

Prepared for: Attendees of Ask the Expert: Messaging

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Messaging Workbook

Introduction

I normally give this session as the second of two, two-hour workshops.

In the first workshop, I talk about how to use market research to discover your ICP: your ideal client (or customer) profile.

However, a number of members have recently told me that they're working on how to describe what they do, which is why I decided to offer the messaging session as a standalone.

So for the purposes of today, we'll assume you already know who your ideal client is.

I will say one thing about your ICP: If in answering the first question in the pre-work (who is your client...), and you say "anyone who needs..." or "any company that needs...", you will probably benefit from refining your client profile.

This is because messaging is most effective when it speaks as directly as possible to the exact client you want to attract.

Essentially, when you're talking to "anyone", you're talking to no one.



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Your three statements

There are a number of methods for creating the basic messaging for your product, service or company, but this one is the simplest. You begin by answering three questions.

1. Who is your client and what do they need?
2. What do you do that fulfils this need?
3. How does it work? (This can be your process, your technology, or how you differentiate yourself from others who perform similar services.)

Brief value statement

When you've completed these three statements, you can write the most important text for your business: the brief value statement.

In the bad old days, we called this your elevator pitch. But the ways in which people used their elevator pitch completely discredited the concept.

Here's how it used to work: You're at a business event. You meet a new person, and you immediately launch into your pitch - even if you haven't been asked for it. It generally starts with an "I" or "we" statement, explaining what you do. You've said it so many times, it sounds as insincere and canned as it is.

This does not begin a lively conversation.

Your three statements don't start with you; they start with your *client's or customer's needs*.



Once you've written your value statement, you'll find you use it everywhere. On your website, in your LinkedIn profile, at the bottom of announcements, or as your bio when you're a guest speaker.

Example

I'm in the process of re-writing my messaging, so I'm going to try it out on you. We marketers are rubbish at doing our own marketing, so I'd appreciate your feedback!

Here's my first crack at it:

1. Technology start-ups who are launching a company, product, or service – or who are re-positioning their existing business – need highly targeted communications.
2. I use market research to help discover their ideal customer, then write all the communications that will attract that customer, from basic market positioning; to website, blog and social media content; to press materials and sales decks.
3. I'm happy to work with clients from market research through product launch, or only on specific parts of the process.

Other ways to apply your message set

When I do this as a two-hour workshop, we use the attendees' three statements to create additional forms of communications on the fly. Here are some of the others.



Tagline

A good example would be your company's tagline. Taking from my value statement above, my tagline could be "Communications, from market research through product launch".

Home page content

I'm a big believer in the 10-second rule for home page content. Above the fold - meaning, what the visitor sees first, before scrolling down - should tell the visitor three things in 10 seconds, plus include a call to action:

1. What does this company do?
2. Am I their target market?
3. What's the benefit to me?
4. Call to action.

So my home page might read like this:

Communications for technology start-ups

Reach your ideal customer

From market research through product launch

Talk to me [button that leads to an email form or calendar scheduler]

Press releases or announcements

Once you have your basic message set, the announcement writes itself. All you have to add is quotes from you and your customers (to further validate your assertions), add the company boiler plate, and you're done.



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Multiple product or service launches

If your business offers more than one product or service, you'll want to have a general company message set, then one for each product or service.

The other value of messaging

Once your messaging is complete, you can also use it to gauge whether an activity you're about to undertake is valuable.

If you find this thing you want to do doesn't match your messaging, then either

1. You need to update your messaging.
2. This activity is a distraction that won't attract your ideal client.

Finally

My motto is "fail fast".

Create your message set.

Try it out on people who don't know what you do.

Try it out on existing clients and get their feedback.

Try it out on people who might need your service.

Then re-write it as many times as necessary to ensure it speaks directly to your ideal client.



Addendum

Sorrel Pindar's example

1. My ideal client is a woman who is a professional or entrepreneur...and she needs a solution to the problem of seemingly endless conflict with her other half.
2. I work with her to resolve the conflict with her other half by drawing on her own compassion, curiosity and unconditional acceptance - while at the same time ensuring that she has good boundaries and a powerful "no".
3. I generally work one-on-one for a period of three to six months, with weekly to fortnightly coaching sessions. I also co-host group sessions comprised of 10 sessions over 12 weeks, alongside a male colleague.

My slight massage of this, to make it more useful as a value statement:

1. Women professionals or entrepreneurs often find themselves in endless conflict with their spouse or partner.
2. I work with women to resolve this by drawing on their own compassion, curiosity and unconditional acceptance - while at the same time ensuring they have good boundaries and a powerful "no".
3. I generally work one-on-one for a period of three to six months, with weekly to fortnightly coaching sessions. I also co-host group sessions comprised of 10 sessions over 12 weeks, alongside a male colleague.

