

Messaging

How do you respond when someone asks “what does your company do?” Do all your team members answer the same way? And is your response compelling so the listener wants to learn more, or do you sound like everyone else?

“Messages” are written and verbal statements that quickly describe what you do and how you’re different. They’re used throughout your interactions with your market:

- ▶ The “elevator pitch” – the 30-second response to “what do you do?”
- ▶ Sales & marketing materials – sales literature, websites, presentations and campaigns all use messages of various lengths
- ▶ The introductory statement in a phone call
- ▶ Press releases – the blurb at the bottom of the release that explains what the company does
- ▶ Slogans
- ▶ Your mission statement

Good messages take your competitive positioning and brand strategy to the next level. They hone in on what’s important to your market and communicate it consistently and effectively.

BEST CASE	NEUTRAL CASE	WORST CASE
<p>By carefully crafting your messages, you can strengthen your value proposition, your brand and the reasons your prospects should buy.</p> <p>It’s easy to communicate your value. The market “gets it” very quickly, speeding up the sales process.</p>	<p>Ho-hum messages don’t help you stand out, but as long as they’re not inaccurate or poorly written, they probably won’t hurt. You just miss out on the opportunity to strengthen your position.</p>	<p>Without consistent messages, individual team members do their own authoring and the results are rarely good, let alone consistent. Poor messages confuse the market and can contradict the other strategies you’ve worked hard to implement.</p>

Key concepts & steps

Before you begin

Before you start writing, define your **brand strategy** – it will help you identify what your messages should convey. If you need messages for a **marketing campaign** or program from your **marketing plan**, plan them out so you'll know exactly what kind of messages you need. And if you haven't finalized your **name**, you'll want to do that before messaging as well.

Define your writing style and requirements

Before you start writing, define your style requirements -- tone, voice, style, vocabulary – so the writing will be consistent and match your brand strategy.

Create an elevator pitch

The elevator pitch describes who you are, what you do, who your customers are and why they should buy from you. When you've written it, test it to see how it sounds and how long it takes (no more than 30 seconds).

Create your positioning statements

Write statements of various lengths – 25, 50 and 100 words – so you have a message length that fits a variety of materials. The shorter statements focus on the value and brand position; the longer ones add features and benefits.

Create a tagline/slogan

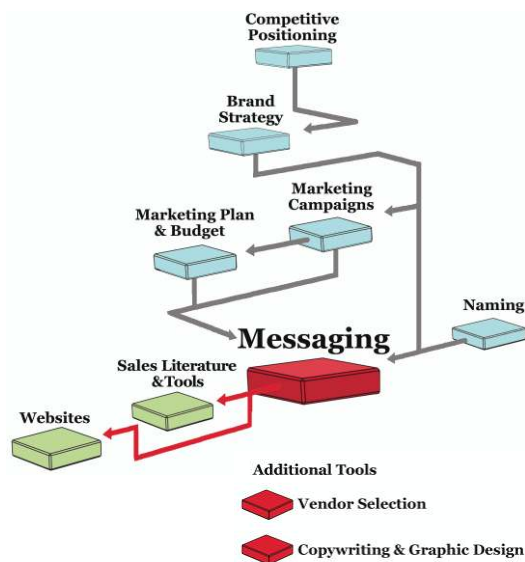
Your tagline/slogan is a more succinct phrase used in campaigns. It can be one word or a short phrase and for most business writers, it's harder to create. You may want to hire a copywriter for this one.

Create your mission statement

An average mission statement describes why you're in business. A great mission statement is compelling, shows why you're different and conveys your company's personality.

Determine where to use the messages

Make sure to use your new messages consistently. Train your team to use the messages and audit your materials periodically to make sure they're still working in the future.



What's next?

Your messages feed all of your communication with your market. Use them in your **sales literature and tools**, your **website** and then all of your **campaigns**.

