



MODULE 5: CRAFTING A CLEAR, COMPELLING MESSAGE

Welcome to Module Five in the **Red Slice Brand Bootcamp** series:
Crafting a Clear, Compelling Message

SLIDE 2: In this session, we're going to LEARN what a messaging platform is, why it makes your business life a whole lot easier and how to build one for clarity and consistency. Next, I'll show you a neat and easy trick for taking that messaging platform and CRAFTING a winning elevator pitch to use with the media or even at your next networking event. Finally, you'll DISCOVER what a Key Messages Document is and how it can help you save time and maintain consistency so you can stop reinventing the wheel and start getting people to remember you.

SLIDE 3: Let's talk about benefits. Too often, business owners start the conversation or the copy with what they *do*: Here's what I sell, I provide, I offer....I...I...!!!! It's all about you. But customers don't care about you, they care about what you can do FOR THEM. They're selfish, and they should be because it's their money. So your prospects want to immediately know and clearly understand: "What's in it for me?" How does your product or service make my life/work/health/family, etc. better?"

So look at what you offer through your customers' eyes. You can do this by talking about benefits first, not features.

Features are the things you offer or sell. What you do/provide/sell/offer? Calming yoga classes, consulting packages, handmade jewelry.

Benefits are direct advantages for the customer. Why does what you do or sell matter to them? What do customers ultimately gain by using your products or services? Do you increase their profits, lower their costs, or improve their efficiency? Will you enhance their beauty, boost self-confidence, preserve precious memories, or reduce stress and ease tension?

Even if it seems obvious, you have to connect the dots for people. They are busy and don't have time to sift through all the information to see how you can make their lives or work better.

If you can't clearly verbalize the benefits you provide, you won't be able to build a brand that resonates both consciously and subconsciously with customers. The lack of benefits will leave all your marketing messages flat. Ideally, the features you cite will serve as proof for why you can make a certain benefit claim, which is important because you have to back up those benefits.

P.S. "Great customer service" is not really a benefit – this is what you DO. You have to explain why the good service matters to them and what it gives them over the competition.

You can capture the benefits you provide by developing a messaging platform by audience to drive the brand and inform all your communications.

SLIDE 4: Now before we go further, let's make a clear distinction between messaging and copy. **Your messaging platform is an internal "outline" to ensure all communications are on track and consistent.** Think of it like the outline of your book or essay – it's not necessarily meant for your external customers to see in its basic form, not "ready for primetime", so to speak. But it helps you control your message and ensure consistency. When you map out your messaging platform, everyone you hire or work with - like a writer or a contractor – can quickly understand the main messages you want to push. Consistently communicating these messages will make you memorable with your target audience.

Copy, on the other hand, is the polished, external face of your messaging shown in various channels (website, brochures, and speeches). It "prettied up" with clever copywriting or brand personality so that's it's not dry but memorable. It's taking the main messages and turning them into something the customer can see, connect with and absorb.

SLIDE 5: How do you build a messaging platform? Well, this part is going to seem a little boring and academic, but trust me, it will make developing strong copy and consistent messaging so much easier for you! **First you start with determining the three core benefits for your clients or customers.**

Why three? Because people can only absorb and remember a few crucial messages. If you try to hit them with 23 different benefits, they'll walk away remembering nothing. But if you beat the drum clearly about three simple benefits over and over, people will remember that more easily. It doesn't mean other benefits won't work their way into messaging or web copy or at other stages of the sales cycle, but think of it this way: What is your lead offer? What is the headline? You only have so much time to get attention so what are the three most compelling and important benefits that will make them pay attention and remember you?

A good way to get to the three main benefits is to simply list out all the benefits you want to convey. Then cut that list in half. Then in half again. Keep prioritizing until you get down to three. And make sure they truly are benefits, not features. I play a game with clients called The So What game. If I can keep digging on each benefit they cite and ask "So what? Why does that matter to me, the customer?" then we know we haven't gotten to the core benefit yet. Once they flip over from saying "I provide" to "the customer gets" we know we're closer to a benefit. For example, someone might say, "A benefit is that our yoga clothes are made from all-organic cotton." But why do they care about getting that? "Because they feel more comfortable during class." That's really the core benefit: comfort.

After you get your three core benefits, you need to determine *how* you offer that benefit to a customer? What do you do that delivers the benefit? That's your key message or capability. It's the "HOW" you deliver the benefit to customers. For example, "We increase your energy by showing you a 30 day step by step exercise and nutrition plan that you can realistically stick to."

Lastly, you need to show *why* you can make this benefit claim. Why should I believe you? These are called proof points. They can be awards, customer testimonials, statistics, or

facts. Back up all your claims so you are not just making empty promises. You can also cite shortcomings of the others guys here – i.e., “we’re the only ones that offer this type of plan online.”

The last thing you do is actually **roll up the three main benefits into a core positioning statement or core value statement**. This is where you describe what you do, for whom you do it and what they get from you.

Remember, even though it’s at the top of the Messaging Platform, the core positioning statement rolls up by combining the three main benefits you provide. **Determine the benefits first!**

SLIDE 6: Let’s look at an example we can all relate to: a car company. They may start out claiming, “Look at our ergonomic safety belts, early accident warning systems, and awards we’ve won.” Which are great, but those are features and proof points. Why do those things *matter to the customer?*

Well, they may say, “It means we provide state of the art automotive safety technology.” Again, great, but So What? Why does that matter TO ME?

“Because we keep you and your family safe in a crash.” BINGO! There’s the benefit from the customer point of view. And you can message that in a cool way, such as “We protect your precious cargo” or something like that. Point is, *safety* is the benefit. They provide it via state of the art automotive safety technology. And they can prove this claim by citing all the product features and safety awards they’ve won.

They then would do the same for the other top benefits they want people to remember about them: reliability and value. Can you see how these topline benefits are all about what the customer gets?

It’s important to note how the benefits you choose to claim as your topline message affect your positioning. This car company is choosing to focus on safety, reliability and value. A Ferrari may choose to tout performance, speed and status. That’s because they are targeting different markets and buyers who WANT or NEED different things. You can do the same with your business, regardless of how many competitors you have. Which position can you claim that others are not ? Or can you make a STRONGER claim than a competitor because you have better proof points? These are all important to consider. (CLICK)

SLIDE 7: Now let’s look at a cool trick. As I said, once you establish your messaging platform, you can then use it as the basis for your other communications and copy. This includes crafting a killer elevator pitch. You can take the core positioning statement you’ve just created: “*Red Slice offers branding and marketing consulting for solopreneurs and small to midsized businesses so they can attract more customers, stand out from the competition and grow their businesses.*”

Now, simply add a memorable “hook” or flair to the end: like a tagline, mission statement, or analogy. It’s important to finish strong and confidently, rather than saying something like, “So, um, well that’s it, that’s what I do!”

For my business, I often say something like *“Essentially, I help businesses tell their story so they can engage, inform and delight their audience.”*

Lastly, wrap up by repeating your name and URL.

It’s important to remember that an elevator pitch is meant to be spoken, so you want to ensure you use words you feel comfortable saying! Once you learn it, you can adapt it by event or situation to whatever feels right. It may never quite be the same thing twice, but the meat of it will always be the same and that will increase memorability the more people hear it.

SLIDE 8: Here’s an example we created for a client *“Alinga Bodywork provides massage and energy work for discerning clients who want to shift themselves out of neutral and get unstuck physically, creatively or emotionally. My clients leave feeling less pain, and more emotional balance, confidence and clarity. I like to say Alinga offers “pampering with purpose.” Find us at www.alingabodywork.com”*

This client doesn’t necessarily say this each and every time, but having this prepared beforehand means she’s always going to communicate exactly the right thing.

SLIDE 9: Now it’s time to think about your core brand “hook”. Every business or business owner has one core thing that sets your business apart from others. You can determine this by going back to your strengths and weaknesses or your competitive differentiators to find the one thing that uniquely defines your business above all others. This is something that perhaps can be a main tenant of your brand strategy. If you can’t boil your single greatest asset down to one thing that no other business can claim, you need to put more thought into your positioning, your product/services mix, or the audience you serve.

See if the single greatest asset of your business seems to rise to the top and puts your offerings in a unique market position? What is the one claim no one else can make in your market space? What unique asset benefits your customers the most and helps you stand out? You might find a cool hook or creative theme that will guide the rest of your brand strategy and inform your visuals and your copy.

SLIDE 10: Maintaining messaging consistency is the key to brand memorability. People will not hear your messages as often as you do, since you live, eat and breathe your business! So repetition will help them remember you.

A Key Messages Document helps keep you on the straight and narrow. It is simply a document that includes: your Messaging Platform, Mission and Vision Statements, 30- second elevator pitch, 25, 50 and 100 word company descriptors (you’ll want these at the ready when someone asks you for a blurb or program listing or to put at the end of a proposal, or on your About page) Press boilerplate (for use at the end of press releases), any Executive Biographies (short and

long forms) and your tagline if you have one. This clever concise line, a la *Just Do It* or *Fly the Friendly Skies* can encapsulate your overall position and also evokes emotion (it's not necessary to have one, but it's nice).

SLIDE 11: Your assignment for this module is going to be to tackle your Messaging Platform. Again, while you might be rolling your eyes, this will guarantee more ease in developing copy and messages – and more memorability about what you do and why you're different. So you're going to identify your three main benefits and start populating your Messaging Platform. Then, you're going to roll up the three benefits into a Core Positioning Statement and finally transform that Core Positioning Statement into an elevator pitch you would easily say. You may want to practice in the mirror or at your next networking event!

Please do all this before you move on to Module Six, in which we'll build on this and be talking about how to take your messaging and seduce your audience with great content and copywriting. We're also going to discuss how to manage all your content and social media activities in a more efficient way.. Any questions, please drop on over to the private Facebook group that is part of your course....Red Slice Brand Bootcamp. If you haven't already requested to join the group, please do! Enjoy, good luck and I look forward to seeing you at Module Six!