

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

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## **BOOK MARKETING: How to Skyrocket Your Book Sales with Speaking Interview with Paul Barton**

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 likes to say that public speaking is fun as owner and founder of Phoenix Public Speaking, Paul Barton has helped hundreds of people become enlightening and engaging speakers. He teaches his clients simple but powerful techniques they can use to mesmerize their audiences any place, any time. Before launching his own business, Paul had a successful 20 year career leading communication teams at six Fortune 500 corporations. Those experiences led him to write the number one book on employee communication, Maximizing Internal Communications. Paul is accredited by the International Association of Business Communicators, and he's not only a National Speakers Association colleague, but I think more importantly, he is an Aviva Publishing author. So Paul, what an absolute pleasure it is to welcome you to the show. And thank you for being this week's guest expert and mentor.

Paul Barton: Well, thank you, Susan. I've been a big fan of the podcast since the very beginning and it's just a thrill to be here.

Susan Friedmann: Well, it's my thrill to have you. And as I was saying earlier, I think you're one of my star listeners, because as you said, you've been listening from the beginning and that's four years ago. I mean, we're on 230 something episodes by the time this gets released, it'll be even more. Paul, you say that giving a speech is easy and fun. Since public speaking is probably people's biggest fear, help us understand how you do this.

Paul Barton: Well, it certainly can be easy and fun, but here's the trick: you need to stop giving speeches. The funny thing is, is most people don't like giving speeches, but more importantly, audiences really don't like listening to them. Instead, what we need to do is change our mindset that we're not giving a speech, we're having a conversation that we're leading and change

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that mindset. Let me give me an example. I usually ask big groups. I say, how many of you like to listen to speeches when I'm doing a workshop or teaching a class? Usually zero hands will go up when I asked that question and then I'll say, but how many of you liked to listen to TED talks? And usually 60 to 70% of the hands will go up. We need to kind of explore. What's the difference between what they're perceiving as a speech and a TED talk?

Well, I think it kind of breaks down this way. Let's say you just wrote a book, as I know, many of our listeners have, and you invited a friend over and you're sitting around your kitchen table talking about the book. You're comfortable in your surroundings, you know your friend, you know what parts of the book he might be interested in, he or she, and you're kind of bringing those out and you're just talking.

But now let's say you get put in a position where you're in front of a group of people to talk about that book. Many of us instantly change our mindset and we're no longer having a conversation. We switch on what I call performance mode and what you're really afraid of isn't public speaking, it's performance. And you can tell when people go into that mode, even their language changes, you'll hear people say words that they would never use in a conversation. You'll hear people say things like, so without further ado or so in conclusion. And of course you would never say that in a conversation. The trick is, and of course it's easier said than done, but it's changing that mindset into having a structured, organized, meaningful conversation.

Susan Friedmann:

And that's exactly what we like to do on this podcast. As you rightly know, is just having that sort of fireside chat. You and I are chatting like old friends and just anyone who sort of is listening in can enjoy that conversation. I always say it's a conversation with a purpose because obviously we want to cover a certain topic area and you being the expert in that area, I want to draw out as many nuggets from you as I can. Let's look at the fact that, I said public speaking is the biggest fear that we have. And obviously if you say that we're presenting rather than giving a speech, but still people are nervous. And when we're nervous, we do crazy things with our hands. Even the words we use, the "ums," the "ahs," the "I knows", or "you knows", or all of those. Help us with that. How can we overcome some of those mistakes, downfalls?

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Paul Barton: Well, the first trick in overcoming your fear of public speaking is understanding exactly what that fear is. Is that something that happened to you in the past that you're afraid is going to happen again? Some people are more afraid to speak in front of small groups, or they feel that they're being judged more than they are in front of large groups. And other people are just the opposite. Some folks are more self-conscious speaking to their own friends than they are to an anonymous group of people and others it's the other way around, but it helps to really pinpoint to start with what exactly are you afraid of because you really can't conquer it until you understand it. The second piece is I have a five-step system that I use to overcome public speaking fear for my clients. And then of course it starts with identifying it, but then we move on to being physically ready.

A lot of what we call fear is actually just adrenaline. And so I teach them some ways to either channel the adrenaline into their presentation or to get rid of some of that adrenaline. The second step is really being prepared because you know, really only prepared speakers deserve to be confident and 90% of how well a presentation will go is actually determined before you ever begin speaking. It's all the preparation we do for it. The next step is being present in the here and now. So often our minds race to something bad that happened in the past or some distant foggy future that didn't go well and we're not here. And now where we need to be in the speech. So there's some techniques we can use to do that. The next step is really about being conversational, which is what we talked about in the beginning. Stop giving those speeches, do follow a structure and speak with purpose, but just to have a conversation. And the last step, and probably the most important is to be audience-centric and keep in mind. It's not about you, you're the messenger. It's really about your audience.

Susan Friedmann: Such great points. Oh my goodness. We could have a whole podcast on each one of those. It's funny that you should say about identifying the fear because I've often thought I find it really agonizing and fearful of speaking to my peers. And I think more than anything, it's being judged, being criticized by them. I'd much rather speak to a group of strangers than ever I would to a group of my speaker colleagues.

Paul Barton: In whichever it is, it comes back to that judgment. And we're only judged when we feel like we're performing. If you can be in a conversation mode, you don't feel like you're being judged because you're just talking. The fear

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comes from the fear of judgment. And that comes from thinking that we're delivering some sort of a performance, rather than a conversation.

Susan Friedmann: And also one of the things that I've told people in the past with regard to any kind of presentation, particularly workshops, is you've just got to do it. It's not one of those subjects that you can read up in a book. And then all of a sudden you can get up and do a presentation, do a training program. It's just doing it one after the other, after the other. I mean, I used to do workshops around the country for a company called Fred Pryor and we'd go from city to city and you have every conceivable type of audience. Some you like, some you hate, I've got fond memories and I've got memories that I would like to erase from my mind of presentations of trainings that I've given in some of these places. But it really is all about just the practice of it. Would you agree with that?

Paul Barton: Oh yes, absolutely. It takes practice. And it's also important to understand some folks feel like either born with the ability to be a good speaker or not, but it's actually 100% a learned skill. Anyone can learn how to do it. And with enough practice, just like anything else, learning to play golf or learning how to do the cha-cha, if you give it the time and the practice and have the right coach and people behind you, you can learn how to do it well.

Susan Friedmann: Now I would agree with that to a certain extent because I think there are people out there who sort of ooze some kind of charisma that seems more natural than it is something that you can learn. Am I correct in that or not?

Paul Barton: To some extent we're either born with charisma or we're not, but there are certain things that we can do to make ourselves more likable. And the biggest thing is just having that self-confidence and being comfortable in your own skin. There've been plenty of performers think of a Woody Allen or a Wally Cox or somebody that doesn't look like they're not the most handsome people in the world, but they're comfortable in their own skin. And we find what we like about those people. There are things that anybody can do. You know, one of the best things that a person can do to start off a speech is simply to smile. It helps you feel more confident. It helps your audience feel better. It makes you more likable and you start to have charisma by doing certain things like that.

Susan Friedmann: Yeah. And I found too that for me, a turning point was when I was willing to self-disclose. When I wasn't frightened to share with people certain parts of

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my life, obviously, you don't want to share everything, but just being open and honest about things. And I always remember somebody coming up to me and saying, "Oh my goodness, you changed my life." And I was like, "Oh, what did I say?" They can't remember. And obviously I can't either because you say so much when you're in a training program, especially if it goes on for several days. But just being open and honest and I think these days, the more authentic you are the better. People smell a mile off if you're not being authentic.

Paul Barton:

And we're living in an age with the Real Housewives of wherever and Snapchat and TikTok. And authenticity is really the coin of the realm right now. And people, audiences in general would much preferred to see the real deal, who may or may not make a mistake here and there or trip up, than to see some really slick over-rehearsed presentation. When in fact, we don't trust the person who's just perfect anymore, we want to see human beings. So we would rather see that shaky video than some corporate-produced slick thing these days. So authenticity and credibility go together. And they're the most important foundations of communication.

Susan Friedmann:

And I think something else that has become very fashionable these days is the fact that storytelling, more and more people are understanding the importance of storytelling. What do you teach with regard to that, Paul?

Paul Barton:

Well, you're absolutely right. You know, since the dawn of the caveman, whenever we began to communicate, storytelling has been the most powerful way that we have to express our ideas and persuade people. And despite all of the technology we have, it still comes back to good old fashioned storytelling. That the technology just enables the storytelling, but everybody has stories to tell. It really helps our presentations when we do that because stories are so memorable and they excite your audience to hear them. The idea is that if you can tell a story, you don't have to memorize it either because they're your stories. So in my opinion, the best speeches are stories and the best stories are those stories from your heart. And the good news is your audiences love them. And they're easy for you to tell because they're your stories. Now you do want to apply a structure to them so that they have a point, that they don't go off the rails and end up somewhere else, but you know, these stories, you don't need a script to read them, to have them. They're your stories.

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Susan Friedmann: That's an interesting point with regard to the actual story itself, but it has to have a purpose. When you work with your students or your clients, is it that you have the point and then attach the story or you have the story and then you attach a point?

Paul Barton: There's different ways to do that. I've heard people give the point first and then the audience doesn't understand what that point is. And then they go through the story and then they repeat the point, kind of sandwich it that way. But it does have to have a point or an outcome to the story.

Susan Friedmann: Interesting. Now talking about technology, we are in Zoom land now, having to do our meetings, our speeches our presentations, everything is online. Talk to us about that. And what should we know? How does it differ giving you know, a presentation on Zoom versus giving it in the flesh?

Paul Barton: Well, there clearly are some differences. It reminds me very much if you had a really good presentation and then you found yourself in a different culture and suddenly your presentation doesn't land, some of the stories don't match up or some of the things... And I find Zoom kind of like that. It feels like there's certain things that used to work that don't. So I've really kind of broken it down into three areas: the tech, the environment, and your delivery.

The first step is really to master the technology and get really comfortable with it. So you don't have a part of your brain throughout your presentation. That's always worried about the tech. Is it going to work or not? You got to get really familiar with that. The second piece is your environment, which you control that you want to have the right lighting. You want to have a good camera. You want to have a good microphone, want to have a good background, and you want to control background noise. You want to dress the part. I find that really interesting that in my presentations, we think, yeah, we got to dress up, but people will still think on zoom. It's okay to show up in a t-shirt or their pajamas for a business meeting. And clearly that isn't going to project the image that you want to do.

Some of the tech is kind of difficult to learn. I am still having trouble. We're so programmed. We know making eye contact is like a really good way to connect with our audiences. And when you're on zoom, you're tempted to look at the person's picture on your screen, rather than looking at the eye of

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the camera. Though there's some tricks of doing that. You want to move their photos if you can, to the top of the screen so that you're still making that eye contact with them.

And then you want to psychologically think of yourself as looking through the camera, not just at the camera, but through the camera, trying to see that person in your mind. That's on the other side, which will impact in subtle ways, your delivery. A couple other quick delivery things, dry humor that works really well for some people in person does not carry well in a virtual environment. Having a really upbeat attitude does. And if you think you're too upbeat, you're probably just about right. And of course, there's all kinds of ways that we want to try to engage people, to use the technology, use the polls, use the chat feature, ask people to give you a thumbs up. We constantly need to kind of find ways to make sure we're engaging that audience

Susan Friedmann: Very much so. And it's hard sometimes I know that there's all this chat that's going on and you're giving the presentation. Now, should you be looking at the chat at the same time? Or how do you work the chat into it? Because there's so much going on in the chat sometimes that maybe you need to be a part of.

Paul Barton: Yeah. I mean, I usually put my chat up on the right and keep checking occasionally on it. It depends whether you're a participant in the meeting or whether you're the host of the meeting too, is clearly a different kind of way of handling things.

Susan Friedmann: You don't necessarily say, have somebody else there monitoring the chat for you?

Paul Barton: Well, if you could, that would sure be nice, but sometimes that's just not practical to do. And different groups are different. I've been in groups where nobody uses the chat. I've been in other groups where people are posting links and articles and comments, and it's almost like a completely different meeting going on there.

Susan Friedmann: Yeah. Sometimes I find it very distracting that I'm trying to listen to what's going on, but at the same time, I want to be involved in what chat is going on. And as you rightly say, some people are sharing links and maybe you didn't pick up on something that the speaker said, and then some kind



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person has written it down for you. The five points that they made. What virtual backgrounds? I mean, you talked about the camera, you talked about lighting and of course how we dress, but what about the actual background? Should we have our own background, a virtual background, a green screen? What would you recommend?

Paul Barton:

Well, I started off with this learning like everyone else, I devised a great green screen background and it kind of went that way for a while. And then I got some ideas that, that wasn't maybe authentic enough and went back and forth. And finally I realized I just needed to listen to my own philosophy, which is in public speaking, the answer is always, always, always about your audience, audience, audience. The real answer to that question is will a virtual background or a natural background best engage and connect you to your audience. And that's the answer, which could be different depending on what your audience is.

But let's say you were giving a virtual presentation to a virtual conference that had hundreds of people on it. Maybe the expectations, maybe, of that audience is that you would have a very professional looking green screen with something, a nice backdrop with your logo on it or something. But that would look really pretentious if I was just doing a one-on-one coaching session with somebody that I had to have my logo up there in this green screen background. So maybe in that case, I want to have my natural background, which is a nice bookcase in my home office. So I think like everything in public speaking, it always comes back to what is going to best engage your audience.

Susan Friedmann:

It depends as one of my guests said once before, and you're right, it does depend what would be right for the audience and in the same way, what you wear, even when you get up on stage, are you wearing a suit for a man or woman also? I mean, can you get away with pants for a woman? Is it casual, business casual? I mean, I always ask, for instance, the meeting planner, what the dress code is likely to be, because obviously you want to look as if you fit in and that the audience can relate to you, which is so important. And I think that authenticity is really where it comes out too. Let's hone in on mistakes, Paul. I know they've got to be a list as long as your arm or mistakes, but what are the common ones?

Paul Barton:

Well, I think three of the big ones that I encounter are first, people who try to memorize their speech word for word. Even if you could do that, if you



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come across, unless you're a really super good professional actor, usually you're going to come across as a bit over-rehearsed, kind of robotic. If you do that instead, what you really want to do is memorize your outline or memorize a speech formula that keep you on track and keep you on point, give you some structure, but allow you to speak freely. Another mistake that I see a lot is putting Q and A as your conclusion, when in fact it really should be with just a sleight of hand, put your Q and A second to last, because you want a speech to end with a sizzle, not a fizzle. And a Q and A almost always ends as a fizzle because usually a Q and A ends with, "Well, I guess there are no more questions. So we're done here."

Which is not the way you want to send people out of the room. And instead of you make that second to last, you control the time, we've got one last question, you finish that question and then immediately launch into a powerful conclusion so that your audience can leave the room with that emotion and that feeling. And then the last mistake is simply not preparing enough for a specific audience. You made your preparation and you think you've got a great presentation and you do for you. But how about your audience? Is that the points that will resonate best with them. So really doing that audience research and knowing who you talk about.

Susan Friedmann:

I love Q and A sessions. I feel that it brings out what they're interested in, not what you think they should be interested in. But I also like the fact that if I can have one of the participants help with answering the questions that I don't necessarily have to be the one answering them, because people listen to their peers often more than they do to the speaker. I often turn that into more of a facilitation session than necessarily being able to come up with the answer. Or I might say, "Well, before I give you my answer, let's hear what you have to say, who has an opinion about this, or who has the answer to this question?"

Paul Barton:

Absolutely. I know early in my career, I felt like, well, these people are paying me money to speak, so I must need to know everything. And what I quickly learned was audiences don't like know-it-alls. And depending on the audience you have, you may have a room full of experts on that subject. What I discovered, and it was actually an audience member that helped me discover this because they raised their hand and said, "Hey, I think I know how I would answer that." And it was a great answer. And from that point on, I started saying, "That's a great question. And I kind of think I know how to answer it, but hey, you're all experts here. I would love to hear what you

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guys think." And then immediately switch into that facilitator role that you had mentioned, Susan. And it's just a great role to take because the audience then gets to engage with each other and that's really powerful.

Susan Friedmann: Oh, there's nothing more powerful than that. And they love it and they think you're great. You can take the kudos now, even though you don't have to, but they think you're good just because of this interaction. And it's often that that interaction is so powerful and so needed sometimes in these corporations because people often don't get the opportunity to voice their opinions or voice their expertise. And so I think if you can create that environment for them to be able to do that, I would think, "Wow, I've done my job."

Paul Barton: Yeah, absolutely. That is just a great way to handle and engage and get everybody excited and involved in participatory in the presentation.

Susan Friedmann: Yeah. And I love the sizzle rather than the fizzle. That's fabulous. No, I have not heard that one before, but it's, it's really right. You're right on. Because how many times do people not have any questions and then you're like, "Okay, well thanks a lot. Appreciate you being here."

Paul Barton: Yeah. Well, one way you can handle that. A lot of times you need to get a Q and A just has to get started and people actually have questions and they just haven't had really time to ponder it. So I always come with a couple of questions and, and I'll say, "What questions do you have." As opposed to, does anyone have any questions that simple word change seems to elicit a greater response. But if I don't get a hand up, I'll say, "Here's a question that I get asked all the time. What do you do with your hands when you're speaking?" And then I'll answer that. And that will usually prompt the audience. Now you can get away with that maybe twice. And after that, if you still don't have questions, then you're not going to get them.

Susan Friedmann: Yeah. You're right. But it often does stimulate those questions because if you do leave it, people might have a question in the moment, but they forget about it when it comes to the Q and A time. So, absolutely right. I love to end, especially a workshop with people sharing one thing, we turn it into a game, but one thing that they're taking away, and once somebody has said that one thing, nobody else can say it.

Paul Barton: Ah, that's great.

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- Susan Friedmann: Yes. Because otherwise somebody says, "Oh, I like the Q and A session." And then somebody else says, "Well, I like the Q and A session." Yes. And they start repeating what other people say, but it's really not what they're thinking. And it really makes them think, and then have to look at their notes or what did I learn here. If everybody, if you've got a room of 30 or 40 people, and this can get really powerful, because that means that everybody's there's 30 or 40 people who were sharing different things that they're taking away.
- Paul Barton: Yeah. And it's great for them to hear from each other what they got out. And that's great feedback for you too. Sometimes you're surprised by something that you thought was this kind of a simple point that really seemed to resonate with them. So you need to know that and take note of that, to use it in the future.
- Susan Friedmann: Exactly. How can our listeners find out more? I'm sure that itching to know, because you are so incredible. Paul, if they want more information about you and your services, your speakers schools, how can they do that?
- Paul Barton: Well, if you go to [PhoenixPublicSpeaking.com](http://PhoenixPublicSpeaking.com) and scroll down to the bottom of that, you'll find all of my social media contacts and that's the best way to get ahold of me.
- Susan Friedmann: Excellent. And I'll put that in the show notes so that anybody who's traveling or doing something else, multi-tasking, can't write down that information, it'll be in the show notes. And the famous golden nugget. If you could leave our listeners with a golden nugget, what would that be, Paul?
- Paul Barton: Well, I think we've touched upon it, but it's really in a nutshell, it's be authentic, not perfect. Be yourself, be comfortable in your skin. Be confident in what you're talking about. You're a content expert. You've written a book. You know what you're talking about. Tell those stories, just be yourself, put a structure to it so that you stay on time and stay on point and you'll do great.
- Susan Friedmann: So true. This day and age, as you rightly said, authenticity sort of seems to stand out more than anything else. And we see it especially on Zoom, people having to be more authentic, especially if they're in their own homes, they're in a whole different environment. This has been amazing.

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You're amazing. Thank you so much for sharing your wisdom with us, Paul, 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.