

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



INTERVIEW WITH JOAN STEWART

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 special guest mentor of the week is publicity expert Joan Stewart, who frequently ranks number one for free publicity on Google. She works with business owners, nonprofits and organizations that need to use free publicity in traditional media and online visibility in social media to establish their credibility, enhance their reputation, position themselves as experts, sell more products and services and promote their favorite cause or issue without an expensive publicist.

For almost two decades under the Publicity Hound brand she has trained and coached thousands of CEOs and business owners, nonprofits, executives, PR staff agency staff, publicists, marketing directors, authors, speakers and experts via live events, online training, consulting and the Publicity Hound Mentor Program. Stewart, a former newspaper editor, is the author of ten eBooks on publicity and PR and has contributed to more than sixty books on publicity, PR, marketing small business, book publishing and social media. Wow. So without further ado, get ready for some great media marketing ideas from the expert and my colleague, Joan Stewart. Welcome to the show, Joan.

Joan Stewart: It's great to be here, Susan. Hi everybody. Thanks for tuning in.

Susan Friedmann: Good. You have got this reputation, this Publicity Hound reputation. I'm sure you've heard this before. You're seen everywhere. I know that I've seen you countless times. How do you do it? What's your secret?

Joan Stewart: I've been at this for about seventeen years and if my name wasn't everywhere I would be doing something wrong. Let me share just a couple of things that authors listening to this can learn. If you Google the keyword phrase publicity expert, I would bet you that I am at least in one of the top positions on Google, and if it's a good day I'm in three positions on page one of Google.

Determine what keyword phrase you want to come up first for on Google. I recommend it not be your first and last name and it not be

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

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your company name because people are going to be Googling you ... They're not going to know who you are and they're not going to know the name of your company, but they're going to be typing in keywords and keyword phrases for the kinds of books or kind of expertise or consulting that they're looking for. Decide what you want to be known for and then work really hard to incorporate those keyword phrases into everything that do.

Susan Friedmann: That's great advice. It's interesting because many of the authors who I work with, Joan, the first question I ask them, who is their niche market? Who is their target? Many of them think their book is for everyone. You know as well as I, it's very hard to publicize to everyone, so I love that. Knowing exactly what it is that you're selling and to whom is great.

Joan Stewart: Susan, I am so with you on that. I tell authors that even if you have a really narrow niche, that's okay. It's a lot easier to penetrate that niche and to become a great big fish in a little pond than it is to become a great big fish in a gigantic pond that incorporates the entire world. That's impossible.

Susan Friedmann: I've heard my own words said by you, so thank you. Joan, as you know, many authors dream of having a best selling book, but why do you think so many of them actually fail to reach that goal?

Joan Stewart: For a couple of reasons, and we just discussed the first one. They have no clue who their target market is or they are unwilling to market to a tight niche. That's the first reason. I think the second reason is because they are not consistent in marketing the book. They will have a launch let's say on March 15th and if they are not a best seller by May 15th they give up and they go on to write the second book.

I get this question a lot; how long do I need to market my book? My answer is very simple. Only for as long as you want to sell it.

Susan Friedmann: Great answer. That's a great answer. Yes, I also get this a lot. I've just recently done a survey of my authors to find out what is their biggest marketing challenge. It's always time, money and not being able to do it. I think most of all it really is they don't have a strategy of how they're going to do it. As you said, they have this launch party and maybe it's good, maybe it isn't good. Then they don't know what to do.

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

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- Joan Stewart: Exactly. The third reason I think is because they don't know where to find the niche market for their site. They don't know where to find their ideal readers, both online and offline.
- Susan Friedmann: Very important. Yes. I like that. I like that a lot. What are some of your top insider secret strategies to help our listeners on their way to becoming a best selling author?
- Joan Stewart: Let's talk about where to find your target market. I don't care what you write about, your readers are hanging out someplace online, and there are many places online. Most authors I hope know about Good Reads. It's the world's largest book recommendation and book review site. Good Reads has its own author marketing program with about nine or ten different ways that authors can use Good Reads to market their books. I think the real place on Good Reads where you're going to find your ideal market are in those thousands and thousands of special interest groups on Good Reads where readers are congregating to talk about issues, to swap recommendations for books to read.
- Harry Potter alone has hundreds of special interest groups. I went on there and I had not read any of the Harry Potter books because I'm not interested in that, but I went on there just because I was curious to see the kinds of groups that are on there for Harry Potter. Did you know, Susan, that there are groups devoted to discussing only one Harry Potter character?
- Susan Friedmann: How interesting. Wow.
- Joan Stewart: You can't possibly have a niche that's too narrow. If you do, that's okay. People will start to ask you questions about your topic, and pay attention to the questions people are asking you because that's a giveaway to things that you can be speaking on, to products that you could be creating, to blog posts you could be writing to your own special interest groups that you can be creating. Pay attention to your email.
- Susan Friedmann: As the Publicity Hound and getting free publicity, what are some of the tricks there?
- Joan Stewart: These aren't really tricks. It's just standard things. I think for both fiction and non-fiction, both, I recommend two things. You become an expert in your topic and you promote your expertise. Don't necessarily promote your book. These days there's an author under every rock. You

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

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don't have to look far to find authors, but there are not experts under every rock, so become an expert.

I'm going to recommend a white paper that you might be familiar with, Susan. Alan Weiss and a group of several other top-level speakers in the National Speakers Association wrote this white paper I'm going to guess about twelve years ago. It's called The Expertise Imperative white paper. Just Google it, "The Expertise Imperative" white paper. It was all about what do speakers have to do to become experts in their field. They actually outlined the various levels of expertise. What I thought was so interesting about it was that they pinpointed that expertise is not only about what you know, it's not only about what's in your head, it's about what you do with that expertise.

The next question is I'm a fiction author, how can I possibly become an expert in my field? Sure you can. You can become an expert in whatever the topic is that you are writing about. Here's another tip that I got from Nina Amershee. I just love this tip. If you're a fiction author and you're finding it difficult to become an expert in the topic you write about, cross over and write a non-fiction book on the same topic and that will make it easier for you to pinpoint what expertise is.

Also, you know, experts help people solve problems. What are the top problems or dilemmas that people have that you can help them solve? That's the best way to get publicity. Answer questions and give away a lot of free advice.

Susan Friedmann: Which is what you're a master at I know. As I said, every time I see something from you it's because you're giving free stuff away and it's brilliant. It's a brilliant strategy. Thank you for reminding me of that Expertise Imperative white paper because I loved it. You're right, it was several years ago and it sort of went off my radar, but you've brought it back on, so thank you.

With regard to free stuff, one of the questions I often get from authors is they're reluctant to give away free stuff because if they give it away then nobody is going to buy their book. What's your response to that/

Joan Stewart: In the first place, you need to get over that, because your competitors are giving away a ton of stuff. They're giving away a ton of stuff. Susan, you know Tom Antion? He's in the National Speakers Association.

Susan Friedmann: Yes.

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

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Joan Stewart:

I heard him say once, and I think it was at a NSA Convention or one of his many webinars, that his book, which I think was called ... I think it was called Great Speaking or something like that ... He took the entire book and he gave it away at his website chapter-by-chapter, a complete breakdown of the book. The fact that it was at his website produced a ton of sales for the hard copy of the book.

I have heard other authors say this too. When they have offered their book at their website, that they actually get sales as a result because people are not going to want to sit in front of the computer and necessarily read your book. They may want to go out in the back yard without a tablet in their hands and read it. They want the hard copy.

You have got to give away content. You don't have to give away the whole book, but you can give away free chapters. You can give away bits and pieces. You can give away cheat sheets that tie into the topic. You can give away a checklist. You can give away infographics, a short video series, the list is almost endless.

Susan Friedmann:

It really is. It's funny because in my book, *Riches in Niches: How to Make It Big in a Small Market*, I list all of those things that you just read off. I was like, oh my goodness, she's read my book.

Common mistakes; let's talk about some of the common mistakes. We talked about some of them, but what are some other ones that come to mind for you?

Joan Stewart:

This is a big one, and that is so many authors are unwilling to build an email list at their website. By that I mean we go to these websites and they entice us with some kind of a digital freebie and we sign in with our name and email address and then they give us the digital freebie and most people are then on our email list and we can email them hopefully on a regular basis to stay in touch.

There are so many authors who are not willing to do that. Their answer is I hate spam. Why would I want to join the legion of spammers who the world hates? My answer is because you're not going to spam. You're going to share with your readers content rich information on your topic and keep them coming back for more. You're going to follow the eighty/twenty rule of eighty percent content and twenty percent promotion, and eventually some of those people will buy from you.

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

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- Susan Friedmann: I think they get sort of impatient. They think if they give something away immediately somebody is going to buy the book and if they don't they get disheartened and then don't want to do any more of that.
- Joan Stewart: What's the rule of marketing? You have to get in front of people at least seven times for the message to sink in.
- Susan Friedmann: Correct.
- Joan Stewart: Right. I've been doing my newsletter for about fifteen years. I started out one a week. Now it's twice a week. I cut it in half and I do it twice a week, every Tuesday and every Saturday. I have to tell you, Susan, my email list of subscribers ... I actually have two lists, one in aWeber and one 1 Shopping Cart, those two lists are my most valuable possessions because those are people who I sell to.
- My super fans ... These are people who can't stand to live without anything that you've created ... There's a group of super fans within that list, they buy everything. That's what you want to do. Those people who have given you their email address have raised their hand and said, "Susan, Susan, email me. Market to me." If they get tired of your emails, they click unsubscribe. Don't get yourself in a tizz over that because it happens. That's how to build an audience.
- Susan Friedmann: One of my guests had said do something every day. Even if it's something small, do something every single day. In a week you've done five to seven things, in a month twenty things that you've done to help market that book. Yeah, I think they think they have to do everything all at once.
- Joan Stewart: Exactly. You could do ... I thought about this. I haven't followed up on it so shame on me, but I could have done a publicity tip of the day on Twitter to build a loyal following there on Twitter. You can't do everything, nor should you. I see these authors, they're on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and they are going so narrow on all of these sites ... They're only going a half an inch into all these sites and they're barely scratching the surface. I would much rather see you concentrate only on one or two sites and doing them really well.
- Susan Friedmann: Which ones have worked well for you?
- Joan Stewart: Twitter works well for me. LinkedIn has worked okay for me, but nothing works nearly as well for me as email marketing. That is my gold

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



mine. That's where I make my money, in email marketing. I started a long time ago when it was a lot easier fifteen years ago to get people's email addresses than it is today because everybody is worried about spam, but it continues to be my number one marketing tool that puts money in my pocket. I'll bet you that for most authors if they did that and if they stuck with it, they would find that that's the case.

Susan Friedmann: Interesting. Your email marketing, how often do you email your list? Is it twice a week with the newsletter?

Joan Stewart: Yes, twice a week.

Susan Friedmann: Okay.

Joan Stewart: Every Tuesday afternoon and every Saturday morning. I've sort of trained people like little puppies to look for my newsletter on Tuesday afternoon. If they don't get it by about 3:00 in the afternoon, I have people emailing me saying, "Did you publish this week?" The trick is you have to be consistent. I'm not recommending you do it twice a week. If you could do once a week, that would be fabulous. If you don't want to do once a week, do every other week. But don't do any less than every other week or you're not going to be able to get in front of them enough.

Susan Friedmann: What's interesting as a strategy is that you went from once a week to twice a week, whereas often I hear it's the other way around, that it gets too much for people to do it more often, that they do it less often, but you've actually doubled what you've done?

Joan Stewart: Remember, I come from a publishing background. I used to be a newspaper editor, so it's a lot easier for me to do this than it is for most people. But you don't have to do a newsletter. Just do a chatty little tip.

Susan Friedmann: I'm into tips. I'm always recommending people do tips. Checklists people love, as you recommended. I think they think that they've got to do these blogs, two hundred and fifty, three hundred words or more, and it becomes a chore, and you don't want it to be.

Joan Stewart: No, you don't want it to be. You need to have it be fun. There needs to be some level of fun in it for you, because if you don't do it it's going to be a torturous, horrible chore that you don't look forward to at all. You will get results if you are consistent. Don't start a newsletter or the tip

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



of the week and then not publish for six weeks and then come back and wonder how come people are not following you, answering your emails.

Susan Friedmann: In the fifteen, seventeen years you've been doing this I'm sure you've made one or two mistakes. Would you be willing to share at least one of them?

Joan Stewart: How much time do you have?

Susan Friedmann: As much as you want to give us.

Joan Stewart: Okay, I'll tell you what one of the biggest mistakes is that I made in my business, was not starting a podcast sooner. Back about five or six years ago when podcasting started to become hot, I thought it was a flash in the pan and I had no interest whatsoever because I had my newsletter and everything was hunky-dory and I just didn't think podcasting was going to last. My friend, Judith Briles ... Do you know Judith?

Susan Friedmann: I do.

Joan Stewart: She gets a quarter of a million downloads a month for her podcast. I'm right now in the process of getting all the ducks in a row to start my podcast hopefully within the next month or two, and I wish I had done that years ago because podcasting is huge. It has really, really taken off.

Susan Friedmann: That's one of the major reasons too why I wanted to get into it, because I too ... I just sort of negated it for so long and then I was like you know what, I really like this stuff. I want to do it.

Joan Stewart: How long have you been doing it?

Susan Friedmann: We've been doing it now a few months. It's a weekly ... The thing is, I'll just need to keep it up, to have these interviews on a regular basis so that there's always material available. The thing, just like the newsletter, is the consistency. I know that there are some people who do this daily. I can't imagine doing it daily, but weekly is very manageable for me. I just make sure that every Tuesday it's out there.

Joan Stewart: Good for you.

Susan Friedmann: Thank you.

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



- Joan Stewart: That's great. It's a huge commitment because you've got to find guests and it's just ... It's a lot of work, but it pays off, and I'm sure you found that?
- Susan Friedmann: I'm just overwhelmed with how many people are downloading the podcast. That tells me that we've hit a topic that people are interested in. I've had the honor of interviewing some amazing people like yourself who are willing to share generously their tips. Let me ask what the best way is for our listeners to find out more about the services that you offer, whether they're free or paid?
- Joan Stewart: You can go to my website at publicityhound.com. There's a box in the upper left-hand corner where you can get onto my email list. There's a blog there as one of the navigational buttons. I have more than two thousand blog posts, including an entire category for authors and publishers. That blog alone will keep you busy for months reading about my publicity tips and how to sell more books for fiction or nonfiction.
- Susan Friedmann: Excellent. I need to go to that one. I didn't even know about that one. I perused your website many times and I don't think I found that, so I need to go look for it. Thank you. If you could leave our listeners with a golden nugget of advice, what would that be?
- Joan Stewart: Always be marketing.
- Susan Friedmann: That's short and simple. Yes.
- Joan Stewart: Always be marketing. Like you said, you don't have to do a major marketing push or thing every single week. Just do one small thing a day and keep at it. Be consistent. It's the authors who market consistently that are selling their books.
- Susan Friedmann: What a wonderful note to end on. Joan, thank you so much. Listeners, I know that you got a ton of great information. Thank you all for taking precious time out of your day to listen to this interview and I sincerely hope that it sparked some ideas you can use to sell more books.

Wishing you much book marketing success.