

Daniel Hall Presents



Episode 62

How to Promote Your Book without Using Social Media

Sandra Beckwith

Welcome to this episode of the Real Fast Results podcast! If you are an author, if you are a publisher, if you are a small-press independent author and/or publisher, you are definitely in the right place. Today's special guest is Sandra Beckwith. She is an award winning former publicist who now teaches authors how to market their books, and she does it quite well.

Sandra's [Build Book Buzz](http://BuildBookBuzz.com) website has been honored by three different organizations for its excellence. When you go check it out at BuildBookBuzz.com, you'll know that what she has to say is well-worth listening to. Thanks for being here Sandra...

Promise: How to Promote Your Book without Using Social Media

We are promising people how to promote their book without using social media. It is a popular topic. **Some people just aren't comfortable with social media, and they are so relieved to learn that they have other options.** That's my promise. You'll get several tips that you can use immediately.

You do hear a lot about social media, but what you don't hear too much about is that it's not really effective for book marketing. It serves a huge purpose for authors. Twitter, in

particular, is great for building relationships, making connections, and also for professional development. **You can learn a lot from the links to content that others share on Twitter, but people aren't using Twitter to find books to read and buy.** They just aren't.

Nobody pulls up Twitter, whether it's on their computer or their phone app, and says, "You know, I need a book to read, and I think that I'll look for one on Twitter." It's just not how it happens. We all think that magic is going to happen on social media for our books, and it just isn't. **The magic happens in other ways, particularly when we connect with people who are the most interested in the books that we write.**

Facebook can be used for connections, but again, unless you know how to use it properly, it's not great for sales. So, social media has its place, absolutely, but if you really want to build an audience for your book, you need social media plus other options. That's what I'm going to give you all today, those other options.

Guest Blogging

I'm going to start with probably my favorite. **This particular option is also good for the introverted or shy author.** There are a lot of introverted authors. That technique for them, that doesn't necessarily involve using Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Pinterest is guest blogging. The reason why guest blogging is so good for authors is that it allows you to make a connection with readers who like the kind of books you write, but they are readers that you might not otherwise be exposed to because they are not in your network.

When you guest blog for a blog post, who reach the same people you want to reach, who reaches your target audience, then you are getting introduced to a whole new audience that's going to love what you have to say to them. So, guest blogging, what's involved with that is spending the time, and all of this takes time. That's kind of the bottom line. There's no quick fix. **It's spending the time to find those bloggers who blog about the topic that you write about, if you are a nonfiction author, or blog about your genre, if you are a novelist, and who might really be in the niche you write about as a novelist.**

With novels, you do want to connect with those bloggers who write in the same category that you write in because their blog readers are fans of the type of book they read, which means that they will be fans of the type of book you write. So, those are the people you want to connect with for fiction. And, for non-fiction, again, it tends to be more topic-oriented. If you've written a book about time management, for example, you might want to be a guest blogger on blogs that address time management. Believe me, there are blogs for everything.

What you do is identify those blogs that reach your target reader, and then you study the format that they use. Do they use guest blog posts? Do they do book reviews and not guest blog posts? Maybe they have a podcast and you can talk face to

face. So, you find out what kind of content they use, and then you contact them by email and offer that kind of content. It shows that you've done your research, and your blog host will be flattered that you've done the research and you know what they use.

Generally speaking, if you are on target with the blog and the content that you're offering, your invitation to contribute will be accepted because bloggers, like me, are always looking for content that we don't have to produce ourselves. So, it's definitely a win-win. One more bonus on that, and one of the real pluses of guest blogging, is that you can include a link to your book on a retail sales page. It may be on Amazon, or Barnes & Noble, or anywhere else, but that gives the people who read your content instant gratification. They like what you have to say, they click on the link and check out your book, and if they like what they see on their sales page, they'll make a purchase. It really doesn't get any better than that, and no tweeting is involved.

How Much Promotion Does Guest Blogging Bring?

When you promote on social media, you can compare it to an in-person book tour, where you make an appearance at a store. You're there for that time, and no one records it, so poof! It's gone. You've made no connections with any of the people who were there listening to your presentation. When you do that kind of presentation through your keyboard, it does stay there forever, and it's good for your site host's SEO (search engine optimization), and it's also good for your site's SEO because that blog post will link back to your site.

The more links that you have coming into your site, the more Google will like you, and the higher up your site will show up in search engine results. That's up there forever, until the site's host takes it down, and they tend not to take them down. So, it's a win-win all the way around.

Book Fairs

This is for the extravert, not the introvert. It's book fairs. **You can exhibit at book fairs.** It seems like almost every community in the country, and that probably applies outside of the US, has book fairs on a regular basis. I am in Rochester, NY, which is western New York, and we have a huge event every fall that focuses on just young adult books. We have another event at the public library that's focused on self-published books. This isn't a huge market, but we have several book fairs on an ongoing basis. This happens everywhere else as well.

First, you need to identify where they are. You need to apply to participate. There's often a small exhibit fee. It depends on the situation. Ours locally do not, but some do. Then, you just have to commit the time to showing up and being there all day and engaging with the people that come by. That's where being an extrovert comes in, because you do need to engage. You need to draw people in, you need to have stories on-hand to share with them, and you need to know how to connect with them.

That's an art form, and it's an art form that comes naturally to "people-people". It's a little bit harder to those who would prefer to be sitting at their computer. So, it's a strategy that works best for those who are outgoing, but again, no Facebook posts were hurt by this process. It works well.

Does it Really Help to Have These Interactions?

You can do a lot with these interactions. **It doesn't all have to be about just showing them your book.** For instance, you can add them to your email list. What you can do is gather market intelligence from the people that stop by to talk to you. If you write romance novels, you can say, "What do you like most about the books you read? What turns you off to romance novels?"

You can talk to them to get information that will improve your next book. But, from a marketing standpoint, rather than a writing standpoint, you can have an email sign up list there and say to them, "Hey, I've got a regular email newsletter. It's got a lot of useful information that you might be interested in. No spam, and I promise that it doesn't come out too, too often. Would you like to sign up for it?"

You know, people have to agree to do that. You don't want to, say, collect business cards and just add people to your email list. They have to agree to the process because that's a rule. But, it's a great way to build your list, and again, do market intelligence, and depending on what you write about, this in-person engagement might let you acquire anecdotes for your next book as well.

It's especially golden for memoirs. Memoirs are so personal that the more you can connect, especially face-to-face with your readers, your target readers, the more success you are going to have. Memoirs are well set up for book fairs, but also, this leads me into another opportunity that we can talk about. That's public speaking.

Public Speaking

Now, this is, again, what we're talking about. When you have this opportunity to meet face-to-face, and they see the whites of your eyes. They decide if they like you or they don't like you.

Public speaking gives you a great opportunity to make that connection, to communicate the key messages in your book. Of course, if you're a memoir author, that's going to be your personal story, as part of whatever formal presentation you make. What I, as a speaker, like about public speaking... I'll give you an example. I am a non-fiction author as well as a book marketing coach.

My first book was about how a man could be more like a woman, and it was a humor book that was meant to explain male behavior to women, and I had way more fun than anyone should have had researching this book. I was calling up men all over the country and asking them, you know, why did they name their kids after themselves, and why is it

that they'll grill outside and won't cook in the kitchen? Then, why did they wear their hats backwards... And, it was tons of fun.

Because of the topic, the lighter side of gender differences, I did a lot of public speaking around that book. Actually, it has been out for a very, very long time. It's sold out, and I still do some occasional presentations on the lighter side of gender differences. What I always liked about the presentation was that it was to women-only or to mixed gender audiences, and people would always come up and tell me their stories afterwards. Like, I would tell them about the guy who washed his socks in the dishwasher by stuffing them inside drinking glasses. So, I would tell them all of these things, which I called "stupid men tricks".

People in the audience would come up and tell me theirs too. Men would come up and be so proud, and say, "I've got to tell you what I did..." Like, "Once, I was wearing black socks, and I had a hole in my sock that showed on my ankle, but I didn't want to change my sock because that's what a woman would do. So, what I did was color the skin that showed through with a black magic marker. Nobody knew there was a hole." Oh my God, genius! I, as a woman, could never come up with kind of solution.

But, this is what people would give me, in person, and it was absolutely priceless. Just priceless! So, for me, public speaking gives me more to go on, and because they are in front of you, you can see what resonates with them. Then, you can improve your next presentation, because you're thinking, "That little anecdote really didn't work. But, wow! I did three of these, and they loved them. I'm going to do six of them the next time." That informs not only your public speaking content, but what you write and what you blog about, and all of that sort of thing. So, it's really, really helpful feedback.

And, as a bonus, you sell books in the back of the room afterwards. So, not only is it intelligence gathering and connecting, it's a book sales opportunity. You know, that's the value of public speaking as well, and if you haven't done this before, start locally. Most newspapers print meeting notices once a week. They'll have professional organizations and things like that.

Start doing research to find out where there are gatherings that you could be a speaker at. Through email and phone, find out who is the meeting planner for that group, and send an email proposing yourself as a speaker, and the topic, and say why it's important to their membership. Local groups and associations are always looking for new and interesting speakers. You just need to find them and then tell them why you are a good fit for their group, and they will be so grateful to hear from you.

Publicity

My favorite is publicity. **Publicity is news media attention. It is free news media attention.** Some studies show that it is ten times more effective than paid advertising, and yet, you pay nothing for it. Publicity is when you get interviewed,

whether it's an online news outlet, or it's a daily newspaper, or it's a TV talk show. It could be a radio talk show, like morning drive-time radio. That is publicity, and it's easier for non-fiction authors to get than for fiction authors, but it's still possible for fiction authors as well. Novelists can get it as well; they just have to be smart about how they approach it.

Now, with non-fiction, a lot of this news media attention can come from the expert status that you get as the author of a book on a specific topic. If you have written a book about something, you're an expert because there's a lot of content in your typical book, so you obviously know what you're talking about. To get publicity, you leverage yourself as an expert to be interviewed about your topic by newspapers, magazines, podcasts, and all kinds of free opportunities that help you get your name out, your book title out, and get your message out.

For a lot of authors, it's really about the message. They have something they want to say. Free publicity gives you a platform to say it. So what you need to do to get publicity is... Again, it starts with the research. I always recommend starting small. Just as with public speaking, I recommended that you start locally. With publicity, I also recommend starting small and starting local. If you've written a business book, start with the business pages of your daily newspapers. Many cities have city business journals. They are an excellent market for business books.

When it comes to health and wellness, most newspapers have a health reporter who specializes in that beat. A lot of radio programs have health and wellness programs as part of their public service commitment. A lot of TV stations have noon news talk shows, like from 12:00-12:30, and they do in-studio interviews in the hours leading up to the morning shows, like the *Today* show, and *Good Morning America*, and CBS's program. And, they are always looking for interesting people to interview. So, your job is to find out what those outlets are (again, starting locally), and then who to contact.

I will tell, you at daily newspapers, it is what we call the "beat reporter"... So, health and wellness. It's the health reporter. If you've written a cookbook, it's the food writer or food editor, depending on the size of the paper. For business, it's the business page editor, or if it's a small business topic, a lot of papers have a small business reporter, and you want to start there. With a newspaper, and likewise a magazine, find that right person to contact. A specific person.

Radio drive time in the morning, or in the evening... It's the drive time show's producer. Sometimes it's a small enough station that the host is also the producer, but you can find out by calling or looking at their website online. If it's a TV noon news program, it's also the show's producer. If you've got something going on that might be TV newsworthy, then it's the news director. So, with TV, talk show producer, and if it's a news program, it's the news director or news assignment editor. Honestly, I usually start with the assignment editor before I go to the news director. On podcasts, it tends to be the host, and I said with magazines it's usually the section editor.

Find the media outlet, find the right person to contact, and then send them an email that says, “Here’s my story idea (or my segment idea, or my interview concept). Here’s why people will want to know about it, and here’s why I am the right person to talk to about this.” That’s really the Reader’s Digest version. I’ve got tons of information on my website on this topic.

BuildBookBuzz.com/blog is the site. There’s a search box on the right side. Type in “publicity,” and you’ll get lots of how-to information that will help you to dig deeper into that. Once you master it locally, and kind of figure out how it works as well as get the bugs out of yourself as far as how you do interviews, you can then take it up a notch. Maybe you can go regionally, and maybe you can go nationally from there.

Preparing for Media Coverage

Put together the whole package for them. When you know the outlet, you will know if you are going to be one of several guests on a talk show that day, for example, and you think in advance about how you can involve the other guests in whatever conversation you are having about your topic. Sometimes you’ll see, like on the *Today* show, there are three people sitting on these high stools, all talking about a certain topic. So, if you know that your topic works better for that, then you should come to them with the concept and the other two people to put on those stools. That way, they don’t have to go looking for them.

Another aspect about this is that for TV you need visuals. When I was promoting my book on “why can’t a man be more like a woman,” I got myself in a syndicated cable show called *Home and Family*. Surprisingly enough, it was still on TV. Back then, it was hosted by Christina Ferrare and Chuck Woolery. I got on that show with the best visuals ever. My topic was “How to Get a Good Gift from a Man This Holiday Season,” and for the visuals, I brought with me some of the winners from the “Worst Gift from a Man” contest that I had hosted.

These were great visuals, and I think the audience’s favorite was an item that came with a little velvet jewel pouch. Of course, when you see that, as a woman, you think, “Ooh, expensive jewelry. This came from a jewelry store. It’s not from Target,” you know? Well, it turns out that this woman’s velvet pouch had router bits. Who doesn’t want router bits in a velvet patch? Every girl’s dream! But, let’s give the guy credit. He was finally going to put the paneling in the family room, and he needed the router bits to install the paneling. It was just so much fun unwrapping this on national television.

The idea of bringing them the whole package also applies to newspapers. Newspaper articles are not very often a profile of one person, or a profile of an author. It happens, but more often than not, it’s a story about a topic that brings in different voices. So, you are one of those voices. You are the expert voice.

But, if it’s a problem/solution, like how to help the homeless in the community, you might be the person who wrote the book on that topic, but you might also want to

connect the reporter with someone who was homeless, isn't anymore, and can talk about it. Then, you might also connect them with someone who runs a homeless shelter in the community. So you bring to them the whole package, and then, they are more likely to say "yes" because you've done all of the work for them, and by the way, it's been good work because it's useful.

Contests

I did a contest. I just mentioned my "Worst Gift from a Man" contest. Again, this was more fun than anyone should have. So, you can do the same thing. Again, it's not an idea that works for everyone, but it can work for a lot of people. You can have a contest. In my case, I had a newsletter, and I announced the contest through my newsletter. I also used publicity to announce it to the nation, through news items and that sort of thing. I got so many responses, and then I used publicity again to announce the winners. The winner results are what got me more interviews. These were radio interviews and tv talk show interviews.

You can have a contest, but if this doesn't work for you, how about creating a holiday? Create your own holiday that's related to your book. Let's say, for example, that your book is a cupcake cookbook, or a collection of cupcake recipes. I'm pretty sure there's already a national cupcake day, but you might zero in on a specific flavor of cupcake, like National Red Velvet Cupcake Day. Or, you might give frosting the respect it deserves by having National Cupcake Frosting Day, right? Who knows? Look at what you've got and create a national holiday for it. Research it just to see if anyone else has done it, and if they have, don't let that stop you. Just put a little twist on yours and then promote the heck out of it.

You can get it into Chase's calendar of events. There are online sites that list holiday calendars. When I say promote the heck out of it, I mean send press releases announcing it to the media, blog about it, guest blog about it, share it all on social media, and just work to get it established. I know one author who did a very successful twist on the popular Take My Daughter to Work Day, which we all know soon became Take My Daughter and Son to Work Day. What she did... She's a mommy blogger and the author of several books about how to raise children. She did Please Take My Children to Work Day. In other words, she wanted other people to take her kids to work so that she could have a moment's peace.

She got a huge amount of national publicity out of this idea, and she promoted it for several years. She was on the *Today* show, and *Fox and Friends*, and all kinds of things. Please Take My Children to Work Day, or something like that. Her name was Jen Singer, if you want to look her up. So, that's something that you can have fun with, but it could also be serious. This is a good tactic for somebody who doesn't want to be out there speaking to groups and at book fairs, but still wants to do something fun that they could call attention to.

Email Marketing

You know, we talked a little bit before about email. Email newsletters and email marketing. Every author should be building an email list. Every author. And, I know that we shouldn't speak in absolutes, but I'm sticking my neck out this time. **Every author needs to be building an email list and should be collecting email addresses through in-person appearances and through any other means possible.** That's because when somebody says "I want to be on your list," they are saying, "I'm interested in what you're writing and talking about." That person is your target audience. You want as many of those people as possible.

In marketing circles, we call that "marketing to warm". They are people who have, kind of, raised their hand and said, "This is me. I'm interested in you." That person is the one who you can sell your books to, and any related products. A lot of authors create workshops out of their books. They create workbooks that are companions to their books. They create online training related to their books. So, all of these people that you get on your email list are the people that are going to be interested in your books and related products.

The way you make this happen is you get an account with an email service provider, or a list management company, I guess you might call it. There's one that a lot of authors use because it's free up to a certain number of subscribers, and that's [MailChimp](#). It's easy to use, and you can get all the instructions you need from them on how to connect their system to your website. When I say that, it's a behind the scenes software process, but what site visitors see is that email form on your website, where they provide their name and their email address in order to be added to your newsletter list. Once they do that, it magically goes to a database at [MailChimp](#) headquarters, or something like that.

Other people use [Constant Contact](#). I use [Constant Contact](#) for my clients. It's easy for me to use, and it's affordable. There's [Aweber](#), [iContact](#), and all kinds of other services like these. Just seek out the one that best works for you and fits your budget, and then you follow their instructions for how to add that template to your website. If it's over your pay grade, find a savvy college student to help you or a smart, computer-savvy relative to help you, or pay somebody to do it for you. Everything is possible.

What you want to do is, once you get that set up... You want to offer people an incentive to sign up for your list. So, we might call that an ethical bribe. I prefer to think of it as a gift. As a matter of fact, if you subscribe to my newsletter, I give you a gift. My gift is a downloadable one-sheet that has my top five free book promotion tools. In other words, it's a list with links to five resources, that are free, which will help you to promote your book. To get that, and this is an example of what you might want to do... To get that, you go to [BuildBookBuzz.com/gift](#). It's so simple.

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marketing tips and advice. You can't beat free. So, what you might want to do, if you're a non-fiction author, is offering a list of free resources related to your topic. You could do a bonus as your opt-in gift, like an audio recording of an interview with you. For fiction, a lot of authors will let people download a sample chapter from their current book. This allows readers to sample their writing, and this gives the readers a sense of whether or not they would enjoy that author's writing.

There are different options, as to what you can provide, but it's a free digital download that people receive in exchange to adding themselves to the list. **Then, you need a regular communication schedule, or a regular newsletter schedule, just to stay in touch with the people on your list.** I publish weekly, which might be more than some people are up for, but I'd rather write than do anything else. So, for me, it's just really easy. I'm a professional writer. Some people say that monthly works best for them. Sometimes it's biweekly.

Some go quarterly, but I don't recommend quarterly. We are so inundated with information that we've forgotten about you by the time your next newsletter comes out. So, I would recommend monthly, if you can do it, as a starting point, and see how you maintain that. But, you have a publication schedule, and the newsletter that you send out has to be valuable to your readers, not to you. In other words, don't focus the content on what you want to tell them. Instead, focus the content on what they want to know and learn. Make it reader-centered. The question that always goes through people's minds is, "What's in it for me," and if it's all about you, then there's not much in there for me.

They want your help in learning something, such as learning how to accomplish something, or how to develop new strategies, etc. When you develop the content for your newsletter, keep the reader in mind. Sure, you can have a message in there announcing your new book. By the way, a newsletter list is a fantastic source for book reviews, and we all know how important reader reviews are on Amazon and other sales sites.

You can reach out to your subscriber list to get beta readers for your book. Not even beta readers. That's probably too soon. You can use it for beta readers, but for reviews, once you've got that book finalized, you can reach out to your list and offer to send it free to people who will agree to write an honest review. You'll also want them to drop that review there the day that the book goes live. It's a great way to get honest reviews, and it's a great way to get reviews from the right people. The right people are the people that you wrote the book for, and they are the people who said, "Yes, I'm interested in what you write," and added themselves to your email list.

Wrapping back around to our topic, which is ways that you can promote your book without social media. Well, a lot of authors rely on Facebook, but if Facebook goes away tomorrow, so do all of your connections. You've lost them. But, with email, you own that list. It's yours, and nobody can take it away from you. So, you're protecting your relationships when you use email rather than social media. I just wanted to put that out there too.

Connecting with Sandra

The best way to reach me, really, is through my website. Please do subscribe to my newsletter at BuildBookBuzz.com/gift. On my blog, I've got tons of free content. It's really helpful information, and that's at BuildBookBuzz.com/blog. As I said, there's a search bar on the right. So, you can enter in a keyword for whatever topic you want to look into. You should be able to find related content, but if you don't, send me an email and I will get some content put up there for you on that topic. My email is SB@BuildBookBuzz.com. Thank you!

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