

## EP114

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I wanna make it clear that this episode is not just for those who are business owners, but also queer leaders. 'cause here's the reality, you are going to have to pitch yourself, whether it's at the next team meeting, pitching your idea, or change in a project, pitching yourself at a job interview. If you're a business owner, pitching to a potential client or.

If this is a personal relationship, maybe you're having a difficult conversation with a loved one, and it's pitching to understand the other person and for them to understand you. And when it comes to those personal relationships, it's actually not about winning. And yes, I won a first place for this pitch, but that was not my goal.

My goal was to get my message out there that our presence, when I mean our, I mean minority leaders do matter, and I knew who was going to be in the room. Two groups, the first group, fellow minority business owners and leaders. Showing up despite current challenges. The second group corporate buyers who are also navigating the uncertainty and shifting priorities, that happens every day when we see the news.

Let's be real. It's like waking up and like, what's gonna happen? Not even that. I feel like it's. What's gonna happen in the morning and then lunchtime and dinner, it's insane. Now, you are going to wanna take notes in this episode, so grab your notebook or notes up 'cause you're going to learn the behind the scenes from my pitch and what you can do.

But don't worry, you're gonna hear the replay of the pitch first. So grab your coffee to your Boba and let's drop the beat.

**Conference Speaker:** Thank you so much, judges. Now please welcome our next competitor, Elaine I Cartus of Elaine, LLC.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Hi everyone. Did y'all have lunch yet? No. Okay. Hi, I'm Elaine Lu Cartus. I'm a business and executive coach, but my favorite title, oldest daughter of a Filipino immigrant farmer. I had to learn early on how to translate. Conversations, culture and clarity between my family and this new country. I created and trademarked conscious conversations out of necessity as a woman of color leader, learning how to deal with crisis conflict and tough leadership moments.

Conscious Conversations helped me as a former grassroots organizer to lead thousands of volunteers in this country to get voters out to vote. Conscious conversations also helped me as a former fundraiser to raise \$11 million. 9 million of it was community college scholarship. And in the past seven years, conscious Conversations has helped supported our 13,000 plus coaching clients, which includes Fortune 500 executives, business leaders in 58 countries.

We also have online courses on career navigation and using AI with USC, duke, John Hopkins, brown, LinkedIn, and 30 plus universities. But what I'm most proud of is our 300 plus client

reviews that you could check@elainelew.com slash reviews. And despite what's happening in this current climate, this year is going to be our highest revenue in our business.

Why? Because people problems are profit problems and conscious conversations solves both. Like my clients, I had to have conscious conversations with my team members. I made tough decisions, met with my finance team, go through our p and l reports. The result we're five months into this year, we've already hit last year's revenue, and year to date we have increased.

Our profit margins by 41%. So to celebrate, I'm not Oprah, I don't got cars for you, I'm sorry. But I do have a free way for you to experience conscious conversations with my team dashboard, and that's at [elaine.lu.com/dashboard](https://elaine.lu.com/dashboard) where you'll learn how to lead your people, increase your profit, and streamline your process.

Without anxiety. Thank you.

**Conference Speaker:** Hi, Eileen. great job. I can tell this isn't the first time you've presented in front of an audience. I love that you brought what you do back to, some really personal experiences and, you know, connected with that and with the audience. I think that's important. I, I did understand what you're providing and I love that you also brought all those different examples of accomplishments to the table.

I think the only thing that I would've loved to hear is like. Kind of where are you going from here? You know, where are you at in your growth journey as a, as a business, and kind of what's next for you. But overall, you know, great job. Can I, can I pitch add? Thank you. Can I add to that? You took a challenge and you turned into profit.

You said during this challenging times. Right now, I'm making more money now than I made before, and I think a lot of businesses need to hear that because this is a challenging time. But you pivoted. The pandemic was a challenging time, but you pivoted and that's good to know. That's very encouraging for a lot of small businesses that are now in these, these times.

You took a time and you challenge it and you turned it into a profit, so that's good to know. Thank

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** you. And I just wanna encourage, as fellow MBEs. It's because I made those difficult choices last year. Last year was tough. It was so hard. I had to put the reality check. Not everything is a priority. What do I need that's down?

Scaling and focusing. So I just want to share if anyone's going through tough times. 'cause I was there last year,

so that was my replay of the pitch. What'd you think? I do agree with the feedback on sharing. I. The vision of conscious conversations moving forward while at the same time, I'll

say two minutes is not a lot of time to go through everything, and I knew I was gonna be deducted points if I did go over two minutes.

But like I said earlier in my intro, I, my goal was it. To try to be number one. It was important to get this message out. Now you heard the replay. This is what I'm gonna do in this podcast episode. I'm gonna break it down in three different things. One, break down my pitch and the thought process behind it.

This will help you, not necessarily, I'm expecting you to do a pitch, but it might help you with your messaging. And this is not just for business owners. This could. Be, if you are working, leading a team, this will help you practice with messaging to a lot of you are nosy. You're gonna, you really care about how the hell have, it's May 19th, 2025 when I'm recording this.

How did I hit last year's revenue? Five months into. This year, despite everything happening. And how did I, I increase my profit margins by 41%, like if I stopped working. And mind you, I also wanna be clear what I mean by hitting last year's a revenue. I mean the cash flow that, like with contracts until the end of the year, like if I stopped doing any sales calls, I've already gone beyond last year's revenue, so I wanna be clear on that.

And I don't really need to try, if that makes sense. I just need to be me, which I have been doing. Anyways, that's the second part that I'll be sharing this episode. And third, how I practice. You ready? All right. First, let's break down my pitch and my thought process behind it. As you know, when we're introducing ourselves.

This case a pitch, an EL elevator speech. I was mindful of my audience. I knew I was around fellow minority business owners and companies that supported us, so that's why I shared. But my favorite title, oldest daughter of a Filipino immigrant farmer. I knew this was going to stand out. Actually, I was surprised how much it did stand out.

I knew it was gonna resonate, but if you remember the replay, there was a huge applause. The reality, if I had to have a critique for myself, I should have paused and allowed that applauding in. If anything, I should have integrated the audience. How many of our immigrants as proud immigrants as well, I would've put my hand up so I could see hands raised.

Didn't do that, but. I thought of that. Now I am. I'm gonna be real with you. Here's the reality. I'm visibly Asian and there's preconceived notions of being Asian. I wanted to remind those that despite the highlight reel of seeing me that day when I pitched in my power suit, I'm not in my power suit right now As I'm doing this reflection episode, I'm actually my PJ's.

I'm always in my PJ's when I record my podcast. Anyways, lemme go back. It's a script. I don't have a script. It's just bullet points. I'm just being real with all of you. people see the highlight reels I got, my makeup did, I was in a power suit. I practiced. So there's preconceived notions, but like, no, this is who I was before where I came from, and.

I'm a daughter and granddaughter of immigrant farmers. My great-grandfather on my dad's side, my grandfather and my mom's side were war victims. So you might see me like, oh my gosh, this amazing person on stage who's killing it. But the reality is, is I came. I came from survival. There is this quote, I've shared it a couple times in this podcast.

I don't know whose quote it is. It is not mine. I'm, I'm not gonna take it, but our grandparents survives. Our parents could provide, and our parents provided so we can thrive. I. And I shared how I created and trademark conscious conversations as a woman of color leader to navigate crisis conflict and tough leadership moments and to bridge that gap, right?

Being the oldest daughter having to navigate conflict, I. I shared my experience prior to being a coach for seven, almost eight years, from being a grassroots organizer, leading thousands of volunteers to a fundraiser, raising \$11 million to coaching for Fortune 500 executives and business leaders. That was a through line to my pitch, a consistency.

And so for those of you, maybe you're not a business owner, maybe. You're managing a team, maybe you are wanting to transition to a different department, different industry, and it's like, oh, I'm gonna be starting all new. Actually. It's figuring out what is your through line? How can your diverse experiences actually help provide more value to your future employer?

What's your value add? And if you are a business owner and maybe you're thinking of wanting to target a different audience, what is the value add you could provide to a potential client given your diverse experiences? So prior to being a coach, I was a grassroots organizer. I was a fundraiser in the political nonprofit sectors.

But throughout my life and career, I had conscious conversations. I talked about Sure. It's, it deals with navigating people problems, but in the reality, it's profit problems and conscious conversation solves both. I also knew, yes, that name dropping. I have online courses on career navigation using AI with USC Bound Duke and John Hopkins was honestly just name dropping.

The reality is. As we all know, we have trust issues right now, and I knew I had to not just back out, back up the names because anyone could have those names be featured in magazine article. And mind you, I'm featured in Forbes and Business Insider and Money, so I was like, you know what? What I am most proud of is our 300 plus client reviews.

I knew that was gonna add a layer of credibility and to just respect my clients. I wanted to use myself as a case study. I wanted to show my vulnerability of, yes, I'm celebrating having my highest year in revenue. And increasing my profit margins by 41%. But as I shared when I was receiving feedback and they're like, it was incredible that you shared you have a high revenue.

Despite these challenging times, I wanted to be real. I made tough decisions and that is backed up. If you've been listening to this podcast, I shared how I like combed through my p and I report. Had tough conversations with team members. That was really tough and as I reflect on it, I thought everything was a priority.

Everything in the p and I, no, I had a reason for everything of why it should still be there. But I wasn't being real and honest with myself of what was actually moving the needle of not just bringing in revenue for my business, but also what is and beyond the p and I report, what is moving the needle for my clients to get better results?

And more transformation, and I ended my pitch adding humor that, you know, to celebrate having the highest revenue. I'm not Oprah. I don't, I'm not gonna give you free cars, but I wanted to make sure there was a call to action. Like I said, my goal wasn't trying to win. Honestly, it would've been a bonus to get.

Emails. So that's, I did a call to action if you wanna experience conscious conversations. And by the way, if you're, since you're listening to this replay, you have access to it, go to [elainelew.com/dashboard](https://elainelew.com/dashboard) where you're going to get the team dashboard as well. I'm not sure if I will keep that dashboard up.

Live forever and eternity, forever and always. I sound so millennial. So you might wanna download that right now. And by the way, I wanna share how even I communicate and talk in this podcast is different from the pitch. I wanna share that in my podcast. How I prepare, like I'm talking about how my breakdown of my pitch and my thought process.

I knew my audience. My audience was business owners, minority business owners, as well as companies that had procurement directors here. This is called WC and Ally's Business and Career Real Talk. This is real talk. This is a conversation. It's not formal. I am looking at notes from a Google doc that I quickly noted, but you know, I'm stumbling upon my words.

And also the reality is with ai, and I'll be honest, I did use AI before. This will say, help me just put bullet points, and I just didn't like it and I trashed it. With AI coming more and more into a real life, people want the realness. And the honesty, like, I'm not gonna share the name of the podcast that I listened to, but it was interesting, this podcast, I've been listening to the host, I wanna say, in the past two months, I could tell this person has used ai.

It's more scripted and perfect. And sure, they might be, they have a YouTube video, and on Spotify they also. Have it on video and sure they might be moving their hands so it could seem natural, but because it feels so perfect and scripted, it like doesn't resonate. And I was reading comments from other people and like, oh, I miss the old days when it was just more conversational and not ai.

And I'm pretty sure you could tell this is just me talking right now. Not let, I mean it's structured, but I always say. It's, it's planned with a margin of magic. So I see where it takes me. All right, demo that [dashboard@elainele.com](mailto:dashboard@elainele.com) slash dashboard. Now, the second part,

what you really care about, how the hell I already hit last year's revenue, five months into 2025 and increase my profit margin by 41% year to date.

All right? I'm gonna probably piss some people off who might be in my industry, but I'm, and also under this second thing, I have 1, 2, 3, 4, 4 points under it how I hit my. My revenue and my profit margins. So the first point under this second point of it is I left the echo chamber of my industry. I stopped chasing trends, went back to the basics, real relationships, real follow up, real value being an integrity to the conversations I was having.

Not always just focus on the transaction. No fancy funnel, just consistency my funnel. The funnel, that client journey journey that people talk about. Okay. people find me, book a call, fill out a form, not a good fit, cancel the call, good fit. We do a call, see, I'm coaching them. Literally, I'm giving so much value giving three action items away.

And then if it's a good fit, great. We talk about, looks like if it's not a good fit, that's fine. Like, that's it. Nothing fancy, really simple. And how, how do they continue to come to me? Referrals, renewals, Google, SE. Going back to the basics with real relationships. It's the same steps that helped me raise \$11 million as a former fundraiser regardless of where I lived.

And people are like, oh, well it was just easier for you. Elle. Like, no, I lived in Iowa, Indiana, Montana, New Mexico, Massachusetts. I always had to start all over raising for these different campaigns. And how I did that was building relationships, meeting with people on the phone, not through dms, not through a chat bot, and.

As things become more automated in ai, I'm just telling you this is, this is like a fact. Being human is gonna be more important now than ever. And the type of coaching business I wanna create that I've owned is I want to be boutique like an Ivy League school, like a liberal arts school. I'm just working with a limited amount of clients.

That's how I wanna do it. And it's interesting 'cause I left my. I left my career as a fundraiser and I had my dream job as I've shared in other podcast episodes because I learned the steps, right? And I figured, okay, I'll also learn steps from other coaches. But then it just started feeling like a pyramid scheme and not authentic to myself.

Thankfully, I talked to people, I was talking to a client who's an executive, and she even shared with me. Coaches look like a pyramid scheme, but the reason why I booked with you to see if it's a good fit, and now I'm working with you for at least a year now is because you just seemed real. And I do make an effort to build relationships in person at least once a week.

Yes, I'm in la yes, I drive, but it's just even beyond my p and I report. It just feels so nice to connect with people as a human, even today, not even work related, but I'm recording this on a Monday. May 19th, and one of the awards that I won that I didn't realize I won, and I actually asked the sponsor Ag.

Wait, what did I win when they announced it, like, oh, you got a \$5,000 scholarship to UCLA ticket class. And then I also got sweet tickets to attend any Los Angeles Sparks games. And one of the people I wanted to invite was my aunt and uncle, and I had a doctor's appointment today. They lived 10 minutes away from my doctor.

I'm like, oh, I'll let them know. I'll, I'm gonna stop by and tell them in person. I could have easily called, texted Facebook and said, but I did that in person and it was just nice to go in person. Mind you, I did get like. A free lunch from my aunt and just like any Filipino auntie, she gave me leftovers, ak ba, and, and it was so nice to connect and it kind of made me re, it reminded me of when I was younger because I had babysitters who were aunts and grandmas just taking care of you.

And I don't know, you just can't replace that type of energy. And the gratitude I got from my aunt. In person to phone or FaceTime. That was my highlight of the day actually. I will share 'cause I used to do a lot of things in my business online, like I've shared doing Facebook lives every day and posting and it feels nice to not be performative.

As a recovering performative perfectionist who always aimed for straight As, this is so healing that my goal was not to be number one. I just wanted a stage I want to play and talk. It was so healing for my inner child. Shout out to my therapist, obviously, and not only did I leave the echo chamber of my industry, I made friends with people in different industries and learned from it.

I was at a Dodgers Sports Entertainment event with executives. I was talking to an executive from Shondaland, by the way, and they were doing a talk about how they've started creating experiences outside of their shows. For example, Bridgeton, if you notice, there's Bridgeton events that happen without the cast, but for people to experience it outside of it and that branding, that personal branding, and.

For you. I want to challenge you to spend time with incredible leaders that's not in your industry. This past year I've hung out with sports, retail, entertainment, and HR executives, and it's been nice hearing their challenges and solutions. I. And let's be honest, when we're business owners, regardless if you're coach or not, we are kind of in an echo chamber thinking, but we know what the problems are and then we're reading Facebook or, well, I don't really use Facebook, LinkedIn, or Instagram or whatever, and we think that's what people are going through, but it's like, actually, why don't you go talk to the people that are actually going through it, rather than making assumptions of what people are posting.

And a reminder that executives aren't all, or business leaders who are busy aren't all. Online all the time they're working, and if they're not working, they're resting. I talk more about relationship building. If you wanna listen to episode 23, get clients with ease through referrals and renewals. All right, we're still under though.

What you really care about is how I hit my five months, like my revenue five months into 2025, and increased my profit margins. The second thing is I always focus on what's working. I shared this earlier, got clients referrals, renewals, Google, SEO. How do people get

nurtured? This podcast, my newsletter. If you're not part of my newsletter, join@elaineleew.com slash join, and like I shared in my feedback.

When I combed through my p and I report, I had to delete and cut things. Those are tough conversations. That leads to the third thing that's helped me hit my revenue. Five months into this year. I surrounded myself with people who told me the truth. Shout to my partner and my coaches. Ugh. My partner is a typical accountant, straight to the point when he gives me feedback.

Sometimes I'm like, can you tone it down? But then I realize, you know what? I need it. I need the direct feedback that I. I need to hear not what I want to hear and grateful for. My coaches, they challenge me and instead of questioning them, like, no, I disagree, I do ask them. Why? Because help me understand why I might not be seeing this so I could learn from it.

I don't want people who kiss my ass. I don't need that. I need to learn and grow and someone to call me out on my blind spots. So I shared my partner as well as my coaches because. It doesn't necessarily just have to be someone you hire. It could be also people in your personal life too. A fourth thing, I know this sounds weird in terms of how I've been able to, I.

Hit my revenue from last year so early is honoring my body and time. My time and energy is the main foundation. It is more important to me than many. So because of that, I ask myself, does this yield my ROI? Is this call that I'm doing with this person gonna be energetic for me or is it gonna drain me?

For example, I've canceled more sales calls when we get our forms in and they're not a good fit. I don't wanna be on calls with people I already know that are not a good fit. I'm not here to convince or manipulate people to work with me. I'm here to work with people who are ready. Are a good fit and I wanna honor their time too, respectfully as a human.

So I'll give an example. I had a call scheduled with an incredible business owner and they were looking for a specific type of support. And even though like they already had a successful business making millions, and as much as I would love the money, I'm like, oh, I'm not the right person. So I referred them to someone else.

You could say that I lost money on it. No, I was holding up to my reputation. And I was honoring what's best for that individual. Also, why I love doing Muay Thai T kickboxing. I get so much energy from it. Now, I'm not saying you go do martial art, but what is that thing that gives you so much energy? I. I was talking to a client and for her, she was like, Elaine, I walked in my neighborhood and I was looking at the birds.

I was looking at the birds, and hey, that was our thing. That's great because it helps us pause from not working. And then when we do that, the best ideas come. And when I talk about



honoring my body and time even preparing for this pitch, I made it easy that week where I was having a maximum of two calls per day.

Some days I didn't. Doing Muay Hai every day. I also blocked off time. Actually, I will be honest, this was not, I mean, it just worked out, but it happens. There's so much abundance that it comes. But the day after the pitch, I did have to facilitate a full day C-Suite retreat with a client. So it was. Their leadership team in Palm Springs.

So I had to drive two and a half hours from Pasadena to Palm Springs and then the full day. So that was not really restful, but actually because that was already planned before the pitch, I made sure Saturday and Sunday I was resting. And then even today, Monday, no call scheduled, went to the doctors, I hanged out with my aunt.

I did a couple of emails, Voxer some of my clients. That was it. I mean, I am even feeling like. I, I need a little more rest. I'll be honest, I have probably two calls. I'm meeting with someone in person tomorrow, and if I had to be honest, I should have done like, like the week of and the week after make it light to honor my energy.

So I'm just telling you, I'm also still. Learning from myself, and I'm gonna bring back gratitude from my partner who reminds me. Like sometimes he's just like, Elaine, what are you doing tomorrow? That's too much. And I get so annoyed by him, like, no, I could do everything. I am a superhero. But then I have to become honest with myself, right?

Breathe, check in, look at my calendar, ask myself actually, does that really honor my energy and time? No. And then I'll have to move and switch things around. So lately I've been honoring my Bonnie and time still learning from the process, and that's what I wanna share with you as well. And if you wanna delve deeper with me on that, check out episode five Time and energy management to get your life back.

All right, Brandon, go to the last part. How did I practice for this pitch? I actually had one person come up to me after the talk. Okay. Real talk. Elaine, how long did it take you to practice? I actually. Shared with them, and I'm sharing with you now. I only practiced the day before, but I was running errands, like I was getting my tailored suit back.

I was making copies, so I was driving around town and I was probably in the car. This is very LA of me, but it's all local. I was probably in the car for a good hour, but I had the radio off. I had the script of the pitch and clipboard, and I was practicing it, and I was practicing adding it line by line. I was making some edits, so I did it for an hour.

Came home, having cooking dinner, having dinner with my partner, a sacred time for me, so was very present with that. Then we had a hot day at Costco. I'm not even kidding. We went to Costco, my favorite club now that I am older and we just, we went shopping and came back. By the way, I feel like I'm doing a live journal of Zinga.

Voice memo. If you're a millennial, you know what that is. If you are not, you're like, what the hell that is? It's like a journal blog back in the day when we were teenagers and young. Anyway, let me bring it back. And then I went back home, took a shower and I was, I put a face mask on. A headband and I used my comb pretending it is a mic, and I practiced in the closet and I practiced speaking out loud just like I did in the car.

But this time I was moving my body, like my, my nonverbal cues from my hands, my arms, my posture. I was practicing it in addition to that. I was also visualizing how I was going to be up there, how people were going to feel, how I was going to feel like an Olympian. So then the morning of, I didn't practice.

I woke up super early at three 'cause I got my makeup done. I wasn't even practicing while I was getting my makeup done. I was just hanging out with my makeup artist who wanted, were just catching up on life. And the morning of drove for an hour and I actually went back and forth. I went back and forth from practicing it with no music on just speaking out loud.

And I didn't care if other drivers are gonna see that I was crazy. People are talking on the phone, so I'm gonna whatever I was talking, but at the same time, sometimes I just got really tired of reciting it. So I was like, okay, let me visualize. So I would listen to some calm music and visualize how I was gonna feel and look how I wanted other people to feel and look.

So I would just go on and off in that. I share this because. I had so many people come up to me. Even the judges, if you remember what the judges said, this is not your first time. You're such an expert. You're a natural. I wanna let you know, in high school I had the most embarrassing moment where I spoke in front of class, forgot my lines, and my bad for not practicing.

And if I wanna be great at something, I know it's about practicing. That's why I appreciate. Sports and music as a moi Thai fighter. It's about practice. It's always the smallest little tweaks like I am right now, realizing I need to work better on my hook, so I know it is being able to follow through.

With my hook or even my cross being able to move my whole arm and back and shoulder and you're like, Elaine, you are speaking a language. I don't understand. But for those of you that do sports, it doesn't have to be mohai, but it could be just the smallest things of what you move your hands, your arm, your like even how you breathe, for example.

And I know breathing is important. 'cause as a moi Hai fighter, when we're punching and kicking, we are breathing out. And then when someone's about to hit us, we also breathe out too. So we don't take so much of the force. And I also was a former violinist. I was concert master and had to practice all the time.

So when it came to the actual hour before the talk, I was actually walking back and forth because of my anxiety. I actually thought. About the Olympic, so I was walking back and

forth. I was not practicing my lines at that point. I was practicing on calming my nervous system, visualization and deep breathing, and what happened?

I won first place, but more importantly, ugh. It was just the number of people that came up to me after it was, it was hard to find a break with me alone. People saying, thank you so much. I loved your energy. Thank you for reminding me of my own story, and sure it's great for business too. Yes, I'll be transparent.

I have a number of very well known companies who wants me to connect with them after, and I know like, Elaine, how is this even relevant? I'm not planning to pitch or I am working at a full-time job. Because here's the reality. If you're focused on a job interview, pitching, or a company, or even have having a difficult conversation with a loved one or coworker, it's about practice and I'm sharing the behind the scenes of work it takes Oscar winners and oly win 'cause of practice.

So next time you have. Interview you are pitching to potential client having a difficult conversation. I want you to practice put a face mask on practice in your closet or do it in your car when you're running errands. 'cause you don't have time. Honestly, that's why I did it in my car 'cause I did not have time.

So I hope you enjoyed and you learned. And if you need to go replay this podcast episode again, go ahead and hit that rewind button back. I. And let it sink in and take notes after.

If you enjoyed hearing the pitch and the behind the scenes breakdown, it would mean so much if you could leave a five star rating interview. It really helps this podcast reach more listeners like you and I created this podcast. Sure, for people who potentially wanna work with me, but also as an accessible educational resource for others.

And if you want to know what the next episode jobs. Make sure to hit that follow button so you don't miss a thing. And if you're ready to stop figuring out alone and you wanna work with me, whether it's in leadership growth, or your next big move, then schedule an introductory coaching call with me@elainelu.com slash call.

You're gonna walk away with three clear action items towards your goals and can't wait to connect.