

Ep #256: The Dangers of Expert-Washing Your Marketing

Full Episode Transcript



With Your Host

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Hey, I'm Simone Seol, and *I Am Your Korean Mom*. I am also the descendant of teachers, healers, and scholars, and I teach you how to remember your humanity through marketing and business.

Hey, friends, I just had a fascinating conversation with a member, a client, inside *Home*, which is my program. This person, who I've actually been working with for a long time, they were one of my one-on-one clients back in the day when I had a one-on-one practice. They've been in different containers, here and there, since, and we have this deep relationship.

I think the world of them. I care about them and their business. They were sharing in the group about how they have this offer, that I know about, that they've had for years, that has done really well. It's brought in a lot of money. More importantly, it's delivered people incredible results. They believe in it in every way. They have so much proof and evidence to back up how well it works. It has been in a lot of demand. It's made a lot of money, all that stuff.

For some reason, recently, these launches have been super up and down. It'd be the same program, same marketing, same wonderful coach, and suddenly it's like the sales would plummet. And then, at the next launch it would plummet again. They were like, "What is happening? I don't understand, it the same everything. It's an amazing program. So, what's different? Is it just my mindset?"

So, they got some coaching on this in the group, and one thing that they were encouraged to do was to go back and evaluate what exactly they were doing in the launches that did really well, versus the launches that flopped. Don't just think vaguely, "Oh, I had the wrong mindset." Go and look at what was happening.

This person, to their great credit, actually activated their curiosity and went back to look at all their marketing copy, look at their emails, look at their offers. How was I marketing differently in the months that did really well versus a month that flopped?

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The pattern was so clear. This is me relaying what they told me; the pattern was so clear. They were like, “Actually, I was amazed to find this.” What happened right around the time when the sales started to hit a nosedive... Hit a nosedive? That's not a thing, you just nosedive. Okay, when the sales started to nosedive was when they stopped doing the thing that they were doing and they asked “experts” how to improve it, improve their sales copy.

They took all their suggestions and “improved” it, and then immediately, the sales went way down. It was like, oh, my goodness, they said the pattern was so clear. When they started coming back into their voice again, the sounds are up again.

I was like, in that moment, when I read that, I just realized there's a concept that I need to birth into this world. I just thought of it, and I need to share it with you. That is expert-washing. I think you all need to know about this concept, expert-washing your work. Expert-washing is taking your work and getting the feedback of people that you consider to be experts, or people that you think just know better than you.

Or sometimes they're not even experts, they're just people who have opinions about your work. When you doubt yourself, it's like, “Oh, they're probably right, because I don't know what I'm doing,” right? It could even be non-experts who just think you should do things differently.

It's taking other people's feedback and editing your work, so it becomes a reflection of their feedback, as opposed to what feels truly like you and your work. Have you ever had someone edit your copy and felt like, “Wait, that doesn't sound like me. That does not even sound like something I would say anymore.”

Or have you ever saw... Have you ever saw? Why can't I speak English anymore? Have you ever seen examples of, here's how not to do marketing, and here's how you fix it. You see two examples side by side and you're like, “I actually liked the before version better.” Right?

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Or have you had someone give you feedback on how to optimize your business for more sales, whatever, and you're like, "Wait, but I if I did that, that wouldn't even be something that I want to do. I don't even want my business to look like that."

I remember one time in high school, there was this girl, and she was a very strange person. But this girl, out of the blue, stopped me in the halls and she was like, "Can I just give you a piece of advice?" And me, being 16 or whatever, I was dumb. And I was like, "Sure."

Now I'm much more wary of people who just come out of the blue trying to offer me advice without being solicited. Anyway, she's like, "Can I get a piece of advice?" I'm like, "Yeah, what is it?" This person says, "I studied makeup and color theory, and the eyeshadow you've been wearing is totally wrong for your skin tone. There are other colors that will look so much better on you. I just thought I'd tell you."

So, the color in question was yellow. I was kind of going through a phase. I don't know why. But there was a specific reason I was really into that color as eyeshadow. And I get it, I'm Asian, right? I already have yellow toned skin, and so yellow on yellow is maybe not some other people's idea of what looks good. But I was into it.

I was like, "I actually love this color. It makes me happy when I wear yellow eyeshadow." And she was like, "Oh, okay, whatever," and then she walked away. I never studied makeup; I don't know shit about color theory. I still don't. Maybe there would have been a lot of people who would have thought I would have looked better with other colors, but I liked yellow.

I liked my face with yellow eyeshadow. And what's the point of makeup, to make sure other people think you're cute? To me, makeup is for me. So, I can feel confident. So, I can feel like I can have fun. Right? So, this is an example of that person trying to expert-wash.

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Or actually, if I had taken her advice and thought, “Oh God, I guess I look terrible,” even though I didn't think I looked terrible at all, “I guess I'll never wear this color that I'm really into because it doesn't look good.” If I did that to myself, I would have let my face literally be expert-washed.

Now I could hear some of you saying, “Okay, Simone, that's just makeup,” that's for whatever. But when it comes to having a business, other people's thoughts do matter. Because other people are the ones who have to like you and pay you. Shouldn't you take expert advice to do things that other people will want to like and pay for?

And to that I say, you're 100% right, of course. Unless you're doing a hobby by yourself, if you have a business that automatically involves other people, and so how other people perceive your work matters completely. But the question is, which other people? The world is full of fucking people; 8 billion, in fact.

And no matter how big a business you have, only a teeny, tiny percentage of the all the people in the world are a right fit for you. I've made over \$10 million in sales in the past few years as a marketing coach. That's a lot of sales. And the kind of people who resonate with my approach to marketing and buy for me, are a tiny, tiny, tiny, tiny portion of the total number of people who are in the market for marketing coaching.

A lot of people find my work not that interesting, it doesn't speak to them, or they don't really get it, or they get it, but they don't think it's that useful. A lot of people check out my work and think, “You know what? I need something a bit more structured.” A lot of people look at my work and think, “I need something with less structure. This is too much structure for me.”

Some people think my teaching on marketing is way too woo-woo, way too spiritual. And other people don't think it's spiritual enough. Some people think that I'm too harsh and mean sometimes. And I was going to say some people think I'm too nice, but I realized that's not true. Nobody thinks I'm

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too nice. Never, in the history of my life, has anyone said no, Simone is too nice. But oh, well.

The point is, the people who end up buying from me, or the people for whom my exact amount of structuredness, or my exact amount of spiritualness or saltiness, not more, not less, are right for them. If I was any different than exactly how I am, they would not resonate with me. They would not buy for me.

That's a great thing. Because there are a million amazing marketing experts out there who are for everyone else who isn't into me. There is enough for all of us. That's why God created so fucking many of us, so that everyone has their own thing. Everyone has their own clients. Everyone has their own right fit people, right? The same is true for you.

For example, when you love writing long, rambley posts, and a copy expert comes in and says, "Well, you need to edit this down so it's short and succinct and to the point, and in order for people to give a shit. You're going to lose everybody with these long posts."

You take that advice, you expert-wash your copy to force it to be short and succinct, you're going to lose the people who love your writing, because it's long and rambley. They love reading every paragraph, every sentence. Those are the people that you'd enjoy working with the most because they're naturally the best fit for your gifts and your medicine.

When you love showing up in say, yoga pants and hoodies, and branding experts are like, "Well, you need to look more unique, more glamorous, more pulled together, to be credible and professional and to stand out amongst everybody else."

The minute you get different clothes and you wear fancy dresses, I don't know, you expert-wash your image to fit that mold, you instantly lose people who are following you because they connected to your down to earth vibe. These are the people whom you would have enjoyed working

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with the most because they are naturally the best fit for your gifts and medicine.

Another example is when you have very strong politics that are important to you, and you include lots of political messaging in your marketing, and an expert says, “Oh, don't do that. You're going to alienate people who could potentially buy from you. Keep those political opinions to yourself. Let it be private. You can do your political things privately on your own time.”

You're like, “Oh, yeah, I don't want to alienate people. I don't want to possibly offend anybody who might want to buy for me. So, I'm just going to keep my mouth shut on these things.” The minute you do that, you lose the people who are following you because they loved how outspoken you are about your politics. By the way, these are, of course, the people who you would enjoy working with the most, because they are naturally the best fit for your gifts, your medicine.

By the way, if you expert-washed your messaging and followed that, now that you have these people who came and bought from you because of your political neutral messaging, you then have to tiptoe around them and hide your political ideas around them. Because they don't know that about you when they bought, and you don't want them to get offended.

If that sounds exhausting, tiptoeing around your own people, hiding who you are, it is exhausting. It makes you not love being in your own business. What kind of life is that? Expert-washing yourself is a little bit like gaslighting yourself, essentially. Gaslighting yourself out of your own instincts, your own unedited voice, your true passions, the unique tone and rhythm and color of your creativity and productivity.

In all these things, you are one in 8 billion, there is no other like you. That is your signature. That is your secret sauce. Remember, that when you gaslight yourself and expert-wash yourself, you're saying, “Hmm, a slightly photoshopped version of my intelligence and my creativity and my energy might be more marketable.”

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I'm telling you, that is not true. Look, this actually may have been at least partially true if we were living in the 20th century, or even before that, when there weren't that many opportunities, options, for work and entrepreneurship. It was harder to start a business. It was harder to find people. There were companies, you got hired, or you hope to get hired by whoever's in charge, who has to approve of who you are, and fit their standard of whatever qualified and professional means.

But in 2023, which is when I'm recording this, no fucking way. We're connected to each other through the internet in ways that are unprecedented. Never have we had more opportunities to make an impact and make a living based on exactly who we are and what our unique gifts and medicine are.

In fact, in today's world, being exactly who you are might even be a requirement for you to hit your full potential for sustainable income. Because if you don't, how are you going to differentiate yourself? If you're just molding yourself to every expert opinion, you're going to look like everybody else.

Who your ideal clients are is not a mystery, they're going to find you naturally when you show up as yourself and communicate like yourself. Who your bad fit clients are, also not a mystery. They're going to self-select out when you show up as yourself and you communicate like yourself over and over and over again; joyfully, unapologetically, confidently, right?

So, this is one of the most important ways you can strengthen your "magnetism." Being yourself. You're not trying to be magnetic to everybody. You're trying to be magnetic to people who are like, "Oh my God, I've been looking for you all of my life."

Some of you might be wondering, what's the difference between expert-washing, and taking genuinely good advice, or getting to learn about my blind spots, because we all have blind spots, and improving how I do

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things? Because it's not a real thing, right? We're not born knowing how to do everything perfectly.

Can't you benefit from learning from others and changing how you do things, especially when that perspective is coming from somebody with more experience more knowledge, etc.? My answer is, of course, hello. But the difference matters a lot, right?

Leaning into your own edges, even when it's uncomfortable, so you can grow your knowledge, sharpen your skills, and improve your effectiveness is completely, completely different from expert-washing yourself. Which is overriding your own instincts and creative intelligence and spirit to fit someone else's mold.

These two things have nothing in common. They're totally different, even though they might look very superficially similar. So, here's how you tell the difference. You have to feel into your body. You have to feel the difference in your body. Ask yourself, when presented with "expert" advice, some way you could improve, some way you could do something differently, and it's uncomfortable, is it just uncomfortable because it's different and new? Or is it uncomfortable because it feels like a betrayal of who I am?

Ask yourself, is there tension here because it's a growth edge? Or is there a tension here because I think I'm doing it wrong, and I feel ashamed and my business is doing something wrong, and it's never going to work unless I follow that other person's instructions?

Ask yourself, am I listening to this person because I think they know better than me about how to do my own life and business? Or am I listening because I know that I know what's best for me, and this person might help me connect myself to the truest and the most powerful version of what's inside me and who I am?

If I do this thing, make this change, improve this thing in this way, would doing so feel like expanding who I am, or changing who I am? These are

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powerful questions. Listen to your body. The answer might be a quite subtle, very small voice. Or it could be fucking loud and unmistakable.

But I promise you, when you get quiet and listen to your body, there's a definite difference between yielding to external pressure to be somebody else's version of good enough and desirable, versus genuinely wanting to learn or try something different out of curiosity, in order to be more of yourself, in order to more truly live into your power and your creativity, knowing that you're already perfect and whole.

I hope this episode encourages you to never let your unique brilliance be expert-washed. Always choose yourself and always trust yourself. I'll talk to you next week.

Hey, if you're looking for a one-stop shop where you can find the best of my teaching, all organized into a beautiful and actionable sequence, guess what? I got you. I took the best of my podcast episodes and created a whole damn workbook around them. It's called *The Simone Starter Pack* and it's the ultimate marketing cheat sheet.

I got countless emails from folks who downloaded it, saying, "This free resource is worth more than all these courses I paid thousands of dollars for." So, what are you waiting for? Go grab *The Simone Starter Pack*. The link is in the show notes. I can't wait to see what amazing results you'll get from it.