

Episode 58: How to Market Yourself as a Consultant—with Lisa Larter

Deb Zahn: Hi, folks. I want to welcome you to this week's episode of the Craft of Consulting podcast. My guest today is Lisa Larter. She is an expert in marketing, and in particular she works with a whole lot of consultants on building their business through marketing. She is very generously going to break down a whole bunch of information about how consultants can and should be doing marketing, as well as how to do that when we're in the midst of this current crisis so that you can still grow your business. A lot of really wonderful information in this podcast, so let's get started.

Hi, I want to welcome my guest today, Lisa Larter. Lisa, welcome to the show.

Lisa Larter: Thank you so much for having me.

Deb Zahn: Let's start off. Tell my listeners what you do.

Lisa Larter: What do I do? I do three things. I help consultants and business owners develop marketing strategies that really support their overarching goals and objectives. And I have a team that helps them implement those marketing strategies because most of the people who come my way are experts in something, but they're not experts in marketing implementation.

Deb Zahn: That's right.

Lisa Larter: I provide ongoing advisement to a number of my clients who refer to me as their CMO. They like to think of me as their thinking partner when it comes to figuring out what the next move should be in their business and how they should position their message in marketing.

Deb Zahn: That's great! How did you get into that?

Lisa Larter: By accident. I grew up in a corporate environment in the wireless industry and in 2006 I opened my own brick and mortar wireless store because I felt like I needed my own real business experience before I could do any type of consulting. Because I thought, "Who would hire me to consult if I've never run my own business?" Interestingly enough, within 60 days of opening that business, I had my first consulting contract. I ran that business from 2006 to 2012 and then sold it because for the last couple of years of operating it I was basically an MIA business owner because I was too busy doing the work that I do today.

Deb Zahn: That's great. That's actually one of the reasons I wanted to have you on is one, you've done consulting. But I know that from a marketing perspective you also work with a lot of consultants who are trained to also, hopefully, embrace that they're not marketing experts. Let's start with the fundamentals. What is marketing? Because I know a lot of times folks hear it and they think, "Oh, you

mean like placing ads," and of course that's not necessarily what it is. How do you define it?

Lisa Larter: How I would define marketing is any activity that you do that helps your buyer know who you are, provides value to them in some way, and increases your visibility. Especially if you're in the consulting industry, it helps you to establish authority and expertise in the marketplace. I think that you can look at traditional marketing where people would pay for ads on television, radio, advertorials, and newspapers, and then you can look at today's world where a lot of marketing is online. Marketing can be as simple as writing a long form post on LinkedIn, talking about something that you have expertise in, or it can be running a webinar where you're offering value and offering products and services. That's why I say I think it's anything that you do that increases your visibility to the right buyer.

Deb Zahn: That's great.

Lisa Larter: The most important part is the right buyer because if you are increasing your visibility for the wrong market then your marketing is not effective.

Deb Zahn: That's right, just because grandma now can describe what you do doesn't mean you're using your money and your time wisely.

Lisa Larter: Right, I use myself as an example. I have two miniature wirehaired dachshunds. I love them to death. I post pictures of them on Instagram all the time. That is not helping my business marketing. All it's doing is helping more people who like cute dog pictures follow me. If I wanted to use Instagram for my business marketing, I would be using it in a very different way than sharing pictures of my dogs.

Deb Zahn: That's great; that's great. And I enjoy seeing pictures of your dogs so I'm glad you do that. I know a lot of consultants, particularly accomplished professionals, who say, "Hey, I know a lot of great stuff. I'm an expert in a lot of things," just as you said. "I'm going to be a consultant." Why should they be doing marketing? Because they might think, "Well, I know a lot and people want it and they need it," but why should they be doing marketing?

Lisa Larter: Well, they should be doing marketing for a number of reasons. One, if you don't do any form of marketing and or content marketing you are essentially a best-kept secret. Your body of work is incredibly important because, number two, any time someone says, "Oh, you need to talk to Deb." The first thing that buyer is going to do is they're going to Google Deb. And they're going to creep Deb, and they're going to make assumptions and form beliefs about whether or not you can or cannot help them. If you have zero marketing, you don't have any content, you don't have any social media presence, then they can't choose you because there's not enough information for them to know whether or not they want to take the next step.

I'll give you an example. Someone that I know was speaking to someone else last week, and they were speaking to her about her previous web person. She said, "Yeah, I'd use that person again. I had a good relationship with them, yada, yada, yada." But the very last thing that this person said, "But if I was going to redo my website I'd go to Lisa Larter."

Deb Zahn: Perfect.

Lisa Larter: That person had never heard of me before, so what did they do? They hung up the phone, they're like, "Who's Lisa Larter?"

Deb Zahn: Yeah.

Lisa Larter: Then they went to my website. They went to my social media. *Then* they reached out to me. Then they told me they did all of this. You're kidding yourself if you don't think people are vetting your skills and abilities by looking at your online presence and what you do for marketing before they reach out to you.

Deb Zahn: I like the idea of also doing it deliberately. If someone Googled me they would find reports that I've written, topics that I've written on, editorials I've done and things like that. And that's all good, but it's not curated. It's not put together for the purpose of achieving a specific outcome that I want. It's just work I've done that happens to be public.

For somebody like that who is Googleable, if that's a word, then what should they be doing right when they first start off? I imagine what you do at the beginning and then what you do on an ongoing basis might be a little bit different. When they first start off how should they put together whatever that marketing platform is that is going to do what you described?

Lisa Larter: I like to think of your website as your silent sales partner, and I like to think that when you look at your website you have to ask yourself, "When somebody comes to my website what do I most want them to do?" That is essentially your sales funnel. It starts by getting them to engage with you in some way and to consume the content or the thought leadership that you have created. When you are creating that content, you need to distribute it to other places. When you distribute it on LinkedIn, you distribute it on Forbes, you distribute it wherever, it attracts people back to you. That means that you have to be really clear on: What are the typical problems that your buyer has? What are the typical pain points that your buyer experiences, and what type of content can you create to solve those problems? Because I'm not typing the solution into Google. Because if I knew the solution I wouldn't be looking for help.

Deb Zahn: That's right.

Lisa Larter: I'm typing the problem in. The problem that your buyer has needs to be findable with a solution on your website, and people don't always put those two things together. I'm always thinking about the questions people ask me and the things that people say to me because those are the very things that I should be creating content marketing around because that's what elevates my authority in the space and gives other people the confidence to do business with me.

Deb Zahn: That's great, and I also know that you very wisely pushed to have a clear call to action. Can you describe what that is and why that's so important?

Lisa Larter: I just had this conversation with another client of mine, actually. Everything you do is selling the next step, so when I come to your website what is it you want me to do? If you're not selling "start here" or "download this" or "schedule a call," you're missing an opportunity to tell me what to do next. When you send a newsletter out you want to tell people "click here," "watch this video," "read this report". When somebody comes to your website and they consume the content you want to tell them what you want them to do next. "Reach out to me," "download this information," "subscribe to my newsletter".

I'm Canadian and when it comes to marketing all you Americans act like you're Canadian. You're afraid to ask for the next step. You've got to ask for the next step. That to me is what the call to action is. What do you want someone to do next? We don't often think about what the logical next step will be for this person. They might not take the next step, but you as the marketer, you as the creator of content, should be asking yourself, "What would I like them to do next?" If you actually take the time to think that through guess what? A certain percentage of them will take that step.

Deb Zahn: That's right because it's your job to build the bridge between your intent and their action.

Lisa Larter: Exactly.

Deb Zahn: Yeah. Americans, we're so pushy. How come we stop short of saying, "Do this next" because then that leaves them on the other side saying, "Huh, all right, so now what?"

Lisa Larter: I don't know. I think sometimes what happens is we try to be clever and we confuse people. We come up with these clever naming structures that don't make sense to anyone. I forget whose website I was on and basically they had a blog, but they named it something obscure and I said, "What is that? Why would I click that?" It's got to be a blog. It's got to be resources. It's got to be articles. Make the name intuitive for me. I think sometimes we do two things: we either make it all cutesy and clever and people don't know what to do, or we give so much information that we overwhelm people. Then they almost feel like they

can't take another step because they're having too hard of a time digesting what you've just put in front of them.

Deb Zahn: That's right, so you have to give it to them in the right-sized palatable bites that lead them to do what you want. Again, by the way, as consultants, that's exactly what we have to do with our clients. The same skill that we use when we're consulting is you can't throw everything at your clients and say, "OK, there you go." You got to do the same thing with marketing. What a great skill to know.

Now when they start off they've got to have a website. Some presence where they can have a silent partner that people can go to when they're Googling them. What should they be doing on social media?

Lisa Larter: I think they should be showing up on social media and they should be doing three things. One, they should be building their network, which means that if you're on LinkedIn you need to grow your network, you need to add connections to your network. Two, you should be providing value so you can be sharing content that you've created on your website, you can be doing videos, you can be doing something, but every day put something out there. A client of mine says, "Never put a zero on the board."

Deb Zahn: I love that.

Lisa Larter: Every day do something that showcases your skills and ability. The third thing that I would say, and not everybody agrees with me, but stop talking about polarizing things unless it is related to your business. I have seen so many people decimate their businesses because they've got such strong opinions on politics or...politics is the worst. But politics, religion, vaccines. Things that people are really, really one-sided on. Their black or white opinions. And I'm all for that if that is related to your work. I have a client who is very, very, very vocal as an advocate for the LGBTQ community because her son is transgender. And so it doesn't matter whether the political party is liberal or conservative, She is a watchdog for those types of things because she does work in that space. It makes sense for her, but if the position that you're taking and the stand that you're taking doesn't add value for your buyer, if you're using that channel for marketing, it might not be a good thing to put there.

Deb Zahn: Right, in which case you can keep your personal separate from the channels you're using for your business.

Lisa Larter: Exactly.

Deb Zahn: And know that you're making that choice. Now someone can Google your Facebook and if they want to see what your political views are, if people want to see that I hate cilantro they can find that out about me, speaking of polarized topics. But they can find that out and that's OK.

Lisa Larter: Do you really hate cilantro?

Deb Zahn: Oh yeah. It takes like soap. I have that genetic thing, and I posted about it the other day. But that's OK. I've made the deliberate choice that this channel is where I say things that I don't necessarily say in my business. I know that people can Google it, they can see it, but when I'm on LinkedIn that does not occur.

Lisa Larter: Right. I think the thing that people always need to think through when they are taking a stand on something is, "Would you want what you just said to be on the front page of the New York Times?" Would you want your biggest client to see what you just said, and, if they did, would you be embarrassed or would you be OK with it? If the thought of it being on CNN or on the front page of a newspaper makes you uncomfortable or the thought of your best client judging you differently because of it doesn't feel good to you then you probably shouldn't put it online.

I think it's OK. I think we all have opinions, and I don't care if you...I'm going to use Trump as an example. I don't care if you like Trump or if you dislike Trump. There's lots of things that he does that may be good and there's lots of things that he does that are off putting and not good. To me that's irrelevant. You could say, "Hey, I'm not particularly keen on the decision that this person made to do this and this is why." But it's when you go on a rant and all of a sudden your behavior is inappropriate and maybe you're using profanity and maybe you're calling people names and things like that. I always say, "Somebody's got a screenshot of everything somewhere."

Deb Zahn: Everyone does.

Lisa Larter: I like to be who I want people to believe I am in all ways in life and that means that I choose not to engage in those things because I have clients that have varying political opinions and my opinion, when it comes to marketing, has nothing to do with politics.

Deb Zahn: Right. And see it's interesting because I will post political things on my personal channel, but I do not shame people, troll people, or go on rants. I am who I am always. And I have strong political opinions about certain things, and I want to be part of the conversation. I like the deliberate aspect of it. You need to choose and not default to how you're feeling in that moment. Make a decision, make a choice, and then know that you're making it for whatever reasons are important to you. It's the same thing with marketing. Be deliberate and not just random.

Lisa Larter: Absolutely. Don't post stuff online when you are emotional and all worked up because you often are not clear in your thinking and it comes across poorly. I think people have to be aware of that. Don't undermine everything you do. There was a client of mine years ago in the shopping center industry who needed a mobile app. And there was a guy that I knew that did mobile apps at

the time, and I was actually in the quoting stage of getting a quote for him to do this mobile app for the this shopping center, which was one of many properties that this company owned. One day I logged onto Facebook, and there was this rant and it was full of F-bombs. It was awful. At that moment I went, "I can't do business with this person. I don't trust their behavior and judgment any longer with my client. I'm not taking that risk." I think it's always about judgment and behavior. You can have strong opinions, and you can be mature and professional in how you present them.

Deb Zahn: That's right.

Lisa Larter: Or you can let your inner three-year-old post your Facebook status update. I think we all know the difference.

Deb Zahn: That's right, the three-year-old who had a little too much Robitussin. I like that, but you also have to be careful because people are going to decide whether or not they want to associate their brand with you.

Lisa Larter: Yes.

Deb Zahn: Clients are going to think it, other consultants are going to think it, other professional service providers are going to think it. So be deliberate.

Lisa Larter: Yes.

Deb Zahn: That's great. So what else should folks be thinking about in terms of social media?

Lisa Larter: I think they should be thinking about the difference between a trend that they should consider versus a trend they should avoid.

Deb Zahn: Yeah.

Lisa Larter: You want to pay attention to trends where your buyers hang out. People always say to me, "Well, how do I know where my buyers are?" Well, make a list of your top 10 buyers and go ask. Go look. Are they on LinkedIn or are they on Snapchat? Just because Snapchat is trendy and TikTok is trendy, it doesn't mean you should follow that trend if your buyers are not there. I do not believe that you need to be everywhere. I believe you need to be where the vast majority of your buyers are. Sometimes that requires testing things to find out what works and what doesn't work. But if you know that the vast majority of business for consultants comes from LinkedIn then you want to pay attention to the trends on LinkedIn.

You want to pay attention to videos that get a lot of views in the newsfeed. LinkedIn articles that get indexed on LinkedIn Pulse can actually garner thousands of views. Documents, branded documents on LinkedIn are the next

hot thing, you should be doing those. You want to pay attention to what is getting visibility in the channel where your clients are and pay attention to the trends for that particular channel.

Deb Zahn: I like that because it's also not so overwhelming because, again, I've talked to a lot of professionals who become consultants who are suddenly like, "I have to market. It's unfamiliar, I don't know how to do it. Wait, what is TikTok? I'm not even on LinkedIn." It can be overwhelming, which can lead to paralysis. My point is always pick what's going to yield the best results. You don't have to do something that's only going to get you a 10% return. You can focus on the thing that's going to get you a 60% or 70% return, which for most professionals right now is LinkedIn.

Lisa Larter: Yes, absolutely.

Deb Zahn: None of my clients are going to TikTok to see if I've got the latest dance moves, but, if they are, I'm going to lose business. That's reality. It's LinkedIn.

Lisa Larter: Yeah, they might be on Instagram.

Deb Zahn: Yes.

Lisa Larter: Chances are they're on Instagram for personal use.

Deb Zahn: That's right.

Lisa Larter: Not business use, which is where my dogs come into play.

Deb Zahn: Yeah.

Lisa Larter: I have deliberately chosen Instagram to be a look into my personal life.

Deb Zahn: Yes.

Lisa Larter: I post pictures of sunsets. I post pictures out on the boat. I post pictures of great bottles of wine. I post pictures of my dogs. I post the odd picture of me with other people. It is a more intimate look into my life that I've chosen to use that channel for.

Deb Zahn: Yep.

Lisa Larter: That's OK. You can do that.

Deb Zahn: Yeah and I've seen that that's actually helped in my consulting business. I've actually had clients say, "Oh, I saw you had kale. Bring me some kale." Or they know when it's harvest season and to a lot of them living the farm girl life is a dream and it's interesting and it's exciting. Or they like cats and obviously I post

a lot about them. It's actually helped create stronger relationships with some of my clients.

Lisa Larter: Mm-hmm.

Deb Zahn: My interacting with their personal feed because I think it's fascinating that they have this really cool hobby that makes them more human is fun. And it helps with the relationship. That's great.

Lisa Larter: You can garner so much information about your clients when you pay attention to what's going on with them personally. Let's just say I was creeping you and I see "Oh, she is a cat lady." Well, I'm at a Target one day, and I see a mug that says, "Happy Saturday." I might be like, "Hey, that mug. That's got Deb written all over it" because I paid attention to what you were doing personally. I could then buy you that mug and say, "I was out and I saw this and I thought of you." It's not weird, it's a good fit. Stop buying people notebooks with your logo and start paying attention to what they actually like in real life. That actually becomes an extension of your marketing.

Deb Zahn: That's right. Customized swag.

Lisa Larter: Yeah.

Deb Zahn: I think that's great. What are some of the common mistakes you see folks making, consultants making, with marketing? Other than going on rants?

Lisa Larter: Common mistakes are: the first one that I see over and over and over again is inconsistency.

Deb Zahn: Yeah.

Lisa Larter: They start blogging. They start with a newsletter, and then they stop. They go through fits and starts. They're going to do it, and then they're not going to do it. So the lack of consistency actually impedes their ability to get any results. And then they think marketing doesn't work but really it's because they're treating marketing the way I would treat a gym membership.

Deb Zahn: Right.

Lisa Larter: If you treat marketing that way you're never going to get any results. Marketing is like going to the gym, you got to be in there everyday, you got to be committed to the exercise and the diet if you want to get the results and the outcome that you're looking for. That would be the number one thing that I would say.

The number two thing that I would say consultants are not doing that they should be doing is they need to get over being camera shy. Video technology,

videos, are not going away. A lot of people would prefer to consume video over read content. Men are more likely to consume a video than they are to read an article. However, captions on videos, 80% of people that view videos view them with the sound turned off and they read the captions.

When you are afraid to embrace technology and use video to convey your message, you're missing out on a bunch of different levels. One, you're missing out on a form of consumption that people like for marketing. Two, you know we're doing this podcast, and you and I are on video. I can see you but you're going to use the audio for the podcast. But even on this podcast you can see me moving my hands as I talk and I'm shaking my hands.

Deb Zahn: That's right.

Lisa Larter: I'm expressive and you can feel the energy of somebody when you see them on camera. If you're afraid to go on camera, camera is the second best thing in person.

Deb Zahn: That's right.

Lisa Larter: You're really preventing your buyer from being able to see the essence of who you are and how confident you are when you speak.

Deb Zahn: That's right.

Lisa Larter: I think those are two reasons why people should use video. The third reason you should use video is to transcribe it and you can repurpose it in a bunch of different ways.

Deb Zahn: That's right.

Lisa Larter: What other mistakes are they making? I'm going to say they don't have a strategy.

Deb Zahn: That's right.

Lisa Larter: They haven't worked with someone like me, as an example, to really get clear on what their call to action should be. What should their lead generation strategy be? What should their content be? What should their free download be? It's like they're throwing stuff at the wall hoping something will stick and they're sitting in front of their keyboard going, "I don't know what to write," because they haven't invested the time and effort in the front end in actually creating a plan that they can use as a guide for the marketing creation.

Deb Zahn: That's right, and I always say, "Do what you would do with your clients." You wouldn't tell your clients, "Hey, just start doing stuff and let's see what happens." You would actually help them develop a plan and have a deliberate

strategy that's behind what they do. The other piece that resonates with me with what you're saying is I always tell consultants, "Every interaction that you have with clients or prospective clients is giving them an experience of what it's like to work with you."

Lisa Larter: Yes.

Deb Zahn: If you have random acts of marketing, even if they don't expect you to be a marketing expert, if they see inconsistency, if they see nervousness and insecurity, they're going to think that's what it's like to work with you.

Lisa Larter: Absolutely.

Deb Zahn: If you do it, you have to bring the same tools and self that you bring to your consulting because you're conveying working with me is fun because I'm fun on my videos. Working with me is valuable because look at what I'm giving away for free. Imagine what I'm asking you to pay for.

Lisa Larter: Right, right.

Deb Zahn: Messages like that.

Lisa Larter: There are two other things, mistakes that I think people make or myths, whatever you want to call them. The first is they greatly underestimate the long game.

Deb Zahn: Yeah.

Lisa Larter: They'll be all in on marketing for six months and they didn't get a lead and so then they decide it's not worth it. If you are planning to be around for any length of time, you've got to look at marketing as a long game. You've got to look at the content that you're adding. You're putting a drop in the Google bucket every time you create content. If you don't keep adding your drop into the bucket, somebody else's drop is going in there. So you've got to be in it for the long run.

You cannot abdicate responsibility for your marketing to someone else. You have to inspect what you expect. I have seen people hire a kid at home for \$10, \$15 an hour to do their marketing and then they never look at what is being put out there. Then all of a sudden one day they get a knock on the door or somebody picks up the phone and calls them and says, "Hey, do you realize that you stole somebody's copy for that blog post?" They realize that there's this whole mess happening with their marketing because they didn't want to be involved.

Deb Zahn: Yeah.

Lisa Larter: That's a huge mistake, and I've seen that happen over and over again where people think they can hire a kid or they can hire a team to do the marketing and then they can turn away and not pay attention. If you're going to hire somebody to help you with your marketing you have to work in collaboration, not isolation, and you have to inspect what you expect. Otherwise it will go sideways at some point in time, you will regret that decision.

Deb Zahn: Absolutely because your reputation is your number one marketing tool and you hold that sacred and tenderly. If you are outsourcing basically what is helping shape your reputation and you're not paying any attention to it absolutely, you will regret that because you only need one or two mistakes.

Lisa Larter: That's right.

Deb Zahn: It's hard to get a good reputation back.

Lisa Larter: Absolutely.

Deb Zahn: That's really helpful. When you think about marketers who knock it out of the park, consultants who do it extremely well, what do you think sets them apart?

Lisa Larter: Consistency in content creation. They are committed to creating a body of work, and they show up regularly, they respond to people, they have great personalities, they let their personalities shine through in their marketing, they're not afraid to try new things, they're not afraid to take risks, and over time, over the long run, they become prolific in what they do.

Deb Zahn: Yeah.

Lisa Larter: Most people don't have the long-term commitment to the work.

Deb Zahn: That's right, and I love to show personality because people want smart people, but they don't want robots without a personality. They actually want to enjoy working with you, and you're showing them that you're actually going to be fun or enjoyable to work with.

Lisa Larter: They need to know they can trust you.

Deb Zahn: Yeah.

Lisa Larter: They can't get to know you if you're invisible. They can't decide if they like you if they can't see you. They certainly won't trust you if somebody else is speaking on your behalf and it's not aligned with the messaging that you would actually put out there.

Deb Zahn: Yep, that's great. Enormously helpful. Let me ask you this because obviously we're in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis right now, which has changed all of our worlds dramatically, and I've heard from a number of consultants that they're either concerned or they know other consultants who've gotten pushback from clients or perspective clients about continuing to do marketing or business development and the concern of appearing tone deaf or icky or predatory is one of the words that I've heard. What do you suggest that consultants do right now given that we're in a different world but they still have a business?

Lisa Larter: I have a client whose business is thriving right now, and one of the things that she did is she sat down and she made a list of all the different things that she... The ideas that she had to help her clients as a result of COVID. She reached out to all those people and shared those ideas and said, "I want you to know I've been thinking about your business, and I was thinking about what you could do right now given the challenges that people are experiencing with COVID. I came up with some ideas and I wanted to share them with you so that you had them. You can decide what you want to do with them, but I want you to know I'm thinking about you and I'm thinking about your business." Believe it or not this client is in her 20s, and she has the maturity and the foresight to think that way.

I think that if you are marketing, buy my stuff, buy my stuff, buy my stuff! That's not marketing. That is icky. That is tone deaf. But I think that if you are looking at how you can add value for your clients right now, I don't think it matters what industry you're in. If you're a sales consultant, you should be trying to create content and be helpful to your clients who are worried about how to sell. If you're in marketing, you should be helping people figure out how to market right now. If you're in healthcare, you should be figuring out how you can help these hospitals and the situation that they're in right now. If you approach your marketing always from the core principle of "what can I do to help," then nobody's going to feel like you're being too pushy.

Deb Zahn: That's right.

Lisa Larter: You might not get business right now, but you might be planting some really powerful seeds that will bear fruit for you in the future.

Deb Zahn: That's right.

Lisa Larter: You've got to figure out how you can show up and help people.

Deb Zahn: That's right.

Lisa Larter: The other thing that I would add, and you and I talked about this briefly before, you remember 9/11, you remember how travel changed forever after 9/11?

Deb Zahn: Yep.

Lisa Larter: Well, guess what? This is COVID-19, we are not going back to the way it used to be. We're not, so if you're sitting there waiting for things to go back to normal, you're delusional. There is going to be a new normal, start using your consulting mind to anticipate what that new normal looks like, to anticipate what your client might need next, and position yourself to be part of the new normal instead of being passive, waiting for things to go back to the way they were. That's not going to happen.

Deb Zahn: Yeah, and you want to help your clients shape it. Because my husband's now working at home, and he works at a mental health organization and they were talking about some of their clients they've had to switch group therapy to be virtual. And I heard one of the counselors say, "Oh my God, they love it. I don't think they're going to want us to have it go back to the way it was before because they're all saying how much they enjoy it for a variety of reasons."

A good consultant who works with an organization like that is saying, "What are you hearing and then what are the ways you can actually now make that part of the way that you deliver services or the way that you sell services." Something like that so that they're shaping the new normal and not saying, "Oh my God, what's going to happen? We're not certain so let's just stop."

Lisa Larter: But you can't do that unless you step back and spend some time thinking.

Deb Zahn: That's right.

Lisa Larter: If you are so, "Oh, I've got to market! I got to get business!" and you're frantic and you're in this scarcity mindset yourself, you can't add value for your clients. Now is the time for people to rise up. Now is the time where the talent that is really talented is going to rise to the top. Those are the people that are sitting back thinking, "What is my client's next move? How can I support their next move? What is the next big idea that I want to deliver to this client that is going to help me help them move forward?" That's what consultants should be doing and they should be writing about it, they should be talking about it, they should be positioning themselves as someone who is thinking about the future for their clients now.

Deb Zahn: That's right and give them hope and then give them help.

Lisa Larter: Yes.

Deb Zahn: Wonderful.

Lisa Larter: Absolutely.

Deb Zahn: Let me ask you this last question because obviously we're all impacted by what's happening around us. At this time how are you bringing more balance to your life?

Lisa Larter: Oh my gosh. We bought a boat.

Deb Zahn: Yay.

Lisa Larter: I've been trying to go out on the boat on Fridays, but I have to tell you, it's a myth that not all businesses are growing because my business is out of control. The last four to six weeks we have been busier than ever, and so I really do need to find ways to create more balance in my life because I could literally work all the time right now.

Deb Zahn: Yeah.

Lisa Larter: I don't want to do that, so I am actually in my head. The conversation in my mind these days is what are the things that I need to stop doing so that I have more time to work on the things that I love doing the most in my business? Because you can do anything but you can't do everything.

Deb Zahn: That's right. That's right, I've been telling people to find 5% or 10% that doesn't need to be you or you don't need to do it and stop doing it.

Lisa Larter: Yeah.

Deb Zahn: Now you have that for boat time.

Lisa Larter: Yeah except for flying back to Nova Scotia on Saturday so no more boat time for me.

Deb Zahn: That's OK, at least you'll have the puppies.

Lisa Larter: Yes.

Deb Zahn: Well, Lisa, thank you so much for joining me on the show. This was tremendously helpful, and especially I think now as we're likely going to get more people who are trying to figure out their consulting business and possibly becoming consultants.

Lisa Larter: Absolutely. Thank you for having me. It's always a pleasure to talk to you.

Deb Zahn: Thanks so much for listening to this episode of the Craft of Consulting Podcast. I want to ask you to do three things. If you enjoyed this episode or any of my other podcasts, hit subscribe. I've got a lot of other great guests and content coming up, and I don't want you to miss anything.

The other two things I'm asking you to do—one is, if you have any comments, suggestions, or other feedback that will help make this podcast more helpful to more listeners, please include those in the comments section. And then the last thing is, if you've gotten something out of this, please share it. Share it with somebody you know who's a consultant or thinking about being a consultant, and make sure they also have access to all this great content and the other great content that's coming.

As always, you can get more wonderful information and tools at craftofconsulting.com. Thanks so much. I will talk to you on the next episode. Bye-bye.