

## WOCAndAllies\_EP90

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Before we talk about how to get your first paying client to start your business in five simple steps, I want to share with you why I'm qualified. First is I'm almost at seven years in business and I've generated seven figures in revenue. I've served about 3, 500 plus clients in 58 different countries.

And I got my first paying client who happened to be my first client. The first day I started my business, I didn't do the whole, let me do this for free. No, I actually. Got my first paying client when I claimed I was going to start my coaching business. It has a lot to do with my experience prior to starting my business and executive care coaching business that you see now, you see this coaching business, actually my second business.

Before this business, I was a former fundraising consultant for political campaigns and nonprofits. Throughout the country, specifically the United States, where I raised millions. So I worked on local statewide campaigns in California, Montana, New Mexico, Iowa, and Massachusetts, and I started the campaigns from scratch, which means no money.

No donations, and I had to learn how to raise millions from zero to six months, a year, two years, depending on how long I was in the campaign. I knew how to create the right messaging, target the right list of donors and how to message and do an ask to get a donation. And Let's talk about these 2 specific industries.

I worked at. It will just give you a better idea of why I've been successful and starting and scaling my business. How I got my 1st paying clients and how it will resonate to you. I promise sharing my story will help you understand how to start your business because we learn so much in storytelling.

Also, I want to share. I didn't get it perfect. I failed. I have been in debt. I have cried like a starfish on my floor. So I've definitely have gone through the strides and I will continue to do so because we are human. So in political campaigns, before we even ask for donations, We had to do target market research, which meant understanding and meeting with community leaders and stakeholders to see what issues were important to them.

So each congressional district or statewide Senate district, it's going to be unique and different for whatever their challenges are. for example, I live in Los Angeles right now. rent is really huge, for example, or even living in California, having taxes for roads or earthquake. those are issues that are going to be unique for our state compared to others and seeing what is important.

For voters and donors when sending messaging, right? For example, one congressional candidate I worked with, we were using messaging on green solar energy and that helped her win. And then in the non profit sector, so for any of you that have worked in the non profit sector, when you want to raise money in capital, you need to work with your board members, look at their Rolodex and strategize on how to raise money for the cause.

So I worked for a non profit where raising money. Or can we call it scholarship money and before we went through their contacts, the board members contacts, ask for donations. We did something similar to what I didn't pull up the campaigns, which is. Target market research for the nonprofit sector, it's called.

Feasibility studies where we met with community leaders and potential donors to ask for feedback. I had. All this background of how to raise money, how to figure out messaging. And here's what I want you to hear from all those past experiences. I wasn't clear in terms of, okay, this is the candidate.

This is what they're for. we did have a general sense, but we also tested the messaging with the audience. So we knew how to ask for donations and we knew how to have elected officials win, or we knew how to raise money for. A specific cause when I was working in the nonprofit sector. So when it came to my business and starting it, I knew I had to do target market research.

I knew I had to have a better understanding of who I wanted to serve, what was the messaging and how I could best serve and support them by asking for feedback, which is what target market research is. So in this episode, I'll share what I did. And we will individualize what you can do to start your business, start getting your first paying clients.

And in doing so, I'll share with you my stories. Also this is action packed. So you will have five assignments in this podcast episode. You are welcome. And I'm excited to give you the strategies and steps on how I did it. So first step, I want you to think about what do you want to create? Maybe you aren't clear of what kind of service or product you want to create, and you probably feel ashamed because you aren't clear and that is completely okay.

At least, you want to create something. So write it pen to paper when creating a business of what you think you want to do. Also, side note, when creating a business, it's, hard because you're going against status quo.

are creating a business that's different from what school and society taught us. For example, you think you're supposed to figure out what you want to do in your life and you want to be a doctor. And to become a doctor, the steps go to med school, residency, figure out your specialty, and then become a doctor, you'll be in a ton of debt, but then you'll start making a lot of money and then pay off that debt and become a successful doctor.

Now, mind you, there is nothing wrong with that route. I want the best doctor to operate on me. I don't want them to try. But in some businesses, for example, coaching, it's different because you don't know exactly. Okay. This is exactly the end result I want to create. Instead, you get more clarity as you have more experience.

And back in 2017. Around June, I've shared this story before another podcast episode. So I apologize if I'm sharing it to you again, but I graduated from my master's in leadership and

management with intention to be an executive director for a nonprofit the day I graduated. I realized. I don't want to do this anymore.

I, I want to start my own thing. I realized I was listening to everyone else's voice and not my own, which I feel like every woman or every human goes through, you get that epiphany and I'm not blaming anyone. I know my parents, my ex boss, all the people around me had their best interests at heart.

I just had a problem in listening and trusting my voice. And for the first time, I heard my voice, that I want to start my own business and I knew it was coaching just because I had, I was able to go through coaching myself when I was in my early twenties, navigating being a director, how to be assertive, how to create boundaries, how to ask for a raise, how to change careers, which I was able to do.

I got a coach now with the intention of becoming one, but. It just helps me so much and I'm so grateful for my first coach at the same time when I was interviewing coaches, there wasn't women of color diversity that I experienced. So when I graduated on my master's, I knew I wanted to do coaching, but I wasn't sure what kind.

And it was probably life coaching, mindset coaching, career coaching, health coaching. So going back to that first question I asked of what do you think you want to create? Those were the things I wanted to create. Now my first assignment I want to give you, feel free to pause after I give this assignment to you on this episode, put a list of ideas you want pen to paper.

And go ahead and pause, maybe play two songs you really love, that, if you're a Taylor Swift fan, feel free to put whatever two songs you're into, or Beyonce, it doesn't matter, or maybe Bridgerton, because, Bridgerton part two's about to come out. I think it's coming out like the day this goes live.

Anyways, put a list of ideas, pen to paper. All right. Hopefully you did pause the episode and we're going to the second step. Similar to what I did when I was a fundraiser to do target market research. And if you've watched YouTube, done research on how to start your own business on Google, and You'll know that target market research is important.

And if you don't know what target market research is, I'll explain it here. It's gathering data, qualitative data information from potential customers so that you can start getting clarity on marketing, pricing, services, and business development. For example, when I worked in political campaigns, we did polls.

Some are target market research where we had a list of questions and we had a targeted list of voters that we're going to ask them feedback for on the messaging. So we knew what would work in the district. I was working in. This allowed us to make decisions on messaging to put in mailers. Messaging to do when we'd call voters to remind them to vote and messaging on how to get donations so we could win the election.

And we would think about campaigns and the words people use in the past, regardless of where you're at politically and your beliefs, there's reasons why certain catchphrases really worked well for their target market specifically. And then when I worked in the nonprofit sector, we did feasibility studies where we met with community leaders, ask specific questions like what top initiatives were important to prioritize and tackle.

And in doing so, there was one non profit I worked with, and in six months we raised a million dollars for 300 plus student scholarships because we were so intentional of meeting our community leaders, asking for feedback, and they just wanted to donate because we knew what issues were important. So in my business, I knew I wanted to coach those were the topics I gave earlier.

It was like life coaching, mindset coaching, career coaching, health coaching. And I thought I, at the time I was like, okay, I think I want to work with. First generation millennial women, but I didn't know what type of coaching I want to do. So I went through my contacts, Gmail, LinkedIn, Facebook was really huge back then.

And I went A through Z and I put two groups of people from that list, A through Z, a group of people who met the criteria for a millennial. And second. The second group of connectors. So maybe they were my target market, but they knew everybody. So they were like the president of an association or organization.

So your second assignment is, I want you to put a list of people you're interested in doing work. sorry, I want you to put a list of people that kind of meet that target market demographic. Go through your contacts. It's okay if they're not in one centralized place. And write them down their names and why you'd want to connect with them.

And you're like, Elaine, I don't know anybody. I got paid a ton of money to sit down with elected officials and board members to Rolodex and go through their contacts. Your network is your net worth, so going through your contacts so you could ask for feedback. The goal is not to get clients from it. The goal is to gather information, gather data, test it before you go out there, right?

So put that list together to make it fun playing music in the background. If you need help with a playlist, I created a Spotify playlist with 1990s and 2000s, hip hop and R and B it's called Mr. Bear's budget bangers and Spotify. And once again, like I said, put a list together. Of people who meet the criteria of your target market into second group of connectors.

And also, make sure that people in this list are people you like. For example, you don't want to put the bully from high school or your old job, but people that you actually like. And some of you might ask, wait, why, do I have to put this? Listen, why do I need to phone call? Can I just do a survey with random people?

Here's the thing, because when doing phone calls, you get to hear qualitative data and words that they are using. When connecting with people, they know you so well that they

could be transparent and honest with you. You could also follow up with questions. And in phone calls, I got to hear patterns I started hearing.

I'm just going to be direct with all of you. I find since post pandemic world, people have such anxiety to connect with people. Not just with strangers, but even people we know. I honor my Jewish heal and community. And yes, you are going to get rejected. Yes, there will be people that won't respond to you.

And by the way, if you keep doing this, Sticking around to listening to this episode, I will share with you a script on how you can connect with people. It happens, but it is part of being human. And I'm actually really grateful that I worked. thank God I don't do it anymore that I worked in American politics because I had that experience.

I did 300 calls a day, recruiting volunteers, hangups, rejections. I asked. Money, millions of it and raised millions. And I got rejected so many times. But the few yeses went up to millions, made impact, got elected officials I believed in, in office. And even though I don't do that, I'm not in that industry anymore, I still do my due diligence, which means I vote.

And it's election year, so I vote now. So

I have to, I hate to break it to you, but if you wanna create a business. You need to be willing to be okay with rejection, be okay to getting out there and connecting. And I want to, and if it's I'm feeling so uncomfortable right now, what is your why? Why is this important to you? When I think about why I created my coaching business, It's because when I needed help in my career, I didn't see anyone that looked like me or understood experiences I went through, which is why when I first started, I wanted to work with first generation millennial women, now it's expanded to women of color.

That's my why. And I felt like if I didn't do this, I would have been really selfish because I was so scared and I had fear because I didn't want to show up. But showing up allowed me to remind fellow women of color that they could show up for themselves as well. And I don't mean show up in terms of being visible, but even showing up and learning how to say no to family members when you don't want to go to a family party because you just had a long week or you don't want to deal with a crazy family member.

Alright, I am absolutely digressing. It's just, I meet so many people and they're like, this is what you did. This is how you started your business. Yes, I connect with people. I thought I needed a website. I thought I needed name cards. I, thought I needed to look the part. I call it the, Superhero cape syndrome where people think they need to look the part to become a business owner like look Consumers are getting smarter people put see through bullshit I give so much away when people schedule an introductory coaching call with me to see if it's a good fit I treat it like a coaching call.

I don't even try to be salesy like okay I'm going to gatekeep it, not tell you. And the reason I do that is because just given this economy, it's an election year, all the worst happening in

the world. There is a lack of trust. the general surgeon of America shared that America is the loneliest right now.

Our humans are the loneliest, that if I want to gain trust, I need to be willing to be out there and give so much that even it's okay if I'm going to get no's, which is why I created this podcast. I know not. All of you are going to want to work with me or don't have the ability to, and that's completely okay.

But this podcast is my love language to give back. Okay. I am absolutely digressing. I apologize if you can't tell, I am so passionate about this, but I also have been in your shoes as well, where the doubts and the fears crept up. So make that list of people. The third step from that list of people after you're listening to some fun music like my Mr.

Bear's Budget Bangers or whatever music you're into right now, whatever era you're in, is identify three to five people that you feel comfortable with doing the target market research first. And sending a message and here's a draft message you can use. So you're going to want pen to paper, take notes, first name.

Hey, Sam, is there something personal? How are things going with your dog? How's your trip to Hawaii? I've been wanting to create a, insert what type of business. And since you are a part of your target market niche, I would love to connect with you for 20 minutes. I'm free. This Monday, 1 through 1 through 3 or next Tuesday, 4 to 6, what date or time works best for you a couple of little pointers.

Make sure you provide dates and times. You are free based on their time zone. You wanted to make an easy decision for them to. When you do connect with them, sure why you want to connect with them and 3. Send these messages 15 minutes before they start work, ideally Monday through Wednesday. For example, I'm recording this podcast during summertime, summer Fridays are a thing, nobody checks emails on Fridays.

You want to do it 15 minutes before they start work, so there's a high probability of them sending message. A little fundraising tip, I always send messages, emails, or texts 15 minutes before they start work. So if you're a Pacific girly like me. And you have a contact in the East Coast. So yes, you had to send or schedule that message at 545 AM, which is 845 East Coast time for someone you might know in the East Coast.

And if you're like, Elaine, I already sent a message or what if they don't respond? it's summertime or it's just life. We are human. I would say wait a week to follow up again one more time and then maximum do two follow ups at least you reached out. So my third assignment is put in your calendar 30 minutes when you can draft those texts or emails and you get to decide if it's going to be an email or text.

If they're like your best friend, text them. If so, if it's more professional email them, if you don't have an email and you have a linkedin, then message them linkedin, instagram,

whatever, social media and. So draft those messages and then send them 15 minutes before they start work, any time between Monday to Wednesday.

Fourth step, do the target market research with them and ask questions. So when you finally schedule a time to connect, start the conversation, personally, obviously ask how they're doing. How was their trip? How's their family? Anything new happening? Have they caught up with so and Share with them why you reached out to them personally and your vision of your business and why you chose to connect with them.

And then next, yes, I am giving you the whole shebang. Here are some questions to ask. Hey, so what are your three challenges when it comes to Answer the problem you solve. What did you try to do to fix the challenge? What hasn't worked? What has worked? Why would you possibly trust me to fix that problem if I have this service or product?

I want to get your feedback on what I plan to create. And then this is the question where you get to jump around of Hey, these are my thoughts and ideas. What do you think of? So you're asking direct feedback of the product or service you want to create. Seventh, do you know one or two people you can connect me with?

That is a game changing question because you never know. That question actually allowed me to get one of my first paying clients, which was like somebody did target market research and her cousin needed help with their career. And then eighth question is what's your mailing address so I can send you a thank you card?

Then write a handwriting thank you card with a 5 Starbucks card. And like I said earlier, that's how doing target market research is actually how I got my first two paying clients. And my first clients were referrals, even to this date, almost seven years in business, majority of my clients are referrals and renewals.

So how it happened when I did target market research, someone I put in the list was someone who I met at a conference. They became a first client. Who I helped become more assertive at their job and they got their first six figure salary. My second client I got from doing target market research, I asked that question, do you know one or two people you can connect me with?

And she's actually my, and you should do see my cousin. So I did target market research. She's I need to work with you. How much is it?

And, it just happened that way because I want to gather information. Here's a thing. People think when they want to start a business, they need to be so clear on the end result and every single step. And here's the hard part when you're starting a business. It's unlearning that. It's planning with a margin of magic where you start doing baby steps.

of things and you gain more clarity. And target market research is basically data, it's qualitative data that you can use on your website, on social media, on marketing materials,

so you know how to market yourself and get clients. So it goes to my fourth assignment, make a note of patterns you're hearing for the target market research.

You'll probably hear data of, okay, these are the patterns I hear. So when I did my target market research, I was a crazy Asian and interviewed 73 people. You don't have to do 73, start with three to five for now. And the three patterns I heard when I interviewed 73 people was number one for first generation immigrants.

Number one, parent's dream versus American dream versus my dream. There's this guilt of My parents sacrificed so much for me to be where I'm at, and I just need to suck it up because they gave me everything. The second pattern I heard was lack of support and resources. when discussing our career, parents often say, do what you want.

What do you like? You need to become a doctor or nurse or engineer, like not understanding the steps for it. And the third is cultural differences. That was the third pattern. For example, I remember when I wanted to ask for a salary increase, I asked for my parents for advice and they just said, you should be grateful for what you have.

You'll eventually get it. I'm like, Oh, that's not how this country works. Difficulty balancing family life and work life. Oh, because you're too independent, you're, you can't have a relationship or get married. Don't work too hard. At your age, I had three kids by now, just those passive aggressive comments, but those are patterns that I heard.

And then from the patterns I heard, I knew exactly how to update my website and write content online. So after you do a couple, like three. Or five, see what patterns you're noticing from your target market research. And the fifth step to starting your business is to reflect and gather your conclusions.

Remember you created a business to follow your own voice, not to do what other people want you to do. Like I said earlier, I was doing really well in my career. I got my master's in leadership management so I could be an executive director, but I realized that was other people's hopes and dreams for me.

Not saying that I was upset with that, I just didn't know how to honor my voice. I was people pleasing too much, that I didn't know how to please other people. What I wanted and what I was doing target market research, there's two patterns. I heard a pattern of Oh my gosh, I would love for you to be career coach and healthy.

I was like, okay, that resonates. There was another one, which is doing like health coaching because I lost 20 pounds and even I had to reflect on that. Do I want to be like a personal trainer or health coach? And I told myself, no, I love being healthy, just don't really want to teach people on that.



I just want to make sure when you're creating your business, doing the target market research, basing off your messaging and marketing and how you're going to do sales, it's not just based off what people are saying, but it's actually something you want to do

and this is Target market research isn't just something to do when you start your business. In my almost seven years in business, I do target market research at least once a year. I am constantly improving my messaging and services based on feedback. For example, I noticed after my first year in business, like yes, I Wanted to work with 1st generation millennial woman, but I noticed from my data, I was attracting more women of color instead of 1st gen immigrants.

So I shifted my niche to make it a little more broader. I also had some allies message me seeing if they want to work with me, which is why I put my messaging. Woman of color and Allies business and Executive career coach. Another reason why I put that as my title I put Woman of Color and Allies is because I lit, I would ask people who got on sales calls who were not a referral.

What made you want to work with me? Or how'd you find me? Oh, I was looking for a woman of color coach, oh, okay. So then I should update that on all my social media and my emails. I should update that on my website. if you look up WC business coach or WC career coach, I am number one on Google after the ads.

I made that intention because I was hearing data from people. So when people tell me something like, Oh, I need to update that.

And I also want to share, I know people say, look, you're going to get advice from me, advice from other people or other coaches, but I'm just going to tell you. You do not have to do services for free to get started. I did not. When I claimed I wanted to do my business, I went to the Secretary of State.

I took the day off to register my business. I also took that day to take my grandma to an eye doctor's appointment. I got my first paying client because I did target market research for them. You don't need a fancy website or social media in the beginning. I remember I wanted to have a website so badly in the beginning, even though I didn't have data.

But what I realized is I wasn't having confidence. Like I was saying earlier, it's that superhero cape syndrome. Felt like I had to look the part, but I had to understand my target market. And even now, but now I will say my website is important. And my website has evolved. I remember having that pink and curly gold and white feminine color.

Now it's red, blue, and yellow. It mimics the Philippines flag, by the way, to honor my ancestors. But there's videos and pictures of me and my With my clients because community is so important to me and the feedback I've gotten doing target market research over the years is I love that I see it's you with your clients and they're so diverse.

They're not just Asian or Filipino there. It's like the United Nations up in there. I focus on having a newsletter. If you want to join my newsletter, go to [ElaineLiu.com](http://ElaineLiu.com) forward slash join because majority of my clients are millennials like me who love reading them. It's like Zanga and LiveJournal. I have this podcast because I have successful clients and successful people in the audience where they're, they don't have time to scroll through on social media.

So they're listening to this podcast as they're washing dishes, folding clothes, working out. And they want to actually get in depth information and data to help them in their life and their business or career. That's why I created this podcast. You're welcome. Also, if you love it, leave a rating and review.

So here's my final fifth assignment for you on getting, on doing target market research. After each conversation, ask yourself, What did I like about what that person had to say? What resonated? What didn't? Make sure to make reflections of what you liked and didn't, and how you can make sure you're honoring your voice in this business.

And fun surprises. Don't be surprised if you get your first paying clients or target market research. That's okay. That's how I got mine. And if you didn't, or if you don't get your first paying clients, now you have data to create your website and your social media. And if you're like, Elaine, I actually just need scripts on how to sell, then I actually have a freebie for you.

And you're gifted this because you stayed towards the end of the podcast episode. Go to [elainelu.com](http://elainelu.com) forward slash scripts. That's [ELAINELU.com](http://ELAINELU.com) forward slash scripts. Here's my reflective question for you. Number one, why do you want to start your business? And I say that because I said earlier, business is so tough.

So I want you to reflect on why do you want to start this? Why are you wanting to leave or end a chapter in your life and start this? My action items for you, I'm going to basically summarize the five assignments I gave you in this podcast episode. One is a list of your business ideas you want to do.

Two, put a list of people in your possible target market. Or connectors go A through Z from your contacts, whether they're on your phone, Gmail, LinkedIn, wherever they may be. Let's make this assignment fun. Play music in the background. You could check out my Spotify playlist, Mr. Bear's Bunch of Figures, which is 1990s and 2000s hip hop.

Three, reach out to low hanging fruit, three to five people. You're probably gonna have to listen Or go back and replay if you want to hear the exact messaging to do for that. And then fourth, make a note of patterns you're hearing from this target market research. And then fifth, reflect on what resonates and doesn't resonate from each of those conversations.

Remember, plan with a margin of magic. Target market research is here for you to gather qualitative data so you know how your business is going to look like and you gain more

clarity from it. And if you're like, Elaine, I don't know, this seems way too easy. Like actually, yes, the sub seems easy, what's going to get in your way is the itty bitty sheddy committee, AKA your head of don't start it.

You need this to send this. I want to go back to like, why do you want to start this business in the first place? And if you need further support, feel free to schedule an introductory business coaching review call with me. It's free for 30 minutes at ElaineLu. com forward slash call. That's E L A I N E L U.

com forward slash call. And in that call, we'll discuss what you need support in. I'll give you at least three action items by the end of the call. If it's a great fit to work together, great. I'll share with you how it may look like to work together. And if by the end of the call, it's not a great fit, great.

I'll refer you to other people and resources. So it's a win for you. Really wanted to create this. podcast episode to be action packed. So you can start your business, get your first paying clients. And it's like a pre celebration before by seven year business anniversary. But if I was able to start a business during the summer, you can too.

And if you need further support, just go to elaineloo. com forward slash all.