

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

*Helping authors get their books noticed!*



## BOOK MARKETING: How to Use Mastermind Techniques to Get Unstuck Interview with Earl Bell

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.

However, today we're going to do something a little different. I've invited back to the show my dear friend, colleague, and mastermind buddy Earl Bell to have an in-depth conversation about building a business around your book.

Earl is a successful entrepreneur, speaker, and trainer whose expertise comes from the world of business. He's the author of *Winning in Baseball and Business: Transforming Little League Principles Into Major League Profits for Your Company*. He's taken a \$25 book and he's managed to turn it into a multi-thousand-dollar product. Earl, welcome back to the show.

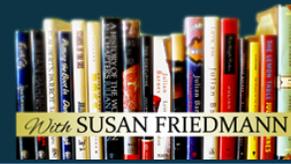
Earl Bell: Thank you, Susan.

Susan Friedmann: As you know, you and I have talked about the idea of going behind the scenes and letting our audience in to a conversation around products, and how to take your book and to breathe new life into it, especially for all those non-fiction whose book is sort of maybe gathering dust and not doing what it should be doing. And you've done so well with your book, I'd love to bottle up your formula for success so that everyone can benefit from that, so let's start off and have you talk a little bit about what you did to create a business around your book.

Earl Bell: Yeah. Happy to do that, Susan, but before we get into it I just want to briefly mention the course that you are creating for non-fiction authors that are struggling to resuscitate their book, which really facilitated the idea to have this conversation on your podcast, looking at the course content right now. I wish that I had the information that you have in your program back six years ago because it probably would have helped

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

*Helping authors get their books noticed!*



me to produce even greater results, so I just wanted to acknowledge my book marketing mentor and master, Susan Friedmann.

Susan Friedmann: That's very kind. Thank you. Yes, it's a course for non-fiction authors and we're looking, as you rightly say, to breathe new life into that book and to look at how you can take that book and build a revenue around it, rather than relying on the book itself to make you money, which it isn't going to do because books very, very rarely make real money. But instead, using it as a door opener to other opportunities out there, the speaking, the training, the coaching. I know that you've got an academy, and I've got my Book Marketing University, and lots of other opportunities for products that people could develop and create around the content of their book. And I know, as we've said, you've done that brilliantly. Is there something that you could share with us about what you've done that would be helpful to our audience?

Earl Bell: Sure. I did a few things quite well. Some things, not so well. In terms of what went well, I'm a huge proponent of Stephen Covey's book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective individuals*. I believe number two was begin with the end in mind, and what I would encourage your audience members to really think through now that the book is written, how you can use the book to build a business. What I did on the front end was I invested a little time and reached out to 100 small business owners and asked them to share with me the top two problems that they were facing.

And armed with that information created a white paper and had 100% clarity around what 100 potential target companies' challenges were, and then used that to frame the outline around building the book. So think of 10 ending book done in sequence, designed to be a roadmap to success for entrepreneurs, and within each of the 10 chapters is a topic for a workshop, a topic for a keynote. The 10 chapters combined is really the basis in the foundation of a business academy that I've created.

The idea was, if I was an effective listener and if I was good at really understand what the challenges or what the problems were of my audience, then it would better position me to create content that would actually be of value and helpful to the audience. So I guess starting, I would say begin with the end in mind and figure out what it is that you're trying to do with your book, and build a business model.

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

*Helping authors get their books noticed!*



Susan Friedmann: Very much so, and I think you mentioned something that I feel is the gold standard, and that is surveying your target audience and really finding out sort of from the horse's mouth what exactly their real challenges are, because understanding that will help you not only build the content of your book, but then afterwards taking that content and, we you rightly say, turning it into either talks or online programs or workshops. I mean, you've got so much that you can do, and even tips or articles. I mean, your book is just full of blog posts and articles that you could use. So it's looking at how can you cut, dice, and slice your book in as many different ways as possible to create this revenue model, but starting with the end in mind is absolutely the starting point.

It's knowing what it is that you want the book to do for you, and obviously looking at who are you going to share your message with, who's your target audience, because those are the people that you need to start with. I know you started with entrepreneurs, and we talked a lot about the idea that entrepreneurs, that's a huge target audience. And looking at how could you maybe condense that and narrow it to a point that it's much more manageable. How did you go about that, Earl?

Earl Bell: In terms of narrowing the niche?

Susan Friedmann: Yes.

Earl Bell: To be candid, it's something that I've learned over time. I show up as best I can with whatever expertise that I can offer, and the companies and owners and entrepreneurs that gravitate to the way that I deliver content and create transformation in companies, they tend to stay with me for a long time, and those that don't typically don't. What I've learned over the years is that my target audience in terms of age demographic is 35 to 65. Interestingly enough, more female than male, 100% service companies, and they typically are struggling with the notion of wanting to build a legacy company. What I mean by that is they have difficulty in building what I call a super team, which is low employee turnover, high productivity, high excitement, high desire to show up every day to serve clients as best they can.

When you can create that team environment, typically what happens is employees love their job, they stay with the company a long time, and clients stay a long time, which essentially takes a transaction type revenue model and turns it into more of an annuity model. So, just listening to clients over the years and figuring out who is best able to

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

*Helping authors get their books noticed!*



connect with the way that I deliver content and create tea building experiences. If I were to write it over again, I probably would have used the same title, I probably would have done a little bit of modification with respect to the stories and the content, but the general principles would have been the same.

Susan Friedmann: So it sounds too that as you grow with your business there's more clarity in terms of what's needed by your target audience. Would you agree with that?

Earl Bell: Yes, completely.

Susan Friedmann: So yes, even if you are 100% sure about the direction, at least knowing who your target audience is I think is key, is a key starting point. Knowing that and then of course finding out what their challenges are, and then looking at how your message can help solve those challenges is the basis of how you can build that revenue model where you start not only what you've put in your book, but then as you say, creating courses and training and speaking and anything out there that will help you make some money out of this book. And the information.

Earl Bell: You know, it's more than information. The way that I think about a book, yeah, it's information, and to be honest with you, it's free on my website if you ever wanted to download it, or you can get it for free on Audible. I did an audiobook. The information is only the start of a relationship. We have a colleague in the National Speakers Association, Joel Block, and I love the way that he frames the designation CSP, which in NSA means certified speaking professional. He really encouraged all of us as a community to think about ourselves as communicators that solve problems.

If you take that a step further, you have to identify the problem before you can offer a solution, and however a business owner goes through the process of understanding what the problems are that their best and perfect clients are experiencing, that is what enables an author to create content that can specifically address and solve the problems that the potential client is facing.

Susan Friedmann: So instead of calling yourself an author, you call yourself a problem solver. I think that's a better title.

Earl Bell: Yeah. Professional problem solver. I like to joke that in NSA we call ourselves professional speakers, but I truly think one of my

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

*Helping authors get their books noticed!*



superpowers is that I'm a professional listener. What I mean by that is for whatever reason I have a gift in being able to ask very direct and clarifying questions that help me understand with 100% certainty what the real issues are, which enables me to offer expertise in a very targeted way, to be of service and to be of help.

Susan Friedmann: And that's also another key, is being able the right questions to get the answers that you need, and as you rightly say, being a professional listener, being able to listen to what your prospect, your client is saying, because there really is so much gold there if you listen for it. They tell you what they need, especially when you ask the right questions.

Earl Bell: Right.

Susan Friedmann: But even so, you get them talking about their concerns, about their challenges, and they'll tell what they need, so you take a lot of the guesswork out of it. I think so much of the time we spend guessing and trying to outsmart what our audience needs, and we don't need to. We just have to give them what they want and they'll be happy campers.

Earl Bell: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And if you think about the process of active listening and providing solutions and providing value, an easy way to think about a business model is to start at the very, very beginning and provide information that is of value in a free way, which is strategically why I give the book away, and hopefully people that read the book get something out of it.

If you go through the progression of the way that I help companies, offer an academy, which is a very short and targeted 24 hours over a three-day period. Typically what happens is that those that come out of the three-day academy with the roadmap want some help because they recognize that, left to their own devices, there's some natural tendency to go back to old behaviors, and they need someone to effectively coach them through the process of executing the roadmap or the game plan that they've created. So you start with something that's free. In my case, I have an academy or a mini academy, which I do online, and then the ongoing coach, so that's a very simple example of how I've taken a book, and produced multiple ways of serving companies and clients well beyond selling a book for \$25 on Amazon.

Susan Friedmann: Something you mentioned that is so key here is being willing to give things away for free. I think many people are frightened to give stuff away because they think people are going to steal it or whatever, and in

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

*Helping authors get their books noticed!*



fact some of the most successful people, and we've seen this within National Speakers Association and beyond that the more that they give away, the wealthier they become because they're not giving their stuff away. People think, "Oh my goodness, if they're giving this away for free, what much more that I'm going to get if I actually pay for the services?"

And they actually want more from you because they're like, "Wow, if he or she can give this away, then there's got to be a lot more depth that I'd be willing to pay for." So yes, I think that's key and something that we shouldn't be frightened of. People aren't going to steal it, and if they do, they're not going to get very far with it. I wouldn't put any energy into that, and just be willing to give. It's all about giving. We give to receive, and it comes back to you. It certainly does.

Earl Bell: Yeah. I think if you just looked at it from a strict monetary perspective, if only 2% of the authors sell 2,000 copies of a book, you can do the math. By the time everyone gets paid, what's left for the authors is next to nothing. And the value isn't in the information. At least the way that I think about it, the value is facilitated transformation from a point of pain to a point of ecstasy, and really that's the idea behind building a relationship over a period of time and taking a client from where they are to the vision of where they want to be.

Susan Friedmann: Yes, and it's all about them. It's not about us, and that's another important aspect. And also understanding and get it right out of your head that you're going to get rich on this book. You're not going to get rich selling books, but you're going to get rich through the information, the help, the solutions that your book offers your target audience. That's where the gold is and that's what you're looking to continually mine and be able to share, and again too, the idea of becoming a recognized expert, because the more that you share within your target audience, the more that people say, "Wow, this person knows their stuff." Therefore, they see you as an expert and you become that go-to person. That's really what you want to look to establish, because the more that you can establish yourself as a go-to person for information, the more they're going to come back for more. Would you agree with that?

Earl Bell: I would agree with that, and I think if a book is written authentically, and in the author's voice as opposed to in the voice of someone writing a college textbook, it gives the reader an opportunity to get to the author. I would hope that anyone that would meet me for the first time

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

*Helping authors get their books noticed!*



face-to-face would feel like they've gotten to know me through reading the book, because I wrote it like I talk. I recognize that I'm not for everyone and everyone is not for me, and a great secondary outcome from writing a book authentically is that people will self-select in and it kind of helps with the filtering process of identifying people that you can actually help.

Susan Friedmann: Yes, and you're right. Your book isn't for everyone, and you appeal to a certain target. As you said, you're looking at a certain demographic. Your audience, as you were surprised maybe, tends to be more female than male, and that's okay. It's who you attract. Other people may attract more of a male audience, and they may be professional. They may be in certain industries, in education, or in medical or in healthcare, automotive. I mean, it doesn't matter. It's just knowing where you fit in and where your message is appreciated.

I think that's important too, is finding your peeps. So many people are just sort of out there just not knowing where their peeps are, and they're searching in all different corners of the universe, and often they're right there. If you're familiar with the story *Acres Of Diamonds* where this farmer is looking all over the world for diamonds, and where are they? They're in his backyard, and that's often where we forget our diamonds are often in our backyard.

Earl Bell: Yeah. It's funny how sometimes the best answers are right in front of you, and the only thing that I could offer to your listeners is to really pay attention to what's going on in your business.

Susan Friedmann: Yeah. It reminds me too, many authors come to me wanting to know about the media. They want to be in the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal* or one of the large publications. I say, "Forget them. They're not interested in you, but the local papers are going to just lap up your information, and you can become a celebrity in your own town. It's okay." It's very easy to do, in fact, to get on the local media and the radio or the TV stations, or in print if you still have a printed paper.

I know our local paper ... I mean, I send in an article on a regular basis. I happen to be very involved in Rotary and we have a monthly article, and they love it. They love us contributing and they actually print verbatim what we've written. I mean, we do write good articles, but the fact is that they do print them, and it's so easy, instead of trying to go to major publications who yes, it looks nice, it sounds nice, but may not be your target audience.

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

*Helping authors get their books noticed!*



- Earl Bell: Another idea. The trade associations typically have online and print versions of a periodical, whether it's quarterly or monthly, and my experience has been they love to have guest contributors to the magazine. And if you want to be known in a certain industry find the trade associations where your clients belongs and see if you can contribute content that way.
- Susan Friedmann: Trade associations are phenomenal, and tradeshow for these different associations. Every association has some kind of tradeshow or annual meeting. That's where you need to be, and your books can be in the book store there. You can offer yourself as a speaker for a concurrent session. You may not necessarily first time around be a keynote speaker, but you could definitely do a concurrent session. You can always offer to stand in for somebody if at the last minute they can't make it. That's a hack, by the way. That's a speaking hack, that you offer your services for somebody maybe who gets sick at the last moment, and you could fill in for them and you start looking like, again, gold when it comes to these people, so yeah, trade associations, tradeshow.
- Get walking around tradeshow. Offering your book as a giveaway to companies who exhibit at tradeshow is a great way to make money because they'll buy that book in the thousands rather than in the onesies and twosies. I know that my first book, *Exhibiting at Tradeshow: Tips and Techniques for Success*, I wanted to find people who would order that book in the thousands rather than, as I say, in the onesies and twosies. I went to people who were in the industry and who had the same target audience I did. I went to them and I said, "Hey, what do you think about this book? Would this be something that would be valuable to your audience?" They said yes and they bought several thousand copies of the book. That's an easy way to make a sale.
- Earl Bell: We've been in the same mastermind group for about three years now and this is the first time I've heard this very specific hack, and the lesson that I'm getting from this, Susan, is for me to get the real good stuff, I have to get on into a podcast with you. That was great.
- Susan Friedmann: I think that's a great golden nugget that we'll end with. I know that this has been a fun conversation from my end. I hope it is from yours as well. Yes, so thank you for doing this. It was something a little different. We tried something new for our listeners, so thank you so much, and thank you all for taking time out of your precious day to listen to this interview. I sincerely hope that it sparked some ideas you can use to sell more books. Here's wishing you much book marketing success.