

myweeklymarketing.

Janice Hostager: 0:05

I'm Janice Hostager. After three decades in the marketing business and many years of being an entrepreneur, I've learned a thing or two about marketing. Join me as we talk about marketing, small business and life in between. Welcome to My Weekly Marketing. Hello, and welcome back to My Weekly Marketing. If you've ever felt like when you're in business, you're in a crowded marketplace where everybody's offering the same thing you do and the only way to stand out is to slash your prices or maybe hustle harder, then today's episode is going to feel like a win.

Janice Hostager: 0:47

I'm sitting down with Ann Carden. Ann is a top business growth consultant, the founder and CEO of a media and marketing agency, marketing and sales strategist, speaker, four-time author and podcast host, and we're going to talk about something that I don't think gets enough airtime, and that's all about how you position your business in the marketplace. So we'll unpack what expert positioning really means and why competing on price will always keep you stuck or in a race to the bottom, and how to shift into being the obvious choice for your ideal clients. If you've been wanting to stop chasing clients and start attracting them while charging more and who doesn't want that then you're in the right place. Here's my talk with Ann. Hey, Ann, thanks for joining me today.

Ann Carden: 1:39

Thanks so much for having me, Janice. It's a pleasure.

Janice Hostager: 1:47

I love this topic. Repositioning I think that, as a marketing nerd, positioning is one of my favorite topics, but we don't really talk about it. I don't really talk much about it, and you have such a strong perspective on what it means to position yourself as an expert. So was there a turning point or an aha moment in your journey where you said, well, I don't want to compete anymore. That was going to be important for you and for other business owners.

Ann Carden: 2:13

It's really interesting. I have always, without realizing about positioning or really even knowing that it was called that, I've always done this in all my businesses. I've always how can I stand out, how can I be at the top of my game, how can I be top of the

market? And so I have always looked for ways to do that. And when I started coaching and consulting and it became a thing, positioning became a thing and I started teaching it to other people I knew how powerful it was, especially to build a premium business, which is what I help people do. So if they want to be premium and they want to get the best clients at the best prices, they are the best customers. They have to be positioned differently and really stand out in the market.

Janice Hostager: 3:00

So, before we go any further, let's define what positioning is.

Janice Hostager: 3:16

A lot of listeners that are new in business. Why don't you define that for us?

Ann Carden: 3:20

Yes, so positioning, think about positioning as the outside perception of how people see you. I like to say it's kind of like your storefront. If you think about somebody who sees you or they meet you. What are they going to do? They're going to try to learn more about you. They're going to go to your website. They're going to Google you. They're going to try to find out. Why should I talk to this person? Why should I trust this person? So positioning encompasses not just that feeling and that first impression that people get when they come across you, but it also encompasses how trustworthy you are, how credible you are. Are you an authority? Are you kind of a beginner or startup? Are you budget? Are you premium Like? Positioning can encompass all of those things. So when it's done really well, you look like the person that can command higher prices. You look like the person that can command higher prices. You look like the person that is credible, that people wouldn't question oh, can you really do this? Or why should I trust you? Or why should I believe you?

Janice Hostager: 4:15

And it's different from a brand.

Ann Carden: 4:17

It is yes.

Janice Hostager: 4:19

Tell us how.

Ann Carden: 4:20

Yeah. A brand is more the visual and positioning and more the identity. But positioning goes deeper. Positioning is about credibility, authority, again trustworthiness, and then also that just are you for me or are you not for me? So positioning can actually repel the wrong people and it can attract. It's all about attracting the right people to you. So that's what positioning can do.

Janice Hostager: 4:51

And isn't it a little bit too about how you stand out in the marketplace, like blue ocean versus red ocean,

Ann Carden: 4:58

Absolutely.

Janice Hostager: 4:59

Kind of like that too. So it's like how you're, just basically how you set yourself apart,

Ann Carden: 5:05

It is.

Janice Hostager: 5:12

Gotcha.

Ann Carden: 5:12

Okay, so how are you different from everybody else? Yes, and that that is all part of it as well. Yeah, I guess I didn't say that as I was going through all the things that it included, of course.

Janice Hostager: 5:18

Well, and you know so much, so much of marketing overlaps too. So, yes, positioning overlaps with branding, and branding you know it's also talks. This sort of overlaps with identifying your ideal client avatar, and so I mean all of this sort of meshes together, so it's difficult to delineate, like, where one thing ends and where another begins. So I think you did a perfect job of explaining that. So so many of my listeners and sometimes I do too too feel like you're one of many in a crowded space. So can you do you have a story of a client, or maybe yourself, that you went from blending in to really standing out?

Ann Carden: 5:57

Absolutely. So, the first thing people have to think about whether you're small business owner or, you know, an entrepreneur, a lot of people are not positioning themselves online to build influence the way they could be, and I see this all the time. They really are blending in. There's nothing different about them. Their message isn't different. They look the same, they're selling the same stuff and all of that is going to cause you to kind of play in the shark invested water, so to speak. But when you strengthen your positioning, you rise above and you become the only one. You are seen as the only one who does what you do, and when you do that, you stop competing and that means you can demand. You can really demand higher fees and higher prices. You aren't price shopped, you don't look like a commodity. All of those things. You don't want somebody to say do I want this kind of coffee or this kind of coffee? You want the right person to say, oh my gosh, I've been looking for you. That's very different.

Janice Hostager: 7:25

And I think even in an industry where there are a lot of options. Such as retail, right. You've got your Walmart, and you've got your Target and your Kohl's, and so you've got like an array and every one of those has a different audience and they're all positioned so differently. Right.

Ann Carden: 7:30

Exactly. If you look at, if you look like a Tiffany and Company right, Tiffany and Co, they're a very specific buyer. And if you look at Kohl's selling jewelry, that's going to be a very specific buyer. Or Walmart selling jewelry, that's going to be a very specific buyer. The great thing about that is there is enough to go around for everyone, which a lot of people don't get this. A lot of times, people get intimidated. Like there's so many people in that market, there's so many people in that space, and don't look at it like that. Like how can I rise above that? That's what you want to be thinking about. How can I get above all the noise? How can I be seen as who I want to be seen as for whoever that is?

Janice Hostager: 8:17

Right, right, yeah, and it can be scary to do that, especially when you're starting out your business. To get really narrow on who that person is right.

Ann Carden: 8:27

It is scary, but I think if people realize, you know I always help people position themselves in a way that it really aligns with them. So I help people really build their expertise into something and when I really show them how they can build a business around what they're so good at doing already, it's kind of the positioning becomes very

natural. Positioning becomes very natural. So I think where people get stuck or they get fearful is they're trying to do something that maybe just doesn't align with what they want to be known for or where they're really good, if that makes sense.

Janice Hostager: 9:07

It does. That's really interesting. So if you're working with a business, what are some signs that they're kind of stuck in the competitive space really, instead of positioning themselves to be like standout?

Ann Carden: 9:18

That's really interesting. That's that's a really easy answer, because if I go to your website and I go to your competitor's website and all I have to do is switch the logos and I won't know who's who, that's a good sign that you are playing in the same space as everybody else. The other thing is being able, it's so easy to see when people are really positioned well and they're positioned above their market you get like this wow, kind of thing. Like you get this feeling. Let's think about a brand that comes to mind.

Ann Carden: 9:55

I like to use Lamborghini versus a cheap used car. Okay, you're going to go get a cheap used car. You're going to get a used car? Okay, well, they're a dime a dozen and just go pick which one you think is going to give you the best value for your money and the one you like. But if you're going to get a Lamborghini, you're not going to price shop it. You're going to be like I'm getting the Lamborghini, right, I've got the money, I'm going to go get this. I'm going to go to the dealer and I'm going to get this. Like you know, you want a Lamborghini and that's really.

Ann Carden: 10:26

If you think about it in brands and you think about positioning. That's the way positioning should be. People, if you're premium so I help people in the premium market. If you're premium, they should know you're premium. They should be able to see that in your marketing and your positioning. They should be able to see that you're different.

Ann Carden: 10:47

There is nobody out there that does anything the same way I do it, and that's very clear when they dig into what I do in my marketing and that kind of thing, there's not even anyone out there. Like even if you go to my LinkedIn headline, there's not even anyone out there that's pitching the same thing that I am pitching, and so. But you also see, like just LinkedIn is a great example. Go to my LinkedIn profile. You're going to see my

books. You're going to see my books. You're going to see that I've been on lots and lots of podcasts. You're going to see that positioning that shows me. You're going to see me with a microphone All the things that I want my market to see about me, because those are the things I help them do. So if they don't see it from me, I'm not walking my talk right, and so that's positioning.

Ann Carden: 11:35

Yeah.

Janice Hostager: 11:41

Right, yeah, and actually I was going to bring your positioning up because I have written down what you have on your bio, so you reposition what they've already built into a business, brand and life that reflects their brilliance, with premium offers, market authority and strategies that drive real wealth, without the grind. It's like wow, that is totally the best positioning paragraph I've ever read. I mean because it's like I don't know anybody else that really does that combination, just like you said, that combination of things together, and you explain it so clearly as well.

Ann Carden: 12:11

That means I did a good job. I'm walking the talk yes, that's great.

Janice Hostager: 12:17

So how can positioning yourself as an expert actually justify premium pricing and increasing your revenue? So it's one thing to say I'm unique and we want to charge high prices. Obviously, if we are offering a premium service, we want to offer premium price. How do you do that? Like, let's take, walk me through the steps to go ahead and do that.

Ann Carden: 12:40

Yeah, so it's some of the things I talked about before. So when you, when you discover, when you really decide what you want to be known for I am very known for the premium market. People know I mean, they've known that for years and there aren't very many people in that same market in the same way so when you really decide what you want to be known for, you sing that message everywhere. You really get it out there. It should be cohesive. So it doesn't matter whether you go to my YouTube channel, whether you go to my LinkedIn or my Facebook or my website. You're going to see the same kind of messaging. So that's a really important piece. The other thing is when you are call out who you want, like that's really important too. So part of your message should be really calling in the right people, the people that you want to work with, the people that you

want to see you, and a lot of people kind of miss that piece. They don't call in. They kind of they're too broad.

Ann Carden: 13:40

You know I helped when I first started 15 years ago. I helped small business owners grow their business. I remember pitching that at a networking event and somebody would say, how do you like? What does that mean exactly? I mean, do you help them grow at a dollar or do you help them grow at a million dollars? It's very different, right? So all the messaging and everything people see should be cohesive and it should be really building up that foundation, that solid brand.

Ann Carden: 14:10

But also you have to think about the market that you're targeting. You can't get premium pricing if you're in a broke market and you can't get premium pricing if you look like the cheap used car and not the Lamborghini. So all of these things play a part in that. And then also you have to build your authority and your credibility. Be like get seen, I'm doing it with you right now, Janice. I'm on here, you're interviewing me, I'm sharing all of my expertise and you're either going to think she knows what she's talking about. Or you're going to walk away thinking, she has no clue, right. And o that's all part of building that premium positioning is people have to be able to see that you know what you're doing. You can't command premium fees if you don't know what you're doing, if you're winging it. So it's having more of a strategic plan.

Janice Hostager: 15:05

So it boils down to confidence in that respect.

Ann Carden: 15:08

When you align your business in the right way, you already will have confidence, Like I have no doubt, about what I can do for my clients and how I can help them, and that comes through. I'm very bold about saying that and so when? But? But it's because I know that I can do it, and so this is why when I help people, a lot of times they're trying to do something that isn't really their expertise. Let's say, for example, you're going to sell websites. You've never built a website. Well, how confident, or are you going to learn as you go? You're going to have a hard time convincing people that you're the website expert, right but if you've built a lot of websites. And you say I'm going to become the website expert for financial advisors. Now you know that you can go and build that and you're going to become the go-to and they're going to see you as a specialist, not a

generalist. So all of those things are parts. All of that is part of building up that premium brand and being seen having that strong positioning.

Janice Hostager: 16:18

And then, of course, messaging.

Ann Carden: 16:20

And messaging is part of it. Absolutely.

Janice Hostager: 16:23

So what advice for that would you say? That was one of the reasons I wanted to read what you had written, because it was beautifully written and put together and it really did set you apart and showed very easily what you did and how you were different. So how do you go ahead? And if you're doing working with somebody that wants to do that, how do you pull that together?

Ann Carden: 16:45

I find out first what they really are good at, where the value lies within them. So I work mostly with consultants, professional service entrepreneurs who want to level everything up and get this premium client. So we look at where's your biggest opportunity and also something that you know you can deliver. So when I work with people that have been in business, it's actually really easy to do, because they can't see the value that they can bring. They're just working in their business and they're just not seeing it, which is why I can usually level them up really easy, because they're missing things that they don't even realize they've done or that are highly valuable to the market. So that's a big piece. But if somebody's just starting out but maybe they're coming from a corporate career and they've had amazing success, or maybe they've been running a great business, they've been successful and now they want to start coaching or consulting. I'm going to find out what were the things that you did really great in your business, what are the things that you know, the obstacles that you overcame, and maybe you figured out a different way to do things and that's, so we're looking for those differentiators and then but then, but we don't keep pieces out and this is what happens.

Ann Carden: 17:59

A lot, you see, a lot of I call them one trick ponies. Somebody will specialize, but they'll be like okay, I'm going to help you build a Facebook group and monetize it. Okay, that's great, but what other pieces are you leaving out that I really need to build my business with. So if I see someone that says with, building a Facebook group and monetizing that

is like one piece of what I hope you do. Like who do you think I'm going to want to go to the person that it's part like? They offer all these other things too. So a lot of times people leave out a lot of value for what they do. I like to say I'm an A to Z kind of consultant. I help you. It can be from concept all the way to million dollar plus leaps, or it can be taking what you're doing and how can we generate and really scale this faster and get those big leaps.

Janice Hostager: 18:54

One of the things that I hear you saying is that you can really pull in kind of aspects of somebody, maybe their personal brand. I use branding, but really I think I'm talking about positioning. I think I use those two interchangeably. But we have transferable skills right, so it could be even personal skills, like if you've gone through a bankruptcy, for example, and you learned, or just burnout which I personally have gone through with my agency business that I had, you learn some things and I share a lot of those things with my audience, or my audience, yes, but also with my clients, my one-on-one clients, because I can see the signs of burnout and I can see when they're working too hard and they're putting in weekends and all of that, and yet I don't really talk about that. But that would be something which I could probably just like pull in right, it could be pulled into your offer Absolutely, and it could help set you apart too.

Janice Hostager: 19:55

Right yeah, so it could be small things like that that we don't even think about, that we've gone through that really make us unique? Right yeah, not necessarily, and especially as entrepreneurs. I think our personal lives and our business lives blend together so much that it could be things with someone's personal life too. So I love that.

Ann Carden: 20:15

Yeah.

Ann Carden: 20:15

A good example of this is I've been married for 45 years. So if I was working with, say, a power couple, okay, in business, or if I wanted to pull that into my consulting like I could actually position myself. Oh, I work with power couples so they can have a strong marriage while they explode their business growth. So that's a good example of how something like that could be pulled in. So it's finding those ways to differentiate yourself and there's so many ways like it can go so deep and you can really micro niche. But you'll be surprised. A lot of people are afraid to like niche down because they're afraid they're going to miss out on all this business. But there's more business than you could

possibly get in any niche, unless you're just in a niche where there's nothing going on, right?

Ann Carden: 21:04

That's not the case with most people.

Janice Hostager: 21:07

Right, right. I 100% agree with that. It's a big pie.

Ann Carden: 21:10

It is.

Janice Hostager: 21:13

So if my listeners only take away one thing from this, what should it be.

Ann Carden: 21:18

You

Ann Carden: 21:18

have to set yourself apart. Don't be afraid of setting yourself apart in the industry and do it around where you are the most confident, but also where it can have the most value in the market, and then and really get positioned that way. But look different. You should be in a category of one. Look for how you can put yourself in a category of one and if you do that, you will never compete. You will be able to attract the right people and you'll repel the people that are not a fit, which is a great thing, right, that's a great thing.

Ann Carden: 21:53

It leverages your time. I'm very clear about who I don't work with and who isn't a good fit for me, and I'm very clear about who is. So I don't get a lot of. I don't waste a lot of time on calls with people that are the wrong people for me. I don't. It's just very clear. And they also. The other piece of that is they also know when they come to a call with me. I know, you know I don't know what you charge, but I know I want to work with you. That's what strong positioning can do. It can pre-sell you, so that's how your positioning should be for you.

Ann Carden: 22:29

So look for ways to do that.

Janice Hostager: 22:32

Love that, and that is so true. I mean, if you find somebody and you say that's what I need.

Ann Carden: 22:36

Yeah, I've been looking for you.

Janice Hostager: 22:38

Yes, yep, that's so true. So how can people find out more about you?

Ann Carden: 22:45

Yes, you can go to my website at annlcarden.com. My books are on there. I've got some free resources on there. You can see my podcast on there. We just hit episode 300, so I'm super excited.

Janice Hostager: 22:57

Yay, that is great.

Ann Carden: 22:59

Episode 300. And so that's on there.

Janice Hostager: 23:03

What's

Janice Hostager: 23:04

the name of your podcast?

Ann Carden: 23:06

Expert in

Ann Carden: 23:07

You.

Janice Hostager: 23:07

I love it, love it.

Ann Carden: 23:14

So I have a free magazine, so I'm a publisher of a magazine. You can get that on there.

Ann Carden: 23:16

So there's lots to do there.

Janice Hostager: 23:17

Okay, I'll put all the links in the show notes for today. Thank you so much, Ann. I have loved our conversation and I have learned a lot too.

Ann Carden: 23:25

Thank you, it was my pleasure. It was great being here with you.

Janice Hostager: 23:29

What I love about repositioning yourself as the expert is the simplicity in it all. You don't have to be louder or cheaper or hustle harder. You just need to find a way to be positioned as the go-to expert in your own unique way, and I love that. So take a minute today and ask yourself how can I stand out from the masses? What little mindset shift can change everything about the way you show up in business and how you position yourself? So to learn more about anything we talked about today, visit myweeklymarketing.com/123. And I would love your help. If this episode spoke to you, send me a DM on Instagram at Janice Hostager Marketing. Thanks for listening today. I'll see you next time. Bye for now.