

The Ultimate Template for Perfect Messaging

This guide is for you.

OK, well, this template is for you if you care about (marketing, sales, product) messaging, which I imagine you do if you're reading this. The template is designed to break down the foundation of **why** and **how** to communicate what you want to say, so you can get on with it and focus on the **what** of getting it done.

I think of it as a [first principles approach](#) to messaging -- if you can understand the motivation behind tuning your messaging, then you can craft whatever your need -- long form blog copy, a title to an email, a header on a web page, and more. Below, we'll start with a customer/prospect profile (persona-based) approach and use the framework to tackle the types of messaging deliverables that you'll need on your team.

Converting vs. informing

The goal of this messaging is to lay the foundation for content that offers value to your audience and moves them down your funnel. Even if it's just a small conversion -- maybe to the next asset -- the messaging is still working to achieve what you ultimately want to accomplish. If there's no conversion or micro conversion, then your efforts are really just creating informative content. And hey, informing is ok and valuable too, but when you have to prioritize your precious time and resources, I like to build messaging and content that converts first, because I know that's a signal of greatest value to the audience.

Start with your audience

We get busy. Mounting demands pull us in a ton of directions. We need to produce, and there are so many ideas zooming around that it's difficult to know how to prioritize what to write and when. It's easy to lose sight of the fact that we're writing for an audience, and, to deliver messages that convert, we need to focus on that specific reader. That specific reader we're trying to reach has *frustrations* when trying to achieve their *wants* and *fears* about attaining their *aspirations*. In the Personal Model below we narrow the focus to your target audience, so you can build the foundation to messages that convert. Those building blocks can be used everywhere.

“A.B.E.” – Always be experimenting

Whether you're a startup or an experienced business, it's important to treat everything you capture in your messaging model and templates as a hypothesis -- to be tested, beat up, and revised as necessary. It's OK not to be sure. You have permission to experiment. You don't know until you know, so capture your informed guesses below and start testing them against your audience.



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Audience

BACKGROUND	
Brief background here on the profile of the individual that you're targeting with your messaging. Focus on the fact that your target reader and consumer is a real, individual, person -- not a company, team, or group. The more focused you can be, the more successfully your content will resonate.	
ROLES & TITLES	What would their title(s) be on LinkedIn?
RESPONSIBILITIES	List direct responsibilities. Job posts are great resources to review and capture these.
MANAGES	Who does this person manage (roles / titles), if anyone?
REPORTS TO	Who does this person report to (roles / titles)
DECISION MAKER?	Yes / No
AFFINITY GROUPS	Associations, online groups, Professional Certifications, etc.

Persona Model

FRUSTRATIONS		WANTS	
A top frustration that this person experiences in their daily work life related to your problem / opportunity space	»	A top "want" that this person needs to meet. This is the opposite of the frustration prioritized to the left.	
Another top frustration they experience. This is a personal frustration -- not a general issue experienced by the business.	»	Another want that's the mirror image of the corresponding frustration. This is a personal want -- not something general to the business.	
One more frustration you are going to focus on. Keep this section tight, so you can refine your messaging around this core.	»	One more key want that this person is prioritizing accomplishing. Keeping these sections tight helps prioritize and focus your messaging.	
FEARS		ASPIRATIONS	
The top fear this person experiences. What's going in the back of their mind? What is failure for this person?	»	What does success look like and what's the opposite of the prioritized fear? What does this person hope to accomplish?	
Another fear that this person has -- could be something they speak or just think about.	»	A key aspiration -- think promotion, recognition of their team, or recognition of their leadership.	
One more top fear. It's ok to have fewer fears listed, but don't try to prioritize too many.	»	An important aspiration that makes it into the prioritized list and relates to the fear on the left.	

Messaging Model

FRUSTRATION		WANT
Start with the #1 frustration from Personal Model above.		»»
		And the corresponding want. We're going to put the <i>frustration</i> and <i>want</i> to work below.
GAIN	50 WORD	For the Gain message, focus on <i>wants</i> and what your target audience will positively achieve with your content, product, or service. "By choosing <our product or company> you'll get <want>, so you can focus on <aspiration>". Our <feature/service #1>, <feature/service #2>, and <feature/service #3> enable you to <benefit - aligned with wants> and <benefit - aligned with wants>.
	25 WORD	Distill down the Gain message focusing on a single want and the benefits aligned with those wants. This is a positive message about outcomes.
	SHORT	Sometimes it's easier to start with more words and keep distilling it down. The short Gain tagline here might be used in header copy, for example.
LOSS	50 WORD	Loss avoidance is a key human desire. Given the key frustration above, how can they avoid it by using your product or service -- or by consuming the information you're writing about. Put a name to their frustration and pave a path for avoiding it. For longer copy, you can expand and include mixing in avoiding their fears as well.
	25 WORD	Shorter and tighter Loss avoidance messaging focusing on the key frustration and the benefits (aligned to the wants) of what it means to avoid that frustration.
	SHORT	Shorter, tag line version of loss avoidance for use in headlines, for example. "How to avoid <frustration> and accomplish <want>".
LOGICAL	50 WORD	Here we use a Logical Argument to make our case. Most people respond to loss avoidance and gain, but a strong logical argument makes sure we're offering compelling messages and also capture the analytical thinkers out there. Use numbers, facts, and references to reinforce the key frustration and proof of the benefits aligned to wants.
	25 WORD	A tighter, trimmed down version of our logical argument. Maybe this is used as short paragraph copy on your website followed by a Call to Action (CTA).
	SHORT	The Logical Argument as a short headline. "80% of <target title and role> achieve <want> this way..."

* Copy and repeat the above model for each frustration or fear with a focus on communicating the movement from *frustration to want* and *fear to aspiration* within the context of your content, product, or service. For long form copy, or even in a sentence or two, can you combine the above building blocks to deliver your message along the three dimensions -- Gain, Loss Avoidance, and the Logical Argument?

Where to go from here

After you nail down and refine your mapping of Frustrations to Wants and Fears to Aspirations with expansion of each along the lines of Gain, Loss Avoidance, and Logical Argument messaging, you can begin to mix these building blocks into production-ready content. Hopefully, you and your team will get a feel for how the pieces snap together to build more compelling content.

A Brief Example

At Content Camel, we're serving the Marketing and Sales teams with everything they need to wrangle their content into a central place with the goal of enabling sales and improving the buyer's experience. Using the framework, we'd approach our messaging like:

Persona: VP of Sales, with about 30 reps on her team:

FRUSTRATIONS		WANTS	
She's frustrated that on an almost daily basis her team -- from SDRs to AEs -- ask each other (or her) where to find some ebook, white paper, etc	>>	She wants her team to be using the latest and greatest assets and not have to resort to hunting around for them in 3 different locations.	
FEARS		ASPIRATIONS	
She's afraid the new features they just launched won't get activated with new prospects fast enough to provide lift to meet this quarter's quota.	>>	She wishes for a time when the entire sales team -- not just a couple of reps -- spin up together on new features to get them in front of prospects in the current pipeline.	

Messaging

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She's frustrated that on an almost daily basis her team -- from SDRs to AEs -- ask each other (or her) where to find some ebook, white paper, etc	>>	She wants her team to be using the latest and greatest assets and not have to resort to hunting around for them in 3 different locations.	
GAIN	50 WORD	By centralizing all of your marketing and content in Content Camel, you'll have a single place to enable the team with the latest ebooks, whitepapers, and blog posts, and your team will rapidly come up to speed with everything they need to move prospects down the funnel this quarter.	
	25 WORD	A single place for all your content means your reps will access and send the right content to impact deals this quarter.	
	SHORT	Enable your team to impact deals this quarter with a central place for all your content.	

LOSS	50 WORD	Sales teams that centralize their content into a single place stop wasting time hunting for the right asset and avoid the slow process of ramping all reps on the new product features launching, so they can focus more on deals this quarter.
	25 WORD	Prevent your team from wasting time hunting for assets by centralizing your content and focusing reps on sending the right asset right now to activate prospects this quarter.
	SHORT	By centralizing all your marketing and sales assets, Content Camel eliminates the chase for the right assets, enabling reps to activate prospects this quarter.
LOGICAL	50 WORD	62% of buyers finalize their selection based solely on digital content, so why are your teams still hunting for the right assets to send to prospects they have in the pipeline this quarter? Content Camel centralizes all your content in one place, meaning the right message and latest content is easily surfaced by all of your reps.
	25 WORD	Forrester research found that 62% of buyers finalize their decision based solely on digital content, so you can't afford to have your sales team misfiring on the assets they are sending to your prospects.
	SHORT	62% of buyers purchase solely based on the content they receive. Start impacting deal this quarter by centralizing your content within Content Camel now.

So, that's just a brief example of how we'd use the template to begin the process of refining our message and testing whether that truly resonates with those interested in Content Camel. Hopefully you see how using this paint-by-numbers approach can create messaging that focuses on conversion and aligning with what buyers care about.



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