



Identify your Value

**Message strategy, audit and gap
analysis**

Words2Win

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Are your customers getting the message?

You know your business inside out, you know what you do, and you're good at it. But knowing what you do isn't the same thing as being able to explain it effectively to your target market. In fact, your 'insider knowledge' can be a curse as well as a blessing - sometimes knowing something so well from the inside makes it hard to see the solution from the client's perspective. It can be difficult to translate 'what we do' into 'how we deliver value'. If your messaging – through your website, your brochures, your sales staff - talks all about you and your product/service, but not a great deal about your clients or how you help them in their business, then your message is unlikely to be heard by your target market.

Maybe you feel that the market doesn't really 'get' what you do, they don't understand how you add value. Maybe you suspect that some people may be visiting your website, or reading a brochure and not going any further, and you need to ensure that the first encounter really engages them. You need a message that is clear, and also consistent – through all forms of communication, digital or face to face.

In terms of messaging, many organisations start with the endpoint.

They build a website, create brochures, deliver a company presentation, have a LinkedIn profile, run campaigns and events. These messaging deliverables often lack consistency. For example, the message on the website may not be consistent with sales team presentations, which in turn may not be consistent with their social media profile.

This is usually because there is no messaging strategy. Organisations who take a strategic view of other areas of their business do not think of their messaging in the same way. Unless there is a clearly articulated strategy for messaging, it will remain disjointed. Unless that strategy focuses on define the audience, show how we deliver value to that audience and what sets us apart in the market, our message stands little chance of being Heard, Understood and Actioned.

Words2Win Messaging strategy workshop

The Words2Win Messaging Strategy Workshop helps you to build that Messaging Strategy. It will help you to define your target market and the messages that you want to communicate to them, in their language. The Messaging Strategy will form the foundation for ensuring that all forms of communication have a consistent theme and message.

In the Messaging Strategy Workshop, your leadership team will explore seven questions, to determine your strategic messaging:

- Why do you do what you do?
- Who are your target customers?
- What are the problems faced by these target customers?
- What do you offer to help them with these issues?
- What are your credentials?
- How are you different to your competition?
- How does the customer benefit from choosing you?

We do this through a combination of soliciting the opinions of each individual workshop attendee, and group discussion.

We use a Master Chart to capture individual thoughts, 'cheat sheets' to help guide/open your thinking, a product/customer matrix and a summary exercise called 'You know how'.

The discussion is captured by the facilitator, and the output is a written Messaging Strategy report that can be used as the basis for all forms of communication, and includes suggestions for an 'Elevator Pitch' and a tagline.

The workshop works best with 3-8 people, and you are encouraged to invite people from a range of functions within your business to get a full spectrum of input.

1 Why do you do what you do?

Why - This section explores why you do what you do. What motivates you, what drives you, who do you want to help, what do you want to change? If your business is a 'passion' business, this step is even more crucial. We know that people buy on emotion, we need to capture the emotion behind your business and share it, tell your story.

2 Who are your target customers?

Customers - We explore who your target customers are. We use a 'cheat sheet' to suggest some criteria by which you might want to select your customer groups i.e. it might be by their philosophy/approach to life; it might be by age; by gender; by geographic area. We capture all potential client types and try to group them into a few key categories. This step is important for getting the messaging right – it is important is for your target group to quickly recognise themselves in your material.

3 Client problems and opportunities

Issues/Goals/Opportunities - Once we have identified your target customers, we articulate their market environment and the opportunities, problems or issues they have, which you can help them address. Ideally we will have facts and statistics to help us quantify and validate these issues.

4 What do you offer?

Products and services - Here we consider what you offer - The key here is to think laterally - maybe it isn't just products per se, it might be education, training, a new way of thinking. It is about what you can offer as much as the physical product itself.

5 What makes you good at what you do?

Credentials - What makes you good at what you do? Why should clients choose you, rather than other people offering what might seem to be a similar service. This section also impacts our thinking when we come to the final section – Benefits. It is important to realise that the benefits may come as much from your credentials as your product - in fact you could say that your product, or offer, is an inextricable combination of you and the product. We use a 'cheat sheet' here, which highlights some of the ways in which you can show your credentials and differentiation.

6 What sets you apart from your competition?

Differentiators - What separates you from your competition? We tend to look at credential and differentiation together, as they are closely linked. A differentiator is a credential that is unique (or at least rare).

7 How do your clients benefit?

Benefits - If your prospects choose you, your offer - how is life different for them afterwards. Benefits might range from the tangible, to the less tangible to the life or business changing. This is arguably the most important section, where the real power of your story comes from - how you will make a difference to your customers' lives. It may be the first thing that you communicate to customers, but it is hard to articulate it without going through the detail of the previous sections.

Message strategy Report

The Messaging Strategy Report includes a summary of the key points in each section, supported by the detail of the workshop discussion.

It includes suggestions for a short form and longer form elevator pitch and tag lines.

The Strategy Report forms the basis of for consistent future communication across a range of platforms.

Audit

Once your strategic messages are agreed and documented, the next step is to compare what you have now with where you want to go.

The audit reviews your current communications against the documented strategy. Typically, it might include:

- Website
- Brochures
- Client stories/Case studies
- Proposals
- White papers
- Company presentation
- Articles and blogs
- eBooks
- Positioning statement
- Elevator pitch
- Capability Statement
- Tag line
- Marketing campaigns
- Press releases
- Awards citations
- Team LinkedIn profiles
- Company LinkedIn profile

Gap Analysis Report

The Gap Analysis Report highlights those areas where the current communication does not reflect the desired messaging strategy, and where there may be communication formats that are not currently used but which could help to tell your story.

The outcome

The outcome of the whole process is that you will have a clearly thought out and documented strategy and a plan for what needs to be done to implement it, to ensure you have a message that is clear, consistent and customer-focused. A message that will help you drive business growth.