

- Hey, and welcome to PCTY Talks. I'm your host, Shari Simpson. During our time together, we'll stay close to the news and info you need to succeed as an HR pro. And together, we'll explore topics around HR thought leadership, compliance, and real life HR situations we face every day. This episode was recorded live at SHRM 2022 in New Orleans. And joining me during this session is Cathy Fyock, national speaker, author and "The Business Book Strategist". Thanks for joining me on the podcast Kathy.

- Thank you, I'm excited to be here.

- So I'd love to start with maybe you sharing a little bit about your background and your passion for writing.

- Well, it's interesting because I really don't have a passion for writing. I have a love, hate relationship with writing, which I think makes me a good book coach because I think a lot of people think, would assume that I would love writing because I've written a love in books, but really that's not the case. I love what writing has done for my career. And that's really what I love about writing. I think writing is really hard work, but if you want something that would establish your visibility, your credibility, your expertise, your thought leadership, there is nothing more powerful than writing, and specifically a book.

- Oh, I can imagine. You know, I truly believe that every HR professional is writing a book in their head.

- Oh, yeah.

- About everything they've encountered.

- All those stories.

- Right.

- Right.

- Yeah, either in their career or maybe advice they would give someone entering the field. You know, I think about that a lot. Where do you even begin to start considering bringing that vision to life?

- Well, I think it starts with a strategy plan that links to what you wanna do with the book. So do you want this book to grow your career? Is it just a fun sort of exercise as sort of a hobby, being very clear on your purpose for writing is a great first step. But then once you've established the purpose and let's say it is linked to your career, you wanna be a consultant, you wanna be a speaker, you wanna be a coach, then it's important to outline the strategic elements of your book and as it aligns with your business. So what is it that you

wanna do? Who are you writing for? Is it for HR generalists? Is it for C-suite leaders? Is it for rank and staff employees? Being really clear on those strategic elements and then outlining what it is that you wanna write. Have you found, I've heard this advice before is like, once you have that outline, basically just start writing every day. Was that your experience or were you more strategic about how you approached that?

- I think it's important to be more strategic. Most of us are super busy people, so we don't have time to be unproductively writing. So sometimes if you just write, write, write, write. So I like to start with a really flushed out outline. So being very clear about the stories that you're gonna tell, the points you're going to make, the questions you're answering for your reader. You outline all of that up and then you write into your outline. So I do think it's important once you start writing to turn off that overthinking part of our brain and just let it go, let it flow, but within the context of the boundaries that you've established for your outline. And this is really consistent with, if anybody's read about "Flow" and the work of Csikszentmihalyi, he talks about setting boundaries and creating those boundaries. And then once you have those boundaries established, then you can just let yourself go.

- I like that you talk about writing a book as part of your personal business strategy.

- Yes.

- And so when I think about that, I'm a person who I would describe myself as a multi-passionate individual. So if I ever.

- I think most of us are too.

- If I ever attempt to write a book, it's gonna create a lot of, I'm gonna have to think a lot about it. So how do you kind of navigate the topic that's gonna link to, like you said, that personal business strategy?

- That's a great question. Because a lot of times I'm working with folks who could write many different books. So it's which book do you write first? And you can't write a book that encompasses everything you know in your life, especially if we've lived full lives, and most of us have. So we can't write about everything we know, we can write about a little sliver of what we know and that's why it's important to stake out those boundaries in advance and say, okay, the book, my next book might be about this other topic but this book is gonna be very specifically on this message and on this focus area.

- How do you find confidence in your message? And I guess what the question really is, is like, why would anybody wanna read a book I

wrote?

- It's interesting because when I became a book coach, I thought the big thing I would be helping people on is sort of getting structure and productivity. And some of these process elements of writing a book. When really, I'm working more as a psychologist because it's overcoming the junk in your head that says, who do you think you are? Did anybody ever tell you, you could write? Who's gonna read your book? I mean, that is the crap that most of us are dealing with. It's that imposter syndrome.

- Yeah.

- And stepping into our zone of genius is one of the hardest things about writing a book. It's not the writing of the book, it's stepping into that confidence that I have something to say and that I can help others. And that's what I love about my job as a book coach is I'm not really just helping with process, I am helping people step into this bigger vision of who they can be. And that is amazing.

- I love that. And I can just, I mean, I know the audience can't see your face, but I can just, you're beaming the passion that you have for this.

- I love what I do. I think what I'm doing is holy work. I mean, I really, really do. I'm helping people live the life that they were put on this planet to live. And I think many of us think too small and live too small. And I'm about helping people live larger than life and the life that they were intended to live.

- I love that. And like you said, you have 11 books.

- Yes.

- Under your wing. 11, that is correct, 11.

- Uh-huh.

- Do you ever get writer's block? Is writer's block even a thing?

- You know, the strategy that I use with myself and my authors is that you never start with a blank page. So you always start with your intention, what do you want to get done? And that outline. And then what I like to do with the outline is have each chapter and each subsection of the chapter start with a question that is answering the question that the reader has. So if you start with a question, how do you recruit more effectively today in today's crazy market? If you start with that question, it's easy to write into the answer of that question as opposed to just, where do you begin? I don't know, write about something. Getting that starting point is really hard, but with

the strategy that I propose for my authors is getting really clear on all of those strategic elements first. And then it's easier to write in to your outline. The other thing I like to do too is, you never just, you finish a chapter and you walk away and then you come back, you're coming back to that blank page. So what I suggest to all my authors is you finish this section, you finish a chapter and then you start writing the next piece. And by writing that next piece, you are teeing up couple of things, you're teeing up your brain to be working on that while you're sleeping, while you're doing other things. And then when you come back to it, you've got all this energy about, oh, I know exactly what I'm gonna write.

- Yeah. I suspect, and correct me if I'm wrong that this model could also work if let's say you don't wanna write a book but you wanna get more well known for writing like LinkedIn articles.

- Absolutely.

- Same approach.

- Absolutely. I talk about a book because that's sort of the big goal.

- Yeah.

- But yes, all of the things that I'm talking about can absolutely apply to your LinkedIn articles, white papers, you know, you name it.

- So as we wrap up, what three to five things can someone do right now to begin their book writing journey?

- Really start with an outline, start by outlining, who are you writing for? Why are you writing? What's the purpose for you? How does it link with your career? What are the issues that you're resolving in your book and what are the key areas? So outline, getting that outline really front and center. The second thing is don't put work on book or work on articles on your to-do list. This is the worst place to do this. You put it on your calendar. If you think about it, we always work our to-do list by what is urgent, not by what is important.

- Yeah.

- And I would suggest that writing a book or articles or white papers will always be important for your career, but it will never be urgent. So you have to create that sense of urgency by putting it on your calendar and making an appointment with yourself to write and to block time to work on this.

- Yeah.

- The other thing is find, an accountability partner or a group or a

book coach, someone that will help you along the journey because it's kind of solitary. And for many of my authors are, they're extroverts, so the writing can be very painful. So it's finding a community of folks that will support you, encourage you, and that's what I love doing is putting these communities together for my authors.

- Well, I appreciate all the great advice and I'm sure there are HR people who have walked away from this thinking, okay, now I have the steps I need to start, so I appreciate you taking the time.

- Well, it's great. Thank you so much. This podcast is brought to you by Paylocity, a leading HCM provider that frees you from the task of today so you can focus more on the promise of tomorrow. If you'd like to submit a topic or appear as a guest on a future episode, email us at ppctytalks@paylocity.com.