

# **UN**MARKETING FOR MEDIATORS

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UnMarketing for Mediators

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# INTRODUCTION

I created UnMarketing for Mediators to help mediators think differently about marketing.

It will not teach you tactics or strategies for successful marketing. Strategies are important and effective tactics matter. No question.

But before you get to tactics and strategies, it's helpful to have an orientation to the work -- a point of view about what it means "to market."

How you think about marketing affects how you act on strategies and tactics. How you think about marketing affects your commitment to carrying out strategies over the longer term. How you think about marketing can be the difference between marketing success...or marketing into the void.

So UnMarketing for Mediators has a narrow, focused mission: To help you think about marketing in ways that feel more natural, less contrived, letting you be you.

When you're able to be your natural self as you market, and don't feel like you have to put on some kind of act or special hat, your market sees a relaxed, authentic person -- the person they're going to get when they hire you.

*Tammy Lenski*

# 1.

## DON'T TELL. SHOW.

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Do you know one of the biggest reasons marketing is uncomfortable for so many of us? Because we associate marketing with a sales pitch.

And sales pitches conjure up images of strutting around, trying to get attention, and being an über-extravert.

If you've wondered how to be "a marketer" without having to seem like an ego-maniac, then you know exactly what I'm talking about.

If you're like me, it feels really awkward to toot your own horn. "Hey, look at me, I'm great!" Ugh.

Good news: You don't have to do that. In fact, you probably shouldn't.

The best way to help your market see your value is to show it to them instead of tell them about it.

Consider Jamie, a mediator in the workplace arena. Jamie decides to present to his local Rotary Club because small business owners are his target market. He uses the podium to educate his market. He talks about how great mediation is, why it's better than other alternatives, and how it can save small business owners money. He uses his 30 minutes trying to persuade them to try mediation -- and indirectly, trying to persuade them to try him.

Now let's consider Eva, who is also a workplace mediator speaking to her local Rotary Club. Eva starts her presentation saying she's going to teach everyone in the room one thing they can start using back at work to help their people sort out conflict better. She spends 15 minutes teaching a quick lesson on the difference between positions and interests and how interests can help people uncover solutions they might otherwise miss. For the last 15 minutes, she invites people in the room to ask her questions about navigating conflict better at work.

If both Jamie and Eva are equally good presenters, which mediator had more impact on the Rotarians -- and is therefore the one more likely to have a positive and memorable impact?

If both Jamie and Eva are equally confident (or equally nervous) presenters, which mediator probably felt more at ease -- the one using the podium for a thinly-veiled sales pitch or the one simply showing people her valuable skills by doing what she does every day?

The takeaway: Marketing is a lot less loathsome -- and much more effective -- when you simply use your good skills and knowledge to demonstrate your value.

# 2.

## INSTEAD OF A SALES PITCH, DO A SALES LISTEN.

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In Part 1 I said that it's more effective to demonstrate your skill and value than to rely on a sales pitch.

Which begs the question: What if someone is showing real interest -- shouldn't I tell them all the good things mediation (and therefore I) can do for them?

Well, yes. But how you do it matters.

It matters because sales pitches can be real turn-offs for the recipient. And it matters because if you're like me and dislike the traditional sales pitch, you won't do it well ... or maybe at all.

When I was a college vice president years ago, I got so tired of sales pitches and cold calls that my assistant knew never to put them through to me. And when I went into private practice, I swore I'd never ever do that to anyone.

Then I realized I didn't need to. Because I had an even better skill for those moments: I had the mediator's and coach's ability to listen, deeply and with full attention.

So instead of educating them more about mediation, I listen. Instead of trying to convince them mediation is a good choice, I listen. I flip the pitch from telling to listening and asking.

When a prospective client calls and says, "I'm wondering if mediation might be useful here," you don't need to dive into all the ways it could be.

Instead, make it your mission to help them make a good decision for themselves. Ask good questions to help them think and weigh, listen to their answers, and ask more questions.

The takeaway: When a prospective client shows interest, it's a lot more effective and painless to flip the sales pitch into a "sales listen." And when you do that, you'll also be demonstrating, once again, your incredible skills.

# 3.

## EXTRAVERT. INTROVERT. AMBIVERT. DOESN'T MATTER.

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I'm a pretty strong introvert. People are always surprised to learn this, since I'm outgoing and love to speak in front of audiences.

But here's the tell: At the end of a day in front of the room, or after a long day of mediating, my husband knows not to commit us to going out with friends. He knows I need to re-charge quietly at home.

And here's another tell: A lot of my marketing activities are solo tasks. I can schmooze with the best of them, but it's not what I want to do every day. I'm at my marketing happiest with my laptop, my dog by my side, and a blank screen beckoning my thoughts.

I've got only anecdotal data to support this, but after teaching mediation grad students and working in the field for so many years, I have a sneaking suspicion that a lot of mediators are introverts.

If you're one of them, then associating marketing with getting out there and strutting your stuff day after day can feel pretty exhausting to consider, let alone actually do.

Here's the beauty of good marketing, though: There are options for all of us -- extraverts, introverts, ambiverts (the switch-hitters among us). You don't have to shape-shift to be a great marketer.

The takeaway: Marketing is much more agreeable when we align it with our natural proclivities. No need to try to be someone you're not in order to market effectively.

# 4.

## CHOOSE MARKETING ACTIVITIES YOU ENJOY.

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The Tennessee ADR Commission invited me to Nashville to teach 230 mediators how to market themselves more successfully.

One very astute participant approached me at a break and said, "I keep getting told by 'marketing gurus' that I should do certain things. I should be on Facebook. I should be blogging. Unfortunately, the thought of doing those things makes me cringe. What do you think I should do?"

My reply?

"Stop choosing marketing tactics that other people have a vested interest in selling to you. I think you should choose activities you enjoy. Because if you enjoy them, even just a little bit, you're much more likely to do them for the long run."

Now, there are always parts of our jobs and careers that we don't like doing. And we still have to do them. But if large portions of your marketing activities fall into that category, odds are good you'll go all "opt and dropped."

"Opt and dropped" means you opted into doing something, did it for just a short time, then dropped it (often before it had a real chance to give you a return on the investment). There are a whole lot of opt and dropped mediation blogs, podcasts, YouTube channels, and tweeters out there.

And of course, your marketing activities need to sync with what makes sense for your particular target market. If your market is young millennials, then LinkedIn may not do a lot for you, even if you love hanging out there.

So look for the marketing activities that live at the intersection of where they are/what they consume and what you enjoy.

The takeaway: There are marketing activities for every style, every talent, every market. Make sure the mix of activities you choose are at least a little enjoyable and you'll vastly increase the chance you'll keep at it.

# 5.

## GIVE AWAY EVERYTHING YOU KNOW.

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It's hard work constantly trying to walk the line between demonstrating your value and giving away so much they won't hire you.

So let me take that marketing weight off your shoulders right now: Stop worrying about it. Give away all your knowledge, generously and fully. Everything you know. Free and clear, nothing expected in return.

It's a myth that giving away your know-how will make hiring you unnecessary. The reality is exactly the opposite: The generous sharing of your knowledge will make you more attractive to prospective clients.

Why? When you give away your knowledge, your market gets regular helpings of your expertise. They get to sample how you think and work and see if there's a fit.

When you are relentlessly helpful, without an expectation of reciprocity, they begin to develop a connection with you and a little ember of trust flickers to life.

Prospective clients who benefit from what you give away will still pay for expert guidance. For the insight that comes from working directly with another. For that freeing moment when the air shifts in the room when you ask the perfect question at the perfect time. For help bridging the gap between knowledge and action.

How do you give away everything you know? If you like to write, write articles -- for your local paper if you serve a local audience, your blog, trade publications read by your market, and so forth. If you like to speak, give away your knowledge just like Eva did in the Part 1 of this series -- record podcasts, speak for free for groups attended by your market, conduct workshops at trade association gatherings attended by your market, and so on. If you're great on camera, give away your knowledge in small videos, speaking directly to the things your market most wants to know about conflict and resolution. Teach them. Be relentlessly helpful.

Will every single one of them end up hiring you? Of course not; that's unrealistic. Some will discover you're not their guy or gal. They weren't going to hire you anyway. Stop worrying about them. Don't let the few influence what you can do for the many more.

Will someone steal what you know? Maybe. It happens to me now and then. They can steal words and ideas. But they can't steal you -- who and how you are. Remember: Your clients are buying you,

not your words or even your ideas. They're buying the person who made those words and ideas. When someone else tries your words on their tongue, the fakery eventually shows itself.

The takeaway: Don't be stingy. Stop trying to dole out your expertise in tiny doses. When you generously give away what you know, marketing almost gets -- dare I utter the word? -- fun. And people start seeing you as a font of expertise and caring. No advertising dollars can buy that, my friend.

# 6.

## ASSOCIATE SOMETHING YOU LOVE WITH SOMETHING YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH.

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This one comes from Dan Ariely, professor of psychology and behavioral economics at Duke University, and bestselling author of *Irrationally Yours*:

*"Pick a ritual that you love — for me this ritual is the morning coffee — and connect it to a productivity-related activity. In my case, it has to do with writing.*

*"So I connect something I love, which is the coffee ritual, to something else that I love in principle, but not every moment of it, which is writing. It's an almost conditioned response, where I start working and I'm enjoying the coffee and the writing at the same time." (Source: Business Insider)*

The takeaway: At first blush Ariely's advice looks like a motivational tip (and it is). But it's more. If you can get a conditioned response to marketing, as Ariely does now with writing, over time it'll feel more natural, like any habit you've developed.

# 7.

## BUILD CREDIBILITY BY THE WAY YOU MARKET.

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The marketing activities you choose go a long way to building credibility. And if you're a new mediator, choosing the right activities can turn credibility- and trust-building into a major win for you.

You may know that I'm a huge advocate of what is now known as "content marketing." When I started out, that term didn't exist. I just called it "demonstrating my ability by sharing what I know." I just can't understand why that latter phrase didn't take off the way "content marketing" did ;)

When you're just starting out, you can't say things like, "Over two decades turning conflict into agreements," or "5,000 clients and counting," or "40+ Fortune 500 companies have chosen us since 2015."

So you've got to rely on what you do have: Skill. Knowledge. Experience from other careers or from a lifetime. Superb training.

And the way you rely on those things is to put them to work for you.

Here's what I said about this in the UnMarketing micro-course I used to teach: If you like to write, write articles -- for your local paper if you serve a local audience, your blog, trade publications read by your market, and so forth. If you like to speak, give away your knowledge -- record podcasts, speak for free for groups attended by your market, conduct workshops at trade association gatherings attended by your market, and so on. If you're great on camera, give away your knowledge in small videos, speaking directly to the things your market most wants to know about conflict and resolution. Teach them. Be relentlessly helpful.

The takeaway: Be, as marketers say, crunchy. Crunchy content is content that is concrete, practical, immediately usable by your specific market. It's got substance your market can chew on.



## ABOUT TAMMY LENSKI

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For over two decades Dr. Tammy Lenski has brought the tools and skills of the professional mediator, executive coach, and conflict resolution speaker and teacher to help teams and mediators better navigate disagreement, address friction, and build alignment. Her two books, *The Conflict Pivot* and *Making Mediation Your Day Job*, have sold more than 20,000 copies worldwide. Her conflict resolution blog and podcast has readers and listeners on six continents and at organizations as diverse as Daimler AG, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Intel, Kennedy Center, Kaiser Permanente, Harvard University, MIT, NOAA, the U.S. Small Business Association, and the FBI.