

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

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## BOOK MARKETING: How to Find Your Voice As An Author Interview with Paul Larsen

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 Paul Larsen, a certified executive coach, and an engaging leadership consultant and speaker. As a former C level executive for a 3 billion dollar corporation, Paul has over 30 years of experience creating a leadership legacy at such iconic organizations as Adobe Systems, Charles Schwab, United Airlines, and Bristol-Meyers Squibb. He's the author of the award-winning book, *Find Your Voice as a Leader*, which is published by Aviva Publishing by the way. I had to put that in.

As a member of the respected Forbes Coaches Council, Paul partners with successful leaders to find a unique leadership voice, and use it to create purposeful and positive outcomes for themselves and their teams. He's a dear friend, a National Speaker Association colleague, and together in our spare time, we both serve on the board of the amazing foundation Together We Can Change the World, which helps women and children in Southeast Asia. Paul, what a thrill to welcome you to the show, and thank you for being this week's guest expert and mentor.

Paul Larsen: Hello Susan, and thank you so much for having me and for that wonderful introduction. I'm like, "Wow. When does it stop? Really? Who is that person?" Thank you. It is an honor, honor, honor to be here.

Susan Friedmann: My pleasure. It's funny, because when people do that to me, and I hear my own bio, I'm like, "Oh my goodness. Who is that person?"

Paul Larsen: Exactly. There's that piece around ... It comes up in the work that I do, and especially as a first time author, the humbleness that you also want to finesse with the ego. To your point, it kind of hits when you hear your bio like that. I still can think, "Wow. I'm a little uncomfortable with some of that", but you have to work through those things as well, as I'm sure we may talk about.

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Susan Friedmann: Yes. I mean it's all about finding your voice. You have a process, and I'd love for you to talk about it and let's start with what exactly does it mean to find your voice?

Paul Larsen: It started with me. I've got decades of corporate experience, and like anything in life, it's not so much the quantity, it's what you do with it. It's that qualitative piece. It's the quality. When I look at all of my experience in life, and especially my professional experience, it's like, "What do I do with all those mistakes I've made? All the successes I've had?" It boiled down to a few years ago where I said, "I have a message to get out. I want to do something a little bit different in my life, and I want to find my voice. I want to help other people find their voice." When I took that process, and when I took my self awareness around that and said, "Wow. What does that mean?" I looked at the experiences that I have had, and those experiences, some of those are again, the successes and some of those are some of the trials and tribulations, or challenges we have in our lives, both professionally and certainly personally.

To really find your voice, I've used five components of voice, which just ideally match VOICE. The first is just to really look at the values, and discover what's important in your life, the values that you profess, the values that you demonstrate. When are those aligned in your life, and when are those not aligned in your life? Secondly, the next piece of voice, or the next component is establishing your outcomes or your vision, or your goals that align to those values. So many times in our lives, I think we find ourselves in whatever role we might be in, we establish and we are aware of our values, but then we go after things that aren't necessarily aligned with our values, so your outcomes are incredibly important to have that vision, to have those goals that are aligned to your values.

Thirdly, this is the I in voice. This is where we can also get stuck in our lives, and in different roles that we play. That is demonstrating your influence. How do you successfully demonstrate your influence in your life, whether you're an author, whether you're a leader, where you're a parent, teacher, husband, wife, partner, sister, brother. Whatever the role is you're playing, how do you actually exercise that influence through trust, credibility, respect, and do that in such a way that again, aligns to your vision and outcomes, and to your values. You can see kind of a common thread here that I've built into the voice model.

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The fourth component is demonstrating your courage. I would say that with the people that I've coached, including myself as a self coach, and then certainly with the coaches I've worked with, demonstrating your courage is something that I think in today's world takes us out of our comfort zone, and creates those baby steps that are necessary for us to actually change and pivot in what we want to do in our life. Demonstrating your courage, to me, is not about large scale transformative change. It's not about necessarily doing a complete 180 and being somebody new and different on Wednesday, than who you were on Tuesday. It's really looking at taking those baby steps, those small steps that become small stepping stones, very sustainable, so they stick. Again, align to your vision and align to your values.

Then lastly, as a coach, I wrap all of this up, so the values, the outcomes, the influence, the courage, and I wrap it all up in crafting, creating, and authoring your overall expression. That's the E in voice. Your overall expression as a leader, as an author, as a speaker, as a coach, again whatever you play in your life, the multiple roles you might play, what is that overall expression? What is that impact you are having? What is that legacy you are creating? What is your overall presence? I'm amazed, and myself included in this, by thinking about what is the legacy you have as a speaker, as an author, as a leader, and how many times I hear the answer, "I don't really know. I really never thought about that, Paul." I'm guilty of that myself. My whole purpose around the voice model is getting to that overall expression, getting to that overall legacy, getting to that overall impact of who you are, because if you don't author that, it's being authored for you. People are out there crafting your legacy of whatever you're doing in that role and so you better be accountable and take ownership of that. That's what the voice model in a nutshell, is all about.

Susan Friedmann: I've heard it so many times, and yet each time that you talk about it, and go through those five stages, it always hits me from the hearts center, so I love it and it really just speaks to I think everything that we should consider. You probably answered this in what you were saying, but maybe specifically, why is it important for an author to find his or her voice?

Paul Larsen: Wow. Great question. Why is it important for an author? Authors have a gift. Authors have a message, and if anything in today's world, and it's all relative, the universe that we are experiencing, whatever time frame that is that we're living through, it's all relative. We can say that it's a chaotic world. We can say that it's a topsy-turvy world, whatever that may be, and I'm sure people in all generations have said that, because it

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is all relative. Now today, more important than ever to me, authors have a gift and a message to get out. There's so many ways in which they can do that nowadays. It's so different than when I was growing up last year, kidding, but it was so different when I was growing up, and to be an author you had to go through hurdles of getting published and having a publishing house.

Now we just can go out and we can just go out and do it ourselves with wonderful partners like you and your colleagues. However, because of that, your message could get lost. Your message can get lost in the chaos of that environment, and that message may not reach the intended audience. To really come out of the gate in a very deliberate fashion, to be incredibly purposeful as an author, to get your message out, you need to find your unique voice. That's what the voice model is. If you look at it, it's unique, because it's only unique to each individual. The values are your values. The outcomes are your outcomes, et cetera, et cetera. It's your unique voice.

When you author your message, you author your book, you author your product, your heart, your head, your gut. You need to do it in such a way that people can hear that, and can receive it. I think what happens in today's world is people just go forward without necessarily thinking about their purpose and being deliberate, and just push it all out there in the case of an author. Then wonder why, "How come people aren't getting my message or how come it's not getting the traction or the stickiness that it should?" I say, "Take a step back. Really, really, really be deliberate with who you are and find that voice, so you can go out there and target your market in such a way that you're successful in reaching the audience that needs to hear your message."

Susan Friedmann: That is so poignant, and you're absolutely right, that so many authors really forget that they have this message that's inside of the book, inside of them that needs to come out and the right people have to hear it. How about mistakes? I know that you coach so many leaders. What about the mistakes that people make when they're trying to find their voice?

Paul Larsen: We live in probably the greatest laboratory that we can ever live in, which is the current time frame. The fact that we can get up each day and just look at each day as kind of a Petri dish, or a Bunsen burner, or a microscope, and we live in our own laboratory, but it's up to us to try things, and it's up to us to recognize when we have those successes and when we have those mistakes. I have lived my life by being incredibly

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aware of the mistakes I've made, and owning those mistakes, and learning from those mistakes. I think one of the most commonalities or common occurrences I see, especially with leaders, and this could hold true with any particular role, is that people are incredibly reactive in the environment. If you think about our environment, it fosters a reaction.

In fact, all of our social media, which to me, social media is incredible. It's an incredible gift that we have. All the different applications and methodologies, all the ways that we have to connect, but one of the mistakes is all these ways we have to connect, we're still really not connecting or we miss opportunities to connect, or we get hung up in, "Am I popular? Am I liked?" In fact, Facebook, which I use tremendously, and I have a wonderful ROI on my Facebook business page, and I understand that the nuances of using Facebook from an author's standpoint, but if you think about Facebook, it's all about how many likes you get on a post.

One of the mistakes I see is trying to be popular, trying to be liked versus trying to be respected and trusted, and credible as a leader, as an author, as a speaker, as a consultant, again whatever role you might be in. That definitely for me was one of my mistakes coming out of the gate. I could go back decades ago when I became a manager, and I won't go into the long story, but long story short, when I became a manager, my first foremost frame of reference was I want to be liked. Guess what? I guess it was the biggest mistake I ever made, was wanting to be liked, because all of my behavior, all of my decisions, everything I did as a manager was based on I want to be liked. The more I wanted to be liked, the less liked I was by the people that I managed. I could not understand that, until I really took a step back and really understood what I was doing and the mistakes I was making, and then realizing it's not about being liked, it's not about being popular, because we're not in school where we kind of get that drilled into us, it's about being trusted and respected.

I took the steps then necessary to pivot my management around that. That held true to me, fast forward when I became an author in 2016, that held true to me to understand that not everybody is going to like what I write. Not everybody is going to resonate with my message. Once I realized that, and again, took that lesson from decades ago as a manager, my message was able to come out with a clarity, my product was able to be formed with a clear direction, and I was able to finesse and let go of the obstacles of the ego so to speak, that I think a lot of authors, especially first time authors might struggle with, to understand to say, "You know what? Not everyone is going to necessarily like or

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appreciate it, but I want to come out with a body of work, ie. my first book, that is going to be looked at with respect and trust." I definitely have succeeded in that, in the sense of understanding what my market is, and then understanding how I can capture that market with my message, and understanding that not everyone will be on board with that.

Susan Friedmann: That's a great segue Paul, into a question that I have for you and that is how you see your book actually fitting into your existing business model?

Paul Larsen: Great question. It's a question that I think every author should ask, no matter what your role is. For me, I consider myself a leadership and executive coach. That is, I guess you could say, my brand identity. Certainly I'm an author, certainly I'm a speaker, facilitator, but first and foremost, I'm a coach. The book for me, has to be my business model. They're one in the same. It would be very different if I as a leadership or executive coach in corporations decided to author a different type of book, then there might be a separation, but because the book I'm authoring is finding your voice, and finding your voice as a leader, the book is my body of work. It is my message. It is what I profess, what I have lived, what I coach.

Authors need to look at that and understand, how do you integrate that into your business model? For me, they're one in the same, and how that manifests out in terms of my own revenue stream and my own processes, is I can do workshops off of the book, I can do speaking engagements from the book. I use the book in my coaching engagements with the leaders that I work at, and I work at companies such as Twitter and electronic arts, and autodesk, and SAP, and when I'm working with these leaders, I'm using my book as a workbook, as an activity. If I didn't do that ... In other words, if I wasn't able to do that, again this only pertains to me, then I'm not being true to my message in terms of what my message is and the work that I do. For me, the book is my body of work, and my body of work is the book.

Susan Friedmann: I'm so pleased that you really paid attention to those different modalities, the speaking and the coaching, that you use the book in every single scenario, because I think that's a piece that many authors miss is how they really can use their book in everything. It is about getting that message out, and you can't just rely on the book, so thank you for that. It's an award-winning book Paul, and congratulations on

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that. Talk to us about the marketing that you did and that you continue to do with regard to the book.

Paul Larsen:

That's a great question, and thank you for the wonderful recognition on that. The award from Indie Reader was something that was definitely a highlight for me. I think the marketing continues to evolve for me. It has been an incredible learning experience in terms of how do I market the book, while at the same time not always putting myself out there front and center, not always having the book as front and center, letting some of the book speak for myself, letting the work that I do as a coach speak for myself, so the marketing piece has been something that has evolved. I think one of the mistakes that I might have had early on and other authors might have is if you write it, they will come. One of the very first things I did when I was writing the book, and I do remember talking to you about this, and I really appreciated your insight as an expert in the field, I wrote the book to get my message out. I didn't write the book to make money. That is a very different deliberate type of vision.

Now certainly, do I want the book to sell? Of course. Do I want the book to be recognized? Of course. It's not about I want to be a best seller to make a ton of money. My whole purpose was to get the book out and get it into the hands and the heads of people where it could really help people. When I finally hit upon that, and that came about probably early on thanks to conversations I had with folks like you, it was like, "Wow. Then I'm going to approach this from a marketing standpoint to make sure that it gets out in a certain way." Certainly the traditional methods that we have in terms of websites and other ways to advertise, certainly in social media, certainly in just handing the book out.

One of the things I've done is I travel quite a bit. When I travel, I'm blessed to be able to travel the world, like you mentioned, with our foundation, but then also for work. One of the things I do is on every flight, I leave a copy of my book in the seat pocket of the airplane with my business card. To date, I have received at least 25 notifications from people that have found my book. Some of them have been aircraft cleaners. Some of them have been other passengers. Some of them have been crew, but they have gotten the book and they've read the book or looked at it enough to reply to me with a thank you. That to me just shows I'm not there to have to sell the book, quote unquote, I want to get the book out and give it into a message in a variety of different ways. That was a creative way that I came up with that. I'd love to be able to say that I just brainstormed that, but that actually happened, because I left the book on a plane once, and because of the response I

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got, I thought, "I'm going to start doing that, because I'm on a plane almost every week."

Susan Friedmann: I think it's a great strategy. I love it, and I hope some of our authors can use that as well. You mentioned that strategically you weren't looking to necessarily make this a best seller, and very rarely do books become best sellers. People have stars in their eyes about books and they think that they're going to get rich, they're going to write a book and they're going to get rich. You know as well as I, that doesn't happen. The fact that you have these different strategies and that again it fits into your business model, hey, kudos. I think that's fantastic, so thank you. Paul, if our listeners wanted to contact you for more information, how can they do that?

Paul Larsen: Probably the best way is because I travel so much, I love getting messages from people who I can learn from. Email is probably the best way, and that is at my email address is Paul@PaulNLarsen.com. If that's a little too long, you can just go to my website, PaulNLarsen.com.

One thing I do want to say, Susan, around the best seller, we are bombarded as authors and as speakers, as consultants, as coaches, facilitators, whatever role. Just as you said that, I see headlines now, especially online that will say, "Become a best seller. Become a best seller in two weeks. Become a best selling author. Your book's not selling? We can make you a best seller." We are bombarded with that. One of the mistakes I think people can make is ... Now I'm not saying you can't become a best seller, but the fallacy of spending the money and going down that deep, deep hole, and not having the results on the other side.

It's all about being very clear and deliberate with your goals, with your purpose, and making sure your outcomes are aligned to that, because we have to cut through all of the noise of the universe to really, really be clear with what we want to get. That's what finding your voice is all about. Believe me, I've made the mistakes, I've had the successes, and I'm living it as we speak.

Susan Friedmann: If you were to leave our listeners with a golden nugget ... You've left so many golden nuggets already. It's almost like I'm scared to ask you for another one, but if you were to leave them with one golden nugget, what would that be?



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Paul Larsen:

I appreciate that in terms that you feel I've left that, and I would like to say, it's just based on all of my experience. Everyone has a voice, and the world right now needs your voice. The world needs your message, but do it in a way that can be very unique to your, and making sure that the audience that you want receives that message, but the world needs your voice. It's not about yelling, it's not about talking louder. The world needs a grounded clear and deliberate voice, and I know that every author has that gift, and I look forward to hearing more about those gifts as we go forward.

Susan Friedmann:

Paul, thank you for sharing your wisdom and your inspiration, because you really are a true inspiration to all authors, so thank you. Thank you all for taking time out of your precious day to listen to this interview, and I sincerely hope that it sparks some ideas you can use to sell more books. Here's wishing you much book marketing success.