

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



DISCOVER THE BEST WAYS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR BOOKS PUBLICITY

Interview with Dan Janal

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 a true publicity expert. Dan Janal is the founder and president of PR Leads Expert Resource Network.

Over the past 15 years, he's helped more than 5,000 clients get publicity in major media outlets to help skyrocket their sales and marketing. He's written 6 landmark books for John Wiley and Sons that have been translated into 6 languages. His most recent books are "Reporters Are Looking for You" and "Internet Marketing Confidential." Without further ado, get ready to learn some serious publicity tips and tricks from my special guest mentor of the week, a dear friend and colleague, Dan Janal. Dan, welcome to the show.

Dan Janal: Thank you so much, Susan. It's great to chat with you and to help your listeners. I look forward to seeing how they can sell more books, so let's get started.

Susan Friedmann: I'm sure you can help them do that. I usually wait till later on in the show to ask this kind of question, but I think it would be a good way to get the ball rolling. Let's talk about some of the biggest publicity seeking mistakes authors make.

Dan Janal: Wow, we could spend hours on that. Let me do a global overage review first. I think the first problem, the first mistake that authors have whether they'd be fiction or non-fiction, whether they'd be subject matter experts, speakers, coaches, or consultants, the biggest mistake they make is in their expectations. They think that just because they wrote a book that the world was going to stop, that every reporter is going to stop what they're doing, and write a long feature article about them, and review their book. It doesn't happen.

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There are literally thousands of books published every single day. Thanks to Create Space and the whole independent publishing process. There are more books published in any day than any one person can read in their entire lifetime. Yet, every author thinks that their book is special just like every mother thinks their baby is special. Yes, it is special, but unless you convey that specialness to the reporter, they're not going to sit up and take notice. I think the number one problem is mismanaged expectations. The number two problem is they really aren't clear about how to identify their book's unique selling proposition to reporters and readers alike. I see that same problem on Amazon Pages as well.

Susan Friedmann: Interesting. Yeah, so let's get down to basics and talk about how authors can go about getting publicity for their book. What would you recommend?

Dan Janal: First of all, they need to get really clear on having their elevator pitch for the book, the 30 seconds statement. It's not 30 seconds anymore. It's more like 10 seconds because after that, the age of Twitter, people just don't have attention spans anymore. A hundred and 40 characters? I tell you. Those Twitter guys are really, really sharp. They either figured out that that's what people's attention spans really are, or after 5 years of using Twitter, we've adapted our attention spans to just be 140 characters because if you go over that, you lose people.

Even though you've written 400 wonderful pages with thousands and thousands of brilliant words, you have to really bite the bullet, and I hate to say that because it's hard for me to do this too to my books, but what is that one essential sentence that will help people understand your book and say, "That's for me?" That's usually a problem-solving statement like, "This book will help consultants figure out how to get high-paying clients." Like, "Oh, okay. Great. Tell me more." "This book will help parents raise smarter, healthier, happier kids." "Okay, tell me more."

That's what you want to have happened whether it'd be a customer, or a reporter, or interviewer. You got to give them that one sentence that says, "Okay, that's great. Tell me more." Again, it comes down to usually a problem-solving situation because that's what people buy books or hire consultants. They want to solve a problem. No one wants to just read a book. They want to solve a problem.

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Susan Friedmann: Yeah. It's interesting that you talked about that because you're right. Authors and me included as you included yourself, it's so hard to just find that one sentence. When I ask authors what's their book about, 20 minutes later, they're ...

Dan Janal: The same thing happens to me. People call me on the phone and say, "Hey, can you help me promote my book?" I say, "Tell me what's the book about," and they tell me, "Oh, it's about 200 pages, and I spent 6 years writing it." Like, "What's that about?" Yeah, but what I find as very interesting is that sometimes, it's the forest and the tree syndrome. Sometimes, you are the worst person to figure out what your book is about. You might try this exercise. Show the book to several of your friends, or your clients, or people get the book for testimonials, and have them tell you what the book is about.

"What is the one thing that really struck you about my book?" They will probably say, "Oh, I really like the chapter about whatever," and why is that important? That's the next question. "Why is that important to you?" "Well, it really helps me understand the problem, overcome the problem, comes to grips with the problem, whatever." They will tell you what they like best about the book, and then you can say, "Okay. That really is what I'm really after here," or you'll find out that's what really resonates with people.

I finished reading Amy Cuddy's book recently. It's called "Presence." Amy Cuddy is the Harvard professor who has a TED Talk that is the most viewed TED Talk of all time or one of the top 5. It's about basically going to that wonder woman stance that gives you power. That's great. That's what the book is about, but the book also has a chapter on the impostor syndrome, which I know a lot of subject matter experts have as well. She could easily have promoted that as a separate book or a chapter in the book, but the book was really about her platform, which is the whole wonder woman power presence posture and all the social psychology reports and studies that back up that thing.

In other words, there's a lot of good information on the book, and you could've gotten a couple different ways to promote the book, but she went with what was true to her platform and what most people would resonate to with her platform, which of course was that, the wonder woman power pose. You have to think about your branding. You have to think about the message. You have to think about where you want it to go, but again, sometimes, other people might have a different

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perspective that says, “Oh, here’s what we can do to promote the book.”

Again, you can promote the book by the main topic, of course, but that’s not going to be the only way you promote the book. You might write 10 articles or 10 blogposts about the book as well, and each chapter could be its own blogpost or its own podcast, or its own PowerPoint, or its own seminar that you do. There are many ways to slice and dice your book, but if you want to get the attention of the reporter, think about the one problem you are solving for that particular reporter’s audience.

If you’re going after a reporter who’s writing about say doctors, say your book is about stress. Doctors. Just focus your idea on how doctors can reduce stress. You call another reporter, and he’s focused on writing for lawyers. You pitch the idea of how lawyers can reduce stress and maybe that reporter will bite for it, but you ... The more personal you make it for the reporter, so they can help their audience, help their readers, then that’s really what it’s all about.

Susan Friedmann: Talk to us about press releases. I often get authors who say to me, “Well, should I write a press release, and what should I include in the press release?” How would you answer that question?

Dan Janal: Sure. A press release is the first place where a reporter looks to find all the relevant information, so they can write their review. They want to see the ISBN number. They want to see the correct title for the book. A book has a title and a subtitle. They want to get the correct author, the spelling, their name, the publication date, the prices, where it’s available as well as the information about what the book is about. The press release really becomes a fact-checking tool for reporters, so it should not be overlooked.

If you’re looking at the press release to say, “Oh, I’m going to send my press release out, and I’m going to get hundreds of reporters say, ‘I want to review your book,’” that’s really not the way it is, and it perhaps not been that way for a long time. Press releases are great for getting search engine optimization if you do it right. Press releases are also good for ... because it’s what people expect to see, so it makes you look professional. They say, “Where is your press release?” I mean, the press release, and you don’t have a press release when the reporter asks you, and they say like, “Oh, you must be an amateur. Forget about this guy.

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I'm never going to hear from him again." It really sets you up as a professional.

I think the other good thing about pitching in press releases is that if you want to pitch a reporter, a press release is ... Let me use an analogy here. A press release is to a reporter what a cover letter in a resume is to a job interview, so I would really pitch. I would write out a pitch, a short pitch to a reporter that says, "Hey, my book is about this, and here's the problem that it solves, and here's why your audience is interested." Three quick sentences, "And to read more, read my press release."

The press release expands on everything because again, your press releases could be 500 to 800 words, no more than that, and it's hard to get people to read 500, 800 words today, so I'd really rather have a 3 to 5-sentence pitch letter that gets them all hot, and bothered, and excited, so they want to read your press release. Then, they want to, then the press release makes them want to read or review your book, or interview you.

Susan Friedmann: You talked about doing a press release right in order to get search engine optimization. What does that mean?

Dan Janal: Okay. It comes down to a couple of key factors. Number one, Google is really strong on keywords. We all know that, so you want to make sure that you have your keywords in the headline in the first paragraph. Believe it or not, after that, Google really doesn't care what you say in your press release. They will index the press release based on those 2 factors, so you want to have your titles, your keywords, all the relevant material in the headline and the first paragraph.

It also depends frankly on which press release distribution service you used to set out your press release. We use PR Newswire. We have a discount relationship with PR Newswire because we buy a lot of press releases from them, so we buy them for less, and pass on those savings to our clients. I think that's really important that it's not a pitch for my service or for PR Newswire. It's just the way it is.

There are a lot of free and low-cost press release services out there. Some frankly are scams from third-world countries that don't get picked up by Google. Others are free services that frankly are legitimate. They get some pick-up somewhere, but Google really doesn't like them because there's no fact checking, there's no sourcing. Google doesn't

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really trust these places. That's why I use PR Newswire, which has been around forever, and Google trusts them. They trust a few other services as well. We happen to like PR Newswire, so we use them.

If you're going to distribute your press release, I really don't suggest you use one of those free services because Google will not index those, so you're really wasting your time and your money even if it's free because time is money, so go with an established service that Google will definitely index.

Susan Friedmann: That's important information. Let's say an author gets the attention of a journalist, editor. What might they expect if they get interviewed by them?

Dan Janal: What might they expect to be interviewed by them? That's a great question too. I think part of it goes to what you want to get from them. For example, my hometown has a small town paper. I think a lot of people listening do, and they write articles that local author makes good. A magazine this month had a beautiful 4-page spread, full color of a local financial planner who had written a book on how to manage your money.

There are a lot of books about managing your money. This is not exactly new. I don't know if her theories were new, but she had a good PR person who came up with a good pitch, and the next thing you know, everyone in our town knows about her, and it's a beautifully laid out, and she can use that layout as a reprint to send to any of her prospects who are customers to get new business, so it becomes a great marketing piece as well.

I think in this case, that article was part personality profile of local person writes a book because everyone likes people who write books. Although, you and I know millions of people who have written books, there are really very few people who have written books in the whole general population compared to all the bus drivers, and truck drivers, and fast-food workers who are out there, so if you have written a book, you are held in high regard, so you should go after your local media first because they will treat you with a lot of respect. If your local media is The Boston Globe or The New York Times, you're out of luck there because they have a lot of authors living in their area. Again, just to manage expectations. That's one way to answer the question.

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The other way to answer the question is, what do you really want to get out from this? You may be a person who wants to change the world with your new views on something. You might have a new diet or a new exercise program, or a new philosophy. You just want to share, share, share and get converts to your way of thinking, and that's perfectly fine. We see this in politics a lot. We see this in personal development a lot. We see it in religion as well, so that's totally legitimate.

If you want to get the word out and get people to think the way you think and follow your new ideas and thoughts, that's perfectly fine, so you want to write about the topic, and that goes to management as well. Management, leadership, HR, all those idea ... all those categories have new topics that come out from time to time. Remember zero-based budgeting? Trends come, trends go, so you might be on the next big train.

You want to get your message out there because you think that's going to make the world a better place, and you also think that the world is going to come to you and hire you for your coaching, and your consulting, and your speaking, and you'll get higher fees because you're the author who wrote the book that created this entire genre, so that's totally, totally cool. Get clear about what your thoughts are. Do you want to sell books, or do you want to get clients? This is a third area we can talk about, which I think is fascinating because I'm doing a lot of Facebook advertising for my clients now.

Here's my "aha" moment. Clients come to me, and they say, "I want to sell my book," and I said, "Great. What do you do?" They say, "Well, I'm a consultant, and I do this, and I help people do X." I say, "Great. Let's do an ad campaign. We'll get people to Amazon, and they'll buy your book." What I found was that one of every 26 people who clicked on the ad actually bought the book.

Frankly, that wasn't enough to pay the bills. We realized this was not great, so there are a number of things you can do to your Amazon page to make it more sellable, and I know you've talked about that with another consultant, and I hope you refer people to that seminar as well because if people come to the Amazon page and they're not convinced that this book is everything it should be, or you're not as credible as they would like, or if there's any reason not to buy the book, they won't. We found this out with one of every 26 people, they bought the book. The other 25 found some reason to say, "Nah, not for me."

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Here's my "aha" moment. I said, "What do we want to do here?" If you're a consultant, you want to sell a book where you might make \$10 on the book if you're lucky after you pay Amazon, and your publisher, and your agent, and all that, or do you want to get people or your prospects into your funnel, so you can sell to them, and then have a client where you can make several hundred dollars an hour for your consulting or tens of thousands of dollars for a consulting project? Obviously, the answer is B. You want to get people into your funnel.

Now, we're doing advertising campaigns for authors who are subject matter experts who are coaches, and consultants, and speakers, and we take them to their website where we get their email ... You get their email address and their name, and they become part of your marketing system where you can reach out to them, and set up a phone interview with them, and see if they want to buy your services, if they're a good fit for you, or get them at your email funnel marketing system where you are impressing them with your subject matter expertise and your content, so you build trust with them, so they want to hire you. When they're ready to hire someone like you, they know they can trust you.

I think that comes back to your basic idea of, what do you really want to get from this book? Is it to sell a couple of copies, or is it to sell half a million dollars' worth of consulting and coaching? If the answer is B, then I think Facebook advertising is a very effective way to reach your goals, and the book, of course, gives you the credibility to support your fees and to attract people into your funnel.

Susan Friedmann: That's fascinating because we've not talked about that at all, but a very interesting concept. Let's talk about ... When would an author use a publicist? When would it be the right time for them to hire a publicist for their book?

Dan Janal: Great. I could've included that question as ... in your first question of what do people do wrong with publicity. I think one of the things that people do wrong is they bring the publicity person on too late. Frankly, I get a lot of phone calls from people who say, "I just spent \$30,000 publishing my book, and I don't know how many more money left in my IRA, and I'm tapped out on everything, and I took a second mortgage, and I'm broke. What can you do for me?" The answer is, "Nothing. I don't work for free. I'm not Mother Theresa. Publicists need to get paid."

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I think you need to bring a publicist on board early in the campaign while you still have money because a lot of people spend money stupidly on lots of things that they don't need to spend money on. I could pursue a whole another conference on that, and I'm sure a lot of people listening to this call would say, "Yeah. I could be a guest on that show too," because we've all done it. I think bringing the PR person on board early can actually help.

"Early" would be after you get in a contract with the publisher or after your first draft is done, so they can start lining up interviews. They can start lining up reviews for you. They can help you with your Amazon page. They can help you with your back cover copy to make sure it's sellable and marketable because a lot of times, you bring a publicist in after all that is done. You say, "Oh my god, these colors don't work. They're last year's colors," or, "The title isn't any good." You can't create a book in a vacuum. A book needs a team and a PR person who's worked with a lot of authors can show you what the benchmarks are, what the standards are, so you don't make any stupid mistakes.

A friend of mine self-published a book, and he had a big launch party for it, and it was very well-attended, and it was a lot of fun. I looked at the book, and the layout was just horrible. It's nothing that many people would've noticed, but the margins were just not good, and the font was not a readable font. It just didn't look like a professionally published book, and I think if people looked at it in a bookstore or if they got it in the mail, they would look and say, "You know, there's something just not right about that."

Of course, they're not publishing pros. They can't put their finger on it, but it's like you just know it's not real. It's like when you have a store brand yogurt that just isn't as good as the name brand. You say, "It's sort of like it, but it's just ... It has the same ingredients, but it's just not as good as," and people intuitively know that. I think if you bring a publicist on board, they will more than pay for themselves. If you have a good publicist, that's great.

When you hire a publicist ... This is the next point. When you hire a publicist, I have very strict standards about hiring a publicist, and I think that a publicist who can open doors for you is worth their weight in gold. If you've written a travel book, hire a PR person who's promoted travel books before because if they know the first names ... the book rather. If they're in a first name basis with all the travel editors at the

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key travel publications and daily newspapers, they will open doors for you that you could not open yourself.

The big mistake that authors do is they go to a big firm, and they have a little book and a big firm, and you're treated like a little fish in a big pond. You get the people just hired out of school. They don't know what they're doing. They're learning at your expense because you're a \$3,000 client, and that's nothing to them. If they don't have the first name contacts with the people who can really make a difference for you, then you're just wasting your money, so hire people who can open doors for you, and you'll be well rewarded for that.

Susan Friedmann: You talked about a \$3,000 client. What kind of fees can authors expect to pay for a publicist? I know that's like wide open, but ballpark figures.

Dan Janal: Sure. It is all over the board, but a few years ago, I did a PR search for a friend of mine who got a huge, huge, huge, huge advance from a major publisher. We're talking lots of zeroes in her advance. I don't know if that happens too much anymore, but she wanted to do an agency search for her, and I figured like, "Okay. Let me go to the people who have done PR for the true bestselling books." You know what I mean by a "true bestselling book."

We're talking about "Good to Great." We're talking about "Made to Stick." We're talking about "Lean In." We're talking about books that are on the true New York Times, Wall Street Journal bestseller lists. We're not talking about these Amazon campaigns where someone bought 20 or 30 books on January 1st when everyone else was asleep and they scammed Amazon to being number one for a couple of hours. We're talking about the real power-hitter books.

I researched them, and I found a couple of names that kept on coming up as being the people who did the promotion for these books that were true bestsellers, and I contacted them. Three years ago, they were quoting me \$40,000 to \$50,000 for a campaign plus expenses, so I think that's a good place to start. Frankly, if you do have a book that deserves that kind of attention, I would look at those guys and just google who did the publicity for "Good to Great," who did the publicity for the books in your genre that are the true pacesetters, the books that sell year after year, or just broken through and really made a mark.

You will find those people and contact them. I tell you. The one thing that really impressed me about these people is that when I asked them

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for information and I told them the book was coming out in say May, they said, “Oh gee, I’d love to help you, but I am booked in May. I can’t take on anymore projects.” To me, that showed a lot of integrity because they’re willing to work with an author for that period and give them their total attention or split up between many authors as they needed before they felt they’re like just taking money to make money, but they actually want to do a very good job. I think that really separates those really top-tier people from everyone else.

Again, your book might have different expectations. It might be a niche book, so it doesn’t need the other kind of publicity that these guys can do or that kind of muscle. It might be a parenting book, or a travel book, or a hobby book, or a cooking book. Again, go to PR people who have expertise in that area, and you’ll be well ... It will pay for itself.

Susan Friedmann: Okay, because I was going to say \$40,000, \$50,000 is a bit scary I think for a first-time author, especially if you’re self-published that you would think about paying that kind of money to promote your book. Okay. What about the media with regard to a traditional versus a self-published book? Is there any bias? What are the thoughts there?

Dan Janal: I don’t think there’s the bias that there was even 3, or 5, or 7, and certainly not 10 years ago. I think that creates space in Amazon and all those other’s publishers, and they’re all variations of a theme, have done a very good job in educating reporters that it’s really about the content. It’s not about the publisher. Morgan James has had a number of bestselling books, and they get a lot of publicity for their clients. They’re more of a hybrid than the traditional New York mark, and they do a great job. In fact, they started a children’s division recently too, which is fun.

There are all sorts of publishers, and book shepherds, and people who can take you from step A to step B, and watch out, and make sure that you do the right thing, so you could hire a general contractor person for your book or a publisher for your book in that regard to save money, save time, and not make any horrible mistakes, and it will not hurt you in terms of getting publicity because reporters don’t know or care anymore about whether the book was self-published or published by one of the majors.

One area where this is not true however I’d say is The New York Times book review, the Sunday book review. Every book in there is published by a major publishing house, and I think they have their own bias on

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which major publishing houses they will do. If you look at it week after week, you'll see certain names pop up and other names never pop up. If you're looking for a review in the Sunday New York Times book review, go with the traditional Wiley or major publisher like that, but most people don't know the name of any publisher at all.

If I asked you who John Grisham's publisher was, no one on this call could tell me. Absolutely no one, so I don't think it really matters anymore. I think if you have a good book on a good topic, that will trump anything that you could do, so you call up the TV producers. Tell them you have a book that solves a certain problem. They will not ask you who the publisher was. They want to get you on because you're an expert. You can share that expertise, and that's what really matters.

Susan Friedmann: Interesting. I like that answer.

Dan Janal: Thank you.

Susan Friedmann: For bias reasons because of Aviva Publishing. We tell clients that exactly what you said, so I'm thrilled that you endorse that.

Dan Janal: Thank you.

Susan Friedmann: Dan, what's the best way for our listeners to contact you?

Dan Janal: Sure. I have a number of websites. I think PR Leads. I'm in the middle of rebranding. That's why I'm fudging here. If you go to prleadsplus.com, that has a list of all my services from the press release service and on ... If you're interested in Facebook advertising, go to prleadstoprofits.com/facebook. Once again, prleadstoprofits.com/facebook. This is something that not many people are doing, so it's not overblown with everyone doing the same thing and crowding you out as with many other marketing techniques.

I think if you want to build your funnels with qualified prospects and get the coaching clients and consulting clients, then Facebook advertising is a new area that is untapped, and we have proven results that can really help you along the way. Thank you for the opportunity.

Susan Friedmann: Excellent. If you were to leave our clients, our clients, our listeners with a golden nugget, what would that be?

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Dan Janal:

Wow, that's great. You should've asked me before. I had some golden nuggets. Okay. Here's what it is. Even rock stars promote the hell out of themselves every single day. Even Adele, and the Rolling Stones, and Paul McCartney, when they come to a city to do a tour, they do media interviews. They get on TV. They run ads. These tickets don't sell themselves. Whether you're a rock star, or Beyoncé, or a movie ... Harrison Ford goes and does interviews on the late night TV shows. All these people need publicity. Why should you think that you're any different? I want you to promote your stuff like a rock star because if you don't, the world will just pass you by.

Susan Friedmann:

Super. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for all that great information, and thank you to all of you for taking time out of your precious day to listen to this interview, and I sincerely hope it sparks some ideas you can use to sell more books. Here's wishing you much book marketing success.