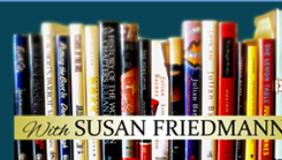


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INTERVIEW WITH DANNY INY

Susan Friedmann: Welcome to Book Marketing Mentors, the weekly podcast where you learn proven strategies, tools, ideas and tips from the masters.

Every week I introduce you to a marketing master who will share their expertise to help you market and sell more books. Today, my extra special guest mentor of the week is marketing guru Danny Iny.

Danny is the bestselling author of multiple books including *Engagement from Scratch* and *the Audience Revolution*. He's the founder of Firepole Marketing and Productive Inbox. Host of the *Business Reimagined* podcast and creator of the acclaimed *Audience Business Masterclass* and *Course Builders Laboratory* training programs, which have graduated over 3000 online entrepreneurs.

What I truly admire about Danny is his passionate commitment to learning, his transparency and generosity to freely share lessons he's learned from his successors, major challenges and even his personal life.

He's a teacher, a speaker, an angel investor, an advisor to many of the top industry leaders in our industry. I think that his company mission says it all, "We serve entrepreneurs on a mission to do something amazing."

Since so many of our authors are also entrepreneurs, I knew that Danny would be the perfect person to interview for this podcast. Without further ado, Danny, welcome and thank you for being this week's guest expert and mentor.

Danny Iny: Thank you very much for having me Susan. I'm really excited to be here. I think this is going to be fun. Hopefully we'll be able to share something valuable for the listeners.

Susan Friedmann: I'm sure you will Danny. Before we knuckle down and tap into your marketing expertise. Especially, obviously as it relates to your bestselling books, it would be so nice to hear a little about your beautiful new family addition I know you'd love to share.

Danny Iny: Yeah, absolutely. You know how it is. When you have a new kid, you want to snap up the pictures all the time. My daughter Prea, she's my

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first daughter, only daughter at the moment. She was born four and a half months ago. We're still very much adjusting to the new normal in our lives, but it's absolutely wonderful. She's reaching to a stage where she can very intentionally grasp for things and everything is going in her mouth and she's getting impatient with being on her back all the time because she can't crawl just yet. It's pretty great. It's pretty magical.

Susan Friedmann: I know. I can share that because I've got a 10-month old granddaughter, Maia. It's so beautiful to watch her as she just learns all these new little skills. I know you're just a few months behind where she is.

Danny, it's every author's dream to have a bestselling book. Do you have some specific formula or guidelines that you can share with our listeners?

Danny Iny: It's a great question. It's something that a lot of people ask about. The term bestseller has been diluted dramatically over the last decade. Bestseller used to mean that you're at the top of a list of significance. You're on the top of the New York Times list or the Wall Street Journal list or even that you're doing very well on Amazon. My first book was downloaded a couple of hundred thousand times. It was one of the top 10 books on marketing on Amazon for two years straight. I think that qualifies.

That said, these days, everybody is an Amazon bestselling author because you have your new book out and you do some stunts where you get 20 of your friends to buy it at the same time and you spike to the top of the charts for 11 seconds. You take a screenshot of that. I don't know. I think it's not fooling anyone, but it is diluting the value of the words.

Now, more than ever before, I think it's very important to ask yourself the question, "What does a bestseller mean to you?" It's about something that's important to you. Why is it important? Do you want credibility that comes with it? Do you actually want to make money selling books which hardly anybody does?

My books have sold a fairly large number of copies and it hardly adds up to anything in terms of money. Is it part of the platform that supports your business? Which is the case for me, and which is why I don't care that I haven't made a lot of money selling books.

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To get really clear on why bestseller is important and how does the book fit into the broader picture and plan and strategy of what it is that you're doing because it's very, very rare and usually when it does ... For an author to be very successful just with their book and without a strategy or anything around it, it's usually just about being in the right place at the right time and lightning striking like the "50 Shades of Grey" situation where sometimes you just get lucky. You can't build success on the expectation that you're going to get lucky.

Susan Friedmann: Very true. You said your book was downloaded thousands of times. What was it that you did to help create that?

Danny Iny: Different things with different books. I can contrast to two different situations. The first that I mentioned is my book engagement from scratch that I published at the end of 2011, self-published I should say at the end of 2011. It's been downloaded, I don't know the number exactly, but at least 100,000 times since then. A decent volume. Possibly quite a bit more than that actually. I'd have to check the numbers.

One of the key things that I did to make that happen is I let people download it for free. This was very controversial at the time and authors come to me all the time, they're, "Doesn't that cannibalize book sales?" My response to that has always been, "First of all, no." It doesn't cannibalize book sales because for every person who's willing to buy a book, there are about 15 or 20 who will download it for free. If your book is any good, at least one of them is not going to want to read it on their computer and so they're going to end up buying it. You, at the very least, break even on sales if you don't end up selling more.

Even more importantly, in 2012, the year following when my book was published. I think I made about \$10,000 in book sales, which is a lot for a book. I think I made about a quarter of a million dollars in product sales to people who got the book for free and then bought other stuff from me. Even if it cannibalizes book sales, I don't really care. It's the takeaway. I made it free and I gave it away.

I just actually, as we're recording this, I'm not sure when it's going to air. As we're recording this, my latest book was published ... Today is Friday. Eight days ago. It was on Thursday of last week. There's a marketing campaign behind it and we did the five days free on Kindle thing with KDP select and it's been downloaded about a little more than 17,000 times since the book was published eight days ago.

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How did we do that? The answer is that it's not just about the book. Of course, I have an audience that I've built and cultivated over the last several years and I told them about the book. I also reached out to a lot of my partners who I shared the ideas of the book and they were excited about and they wanted to spread the word, so they've been mailing about it as well.

The thing is that people are only going to do so much to promote when there's nothing in it for them. It's not about people being selfish or opportunistic because my partners are wonderful. It's really just about the fact that there's an opportunity cost. If someone's business is driven by the e-mails that they send out to their audience then you can only dedicate so many e-mails to promoting a book when you're getting nothing back because you're losing money every time you do it.

I knew that I've got this book coming out and I have a training program that is dramatically related to the content of the book. We set it up so that when people are promoting the book, when my partners are promoting the book and people raise their hands and get it for free, they get tagged with an affiliate link. If they end up buying my course my partners will earn a commission.

Having the launch to my product tie in to the back of the book launch. First of all, I create an upside to the book launch in a way that just launching book isn't going to have and it allows me to adjust ... I put in a lot more resources into promoting the book. It also means that there is a payout. There is a revenue opportunity for my partners who are going to promote the book.

It comes back to the fact that if you want to succeed with your book, you have to recognize that it's about more than your book. There are a lot of different ways to do it. I didn't do this with my first book engagement from scratch. There is always a bigger strategy than just, "I have this book and I hope it does well."

Susan Friedmann:

I like that because the authors who I work with all the time think that the book, it's all about the book, and I'm saying, "No, it isn't," especially if they want to use it as an entrée into a product or a speaking engagement. It's more than just, as you say, just the book. It isn't just the book. I like this and, as you say, it's part of this platform, a strategy that you developed to give it a purpose, a real purpose.

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- Danny Iny: It's about ... People, often they say, "I've got my book and it's my masterpiece and it's so frustrating that I have to build all of these infrastructure and hoopla around to sell the book." I understand that perspective but I think it's not a constructive approach. I would suggest a shift in framing to the fact that a book as great as it is fundamentally information. Most people who get a book are not going to read it and those who are going to read it, it can be thought provoking. It only takes them so far.
- Usually, there is an opportunity for further support in creating a transformation for people. Obviously, I'm talking about non-fiction. Fiction is a whole different ballgame. There is an opportunity to support people in taking their transformation further whether that's through an educational course or through a coaching program or through speaking. There is an opportunity and the need for you to go further with people.
- All we're talking about is being intentional about recognizing that opportunity and that need and building it all into your strategy from the get go.
- Susan Friedmann: Yeah. Very much so. This is what makes you such an incredible marketer because you do, you think that through and you strategize and you know exactly what it is that you want out that book which I hope that many of our listeners will take away. What other guidelines in terms of developing that strategy could you give us?
- Danny Iny: A lot of it comes down to time. I think one of the biggest mistakes I see people making with book launching is that they remember to think about how to launch their book after the book is already out and that's way too late. I've been planning this launch ... We're in mid September now. I've been planning this launch since April or May. It's hard to justify that if it's just a book and it's not going to pay your bills and it's only going to take you so far. Which again is why you want ... You can't justify all the work that it will take to do this properly if you're not going to make this part of something bigger.
- Susan Friedmann: Yeah. That is just the key to it all is that it is just information and people need more than just that. That so many people are fooled by thinking that this is, "Oh, I've got this book. I now know how to do everything." It isn't. It isn't, it's just the beginning.
- Danny Iny: A useful lens for those is that people are often very fixated on the book and the book launch. A useful lens is to ask yourself the question ... Let's

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say you launch the book. Let's say it goes great but now you're looking into the future, 6 or 12 months after the book is launched. Everything to do with the book launch has already passed. How is your life different? Great. You're not going to go through this whole massive exercise to launch this book, to write it, to put it out into the world and it's a big ... You don't want it to be just a flash in the pan. You want your life to be different.

Depending on the nature of your business and your goals of course. Maybe you're reaching more people. Maybe you're charging higher rates. Maybe you're speaking on stages. Maybe you're ... I don't know. There are a lot of things that you could aspire to. Whatever it is that you want life to look like a year from now as a result of having launched this book, be intention about building those outcomes into the book launch rather than just hoping they take care of themselves which they won't.

Susan Friedmann: One of the things that you're a monster at is blogging. I know that this has been basis of so much of the growth of your business. Can you talk about that as it relates to the book or a new book?

Danny Iny: It's actually tricky because what people often try to do, again, it's this approach of too little too late, "Oh! I've got a book coming up so I'm going to do a blog tour. I'll do a post here and a post there and a post in that other place and I'll write a post about it on my own blog." Those are all good things to do but they're really only going to go so far in terms of moving the needle.

The real power of blogging is that it's an opportunity for you to build a following of people who trust and respect you. The outcomes of my book launch and launches, plural, they all have much less to do with what I happen to do on my blog that week to promote the book and much more to do with what happened in the years prior building an audience of people who trust and listen to me.

I guess the biggest takeaway is to ... It's a BandAid. It's not something you ... It's got to be a strategy you're committing to just like your podcast. You've got a podcast about book marketing and I don't know what the end game is for you. I don't know what you want to get out of it, and there are a lot of likely upsides. Whatever it is, you're not going to publish your first episode and, "Okay. Now, here is what I want." You expect to have to do the work and create content and build a following and so forth. It takes time.

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Susan Friedmann: Correct. Very much so. Related to that, one of the things for instance that I'm interested in offering listeners is the opportunity to do some book marketing coaching. That's something that I'm very interested in. Again, I want also supply them with information that they can use, easy to use, implementable information and that's guest like yourself and previous guests we've had that's so generous with what they share from their own expertise and things that they've done that have worked for them.

Let's turn it around and let's talk a little bit about mistakes, things that haven't gone quite as well as you'd like to have gone. What for you were some real learnings that you've gotten out of mistakes you've made?

Danny Iny: There are so many.

Susan Friedmann: Me too. I know. Where do you start?

Danny Iny: Depending on your perspective, your advantage points, the growth of my business might seem very fast. From other vantage points, it really doesn't feel that way. My first book that I launched at the end of 2011, over the following years it's been downloaded over a hundred thousand times. In the early days, in the first week or several weeks, in the first months probably of the book, it was downloaded 3,000, 4,000 times which is not nothing but it's nowhere near what I've done today and it's nowhere near what I still aspire to.

I have friends who launched their book and they sold 50,000 copies before the launch even came out. I have to remind myself that they've been at this for longer than I have. They have just more of a following. They have more relationships. That's their shortcuts to a certain extend and that you can be smart and work effectively and do the best you can with what you've got. You still got to put in the time and do the work.

The skipping from zero to whatever the pinnacle of success in your view might be, it will happen occasionally and that's when people get lucky. When you did deep, usually there's ... People have done the work and paid their dues before they magically explode on to the scene.

A very good example of this is my friend Ryan Levesque who has recently published his book Ask and he hit the top of the Wall Street Journal list and he's done very, very well. It's a great book. The book is called Ask.

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Ryan would seem to have come out of nowhere. His business online, his presence online is only a few years old. He's been working behind the scenes in this industry since about 2008. He's been at this for a very, very long time, learning the ropes and figuring out how to do really well. There is a snowball effect. The growth you experience from year four to year five is dramatically more than the growth you experience from year one to year two. You can do well even from your one to year two.

My business was ... I think we were doing multiple six figures in the second year. You've got to be willing to pay your dues. This is coming down to mistakes I've made. Whenever I've tried to run before I could walk is when I fell flat on my face.

Susan Friedmann: Yeah. I've had that happen many times too.

Ryan, I bought his book and you're absolutely right and it's true because I'd never heard of Ryan Levesque before. As you said, he just exploded on to the scene but you don't realize that it looks as if people are overnight successors, but as a mentor of mine once said, it takes 15 years to become an overnight success.

Something you've mentioned a few times and I'd like to hone in on in that, it's the word relationships. Talk to us about building relationships and how you've gone about it and what that's meant for your business.

Danny Iny: Relationships are everything. Relationships ... Because there are a lot of categories of relationships. There is relationships with your audience, relationships with your peers, relationships with your mentors and relationships with your customers. At the end of the day it's about the emotional investment that people have in you and your work and what you're doing. It's critical and it's something that's very overlooked. It's like people are with money. If you start saving the day you need the money, it's too late. Relationships are only valuable if you create them in advance before you need anything.

Some people would say that presents a strategic challenge and, "How do I know it's relationships I'm going to need? I'm going to develop them when I know I need them." It just doesn't work that way. The best relationship builders from a strategic ... From building relationships that are going to support them in their goals and their work. They're very generous in the people that they connect with and the relationships they build because they're not always looking at what's in it for me and what can I get back from you.

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Susan Friedmann: We just had Jeffrey Haslett as a guest. He's made it big time. He's a big time celebrity and with his own television show. He's been on major shows. He will be interviewed by anybody. He feels that anybody who has ... Podcast, radio show or anything that he's just willing to do, wherever it is, in some podunk town somewhere. He just feels all of this is valuable.

Despite his celebrity status, he just is very humble and human about that. Everybody is important and I'm so touched by that and I just know how generous he is just as you are with your time and how you share and the relationships that you looked to build. Even with me, and you and I have had a few conversations and you always reach out and say, "How are you doing?" I'm, "Oh my goodness! The guy is busy and he bothers to write me an e-mail to say how are you?" That's what a kind of person you are, a real [inaudible 00:23:52]. Thank you.

Danny Iny: Very kind of you to say. Thank you.

Susan Friedmann: I can see that you're developing relationships along the way and, as you say, not waiting until who's going to be important to you when you need that. You just never know who you're going to need when. How about some more mistakes? What else have you done? Come on. Share something. Something juicy.

Danny Iny: Let's see. It's challenging because I try not to think of things as mistakes.

Susan Friedmann: I know. Just like, what's his name? Edison, Thomas Edison. You find just 10,000 things that don't work.

Danny Iny: You learn from the experience, that finding things that don't work. It's about learning why things don't work which points you to what will work. Not only that, most "failures", they're not [inaudible 00:24:52] complete failures. It's not that there was no redeeming. Stuff comes out of it.

There have been lots of cases where things didn't succeed as well as I would have liked. Honestly, it's hard to call them to mind because I don't dwell on them. I'm, "Okay. What's next? What's next? What's next?"

Susan Friedmann: I like that. I like that. It's interesting because I just wrote ... Everyday, I write these Susan rants and they're just for me. I talked about the other day in one of my writings, I was just saying ... I was laid off three times

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and at the time I thought it was devastating, I was so embarrassed about what people would think about me and why and all that nonsense conversations that go on in your head. Then I looked back and I was, "You now what? I would never have written books that I've written. I would never be where I've been and develop the business that I'd have developed it even if that hadn't happened to me. At the time it was devastating but now I'm, "It was wonderful." I thank every single one of those people who laid me off. I hear where you're coming from with that.

Danny Iny: It's very true and it's hard to remember in the moment when things are falling apart. We're in the middle of a launch right now as we speak and pages aren't coded when they should be and stuff is going live, not looking the way I want it to and we're scrambling at the last minute. There's always stuff like that.

First of all, the further you go in time the more you look back, the less of a significant thing it is. Actually, there's a quote that I'm remember. I could be misquoting, but it's from Neil Strauss' book "Emergency." What he basically says there is that with the right attitude and some good preparation, most of life's emergencies are merely inconveniences. That's, I think, a useful approach to take.

Susan Friedmann: I like it. I like it a lot. Where do you get your simulation, your motivation? You're writing constantly too. Where do your ideas come from?

Danny Iny: They come from people. They come from doing things. My wife who's also my business partner, my daughter, my parents, my team, my students. The busier you are, the easier it is for ideas to come to you. It's a trade off. The less time you have to write, the more you have to write about.

Susan Friedmann: Very much so. Yeah. Do you have a particular discipline? Talk to us about a typical day for you.

Danny Iny: My typical day has changed a lot now that I have a baby. Mind you, she's a good sleeper. Not too bad but it will vary of course. I don't always stick to this. My most successful days, I'll be up around seven, that means I had enough time to sleep well. I do my morning routine, I shower and shave and all that. Make myself a cup of tea and read for half an hour before getting to work. If I'm disciplined about it, I will do some actual work before I check my e-mail and then I'll cycle between

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e-mail and the actual work until noon and then I'll have meetings in the afternoon. That's a rhythm that works very well for me and it allows me to then disconnect once it's 5:00 or whatever so that I can be with my family.

Susan Friedmann: It's funny because I've got a very similar routine as well, but I actually force myself not to look at e-mail until I've at least written and I've done some reading, stimulating, inspirational reading. Just something before I get caught up in that or e-mails and how you get sucked in to rabbit holes very quickly. Yes, I like that. I like that a lot.

If you were to leave our listeners with a one golden nugget, what would that be?

Danny Iny: To keep on going. That's the most important thing. Imperfect action trumps perfect action not completed always.

Susan Friedmann: Yeah, just keep on going. Persevere. In the gym that I go to there's a big poster of Jansen, what's his name? Dan Jansen who is the Olympic speed skater and it's got underneath it, "Perseverance. If you think you've tried everything you know, think again, because you haven't."

Danny Iny: I really like that one.

Susan Friedmann: Yeah, it's a good one. How can people get hold of you if they want to learn more about what you have to offer?

Danny Iny: The best place to go is my website, firepolemarketing.com or check out my books on Amazon including the most recent one, Teach and Grow Rich which I am very, very proud of.

Susan Friedmann: Teach and Grow Rich, I love it. I'm going to download that straight away. Excellent. Danny, you've been wonderful, as I knew you would be sharing just who you are and how you've grown to be successful is sharing just a little nugget of that. Thank you.

Thank you all for taking your precious time out of your day to listen to this interview and I sincerely hope that it sparked some ideas that you can use to sell more books.

Wishing you much book marketing success.

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