



As a content creator and freelance social media manager who is trying to grow my client base, I've noticed two things about entrepreneurship: there's a lot about starting a business that you don't learn in school and in order to find freelance work, you have to know how to network. In order to learn more about how to run a business and how to network, I started a podcast where I interviewed successful entrepreneurs about their journey and advice for college students. This podcast provides insight for young professionals on the new and upcoming career path of the 21st century freelancer/business owner. My professional writing and rhetoric classes and experiences prepared me to undertake the many moving parts of this project, such as conducting research on GenZ entrepreneurs, navigating podcast technologies I'd never worked with before, coordinating interviews with entrepreneurs and asking effective questions, and editing the final podcast episodes.

For each episode, I researched a successful entrepreneur I could reach out to. Three of them were past Elon alum and one was an entrepreneur and professor who had connected with me through my personal brand, Angela Anne, on Instagram. All four of the entrepreneurs had different areas of expertise, so I tailored my interview questions to each entrepreneur as well as used information from interviews I conducted with six GenZ entrepreneurs about their current professional struggles to inform podcast interview questions.

One key finding from the podcast episodes was that everyone's entrepreneurial journey is different. No two interviewees had similar stories, but there were three underlying details of all four podcasts: a passion for what they were doing, good networking, and audience analysis skills. Through the process of creating the podcast, I also discovered how transferable my video editing skills were, which draws back to a key principle from PWR classes that with a good rhetorical basis and ideas on how to approach new technologies, you can undergo new projects with more ease.

For my own professional development, this project utilized my skills as a content creator as well as expanded those skills into audio content which, with the rise of podcasts and Clubhouse, is a strategic ability to learn. Further, as part of the professional writing and rhetoric major, many of my courses discussed the power of multimodal rhetoric. Audio is a form of rhetoric I have little experience with so exploring this adds depth to my formal education while also pulling from skills I learned in classes such as PWR217. This project built upon interests and skills developed during my time in the program, as well as expanded on those skills.

This podcast could be a significant professional development tool for Elon PWR students and others looking to get into freelance work or entrepreneurship. The podcast is for people from GenZ and perhaps young millennials who want to work for themselves but aren't sure of the path to becoming sustainably self employed. According to an article from Forbes, 54% of GenZ aspire to own their own company. The insight from these interviews might help other PWR majors at Elon in their own career journey as well as others curious about freelancing or entrepreneurship. While all listeners and PWR majors might not want to freelance, advice from successful entrepreneurs can be of benefit to any young professional.

## Statement of PWR

Rhetoric can be broadly defined as intentional communication with others. It can persuade, inform, or entertain and is not constrained to only written words, speeches, or any other medium. While rhetoric can be found within more formal genres, such as written articles or formal oral presentations, it also exists in every aspect of communicating, even the most informal parts such as text messages or body language. Anytime someone tries to communicate a message, that is rhetoric. When we understand that rhetoric plays a role in all aspects of society, we're open to examine all forms and utilize rhetorical strategies to get our point across better, whether through a tweet or research thesis.

Three of the most impactful rhetorical strategies for me are kairos, invitational rhetoric, and ethos, pathos, and logos. When I first learned about kairos, I didn't think much of the concept but now, with COVID and my work as a content creator, kairos is an important variable in effective rhetoric. Kairos can make or break if a social media campaign does well or not as styles, preferences, and internet references change faster now than ever before.

In contrast, I've always been drawn to invitational rhetoric. The idea that rhetoric shouldn't try to persuade but find common ground and invite people into the conversation adheres to my values. One place I've found this applicable is in my Lumen project. Because my topic is sexual violence prevention and so much prevention programming uses negative language and tells the audience what not to do, I tested empowering messaging and equipping users with the tools to prevent sexual violence. In the usability studies, users reacted well to this style of messaging because it invited the reader into the conversation.

I grouped together ethos, pathos, and logos because a rhetor needs to balance them. Ethos, pathos, and logos play off each other and they're equally important and should be taken into account when communicating. For example, at a past internship where I helped a refugee resettlement group with their social media, I had to take into consideration the pathos, or emotions, when presenting on immigration news. However, I also had to deliver the facts in a logical way to appeal to the reader's desire for logos and use reputable sources to back any claims to maintain the ethos of the organization. Only when all three concerns were possible would a post get the ok from the watchdog audience as well as build the credibility of the brand's Facebook and Instagram.

Through my coursework, I've learned how to utilize rhetorical analysis and strategies from the initial brainstorming to the final revisions. This has helped with my freelance social media clients because it allows me to be cognizant of their brand's content pillars, their audience, and their ethos through the entire content creation process. As I've spent over 2 years diving into research about how to communicate about sexual violence prevention, I've learned how to integrate my communication and research skills to provide better communication recommendations; I've also learned how to implement those recommendations into a community, such as how I used my graphic design and copywriting skills in tandem with my Lumen research to create the Elon Empowers campaign. This balance of the creative and analytical will be an asset in my professional life, in social justice advocacy projects such as the Elon Empowers campaign, and in my own personal projects, such as my personal online brand. Overall, my background in professional writing and rhetoric has gifted me the ability to utilize analytical skills, creativity, and adaptability in any professional role or personal project.