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BOOK MARKETING:

How to Best Conquer Your Content Chaos

Interview with Bonnie Chomica

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 true marketing professional. Bonnie Chomica is a guide, an adviser and a cheerleader for her solopreneur clients. She helps them get more visibility with strategic web content, email marketing and social media so they can attract more leads. Building this solid marketing foundation enables people to move from frustration and uncertainty to clarity and confidence so they can grow their business. Living on Vancouver Island on the West Coast of Canada, Bonnie has over 30 years experience as a marketing professional in corporate, with startups and in the trenches as a business owner. My dear friend and mastermind buddy, Bonnie, what an honor it is to welcome you back to the show. And thank you for being this week's guest expert and mentor.

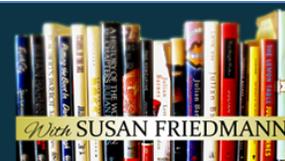
Bonnie Chomica: Awesome to be here, Susan. Thanks for having me.

Susan Friedmann: Bonnie, content chaos. I know that this is a topic that you're spending a lot of time helping your clients with. And I know that I personally am overwhelmed with what content to put where and how often I should be doing it. I'm assuming that many of our listeners may feel the same way. So let's just get down to it and dig into this topic and really understand what exactly is content chaos.

Bonnie Chomica: Well, content chaos comes from trying to do content marketing, which is such a great way to get visibility and to build your credibility. It's an opportunity to share what you know, to position yourself as the authority in your particular niche or niche, as the Americans like to say, and to serve your audience. So, you can do that through a blog, a webinar, this podcast is an example, you can do live streaming, email news, social media, there's all

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kinds of places to put out content. And that content is meant to be helpful to people because people are searching for answers to their questions and solutions to their problems. People don't know what to write about or what to post so they just don't and they miss out on that exposure. So they stay invisible and the struggle or chaos to come up with content is the common challenge.

Susan Friedmann: Where do we start? I mean, you mentioned a lot of different places that we could go with this, you said blog, the articles, the podcast, but it's like, "Okay, it's almost like a haze. There's just so much out there and I just don't know where to go first, what's right for me." How do I know that? How do I determine that?

Bonnie Chomica: The first thing is to truly understand your audience, your avatar, or your ideal client. Who is it that you're writing to? Think about their pains, their problems, what fears or anxieties they have, what roadblocks they might be having, or even what their desires are. Where do they want to be? Where do they want to transform to? How can you address and provide those answers and solutions?

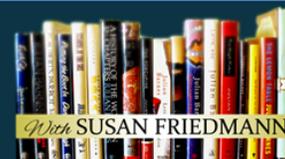
You position yourself as a leader by creating value-added content and what I call the three E's. This is where you start to focus in on what your topics might be about, and that's to educate, to entertain or to enlighten people, which means to inspire or motivate them. So how can you help and be of service? You need to create this value-added content to do that. And the best place to do that is to start by researching for topic ideas based on those fears and anxieties. So, what's popular? What are other people doing that you can glean from? What language are other people using? People like yourself, offering the same services or writing about the same things. What are they writing about? How are they serving their community? Research is the key. And you build from there.

Susan Friedmann: Let's go down that research rabbit hole. Obviously, Google, we look on Google. But are there some other tools that we could be using that might be a little easier and focus us on maybe more of what we really need?

Bonnie Chomica: Oh, absolutely. There's many, many resources. And indeed, Google should be the first place that you look. There's lots of ways to use Google to get those ideas. The next one I would go to is Amazon. I'm sure all your authors are familiar with Amazon. But it's a great place to start too. What you can do

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is find a similar book or maybe a similar product or service to yours, and then check out the reviews. But don't look at the top four-and five-star reviews. Look at the one and two-star reviews. These people are not raving about what they love, they are expressing pain points. Those are topic ideas right there. So use those pains or frustrations as a topic idea.

As an example, maybe you're a dog trainer and you found a book about dog training. And one of the one-star reviews says, "Well, this book has good tips for a Golden Retriever or a Labrador, but what about a more aggressive dog?" That's a topic idea right there. How do you train aggressive dogs? And there's probably several things that you could do. So, that's just an example.

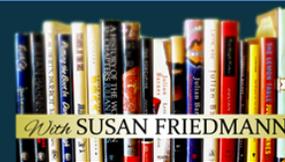
Another thing I love to do, kind of fun, is doing a geographic research. And that's to look at someone that's doing similar things to yourself. Look in a different city or location. I live on the West Coast of Canada, I often search for similar companies in Toronto, or maybe Florida or Ohio. People that aren't going to be my competitors. And I look to see, what are they writing about? Are they doing blogs? Are they doing videos? What are the topics that they're sharing? What type of language do they use? Are people interacting with the content or social posts? That tells you what's popular with people. It's good to check out, also, the different services they offer and pricing. That's good from a business perspective, not just looking for topic ideas.

Another fun resource is in the grocery store checkout. If you think of the popular magazines that sit there while you're waiting in line, there's Cosmopolitan and Men's Health, are two in particular. They have been generating proven headline formulas for decades. Those headlines can give you topic ideas while you're standing in line. So be ready to snap a picture on your phone.

An example I saw the other day from Cosmo said something like, "Three steps to lean legs and a tight butt." Now, who doesn't want that, right? You can turn that around into, "Three steps to more likes and shares on Facebook." I just turned that into something that was appropriate to my business. Also, watch your inbox, blog posts that you read, social media posts. And stop and really analyze the title or the words that made you click or read something. Make note of those and create what's called a swipe file. You literally copy and paste them somewhere so that you can go back and

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reference them and get ideas from other people's headlines and things. Those are some easy places to start.

Susan Friedmann: Those are fabulous ideas and I'd like to go through them one by one. First of all, Amazon. Yes, what a great place to go and do your research. And I love the idea of going and looking at the one and two-star comments because, as you rightly say, they're missing something from the book and they often tell you what it is that they're missing. Well, if they're missing it, how many other people are also missing it? That's good to think about.

The geographic research, I've not thought about that. But you're absolutely right there that somebody that is doing, maybe something similar to what you're doing, but in a completely different area of the country, of the world even, what are they doing? How are they approaching it?

I mean the grocery store, yes, I'm always standing in line and looking at what are the headlines in these magazines. And you can learn. And they got, as you rightly say, just proven formulas that work all the time. And why reinvent the wheel when it's been invented for you. I love those ideas.

And swipe files, what other people are using? There are tried and true headlines that people use. And, hey, I mean, I love the how-tos. I mean, if you look at the titles of the podcasts, they're all how-tos, because people love how-tos, they want to know how to do something. Those are some great resources. What about some other tools? What would you suggest that we use?

Bonnie Chomica: There's all kinds of different websites. You can look for things like headline analyzer or blog ideas, and different tools come up for those. But some other things that aren't specifically web-based might be something like mind-mapping, for example. A little personal brainstorming where you initially come up with broad topic ideas, and then dig down into more detailed ones.

And I'll give you an example and I'm going to use dogs again because people can relate to pets more so, I think, than various industries or businesses. Say we're looking at dog topics and just broad ones like food, puppies, training, health, and let's say, travel. Then you can take that travel topic and think of topics that go with that specifically, like what are medical requirements, travel laws, what to do in a car, on a boat, maybe on a plane? And then you

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could take that plane topic deeper, like airline regulations, how to prepare your dog, best types of carriers, old dogs versus puppies. There's all kinds... So you put down these ideas, start with one and then keep adding to those. I find it also best to do them on paper. It's a more creative way to do it. And then again, you can just build on those.

The other thing I wanted to mention was something called "The Big 5." And these are idea generators. Again, a gentlemen named Marcus Sheridan, he's with a company called IMPACT. He was a successful blogger for many years, and these are the five topics that he found drove the most traffic to his website. The first one is cost. Are you trying to describe the value of your services or things like that? The next topic is problems, the most common or unexpected problems, how to avoid them. There's reviews, which could be related tools or products or series, any applications that are relevant to your audience. And I'm sure you've seen lots of "Best of..." list type posts. The best five products to solve puppy chewing. The best tips to achieve or avoid X. And number five is comparisons. You can compare different solutions. You can compare different types of services. Things that happened yesterday versus today.

And I also like to add a sixth one that's very trending these days, and it's showing people behind the scenes of your business or book writing or promotion. So how do you do things? What mistakes have you made? How do things work or what steps to take? Those are just some other angles to generate those ideas.

- Susan Friedmann: [inaudible 00:12:43] fabulous. So go through them again, cost, problems, reviews. What was the fourth one?
- Bonnie Chomica: Best of...
- Susan Friedmann: Best of... Thank you.
- Bonnie Chomica: And those are usually list posts, The 10 Best this or whatever. And then comparison.
- Susan Friedmann: And then behind the scenes and mistakes. That's a great segue, Bonnie. You know we love talking about mistakes here. We got that... That opened that door for me. Thank you. Let's talk about mistakes that you find people make when it comes to writing, finding, developing content.

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- Bonnie Chomica: One of the first that comes to mind, and I've certainly been guilty of this, is often people create content that interests them versus what interests their audience. You really, really have to focus on your audience and what their issues and pains are so that you're providing information that can solve those. Zero in on their pain points because you're here to help them. The other one is not being consistent, not consistently putting content out there. This is a long-term strategy. It's going to get you exposure, build your reputation and position you as that authority in your niche. And it all contributes to search engine optimization as well. You have to feed Google and good content is a way to do that.
- Susan Friedmann: What about, and this is a problem or a challenge that I've had, and that's knowing you produce, so you write one article, how can you repurpose that one article?
- Bonnie Chomica: There's a few different ways. And it depends how your kind of marketing foundation is set up. But say you've written that article, and it's a blog post on your website, you can certainly share the link on your social media sites, but you could also break it up into smaller kind of bite-sized pieces to use as individual social media posts. You can post that article on LinkedIn. There's a way to publish articles on LinkedIn, not just to post. But you always have to refer back to the original blog post so that Google doesn't see it as duplicate content. You can create videos or podcasts, audio files to share in different ways, put them in an email newsletter. Those are just some ways you can repurpose.
- Susan Friedmann: What about the whole idea of content curation, of using other people's material or posting other people's material is better way of putting that?
- Bonnie Chomica: That's very common on social media. Mostly, I would say Facebook or LinkedIn, people share articles from other sources. And that's still fine because that shows that you're still studying that topic, that you know where to go for those resources. Maybe it's somebody that you know, you're sharing somebody shared things of yours. Like, "Oh, my friend, Susan, has this great podcast today. You should check it out." That's one way of sharing other people's content. And that's curating. Another way, lots of people kind of formulate newsletter or news broadcast. And that's taking maybe the top five articles or posts from this week. I study a lot of marketing stuff, obviously, but say the top articles from this week. And I

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would put five different links to different articles. But I would describe what each one is about. Give a little bit of an introduction of why it would be a benefit to click on this link and read the rest of this article. So again, it's providing a service by gathering the most important information and sharing it with your readers.

Susan Friedmann: Yeah. And I like to do that on my blog site on Book Marketing Mentors that, yes, they've heard from our experts and they've heard from me, but let's look at the topic from another expert's point of view. Yeah, I like to do that.

Bonnie Chomica: Exactly.

Susan Friedmann: What about some other mistakes?

Bonnie Chomica: I think people not being consistent is the big one. But often, I guess it depends on the writer who's creating the content. But writing kind of what I call big blobs of content, where it's this big paragraph after big paragraph. When you're reading things on the internet, typically nowadays, like 70% maybe, are reading on their mobile phone. Those big blobs of texts are difficult to read and it turns people off. So you need to break things up. Kind of like when you're making a graphic design, we look for white space so that the items on the page pop out. Well, you try to do the same thing with writing. Break up your content with subheadings, for starters, making it easier to identify what the article is about. And using bullets is another way to do that. Bullets or numbered lists makes it easier on the eye because people are scanning, they're not reading word for word, they're scanning your material. If you can break it up, it makes it easier for them as well.

Susan Friedmann: Yes, the blobs of text, I mean, that scares me. If I see that, you're right, it just puts me off. I just need that white space because-

Bonnie Chomica: Yeah, it's too hard. It's too hard.

Susan Friedmann: It's too hard. Don't make me work hard. I mean, there's an excellent book out there, I think it's on websites and designing websites, Don't Make Me Think. Yeah-

Bonnie Chomica: Yes, yes.

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Susan Friedmann: And that whole idea of bullets or numbers of lists of things, I think that's the easiest thing to write. Would you agree?

Bonnie Chomica: Well, I have some clients that are not quite there yet. And I think it's a style of writing that you kind of have to evolve. And once you do that, you'll start thinking that way, you'll start thinking in that mode. I typically do an outline before I write a blog post. I'm going to talk about these three things. I might need to research this and this and this. And then when I write, I've already got that flow, that open, middle and close. And I know what those three kind of topics are. And I always look for ways to do bullets because they just pop off the page. They make me look there. It's kind of an evolution in your writing style for the internet.

Susan Friedmann: You talked about consistency earlier, I'd like to pick up on that. And so, how often... I mean, you and I have talked about this many times is how often should we be posting and how varied should those posts be?

Bonnie Chomica: It depends on what platform you're on. It depends on your audience. But certainly, I would say something like Instagram and Facebook, you should be posting a minimum of three times a week. On Facebook, if you can do it daily, that's better because it's all about algorithms, that mathematical gizmo stuff that gets you exposure. Because everything you post does not show up in everybody's newsfeed. The more often that you do it, and the more often that you're able to engage your audience, the more likely those posts will show up in your audiences feeds. Something like LinkedIn, you might want to post once a week. And that could be either whether you're publishing an article or if you're sharing a link from someone else's like we talked about curating. Because LinkedIn is more of a business site. People aren't in there so much to be sociable as to be seen. And other than posting, it's good to comment on other people's posts or share similar to share other people's posts that just shows your connection, your interest in that particular topic. Again, kind of positioning you as that authority. Each platform is different.

Susan Friedmann: You talk about commenting and how often again should be commenting on other people's work? I suppose it's like... I know you're going to say it depends. But it's like, okay. How much time, maybe is a better question, should I even think about setting aside for social things?

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- Bonnie Chomica: Yeah, it depends. Well, what happens is it is good to put time aside, whether that's maybe Monday, Wednesday, Friday, you do it at eight o'clock in the morning and Tuesday and Thursday you do it around noon. Because people post things at different times. You're not going to see everybody's posts or be able to comment on everybody's posts. And some days there are not posts to comment on, right? If there isn't an appropriate topic for you to comment on or to share. When you spend that five or 15 minutes a day, some of those days, there may not be anything to comment on. It depends on what other people are posting. I spend a lot of time on social media because that's a lot of what I help my clients with, but it's also about marketing for me. I'm researching about marketing. And like I said earlier, I'm looking at, me too, I'm looking for topic ideas and what other people are doing. I make the time to see kind of what's going on in the world.
- Susan Friedmann: Talking about the services that you offer clients, talk to us more about how our listeners can find you and learn more about what you do.
- Bonnie Chomica: Oh, sure. Thank you. Well, I have spent most of my career doing marketing for people, but in the last couple of years, I've morphed over into a marketing mentor. So I'm really trying to help people build a solid online foundation with their content. How to plan it, how to implement it, how to write it. So it's a little bit of coaching, it's a little bit of training and a little bit of feedback. I monitor what they're doing and give them feedback so that they can improve. You can find me, my website is called marketingdonewrite.ca. CA is for Canada. And write is spelled W-R-I-T-E. So, marketingdonewrite.ca. Email, info.marketingdonewrite.ca. And probably my Facebook page, which is also Marketing Done Write. And you can find me there.
- Susan Friedmann: Yes. And by the way, listeners, Bonnie writes a great post every week on The Content Garden. Is that correct?
- Bonnie Chomica: That's a group. Yeah. My Facebook Group is Content Marketing Garden, it is very specific to content marketing so sure. You can come over and check that out and answer a couple of questions and I'll let you in the group.
- Susan Friedmann: Excellent. Yeah, that's lovely. And if you were to leave our listeners with a golden nugget, what would that be, Bonnie?

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Bonnie Chomica: Like anything in marketing or your business, it's good to create habits. Make this kind of research a habit. You don't do this just once, because you'll want to look for different types of topics. So, that's ongoing because you're going to be consistent with your posting and writing. Create your own process and a resource library or swipe files. Whatever that looks like for you. Using tools like Trello, Evernote, or simple spreadsheets or word documents, even just post-it notes. So save those content ideas and those ideas, you won't always feel like writing about them at a specific time. So let them percolate until you kind of feel emotionally driven to use one and then your content creation begins. And using the tools I mentioned today, and there's more, you should never have content chaos again.

Susan Friedmann: No more content chaos, everyone. We've solved all the problems. All the wonderful tips that you've shared, Bonnie, thank you. Thank you for sharing your wisdom so generously. 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.