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Author Interview – Shavon Jones – 52 Sales Tips And How To Use Them

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Written by JJ Barnes

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I interviewed small business owner and author Shavon Jones about her work, what inspires her, and her new book, 52 Sales Tips And How To Use Them.

This will solve all your Android problems

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Tell me a bit about who you are.

I am a small business owner responsible for my own selling. I learned to sell while working for big regional and global firms but was in for a rude awakening when I went out on my own. I saw how much more difficult it can be getting seen and getting meetings when you don't have a big name behind you. So, I had to learn how to sell as a "little guy" (or gal, since I'm female).

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When did you first WANT to write a book?

This isn't my first sales book. My first sales book was *Sales for Lawyers*. Since I'm a lawyer and there are special ethics rules that govern our sales



Shavon Jones

and marketing activities, I wanted to create a resource that made lawyers comfortable with business development. I wanted to write the book as a service to my profession but also because I absolutely love to write.



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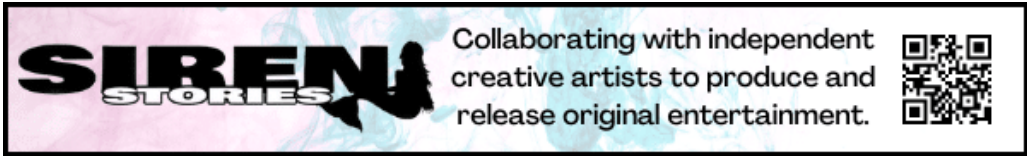
I'm one of those weird people who loves to work. I work all the time. I started writing my first sales book while vacationing in Europe one summer. I would spend my days touring architectural sites and people watching at outdoor cafes. Then, in the evenings I would write the first draft of the book.

How long did it take you to complete your first book from the first idea to release?

About 9 months. That's an expedited schedule because I use a group of contractors for cover design, editing, photography, and eBook formatting to help me ready my books for print and eBook distribution.

How long did it take you to complete your latest book from the first idea to release?

The latest book was finished even quicker than the first. This one took only about 5-6 months from idea to release.



Focusing on your latest release. What made you want to write 52 Sales Tips And How To Use Them?

52 Sales Tips & How to Use Them was borne out of my desire to be more accessible. I wanted to help a broader audience than just lawyers. What I've learned about sales and prospecting applies to any service business whether you're a chef or caterer, an interior designer, a doctor, a personal trainer, a performance artist, or what have you.

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What were your biggest challenges with writing 52 Sales Tips And How To Use Them?

I didn't really find it difficult to write the book. The writing process is pretty easy for me. The challenge was getting the contractors to contribute their parts during a pandemic. The cover artist was particularly unresponsive which had not been the case with my first project. So, I guess that was a form of supply chain issue for creators of intellectual property. We hear so much about supply chain issues with physical products, but we are experiencing labor shortages on the intangibles side as well.



What was your research process for 52 Sales Tips And How To Use Them?

This is a practical book. It doesn't include many statistics. There is a glossary where I define sales and marketing terms that folks may not be familiar with if they are not trained salespeople, but there aren't many references or notes. Instead, the book uses personal experience and common sense to provide sales and marketing guidance through relatable examples.

For instance, in one tip, there's a pop culture reference to George Jefferson, this fictional dry cleaner from a popular 1970s and 1980s sitcom called *The Jeffersons*. George moved his family into the upper middle class after founding a dry-cleaning franchise. In real life, the dry-cleaning business has changed a lot—having been disrupted by at-home dry cleaning products. Corporate accounts now dominate the cleaning and laundry space. So, the tip is about how to compete when your service isn't unique, and how to price your offering when you have thin margins. These are issues that a lot of small businesses deal with.

I really tried to illustrate tips in memorable ways throughout the book. Thinking of cultural references that would be relatable took a bit of time. But I think using cultural references (including tennis great Jimmy Connors and the late rapper Notorious B.I.G.) makes the material easy to remember and implement into your system for generating revenue and cash flow for a small business.

How did you plan the structure of 52 Sales Tips And How To Use Them?

Last year I gave a weekly sales tip on my LinkedIn company page. But the social media posts did not go into much detail. So, I didn't think the information was very helpful. Therefore, I wanted to put some meat on the bones (so to speak) and compile those tips into a book. The challenge was in arranging the tips in a way that makes sense. I ended up grouping them by where they fit within the selling cycle.

So, I start with tips about client profiling (i.e., deciding which prospects to pursue since many people try to sell to everyone when they should start with a particular client in mind and target the pitch to that type of prospect). Then I proceeded to prospecting (i.e., where you can find people who are predisposed to doing business with you).

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Did you get support with editing, and how much editing did 52 Sales Tips And How To Use Them need?

I hired a proofreader through the Writer’s Digest website. I chose a proofread because writing is one of my strengths. I didn’t feel like I needed structural or grammatical assistance. But the individual writer can decide what level of review they want to pay for —a full edit versus a proofread or something in between. Whatever level of review you choose, it’s a good idea to send the best draft you can.

If you send a rougher draft, the edit will only focus on the big, obvious problems. But if you don’t have big problems, they’ll get into little tweaks like word choice and tone that can make your writing really resonate with your audience.

In my case, I had done several proofreads myself before sending the draft. So, the edit only took 2-3 days to finish, and the editor was able to nitpick and help me soften my tone a bit. I believe the softer tone makes readers more comfortable with a subject like sales which is inherently uncomfortable for a lot of people.

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What is the first piece of writing advice you would give to anyone inspired to write a book?

Just figure out what you want to say and say it in your own words. Then go back and put it into proper English and fix the word choice, grammar, etc. So, you want to get the ideas on paper without trying to write a perfect first draft.

Can you give me a hint about any further books you're planning to write?

Yes, I do intend a third and final sales book, although I haven't begun to write it. The third installment will be a start-up founder's guide to gaining adoption of a new offering. Obviously, I have to think of a catchy title, but the content will be about selling to one's base before moving to the larger market and using those early sales to finance operations, get earned media, and gain broader adoption of the offering. This strategy will allow founders to avoid giving away too much equity too soon.

And, finally, are you proud of your accomplishment? Was it worth the effort?

Well, I didn't write the book for myself. I wrote it for others. So, I'm happy that it is being well received. Financial advisors have been recommending it to their business owner clients as a resource to help them get humming again after covid shutdowns. So, to the extent that the book is viewed as helpful or timely, I am very proud.

Pop all your book, website and social media links here so the readers can find you:

I have a podcast: The Sales "how to" Podcast. I welcome suggested topics. Each episode is under 30 minutes to be respectful of everyone's busy schedule.

<https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cHM6Ly9zYWxlcjRsYXN0ZXJzLmNvbS9mZWVkL3BvZGZhcnQ>

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