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Why You Need a Marketing Strategy Plan and How to Create One Brand + Design Scoop ep. 018 Podcast Transcript

Welcome to Brand + Design Scoop, where I share practical, relatable tips on branding, design, and building a business for freelancers and do-it-yourselfers who want to stop doing everything themselves.

I'm Kelly, a brand strategist and Squarespace website designer and founder of AKS Design Studio.

Just a quick note: Whenever I mentions articles, resources, or my own blogs or podcasts, I will always share the links in the show notes. So, I won't repeat that every time I share a resource. Also, this is a particularly good episode to download the transcript since it lays out everything in easy-to-follow lists.

All right, today I'm going to discuss creating a marketing strategy plan. When you search online for "marketing strategy," you'll find articles and guides for both marketing strategy and for marketing plans. Why do both of these results pop up? Are marketing strategies and marketing plans the same thing? If not, what's the difference?

Technically, a marketing strategy and a marketing plan are two different things.

A marketing strategy is the overall approach to communicating with your audience and turning them into paying clients.

A marketing plan is how you will put your marketing strategy into action. Your marketing plan contains action steps that help you achieve the goals of your marketing strategy.

Now, the two have a lot of overlap into what goes into them. For example, they both contain sections on your marketing goals, your target audience, and your competition. They also include information about what communication channels you'll use to market your project.

So, to simplify things, why don't people just roll the strategy and the plan into one document?

Well, when I was getting my master's degree in communication from Johns Hopkins University, I took a class in which we did just that. It's called an integrated marketing communication plan. It combines your marketing strategy with your marketing plan. I'm going to teach you how to create an integrated marketing communication plan. But I'm going to simplify it for you even more since we're freelancers, and what I learned goes really in depth for larger companies.

I'm going to call this a marketing strategy plan, to use common language, instead of an integrated marketing communication plan. That's a bit cumbersome!

And I'm going to give you each section of the plan as a question instead of just a single word or phrase. I find using writing prompts a lot easier to use than single words or phrases. For example, which would be easier for you to start writing about, "Sales" or "Where will sales come from?" This is your business. You can format documents however works best for you!

So, why do you need a marketing strategy plan?

Before we get into the ways a marketing strategy plan helps you, let me say that you are creating a plan for a specific product or service. You can also create one for your whole brand, such as if you're trying to increase brand awareness.

Let's say you have your regular service, and now you want to offer a high-ticket special service. It has a time and space limit to it. There's some urgency around it, and it will take some special marketing to get the word out. This would be a good time to have a marketing strategy plan just for that project.

I have a marketing strategy plan for my main service but not for my other services. I see those as fallbacks for when people don't want a full website. But those aren't what I really want people to hire me for. I want people to hire me for the full website service. So, that's all I promote. And that's all I've created a marketing strategy plan for.

All right, here's why you need a marketing strategy plan.

1. It helps you achieve your goals

Without a marketing strategy plan, you might not even set marketing goals for your project. Going through this process, you create clear, measurable goals that help you define the rest of your plan.

2. It helps you reach your target audience

The whole point of the marketing strategy plan is to communicate with your target audience and turn them into paying clients. The steps you'll go through in creating a marketing strategy plan will help you figure out how to do that.

3. It helps you keep your marketing consistent

Strong brands have consistent branding through their website, logo, social media, visual collateral, messaging, ads, everything. Your marketing strategy plan can help guide you in maintaining consistency throughout your marketing.

4. It helps you stay on budget

One of the things that your plan will help you do is estimate your marketing costs. Yes, there are going to be some costs to promoting your business or your project. Your marketing strategy plan will help you budget and determine your spending.

5. Finally, it helps you find a way to measure success

How will you know if your marketing strategy plan is successful? In the last part of the plan, you'll figure out metrics for defining success.

STEPS TO CREATE A MARKETING STRATEGY PLAN

So, now let's discuss the steps that go into creating a marketing strategy plan. I'll tell you what they are, then I'll go over each one in more detail.

1. What is Being Marketed ?
2. What is Known About the Market Where the Brand Competes?
3. What is Known About the Major Competitors?
4. Where Will Sales Come From?
5. What are the Brand's Marketing Objectives/Overall Goals?
6. How is Marketing Communication Expected to Contribute to the Marketing Objectives?
7. Who is the Target Audience?
8. What are the Media Options for Achieving the Marketing Objectives?
9. What is the Budget for Marketing this Project?
10. What are the Metrics for Measuring Success?

So, let's dive in.

1. What is Being Marketed?

Here is where you will describe the project, service, or brand that you will be marketing.

Start out by describing in a few sentences what the brand does. Don't just jump straight into your service or project.

For example, here is the first part of what I wrote for this section when I did a marketing strategy plan for the company Tin Drum:

Tin Drum creates performance- and narrative-based content for augmented reality (AR) headsets, such as the Magic Leap One and HoloLens, using human holograms created through volumetric-captured moving photography. Unlike virtual reality (VR) in which the user is immersed in a fantasy world, Tin Drum's products digitally drop life-size human holograms into the user's real world. This creates a feeling for the consumer that they are in the presence of the performer. The hologram is site-specific and is anchored in space such that the consumer is able to walk around the performer, seeing the performer from any angle — front, side, back — while also hearing the performer speak. The consumer feels as if they are experiencing a live performance even though the performer is not really there. Tin Drum's products pose the question: "What is real, and does perception alter your reality?"

After this part, you'll want to write a short paragraph about what makes your brand, your service, or your project unique. Again, here is what I wrote for Tin Drum:

What is unique about Tin Drum's products in the sphere of performance art is that the performance lives forever, beyond the lifespan of the performer. When a live performance is over, it can never truly be experienced again, and a filmed version of the performance isolates the viewer from the performer. The viewer does not feel as if they are there.

In the last part of this section, you will write a few sentences that describe the service or project that you will be marketing. Give some concrete details about it. Here is Tin Drum again:

Tin Drum's first product is a performance piece featuring performance artist Marina Abramovic. The product will premiere as an exhibition at the Serpentine Galleries in London in February 2019. Up to 50 consumers will be able to experience the product at the same time. The exhibition will be free to experience, and the product will go to auction later in 2019.

2. What is Known About the Market Where the Brand Competes?

For this section, you should do a bit of research into your industry. Look into the range of prices for services similar to yours. Look into how much competition there is in your industry. Look at how much competition there is in your niche.

Your niche is the tightly-defined area within your industry in which you do business. This helps you stand out from your competition. For example, website design is a massive industry. So, I do Squarespace website design. That's still huge. Most freelance website designers have entrepreneurs and small-business owners as their ideal clients. My ideal clients are freelancers and do-it-yourselfers. So, my niche is Squarespace website design for freelancers and do-it-yourselfers. It's a tight niche that is still large enough to sustain my business.

For information on helping you define your niche, check out my podcast called "[How to Pick a Niche for Your Business](#)."

You can also look at whether your industry is growing, staying steady, or declining. Just google it, something like, “website design industry growth”—but using your industry.

In the Tin Drum example, they were creating a new market. No one had previously sold an augmented-reality piece of any kind at auction. And this was an AR performance-art piece. So, truly a new market.

If you are creating a new market, go ahead and claim it!

3. What is Known About the Major Competitors?

When I wrote the marketing strategy plan for Tin Drum, they had no competitors. So, I wrote instead about future threats.

For the rest of us, of course we’ve got lots of competition! What you’re going to do in this section is look at 5 to 10 specific competitors and discuss trends in the industry. Uncovering those trends will help you find holes where you can stand out. Find out more about that in my podcast called “[Thinking About Rebranding? Start with a Brand Audit.](#)”

So, here, you’ll write down key points about each competitor, such as

- Their name
- Design features on their website
- Their prices (if they list them—write down if they don’t list them)
- Where they market their services
- If they have a newsletter

Then, from all of this information for each competitor, discuss trends that emerge from the data. For example, what is the most common way that people are marketing their services—social media, Google ads, newsletter? What is the price range and average price for a service like yours?

4. Where Will Sales Come From?

This section refers to exactly where you will be selling your service. Will you be selling it on your website? Can people buy it in person from you? Will you have a “purchase” button on Instagram?

This section can be written as a list or just a sentence or two. Your preference.

5. What are the Brand’s Marketing Objectives or Overall Goals?

So, what is the point of your marketing this service or your brand? We said earlier that the point of a marketing strategy plan was to communicate with your target audience and turn them into paying clients. This, then, assumes that *your* main objective is to make a certain amount of sales or a certain amount of income from the sale of this service.

Now, you could have a different goal or additional goals. For example, here is what I wrote for Tin Drum:

The overall marketing objectives of the company are to create brand awareness, establish Tin Drum as a leader in the performance sector of the AR industry, and create a market for its products. While the facts that Tin Drum is still a young and unknown company and the category is a new one may be challenges, these are also opportunities for the company. They can generate positive brand attitude and category need without having to overcome much in the way of preconceived beliefs about either the company or the category.

So, Tin Drum’s original objectives did not have to do with sales or income. They had to do with brand awareness, establishing themselves as a leader in their niche, and creating a market for their products.

Can you have similar objectives? Of course! Brand awareness is always a good goal to have, especially if you are still a relatively young or unknown business. If your domain authority is still low, then, yes, you should make brand awareness one of your goals.

By the way, to monitor search engine ranking and domain authority, I use [GrowthBar SEO](#). It also shows you keyword difficulty and gives suggestions for other keywords. And it gives you information on other websites’ domain ranking and keyword ranking. As of this recording, GrowthBar pricing starts at \$29/month. You get 20 percent off when you use my link.

Some basic objectives and goals you may consider include:

- Acquire new clients
- Earn a certain amount of income
- Increase brand awareness
- Establish industry authority
- Boost brand engagement
- Generate leads

Pick about three that feel right for you. We'll discuss how to measure them at the end of this list.

6. How is Marketing Communication Expected to Contribute to the Marketing Objectives?

This section is a bit advanced, but it's really worth doing. I'm going to simplify it as much as I can—after studying the concepts in books and several scholarly articles in graduate school! And, to give credit, this model was developed by Rossiter and Percy.

Services and products are defined as either high-involvement or low-involvement. Involvement is tied directly to risk—that is, purchase risk or psychological risk.

High-involvement services and products are high-risk in that they cost more, and people take more time deciding whether to buy the service or product. Examples of high-involvement services and products include Apple products (unless you're an Apple fanatic!), other high-end gadgets, cars, jewelry, vacations, and high-end coaching programs.

Low-involvement services and products are low-risk in that they cost less, and people take less time deciding whether to buy the service or product. They often buy these products as impulse buys. Examples of low-involvement products include everyday clothes, makeup, and cleaning products.

Now, you use different strategies to influence purchase motivations. There are two motivations: Positive and negative. And there are two strategies: Transformational and informational.

A negative motivation is when the buyer uses facts and figures (information) to influence their purchasing decision. A positive motivation is when the buyer uses feelings (transformation) to influence their purchasing decision.

So, you see that understanding your client's motivation will influence what strategy you use.

Now, you can use either strategy with either low-involvement or high-involvement services. For example, insurance and financial services are high-involvement informational. People tend not to make these decisions based on emotions. They make these decisions based on facts and figures.

High-end coaching programs are an example of high-involvement transformational. People are looking for a transformation when they join a coaching program. They make their decision with their gut and with their feelings, not with facts and figures.

High-involvement services usually take more time and more marketing to sell. They also often need a "try before buy" approach. For coaching, this means offering a complimentary discovery session. Think of test-driving a car.

Of course, there are lots of high-involvement services and products where you can't try before you buy. You can't take a vacation then get a refund if you didn't like it. At this point, I can't do a website for someone on spec.

So, for high-involvement services, the marketing message, the marketing channels, and the frequency of marketing are going to be key.

Write a bit in this section about what type of service yours is. Write about what kind of motivation your clients use in making a purchase decision. Based on that motivation, write about which strategy (informational or transformational) you'll use with them.

7. Who is the Target Audience?

Understanding your target audience is essential in marketing your services. You aren't marketing in a vacuum to just anyone and everyone. No, not everyone can use your service. And you definitely wouldn't want to work with just anyone.

As a freelancer, you get to pick whom you work with. So, first you need to identify your ideal client. I go into lots of details about doing that in my blog post called “[Why Is It Important to Identify Your Ideal Client?](#)” and my podcast called “[How to Identify and Attract Your Ideal Client.](#)” You should do that exercise a basic part of your business. Then you can use that information for this section.

The main things you’ll need to know about your ideal client for this section are:

- Their income range (this will help you understand if you’re pricing your service too low or too high)
- Their age (this will help you know which social media platforms to use)
- Where they go for information (this will help you understand what channels to use to market your service)
- How they make their buying decisions (their motivation and how long they tend to take to make a decision)
- Where they make their purchases for services like yours (in person? on your website? on freelancing sites, such as Upwork or Bark?)

There are a lot more details that my ideal client exercise takes you through. But these are the essential pieces to know for here.

Without taking a survey of existing and past clients, how can you figure this out?

You can ask Google. You can use yourself as an example. You can ask friends and acquaintances —just the ones who match the definition of your ideal client. And you can estimate based on past clients.

8. What are the Media Options for Achieving the Marketing Objectives?

This is where you finally get into specifics of the strategy. Where exactly will you market yourself?

Your website is the first place. So, be sure to list that.

Social media, of course. Well, as freelancers, that's a pretty obvious one. Though I do know a few freelancers who aren't on social media. And I actually know someone who doesn't have a website. She gets all of her clients through referrals and word of mouth.

With social media, you don't have to be on all the platforms. Research which ones are best for your industry and which ones your ideal client is mostly on. This is where knowing their age will help. Google "Instagram demographics," for example, and you'll find information on the percentage of users of different age groups.

Hootsuite has particularly good articles about each of the major social-media platforms. Here is info about Instagram from their article called "[Instagram Demographics 2021: Important User Stats for Marketers.](#)"

According to their statistics, 33 percent of Instagram users are 25 to 34 years in age. The next most populous group is 18- to 24-year-olds at just over 29 percent. 35- to 44-year-olds make up 16 percent of Instagram users. And 45- to 54-year-olds make up just over 8 percent of Instagram users.

So, if your ideal client is within the 18 to 34 age range, then Instagram would be an ideal place for you to promote your service. Do this same research for other social-media platforms you're considering.

Do you have a newsletter? If you blog or podcast, then you really should. That would be your weekly content for your newsletter. I post a blog post every Tuesday and a podcast every Friday. I send out a newsletter every Wednesday with links to both. So, I'm not creating new content for the newsletter.

When you have a newsletter, remember to use an official email marketing service, such as Squarespace Marketing or MailChimp. They make sure that you're following all the legal guidelines—such as having a working unsubscribe link and including an address in the footer. I've seen freelancers send email blasts from their personal email and not give any way to unsubscribe. They've also put me on their list without my permission. Man, do I hate that.

So, you can use your website, social media, and your newsletter as marketing options. What else?

- Referrals
- Word of mouth
- Google Ads
- Facebook Ads
- Instagram Ads
- Flyers
- Networking events
- Sponsoring a conference, particularly one where you'd get to speak on stage

You do *not* have to do all of things. In fact, you *should* not do all of these. You'll wear yourself out, possibly blow your budget, and not be able to focus on the channels that matter most.

9. What is the Budget for Marketing this Project?

Here is when we transition from a traditional marketing strategy to a traditional marketing plan. See how much better this integrated marketing communication plan is? You don't have to do everything twice just to get to the nitty gritty.

The Small-Business Association notes that small businesses tend to spend 7 - 8 percent of their income on marketing. Deloitte puts that number around 12 percent. The numbers assume that the small business is outsourcing content creation—that is, writing blog posts and newsletters, creating images, editing videos and audio, and posting to social media.

As freelancers, we tend to do all of this ourselves. I certainly do. But I have a background in film editing, more than 10 years of experience doing a podcast, lots of experience writing and editing, and past experience doing graphic design. Plus, I was a marketing consultant years ago. So, I feel really comfortable doing my own marketing.

You might need to hire another freelancer to do some of this work for you—whether you don't have the skills to do some of this, or you just don't have the time.

Here are some of the basics that you might be spending your marketing budget on:

- Your website
- Google Ads
- Social-Media Ads

- Email Marketing
- Design Software
- Video-Editing Software
- Audio-Editing Software
- SEO-Monitoring Service

I'll discuss some software and services that I use. For more details, you can refer to my blog post called "[Design and Business Resources for Freelancers and Do-It-Yourselfers.](#)"

I've included design software, video-editing software, and audio-editing software because you'll definitely be creating images for your website and for social media. You might want to create some video for your website and social media. And sometimes audio is helpful, too. Or, you might want to start a podcast.

Most design software is based on subscriptions today. I use Adobe Creative Cloud Express. Well, I subscribe to the full Adobe suite. But Creative Cloud Express is an excellent standalone product. It also gives you access to Photoshop Express and a few other programs. The premium level costs \$9.99 per month or \$99.99 per year. Creative Cloud Express is an alternative to Canva, and I prefer it over Canva. It also costs less than Canva's \$12.99 per month or \$119.99 per year.

Website hosting plans vary in price. On Squarespace, you'd want at least the business plan, which costs \$23 per month when paid annually.

There are some free email marketing services. But they really limit you in how many subscribers you can have and how many blasts you can send every month. I use Squarespace Marketing. Plans start at \$5 per month.

For video editing, I use LumaFusion on my iPad. It is excellent and was a one-time fee of \$29.99.

For audio editing, I use Ferrite Recording Studio on my iPad. Also excellent. Better than GarageBand, which comes free with Apple products. Ferrite was a one-time fee of \$29.99.

Finally, like I mentioned earlier, I use [GrowthBar SEO](#) to monitor my SEO results. Pricing starts at \$29 per month. With my link, you get 20 percent off.

For Google Ads and social media ads, you control how much you spend—based on views or clicks. The set-up in all of them helps you pick your goals and choose the best option based on your goals. You set a maximum spend amount, and the system shows you how many people your ad will reach. You can pick your demographics—which you will definitely want to do. Don't have the ad go out to the whole world. Use the demographics from your ideal client.

10. What are the Metrics for Measuring Success?

Based on your marketing objectives and goals, you're now going to figure out how you're going to measure success.

Let me repeat the example goals I gave earlier:

- Acquire new clients
- Earn a certain amount of income
- Increase brand awareness
- Establish industry authority
- Boost brand engagement
- Generate leads

What are some metrics you could use to measure these goals?

For acquiring new clients you would simply track how many new clients you've gotten. Easy. Just keep a spreadsheet, or use a client- and project-management system, such as [HoneyBook](#) (starting at \$9 per month—20 percent off with my link).

For new income, again, track it on a spreadsheet or in a bookkeeping system, such as HoneyBook or Quickbooks.

Measuring brand awareness is difficult. You don't measure it directly. You're going to use other metrics to come at it sideways. Track things such as website visitors, newsletter signups, social media follows, social media mentions, social media comments, social media shares, and social media likes.

Same thing with industry authority. Track everything you do for brand awareness. Add to that domain authority in an SEO-monitoring system such as [GrowthBar SEO](#). The more of an industry leader you are, the higher your domain authority will be.

For brand engagement, you'll want to look at how your social media is performing. So, look at number of followers, number of likes, number of comments, number of shares, and number of mentions.

Finally, for leads, track new leads in a spreadsheet or in a client- and project-management system such as [HoneyBook](#).

Once you've finished your marketing strategy plan, how do you proceed?

1. First, you'll go back to number 8 (what your media options are) and number 9 (what your budget is) and combine them into action steps.

Figure out which outlets won't cost you anything—other than creating the content. Posting is free, unless you use a content management system, such as Loomly or Hootsuite.

A good rule of thumb for posting on social media is to follow the rule of thirds. So, one third of your posts will be original content. One third will be curated content—that is, other people's articles. And one third will be conversation—that is, posts that are behind-the-scenes, asking questions, showing something from your life, or recognizing a holiday or “national day of” whatever. You know, like National Pet Day.

Use a content calendar—or a service like Loomly or Hootsuite—to plan out your content, the topics, the category (original content, curated, or conversation), the date you'll post, hashtags, links, and associated images.

Tracking likes and comments on content that you create and *don't* pay for is called owned media. Owned media also includes blogs, podcasts, and newsletter. You have total control over earned media.

Another type of media other than owned media is called earned media. This is a really powerful type of media. This is when other people are talking about you. It includes word of mouth, PR,

reviews of your services or business, and when people share your posts on social media. Earned media is also free. A real benefit of earned media is that it builds trust and loyalty. A vast majority of people trust recommendations from friends and family more than they do marketing or advertising. And, today, people also trust recommendations from influencers.

The third type of media is called paid media. This is ads—or any time you pay to get your content seen or promoted. So, this takes us into the next action you should take...

2. Look at how much you've decided to spend on ads and figure out which platforms would be best for that, such as Google Ads and social media ads.

Be really precise with your ads. If your ideal client is googling your service, then Google Ads may be the way to go. But, if your ideal client is searching on Facebook, then you may want to be there instead. You can do both, of course. But, if you have to pick just one, look back at your target audience information to see where they're looking for information on services like yours.

When you set up your ads, really define your demographics by age, gender (if appropriate), and income. You may want to define a location, as well. Also, you can eliminate search terms when you create Google Ads. For example, for high-end services, eliminate search terms that include “cheap,” “free,” and “sale.” I know that I wouldn't want to waste a Google Ad on someone searching for “cheap Squarespace website designer.”

3. Next, look back at number 6: How is marketing communication expected to contribute to the marketing objectives?

This is where you figured out if your service is high-involvement or low-involvement. And you figured out if you need a transformational or informational strategy—based on your client's positive or negative motivation.

This will inform the content and tone of your copy, your images, your ads, and your social-media posts.

If your service is high-involvement and transformational, you'll need to use inspirational copy and images and expect clients to take some time to decide before buying.

If your service is high-involvement and informational, you'll use lots of facts and figures in your copy and images and still expect clients to take some time to decide before buying.

If your service is low-involvement and transformational, use inspirational copy and images, and expect clients to decide fairly quickly.

If your service is low-involvement and informational, use facts and figures, and expect clients to decide fairly quickly.

Remember that high-involvement services are high-priced services. So, you'll want to promote your service to feel somewhere along the lines of sophisticated, luxurious, exclusive, professional, or something else that speaks to high quality.

Don't put your service on sale. Don't use discounts. Don't give free trials. A discovery session is fine. That's a way to prequalify potential clients and to give a taste of your excellent customer service.

A discovery session is also a way to learn more about their motivation and to sell them on the value of your service. This will move them away from the idea that they are paying you for your time. See my blog post called "[Pricing Your Services](#)" for information on that.

So, at the beginning of this podcast I said that you can create a marketing strategy plan for your whole brand or for individual services. It's a good idea to do one for your brand, especially if you're a new business.

It's a really good idea to do a marketing strategy plan for a new service, especially if it's a high-involvement service—such as a long-term coaching program or some sort of high-priced course with one-on-one time. High-involvement services usually involve lots of one-on-one time. That's a key part of what makes them special and exclusive.

So, an action plan may look like this:

You have a high-involvement transformational course that's starting in eight weeks. You'll have the course already planned out by this point. And let's say you want to create a sense of urgency for people to register for the course.

1. Create a landing page for the course. You'll launch the landing page about two-and-a-half weeks before start date and have an email sign-up on the landing page to notify people when the course is open for registration. Take down the email sign-up form when the course goes on sale.
2. You've decided that you'll officially start selling the course 10 days before the start date.
3. Pre-write a blog post that you'll post two-and-a-half weeks before the course starts—so, about one week before you start selling the course.
4. You've decided that you'll promote the course on Instagram and Facebook.
5. Create your content for sharing on social media. You'll be sharing original content to promote your course once two-and-a-half weeks before the course starts then about three times a week once you start selling it—so, 10 days before start date. You can reuse some of the content. But you'll need several iterations of content so that you're not repeating the same posts over and over again.
6. Plan your ads. You've decided that you'll take out an Instagram ad. Plan what audience you will target. Plan your copy, hashtags, and image. And decide what your budget is. You'll run the ad from 12 days before start date until the day before start date.
7. Send out a “coming soon” email about two-and-a-half weeks before start date—so, one week before registration opens. Publish the blog post this same day and share the link in the email.
8. Figure out some influencers who might be willing and able to promote your course. You can offer them a commission on anyone who registers through them. Contact them six to eight weeks before start date.
9. Offer brief discovery sessions for anyone who needs more information. Don't give away content or advice. Just promote the course and answer questions about the course. This is *not* free consulting.
10. Close the doors for registration on the start date.

Now, you can adjust the timing for all of this. If you don't want to create such a sense of urgency, you can lengthen the time of promotion. So, you could extend the selling time to two-and-a-half to three weeks. I prefer 10 days though.

For a service that won't be limited by a set registration time, still send out a "coming soon" email and posts. Then promote the service several times once it launches. Use testimonials from past clients.

You should also testimonials to promote a course. If you're offering a course you've offered before, use testimonials from previous courses. If it's a new course, share testimonials from private clients.

For a service, it's also a good idea to offer discovery sessions. Again, this is not free consulting. You're uncovering their problem, their pain point, their motivation, and their commitment level. Then you're selling the value of your service. Answer any questions they have about your service.

So, that's it! I hope this helps you come up with your own strategy *and* plan of action. As I said earlier, you can do this for your whole business—especially if you're just starting out—and you can do it for any new service. You should especially create a unique marketing strategy plan for any new high-involvement service, such as a course or long-term service. An example of a long-term service would be website design with ongoing website maintenance or freelance writing that's ongoing—such as continuous writing of a company's blog posts, emails, or other content.

That's it for today! Don't forget to download this episode's transcript to get these steps with lists and bullet points.

I'd love to read your thoughts on this episode. You can leave comments on this episode's post on my website.

I'll be back next week with more branding, design, and business tips.

See you next time on Brand + Design Scoop!

Links mentioned in the episode:

[“Design and Business Resources for Freelancers and Do-It-Yourselfers”](#)

[GrowthBar SEO](#). (20% off)

[HoneyBook](#) (20% off)

[“How to Pick a Niche for Your Business”](#)

[“Instagram Demographics 2021: Important User Stats for Marketers”](#) — Hootsuite

[“Pricing Your Services”](#)

[“Thinking About Rebranding? Start with a Brand Audit.”](#)

[“Why Is It Important to Identify Your Ideal Client?”](#)

Link to this episode



Angela Kelly Smith provides custom Squarespace websites, branding strategy, and marketing instruction so freelancers and entrepreneurs can run a successful business while spending more time focusing on the work they really love doing. Check out her [website design + marketing strategy services](#).