

EPISODE 41: FREE PR STRATEGIES THAT YOU MISS AS A CREATIVE ENTREPRENEUR

with Robin Samora

Marketing for Creatives Show
at IntNetworkPlus.com

Announcer:

Turn your hobby and freelance work into a profitable business! Make your marketing easier by applying the strategies of experienced entrepreneurs and have more time to do the work you love. You are listening to the Marketing for Creatives show with your host Marina Barayeva.

Marina Barayeva:

Hi everyone. This is Marina Barayeva. Welcome to another episode of Marketing for Creatives show. In this episode, we gonna talk about free PR strategies that you miss as a creative entrepreneur.

One thing is that of course you want to get some extra promotions. But another one is I know that you don't want to jump to one more thing that you will start and give up on.

So besides of that these PR strategies are free, we'll mention many that are easy to implement.

Also, if you have any other topics that you want us to discuss on the show feel free to send me an email to marina@intnetworkplus.com.

Our special guest today is Robin Samora.

Small business marketing and PR expert, Robin teaches small business owners how their brands can command attention in a noisy, crowded marketplace.

Thorough her speaking, consulting and mentoring, she helps clients find their ideal prospects, form valuable relationships and turn followers into loyal customers and raving fans.

She uses social media, email marketing, speaking and free publicity strategies to enhance credibility, reputation and leadership position — even without a PR budget.

Hi Robin. Welcome to the show. How are you doing today?

Robin Samora:

I'm doing very well. Thank you for having me, Marina.

Marina Barayeva:

That's fantastic to have you here. Robin, please share with us your entrepreneurial story.

Robin Samora:

Absolutely. Both of my parents actually, Marina, were entrepreneurs. So we grew up as children listening to business stories and challenges and successes at the kitchen table.

I worked with my dad. He owned a recording studio and did so many different types of small businesses that it just seemed that it was natural to me.

When I went to college I studied PR and public communication, being able to study the ways to influence, to market, and to advertise. I did that for a while. Then started a few small businesses. Some varied.

Through the years I was a licensee for major league baseball. I worked at what is now Xfinity many, many years ago. Started actually interning. I was an intern as a producer in the video production department and eventually worked my way up, left a few times, but came back and became the promotions manager.

After that, I was so busy actually doing so much different promotion work and PR work for some major cable television stations that I had a woman cold-called me, and I'll never forget this, and I said, "yes, I need some help." We had an event that was coming up for shark week and I said, "Yo, come help me."

Eventually what happened was I bought her business. Now, 19 years later I'm here with my business called **Partner Promotions** and my brand is **robinsamora.com**. So, I put together all kinds of... took all my corporate experience and started my own business for small business marketing.

I'm helping business owners, experts, creatives, entrepreneurs, build their business, boost their brand, and make sure that they're making some good money doing what they love to do.

Marina Barayeva:

That's what we want. Do what we love to do.

Robin Samora:

Exactly.

Marina Barayeva:

That's interesting. I saw some of your materials you are really pro in PR. There are many strategies to market a creative business and some methods are paid, but there are also many free PR strategies which bring results.

Can you share with us effective free PR strategies that we can apply to our businesses?

Robin Samora:

Absolutely. Some can be, Marina, honestly, as simple as creating an email signature for your mobile phone that says what you do with your contact information.

It can be in your regular email that you send out on a daily basis. You can include your social media. You can include... say you wrote a book, you could have links to a free chapter, a YouTube latest video.

That's something that's so easy. You could tie in with different days. Say it's national Pastrami Day or something like that. You find out about something like that on a site called nationaldaycalendar.com. That's nationaldaycalendar.com.

There're ways that you could use expert's sites like quora.com, Q-U-O-R-A.com. You can get yourself noticed by signing in, looking at your own topic and answering questions that people want to know about your expertise.

You get free publicity that way, and you also, the added benefit is that you'll be able to see if your competition is there.

You always want to keep your eyes out for opportunities where you can stand out in a crowd, but you really don't have to spend tons of money.

In fact, I'm new to the [National Speakers Association](http://NationalSpeakersAssociation.com), but what I do is a part of my talk series, speaker series is talking about how to promote your brand or your business even without a PR budget.

So it's not just about social media, but it's also about using other kinds of strategies, whether they're online or offline to get your brand notice because that's basically what it's all about.

You could stay at home in your yoga pants and you can work on your brand behind the scenes, but it's also important to be out front networking in front of your target audience because you are your brand 24/7 and people like to do business with a human.

Marina Barayeva:

Wow. Right away you give us three things. We can leverage our email signature or the signature on our mobile phones. We can use national days and we can use Quora. Can you tell us a little bit more about that?

For example, if we want to use our signature and you mentioned that we can add the link to our books or videos or whatever, some people think that it's not necessary to include too much information there. What do you think is necessary there?

Robin Samora:

I always think that if you're going to be emailing... I don't know, how many emails do you respond to a day? 100? Sometimes more. Really depends. A lot is junk mail. So you want to have a special email for all signups and junk. That doesn't have to be junk mail, but there is a lot of junk mail.

What I suggest is that you always have your name, you always have your phone number, a way to contact you and then some feature like a tagline.

For example, on one of my email signatures from my phone, I use a quote "Don't be the best secret in town." For my regular email, I might include links. I have a download copy of 27 ways to... I think it's called 27 ways to get free press or something like that to be a media darling.

You can change those up so they could go to a particular landing page. You could offer freebies. You can offer a starter video series on how to paint, how to promote your brand through creating avatars or how to create your brand using PowerPoint presentations and turning them into books.

It's whatever you want to do and you want to test it to make sure that whatever you're offering is something that's of value. Because the way that we build a base of raving fans is to create value so that people like, know, trust and believe in you not just see you.

It's a process. It's not all done overnight. You always want to be working so that people you're in front of your correct, the right target audience and you keep defining it more and more.

A lot of entrepreneurs and small business owners make the mistake "Oh, everybody is my target market." Well, that is not right. You want to absolutely define your target market.

Whatever strategies you are going to be using for these free PR ways or ways to promote your brand, you want to make sure that they're going out to your target market.

But also they have to be readily seen by journalists and the press because they're the ones that ultimately the influencers you are going to be want to get in front of so that they'll cover your story.

So you have two markets, actually, we'll talk about it that way: you have the press that you're trying to impress and let them know that you're an expert, you're a resource, and then you also have your target market where you're trying to build your business so that material has to be good for both of them. It's how you position your brand.

Marina Barayeva:

And when you talk about the national days, how can we align our brands to the national days? Do you mean those are Mother's days or national holidays or what you're talking about?

Robin Samora:

It's called nationaldaycalendar.com. It's really a cool site. It's maybe take your pet, take your dog to work day. So, say that is an actual holiday. On this site called national day calendar, you'll be able to go on it and see there might be a day that aligns with your business.

For example, say you're a dog walker and there's something called national pet day sitting or something like that. You can align with that in your marketing, whether it's through email, whether it's through social media. So you want to always jump at a cost just

like you have Instagram and hashtags, this is an actual day or an event or a week or a month. I have a doctor, for example, that's a client and we want to align with different hashtags or different days that align with his community, with the press, with people that are all following the same cause.

It's a great way to align your brand in a way that's already established. We always want to try to piggyback, we don't call it necessarily parasiting or newsjacking, but it's kind of similar.

You want to make sure that you're aligning with already an established group or community. Because it just makes it so much easier than starting from scratch.

Marina Barayeva:

Interesting. When you talk about Quora, how can we get attention there? Because we can answer the question, but we don't want to be too promotional and just tell everybody "Oh, here is I'm so cool and my business," but we want to be helpful in one way, but in another way, we want to bring people to our business.

Robin Samora:

I feel pretty strongly about helping people. The point of being in business is, of course, we're going to make money and of course it's doing something that we love, but it's also the point of being of service.

Whenever you're of service people will find it's an attractive quality. You're not always like a taker. You want to give, give, give. And that's important also in our social media strategy where maybe 80-90% of what we do is sharing other people and 10% is promotional.

Similarly on Quora. You're really just establishing your expertise, you're establishing your leadership position and letting other people know through your answer your persona online, your brand personality, your expertise that you are an expert.

Then you're also observing. If, for example, they were a digital marketing or a PR question that I was responding, I would also look at all the people that are asking questions.

Because those people could potentially can be clients, they could be part of the audience, they could be joint venture partners, they would be people that you might want to align with because they're in your space.

You're always keeping your eyes open for opportunities to connect with people. Because connecting and referring and connecting your group together is a great way to establish this, like, know, trust and belief factor because that's critically important.

Marina Barayeva:

What other free PR strategies can we use?

Robin Samora:

We have online strategies. There are so many. At the end of this podcast, what I'd love to do is to have everybody pick up this great download called 50 Ways to Market your Small Business on a Dime, but let's just talk about offline for a minute.

We have **Meetups**. A lot of people don't really recognize Meetups as a fantastic strategy to gather a group of like-minded people.

You could either start your own Meetup or you could, for example, join another Meetup.

In one particular case, I was having an event, that's another one we'll talk about, but they're sort of in the same genre, I had a Meetup called A Gratitude Meet Up. I was having it around Thanksgiving and I had developed 50 ways to be grateful.

What happened was, I put it out, I started a Meetup and I think, and you could double check this, everybody, don't take my word for it because the times might have changed, but for example, I think you get your first month for free.

What happened was I established this group called this Meetup group of gratitude and within like three or four days I had people that were interested in coming to my event. I had a corporate sponsor. And what happened was that I had actually a reporter, they want you to come and they wanted to film it so that they will looking for keywords.

That's why it's so important for small business owners to know what their keywords are, to know what their niche is exactly.

It was around before Thanksgiving time in this producer found me on Meetup and wanted then to come and shoot some video. It ended up that they had something else more important and that don't take that as a bad way, this does happen all the time in the TV world, but it was great that she saw me on Meetup and I said to myself, "Wow, this is was the first time that ever happened."

Because I was testing it as a PR strategy. But I said, "Wow, that's really great." With Meetups, you can build your list, you can build yourself as a micro influencer. Because micro influencers have a lot of credibility and people follow them because that they believe that their leaders.

All of these things that we're doing here, all of these free PR strategies are helping to increase your expertise, your positioning, leadership, credibility, reputation, they're all working and that they help raise you to the top so that you'll be able to position your brand in a bigger, bolder way and more people will pay attention to you.

If you're being honest and sincere and authentic, and you're in the giving mode because it's the giving mode, I truly believe that makes a very big difference. You're smart - of course. You're accomplished - yes. You know your stuff - yes. But you're also willing to help others.

It's not all about just money. It's about being of service. I believe that that's a pretty important part of being in business and building your brand because you, your brand, wherever you go. And this funny expression that if you leave the room what 10 people say about you, that's your brand.

Marina Barayeva:

How would you recommend people to grow their authority and expertise in the community with free PR strategist?

Robin Samora:

We're not really talking about blogging because that's a whole podcast onto itself, but I'll give you some things that I did a talk yesterday on social branding, but the principles are still pretty much the same.

You want to get your name out there. You want to do blogging. You want to be on selected social media that you actually like and will use.

You want to connect online and offline networking. You want to join groups. You want to be in front of your target audience. You might want to consider speaking engagements because for me speaking engagements really opened up a whole new area.

I was in person. Because in person my brand might be similar to online, but in person, people actually get to see me, get to talk to me. I like to walk the room. I like to have fun. I like to make people laugh.

It's a way for them to get to know me. So that builds my expertise. What other people say about me is important. Reviews or Google reviews for some people or reviews on LinkedIn or reviews on their Facebook page. All these strategies, pretty much are free.

Being on a podcast is another way. And taking the podcast, getting the notes and then turning that into a blog that's important.

Other things that you might want to do would be writing articles and/or taking your blog and then making them into articles for LinkedIn. Then changing the title and making a tip sheet and sending that out to your industry publication.

I could go on and on and a lot of these around this pdf that I would love everybody to download if you're interested. Because they give you a lot of great ideas to think about. It took me a while to make it. To be able to position your brand.

Because you don't have to have a lot of money, you have to be strategic in what you select. You have to pick a few ideas on what's best for your brand. What's best for the way that you want to present your brand personality that's authentic to who you are.

Because if you're inauthentic, people can spot a phony a mile away and you don't want to be one of those phonies because it just backfires. You have to be you.

I always say that I'm a recovering perfectionist when I talk. I say just go for it. You'll make mistakes, of course, we're human. But once I really embraced that recovering perfectionist part of me, I really started to blossom. I like to say "Blossom to awesome."

Just go for it. Pick some things. See what works. See what doesn't. Read a lot. Go online. There's a YouTube, you can YouTube. There's so much free information, so many great people out there that you can learn from.

So to be open to it that we're all experts in training, Marina. Every single one of us. There's no one that knows all the answers. Test it out. Try it. Tweak it. And then see where it goes from there.

Marina Barayeva:

Let's stop for a moment on two mentions of you. One, in the beginning, we were talking about the National days, holidays, and anything happened in your business. Then you were talking, that you can send a press release and we can send it to different publications. How would you do it?

Would you write the specific press release for your event and just send them what is it about? Or how would you reach media about that?

Robin Samora:

About a specific event that you were going to be having?

Marina Barayeva:

Event or maybe you decided to celebrate a holiday in special ways and align it with your business.

Robin Samora:

Let's make an example, so that it was a national pet month (laughter) and you were a pet store owner, or you were a photographer that specialized in pets, or you're a spiritual healer that worked with pets, or you were a dog whisperer, or you were a cat behavior specialist or something like that. Anything that has to do with the pet's industry.

So, say you were having an event or you were featuring a program or a workshop or you had a Webinar or you had a drop in or you brought your cat or dog or a bird for photos. What I would suggest is you want to do online and offline strategies.

So first I'm hoping that everybody has a database of all the people that buy their products, services, are interested in. Because email marketing, I know we're not going to talk about that a lot, but email marketing or having a database of the raving fans or people that want to find out more, so we can again build that, like, know, trust, believe factor, they would be perfect people that we would tell. So that would be one way.

If we were offline different associations or different meetups or different groups that you're a part of, you can get in on their email blasts or you might want to also have flyers, you could have postcards, you could do a joint venture.

So, say the pet photographer and the pet store combined forces and to both of their email list or their fans would be able to do a joint venture and reach out on that.

Additionally, you might want to go to a site called **Buzzsumo**, B-U-Z-Z-S-U-M-O.com. This is an amazing site. There's a freemium meaning it's free and then there's a paid version.

I write for a digital marketing agency and I have the paid version, but you go in and you type, for example, 'national pet day,' say that was national pet month. Or you would find out who would be the influencers, who are the people that are sharing information about pets.

Then you would be able to look at it. So you would say, OK, here are the journalists, the influences that are writing about pets. Then you would go into each journalist. Who are the people that are in my area?

Then you would look at the people that are sharing and who are these people that are in my area?

In other words, you can strategically back ended go, or I call it reverse engineering, through people that are participating on social media as well. You can do this all by hashtag, you can do this by Google.

Google, besides my friend Karen Colby, is my second best friend (laughter). Because you could find out almost anything in the world that you want to ask questions for.

Or say like top 25 pet journalists. Top 25 pet journalists in Boston, Massachusetts. I'm in Boston, so high from Boston to China. That's great. (laughter)

It really depends. There's a lot of ways to find that. You could of course also... there are online versions of your local newspaper, you have industry groups, you have your networking groups, you have your Meetups. It takes time.

I think I wrote a blog on Robin's Rainmakers, that's the name of my blog and I invite you all to also sign up for that. I give free marketing tips.

It takes some time. You don't just have an event like in three weeks, so at least I really like at least eight weeks, minimum six weeks.

You can throw something together if you have the support of a micro influencer that can also promote you.

So, it's not just about you promoting to your list, it's about other like-minded people that want to support you and that again, you have this circle of influence of people that want to help you and that you will, in turn, help them.

This like the circle of Karma. It's people helping you. Who's in your group? Who can you ask for help? Because don't ask, don't get. It's a combination of collective efforts that don't have to always cost a lot of money.

And actually, I want to make sure that I say this, I'm not sure Marina, if you're familiar with [Canva](http://Canva.com), C-A-N-V-A.com. Right.

Marina Barayeva:

I like it.

Robin Samora:

Right. I love it. And when I'm always speaking, I always say, check out Canva. It's free for the most part. I think I paid a dollar once on some book covers I made. But I love that.

It's easy. You can take the designs, you can repurpose them, you can use them for social media covers if you want to do that or you can use them for posts or you can make infographics.

Although there are better sites for Infographics, I'll be honest. There are so many different ways that you can use Canva and then there's Pablo and then there are so many others as well, but Canva is the one that I'm the most comfortable with.

And I don't have a ton of time. I'm busy. I have a virtual assistant who I love to death. I've never met her in eight years, but she's out in New Mexico and she's my right hand.

You can't do everything. You can start a company by yourself, but you can't build it by yourself. Not to the level if you really want to establish this lifestyle that you like, that you're not always in a cubicle working. Because that was a long time ago. I'm not there now where, same book, different chapter. You know what I'm saying?

Marina Barayeva:

Yeah. I completely understand that. We need to grow in that.

In your long list, there was another interesting part which I want to ask you about. You offer us to be the spies. You say that two weeks and track our competitors anonymously on LinkedIn to get to the inside scoop. How can we do this?

Robin Samora:

Yes. That is correct. One of the ways is you are able to turn in your settings, you can go private. For example, I'll just make something up.

So say you wanted to meet a CEO of a company, but you didn't want to stalk them, cause people can sometimes see who you are, who's looking at you, so they changed their privacy settings so that they're anonymous.

And what you can do is you can say I wanted to meet the CEO or find out how I could meet the CEO. I might go look, check out the CEO's LinkedIn. Everybody should have a LinkedIn profile and it should be pretty robust. I really don't care if you're not in that space. It's like your business card, your brochure for your business or for your brand.

I don't have a business page. I do have a personal page and I love to hear from you guys there. But anyway, we go to the CEO. We're on private. We want to find out, for example, what are his charities, because most people of leadership have some kind of a charity that they're aligned with.

I might go check out the charity and then my checkout where is the CEO? Where is he or she going to be speaking, visiting, what are they aligned to? And I might meet someone that way. Because I think that's a great way to a true charity. People believe in it and they're pretty open to feedback.

Don't just go and stalk them and then just pound them with messages. (laughter)

Remember, we always have, even when you connect on LinkedIn, you want to make sure that you have established some kind of a connection.

For example, "Hey, Marina, I was on your podcast and I noticed that we're not connected here on LinkedIn. I would love to connect here and see how we might help each other. Look forward to hearing from you. Best, Robin."

Similarly, you want to do that with other people that you've met. Maybe the CEO... this is the right way to do it with people that you've met already, but the CEO, you could find out, is there an event that's going to be in your area? Who's going to be at the event?

You could also, for example, contact the CEO through LinkedIn, and I recommend this to actually to college students or to anybody that wants to network at a conference, you go in and you read about the conference speaker, or you read about the CEO and you would send them an email, for example, and say the person's name was Anna Smith:

"Hi, Anna. My name is Robin Samora. I recently read your article about 50 Ways to Take Your LinkedIn to the Next Level Without Sacrificing Your Soul. I really liked it, but I'm not really sure about what you mentioned about X, Y, and Z. I think it might be this and that, but anyway, I know that you're coming to this upcoming conference and I'd love to meet you in person" or "I'd love to say hello."

You don't have to say you want to meet them because they're busy and they don't know who you are.

Typically, what will happen is if you make this connection, people will usually remember you, as long as you're thoughtful, you're not stalking them. It just is another way to make a connection.

Think about what is a way that... it's like a writing to when you're going to be pitching a guest blogger. You never just jump in with your request. You only say, "I read your article on X, Y, Z. I really enjoyed it. It really fits my audience. I have similar information."

Or you just mentioned something that they've already done. It just means I read you, I know you... you don't know them. I read you, I like you, I acknowledge your information and then slowly lead into pitch the person for the blogger or other or whatever it might be. Does that make sense?

Marina Barayeva:

Yeah, it's very interesting. And I think our listeners got new ideas and new insights. Now, please share with us how can we find more about you and more those free PR strategies and other strategies that we can use in our businesses.

Robin Samora:

Absolutely. Thank you so much, first of all for having me. I really appreciate the opportunity. I just love to help small business owners boost their brand, their business, their income.

The best way to reach me is my website robinsamora.com. So that's awesome. You can reach me there, check me out, or you can subscribe to my blog. It's called Robin's rainmakers.

And when you go to my website, I think there's a little place that you can put your name, whatever. I have total privacy on all that kind of good stuff so everybody knows that.

But I also think that the sheet that we've been talking about, 50 Ways to Market Your Small Business on a Dime, I'm offering that to anybody that's listening.

Here's the URL. It's robinsamora.com/50-ways. You can download a digital copy there. And then if you have any questions, reach out. Please, become part of my community if you're interested.

If you're in this area, come hear me speak, or let's just reach out and say hello. Cause I think that we're all, again, experts in training and there might be lots things that you know that I don't know. So collectively we can all be better marketers.

Marina Barayeva:

Thank you so much, Robin. It's been so much pleasure to have you on the show today.

Robin Samora:

Thank you for having me. And I look forward to learning more about you and what you're doing, Marina.

Marina Barayeva:

Sure. Thank you.

Robin Samora:

OK. take care.

Announcer:

Thank you so much for joining us today. If you are new to the show be sure to subscribe. And for more marketing tips go to the IntNetworkPlus.com where you'll find the answers on the hottest topics about how to grow your business. You were listening to Marketing for Creatives show. See you next time.

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- Grow your authority by answering the questions on quora.com

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