find anything as comprehensive as accurate as reliable in this area as me.

3A. It has helped tremendously. It is the, for the most part, it's open doors. That's what it's done. I think it has taken my writing to a new level. It's opening these doors that I never would have had if it wasn't being that brand that I have on social media.

3B. It gives them a place to find you. Like a clubhouse, they like to visit.

Q20. How often do journalists (you) post on their page?

1A. My goal is at least once a day.

1B. I try to post at least once a day, more if I find interesting content. Posting more than three times reduces interaction in my experience. I do go stretches where I don't post at all, but that's when viewers have been especially rough, and I pull out for the sake of my mental health.

2A. I make at least two a day. When my old news director was here, we were required to do five Facebook posts a day, but I thought that was too much.

2B. At least thirty posts a day.

3A. We have we have requirements in my company, but they do not own my pages. They want fifteen times a week. I try to post at least once a day, but usually, except for weekend, I will post two to three times a day.

3B. I post a minimum three times a day, no more than ten.

Q21. How do journalists (you) try to innovate new ways to connect with your users on Facebook?

1A. You try to be something different. I always try to give a little bit of information or content with whatever I'm doing even if I post about going to the grocery store. And it has a personal touch, and it's not too personal.

1B. Facebook limits too much creativity when it comes to new, BUT I try to come up with new ways to do a Live Stream that will shake things up as much as possible. Throwing in a poll or two works. Communicating with GIFs is all the rage right now.

2A. I know that Facebook lives are really great, so I use them that way. I know when I can clip video of personality-driven moments from the on-air product I know I'll get a lot

of play from that, so I continue doing that.

2B. It's not really something that I do a lot. When I do need to engage with them like if I need to find a professional to interview in a story, I will put my personality out there and you know I guess probably could get it.

3A. For me, it's really been videos in the last year. I found that the more ways I can be open and honest, it may be posting a very raw story of myself, that helps me.

3B. I make my pets characters on the page and share conversations they are having. People love it.

Q22. How does the promptness of a journalist's response to user interaction affect the brand?

1A. I'm bad at that. I do I do try to like every comment, so they know that I'm engaged they know that I'm seen their comment. And it's something they ask for specifically then I'll answer it, but I won't answer every single comment.

1B. The more prompt, the better. People don't want to see you react if it's been a few days. The sooner, the better. It makes them feel like they are connecting with you because you are connecting with them.

2A. I think they would realize oh she's actually watching oh she's actually on this. This is really her. And so then again it encourages connection.

2B. I don't ever I mean you know I try. I'd bet that if I did, I would have even more but because it's to me it's a slippery slope. I haven't really experimented. I bet that I probably have a lot more quicker response that I would have a lot more engaged with if I gave a quicker response to things. But I don't really. Ever put it in a position to have a response in general.

3A. Because of my following, I can't, but try to be prompt. I get on there every hour or two, and I will go through and like them. I may not comment on them, but people do know certain posts are going to come up and I try to like their comments.

3B. Greatly. I try to respond within an hour to every message.

Q23. What do journalists think is the most important strategy used when building a brand and communicating on their Facebook brand page?

1A. My strategy is posting once a day. I share about my fitness world. Then I usually do like some kind of health tip.

1B. Being genuine and honest.

2A. Figure out how you want to be perceived and do it.

2B. I feel like it's the biggest tool you know you're here to help them be part of their community and that they actually play a really big role in helping you do that. So their self-worth their value their relevance establishing that frequently.

3A. Engagement. I think that is, maybe I'm not the prompt on it, but I am very good at engagement. They see you on TV, and they want to be connected. And by that engagement on social media, they are connecting to you. For me, it's also helping build my brand

3B. Be honest. Be accurate. Don't share 'click bait'. They won't respect you.

Q24. What is a journalist's basic motivation when promoting their professional brand on Facebook?

1A. That one day I get to be my own boss because TV's evolving and people are going online. For me, it would be to build my own brand and to eventually become an independent journalist because I think that's where we're all heading towards.

1B. Learning. Community. Connection.

2A. Career advancement. I want another employer to see what I'm doing that's my basic motivation.

2B. Is getting information out. That's my soul priority is just getting information out.

3A. Well I mean it's always to grow because the more I grow, the more I can become a brand. You know I think my goals in life have changed. I loved being a news journalist, and you know when I was young it started as I wanted to be in a big city. Life changes and you find that different places you live maybe you don't need to do that. You want the quality of life so then it goes from there and the quality of life it just changes over the years. So for me in the last couple of years, my ambitions have changed, and I'm comfortable with my life as a news anchor, but that's not my sole purpose. You know my purpose is having a family life first, but then also it's become my brand. It's become the writing because that's my passion now — being able to share my story.

3B. To grow their audience.

Q25. What is the journalist's (your) definition of professional branding success on Facebook?

1A. Continuous engagement. There are some pages that have like 50,000 followers, and then they get ten likes. You start wondering if they are just buying followers.

1B. For everyone, it's different. For some, it's how many likes or comments. For me, success is knowing that I can pitch a topic or idea and watch people interact and learn and grow.

2A. I would say the number of followers is a big part. I would say adeptness at the types of things that are being posted and the frequency with which they're being posted. Lastly the engagement with people on the page to a number of followers successive posts and engagement with those posts.

2B. Having a community that's willing to help you put the information out. That to me is successful; to build up a community to have a bunch of people who are willing to be part of keeping and making their community great is successful.

3A. It's engagement with a growing following. I think engagement is probably the big part because you're going to find success in your branding, if more people start commenting and that means that they're trusting you.

3B. My definition of branding is to have more people on my page than everyone else in the market.

Q26. How well have journalists met the definition of success in professional branding on Facebook?

1A. You know when you've got all these followers that helps. I think some young journalists know social media but lack guidance and post things I wouldn't post. Then some older journalists aren't posting at all. I think in general it depends. The better you are at that engagement, the more successful you can be.

1B. I think some do it very well. Others, not so much. For management, Likes and shares and reach are the things that determine success... but that's not what everyone is aiming for.

2A. I think I've done very well and I continue to do well. And also as you know, I can get rid of the trolls, but I need to set people straight when I need to. But for the most part, because I foster that kind of community. That's what I get back in return.

2B. I think I've got way more growth that needs to happen that can and will happen. I think I've done well so far. But you can always continue to improve.

3A. It took me a long time to even get on Facebook so it's kind of funny now that I'm somewhat of a master of it.

3B. Most don't meet the definition, or they just aren't trying. If you treat social media as a chore instead of an opportunity, you won't succeed.

Q27. How do journalists use their Facebook brand page to expand their influence?

1A. They prefer you for emceeding events. And you can feel the way people approach you outside of work. They ask for pictures, and they like you. Credibility goes up. Loyalty goes up. Brands or different organizations want you instead of the other anchor you know to work with them.

1B. I use it to help those going through similar health challenges as I am. I've coached more people than I can count through certain types of surgeries I have had. To me, that's influence and success. I've used it to help people raise money for some really cool causes. I've helped challenge people to get back in shape. That's how I measure success. But that's not the same measure as others.

2A. I use it is to expand influence because it is about reach. The more people you have, the more reach you have, which means more influence you have.

2B. I'm not ever intending to influence or you know affect anything other than just promoting information for the community. I guess maybe because I foster a community of being helpful and spreading legitimate information. The Facebook brand continues with that influence so simply having the opportunity to be able to spread information and collect a group of people who are willing.

3A. My new mission in life is to use it to help for good.

3B. I have gotten so many stories that were exclusive because of my page. People view me as a trusted friend so they come to me with stories.

Q28. How do your efforts to expand your influence through Facebook benefit your brand development?

1A. It makes you more influential.

1B. Facebook has done wonders for my ability to communicate with people. If I had been in TV 20 years ago, I would have never had the opportunity to share and interact with people like I do now.

2A. It's everything because people only see one person on TV. You want to show them the rest of that picture through social media.

2B. As long as you're somebody who just kind of lets people run amok on you're page not really going to have an identity. But for me, I feel like establishing that identity and having people help me you know further push that identity of a community of information sharing and helping you know further with that influencing.



3A. I think everything I do does help. You know it's it's a lot of work. I don't know if it warrants as much time as I put into it sometimes but I think that it does help.

3B. The more people you bring into the tent, the better for your brand and ratings.

Q29. How does employer response to a journalist's branding efforts on their Facebook brand page motivate a journalist negatively/positively?

1A. It became overwhelming at first when the employers started to find out the importance of social media, and they wanted you to create your branding. So in my newsroom, they always encouraged to post daily. When that started happening much thought, it was annoying and extra work. And I get it. But I'm like well that's the future. You know like you got involved with the social media. I think it is important it will benefit yourself and the station, and that's why the stations are noticing, and employers will eventually start encouraging to do that.

1B. My bosses have very little social-media savvy and frequently push ideas and posts that are unproductive and not-genuine. I generally disregard their input unless they have something useful to say. Which is rare. I would say that influences me negatively because posts that I consider successes that have positive impacts on people's lives are not generally looked upon favorably by my bosses. They want fluff and hype.

2A. I've only had one news director who has made a social media policy and who put so much emphasis on it. The boss would do quarterly goals and like competitions and whoever would win the competitions for like percentage likes increase would earn a prize. That boss is the reason that I have so many followers. The boss even paid part of the budget to promote our pages in order to get likes because the boss realized news viewers were on Facebook and we needed more likes we needed more influence. We needed more reach. That's helped me because it's helped me to really understand how important it is to potential employers.

2B. I've got a high following, and they of course very much appreciate it. They don't really get in my way. When the consultants come in and they try to critique me, but I'm different. I've never been given expectations from my bosses. They sometimes send out emails on the top posts, and I'm usually on the list several times.

3A. Our station runs down the top stories and social media people at our station. If my name is not on there every day, I'm doing something wrong. When I had a post that did very well the boss put out a memo to everyone. Yes, I pay close attention just because they are now.

3B. My bosses stay out of my business and page, and that's why it works. They are happy I have so many followers so they leave me alone.

Q30. How do you feel that your professional branding efforts benefit job security?

1A. Not necessarily, but I do think it does have a big influence. That speaks volumes of you because that means you've put effort into your social media page creating your brand. I'm not sure. Because there's a lot of factors. I would say 60 percent job security.

1B. I think it helps me... it would be harder to fire me with the reach and influence I've created in my area.

2A. I think the more people who feel connected to me the more outrage there would be if and when you leave, specifically if you have been done wrong. Because I own my page. They don't own my page. So if they do wrong by me and I've got thousands of loyal followers that could make the station look bad.

2B. It plays a big role. So it is very important to this particular job security.

3A. I think that that bodes well for me as we start negotiating a contract and then I can say I have this influence and I have this following of tens of thousands of people. I have that influence, and I think that will help as opposed to if I had 500 followers.

3B. Greatly. Would you fire the person with 15 times the followers as all the other TV anchors? Probably not. Plus I get stories and can use the page to help other reporters find subjects for their stories.

Q31. How do you feel your professional branding efforts benefit your career as a whole?

1A. For me, it's important to relate to the viewers and to have that connection with the viewers and not just be a talking mouth to them. So for me, I think it's very important. I always say social media is working for you and not for your station. I leave with those viewers, and I want to start a blog or anything like that, I have those viewers, that engagement already built still work for you.

1B. It's a love-hate relationship. It's given me a conduit to connect with people which is amazing, but then it also gives genuinely horrible people and trolls the ability to sexually and verbally harass me on a regular basis, which definitely takes its toll.

2A. I think it's a huge part. Someone can see you on TV, and they see a small part of who you are. Social media is supposed to fill the rest of that pie. So if tv is 30 percent, I think social media is the other 70 percent. It fills the gaps. It lets people know who you really are. That's why personality driven content is so imperative, and it gets so much interaction because it helps people understand the real you and understand if they want to continue to watch you.

2B. If I were to go to another market, they would see that I had the capability of doing this and because news is going in such a digital fashion that would, of course, be a huge plug in of course even outside of the business.

3A. I think it tremendously helps because I think that as I've shifted more from just being that news anchor talking head, I am not only now a person because of social media people seeing the real me and me being able, to be honest.

3B. People like my writing so it gives me the chance to show that part of my tool box. That helps me grow the page, and that helps keep me employed.

Q32. How does user response to a journalist's branding efforts on their Facebook brand page motivate them negatively/positively?

1A. There's always going to be something negative somebody sad to say something, and there's more positive or negative out there. I focus on the positive, and that's always going encouraged me to do more. Thank god I haven't had any major trolls. But the bigger you are, the bigger the station, the bigger the following you will have.

1B. Posts that help people change and grow and inspire others makes me feel very satisfied when it comes to what I do, but there are many days the trolls/harassers are can outweigh the good.

2A. Sometimes when things are not nice it's a downer, but you know for the most part I think people that engage on my Facebook page are there because they want to engage with me positively. That just encourages me, and it continues to reemphasize the type of things that I want to put out there on my page.

2B. It doesn't move me at all. I don't like to be about me so I don't try to give myself anymore.

3A. It helps me quite a bit positively because I can see the interaction and you know it helps me keep going because every time that I feel like I you know I put so much effort in it is it I mean it's almost a full-time job to keep up to date. So I get to hear that response. It totally keeps me going.

3B. It motivates me to keep sharing great stories and positive stories and growing my page.

Q33. How do you feel your professional efforts benefit your relationship with the community?

1A. It strengthens my relationship with the community. That's the main reason I do it for.

1B. It's immeasurable. Before Facebook, I don't think I would have been as popular of a personality. I think most of what makes people tune into me instead of someone else is the brand I've built online.

2A. People get an even better look at your day in and day out on social media than they ever would in one charitable appearance or an engagement. You know because you're not

going to stand up there and talk about your weekend or your kids or you know personal things like that as an MC. You're going to do that on your social media.

2B. It truly is a really valuable outlet to be able to have a relationship with viewers that's never been possible before.

3A. That's everything as our industry evolves and fewer people tune into TV they're going to go to the Web site they're going to find you have to find ways to still connect with viewers.

3B. My audience gets to know me as a person so they are more likely to say hello when they see me out. It's all positive.

Q34. What benefit is there for a journalist to build that relationship with the community?

1A. I think it's incredible because it's building credibility and loyalty towards you specifically. The station is benefiting from as well getting more viewers and getting more money because of you. And then later on if you want to become independent you have loyal followers keep feeding your pages.

1B. Huge benefits. We can all learn from each other through connection and conversation. I can reach further and talk to thousands upon thousands more of people through social media. Twenty years ago I'd get three minutes to connect with folks while giving them the forecast. Now I get all the time I wish to connect with people. It's a complete game-changer.

2A. The more well-known you are, the more name recognition you have. When that comes up in research about how great you are and how well known you are that just serves to enhance job security. It helps you in contract renegotiations.

2B. The benefit is in making sure that the community is engaged and informed. One that they don't just drop willy-nilly about the information that they're sharing. That the information they're getting or giving valuable to me is in making them better people for their own communities.

3A. They come to me because they feel like they know me. They're going to contact me and because they know so much about my family and about me being an open book I also get stories that way they can relate to me on different fronts.

3B. The more they like you, the more likely they are to watch you on TV.

Q35. How does the response to a journalist branding efforts motivate them to further participate?

1A. Oh definitely motivates me. But like I said even if I don't get a response I still post.

1B. I think it's a positive feedback loop if done well. More interaction makes you want to interact with people more if it's positive interaction. The reverse is true when it's negative.

2A. I think when you realize that you're getting really great response from people it's just an encouragement to keep doing it because it is an increase of influence it's an increase of reach.

2B. I appreciate when there are other nice people who say we really appreciate that you do this. Thank you so much for what you do and everything you do. Of course it's always nice to hear. But it doesn't make me want to do it any more.

3A. The more the more response I mean it's you know it's kind of that adrenaline rush if you have a viral post go crazy. I now have this voice that people are listening to me.

3B. Success breeds success. You see how well it's going and you want more of it.

Q36. How does peer social media performance influence the performance of other journalists?

1A. A fellow co-worker would tell me to do a Facebook live every day and at first, I would not listen to her. But finally, I did because I saw the responses she was getting. I mean it helps, and I learned from her.

1B. We do have measures in place that compare all the journalists in the market. I feel that's a toxic way of doing things. Like running a marathon, the only person you're racing is yourself. If you compare yourself to others, you'll end up putting out content that's not true to yourself to get more likes. I've even seen people buy likes to get their numbers up. That actually hurts their interactions in the long run. To each their own, but it doesn't work for me.

2A. I am strategic to mostly post content with those who have as many followers as I do or more.

2B. The only influence it will have is when I'm trying to help them. So if they are on a story or they're doing something where they're also trying to look for help, I will help them.

3A. For me, it doesn't much because I just kind of do my own thing, and I've got my own brand.

3B. I don't care what others are doing. I don't mimic anyone else's page.

Q37. How do journalist's branding efforts on their Facebook page benefit peer relationships?

1A. Having support from other anchors is important, but there are times when some anchors won't share something about you because you don't have as many followers.

1B. I think stories and pictures where you can tag each other and bring others into the conversation can be very beneficial. I think it helps me get to know my peers better too because I can see more of their lives than I normally would at work. For instance, I found out a coworker is a running fan through the journalist's posts, now we encourage each other to go for runs, and we both can tag each other on posts and get cross-promoted. Maybe I have viewers on my page that would that journalist's content if they were exposed to more of that person's posts... they get a chance to do that through this kind of linked interactions.

2A. When a reporter has a great story, I will promote their story on my page. I think they appreciate it that because I've got so many more followers than most of them.

2B. Well, the only time that any of my peers ever talk to me about social media is when the consultants come in.

3A. I can kind of help them that way and say hey you know what mix it. I can be a mentor.

3B. When people see I have tens of thousands of followers they want to smack me.

Q38. How important is brand development to a journalist's career?

1A. Very important because you're creating a niche for an audience. So they know like you go to your page for that.

1B. I think it's the new resume. I can show you a 5-minute reel of my best work, but you can't get to know me that way. You can't see my day-to-day work that way. Facebook and Twitter open up a whole new way for people to scout new talent and check up on those that are in their prospective stacks of employees.

2A. We're in a business that perception is everything. So if you're perceived to be caring, kind, smart, and funny, then that is what you are. So if I can create a page that that showcases me and all of those things, then that is my brand. That is my image in it, and it's everything.

2B. I think in this day and age and to me and my personal opinion that's an unfortunate thing because I believe that news is not supposed to be about us, it's supposed to be about the news and we're supposed just to be providing information that helps people make their own decisions. But today way the way news is, I think it is very critical for

journalists to have something that identifies them.

3A. It's everything. It definitely I think it's it is huge. I would have said something completely different five years ago but seeing how the change in our industry is seeing how you know, it's turning more to online you know and doing online news because not people are not sitting around the TV to watch the nightly news as much. It's yeah it's everything.

3B. If you're not making waves on social media and growing the page and engaging people, you won't have a career for long.

Q39. What motivates you to work on your brand?

1A. I want to apply for a job I know that employers are looking at that as well. So I take it I take it seriously as part of my job.

1B. Positive interactions and the ability to help others learn and grow.

2A. The chance of having another great job.

2B. I don't really try to have a brand per se other than just making sure that I am the one who's got the news in our community. So if something's breaking generally I'm embracing it.

3A. It's the engagement and then seeing how successful I've been in the last couple of years. And it's each year I think of the last couple years I'll get to January and go Wow. Last year was amazing.

3B. Money. And it's nice to make friends.

Q40. What do you hope these efforts lead to for you in the future?

1A. If I ever want another job and then if I ever want to become independent writing my own blogs or something like that.

1B. I hope it leads to just a slightly-better world for a few folks out there. For me? I get to feel more connected to people.

2A. I think it always leads to leverage. So whether I'm leveraging that within television or once the point comes that I decide to get out of television and I can leverage that name recognition and identity then that's why I work on my brand.

2B. Just continuing to establish that I'm the go-to for news in our community.

3A. Well, I just think that more success and different direction. The older I get I have found different avenues that I really enjoy which is writing for me and for me it's opening

doors and you know it's opportunities to work with some some big name people but also websites and get to do more and kind of just see where my career leads because you never know how long longevity is in our industry. And so it's opening doors to other possibilities.

3B. Career longevity and Money.

Q41. How do you see developing a professional brand as beneficial as a whole?

1A. Independence.

1B. I see it as beneficial because it leads to me having a clearer voice and more ways to help others.

2A. If you're not known you don't get paid. If you're not known, and people don't recognize you as somebody who they would trust and go to for news, what-what incentive does a station have to keep you or to pay you?

2B. I guess the same thing is continuing. What it is that I'm trying to do which is to keep the community informed.

3A. I think that with the changing industry I think that it's beneficial to the more that I can grow at my social media brand and open other doors then it's going to help me in the long run. It may take me in a different direction in a different career, or it may just help me you know become more valuable in my in my industry.

3B. Just like I said before longevity.

Q42. How do your efforts to professional brand on Facebook contribute to increased influence over users?

1A. I created that niche and credibility and I know that's very important to create your own brand. They can trust you as a person.

1B. If they are doing it right, which isn't the same for everyone, it leads to more interaction and more likes, if that's what your measure of influence is.

2A. I don't I don't think I'm trying to influence people that's not that's not really my that's not my goal. My goal is to highlight me and for people to feel connected to me.

2B. as long as I continue to tell them you know I am the sole place for our community's news then that will continue their influence. The more that becomes a habit for them and the world becomes a habit for them the more they will automatically come to me and they'll continue spreading it to others like oh you have a question. She's got the answer.



3A. The more that I posted and find my audience then I'm getting more and more reaction, and supporters are interacting quite a bit more.

3B. he bigger the following the more the influence one has.

Q43. What benefit do journalists most see as a result of their professional branding efforts on Facebook?

1A. Independence, credibility.

1B. Closer connections. People know me more as a person and not just someone telling them to wear a coat. My branding leads to more speaking opportunities and more doors opened when it comes to emceeding charity events.

2A. I think increase viewership and name recognition within the market. I think those are those are the two big ones.

2B. Being the person that people come to you first about things they're seeing.

3A. It's just been leading to different opportunities for me. It has gotten my name out there where I have now been asked to be a motivational speaker on several fronts which is something new to me. I'm now not getting asked to be a keynote speaker because of my position in the news, it's because of me as a person and me as a writer. It's also opened doors to other you know jobs and some freelance work as a writer.

3B. You get tips on great stories to pursue.

Q44. What do journalists (you) hope results from your branding efforts on Facebook?

1A. Independence.

1B. A true connection with viewers.

2A. Everybody wants to be thought of well you know. So I know that would be the main goals: to be thought of well and to be to be well-liked. You don't want to be expendable to a management team. That's part of the effort to make an impact within a community.

2B. With all the questions with the reliability of media today, I hope that it provides people the opportunity to see that there are still invested, trustworthy, old-school journalists that are out there that you can trust that will provide you with information that you need and that it hopefully helps influence less sharing of frivolousness and untrustworthy stuff.

3A. I would love to transition and be more of a parenting expert. My goal would be to someday scale back on the news front and be able to write part-time and do some TV

work more as a parent.

3B. We get to keep our jobs.

Q45. What are the most important steps that journalists can take to grow their professional brand Facebook?

1A. Take a social media course. If somebody in your career has tons of followers, mimic what they're doing to a certain level try to learn from that as well. Social media is evolving so you just have to stay on top of it daily as well.

1B. Be genuine. Post about personal things that you're comfortable with, as well as genuine interactions with people that make them feel like they know you better... because they actually do.

2A. Open up, be more than just a story, be more than a headline. Be more than a talking head. That's the most important thing that you can do. I find that the people who don't understand the importance of showing their personality are not successful on Facebook. Facebook exists to highlight who you are.

2B. Find something or maybe talk to your boss about having a beat that you can at minimum make your focus on social media. There's got to be a thing that they come to you for, and if you if, you care about being a legitimate journalist it needs to be something that is beneficial to them, not your hair or your dog or your dress.

3A. Pay attention to their audience listen to their audience figure out their audience. Find that niche. I think it's also watching their peers. I think that seeing what the trends are because what works in one market might not be the same or what works for someone like me that is branding not as news as it's going to work very differently than others.

3B. Be positive. Be nice. Be smart. Respond to your followers. Treat them with respect.

Q46. How can a number of users "liking" a journalist page help a journalist professional brand?

1A. If they like your page, it's most likely going to appear in their News Feed, and as a result, you may get more likes from their friends.

1B. If they are organic, more likes mean more reach means more shares, means more new opportunities to connect with people who didn't know you exist.

2A. When you have a large number of followers any potential employer or even your current employer thinks of you differently because they realize first of all your current employer thinks of the backlash and the voice the megaphone that you have if things go wrong, and your potential employer looks at it going wow this person is already really adept at using the medium and will be equally as adept and even more so when they

begin to work for me.

2B. When people are liking your page you're on their feed they see your stuff, and they're more likely to like the post and if they like the post Facebook sometimes tell your friends that you like to post or obviously it's another opportunity for them to tag a friend who goes to that conversation.

3A. I didn't think at first it did, but you know every time that someone likes your page likes the page it's going to pop up in their News Feed that they liked it. So the more people that like, the wider audience you're going to get what steps can journalists take to influence users to help grow their professional brand.

3B. Those same people can be told "watch this cool story I have on tonight," and you drive audience.

Q47. What steps can journalists take to influence users to help grow their professional brand?

1A. You can tell people to please Like and Share.

1B. Same as I said before.

2A. You can pay for promotion, but the cheaper way is to post content that people actually engage with, and that's the personality driven content

2B. Let them know they are your eyes and ears. They are not just the viewer receiving information. They are a person in the community seeing and hearing things in helping you let other people know about it so making them part of the process.

3A. Don't ask people to like and share. Instead, ask them to spread the word or use other terms. Facebook is cracking down on that stuff.

3B. Share stuff they want to share without them being encouraged to share it. It must be organic. Not forced.

Q48. How can Facebook pages help a journalist grow their brand?

1A. I think that's the only thing you take away when you leave a job or when you want to switch a job. You own it. It's the followers no matter where you go that will support you. They'll still connect with you with your personal hobbies and stuff like that. And we're talking about your personal life. So I think that's the only thing you take away really with you nowadays.

1B. If they use it as a way to communicate and share themselves, it becomes a totally new and comprehensive way to connect with people outside their show.

2A. If you already have a lot of people who are following you and you put out good content, then that will be part of how people perceive you. You know putting worthwhile stories, not fluff, but things that they need to know is important investigations that were done within the station. That's very important because after all, we are journalists right. So, it does come back to the content. So, they'll think of you as more of a professional at that point. It's all about the perception what you what people perceive you.

2B. It's an outlet that you've never had before. It is a way for you to literally be face to face on any topic one any day at any hour. With people in the community. It's definitely a valuable outlet, even though it has its negatives, it's a very valuable outlet.

3A. I think that it can it can really help you grow and be more successful in anything whatever avenue whether it's news or some other direction you're trying to go.

3B. By growing and driving audience engagement.

Q49. How can journalists benefit from relevant content sharing through their Facebook page?

1A. Even major networks post fun, content that gets people talking. So copy what they do. Engage people. They get that viral video from you, posted it on their page and somehow some way a few followers come your way.

1B. The more relevant the content, the more people will find it useful, the more they will interact, the more we interact with them... it should be a positive feedback loop.

2A. The more people you have on your page, the more people see the type of content that you're pushing out. A local journalist is not getting followers because of the news content they post. Local journalists get followers based on their personality. Once you have all of the followers, then you can post good content that that then kind of reinforces the brand.

2B. You make yourself relevant literally. When I say as in you are not a personality you are known as traditional journalists where people can get reliable, necessary information. So sharing that kind of content establishes your personality. Establish just who you are. If you want to be willy-nilly and silly that's what you share. That's what you will to be known for. If you want to be serious, that's what you share, and that's what you'll be known for.

3A. That's a big thing. I will see the big stories. I know people it's also knowing your audience so I know people are not going to my page to get the breaking news. But I pay attention to the big stories and if there's something you know with a winter storm, I may share a video from one of the national outlets or something we had that was really

powerful and sharing that that's very relevant. That's going to get you know a lot more traction, and people are going to share your content.

3B. Like I just said, growing your audience and getting them to engage.

Q50. How can increase influence earn through social media help build a journalist professional brand?

1A. If you share something you can ask did you see this story, it's something for you, and then they share or like it. You know like you influence these people and these people really trust you. It will motivate me to post more.

1B. The more we engage each other, the more trust is built. That's a huge plus during times when people think we're part of the problem.

2A. It all it all comes back to name recognition and not being seen as expendable.

2B. Well just like just like when somebody likes a good restaurant they're going to tell people about it if they like what they're getting from you.

3A. the more, the more influence I have on others I'm going to get other people to start following me.

3B. Facebook followers become viewers. That means bigger ratings and job security.