

Management tool #B-16:©

Effectively communicating our compelling value:

“There’s no point being the best if we’re also the best kept secret.”

If we can’t communicate our value in a clear, believable and compelling way...it’s meaningless. Everything we do communicates. Are we effectively communicating our value and telling our brand story in everything we do? Are we even clear what our value and brand story are? Many businesses are not. They don’t know who they are...so their customers don’t know who they are.

Although there are 100s of ways that we communicate who we are, there are 7 broad categories of business communication, shown below. Using the boxes beside each, honestly evaluate on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being ‘excellent’, how effective we are in each of these communication categories.

7 categories of business communication:

- ☐ 1. How we **‘look’** in every part of our business communicates our standards, our style and our sense of self. How we ‘look’ creates or destroys confidence.
- ☐ 2. How we **‘sound’**...*“We are what we speak.”* How we ‘sound’ in person, on the phone, on our website, in our ads, on our blogs and on Social Media communicates how much we know and how much we care. How we ‘sound’ creates or destroys confidence and builds or destroys relationships.
- ☐ 3. How we **serve, coach and perform** communicates ‘loud & clear’ how important we think our customers are.
- ☐ 4. The **price** we charge communicates what we think we’re worth. And in both our business and our personal lives, nobody will think we’re worth more than we do.
- ☐ 5. How and where we **advertise and promote**.
- ☐ 6. How we **care** for each other and our planet communicates where our corporate ‘soul’ is.
- ☐ 7. How our business **‘feels’** matters. How we ‘feel’ communicates if we are welcoming, safe and professional to do business with. To quote American poet Maya Angelou, *“People may not remember what you say or what you do...but they will always remember how you made them feel.”*

Noticed...remembered...trusted...famous!

First, we need to be noticed, remembered. If we’re not noticed, we simply don’t exist. Then we need to be remembered. Are we memorable, or are we ordinary with a scattered, inconsistent message? What’s special, unique or amazing about us?

Does our name communicate clearly what we do and how we do it wonderfully? Great examples are **“Speedy Muffler King”**, **“Miracle Grow”** plant fertilizer and **“The 10 Minute Manicure”** kiosks in airports. We know exactly what they do...no confusion.

If our business name doesn't communicate clearly, can we come up with a catchy positioning statement that 'grabs' folks and adds value. **Boundless High School**, an accredited outdoors education and wilderness experience camp in the Ottawa Valley of Ontario is in the business of transforming young lives. They communicate that brilliantly with what must be one of the world's best positioning statements, *"Send us your kid...and we'll send you back a new one!"* Anyone with a teenager knows that this is great marketing.

Next, we need to be trusted. Customers are stressed, confused and cynical. They don't know who to trust anymore. We need to absolutely commit to doing the right thing...and to doing it wonderfully and joyfully. Don't try to fake it. Play it straight. If we aren't building trust, we aren't building anything.

Finally, we need to become '**famous**' for something. Not 'Hollywood' famous, but 'famous' to our target customers. 'Famous' for something that really matters to them. Toronto's **Steam Whistle Craft Brewery** has become famous for its world-class Pilsner beer. Their slogan, *"Do one thing really, really well."* These guys get it. [Carefully study the Steam Whistle website. There are more powerful marketing ideas on that one site than on any site I've seen. It's a Marketing MBA.](#)

So, what can we become 'famous' for...and how will we go about that?

A few words about advertising. Basically, advertising is creative bragging. What are we doing that's truly worth bragging about? When we've developed our key value message we need to be real and be consistent. Management Tool #21 is a 'Reality Check' on what we need to know before we spend a penny on advertising.

The internet and Social Media are the biggest free gift in the history of marketing:

The internet has changed everything. With websites and databases even small businesses can target, reach and build relationships with target customers, world-wide. Fans can tell thousands of people about us with a single click. The Pie Commission, a tiny take-out stand selling amazing meat pies in an alley behind a paint store in Toronto's west end became a huge hit in just a few weeks because of Social Media. But unhappy customers can also have a devastating effect on our business...instantly.

What are we doing to take maximum advantage of this incredible marketing 'free gift'? Are we creating and proactively using three databases?

1. A customer database.
2. A database of key prospects.
3. A database of media and key influencers (see below).

Getting 'free' PR. How can we get the media and key influencers talking about us? First we have to be a story...and then we have to tell our story. What are we doing, or could we do that's so interesting, different and newsworthy that the media and key influencers (bloggers & tweeters) will be interested? What are we experts on that their followers will find helpful? Then, we can use our database of media and key influencers to spread the word.

Creating our own 'media'. When we have a customer database and we're doing interesting things, or have important information to share, we can also create our own customer E-Newsletter, blogs and tweets to tell our story. This is inexpensive, targeted and very effective.

1. What's our key compelling value story that will 'grab' our target customers, clearly differentiate us from our competitors, make us 'famous' and grow our bottom line?

What are some other important parts of our value story?

1. _____.
2. _____.
3. _____.
4. _____.
5. _____.

2. Given who and where our target customers are, how will we most effectively and consistently communicate our value story?

Note: Referring to the “7 categories of business communication” found on Page 1 and the “40 ways that we communicate” on the following page, below we'll create a comprehensive list of how we'll communicate our value story, then we'll create a detailed implementation plan for each agreed communication idea.

1. _____.
2. _____.
3. _____.
4. _____.
5. _____.
6. _____.
7. _____.
8. _____.
9. _____.
10. _____.
11. _____.
12. _____.
13. _____.
14. _____.

48 ways that a business can communicate:

Note: We'll use this checklist to jumpstart our creativity as to how we can create a comprehensive communicate program. For each of the communications possibilities listed below, that we chose to be part of our program, what might 'extraordinary' look like?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our business or brand name...and product names. | <input type="checkbox"/> Our vehicles. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our Logo. | <input type="checkbox"/> Promotions & special events. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our Brand promise and Brand personality. | <input type="checkbox"/> Create workshops and seminars. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our positioning statement. | <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomas, certificates. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our products & services...quality, selection. | <input type="checkbox"/> Letters of reference. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our prices. | <input type="checkbox"/> Biz cards, letterhead. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our sale and promotional strategy. | <input type="checkbox"/> Info or demo videos. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Merchandise presentation. | <input type="checkbox"/> Our Guarantee. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Packaging, tags & labels. | <input type="checkbox"/> E-Directories...Yellow pages. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catalogues and brochures. | <input type="checkbox"/> Direct snail mail...Direct e-mail. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our Website. | <input type="checkbox"/> Sampling / "test driving". |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blogs, Newsletters and E-blasts from us. | <input type="checkbox"/> A mascot. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use of Social Media by us. | <input type="checkbox"/> Celebrity endorsements. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blogs, Newsletters and Social Media by others. | <input type="checkbox"/> Ad specialties. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The phone...how we answer + outbound calls. | <input type="checkbox"/> Sales calls to customers & prospects. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our premises...the design, location, size, lighting. | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-on-1 coaching of customers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Signage...inside and out. | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade or consumer shows. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our Staff...how they look, sound and serve. | <input type="checkbox"/> Media exposure (PR). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uniforms / badges. | <input type="checkbox"/> Movie & TV product placement. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising...print, radio, TV, billboard, internet, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsoring teams, special events or competitions. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write articles for trade mags or local media. | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint promotions with complimentary product or service providers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer 'Club Membership' with privileges. | <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in community events. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Algorithm driven customized special offers. | <input type="checkbox"/> Giving back to our community. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking at industry events or to customer groups. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creating contests or competitions. | |