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BOOK MARKETING: Successful How-to Ways to Generate More Author Income Interview with John Corcoran

Susan: 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 guest is an expert at developing relationships with the right people. John Corcoran is an attorney, writer and a father. He's a former Clinton White House writer and speech writer to the governor of California. Throughout his career, he's worked in Hollywood, the heart of Silicon Valley and owns his own boutique law firm in the San Francisco Bay area catering to small business owners and entrepreneurs. He's the creator of Smart Business Revolution. He's the co-founder of Rights 25 Inner Circle, a small, exclusive group of professional service entrepreneurs and business owners who want to move away from trading hours for dollars, diversify that income and create multi streams of revenue. His writing has appeared in Forbes, Entrepreneur.com, The Huffington Post, Business Insider, Get Rich Slowly and numerous other publications, blogs and websites. John, welcome and thank you for being this week's special guest expert and mentor.

John: Susan, it's a pleasure. Thank you for having me.

Susan: John, we don't often have guests, in fact, you're the only one so far who've actually worked in the White House. I'm sure our listeners would love some small nuggets or, perhaps, some of the most exciting highlights of your time there.

John: Yeah, it was a real privilege to work there and I did two stances there, because I was in college, I was an intern in the speech writing office and then I came back after graduating college and I was a writer in presidential letters and messages, which is like a second tier speech writer, like if any of the speech writers pulled the hamstring, then we would step in for them, that kind of thing, I can say jokingly. Really, it was a cool experience. I was 21 years old when I was an intern, 23 when I started working there, so I was young and it was a cool experience. It is unusual, you'd be walking to the bathroom and running to a contingent that included the leader of the Free World having an argument with the premier of China in the hallway with 50 secret service people around them waiting for the two of them to continue this argument with the translators up in

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there, translating and I'm just thinking I need to go pee. Can you guys move so I can get by? That was the kind of dream situation.

Then we drafted correspondence on behalf of the president responding to VIPs, members of congress, governors, so there was some cool correspondence that we saw coming across our desk. We've read all of the outgoing correspondence from president Clinton, everything that he wrote himself or the notes that he wrote on there, because we were trying to get his voice, so that was interesting. I went a bunch of ... Saw a lot of events on the East Lawn or at the White House. We went in the oval office. I was around the president or in the company of members of congress. It was a great experience. It taught me the importance of really elevating your game, taught me the importance of the relationships around you.

I was there before the impeachment, the Monica Lewinsky scandal and I was there after he was acquitted in the senate, so I wasn't there during the whole impeachment scandal that happened. One of the things I learnt from it is as I worked in my career both for a president who was impeached and a governor of California who was recalled, is really the importance of relationships and that really is what I do today.

Susan: Wow. I just can't imagine as you were painting this picture I'm like ... From the movies that we've seen, I'm like visualizing being there and you holding yourself, you wanting to pee, but you want to be listening in on all these exciting conversations.

John, let's focus our attention on one of your many successful ways of generating income and that is by the use of webinars. How can our listeners tap into this income source to help them build their author platform? What would you recommend?

John: I assume that you've already got a book out there, but even if you don't, webinars are an amazing tool just for market research, for understanding what the market needs help with, which is really one of the most powerful aspects of them. A webinar, it's a tool for communicating to people one to many, it's similar in many ways to speaking on stage. It gives you greater authority, it allows you to accumulate an audience or a tribe or a community of people who are interested in a particular expertise that you have. It allows you to test ideas and it allows you to sell things too, while also presenting information in an educational way and without having to be all salesy, which we all hate. It's an amazing tool.

The technology that exists now allows us to broadcast to a worldwide audience with hundreds or thousands of people on the line, interacting in real-time. That kind of technology didn't even exist 10 or 15 years ago and to the extent that if

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something similar existed, it cost tens of thousands of dollars. When I was growing up, my father worked in local TV news and I remember how expensive it was to point a satellite in a different direction and it cost thousands of dollars for minutes of time. Now you can accomplish these things basically for free or for pennies on the dollars, very, very inexpensive.

You can live in some small town in some remote part of the world and you can reach a global, exponential audience and you can find people who are uniquely interested in you, in the value that you provide and the expertise that you provide. That's why I'm really gung-ho on them and we can talk about different ways of monetizing based on your expertise, if you're a consultant or a coach or you want to create, take your knowledge and package it up in some way. There are different ways of doing that, there's a lot of different ways to monetize webinars. What I'm so gung-ho about them is that they really allow you to find that community, that audience, that tribe of people who is interested in you, uniquely you.

Susan: Yes, I definitely want us to touch on monetizing them, but let's first touch on getting started with webinars. I don't want to get ahead of ourselves. Let's pretend we're just getting start, we don't know anything about it, we're scaredshitless about it. What do we do?

John: The first question that people usually have, which often holds them back for years, even. People will say, "For years, two, three years I've been thinking about doing webinars, but I'm not sure what software to use." That's what we always go. That actually is not the biggest barrier, because there's a lot of software solutions out there, most of them give you 14 or 30 day trial periods, so you can try it out. The most important thing is actually doing it. Doing it requires you to say to yourself, "Okay, maybe I'm not ready yet, but I'm going to do it anyways." That really gets to mindset, it really gets to being okay with the fact that you're going to hold yourself out there as an expert in one particular area.

You don't need to be a rocket scientist, you don't need to have a PhD, you don't need to have won awards or those types of accolades. You just need to say, "Okay, there is some particular area of expertise that I have that I can help other people with." It could be travel hacking, it could be growing your consulting business, it could be fitness, it could be diet. There's so many different areas and a lot of time we don't appreciate our own areas of expertise or it might be counter-intuitive or we might just take it for granted. You need to be okay with the fact that you're going to hold yourself out as enough of an expert in order to do a webinar. You don't need to have a Nobel Prize or anything like that in order to do this. In fact, more and more thousands, tens of thousands of people are doing webinars now, growing their business using webinars. Believe me, they're

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not all PhDs, they're not all world's foremost expert in any area. I think that's the most important piece, is starting with the mindset.

Then we can get into what software you can use, that's another question. Really, what I like to focus on, because what I focus on is building better relationships in business, is how can you use webinars as a tool, but also how can you use it to grow your relationships exponentially? When you're doing a webinar with tens or hundreds or thousands of people, you're building relationships with all those people at scale, much faster than you ever could, just going to a Chamber of Commerce meeting or going to some local networking meeting. That's why it's a lot more effective. That's a roundabout of I'm saying, mindset is really the most important piece first.

Susan: Let's talk a little bit more about that and as it relates to maybe mistakes that people make when they are getting started.

John: One of the big mistakes people make is they underestimate how much work it's going to be when you get started. There's work that's required on the front end, one time and then a lot of that becomes easier later. For example, when you create a webinar presentation, you need to create a presentation, so you need to have some kind of PowerPoint or something, most people don't do just directly to the camera, so you need some kind of PowerPoint presentation. There's a lot of skill that goes into creating that. You need to have some kind of offer to give the people, maybe it's your own consulting, maybe it's coaching, maybe it's a digital product that you've created. You can use someone else's digital product, it could be software. There's a lot of different ways that you can do it. Then, finally you need to get people to register and to show up. Those are the three big pieces.

Of those three, the first two you accomplish at the front end and then you can tweak and improve over time. It's not something that will take a ton of your time all the time. That's what I love about webinars, is that you can create a presentation that works and you can do it over and over again, much like a Keynote speaker. A Keynote speaker, they have a couple of speeches that they do over and over again to different audiences. They don't reinvent the wheel and create a brand new Keynote every single time they speak, because it's a different audience. You can create a presentation and then you can do it over and over again to different audiences. Then, as far as the offer goes, you can change your offer over time, you can sell consulting, you can create a digital courses, there's a variety of different ways you can do it.

Then finally, the last piece, getting people to register and show up. What I hear from people a lot of time is, "How do I get people to register and show up if I don't have a list?" If you're just getting started with the list, building list? I think

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that actually webinar is a great way to build a list, because you can start with nothing and you can build up a list very quickly using webinar. Different times that I've done individual webinars for either people or for companies and I've gotten 1,500 or so people added to my email list in the course of a day or two that are registering for my webinar, so it's incredibly powerful. The question then become how do we make that happen? Some people say, "I'm going to go do Facebook ad." I think that's a bad strategy, because that's cold traffic, that's people who don't have any reason to trust you and they're the hardest convert into some kind of buyer. If you don't know what you're doing with Facebook ads you're going to burn a bunch of money, so I don't think that's a good idea.

What I do think is good is going out and finding other people who have audiences that you can do a webinar for. It could be a company, it could be an individual, it could be an author, it could be a thought leader, it could be a speaker, it could be an organization, it could be an university, there's a lot of different options. There are a lot of, for example, software companies and organizations that do ongoing, regular webinars on topics and they're looking for good presenters. If you can come out there with a presentation that's interesting, that informative, that's educational and you could find the audiences that are already doing webinars, it's just like getting on stage and giving a speech. You can do it over and over and over again and you can eventually accumulate a tribe of people who are interested in what it is you do.

Then, the next question becomes how do you develop and nurture those relationships with those perspective audiences, organizations, individuals who've got the audience that you want to get in front of? That's a longer discussion, which I'm happy to dive into, that's really where you need to be thinking about, "Okay, for a long-term, if I want to do webinars, I need to really focus on that relationship piece in order to get in front of these audiences."

Susan: I know that you talk about being able to get paid before a product actually exists. Maybe I'm jumping ahead and we should talk about monetizing your webinars first.

John: The monetization piece and getting paid without having a course first, that's absolutely something you can do, but before you do that, you need to put together some kind of audience. You need to start to accumulate a list. In order to do that, what I think is the most effective means is doing what I hinted out a moment ago, which is I call them collaborative webinars.

Basically, webinars where you do a presentation for someone else's audience or community on a topic that's relevant, interesting, educational, informative for that audience. You need to pick your area of expertise and then there are ways you can figure out what is the most low hanging fruit, the most valuable topic.

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The best way to do it, honestly, is just get started doing webinars for whatever list or community that you have and start seeing what people engage with or asking people, "Hey, what would you like me to do a webinar on? I'm thinking about doing a webinar in two weeks, what would you like me to do a webinar on? What topics would be interesting?"

Then once you find a topic that works really well, then you go around and I call it going on the road. You find more and more audiences to do your presentation for and you start to accumulate that audience, you accumulate that list. Once you've done that, once you've developed some kind of list or audience or community or tribe of people who are interested in the topic that you are focused on, then one of the ways to monetize that list further is by getting paid before you've created something. There's a number of significant reasons why to do this. One of the big ones is when we create something, be it a book, be it a film, be it a speech, be it a training program, online training program or a coaching program or something like that, when we create things and this is a very broad generalization, we don't always know if the market is going to be interested in purchasing that thing that we've created.

Traditionally the way products have been created is someone will retreat to their workshop or their garage or their den or their spare office or their manufacturing facility, create something, spend a bunch of time and effort doing it, then they release it to the market to either success or failure. Today, webinars allow you to actually create something and to test it before you've created it, so you don't actually have to create it before you figured out if the market is interested in it.

Literally what I've done, what many people will do, is they'll decide on a topic of a training, of a program or something they want to teach people about. Let's say it's how to get fit in 30 days or something like that. You want to teach people how to do that using your own methodology. You can literally create, basically, like a description of what that thing is that you're going to do and you can use webinars and market it to the own list that you've developed using the process that I just described and you can see if anyone is interested in purchasing it. If no one buys, great, you figured out that they're not interested in that, you can tweak the offer, change it somehow, at least, you didn't create it before you tried to sell it and discovered that no one wants to buy it.

If you do pre-sell it and people buy it, then you go and create it. Then you say, "It's going to start in a couple of weeks." You've got people who've already bought it, you've got some revenue that you can use in order to create the thing. Then you go create the thing and you have got something that is already proven that people are interested in and you have people going through the program who will give you feedback on how to develop the nuances of what

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that thing looks like. Does that make sense?

Susan: No, it certainly does. How about any misconceptions about products you create? What goes on out there? There are definitely misconceptions when it comes to creating products. Can you talk about some of that?

John: There's a fine line between communicating what people want and also creating what they really need. Sometimes there's a disconnect between those two. Like I mentioned earlier, one of the most popular questions I get when it comes to webinars is about the software, people want to know what software should I use? When I do webinars about webinars, all the questions will focus on that, if I let it.

Instead what I do is I just give them all the answers. I say, "Here are a bunch of different software options that you can use. Now let's move onto a more important question," because really having done ... For example, in 2015 I did 83 live webinars. Having done hundreds of webinars now, I know if you want to be successful at webinars, the most important question is not what software should you use? The more important question is how do I get in front of the right audiences? That will allow you take webinars further.

As far as misconceptions go, as far as products go, there's a fine line between communicating what your product is about in a way that is authentic and that is true and also giving them what they really need, if there's a difference between those two, because sometimes what people need and what they want are different things. Also, sometimes people don't really understand what they're getting. You need to have a lot of conversations with your potential buyers about what they need? What their challenges are? What their pains are? So that you can make sure that any copy that you use to describe the solutions that you're providing, that you're selling to people are going to address those pain, challenges that they experience and communicate it in a way that they trust you that you are going to help them to alleviate that pain or that challenge. Does that make sense? Hopefully, that explained it.

Susan: Yeah. How in depth should these programs be?

John: Most people, when they create some kind of solution, they have a tendency to give too much. I certainly did that. Most people that I know when they go and create some kind of a digital course or even a coaching program or something like that, when they first create it, there's too much to it. They give people a fire hose, because they want to make sure that people feel like they're getting their value. Anyone who's been in a classroom or taught people before knows that ... Or even been in a classroom themselves as a student, you know that you can't capture everything. There's real value to curating and being cautious in how

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much information you give. At the same time ... I've seen this as a course creator and selling courses, the hard part is people will purchase based on unrealistic assessment of how much information they can take in.

Sometimes you honestly do have a situation where if someone sells like \$4,000 worth of digital products and programs and multiple different courses and packs all this stuff in and they sell it for \$97, people will buy like crazy, even though it's really unrealistic that they're going to be able to get through all that information. I think the best thing you can do is when you're creating some kind of solution for people, you make sure that it's as succinct as possible and it just walks them through in a way that is not going to overwhelm them and that is going to help them to digest the information and implement it as much as possible and to the extent that you throw other additional bonuses and things like that that is separated out and it's a separate course of its own, so that people can focus on one thing at a time.

Susan: Let's talk about other streams of the income, some easy ones as they maybe relate to the webinars.

John: From an author's perspective, there's many different ways you can take the content that goes into your book and monetize it in different ways. You have this IP, your intellectual property, that goes into the book. That book is one way of monetizing it. Other ways of monetizing it are you could create an audio book, you could create an eBook version, you could create a work sheet or a workbook that's based off of the book itself, that helps people to implement it further.

You can, of course, do your own consulting or coaching or some kind of done for you type of solution related to the work or the book, using the book as essentially a lead generation device and trying to get people into your consulting, your coaching. A lot of times that is how people end up writing a book in the first place, is they are doing client work in the consulting or coaching or done for you type of capacity where they will create ... Done for you is like a web developer who will create a website for someone. Online courses, as we've been talking about is another way of doing it. Software is another way of taking whatever pain or challenge the person is going to read the book is experiencing, is there a software solution that can help to alleviate that? Is there a physical product out there that this market would also be interested in purchasing?

You don't have to create all these things, by the way. There are others maybe that have created good solutions that you can recommend. I say look internally first, what are they products? What are the courses? What are the books? What are you consuming? What are you using yourself in your own business that you can recommend to others? If you recommend something that's relevant, that's

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curated to other people, you've taken the time to figure out that that is a valuable tool for them, you've saved them a ton of time, you deserve to be compensated for that recommendation.

Oftentimes, in fact, most of the time, when a product out there, like a software or something like that has some kind of affiliate or a partner program, it doesn't increase the cost to the end user, it's 10%, 20%, 30% or whatever of the cost. Maybe it's capped, maybe it's only for a year, if it's a recurring expense or something like that, it's a way that you can monetize your own knowledge, your own expertise by making recommendation to other people. There are some people that is the exclusive way that they monetize their knowledge or expertise, essentially as a recommender, as an affiliate, as a partner, as someone who's providing advice and recommendation to other people.

If you're not doing this, then this could be a revelation to you, that there are other ways of making money, maybe diversifying your revenue, so that if you are, let's say, you're a consultant and the only way you work right now is by getting paid by clients. What if you were to also ... And you can disclose this to the client and you say, "Hey, look, there is this software solution that can help you to achieve the results that you want to achieve, I'm a partner with them and you certainly don't have to use this software solution, but I would recommend it, it will help you achieve the results that you want faster and I will help you to implement it in your business. They do that and then you get compensated for that. It's a way of creating a different revenue source for your business."

Everything that I've done for my business over the last four or five years has been towards shipping, towards diversification of revenue sources and away from single revenue source, because when I was a practicing lawyer and that was my only source, then that was one source of business and a lot of small business owners had that problem, so I'm a big fan of getting creative and finding other ways to monetize your expertise.

Susan: I love it, because that's exactly the way I like to do it. I look at how many ways can you repurpose material? Yes, thank you. I know that our listeners are itching to find out how they can get hold of you.

John: Smartbusinessrevolution.com is my home on the web. I've got all kinds of email templates that you can download from there. I've got eBooks, if you sign up for my email list at that spot, then I will send them over to you right away. If you want to learn about webinars, for example, you can go to webinar1K.com/freebok and you can download, I've got an eBook there that will help you to get started with webinars and what software to choose and that sort of thing, so you can check that out.

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- Susan: Excellent resources, I can highly recommend them. Thank you. If you were to leave our listeners with a golden nugget, John, what would that be?
- John: We didn't even get to talking about this, but I want to mention it, because I think it's really important. Everything that I do, when I look back on my career, I realize that it was all about the relationships that I built that allowed me to get the wonderful opportunities that I've had in my career. I try inspire and equip other people with ideas, inspiration and tools that can help them to do more, build better relationships in their businesses.
- One of the big ones is I advocate everyone to create what I call your conversations list, which is a list of the 50 people you'd like to build or deepen a relationship with over the course of the next year or so. I'm a huge advocate of doing that, it should only take about 15 minutes of your time to do. I don't know what the direct link is, but if you google Smart Business Revolution and conversations list, you'll come to a blog post that is about how you can put together your conversations list.
- I have mine on my wall, so I literally have a list of 50 people who are most important in my business. On a daily basis, I create my own action planners to plan out my day and I write down the list of each person and [we cycle 00:26:46] through them over time, each person who I'm going to reach out to and try and deliver some value to them. I'm a huge fan of doing that and I recommend that you do that.
- Susan: You're on my list, John, so thank you.
- John: Great!
- Susan: Thank you and thank you all for taking precious time out of your day to listen to this interview. I sincerely hope that it sparks some ideas you can use to sell more books. Here's wishing you much book marketing success.