

A Key Messaging Framework for Your Business

By Kevin B. Levi

Founder and President, Winning Message LLC

www.winningmessage.com

info@winningmessage.com

An effective framework for differentiating a business's value should start with a powerful positioning statement: a memorable, impactful, concise sentence that tells people what you do, how you are different and what value you will provide to them. If your salespeople are not able to deliver this top-line sales pitch - and have the recipient understand it in the time it takes to go up two flights on an elevator - it is not effective and needs to be redeveloped.

In the instance where the elevator gets stuck or the ride simply takes longer than it should, your salespeople should also be armed with fact-supported differentiating messages to further persuade, if necessary. These pointed, concise, powerful statements must support the corporate positioning statement and help to prove its viability and legitimacy. These assertions should be no more than one sentence each. Behind each of these messages must be supporting proof points to legitimize each key claim. The key is to have several layers of ammunition to prove your business's worth to a potential client and to make your product or service stand above the competition's.

Following each key message and its supporting proof points should be a customer value statement (or value proposition). This one or two sentence statement clearly articulates to the potential customer what value your product or service will offer them.

Positioning Statements – top line business message designed to stake a claim in the industry and position how customers should perceive the company.

· For example:

– We are the world’s largest...

– Our company provides senior citizens with the cheapest...

Key Messages – Differentiating claims based on the business or its key products, services, etc.

· For example:

– Our XYZ product is used today by 67 of the Fortune 100 companies.

– Each member of our management team has successfully launched an initial public offering (IPO).

Value Propositions – Statements describing customer value based on the claims made by key messages and positioning statements.

· For example:

– With key message: Our XYZ product is used today by 67 of the Fortune 100 companies.

§ Value proposition might be: You can feel assured that our technology is proven and will work as described.

– With key message: Each member of our management team has successfully launched an initial public offering (IPO).

§ Value proposition could be: Your money is being put into the hands of a company led by entrepreneurs with a history of success.

This type of “messaging hierarchy” is essential in business, unless you are taking a lowest-cost provider position. This is especially true in the business-to-business marketplace, where the value of products and services is not always apparent.

With a complete messaging framework established, an organization has the ammunition needed to effectively differentiate itself from the

competition when competing for clients, new hires and leveraging in public relations news copy.