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BOOK MARKETING: How to Use Social Selling Best Practices Interview with Phil Gerbyshak

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 Phil Gerbyshak, a LinkedIn trainer and technology expert who helps his clients leverage technology for business growth, whether it's using LinkedIn or other social selling tools, choosing the right mix of technology, creating webinars and online universities, publishing a book, maximizing speaking engagements, or knowing why and how to use technology tools, Phil can help you.

You may have seen Phil's insights featured in the Wall Street Journal, Daily Globe and Mail, inc.com, USA Today, his articles in Speaker Magazine, or on philgerbyshak.com, or heard his voice on NSA Voices of Experience on his podcast Conversations with Phil.

When he's not teaching the world how to dispel their technology fears, but rather to use technology to be more profitable, you can find Phil relaxing on one of Florida's beaches either reading a book, playing pinball with his iPhone, being with his girlfriend, and of course, he'll be wearing trademark glasses.

So Phil, it's such an honor to have you as this week's guest expert and mentor. Welcome to the show.

Phil Gerbyshak: Thank you Susan, it's really a pleasure to be here. This will be fun.

Susan Friedmann: I know it will, and I'm going to really get to the nitty gritty because technology is something that is constantly changing. First of all, how do you manage to keep up with it with all these changes without going crazy because I know I do.

Phil Gerbyshak: Well that's a really good question, and for me, I look for other people that are really technologically smart to draft off and learn from them

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because frankly, I can't keep up with everything myself unless I have some help because frankly, there's so much out there like you said, and so first I pick some mentors to draft off of.

One is Beth Ziesenis is super duper smart. She's Your Nerdy Best Friend. I keep up with Beth and read what she writes and read what she shares on social media. When I'm looking to keep up on LinkedIn, I do a pretty good job myself but there's a lot of smart people out there. Viveka von Rosen, Melonie Dodaro, Bernie Borges, Mario Martinez, you know, so many smart people out there, Kirk Shaver, I mean I could go on with them.

Frankly, I do have to do my own research. I have Google alerts set up for the word LinkedIn, so if anybody mentions LinkedIn, it pops up in my RSS feed reader, which I use Feedly, F-E-E-D-L-Y dot com, and I can quickly skim and see, hmm, is this something of value or is this something that isn't of value?

All of those things, I kind of put them together and I dedicate time each and every day to learning, because frankly, if all I was doing was producing material, I wouldn't be on top of things. I would just be talking about what happened or what might happen, so instead, I commit myself to being a lifelong learner, and I listen to podcast like this one to stay sharp. Sometimes it's even in something completely unrelated that sparks the best ideas because sometimes we have to look at the same idea through a different perspective, through a different lens in order to get a good idea that we can use in our world.

Susan Friedmann: I'm with you on that because like you, I'm a lifelong learner. How do you suggest, though, that a busy author keep up with this type of technology they don't necessarily have the time to do all the things that you do? What would you recommend?

Phil Gerbyshak: If you're going to pick one of those, certainly pick a smart mentor. Someone that you can follow that you can get in touch with, maybe even hire a coach, be part of a master mind. You can either invest time or you can invest money. Sometimes we have more money than we have time and sometimes we have more time than we have money, so pick which one do you have. You don't get to have both. I mean, that's not how this works, right? You have to give up some resource in order to get more of what you want. That usually works.

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The other thing that you can do is frankly realize you don't have to do everything. You don't necessarily have to keep up. So if you start with your "why". Why am I thinking about a new technology? Is there an inefficiency in my business that I'm trying to overcome? Now, sometimes there is technology that can overcome that, but sometimes that technology has such a steep learning curve and is so difficult to learn that it frankly isn't worth it. There are some marketing automation tools out there that are really hard but they do some amazing stuff that I would love to have them do but frankly would take me a month to learn how to do them, so I choose not to.

Again, with that, if I really felt that that was going to be a lever in my business that I wanted to pull, I would invest the money to hire a virtual assistant to do that or I would find a way to get a coach that could help me with that or join a group coaching class. Sometimes group coaching is a little less expensive way to stay on top of things, but find folks that you trust, that you can learn from, and that who fits your learning style. That's the other thing you have to realize is because technology can be very difficult. If you don't know how you learn or why you want to learn it, it's going to be really hard to keep up.

Those are the things that I recommend, but it cost you time or it cost you money. You get to pick which one, but one of them is going to happen.

Susan Friedmann: Definitely some wise advice there, Phil, thank you. Now, you talk a lot about social selling, but what exactly does that mean and how can our authors use it to build their author platform?

Phil Gerbyshak: Let's break that apart in the two words that it is. Let's talk about selling first because that's the way that we do it last. By that I mean you have to understand what selling is and that's typically not done in the masses. If you're an author and you just kind of jam your book up there and you think that people are going to buy it, they're going to find it because it's a wonderful book, and you don't give them any context and you don't give them any reason, it's not going to happen.

Instead, you're going to have get more intimate with them. Podcast like this is a great way to become more intimate, so if you're an author, you should be getting on podcast or hosting your own podcast so that you can get inside people's heads. If you think about it, a podcast often, people put both earphones and they exercise or they clean the house or they drive or whatever it is that they do, but it goes deep inside the

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head, and it really gets into the brain, it really becomes intimate. You hear people's voices and it's almost as good as talking on the phone, although I would say it's better if you're trying to build your platform because there's no chatter from you. You have to listen. You have to give it some mindful attention.

That sale takes place either in an email, it takes place on the phone, in person, on a webinar, somewhere more intimate, not where you're attempting to reach the masses. Stop using social to sell, instead use social to get them to change the channel to join you on your email newsletter list, on a webinar, in a private Facebook group, on a podcast, at an in-person event, something that's more intimate.

And then the social piece of that, you have to talk to who your ideal customer is, knowing that at first, you might not reach any of them because they've never heard of you, so you might get zero on your engagement score. Nobody might hit like or comment or share, which is fine, but you have to get dressed before you get busy. That means you have to build up your profile, and you have to look like someone that people would want to connect with.

As an author, it isn't enough to say that you're an author. You have to offer samples of your work. You have to get some third party testimonials that say that they've enjoyed your work and how it's helped them, how it's really made them think differently, why they've enjoyed it. Those testimonials are social proof that are just so important and you need to get those. You need to have your picture and things filled out and people need to be able to read your story. Not just your book story, but your story of who you are and why you do what you do.

And then you have to be a person of value. That means you might be sharing other people's stuff first. You might be going out and looking at your audience and saying, hmm, what are they sharing? Now, hopefully you've done a good job of creating some sort of persona of the ideal person that's going to read your book.

In addition to sharing their stuff, you might also know their common complaints, their common problems. What are they struggling with? Why do they need someone like you? And then sharing those articles from other people as well because you can't be social by talking only about yourself. Nobody would think that's very social. If you're at a cocktail party, and all you do is throw out your elevator pitch, people would be like, really? You're not at all interested in me? You don't ask

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anything? So you need to ask, right? You need to connect. You need to converse. Really, really important stuff on there.

Again, it comes with time though, so you can't just flip a switch and, today, I'm going to sign up for LinkedIn and tomorrow I'm going to start building my business. I'm going to start social selling.

That's not how it works. It does take time. You need to build it before you need it. I recommend you should have it set up long before you write your first book. You should be starting out with a blog, giving people samples of your work, sharing your opinions and other people's ideas, and going deeper into those things that trouble especially as a non-fiction author. You have so much opportunity to connect your story to them that if you don't do that, you're frankly just missing out.

Susan Friedmann: You mentioned LinkedIn, and I'd love to turn the tables a little bit now and focus on that because I know that you've mentioned that LinkedIn is the hardest social network. Tell us exactly what that means but yet why you've chosen it as your favorite platform to use.

Phil Gerbyshak: It's the hardest social network because you don't have any fluffy stuff to talk about. If you go to Facebook, you've got cat videos, you've got pictures of kids, you see people being very personal, and it's real easy to say, "Hey, that's a cute picture of your kid," or, "Hey, congratulations on buying a new house," but people don't make those proclamations, they don't share those pictures on LinkedIn, and frankly, I don't know that they ever will.

It's more work stuff and think about it, if you're working somewhere and you knew that in your building, everybody could see everything that you did, how much of your personal stuff would you bring in? Some people share more and some share less, but most people choose to share less, so that makes it hard because that connection point, you really have to work at it. You have to really pay attention. Not to mention, from an interface perspective, LinkedIn doesn't give you a lot of ways to sift and sort through all that information that's coming your way.

If you get 500 people that are connected to you on LinkedIn and they each share once a day, oh my goodness, that's 500 messages. That's hard. That's almost overwhelming than adding 50 influencers and 10 businesses, and you're up to 600, 100, 10,000 pieces of content today, and how do you choose what to do? That's how it can be really hard.

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But the good news is if you have a strategy, first a connection strategy, who do you connect to and why? Why are you connected to them? If I'm going to connect to [inaudible 00:12:42] and why do I want to do that and I have to ask myself that intentionally before I even do it. It could be because you're a peer. It could be because you're a potential business partner. It could be because you're someone that I hope buys my book or someone that I hope hires me to speak or someone that's at a corporation that I'd like to do some work with. Whatever that is, I need to really be intentional about that.

Then I need to think about, so how do I cultivate that relationship? Now, these are all things that happen in private, by the way. You won't see that I am super intentional in the public about cultivating a relationships because frankly, that ends up looking kind of cheesy. Not to mention, if I'm talking to a prospect in the public, someone who might buy my book and do business with me, who might hire me to speak or to train their organization on how to use LinkedIn, if I'm talking to the public, my competitors might see that too, so they might snipe that off. They might jump in with, "I know a person that's even better than Phil, and he's even cheaper." Sadly, that relationship is tough to jump.

If I'm just getting to know someone, I have to stay in private and we have that conversation. So, that first step, like I said, is categorize why am I connecting. Second of all, cultivate that relationship, and third then, I need to change that channel. I need to get them on the phone. I need to have them on my private email list. I might need to send them a personal message. Once you connect to someone on LinkedIn, you get their email address.

Well now, not that you should go taking of your contacts and putting them in your email marketing platform because that's illegal, that's canned spam, not approved, and that will get you in trouble, but you should put them into your contact manager and have some one-on-one conversations where as you bucket them as you know why you're connecting with them, you can have those one-on-one conversations. You can have an outline of what you want to say, and then personalize it and customize it, but it can't look like the same thing you sent a thousand people or people know that it's not personal for them.

That's why LinkedIn is both the least and the most powerful social network, and that's why I choose it because of its complexity. The barrier to entry on LinkedIn is high, which means once you know how to

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do it right, you can really leverage the heck out of it and really make some impact.

Susan Friedmann: If our authors were to start using LinkedIn, what must they do first off to be effective as using this as a social selling tool?

Phil Gerbyshak: The first thing is you have to be someone worth connecting to. You have to build out your profile. Each piece of that profile, from your headline to your summary, to your picture, to your name, to the media that you add to your profile, to absolutely everything on your profile must be there and fully filled out. It's really important, and in fact, LinkedIn says that 75% of their people, 75% of people using LinkedIn, do not have a complete profile, which means they do not show up in searches well, which means when people Google them, they're scratching their head.

If I find you and you don't have a complete profile, your profile doesn't answer the questions that I'm asking. So complete your profile. That's the first thing that you need to do.

The second thing is you to get connected. You need to, again, think about who am I trying to connect to? Who is of value? Who is my ideal customer? Who could buy my book, and please, if you're telling me that everybody will benefit from your book, go and buy that directory of everybody, you know, it's called the Internet with about a billion pages on it and go search through them. Start at the As and come back to me when you get to the end. Because that's not true. Narrow your niche. Narrow your target down, and then start finding out where they are. Are they in groups? Are they in nowhere? Do you have to follow them back somewhere else? Is there maybe a website that takes them back?

LinkedIn is meant to be not an endpoint, but a starting point. It's a great place for research. It's a great place to share things. It's a great place for people to find you because it's typically the top five searches. If you search for someone's name, typically, it's going to show up in the top five. Unless you have a more common name, then it might show lowered on.

Even for mine, I own philgerbyshak.com, I write there often, I'm constantly producing content, constantly updating it, making it relevant. LinkedIn still shows up number two for me. That means LinkedIn's probably going to show up pretty darn high for you too, especially if you don't write everyday. In fact, it outranks my Amazon profile, which is fascinating when you think about it, that LinkedIn, a social network,

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could outrank a place where my books are, where I have high authority being an author on Amazon, but no. No, no. In fact, LinkedIn beats the pants off it.

Susan Friedmann: I know that there is a free version and a premium version. What are your thoughts on what we need starting out?

Phil Gerbyshak: Well, starting out, go free and go deep. Leverage everything you can on LinkedIn. As you're starting out and you're learning to use the platform, it might take you 30, 60, 90 days depending on if you hire a coach or depending if you buy a course or some shortcut to make it faster, but it's going to take you some time to learn how to use it.

Okay, that's great. Once you've figured it out, then realize that there's a whole nother world in the paid version. The paid version allows you to target down. Now, I don't know that selling books via the premium version is really what you're going to do, but I can tell you, if you're going to get speaking engagements, if you're going to do consulting, if you're going to do coaching and you need to target your people, if you want to do lead generation and generate some leads for your business, and you want to get to know them more where you want to go in to a big company, and you're not quite sure who the decision maker is, you should absolutely be using sales navigator.

That's LinkedIn's premium product. It is their best sales tool. Often they give you a special where you can try it out for a month or two months or I've even seen three months free trials.

Here's the thing though. If you don't have a strategy, if you don't have a plan for who you're going to target, what the message is, don't sign up for navigator. Once you develop that plan, once you have a strategy, you layout the messages, you think about the cadence with which you're going to talk to people and who it is that you want to talk to, now is a great time upgrade.

Again, I don't know that it's going to sell you any more books, but it absolutely will give you an opportunity to connect with those right people who can pay a whole lot more than just buying a \$25 non-fiction book, who can buy you for consulting or coaching or something like that.

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Susan Friedmann: How about mistakes that you see, not necessarily only authors, but you see people who use LinkedIn, what are some of common mistakes that they make?

Phil Gerbyshak: First one is they don't fill out their profile. 75% of people, three out of four don't have a completed profile on LinkedIn. That's a huge mistake. Or they have such tight privacy settings that you can't even see their picture so that they don't even look human on LinkedIn until you get connected to them. That's the big mistake. If you're trying to be more visible, and then you're so worried about privacy, that's a total disconnect. That is a big problem, so please, don't be so darn private.

I mean, this LinkedIn. It is seldom that you're going to share if you have a health issue on LinkedIn. You might do that on Facebook. I get why you'd lock that down, but you're not going to do that on LinkedIn. So don't.

The other mistake that I see is people try to get married because they even get introduced. On the first one, they come across somebody's profile, and they click on connect. Connect, in most places on LinkedIn sends an automatic message with no customization at all, let's get married on LinkedIn, which is let's connect. Frankly, if you have never even looked at my profile, which I can't see, again, this is that privacy setting, if you have it locked down, that says you're invisible on LinkedIn, and then you send me an invitation with no message and you just want to connect, I'm like, who the heck are you? Why should we ever connect? I mean, you didn't even look at my profile. So I'm not going to connect to you. That's the second one.

And then the third one is when they do customize that connection request. LinkedIn does offer you the ability to add a link now and add your phone number to that connection. Well, what I see as a mistake is people take the time to go through and pitch in that first message. "Hi, it's nice to meet you. I'm really great. Here's all the services that I do. Here's a product. Here's six links. Call me. Text me. Write me. Let's get connected. Come on, come on, come on. Let's do some business." "Hi. I'm Phil. What was your name?" Like slow down.

I'm going to offer you one more, and this is not just LinkedIn, but this is a common mistake that I see all over, Susan, and that is people don't have any idea what the next step is.

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So we got connected on LinkedIn. Now what? If you don't know what that next step is, and we just connect on LinkedIn, you're not going to get any business from it. Your connections are going to go up. Maybe one day, they'll know somebody that you want to know and you'll ask for an introduction, but if you don't know what that next step is, if you don't take the next step, there's no way that it's ever going to relate to business.

You don't have to take the next step today. You don't even have to take it this week or this month, but you need to know what the next step is. The sooner you make it to the connection, the primacy/recency thing happens, and people remember what happens most recently, make a next step, I would say, fairly soon. Now, you don't have to. You could connect to someone that you might want to nine months from now, but you need to think about, okay, so what is the next step with this connection?

Once you know that, and you take it ... And that's whether it's on LinkedIn or Facebook, That's whether someone comes in your email list or what, we have that automatic response that we want people to do. Do we know what the next step? Do we know the next couple of steps? If we know all those things now, we can really leverage social media for power, and if we don't, well, then we just have more people on our newsletter list and we hope like heck that they really like us because it's totally accidental.

Susan Friedmann: You've given us so much valuable information. Phil, I'm sure that our listeners will want to know how they can get in touch with you to find out more about your services. Where do you want to send them?

Phil Gerbyshak: Well first, I'm serious, I'm going to give you my phone number. If you have a question, I want you to call or text me. It's 414-640-7445. That's 414-640-7445. Don't be shy. Call or text.

Now, I know some people will not do that. In fact, I know most people won't do that. I've written an article on leaving great voicemail, five million readers, less than fifty calls. Most people won't do that. So I'm going to give you a way that you don't have to be so personal with me.

You can sign up for my daily email at positivelyphil.com. Everyday, I send out an email. Sometimes it's business related, sometimes it's life related. It is just an email just to remind you that you're awesome, and you can do more than you realize. Sometimes it's a tip. It could be an

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article that I read that really caught my eye, whatever it is. So positivelyphil.com.

If you want my LinkedIn articles, if you want things that I write about when it comes to social selling, when it comes to how to sell more books, how to market better, I encourage you, go to my LinkedIn profile. Connect to me on LinkedIn. It's Phil Gerbyshak. G-E-R-B-Y-S-H-A-K dot com, and tell me you heard me on Susan's show. Just, real quickly, just say that you heard my episode on Susan's show, and I'll happily accept your connection request.

And then think about, what do you want? Do you want to know more about LinkedIn? Are you just connecting because Phil says no, but he does that, so I should do it because I want to be different, but then I don't know what to do.

Well here's the thing, I'm going to give you one last website, one more actionable tip. If you want, just because you're listening to Susan's show, I will give you 15 minutes with me, free. No obligation, no anything. Just go to 15, 1-5, withphil.com. That's 15withphil.com, and fill out the form. Fifteen minutes with me. You can ask me absolutely anything you want.

If you heard this and you thought I was totally full of crap, you can yell at me for 15 minutes. That's okay. I don't care. Whatever you want. 15withphil.com will get you to me, it'll get you on my calendar, and I'm happy to answer any question that you have. Anyone at all, because I'm on this planet to serve. I'm here to help you build the business and the life that you want. So if I can help you, please let me know how.

Susan Friedmann: That's so incredibly generous, so thank you so much, Phil.

If you were to leave our listeners with a golden nugget, I know you've left us already with so many, but just one more, what can we squeeze out of you?

Phil Gerbyshak: Sure, so the last thing I would say is really around the social selling mindset, and that is this. Your goal is to be more human in everything you do, and to be more you in all you do. Take time, first of all, to remember that everything you do is a direct reflection on you, and second, remember that the people that are reading that are other people so if you wouldn't say it to somebody face to face, if it sounds

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like a contrived hokey sales pitch when you type it up and then you read it out loud, it is. So don't do it.

Focus more on being more human in all you do and being more you in all that you do, and you, too, can be successful. Social selling, using LinkedIn, writing books, and being the incredible person that you already are.

Susan Friedmann:

Well, you're an incredible person, and we really thank you for sharing that with us, Phil.

Listeners, if you want to take your author marketing to the next level of success, make sure that you go to bookmarketingmentors.com and sign up for a 15 minute complimentary coaching session with me, Susan Friedmann.

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