

# Taking Message Development into Your Own Hands

## A Five-Phase Message Development Process

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Phase 1: SWOTi Analysis

Phase 2: Analysis of Current Messages Utilized: yours and your key competitors'

Phase 3: Identify Your Company's Key Differentiators and Most Viable Positioning Stance

Phase 4: Build Your Messaging Framework

Phase 5: Integrate the New Messages into Your Business Development Engine: sales and marketing tools

### **PHASE 1: SWOTi Analysis**

→ **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (and insights)**

Take a holistic view of your business opportunity by assessing your firm's strengths and weaknesses, as well as those of your top competitors. You will then be ready to detail your business opportunities and business threats. This comprehensive view of your market landscape will provide you with the key insights necessary to carve out and stake a niche in your industry, where you can effectively sell and market your products and services.

Below are examples of two SWOTi analyses, one for a business and one for its main competitor. Notice how themes on the left of the chart can carry across from category to category. For this reason, it may be beneficial to start on the left with the "strengths" and move to the right, across the chart.

In these examples, a fifth section labeled “Insights” is included. This section is where you review each row’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and identify the single most important finding or “takeaway” that can significantly impact your business moving forward. These positive or negative components at the end of each row will help you develop your positioning and key messaging statements.

Example: Your business

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Insights
Fastest product in the industry	No customer testimonials	Invest more in research and development	Customers may not perceive speed as very important any longer	<b>Must have customer testimonials to validate claims and demonstrate business improvement</b>
Only company in our space with a global presence	Our product does not interoperate with any other products on the market	Expand into China	Our revenue continues to fall, and we have to make cuts	<b>We must diversify geographically</b>
Multi-lingual staff/strong customer service infrastructure	Continue to have declining revenue	Increase our advertising and Public Relations spend	Our poor customer service denigrates our image	<b>We need to invest in our customer service capabilities</b>
Only all-in-one solution in the market	We are expensive	Buy a competitor	Our top two competitors just merged	<b>Our competitors may soon trump us</b>
We are perceived as the industry’s high-end product	We are perceived as too high-end and have positioned ourselves out of the small business market	Introduce a low-cost product or line targeted at small businesses	Our products become commodities	<b>We must have a lower-end solution</b>

Example: Your top competitor

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Learned Insights
Lowest price	Can be perceived as low quality, low end due to pricing	Work to “own” the small business market with its low end solution	May have pigeon-holed themselves out of high-end, large-business deals	<b>Needs to think about a strategy for tapping the large-company market</b>
Highest U.S. market share	Dependent on a continued strong U.S. market	Expand into new geographies	U.S. market demand declines	<b>Must expand geographically</b>
Product is compatible with all competitive and complementary products	Lose control of the customer once he/she chooses to integrate with other vendors' products	Promote the message that compatibility is imperative in today's turbulent business environment	Other vendors choose to no longer allow its their products to interoperate with this company's	<b>Compatibility could be their downfall, rather than their main selling proposition</b>
Only offer select components of a full solution	Can not offer a customer an end-to-end solution	Buy or partner with more companies to offer a full solution	Market demand shifts to a one-stop-shop mentality	<b>May need to expand/round out current portfolio of products</b>