

## **Stacking the Deck in Your Favor**

*To Close Ideal New Business*

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When it comes to closing a sales deal, ensuring that your team's communication with the prospect is tight and effective is in your best interest. It may seem like a simple task, but it is not always that intuitive. In order to stack the deck in your favor when it comes to landing a new sales lead, here is a process that can help you navigate through that challenge ahead of time.

First, it is important to understand that marketing messaging and sales messaging are not the same thing, but they do correlate. Marketing messaging is broad and focuses on a strategic path, while sales messaging essentially starts with the marketing messaging and tailors it to the individuals they are talking with. There are no shortcuts when it comes to building your messaging framework. With the right collaboration (sales leaders, marketing leaders, and executive leaders) and time, this framework will guide your communications team to higher-quality deals and ideal revenue.

## **5 Steps to Create Your Own Strategic Messaging**

### Step 1: Overview of Current Circumstances

Take a step back and identify key threats and opportunities. Here are some essential questions to ask yourself. Write down your answers and share them with the group to see how aligned your answers are.

- How well do we understand the specific business threats and opportunities of our customers?
- How is a customer's business actually transformed by doing business with us?
- What are the specific elements of our value proposition, and are they truly defensible?

### Step 2: Complete a Before and After Exercise

As a group, take a pulse of the potential state of a customer or a prospect before doing business with you and how their business will be impacted by partnering with you.

Here are those discussion points:

- Make a List of Concerns "Before Doing Business with Us" (Business Issue)
- Make a List of "Business Impacts or Consequences" (If They Stay With An Inadequate Provider)
- Make a List of Benefits "After Doing Business with Us" (Customer Benefit)
- Make a List of Results "Positive Business Impact" (If They Decide to Switch to Us)

### Step 3: Establishing a Value Menu

Create a coherent list of all the positive business outcomes from the before and after scenarios. Essentially, we are taking these outcomes and transforming them into sales propositions or "value drivers". This is a point where some organizations stop the messaging development, but the next couple of stages is where the magic comes out!

#### Step 4: Poking Holes Into Value Drivers to Strengthen Them

An important rule for landing quality leads is “show, don’t tell”. That is where proof points come to play and the importance of building an infrastructure that can maintain those proof points.

For example, if you were focusing on developing your first aid division, one of your value drivers could be helping clients by staying OSHA compliant and reducing risk mitigation.

The next question is, how are you able to do this? The next set of questions and answers is an example of how to strengthen a value driver.

#### **Question: What are some required capabilities to meet this need?**

- Answer: We need a partner who
  - Has a staff that is trained in OSHA, first aid, and safety services
  - Has a supply chain that will help keep our first aid cabinets fully-stocked
  - Understands what we need based and has a well-managed inventory program

#### **Question: How do we prove that our service offering is superior?**

- Answers: We need a partner who can help us
  - Get fewer OSHA violations
  - Minimize lost time at work
  - Lower employee turnover due to improved safety conditions at work

#### **Question: How do we maintain this level of service?**

- Answers: We need to ensure we
  - Inspect first aid cabinets in a timely manner
  - Continuously train staff on OSHA and safety requirements
  - Understand inventory levels so we don’t overstock or understock any first-aid cabinets
  - Have the right supplier partners who can provide the highest quality safety products consistently

#### Step 5: Distinguish Defensible Differentiators

The final step of developing your messaging framework is to identify and define a set of differentiating qualities of your company that is credible and defensible. When a prospect is evaluating the proposals from others, we want to make sure we can shift the conversation to a value-based dialog and make the decision-making process a simple one for the prospect.

To simplify the process, it is important to understand which value drivers are stronger than others. The value drivers you identified in Step 3 now need to be sorted into the following two categories.

**Unique differentiators:** The presence of a value-based capability that is not available for any competitive offering.

***Comparative differentiators:*** Value-based capability that is superior (in some specific way) to comparable capability of a competing offering.

Understanding your value driver messaging is important but also understanding which value drivers are superior to others is a valuable tool when it comes to securing a large new account.

### **Start Using Your Marketing Messaging Framework for More Targeted Sales**

Whether you are revisiting an industry that you have targeted in the past or starting fresh into something new, having these five steps nailed down for each segment of the business that you wish to grow is crucial. It helps ensure your communication with the outside world is not erratic but aligned. It will help stack the deck in your favor to grow your business with ideal new business.