

**BUSINESS PLAN**  
**SpeakYourStory, LLC**



*Speak Your Story*

**Katie Morris & Teal Cracraft, Founders**

**December 4, 2015**

***If you want to learn about a culture, listen to the stories. If you want to change the culture, change the stories.***

~ Michael Margolis ~

## **THE PROBLEM**

All women carry stories in secret because we are ashamed. Society has taught us to keep silent about our most transformative, personal experiences lest we be stigmatized and judged. This silence has led to women being marginalized, sidelined and dehumanized. Few women speak openly about their experiences such as assault, addiction, depression or abortion, which leads us to feel isolated, unworthy & unlovable. However, these profound life events that shape us should not isolate us through fear and shame; rather they should unite us in unbreakable ways.

## **THE SOLUTION**

SpeakYourStory, LLC is a community-driven platform defiantly standing up to the silence. We are showing that, yes, sharing your story with one person can be therapeutic, but sharing it with 44,000 (and counting) is empowering. By publicly sharing our stories, we make the statement that we will not be marginalized, dehumanized and ignored. SpeakYourStory is actively building a community that embraces the stories of women with love and compassion. We are showing women that, when we stand unapologetically in our truths, we are simply unstoppable. There is nothing more empowering and impactful to society than women who reject silence and stigmatization and become their own best advocates.

## **BUSINESS PROFILE**

SpeakYourStory is a multi-media platform within the self-empowerment industry. The engine powering our growth is our website where we publish unique, user generated content on a weekly basis. Women from all over the country are using our platform to share their most transformative experiences and each time a new contributor shares her story, our audience grows to encompass that woman's personal network. Through crowdfunding, we've raised over \$10,000 to publish our first book in an anthology series, produce our first six episode podcast and create an online cooperative where our contributors can sell their goods and services. In just nine months, we've attracted 44,000 visitors to our site, and the next phase of our business development will capitalize on this traffic. We will provide advertising and sponsorship opportunities on our products and services by utilizing our website traffic analytics to entice established brands that are aligned with women's empowerment to use our platform to grow their visibility and increase sales.

# **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Speak Your Story  
8239 Forest Lane  
Indianapolis, IN 46220  
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## **1.1. About the Business**

SpeakYourStory (SYS), LLC is a robust online, ad-free, story-sharing platform that publishes content exclusively produced by women. In recent years, there has been a paradigm shift to push, support and motivate female leadership and empowerment through print and online publications. Additional avenues have included exclusive online community memberships, empowerment conferences and motivating podcasts. SYS will grow into a multi-media company and national brand that is synonymous with being an advocate and outlet for motivating and empowering women.

## **1.2 Products and Services**

Our website consistently attracts more than 1,000 visitors per week, and with each new story-teller, we gain access to an even larger audience. We will drive the traffic from our site to the SYS online marketplace, where we will grow our brand with (1) online and print publications; (2) on-demand streaming podcasts; (3) live workshops and conferences; (4) story-telling webinars; and (5) an online creative cooperative where our contributors sell their goods and services. The website traffic and success of our marketplace will allow us to provide established corporations which support women's empowerment with advertising and sponsorship opportunities with our podcasts, anthologies, workshops and conferences. Our business is designed to capitalize on teaching and empowering women to speak up, speak out and boldly step into the spaces they occupy in society.

SYS is well-situated to contribute to an existing gap in the self-improvement industry. Market research shows that 70% of consumers purchasing self-improvement products are women and that this industry generates approximately ten (10) billion dollars in annual sales. SYS is distinguished from competitors in the marketplace because we appeal to a wider demographic of consumers. Our multi-media platform exists for ALL women on a personal path to self-discovery who want to become their own best advocates by claiming their stories and reshaping their personal narratives. In turn, SYS will position itself to become the voice and advocate for women's empowerment to those who want to reach this specific type of audience.

## **1.3 Principal Members**

Katie Morris, Co-Founder, Website Developer, Editor, Operations  
Teal Cracraft, Co-Founder, Editor, Sales Management, Outreach Coordinator

## **II. Vision and Mission**

### **2.1 Vision of the Founders**

We are working toward a future where all women feel empowered by the personal experiences history and culture have taught us to hide in shame and fear. This breeds loneliness and isolation that negatively affects self-esteem and prevents women from speaking up at home and in the workplace for better treatment and better pay. SYS is changing this paradigm by helping women embrace their whole self and re-imagine their perceived flaws and shameful secrets as powerful tools that actually build community and character. There is simply nothing more empowering than speaking up for yourself, and SYS was founded on the belief that when you tell your story, you discover strength and encourage others to find their voice as well. Our products and services help women become their own best advocates by crafting a personal narrative that best serves them personally and professionally.

SYS's platform and products are critically needed in the self-empowerment industry because they promote a sustainable process and attainable outcome open to every woman without exception. We give women the resources and tools they need to change their lives by owning their personal stories. Testimonials from our website contributors and our steadily increasing traffic proves the effectiveness of our platform and the demand for our product.

### **2.1 Mission Statement**

The mission of SYS is to change the face of our most stigmatizing experiences through storytelling and provide every woman with the tools she needs to become her own best advocate both personally and professionally.

### **2.2 Competitive Advantage**

Our most distinct advantage is that we're a multi-media platform that appeals to the widest demographic of women. We understand the changing technological landscape and need to broadcast our message over multiple channels including our website, podcast, printed/audio versions of our book, online courses, in person workshops and speaking engagements.

## **III. Business and Industry Profile**

### **3.1 Industry Analysis**

SpeakYourStory, LLC is positioning itself to be an online media outlet and part of the growing self-help and empowerment industry geared towards women. This ten (10) billion dollar industry has experienced a steady growth of 6.1% each year. It was one of the few industries that prospered during the recession. The fastest growing segment of this industry is internet based educational and training programs and audio books, and according to IBIS report for NAICS code 61143 Business Coaching in the US, "online

training will revive industry growth.”<sup>1</sup> Additionally, because the goal is to venture into other services, it has been found that there is sufficient market share of the SYS services in the Internet Publishing (NAICS #51913B), and Magazine and Periodical Publishing (NAICS #51112) industries.

### 3.2 Growth Trends and Rates

<b>NAICS Industry</b>	611430 <sup>2</sup> Business Coaching/Online Training	511120 <sup>3</sup> Magazine/Periodical Publishing	51913B <sup>4</sup> Internet Publishing and Broadcasting
<b>Overall Industry Growth Rate and Period</b>	3.9% (13-18)	-0.6% (14-19) -1.8% (09-14) previous	7.1% (14-19)
<b>Industry Activity</b>	Online Training	Online and Print Periodical Publishing and Distribution	Podcast, E-Book and Internet Forum Publishing
<b>Life Cycle Stage</b>	Growth	Decline	Growth
<b>Trend</b>	Online training for professional development has experienced a greater demand due to scheduling flexibility	Renewed spending on digital advertising will mitigate revenue declines as advertisers invest in digital platform outlets.	Revenue is set to accelerate as business switch brand building campaigns from traditional media to the internet.
<b>Size of Product Market</b>	60% Online Training	6.1% Other Periodicals	61.3% Advertising Space 35.2% Subscriptions and Sales 1.2% User Information Sales

<sup>1</sup> Lemon, S.(2013). IBIS World Industry Report #61143

<sup>2</sup> Lemon, S.(2013). IBIS World Industry Report # 61143

<sup>3</sup> Ulama, D.(2014). IBIS World Industry Report # 51112

<sup>4</sup> Kahn, S. (2014).IBIS World Industry Report # 51913b

### 3.3 Key Success Factors

<b>611430<sup>5</sup> Business Coaching/Online Training</b>	<b>511120<sup>6</sup> Magazine/Periodical Publishing</b>	<b>51913B<sup>7</sup> Internet Publishing and Broadcasting</b>
Having a good reputation	Control of distribution arrangements	Developing a clear niche
Access to highly skilled workforce	Access to niche markets	The ability to attract advertisers
Access to updated and enhanced technology	Established brand	Protection of IP and copyright of output.

### 3.4 Company Goals and Objectives:

#### Marketing Objectives

- Increase awareness of the SpeakYourStory mission, products and services
- Increase SpeakYourStory market share in the self-empowerment, publishing and podcast industries
- Continually develop new markets for the SpeakYourStory brand - e.g., e-magazines, video talk show, documentary film making
- Brand SpeakYourStory as a company and brand which advocates for women

#### Financial Objectives

- Generate revenue and grow revenue each year
- Support both Co-Founder salaries by Year 2
- Financially sustain the ad-free web platform
- Develop a robust Creative Co-op / Marketplace for our story-tellers to connect with consumers

#### Societal Objectives

- Contribute to the empowerment and uplifting of women
- Reduce the stigma and shame connected to so many of women's most transformative experiences - e.g., reproductive choices, mental health, family relationships, body image
- Financial empowerment of women - connecting our contributors with our large network of consumers who will purchase their goods and services

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<sup>5</sup> Lemon, S.(2013). IBIS World Industry Report # 61143

<sup>6</sup> Ulama, D.(2014). IBIS World Industry Report # 51112

<sup>7</sup> Kahn, S. (2014).IBIS World Industry Report # 51913b

Operational Budget

	<b><i>YEAR 1</i></b>	<b><i>YEAR 2</i></b>	<b><i>YEAR 3</i></b>
<b><i>Accounting and legal fees</i></b>	\$500	\$1000	\$2000
<b><i>Advertising and promotional costs</i></b>	\$1000	\$1500	\$2000
<b><i>Salaries</i></b>	\$0	\$60000	\$100000
<b><i>Insurance</i></b>	\$135	\$135	\$135
<b><i>Stationery / Printing</i></b>	\$500	\$750	\$1000
<b><i>Rent</i></b>	\$0	\$300	\$300
<b><i>Telephone</i></b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b><i>Training Materials</i></b>	\$500	\$1000	\$2000
<b><i>Travel</i></b>	\$2000	\$3000	\$5000
<b><i>Vehicle</i></b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b><i>Miscellaneous</i></b>	\$500	\$750	\$1000
<b><i>TOTALS:</i></b>	<b><i>\$5,135</i></b>	<b><i>\$68,435</i></b>	<b><i>\$133,435</i></b>

## IV. Business Strategy

### 4.1 SWOT Analysis

<b>Strengths:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I. Specialized Workforce, founder's expertise.</li><li>II. Close proximately to a large geographic markets via online communities.</li><li>III. Women focused enterprise.</li></ul>	<b>Weaknesses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I. Still in start-up phase.</li><li>II. Small Workforce.</li><li>III. Currently building national brand awareness.</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I. Increased demand for technology based exclusive training and communities.</li><li>II. Growing social awareness regarding the disparities of women.</li><li>III. New market exposure via online platform.</li></ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I. Ensuring the ability to maintain the privacy of the website contributor's.</li><li>II. Internet security.</li><li>III. Copyrights of personal work.</li></ul>

## V. Company Products and Services

### 5.1 Description of Products and Services

Current products are as follows:

- Website
- Online Store with SYS merchandise (T-Shirts only)
- SpeakYourStory Annual Subscriptions
- Speaking Engagements
- Local Story-telling workshops

Future Products:

- Additional SYS merchandise (mugs, tote bags, sweatshirts,etc.)
- SpeakYourStory Anthologies - 2 per year
- SpeakYourStory Weekly Podcast
- Creative Co-op / Marketplace for website contributors to sell their goods and services directly to the SYS community
- Storytelling workbook that provides inspiration for different types of creatively expressing personal stories
- Online private and group storytelling workshops
- National SpeakYourStory Conference
- SpeakYourStory Documentaries
- SpeakYourStory National Chapter Affiliates



- SpeakYourStory International Chapter Affiliates

## **5.2 Legal Structure**

SpeakYourStory, LLC is organized as a limited liability corporation.

## **5.3 Intellectual Property Rights**

SpeakYourStory, LLC is registered and trademarked in the State of Indiana. Our website domain and social media accounts are secured. Content for our Anthologies and Podcasts is copyright protected.

## **5.4 Regulation**

Trademark and copyright laws apply to our published work.

# **VI. Marketing Strategy**

## **6.1 Target Customer and Profile**

- Women ages 25 to 65 seeking empowerment and equality. They are liberal thinkers who understand that despite tremendous progress in the ways society treats and views women, there is much work to be done in order to gain true equality.
- Women and men with disposable income who are interested in purchasing from small businesses will support our SYS marketplace and creative cooperative.
- Women consumers with disposable income who purchase products and services within the empowerment and self-improvement industry
- Corporations, Mission-Based Organizations, Government Agencies who are interested in investing in women based issues.
- Corporations who have digital advertising expenditures geared toward specific general audiences such as SYS's.
- Organizations with missions that address women issues

## **6.2 Other Customer Characteristics**

Specifically, our ideal target customers are women seeking empowerment. These women are not in crisis situations, but unfulfilled in some aspect of their lives – work, love, family, or any other roles they are expected to fill. Our target customers read self-help books, books about relationships, finding your purpose, and everything by Brene Brown. They watch Oprah and Amy Schumer. They listen to TED talks. They read memoirs and see movies like 'Wild.' Our target customers are women who are searching, women on a journey of self-discovery, self-love and empowerment.

Statistically, women make 70% of the purchases in the self-improvement industry. Our target customers makes above average income; are educated; highly motivated to connect with their creativity, and thus higher self. Our target customer wants to share her personal experiences as part of her journey to connect with like-minded women and form a community that is supportive, compassionate and loving.

Specifically, however when you consider our additional industries, our customer base expands to not only consumers with disposable income, but corporations who have advertising dollars geared towards this specific demographic; organizations that serve as transition spaces for women, such as shelters or women's organizations; and other agencies who are focused on alleviating or understanding barriers of today's woman.

## 6.3 Market Size and Trends

See table at 3.2

## 6.4 Promotional Strategy

Strategy	Goal
<b>Website Publishing</b>	Increased Online Brand Awareness Providing a platform for women
<b>Public Relations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newsletters</li> <li>Public Workshops</li> <li>Press Releases</li> <li>Letters of Introduction to mission based organization leaders</li> <li>Informational Blog</li> <li>Published Articles</li> <li>Guest Blogging</li> </ul>	Advertising Opportunities Relationship Building Organizational Marketing Increase Brand Awareness Calls for memberships
<b>Advertising: Print/Online</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mission-Based Organization directories and conference print materials</li> <li>Online Sponsored Social Media Ad's</li> <li>Other target market publications</li> </ul>	Advertising Opportunities Relationship Building Organizational Marketing Increase Brand Awareness Calls for memberships
<b>Digital Marketing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email Campaigns</li> <li>Social Media Campaigns</li> </ul>	Client Relationship Management Increased Brand Awareness Call for Memberships Advertising Opportunities
<b>PodCasts</b>	Subscribers Advertising Opportunities

## 6.5 Pricing and Cost Structure

### Year 1

- Annual Memberships **\$60 each**
- Merchandise sales, t-shirts **\$25 each**
- Group Story-Telling workshops **\$500 each for a ten person workshop**
- SYS Anthology Hardcover at **\$35 each**; ebooks at **\$11 each**; audible edition **\$1 each**
- Podcast Advertising **\$250 each per slot**

### Year 2

- Annual Memberships **\$60 each**
- Merchandise sales – t-shirts **\$25 each**, wineglasses **\$10 each**, tote bags **\$30 each**, sweatshirts **\$35 each**
- Creative Co-op / Marketplace **20% on each product sold and \$250 for each sponsorship space**
- Group Story-Telling workshops **\$1,000** for a ten person workshop
- SYS Anthology Hardcover at **\$35 each**; ebooks at **\$11 each**; audible edition **\$1 each**
- Private Story-Telling workshops **\$100**
- Podcast Advertising - **\$250 per slot**

## 6.6 Distribution Channels and Sales Objectives

We have a Share Your Story tab on our website that welcomes comments and feedback from our site visitors. We're very active on Facebook and Twitter and have 100% response rate to comments and messages we receive there. We're also working on a survey to send our community members on the type of content they'd like to see more of and suggestions on ways to improve the functionality of our website.

# VII. Competitor Analysis

## 7.1 Competitors

Currently the women's empowerment market is emerging, and with the introduction of technology it is growing at an incredibly fast pace. After searching for other sites such as SYS, using keywords such as "Bold" "Strong" "Women's Empowerment" and "Smart" we found the following competitors.

- PostSecret – Most trafficked ad free website in the world where the audience creates the content by mailing in their secrets on postcards that are published on the site. Revenue is generated from books, all of which have landed on the New York Times bestseller list, public speaking engagements and videos.
  - Pros – Robust site, worldwide reach, bestselling books, Ted Talks, huge social media presence,

- Cons – Not selling merchandise on website or website sponsorship, does not have a regular podcast
- New Moon- Ad free website with a periodic magazine publication, where video, content and photos are published by girls. It is also membership based and has on online store.
  - Pros- Robust site, worldwide reach
  - Cons- Youth Centered (no income), Low Social Media Presence
- The HerStory Project – Robust website that publishes women’s stories both online and in themed anthologies comprised of essays written by women from diverse backgrounds. It is also membership based and sells online writing workshop.
  - Pros – Robust website, worldwide reach, published books and popular writing workshops
  - Cons – Does not have a podcast, isn’t selling merchandise other than books on the website

Of course, some of the most well-known gurus that are closely aligned with our objectives are Oprah, Brene Brown and Elizabeth Gilbert. Since entering the market in March 2015, we’ve quickly gained a loyal following on our website and believe that our market share will continue to increase as our product offering expands.

## VIII. Description of Management Team

### 8.1 Katie Morris Founder, Co-Founder

Katie received her Bachelor of Arts from Olivet Nazarene University in 2004 with honors in Political Science with a minor in Writing. She left the Midwest for the “big city” and lived in Philadelphia where she first learned what it meant to make her own way in the world. After a year in Philadelphia, she moved to New Zealand for 6 months, and then back to Philadelphia to attend law school at Temple University. After graduating in 2009, Katie practiced criminal defense litigation, but within the year, she realized that her passion for social justice was not being honored in the legal profession. Katie moved to Indianapolis to be closer to family and began a new career in research administration at Indiana University. She never lost her passion for advocacy and social justice, and eventually realized that she could put her skills to use in a less conventional way. Katie thrives on building a community of women who are dedicated to empowering and uplifting each other. She now believes that her truest calling is in advocating for women by creating a platform that encourages all women to stand in their truth and find their inner strength.

### 8.2 Teal Cracraft, Co-Founder

Teal received her Bachelor of Arts from Whittier College in 2002 with honors in English Literature and Philosophy. She was then accepted into Whittier Law School’s accelerated program where she received the Cali Excellence for the Future award in Torts, was selected for Moot Court Honors Board and graduated with a Juris Doctor

degree in 2005. Teal practiced employment litigation for four years before transitioning to a Business Development and In House Counsel position with a ceiling fan manufacturer. Teal's diverse employment experiences have allowed her to travel the country meeting with business owners and learning about the unique challenges faced in different geographical locations. Her genuine love for people and learning about their personal experiences combined with her scholarly focus on writing and public speaking led to her true calling as the co-founder of SYS.

## **IX. Financial Forecast**

### **Year 1**

- Annual Memberships - 150 @ \$60 each = **\$9,000**
- Merchandise sales - 100 T-shirts @ \$25 each = **\$2,500**
- Group Story-Telling workshops - 10 @ \$500 each = **\$5,000**
- 2 Anthology publications - 500 hard copy sales each book @ \$35 each = **\$35,000**; 250 e-book sales each book @ \$11 each = **\$5,500**
- Podcast Advertising - 36 episodes, 72 advertising spots @ \$250 each = **\$18,000**

**TOTAL: \$75,000**

### **Year 2**

- Annual Memberships - 300 @ \$60 each = **\$18,000**
- Merchandise sales - 200 T-shirts @ \$25 each = **\$5,000** ; Other products (sweatshirts, tote bags, wine glasses, etc.) = **\$2,500**
- Creative Co-op / Marketplace - **\$3,000** of products and services @ 20% = **\$600**
- Group Story-Telling workshops - 10 @ \$1,000 each = **\$10,000**
- Private Story-Telling workshops - 10 @ \$90 each = **\$900**
- 2 Anthology publications - 750 hard copy sales each book @ \$35 each = **\$52,500**; 350 e-book sales each book @ \$11 each = **\$7,700**
- Podcast Advertising - 72 episodes, 144 advertising spots @ \$250 each = **\$36,000**

**TOTAL: \$136,200**

### **Year 3**

- Annual Memberships - 400 @ \$60 each = **\$24,000**
- Merchandise sales - 200 T-shirts @ \$25 each = **\$5,000** ; Other products (sweatshirts, tote bags, wine glasses, etc.) = **\$2,500**
- Creative Co-op / Marketplace - \$6,000 of products and services @ 20% = **\$1,200**
- Group Story-Telling workshops - 15 @ \$1,000 each = **\$15,000**
- Private Story-Telling workshops - 15 @ \$90 each = **\$1,350**
- 2 Anthology publications - 750 hard copy sales each book @ \$35 each = **\$52,500**; 350 e-book sales each book @ \$11 each = **\$7,700**
  - Book Sponsorship - 1 @ **\$10,000**
- Podcast Advertising - 72 episodes, 144 advertising spots @ \$350 each = **\$50,400**

**TOTAL: \$169,650**

## Testimonials:

*I can't express to you the amount of healing I feel tonight. I can't explain to you how validated I am, how humbled, how SEEN. What a gift you beautiful souls have given me. I can't express to you how much it means to me. Manisha Antani Contributor  
"Abortion Un-Anonymous"*

*Someone from another state sent me a link to this and I wanted immediately to write something for it. Darolyn Jones, 'Dear Guilt'*

*My interest in getting involved with your cause was immediate. As a writer, my biggest goal is empowering women to find their voice. Ana Surviladze, 'You Can't Take Me Anywhere'*

*Thank you for the opportunity to tell my story! I am so honored and humbled, and rest assured that I will contribute again. Myra Ann Rutledge, 'Slut Shaming 101'*

*This is actually the very first time I have submitted my writing anywhere! I've never had the courage but I'm really excited by the website and I'm so grateful you're doing this. Rachel Swain, 'Suits'*

*I just wanted to write and say that these stories are so amazing! I'm sitting here trying not to cry at my desk at work... awkward. Lovely, lovely stories from (I'm sure) equally lovely women. Kelly Ribera, 'God Told Jonah'*

*It was daunting to know where to start, as I've spent the years since putting this chapter behind me. But last week, I was leaving a coffee shop and heard first then saw a man standing and screaming over a woman who was sitting in the driver's seat her car. I heard him yell about being her husband and what she owed him. I didn't know what to do, and began to walk over as if my car was near them and he left. I felt so helpless as she quickly drove away, and instantly recalled the years I spent where that was my norm. It reminded me that this story is important, that what your organization does is vital, and I hope my story might help someone in some small way. Thanks for what you're doing to give women of all walks of life a voice! Bethany Robinson, 'Back to Life'*

*My story doesn't define me.... It made me. Please share it. People need to know that they are not alone, and there is a way out. A way to become your own hero. Desi Ripple, 'Saving Myself'*