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Learn *The Lingo: Make Your Small Business Pop With the Right Audience*.

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The statements and opinions by Jeffrey Shaw do not reflect the views or opinions of Verizon and its affiliates.

PRESENTATION

Chris Serico

Hi, I'm Chris Serico with Verizon. Welcome to our Small Business Webinar Series. We're so glad you could be here with us today. Now with each webinar, we feature industry experts who bring inspiration and advice to keep your small business moving forward. Returning as our host today is Ramon Ray and it's always exciting to have him here with us, and if you aren't already familiar with Ramon through our series, he's an entrepreneur, he's an author, he's a speaker, and he's the founder of SmartHustle Media. As for our guest today, we have Jeffrey Shaw. He's the host of a popular podcast called Creative Warriors and the author of *LINGO: Discover Your Ideal Customer's Secret Language and Make Your Business Irresistible*. So, if you're looking to find new ways to connect and resonate with your audience, you've signed up for the right webinar.

So, let's begin. Here now are Jeffrey Shaw and Ramon Ray. Take it away.

Ramon Ray

Chris, again, thanks for having us. Thanks for the warm introduction, Chris. Always good to be back here at the Verizon Small Business Webinar Series. My name is Ramon Ray, and I'm really happy to work with my colleague, a fellow speaker, and amongst other things, Jeffrey Shaw, who's the author of *LINGO*. Jeffrey, thanks for spending time with us today, and I know you have a lot of information to share with us and to help the Verizon Small Business customers. How are you?

Jeffrey Shaw

I'm great. Thank you for having me. I'm super excited to be here, and I want to thank you for all that you're doing for our small business community, so thrilled to be here.

Ramon Ray

Awesome. Excited to be here as well. So, one thing I want to jump right into, Jeffrey, listen, we're going through some challenging, some rough times, and I think even beyond the shelter in place and issues we're going through now, one big, big struggle small businesses have is how do I get more customers? How do I work with more people? How do I build my business? We're scratching clawing etc. all day long to do that. I know your book, which came out relatively recently, *LINGO*, is a masterpiece on how to solve this problem. Can you spend a few minutes, Jeffrey, to unpack what *LINGO* is about, what that process is, and frankly, why you're advocating that you don't have to wake up every day and claw and scratch and fight? You can sit back a little more easily and people will come to you, but it has to be a process, there has to be some things that you have to think about. What is that all about?

Jeffrey Shaw

Well, there's most definitely a process and by all means, to your point, the goal is here for me to support small businesses to learn to attract their ideal customers. None of us are in business for everybody, and the fastest way to grow your business exponentially is to

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hone in on your ideal customers, those that you are meant to serve, because if you can serve them, make them happy, they're far more likely to come back. Now, how you determine, how you define ideal customer, I leave open a little bit, but I will tell you, it's not always just the most profitable. It's also those that enable you to do your best work, you and your entire team, because if you do your best work, they're going to keep coming back, they're going to spread the word, and it's based on this understanding of lingo. So, let me define that a little bit, because to speak someone's lingo is to actually tap into their unspoken emotions. It's to know your customers so well that they feel a deep connection. What I often say the goal in marketing and branding and messaging needs to be today is to make your customers feel like, wow, it's like you're in my head. Because if you can make a customer feel like you know them so well, you understand them so well that they're likely to say, wow, it's like you're in my head, what more of a connection can you ask for?

So, I've been unpacking this for 35 years of entrepreneurship to figure out how we can tap into those unspoken emotions so that our ideal customers feel aligned with us, and to your point, this is more important now than it ever has been, because there's more competition as businesses are struggling to get back on their feet. The whole world has changed. I think it's more important now to make people feel like you get them and that you are speaking directly to them.

Ramon Ray

It sounds like we're on a Steve Harvey or some other entertainer's show or something when they're doing a date or something like this. I didn't know he or she got into my head. That's why—

Jeffrey Shaw

Nothing creepy. Nothing creepy.

Ramon Ray

In a good way, in a good way. Yes. Let's talk about this aspect, Jeffrey, of ideal customers. What do you say to that small business owner out there, and again, in this Verizon Small Business Webinar Series, Jeffrey, we've taught thousands of small businesses across a variety of sectors, but talk to the person who is like, Jeffrey, what are you talking about ideal customer? My view of customer, Jeffrey, is the one who's going to give me a check. That's all I want to do. I've got to pay rent or whatever it is. Can you help us understand – and people who sound like maybe they're one of the large big box retailers, we're here for everybody, everybody come in, but what I think I'm hearing you say maybe is, maybe you don't have to do that, and/or that's not the best approach. Why is that?

Jeffrey Shaw

Because small business, we don't have a lot of time. We are doing the... we're wearing the thousand hats, we're playing the roles of several people, we don't have a lot of time and businesses waste an inordinate amount of time trying to convince people of their value, or trying to satisfy customers that will never be satisfied, and we all know this. Every small business owner knows this experience. They're the customers that we bend over backwards for, that we jump through hoops for, they're almost always the least profitable. Those that we jump through hoops for almost always are more likely to say, well, that was a waste of time, and then there are those customers that are so aligned with what we do and how we're connected, that they just fly through our process and love what we do for them. So, we want more of those customers. I want to stop small businesses from wasting their time trying to convince people of their value and to focus on the people who already value what they do, and that becomes a marketing and branding strategy, which is what LINGO is all about, so that you can attract your ideal customers who already value what you do, and therefore collaboratively you're creating much better value.

Ramon Ray

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Are there some specific ways, Jeffrey, that we should do this, talking to the people who are listening now, two, or three or four tips that they should be writing down? It may not be able to change them overnight or instantaneously, what things should they unpack and think about as we're on this journey?

Jeffrey Shaw

Yes, so I've broken this down into a five-step process, and I'm happy to go through all five steps with you. These are what I have deemed over my decades of experience as being the five strongest human emotions, because I say the buzzwords in business today need to be compassion and empathy and now more than ever, because of all the changes in the world, that it is more important now than ever to actually have true empathy for those that you serve. So, I've broken this down into these five emotional triggers, if you will, that a business needs to walk themselves through. Now, I wanted to clarify, this is for any opportunity when a business is changing, or the world has changed, and this is what makes this so important. Now, the whole world has changed, we have to understand that, and when I say what's changed is that people's values have shifted and changed, and when people's values shift and change, and what was important to them six months ago isn't as important to them now or vice versa, we then have to... as small businesses, we have to reevaluate everything. I think every small business needs to look carefully at what they're saying and what they're putting out, not just to make sure that you're not saying or doing the wrong thing, but perhaps even more importantly is to look for the opportunities where you can show up as the business that is more compassionate, more empathetic, more understanding of where they're at, because that's going to make you memorable.

So, the five steps, shall I go through them?

Ramon Ray

Yes, please, if you can do it one, two, three, four, five, then maybe we could pull out one or two to talk about more, and we're probably going to have a flutter of questions about all five, but that's OK, we're here to serve. So, all five, shoot.

Jeffrey Shaw

All right. We'll go through all five and then we can come back and pull out details of any one of them.

So, the first is you have to understand the customer's perspective. So, you can't go past go until you... you can't attempt to speak someone's lingo, to know them deeply, until you are willing to understand their perspective, and here's the key, without judgment, without assumption, everybody's life has changed. People are at different places, even within a single family, so you have to understand how they see the world. It's imperative to understand the perspective of your ideal customers. This was a big learning lesson for me, Ramon, because when I started my photography business, serving very affluent people 35 years ago, I was a lower-income kid from a small country town, I knew nothing about affluent people, but what I realized is that I didn't have to be from their world to serve them. I just had to understand their world, and I willingly stepped into their world without judgment and without assumption to break apart what does the world look like from their perspective? All right, so step number one is—

[All talking]

Ramon Ray

—Jeffrey, I know time is short, but I just want to underline, it seems to me, that was a simple willingness, because you said it best that you could have... it could have not worked, but it sounds... I'm just imagining if I was Jeffrey, that you stepped back and said, as you said, no judgement. I'm here to learn. If they say the black pen is red, or they say the water's milk, so shall it be and let's roll with it. Is that what I'm hearing you say?

Jeffrey Shaw

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It is, and it's... I also speak a lot in HR. So, I'll use this as an example because one of the challenges in business today is for people hiring and who you're hiring are likely millennials, and employers are just puzzled at hiring these millennials, and often with a lot of judgment, with a lot of negativity, and I'm saying it's only because you're not taking the time to understand them; understand their perspective, understand this is a generation that chooses a place to work based on whether it aligns with their values or not, and whether they feel like they're able to contribute to the world. So, it's absolutely clear. That's why I say without judgment and assumption. Believe me, Ramon, prior to serving those that I did as a photographer, I heard all the stereotypes about affluent people, but by putting them aside and not having any judgment or assumption, I was left open to understand their perspective and understand, well, this is how they see the world and I get it, and then try to make sure... so the first step is to understand where they're coming from and how they see the world.

Ramon Ray

OK, step number two.

Jeffrey Shaw

Number two, I think the most powerful one and the one I love the most is the feeling of familiarity. So, if you can recreate feelings of familiarity, it creates comfort and it creates a profound connection. So, think about it in a real estate business, for example. I don't know if you've ever had this experience, you go to sell a house and the realtor might suggest to bake an apple pie, or chocolate chip cookies. Why? Because the smell conjures up all these feelings and emotions of familiarity. So, as a small business, we want to understand... I think this is more important now than, again, it has been in the past, is that feeling of comfort. What is going to make the people that you serve feel comfortable? Certainly, if you're a restaurant, it's making sure they understand the steps of sanitization that you're taking on. Let them know how they're going to experience your business in these times. Familiarity is an incredibly profound feeling. It's memorable. I'm here in Miami. Miami has a patented scent. [who knows], a company, Doctor Aromas seems to have developed it, but I realized that because as I was looking for an apartment, I kept smelling the same fragrance, and I looked into it and realized, and I thought what powerful marketing that is so that as a tourist to the city, when you go home, you will always remember your trip to Miami because of that smell. So, that's the power of familiarity. It's somewhat subconscious, but not in a creepy way, but I think a beautiful understanding of people to understand what makes them feel comfortable. So, one thing I often suggest to small businesses is to study brands that your customers are already doing business with, and unpack what is it that feels familiar to them and how can you recapture that, because you don't want to attempt to gain the attention of a high end Neiman Marcus shopper by feeling like the dollar store. It won't work.

Ramon Ray

And for those which I think you need to do, but for those who want to be the cheapest, cheapest, cheapest, you don't want to get the opposite customer if you're saying we're being cheap, so whatever your choice is picking for differentiation, stick with it and I think over time it grows. I know myself, I had that with the people I work with. Jeffrey, I know for sure you... seeing you on stage and other things in our common communities, you have a certain way that we know Jeffrey, his shirts for example, or whatever it is. So, we all have a way we are, so I love it.

Jeffrey Shaw

And if you can see it, I'm barefoot now, but I would always have really rocking shoes on. That's something you can expect to be familiar.

Ramon Ray

I love it. Number three?

Jeffrey Shaw

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Step number three is style. Now, here's the thing about style. It's not as profoundly emotional as familiarity, because familiarity is so deep inside of us. Style is the instant decision maker and that is so important today. People make an instant decision as to whether you feel like the business or the brand they want to do business with based on whether your style resonates for them. We go shopping and we hold up a shirt and say this so me. Things feel like they speak to us, and where this is particularly important today is in our brand voice. Do you come across as the brand that is caring and understanding under these times? Brand voice I think is really important right now, because the last thing you want to do is sound tone deaf. You don't want to sound like you're not aware of the complexity of the issues that we're facing in business today. So, you want to make sure that you have a style and a brand voice that is also aligned with your ideal customers. There's been so many different interesting studies. I think 76% of people have tried new brands, for one reason, during the last few months. Maybe Amazon didn't have products that can be shipped, so we have found products that we need in other brands. 36% of those say that they're going to stick with those new brands. This is a phenomenal opportunity to create relationships with new customers, and it's largely because they feel like you are the more understanding, you're coming through for them. I did a podcast a while back that I referred to it as a leveling of the playing field because I don't think it matters who you've been in the past, whether you've been the biggest rock star in your industry, or completely unknown. What matters is how you're showing up for people today. Your brand voice style has a lot to do with that, and if you—

Ramon Ray

And I think, Jeffrey, what I'm seeing here, this works for the smallest business. You're a one-person shop, two guys in a garage, two girls and a cat, whatever it is, I think it can work, and it can work even for those who are larger. I think this style is very... is suddenly very important.

Jeffrey Shaw

Yes, and if you do any email marketing, what we know about email marketing is the only reason somebody opens up an email from you is the subject line. So, what's the brand voice? What degree of humor is appropriate for your ideal customers? That's all brand voice and that's style, and that has everything to do with whether you're going to get their attention.

Ramon Ray

Yes, I love that. What's number four? I wish we had like a bell or something. Number four.

Jeffrey Shaw

We should have counted down. So, the fourth one is price. Now, it's a pricing psychology because honestly, pricing is so arbitrary. I mean, you literally can pick any numbers out of the air. Unless you're trying to win on price, pricing is completely arbitrary, but where it's really important is that your pricing psychology, your pricing strategy, the perception that you create through your pricing, because pricing is all about perception. What's your perception of a restaurant that doesn't have prices on the menu?

Ramon Ray

They're expensive.

[All talking]

—and you'll go, assuming you know your own and what you can do, in an ideal world, you'll go anyhow if that's your thing. Me and my wife, Jeffrey, we argue, man. She's not going to the place. Me? I'm going. That's just my style.

Jeffrey Shaw

Yes, exactly. So, there's such a perception, so the numbers are arbitrary, but what is important to stop businesses from wasting their time is to create the perception that aligns with your ideal customer, and here's the key, Ramon. It has to do with how does your

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customer see themselves in the world. If they see themselves in the world as only choosing the top quality, highest price, then you better be that in order to match how they see themselves in the world. If your customer is cost conscious, and they want to make choices, they see themselves as needing to be cost conscious, then you need to match that. The key is to two key points. One is to understand how they see themselves in the world so you can match it, and the second, probably one of the most overlooked things in business, is to make sure you're portraying that. Whenever a business tells me that they have... they're wasting their time with customers that are always asking for discounts that are trying to talk them down, I will always say, well you know what, it's kind of your fault as the business because you haven't created an impression of what they should expect, and if you don't create that impression of what they can expect, and that impression is created by the way you present yourself, your business, your website, if you don't create a price point impression that aligns with how they see themselves in the world, there's a misalignment right from the beginning and you're going to waste a lot of time trying to convince people to pay your prices or you're going to waste a lot of time on customers that never had an intention to spend very much money in the first place.

Ramon Ray

That is so true. Before we get to number five, Jeffrey, can you tell us what your website address is? I can imagine many people are putting in questions, they're peppering Jeffrey already, but those who want to check out what you do – the book I guess we can just go to Amazon, but what's one or two good websites people should go to check you out, and your Twitter handle as well.

Jeffrey Shaw

Yes. So, jeffreyslaw.com is the website. Twitter handle is JeffreyShaw1. Jeffrey Shaw on LinkedIn, Instagram, reach out any way you can. I'm there, I'm there. Probably too often.

Ramon Ray

I say this because while we're speaking, ladies and gentlemen, feel free to tweet out to Jeffrey, let people know you're hearing this; tweet out and thank Verizon Business on Twitter. Go to his website, check out what he has, and of course, as Chris has kindly said, I'm Ramon Ray, ramonray.com. I'm on Twitter @RamonRay as well.

Before we get to number five, because I want to get to that, but I want to push back. I can see hear the Verizon Small Business people, Jeffrey, but my competitors have a lower price. Jeffrey, but you don't understand, my business is special. Jeffrey, my business is like this, but I won't get enough customers if I'm too expensive. I know that's a lot, but you can handle it, Jeffrey. Can you just... if you think I'm right then say I'm right, but if you can fire back at me to help us understand these things that you can understand that people may be saying, but Jeffrey, really? Really? Really? What do you think?

Jeffrey Shaw

Pick your lane. You know what I mean? I often look at this as almost like radio frequencies. We know... we might have our favorite genre of music, we know there are other genres playing in other stations, so what lane or what frequency are you going to hop in on? I think, without a doubt, no business is for everybody. You will exhaust yourself as a small business trying to be for everybody, and the problem is that if you try to be for everybody, you end up being for no one, because they have to understand who you're for, who you're meant to serve. So, hey, I'll give you a comparison. Often... Target and Wal-Mart, very different lingo. Walmart is the lingo of cost consciousness and they do it extremely well, and they attract their ideal customer, the cost-conscious customer. They portray that through their pricing psychology, everything's priced to within one-hundredth of a cent, so that you know that you're not going to be paying more than 100% more than you have to.

Ramon Ray

That's right.

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Jeffrey Shaw

They talk about rollback pricing, so they're very focused. The registers are lined up in the front of the store because it's a very transactional mentality, whereas Target is value conscious. Target customers as a brand will spend money but they need to feel like they're getting more value than what they're spending, and what I love to demonstrate, I will always point out is you ever noticed that Target and Walmart are right down the street from one another? Always. Why? Because both exist in every community, and that's true of every community, that I can think of every small business owner too. Pick your lane. Are you for the high end, are you for the middle of the road, or are you for the cost conscious? Pick your own customer, pick your ideal customer, know who you're best to serve, and then do it 100% by following these steps.

Ramon Ray

Was that number five, Jeffrey, or was that one, two, three, four? We have one more to go. Is that right?

Jeffrey Shaw

Yes. Number five is actually now speaking to them. Number five is lingo, and Ramon, here's the thing. If you notice, this is reversing the way most people start a business. How do most people go into business? They have a great business idea. They have a business card design and a logo designed, and they launch a website, and they fill it up with words talking about themselves and saying everything they want to say but they never took the time to understand the lingo of who they're trying to reach. The right way to build a business is to step back, and when I say build a business, it doesn't have to be from day one. It can be from right now because we all need to change how we present ourselves in business. The right way to do it is to step back, understand the perspective of those that you're going to serve, understand what feels familiar to them and makes them feel comfortable. Understand a style that will stop them in their tracks because you're speaking their brand voice. Understand the pricing psychology of how they see themselves in the world. Understand all that and now you can actually speak to them. Now you can use words that you know will resonate for them.

The two things I'll point out about words I think will be valuable for small business owners. One, what I refer to as a standout statement. A standout statement is what I refer to as a modern day slogan or tagline but the problem is slogans and taglines have no energy, because they're thought up from the head, but they haven't brought... the heart hasn't been brought into it. A standout statement is a result of understanding your customer so well that you know what to say in a brief sentence that will resonate straight to the heart of your ideal customer such that they're likely to say, wow, it's like you're in my head.

The second important part is what I refer to as a self-identifying process and this goes right back to what you said in the beginning. We live in a time now and doing business at a time where the moment you tell somebody that you're a trustworthy resource, they don't trust you. The moment you... if someone tells me I'm in the best in my industry, they doubt you, because we're living in a time that I refer to as the empowerment age. Our goal as small businesses is to create the environment for people to choose us. So, through our marketing and our brand messaging and our websites, we're revealing our authenticity and who we are genuinely, and we're helping them come to their own conclusion to choose us. An interesting study by Forrester Group that states that people make a decision 70% of the way on their own before they ever reach out to a company.

Ramon Ray

I can believe it.

Jeffrey Shaw

They do their self-vetting. I call it empowerment. They're literally self-vetting. They're doing their own research. They're going online, they're checking out the website, they're feeling whether you feel like they resonate [inaudible], they're making the decision 70% before they even reached out to enquire. That's empowerment, so you want to frame—

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Ramon Ray

[inaudible], Jeffrey, or it can be scary, depending on the position you are.

Jeffrey Shaw

Here's the easiest... let me tell you, I'll give you two easy solutions.

Ramon Ray

Sure, and then we're going to jump back, but before you get to those two then we're going to jump into questions, Jeffrey, but tell me those two solutions, and then we're going to jump to Q&A when you're ready.

Jeffrey Shaw

Two simple solutions. One is, please take a look at your website. It's probably the cocktail mentality. What if I call a cocktail party? Now imagine if your website is all about you, it's not serving the objective, any more than if you went to a cocktail party and walked in and told everybody all about yourself and then said if you'd like to know more, here's a contact form. That's what most websites feel like. The website needs to speak to the person visiting it. They have to feel like they have just landed at home. The second little tip, which I think is an easy solution to this, is take a look at how you behave on social media. There's a really good chance, particularly on Instagram, people reveal themselves on Instagram in a really genuine and honest way. Check out how you appear on social media, particularly Instagram, and bring that energy to your website. Somehow, we have got this mental division that we reveal who we are, we share our lives on Instagram, and then you go to the same business's website and it's stale and boring.

Ramon Ray

This is powerful. Listen, Jeffrey, if it's good with you, are you ready to take the Verizon Small Business webinar questions? Are you ready?

Jeffrey Shaw

100%. I'm ready.

Ramon Ray

Let's do it right now. Here we go.

Hey, Jeffrey, we had so many great questions come in. The first question coming in, Jeffrey, for you is that, let's bring this... what I like about the Verizon Small Business Webinar Series is people ask questions about their particular businesses. So, one question came in, Jeffrey, we're kind of, I'm going to use the word boring, but they're not boring, but we're a simple, your basic computer technology company. It's pretty simple, Jeffrey. How does the LINGO work in that kind of business? What should we do for your basic, average, simple computer company? What do we do, Jeffrey Shaw, this someone wants to know? Or not even computer consulting specifically, they have a computer program, low-cost computer program, let me restate that, but how does LINGO work for them Jeffrey?

Jeffrey Shaw

So, for their ideal customer, this is not boring. So, what is... how does... what I suggest you do is step into, and you might already know this – many small business owners, their own story, their own founding story often has something to do with the business they develop. Maybe they were... I often refer to it as a positive escalator. A lot of times we're just a step or two ahead of those that we serve, so there's a really good chance that computer programmer has been at some point in their life exactly where their ideal customer currently is. So, you have the level of compassion and understanding and it's not boring to them. So, if you're not already doing so, read the blogs

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they're reading, visit the websites they're reading. Back in the day when I started my photography business, it was all brick and mortar, I had to physically go to these places, but in today's world, you can do a tremendous amount of research online. It's just important to step into their world and read their publications, their blogs, wherever they're going for information, even attend, when we can, their live event or go to their webinars, go to the trainings that they're receiving, so you can more deeply understand their world. But it's not boring to whoever you're serving.

Ramon Ray

And I think I want to underline, Jeffrey, that's so important because sometimes in our own businesses, I know you don't think that about what you do, but we can think it's just this, I just make cakes, I just clean floors, I'm just computer programmer, but to the customer, you could be everything to them. So, a very good point for sure.

Listen, again, we had a broad range of questions here, Jeffrey, and some I may jump in as well. Email subject lines. We had a great question here. Jeffrey, you're right about attracting the right customer, but I know email marketing is a great part of marketing, any tips, suggestions, thoughts on how to have great email subject lines. I know you get a lot of email, I do too, and the ones that have the catchy email that I anticipate, Jeffrey, that's the one I open. What do you say about using email marketing in particular subject lines?

Jeffrey Shaw

Again, it all goes back to understanding the brand voice that you want to communicate and how that aligns and matches with your ideal customer. So, you want to look at... humor is incredibly compelling, but you have to understand to what degree is it appropriate humor or off humor. What's going to be... what is going to... as far as... I serve a very wealthy clientele, I had to play a little bit of a fine line there, but here's what's interesting. Just because your clientele may live a formal life. The reality is, I'm the breath of fresh air of casualness in their life, and what I do is very family oriented, so you want to focus in on the kids. So, when you're developing a subject line, that's where it's, I think, more important than ever to really understand the brand voice that you have within yourself, and how that aligns with your ideal customer. I would ask yourself questions like to what degree do you need to be formal or casual? To what degree is humor useful? What inner language can you use that maybe if you've built a community, that they may resonate with? In my community, or my podcast, we talk a lot about chasing squirrels, because as creative thinkers, we chase a lot of squirrels. My newsletter's called Nutshell Newsletter. I put everything in one place because I'm going to chase squirrels. So, I can... if I want to really create a deep connection with that community, I can talk about squirrels, I can make a joke of chasing squirrels and they get it. So, you want to think about what inner lingo do you have amongst your community, what degree of formal, casual, and degree of humor and try to develop, and there are some wonderful tools online, by the way, that you can run subject lines through that will give you a subject line score. None of the apps come to mind right now, but if you do a little investigating, there are tools online that you can get a headline score that will help you develop a really good subject line.

Ramon Ray

Absolutely. No, for sure, and somebody asked about how do you understand a customer's lingo? Some of this, you've already answered, Jeffrey, but people mentioned things like do you recommend those of us who want to dive deeper into this, for sure, I recommend everybody, go to Jeffrey's website, jeffreysaw.com, he talks about a lot of this, gives a lot of value to Verizon customers, so do check that out, but the question is, focus groups do you recommend? Do we take surveys? Should we call customers? How do we get more understanding of what our customers are thinking? And you said part of it already, go to their events. Anything else on that for those who want to dive deeper into understanding what their customers are saying and thinking?

Jeffrey Shaw

Yes, great question. You want to have good, normal, casual conversations with your customers. I have mixed feelings on focus groups, because when people know they're participating in a focus group that can often in itself skew the results. I think they're important. If any of you are in the focus group business, I'm not discouraging focus groups, but I also think just simple conversations with your

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customers can go so far, and, again, not understanding the shopping habits, for example, of affluent shoppers in my photography business, I would ask them, what do they do on the computer, and much to my surprise, they do little to no shopping on the computer. What they do is they help... they only work on the computer to help their kids with their homework or to look for donations for charity events that they might be contributing to. So, it was a nuance that I didn't understand, as if I were to do some advertising online, it let me know a little bit about their computer behavior.

I'm going to take that just a step further as an example of LINGO. I challenged my affluent clients, as they don't shop online, but if they were to shop online, where do they shop online? Overwhelmingly, every mom I had this conversation with said J. Crew, and that surprised me because I don't think of J. Crew as being the highest end brand, but when I asked them, well, why J. Crew, every one of them had the same answer. J. Crew is size consistent, and so when they're shopping for their kids, a medium is a medium and a large is a large, and I contacted J. Crew, and they're like, oh, yes, we know that. They go through great lengths, the lingo that they're speaking to their customers is size consistency, and it's developed a loyalty because people know when they buy a certain size at J. Crew, if it's fit their child before, it's going to fit them again. That's understanding your customers so well.

Ramon Ray

That is a powerful insight, Jeffrey. That is very powerful, and I think I would challenge everybody listening to this, let's go back and do our homework and we can do it repeatedly. I do that for the clients that I work with, Jeffrey, what really do they want? I may think they want X, but they may end up wanting Y.

Somebody asked a great question here, Jeffrey. Can you speak to as best you can professional services industries or just services industry that traditionally, like ours, to a degree, traditionally have been face to face, have been offline, but now everybody's trying to figure in some way how can I serve my customers more online to some degree? Any thoughts? Any advice you've come across? Part of it you've said, and I just want to underline, check your website. Always refresh it. That's one big thing. Any other things you're seeing, Jeffrey, about how to transition better online?

Jeffrey Shaw

Yes, most definitely, and it's a great opportunity to re-evaluate. The fact that I am an artist at heart, I'm a photographer, and one thing you learn as an artist is that you learn to respect the medium. What doesn't work is when you try to create a medium where you're trying to put oils where you would normally use pastels. I see this is a lot with the speaking world, and a lot of speakers stumbled through the transition because they tried to show up online or in virtual events the same way they show up on stage, and you can't. You have to respect the medium. You and I right now, I don't know how many thousands of people might be watching this, but I try to speak in the singular, because the person receiving this information right now is likely alone somewhere, and as a podcast host, I had to learn that, because although the podcast may reach 30,000 people in a month, it's one person at a time receiving that. So, it's important about transitioning to today's world of be it virtual education, virtual events, or even how you market yourself, remember the person receiving your content, your message is likely alone. So, you have to change the way you communicate. Respect every medium, whether it's a blog, a podcast, live, whatever the medium is, in which you're showing up, respect it for what it is, strengthen it, and make it even better, and in a lot of cases, it's an opportunity to actually come across far more intimate. If the person that's receiving what you're putting out feels like you're speaking to them in the singular, it'll feel a lot more intimate and create a deeper connection.

Ramon Ray

And I just want to stretch that advice because it's so powerful, Jeffrey. A lot of people, as I'm sure many listening to this, I'm guessing, are doing more and more online video chats, and either they're learning or giving it as we're doing today, and I just want to underline that tip, Jeffrey. I've been pushed sometimes, Ramon, we need to have more questions and polls and banners and gizmos, which can work, but I found that for me, it's just what you said, looking in that camera, talking as though I'm talking to one person, that's the most engaging thing to do, and two is a good chat. We have so many questions pouring in, Jeffrey, so I just wanted to underline that advice

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you're giving. For those who are getting into online stuff, yes, pictures and gizmos and polls and pop ups, but really just be you and respect that camera lens that, Jeffrey, you know so well.

Jeffrey, somebody asked, and again, some of these questions, you'll find, Jeffrey, you may have given the advice, but I think they're asked in different ways, so it's important. Somebody's asking, Jeffrey, I found my ideal customer, let's say, they have two or three or four, how do I find more of these people, Jeffrey, that are speaking the same language? I found Mary and Bob, or I found this B2B company, how do I build my business and find more of them? Hopefully, it's an unsaid question, so I can shed those I really don't want. Thoughts on that, Jeffrey, how to find more of the customers that we already want to serve?

Jeffrey Shaw

Yes. So, first of all, and I also should know, I'm a huge fan of multiple audiences. So, the narrowing it down to our really fine niche was great a few years ago, not so good today, and we're seeing the evidence of that right now, because those businesses that were super narrow are really struggling if what you have been doing no longer is as relevant. So, it's a far better business model, what I call to have a business model of multiples, where you have... you're reaching a variety of audiences. The key, though, is that all audiences are aligned based on what you can do best for them. I'll even address it as a twofold question, because on one hand, this person asking the question seems to wonder how I get more of the audience I already have. The more common question I get asked all the time is how do I reach multiple audiences, and the answers are sort of the same. The more people can understand what you stand for and who you stand for. I spoke a moment ago about the standout statement. The reason it's called a standout statement is because in three to nine words, you have to let the world know what you stand for, whom you stand up for, and do it in a way that's so compelling it stands out. So, the way to get more customers, if you've got your defined ideal customer, the way to get more of them is to make sure it is super clear that you're for them because they are self-vetting, as we also discussed a moment ago. So, you want to make it super obvious to them that you are for them, and then of course if that means you need to do additional marketing, that again, you can figure out where are they spending their time. I coached a photographer some time ago who did weddings about what we called pig roast weddings. They're the casual backyard pig roast weddings, like he hated the whole formal weddings, and I just gave an example. So, I challenged him. I said, so for you to reach your ideal customer, if you had an opportunity, where would you display your photographs? Would it be in Starbucks, or would it be in an independent coffee shop? Obviously, his ideal customers are far more likely these people that are having backyard pig roast weddings. We also refer to his brides as tattooed brides. They're far more likely to go to the independently owned coffee shop than a corporate-owned coffee shop. So, you'll find more of the customers you want to reach, the more you can understand them and where they might be going, and don't... just get in the right place where you can meet more of them.

Ramon Ray

Yes, this is powerful. I think Seth Godin says something like that, or you, people like us do things like this and I think that's part of that lingo, following the language of our customers.

Another question here, Jeffrey, which I know is... you and I could probably talk about does to help the Verizon audience for hours on this is price. I'm often asked this, Jeffrey, I'm sure you're often asked, how do you – and can answer the question any way you want, but the bottom line is how do you push back against people wanting you to lower your price? Jeffrey... a client comes to Jeffrey. Jeffrey, can you do a photo package for us, and he... it's 50,000 75,000, whatever it is, something high for most of us. I don't have the money, Jeffrey, can you... listen, can you do it for half, or I'll give you some bagels if you cut it by 20% or whatever? What do you do? Help us understand this aspect of pricing and either how to stick to it, or do we not? What do you say? Help me unpack that, Jeffrey.

Jeffrey Shaw

And I can be bought on bagels. Let's just make that clear. That's not a stretch. So, the reality is that we all want to get paid our worth and our value and I'm a huge proponent of making sure people get paid their worth, what they're worth. However, I spend my life, my days, serving small business owners, self-employed business owners, and I'm also a realist. There are a lot of times in the real world,

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not just the motivational hoopla – in the real world, there are times that we have bills to pay, there are times that we are willing to work for less. So, here's my suggestion. You want to know your absolute worth. Own that, right? Know what you're worth. That's your full fee. That's what you're always striving for. Then understand what is your range of acceptable, because there's a range underneath that that is acceptable, and there may be other value items that you can add when you're getting underpaid. Some bagels might offset; if I work for less, but hey, you're going to throw in some bagels, and you know, as speakers, we may take a less than full paid speaking gig because it's going to include the video, when we really want good video. So, there are some offset values, and here's the key thing, Ramon.

What is the line of shame? That's what I want people to really understand. What is the line of shame? So, you've got your full value pricing, you've got your range of acceptable for which you're going to try to make up that gap with other value added items, but what is the line of shame, and don't ever go below that, because the cost of giving yourself away below that line of shame is far greater than less money. I call it the line of shame because that's the impact it has on people and I see this every day, people that shamefully admit that they're working for less than they're worth. So, you have to know what your line of shame is and never go beneath that, but I'm also a realist and understand there is a range of acceptable and when you're taking a job within that range of acceptable, but not your full value, maybe have a list available. I literally have a list available to me. When I get into a conversation with an event planner, and if they can't pay my full fee, I have a list ready to go on my priorities, video being one of them, or can I sell books outside the room, or the other value, I have a list going. So, prepare yourself with a list of what you might be able to ask for.

And I'll add one more thing to that. Don't be sold, don't go below that line of shame because of a dangling carrot that really means nothing. So, as a photographer starting out, I cannot tell you, Ramon, how many times people said to me, well, I'll give you a photo credit. I've never gotten a damn job from somebody seeing my name on a photograph. Like, it doesn't happen. So, don't fall victim to going below your line of shame for a false promise. Know that line of shame and never go below it neither, because it's toxic. What it's doing to you on the inside is far greater than the less money that you're accepting. It's not worth it.

Ramon Ray

And we've got a few more minutes to go, Jeffrey. I'll squeeze in a few more questions, but those who want to be in touch with Jeffrey Shaw, amazing photographer and author and more, just go to his website jeffreyszaw.com. He's very responsive there. You can find him on Twitter and LinkedIn. If you want to check out me and see what I'm all about, ramonray.com. And for those looking for the replay about this, just go back to the same BrightTALK link of the Verizon Small Business Webinar Series that you went to and the replay will be available, so you can go there if you didn't get it. I know it's stormy in some parts of the country, Jeffrey, so those who didn't get it well the first time, you can check it out.

Let's get a few more things quickly. Want a quick story, Jeffrey? For you it's bagels. A guy couldn't pay me my full fee, but he said, but I can get you and your wife a vacation to Aruba. What do you think I said? Yes.

Jeffrey Shaw

Yes.

Ramon Ray

Let's dive in. Somebody else asked you, Jeffrey, about your lane or not, and the question is, Jeffrey, I'm in a certain lane maybe doing something in a career, a certain job, a photographer, speaker, whatever it is, but I want to shift a bit, maybe change a bit. Broadly, Jeffrey, guidance to them on how to shift. They don't want to do wholesale something different, but they want to morph a bit. What do you think?

Jeffrey Shaw

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I love that and it goes to the multiple audience question. You're taking on all... more audiences is a shifting audience. Here's the key, and I think this where how I speak to this in reverse of most people, your ideal customer begins with you getting clear on what you have best to offer. So, for example, I love helping people find their unique perspective. Your unique perspective is how you see what you do that's different than everybody else, because there's hardly any business any of us are in that there aren't a lot of other people also doing, but I guarantee you that you have a different reason for doing what you do. There's a different way that you look at what you do, maybe there's even a different process, but it's a different way that you look at what you do than anybody else in your field. The more clear you can get on that, so defining your ideal customer or your multiple audiences, starts with that, understanding your unique perspective, understanding what your differentiators are, understanding what your strengths are. Like my strength is my ability to curate chaos. So, that's the served me well as a photographer because it's such an incredibly chaotic situation. I photograph entirely on location, so I've got sun and wind and personalities and locations, and I thrive in that environment, and it helps me today by helping small businesses because they're living in a chaotic world, and I can help unpack the pieces and give them clear direction. So, when you understand your unique perspective, your core skill set, then here's the key question. Who will love that? And for which you should be able to come up with multiple audiences that will love that.

So, I work with a... I'll give you an example. I worked with a coach a while back that was convinced that her niche, because she was told to find a niche, her niche was helping women in divorce, but every story she had was a very unexpected divorce. So, I said to her, I said, you know, I don't think your core skill is helping women to divorce. I think your core skill is helping people when life takes a sudden turn to the left. And for... and I was like, so how many... that includes job loss, that includes death of a spouse or a partner, it includes so many other times in life when your life suddenly goes in a different direction, and that was her unique skill set, for which then she was able to expand and see multiple audiences in that core skill set. That's how you pivot from one lane to another or you seek out the opportunity for multiple audiences.

Ramon Ray

Jeffrey, I think that is so powerful. Listen, I know many more people wanted to talk to you. I have a final message from my friend, Chris, I wanted to share with... we're going to share with the Verizon audience right now, but again, if you had some more questions for Jeffrey, tweet at him, go to jeffreyszaw.com. You wanted to reach out to Jeffrey, you couldn't, I'm Ramon Ray, you can go to me and I'll connect you to Jeffrey as well. But listen, Jeffrey, thank you so much and hang tight. We're going to have one final message here from Chris as well.

Chris Serico

And that's it for today's webinar. Thank you so much, Ramon and Jeffrey, for sharing that great advice for how small businesses can use lingo to cut through the noise and really connect with their audience.

In the Attachments tab, you'll see that I'm sharing some links and additional information. You can check out the other webinars in this series on our BrightTALK channel page and be sure to tune in for our next webinar on Tuesday, August 11. That's when Peter Shankman, the founder of Help a Reporter Out, will be with us sharing radical new ways to rethink your customer experience.

So, I hope you'll join us again on August 11, and for all the events coming up in our Small Business Webinar Series. Thanks again for joining us. We'll see you soon.