

## COMMUNICATING YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

Even when people know their value, many find it difficult to describe.

When someone asks the simple question, “What do you do,” you know the simple answer but you need to convey your value, and when communicating your value proposition, you don’t want to deliver the same canned speech for every audience.

What you need to do is first craft, then learn to deliver, specific pieces of information you can use to get your value across. Put all these pieces together, and you have what we call a value proposition positioning statement.

A value proposition positioning statement is a compelling, tangible description of how a company or individual will benefit from buying from you.

For example, I may start by saying, “We help companies grow their customer base through the implementation of innovative marketing techniques.”

This is the umbrella under which we operate. It’s a small piece of information I will use in the early part of conversations. And it’s an important piece as it’s the ultimate reason why clients eventually hire us. But there is always a set of factors and specifics that sway them to choose us versus: doing marketing themselves, choosing someone else to help them, or choosing to do nothing at all.

Obviously, as the conversation moves along, we (you) need to communicate more if we want to tip the scales in our favor. It is simple to memorize words on a website or brochure, but sometimes difficult to sit with a potential client and tell them exactly why you are the best fit for them.

To get a full picture of your value across, you need to be able to cover these areas including:

- Target customers. Whom do you serve? What makes for an ideal customer regarding industry, location, size, type and so on? This allows the person on the receiving end to know if you work with companies and people like them. Know your target customer so you can craft messages that will resonate with them.
- Need/business problem. What types of needs and business problems do you address? How do you help? This helps prospects understand how and when they should use you.
- Impact of solving need. What are the rational and emotional benefits of solving the need? Getting this right is a major factor in whether or not you resonate.
- Your offerings. What’s your product and service approach, how do you run your company, solve problems and work with customers?
- Proof of concept. How can you demonstrate that your approach has worked to solve similar problems for others? How do you substantiate your claims? How do they know that what you say will actually happen?

- Why is your offering preferable to other options for solving the need? Do you have something special about you that's worthwhile to share? Is there some way to highlight how you're distinct from others?

Once you've built all these pieces, practice it as one statement until you have it memorized ... Then forget it. At least, forget delivering it in one slick mini-speech.

If you deliver all your building blocks in one big long breath, the person you're speaking with will be thinking "elevator pitch...here it comes." Often they'll tune out.

When you introduce yourself and someone asks you, "What do you do?" The best thing is to start with a few important pieces that can help you get the conversation flowing.

We started our example with, "We help companies grow their customer base through the implementation of innovative marketing techniques."

I haven't even started to cover our target markets, the impact, our distinctions, proof of concept, and so on. When it's time, I can and I do! But I do it as the conversation unfolds and I learn more about with whom I am speaking.

I might start here and then ask the other person, "And what do you do?" and they'll answer, often following my lead and keeping it short. Then we ask questions to learn more. In the natural flow of conversation, we're likely to learn enough to share (and customize!) relevant details that will continue to position our value. As well, ask someone something and they'll often turn the question right back at you.

For example, you might ask, "Can you share with me any specific examples?" or "I am curious to know how this may fit for me?" Then they'll tell you the story and say, "What about you? Any examples in my industry?"

And you can hit the rest of your bullet points as you continue along in your great conversation.