

POSITIONING FOR SUCCESS:

A Strategic Workshop for ADR-OC Mediators



with Susan Guthrie
March 5, 2026

1

Program Materials

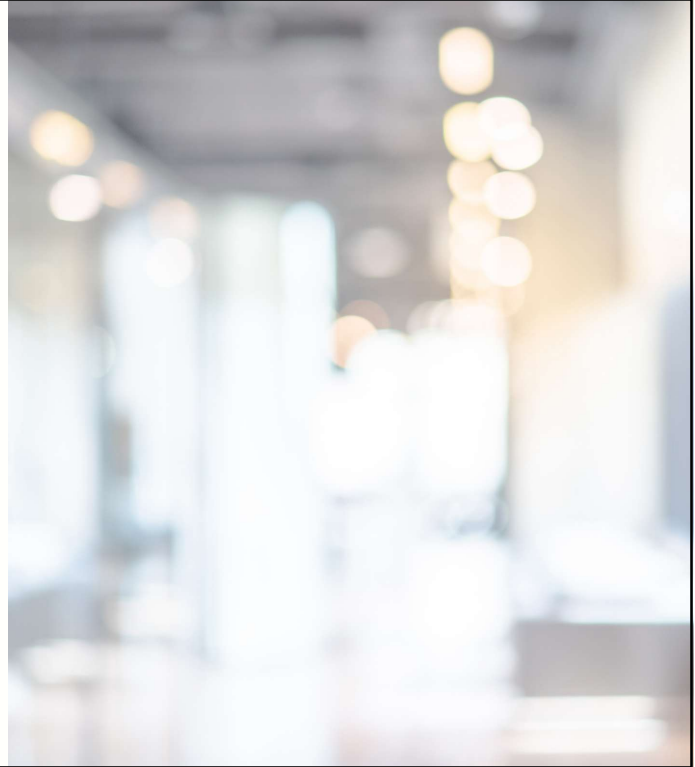
<https://susaneguthrie.com/adr-oc>



2

Agenda

- The Business Reality
- Precision Before Promotion
- Positioning Statement
- Thought Leadership Strategy
- Visibility Infrastructure
- 90-Day Commitment



3

MEDIATOR TRUTH

It is often harder to **get** cases
than to **settle** cases

Welcome to the business side of mediation

4

The Reality of Mediation Practice Growth

Mediation skill and mediation business are two different competencies.

- Skill earns respect, but no one knows your skill until you have them in the room.
- The key then, is how do you get them in the room?

How do you build demand for YOUR services?



5

How many have had successful litigation careers?

Here is the common expectation for the transition:

- "I'm good, the cases will come."
- "My reputation will carry me."
- "I've been litigating for 20 years. People know me."
- "I'm on the panel/in a firm. That will be enough."

But calendars are not as full as desired . . .

The transition to neutral stalls . . .

Litigation remains the revenue driver.



6

THE CASE FLOW REALITY

Across the mediation field:

- A small percentage of neutrals handle the majority of repeat matters
- Most mediators rely on a limited number of referral sources
- Case flow is often relationship-dependent rather than strategy-driven
- Firm membership does not equal selection

**DEMAND IS NOT ACCIDENTAL.
IT IS ENGINEERED AND CULTIVATED.**



7

FROM AWARENESS TO ASSESSMENT

If demand is engineered and cultivated . . .
then clarity comes first.

Before we design strategy, we need to understand:

- What is currently driving your case flow?
- Is it structured or incidental?
- Is it diversified or concentrated?
- Is it intentional or inherited?

We cannot engineer growth if we do not diagnose the current structure.

EXERCISE ONE: CASEFLOW REALITY CHECK



8

HOW DOES THE MARKET SEE YOU?

When someone refers a case to you, what do they say about you?

- What type of mediator they believe you are
- What kinds of cases you handle
- What value you bring to the process

If someone unfamiliar with you read your bio today, what would they assume you specialize in and in what role?



9

PRE-WORKSHOP REFLECTION: WHAT YOU NOTICED



Language Check: Litigator or Neutral?

When you described your work, did it sound more like:

- A. A litigator
- B. A neutral
- C. A blend

10

WHO DO YOU SERVE?



IF YOU TRY TO BE FOR EVERYONE,

YOU WILL BE CHOSEN BY NO ONE.

In Exercise One, you identified:

- The mindset shift from litigator to mediator
- The difference between competence and demand
- The need to engineer visibility and relevance

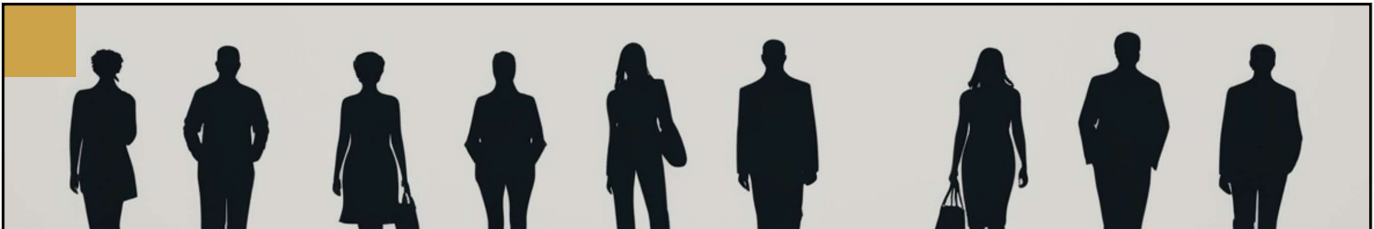
Now we sharpen that further.

Demand is not created by broad availability.

Demand is created by specific relevance.

Before you define your positioning,
You must define your audience.

11



How to Identify Your **Ideal Client**

Where do you consistently create the most value in a dispute?

- The types of cases where attorneys most often request you
- The disputes where your experience is particularly relevant
- The situations where parties trust your judgment quickly
- The matters that generate the strongest referrals afterward

12



Clarifying Factors:

Your ideal audience is usually defined by three things:

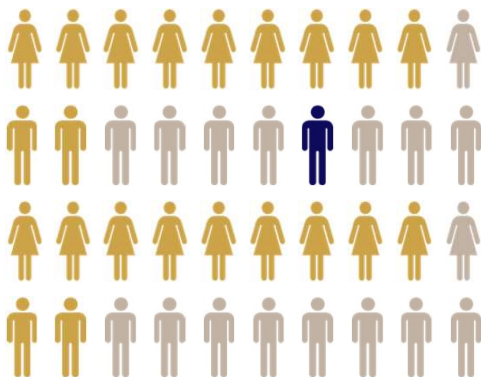
WHO selects the mediator (trial attorneys, general counsel, insurers, business owners)

WHAT type of dispute they bring (commercial litigation, employment, partnership disputes, family matters)

WHY they choose you (case management, subject matter credibility, ability to manage complexity)

13

DEFINING YOUR IDEAL CLIENT (WHO HIRES YOU)



Your target audience is not everyone who could hire you.

It is the group most likely to choose you.

EXERCISE TWO: TARGET AUDIENCE DEFINITION

14



If Skill Is the Foundation, **Positioning** Is the Bridge

Positioning answers three questions instantly:

- 1.What** do you do?
- 2.Who** do you help?
- 3.Why** are you the right choice for this case?

Skill → Positioning → Visibility → Opportunity

15



Positioning is
Strategic **Clarity**

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.

16



Positioning Formula

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

Simple. Powerful. Memorable.

Example:

LESS EFFECTIVE: “I help parties resolve disputes through mediation.”

BETTER: “I help business partners resolve high-conflict disputes so they can protect their companies and preserve long-term value.”

17



More Examples

LESS EFFECTIVE: “Trial attorney with 25 years experience mediating cases.”

BETTER: “I help trial attorneys resolve complex commercial disputes efficiently so their clients can avoid prolonged litigation and move forward with certainty.”

LESS EFFECTIVE: “I provide culturally competent mediation services.”

BETTER: “I help diverse business owners navigate high-emotion disputes so agreements are culturally understood, durable, and respected.”

18

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.



19

YOUR POSITIONING STATEMENT

I help _____
 with _____
 so they can _____

EXERCISE THREE: CREATE YOUR POSITIONING DRAFT

20

BREAK – 15 Min.

21

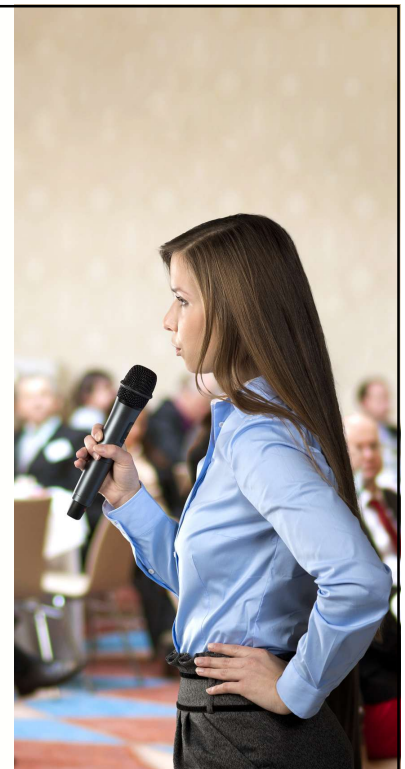
PART THREE: THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

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.



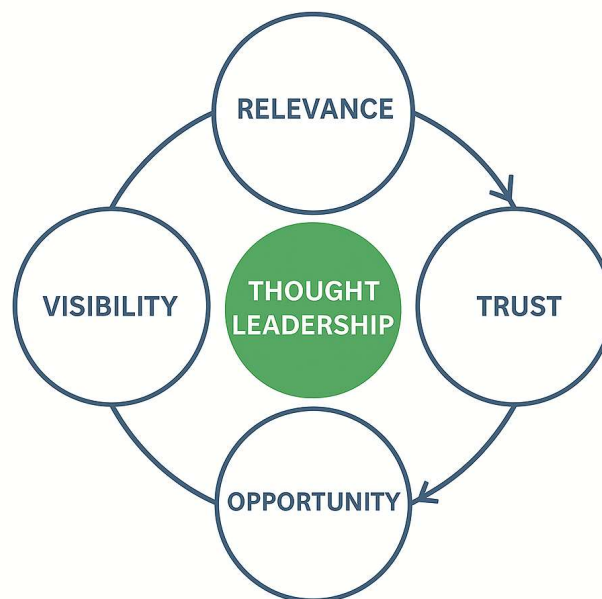
22

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.

23

The Thought
Leadership
Trust Cycle



Your message builds trust.
Trust creates opportunity.

24

Every time you create thought leadership content ask yourself . . .

Who are you speaking to?

WHO IS MY TARGET AUDIENCE?



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

25

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.**

26

Forms Your Signature Content Can Take

Insight-Based Posts

- LinkedIn posts or articles
- Case 'lessons learned'
- Commentary on industry trends

Tools & Checklists

- Counsel prep checklists
- Visual frameworks
- Decision-making tools

Speaking & CLEs

- CLE decks and outlines
- Signature talk points
- Webinar summaries

Podcast & Media

- Guest interviews
- Articles for bar/news
- Quote cards or clips

Downloadables

- Tip sheets for clients
- 'What to Expect' guides
- Lead magnet PDFs

Repurposed Content

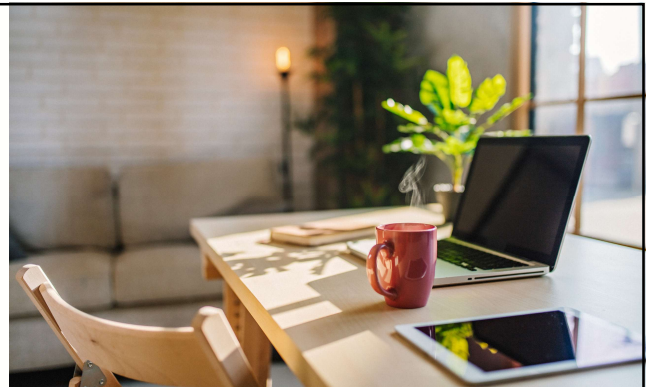
- Turn ideas into posts & articles
- Infographics & carousels
- Blog or email series

THE KEY IS SELECTING 2-3 THAT WORK FOR YOU

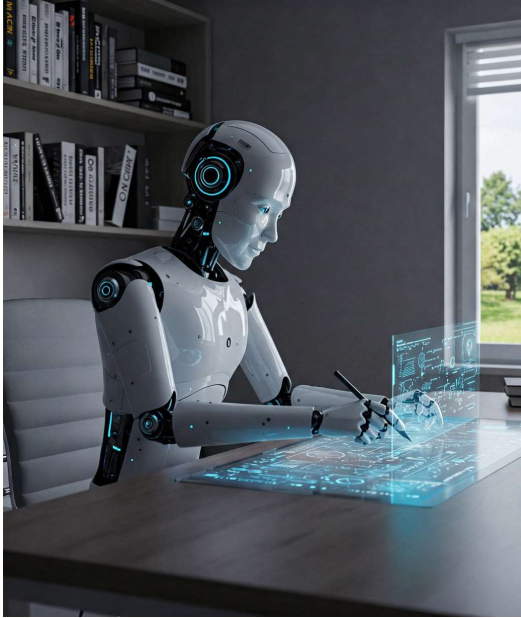
27

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



28



EXERCISE FOUR: CONTENT GENERATION SUPPORT FROM AI TOOLS

Prompt: “I help [WHO] with [WHAT] so they can [OUTCOME].”

Generate 5 timely content topics that would resonate with this audience and position me as a trusted authority.”

29

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.

30

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.

31

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.

32

Visibility is a system



You do not need to be everywhere.

You need:

- 1-2 defined audiences
- 2-3 signature themes
- 1-2 primary platforms
- A consistent cadence

Positioning creates clarity.

Visibility reinforces it.

33

YOUR 90-DAY VISIBILITY STRUCTURE

Minimum effective plan:

- Refine and consistently use your positioning statement
- Focus on one primary audience
- Publish 8-12 thoughtful posts or articles
- Have 3-5 intentional referral conversations
- Secure one speaking or CLE opportunity
- Align LinkedIn with your positioning

THIS IS ENOUGH TO shift momentum.

34



90-DAY COMMITMENT

- In 90 days, I want to be known for:
- My primary audience is:
- My first visible action this week:

CLARITY → CONSISTENCY → CREDibility → Selection

35



FINAL TAKEAWAYS AND NEXT STEPS

<https://calendly.com/susanguthrie>
ADR-OC Neutral 1:1 with Susan

36

THANK YOU

Susan Guthrie



susan@susaneuthrie.com



susaneuthrie.com



[linkedin.com/in/susaneuthrie](https://www.linkedin.com/in/susaneuthrie)

