



**PRACTICE WITH PURPOSE**

**A Strategic Growth Intensive for Exceptional Neutrals**

with Susan Guthrie  
Upchurch Watson White &  
Max Firm Retreat  
September 27, 2025

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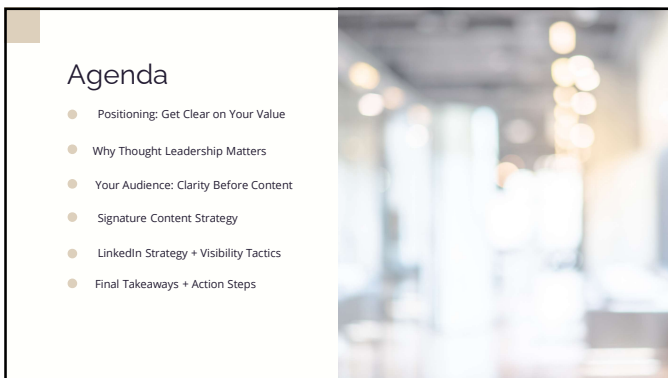
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**Agenda**

- Positioning: Get Clear on Your Value
- Why Thought Leadership Matters
- Your Audience: Clarity Before Content
- Signature Content Strategy
- LinkedIn Strategy + Visibility Tactics
- Final Takeaways + Action Steps

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**MEDIATOR TRUTH**

It is often harder to get cases  
than to settle cases

Welcome to the business side of mediation

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## Part 1: Positioning

Why  
Positioning  
Matters

Credentials earn you respect.

Positioning earns you business.

Clients hire who they recognize, understand and **trust**  
— not just the most credentialed professional.

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## What is Positioning?

The strategic way you define and present your value so the right people instantly understand what you do, who you help, and why YOU are the clear choice.

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## Positioning Formula

**"I help [WHO] with [WHAT] so they can [OUTCOME]."**

Simple. Powerful. Memorable.

**Examples:**

- I help business partners resolve conflicts so they can preserve both the business and the relationship.
- "I help attorneys resolve cases more efficiently through trusted, experienced mediation — so their clients feel supported, the outcomes stick, and their reputations stay strong."

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## Common Positioning Pitfalls

### Generic titles

- "Mediator" or "Arbitrator" without context or clarity.

### Credential dumping

- Listing degrees, courts served, or certifications with no connection to value.

### Vague outcomes

- "I help resolve disputes" doesn't answer why you or why it matters.

### Trying to appeal to everyone

- If your message could describe 100 other people, it's not positioning — it's camouflage.



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## EXERCISE - POSITIONING DRAFT

"I help [WHO] with [WHAT]  
so they can [OUTCOME]."

Take 3 minutes to draft your positioning statement using the formula.  
Then pair up and share. Give feedback.

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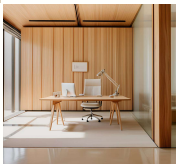
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### PART THREE: THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



**Thought Leadership** is a long-term visibility strategy that positions you as **the trusted authority** in your field, before clients or colleagues ever need to hire or refer to you.

As a practice strategy, it's how you consistently share your expertise, insights, and point of view to:

- Build trust with your ideal audience
- Create recognition and top-of-mind visibility to your target audience
- Attract aligned opportunities — referrals, cases, speaking, media, and more

It's not just about being known — it's about being known for something that matters.



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People don't hire the most qualified expert.  
They hire the one **they've heard of,**  
**and trust,** for **that kind of problem.**

*Your thought leadership is how they know and trust you.*

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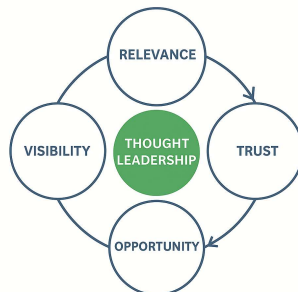
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The Thought  
Leadership  
Trust Cycle



Your message builds trust.  
Trust creates opportunity.

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Who Is Your  
Audience?

Who needs to hear  
your message?

Ask yourself:

WHO HIRES  
ME?

WHO REFERS  
TO ME?

WHO BENEFITS  
MOST FROM MY  
INSIGHTS?

Your content should speak directly to their  
needs, concerns, and language — not your peers.

**Key Takeaway:**

★ You don't need to speak to everyone  
— just the right people, in the right way.



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## TARGET AUDIENCE CLARITY EXERCISE

Draw a simple stick figure in the center of your page.

This is your ideal client or referral source — the person your content should be designed to reach and resonate with.

Around the figure, fill in these six categories:

1. Who are they?
2. What keeps them up at night?
3. What do they want most?
4. How do they make decisions?
5. What do they need to hear from you?
6. Where can you reach them?

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## Building Your Signature Content Strategy

**What Is Signature Content?**  
Signature content is the core insight, message, or perspective you share consistently that reflects your unique value and expertise.

**Key Features:**

- Rooted in your positioning — it communicates what you do, who you help, and how you solve problems.
- Highly relevant to your audience's concerns — speaks directly to their needs or challenges.
- Repeatable and versatile — forms the basis for talks, posts, articles, podcasts, or frameworks.
- Builds authority over time — helps you rise above the noise with substance, not self-promotion.

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## Forms Your Signature Content Can Take

<b>Insight-Based Posts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LinkedIn posts or articles</li> <li>• Case "lessons learned"</li> <li>• Commentary on industry trends</li> </ul>	<b>Tools &amp; Checklists</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counsel prep checklists</li> <li>• Visual frameworks</li> <li>• Decision-making tools</li> </ul>	<b>Speaking &amp; CLEs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CLE decks and outlines</li> <li>• Signature talk points</li> <li>• Webinar summaries</li> </ul>
<b>Podcast &amp; Media</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guest interviews</li> <li>• Articles for bar/news</li> <li>• Quote cards or clips</li> </ul>	<b>Downloadables</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tip sheets for clients</li> <li>• "What to Expect" guides</li> <li>• Lead magnet PDFs</li> </ul>	<b>Repurposed Content</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn ideas into posts &amp; articles</li> <li>• Infographics &amp; carousels</li> <li>• Blog or email series</li> </ul>

**THE KEY IS SELECTING 2-3 THAT WORK FOR YOU**

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### Content Creation Rules for Professionals Who Hate "Content"

1. Speak to One Person
2. Lead with Insight, Not Information
3. Keep It Simple and Specific
4. Be Generous, Not Promotional
5. Consistency Beats Virality



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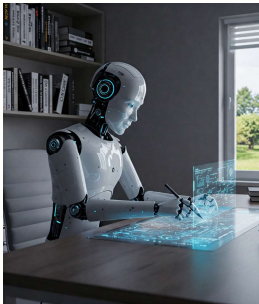
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### Content Generation Support from AI

I am a [insert role - e.g., commercial mediator, arbitrator, neutral] who works primarily with [insert audience - e.g., general counsel, trial lawyers, business owners] in [insert field - e.g., high-value disputes, personal injury, complex family matters].

I want to create a [blog post / LinkedIn article / CLE outline / checklist / podcast topic / explainer PDF] to be shared on [LinkedIn / my firm's website / a bar association / newsletter / panel presentation].

The goal of this content is to:

- Help my audience understand [insert insight or mistake you see often]
- Show how I help them achieve [insert outcome - e.g., faster resolutions, better client experience, reduced litigation risk]
- Build trust and credibility in a way that feels [choose tone - helpful / professional / approachable / thought-provoking]

Please generate 3-5 impactful content ideas that align with this — each one should include:

- A working title or headline
- A one-sentence hook or introduction
- One or two key takeaways my audience would find helpful

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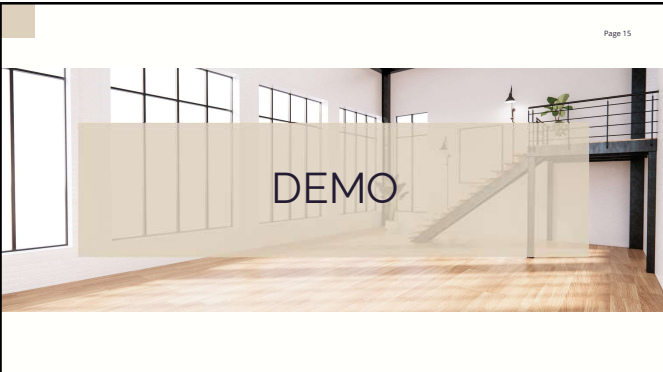
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Thought Leadership  
Playbook Content Generator

**Gemini Gem:**  
<https://bit.ly/Thought-Leadership-Gem>



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LinkedIn  
Strategy



**LinkedIn is no longer optional  
— it is where trust begins.**

- Your ideal clients and referral sources are already there.
- Decision-makers use it to vet professionals before they reach out.
- A strong presence builds visibility, credibility, and relevance — without needing to post every day.
- It's your modern business card, reputation builder, and referral amplifier — all in one.

If people look you up and don't find anything meaningful, they move on.

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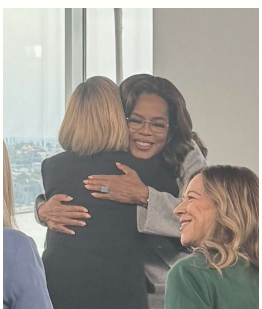
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LinkedIn is full  
of unexpected  
opportunities

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

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## Three Quick Upgrades for Your Profile



**Susan E. Guthrie**     
Entrepreneur & Mediator  
**Susan Guthrie**     
 Helping Mediators, Lawyers & Entrepreneurs Build Profitable Practices | Best-Selling Author of the Practice Playbook Series | Legal Tech & Practice Consultant | Host - Practice Playbook Podcast, Past Chair - ABA DRS

**1. Rewrite Your Headline**  
 Don't just list your title. Show who you help and how.

Old: Mediator | Arbitrator

Upgrade: Commercial Mediator | Helping Business Partners Resolve Conflicts Without Court



**Murphy Funkhouser**  
**About**  
 Helping businesses stand out, scale up, and shine!

I'm a brand and marketing strategist with 20+ years of experience guiding businesses, entrepreneurs, and nonprofits to tell their stories with impact and drive measurable growth. My passion—and specialty—is putting your business center stage so it captures attention, builds loyalty, and dramatically increases sales and performance.

**2. Refresh Your About Section**  
 Use your positioning statement: Who you help, what problem you solve, and what success looks like.

Start with:  
 "I help [audience] with [problem] so they can [achieve outcome]."  
 Keep it clear, relevant, and human — this is your first impression.



**Donna Serdula**     
Entrepreneur & Mediator  
**Donna Serdula**     
 Build a Brand That Opens Doors a Founder, Vision Board Media & The Career Accelerator • Author • Keynote Speaker • Empowering Executives & Entrepreneurs to Lead, Attract, and Grow

**3. Use Your Banner Space Strategically**  
 Add a branded image with your tagline, logo, or a few key services. This turns your profile into a landing page — not just a résumé.

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## Top Tips for Effective LinkedIn Posting

**Post Once a Week**

Stay visible and relevant with just one valuable post per week. Consistency builds trust.

**Teach, Don't Sell**

Offer insight, not services. Posts should educate, clarify, or guide. That's what builds credibility.

**Speak to One Person**

Write as if you're helping one ideal client or referral source solve a real problem. Keep it simple and specific.

**Engage Like a Pro**

Comment, connect, respond. Trust grows faster through interaction than from broadcasting alone.

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## Repurpose, do not reinvent the wheel

**Easy-to-Repurpose Ideas:**

**Insights from your cases (anonymized)**

- "Here's how we broke a deadlock last week..."

**FAQs you always answer**

- "This question comes up in almost every mediation..."

**Upcoming events or appearances**

- "Speaking at the Bar's ADR section this week? Share a takeaway after."

**Articles or CLEs you've written**

- Break them into short posts or quote graphics.

**Client or colleague conversations**

- Without names, of course — reflect on the challenge and lesson.

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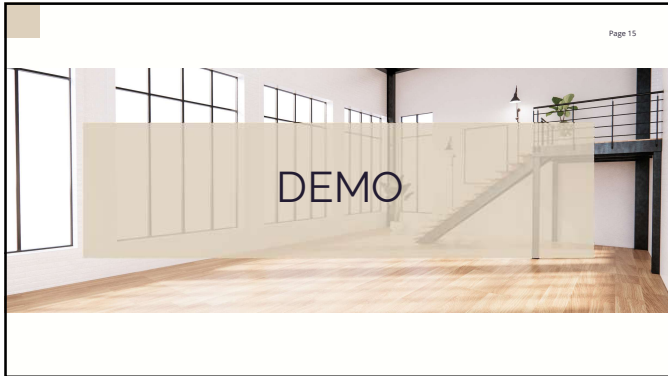
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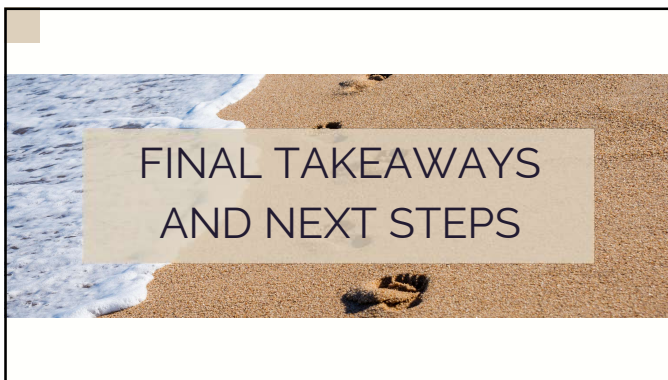
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