

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



INTERVIEW WITH LINDA HOLLANDER

Susan Friedmann: Welcome to Book Marketing Mentors, the weekly podcast where you learn proven strategies, tools, and ideas from the masters. Hi, I'm Susan Friedmann, Owner and Founder of Aviva Publishing, and host of this exciting podcast. Every week, I introduce you to a marketing master who will share their expertise and guidance to help you market and sell more books.

Today it's my pleasure to have as my Book Marketing Mentor, Linda Hollander, author of the best-selling book, *Corporate Sponsorship in 3 Easy Steps*, and founder of the International Association of Business Sponsorships. Linda is referred to by Inc. Magazine as the industry leader in corporate sponsorship in business success, and that's quite a title.

She has over 20 years of experience as a business owner and consultant, working to bring clients and sponsors together. These include Fortune 100 companies, such as Microsoft, FedEx, Citibank, Mattel, Bank of America, Marriott, Health Net, American Airlines, IBM, and Walmart, and the list goes on and on.

Without further ado, Linda, I'm going to bring you on and thank you for being this week's Book Marketing Mentor. Welcome to the show.

Linda Hollander: Great to be here.

Susan Friedmann: Linda, let's start off with some very basic questions. The first is: what exactly is sponsorship? Then: how can authors use it to market and sell their books? Two pretty intense questions, so I'll let you handle those. I know you can.

Linda Hollander: Okay. First, let's do the definition of sponsorship, because my definition of sponsorship is connecting a company to people who buy things. There's an industry definition that's a whole lot more complicated, but that, I like because that means if you know people who buy stuff, then you can get sponsors. The way you connect them, the sponsors with the people who buy things, is through your book, is through your book promotion, which Susan is a master of teaching you, and all the other touch points that you have with people.

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As an author, it is really, really important to not just concentrate on your books and the content of the books. We're going to assume that you have absolutely stellar content in your books that's going to help people, that's going to entertain people, that's going to touch people, that's going to make people think, and they're changed after reading your books. We're going to assume that is the case.

Now, what we want to concentrate on is the marketing and promotion of your book. Hopefully, as an author, you are always building your audience, you are always building your fan base because those are the people in your community that you can introduce sponsors to. That is what they pay you for. That is the definition of sponsorship.

Susan Friedmann: I love it. I love it. Let's look at how we can bring authors together with those companies so that they can market, and obviously, sell books, which is what they want to do. How do we do that?

Linda Hollander: Like I said, the sponsors are interested in your book tour, in your book promotion. Really have a strategic plan. I'm sure that Susan has taught you, and all the other successful people who are experts in this particular field, have said: "While you're writing that book, boy oh boy, make that marketing plan, make that promotion plan." Really know how you're going to get that word out about that book, because even if you have a big-time New York publisher—one of my books is with Random House—they really don't do much to promote you. It's usually up to the author to promote themselves, to get the speaking gigs, to sell the books. Have your marketing plan in place. Just because you do a marketing plan doesn't mean that you don't need an eraser to always change it, always adjust it.

Here, as an author, is how you can start getting your sponsors. I'm going to give you a three-step process to start getting your sponsors. Number one is I want you to make what we call the sponsor wish list. The sponsor wish list is the companies that can sponsor you, the companies that you would like to work with and you would like to have fund you.

I want you to make your sponsor list robust, because what a lot of people do when they start making lists of prospective sponsors is they think of what they call the love marks. The love marks are the brands that you use, the brands that you already recommend to people. I want you to go a little bit beyond that. Usually they'll list maybe 20

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companies or under. I want you to go a little bit deeper because instead of just listing the top-tier sponsors which are the sponsors that are top-of-mind... In my intro, Susan read to you some of the sponsors that I work with; Microsoft, FedEx, Staples, Health Net Insurance, American Airlines, Epson (the printer company), Walmart. Those are top tiers. I want you to go down also to what we call the second tier when you're making your list of prospective sponsors.

The second tier, let's just take that banking category. Love banks. Always have banks on your sponsor list. I work with Bank of America, Citibank, and Wells Fargo. Those are top-tier banks, but there may be a local community bank where you live or there may be some other boutique banks, such as First Bank or Ally Bank, which is only on the internet and they cater to small business owners. Expand it to top-tier and second-tier companies. That is number one, is you do your sponsor wish list.

Number two is you need to get a sponsor proposal done. The sponsor proposal is different from your business plan, it is different from your book proposal, because the sponsor proposal basically tells the sponsor: "What are the benefits for them? What is your mission statement? What are your demographics?" In sponsorship, demographics are destiny. It tells the sponsor who is in your audience. Is it entrepreneurs? Is it the youth market? Is it parents? Is it the cultural creatives, the people who are into personal development? Is it accountants? Is it attorneys? You want to tell them who's in your audience. Those are the kinds of things that go into the sponsored proposal. It's usually about 10 pages. The sponsor proposal needs to be industry standard or you will not get funded. That's number two, is you have to do a very professional industry standard sponsor proposal.

Number three is you negotiate the deals with your sponsor. What we suggest is that you have a one-year contract with your sponsor with the option to renew, meaning: if they like working with you, they'll fund you for this year and then the next year. It's absolutely magical. It's a game changer because it's cool to know that that revenue is coming in from your sponsors. My clients have gotten multi-year contracts with Verizon, Black & Decker, and Dole Foods; and I've had multi-year contracts with Citibank and FedEx. It can happen and it's wonderful.

I will also tell you how much money you can make with sponsorships, because you're probably wondering about that. Most of my clients get

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between \$10,000 and \$100,000 from each sponsor, and there is no limit to the amount of sponsors that you can have. This can be quite lucrative.

Susan Friedmann: This is fabulous stuff. Fabulous, Linda, thank you. What jumps out at me, of course, is this 10-page sponsor proposal which probably is a little scary when you think about it. When you say it's an industry standard proposal—I know that you have that and I know you have a lot of information in your book, *Corporate Sponsorship in 3 Easy Steps*—where else could we find this kind of a proposal?

Linda Hollander: You could go on the internet and just search other what we call “properties.” You can write that down. That’s the only piece of vocabulary I’m going to give you today, because what you now is called a property. A book can be a property, a business can be a property, an event can be a property, a person could be a property. Celebrity chef Rachael Ray, she’s a property; she’s sponsored by Nabisco. A charity could be a property. You have your property, so look at other properties that have sponsors, and try to get their proposals on the internet. There is a caution about this, though, because the proposal that they put on the internet for their company – you don’t know if that proposal has been rejected 50 times or if that proposal has been successful. You can do that.

You could go to my company, which is www.SponsorConcierge.com. We have some suggestions for writing the proposals. You could also schedule a strategy session with me that is completely free and complimentary, and I could talk to you about what you do, writing your proposal, do your strategy for sponsors. Those are some ways to see what corporate sponsor proposals look like.

Susan Friedmann: Excellent, because I think that’s the big thing, which is a sticking point. Yes, you can put together that wish list, but it’s the actual putting that proposal together and knowing what the right pieces of the puzzle are that will make that successful piece that you obviously then can take to the next step and start the negotiation.

Let’s talk about some of the things that you would actually put in the proposal and say that you will do for the potential sponsor. What are some of the kinds of things that you could offer as an author, other than of course your book?

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Linda Hollander:

As an author, I strongly recommend that you have a website because sponsors are going to check out your website. Social media presence is not enough, because a lot of people call me, and they say: "I don't have a website yet, but I have a Facebook page." It's really not enough. You really need a website for credibility for the sponsors.

When you have that website, here's what you could do: you could put sponsor logos on your website and they pay you for that. You could also do blog posts for a sponsor. I know I'm talking to authors, so you can write in your Ezine and email marketing. One of my clients gets paid, she sends out emails and she puts the sponsor logo on the bottom of her emails with both her email, newsletter, and just any email, she says: "Sponsored by," and there's a link to that particular sponsor.

You could also be a spokesperson for a company. Spokespeople get paid very, very well. As a spokesperson, you do media interviews for the sponsor. Sometimes they fly you to events, tradeshows, etc. You can do press releases for your sponsor. You can do press releases very, very inexpensively. All of these things I'm telling you to do are very low cost, but have a high perceived value to your sponsor. Press releases are very, very good. My favorite sources for press releases are www.PRLeds.com and www.PRNewswire.com.

You can also do social media. Social media, remember I said it's not enough to just have social media presence, you need a website, but social media is absolutely mission critical now in the sponsor world because sponsors really want to expand their social media campaigns; that's really a prime directive now of sponsors. Also, video marketing is king with sponsors. You can do videos, place them on YouTube, and integrate your sponsor into those videos.

Award presentations: if you do actual events or if you do actual speaking, you could do award presentations. When you speak and when you promote your book, you could pass out the literature for your sponsors. You could pass out the marketing materials for your sponsors.

Those are just a few benefits that you could offer your sponsors. Remember that all those benefits are pretty low cost to you, but they really provide a lot of value to your sponsors.

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Susan Friedmann: Fabulous ideas, Linda. Then, you talked about the different range of sponsorship from \$10,000 to \$100,000. How would I even know what kind of price tag to put on these different elements of the proposal? How do you start pricing all of this?

Linda Hollander: I'll give you a little bit of a primer. Of course, I'd need to talk to everybody personally, but this is a general rule of how you can price your sponsorship. The general range that we have people ask for with sponsor fees is \$10,000, \$25,000, \$50,000, and \$100,000. Let's go one by one.

At the lowest level you have what we call the visibility benefits. That's what I talked about, that's signage, that's logo placement, etc., where they're not really interacting with the brand, but they're just getting a visual on the brand.

The second level of sponsor benefits are the connection benefits. Connection benefits are where people are actually engaging with the brand. You could do a contest for that brand. Contests are really, really cool and they're so easy to do now with social media. With one of my clients, we had a "show us your dirtiest dog contest," because he had a blog for dog lovers. The sponsor was Black & Decker, and they absolutely loved it, because people would send in stories, they would send in photos, those kinds of things. They're actually interacting with the brand. If you do physical events or you go around and speak, you could have the sponsor set up a table, you could introduce them or recognize them from the platform and they could introduce you. Those are more of the connection benefits.

The third level of benefits are media benefits. Media benefits. Remember: traditional media is still viable in the sponsor world. Along with the digital media that we've talked about, there's also traditional media; print, newspapers—I'm telling you, they're not dead—magazines, journals, radio, television, broadcast media. Even if you could do something like this – podcasts. Oh my god, podcasts are really, really viable right now. You want to include media at the higher levels. This is about your \$50,000 level, so even if you have to spend a couple thousand dollars to buy some media, they're giving you enough money that it makes that pretty feasible.

At the top level there's what we call naming rights. Naming rights: when you see something like Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week, Mercedes-

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Benz has bought the naming rights to that particular property. When you see the FedEx Golf Tournament, they have purchased the naming rights to that event. Until recently, the Westminster Kennel Club was sponsored by was Purina, and now it's Pedigree. Those are naming rights sponsors where you see, "Presented by," in front of the name. That's at the top level of sponsorships.

Susan Friedmann: It's funny, when you were talking, I was trying to make the association between the dogs and Black & Decker. Help me with that one. Why would they be interested in somebody who promotes dogs, or books, or...?

Linda Hollander: I'm so glad you asked me that, Susan, because when people start to think of sponsors, they just stay within their category. My client had a blog for dog lovers. Let's say you have a book about how to train your dog. You're a great dog trainer, and you write a book about how to train your dog. You're going to think of companies like dog food, dog toys, etc. I want you to think outside of your category because this client of mine, that's what he was approaching, he was approaching pet food sponsors, and pet toys, and things like that. I said: "Hey, let's go out of category." Let's think of the lifestyle of that pet owner. Remember when I said demographics are destiny. That pet owner has a bank account, so we approach bank sponsors. That pet owner gets in a car, they buy insurance, they have credit cards.

The reason we got Black & Decker as a sponsor, and this is going to help everybody there, so that if you're writing a book on dog training, you could get Black & Decker or those kinds of companies as sponsors because people have to clean up after their dogs, and Black & Decker makes small appliances. They have a cordless vacuum and they have a mop that cleans up after the pets and gets out the pet stains. That's why they were a sponsor.

Susan Friedmann: That's a brilliant association, because you're right, when I talk to authors about sponsorship, I always tell them to look within their category but that's actually making it far too narrow.

Linda Hollander: Yeah. Let's say that person that's writing a book on dog training, of course they're going to go in the pet industry for sponsors, but I want you to also go outside of the pet industry because then you're going to be much more successful if you include both inside and outside your industry. Remember the common denominator is the demographics, is

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your audience. What's their lifestyle like? What do they buy other than pet supplies?

Susan Friedmann: That's why the demographics are so important.

Linda Hollander: Very important.

Susan Friedmann: Something you said earlier, too, about that wish list, the A-list and the B-list. I always remember talking to a client and him saying how actually the B-list are sometimes hungrier than the A-list, because the A-list, everybody goes to, the big names. It's the A-list group we try harder with, and the B-list that are often hungrier and maybe more open to sponsorship. Can you talk more about that?

Linda Hollander: Absolutely. You are so right, Susan, there are so many opportunities in the second tier, because I work with a company called Evolution Insurance Brokers, and nobody has heard of them, but they needed me to get their name out because Evolution Insurance, it's not like Progressive, or State Farm, or Aflac where they're a brand name with the name awareness and a household brand. Evolution Insurance needed to get their name out, so I did a five-figure deal with them. I can't reveal exactly how much it is. When you get your sponsors, the amount of the sponsorship should remain proprietary, but man, they have money, the second tiers, and they need you more than the top tiers, and it's easier to get to the decision makers.

Susan Friedmann: That being the case, somebody like this Evolution Insurance who, as you say, haven't heard of, how do you find those B-list companies? How do you know which ones are the ones that are looking for this kind of exposure, but are hungry to have that connection?

Linda Hollander: In the case of Evolution Insurance, it's interesting because I did an event, I did a women's small business expo for years, and actually they called me to do an exhibit booth, and I talked them into the five-figure sponsorship. It was kind of an interesting thing. If anybody calls you, you can always talk them into a sponsorship. That's when they contact you. Of course, they're not always going to contact you.

To really go for the second tiers, let's say you go for the insurance category, go and do a Google search or whatever your favorite search tool is and search out insurance companies. Of course, the big names

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are going to come up first, what we talked about – State Farm, Progressive, Farmers. Those are going to come up first, but if you dig a little bit deeper in your category, those second tiers are going to pop up in your search. Just keep your ear to the ground, and if there's some company that starts to do big ad campaigns, those are absolutely prime for sponsorships because you see they're spending money to introduce their company to the public and they've got a campaign going already.

- Susan Friedmann: I like that idea. The wheels are turning, because I'm looking for a sponsor for this podcast, for instance, and I'm thinking: "Which direction should I go with this?"
- Linda Hollander: If somebody calls you and they want to buy an ad, say: "We have a sponsorship program that I think would be a whole lot better for you." A lot of times my clients have upsold them in that way.
- Susan Friedmann: I love it.
- If our listeners want to get ahold of you, how can they, and what can they expect?
- Linda Hollander: What they could expect is that I absolutely love to talk to people one-on-one because everybody's doing something different, everybody can offer something different. I would love to share my 15 years of experience in the sponsor world with you. I do this every day. I'm really in-tune to the pulse of what's going on in the sponsor industry, and the trends in the sponsor industry. I have worked with a lot of authors, and I'm an author myself. I know where you're coming from. They can go to www.SponsorConcierge.com. At Sponsor Concierge, you can schedule a sponsor strategy session with me one-on-one. You can ask me a question. The email is Linda@SponsorConcierge.com. My toll free phone number is 866-966-3624.
- Susan Friedmann: You've got that down so well and so clear it's not even necessary for me to repeat it.
- Linda Hollander: One more thing, can I give people a gift?
- Susan Friedmann: Oh my goodness, I'm sure they would love it.

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- Linda Hollander: If you go to www.SponsorConcierge.com, on the upper right-hand corner you can get the #1 secret to getting sponsors, and that's my gift to you and your listeners.
- Susan Friedmann: How lovely. Thank you. Thank you so much. This has been amazing, as usual. You know how I love our little interviews together. I always learn something, even if it's just being reminded of things that you've said before. I just love to hear it. Sponsorship is one of my big categories that when I talk to authors about marketing, is to say: "Hey, let's look at some possibilities." They are your potential clients, so hope to be able to send you some people that way.
- Linda Hollander: Thank you so much.
- Susan Friedmann: Thank you, Linda. Would you just repeat that website again, that email address, so that everybody's got that?
- Linda Hollander: I would love it. The website is www.SponsorConcierge.com. If you want to send me an email, it's Linda@SponsorConcierge.com. If you would like to call me, my toll free number is 866-966-3624, and I am located in Los Angeles, California on Pacific Time.
- Susan Friedmann: Perfect. Wonderful. Linda, you've been a wonderful Book Marketing Mentor. Thank you for your generosity, for sharing with our listeners. Look forward to hopefully having you back again, and you can teach us some more about sponsorship.
- Linda Hollander: I would love to come back any time. Susan, you are so wonderful. Thank you so much.
- Susan Friedmann: Thank you.
- Linda Hollander: Bye-bye.