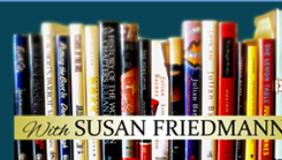


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BOOK MARKETING: How to Build a Dream Business Around Your Book Interview with Sonia Thompson

- 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 marketing strategist and dream business maker. Sonia Thompson spent more than 10 years living the corporate life helping grow million and billion dollar healthcare brands around the world. Now, as a marketing strategist and consultant, she helps business owners get the customers they want and keep them coming back for more. She's the author of the book *Delight Inside*. Host of a top-rated business podcast *I Am the One: The Entrepreneurial Edition*, and a columnist at *Inc.* Sonia what an honor to welcome you to the show, and thank you for being this week's guest expert and mentor.
- Sonia Thompson: It's my pleasure to be here. Thank you so much for inviting me.
- Susan Friedmann: Sonia, you help clients build dream businesses, and I know-
- Sonia Thompson: I do.
- Susan Friedmann: I know that many of our listeners struggle with the thought of building a business around their book. What recommendations could you offer them?
- Sonia Thompson: I think really it would be to think about your book, and what the objective of your book is. What is a specific problem that you solve for the readers? Then you can build a business by solving that particular problem that you talked about in your book. But probably just on a grander scale because if there's a market for the people who are reading your book, then there is a market for you to build a scalable business around those same principles that you are clearly an expert on because you knew enough about it to write a book about it.
- Susan Friedmann: What might be the simplest action our listeners could take?

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Sonia Thompson: A great way to get started if they don't already have a business is to begin with coaching. I say that because coaching is one of those revenue streams that you can start building because you already have the knowledge, there's no upfront costs really, or very little if any costs to maintain it. So you could start by talking to people within your existing network. That can be your personal network, your professional network. Go to networking events or other events, maybe conferences or things like that where people are interested in the specific topic that you cover with your book. Then as you start to talk more to people and learn more about them, what it is that they do, you'll understand more about how they describe their problem. Then as you build that relationship and rapport with them you can let them know that you offer coaching services specifically to help them with that particular issue. Then all of a sudden you'll have a coaching practice. That's how you launch it.

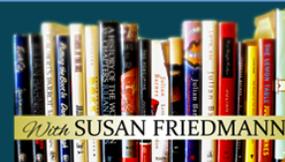
Susan Friedmann: Yes, because I know that you recently wrote an article about getting your first clients. Talk to us more about that.

Sonia Thompson: Sure, so a lot of people, they recognize that coaching is a great way to get started building their business. Whether a coaching practice is something that they want to be their primary revenue stream, their primary business, or if it's a bridge income while their working on building something else. There's a lot of benefits to working with people one-on-one, and even if you get to a certain level working with people in group programs because you're able to hear firsthand, directly from the people who you're serving, directly from the people whose problems you're having, and you're able to work with them to help them achieve a very specific transformation that is burning for them. It's a burning pain or struggle that they've tried to deal with, quite frankly, for a period of time and haven't, for whatever reason, been as successful as they would like. So you, as an expert, because you've been able to write a book about it, or you're writing a book about it, you can help them create that transformation.

You can do that with a coaching practice, and if you want to transition to doing something else later on, you then got the benefit of all those insights from working with people one-on-one, understanding what their objections are, understanding where it is they get stuck. Then you can turn that later on into information products, digital products, consulting at larger companies, and different things like that.

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Susan Friedmann: I really like that because it does extend the book. So many authors think it's just about selling the book, and I work with them on getting them to see that coaching, speaking, and as you say, creating products are going to help them in terms of making more of an income than just selling books in the onesies and twosies. Would you agree?

Sonia Thompson: Absolutely, and I've heard this said from a lot of people, a book is really just ... you can use it and leverage it as a business development tool. So I recently interviewed a woman, her name was Dorie Clark, she was talking about how her speaking career exploded once she had her first book published. I felt like all of a sudden people see you as having a lot more credibility, and it's kind of your calling card. So if you're talking to someone about a particular issue, let's say you're at a networking event or a conference, and they're talking about how they've struggled with a particular topic for a little while. It's one thing to say, "Oh, I can help you with that," or it's another thing to say, completely different to say, "Oh, I just wrote a book on that very topic." You're instantly positioning yourself as a credible expert who they know they should be able to trust because one, they can see that you've invested the amount of time in your book.

But two, you had the depth on the topic to be able to organize your thoughts in such a way. Then they don't have to go looking, and searching, and checking all your other credentials so much in depth because you've already done the work and packaged it nicely.

Susan Friedmann: That brings up a point that many authors talk to me about feeling, maybe, like a fraud or an imposter to even go out and market themselves or their book and call themselves an expert. If they came to you with that issue what advice would you give them?

Sonia Thompson: I would say, well first maybe the label sometimes does get people hung up. You don't have to call yourself an expert. The fact that you wrote a book positions you as one without you having to call yourself that. I think the terminology sometimes makes people a little uncomfortable. Second I would want them to know that feeling like a fraud or an imposter is not something that's uncommon, especially among people who do creative work. 70% of high achievers have some form or have experienced imposter syndrome in some way, shape, or form, but the difference between the people whose names you know versus the people whose names you don't is that the people who are able to be successful in spite of having those feelings, feeling like you're a fraud, is that they kept doing the work. They kept showing up.

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So when it comes time for you, and you're feeling a little anxiety, like, "Who am I to be talking about training these people and this particular topic? Who am I to think that I can help these people no matter what level of expertise or success they've had?" Just know that the way to shut down those voices is to take action. The way to shut those voices is to continue writing and to continue talking about what it is that you do and the transformation that you create for people, and know that the more you do it the more those voices will be shut down. Like Elizabeth Gilbert, she is the one who wrote the book *Eat, Pray, Love*. The hit that turned into a movie, and she's had all these other great books after that. But she talked about how much she's felt like an imposter, and it prevented her from releasing her second book. The followup to *Eat, Pray, Love*, and that book ended up bombing. But she talked about, "That's not why I'm doing it. I'm doing it because this is my job. This is my purpose. I'm supposed to be writing."

It's a really great lesson that, as you're going about doing your work, promoting your book, publishing your book, talking about your book, the work that you do, and the work that the people that you're trying to serve, that is the mission why you're trying to do it. That's what helps you dig in a little deeper to work on your craft and put it out there. It's not about the expectation of achieving whatever fame or fortune or accolades from all these other people. Those things can be nice, but those aren't the reasons why you do what you do or drive you. If you think about the people that you're serving, and how specifically you're trying to help them then it helps you deflect your energy away from feeling inadequate because you've got a much more focused energy in terms of, "I'm going to help x y number of people as I go about putting my work out there in the world."

Susan Friedmann: So that's also a great segue into how to stand out in a crowded marketplace. I know that you've written about that. Can you share some of your tips on that for us please?

Sonia Thompson: Sure. My method of choice for standing out is through content marketing, also known as attraction marketing. It's really around this same premise of serving your audience, serving the people who can most benefit from your products, your services, and your expertise in a particular area. So if you were going to publish different types of content, and you'll see people all over the place doing this, Gary Vaynerchuk does it, Netflix does it, Amazon is doing it. They're all these big companies, small companies, solopreneurs, authors, everyone does this in some way, shape, or form because the marketplace is getting more and more crowded, and you're not just competing among people

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who do similar things that you're doing. You're competing for the attention of your audience among everything else that's going on vying for their attention.

So when it comes time to find ways to get them to know that you are somebody that can help them, you've got a great way to do that is by presenting some type of content. That can be blogging, since you're a writer that's a great way to do that. Increasingly you can use other types of mediums, such as audio, like a podcast like we're on today. You can use video. You can use a combination of all these different things. You can use a lot of different visuals because people are starting to learn in different ways. So if you are there consistently sharing valuable information, or even entertaining along the way to your audience and showing up over time, consistently adding value to their lives that's a great way to stand out because some people they'll do it, they'll make attempts, but a lot of them don't continue over the long term.

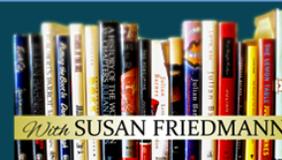
So if you keep doing it eventually you will start to gain traction, momentum. You'll build up that much needed platform that you need to be able to sell your books, and to have people interested in maybe even your services after the fact. Content is a great way to do it.

Susan Friedmann: It's interesting that you say that they started and give up because I think that's exactly what so many authors do and small business owners. They try something, and if it didn't work after the first few times they're like, "This doesn't work. What else should I try?"

Sonia Thompson: Right, and that's one of the things about content marketing. It works, it's effective, but it takes time. It's a longterm game. So if you think about it, you probably didn't write your book in three days. You probably didn't write your book in 30 days and get everything perfectly exactly the way you wanted it. It was something that took time, and even before you started writing your book you had to learn about all the things that you wrote your book about. So the process of getting your book out, and getting it to a place where it was tangible and actually able to help someone, it took a period of time. It's the same thing with content marketing because, like we said, I think a lot of people they stop if it doesn't happen. They start seeing immediate results in three weeks, a month, two months, or maybe even six months, but the reality is the more you stick with it, the more you buildup your body of work it becomes a bit of a snowball effect over time to be able to get you what you're looking for.

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One of the examples I love to use is Seth Godin. He's an 18-time bestselling author, and a lot of people see that. They're quoting Seth Godin all the time. They see how well his blog post does, but he writes a blog post, publishes a new post every day, and he's done so for more than 10 years. But what many people don't know is that he was a book packager for 10 years prior to publishing any books of his own. As a book packager he published a new book every month for 10 years. So if you think about it that's 120 books that he published going through this, and you think over that 10-year period going through 120 books he learned a thing or two about what it takes to be a bestselling author. It's not that he just published his one book on day one and everything happened.

It was all the years of toil and learning what works, what didn't work, what the market responded to, a number of failures along the way that gave him the information that he needed to know what his audience wanted from him, and how to succeed in a way that would make him stand out. So if you're gonna use content marketing, which I absolutely recommend that you do, stick with it. Stick with it. Stick with it knowing that in time you will start to get the results that you are looking for as you continue to learn and adjust based upon what you're picking up and how your marketer is responding.

Susan Friedmann: Do you recommend weekly, monthly? How often should you be putting something out there?

Sonia Thompson: If you can swing putting out a new piece of original content once a week that would be great. I think a lot of times people start very gung-ho. They go and maybe they try and put something out every day or three times a week. Then they fizzle out. The key thing is to find the systems that work for you that will support you in being able to put content out on a consistent and regular basis. So if you're not in the habit of pushing content out regularly, then maybe start with twice a month. But do that on a consistent basis until you get into a nice rhythm and a system. Then as you get better at it, as you get faster maybe you move then into once a week. Then you find the rhythm that works best for your audience and for you to be able to put out high quality content.

But you don't want to put out content so infrequently that the people that you are trying to reach they might forget who you are, or they might not be looking for you as much early on because the times in which you communicate isn't as often. Try and think of it as a relationship. Whenever you're connecting with somebody, upfront you

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need a little bit more time for you to establish that connection and deepen the bond. Over time, if you talk to each other less frequently, that's okay because that initial relationship, that connection is already there. But whenever you're just starting out it's kinda difficult for that to happen, so you need to have a bit of consistency, especially in the beginning to form those bonds that you need to have an audience that will stick with you for the longterm.

Susan Friedmann: You were talking about failures a moment ago, and I know that my listeners love hearing about mistakes either that my guests makes, or that they know that their clients have made or make. So what can you share with us?

Sonia Thompson: You mentioned in my introduction that I'm an author, and I am an author. What I did, I worked in my corporate job for Johnson & Johnson for nine years, and I ended up writing my book while I was employed there. Then once I finished the manuscript for my book that was my personal marker that I needed to give me the courage to leave. That was like I said, "Okay, I'm ready." So I quit the job. I published the book, and then nothing happened because I spent all my time and my energy focusing on getting the book done. I put zero time and energy in thinking about how to actually sell the book. How to actually get any eyeballs on it, and I know this is something that you can appreciate and probably frustrates the heck out of you because you have to spend probably at least half the time thinking about okay, what are you gonna do to get the people to read your book that you've spent all this time and energy toiling over trying to get just right.

There's no reason to publish a book if you're not going to put in the effort to actually get people to read it. So that was a big fall flat on my face type of thing where I spent all this time working on getting this book out. Then it was like, "Oh, now what?" when it came to the marketing. But like I said the book did serve its purpose because it was what I needed to leave a job and go and start my dream of being an entrepreneur.

Susan Friedmann: That's funny you say that because you're absolutely right. I talk to authors, and they put so much blood, sweat, and tears into bringing that baby to life. Then once it's here it's like, "Okay, what shall I do with it now?"

Sonia Thompson: Yes.

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- Susan Friedmann: "Let me give it to somebody else to market." It's like no, no, no, no, no. You're the best person to market this book.
- Sonia Thompson: Absolutely. Absolutely. I read something somewhere where somebody said that the best time to start marketing your book is three years before you publish it. I think it's because, and not everything has to be three years, but that helps you build your platform, build your audience, build a group of people who are interested and eager to hear from you. So that whenever it comes time for your book, of course you still have some marketing work to do, but it becomes a little bit easier because you've already got a group of people who are interested in what you have to say versus having to go out and suddenly find people to pay attention to your work.
- Susan Friedmann: It's interesting you say that because I have a colleague who, once he had the cover of the book, he talked about it all the time. And it took several years before the book actually came out, but he was marketing the hell out of it because he had the cover, and he could [crosstalk 00:19:16] ... and he was teaching on the subject as well, but he just didn't have that body of work together yet, but he still marketed it. So people were so keen and eager. It's like, "Tell me when the book's going to come out because I can't wait to have it." Yes.
- Sonia Thompson: Yeah. He's got an audience who was primed and ready, so that's a much better position to be in than having to say, "Hey, I got a new book out."
- Susan Friedmann: So I know another thing that you're really good at is creating emotional connections with your clients, with your customers. Talk to us more about that.
- Sonia Thompson: Loyal customers is what everybody wants. These are the people who they buy your book, they come back to you again and again, they tell their friends about you. Let's say you have a bad day or slip up here and there, which everyone does from time to time, they're likely to overlook it because they've got an emotional connection with you that transcends a transaction. Most people, most businesses view the way they interact with their customers very transactionally. "Okay, you give me \$10. I'm gonna give you this book. Have a nice life," and whenever that happens you have to work so hard for every person. Whereas if you were able to retain the people who are interested in what you have to say, not only does it save you money, but it helps you build up a community of people who are interested in coming back to you again and again and again to help them. But a lot of people struggle with how

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to do that, with how to build those relationships, and people connect with you on an emotional level.

That loyalty is built really in three ways. It comes through your people, your products, or your processes. So the people part of it is very easy. That's you. That's you, if you have a team of people you work with it's the team of people. Whenever they're able to connect with them on a deeper level. So, for instance, there's this restaurant that I go to. It's about four blocks from where I live. I'm in there all the time, like all the time. I'm ashamed of how much I go in there, but the food is great, but it's kinda like I like to go in there because I like seeing my buddies who work there. I've developed a relationship with them. They know my name. I know their name. They know exactly what I want whenever I walk in. So that bond that we created over a period of time is helpful, and it's what draws me and keeps me going back.

That can be done online as well, where you talk about different experiences that you have where you're sharing parts of your life. It doesn't mean that you have to become an open book and share every little thing that's going on with you, but as people get glimpses into your world, and get used to hearing from you on a regular basis, and learning more about you and your life that's a way that you can create that emotional connection with them.

The second way that you can do that is through your products. Specifically where you've got a product that speaks to them and is designed to show that the creator was very thoughtful, and it's something that is integrated very well into your life. So let's stick with the food theme. I follow a gluten-free diet, so there's another restaurant that I go to. It's actually the same restaurant I go to. I go because the product is very important to me. The product actually got me in the door because the restaurant is entirely gluten-free. I can eat everything there, and that is an experience that I haven't had for years since I had to adopt this gluten-free diet. Eating out kind of was a little bit of a chore because you have to pick and choose and figure out, "What can I eat? What can I not eat?" So now whenever I go to this particular restaurant I don't have to think about that at all. The product was designed exactly for me and mine. I can eat everything, and it's delicious. It doesn't taste like it's gluten-free or anything's missing from it. So that product created an emotional connection with me as well.

The last thing is processes, so let's stick with the food theme again because food is great, right? We all have to eat. So Chipotle in the US, I

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love, love, love, love, love, love going to Chipotle. The food is good. Who doesn't love a good burrito? But what I love most about Chipotle is their commitment to not having GMOs in the food. They harvest their food, and they source it from local sources, and that is important to me to know of the quality of my food, and to have a good idea of it. So the processes there are what connect me to that company and to that brand more. So as your thinking about how to create those emotional connections with your customers, you don't have to have all three, you can start with one. Of course the people is the easiest one to do, and it's the one because we all have people at least ourselves and our business and a way to connect with our customers.

So people, products, and processes are the way in which you develop that sense of loyalty, and the way you transcend that transaction to create an experience and a feeling for your customers that makes them feel like, "Oh my goodness. This is exactly where I belong. How did you know that you created something that had designed just for me?" That's the way you want them to feel, and that's what will get them to stick to you like glue rather than running off to somebody else the minute they offer them a better deal.

- Susan Friedmann: I love it. Sonia if our listeners wanted to find out more about you and your services how could they do that?
- Sonia Thompson: They can reach me over at TRY Business School. That's the name of the business. The website is trybizschool, and one of the things that I do is I work with entrepreneurs to help them build a simple content marketing strategy that puts their expertise on a stage where it belongs, so they can stand out and attract the people that they want to reach. Hopefully people will buy their book from them whenever they're ready.
- Susan Friedmann: Excellent, and if you were to leave our listeners with a golden nugget what would that be?
- Sonia Thompson: We need your goodness. We need what you offer to the world. So don't let any type of fear, or feeling like an imposter, or even frustration about not knowing a particular process prevent you from getting what you have to offer out into the world. So if you think about somebody is waiting for you to help them, somebody is waiting for you to give them the knowledge, and the experience, and the expertise that you have. Somebody is waiting for you to help create a transformation in their life, so do whatever you need to do to make sure that you get what you

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have to offer in their hands because you have the power to make life better for them.

Susan Friedmann:

Oh, that really speaks volumes. So thank you. Thank you so much for sharing your wisdom, and 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.