

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



BOOK MARKETING: How to Generate Powerful Innovative Product Ideas

- 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 is a product creation expert. Marcy Nelson-Garrison is a product mentor, certified professional co-active coach, master's level licensed psychologist, a visual artist, and the founder of the Coaching Toys online store. Coaching since 1999, Marcy brings her extensive product knowledge and passion for creativity to helping heart-centered professionals and authors create products and programs that transform lives. She believes in the power of products to expand your message, have more impact and generate more revenue. That's most important. Marcy, welcome to the show and thank you for being this week's special guest expert and mentor.
- Marcy Garrison: Thank you so much, Susan, for having me there and for underscoring profit. It's such an important part of everything we do.
- Susan Friedmann: Absolutely, because, Marcy, you know as well as I that authors are unlikely to get rich just selling their book. What I love about what you offer is the fact that how can they take that book and maximize their content, so tell us what we need to know.
- Marcy Garrison: First of all, I'm assuming most of the people listening today to this podcast have a book written or maybe on their way, so I just want to say congratulations. That is not a small accomplishment. What that means is that you've got something to say and you've got some wisdom to share and books are a powerful way to get it out. The exciting news is that's only the beginning, and you know this too, Susan. There are lots of ways to share your message, so we're going to talk a little bit about what else is possible.
- Susan Friedmann: A book is a gold mine for all sorts of products, so how can we delve into creating those products? Where do we start? Somebody who has no clue and just sees the book as a book, where would they start looking for ideas?

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



- Marcy Garrison: Well, I think there are a lot of creative ways to look about it. What I'd love to point to first is just that any medium can be a message and that your fans are going to buy your message in multiple forms. I want to point to Hay House as an example of this. You may have already seen it, Susan, with some of the people that you work with. Hay House really gets how to leverage their authors and they have some really high visibility authors like Wayne Dyer and Dr. Christiane Northrup, and so if we took Christiane Northrup's as an example, she's got a book called *The Wisdom of Menopause*, and if you take a look at all the products that have emerged from that book, her content has been expanded into an online course, an app, a workbook, a journal, an audio download. I mean, that's how many? How many is that? Six, I think?
- Susan Friedmann: Yeah, five or six, yeah.
- Marcy Garrison: Yeah, so if you imagine for a moment that you've never heard of her and you just happened on this huge collection of products related to that message, would that color your perception of her?
- Susan Friedmann: You definitely see her as an expert on this field.
- Marcy Garrison: Yeah, you would. If it's an important topic to you, would you buy more than one thing?
- Susan Friedmann: I know that I'd buy one thing from somebody and if I like it, I'd go in and search for something else.
- Marcy Garrison: Exactly, so her just having more products amplifies her expert status, just as you said. The perception is she's prolific. I'm getting a roundabout way to your original question. The perception is that she's prolific but she didn't have to generate a lot of new content to add those additional products. It's more about repurposing and repackaging what's already created in the book, so you don't want to, when you're looking at other products to create, you don't want to be going off on too many tangents off that main message.
- Susan Friedmann: I remember when I wrote my very first book and it was exhibiting at trade shows and I was like, "I don't want to sell this in onesies and twosies." I went to a company and they bought a thousand and then another thousand. Then I went to another company and they wanted little booklets, and so we created booklets which they translated into other languages and they ordered like a quarter of a million of them. This all came from this one book. I didn't have to create anything else.

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



- Marcy Garrison: That's what's kind of exciting about this. Books, booklets, selling in bulk, but you can also create ... Well, the Hay House example is a lot of courses and I think that you can also create card decks and calendars and workshops and kits and board games, pillows with your quotes on them. The sky is the limit. You can create all kinds of things. It's really fun and good for business.
- Susan Friedmann: I know that there's a website, Zazzle. Do you use that?
- Marcy Garrison: Yeah.
- Susan Friedmann: You can create products, as you say, and people can order straight from there.
- Marcy Garrison: Exactly. I think CafePress is another one. There are a lot of companies now that are doing print on demand. Places that do card decks print on demand, which always surprises me, but why someone would want to do those print on demand? It's always a good way to test your market and see if it sells, but if it's a good product, you'd want to mass produce or find a publisher, one of the two, but yeah, you could put it on clothing. You can do all kinds of things.
- Susan Friedmann: When somebody comes to you, Marcy, and says, "Help me," where do you start with them?
- Marcy Garrison: For a lot of people that come to me, they don't already have a book and I think it's a little bit different starting place then because it's really finding the core message, what they stand for, and creating from that. But if you come to me and you already have a book, you've already got the content and the message, so then it's a matter of mining the book. What I believe, Susan, is that creativity requires stimulus and the stimulus can come in a lot of different forms. I created something called the Circles of Stimulus, which helps people look at it.
- If you can envision three concentric circles, so the inner circles, I call it close to home, and that's your passions and your interests and your current and your past work. In the case of someone who's written a book, it's the book content or the pre-book content. The next circle out is the cognitive mall and this type of stimulus uses more cognitive creative thinking tools so you're looking for intersections between unrelated fields and you're letting everything cross pollinate with your ideas and come up with some new ways of looking at things. There's a

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



- great book by Michael Michalko. Do you know that one? Thinkertoys, I think it's called.
- Susan Friedmann: Thinkertoys.
- Marcy Garrison: Yes.
- Susan Friedmann: I love that book.
- Marcy Garrison: I know.
- Susan Friedmann: I absolutely love that book.
- Marcy Garrison: It has just so many wonderful cognitive exercises to break out of your thinking. I was just talking to a client today and we drew the card from the Whack Pack but it was slay the sacred cow, and it was such a good one because sometimes you just get so attached to an idea being a certain way that you have to look at your assumptions and the rules and break them all and see what shakes out of that.
- Susan Friedmann: Yes, I've got that on my shelf, that Whack Pack, and it really does. It's good to bring it out every now and again. Thank you for reminding me.
- Marcy Garrison: You're welcome. Those are the kinds of creative stimulus and the cognitive mall. The third circle out, one of my all time favorites, is the cosmic soup, and this is really about inviting spirit and using non-linear, more right brain methods, sort of playing and really looking for intuition. I'm always, when I'm working on something creative, I'm drawing from my favorite card decks whenever I get stuck or I'm doing creative journaling exercises to open up to intuitive guidance. I mean, that's the cosmic soup. You need both. You need those left brain stimulus things and you need the right brain stimulus things. I have actually come up with some questions that would be helpful for authors.
- Susan Friedmann: I'd love to hear them. Share them. Pray, share them with us.
- Marcy Garrison: These would probably be more related to that close to home circle of stimulus because you're really looking at your book content but trying on these questions and to seeing what shows up. The first question is, "Does your book suggest steps or a process?" I think whenever you've got a steps or a process embedded in your book, that's easy to pull out and turn into some sort of a program or class or something. One place

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



to look is your chapter headings. Or if you use exercises or questions at the end of each chapter, how could you pull those out and use them in some different ways. That's question one.

Question number two, "Like if your book were a program, what would the training modules be?" I think about Brené Brown's book, *The Gifts of Imperfection*. Her book can easily be converted into a 12-week class or a group coaching program. She's got 10 guide posts, she's got an introduction to *The Gifts of Imperfection*, she has this part on how things get in the way, so you put those together and you've got a lovely program.

Look to your own work to see if there are training modules that just would show up. It's just putting a different hat on when you look at your material.

The third question is, "If your book were a card deck, would there be suits?" Off the top of your head, what are four suits that might capture your content? If you need more, you can add more. If you need six suits, have six, but just see if there are these big categories.

Question number four is to look at each chapter heading individually. If this specific chapter heading were a product, what would it be? I picked up a book that's been on my shelf for a long time. It's *Creativity in Business*. One of the chapter headings was *destroy judgment, create curiosity*. It struck me. I said, "That's a pretty powerful title." If that were a product, how would you make it interactive? Maybe it could be an app that walks you through a process. Then I started thinking, "Well, it has possibilities as a card deck with two suits, like what if one suit were *judgment busters* and the other suit *curiosity stimulators*" Oh, I hope somebody makes that deck. Sounds pretty interesting.

Susan Friedmann: Sell the idea to the author.

Marcy Garrison: Right, I could do that. That step is looking in each chapter heading and see what that triggers as a product. Five is look at some of your favorite passages and see if there's a product possibility there. I pulled a book off my shelf, Maureen Murdock's book *The Heroine's Journey*, and it was written 25 years ago. It had this statement in it: "The vision and power of the feminine is represented in depictions of the virgin, mother, and crone; the spider, snake, and bird; the vessel, cave, and grail; the mountain, water, and trees; as well as specific goddess figures." The artist in me immediately jumped when I read that passage to having a

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



coloring book or a journal with all those different symbols of the feminine, and then I thought, "Well, it could also be like an eight-week online course or a live course really focused on the energy of each of those particular symbols of the feminine. Or even a year-long art journaling practice."

I mean, I sort of went nuts with that one. But as you can see, sometimes just a phrase can take you in a new direction. So really go through your material and see if there's some of those really juicy passages that jump out at you and see what you could create from that. Then the last one is what are the reoccurring words or slogans or quotes in your book? The things you say all the time that you really take a stand for and people start to know you by those phrases. Those could inspire a line of t-shirts or toe pegs or even other kinds of clothing.

Susan Friedmann: Coffee mugs.

Marcy Garrison: Coffee mugs. Calendars. It's just all kinds of things. You probably know some things about distribution avenues if you've worked with people with books because products often have similar distribution avenues, particularly the tangible kinds of products like if you had totes or if you had calendars or if you had card decks. Retail stores, and so do agents, tend to prefer a line of products versus just a standalone. Yeah, if you go with just a book, it's okay, they might carry the book, especially like specialty retail stores, but if you have a book and a companion journal and a workbook and a card deck, they're going to be much more excited about putting you in their store. Agents like that too, they call on the different retail stores. They like to have a line that they represent.

Susan Friedmann: I know that we talked about a couple of our resources that do print on demand t-shirts, caps, mugs one at a time, but there are some products like I've got an author who wrote a children's book and she was looking to create a stuffed toy that was the hero in her book. She could only find a Chinese manufacturer and she would have to order many thousands-

Marcy Garrison: Six thousand, probably?

Susan Friedmann: Yes, so she wasn't prepared to do that. We don't want a garage overflowing with product. What do you suggest there?

Marcy Garrison: I did do some research into a plush toy at one time, that's why I knew the six thousand number, because I had a prototype that I'd created and

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



decided not to produce it. I think when you're going to invest, it's helpful to do some research. That would mean investing and getting some prototypes made. I'd found someone at the time who did ... She actually did prototypes for Target stores and so she created my prototype. My prototype wasn't cheap and this was quite a few years ago, probably at least 9 or 10. It was probably \$500 just to get a prototype made. But then you have something tangible that you can take around and get estimates and you can look at other avenues for production, but you can test it, you can see if people like it enough.

I think if a book has a good track record and you're selling a lot of them, it's a little easier to justify creating the companion plush toy. If you know you're going to sell 5,000 books or 6,000 books, that you've got the distribution channels, you've got a good agent, you had a good track record, and the demand is looking brisk, then you can be justified in investing in 6,000 because what you want to do is figure out your breakeven number. If you're producing 6,000 of a plush toy and say the price gets down to \$2 per toy, and you can sell it for 15, 20, you can figure out how many you have to sell retail because retail is going to want half of that. Let's say you have a \$20 price tag on it, retail's going to be 10 and your cost is 2, which means you've got \$8 there of profit. Your \$10, you figure out how many times does that go into 5,000 and then you know how many you have to sell to break even.

Susan Friedmann: Would you recommend that people find a company that you could partner with, who, let's say, were interested in this particular product? Maybe, as you say, it's a game or it's a toy and that they fund it.

Marcy Garrison: What happens when you have a pa- ... It's like book publishing, similarly. If you have a game company like Mattel that takes your game, you're going to get a small royalty off of it. They'll take all the risk, they'll take all the profit too and you'll get a little bit, depending on the contract you're negotiating. With any kind of product where you're partnering with someone, they're going to take a percentage. You always stand to have more profit if you self-produce, but you really want to make sure you have your distribution channels lined up and you have maybe some agents lined up and you've done some testing, so you know you're going to get your money back. That's what a lot of people don't do, the testing piece. They'll invest and then their product just doesn't hold up against other products in retail venues, so then it doesn't do well. Or storekeepers don't want it because it doesn't have enough shelf appeal.

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



- Susan Friedmann: Let's step back, I mean, this could be a little scary for some authors, just thinking this kind of numbers and investments and everything. Let's back down to what they can do with their book. Can you talk about more of those types of products?
- Marcy Garrison: Well, I do think that card decks are possible. Journals, journals could be really simple. You could have small quotes from your book in the journal. A workbook could be an easy tangible product to create, but then you really want to look at some of those other types of products, like an online course or a class series or boot camps or things like that where you have a lot more margin, because then you can do joint venture opportunities. It's hard to do a joint venture opportunity, particularly with a book, because they're usually low cost items and people can have you as a guest to speak and sell your book, but if you are pushing your book but you also have a \$400 program, online course, you can offer that joint venture partner a nice, healthy commission off that and so they're really excited to get you out in front of a lot of people.
- I would add the tangible, the smaller, tangible products. You can do a card deck print on demand. You can do all of these things print on demand, and if you're just selling in the back of the room or your website, you're fine, you're going to make enough money on it, but it limit you from getting into retail stores. So you want those other kinds of products that can really increase your opportunities for joint ventures but also just have a nice margin. Then you can bundle things, which is even more exciting, so.
- Susan Friedmann: I'm pleased you brought that up because that really is key is being able to bundle. I often tell my authors, I mean, even just putting a few books together and not just selling it one at a time. It's just packaging or buy two and get the third one free. It's little things like that.
- Marcy Garrison: Little things.
- Susan Friedmann: Let's focus on mistakes that you find your clients make when it comes to producing product, and obviously particularly authors.
- Marcy Garrison: Well, I think for everyone, and it may be true when people are writing their book, too, that they tend to not stay in the creative process long enough. I don't know if you find that with book writing.
- Susan Friedmann: Talk more about that creative process.

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



Marcy Garrison:

I tend to work with a lot of service professionals and they get it and they're creative. We're helping really creative people and they get an idea and the first idea they get, they just want to run with and produce it. Trying to slow them down is not always easy because it's usually the second or third iteration of a product idea that is actually the stronger, more profitable option. I review products for a magazine and I often get products ... Well, not often, but I'd say 25% of the time, I get products sent to me that just don't look finished. It's like if they would only have taken this a couple more steps, they'd have something good, but they just fell short. I hate to see that happen when you've got a good concept but you just don't push it far enough.

The end product doesn't stand out. Either there's not the investment in production, go on the cheap, it just doesn't have the impact they want. I'm doing this card deck class and I know that a lot of people come to me they want to create a card deck. They often have an idea but it's often an idea that's been done a million times. It's like how can you take it another step further? Tie it to your wisdom and your message in a new, fresh way that makes it really exciting for the end user.

I love quoting Janet Goldstein. She was a New York publicist. She says, "It only has to be 10% original to be perceived as original." I love hearing that, and so do most of my clients because they think little thing has to be original and it stops them in their tracks. It only has to be 10% original but you need to take it past that original urge and keep diving a little deeper, peel back another level, come back at it another direction, and the better idea will start to emerge, but you have to keep playing with it longer than most people want to. Creative people tend to be impatient sometimes, so like, "Go, I want to do it."

Susan Friedmann:

I recognize that one.

Marcy Garrison:

Yeah, right. Sometimes it works to do that and sometimes it pays to just ... I know when I'm working on something and I run it by some friends and they give me some feedback, part of it is getting comfortable with feedback. My first initial reaction is always, "Oh, crap. I thought I was done," but then I sit with it and I look at the feedback and I go, "Oh, huh!" It takes me in a slightly new direction. I refine what I have. I start to see how it could improve and the next version is better. It proves it over and over to me each time that happens that if you push it a little further, risk getting feedback, take in what's helpful and continue to create, you'll have a better product. That's the number one mistake I

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



think people make is just don't take it to another two or three iterations down the road.

Susan Friedmann: What else do you have for us?

Marcy Garrison: We talked a little earlier about testing. It's getting feedback. Research can be such a wonderful dance partner if you let it. It's just you put it out there, you get some feedback, you go back to the drawing board, you put it out there again, get some more feedback. If you have a favorite color magenta and you create a card deck that's heavy magenta and you do some testing and everybody says, "Gosh, I love this card deck. I love the impact, but I sure don't like that color." If you hear that enough, you might realize that you need to not rely on just your favorite color for the deck, but you need to find a color that really is going to help your deck get out and have the most impact and not turn people off. You wouldn't know that if you didn't get it out there and do some feedback around it. It's the difference of having 6,000 plush toys in a box in your basement and selling 6,000 of them.

Then, of course, the other thing is just invest. Invest in packaging. Invest in design. Don't try to do it yourself. A designer is going to bring so much more expertise and a fresh mind to what you're creating and can actually be a collaborative partner in some ways. I think a lot of people, especially with card decks or kits or board games, like they can sometimes fall short on the packaging side of it, but if you want to get out into retail environments, shelf appeal is important. Even if you're going to a conference; I take products to conferences all the time. If I have to explain what it is too much, it's not going to sell, but if the packaging is really inviting and it just says what it is, it's really easy to sell them. That's my soapbox.

Susan Friedmann: Great soapbox. One thing that I'd really like to touch on very briefly and that is patenting. Here, you've created something, do you recommend a patent for it or is it not worth it?

Marcy Garrison: That would be worth talking to an intellectual property attorney. Most of the types of products I work with people on, it would be more copyrighting than patent, so you'd really want to do some research on the ... I always think of patents with like technical things or science or gadgets.

Susan Friedmann: You recommend like trademarking it or copyrighting.

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



- Marcy Garrison: I think copyrighting, unless there's something that is patentable, but most of the product that we've mentioned today like classes and workshops and boot camps and retreats and all that, I don't think that they are ... Unless you have a brand that you trademark. The actual content of those courses would fall more under copyright. I'm not an attorney. You'd want to double check. That's my understanding.
- Susan Friedmann: Okay. If our listeners would like to find out more about your product creation services, how would they do that?
- Marcy Garrison: I do help people create products and would love to offer the listeners a couple things. One is worksheet of those six questions that we went through, that if you want to take those, download them and work on them at your own leisure. The other is a free product possibility session with me. It's just an opportunity to get some input on your idea, maybe explore some possibilities. You can learn how I work and what different programs are available and I get a chance to learn about you, too. I really love doing those sorts of call. To sign up for a session and to get that download, you would go to my website, pinkparadigm.com, and it'd be /bookmarketingmentors.html. That's www.pinkparadigm.com/bookmarketingmentors.html.
- Susan Friedmann: Excellent. What I'll do is I'll make sure that that's in the show note, Marcy. Thank you. If you were to leave our listeners with a golden nugget of information, what would that be?
- Marcy Garrison: One of the things I want to emphasize is that creating something that has heart and meaning can also be profitable, and it's really important to bring both head and heart to the process, and that people will buy your message in more than one medium. It really is doable. It's like just imagine going to a speaking thing and having multiple products to sell in the back of the room and they buy them all. Lots of possibility for more income and just have fun with the creative process.
- Susan Friedmann: Excellent. Thank you. Thank you for being our guest. Thank you all for taking time out of your precious 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.