



Case Study: **Saving Lincoln**

Twitter storytelling to build an audience

With thousands of films released yearly, it's a challenge for filmmakers to break through all the noise. Traditionally, films with larger marketing budgets have more success in reaching their audience. With the onset of social media, the rules are changing.

Smaller marketing and advertising agencies are increasingly incorporating social media as a bigger part of their marketing and promotional campaigns. Using Hootsuite to manage their social media outreach, they are able to connect directly with their fanbase and strengthen their social media presence.

Recently, a team of writers launched a Twitter storytelling campaign aimed at building an audience for the release of the independent film "[Saving Lincoln](#)", directed by [Salvador Litvak](#). With a limited budget, they recognized the importance of having an avant-garde social media strategy that was cost effective and easy to implement. With these guidelines in mind the team launched a Twitter storytelling campaign to drive awareness about the film before the film was set to be released. Using the [@SavingLincoln](#) Twitter handle, they sought out to deliver context and understanding around the history of Abraham Lincoln and his bodyguard Ward Hill Lamon while still engaging with fans and building an audience. They used Hootsuite as their social media management tool.

The Challenge

The team wanted to effectively manage the online presence of the film in a creative but affordable way. By creating a storytelling campaign through Twitter, they set out to reach the following goals.

Social Storytelling Goals

- Build brand awareness and “buzz” for an unreleased movie
- Create a network of fans for the film
- Sustain campaign over a year or more
- Build awareness of Ward Hill Lamon - Lincoln’s bodyguard- and his place in history
- Implement strategy within \$1000 monthly budget

The [@SavingLincoln](#) team focused on telling the history around Abraham Lincoln through the voice of [Ward Hill Lamon](#), an “oft-neglected historical figure who was Lincoln’s friend and legal partner in Illinois and played a major role in keeping the President alive during the Civil War as his personal bodyguard.”¹

By using Lamon’s voice, based on his own writings from the Civil War era, and with keeping in the true spirit of the film, the writers were able to add another dimension to the story.

Instead of using a traditional website to market the film, Twitter was used as a medium for telling Ward Hill Lamon’s stories. Each story was structured in the way serial comic strips are: a story beat per day, told in several tweets, as opposed to a few art panels. Each day’s series of tweets furthers the story while leaving readers eager to find out what happens next. Fridays became the cliffhanger day that set the stage for the tale to resume on Monday.

AUGUST 5TH, 2011 - INTRODUCTION/MR. LINCOLN’S YOUTH

Good day. My friend Abraham Lincoln once said: “To ease another’s heartache is to forget one’s own.” He & I were well-acquainted with that.

Over the fortnights to come, I shall regale you with stories of Lincoln and me, from our carefree younger days to the heartache of old age.

I have come to understand your “Lincoln logs” and other expressions of my good friend’s humble beginnings. To me, the Lincolns’ log cabin...

...was the embodiment of their steely resolve. His father, Thomas, witnessed his grandfather’s death at the hands of Indians.

That early tragedy helped shape Thomas, who named his son Abraham after that fallen Lincoln. Thomas’ brother, Mordecai, killed the attacker.

I’ve read the musing “The Internet is forever.” So it is. I’m glad, though, that it keeps my good friend’s memory alive. More on the morrow.

Thomas Lincoln was much unlike his famous son: short and stout in comparison, and “idle, thriftless, poor, a hunter, and a rover,” I wrote.

But Thomas and Abraham Lincoln did not differ entirely: Thomas had a habitually peaceable disposition, and he had a propensity for stories.

In fact, Thomas Lincoln’s most valuable possession was his inexhaustible fund of anecdotes, much like Abraham carried with him. Thomas and Abraham shared a love for storytelling. It atoned for many of the former’s sins, and it endeared people even more to the latter.

Shiftless though he was, Thomas Lincoln managed to successfully court Nancy Hanks. He was five years her senior & had worked for her uncle.

Thomas Lincoln had previously failed in his courtship of Sally Bush. I surmise it was his defect of character that left her unimpressed.

The Team

Reuben Lim is an independent film producer, Sundance Producing Fellow and owner of production company, Lane Street Pictures.

Blaine Graboyes is an award-winning executive producer and game designer with nearly 20 years of digital and multiplatform entertainment development.

Brad Cook has published several short comic book stories in various small press anthologies. He modeled the @SavingLincoln storytelling on the comic strips he grew up reading.

Nina Davidovich is a screenwriter who co-wrote “When Do We Eat?” and Saving Lincoln with her writing and life partner Salvador Litvak.

Bio	Timeline	Mentions	Favorites
Abraham Lincoln's friend & bodyguard. I kept him alive while my Southern brethren tried to kill him. Follow my stories. Explore the movie at savinglincoln.com.			
7,490 Followers	163 Following	2,908 Updates	55 Klout
Location	Washington DC		
Bio	Abraham Lincoln's friend & bodyguard. I kept him alive while my Southern brethren tried to kill him. Follow my stories. Explore the movie at savinglincoln.com.		
Twitter	http://twitter.com/SavingLincoln		
Website	http://www.savinglincoln.com		

The [@SavingLincoln](#) Twitter Profile

Achieving Success

In order to accomplish all of the objectives of the [@SavingLincoln](#) storytelling campaign, they relied on the following tools in the Hootsuite Dashboard.

The team needed each tweet published in a specific order, as it was critical they were published the same way, at specific intervals. They used the reliability of the **Scheduling** functionality to send out each tweet in the correct order.

They needed a streamlined process for review, edits and contributions to their weekly Twitter stories. Using **Hootsuite Teams** helped as the Teams functionality allows multiple parties to have access and collaborate on the same content.

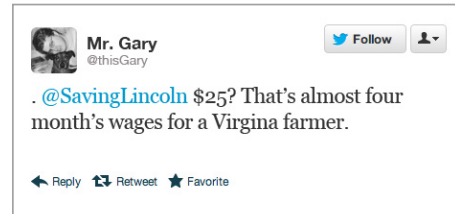
“We use Hootsuite because it’s an easy, reliable way to schedule upcoming Saving Lincoln story tweets. Each tweet was written in a specific order, so it was critical they were published the same way, at specific intervals. Hootsuite is the most reliable service we’ve found for accomplishing that.”

*Brad Cook,
Twitter Storyteller*

Results

[@SavingLincoln](#) was successful in reaching their campaign objectives. With the help of Hootsuite, they were able to execute and manage their social media strategy effectively as well as reach their goal of creating a loyal fan base for the film. These new Twitter fans in turn helped drive a significant increase in awareness for the film.

For more information on how you can get your business up and running on HootSuite Pro, please visit hootsuite.com/pro



A tweet from a fan responding to a comment that the @SavingLincoln handle published. Increasingly, @SavingLincoln's followers enjoyed retweeting or replying to @SavingLincoln stories as time went on.

1. "Future of Film: Resurrecting Abe Lincoln's Bodyguard (Via Twitter)" By Brad Cook, *Huffington Post*.