

BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

Helping authors get their books noticed!



BOOK MARKETING: How to Get Your Books in 5-Star Hotels Interview with Randy Peyser

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 book coach and literary advocate. Randy Peyser gets people book deals with publishers. She analyzes, edits, and ghostwrites books, pitches books to literary agents and publishers, and places books in five-star luxury hotels. She's a literary advocate, book coach, editor, speaker, and CEO of authoronestop.com. Her clients have been featured in Oprah Magazine, Time Magazine, on the Wall Street Journal, and USA Today best-seller list, on Hallmark TV, in airport book stores, and in big box stores and more. Randy is the author of Write-a-Book Program, Crappy to Happy as featured in the movie Eat, Pray, Love, and The Power of Miracle Thinking. Randy, welcome to the show, and thank you for being this week's guest expert and mentor.

Randy Peyser: I'm very excited to be here, Susan.

Susan Friedmann: Randy, I know that your sweet spot now is really working with shy authors. Tell us more about that. What does that mean, and how do you help shy authors?

Randy Peyser: If you're a first-time author, everything is new, and how you present yourself, your material, having to step up and maybe do readings, having to step up in front of the public, it's all brand new. I realize that this is a very underserved market because there's a lot of "rah, rah, get your book out there, yay." It can be very intimidating. It can be very, very scary, and so I suggest a certain sequence of steps in order to get to the place where you're in the "rah, rah, I can do it all," but you have to start from somewhere.

Susan Friedmann: Where do we start?

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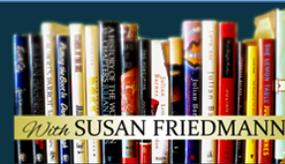
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- Randy Peyser: One of the easiest ways to start talking about your book is to do Internet radio. Why this is easy is because no one's looking directly at you, are they? That's one thing. You're taking the pressure off of yourself. We all know there are hundreds of blog talk radio shows where you can get your positioned as a guest because all of those people who have shows need guests.
- Susan Friedmann: Very much so. They're always looking for experts in areas, and they're hungry for guests. You're absolutely right.
- Randy Peyser: That's true. Here's one of the secrets to doing any of these radio shows. Because it's not visible to the audience, they cannot see you, so that means you can write out your question list. Write out your question list, maybe 12-10 really juicy questions. First send a copy of that, obviously, to the interviewer, but there's the wonderful, magical surprise of it: I want you to write the same list of questions, print it out again, but this time, filling your answers. That's the sheet you want to have in front of you. When you ask these questions, you have a basic idea as to the answer you want to discuss. This is a great way to start positioning yourself, and the more radio you do, the more you're going to start to remember your answers.
- Let's talk about the kind of questions you want to ask. Think in terms of the reader, not in terms of you. You always have to be thinking about answering the question, what's in it for me, from the reader's perspective. This is especially true for people writing memoir because there's a lot of memoir that's being written. People want to share their life experiences because they overcame something, and they want to help somebody along the way, which is great, but think of it always in terms of "what's in it for me" from the reader's perspective. Think about their pain points and what basically the problem that happened and the solution that got you through it. Those are just a few tips for doing Internet radio, but it works very, very well. Certainly, incorporate stories, incorporate facts, incorporate quotes. Think of one very, very strong quote that readers or listeners can walk away with.
- Susan Friedmann: I love that technique with the questions and the answers. In fact, I've used that myself, especially if I'm being interviewed by somebody on a subject that I know but I don't always feel as confident about, so having those answers written out for myself really helps me. It's like my security blanket.

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- Randy Peyser: Absolutely. I want to share something. Many, many years ago, like over 20 years ago, before I started Author One Step and was really totally engaged in book publishing, I was in magazine publishing up until that time. I met an author who had been on Oprah, and she gave me this tip, which I think is really golden, and I do want to pass it along to listeners, which is, this woman said, "Know your material backwards and forwards. Just because you wrote the book, after you finish writing it, you may not remember all of your pithy points and things that you want to discuss." This author said she read her book constantly. She kept the copy of it in her bathroom, and every time she sat down on the throne, she read and reread her book, so she was really learning her material backwards and forwards.
- Susan Friedmann: That's such a great point because you're absolutely right. I've got a couple of my books, and they've got post-it notes in all of those pithy areas, as you rightly say, so that I can go back and remind myself, "Well, what did I write about this because at the time, it was really good, and it still is good, so let me remember it," so yes.
- Randy Peyser: I want to bring this up because when you're marking places in a book, you can't refer to those places if you're speaking live. One of the things that I do is I would go to all of those pages where you have that post-it note, and I would actually just make, in a Word document, and this is what I do, I just make a list of the things that I might want to cover in my talk, just basically a one-liner that just triggers my memory. I've found that to be incredibly helpful when I'm planning out all of my talks.
- Susan Friedmann: For instance, I've got seven strategies in my Riches and Niches book, How to Make it Big in a Small Market, and so I might talk about a certain strategy, the third strategy is move the movers and shake the shakers, and I might talk about what that is, but tell them that it's one of seven strategy, hoping that it will spark them to think, "Oh, well, what are the other six?" They want to know, so they may go and buy the book just to find out what those other six are. What are your thoughts on that?
- Randy Peyser: What you're doing is creating like a tease. I would probably give more than one. Yes, I think that's absolutely true. Readers need a compelling reason to buy any book. What is a compelling reason? One is to address pain points, to know your audience well enough, like you wrote that book for a specific purpose to help somebody with a specific need. What is the most compelling factor, and really start to dig in there.

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I heard a speaker one time, a marketer many years ago who said, "A mind does not like an open loop." What you're talking about like when you say one, two, or three tips out of seven, you've created an open loop, and a mind wants to close the loop. The way they do that is obviously by buying the book.

Susan Friedmann: That's exactly what I want them to do. Yeah. In my introduction of you, we talked about you get books in five-star hotels. What's that program about?

Randy Peyser: I started working with a program that a friend of mind, Jane Ubell-Meyer created about 16 years ago in the Hamptons with all the luxury hotels, and now it's expanded nationally, and it's called bedsidereading.com. What we are doing is that we are placing copies of authors' books in Waldorf Astoria, Shuttlers on the Beach, Mandarin Oriental, New York and Washington, D.C., the Acqualina in Florida. The idea is that the books are going actually on the bedside, that's why it's called bedsidereading.com. We're getting books placed by the bedside in these five-star high-end luxury hotels.

When you think about visibility and creating visibility for your book, if you are looking to get your book in front of a key influencer, a CEO, a VIP, a corporate decision-maker who hires speakers, possibly a filmmaker in Hollywood, a celebrity, wouldn't it be beneficial to have your book by the bedside in a luxury hotel? That was the idea behind it, and it's just now being offered to individual authors and indie publishers. Up until this time, it's been major publishers like Penguin Random House, Simon & Schuster, HarperCollins, Hachette, Macmillan, and St. Martin's Press, many others are using the program on a monthly basis because they love visibility marketing, word-of-mouth marketing.

We're also doing something more in this program. We're doing high-end photography of your book's cover, all of the books that are featured in all of the hotels per month. Let's say there's 12-15 books per month. They're all photographed and put in a gorgeous display ad that goes into 10 national women's magazines, like First for Women, Women's World, Closer, Life & Style, In Touch. I mean, these are magazines that you see in the grocery stores that women readers pick up everywhere.

This display ad is a gift bag giveaway that features all the books for that month. I want to give you an example. Last month, we had 99,950 readers apply for that gift bag giveaway. We're getting huge visibility for the book's cover in nationally-recognized magazines.

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- Susan Friedmann: That's really exciting. Now, do you actually give these books to the hotel, or do the-
- Randy Peyser: Yes.
- Susan Friedmann: ... hotels pay for-
- Randy Peyser: Yes.
- Susan Friedmann: ... them?
- Randy Peyser: No, the hotel does not pay for them. The author pays for getting the books into the hotels. We have a program for that that's really, really sweet. It is priced so unbelievably low for this kind of service. It's amazing. I'm just very, very excited about getting the word out about it because you never know what's going to happen. I mean, we had one man with a self-published book, and because he did this program, he's now attracting, I think three major publishers are considering it. One of the major movie TV film companies is working with him right now because they're interested in doing a limited TV film series. Just having this kind of connection is so powerful.
- Can we promise results? No. Nothing can happen. Magic can happen. I'm excited to see what's happening with it. I tell people there's a reason why all of the major publishers are using it every month. Many of them are booking multiple hotels in the same month, so it's very exciting.
- Susan Friedmann: You talked about the idea of offering this to self-published authors. Is that correct?
- Randy Peyser: Yes. That's exactly who it's for that we're opening it to. I will say that people have to apply for the program. They can contact me if they're interested. All the books are vetted both by us and by the hotels. We have a large variety of genres. For example, we're doing a business, a bedside reading for business programs. If you've written a business book, your book is going to go to the hotels, these five-star hotels who are specifically requesting business books.
- The same is true, we have one major hotel, a five-star, obviously, they're all five-star major hotels, that they're starting a children's program. They're looking for high quality children's books. Believe me, these hotels, they do their own marketing, and they get the word to their lists as well, so there's even more expanded publicity. We're doing

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memoirs, self-help, some romance. I mean, just this wide variety, some health books. I can tell you that the hotels shy away from mind/body/spirit, politics, and religion. If your books are in those categories, we may or may not be able to place it. It depends on the title, but you're welcome to apply. There's no cost to apply.

Susan Friedmann: That's a very exciting program. I love the fact that there's the variety now, as you said, of children's books. What a perfect situation to have that available because who buys children's books but parents and grandparents, and these are the kinds of people who could potentially stay in these luxury hotels.

Randy Peyser: Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

Susan Friedmann: How about self-published books being bought by traditional publishers. I know that so many of my authors feel that they need their book to be published by a traditional publisher; however, starting out, and in a self-published version, and then transitioning, talk to us about that possibility.

Randy Peyser: Yes. I sell books directly to publishers. If it's fiction, I send them to literary agents, but I secure the agents for them, and for nonfiction, I sell books directly to publishers. I have sold self-published books before. It's a little bit tougher, so I'm going to tell you what the publishers are looking for because this is what you need to know. It's really, really critical.

They're going to ask me a series of questions, and every single of them, I promise you, is going to ask me this. They're going to ask me when did the book come out, number one. Number two, how many copies have sold? If your book's been out a long time, and you don't have a whole lot of copy sold, the conversation ends right there. The best scenario is the book's been out for under a year, and a lot of copies are just selling. Obviously there's a need for it. It shows the author is marketing and putting themselves out there. The third question they're all going to ask me is about the size of your social media following. Believe me, 15, 20 years ago, nobody was saying, "Tell me about the author's social media." Now it's the third question out of their mouth. They're also going to ask me who do you have left to sell it to?

As you can tell from all these questions, they're all statistical. They're all about the numbers. I want to give you some ideas as to how you can increase your numbers with a self-published book because I was able to

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get a self-published actual novel this past year under contract with a top agent because the author is going through book clubs, and she is selling a hundred books a month. Those are good numbers for a self-published author, obviously, so your numbers have to be strong.

Another way that I can sell a self-published book is if you've just put it out, and it's only been out maybe a month or two. Then you can have smaller sales because then I can say, "Oh, she was just testing a beta market," or, "He was just testing a beta market," and I've gotten books sold that way, but the longer your book is out, and the fewer your sales are, that's like an impossible investment for a publisher make.

Susan Friedmann: Talk to us more about these numbers. You say a hundred if, let's say, they're being sold through book clubs. What if they're being sold through other avenues, through Amazon, obviously, or their own, they've got their own following, for instance. What kind of numbers are we really looking at for somebody to take them seriously?

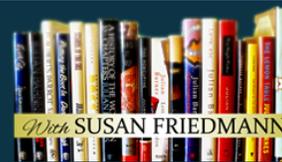
Randy Peyser: It's a funny question because, one, it depends on the content itself because I think earlier you mentioned various niche markets and things like that, so really depends on the market size overall. That's part of the equation, but many years ago, I had an agent who said, "Randy, it's all come down to publishers sitting with their calculators, and they're comparing one person's numbers to another." If they have a person with a 60,000-person list, and they have a bunch of launch campaign partners all whom are the big-mouth people who are getting the word out of the book, and you're showing consistent sales, obviously, you can't fight that if you're an author with a thousand books sold; however, if you have 10,000 books sold or even 5,000 books sold in a shorter period of time, let's say within six months, somebody's going to take notice.

Yes, there can be smaller numbers than that. If you show that you're working in some big marketing thing that's about to happen, maybe you're doing some kind of joint venture with another person or you're going to start doing festivals, and all of a sudden, you can show that you're creating buzz. There's interest in your book. What I tell people is, what can you do to get a publisher to raise their eyebrow?

As I was sitting with a publisher a couple of years ago at BookExpo America ... That's where I go every single year. It's an annual trade show for the publishing industry. I call it the feeding frenzy of the publishing industry. That's where I go to pitch every single year, all with the New

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York Publishers and the agents and everybody's looking for their big deal. It's just exciting. I had 41 meetings in three days at last year's show. It was just phenomenal. I got six of my authors 11 contracts between them, which was pretty phenomenal too.

I was sitting with one publisher who told me he gets 10,000 inquiries a year. 10,000 submissions. That's roughly 860 a month. Then it's my job to help people, like the self-published authors, get to the top of that pile. I'm always thinking, how can we tip the sale in the author's favor. What is it that I need to say or to write that will really get them absolutely compelled, absolutely compelled to consider that manuscript?

Part of the formula has to do with the topic. What is trending right now? Have you written a book that's in the news? For example, I had a book that just came out recently called *Slave: A Human Trafficking Survivor Finds Life*. It's a memoir. Got it sold instantly on the show floor. I didn't even have to show the publisher the writing. I just talked about the topic. The publisher said, "It's sold. I bought it."

I got home, and we worked out the deal with the client. It was hysterical. It was so funny, but that book is being considered by three Hollywood movie producers right now. That's very, very exciting. What is the compelling need from a publisher's perspective because they're looking at trends, marketplace, excuse me, like what's selling now?

Susan Friedmann: As soon as you said that, I was like, "Oh my goodness. Yes. That has to be a definite." Anything to do with trafficking at the moment is really hot, so I can totally understand why they went for it. That's fantastic. Randy, how about mistakes that you see authors make, shy or otherwise?

Randy Peyser: Well, one of the things that I tell people is never tell a publisher that you know your book is going to be a New York Times best seller. Never tell them that it's going to be a best seller. That's one of the things in terms of publishing because they'll just roll their eyes because we have to prove everything with the numbers.

Other mistakes I would say, and I've seen this actually quite frequently, and these are so easily correctable: Typos on websites completely turn publishers or media off or readers off because it makes you look unprofessional, and the message, the way the message is worded is very, very critical to getting readers to buy. People are over-hyped.

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They're skeptical, I think most people are skeptical by nature. You've gotta be careful with the kind of text that you're using to position yourself correctly. I really just can't overstate that.

I have this joke, for example. There's a lot of marketing professionals, and you could probably go on a lot of marketer sites and you'll see, the basic, some variation of this phrase. "We'll make your text sizzle." I tell people, "The only thing I want sizzling is a fajita platter at a nice restaurant a lunch time," and if you hear the word sizzle, run faster than a cow being chased by a McDonald's truck because it's an overused word. Now, what I like to say is, "I know all 26 letters from A to Z, and I use them in varying combinations to bring the brilliance in you out." It's just like having fun with language compels people. Just making it more lively compels people.

Another thing would be to get very high quality endorsements, the higher you can. Short endorsements. One mistake would be paragraph-long endorsements like on the back cover of a book, or even on a website. People usually don't read all of that. Just one or two sentences max.

Susan Friedmann: I know that one of the things that authors struggle with too is really honing down that message for into, let's say, one or two sentences. I ask them, "Well, what's your book about?" and 15 minutes later, they're still telling me what it's about, and they've already lost me. Honing that message in to just a few crisp words is really challenging.

Randy Peyser: I'd like to give all of the listeners a very quick tip for their 30-second promotional because basically what you're talking about? After I give this tip, I'd like to talk a little bit about how you network at events to help promote your book. The tip is, I help who do what. I help who. Who is your audience? Who is your target market reader? I help moms. I help women under 40. I help people with disabilities, whatever it is, I help who do what? It's very crisp and to the point. You've gotta be able to narrow that down, even if you've written memoir.

I wrote a book called Crappy to Happy. It's my life story. After each of my stories, I have tips about how I overcame some experience that's related in that story, and those tips are either inspirations or insights for readers. They're short. They're pithy. They're only two or three sentences a piece. I help who do what? I help, one of the things I say is I help people whose income is trickling slower than an intravenous drip to figure out some of the blocks so that they can get their income

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flowing again. [inaudible 00:24:06] to that. I help who do what? That's a real basic formula. Easy, easy to figure that out.

Susan Friedmann: I love that. That's very fun, and it really grabs your attention because you're like, "Well, how do you do that?" which is obviously the response that you want people to have.

Randy Peyser: Yes, and then that's where when you talk, Susan, about the teasers. You can say, "I have ... " People like numbers. They like to quantify things. "I have a five-step program, a six step program. I have a four-step program," whatever it is. It's simple. It's easy. People like terms like simple and easy. You never want to use the word work and all things that sound like struggle or hard in your promotional talk, your networking talk, but some simple tips. That's one of the things that I want to suggest.

I mentioned I want to give shy authors some other tips for networking. In fact, I once had a publisher ... I was in New York at a big networking party. It's all, a lot of big wigs and a lot of people hoping to get their books sold, and I'm pitching, but I was speaking to this publisher, and he said, "Randy. How do you do it?" I said, "Do what?" He goes, "You just walk up to people," and he goes, "and I'm just terrified of doing that." Now, this is a publisher who stands about 6'5", and he was still intimidated. New authors, you're in good company. Don't feel bad about it. You're new at this.

This is what I told him. I told him, "Pretend you're a golden retriever." As you're walking up to somebody, just think about a golden retriever. "Hi? Got a stick? Got a ball? Want to play?" The first tip I have is just pretend you're a golden retriever. You're going to approach somebody with a happy smile, and a "let's play together" attitude.

Now, here's another piece of the equation. What I'll do when I walk up to somebody, I'll say in these exact words. Notice I don't say my name or their name because often in networking events, people are wearing name tags. They're not going to remember your name anyway, and you're not going to remember their name at first. I walk to somebody, and I say, "Hi. What is it you do?" or, "What is it you're up to?" That's it. Then you can hear what their agenda is. Then you can position your response, if it relates to your book, then you can position your response and include your book title in it. I help so-and-so do what? "Well, I help women like you do blah, blah, blah," and then you can say, "I'm the author of this book."

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- Susan Friedmann: Well, I know at this point, our audience must be itching to find out how they could learn more about your services. What's some contact information that you could share with them, Randy?
- Randy Peyser: Randy@authoronestop.com. It's Randy, which is R-A-N-D-Y @authorone, O-N-E, stop. Authoronestop.com. One of the things that I always like to do for people is that I feel like the most valuable thing that I can give people is my time. I like to hear the ideas that people have, the books that they have. I'll give anybody a free like 10-15 minute consultation about their project and whether I think that I can really take it to the next level if they're looking for a publisher or if it might be appropriate for the Bedside Reading program. I'm happy to do those things.
- Susan Friedmann: Excellent. That's very generous. If you were to leave our listeners with a golden nugget, Randy, what would that be?
- Randy Peyser: Well, this is actually a good tip. One of the ways that I sell the most books as a nonfiction author is to look for a captive audience. It's much easier, let's say, if you're a mind/body/spirit author to give a sermon in a church, and all of a sudden, be in front of 20, 30, 40, 50, a hundred or more people. There's captive audience there. If you're writing in business, think about chambers of commerce or other places where you can speak where you have a large audience that is already seated there. Book stores can be iffy in terms of sales, but usually organizations, like religious or business or spiritual, are really good places to have a captive audience.
- Susan Friedmann: Thank you so much for sharing your wisdom. Thank you all for taking time out of your precious day to listen to this interview, and I sincerely hope that it sparks some ideas you can use to sell more books. Here's wishing you much book marketing success.