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BOOK MARKETING: How to Dominate a Niche Market the Right Way Interview with Chris Prefontaine

Susan: Welcome to book marketing mentors, the weekly podcast, where you learn proven strategies, tools, ideas, and tips from the master's. 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 successful entrepreneur. Chris Prefontaine is the best selling author of Real Estate on Your Terms. Chris has been in real estate for over 25 years. His experience includes owning a realty executive franchise in Massachusetts as a broker owner, which he eventually sold to Coldwell Banker. He's coached over a half a million realtor's to help them scale and/or to make their business throughout the US and Canada. He's a big advocate of constant education and participates regularly in high end mastermind groups and consulting with private mentors. He runs his own real estate business and continually mentors and coaches investors to be successful. Chris, welcome to the show and thank you for being this week's guest, expert and mentor.

Chris P.: Well, thanks for having me on, it's a pleasure Susan.

Susan: Chris, you've positioned yourself in a niche market or a niche market, depending on where you're from, that's namely the real estate market. Talk to us, how you went about positioning yourself in this market

Chris P.: I actually was introduced to the idea, I'll call it a first Susan, to write a book from many different people who have done it, and they all referred to it as attraction marketing, and I'm thinking to myself, "If you write a book, you go sell books, hopefully it's successful and if not, okay." You maybe lost some [inaudible 00:01:48] and had a good experience. I didn't realize what an attractor it could be to position yourself in any given industry. It doesn't matter what industry. I found out that, man, what a neat thing to have that credibility out in front, thus the name attractive marketing, to bring people into you, not to necessarily sell books, and if we do, fantastic, but if we don't it's a great attractor.

Susan: Then how do you actually fit the book into your business model?

Chris P.: Well, we coach and as you alluded to, we used to coach realtors, we coach and we still participate as investors, so we're talking about people that will spend, or

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look at spend anywhere from a thousand, to \$90,000 dollars with us, so we use the book as a credibility piece primarily, is the shortest answer. We'll use it on our website as a bonus give away. We'll use it as bonus giveaway. We'll use it for promo's if we have an event, and that will be a bonus gift. We'll use it for what we call a shock and awe package, where some are option to our list and they'll get that in the mail with an autographed note from me. Mainly it's like a massive, highly credible, high quality business card.

Susan: It certainly is. I know many authors have done that with their book. It's just to use it as a door opener for opportunities, for speaking, coaching, consulting. Do you actually do any workshops around the subject of the book?

Chris P.: Yeah. Actually good question. The subject of the book, everything we do is a family company, which buys and sells property, we also teach that to associates around the country and locally and everything we teach is actually in the book. I'm not saying they could be the very best by reading just the book, but the concepts yes, are taught and taught all the time to all our students.

Susan: You've been an entrepreneur for over 25 years, and many of our authors need to think about the book as part of being what we call an authorpreneur. What would you say some of the top skills are to be a successful authorpreneur or entrepreneur?

Chris P.: Either one of those terms, and I like how you use them interchangeably because my answers probably going to be the same in no particular order. I used to tell the kids this when they were younger, to be great at anything, the word discipline comes to mind, most definitely. You interview a lot of people, so you must know. You interview people and there's one thing that screams loudly, is they have discipline in their own area. Whatever that might be. The second word that I guess is related, that comes to mind. Is the word coachable. If they want to take the path for publishing, they're going to latch onto someone like you, they ask the expert. If they want to learn how to do real estate, they'll latch onto someone like me, or someone else in the industry.

The word coachable comes to mind and any entrepreneurial endeavor, there's some level of financial maturity. When you're talking about the entrepreneurship, as far as three, two or three key things, because without that, you can get caught up in a lot of different things. Whether it's writing your book, promoting your book. If you spend money or manage money incorrectly, that could be a headache. Those three things are somewhat related, but not, but I think they're important when we talk about that subject.

Susan: Discipline. How do you teach somebody discipline?

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Chris P.: That's a toughie, and I've never been asked that, but as far as teaching it to someone, we talk a lot about it in everything we do, we talked about it at our recent event. The best way is to have a coaching, mentor relationship whereby, let's say I was teaching you or mentoring you. I would ask for permission up front, to be brutally honest, and blunt and to the point and not take it personally and then I would go into the different discipline items. I won't call it trick, here's one little technique.

I have a simple chart, I call it the power of daily discipline. If you turned an eight and a half by 11 sheet of paper to run horizontally and on the far left hand side of the paper going down, you wrote some daily disciplines that you knew if you did them, for whatever reason you haven't, but you knew if you did them, you'd have a successful day and over time a successful month, and over time a great year. Then across the top, you'd just simply put the numbers, one through 31 representing the calendar.

Each day, you're holding yourself accountable. First of the month, and you go down, your list's on the left rather, and you say, "Okay, did I do my 15 minutes of writing?" If they were going to do that for their book. "Did I work on my goals?" Whatever it might be that they know they should be doing, but haven't done consistently, it becomes a self accountability.

If you want to uptick the discipline toward the next level, grab an accountability partner, where you and I get on the phone once a week. I have one. He happens to run a very big organization that publishes podcasts. He runs my podcasts. We get on the phone every Friday, we go over our win's, our loses, our aha's, and our fixes, but that requires me to be disciplined and all week do certain things that are going to get me to that call. Those are just a couple of ideas, I don't know if that's what you were referring to.

Susan: Yeah. That's great. Something that sort of came to mind too was the whole idea of mindset towards discipline, towards yourself being coachable, do you teach anything with regard to mindset? To your realtors? Or to the people who you coach and teach?

Chris P.: Yeah. I mean, again, it's built in to everything, from a mindset standpoint, it's just one micro manage aspect of what you asked. Some people say, "Well, discipline, you talked about creating that chart and having an accountability partner, and all this stuff, that sounds like a lot of work." That's a mindset. I say, "Actually it's the complete opposite mindset. It's a whole bunch of work and heartache and frustration if you don't do it." So turn that mindset around to be, it's not work, it's going to make your life easier, more successful, more fruitful, more fun, be able to design your lifestyle. All the investors that we're coaching,

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in some shape, form, or fashion are hearing that all the time, whether it's video, phone calls, at the live events, wherever it might be.

Susan: Yes. That whole idea of being coachable, if you're not coachable, it's really very tough for anybody to take in any of the messages that you're offering. That's excellent. How about you? What do you think was the toughest lesson that you had to learn?

Chris P.: Well, as part of the book process you mean? Or more broad?

Susan: It could be either. It could be the book, marketing the book, getting it out, or just becoming a successful entrepreneur.

Chris P.: I guess I could go in a number of different directions because I've made so many mistakes. The biggest one that comes to mind for me and it does not affect everyone, is the real estate debacle 2008 where we were at the time, personally signed on 20, 30, whatever properties and we felt the national down turn of market like so many people did. They may just be authors that who owned one property, they might have felt this, so maybe some people can relate to this. But it was a big mistake for us to think that that was never going to happen. That correction was never going to happen. The book, the entire book, "Real Estate on Your Terms" and everything we teach and do with investors, it's exactly that. On your terms. It's not signing on personally loans, it's not using your credit, it's never taking out loans to buy anything.

That was a big, big lesson that we learned and I shared on, because it's not just real estate, if someone's going to build a business there are ways to do it. If someone's going to be an entrepreneur there are ways to do it without putting yourself and your family at risk.

Susan: I always love talking about mistakes, whether it's about mistakes you made, or mistakes that other people in the business make, especially with regard to marketing themselves and getting out there in the marketplace. What can you share?

Chris P.: Marketing, getting themselves out? I'd have to say, I don't know if you follow this general, or have in the past, but there's an organization that the glazer-Kennedy organization, I think they call it GKIC, it's changed over the years, but it's Dan Kennedy. I found his stuff to be, it's where I learned about attraction marketing, I find his stuff to be a little bit out of the box to say the least.

It doesn't matter who your listeners are, every single person can benefit from this attraction style type marketing. Getting yourself out there and marketing

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any business. Too many people are doing what I call brand advertising, and generic advertising. Nothing is trackable.

Everything that I've learned from him and I won't take credit for it, I learned from him and his organization, is if I'm going to spend ten cents, it's got to be trackable, and attributable to something. I've got to get a return on it. It can't just be I'm going to throw out ... I'll use an example. A yellow page ad out, or I'm going to put an advertisement on the bus, I'm just thinking things that are generic. I can't tell if that's going to get me any business, I can't predict it. I can't say to you in January, I'm going to do A and as a result B and C are going to happen. If I take a mailer or I take a campaign online or I do some kind of a trackable event like that, I'm spending money on that, that gets some multiple return, doesn't that make sense for any business? So, every single entrepreneur can do something like that. That type of advertising or marketing on getting themselves out there that gives them a multiple return.

Susan: You've mentioned this work attraction marketing. Talk to us more about it. What exactly it is, which obviously maybe that's a silly question, because you're looking to attract people, but how do you actually go about that?

Chris P.: Without prioritizing them, things that come to mind would be, and this can be with the book or with real estate or with anything you're doing. You got a hotdog stand on the corner, anything. If you want to attract business, would it be easier to have people calling you or you reaching out to them. In the real estate world, was it easier when I used to cold call people back in the '90s when I was a license realtor? I wasn't an investor then. Was it easier to do that? Or was it easier to learn the attraction marketing type style whereby we would run certain ads online or offline, to then attract the right person to then have them call you and raise their hand and say, "Hello, I want someone to call me about this." That's much better than a cold call.

I know that's an extreme example but anything whereby you can have them calling you, instead of you reaching out to them on more of a cold basis. For us in real estate, we have a virtual assistant, this is just one example, who goes and does those cold type calls and then sends us validated, what I call leads, that we can call them. We have on our website, for the coaching business, the smart real estate coach business we have on our website, our free webinar, that webinar if they're interested, attracts them to then fill out a form and come to us. Again, everything leading people to you versus you trying to chase them. That make sense?

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Susan: It does. Thank you for adding in the whole idea of a webinar and using that as a way to bring people in and get them interested. Do you look to sell them on the webinar? What's your process with your webinar?

Chris P.: Our process always has been, and it's been quite successful, very much so when you get towards year end for us, because our business is such that people will want to be making decisions for the new year right? Our webinar does this. It provides about in a 45 minute webinar, it provides about a 35 minutes or 38 minutes of content, really good content that they can leave the webinar with and do something, will act on it tonight, today, tomorrow. They're invited to then because they wanted a webinar, at the beginning of the webinar, we told them, stick around, we're going to give you some gifts. And we give them some gifts from us. They're high product gifts. They're worth a couple thousand dollars. They're going to wait and they're going to get that. Regardless of what they do. As a choice they can make, they can go ahead and acquire a home study course. If they don't, they still get the gifts. If they do fantastic, maybe we'll be talking to them again.

Talking about automation and attraction, the webinars in my opinion, can and should be run completely automated. I filled it once, then you see the ad, you click on that ad, you chose a time, you think it's a live webinar, it appears to be a live webinar, people are populated on there, people are on there with you, but it's pre-recorded, pre-done already, so you're not jumping on that webinar five times a week. You put it on a nice automated system.

Susan: Yes. I love those. Although sometimes I feel, Oh my goodness, it feels as if it's real, but you have to keep asking yourself, "Is it really?"

Chris P.: Yeah and that's okay. There's another way to automate it that we just changed on that. No, because I agree with you. And so, what we did, we said, Look, if most people come to realize and understand and accept that it's maybe not "live, live," quote-unquote, it's taped live. Then why not make it available at all times? So, instead of having them schedule times that limit some to schedules, because I can't stand that when I'm limited to a schedule. Now when they opt onto our site, they actually get it immediately and can watch it whenever they want, and we know if they're watching it or not, and we're notified.

Susan: I think there's an element more of authenticity there, because there may be the thought as you said, with the time thing. It's recorded, but yet they're asking me to be there at a certain time. I like the idea of just clicking and having it play straight away, because that's really when you want it. You don't want to wait several hours or days before you actually get the information that you might be interested in.

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Chris P.: I agree, because sometimes we're in the moment, I mean me, I get distracted easy. If you do that to me, I'm probably not going to do that again, unless you send me an email, it just doesn't happen. So I agree with you.

Susan: What other mistakes can you share with us?

Chris P.: Again, mine all relate to the real estate world. If you make it more general, I can think of some other things, when I say general, any entrepreneur listening. We have a family business, so it's very easy to delegate and let go. Whether a family or not it is. It's super important to going back to one of your first few questions, to set up certain accountability and, or checkpoints.

I personally think of you're an entrepreneur, if you want to create a lifestyle, not have a job, you've got to create some kind of a skill ability with your business. If you want to create some kind of skill ability with your business, then that entire discipline, accountability, and checkpoints have to be put in place. I know over the years, growing numerous businesses, I made the mistake of, "Okay, they got it, they're all set," I made some assumptions then I let go too soon. I don't think you want to micro manage the day like that of everything but not letting go too soon would be something that I can think of that's more general and not real estate related.

Susan: Your book achieved a best seller status. Talk to us about how you did that. I know it's on Amazon, and I checked it out and you're in different genres, so talk about how you put that all together.

Chris P.: You know, I got most of that, so again, a lot of the book stuff was totally new to me. I want everyone to know that. I never did a book before, I do not consider myself a big marketer, this all was just all taught and learned over time. I had dinner with Mr. Joe Vitale, you probably know of Joe. Back in the summertime, it was right before the launch. He's written, I think he told me at the time, I don't know, 60 or 65 books. Many of them best sellers.

And he said, "Chris," relative to your interview here, it's interesting, he said, "This is 100% about marketing." So, he put me in touch with people who would help drive traffic to my list, drive traffic on social media, drive traffic to other podcasts, drive traffic from radio interviews, he helped put that together, as did the people I was working with on my book at that time.

Now that I've done the book, I've met some fantastic people like you, and many others that I say, "Wow, is there even other avenues." But at the time, I didn't even know what to do, and so he put me in the right direction and I got to say, it's all marketing. I don't want to water it down, but it is all marketing. To

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become the best seller, that's the goal. Frankly, that does help the credibility/attraction marketing. The book's great. Okay, Chris wrote a book, great, he must be the expert in this arena. Oh, Chris wrote a book, it's a best seller, better. So, that marketing is super important.

Susan: You just said something that I think is vital and that is people associate the fact that you wrote the book therefore, you must be an expert. They're making that assumption based on the fact that you wrote a book.

Chris P.: Well they are, whether someone wants to believe that or not. They most definitely are. The market is so ... When I say the market, I'm talking about any business, is so crowded right? And everyone's vying for their attention, everyone's trying to sell them in some shape, form or fashion although they won't use that word perhaps. So, how do they differentiate? Well, the books one for sure, and if you're speaking, that's another one. So if you start putting some of these together, if you're on the radio, if you're on a podcast, in the best seller, and you spoke about, so all these things in the prospects mind, in a potential business partner, or buyers mind, you are most definitely the expert, the more of those variables you can add to the mix.

I got to say that I never did any of that that I just mentioned until I had the book. And then the book opened up the relationship with Joe Vitale, which has been enormous. Relationships that are ongoing with the podcast, none of those came about without the book. None of them. They're door openers.

Susan: Excellent, I love hearing that because that's exactly what we started off saying, is that it is a door opener in many cases to other opportunities. People who think they're just going to get rich on just selling books, I say, "Uh-oh" that's not going to happen, but if you can open doors like you said, then there are other opportunities, the speaking, the coaching, whatever else you have. Good.

If our listeners want to contact you for more information Chris, how can they do that?

Chris P.: Well thank you. I appreciate that. Our main site is smart, so www.smartrealestatecoach.com.

Smartrealestatecoach.com.

My email, you can send me a personal email, it's simply Chris@smartrealestatecoach.com.

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If you just put in the subject line, Susan's name, I'll know and I'll make sure I'll answer that email so it doesn't get lost.

Susan: Oh super, that's nice. A little bit of influence there. I like it, I like it. Chris, you're so upbeat and you're successful, what motivates you to be this way and get up in the morning and say, "Yay, it's a new day?"

Chris P.: That's awesome, I like that question. It's really having a big enough, and I'm going to define it, it's really having a big enough why, right? Why? What's the reason you're doing this? Here's what I tell my students how I answer the question is, it's not about going out and creating a million or two million dollar or five million dollar business in my opinion. It's deeper than that. And this is where it gets me and should get others up, and that is, okay great, but why? What are you going to do with that? It's not the money, you can get to a certain point where you go, "Okay, I get it, that's enough, I have enough to live quite comfortably, I can travel, I can do what I want."

Here's my definition of success and what gets me up. It's having enough money to buy the things that money cannot buy and for me, that's experiences with the family and traveling, you simply cannot replace that. That is what gets me up to get me going. Aside from, now specific to real estate. Real estate is so unique because it's bopping and weaving forever. It's never the same. I told you earlier, I get distracted, I've got to be constantly challenged in order to keep my attention. Real estate does that. We do deals now with my kids in the office here, my son, son-in-law and daughter. I'm still learning. Yes, I'm teaching them, but I'm still learning. Deals come across that I've never seen before, and that keeps my brain going and that creativity and always working on the deal so to speak. That's the smaller micro answer, and the bigger is that why.

Susan: That's amazing, yes, that why is truly important. It's just an example of how coachable you are, because you said, how important being coachable is, and now you're just showing, "Hey, I'm also coachable, even though I've been doing this for many years, I'm still learning." So I love it, excellent. Chris, if you were to leave our listeners with a golden nugget, what would that be?

Chris P.: I wish I had this earth shattering answer for this one, but I'm going to give you one I hope helps people practical wise, and that is, because we've got an audience that probably does many different things, the biggest thing I can tell you is, someone is where you want to be or was where you want to be and they can show you the way, the biggest thing you can do is, of course, latch onto them, reach out to them. If they're [inaudible 00:23:32] reach out to them, tell them you want to buy them lunch. Get to that person somehow. That's how I

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reached Joe Vitale and went on that dinner with him. Very important meeting. But that doesn't stop there. You latch onto them.

This is the important thing, it gets more difficult. Once you find that mentor or role model that you can say, "Okay, this is the direction I want to go." The path of their personal life, their business life, everything. Don't look left, don't look right, don't look back, wipe the whiteboard clean for what you think you know or you know, because you know a lot, but not what they know. And then put the blinders on for at least 12 to 36 months is what I tell you. 12 to 36 months with that person. Don't let the shiny objects get in the way, and all the new fancy things, and the do this quick, get this, get rich quick, none of that. Just find that person, latch onto them, and put the blinders on for 12 to 36 months and that goes for any business, charity, or profession in my opinion.

Susan: What great wisdom, thank you so much for sharing 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.