

POST-PROGRAM WORKBOOK

Building Your ADR Practice

Branding, Marketing, and Referrals

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How to Use This Workbook

Tonight was the overview. This is where the real work happens.

This workbook mirrors the program exactly: three sections, nineteen exercises, and Jordan's completed examples throughout as a model. Work through it in order. Each section builds on the one before.

Do not skip the reflection questions. They are often more valuable than the fill-in-the-blank prompts.

Return to it as your practice evolves. A positioning statement that is right for year one may need sharpening in year three.

The workbook is a plan, not a test. There are no wrong answers. There is only clarity you have and clarity you are still building.

How to Read the Boxes

JORDAN'S EXAMPLE

Cream boxes show Jordan's completed version of each exercise. Use them as a reference point, not a template. Your background, niche, and positioning will be different from Jordan's. That is the point.

CONCEPT RECAP

Warm recap boxes summarize the key idea from the program before each section's exercises begin.

REFLECTION

Blue reflection boxes ask the harder question at the end of each exercise. Do not skip them.

Gray boxes and writing lines are your workspace.

Write directly in this workbook, or use the prompts to work in a separate journal or digital document.

SECTION ONE

Branding

What you are known for, and who knows it

CONCEPT RECAP

Branding is not a logo, a color scheme, or a website. It is how people understand what you do, who you serve, and why they should choose you.

In ADR, branding carries a unique requirement: because selection requires agreement from both sides, your positioning must work for everyone who needs to say yes.

Key takeaway: If your referral source cannot describe you in one sentence, you do not have a brand. You have a resume.

01

Your Four Niche Decisions

Work through each question. Vague answers produce vague positioning.

JORDAN'S EXAMPLE

Case type:

Employment disputes

Ideal client:

Employment attorneys on both sides of the table

Complexity level:

Complex multi-party cases

Dispute orientation:

Emotionally charged

What type of case do you do best? Where does your background give you a genuine advantage?

Who is your ideal client? Attorneys, individuals, organizations, or some combination?

What level of complexity do you thrive in?

Emotional disputes or technical ones? Or both, in what proportion?

REFLECTION

Does your current practice reflect these answers? Or are you taking whatever comes through the door and calling it a niche?

02 The Both-Sides Test

CONCEPT RECAP

The moment a potential referral source perceives you as leaning toward one side, you are off the list. This exercise audits your current positioning for unintentional signals.

JORDAN'S EXAMPLE

Jordan's instinct was to market to plaintiff-side attorneys, the world Jordan came from. The both-sides test revealed that this would have made Jordan invisible to defense counsel before a single conversation happened. Jordan's litigation background actually solved this, because it demonstrates fluency on both sides of the employment dispute equation.

Review your current bio, LinkedIn headline, and website. Does any language signal preference toward one side?

Who has referred you most in the past year? Are they predominantly on one side of your dispute type?

If an attorney on the side you work with less read your website today, would anything give them pause?

What change would make your positioning equally credible to both sides?

REFLECTION

The goal is not to pretend you have no background. The goal is to frame that background as an advantage to both sides, not a loyalty to one.

03 Your Differentiation Inventory

JORDAN'S EXAMPLE

Professional background:

10 years of employment litigation. Understands how plaintiff attorneys calculate damages and decide to settle. Understands how defense counsel and carriers evaluate exposure and move clients toward resolution.

Process advantage:

Litigation-informed pre-mediation preparation designed to ensure all parties arrive ready to move.

Personality and approach:

Comfortable with high emotion and complexity. Creates space for the human story without losing sight of resolution.

Professional background: What career, education, or life experience do you bring that most mediators in your niche do not have?

Process advantage: How do you run a mediation differently or more effectively than others in your space?

Personality and approach: What is the intangible that clients and referral sources come back for?

Which of these three is most underused in your current marketing?

REFLECTION

Your differentiation is not what makes you good. It is what makes you the obvious choice for a specific person with a specific problem.

04 Your Positioning Statement

CONCEPT RECAP

The formula: I help [specific audience] resolve [specific type of disputes] by [distinctive approach or strength].

JORDAN'S EXAMPLE

Before:

"I'm a mediator. I handle all kinds of disputes."

After:

"I help employment attorneys on both sides of the table resolve complex, high-emotion disputes before trial, drawing on 10 years of employment litigation that gives me fluency in the risks, costs, and settlement dynamics both sides are weighing."

Draft your positioning statement. Do not edit as you write. Get a first version down.

Refine it. Is the audience specific? Is the dispute type clear? Does the approach actually distinguish you?

Peer test: Share it with a colleague. Ask: Can you picture exactly who to refer to me? Write down their response.

REFLECTION

Would both sides of your dispute type read this and feel confident selecting you? If either would hesitate, keep refining.

05 Professional Bio Rebuild

JORDAN'S EXAMPLE

Short bio (before):

"Jordan Blake is a mediator serving clients in employment and workplace disputes."

Short bio (after):

"Jordan Blake is an employment mediator and former employment litigator who helps attorneys on both sides resolve complex, high-emotion disputes before trial. Drawing on 10 years of litigation experience, Jordan brings fluency in the strategic and human dynamics that determine whether cases settle or go to trial."

Short-form bio (150 words or fewer). For speaker introductions, LinkedIn headers, and directory listings.

Long-form bio (300-400 words). For your website About page, speaker proposals, and media pitches. Include: niche, who you help and how, professional background advantage, and any speaking or publishing credentials.

REFLECTION

Read your bio aloud. Does it sound like a person or a resume? Does it give a referral source a clear reason to think of you for a specific type of case?

06 **Competitor and Peer Positioning Analysis**

CONCEPT RECAP

You do not need to know what everyone is doing. You need to know enough to find the position that is authentically yours and visibly unclaimed.

List 3 to 5 mediators in your practice area and market. For each, note their positioning, apparent strengths, and any gap you could fill.

Name / Practice	Their Positioning	Their Strength	Gap You Could Fill

What position is underoccupied in your market that aligns with your background and niche?

REFLECTION

The goal is not to copy what is working for others. The goal is to find the version of this work that is authentically yours and visibly unclaimed.

SECTION TWO

Marketing

Getting your message in front of the right people, consistently

CONCEPT RECAP

Marketing is not about doing more. It is about doing the right things consistently.

Thought leadership, sharing genuine expertise that helps your referral sources do their jobs better, creates visibility, demonstrates competence, and builds the trust that eventually drives selection.

Key takeaway: Irregular bursts of activity do not build a practice. Consistent, targeted visibility does.

07 Visibility Gap Analysis

JORDAN'S EXAMPLE

Jordan rated LinkedIn at 2 (certifications listed, nothing published), website at 2 (outdated bio), speaking at 1 (never pursued), articles at 1 (none written), podcast appearances at 1 (never pitched). Top three priorities identified: LinkedIn content, speaking at bar events, collecting two testimonials.

Rate your current visibility on each channel from 1 (nonexistent) to 5 (strong and consistent).

Channel / Area	Rating (1-5)	Notes / Next Steps
LinkedIn profile and activity		
Website clarity and content		
Speaking engagements		
Published articles or blog posts		
Podcast guest appearances		
Search engine visibility		
Online reviews and testimonials		
Other (specify)		

Your top three priorities for improvement:

1.

2.

3.

REFLECTION

Visibility is cumulative. The channels that feel most uncomfortable are often the ones where your referral sources are spending the most time.

o8 Online Presence Audit

CONCEPT RECAP

Conduct this audit through the eyes of an attorney who has just heard your name for the first time and is deciding whether to refer a case to you.

Check each item. Mark it with a checkmark if it is strong, an X if it needs work.

/
X

My LinkedIn headline clearly states who I help and how

/
X

My LinkedIn About section explains what I do in plain language

/
X

My website tells a visitor within 10 seconds who I serve and what I do

/
X

My bio leads with my niche and differentiation, not just my credentials

/
X

My profiles include a current, professional headshot

/
X

There is a clear and easy way to contact me or inquire about my services

/
X

My online materials address questions a referring attorney would have

/
X

Testimonials or client outcomes are visible and specific

/
X

There are no broken links, outdated information, or confusing navigation

/
X

A new visitor could explain who I am and what I do after 60 seconds on my site

Two or three things you will fix this week based on this audit:

REFLECTION

Ask a trusted colleague or past client to do this audit without coaching. Their experience of your presence is more accurate than your own assessment.

09 Your Content Angles

CONCEPT RECAP

Your content should come from three places: what you know that your referral sources do not, the questions attorneys ask you most often, and the mistakes you see repeatedly in your dispute type. These become your content pillars.

JORDAN'S EXAMPLE

What Jordan knows that attorneys often do not:

How emotional dynamics affect an employer's willingness to move. What actually happens in a pre-mediation conversation that determines whether the day will succeed. Why cases that look certain to settle sometimes do not, and what to do about it.

Questions attorneys ask Jordan most often:

When is the right time to mediate? How do I prepare my client? What do I do when the other side is not negotiating in good faith?

Mistakes Jordan sees repeatedly:

Coming to mediation without a realistic number. Letting clients anchor too early. Treating the pre-mediation call as a formality rather than a preparation tool.

What do you know about your dispute type that most attorneys in your referral network do not? List as many as you can.

What questions do attorneys ask you most often, before, during, or after cases?

What mistakes do you see repeatedly in your dispute type that you wish attorneys would stop making?

REFLECTION

These are your content pillars. Every piece of content you create should connect back to one of them. This is how you become the name people think of when they have a question about your dispute type.

10 Your First Three Content Pieces

JORDAN'S EXAMPLE

Jordan's first piece: 'What employment attorneys on both sides get wrong about mediation timing, and why it costs their clients money.' Specific. Grounded in litigation experience. Useful to both plaintiff and defense attorneys simultaneously.

Use your content angles to draft three working titles. For each, note the audience, the key insight, and what the reader will take away.

Content Piece 1

Working title:

Target audience (specific):

Key insight or argument:

What will the reader do or think differently after reading it?

Content Piece 2

Working title:

Target audience (specific):

Key insight or argument:

What will the reader do or think differently after reading it?

Content Piece 3

Working title:

Target audience (specific):

Key insight or argument:

What will the reader do or think differently after reading it?

REFLECTION

Would an attorney who read this want to share it with a colleague? Would it make them think of you the next time a relevant case comes to them?

11 AI Prompt Starters for Content

CONCEPT RECAP

Paste these into ChatGPT, Claude, or any AI tool. Fill in the brackets with your specific practice details. The more specific you are, the more useful the output. Generic in, generic out.

01 Content Ideas

I am a mediator who specializes in [your practice area] and works primarily with [your referral source type]. Generate 10 article or LinkedIn post ideas that would be genuinely useful to that audience and demonstrate my expertise as a neutral.

Your customized version:

02 Thought Leadership Post

Write a short LinkedIn post from the perspective of an experienced [your practice area] mediator. The post should educate [your referral source type] on [a specific challenge or mistake attorneys make in this dispute type]. Do not pitch my services. The goal is to demonstrate expertise and start a conversation.

Your customized version:

03 Content from a Case Pattern

Based on this pattern I see in [your practice area] mediation: [describe the pattern in 1-2 sentences]. Help me turn this into a short post or article valuable to [plaintiff or defense] attorneys. Keep it practical and grounded in real experience.

Your customized version:

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Your Platform Decision and 90-Day Plan

JORDAN'S EXAMPLE

Jordan chose LinkedIn. That is where employment attorneys actually spend time. Commitment: one substantive post or article every Wednesday for 90 days. Re-engagement: one outreach to a past contact or professional connection every week.

Which one platform will you commit to for the next 90 days?

What does consistent look like? How many posts per week? What type of content? What day?

What is your re-engagement commitment alongside the content?

90-Day Content Calendar (sketch it out):

Period	Planned content and actions
Month 1	<hr/>
Month 2	<hr/>
Month 3	<hr/>

REFLECTION

What does the attorney you most want to refer you need to see from you consistently over the next 90 days to feel confident making that referral?

13 Content Repurposing Planner

CONCEPT RECAP

One piece of content is the beginning, not the end. You write it once. You let it travel.

JORDAN'S EXAMPLE

Jordan's first article became: three LinkedIn posts, a bar association newsletter pitch, a short CLE presentation outline, a podcast pitch topic, and a speaking proposal to an employment law conference.

Choose one piece of content from Exercise 10. Write the title here:

Now map it to five new formats or distribution points:

Format or Platform	How you will adapt it

REFLECTION

How much of the work you have already done, past presentations, case insights, lessons from difficult mediations, could become content with very little additional effort?

SECTION THREE

Referrals

The engine that actually drives a sustainable ADR practice

CONCEPT RECAP

Referrals are not automatic. They are built intentionally, maintained consistently, and lost through neglect.

The thank you email is not a referral strategy. It is a closing ritual. What comes after it is what determines whether that attorney thinks of you for the next case.

Key takeaway: If a referral source cannot describe you in one sentence, they cannot refer you. Clarity is the prerequisite for referrals.

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Your Referral Map

JORDAN'S EXAMPLE

Jordan identified 10 attorneys from past cases. All were plaintiff-side employment attorneys. Zero had been contacted since the case closed. Zero had been given a clear description of what kinds of cases to send. The map revealed the immediate priority: reach both sides and start re-engaging now.

List your top 10 potential referral sources. Include past clients, professional contacts, and those you want to develop. Note relationship strength (Strong / Warm / Cold), last contact, which side they represent, and your next action.

Name / Firm	Relationship	Last Contact	Side (P/D/Both)	Priority Action

Name / Firm	Relationship	Last Contact	Side (P/D/Both)	Priority Action

REFLECTION

Look at the Side column. Are both sides of your dispute type represented? If not, that is the gap to close first.

15 The Both-Sides Referral Check

How many of your top 10 referral sources are on the plaintiff side of your dispute type?

How many are on the defense side?

If there is an imbalance, what is keeping you from developing relationships on the underrepresented side?

Name two specific attorneys on the underrepresented side you will contact in the next 30 days.

REFLECTION

Building referral relationships on both sides does not mean you abandon the relationships you have. It means you build a practice that is not dependent on one side's willingness to keep sending you work.

16 Make It Easy to Refer You

JORDAN'S EXAMPLE

When Jordan reconnected with a plaintiff-side colleague after repositioning: 'I am now focused on complex employment disputes for both plaintiff and defense counsel. If you have a multi-party case that is emotionally charged and needs a neutral who understands what both sides are actually weighing, I would love to be in the conversation.' The attorney responded: 'That is exactly who I would send a certain kind of case to. I have one right now.'

For each Cold or Warm relationship on your referral map, draft a one-sentence description of who to send to you. Use the language of your positioning statement.

Write the message you will use to re-engage a past referral source. 3-4 sentences. Lead with value, not availability.

What do you want them to walk away knowing about who to send to you?

REFLECTION

If a referring attorney cannot describe you to a colleague in one sentence, they will not refer you. They will refer the mediator they can describe clearly.

17 Your Follow-Up System

CONCEPT RECAP

The thank you email is the floor, not the ceiling. Jordan was already sending it. What Jordan was not doing was everything that comes after it. The system does not need to be elaborate. It needs to be consistent.

JORDAN'S EXAMPLE

Jordan's system:

Day of close: personalized thank you (2-3 sentences, specific to this case). 30 days: brief check-in, share a relevant article. 60 days: personal note, no agenda. 6 months: reassess the relationship and plan the next touchpoint.

Build your follow-up system. Be specific about what you will actually do and say at each stage.

Timing	What you will do and say
Day of case close	

30 days

60 days

6 months

REFLECTION

The 60-day check-in is the most important and most often skipped step. It is the one that signals: this is a relationship, not a transaction.

18 Third-Party Proof Planning

CONCEPT RECAP

A few specific, well-placed testimonials from people on both sides of your dispute type go a long way. Every case that closes well is a potential testimonial, a referral source, and a relationship to maintain.

Step 1: Inventory what you already have (testimonials, endorsements, media mentions, speaking credits):

Step 2: Where are you missing proof? Website, LinkedIn, speaker proposals, referral conversations?

Step 3: Who will you ask? List 3 past clients or referral sources who would give a meaningful testimonial.

Sample Testimonial Request

Hi [Name], I hope you are doing well. I am putting together some materials for my website and would be grateful for a few words about our work together. A few sentences responding to any of these prompts would be more than enough:

What was your biggest concern before we worked together?

What result or experience stood out to you?

What would you tell a colleague considering working with me?

If you are comfortable with me using your name and title, please let me know. Thank you so much.

19 Your 90-Day Referral Outreach Plan

JORDAN'S EXAMPLE

Jordan's 90-day plan: Week 1, reach out to 3 past referral sources with personalized re-engagement messages. Week 2, attend a bar event and make two new connections on the defense side. Weeks 3-12, one outreach or touchpoint per week, rotating through the referral map. Month 3, reassess who has moved from Cold to Warm.

Name three referral sources you will contact before the end of this week.

1.

2.

3.

Map out your first 12 weeks. One action per week.

Week	Action
Week 1	
Week 2	
Week 3	
Week 4	
Week 5	
Week 6	
Week 7	
Week 8	
Week 9	
Week 10	
Week 11	
Week 12	

REFLECTION

What would your practice look like at the end of 12 consistent weeks if you actually did one thing every week? Most people never find out because they stop in week three.

Referrals are built. Not hoped for.

Jordan built through the 3 to 5 year window. So can you.

Bringing It Together

Branding, marketing, and referrals are not three separate strategies. They are one system. Your brand defines your message. Your marketing communicates your message. Your referrals reinforce your message. If they are not aligned, none of them work as well as they should.

Integration questions:

Does your positioning statement appear consistently across your bio, LinkedIn, website, and how you introduce yourself?

Does your content speak directly to the referral sources on your referral map?

Does your referral strategy reach both sides of your dispute type?

Is there anything in your current marketing that contradicts your positioning or signals preference toward one side?

Your 90-Day Commitment

One specific commitment per section. Make it concrete enough that you will know whether you did it.

Branding commitment:

Marketing commitment:

Referrals commitment:

Signature

30-Day Check-In Date

The Practice Playbook Series

This workbook draws from The Thought Leadership Playbook. The full series is available at susaneguthrie.com.

The Flat Fee Playbook | A Step-by-Step Guide to Break Free from Billable Hour Burnout

The Thought Leadership Playbook | How to Get Known, Build Trust, and Grow a Profitable Practice

The Business Plan Playbook | How to Build a Business Plan for Lawyers, Mediators, and Dispute Resolution Entrepreneurs

Jordan's Complete Profile

Jordan's completed workbook in summary form. Use it as a reference throughout your own work.

Background

10 years as a plaintiff-side employment litigator before transitioning to mediation. Now 3 years into an employment mediation practice with deep familiarity in plaintiff-side dynamics and a building presence on the defense side.

Four Niche Decisions

Case type: Employment disputes. Ideal client: Employment attorneys on both sides. Complexity: Complex multi-party cases. Orientation: Emotionally charged disputes where the human story drives settlement dynamics.

Differentiation

Professional background: 10 years of litigation experience on both sides of the employment dispute. Knows how plaintiff attorneys calculate damages and when to settle. Knows how defense counsel and carriers evaluate exposure. Process advantage: Litigation-informed pre-mediation preparation. Approach: Comfortable with high emotion and complexity.

Positioning Statement

"I help employment attorneys on both sides of the table resolve complex, high-emotion disputes before trial, drawing on 10 years of employment litigation that gives me fluency in the risks, costs, and settlement dynamics both sides are weighing."

Short Bio

Jordan Blake is an employment mediator and former employment litigator who helps attorneys on both sides resolve complex, high-emotion disputes before trial. Drawing on 10 years of litigation experience, Jordan brings fluency in the strategic and human dynamics that determine whether cases settle or go to trial.

First Content Piece

"What employment attorneys on both sides get wrong about mediation timing, and why it costs their clients money." Shared by two defense-side attorneys to their networks in the first week.

Platform and Cadence

LinkedIn. One substantive post or article every Wednesday. One outreach to a past contact every week. 90-day commitment made and kept.

Referral Map

10 attorneys identified initially, all plaintiff-side. Added 4 defense-side employment attorneys in the first 90 days. 3 are now warm relationships. 1 has referred two cases in year four.

Follow-Up System

Day of close: personalized thank you. 30 days: relevant article or development in employment law. 60 days: personal check-in with no agenda. 6 months: relationship reassessment.

Jordan at Year Four

Clear niche. Positioning statement anyone can repeat. Content publishing consistently. Name recognized on both sides of the employment bar. Three attorneys sending regular referrals and referring Jordan to each other. Practice built through the 3-5 year window, not waiting it out.

Your practice will not grow by accident.

Build it on purpose.

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