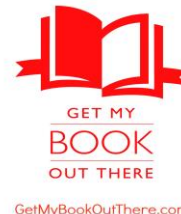


Get My Book Out There Podcast #13 Team Creation & Building



Narelle Todd:

I'm Narelle Todd.

S.E. Smith:

And I'm S.E. Susan Smith.

Narelle Todd:

We are the self-publishing author and marketing duo that has sold over two million books. But we didn't start out knowing how to sell books. Fast forward past many failed promotions and a lot of lessons learned, you will see how we went from self-publishing newbies to hitting the New York Times Bestsellers list and making the USA TODAY bestsellers list 19 times and counting.

Narelle Todd:

We created the Get My Book Out There podcast to give you simple yet effective marketing strategies to increase readership and book sales, so you know what to do, when to do it, and how to do it, as well as some tips for staying mentally and physically well.

S.E. Smith:

Let's get started.

Narelle Todd:

And we're here today to chat to you about team-building, so creating your team. So how do we actually get the right team around us to support us, to take off some of the admin sort of things or other jobs so that you are free to write?

Narelle Todd:

So we've got three topics or areas that we're going to cover. In this podcast I'm going to kind of interview Susan around this. She's certainly experienced at creating a team for her author business. So let's get into what wisdom she has for us.

Narelle Todd:

So, first question, Susan, is when should you start building your team.

S.E. Smith:

Immediately. Even if you're a brand new author and you're just starting out, now's the time to start putting everything into place. And if you can start that networking, even if you don't hire someone yet, but if you put

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that networking into place, it helps give you that experience so that when you are ready to do it, you're hitting the ground running. Instead of like me, "Hold on, give me a week. I'll figure out how to do this, and then I'll be back with you." And then they ask me something else. "I'll be back in a week. Let me figure out how to do this."

S.E. Smith:

So if you can start getting your team set up and if you're not sure what you're going to need, I can give you a few tips on that. I have both an admin assistant and a personal assistant and I have a marketing director. And then I have an assortment of other support staff that helps me come in.

S.E. Smith:

And you're like, "Well, I'm not ready to start there yet." I was where you were at. I wasn't ready either. And so I was always scrambling to kind of catch up and find these people to get them put in place. And so if you can start now, you're already way ahead of the game.

Narelle Todd:

So it's important to remember that you're nearly 80 books in English and then 50, 60 more in translation. So it was seven years down the track in your author journey. So if somebody's starting out, it's important to remember to keep in the place you're in now. So if you're just starting out, it's like, "What do I need the most help with at the moment?" That could be admin jobs, have a look for somebody there.

S.E. Smith:

And that's exactly where I started out with. It all began, and this worked out really great for me, was I found somebody who was going college and as part of their college, they had to do an internship. Lo and behold, she needed to work in a publishing company. I happen to own a publishing company, Montana Publishing, so I was able to meet the criteria that her professor needed and she was able to come in and I basically was able to show her step-by-step what my day generally looked like.

S.E. Smith:

And back then, I was just focusing on doing the eBooks and the paperback. And then having to deal with the Facebook, talking with greeters and Facebook and stuff, and I was beginning to get into audio books, but I was also looking at additional things, such as branching out in my marketing, branching out my conventions and things that I was going to, so I needed designs. Instead of me having to spend time formatting my books, I showed her how to do it. And so I could write the book, she could format them and then I showed her how to upload them. So I didn't have to take the time out to go and upload everything. So that right there, one person, by showing her that saved me hours of time. And then I started showing her other things that I was working on. Everything that I was working on, by showing her I could then pass it to her and I could just keep on focusing on what was important, and that was the writing.

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And too often, we see engaging somebody or paying a contractor as a cost, whereas it really needs to be seen as an investment.

S.E. Smith:

I can make more money now because she's helping me not have to worry about that. The costs of me paying her was a fraction of what I could make writing the book. And again, she started out as an intern. It worked out so well that she ended up graduating from college and I asked her, "Are you still interested working with me?" And the cool thing is it starts out where she was living near enough that we could meet and I could show her how to do these things. A couple of months after the summer, she did a six week intern, she was ready for me to let her go on her own. And with the internet, she could live anywhere. We can communicate and she can get it all done. So that initial investment time did not take any more time out than I would have had to spend anyway, but it made such a huge difference. And now when we talk more about what some of the things they can do, you'll see that having somebody allowed me to become much bigger and more diverse than I would have been otherwise.

Narelle Todd:

Yes. It's like what might be seen as the initial pain of training somebody else, actually frees you in the long run. That's how you need to think of it.

S.E. Smith:

And what's really cool is she likes to do the things that I'm not overly excited about doing.

Narelle Todd:

That's always a plus. Do what you love to do and let them do what they love to do.

Narelle Todd:

Who do you need in a team as an author?

S.E. Smith:

I'll share with what I started out with. I started out all by myself and before anyone says, "Well, I don't know any other authors. I don't what I'm supposed to be doing." I was exactly where they are. I had never met another author. I knew absolutely nothing about publishing. Generally, I didn't know anything about writing. I wrote from the heart. I think, in a way, that's what came through. But as my books became more successful, I began writing more. I realized I was going to need help in managing this.

S.E. Smith:

The first people that reached out to me happened to be a marketing director guru, which I really needed because you need to get your name out there because the more you get your name out there, then the more books you can sell, then the more you can afford to pay for this help. I needed help with someone who had experience and really enjoyed website design so that I didn't have to constantly be worrying about putting stuff on my website, who understood how to integrate the newsletter, the ins and out of Facebook. One of the first people I had, part-time, was somebody who can help me with my marketing. You would know her very well.

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Narelle Todd:

Yes.

S.E. Smith:

It was you, and when you reached out to me, it came at such a critical time because I was ready to give up. I had reached a point where I was just beginning to feel totally overwhelmed. I couldn't handle working full time, which I was doing, working part-time, which I was doing, and then writing. So I basically had two full-time jobs. When you're writing, it's not just sitting down and writing and releasing the book. It's also all of the other things that come along with it. And when you reached out to me, it was just like this glow, this safety line that said, "You're not going to drown right now. I can help you." Finding you was one of the things that kept me going and it helped that you enjoyed my stories so much, that you were really enthusiastic about them too. So find somebody that enjoys that part of the business, that likes doing the Facebook stuff, the social media stuff, that is competent enough to do the website stuff, start with them.

S.E. Smith:

And then from there, like I was telling you, I had the intern. And when I realized that I could take even more of the steps that I could do, but it wasn't my favorite thing to do, and it really wasn't worth my time, because my time is worth money. Then I realized it made more sense, and I learned this, actually from you, that it made more sense to start delegating that.

S.E. Smith:

That was the first part, was finding somebody that could help me do the marketing and then finding a personal assistant that could help take the daily load off my shoulders.

Narelle Todd:

So where do you go to find the right people?

S.E. Smith:

It's kind of focus and luck. You have to have a combination of the two. One of the things that happened today, which was really, really funny was I decided that I needed to hire another French proofreader. And my personal assistant had gone, she was looking at it and she just felt overwhelmed. She's like, "They're all sound so good. I can't figure out which one I want to use." She says, "Can you please take a look and narrow it down?"

S.E. Smith:

A lot comes from your gut feeling. That has really served me well over the past eight years. And it's very easy. It's like a pilot that has been trained to use their instruments and they're flying into a massive storm or fog, but they can't see and they have to put all that trust into the instrument. And it's not easy. They don't want to do that. It's also the same with you. You don't want to... Your gut is telling you to do one thing and you want to ignore it. You want to say "No, no, no." But don't discount it.

S.E. Smith:

I'm just going through this list that she had and I picked out two names and I was drawn to one. And I said, "Approach this one. Find out more about her." The French proofreader ended up writing back and it turns out

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that her and her PA, you could tell that they just clicked immediately. And then I found out that two authors that I personally know have used her. And I wrote to one of them and I said, "I know you've used this proofreader. What did you think of her?" And she's like, "Oh my God, she's fantastic!" When you have an author that will tell you that behind the scenes, so you know she's telling you the truth. In this huge world, finding a French proofreader that lives in France and you just happened to know somebody that she knows out of all of these names, but it was that instinct that was drawing me to her. And that said, "I need to give this one a chance." That's the luck part. That is one of the things you need to look for.

S.E. Smith:

Another is look around. When you go onto Facebook groups, you can kind of get a feel for people that are really good. Don't be afraid to reach out to other authors, ask them, "Hey, do you know any virtual assistants? Or if you had to pick a virtual assistant, how would you go about it?" For me, it worked out because I used an intern. You may want to check with the local colleges and see if there's anybody that is a student that needs to take an internship for a publishing company, it can work for you.

Narelle Todd:

Could be a marketing intern, an editing intern. It very much depends on what you need, but there's literally interns looking for work.

S.E. Smith:

Yeah. And they have paid and unpaid. And that's the way, my PA she could be either paid or unpaid. And it was so funny, because when she told me that I said, "Oh, darling, I'm paying you because I know how much work you're going to be doing." And of course, as a student, she definitely appreciated that. But let me tell you what, I definitely got my money's worth. And she has thoroughly enjoyed it. And let me tell you what, that PA that started with me as an intern has been with me now for eight years. It's hard to believe eight years just flown by like that.

Narelle Todd:

So you've used interns and to find people you use Upwork?

S.E. Smith:

Don't be afraid to use Fiverr for certain things. I found, oh my gosh, my voiceover actors, a fabulous singer that I wrote a song and she did the singing for, I found cover art. Some of my worlds I wanted maps for, I've had maps created. The artist that I'm using now is like absolutely amazing and I originally found him on Fiverr.

S.E. Smith:

For PA work. I think I would go more to Upworks because that is more professional and so you're going to find more people that you want to work with long-term. And make sure that it is a long-term commitment, because if they know that they're going to be there a long time and you're going to be working as a team, they know the better that you do, the better they're going to do. And so they're going to be there and they're going to be the ones telling you you can climb out from underneath the bed on a bad day, or they're going to tell you it's okay to go climb under the bed and they'll fight off the demons for the day.

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Narelle Todd:

Awesome. Well, thank you very much for sharing into how you have built your team and your wisdom around that.

Narelle Todd:

So from here, folks, go have a look at who can you bring into your team and create your team. What is one thing, just choose one thing that you know that if you get off your plates today and give to somebody else and delegate that you can free up your time. More time, right? Quicker you release and the quicker you can earn more money. Go out there and do it.

S.E. Smith:

Don't be afraid to listen to your gut. Listen to it. If it's saying, "Oh yeah," definitely listen to it.

Narelle Todd:

Good words of wisdom there.

S.E. Smith:

Thank you everybody for joining us.

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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