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BOOK MARKETING: How to Best Use Mentors to Increase Your Author Success Interview with Claire Diaz-Ortiz

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 social media innovator and mentoring expert. Claire Diaz-Ortiz is an author, speaker and Silicon Valley innovator who was an early employee at Twitter. Named one of the 'Hundred Most Creative People in Business' by Fast Company, she holds an MBA and other degrees from Stanford and Oxford Universities and has been featured widely in print and broadcast media, such as CNN, BBC, Time, Newsweek, The New York Times, Good Morning America, The Today Show, The Washington Post, Fortune and many others. She writes a popular business blog at clairediazortiz.com, and is the award-winning author of eight books that have been published in more than a dozen countries. Her latest book, which she co-authored with Ken Blanchard, 'One Minute Mentoring: How to Find and Work with a Mentor and Why You'll Benefit from Being One', was released in May.

Claire, welcome to the show. Thank you for being this week's guest expert and mentor.

Claire: Thank you so much for having me. It's great to be here.

Susan Friedmann: Claire, you're often referred to as 'The woman who got the Pope to tweet'. This sounds like a fascinating story and one that I'd love you to share with our listeners.

Claire: Early on in my career, got my start as an early employee at Twitter, so I spent about five and a half years there doing a variety of things, but one of those things was I spent almost a year working with The Vatican to bring the Pope onto the platform. At the time, it was Pope Benedict. It was a fun sort of sleigh ride at the time I should say, spending about a year working with The Vatican and trying to figure out how to best

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strategize to bring someone of that importance onto the platform at the time.

I think that the thing that I often think about when I look back on the experience was just how I think it's very easy from the outside to assume that this was some sort of a challenging decision for The Vatican, that they didn't want to agree or anything like that, but honestly it was really they were at the forefront of innovation all the way. They were very, very open and excited about the possibilities of the Pope being able to better connect with his massive following around the world.

For me, it was really a joy. It wasn't an experience of a social media trying to prod an old institution to do something in any way at all.

Susan Friedmann: Do you know if they've kept it up?

Claire: Yeah, absolutely. Pope Benedict joined Twitter in December of 2012. He launched, I think at the time we launched with maybe five different languages, but in a few months there were eight or nine languages, then when Pope Francis transitioned to become Pope he became a even more regular tweeters. Now all the Pope's accounts, the Pope, if you can't up all his accounts in the various languages, it's the largest following that anyone has out there, so yeah, it's a very active, active, active profile.

Susan Friedmann: That's amazing. Claire, you recently interviewed me on a panel for an upcoming mentoring summit that you're holding. Let's focus on this whole idea of mentoring and what it is and how our listeners might be able to benefit from it. Let's be very basic and start off with, What exactly is mentoring?

Claire: Mentoring in its most simple definition is just an experienced and trusted advisor. What's interesting about this definition is that I think the idea of mentoring has become more popular in the last decade or so when we look at people in business, and yet it has also become conflated with other words or other types of advising essentially. In this day and age, you can think of mentoring and then you kind of instantly start thinking of other things. Maybe you think of coaching, maybe you think of advising, maybe you even think of therapy. A lot of times, people don't have a very clear sense of what these different things are and how they can each work together to synergetically help you better succeed in your business essentially.

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- Susan Friedmann: Then what is the difference between mentoring and coaching?
- Claire: What I think, and when Ken Blanchard and I working together to write this book, 'One Minute Mentoring', the definition that we came to and isolating out how is mentoring different from these other schemes is essentially the idea that mentoring is a bit more holistic. Coaching is about working on or working through a specific problem, usually with some kind of goal of increased performance. Coaching is often a paid arrangement. Mentoring, in contrast, is more holistic. You look at mentoring in terms of your whole life, or you can maybe look at mentoring in terms of your personal life or your business, but you're going to be looking at mentoring in a very niche topic. Let's say you want to find a coach to help you become a better public speaker, say. I really believe that mentoring is a sort of a more general way to get to where you're next going in a particular field of your life.
- Susan Friedmann: Then a mentor wouldn't necessarily charge for his or her services. Is that correct?
- Claire: I think it's, in its most organic or most original form, a mentor is not someone who charges, but as I say, these words have become sort of conflated in the last few years, so you do see lots of paid mentors in this day and age. Ultimately, no matter what word you use, as long as you are clear on the concept that a mentor is someone who is going to help guide you in a specific area of your life, then you can best engage a mentor to get where you're going.
- Susan Friedmann: How do you who to mentor?
- Claire: Who to mentor, or who to be your mentor? I guess those are very different questions. If there is a saying that when the teacher is ready, the student appears. I think in terms of who to mentor, I think a lot of that can happen synergistically. If you think that you are maybe ready or in a place where you feel that you would really gain by teaching someone else, one of the best things to do is to start putting out feelers with people you know to let people know that you are in a place where you think you could gain also from passing on your wisdom to someone and let the world deliver back a potential mentee up to you. If you are in a corporation already and you work within a larger business, there are programs these days that allow you to immediately identify a potential mentee for you, but if you're not within that, it's great to start with a network of friends and family.

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I should be clear here, though, that the first thing you need to do before finding a mentor or a mentee is to understand what type of mentoring relationship you are really interested in. One of the things we did in writing this book was dig into a bit, and do the research on the types of common mentoring relationships that are around these days, because ultimately, if you think you want a mentor, but you're not really sure what type of relationship you want, you're not going to be able to find the right mentor or mentee for you.

To just give you a sense of a couple of these types of mentoring relationships, one of the classic ones that many of us know about is this idea of an adolescent to adult relationship or adult to adolescent. You can think of large famous non-profit organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters that basically pair someone who is young, a youth, with an adult, with the hope that the adult is going to guide the youth through some sort of key decisions in their life. That's one type of mentoring relationship that a lot of people are familiar with.

Another type is this idea of a cross generational mentor relationship. This is best represented, I would say, by my own relationship with my co-author, Ken Blanchard, when we went about writing this book, 'One Minute Mentor'. Ken is about 40, almost 40 years older than I am. He has published 65 books. He is an incredible mentor to many and was an incredible mentor to me. When we started the process of writing this book it became clear, "I see. We are not only co-authors, we are also in this cross generational mentoring experience."

Another common or increasingly more common type of mentoring relationship that you'll see in corporations is this idea of having a new hire mentor. You might be newly hired into an organization and you are paired with someone within that organization who is going to sort of show you the ropes as maybe a new hire or another way to refer to it might be 'Peer to peer mentor'.

Before finding a mentor or mentee, first figure out what type of mentoring relationship you are after. That type, discerning which type you want to go after, is going to help determine the path to finding a good mentor or mentee.

Susan Friedmann:

Based on that, what might be some best practices, some best mentoring practices?

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Claire: In the book 'One Minute Mentoring', we walk through basically a six step model. We call it 'The Mentor Model'. We use the word 'Mentor' and each letter is representative of an important step in these six steps.

Ultimately, I think there are a few essential, essential keys to making a mentoring relationship work. One of those, I would say, first and foremost having some type of mission statement is really important. When I say this, I think sometimes people get a little scared because that sounds perhaps overly formal or overwhelming, but in reality, having a mission statement is just a simple statement of purpose, a statement of intention that kind of outlines where you want this relationship to go. It's very common to get excited about finding a new mentor, or a new guide to help you get where you're going in life, but to not actually clarify where you want that place to be. Maybe you might have in your mind this idea that your mentor is going to help you figure out X thing in your life, but your mentor might not know that. They might be thinking they're here to help you with issue Y in your life. You want to have that agreement up front and coming up with a simple mission statement is a great way to do that. I would say that is first and foremost.

I think another key, key thing that you want to make sure happens, and again, this is all going with that acronym of 'MENTOR'. 'M' was 'Mission'. 'E' is this idea of 'Engagement', making sure that you are stating a commitment to regular meetings with your mentor or mentee is really important, especially in the beginning when you're just trying to establish that relationship and get that relationship off the ground, you want to make sure that you have developed good report. A great way to do that early on is to make sure that you're meeting regularly. Once you have some of those regular meetings under your belt, then you can maybe let it go two weeks or three weeks between meetings, say.

Susan Friedmann: Can you carry on with the rest of the letters, the 'N', the 'T', the 'O' and the 'R'.

Claire: Sure. Sure, of course.

Susan Friedmann: That would be wonderful.

Claire: Sure, of course.

'N' in the mentor model, 'N' is for 'Networking'. This is really about the idea of cultivating productive relationships and why cultivating

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productive relationships is so important. It's very common for a mentee to assume that a mentor is going to open up their network and help them, but sometimes mentors forget that their mentees also have a lot to offer as well. Remembering that both people in the partnership are bringing networks to the table is really important.

This sort of immediately leads us into the next step in the mentor model, which is 'T', 'Trust'. Really, this is really essential, because especially when you're thinking about opening up your network to a mentor or mentee, you want to make sure that you guys have a very high level of trust between you two. Making sure at every step of the way, in your mentoring relationship, in your mentoring partnership, that you are putting trust as an important quality that you are aspiring to attain is really essential.

Next in the path is this idea of opportunity. Once you have built that trust, you can really start taking advantage of the opportunities that your mentor or mentee might be setting in front of you. These might be tangible opportunities like a job idea, job opportunity, or these might be more intangible learnings or lessons making you understand or teaching you to understand something in a new way and seeing something in a new light.

Then finally, one of the last and most important things in the mentor model that you want to make sure that you want to do is this idea of reviewing and renewing, regularly going through the process of reviewing your mission with your mentor or mentee and making sure that you're in the right place to continue to renew that mentoring relationship. I was doing an interview with someone earlier this year and they said to me, 'You know Claire, I've been the mentor to someone for a couple years now, but I'm not honestly not sure we're really making much progress anymore. What should I be doing? Should I be breaking up with my mentee?' I said, 'No, no, no. Whatever you do, don't break up with your mentee. That's completely not necessary. What you should be doing instead is just realizing that mentoring relationships go through periods of activity and periods of inactivity.' You might have a mentoring relationship that is really active and very productive for a period of time and then you might find that it doesn't need that kind of level of activity and maybe it's just time to put sort of on the back burner or put that relationship in your back pocket until one of you feels the need to start things up again.

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I think that's something really important to remember. Having a mentor or a mentee is about having someone ultimately in your network that you can call on in the future. There's no reason to close the door to that person, you just sort of put a pause on the mentoring relationship.

Susan Friedmann: Having you found that a mentoring relationship, let's say fizzles out after a certain period of time, be it two years, three years, seven years?

Claire: Absolutely, but I think that timeline completely varies on the people and varies on the issues on the table or that initial mission statement that two people had between them. I don't think the fizzling needs to be seen as a negative thing. I think it simply needs to be seen as the regular life cycle of these types of relationships. You need to realize that when maybe you come to the end of that cycle, that doesn't mean that you're coming to the end forever, because that relationship might pick up again with more intensity a few years down the line.

Susan Friedmann: You talked about regular meetings. What might that be? Is that weekly, monthly?

Claire: I think one of the key things to remember with regular meetings is that a meeting doesn't have to happen face to face. Your definition of the way you want to engage with your mentor or mentee is just that. It's your definition. You need to clarify at the outset, 'How are we going to be meeting or engaging? Are we going to be having face-to-face meetings? Are we going to be doing phone calls, Skype video calls? Are we texting? Are we emailing? What are we doing to engage?', and then, 'What are we going to prioritize a regularity to that engagement?' The regularity is really up to you, although I would really say in that beginning stage, it's important to be more regular, because that's when you're really developing the relationship and developing the report. In my book, if you're doing some type of in-person or phone or video chat, meeting, I would say once a week, is a great timeframe to start in the first couple of months of a mentoring relationship.

Susan Friedmann: Let's talk about mistakes. I love talking about them. What are some common mistakes that you see either mentors or mentees make or both, obviously?

Claire: I think one of the biggest mistakes is when someone is looking for a mentor and they ultimately find a mentor, they often feel that a mentor can solve all their problems. That's really not the idea. The idea is that a mentor is someone who is a guide to you. They have maybe been

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before you in certain areas of life and can offer insight and support and guidance, but they are not going to solve all your problems. It's very important that you realize that this a relationship that is going to push you to try to solve your own problems. I think that, first and foremost, is one of the big, big misconceptions people can have about mentoring relationships.

I think another key mistake that mentors and mentees alike can make is not really understanding that a mentoring relationship or a mentoring partnership really is a two way street. Even in my own experience when I first started with Ken Blanchard on this book 'One Minute Mentoring', I really went into it with this idea that Ken, as this wise sage, was going to be my mentor. I was going to take notes and diligently write down all the smart things he said and that that is sort of how the transition of knowledge would happen. He made it very clear up front, 'No, this really a two way street. We're learning from one another.' This really taught me and ultimately enriched our book immensely, this mindset of what mentoring could really be and why positive mentoring relationships really do both directions.

Susan Friedmann: Did he approach you or did you approach him? How did this relationship develop?

Claire: Our relationship developed, we were introduced by my literary agent some years ago. We were introduced without really the idea that we would connect as well we did, I think. I mean we had things in common and such and for that reason we were introduced, but I think it was really a relationship that, on my end at least, far exceeded my hopes for it. Ultimately, he became a great mentor to me. I'm so grateful that came out of this process.

Susan Friedmann: How about some more mistakes?

Claire: Another important thing to remember when mentoring is if you are a mentor or a mentee, you're going to want to remember that mentoring is different than coaching, and it also is different than therapy. This is something that I think people can fall into pretty easily of realizing that they don't necessarily need to reveal everything and that there should be boundaries in terms of discussions and what you share especially in the beginning while you're still sort of feeling out that relationship with your mentor or mentee. I think that's something to keep in mind.

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- Susan Friedmann: The boundaries, I'm sure that's very important to realize what those boundaries are. Is that something then you would work out right at the beginning?
- Claire: I think boundaries, to some extent, can be organic, if that makes sense. I'm thinking often of when we were writing our book. We had this interesting moment during the editing process where, in our book, in 'One Minute Mentoring', it's a story about an older mentor mentoring a younger man who is the mentee, and she is a very seasoned executive in the media industry and he is a young guy in sales. They come together and they start this mentoring partnership and they start learning from one another. At one point early on in the partnership, she becomes pretty authentic with some of her own career struggles. I believe that authenticity is essential to a mentoring partnership, but authenticity has to come with boundaries.
- It was interesting in the editing the process that someone actually said, 'Hey, is she being too authentic here? Is this realistic for a 60 year old successful media executive to be confiding in this way to this 27 year old young sales guy?' It was an interesting question that made us, as the authors, go back and think, 'What is realistic here? What is not? What would the boundaries of this be? What is authenticity and what is too much information?' I think it's an interesting tension that you always have to be navigating. It's very dependent on the personalities of the people and again, also on the mission statement of that mentoring relationship.
- There are people who might have a mentor and that mentor is really there to help them deal with some issues in their personal life, which might be very personal. It depends on the people and it depends on that mission statement.
- Susan Friedmann: If our listeners want to find out more about your services, tell us how they can get in touch with you.
- Claire: I'm a writer and I'm also a writer of words on the internet. A lot of those words are over at clairediazortiz.com. I'm also about to put on a big summit called '[The Success Mentor Summit](http://TheSuccessMentorSummit.com)'. It starts September 5th and it runs for 10 days. It's a free online summit. You can find out more about it at successmentorsummit.com. We've got, I think over 100 amazing speakers like yourself at it. I'm really excited to put it on. It helps celebrate this new book, 'One Minute Mentoring'.

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Susan Friedmann: I'm excited to hear all the other speakers and participants in this, because it was a great experience just being on the panel with you and you're such a great interviewer. It was a lot of fun, so thank you.

Claire, if you were to leave our listeners with a golden nugget, what would that be?

Claire: The golden nugget, I would say, about mentoring, because that's what my golden nugget is going to be about today, is the idea that you don't have to have it all figured out in order to be a mentor. I think there is this myth that being a mentor is something that can only happen once you are at the end of your life sitting in your golden rocking chair. That is absolutely not the case. Everyone has something to teach. By the same token, everyone has something to learn, but being a mentor is something you can be at any stage of your life. No matter who you are, you can be benefiting someone greatly by passing on all that you know.

Susan Friedmann: Fabulous. Thank you so much for sharing your wisdom. Thank you all for taking time out of your precious 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.