



How to Explain **WHAT YOU DO**

So More People Will **BUY FROM YOU**

Three Fill-In-the-Blank Templates to Instantly
Engage and Attract All the Right People

MARIA ROSS

www.red-slice.com

We've all heard it and rolled our eyes.

And some of us, if we're brutally honest, have heard ourselves say it at one time or another – maybe when we were first starting out - and inwardly cringed.

If you're an entrepreneur, marketer, business owner, author, maker, doer, blogger, artist, then you've been in a room full of people and heard this:

"What do you do?" or it's sexier cousin, "What is your business/book/invention/startup all about?"

And the answer?

"Well, it's kind of...um, sort of like, you know when you have to do (x) and it's really hard and you always wished there was a way to...well....hmm, it's a little complicated... (pause) Oh, oh, oh! Have you heard of this other company/book/blog? Yeah, it's kind of like that – but completely different. I don't know...it's..."

KIND OF HARD TO EXPLAIN."

No. Not acceptable. If you can't explain your business or the plot of your next juicy best-seller, then you have not thought through it enough yourself. You can't expect people to buy your stuff if they don't know understand it. Period.

Unfortunately, I hear this kind of talk way too often at networking events or from prospective clients.

My name is Maria Ross and I'm a brand strategist, author and speaker who has helped thousands of solopreneurs and small businesses stand out in their markets and attract more clients by telling the right unique story to the right people at the right time


I wrote this handy guide to help you explain what you do clearly and crisply so people quickly understand what you can do for them.

When asked any variation of "What do you do?" you have to have an answer ready. Even if you're just starting out on a project. Even if you've only written Chapter One. Even if you're launching your business two months from now. Even if you're taking six months off from work to backpack through Europe (perfectly acceptable and highly encouraged, by the way).

In film and television, this is known as a *log line*. It's a summary of what the project is about with a short emotional "hook" added in for intrigue. For business, it's often referred to as an elevator pitch. But I'm also talking about something much more basic. I'm talking about you taking the time to define and articulate what you do. Why?

You need a sense of direction.

Potential buyers need to know what value you provide.



If they are not the right buyer, they need to easily tell if they know someone else for whom your work might be perfect, even if it's not for them.

It does no good to talk about your business, book or other project to others if they won't get it. The burden is on you to communicate what you do in a way people will understand.

As Albert Einstein is famously credited as saying, ***"If you can't explain it to a six year old, you don't understand it yourself."*** This is true whether you are a life coach or a large tech company; if you're a government think tank or an Etsy seller.

Here are six tips to explain what you do crisply, cleanly and in a way that gets the right people to perk up and pay attention!

1. SIMPLIFY

Stop overcomplicating things! Keep it simple. Don't try to get too clever, fancy or detailed at the highest level. Give them just enough information to intrigue and inform without requiring a doctorate degree in your subject area. If they are interested, they will dig deeper. You don't have to try to explain every nuance of your work in the first thirty seconds. Some examples:

"I'm an accountant who serves as a virtual Chief Financial Officer for small business owners."

"I'm a life coach who helps women in transition discover their next big adventure."

"My book is about one woman's journey to reclaim her confidence and identity after a brutal assault in her own home."

"I create paintings and mixed media art that showcases the intricate and overlooked details in nature."

"Our software helps large companies blend, analyze and share data so they can make better business decisions."

2. DITCH THE JARGON AND ACRONYMS

Pretend you are describing your business or work to that six year-old who Einstein references. If you were an accountant, you wouldn't bust out statements like accrual basis, P and L or EBITDA, would you? If you're writing a self-help book about how to keep brain function sharp as you age, you wouldn't lead with medical terms that the Average Joe (your intended reader) doesn't understand, would you? Unless you were in a room full of neurologists, which takes us to...

3. USE ANALOGIES

Just like the log line I mentioned earlier, when you pitch screenplays or TV pilots, development people love to hear something like, "It's *The Walking Dead* meets *House of Cards* meets *Twilight*." Why? It gives them a reference point. If your work is really that difficult to understand, help people out by providing an analogy for them. Some examples:

"It's a cookbook for people who want Barefoot Contessa-inspired dishes on a 30-Minute Meal kind of timeframe."

"We are the Audrey Hepburn of design agencies: Our work is graceful, elegant and timeless."

"I'm like the Dr. Phil of personal trainers: I get real, say what needs to be said and help you do the work so you can get the results."

4. LEAD WITH BENEFITS

Perhaps you can describe your complicated work or book by first stating the benefits it gives to people. What needs do you fulfill? If people are intrigued, then you can tell them more about how you do it. Some examples:

"I make it easy for folks without green thumbs to create beautiful gardens."

"I help people get control over their retirement planning so they can stop stressing and start living."

"I teach women how to hear and trust their intuition again after loss."

"This book gives busy people a step-by-step guide to eating better so they can start feeling better."

5. OR, DESCRIBE THE PAIN POINTS YOU REMOVE

Everything we do is designed to increase pleasure or decrease pain. So instead of leading with benefits as stated above, you could share what *pain* your work takes away. Based on your audience, you'll have to decide which way is more compelling for people. Some examples:

"I do your taxes so you can stop drowning in paperwork and receipts and focus on your business."

"I save marriages by taking care of all the household chores neither of you want to do but both of you argue over."

"I help corporate teams eliminate communication snafus, power grabs and bureaucratic red tape so they can be productive, motivated and energized at work."

6. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

If you're a life coach with a spiritual bent and you're at a party full of women who adore Oprah's *Super Soul Sunday*, you can speak a slightly different language than if you're attending a seminar on start-up business financing. It's okay to have variations of the "What do you do?" answer using some of the strategies listed above—but start with at least one coherent baseline version!

These tips can all help you craft what's known as your **elevator pitch**. This is just a simple and succinct way to describe what you do so people clearly "get you" and are left wanting more! You can use your elevator pitch at networking events, as a speaker introduction or when meeting with prospective clients.

Your Next Move: Try These Scripts on For Size!

Ready to test this out? Try ONE of these fill-in-the-blank scripts below to craft your own elevator pitch. Don't stress over it or worry about making it perfect—just do it!

Then email your elevator pitch to me for feedback at maria@red-slice.com. That's it! All you have to do is practice saying it in the mirror every morning until it is as natural as breathing.

You'll never feel stuck, or ramble, or get embarrassed again.

Here are three very simple templates you can use:

OPTION #1

I'm a (TITLE) who offers/sells/provides/delivers (WHAT) to (WHOM) so they can (GET WHAT BENEFITS?)

Example: I'm a **leadership coach** who offers **workshops, books and private consulting to senior executives** so they can **communicate more clearly, lead with confidence and inspire their teams to deliver great results**.

Your turn!

I'm a _____ who offers/sells/provides/delivers _____
to/for _____ so they can _____.

OPTION #2

I'm a (TITLE) who coaches/ignites/revs up/inspires/enables/serves (whom?) to (DO WHAT?) so they can eliminate/avoid/decrease/stop (PAIN POINT ONE, PAIN POINT TWO, PAIN POINT THREE.)

*Example: I'm a **financial planner** who advises **people approaching retirement on how to avoid tax penalties, eliminate excess spending and ease their anxiety** so they can **enjoy their golden years**.*

Your turn!

I'm a _____ who coaches/ignites/revs up/inspires/enables/serves _____
to _____ so they can _____.

OPTION #3

I'm a _____ who serves (WHOM?). I'm like a (ANALOGY).

*Example: I'm a **graphic designer** who designs **logos and websites for small businesses on a budget**. I'm **like a Jedi master who takes the concepts inside your head and translates them into powerful visuals**.*

Your turn!

I'm a _____ who serves _____.
I'm like a _____.

Now you have three crisp, powerful, attention-grabbing ways to respond the next time someone asks you, "What do you do?"

GREAT WORK! I invite you to share your nice shiny, new description with me via email at maria@red-slice.com. Just put "WHAT I DO" in the subject line. And be sure to practice your elevator pitch in the mirror every single morning until you're a natural.

I'll be sharing more brand and messaging tips to help you stand out, attract loyal fans and amplify your work. Stay tuned!

Oh, and always feel free to Tweet me [@redslice](https://twitter.com/redslice) (I love hanging out on Twitter) or join the tribe over at the [Red Slice Facebook page](#).