

The logo consists of a solid black circle centered on a white background. Inside the circle, the text "VoyageLA" is written in a serif font. "Voyage" is in white, and "LA" is in a bright pink color.

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SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

# Meet Tiffany Walker of Brainstorm Content Solutions in West Los Angeles



Today we'd like to introduce you to Tiffany Walker.

**Tiffany, can you briefly walk us through your story – how you started and how you got to where you are today.**

I joke that I'm a white trash girl from Florida because it's true 😊 I

was born in Clearwater, Florida (home of Hooters and Scientology), but mainly grew up in Orlando. I actually never fit in in Florida and did everything I could to get out, choosing Emerson College in Boston, Massachusetts as my escape route. From my schooling at Emerson, I was able to live in Europe for a bit, Los Angeles, New York and then back to Los Angeles.

Although I've been an actor my whole life, I've always seemed to fall into many different types of jobs. So, in between acting, I would find myself in the world of Jr. literary agenting, then onto bookkeeping, singing/songwriting and music publishing, producing a play, writing articles, massage therapy, freelance editing, ghostwriting and production work, and then back to booking an acting part (with of course a little bartending happening on the sidelines). I will say that throughout my life, I've always wondered what my true purpose is and what is it to be fulfilled within the career you have. I never assumed I'd act forever and ever, but I will say that I never quite had the stars align as I had hoped, and I chose not to go the #metoo route-though four opportunities arose (pun intended; #TwoSides of a shiny coin #choices).

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I never questioned my desire to work in all these different types of jobs, because I've always had so many different special interests since childhood, and an overall intense desire to learn, constantly curious. So, as I hit a wall in regards to my sporadic acting career, I found that my freelance journalism and ghostwriting were viable directions. And it was when I was content editing the a self-help book that I realized editing was equally as invigorating and fulfilling as acting.

From that point, I decided to fully diversify my world and get my Master's in Multimedia Publishing at City, University of London. That move really marked my shift into honing hidden skills and pivoting into a fully realized freelance career. I do know there's a misconception with "publishing" in that people think it equates to strictly book production. Yes, books are inherently connected to publishing, but technically, publishing means "bring to the public". That means you "bring to the public" a brand, a concept, a person, a product, music, literature, or anything, really. Every day you walk out the door it is an act of publishing.

In fact, you learn more about social media "publishing" than classic book publishing, though discussed in detail. The hidden skills I honed were everything from business models and marketing/PR strategy to social media techniques and UX/UI design of websites and apps. And for me, a major take away from this course was learning that I really do enjoy website and app design. So much so that I created an animated storybook app prototype, Your Own Hero!, for autistic children to become the hero of their own story, learning coping mechanisms and social skills along the way, which I'm in the midst of getting funding for.

I actually feel like a degree in publishing should be the new communications degree because you can apply all that you learn to any career you go into. It is funny, but when I look at my entertainment background, I realize how essential publishing skillsets are, and vice versa. My visual and story skillsets from my entertainment background are extremely effective for not just classic book publishing, but also all the variant social media offshoots that are basically a necessity for any business or product's success.



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After getting my master's, I initially thought I was going to stay in London to ghostwrite this educational book, but that fell through. And when I got back to the States, I thought I would come upon a job that would encompass all that I can do; however, that didn't happen either. So, I figured the only way for me to be able to be all that I am is to start my own business.

I created Brainstorm Content Solutions to basically be the mothership of all my career identities. Although I still take acting and voice over gigs here and there, I am able to utilize all of my integrated skillsets through one site. Though freelancing in these times isn't exactly happening, I know that I am set up and ready to go when things start shuffling back into place.



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**Overall, has it been relatively smooth? If not, what were some of the struggles along the way?**

I most definitely haven't had a smooth road to victory.

I think the biggest challenge I've faced is in trying to overcome the mental dragons of not feeling good enough or smart enough. Some of those feelings were hardwired through my difficult childhood (neglect and being bullied), and some were from dealing with learning issues. Therapy has of course helped ease a lot of these self-sabotaging thoughts, but I've also found some relief through recently learning I've had ADD all my life. It was a *huge* ah-ha moment finding this out since it explained all the issues I had in school growing up and alleviated a good portion of the demons.

Another challenge that I've faced is finding a corporate job when I've had such a diverse background and skillset. I guess that fact was the impetus to just start my own company, but it is something that should be reevaluated in society on a whole. That and ageism. I recently learned that I'm what they call a polymath or multi-hyphenate. This is a person who has an acuity in many interests and creative pursuits.



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All my life, I've fallen into different types of jobs, which I was very good at and liked doing, but thought I'd move on and explore, trying different types of jobs. One of my philosophies is that the more skills you have the more valuable you are. The problem with being one of these types of people is that it is difficult to get a corporate job because your resume' will look scattered because you're not a one-trick pony.

I had no idea I would be basically shamed for having versatile skillsets. Quite simply, it is difficult to get a corporate job because those hiring don't see you as being the ONE thing they described in the job posting (you are actually more than they asked for). They sometimes will think you lack skill or commitment ... which is exactly the opposite. I've had recruiters say I need to just scrap half my resume' (i.e., half my life) to look appealing to a company. Who wants to dumb themselves down ever?

On one level, I get it: a company wants someone skilled and dedicated to the job title they've listed. But when I read a job posting, I see exactly the skills they're asking (which I have) and I see how all my skillsets would be even more effective for the job that needs to get done. Someone with a dynamic background is able to think outside the box, foresee and troubleshoot situations that would otherwise be missed, and leave a company hanging.

But society doesn't really value experience, they value a person that has only done one thing all their life. It is *that* factor that needs to be reevaluated in this myopic, corporate system. If you investigate that further, that is why so many people will be out of work when technology (or a pandemic) shifts-they will only have one skillset. Becoming a specialist is important, but so are many other contributing skills.

Coinciding with the above commentary, is the ageism factor...the minute you are 29. As a woman, I see some form of ageism every day because it inherently connected to sexism, and is unavoidable for women 20 years before men even get a hint of it. How a person is only viable in the heart of their 20s is absolutely ridiculous.



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I get it that someone in their 20s is malleable to a company's rigor because they don't know any better, and will just take verbal brow beating and pushed boundaries of a life-work balance. But I also know for a fact from first-hand experience that those in their 20s don't have problem-solving skills that are needed for most jobs.

I actually faced a huge ageistic challenge even when deciding to go back to school for my master's. Even though I had been accepted to the university on my merit and had what I thought was a great conversation with the overseeing professor, I got a letter from said professor telling me that due to my age, I'd never get a job in the field I'm getting my master's in and that I wasn't a good fit with the young applicants. Yup. The letter was real. I've paraphrased it, but what he said was real (let's not even touch on the fact he wouldn't have said it the way it was said if I were a man). I said f\*\* them, I'm going anyway.

The fact that you have to roll over and dig a grave because you're not in your 20s is just insane. People continuously change and grow, reinvent themselves. Pivoting your life and business seems to be the name of the game now.

### **Brainstorm Content Solutions - what should we know? What do you do best? What sets you apart from the competition?**

My company handles all things content and creation. Whether someone needs an article or blog written, research, editing on a book, consultancy on website and marketing goals, or story development and punch-ups for books or scripts, I'm able to fill in the gaps and assist on whatever someone feels they need support in.

What I specialize in is creative consultancy, content development and audience engagement, which means I help in overseeing a concept from its current state and help bring it to an even higher level of connection. I've helped people that have a website they've designed, but the UX/UI elements and content are hindering their overall concept.

So, I give guidance on UX/UI options that would better serve their message and revamp, re-write the content into more succinct copy. I also have people come to me with a concept or story they want to get off the ground, and I assist in the research and brainstorming of all the competition and possible directions it could go.

I then commence the execution of the decided goal, which could be ghostwriting the book, or outlining the episodes, or whatever the creative concept requires, in the medium(s) that is considered most desired and effective to achieve the steps that lead to what is envisioned and the ultimate goal of consumer connection (and sales).



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Because of my eclectic background in entertainment, acting and production, I bring a very unique, integrated skillset to the table. I am able to observe and connect with people on a more in-depth level to where I'm known for interviewing, streamlining difficult material into mainstream material, and ghostwriting.

I also love a great tag line and have a penchant for creating clever marketing spins and tags. In terms of subject matter, I do both fiction and non-fiction, and because of my previous journalist work, I am versed in most genres, though health/wellness, self-help/motivation, business/finance, music/fashion/beauty seem to be my forte.

### **What is “success” or “successful” for you?**

Defining success vacillates for me since I constantly strive to attain new levels of knowledge and skill, and I'm often in a discovery mode. This often means I don't always have tangible proof of “success.”

To be extremely honest, I battle with that word often. Some days I feel like there is one simplistic definition for success: Did you get through a day better than you did the day before? Then other days, I find myself defining my success more harshly as if it were art, similar to the old adage: “It’s not art until someone calls it art.” (I.e.: It’s not success unless the public acknowledges the achievement *as* an achievement.) I then have a hybrid definition that everyone knows: “When you know better, do better.”

The pandemic has made my mind wander on what a lot of things really mean in the big scheme of life, so for right now, success means being positive, with a “chin up” mindset, constantly striving to make the day you want it to be for yourself.



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