



Messaging Tip Sheet

Do not underestimate the importance of solid messaging. Getting your key messaging right will underpin all your ongoing communications to any stakeholder. There is no perfect approach to developing a solid message track. The key is to do the right research and give deep thought to what will resonate most, then craft compelling points that can be pulled through in written and verbal communications. Once you have a solid foundation, the rest of your content should flow fairly naturally.

Here is some direction on how to think this through.

Research

- List your top (up to) 5 competitors—real or perceived.
- For each competitor, do a messaging analysis by reviewing the following:
 - Websites
 - Press releases: last 6 months
 - Press coverage: to see how messaging is being received.
- Map out findings in an easy-to-view format, like an Excel chart, noting top-line observations and analysis.

Exercise

- Do a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Strengths) exercise to help think through your points of differentiation and customer value. If you are unfamiliar with this process, see [this guidance](#), and you can search for other tutorials.
- Based on the SWOT, pull out key words and phrases that best characterize your company and set you apart from your competition.
- Draft complete messages that you think will resonate with your audiences and break through the clutter of the competitive environment. If helpful, you can divide your messages into categories, such as “Company”, “Product(s)” and “Landscape” (part of messaging is stating the issues and unmet societal/customer needs your company/product can improve/fix).



Elevator Pitch

- Separate out your top 3 most important messages, as well as your ‘elevator pitch’: If you had to sell your business or organization to a potential customer in 30 seconds, what are the most salient messages? Think of value to them, not just your selling points.

Test

- Use the new messaging with various audiences and gauge reactions, for example – use it to re-frame a low-risk investor pitch and see what reaction you get.
- A 'safe' test could be working your key messages into a few social media posts (if you're active on social media) and seeing if you get better engagement. There are many ways to 'soft sound' your messaging, depending on where you are in your business trajectory.

And remember, this is an iterative process, especially for early-stage companies. Messaging will evolve as your business/organization evolves, so don't look at this as a 'one and done' exercise. You should be testing and evaluating the effectiveness of your messaging every 4-6 months—even sooner if you're just starting out.

Good luck!

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