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BOOK MARKETING: How to Develop Marketing Products the “Real Fast” Way Interview with Daniel Hall

Susan Friedmann: Welcome to Book Marketing Mentors, the weekly podcast where you learn proven strategies, tools 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 marketing guru. Daniel Hall is a bestselling author, speaker, publisher, attorney, nurse and sometimes a blogger. He's also the creator of the popular Real Fast training programs, designed to help authors, speakers, coaches, consultants, trainers, internet marketers and entrepreneurs effectively grow their businesses faster and profit more effectively. I think we really like that. So Daniel, welcome to the show.

Daniel Hall: Well, thank you so much, and yes, actually when I wrote that up, I thought, "Hmm, how could I write a marketing message into my bio," and that's what I came up with. It's probably a good teaching strategy as well, because the thing is when you have a bio read or when you're preparing a bio for an event such as this, you want to start the conversation correctly. You want to frame the conversation correctly, so people are ready for what is coming and actually be anticipating that. So there's your very first tip.

Susan Friedmann: I was just going to say, this was a teachable moment. I love it. Daniel, I've been introduced to your work through the Real Fast series, and although I know you have a wealth of knowledge in so many areas, let's focus on the Real Fast series, and tell us what was your impetus to get this started?

Daniel Hall: It's a great question, and I love telling the story. The fact of the matter is that I got into publishing and platform building and whatnot kind of accidentally, very much accidentally. And the creation of the Real Fast brand was accidental as well, as it turns out. A little back-story. I actually got into publishing by sort of falling into a niche within a niche in the speaking industry. That niche was, I figured out when I was a baby, a puppy lawyer, how to trade my ability to speak in public for free luxury cruises for myself and my family. I did that for a number of years and became very popular in my family because I was taking everyone on these cruises all over the world. I started getting questions from friends and colleagues on

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how they could do it too. I got so many of those questions that I thought, "You know, I should probably write this in a book," which I did.

That book went on to do very well. The first time we published it, it was a \$37 book, it was an e-book, and then we raised the price to \$97 and pretty quickly the book ... Actually, I did the numbers the other day and we've done over a quarter of a million dollars in sales of that book over time. The interesting thing was, coming back to your question on the Real Fast brand, as that was continuing to happen, as the cruise speaker thing continued, I was also continuing to speak on cruise ships as well. I've been doing that since 2001, or maybe it was 2000, it was right in there that I started. So the idea for the Real Fast brand actually came, I was asked by Celebrity Cruise Lines to speak on their Ancient Empires cruise. It was a long cruise, it was I think 12 or 13 days. I thought, "Well, I need another additional talk," because I usually did seven-day runs, so I needed additional material. I'm thinking to myself, "Well, what could I do that had a really nice hook to it?" And I pitched the cruise line. I said, "Listen, I could do a program called 'Real Fast Book' and show people how to actually write and have their book published by the end of the cruise." They loved the idea. They said, "Yeah, let's do that."

So the beginning of Real Fast Book, which was my very first Real Fast product, was actually a PowerPoint presentation that I had prepared for my cruise with Celebrity. It went very well on Celebrity and folks loved it, and I know that because I got the reviews, so I came home with this and I went, "Wow, that was really a very popular program on board," and I thought, "I have the PowerPoints. If I just built these PowerPoints out more, I could make a product out of this. I could make an information product out of it," and that's what I did. I completely built that out. By the way, all I was doing with the Real Fast program is applying the lessons that I learned in the publishing of my cruise speaker book. That's all I was doing. So I put that into a program called Real Fast Book. I put it up on the market.

It was about that time that I also learned how to publish books via Kindle. So I thought, "I've got this knowledge with Kindle. Why don't I sort of take my knowledge on Kindle and put it on the webinar circuit," which is another thing I learned and picked up, innovated actually from the real estate investment market. They were the first people that I started to see use webinars to promote their materials. I didn't see anyone in that space. No internet marketers were really doing it. Certainly no one in the publishing area was really doing it. So I did, and we did our first webinars were primarily with regard to teaching people how to put Kindle books up, and that went very, very well. I put several thousand people into my Real Fast Book program, and I'm like, "Wow, okay." The next thing, like, "Well,

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I've got all these people and I showed them how to publish a book and publish a book, what else?" So I went to the community and I said, "What else do you guys want to know how to do?" I don't remember what the next thing was. I think it was Real Fast Book Marketing. I actually brought in a world-class expert in that. You may know him. His name is John Kramer.

Susan Friedmann: Oh, yes.

Daniel Hall: John and I did Real Fast Book Marketing together, with the USP, or unique selling proposition of sell 100 to 200 books in the next two weeks with little or no budget. That was the USP of that product. By the way, that's an excellent product and we still sell it today. That was I think number two, and it went from one thing to the next to the next, and I'm like, "Wait a minute, I've got a brand here! I've got all these products named Real Fast," and we're 25, 26 Real Fast products in, and that's-

Susan Friedmann: Pretty impressive.

Daniel Hall: I don't know about that, but, and I hope that's responsive to your question, but that's kind of how it got started, Susan.

Susan Friedmann: I love that. That's a great story. Now, in hindsight, what advice would you give our authors if they wanted to create a similar style product in their field of expertise?

Daniel Hall: Well, very important, and I think this is one of the secrets to the success of the Real Fast brand, is twofold. Number one, that the brand actually expresses, or at least one of the primary benefits of the product or product line or the brand. I've actually not published Real Fast courses because they were in fact not real fast. They were not fast at all. They were actually rather slow, so I decided not to publish them for that reason, or hold off on publishing courses because they didn't meet the brand. They wouldn't set expectations correctly. So that's the first thing, to have a brand name that has some element of promise of what the underlying product does.

The second thing is, the fact that you must not only deliver but over-deliver every time you come out with a new product. Everything needs to be just as good as you can make it. I don't mean perfect, but as good as you can make it. The reason for that, Susan, is that when you have delivered and over-delivered on a promise, it makes it so much easier. It lowers buying resistance the next time you come out with something that has that sort of brand on it. That's one of the great values of branding, is that you know because you've experienced the brand previously that it's quite likely that you're going to get more of the same, or substantially similar quality. If that

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quality is superlative, if it's sterling in every way, then it lowers buying resistance into that brand for a subsequent product, which is huge.

So, I hope that's responsive. Is that what you were looking for, Susan?

Susan Friedmann: You know, I throw these questions out there, and whatever the answer is is the correct answer. So then if we start to take the course apart and look at, is there an optimum length for the course, how long does it take to actually create the course? Can you give us a feel for that?

Daniel Hall: If you are new, if you are rather inexperienced in this field, the first thing I would do is tell you to start with one problem that the community or the niche or the marketplace that you're trying to serve has. What is a problem that they are willing to pay to solve? That should be the first question that you ask yourself. Then, you look in your bag of tricks, your bag of solutions as it were, and you find one solution of yours that, when applied to that problem, actually would result in at least a partial solution to the problem, a partial remedy to the problem. So I say, one problem, one solution. If you approach especially your first couple of products like that, I have this problem and here's the solution to the problem, it makes it so much easier to put together into sort of outline and information product. Because that's really what we're talking about here, Susan. These are the creation of trainings or information products.

I love to use video in my training products. In other words, they are online video that people can watch. It's like a YouTube video, but they're in the house, the space, the protected area known as a membership area. People basically, I lay out the course in such a way that it's logical. Also what I'll do is take and usually transcribe those videos into pdfs, because lots of times people love to be able to follow along reading with a pdf. Sometimes I'll even strip out the audio and allow people to listen, like they can download the mp3 and walk the dog and listen to the training, et cetera. So that's a very important part of it, as well. Finally, make sure that your videos within your training are short, not long. This may sound counter-intuitive, but the fact of the matter is that people are buying your training product for the result, the promised result implicit in the title of your information product. Therefore, they did not buy your product just to hear you drone on. So get to the solution as quickly as possible. I try, though I don't always succeed, but I do try to keep my training videos five minutes or less. So I will break up my content into nice bite-sized chunks, so that people don't have to watch for hour after hour or 40 minutes, 50. That's way too long. People will not get through your content.

That's the other very very crucial thing when you put together an

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information product. Your job as an information creator, much like your job as an author, is to effect real, palpable change in the lives of those people consuming your content. I like to think of myself as sort of the mother hen and my people that consume my material as my chicks. I protect them that way and I feed them in just little bite-sized chunks. That's a very, very great way. Or maybe even think about them as you're baby-feeding them, just little easily-consumable chunks of content. That's another huge thing, because the easier you can make your content to consume, the more people will consume it and the more people will get the result that promise them. And the more people of that that you actually have, that's where your fan base comes from. That's where true platform-building is, is in helping to effect real change in their lives.

This is one of the reasons why, by the way, Susan, I'm watching my own podcast. Not coincidentally it's called Real Fast Results, for this same reason, right?

Susan Friedmann: I love that. Yes.

Daniel Hall: So that in that podcast, which by the way we're getting ready to launch in May of 2016, at realfastresults.com. And I would encourage you, if you like this podcast you're probably going to like that podcast, because we're going to be very, very focused on process. In fact, our very first season is going to be on digital publishing and publishing. It's going to be very process oriented, very step by step, easy to follow. Here's the outcome that we're promising. Here's the result, in other words, that we're promising. Now here are the steps, bringing you the experts to help take you through those steps, and here are the resources to actually effect that result in your business or in your life. It's a completely different approach to podcasting. As a matter of fact, it's much like taking my model of information product creation, but to the podcast world, to podcast theme. That's again, and it fits within my brand. It follows what I'm trying to actually meta-teach here in this podcast, and it's very exciting. I want, I have big plans for it, and I think it will in fact really help people that actually come and listen, much like the people that are listening and follow you, Susan.

Susan Friedmann: Will this be a paid podcast, since it's a teaching?

Daniel Hall: No.

Susan Friedmann: It's going to be a freebie.

Daniel Hall: It'll be completely free.

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Susan Friedmann: How wonderful.

Daniel Hall: Yeah, completely free, and I'm not sure, probably it will be weekly that we will have a podcast. But it may be more frequently, maybe less, I haven't yet decided that. But 90% sure it will be at least weekly at this point.

Susan Friedmann: I'm excited to listen to it. One of the things you talked about was a membership site, when you put together these programs. Talk to us about that. Is there a particular membership program that you like to use? Then, do you drip the information to them and they have to finish the first section before they can go to the second section? How does that work for you?

Daniel Hall: Well, it depends. It depends on my intent and the price point of the membership, which is another sort of way to approach this, because you can set up a membership site and just charge a one-time fee for membership to that site. That's known as basically an information product. Then you can absolutely drip it out and so forth. What we do, well actually I've done it a lot of different ways over the years. One of the best ways that I have found if you want to drip content out is to essentially set up a fixed-term membership that is delivered via auto-responder. As a matter of fact I have a whole course on this at realfastfixedtermmembership.com. But the idea is pretty simple. You load up your auto-responder with pdfs or videos or audios, whatever your content is, and people actually pay to subscribe to that particular auto-responder. They join, and then every so often, every week or every two weeks or every month, however frequently you want to send content out, that actually will then auto-bill that person for a fixed term. In other words it doesn't go on ad infinitum. It doesn't keep going and going and going. In fact, those that do keep going and going and going, they're in my opinion much harder to sell. Much harder to sell, and much harder to upkeep as well.

The reason why I like the fixed-term membership is that the attrition rate is much lower with it. When people realize that, "Okay, this is a six-month or nine-month or year membership, and every week or every two weeks or whatever, at some frequency I'm going to get my next dollop, my next nugget of content. And as long as I keep paying, that auto-responder will still continue to hit my inbox." I like to do it that way, with any kind of recurring payment. I don't, I shouldn't say I've never, I have tried to do long-memberships, and I burn out on them usually before my customers burn out on them.

Susan Friedmann: That's cute. And a program, do you recommend a particular program? What do you like using?

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Daniel Hall: For the auto-responder?

Susan Friedmann: For the membership.

Daniel Hall: Well, that is the membership, with that particular approach.

Susan Friedmann: Oh, okay, so it isn't a specific membership program.

Daniel Hall: No, no. What's so beautiful about that, by the way, Susan, is it's relatively simple. It's relatively simple. You just, somebody wants to cancel, you just unsubscribe them from that list, so they don't get the auto-responder anymore.

Susan Friedmann: Let's change the focus. Thank you for that. Talk about, you've coached hundreds of people. What are some of the big mistakes you see authors particularly make?

Daniel Hall: The biggest, by far, is they will independently, well obviously it's independently, come up with an idea and they won't check that idea with the market. In other words, they won't do appropriate market research before setting out to create the book or to create the product or what have you. What I see more often than not is they will fail, because they'll create something that the marketplace doesn't truly want. Maybe they say they want it, but they're not willing to pay for it, which is the same deal because you're in business. This is not a charity, this is a business. That's a very, very important distinction that folks really need to draw. Know that your market exists and that they're willing to pony up money to get your solutions.

By the way, the next question probably here should be, "Well, Daniel, how do you figure that out?" It's actually pretty simple. It's not difficult really at all. It could be made difficult. A lot of people try to make it difficult. But the main thing to do is look at other competitors. Number one, do you have competitors? If so, that's generally a good thing. Second, are those competitors successful? If so, that's generally a good thing as well. Why? Because then it informs you that people are in that marketplace spending money for solutions to whatever that competitor is trying to solve, which means there are probably more people in that marketplace.

Another way to do this, by the way, is you can look at Amazon, which is, by the way, a buyer search engine. That's what Amazon is. You don't go to Amazon unless you know you're going to buy something in most cases, 98% of cases. If you go to Amazon and you search for the idea that you want to create a product around, and maybe one or two books come up and maybe

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they're not selling very well because you're looking at their bestseller rank. And I would say if you're seeing bestseller ranks of anywhere above 100 thousand, that I would start questioning it. But if you're seeing bestseller ranks closer to 40, 50 thousand, 20 thousand, 30 thousand, 100, even up to 90 thousand, even up to 100 thousand, that's generally a pretty good indication that there's people in that marketplace searching for that solution and they're willing to spend money for that solution. That checks out, you're usually good to go. Usually.

Susan Friedmann: That's a great way to do some market research. I love it, thank you.

Daniel Hall: You're welcome.

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

Daniel Hall: All right, for folks that are here, especially your community, Susan, I would recommend you jump onto danielhallpresents.com/getcode, because there is a free, you don't have to opt in for it, but just a free tutorial, on how to actually publish your blog to the Kindle marketplace. If you like the way I teach, and if you want another eight additional free tutorials, there is a way there underneath where you could join the community, where you can get onto my email list and get the rest of those trainings. Again, completely for free. And of course I would love for you to come check us out at realfastresults.com, because we're going to be doing a lot of this sort of teaching as well over there in podcast format.

Susan Friedmann: Excellent. Well, that's very generous. I like it. Thank you. I know our listeners will be very grateful, and we'll put that up on the website as well. Danielhallpresents.com/getcode. Okay, so if you were to leave our listeners with a golden nugget of information, what would that be?

Daniel Hall: It's a bit of a lengthy one, about three minutes, okay? Will you indulge me?

Susan Friedmann: I will indulge you.

Daniel Hall: Okay, so the very first information, we talked about information products today, and I would definitely start off with the idea of making them as simple as possible. The way that I do it is essentially by using a program called Jing, J-I-N-G. It's available at textsmith.com, for free, completely for free, where you can make your information products. You can put together your slides that you sort of narrate, but then embed, or actually just put hyperlinks to those videos in a Power ... Into an MSWord document, so that that document, because you'll make it into a pdf, and that pdf actually becomes the product. That becomes the deliverable. So you don't actually

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have to set up a membership site. You don't have to worry about the video resolution and where to host the video and making sure that it all looks right. You can actually do all of that for free by using Jing and MSWord, or even Pages will work if you're a Mac user. Then that becomes your information product. It's a great way, it's a stellar way, to have your very first information product. Because it's easy to do, it's fast and it's free, and you can definitely sell it.

Susan Friedmann: I use Jing, but I never used it for that, so that's a great tip. I love it, thank you. It's been amazing. You've shared some really valuable information, so thank you so much, Daniel.

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

Here's wishing you much book marketing success.