

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

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## BOOK MARKETING: How to Create a Telesummit Interview with Dawn Montefusco

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 writing coach Dawn Montefusco. As well as being a writing coach, Dawn is also a creativity coach, speaker and poet. For over 15 years, she's helped hundreds of people thrive creatively by breaking through the resistance that keeps them stuck. Her passion and keenest talent is educating and inspiring her talents to find their true genius and teaching them proven skills to assure them a lifetime of success and joy. She offers one-on-one coaching, group coaching, consultations, and retreats.

I recently had the honor of working together with Dawn when she invited me to be a guest on her Write Because It Matters summit. I know she's going to bring a lot of excitement to the show, so Dawn, welcome and thank you for being this week's guest expert and mentor.

Dawn Montefusco: Hi, Susan. This is so great. Thank you.

Susan Friedmann: Dawn, I'm always looking for different techniques authors can use to build their offer brand. Your Write Because It Matters summit definitely caught my attention, so I thought that it would be interesting to learn more about the experience about setting up a summit like this. What was your particular motivation to organize an event like that because that was pretty ambitious?

Dawn Montefusco: Yes. It was no small potatoes. It was scary though. I've never done anything like it and I truly couldn't have done it without the support from my coach. I have a coach that specifically works to help people build their lists and to host these summits. She's very heart-based and loves creativity and heart-based businesses and that kind of thing. What she did that was really unique is we had a secret Facebook group of the hundred or so people she works with per year to create their personal summit. Most people are doing it for increases your finances or sales or law of attraction or find your best relationship, and it's just a different realm of the writer kind of thing, if you know what I mean.

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I didn't know where I fit. I just knew I wanted to build a bigger list. When I met with some friends that had been in her program and then went and met ... Her name is Shanda Sumpter and the program is called the Pace Program, P-A-C-E. I just went for it because what I realized is I had a lot of the pieces intact but not necessarily in the proper order. That was what she specifically was teaching us, because I had a fancy website and I hired the right photographer and I do well on video, and I have thousands of followers on Facebook or on Twitter and I had a blog. Yet I wasn't ... My personal list, when I wanted to maybe promote a book, even a free book or even a book for 9.99, it wasn't converting as easily.

I thought, "Why? I have all these people that I think I communicate with, so what is the missing link that I'm not getting out there enough?" She said, "Why don't yourself build your email list because then you have your direct fans, if you will, or your people that you relate to." I thought, "Okay, that's great." I really didn't know what I was getting myself into, and then really truly didn't ... I liked the element of suspense. When I joined up in January, we had 3 months, we had 90 days to create the summit.

What she asked, which I invented it in like 2 minutes, and I'm not kidding. I didn't spend much time thinking about it. she said, "Don't spend a lot of time . Just what is the question you want answered? What are you curious about? If you had to ask a bunch of experts anything, to answer a question for yourself, even from your heart-based passions, what would it be?" For some reason, I get asked a lot by people, "Does it even matter anymore to write a book because the Internet and social media and videos, and who's going to read it?" Of course, in my heart, I thought, "Well, of course, it matters," but then I thought, "Well, does it?" I mean am I just living in this little bubble?

You had to match your summit title to your URL and it happened to be available, writebecauseitmatters.com. Then from there, it took some massaging of the tag, "Finish your book, live a legacy and inspire others." Then from there, it was like, "Well, what do I do now?" I was really excited about the fact that I was about to embark on a journey that was going to really expand my mind. I had to just get on Google, on Amazon, and just start Googling authors and entrepreneurs, because I started to think, "Well, what are we writing about now? Who's writing?" I mean I got an MFA in writing and everybody wanted to win a Pulitzer Prize. Really, now, it's more about the bestseller than it is about the Pulitzer Prize. That's very different kind if writing.

Then I thought about how awesome it is to write just about anything if

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you're passionate. Your subjects as an entrepreneur, your memoirs, just think you're curious about, what you put in your 10,000 hours of knowledge I want to share with the world. I started to just trust and reach out to, again, it was authors, self-publishing, masters of publishing experts, social media experts, and then I was trying to match it to Amazon to see if I saw people with a lot of reviews and bestsellers on Amazon and see if I could find their websites. Then just follow the bread crumbs because you have to contact about 200 people just to get about 21 people to say yes.

Susan Friedmann: That's a lot of people, a lot of work.

Dawn  
Montefusco: Yeah, a lot of emails.

Susan Friedmann: How long did that take you?

Dawn  
Montefusco: Well, really, it took about 3 months. I got most of everyone, I think I got 15 people within 60 days. You can add people because by the time the summit launches, if it's an interview a day that's going to go out per day and it's 21 days, you can still add people at the end so that it can get stretched out a little bit. I'd say I had at least 15 or 16 people within 60 days.

Here's the kick. There's a requirement of a minimum list of 5,000, so they have to have a list of at least 5,000 people that they are going to market to, because it's a truly shared marketing experience. It's a free series that you put on. It's a lot of work, a lot of energy, and the only requirement for your interviewees is that they are willing to give out one solo email and a few social media blasts to their list. At 5,000 people for 21 people, that's ... I don't know, over a 105,000 or so. Some people have smaller list and some people have bigger list but you really try to say at that minimum around that or you're not going to get the reach that you want. Because you're still only going to capture about 1% onto your email list.

Susan Friedmann: What was your success rate with that?

Dawn  
Montefusco: I did about 1,600 and it could have been higher. Really, it could have been about ... The idea is to hit like 2,500 to 5,000. It was 1,500 more people than I had had, and it's a tighter list. The thing is it's cleaner, it's people that you're interacting with. They're very active. I have a close Facebook group for it. It's been wonderful to just get feedback and to volley back and forth with them and to create longer, lasting relationships. I have a book coming out in a few months called *Born to Write*, and so now I know that ... I have a poetry book that's called *A Private Conversation* that I have out, but I've wanted to just have an audience. I love blogging because I definitely had an audience for some of that, but now it's a trust ... It's a really nice feeling of

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trust between me and my list and the relationship I have with them so that I can do more summits. They don't have to be as long or as big, but I know there's a great beauty this that goes beyond all these numbers as well is just the vibrant energy about writing that came out of it.

That was really more than I even dreamed was thousands of people writing and saying that they were inspired, they felt that they mattered suddenly, and these ideas they have in drawers and boxes and file folders, they were pulling them out and started to realize that we all do have a voice and there's definitely an audience out there for everybody.

Susan Friedmann: Did you look to monetize this or would you at a future time?

Dawn Montefusco: Yeah, for sure. I mean at some point, I'm hoping to put up ... The next thing I have coming out is a free webinar to announce a group class that I'm going to have. I've got a couple of subjects floating around. I haven't solidified that yet. I'm just now coming out of the summit mode. For books and for my one-on-ones, I definitely increased my personal clientele, but I don't have room for a lot of one-on-ones. I'm helping a couple of people finish their books. There's definitely a kickback for that and then I see in the future, for sure, using that as a way to get my work out there and to sell books, to sell programs.

What's great is I'm selling to an audience that actually wants specific help in that area, so it's a nice symbiotic relationship.

Susan Friedmann: Yes, I know that when you interviewed me, we talked a lot about niche markets and I made an offer to people that they could have a list of questions to how their niche market. I got several responses to that, people emailing me, actually, weeks after the interview ad. It was fascinating to see what it took and then people wanted the freebie and I've now added them to my list to receive this podcast. See where it goes. I mean it's just the beginning of a relationship with people.

Dawn Montefusco: My series really went a lot of directions in terms of there's fiction, there's poetry, there's your purist entrepreneurs that even said this woman who wrote like 23 books, she says, "But I'm not a writer." She's a writing coach and she's obviously a writer. Then you have gurus, self-publishing experts like you at Vanity Publishing that I ... People love your interview because they didn't even know Vanity Publishing was out there, that they could have control of their books. It was so amazing how ... I mean I knew about this. I just didn't realize how many people didn't know how awesome self-publishing was.

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The range was great and then so each person that was on the interview captured their own people that were specific for that niche, what they wanted, so the people who were focusing on entrepreneur writing or just memoir. There's one, it was like a memoir coach on there and then entrepreneurial stuff, and then I got the fiction writers and the poets ... I'm a poet. We just like to talk about writing. We have just the artists who pop in and pop out, but I just loved it because it was a way to reach so many people. For me, it was just an incredible curiosity to see how to increase my online presence.

You have all these social media things running around to hone in on one thing and to produce it. It's that niche ... What is it? Riches in niches? Niches to riches?

Susan Friedmann: Riches in niches, yes.

Dawn Montefusco: Riches in niches. You think, "Uh-oh, I'm going to tunnel vision myself to Write Because It Matters and just put my focus on that." It's amazing how once ... The more close you make that container, the wider the spectrum actually gets.

Susan Friedmann: If you were to do it all over again, what would you do differently?

Dawn Montefusco: I would definitely start my interview calendar sooner. Part of the reason that the program really crunches you into 90 days is literally to get you to not think so much at first, because it's a very vulnerable, very scary process at first. It becomes so easy once you get used to the discomfort. As a coach, I know what that's like but I hadn't experienced something quite like this. The first few interviews, of course, I mean I'm a nervous wreck and I was trying to make this right, and I ... Everything has got to be perfect. By the end of the series, everything is still great. The make is so great, things are still looking good, but I'm so much more relaxed because it became so natural.

However, that time crunch because in the program, our coach, Sandra, she really wants to get us out of our heads of being in the emotion of the task. You don't want to be stuck in the emotion of the task, like, "Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god." I can't believe I'm going to interview this person who is so huge. You start to just get into the task. "Okay, here we go." We don't have time to think. We're going to do this.

In retrospect and looking forward for my next summit, I would definitely start sooner. However, for people who maybe don't have that kind of support or doing it on their own, you don't want to think too hard about it.

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It's going to work out. Plan accordingly and at the same time, let go, because it's also going to create itself. Like it was ... It's like writing a book. I mean it's really like writing a book, like writing a story. You start somewhere and you trust. If you just let it unfold, it's going to unfold perfectly.

Susan Friedmann: That's really interesting because I understand the emotional side because I'm sure the more time you have to do it, the more time you have to talk yourself out of it.

Dawn Exactly.

Montefusco:

Susan Friedmann: "There's no way I can do this," but you've got to get on that train and just keep going with it.

Dawn Totally, yeah.

Montefusco:

Susan Friedmann: How about the people other than the size of their email list? What was their criteria for choosing the guest you chose?

Dawn I tried to hit a lot of categories. Again, coming from the MFA, I had MFA at Eastern Washington and I went to NYU, I live out west now. It's interesting because back east, when you meet someone, "What do you do?" It's a big question and back east, we talk about our degrees and what we're doing from work. Out west, when you say, "What do you do?" we'll talk about surfing, hiking and reading poetry in the park. It's a totally different realm of thinking.

Montefusco:

Knowing that writing has this, I think, very interesting spectrum where you go from the canon all the way to your bestseller, which could be the same, could be similar but different, and then you have eBooks and then you have the Kindle versions and such, it just seemed that given that it's the 21st century in 2016, there was a lot to cover. I started to think about east meets west feel. What do I want? What am I curious about? Well ... Then I just started writing. "Okay, I want a fiction writer. I want a non-fiction. I wanted entrepreneur that used it as calling card, as public speaker. I wanted an artist, somebody in a different art that use writing to bump up their art." I just started to think of the categories as if you went to a library, kind of. The categories of books and writing, because the theme, "Write because it matters."

Then when I finished with a lot of ... When I had that, I realize I was really lacking in the self-publishing because I'd focused a little bit more on the authorship and the entrepreneur and the public speaker. Then when I went

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to self-publishing, I was like, "Oh, this is juicy. This is great." Then got really ... I hate to say lucky because I'm one of those people that, I don't know, what it is, that things happen for a reason or are we just lucky? I don't know. Then it just worked out, but I think because I was definitely sculpting. I was definitely ... Very similar writing actually.

Once I had the people, I started to wonder about where they fit and then once all the 21 interviews were over and I had to figure out the ... Or at least I had about, I think, 18 or 19 of them. I finished up with the last 3. I was like, "Well, where am I going to put these in?" That was a whole other question I had because I ... So then I just started spreading out the authors with the publishing people. I would say it was like walking into a library in my head.

Susan Friedmann: That's an interesting analogy.

Dawn: Yeah.

Montefusco:

Susan Friedmann: I like it. How do you feel this type of marketing would help a first-time author?

Dawn:

Montefusco:

First time authors, I think, anybody, author ... Just because this is writing, so authors write. That word is there and social media is full of words. It's also full of pictures but we're not going to going to rid of our language anytime soon. I think we get stuck, I think authors, we do like to hide a little bit even if we're gregarious and we're public speakers and we do stuff, we also like our solitude in our writing. We can get stuck, I think behind the screen thinking somehow we're going to go viral. Somehow if I were to write a post or I do this the perfect way or if I ... Somehow, there's a seduction that as long as you're in the matrix, that it's going to bring you the hits that you want.

In actuality, it's the opposite. You really want to put the effort in to getting the audience. You don't need it for the contents so your book isn't the draw. The draw is who are you gathering. I think, for authors, if they could gather other authors, other people who want to talk about writing, and not worry. Again, I had writing coaches on there. I didn't worry about competition. It was a very inclusive sharing, which I think authors do in writing groups, in writing classes. You get a bunch of authors together and they are collaborating and they're talking. I think that would help a first time author to do something like this instead of waiting for something to happen, because you can get stuck behind that screen thinking that there's something magical is going to happen, but you can actually make it happen.

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I think for a first time author, creating an audience and a buzz for themselves takes care of a lot of things: takes care of their first book, their second book, their ideas. They can bounce things around. They can ask their audience what do they want them to write about. I mean that's an awesome situation where you can do ask questions to your audience and start to have fun not just with your first book, but start to think ahead at the next project.

Susan Friedmann: I would think, too, just in the same way as the guests who I have on the podcast, you built new relationships with people, because you and I didn't know each other before.

Dawn  
Montefusco: Oh, I know. Yeah, yeah.

Susan Friedmann: You interviewed me and I felt it would be wonderful to have you on the show. Now, we've built that relationship. I also looked at the number of some of your different guests and I thought, "But who would be a good fit for this show?" I actually found a couple of people-

Dawn  
Montefusco: Nice.

Susan Friedmann: -Who were a really good fit. Yes, I think it's that networking, that relationship building.

Dawn  
Montefusco: Yeah, it's so fun because it's like ... I did mine in split screen Skype and you don't have to do it on Skype. You can do podcasts. It can be just an audio series. I did a video series because I just like video. A lot of people do audio series, and the cool part is I love meeting people as much as I like to ... I'm an introvert/extrovert ... is that you meet people all over the world. You're not limited at all. Again, you realize that in terms of your writing, too. You realize we live in a very remarkable time right now, just at the cusp of being ... I even said on my ... When you go Write Because It Matters, there's my intro video and it says, "There's no better time in human history to write a book than right now," and moving forward, because now we have the global audience whereas before we ... I mean, gosh, I remember back in the day with printing out my letters and trying to see who'll take a story or something like that, and it take weeks, if not months, and now it seconds-

Susan Friedmann: That's right. That's right.

Dawn  
Montefusco: -to send things out. Yeah, creating your network is fun.

Susan Friedmann: What about surprises? Were there some unexpected things that happened? Good and maybe not so good?



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Dawn  
Montefusco: Yeah. I wouldn't say that it was particularly a surprise. I really was so ... We were coached quite a bit on problem solving. Lots of problem- ... Immediate, like not to stress about immediate breakdowns or ... There were some fun technical issues. I say fun because you were bound to have one. You're bound to have Skype dropping and having to reschedule or the Internet going down randomly. Having a slight sense of humor, at least about technology, and realizing you're going to need to be a little bit flexible, you may have to do ... Not necessarily have to do the interview over, but you might have to stop and then continue it from where it left off, not to try to be perfect by any means.

I never tried to be perfect. I tried to have an excellent video series and I knew there would be some glitches here and there. That was expected. It was traumatic though. For as much as I say right now it wasn't really a surprise, every time it happened, I would definitely have to recalibrate and just realize how I was going with the flow and not make a big deal out of it because I had to finish the interview. In terms of real surprises, I would say what was really surprising was how excited everybody was on the series. I was so happy with how vibrant my guests were.

They were excited to talk about their work, because what was funny is some of them, like the relationship coach or the sales coach who's also an entrepreneur or the social media guru from LinkedIn, they usually talk about what they do for work. Their book sometimes, it's just there. It's part of what they do. Not even what they do; part of who they are. They were so excited to talk about the writing process. We had even a rock star on there, Storm Large. She was on Rockstar Supernova on CBS and she's had a one-woman show on Broadway and then she wrote a memoir, but people know her mostly for her showmanship. It was totally unique for her to talk about the writing process.

I was really surprised about how excited everyone was because I thought maybe they thought ... My paranoid inner critic was like, "Oh gosh, I hope they're not bored with talking about writing." I don't know why I thought that but there's that paranoia of "Is this going to work out?" What I loved is how really truly excited everybody was about it.

Susan Friedmann: How can our listeners get a hold of you or even go to that summit? Is that still available for them to see?

Dawn  
Montefusco: The summit is over. Yes, summit's over right now, but you can sign up for the next series and then I will be distributing, actually, the interviews back out to the people who did them. People can do with them as they want.

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They could probably contact ... There's the list of who I interviewed and it says you can sign up for my next series. It's called writebecauseitmatters.com, and then my personal, my other ... That's the summit page and that's where my summits will live. My personal email and website that you can get a hold of me is dawnmontefusco.com and that's D-A-W-N-M-O-N-T-E-F-U-S-C-O. I know you all have that listed. Yeah, my next summit, I actually don't know what specifically it's going to be, but I'm doing one more in the fall. I don't know. I haven't decided yet.

Susan Friedmann: Well, that's-

Dawn  
Montefusco: There'll be writing in there somewhere.

Susan Friedmann: That's very exciting. If you could leave our listeners with a golden nugget of information, what would that be, Dawn?

Dawn  
Montefusco: For all the writers out there, there is someone just dying to read you and there is so many people now that want more. They just want more. If you feel that there's already too much of something out there, true, there might be 20,000 books or more written on how to lose weight, but you didn't write it. That uniqueness about trees or about birds, I mean as simple as that, each person is so unique and has such an absolutely individual, original thought that only they can write that way. Get your work out there and we need more. There's always room for more writing.

Susan Friedmann: Wonderful. Thank you. 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.