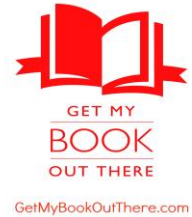


Get My Book Out There Podcast #4 Relationship Building with Readers and How It Helps You Sell More Books



Narelle Todd:

Hi, I'm Narelle Todd.

S.E. Smith:

And I'm S.E. Susan Smith. We'd like to welcome you this week to our weekly chat on real-world marketing tips and promoting for self-published authors.

Narelle Todd:

We're going to talk about relationship building by responding to readers. So, one of the fundamentals I see with a lot of authors is that they often will not do or stop doing the fundamental things because they think they're too basic. Actually, it's those fundamental things that you have to do every day, those maintenance type things. Which is often the boring things, can be the boring things as well, but they're the things that actually build your author business.

S.E. Smith:

The foundations for the business. So when you forget the basics, you're forgetting to put the floor in or the walls or the studs.

Narelle Todd:

Yeah, exactly. So, we want to have a look at some of those basics today and look at three things or three ways that you can build your relationship with your readers. Get these right, you're really doing well with your business.

S.E. Smith:

And they don't cost anything. When you look at it, they cost, well, your time, but your building that relationship actually will extend far beyond the impersonal touches, because when you go out on conventions, then you will eventually meet them in-person and you have that connection.

Narelle Todd:

I always say that it takes roughly about 1,000 raving fans for you to actually build your business, and this is how you can create those raving fans when you may be money poor, but you've got some time where you can start to build the relationship. So, our first one is website and responding to comments there. Susan, you do this really well. You typically respond to everybody yourself personally, and if not, I usually step in and respond. What do you find about that?

S.E. Smith:

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I like to at least go in, and even when you respond, because I'll be in a major deadline or something like that, I still get that notice. Then I'll go in and I'll see that you've already replied, but we've worked together so long that I know a lot of times what you're thinking and you know exactly what I'm thinking, which is amazing. But I still read the comments and sometimes I'll even add an additional comment to it.

S.E. Smith:

For me, I guess you could call it a downtime. I get so much enjoyment going in and reading the comments and answering the questions, and sometimes I get a little overwhelmed if I have half a dozen of them. I realized that they're enjoying the stories as much as I am. They'll either leave a comment. I had somebody tell me, "Oh, I loved the puzzles that you put." That was a comment the other night.

Narelle Todd:

Yeah.

S.E. Smith:

It was so funny, because one of the things that I'll do, and I tell one of the readers who introduced me to doing this, I said, "Oh my God, now I'm going down the rabbit hole again." I'll sit there and I'll play the puzzles, just try and see if I can beat my time from before, or I'll just go from one puzzle to another to another. That's what the reader said, she says, "I stay up way too late." Part of it is having that relationship with the readers and I'm seeing what they're enjoying doing and getting enjoyment from their comments. It's that interaction, it's that connection with them.

Narelle Todd:

I think it's also important just for that authenticity. So whenever I respond to a comment because you're tied up with writing, I'll always say that it's me who's commented, just so that people know that I'm just filling in for you. But I think it's good to be authentic as well, just to let people know so I'm not trying to fake being you. But you still want the relationship built, so you've got somebody there to fill in sort of thing when you can't do it.

S.E. Smith:

Sometimes if it's a very direct question or something, I have their email so that I can go ahead, and I'll actually not only post a comment on the website, but then I'll actually email them as well to let them know that I responded and what I responded. Especially if I know there's a time constraint or something on it.

Narelle Todd:

Yes. Yeah, that's a good one.

S.E. Smith:

But it's worth taking that extra time. If they're taking the time out of their busy daily lives to post a comment, the least I can do is try to take time out of my life to respond.

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Yes, and if you time block, so if you say give yourself 10 minutes and I'm going to respond to all the comments on the website, then that way you keep it to that. Even if you have to set a timer, you just do the comments and then you get out so you don't get distracted and you don't go down the rabbit hole.

Narelle Todd:

Our second tip is Facebook Lives. Great way to interact with people, even though it is one-way with you doing the talking, but people can still leave comments and things like that. So, step us through how you do that one.

S.E. Smith:

I think out of all of them, it's one of the ones that I get the most stressed out about doing, but I end up enjoying. Zoom might be a little bit more fun, because you do get that two-way interaction better.

Narelle Todd:

Yeah.

S.E. Smith:

But by doing Facebook Live, the readers are able to post comments. I think that's the big stress part, is the technology going to work? Are they going to be able to hear me? Do I have a good internet signal? Because that's often an issue. Then can I read all the comments? So by talking, I try not to talk at them, I try to go ahead and have a two-way conversation, even though it is primarily one-way, but it gives a chance for the readers to see me, to see who I am.

S.E. Smith:

Sometimes my hair will be up. I've done it where I've mowed the yard and I've come in real quick because I've lost track of time. We're trying to get from point A to point B so I'll have a signal, so that I can actually do it. But by answering those questions real-time, it also makes it more fulfilling for both of us, because there is that two-way connection and it's instantaneous right there real-time.

Narelle Todd:

Yeah, for sure. One of the beauties about it is obviously they can ask questions, so you can answer straight away. You can put in links, it gives you that real-time conversation ability, really.

S.E. Smith:

Well, and it also allows me to discuss things and then it's not only on Facebook, but then we can also take the videos and put them onto the YouTube. What I do is I get comments posted on YouTube, afterwards they'll watch the video if they didn't have time to join in with the Facebook Live, but they may come in later and then they can actually post questions, and then I'll go back in and I'll answer questions.

S.E. Smith:

It also allows me to do my work in progress. On Wednesday nights, I've been doing my work in progress. So, I'm able to share tidbits of my unedited thought process I guess you could say of the stories as they're coming

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alive. I think it's kind of neat. I love seeing the evolution of anything you do. If you decide to remodel your house or paint a wall or anything that you're doing creatively, cross-stitch, you start out with this blank slate and then you see this picture come alive in front of you. So, I think Facebook Live allows me to do that and the readers are able to see it in real-time.

Narelle Todd:

Yes, and it's been quite a popular series, the work in progress reading. So, our third tip is around Messenger. So Facebook Messenger and email, so combining those two. What's your secrets there?

S.E. Smith:

I love being able to chat with readers. I think that the thing is, is when you're doing it with Messenger or you're doing it with email, Messenger, the good thing is, again, it's real-time. So you're having this conversation real-time, talking back and forth, and it's very personal. In this case, oftentimes, I would say 99% of the time, it's just you and the other person. So, you're having that personal conversation like you were talking on the phone or you're talking to a neighbor, and you're asking them how they're doing and what's going on. You share photos, you can share videos, you can share anything that you find interesting, links.

S.E. Smith:

It's not all just about books, it's about what's going on in life. If they're celebrating a birthday, the best conversations I've had is I had a reader, her son was in the hospital. It was late at night and she got on and you could tell it was a stressful time for her. We were on Messenger, she says, "Do you mind if I do a video?" I said, "If you don't mind the fact that I'm sitting in the dark in my nightgown, yeah." That's exactly what we did. She laughed, but we had this conversation and it was very, very personal, it helped her and it made me feel better, knowing that I could be there, I could be that shoulder for her.

Narelle Todd:

Yeah, and I think once again, technology really helps us connect with people and it's also the way that we manage that as well. So I think whenever you look at using technology, you also need to have in place a plan how to manage that technology. Have say notifications turned off at a certain time so that you allow yourself downtime. Just be aware, do you need to set time limits for how often you go on things, because you could be there for a while and actually chatting with people, but then draw that line and say, "Okay, I've been doing this for an hour, I better get back to work." So, we need to be mindful of those things as well when we use technology.

S.E. Smith:

Like you said, setting up, it doesn't need a time that you can do this, or when you need that break, you could be working and then set it up and then divide it up into sections. Posts, there's a lot of posts that are on Facebook on the author page, and I read through I would say probably 99% of them or more, but I don't answer all of them. So I may read them, but I may not spend the hours it would take to answer everything. But I'll go through and I'll pick maybe a dozen that I do respond to, especially ones that really hit me or I think are really funny or that I can really relate to, something that's happened in my life that I could really relate to what they are talking about.

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S.E. Smith:

You don't have to feel like you've got to answer every single comment, which is what I did when I first started. When I was a teacher, I felt like I had to grade every single piece of paper. You finally get to the point where you realize that, no, you only need to do certain ones to get that snapshot. Look at most important stuff, but enjoy the other. Take that time to do that, but even just responding to odd comments throughout, the readers realize that you are there. Then if I do have a conversation with, "Oh yeah, do you remember when you said this?" They're like, "Oh yeah, I remember that now."

Narelle Todd:

Yeah.

S.E. Smith:

Again, it's that personal connection. I like people, and I think that my readers realize that I enjoy the chats that I have with them, and hopefully they enjoy the chats that they have with me.

Narelle Todd:

So, there are our three tips for relationship building with your readers using technology. So, let us know in the comments which ones go and use. So just start with one and then build the others in, and that really will get your foundations in a really good healthy place to build that relationship.

S.E. Smith:

And enjoy them. Find the ones that you enjoy the most, and don't be afraid to expand upon that. So I hope everyone enjoyed today's podcast, and then like Narelle said, if you have any questions or comments, just post them below and we'll be right there to answer them.

Narelle Todd:

Hey, thanks for joining us today. You know we've got way more information we want to share with you to increase your book sales, so please come and join me at [facebook.com/GetMyBookOutThere](https://www.facebook.com/GetMyBookOutThere).

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