

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

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## BOOK MARKETING: HOW TO IMPROVE AUTHOR MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES Interview with Shelley Hitz

**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 author coach Shelley Hitz.

Shelley is an award-winning, international bestselling author, professional speaker, podcast host, author coach, and business strategist. She's coached thousands of authors through her books, training programs, online events, seminars, and more. She's been writing and publishing books since 2008, and has personally authored over 40 books, including print, ebook, and audio book formats. However, she is best known for injecting energy and enthusiasm into everything she does and inspiring those around her to take action. Shelley, an enthusiastic welcome to the show. Thank you for being this week's expert and mentor.

**Shelley Hitz:** Thank you so much for having me, Susan. I'm delighted to be here. I just can't wait to dive in.

**Susan Friedmann:** Okay then. Shelley, you're well known for helping authors write and publish their books. You're also a phenomenal marketer. Let's focus on book and author marketing. Could you talk to us about your promotional pyramid, which I know you've created for marketing books? Talk to us about that.

**Shelley Hitz:** I'm the type of coach that I don't teach something unless I've done it myself. I teach from my own experience, my own success and failures, the mistakes that I've made. As I began to transition my career and really just focus on publishing and marketing books, I ended up having some great success. We sold over 100,000 books. People will just ask me, "How are you doing this? I need to sell more books." That's the question I get from authors. "How do I sell more books? I want to sell more books." It's like reverse engineering my own success. It's like what did I do? What was it? Many times people want the magic pill.

**Susan Friedmann:** Very much so.

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Shelley Hitz: The easy button. They want that software that will blast their book out and give them thousands of sales. They want the promotion trick. You want the quick, easy button to more book sales. Sure, there are going to be times when you can do one-time promotions that will give you a huge boost. It will give you a great flood of sales at that time, but, really, when I was starting to look at my own success and reverse engineer what did I do, it was really in building my author platform.

Then when I was thinking about it, I was getting ready to speak into a live workshop, this idea for promotion pyramid came to me because I'm very visual. I don't know if you are the same way, Susan, but I see things in pictures and I like to teach with illustrations. The promotion pyramid made sense for me.

If you think about a pyramid, it's like a triangle. There are three main aspects to an author platform and to the success that I've seen for myself and other authors. It is your website, which is your home online. It doesn't mean you have to blog, but you have a place where people can find you and they can connect with you, they can find links to your books. I've reviewed many author platforms over the years, and it astounds me how some authors bury their books on their website. I'm like, "Where do I buy your book? Where do I find your book?" Just having that place online.

Then your social media, which a lot of authors cringe when they hear social media. It's like, "No." It doesn't have to be hard. I love to teach systems. I love to teach automation. It doesn't mean that you're a bot, a robot. It's your words, it's your messages, it's your connecting with your audience, but you can use scheduling tools, you can use all sorts of things so that you're not on social media all day every day. You're doing what you love, which is writing, or whatever it is you love to do. Social media, choose one or two platforms. Find where your target audience is online and spend time there.

Then the third part of the promotional pyramid is your email subscriber list. That has been the number one way I've sold books over the years, is just continuing to build my tribe, build my lifers, those people that know they can trust me. They're just a certain group of my followers that will buy everything that I put out, buy every book that I share. I write in two different genres, but building that tribe and continuing to nurture them.

Susan Friedmann: That's a lot to take in.

Shelley Hitz: I know. [crosstalk 05:03].

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Susan Friedmann: That's like, "Whoa! We're drinking out of the fire hose here." Let's go back one-by-one. Let's take them one-by-one. The website. You talk about the author website. Often I work with authors and they think they have to have a book website versus an author website. What's your feeling about that?

Shelley Hitz: My feeling is we need to keep it simple. What happens, I find, is authors are like, "Oh, I have to have a website for this book and this book and this book and this thing and this thing and this niche and this." Then they have 10 websites that they're not updating, they're not taking care of them. They get into overwhelm. I want people to instead of being overwhelmed, to be effective. I like to say work smarter, not harder.

I have been in that same place before because I'm the typical entrepreneur or author with a million ideas. I've really decided it's so much simpler when you can have an umbrella for what you do. That doesn't mean every author is going to have only one website. Sometimes it makes sense to have different websites, but the simpler you can keep it, the better because if you have one website to update, one website to blog at or to put things on, your focus is going to be there, and you're going to just be able to have so much more impact in your marketing efforts than being spread out into 20 different directions.

Susan Friedmann: I like that because you're absolutely right. Also, the idea that you are the person behind the book. People, I believe, are buying you versus just the book. Would you agree with that?

Shelley Hitz: I do. I transitioned about a year and a half ago into a personal brand. My personal brand is ShelleyHitz.com. Then I can have the things that I do underneath that brand. If something changes and things go in a completely different direction 5 years from now, I can keep my personal brand. I can keep that. It's just more freeing. You can have more flexibility. You're not locked in to a certain genre or certain niche.

I really like, in this day and age, 2016, having a personal brand because in order to stand out amongst all the competition, you really have to put you into your marketing. You really have to put your personality, a little bit of you. That doesn't mean you have to do it in the same way I do it. We're all different. We all have different strengths. That's what I coach authors on.

Find your sweet spot, find your strengths, find where you shine, find what gifts God has given you, and use those in your marketing. You don't have to do what I'm doing. That's the other thing that I think authors get into. It's like feeling they have to do everything.

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Susan Friedmann: Yes. That's when it becomes overwhelming because, as you just reeled off all the different components of your promotional pyramid, there were so many little subsections of those three main concepts. Let's continue talking about the website. You mentioned whether you decide to blog or not. What are your feelings about blogging?

Shelley Hitz: I think a lot of authors just think naturally because they're writers, they're authors, they're publishing content. They have to have a blog. Now I don't think that necessarily has to be the case, but I do love having a blog. I think it's a great idea, but the other thing is if you have a blog, you don't have to always do it in a traditional way. You can blog and just use video content.

Look at Jeff Walker. I think it's JeffWalker.com. He mostly does video. He doesn't even have them transcribed most of the time. It's mostly just a video and a few paragraphs. You can do a podcast and make that your blog content. We don't have to do things in one certain way.

That's why I love just freeing authors in that way. You can do your blog in the way that fits best with you and where you're at right now. What I've been doing is I have been repurposing content from videos, putting that onto my podcast, and then having it transcribed and putting the podcast with the transcription with the video on my blog.

The options are limitless. It really just depends on how you want to serve your audience and then what is easiest and best for you, what can you be consistent on, because, in my opinion, it's consistency that's the biggest thing. If you have a blog and you're not going to be consistent on it then that's probably not the best option for you. Find something that you can be consistent on, you can deliver value, you can give amazing opportunities to serve your target audience, and they will continue to come to you.

Susan Friedmann: So many great pieces here. I think that every listener should go to look at your blog because exactly what you talked about, you do. You've got some pieces that are just written and you've used video, you've used audio. You've just really combined all different elements. It makes it much more exciting. It was like, "Oh, my goodness. I want to go to this one. Oh, I want to go to that one." You really make it exciting. It's a good example for our listeners to look at. When you say consistent, how often do you blog and is there an optimum number of times?

Shelley Hitz: When you look at my blog, you might feel overwhelmed. It has been a process. I tell authors, "Okay, let's breathe. Repeat after me: progress, not perfection." It's a process. It evolves over time. Your platform is going to

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keep building. It's a lifelong process, but let's get some key things in place and then let's build a plan and a strategy to just keep adding one thing a time or as you can. You don't have to do everything right now.

I just want to clarify that, because when you look at my blog, you might feel overwhelmed. I now have a team. I have grown and my business is now profitable to the place where I can hire a transcriptionist, I can hire a video and an audio editor, I can hire a VA. I'm at a place completely different than when I first started. When I first started, it was different.

Now, because I'm at a different place, for me, my sweet spot is video. It's speaking. I've always been a speaker before I was even a published author. I tend to write my books by recording audio and having them transcribed, or dictating them. That's me. You may not be that way, and that is completely fine. Don't think that you have to do it the way I do it or that it has to be that way right now because it's been a process for me and it definitely evolves over time.

I now have a team, and so my goal is to do a live video broadcast around 5 times per week, have each of those broadcast, transcribed and edited, and put on to my podcast, my blog, and my YouTube channel. I am doing a blitz of content. I am a prolific content creator. That is a gift that God has given me. I have a team now that can do it for me. I can get it out there.

When I say consistency, if you're going to do it once a week, do it once a week. If you're going to do it twice a month, do it twice a month. I would say you don't want to do it probably less than once or twice a month, but if you can commit to doing once a week, that would be amazing, because I think if you can start giving weekly content to your tribe ... And that's what I started with my podcast.

If you look back earlier on my blog, I was doing about once a week. Every Tuesday, I would give a new podcast. That podcast was transcribed. It was put on my blog. I would email my list, and give them new content once a week. It goes very consistent. If you can commit to that, I think that is awesome.

One thing I love is batching content. I'm sure you do this, too, Susan, where if you have a blog, you can set aside one or two days a month, get all your blog content done, schedule it, have it ready, and then forget about it the rest of the month. You have it done and you're not worrying every week, like, "Okay. What am I going to do for my blog today?" You have it scheduled, you have it done, and you get in the flow of writing. You just get it done and get it scheduled and not have to think about it later.

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Susan Friedmann: Let's get practical with this. Scheduling. What do you use? What are some of the tools that you really like?

Shelley Hitz: For blogs, I just use the built in WordPress scheduler. Is that what you're talking about for blog posts?

Susan Friedmann: Okay. Yes, when you say you batch everything up. It's on WordPress and you're doing that through the WordPress and scheduling it that way.

Shelley Hitz: Yes. You just go into WordPress. There's a place to schedule it. Then you can do the same thing on YouTube when you upload a video. You can either upload it as public, unlisted, or scheduled. Just choose scheduled. Choose the date that you want it to go live. You can batch your video content. You can do the same thing ... Facebook has a built-in scheduler for your Facebook page.

Then, for social media, I personally right now am in love with Post Planner. That is my tool that I'm in love with right now because I can not only schedule my posts, but I can schedule posts to my paid group. The weekly post that I do, I can schedule recurring posts. I have certain quotes; they're rescheduled for 24 months from now. Once I have two years' worth of quotes in there, image quotes, they'll just keep repeating. People won't remember what I posted two years ago. Then it will just continue to mark it for me. On Twitter, you can mark it more than just posting once or twice.

Those are some of the tools that I love. A lot of the things that we use have built-in schedulers. You can just create your content and schedule it. Then you don't have to be thinking about it for the rest of the week or the rest of the month. Personally, I schedule my social media one day of the week and then that's done. If I add other things throughout the week, I can do that. I can engage on social media. My regular posts that I do, they all get scheduled once a week.

Susan Friedmann: Fabulous. Video. You talked about video as being something that you really enjoy doing. Talk to us more about that because I know that some people get scared at the idea of ever being seen live on camera. How do we get over some of those fears about the camera?

Shelley Hitz: There is a lot of fear when it comes to video. That's why I think when you do video, it helps you to stand out because not many people actually will do it. If you consistently broadcast, especially if you broadcast live and offer really valuable content, you are going to stand out head and shoulders above so many other people in your niche.

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I've been on Periscope broadcasting since almost when it first launched last year, 2015. I've been online video broadcasting for over a year, very consistent, doing it very often. I'm getting better because I've been doing it consistently.

There was a statistic. They said only 1% of all Periscope users broadcast. Only 1%, and there's millions of people on Periscope. The point is the fear holds most people back. That's why only 1% will broadcast live.

What I recommend and what I coach my authors to do, take out your smartphone because your smartphone is probably your best tool right now for video. My iPhone, it records amazing video. I have a little microphone that I purchased. It's called the Rode Lav, R-O-D-E, Lav. You can get that on Amazon for \$70, but you have your smartphone.

What I recommend is ... I understand the fear. Let's just say you start doing one or two-minute videos that you record on your phone. They're not live. You don't even plan on publishing them, but you just start doing it to get comfortable. You just start talking into the video. Don't worry if you make a mistake. Just keep going. In your mind, don't put any pressure for performance or perfection because you're not going to plan on publishing these.

I'd like to recommend that you start with the questions people are always asking you. You can start just sharing that and sharing those tips and just get comfortable. If you do that for 30 days, record a one or two-minute video every day, by the end of 30 days, you will most likely be more comfortable creating videos. You will have taken a huge step because just the act of doing it every day and just getting used to watching yourself and hearing yourself, because that's one of the things. We are our worst critics, aren't we, Susan?

Susan Friedmann: Without any shadow of a doubt.

Shelley Hitz: "Oh, why did I say that?" or "Oh, that was such a stupid look," or "That was dumb," or you just have these thoughts. Let's admit it. We all have those stinking thinking. We critique ourselves. We're like, "Oh, that was bad," but just be very, very honest. In our culture right now, people value authenticity.

If you look perfect, polished, and like you never make mistakes, they'll actually probably not be attracted to that as much. If you are just real and you ... You can't edit out a live video, and I think that's what scares a lot of

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people. It's also what can really attract your tribe because they see you. They see you're authentic. They see who you are. They see you really know your stuff.

I was on live video yesterday as part of a 5-day author platform challenge. I was teaching about finding your target audience. I ended up being on there 45 minutes. Normally, I try to keep my broadcast at 15 minutes, but I had so much information. I want to give them all the tips, the tools, everything. I have over 100 comments. People were having breakthroughs, ahas. It was just amazing.

My encouragement to you is just imagine what could happen if you breakthrough this fear and you just start doing it. There's a quote, it says, "Action cures fear." If you just start recording these videos once a day for 30 days, you don't even have to publish them. Don't worry about that. Don't worry about mistakes. Just keep going. Eventually, I think you'll find that you'd get more comfortable.

Susan Friedmann: I love it. I'm going to give that a try.

Shelley Hitz: You should, yes.

Susan Friedmann: How, if a tool, are you monetizing through Periscope?

Shelley Hitz: Right now I'm actually spending even more time on Facebook Live, but I'm also on Periscope as well. I've had people that have found me on Periscope. They started attending my broadcast consistently. They will literally sign up to my paid coaching program directly from Periscope. Never been on a webinar, never been on anything else, but they get to know, like, and trust me. It's instant. It's crazy. It just breaks through all the barriers of marketing. It just is very, very quick.

You have to have, obviously, products and services. Obviously, we have books, things like that, to sell. Right now I'm in the middle of doing a book launch on live video. I'm showing my book, I'm teaching concepts from my book, and then I'm directing them where to buy my book. You can do that.

One of the best things, though, from Periscope or Facebook Live using live video, is to have a call to action to sign up to your email list. I'm a big, big fan of automation. Work smarter, not harder. One of the things I have setup is my 7-day writing challenge. It's at [writingweek.com](http://writingweek.com). If you sign up for that, it's an amazing challenge. I give a ton of stuff away for free, a \$27 software. I give all kinds of different formats of the writing journal, you get writing affirmation downloads, all these stuff.

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Anyway, it's a great, great thing for a lead magnet, but immediately after you sign up, you get an offer to join the full 30-day challenge for \$10. Normally, it's \$30. You get a little discount. I can give amazing value and I could be teaching on live video and say, "I would love for you to join my free non-fiction writing challenge on writingweek.com. Go join me there." There will be a percentage of every person that signs up will buy my \$10 program. That's another way to monetize. You're not even selling, you're offering something for free, but then on the thank you page, you're giving them what is often called a tripwire, a small product. Then, from there, I invite them into my webinar where then they can join my academy.

Susan Friedmann: That's where you make your real money?

Shelley Hitz: Yeah, that's where I make the majority of my income. At this point we still make a lot from book royalties, but, as my business grows, that part of my business is growing the quickest.

Susan Friedmann: I love that feeder into that. It just seems so natural and it just seems to flow for you. Great advice. You're talking about this course. How do people get a hold of you?

Shelley Hitz: Yes, the best place is at my website, ShelleyHitz.com, S-H-E-L-L-E-Y H-I-T-Z (dot) com. My academy is AuthorAudienceAcademy.com. That's where I have group coaching. I'm active in my private Facebook group every day. I just love that community, and just teaching. I have new training every month and such as well.

Susan Friedmann: Your academy, is that a membership site? How does that work?

Shelley Hitz: Yes, it is. When I was first going to launch it, it was going to be a one-time fee. I got some coaching from Shane and Jocelyn Sams over at FlippedLifestyle.com. They really recommended I consider a membership model.

Now it's just like marketing. There are different things that are going to work best for different people. Not everyone likes the membership model, but I've been in internet marketing. I had a website online since 2004. I've been trying the passive income stuff and all of the products, and it just never clicked for me. This model of the membership model, it fits my personality, my strengths because I'm a networker, I'm an encourager, I'm a teacher. I am building such a strong community of relationships and people who are just helping each other. It's just an amazing thing.

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What it also does is it gives me consistent income. I have a pretty low turn rate, which turn rate is just the term for the people who leave your membership and the people who stay. I have a pretty low turn rate. What that means is it's giving me a very consistent steady income because my monthly memberships and my yearly memberships are ... People continue to stay.

I really like that model. I'm so thankful that I got that coaching advice. It's so powerful to invest in coaching because many times it just can totally change the direction of where you were going.

Susan Friedmann: It's an ongoing membership. Is that correct?

Shelley Hitz: Yes, monthly or yearly.

Susan Friedmann: A lot of super information for our listeners. If you could leave our listeners with a golden nugget of information, what would that be?

Shelley Hitz: My golden nugget for you is to focus. There is really a thing about bright, shiny objects syndrome, and it's so easy to go, "Oh, I need to be on Pinterest. I need to do this, I need to do that, I need to go over to Facebook Live." Find what are your strengths. I recommend Strength Finders 2.0. you can get the book online and then take the quiz or the assessment for free with the code in the book. Find what your strengths are and then focus on those strengths in your marketing. Focus, focus, focus.

That's what I've done over the last year and a half. My business' income has doubled in the last 2 years. It's all because I have found what my strengths are and I've focused on that. That's why I focus on video. My strengths are communication and networking. Live video works perfect for me.

That is my golden nugget. Find your strength and then focus your marketing efforts on what you do best. Just keep going. Don't give up. Progress, not perfection.

Susan Friedmann: I knew you'd be great, but you were super. This has been an amazing session. Thank you so much.

Shelley Hitz: Oh, you're welcome.

Susan Friedmann: Thank you all for taking precious time out of your day to listen to this interview. I sincerely hope that it sparked some ideas you can use to sell more books. Here's wishing you much book marketing success.

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