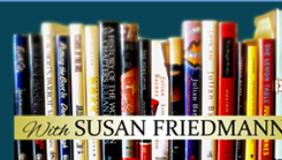


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BOOK MARKETING: How to Create a Great Audiobook Interview with Tina Dietz

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 Tina Dietz, an audio marketing expert. When she was two years old, someone handed Tina a tape recorder and that was that, a lifelong love affair was born. Today, Tina is a speaker, audio book publisher, podcast producer, and internationally acclaimed business coach who's been featured on ABC, Inc.com, Forbes and Huffington Post. Her company, Start Something Creative Business Solutions, works with authors, experts and entrepreneurs who want more than just a business and want more than a routine life. They want a business oasis. Tina splits her time between the US and Costa Rica. Tina, what a pleasure it is to welcome you to the show and thank you for being this week's guest expert and mentor.

Tina Dietz: Thank you, Susan. I'm just tickled to be here. Thank you so much.

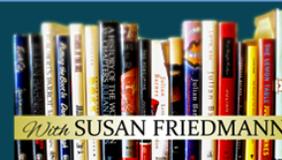
Susan Friedmann: Tina, audio seems to be gaining momentum in today's marketplace. Talk to us about audio trends that you feel authors need to know about.

Tina Dietz: There's a couple of trends that are definitely on top. The two, of course, that probably most people have heard about are audio books and podcasting. Those are two, of course, of my deep specialties, so I'm terribly biased. But I was very happy to see the resurgence of audio books happen. This isn't new. The resurgence of audio books actually started about six or seven years ago when audio books started to go completely digital. I know that the listeners have probably seen that there's been a tremendous movement away from hard copy into digital. So most audio books, vast, vast majority of audio books, now are all listened to through apps and through our phones, which makes them more convenient than listening to them on tapes or CDs like they did when I was growing up, and they were prohibitively expensive.

I remember going in spending \$40-60 for an audio book. So audio books, the production of audio books, the cost has dropped about 50%

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for production cost since 2009, and there's not too many things on this planet that we could say has dropped 50% in cost since 2009. So that's made it a lot more accessible for authors to go on, get their audio books produced and that's in conjunction with this desire for audio in our deeply mobile society.

Susan Friedmann: That's great, because I really want to talk to you about audio books. I know that it's come out many times. Many of my authors want their books on audio and they just don't know how to go about it. But let's start off with talking about how necessary do you actually think it is for an author to have an audio book?

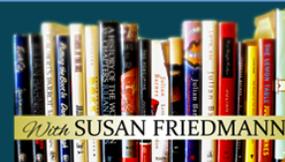
Tina Dietz: A lot of people would probably expect me say, "You have to have it. It's be the best thing," and all of that. I actually don't say that, because before I was an audio book publisher, I've been a lifelong entrepreneur and a lifelong creative. So my approach to anybody's work is always looking at the bigger picture and seeing if it's going to be a good fit for your overall goals and your overall strategy. So one of the first things I ask authors who come to me is "What do you want your book to do for you?" If you are an author who simply wants to have a product to sell in the back of a room and it's just an entry level thing or you just want to be a bestselling author as a credential and you're not really ... don't want your book to live a long and full and rich life inside of your larger business model, then I don't know that I would recommend that you have an audio book created, because if you're not going to be nurturing your book as an asset, then why create another asset?

But if you want to leverage your work, if you want to get your voice out there into as many hands and hearts and ears as possible for a long time to come, because that's ... I know you and I talked about this, it's the beauty of a book. It is this precious asset that lasts for a long, long time. It's not just about the launch; it's about nurturing your book as an asset. Stephen Covey, he wrote the Seven Habits of Highly Successful People, if it had been an option for him to do an Amazon bestseller launch and that's all he had ever done, he probably would have only sold a couple hundred copies of his book and that was it. It was his long-term persistence in leveraging his book and his work and his voice and his message so many different ways. That's what resulted in the global empire he created off of seven very simple principles. That's the opportunity for most authors that they miss.

So if you want that kind of leverage and reach, then an audio book does become essential.

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Susan Friedmann: I would agree with you that it's like how many different ways can you produce your material, and the more ways that you can, obviously, the more opportunities you're going to have out there to, as you say, get your message heard and seen. So, let's say our authors want to go about having an audio book, what are some of the basics that they need to understand?

Tina Dietz: The first thing you need to take a look at is where in the world are you? So the audio book world has opened up to international authors just recently. When I first started offering audio book services several years ago due to this kind of a demand in the market and not finding the services that I wanted for my own clients and for my own creative outlet, I decided to go ahead and start the publishing branch of my company. At that time, we were actually handling the royalty distribution for international authors. We weren't retaining any of it because my company doesn't do that, it simply wasn't available to authors outside of the US and the UK.

Now, things have changed just in the last year and the platform for audio book self-publishing has opened up worldwide. The first thing you need to take a look at is what platform are you going to use to produce your audio book. There are two that are available that I recommend. One is acx.com, which is the common backend, as we say, of Audible, Amazon and iTunes and that's one that's the most commonly used. So that stands for Audiobook Creation Exchange. So that is the common portal you can use if you are in the US, the UK, Canada or Ireland.

If you are outside of those countries or you want to have wider distribution of your audio book, and there's pros and cons to that, than those main platforms of Audible, Amazon and iTunes, then you go to AuthorsRepublic.com. AuthorsRepublic.com can handle audio book publication in any country that uses PayPal because that's how they do their royalty distribution is through PayPal.

So those are the two companies that you can take a look at if you're going to do self-publishing. That's the first thing to take a look at. The other thing they should know is their timeline. In my company, we can produce an audio book depending on the length of the book in about 60 to 90 days. If you're going to through this learning curve for the first time though for yourself and you're planning on working with a narrator, not narrating it yourself, that's a different ball game, then you want to probably double that amount of time simply because you're

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going to be going through a learning curve for the first time that has a lot of moving parts.

So if you are planning on doing a launch, you need to make sure you have adequate time to actually produce your book because there are certain parts of an audio book that simply can't be rushed or faked and there's, like I said, a lot of moving parts involved and there's parts you're not going to have any control over. So if you're planning a launch and you want to have a robust launch that reaches a lot of people, then make sure that you actually have it planned out with enough time in advance. I usually recommend for self-publication, you want to leave four to five months.

Susan Friedmann: You bring up an interesting point, and that is about who should actually read the book. Often people say to me, "Well, should I read it or should talent read it?" What are your thoughts on that?

Tina Dietz: It really depends on the resources and also again your strategy. What we find in terms of actual sales of audio books is that the sales of audio books are not necessarily impacted if an author goes ahead and reads it themselves unless that author has a very large, very rabid following. Then there's an expectation that the author is going to read their own book. However, if an author is at that level, then they're probably already working with a large publisher who is putting the cost and the bill of them going into a studio in LA or New York and having a director and going through that audio book process in a very invested level.

I have authors who work with me on both levels. Usually when an author finds out what's involved in narrating your own audio book, which is pretty time intensive, also training intensive, and counter-intuitively, it's more expensive to narrate it yourself than it is to work with a professional narrator. So it really depends on how you want your time, energy and money utilized. Some authors are very, very committed and very dedicated that it must be in their voice, that nobody else could do it but them. Some other people are open to having a narrator work with them and one of the things that my company is known for is for narrator matching and finding narrators that can actually deliver the material in the spirit in which it was supposed to be delivered, in that voice that is reminiscent and reflective and authentic to the original author.

Susan Friedmann: I know that that's really important because I often tell authors, and this may be incorrect information, but the fact is that you've got the passion

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for your own work. So for someone else to have that same passion, sometimes it's hard, but if you're saying you're matching that with the professional talents you use, then that's really important, I would think.

Tina Dietz:

It's very important. Even in publishing your book to begin with, one of the things that I recommend authors all the time because they will say, "Well, when should I start thinking about an audio book?" and you can launch an audio book at any time after your book is published. You can use it to revive an old title. But if you have an upcoming book, the best place to start thinking about an audio book is right before you send your book to editing for the first time, right as you're finishing that first manuscript, because what authors need to be doing is what's called an oral edit. Because if you read your book out loud, which I recommend every author do, before they send their book for editing for the first time, if you read your book out loud, you will catch errors that you would never catch visually.

You will catch phrasing you would never catch visually and you will also be able to see where the narrative might be missing, particularly for non-fiction authors, this is a really big deal because what makes a non-fiction book really stand out and really be great is the narrative and the story. I know I'm preaching to the converted here with you, Susan, but I don't think it's something that can be overstated for most non-fiction authors. Nobody wants to read a lecture, but everyone wants to hear a story.

Susan Friedmann:

I love that whole idea of the oral edit. I'd not heard that before but it makes absolute sense because you're right, you hear something very differently than when you right it. I love that. That's really super. Tell us, Tina, how you and your company actually work with authors to create the audio book. What's the process?

Tina Dietz:

Here's how it works inside of my conjuring as it were. So our company came about because I wanted my authors, my clients ... I had a lot of clients. I've been building businesses for over 20 years ... and I wanted my colleagues and clients who were all publishing books to have access to this world of audio books, which I just kept seeing double digit sales growth year after year after year over and over again. I want them to have access to it.

What we found out in our market research is that authors just really didn't know it was a possibility, didn't know that it was affordable, and certainly didn't know how to overcome the technology and learning

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curve of it. When I reached out to traditional audio publishers, what I found was really disappointing. I found that not only were authors having to pay upfront, but then they also were locked in to paying a chunk of their royalties to these audio publishers forever. As a creative and someone who considers them self an artist themselves, I found this incredibly offensive at a lot of levels. Just I was not happy with that.

So I set out to change that out and allow authors who now are doing all these wonderful things with self-publishing and hybrid publishing and having this support but keeping their royalties. I wanted to have the same thing available for audio books, and so that's what we've done. So my authors are able to have creative final say. They're able to have a choice of narrators that are highly vetted and highly professional, and we provide them the expertise and the back up and the project management and the advocacy to make sure that their book gets done the way it needs to be done to be received really well by somebody's ears and really well by the audience.

So we do everything from advising the author on their strategy, on their launch tactics to helping them with the narrators, actually handling their narrator selection, going through the entire production process, making sure everything is word perfect, and then getting that book through the quality control process on Audible and getting it distributed and out to the world. We also work with the marketing and distribution side of things as well if an author would like to have that available to them.

Susan Friedmann: Talk to us about distribution. I know you mentioned ACX and Authors Republic, but is that the distribution channel or are there other distribution channels?

Tina Dietz: Those are the main distribution channels. One of the questions I get a lot of is, "Should I have the audio book available to my website?" and I generally don't recommend that because of the delivery process of audio books. Audio books are, to put this in air quotes, heavy. There's a lot of data. It's like video. People want to be able to access their books in a library. We're used to being able to scroll through a list of things we have and select something. So if your audio book is an outlier and they have to go through multiple steps to listen to it, we simply as a society don't have patience for that. So that's why we recommend going with the larger distribution channels like Audible, Amazon and iTunes initially to get the most out of your royalties and then after you do your bigger pushes in that first year, then you can nurture your book along by making it available on other platforms.

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So, for example, on Authors Republic, they work with about 30 different distribution channels. There's no guarantee that your book will get on all of those, but it will be submitted there and then you can advocate for yourself on those. It will be picked up by some and you can nurture the process along over time.

Susan Friedmann: My authors know that I love mistakes. So let's talk about mistakes that authors make in this environment. O great one, share some with us.

Tina Dietz: I am fortunate to be in a position to be able to prevent a lot of those mistakes. But here's the one that comes up the most, and it has to do with what I would call launch fatigue. I'm making that up, but this is how I see it. Many of the authors we work with, we're working with them, they're getting their book launch out, so we're producing their audio book, but we may be producing marketing materials for them, email copy, social media copy, helping them put their launch team together to get the word out for their entire book launch, not just the audio book side of things, because you can double dip on that. You replace the word book with audio book. You can use the same stuff.

So what I see happen is that people launch the book and they are super excited. They become number one Amazon bestselling authors in one, two, three, four, five countries, all excited, and then they forget to talk about the audio book. That's the biggest mistake that I see happen is they're so excited, it's like, "Wait, you came to us for the audio book. We helped you become Amazon bestsellers, but now you're not sharing about the audio book as well," and that's a real missed opportunity because that initial push of your launch is only the first wave. Marketing happens in waves over time, months, years even.

So to only allow your book to have that first wave and then get a case of shiny ball syndrome and be bouncing off to the next thing is really doing yourself a disservice as a business owner, as an author, as an expert, and certainly it's going to hurt your bottom line as well.

Susan Friedmann: How about courses? A lot of courses now have an audio as well as obviously a visual component. Is that something that you get involved with, with authors?

Tina Dietz: Yeah, more on the coaching side of my company that we do, or with the content marketing side of my company. Many times when we work with authors, they come back to us for additional services over time because, of course, we've gotten to know their work. So they may come back to

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us and say, "Hey, can you put together ... help me actually build my social media presence and make sure it's consistent across platforms?" We only have a few of those clients that we take on at a time, but we're able to help them build a repeatable and sustainable foundation for their marketing, which is so important.

If we saw Nike have a Nike swoosh on Facebook, and then they had a start on LinkedIn, and then they had a different symbol on Twitter, we would never know who they were as a company. A lot of small companies, a lot of authors have the same issue where they're simply not consistent across their email, their social media and all these other places, so we help them to do that and help them to really refine their message, and much like we were talking about in the beginning of our chat today, to help them use their book as this message bringer for the long haul.

Susan Friedmann: Now, how about if an author gives their book away for free. Let's say the e-book that they're giving away for free. Where does the audio book fit in with that and can they still make money from it? I mean what's the process there?

Tina Dietz: Okay, so this is where I get all kind of giddy because this is one of my favorite techniques. This is one of my favorite marketing techniques. I love this. So one of the things that we found is that if you have the audio book produced and it's available, and you are using your e-book as a lead generator or as a traffic driver to push people towards downloading your book, what we see happen is that people who love audio, and there's a lot of them out there ... It's over \$2 billion in the last year this industry has exploded into ... what we find happens is that people will download the free e-book, but then if they like it they'll buy through audio as well, and that's what makes it really cool.

So you can promote your free book and still have a paid option for people to get into, because they get a case of what I like to call "might-as-wellitis," and they want it in multiple formats.

Susan Friedmann: That's interesting, because I'm one of those people.

Tina Dietz: See?

Susan Friedmann: I love audio. I mean Audible was made for me, I know it was.

Tina Dietz: You and me both.

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- Susan Friedmann: So very much so. I love it. Tina, if our listeners wanted to contact you for more information, how could they do that?
- Tina Dietz: You can go to my website and probably the easiest one to remember is StartSomethingPositive.com. That's the most memorable URL you can use to get to my site. Like most entrepreneurs, I got like 10, so StartSomethingPositive.com and you can go right to our audio book page and listen to a bunch of our audio books. You can also download our checklist and guide for people who want to self-publish their own audio book. We walk you through it step by step, give you all the pitfalls and the pros and cons. That's available on the audio book page there. Of course, you can contact us right through the Contact Us page if you want to sit and have a chat about your book and see if it's a good fit for you.
- Susan Friedmann: Excellent. I know that many of the listeners are going to be contacting you because we talk about audio books all the time when I coach my authors and they're always asking about that, so excellent. And if you were to leave our listeners with a golden nugget, what would that be, Tina?
- Tina Dietz: I think the golden nugget would probably be that marketing is the difference between having a good idea or a good product and building an empire. So if you want to have an impact in this world, if you really want to leave a legacy for future generations and reach ... We always talk about the ripple and the pond being the ripple effect. If you want to be that, then give your work and your voice and your message the time and attention it deserves over the long haul and allow it to develop and continue to spread the good word about what you're doing.
- Susan Friedmann: I love the idea of leaving that legacy, 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, and I sincerely hope that it sparked some ideas you can use to sell more books. Here's wishing you much book marketing success.