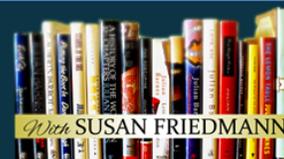


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## **BOOK MARKETING: How to Best Adopt a Sales Mindset for Success Interview with Merit Kahn**

- 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 Sales Mindset Expert.
- Susan Friedmann: Merit Kahn, CSP is the founder of Merit-Based Business. She's the author of *Myth Shift: Challenging The Truths That Sabotage Success*. She's the creator of the Merit Method Sales Mastery Program, and co-host of the Smarter Sales Show. Each episode gives tech and techniques solutions to sales challenges so that you can sell more and stress less. With more than 20 years of sales, sales management, coaching, training, and consulting experience, Merit has worked with thousands of clients across multiple industries with one goal in mind; grow sales and influence.
- Susan Friedmann: Here's a fun fact about Merit. She performs stand up comedy. She wrote, produced and performed a one-woman inspiring comedy show about her life called The Book Of Merit, that's currently airing on C-Suite TV. She's been quoted as being a 'cross between Daniel Coleman, Tony Robbins, and Ellen Degeneres smart, inspiring, and funny'. She's certified in emotional intelligence. She's a National Speaker Association colleague and fellow certified speaking professional. Merit, what an absolute pleasure it is to welcome you to the show, and thank you for being this week's guest expert, and mentor.
- Merit Kahn: Thanks for having me, Susan.
- Susan Friedmann: Sales mindset, we are gonna drill down into that one because I know how important it is for our authors to really understand this whole concept. Because we talk about sales, we talk about marketing, we talk about sales mindset, marketing mindset, it sort of all gets woven into one. But yet, there

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is a distinct difference between sales and marketing. Let's start there, and understand what that is so that we're sort of all singing from the same hymn book.

Merit Kahn: That's a great place to start, Susan. I get that question all the time. I think it really boils down to this: marketing is everything that happens before you're in a conversation. Once you're in a conversation, you have begun the sales process, and it really is that simple. What I sometimes see is that people who are already in a sales conversation will go backwards in the process, and [??? 02:55] someone to their website, that's going backwards. Marketing is designed to drive sales, not the other way around.

Susan Friedmann: When people come to me, they say, sales is icky. They just don't want to be seen as being salesy. How do you answer that question?

Merit Kahn: Well, they don't want to be that traditional used car sales guy, right on the lot, in days gone by. That's icky. Nobody wants to be sold. Nobody wants to feel pushy or aggressive or salesy. And if you don't understand the psychology of selling, then you're more prone to go down that path. But I think people, when they become real sales professionals, it's because they really understand how to be influential with others. And the way that they understand that, is that they've really done the deep work to understand what has influence over themselves.

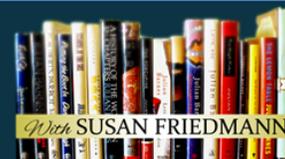
Merit Kahn: If you just focus on what can I say and what can I do to try to close this sale or convince this prospect, well that's all about you and that's not really about the other person and helping them get their needs met, helping them solve their problems. But if you understand what has influence over you, then you've earned the right to be more influential with other people, and I'm hoping that your audience would do that for good and not for evil. But that's part of it, really understanding our own sales mindset. That way when you do that work, when you learn the right things to say it's not pushy and aggressive.

Susan Friedmann: So, the whole idea of the psychology of selling and how to be influential, where do we start with that?

Merit Kahn: I really think there's three pieces of the puzzle to be good in sales. And that is your mindset, but also the mechanics of selling really understanding the whole process. And then what do you need to do to stay in motion? So, mindset, mechanics, and motion; those are really the three principles that I use as the basis of my work with people. And I think that you can start in any

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one of those buckets. In other words, if I learn a good sales skill and I'm excited to go out there and use it and then I see that it's produced some value, it's working, then that starts to shift my mindset about what's possible for me as a salesperson, or how I'm starting to feel more professional and less pushy or aggressive. And the more I feel like that the more I'm going to be in motion. If you picture it like a circle, you can kind of start anywhere and all three of them are interrelated. It's not like you can only study your sales mindset and then everything will work out. Or you could only do a lot of sales activities and everything will work out.

Merit Kahn: You really want to be looking at all three of those buckets, because strengthening your sales mindset for some people may just be directly related to the work that they're doing to understand their own beliefs about sales and money and where does that come from and how do they shift those beliefs. For other people, it may be learning a new skill that gives them the confidence, and then they want to learn more, and then they're growing their sales mindset by learning skills. And for some people, it's their confidence is growing, their sales mindset is strengthening because they're in action, they're doing more behaviors. For everybody, it's a little bit different, which is why it's really important to be working on all three.

Susan Friedmann: I love that. The way it blends together and it's and as you said you need all three, but it doesn't matter which one you have first because when you talked about shifting beliefs, for me, it was like oh, yes that's much of what I feel, authors need especially when they come to me and hate the idea of selling, promoting or whatever. The skills, the confidence to have the skills I think is so important as well. But let's focus on more of the mindset in the beginning and then we can transition into some skills. Give us some ways in which we can shift those mindsets, those beliefs we have about selling.

Merit Kahn: I think the first thing that I really work on with people is first you want to do an inventory, right an inventory of what are your sales beliefs. So, what do you think about what is a lot of money, what's the amount of money you're comfortable earning, what's the amount of money you feel that you are worthy of earning, what's the largest amount of money you've ever made? And that's just one example of beliefs but it also has to do with the level of decision-maker that you're comfortable interacting with or the size of the deal that you're comfortable talking about.

Merit Kahn: As an example, I was doing a program for an association, this was many many years ago. And in my audience there was a woman, an entrepreneur,

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she'd been a business owner for many years. And she heard me say something about how you buy impacts how you sell. And I talked about this idea of if you think, as an example, \$1,000 is a lot of money in your life and if you're out there and you're offering something for \$1,000, you may hesitate because it feels like a lot of money to you. She heard me say that and about two weeks after that program, I got this email. Now, I'd shaken her hand at the end of the meeting but that was really all, we didn't have a connection or we didn't know each other.

Merit Kahn: And she sends me this email and she said, "Because of you, I closed the deal that was about \$75,000 more than I would have even proposed originally." And at first I got nervous I called her back and I said, "Please tell me you didn't just gouge someone and charge them more for something." She said "No, no, no. What I did was I noticed that I was negotiating down with myself when I was putting together the proposal because I was uncomfortable with the total dollar amount. And what I realized was that I was taking out services that were beneficial to my prospect that they really needed to get this project done appropriately. And because of my own money issues, my own money weaknesses. So, I decided to just say, why not? I just put the proposal together the way that it would serve the client best, and they bought it."

Merit Kahn: And it was a real learning moment for her because she recognized that it was her own weaknesses around money that were sabotaging her success in sales. I think authors and marketers I've seen that in so many different professions, I experienced that myself earlier in my career as somebody trying to get my book out into the marketplace. It's the same sabotaging belief systems that had me writing, and nothing ever left my computer files because I wasn't sure it was good enough, right. I wasn't sure it was what was needed out there.

Susan Friedmann: Yes, and I think we sabotage ourselves in so many times in so many different ways. And I had a chance to look through your book and the different approaches that we have with regard to our elites and how we just go about anything in our life But I love the idea of how you buy impacts how you sell because that's certainly went through my mind. Oh my goodness, you're right. If I thought something was expensive at \$1,000 to buy, then how was I going to be able to sell something for \$1,000? Yeah, I love that. Let's talk about some of the mechanics, some of the skills. What do you need to get started in this whole sort of selling environment?

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- Merit Kahn: I think one of the most important things is really understand from your buyer's perspective, what the problems are, what the emotions are that they're feeling that your book or your offer in the marketplace is a solution for. As an example, I wouldn't say I work with salespeople and business owners and professionals who have to grow their practice, and I sell them sales training and coaching services. People don't buy sales training and coaching services. What they buy is the solution to an emotional pain.
- Merit Kahn: What I would say to somebody is what I do is I work with salespeople, professionals, business owners, entrepreneurs; they're great at what they do but they're so frustrated because it should be so much easier to do business than it is. It should be so much easier to attract new clients, to get more referral business. When I say it like that I'm really not saying anything about how I work. I'm really talking about what it is that people would identify in themselves that would trigger for them, I'm intrigued I'd like to talk to her more. There's something I can learn here. There's something she can help you with. I think that's a really important thing, especially for authors, because we have so many opportunities to do that on the book jacket itself, right on the back of the book, or when you're asking people for your testimonials and your endorsements and their quotes.
- Merit Kahn: You want to really think about and be deliberate about the emotions that those quotes would evoke in a potential buyer of your book. And I think that is the same for all of the messaging that we would put on our websites and in our social media posts about why people really get value from this book. It has nothing to do with really how you fix the problem. It's focused on what is the emotion of the reader, who's going to purchase this book. How do I connect with what they're going through right now that this book is going to be a solution for?
- Susan Friedmann: Yes, and the solution to that emotional pain, it's interesting because I say, for instance, most nonfiction authors struggle to get known and paid for their expertise. And I help them get the recognition and income they deserve. It's focusing on the struggle, the pain that I know many authors have to get recognized for what they want to be recognized for. So, yes that's so important.
- Merit Kahn: Because I can identify with that. I can say ugh, I am so frustrated. I should have more recognition for all this expertise. And so there's a frustration and there's just like an ugh, and that's what you want to speak to.

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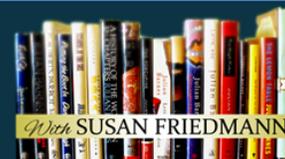
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- Susan Friedmann: Perfect. It's that 'ugh', that feeling as you said. It's sort of visceral.
- Merit Kahn: Yeah. Exactly. That's when you know you got it, you nailed it.
- Susan Friedmann: Let's talk about mistakes, Merit. I know that they've gotta be a thousand and one mistakes when it comes to sales and marketing. Share a few of the common ones with us.
- Merit Kahn: Where do I even start? I'll just go vulnerable with your audience here today and just share. When I published my book in 2016, it was actually the third book I had written, but the only one that made it into the light of day. So, I would say the biggest mistake that I made was thinking that I didn't have something worthwhile enough that I was waiting for. It was the perfection trap, right? So, it was waiting for it to be perfect and ready. I think what happened for me to get myself out of that cycle, I literally sent an editor all three versions of this book that I had written. And they were all, I wrote them at different times in my life and different things were going on. It was all about sales mindset, but they were all just different versions of the me that wrote at that time.
- Merit Kahn: And I said, I want you to tell me what you think of this, and then just put a red line through everything that is something that you've heard before in some way shape or form and I just recycled it in my own way. I don't want anything like that for my book. So, get rid of all of that, and then find what's that thread. And what else does it need to be more of a complete book? And what I realized by that experience was that it was a huge mistake to think that I was going to launch this book on my own without any outside expertise and advice. It took way too long and frankly it didn't even happen.
- Merit Kahn: I think a big mistake is for people to think that they're going to be the Lone Ranger out there and everything's going to magically come together because you set your goal or whatever. It doesn't work that way you need people, especially in launching a book. And once you've launched the book and you've done all of the hard work, now it's a whole nother job to get it out into the world and the marketing of it. And there too I think having people look at your marketing messages, make sure that you are speaking to the pain, make sure that you've really thought through the things that will resonate with potential readers and buyers of a book. And I think it's a huge mistake to think that we can do it all on our own. We have got one piece of that expertise that it takes to launch something like a book. And then there's

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other experts that we need, like what you're doing, Susan, but there's other experts that we need on our team to really make it come to life.

Susan Friedmann: Yes, as you say you can't be the Lone Ranger out there. And it took me many years to realize that it was okay to ask for help. Again, for me, that was something that really sort of... I sabotage myself. I know that I did it because I was scared to ask for help often because of what people might think. Oh, she's asking for something that might be very simple. And it's also those feelings as you said, you not being good enough or thinking you have to be perfect. And I love the fact that you said oh, well find something that isn't out there already. Well, what came to mind was, there's nothing new under the sun. It's just how you package it. Yes, you may not have a unique, unique idea but packaging of an old idea may be what's making it new and exciting for the clients or your prospects, your readers. So, absolutely. What else? What else comes to mind when you talk about mistakes with your clients or with your audience?

Merit Kahn: I think a big mistake is to just think from one perspective without putting yourself in someone else's shoes. I think empathy is a really important aspect of being a good professional salesperson as opposed to somebody who is only after their own agenda. And if I'm just about making my goals and my numbers at the expense of anyone else's needs or solving real problems, then it's really going to be a short term success if it's a success at all. And so I think a real strategy and a real strength for professional salespeople and people who approach whatever they're offering in the marketplace as a professional would is to really understand their audience, understand their readers, understand the marketplace, and the solutions that they provide. So, I think that doing that work is really important to make sure that what you're offering does have value. And it's paying attention to the marketplace too.

Merit Kahn: For example, right now as we're recording this we're playing a pandemic and businesses dramatically overnight, really, literally. And so there were things that I offered in my business like one of the things that I do is I help companies with tools to help them make better decisions as the salespeople that they would bring into the organization with screening tests and different things like that. And overnight, it was a less important offer. There were other things that I do that were more relevant in marketplace right now. I'm not an argument with reality. And so I just said okay, let's just take this other offer off the table, because it's not serving people in this marketplace the way that it would in other times, and it's confusing. It's

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confusing in the marketplace. It's just not needed right now. So, I want people to think about offerings that you're selling and the ways that you're going to market and all of those social messaging. Just make sure that we're in tune with what's happening in the current environment and taking a look at messages or your offers so that they're appropriate now.

Merit Kahn: And when people don't do that work, that's a huge mistake and it can actually damage your brand if you're marketing in the same way that you did two months ago, and you're in this global pandemic. Well, people will look at you and go, "Do you have any idea of what's going on in the world right now?" This is just an obvious easy example but this has happened many times without a global map. It's having an awareness of what people are really dealing with, what's happening in the marketplace, why is your offer more important now than ever or unimportant and inappropriate now.

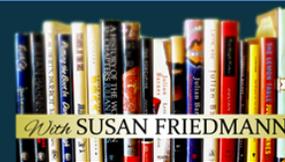
Susan Friedmann: One of the things that I noticed on the website is literally how you've converted everything to the current situation, and how you're dealing with it and how you transitioned. And the word that came to mind for me as you were saying this was the nimble, how we have to be so nimble and as you said in tune in the marketplace so that we know what's going on. And that we offer is in line with what people need current time. Because as you rightly said people need very different sales skills now than perhaps they did before all this.

Merit Kahn: Absolutely. I recently started a movement. I call it The Can't Wait It Out Movement. So, it's CantWaitItOut.com, skip the apostrophe in 'can't'. I don't know how to do an apostrophe in a URL. But it was a response to the marketplace. First of all, one of my main revenue streams and my business model is as a professional speaker. I earn a living speaking on stages for large audiences. From those audiences come coaching clients, consulting projects, and other things. So, if that revenue stream and that marketing stream is all of a sudden cut off, I have to really look at my business model. And there's a concept I use with my clients and I call it redeciding, and I talked about in a book.

Merit Kahn: And redeciding is very different from changing your mind or flip-flopping or being wishy-washy. Redeciding is about taking a look at the information that's around you and allowing it to inform you to make a new decision based on new information. There's so many different examples I could give you around that but I had to actually and what I'm doing with this movement with the CantWaitItOut.com, I'm inviting people in to take a peek

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behind the curtain to see how somebody who's been training other people to do this for 20 plus years is actually doing it for herself, and that's me. I am taking people on a journey. I'm being raw and authentic. I'm doing podcasts and audio messages, and I'm showing people how exactly I changed my messaging, I've changed my business model. Like, I don't know when large audiences and conferences are coming back, it might be two years and I'm a very optimistic person, but I'm not in an argument with reality.

Merit Kahn:

As I'm going through that process of putting into practice everything that I've been teaching for 20 years. I think it's valuable to invite people along that journey with me, so that you can see, here's what my website and my LinkedIn banner and my post look like pre-pandemic. This is what I was out there offering this is why it was relevant in that world. And overnight, here's how I pivoted, here's how I changed my messaging, I changed my offers. I really looked at what was appropriate and inappropriate for my client's and prospects perspective. And I think it's helpful for somebody to, I think we need authenticity. We need our people to, experts out there to tell us what they're really doing, right? Because if my business changed overnight like so many people, and most of my clients literally can't wait it out. They need to find a way. They can't wait until the government opens things up or anything. And I can apply that to what is the 'this' in your life.

Merit Kahn:

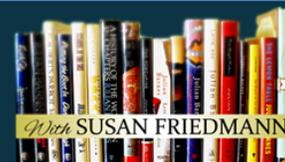
Can't wait this out. Can't wait this marriage that isn't supporting me. Can't wait this financial situation that I'm in, gotta change it. Can't wait this health issue out, gotta take control and get on top of things. So, whatever the 'this' is for you, right now we're all dealing with a very common situation, but forever, the 'Can't wait this out' whatever this is for you, it's time to get in action. And that's what people want from me right now is just tell me what to say and what I should be doing as opposed to teaching me the theory about sales and sales psychology. People don't have time for that right now. They just need to know what works.

Susan Friedmann:

What works, yes. What works, that's sort of like the magic button the moment we got to press. But you're right, the authenticity is so important and you see this more than ever now every time you turn on the television. People are broadcasting from their own environment. You see somebody's office, you see their staircase, you see their hallway. They're letting you into their homes and that's very personal. And I think you've got to be authentic in that situation. If our listeners wanted to find out more about you, what you offer, tell us how.

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- Merit Kahn: Well, there's a few different ways. My main website is [MeritBasedBusiness.com](http://MeritBasedBusiness.com), and there's plenty of links on there to get you in touch with me. My email is [Meredith@MeritBasedBusiness.com](mailto:Meredith@MeritBasedBusiness.com). The Can't Wait It Out Movement is another way, so that's a lot of free tools I'm constantly adding to that. That just recently launched, so I'm excited to share that with folks. So, CantWaitItOut.com. And then the third way is I am a co-host on The Smarter Sales show, which is the tech and technique to sell more and stress less. That's a podcast that comes out every Wednesday with my good friend and technology expert, Julie Holmes. So, I invite you to connect with me on any one of those three or all of them, and certainly on LinkedIn, Merit Kahn, K-A-H-N Kay. Connect with me on LinkedIn, tell me you heard this podcast, and let's keep the connection going.
- Susan Friedmann: Excellent. And yes, I'll put all those in the show notes if people are working out at the moment, taking a walk, mowing the lawn, whatever they're doing while they're listening to this, I'll put that in the show notes. And Merit, if you were to leave our listeners with a golden nugget, you know that one takeaway from this interview, what would that be?
- Merit Kahn: I would say that, whatever is happening out there, you want to be, have this attitude of being open for business. Whether your business is a service or a product, a book, it's this idea of being open for business. It's more than the ability to transact business. It's about an action and an attitude. When you're thinking about how you're marketing your book and how you're going to engage in sales activities to promote your book and your expertise, really think about that attitude of it's time. It's time to get this out there, and I am the right person to do this. A strong sales mindset is the key to marketing and business success.
- Susan Friedmann: It's time. Merit, you came just in time, this information is timely, I love it. Thank you so much for sharing your wisdom. And thank you all for taking time out of your precious day to listen to this interview. And I sincerely hope that it sparked some ideas you can use to sell more books. Here's wishing you much book marketing success.