

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

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## BOOK MARKETING: How to Easily Create a Powerful Attention-Grabbing Brand Interview with Robin Samora

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 small business marketing and PR expert. Robin Samora teaches small business owners how their brands can command attention in a noisy, crowded marketplace. Through her speaking, consulting, and mentoring, she helps her clients find ideal prospects, form valuable relationships, and turn followers into loyal customers and raving fans.

Robin's mission is to help her clients boost their brand, business, and bottom line by cutting through clutter so that they can get noticed. She uses social media, email marketing, speaking, and free publicity strategies to enhance credibility, reputation, and leadership position, even without a PR budget.

Robin also shares marketing tools, tricks, and articles on her weekly tip sheet, Robin's Rainmakers. Robin's also one of my National Speaker Association colleagues, so Robin, a big, hearty welcome to the show, and thank you for being this week's guest expert and mentor.

Robin Samora: It's really a pleasure to be here to speak with you and to also reach out to give some tips and ideas to your community.

Susan Friedmann: Fabulous. So, we'll start, Robin. You know, authors are looking to build their author platform, and in order to do that, it's important for them to establish a brand for themselves. How do they go about doing that?

Robin Samora: Having a brand is not only about image and font and color and logo, but a brand is also about how you make someone feel. When people would work with you, for example, you say, "How does your brand make people feel?" And hopefully it's one that leaves a positive image; one that welcomes a community, that welcomes conversation engagement,

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and people realize that you're an expert and you're there to serve them, to help them reach their own goals.

So, a brand has so many different aspects. There's visual and then there's the emotional, and there's also the expert level of being able to be of service.

Susan Friedmann: Creating this brand. Why is that so important for an author?

Robin Samora: Well because an author wants to be recognized among the hundreds of thousands of other authors and also be recognized for their expertise, whether they're writing mystery or whether they're writing fiction or whether they write about deep sea fishing or deep sea diving. It doesn't really matter. They want to be noted for their expertise so that people will be able to resonate with them, and they'll also be able to find them online and offline and also their books.

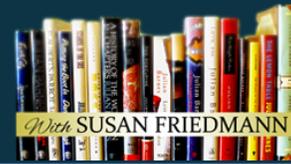
So, they create this brand to create sort of a sense of community, to create a sense of online image and offline image, and so they're noticed as experts, and people that they like, know, trust, and believe because that's also a big part also of being a brand so that you establish this credibility and you establish this connection with your prospects, customers, fans, and followers, too.

Susan Friedmann: In order to be seen as an expert, one of the ways that I love, and I know you do, too, is getting free publicity. Let's talk about that. How can an author take advantage of the free press that's out there?

Robin Samora: There's so many tips and tools that are out there. One of my favorite is called HARO, H-A-R-O, and it's called HelpAReporter.com. I definitely recommend that every author or anyone listening to this podcast sign up for it. Basically what it is, Susan, is a website where you enter your information, and you'll get notices from the HARO folks maybe three times a day, but you can also opt for whatever kind of settings that you want, and you'll get notices from journalists and other people who want to interview you who are looking for experts or resources because they need material; they need content; they need experts who can give them tips, tricks for their readers, and content is everything. Content's not just king; content is emperor, and if you have this bite sized or this knowledge, this depth, this breadth of what your subject matter is because you're a subject matter expert, then it's always so valuable.

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When you're able to learn how to pitch, which isn't that hard, you're able to then make these connections with these journalists, but also every time that you're published, you'll be able to repurpose the articles. You'll be able to use them on social media. You'll be able to use them to prospects, customers. It just is validation, third party validation, not just you promoting yourself, "I'm great, I'm great, I'm great." It's other people mentioning you.

So, as a collective, it's awesome to have all this press, and then you can start a media page.

Susan Friedmann: Let's talk about some tips for pitching to these reporters.

Robin Samora: To pitch the reporters, first of all, you want to make sure ... In my opinion, this is what I would advise my clients. First of all, make sure that you have a great headshot. So, that's not one that was taken at Sears or something like that. We're talking about a nice headshot. You could also have a lifestyle shot, and that means that say, for example, I was a beekeeper, so I have shots of me as a beekeeper, but I also have nice headshots that I use as part of my profile consistently on all my social media platforms.

So, another that you'd want to do when you're pitching to reporters, you want to make sure, of course, your website is great. You want to make sure there's no errors on there. If you're writing a blog, a blog is fantastic because a blog shows that you're an expert in your subject matter, so that's of course important, too. Getting free publicity, reporters are looking for credibility. They're looking at your social profiles. They want to know is this person for real if I want to feature them online, on a blog, in a newspaper article. So, they want to make sure that you're the real deal, so you can't just be a robot. You want to show your true brand personality, and that's a little bit of you online and that's a little bit of you offline.

They also want to look at your content. Your folks are all authors, so they're all great writers. They want to make sure that their content will resonate with their readers. When you're gonna be pitching a reporter, for example, you want to make sure that your writing is geared to them, that it will be of service and to be helpful for them because their job is to make it interesting for their readers to read, so you can be a valuable resource that way.

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So, there's a lot of different ways that you can pitch the press, and you want to just make sure that all of your social media information is consistent, you're out there, you have a good reputation, you take pride in your brand, there are no mistakes, and that you're always sharing valuable content because there's nothing worse than people just, "Look at me, look at me," without something substantive there as well.

Susan Friedmann: You're looking to let the reporter know that you can help their readers in this article that they may be looking for.

Robin Samora: First of all, you have to create interest. You have to be credible. So, whether you pitch them, and they don't use you right away, that's okay as long as you're consistent with them, you're smart, and you're responsive, and you have researched them. That's what's important because, for example, you don't want to pitch a blogger or a reporter without having done some research or investigative work, and you don't want to pitch a topic that they've already just covered.

So, my recommendation is if you want to go after five publications, not 500 and just send out a massive press release, you want to pick a small handful of journalists or reporters that are in your industry or that would be interested, and you want to pitch them but having done the research so you don't repeat the topic, that you want to make sure that it's written in a way that would be interesting to their readers. The whole thing is value. Reporters want to interview experts and have resources who add value, who make them look good.

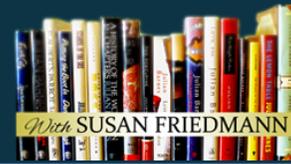
You want to make it easy for a reporter to contact you, work with you. They usually do it by email. Sometimes it's done by phone, but you always want to make it easy for them.

Susan Friedmann: So, for instance, this HARO helping a reporter when they put out a request for an article. How would you structure, let's say, the email that you would send them to pitch that you were the right person to write this article.

Robin Samora: Well that's a great question. So, I have a template someplace on my website, and I'm happy to share it with your readers if you like. We can do that after. But basically what you would do is you would have a template. So, when you send your email, in the subject line that's going out to the reporter, usually ... Most of the time there's like a secret code that they use for HARO, but sometimes you can write directly to the reporter.

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So, in the subject line, you would write "HARO:" and then the name of the query that they have asked. So, for example, if I was writing, wanted to pitch a reporter that was about 50 small business tactics to grow your brand, that was their query. Then I would put that. HARO: 50 ways to whatever. So, that's important.

The second is you want to address them as an expert, and you want to say, "My name is X, Y, Z." You want to make sure you send a link to them. You never send an attachment because attachments could always have viruses. You want to make it short and sweet. "My name is Robin Samora. I'm a small business marketing expert and speaker with the National Speakers Association. I help small business owners boost their brand, business, and bottom line and write a weekly blog called Robin's Rainmakers." So you give them an introduction onto who you are.

"You had asked a question about 10 tips to X, Y, Z. Here are 10 tips that I find that might be helpful." You don't need to do 10; you could do five. "Here are a few tips that you might feel helpful. Number one, number two, number three." Short, sweet, concise. "If you'd like more information, I'm happy to help you. Please reach out at any time. Thanks for your consideration. Robin Samora."

Now at the bottom of the email, of course, another free publicity strategy is to have a well thought out and concise email signature. Your name, your website, if you have social media links if you want to do that, if you're an author, maybe it's a chapter to one of your newest books, a link to a landing page; it can be whatever you want it to be, but make sure you come across as professional, concise, helpful. You're not gonna stalk these people; just keep putting it out there, and every template and every pitch that you make will get better and better.

Once you learn the secret to it, you'll be surprised at how easy it is if you take the time to actually answer these HARO requests. There are others, too, but it's a discipline activity just like marketing is discipline. You need to do it, and then it will just grow on itself because now more reporters will reach out to me, and podcasters will reach out to me because of the authority that I've commanded by putting my material out there, by being an expert subject matter, by being helpful, by teaching, by speaking.

So, these are all things collectively, I think, that help build your brand and will help you further promote your own message, and you can do it without breaking the bank. I'm convinced of it.

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Susan Friedmann: One of the strategies you talked about earlier was blogging. Talk to us about blogging and why it's important for an author to blog.

Robin Samora: Blogging is a way for you to share your message, keeping current with what's going on in your life and your world. So, for example, you don't have to blog always about your book. You can blog about your subject matter. I believe blogging is important because it's your authentic voice, number one.

You should be writing regularly, hopefully. Some people write twice a week. That's a lot for me, and for me it's too much, but I try my best over five years to write at least once a week. What you'll do is you'll want to make sure that the topics are interesting to your community, so you want to have at least some kind of an email database or your fans or community that want to hear from you, and then you want to make sure that you're using your keywords to your subject matter peppered carefully so that other people will be able to pick you up, and you'll be noticed as well on Google or search engines because this is all important as well.

As a writer or as a blogger, I think it's important because you can also lead the press to different blog pieces that you've written, it creates links, and every time that you write, you're building your credibility. You're building organic search engine optimization, so I think it's really critical. I work with many clients that don't have a blog, but once we start it and then you're putting in keywords to find someone on Google because that's really the best test, and then they'll start coming up and ranking higher and higher and higher without spending money for AdWords or other big campaigns where you have to spend a ton of dough.

I'm all into trying to help clients and share the strategies to get the biggest bang for your buck so that you can really grow your brand, and as you grow your brand, there are also so many other benefits like having maybe a better lifestyle, making more money, spending more time with family and friends. It's all really about taking the gift that you have, writing about it in ways that it makes sense for you, that's attractive to other people. That way you're able to grow your online presence and visibility, as well, and ultimately lead to more business.

Susan Friedmann: One of the things that you're really good at is helping establish a base of raving fans. What can you share that would be helpful to our listeners?

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Robin Samora:

So, in order to build a base of raving fans, you have to create a like, know, trust factor. Now, some people have said to me, "That's not the way it goes. I've looked on Google. I've read articles. It's really know, like, and trust." I respectfully disagree. I think that people have to like you, they have to know you, they have to trust you, and then they have to believe you, so that believing is a whole nother process.

So, building a community, a base of raving fans, you can do that lots of different ways: by being out there, by being consistent, by being of service. If I'm at a speaking engagement, for example, I want to be as transparent as possible. I always laugh because I get up there, and I call myself Rockin' Robin, and I tell them that I'm a recovering perfectionist, and everybody laughs. I say, "Who else is a recovering perfectionist in the room?" Probably the whole audience, half of it raises their hand. And the point is that I'm a person. I'm transparent. I'll tell you exactly what is going on. So, people want to do business with other people.

It's funny, yesterday I was speaking at an event and some reason my phone rang, and I was mortified at first, and I said, "Oh, it must be India calling. I'll tell you about that later." And then everyone's going, "What do you mean?" I said, "Oh, maybe it's one of you tricksters out there that's just calling me seeing how I'll handle it." But the point was I was just being my brand personality. I was being me, and that's what's the importance of building of a base of raving fans is people know you, like you, trust you. They have to like you, and you have to make them feel comfortable, then you have this base of knowledge, and then you're of service. So, all those three circles together, working together, and then of course you have to provide the value; you have to have a good product, and you have to have a great book or you have to be a great mentor or someone that people can resonate with.

You want to make sure that you're, on all levels, you're congruent 'cause there's nothing worse than being incongruent or not having integrity to who you are because being comfortable in your skin and being able to share those same values, the core values that are important to your target audience ... That's why it's so important to know exactly about your target audience; what makes them tick, what they like, what they don't like, and then you'll always find some people that don't like you, and you know, wish them well and bye-bye. There's always more people that you can help, so you can't be a friend to everybody, so you just be yourself and you give your best gift out.

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Susan Friedmann: How about mistakes, Robin? Our listeners love listening to mistakes and learning from them. What can you share with us?

Robin Samora: Oh, so many. We would need to spend hours on the phone about mistakes. I've made my mistakes by not following my gut. I've made some mistakes by always having to be perfect and waiting because something wasn't just right. I've made mistakes by fear, by being afraid. I never, ever thought that I would get up on stage and talk with people. I was afraid at Toastmasters to even go up for the ice breakers. I was afraid that I would never be good enough. There were a lot of self-limiting doubts that I had.

As far as mistakes that I've made online or offline, sure. I probably should've gone more face to face networking earlier on. I'm a part of a BNI group, I belong to several women's organizations, and I realize the importance now more than ever of being real online and offline, so that means making personal connections as well as making online connections.

And mistakes that I might've made have been not reaching out to enough people, of being afraid of what people might've thought of me, but that's all bologna, and maybe it's something that happens as you get older; you just embrace your true self and not be afraid anymore, and if people don't like what you have to say, that's okay. You know what you have to say is valuable, and it has to do with that inner confidence.

So, people, I think, a lot of times don't feel confident in their abilities, but everybody starts somewhere. My first speaking gig, for example, was a total flop, and I was mortified, and then I got up, and I did it again, and I got training, and I practiced, and the same with my writing. I used to have someone check my writing for me five years ago. Their writing wasn't exactly in my style, so I said, "No, I don't like that. I'll keep going more and more."

So, every time that I do it now, it's better, and I feel that it's me, and that's what you're basically selling, and you're selling that in a book. You're selling your style. You're selling a glimpse of your story, your personality. You're selling your work, and people love to be connected with a story or a persona or this path that you create for them, and that's what you create when you create a brand or you create a brand series 'cause books can be a brand series as well.

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Susan Friedmann: One of the things you mentioned earlier was being a perfectionist, and I relate to that very well. How do you deal with that? You see it as a failure or a mistake. How do you overcome that?

Robin Samora: It's taken me quite some time to get over being a perfectionist, but now instead of staying up at 1:00 in the morning and deciding that I have to go to Target or a 24 hour store to get more ink, I'll use an order form and write something out and make copies in the morning.

It's just a matter of deciding that good enough is good enough. There's that 80/20 rule and the fact that you can always fill up the time to do stuff, to be perfect, to do this and that, but there comes a time also when good enough is good enough, and that's what I've had to learn, and when I used to try so hard to be perfect at everything, I would always be disappointed.

So, now I do the best that I can. If there's a mistake or something that I can do better, I let it go, and next time I'll be better because really we're learning all the time, and perfectionism is really a form of fear; you're afraid of something, but when you are comfortable in your own skin, again I said that before, I think it just makes it so much easier, and people like to see people make mistakes. It's happened to me on stage. I once sent a presentation as a draft. I never do that by the way if anybody ever has to do that. And it was the wrong one, and I had all these comments that shouldn't have been up on the screen. I was horrified, but then I started laughing, and I sold so many programs right after because I was just me, and that's what it is, and like me or don't like me. It's okay.

So, I think it's just having confidence in who you are and let the perfection go. It's fear, and fear is just something that we create in our heads, and we can do so much great work, and we can be so outstanding and help so many people, and it's just something that you just have to recognize; of course, we recognize it, and say, "Nope. See you later. I'm done with that."

Susan Friedmann: Robin, if our listeners want to get ahold of you and find out more about their services, how can they do that?

Robin Samora: So, if your listeners wanted to reach me, they could reach me at my website or by email. My website is Robin, R-O-B-I-N-S-A-M-O-R-A dot com, robinsamora.com, or by email at Robin@robinsamora.com. That's one way. They can also follow me on social media or really just

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subscribe to my blog to see what I'm up to, and I love ideas and welcome ideas from different people all over the world, and it just makes it fun. I love my work, Susan. I love helping entrepreneurs, small business owners be the best that they can be, and they don't have to spend so much money doing it.

Once you learn the strategies and the tips and the tools, it really becomes fun for them. It's not so much of a chore to market their brand.

Susan Friedmann: Very much so, and I can hear the passion in your voice. It's just wonderful; it comes out, and you're so sincere with what you're saying and so believable, and that's your brand. You talked about that earlier; feeling the brand, and you certainly did that superbly.

I know that you have a gift for our listeners, as well. Do you want to tell them about that?

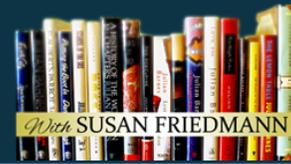
Robin Samora: Absolutely. So, I created this worksheet. It's not a worksheet; it's actually a PDF, and it's called 50 Ways to Market Your Small Business on a Dime, and I took about maybe a month, and I put together a bunch of resources that I thought were valuable on how you might be able to market your business, and so you can get that at [robinsamora.com/50-ways](http://robinsamora.com/50-ways), and it's a colorful listing of different ideas that you can implement that you can use starting today, tomorrow, whenever you're ready, but I say let's get started, get the party started, so that you can market your brand and really start promoting yourself, your books, your products, your services because these strategies can be used for a number of different industries; you don't have to just be an author. They can be used for any kind of service provider, expert, consultant, and many of the authors I know that they have other profit streams also to their work, whether they're consultants or authors or they might have different professions, so this would work for any of them.

Susan Friedmann: Yes, and that's so important for authors to realize that they need to have different profit streams, as you say, so that they're not just relying on selling the book because that's hard work.

Robin Samora: Let's face it, we're experts, so we can create whatever kind of products that we want using our expertise, and it doesn't have to be online course. It could be something as simple as a calendar, or it could be different kinds of products maybe that you sell on Etsy or ... We could just go on and on, but you're right, profit streams are important

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because it takes some time to be able to build a brand and also sell books and promote books so many different ways.

Susan Friedmann: And, Robin, if you could leave our listeners with a golden nugget, what would that be?

Robin Samora: Just do it. I hate to be like Nike, but I would say take the bull by the horns, decide what you want. I always start at the beginning. Where are you now, and where do you want to go? So, pick some ideas from this list when you download the robinsamora.com 50 ways, pick some ideas that you want to start and just go for it. Try something new. Try something that feels a little bit uncomfortable for you because ultimately that's what's important to test, to trial, to tweak because you'll never know unless you try, so I say just go for it and see where it brings you, and if you don't like it, try something new.

It's not like these are huge things that cost lots of money. Yes, it costs some time. Yes, it might take some scheduling. You might need some help to talk to someone on your team about this, but it's all worthwhile to test, to try, to tweak, and promote your brand because there's so much glory on the other side once you start getting it going and so much momentum.

Susan Friedmann: Thank you so much for sharing that wisdom with us, Robin, and 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.