

# Small But Mighty Agency Podcast

## Episode 143: Why Outcome Clarity Beats Every Trend in 2026

### Speakers: Audrey Joy Kwan

#### Audrey Joy Kwan

Hi friends, welcome back to the Small But Mighty Agency podcast.

There's something we need to talk about as agency owners heading into 2026.

You're likely doing good work — genuinely good work — and yet it feels harder to sell, harder to price, and harder to gain traction than it used to.

Not because your work isn't strong.

Not because your team isn't capable.

And not because effort is missing.

The issue is this:

The market has changed faster than you describe your work, structure your offers, and explain your value.

Your ideal clients are more cautious, their decisions feel riskier and “we do great work” doesn't create momentum on its own.

What separates agencies that feel stuck from agencies that feel steady right now isn't volume or visibility.

It's clarity.

Clarity about what you actually help clients do.

Clarity about the problem you solve best.

Clarity about what changes when you're involved.

And this matters more than ever because the market is loud — and honestly, overwhelmed.

AI has made it easy for agencies to sound competent.

Content is faster. Messaging is easier. Polished decks are everywhere.

So ideal clients aren't looking for more information.

They're looking for confidence.

They want someone who makes the decision feel easier — not heavier.

That's why outcome clarity — being clear about the result your work creates — is now a real differentiator.

Not “you do marketing.”

Not “you help them grow.”

Not “you work with this industry.”

But: this is the result you help your clients achieve.

In this episode, I'm going to walk you through a few realities shaping how you build momentum right now — and why clarity around outcomes is the thread running through all of them.

As you listen, keep this question in the background:

If 2026 goes really well,  
what outcome do you want your agency to be known for?

You don't need to answer it yet.  
Just notice where your mind goes.

## **Audrey Joy Kwan**

Welcome to the Small But Mighty Agency Podcast. If you want to grow an agency to seven figures and beyond without working more hours in your business, you're in the right place. I'm your host, Audrey Joy Kwan. I know what it takes to build an agency, including supporting an agency owner in selling and exiting. I also have a Masters degree in Communications specializing in organizational development. My team and I have worked behind the scenes of multiple seven figure agencies and have coached and consulted with over 150 agency owners. All this to say when you join us on the Small But Mighty Agency Podcast you get real world experience and practical tips that help you work less, earn more, and lead with integrity. So let's go.

## **YOU CAN'T SELL YESTERDAY'S SERVICES INTO TODAY'S MARKET**

Let's start here, because this is where a lot of friction is coming from right now.

If your services look essentially the same as they did two or three years ago, you're going to feel resistance — even if the work itself is solid.

Not because you're doing something wrong.

But because the market you're selling into has changed.

Clients are under more pressure and Budgets are tighter which means decisions carry more risk.

And that changes how people buy.

What worked in 2022 was often about execution:  
so deliver the work, hit the metrics, keep things moving.

What buyers are looking for now is confidence that this is the *right move*.

Some agencies are still selling offers that were designed for a different moment when buyers were less cautious and decisions carried less risk.”

You've got the same packages,  
same scopes,  
same pricing logic,  
same “this is what we do” framing.

Traction isn't about reinventing everything.

It's about updating your offers to reflect today's reality.

And asking:

What does your client actually need to feel confident saying yes right now?

Where does uncertainty show up for them? AND

What decision are they really trying to make?

Once that's clear, the offer tightens.

The offer doesn't get bigger or broader, it become more clear

Clear about the problem it's designed to solve.

the outcome it's meant to create.

And Clear about why this work matters *now*, not just in theory.

There's another piece of this that matters a lot in this market.

What's working right now is having a clear product ladder.

And all that means is you have a sequence of offers that build trust over time.

Someone works with you once.

They get value, their confidence increases And then it makes sense to work with you at a deeper level.

That's the ladder.

People don't just ladder up in how much they pay you — they ladder up in how much they trust you.

And here's the part that's especially true right now:

In-the-door offers are selling.

I know agencies don't love hearing anything that sounds like "lower ticket," so let's call it what it actually is — an entry point.

An offer that makes it easy for someone to say yes.

Because it is far easier for someone to trust you with three thousand dollars before they trust you with thirty thousand.

That's not about confidence.

That's not about values.

That's just human behavior.

What's changed is that buyers want proof *before* they commit deeply — not promises.

So agencies that are building momentum right now aren't forcing people to jump straight to the biggest engagement.

They're designing an entry offer that does real work.

The output of that first offer shows the value.

It creates clarity.

It makes the next step obvious.

And this part is important:

That entry offer isn't random.

It's intentionally designed to point to the next outcome.

So by the time a client says, "Okay, what's next?"

The answer is already clear.

And that's where this connects to outcome clarity.

Your product ladder shouldn't just move someone up in price.

It should move them closer to the result you're ultimately responsible for.

We'll talk more about that next — because this is exactly where outcome-based offers start to matter.

But at a foundational level, this is the shift:

If your business still relies on a single, high-commitment offer as the only way in, you're going to feel friction in this market.

When you design a clear product ladder, trust compounds.

And when trust compounds, sales stop feeling so hard.

Next, let's dig into OUTCOME CLARITY as a FILTER for your decision

Before we talk about capability, we need to talk about outcomes — because this is the part most agencies skip.

We are in a season where buyers are not buying execution on its own. And they're not buying effort.

They're buying outcomes.

They want to know:

What will actually change if we do this?

What problem does this solve?

And why is this the right move *right now*?

That's what outcome clarity really is.

It's not a deliverable or a channel.

And it's not a nicer way of describing your services.

An outcome is the shift that happens on the client's side.

Something gets easier.

Something gets unstuck.

Something moves.

And when that outcome is clear, it does a few really important things all at once.

It reduces hesitation.

It makes decisions feel safer.

And it gives buyers language to justify the choice internally.

That's why agencies who are clear on outcomes are having very different sales conversations right now.

They're not convincing.

They're not over-explaining.

They're helping clients see, "Yes — this is the thing we need to solve."

Without outcome clarity, .... offers, pricing, referrals, and priorities start pulling in different directions

And attempts to truly "level up" the business turns into guesswork.

That's why outcome clarity isn't a messaging exercise. It's the filter that helps you decide what to say yes to, what to improve, and what to ignore."

Once you're clear on the outcome you're responsible for, everything else — offers, capability, partnerships — has a direction.

And that brings us to the next shift.

## **CAPABILITY HAS TO BE BUILT IN SERVICE OF THE OUTCOME**

Once outcomes are clear, the next question becomes: what do you actually need to be good at?

You can easily get pulled into the weeds on this one right now.

Because AI is here.

New tools are everywhere.

And there's a constant hum of "you should be doing more."

It's learn this.

Adopt that.

Upskill the team.

Change your process.

And if you're not careful, you end up in a massive rabbit hole.

Especially as a small but mighty agency, you simply don't have the luxury of chasing 10 things.

So, here's the reframe:

Capability-building only works when it's outcome-led.

If you don't know the outcome you're optimizing for, you can't possibly know where to invest your time, your energy, or your learning.

You just end up collecting skills.

If you want more momentum, you need more focused action.

Start with the outcome.

Then ask:

What capability actually strengthens our ability to deliver *this* result?

What helps us do this more consistently?

What helps clients feel more confident in our judgment?

And this is where AI becomes useful — not as a trend, but as leverage.

Not:

“How do we use AI because everyone else is?”

But:

“How does this support the outcome we're responsible for?”

For some agencies, that means using AI to:

tighten insight development,

speed up analysis,

or improve how recommendations are formed.

For others, it means:

reducing busywork,

freeing up senior thinking time,

or making delivery more consistent.

The point is, the capability investment is intentional.

It's not scattered and reactive.

And it's not driven by fear of being left behind.

It's driven by focus.

And when capability is built this way, something else shifts too.

Clients experience you differently.

They don't just see a team that can execute.

They experience a team that understands what matters.

You ask better questions.  
You connect dots faster.  
You help them move forward with more confidence.

That's not because you learned *everything*.

It's because you chose what to get better at — on purpose.

And that's the difference between agencies that feel stretched...  
and agencies that feel grounded, even in a fast-changing market.

## **COMMUNITY IS HOW YOU STAY GROUNDED AND INFORMED**

There's one more piece of that really matters to outcome clarity right now — especially with how fast things are changing.

When things move this quickly, staying grounded becomes just as important as staying informed.

And that doesn't happen in isolation.

Reality doesn't show up first in reports.  
It shows up in conversations.

It shows up in the questions your clients start asking.

In the same objections coming up again and again, before anyone names them as a pattern.

AND In those moments where something feels off before you can quite explain why.

Navigating this season intentionally means putting yourself in community — with other agency owners who are close to what's actually happening.

Because community is how you keep your ear to the ground without spinning out or reacting to every new thing.

And yes, there's real support in that.

There's relief in being able to say things out loud with people who understand the context.

People who know what it's like to run a small but mighty agency.

AND People who don't need everything explained from scratch.

But it doesn't stop at support.

The real value shows up when support turns into shared perspective.

When you start comparing notes and realize a challenge isn't just personal — it's something others are seeing too.

Or When you hear what's shifting in sales conversations, pricing, or client expectations before it becomes obvious.

That's how you stay grounded.

And that's how you make better decisions without constantly second-guessing yourself.

And this is why spaces like Agency Together exist.

Not as a quick fix.

Not as a one-off event.

And not as a surface-level network.

But as an ongoing environment where small but mighty agencies can stay close to what's actually happening — through real conversations, shared insight, and honest perspective.

A place where you can think things through, pressure-test ideas, and decide where to focus next, without feeling like you have to figure everything out alone.

In a market that's changing this fast, that kind of community is how you stay grounded. stay informed and keep move forward with clarity.

## **SHIFT 5 — OUTCOME CLARITY IS WHAT CUTS THROUGH NOW**

If you zoom out, ...a lot of the friction you're feeling right now — like offers that are harder to say yes to, scattered capability, marketing that doesn't land, and longer sales cycles — all comes back to the same thing.

It all comes back to clarity.

Specifically — outcome clarity.

We're in a market where buyers are overwhelmed with options.

They can find a lot more “*good enough*” execution than they used to.

You can chalk that up to AI.

What's harder is knowing what the right move actually is.

That's why people aren't buying services the way they used to.

And it's why simply naming your industry or listing your channels isn't enough anymore.

Outcome clarity answers the question buyers are really asking:

*What actually changes if we work with you?*

Not what you do.  
Not how you do it.  
But what moves.

An outcome isn't a deliverable.  
And it's not a promise pulled out of thin air.

It's a clear positioning about the business problem you're choosing to focus on — and the change your work helps create on the other side.

But This is where you can stop short.

You clean up your messaging.  
You tighten how you describe your services.  
You pick an industry and call that a niche.

And all of that can help — but it doesn't quite get you there.

Outcome clarity asks something more specific.

It asks:  
What problem are we actually best at helping solve?  
For which clients?  
And at what stage?

Because when that's clear, everything else we've talked about starts to line up.

Sales conversations feel more grounded.  
Referrals get more specific.  
Capability decisions have direction because you know which skills actually matter for the outcome you deliver..  
Partnerships make more sense.

And clients understand *why* they're hiring you — not just what you'll deliver.

This is also where trust starts to build faster because Clear outcomes reduce uncertainty.  
It makes decisions feel easier and gives buyers language to explain the choice — to themselves and to others.

Even when the work itself is complex, clarity lowers the friction.

**Let me make this really concrete with an example.**

**Instead of saying:**

“We help healthcare organizations get more patients.”

**An outcome niche sounds like:**

“We help healthcare organizations increase patient demand by 20 to 30 percent within the first three months of working together.”

**That’s the difference.**

You’re not just saying what you do.

You’re being clear about what changes — and when.

**And I want to be really clear about what this decision is — and what it isn’t.**

You’re not choosing something you’re locked into forever.

You’re choosing what outcome you want your agency to be known for next, based on where your business is right now.

This isn’t about your list of services.

It’s not about the tools you use.

And it’s not just about the industry you work in.

It’s about the result your work consistently helps create — and making that the anchor for everything else.

And here’s the bridge I want to name before we wrap up.

Outcome clarity is the decision.

An outcome niche is what happens when you commit to that decision.

In the next episode, we’re going to go deeper into outcome niching.

What it really means, how to do it without boxing yourself in, and the three criteria that need to be there for an outcome niche to work — without feeling heavy or restrictive.

Because when outcome clarity turns into an outcome niche the right way, it doesn’t limit you.

It gives your agency momentum.

And in a market this noisy, momentum doesn’t come from doing more.

It comes from deciding — clearly — what you’re here to help move forward.

As we wrap up, I want to bring this back to you for a moment.

If any part of this episode felt familiar—if you've been doing solid work but feeling more friction than you used to,  
or if you've been questioning how to sharpen your positioning without overhauling everything—  
that's not a sign you're behind.

It's a sign you're paying attention.

This season requires more clarity, not more noise.

More focus, not more tactics.

And honestly, more real conversation than most of service-based business owners get day-to-day

That's exactly why I host the Agency Together Mixer.

It's a live, facilitated space for small but mighty agency owners to come together, compare notes, and talk through what's actually changing in the market—whether that's offers, pricing, sales conversations, or partnerships—without posturing and no pitches.

Just smart peers, real conversation, and clearer thinking about where to focus next.

If you're curious, you'll find the link to the next mixer in the show notes.

Come as you are.

You don't need to have it all figured out—that's the point.

And if this episode sparked something for you, stay tuned.

In the next episode, we're going to go deeper on finding an outcome niche.

Thanks for spending this time with me today.

If this was helpful, share it with another agency owner who might need to hear it.

And I'll see you in the next episode!

## **Audrey Joy Kwan**

Hey, thanks for hanging out with me at the Small But Mighty Agency Podcast. If you enjoyed this episode, it would mean the world to me if you hit the Follow or Subscribe button in your podcast app and share it with a friend. I'll see you on the next one.