

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

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## **BOOK MARKETING: How to Use Focused Marketing to Get the Best Results Interview with Minette Riordan**

**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 get-you-focused expert and coach. Dr. Minette Riordan is an award-winning entrepreneur and best-selling author. For over 10 years, she ran a multimedia publishing company growing a small quarterly publication to a monthly magazine with a circulation of 50,000 copies a month. She made the leap from print magazine to digital in 2009. After successfully selling advertising face-to-face for a decade, learning to sell online was a challenge, one that she's been continuously studying and practicing ever since. She and her husband now run a successful coaching and training business from their home in Santa Barbara, California.

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

**Minette Riordan:** Oh, Susan, thank you so much for having me. I'm super excited to be here today.

**Susan Friedmann:** I'm super excited to have you here. Minette, as you well know, being an author, sometimes, you can also be creative entrepreneur at the same time. As an entrepreneur, we're full of great ideas, but sometimes, our time management is not always the best, and I'm speaking from my own experience. Talk to us about how we can do a better job of managing our time so that we can be more productive.

**Minette Riordan:** Yeah, thank you. That's such a great question. I particularly love this question because I am one of those creative entrepreneurs with many, many ideas. I'm sure there are others listening who have stacks of notebooks and idea books and 50 books that they want to write, and it can be really hard to know where to start, to focus and to pull our many

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and varied interest into a place that makes sense for where we are in our lives, in our businesses.

To me, it all starts with asking ourselves that question about why are we doing the work that we want to do? So often, people look at productivity, and they just think, "Oh my gosh. I just want to get more done. I just need to accomplish more. There's so many things I want to do, and I want to do them all at once." I would ask, instead, what's the impact that you want to have with the work that you're doing because when you're clear about what Simon Sinek calls, your why, it makes it so much easier to start to prioritize your ideas and your dreams and your goals in a way that will help you be more effective and more productive. Oftentimes, it's not really about time management. It really is about focus and focusing in on one idea at a time.

Susan Friedmann: I really love that you quote Simon Sinek because he's one of my favorite people, and the minute you said the word why, he just came into my mind. That's brilliant because, yes, his focus and, as you rightly say, the why is so important; however, finding that why, talk to us more about finding that why.

Minette Riordan: For me, it's the thing that gets you out of bed every single morning as an entrepreneur, even maybe when you don't want to. This is my 17th year as a business owner, and not all the days are fun or easy. Some of them, I don't even know what I should be doing at times. Some of them are, "Oh my gosh, I have way more tasks than time today." When I get into that place of feeling really overwhelmed or just out of sorts, and I'm wondering how to get myself back into action, I reconnect, always, to why I do what I do because it's really not about me.

I think this was the thing that those of us who are entrepreneurs have to learn is that most of the time, the work that we're doing cannot be about us. It's actually about the people that we're being called to serve. When we're really clear about who it is that we're being called to serve and how we want to show up in service to them, it gives meaning and purpose to our work. It not only allows us to focus on influence and impact, but it allows us to focus on why and that belief that if I can just touch one person today, Susan, if I can just have my words in my books or my words I'm speaking on this interview or on my blog or Facebook or wherever it is, if my words can just make one person's day a little bit better or help them move one step closer to their goal, then it's all worth it. Sometimes, we lose sight of the fact that this isn't about us. It really is about them.

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Susan Friedmann: You couldn't have said it better because, absolutely, it is about them, and sometimes, you're right, we get so I-focused, me-focused. It's all about what I can bring to the marketplace and I've got this message, and it keeps going on with the I, especially when you read those websites and, "I can do this for you," and, "I can do that for you," rather than saying, "Hey, what is it that you need? How can I help you and serve you and the way that is best that will help you be more productive?" I really like that.

I know that you have a time management system because you wrote a book on it. Was it Time Management for Creators? Was that the title?

Minette Riordan: Yeah, it is A Time Management System for Creative Entrepreneurs. I think that all entrepreneurs are creative and are idea people, but my personal passion and my big why is helping creative women entrepreneurs to really create financial freedom so that they have freedom of choice in their life, and I feel like the more financial independence that women have, the more empowered they feel to take action, to speak up, to stand out. There's a lot in the media right now about women, this is the year of the women. We just recently celebrated International Women's Day, but my personal calling is to make sure that women have freedom of choice.

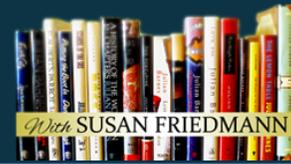
One of the ways that we do that is by managing our time, our tasks, our attention, and our finances very carefully, that we don't overdo it in any of those areas, and that we're really honest with ourselves about time because I hear over and over and over again from entrepreneurs that, "Oh, I'm so busy. I couldn't possibly do that. I can't take that on. I'm so busy." It's almost like it's a badge of honor to be busy, but there's a big difference between busy and productive.

What I find with creative entrepreneurs is that most of the time, they're doing way too much. It's not that they're not doing enough. They're doing too much, and they're not doing enough of the right activities to grow their business. It's almost more about task management and really, again, that big why, having a clear business plan and strategy, being brutally honest with yourself about your distractions, where you're spending your time, what are you resisting doing that form this holistic time management system that is all about working smart and actually working less.

Susan Friedmann: Busy versus productive. That is so, that speaks to me because, yes, I can keep myself very, very busy, but am I being productive is the real

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question. I know that that's a question that many of our listeners could be asking themselves.

I know that you've got a time management checklist. Can you give us a few practical tips that we can get started in identifying busy versus productive or how we can even be more productive.

Minette Riordan:

The very first recommendation that I have is to do a time audit, and to do this for at least a week, and to be rigorous about really looking at how you're spending every minute of your day from the moment you get up in the morning until the moment that you go to bed at night. You can do this simply with pen and paper. There's some great apps. One of my favorite that works both on your desktop and on your smartphone or tablet is called Toggl. T as in Tom, O-G-G-L dot com. There are many apps that are time-tracking apps. ATracker is another one. But getting honest with yourself in 15 to 30-minute increments, 15 minutes kind of made me crazy, so 30 minutes might be a little easier, but if you find yourself switching activities very, very frequently, then 15 minutes might be more effective.

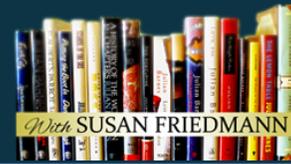
Doing this for one full week with no judgment. This isn't about really judging any of the activities that you're currently choosing to spend time on, but just noticing where is your time going. I recognized how much time I loved to spend on Netflix or how often I was being distracted by my phone and going down the Facebook rabbit hole just because I had notifications turned on on my phone. I would get this nice little buzz someone mentioned me or connected with me or posted in a group, things that really weren't at all useful or intentional for the day that I was leading but that were happening.

We also start to notice that, experts say it takes 20-30 minutes to get back on task when you've been pull off task by a distraction, and that distraction could be a phone, it could be one of your kids if you work from home. I have a precious kitty named Phoebe who is very vocal, talks a lot and distracts me when she wants to go outside. If I'm in the middle of writing and she distracts me and wants to go outside, it can take 20-30 minutes to get back on task. That's a huge amount of time being lost to transitions.

Every time you get up to go to the restroom, and if you're anything like me, I put it off until the last possible moment because I don't want to get my focus interrupted. Just noticing and being brutally honest with where is your time going currently. This is the first step to really

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understanding what I affectionately call your time-eating gremlins are so that you can make peace with those gremlins and start to structure your day in a way that really minimizes distractions.

Susan Friedmann: I love the idea of time-eating gremlins. I can just see them running around my desk.

Minette Riordan: Yes, and it's all those open tabs, it's all those social media notifications, and many others have our tablet, our phone, and our computer all sitting right in one space. I'm looking here in front of me. I've got my iPhone, my tablet, my desktop, and my laptop all right here in the same vicinity. It's so easy to have everything start buzzing and beeping and distracting us, not to mention telephones ringing or people stopping by. Things happen, and those time-eating gremlins that really get to people though are the ones, so social media is a big one, email is another one. Stopping to read your email every time you get a notification. Television, Netflix, YouTube, whatever your guilty pleasure is. Pinterest is a huge one for me.

Just starting to notice where is your time going. When you're complaining that you're too busy to focus in on the task that will grow your business, really look and say, "Which of these activities are not moving me forward? Which could I cut back on?" I'm not telling you to go stop binging on Netflix, but maybe it's an hour instead of three hours a day. The national average is really high for how long people are spending watching video, live video streaming, some kind of video streaming on their devices, so just paying attention to what your preferred distraction is.

Use a timer is another great tip, Susan. A lot of times, I might have clients that are spending too much time on social media. I say, "Use a timer. Give yourself 15 minutes. Go in. Do your work first." Make sure that you post in your groups or post on your business page, whatever your task is that you're approaching social media for in the first place. Do that from a place of I gotta make sure I get this business piece done. Check your notifications, then if you still have a few minutes left, allow yourself a few minutes to play and go down the rabbit hole of your newsfeed, but don't linger. Using timers can help us to manage our time really effectively.

Susan Friedmann: I love the idea of a timer because I'm really good about going down rabbit holes, or not so good might be the better phrase. What I do is I actually make appointments with myself and leave the whole morning

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where I just do my work because if I don't, then it's easy to go into email, and once I'm in email, that leads me to a website, which leads me to another website. Everybody can relate to this, I'm sure.

Minette Riordan:

I, absolutely, I do it. I do it all the time. I think that time-blocking is such a brilliant strategy for time management. I learned the really hard painful way that I'm really good at letting my calendar get full of people, conversations, interviews like this one, which I absolutely adore doing. My clients have access to my calendar so they can schedule coaching sessions or people can schedule consults with me all through public links. If I'm not careful, all of a sudden, I look at my calendar, and there's no time to get actual work done, the creative work that drives our business. Any digital marketing online business or anybody that's an author, our greatest need is time to write, and so making sure that you're carving out that time first and sticking a claim for yourself in your own calendar is critical to successful time management, and yet, it can be really challenging to do. I find creatives in particular get really resistant when you want to put boundaries on their time.

I recommend that you block time to do your own work of growing your business, but you don't need to be super specific about the actual task that happened during that time. You might have a nice, written or Trello version of a to-do list that's kind of a master to-do list, and yet, you make sure that you block time in your calendars so that you're using what I call both structure and flow to successfully move you forward. You're giving yourself structure by time-blocking, but you're not being super hard on yourself about what tasks happen when. The flow part is giving yourself freedom inside of that structure to work on what feels most playful or most creative or most urgent in that particular time block.

Susan Friedmann:

For me, one of the things that I have to watch is getting bored with what I'm doing because that's when I go and look for something more exciting, the bright shiny object that gets in the way, which I suddenly feel I have to have. That leads me down another rabbit hole. Talk to us about avoiding that boredom.

Minette Riordan:

That's a great, great question, and it's something that my husband has really been working on lately. One of the things that he's done is created what he calls focus blocks. He started with 10 minutes a week. I think he's up to about 50 minutes a week because he was really struggling. I don't know that he would've called it boredom as much as

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just simply distraction and really struggling with focus, but I love your emphasis on boredom.

Sometimes, boredom is simply a mask for what happens when we get stuck with a knotty problem, maybe a particular paragraph that we're trying to write or a task like billing and invoicing that doesn't feel particularly fun but needs to get done. What he would do, he would work in these short focus blocks and set a timer, and as soon as the timer went off, then he would allow himself to be completely distracted by whatever felt appealing in the moment. For him, that tends to be Reddit. He's a huge fan of the Reddit forum, or he might hop on Instagram and search around for a little bit and just give himself permission to be distracted by some of these bright, shiny lights and notifications and whatever so that then his brain thinks there's a reward at the end of the focus block, and by the time he's ready for the next focus block, he has given space for his love of distraction and also allowed his brain a little freedom to work on some of those knottier problems in the background.

I think it's a myth to think that we can sit down for three hours of uninterrupted creative time all the time. Does it happen? Yes. Is it amazing and wonderful to get into those flow spaces? Yes, absolutely, but the reality and nature of the way the world works today is that it's really rare for us to have the ability to be able to concentrate for that length of time because we're so used to the many, many, many distractions that are flowing in from all over the place in our life.

Susan Friedmann: What I really like about the time blocks is that you don't have to feel guilty, so you allow yourself that, or the focus blocks that you call them, that you don't feel guilty about doing the things that are a little bit of a, maybe a time-eater, but you can do them free of guilt, and then get back to, as you say, the more productive aspects of your business.

I know that we've woven many mistakes inside of what we've been talking about, but my listeners know that I love the idea of asking about mistakes. Talk to us about specific mistakes that you see your clients make or you make, your husband makes.

Minette Riordan: Ah, I'm happy to share my own mistakes, and I find them often mirrored in my clients, which is always just fascinating. I think that most of the time, our clients are just a reflection of who we are, and oftentimes, their challenges tend to be ones that I'm working on in some way myself as well.

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But I think one of the biggest, and the one that was most painfully-learned for me personally, was not having a business plan in place. What does a business plan have to do with time management? It helps you stay on track. It helps you pick the task that are most important to move you towards your goals. I'm not talking about a traditional formal business plan, although that has value and use in many areas and many strategies, but I'm really talking about are you crystal clear about what it is that you're creating by when you wanted to have completed, and what's the financial goal related to that. Whether that's simply writing a book or whether that's bringing in five new clients, it's being crystal clear about what you're trying to accomplish.

When you start with the end goal in sight, then you can reverse engineer the productivity system to really emphasize what's the first step, the second step so that you make consistent progress towards what that goal is. The mistake that I see people make is that they dive in with both feet, and I am the queen of diving in with both feet and just going, "How hard can it be?" and not really having a sense of where I'm going. Knowing where you're going is essential to making sure that you stay on track.

The second part of diving in with both feet is that we tend to do these big brain dumps and massive to-do lists that aren't prioritized or sequenced and often include both our personal to-dos and our professional to-dos on the same list. I'm a big fan of getting everything out of your head and on to paper, but then spend a little extra time to separate out your personal activities from your professional activities, and then to prioritize them in order of what's urgent, what's important, what's useful and necessary, and really be honest and take off anything in the list that you're really never going to get to. Maybe clean out your closet is something that keeps lingering on your list, but really, you're not going to get there any time soon. Take it off your list so that it doesn't add the emotional weight and stress of an unfinished task to your mindset.

Susan Friedmann: Now, along with that, are there specific tools you use? Do you have your own tools? Can you share any recommendations?

Minette Riordan: Sure. I've tried so many different things over the years. I use a combination of both digital and paper planning because I'm still a writer at heart and an artist at heart, and I love pen and paper. I love big, cheap sheets of paper or big desk calendars that you can get at any

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office supply store, and I do a brain dump periodically where I try to get every task that's floating around in my head on to a piece of paper.

Once I can see it, then I can manipulate it. From paper, everything goes into, we have both a wall calendar, a big giant wipe-off laminated calendar so that we can see big goals and milestones out in front of us all the way down to a Google Calendar. We use Google for everything. We love Google. We use the Google Spreadsheet to manage our editorial content, and we use Google Calendar to manage all of our appointments and all of our time-blocking.

For me, I have created a system that works for my crazy creative brain, but it always has to start with pen and paper before I can move it, for me personally, to a digital system. My husband loves Google Keep for keeping track of notes and ideas. Again, it integrates with Google. It's very easy to share. We have managed to really combine, because he's much more structured than I am, so we've been able to combine his love of structure and my need for flow into a system that works for us.

- Susan Friedmann: Fantastic. If our listeners wanted to contact you for more information about your services, how can they do that, Minette?
- Minette Riordan: The easiest thing to do is go to [pathtoprofitacademy.com](http://pathtoprofitacademy.com). You can see there's a nice contact button right at the top of the page and reach out to me that way. I am a Facebook junkie. I love Facebook, and you can find me at Minette Riordan or Path to Profit Academy on Facebook as well.
- Susan Friedmann: If you were to leave our listeners with a golden nugget, what would that be?
- Minette Riordan: Be honest about how you're spending your time. Really take time to do that time audit and pay attention to where your time is going. Time is a precious commodity in our distracted world, and I would encourage you to use it wisely in a way that leaves your life feeling fun, graceful, and easy, rather than busy and overwhelming.
- Susan Friedmann: That's something I'm going to do straight away because I've never done it, and I think it'll be enormously useful, so thank you. Thank you so much for sharing your wisdom, Minette, 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.