




Delivering a Corporate Story That Strengthens Your Customer Experience.

How messaging materially impacts customer acquisition, retention, advocacy and the customer experience.





“If you think your company’s strategy conversations should only take place at the most senior level, you could unknowingly be crippling your company’s bottom line. Research shows that companies whose employees have a clear understanding of where the organization is headed and how their daily activities contribute to the success of the organization consistently outperform the competition.”

— *Forbes.com*: “The Strategic Narrative: A Better Way To Communicate Change”



Define and deliver an intentional corporate story — or else.

More than ever before, businesses operate in a world of transparency. The always-connected-and-consuming buyer has unprecedented access to your organization. Your strategy and story are visible to anyone, anywhere, at any time. How your business operates, what your organization believes in, the actions employees take and the words you use to describe what you do — as well as the value you deliver and what differentiates you — are now omnipresent. These touchpoints, interactions and messages define your customer's overall experience with your company.

They also represent the new competitive environment that businesses must contend with today. In fact, a recent Gartner report said by 2016 (that's here and now), 89 percent of companies expect to compete mostly on the basis of customer experience, versus 36 percent just four years ago.

In the customer-experience driven world we live in, words and actions matter. They establish perception. They define how customers perceive their experience with your company. While your strategy drives your actions, your message drives the storyline customers experience throughout their journey.

That's why your story and strategy must be fully aligned. When they are not, the customer experience breaks down. The perception of your brand is damaged. Customers lose

faith and trust in your company. Customers leave and go to the competition.


Clarity and connectivity between your story and strategy is paramount. A recent article in the Journal of Business Strategy stated, "In its simplest sense, a corporate story is a narrative tool that tells the tale of a company's strategy in action. It is a clear, structured, compelling articulation of "who we are" and "where we're headed" that rallies emotional and rational support from stakeholders." The article continues, "More than mere words, however, the corporate story's strength lies in its ability to align leaders, drive decision making and mobilize the organization."

In this paper, we'll explore the best practices for developing and delivering a clear, compelling and consistent story that can in fact "align leaders, drive decision making and mobilize the organization."

A story that is:

- > Aligned with your go-to-market strategy
- > Anchored in a higher purpose
- > Constructed with consistent building blocks
- > Packaged, comprehensive and compartmentalized
- > Embraced and activated by employees
- > Connected throughout the customer experience
- > Designed to produce top- and bottom-line business results

Companies that succeed in maintaining alignment between their corporate strategy and story win. They win because their words and actions align, creating a superior experience that increases customer acquisition, retention, loyalty and competitive differentiation.



“By 2016, 89% of companies
expect to compete mostly
on the basis of customer
experience.” — Gartner



A story aligned with your go-to-market strategy.

Every meaningful story includes an underlying theme, characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution and audience.

Your business strategy has many of these same elements:

Theme: Your company's vision and purpose

Characters: Your employees, products and services

Setting: Your industry, market and competitive environment

Plot: Your strategic plans and initiatives

Conflict: The challenges, barriers and customer pain points you face

Resolution: The way you address challenges, barriers and pain points

Audience: Your prospects, customers and employees

These similarities illustrate why your strategy and story are intrinsically connected. Establishing connectivity between your strategy and story requires discipline. It means you must invest the time, resources and energy to make it happen. You must be intentional.

In his book, *The New Leader's Playbook*, George Bradt said, "Everything communicates. You can either make choices in advance about what and how you're going to communicate or react to what others do. It is important to discover your own message and be clear on your platform for change, vision, and call to action before you start trying to inspire others."

You can't execute a strategy and tell a different story in the market. Nor can you tell one story and execute a different strategy — unless, of course, you want to

confuse your audience. Remember, you have an internal and external audience that needs to understand how your strategy and story connect. Internally, your audience includes leaders and employees across the organization. Externally, your audience includes prospects and customers.

In a recent *Forbes.com* article, "What Does It Take To Tell A Successful Corporate Story," it stated, "Your corporate story is going to have to stand up to competing stories that will be tested against the split-second emotional reactions of potential customers."

To formulate a strategically aligned, compelling and consistent story you have to be able to clearly define and document your go-to-market strategy by answering questions like these:

Who is our primary target audience?

What is our vision for the company?

What is our employee's daily mission?

What are the core values that drive our actions?

What are we trying to help our customers achieve?

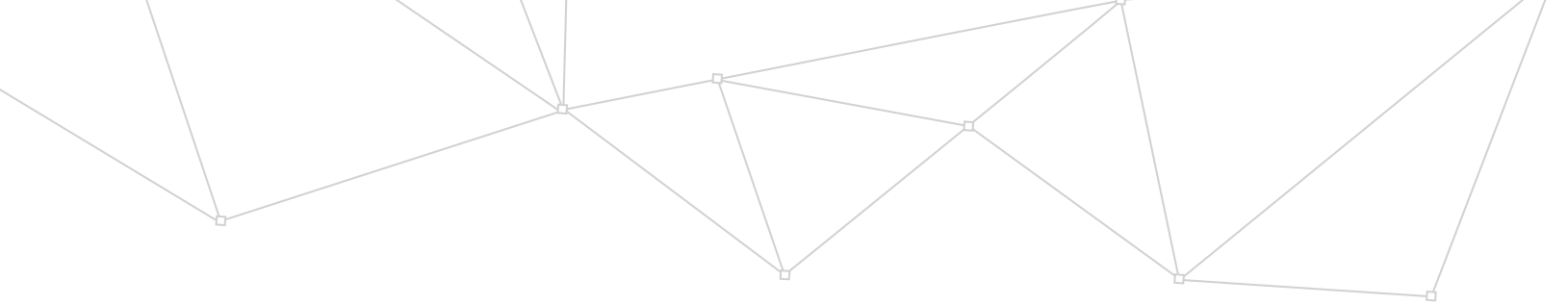
What type of experience do we want to deliver?

What specific products, services and solutions do we offer?

What makes us better than the competition?

What is the ultimate value we deliver?

It's important to crystallize and document your answers to these questions because clarity and alignment drive successful execution.



Research from Forbes finds that only 65 percent of organizations have an agreed-upon strategy, just 14 percent of employees understand what the organization's strategy is, and less than 10 percent of all organizations successfully execute the strategy. Having a clearly defined and documented go-to-market strategy will dramatically improve organizational performance — and your customer's experience.

“Research shows only 65% of organizations have an agreed-upon strategy, just 14% of employees understand what the organization's strategy is.”

— Forbes

The process of securing answers to these questions differs based on the size, scale and culture of the organization. However, we recommend the following 5-step approach:

1. Vision, mission, values alignment

Companies with a clearly defined vision, mission and values system outperform the competition. Why? Because it brings a higher degree of certainty to what they do, the decisions they make and the actions they take — everyday. More importantly, it helps them decide what they are not going to do. The entire executive team must

be aligned with and in full support of these foundational elements. We recommend conducting at least two, three-hour, professionally moderated alignment sessions to gain clarity around the company's vision, mission and values.

2. Go-to-market strategy alignment

The vision, mission and values work will guide the leadership team's highest-level strategic decisions. Now you need to get more specific. You need to determine the strategic market opportunities the leadership team will intentionally choose to pursue and not pursue. You'll need to define the strategic growth initiatives the company will invest in and determine the market opportunities you will attack and the types of customers you will serve. You'll need to understand where the company will grow, where you expect to experience declines and how you plan to overcome internal and external barriers to success. Again, this will require executives to participate in strategic alignment sessions where these topics can be discussed, agreed upon and documented.

“Conducting this discovery and alignment work is critical. It is the means by which you land on a clearly defined and documented go-to-market strategy and story.”



3. Definitive product, service and solution map

A critical element of your story is what you do. This part of the story requires a holistic audit and understanding of the products, services and solutions your company actually offers customers. You'll need to define and document these offerings. The key to success is to clearly organize, categorize and name the offerings you are bringing to market. They need to be prioritized based on market opportunity, customer demand and competitive differentiation. Once you have a clear picture of your offerings, you will be able to define the role they will play in your story.

4. Customer persona profiles

With a better understanding of the vision, mission and go-to-market strategy in hand, you need to do a reality check on your customer. Using historical revenue and profitability analysis, you will need to segment your customer base into high, medium and low performing customer segments. You can segment customers based on the financial metrics that are most meaningful to your executive team. This data may include lifetime value, deal or contract size, profitability / margin data, etc. Once you understand the numeric makeup of high-value customers, you will want to then get a clearer picture of how their minds work and what makes them tick. This will require Voice of the Customer research to understand their pain points, needs, desires and what they truly value. In the end, you will need to define and document detailed personas that represent each individual involved in the buying process. The customer segmentation

work, combined with detailed personas, will ensure the company's strategy is aligned with the high-value customers you are targeting, allowing you to formulate a story that will resonate with this specific audience.

5. Competitive assessment

Now that you have a clear picture of what you stand for, what you offer and the customers your company is uniquely positioned to serve, it's time to compare that with the competition. More specifically, you need to understand how your competitors are going to market, where they are placing their bets, the customers they are going after and the story they are telling in the market. This is not a feature / functionality competitive analysis. This is a go-to-market strategy, messaging and positioning competitive assessment. You need to understand how your strategy and story will be seen as different and better than the competition.

Conducting this discovery and alignment work is critical. It is the means by which you land on a clearly defined and documented go-to-market strategy. It provides every stakeholder with a roadmap that can be used to guide decisions, words and actions. It will also be used to help shape and crystallize your story and the ultimate purpose of your organization.

“A clearly defined and documented strategy and story will dramatically improve organizational performance and your customer experience.”



A story anchored in purpose.

We've explained how important a Vision, Mission and Values System is to your go-to-market strategy and story. Now we need to address an aspect of business that is growing in importance to employees and customers alike and that is — your purpose. Many industry experts agree that we are moving from a not-for-profit and for-profit divided world to a not-for-purpose and for-purpose business environment. What this means is that your employees and customers will bucket you in one of these categories based on your strategy and story.

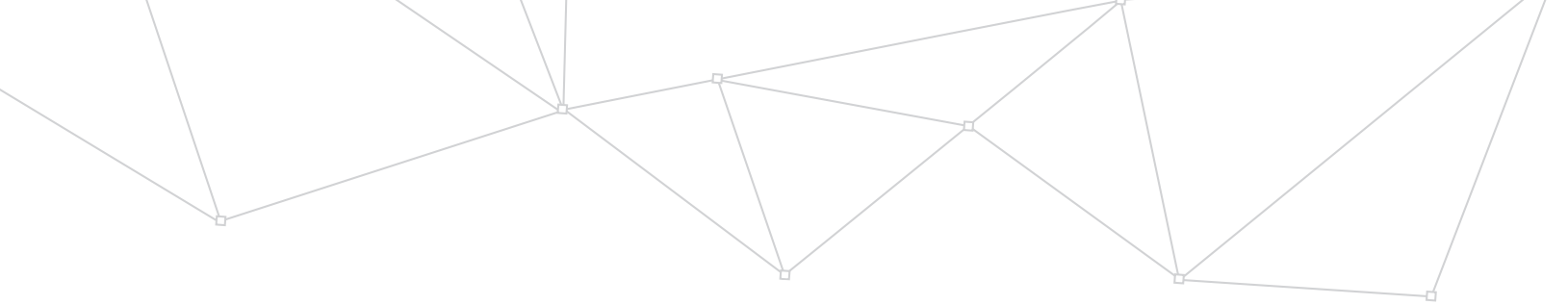
Material changes in the makeup of the world's population are driving this new way of thinking. Gen-X, Millennial and Gen-Edge consumers are changing the game, both in corporate culture and the buying process. As employees, Millennials, in particular, want to work for more than just a paycheck. They want to contribute to something significant. They want to know that what they are doing is actually making a difference in the world. More and more, customers also want to understand what you stand for and why your company exists. What this means is the buying criteria for customers and the buy-in criteria for employees has fundamentally changed. This has business leaders searching for better ways to define and communicate the meaning behind what they do and the value they deliver in the market.

“If vision is what you aspire to achieve ... purpose describes the positive outcome / impact your company has in the world.”

More than ever, your strategy and your story must support a higher purpose. Your strategy must be about more than making money, and your story must go beyond selling something and emotionally connect with what your target audience truly values. In addition to meeting the demands of today's buyer and employee, a clearly defined and communicated purpose produces significant business results. As McKinsey & Company recently stated in a report, “Achieving real alignment, where strategy, goals, and meaningful purpose reinforce one another, gives an organization a major advantage because it has a clearer sense of what to do at any given time, and it can trust people to move in the right direction.”

Purpose sits on top of your vision, mission and values. It speaks to the highest-level outcome or impact your company has in the market. If vision is what you aspire to achieve, purpose describes the positive impact you wish to have on the world. Some companies call it their North Star.

To capture the essence of your company's purpose you will need to get your executive team in a room to discuss and debate this very topic. We recommend two, three-hour, professionally moderated workshops. During these sessions you will review your vision, mission and values. You will discuss the value you deliver to customers. You will even talk about how your company contributes to the betterment of customer lives, the communities you serve and the world at large. These discussions will exclude the fact that you provide people with jobs or that customers benefit from your products. Instead, the discussion should focus on the “why” — why your company got started in the first place. And, it should focus on the “how” — how it continues to meaningfully impact your many constituencies — which are the emotional drivers behind what you do as a business.



“Defining your purpose is crucial and it will play a significant role in your story and strategy.”

You'll also want to detail the causes, charities and philanthropic efforts that the leadership team, your customers and your employees care deeply about.

Defining your purpose is crucial and it will play a significant role in your story and strategy. It will also be brought to life throughout your customer experience. Don't hit the easy button. Dig deep. Discover why your company does what it does and ultimately how it positively impacts the lives of others. When you do, your employees, customers, and yes, your bottom-line, will thank you.

A story constructed with consistent building blocks.

With the discovery process behind you and strategic documentation in hand, you are now ready to start constructing your go-to-market story. Your go-to-market story will drive the words, decisions and actions of every stakeholder connected with your company and is where you will leverage your clearly defined and documented...

- > Purpose
- > Vision, mission and values
- > Go-to-market strategy
- > Products, services and solutions
- > Customer segmentation and persona insights
- > Competitive differentiation

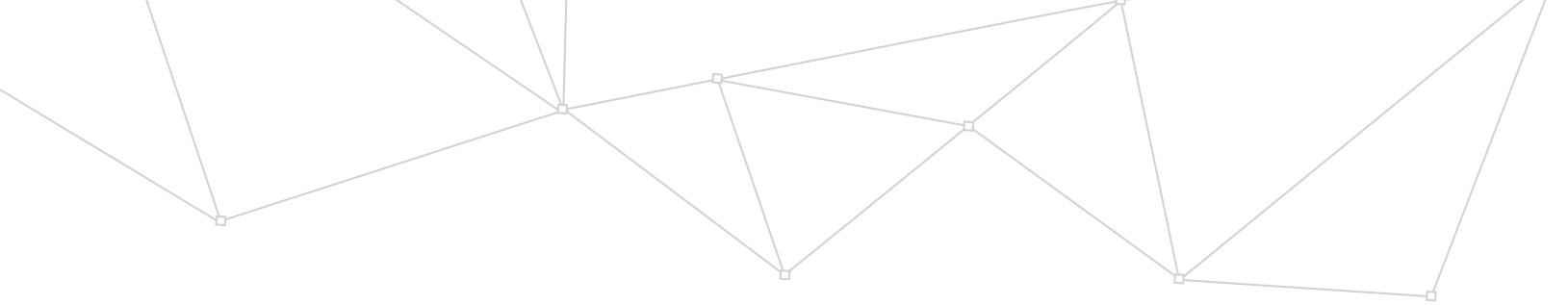
As we have already shared, the secret to developing a clear, compelling and consistent story is being disciplined and intentional. Your goal is to achieve complete alignment and connectivity between your strategy, story and ultimately your customer's experience. A recent article in the Journal of Business Strategy explains why this is so important: “Taking a focused and deliberate approach in crafting a corporate story will enable companies to align leaders, engage employees and create distinct competitive positioning.”

“Most companies wonder why their message isn't resonating or connecting with employees or customers. Well, more often than not, it's because the message is not being delivered consistently.”

You need to get the entire leadership team and eventually your entire employee population to understand one simple truth: words matter. The words you use play a critical role in the perception your company creates in the minds of your customers. In fact, a recent report from Insight Agents, a strategy consultancy, found that almost 50 percent of a brand's image is attributed to what it says and how it says it.



“Taking a focused and deliberate approach in crafting a corporate story will enable companies to align leaders, engage employees and create distinct competitive positioning.” — Journal of Business Strategy



Your story is the bedrock of your customer experience. What, when and how you communicate your story must be viewed as strategic. It must be delivered consistently at every level of the organization. Insight Agents described the impact of consistent messaging in the customer experience when they noted, "... clear and consistent messaging across all channels is vital in providing an authentic, believable and coherent customer experience."

"Almost 50% of a brand's image is attributed to what it says and how it says it."

— Insight Agents

The key word here is: consistency. Most companies wonder why their message isn't resonating or connecting with employees or customers. Well, more often than not, it's because the message is not being delivered consistently. As a result, the message never gets through.

Consistently delivering the corporate story is a significant problem for most organizations. With that being said, it also represents a huge opportunity for companies that use consistency of message as a competitive advantage. How big of a problem is consistency? Black Sun LLC, a strategic communications firm, recently completed a study that showed inconsistent messaging within corporate websites and annual reports in more than half (64 percent) of Financial Times Stock Exchange 100 companies. The study focused on basic building block messages like who the company is, what they do, the value they deliver and what makes them different.

Inconsistent messaging creates confusion — for both employees and customers. Lack of clarity and consistency damages the brand, reduces trust, and, in the end, negatively impacts your customer experience.

Delivering a consistent story isn't just problematic in print and digital communication. It is also a huge barrier in face-to-face conversations with customers. A recent report published by CEB shows 53 percent of sales executives say that consistent messaging in the sales process is a significant challenge.

We will say it again. Words matter. David Rich, head of marketing at Robert Dyas, reinforced this statement when he said, "The words a business uses in its branding play a pivotal role in creating context around each touchpoint, the cornerstone to customers developing trust." Rich went on to say, "Words — nuances in phrases — are absolutely paramount ... if you don't have consistency in your wording, you will never have a coherent platform for communication."

"53% of sales executives say that consistent messaging in the sales process is a significant challenge."

— CEB

Consistency is achieved through a Messaging Architecture.

Consistency is king when it comes to communicating your strategy and your story throughout the customer experience. But how do you decide the right words to use? We recommend building a Messaging Architecture. This architecture consists of the building blocks that consistently frame the organization's story in the mind of its target audience.

These building blocks include:

Who we are: A simply told statement of carefully selected, intentional words that describe the type of company and the market segment in which it plays.

Our positioning statement: A single sentence that captures the unique brand position the company wants to own in the minds of its customers.

What we do: Specific words that define, organize and describe the core products, services and solutions the company offers.

Value we deliver: No more than three words that capture the value the company delivers, connecting the dots with customer pain points, needs and aspirations.

What makes us different: No more than three words used to define own-able and defensible attributes that differentiate the company from competitors.

These elements, intentionally defined and documented, establish the building blocks of a corporate story. They are the statements and words every employee within the company must use to frame clear, compelling and consistent messaging across all communication channels. The Messaging Architecture also serves as the foundation from which a comprehensive Messaging and Storytelling Platform can be constructed to drive consistent communication throughout the customer experience.



A story that is complete and compartmentalized.

Many CMOs and executives think if they have a brand promise, positioning statement and value proposition, the story is complete. It's not. These basic messaging elements will only go so far when stakeholders need to build corporate presentations, sales tools, call center scripts, website content and other vital communication vehicles that play a role in the customer experience. These stakeholders need more. They need a single, comprehensive resource that contains the entire company story — a document that contains compartmentalized messaging content and storytelling tools that can be used in customer-facing communication situations.

“Many CMOs and executives think if they have a brand promise, positioning statement and value proposition ... the story is complete. It's not.”

This is what a Messaging Platform is and why it's such a mandatory piece of the storytelling puzzle. A Messaging Platform gives the Messaging Architecture life by capturing the most relevant details, proof points, and emotional layers of your story, weaving them into one powerful narrative whole. The Messaging Platform provides stakeholders involved in the customer experience (sales, PR, customer service, digital teams and others)

with repurposable messaging content — consistent source material they can use for every communication and conversation need. That is the fundamental purpose of a Messaging Platform: to serve as a trusted go-to source of “on message” content that can be used across all channels, communication vehicles and conversations. Having a platform in place dramatically increases communication efficiency and consistency and stops the “reinvent the wheel” process every time a stakeholder needs to produce customer-facing communications.

“A Messaging Platform gives the Messaging Architecture life by capturing the most relevant details, proof points, and emotional layers of your story, weaving them into one powerful narrative whole.”

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The power of a complete Messaging Platform.

The Messaging Platform arms stakeholders with the content they need to stay “on message” in critical business situations. It goes beyond a simple, single-page messaging document for the marketing department and instead includes a broad range of actionable messaging content and tools for executives, sales, customer service, HR and every other team within your organization.

Below are just a few of the standard elements a Messaging Platform should include:

Target audience profile: Insightful and actionable information that enables every stakeholder to more deeply understand the company's target audience(s) and customer(s).

Messaging inventory: A comprehensive inventory of the core elements that make up the story so stakeholders can quickly identify the most meaningful and relevant parts for their specific situation.

Short- and long-form messaging decks: 75-word, 250-word and 500-word versions of your story. Provides stakeholders with consistent corporate messaging content based on the desired degree of detail. This is the source content that can be used to jump-start consistent content in marketing materials, presentations, thought leadership content, sales enablement tools, website content and more.

Audience- and industry-specific value propositions: Specific value proposition messages tailored to the individual roles involved in the buying process.

Corporate elevator pitch: Concise and conversational messaging that tells your story in less than a minute. Enables all team members to readily and naturally convey your core message in a consistent manner.

Storytelling conversation starters: Brief, bullet point customer success stories that infuse the corporate messaging (what you do, core value messages, key points of difference, etc.) into the storyline.

Corporate boilerplate: Brief, standardized copy to describe your organization and story. Provides consistent messaging for use in press releases, catalogs, directories, event listings, etc.

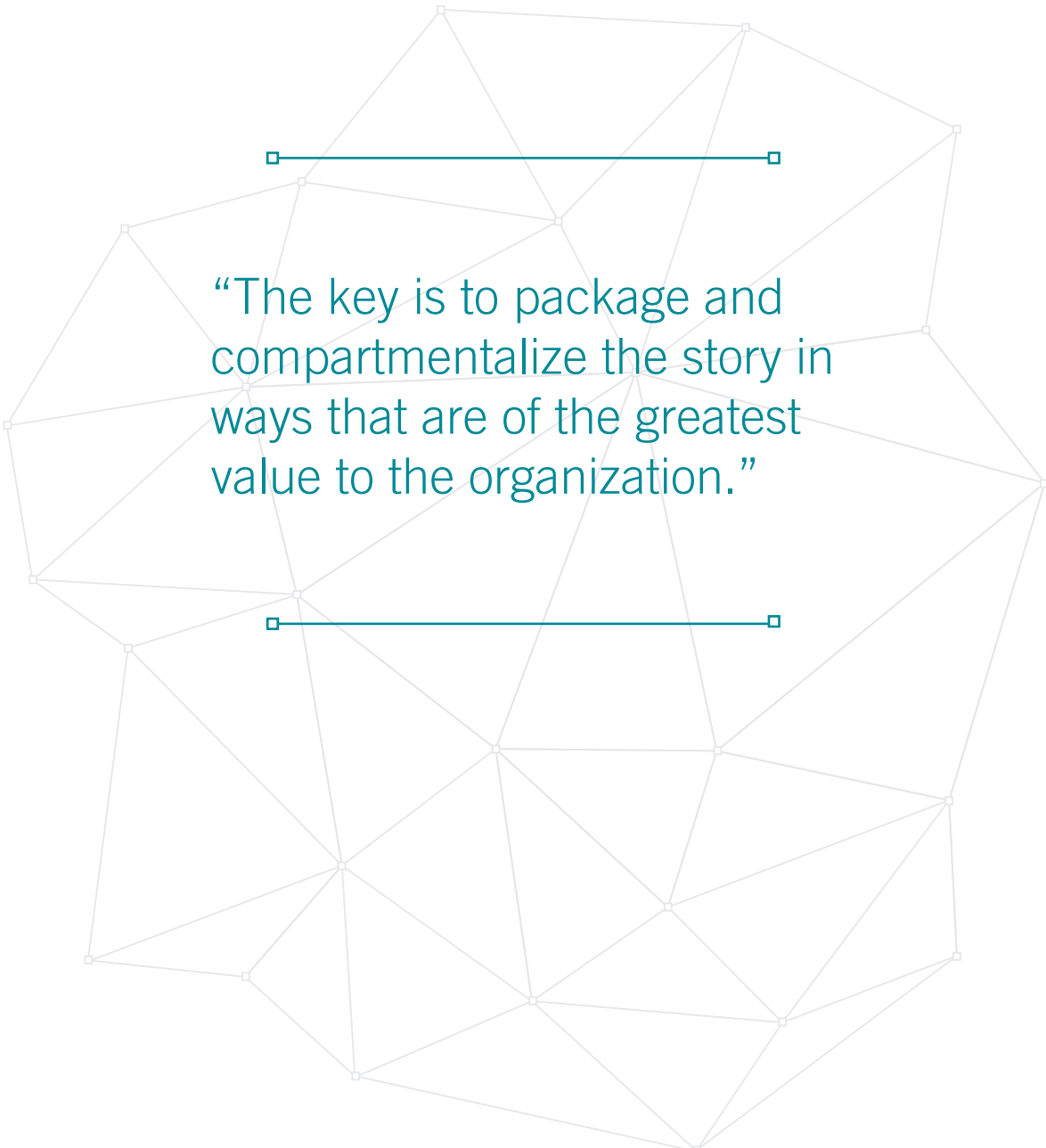
Visual representation of your solution: Diagram that illustrates the functionality and benefits of your solution offering. This serves as the primary storytelling image to quickly and clearly communicate what you do, what makes you different and the value you deliver.

Sales / customer service scripts: Consistent messages that should be infused into situational sales conversations and customer service phone calls.

Social media profile messaging: Consistent messaging to be used on all social media sites to describe who you are, what you do and the value you deliver.

Frequently asked questions and “on message” answers: A list of common questions from prospects and customers along with specific answers infused with messaging in the platform. Ensures every employee delivers consistent messages in response to a wide range of customer-facing questions.

These are just a few of the elements that should be part of your Messaging Platform. The key is to package and compartmentalize the story in ways that are of the greatest value to the organization. The content should be tailored to reduce the lift required for stakeholders tasked with producing customer-facing communications.



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A story stakeholders internalize and activate.

This is where the rubber meets the road. It's time to get individuals behind your strategy and story. It's time to bring it to life. A recent article in Forbes, "Strategy 101: It's All About Alignment," explains why: "Assuming you have created a sound strategy based on the union of customer desires and company output, you now face the challenge of inserting employees into the mix — in a way that aligns their daily decisions and actions with the strategic direction of the company. Success rates drop by around 50 percentage points in this phase."

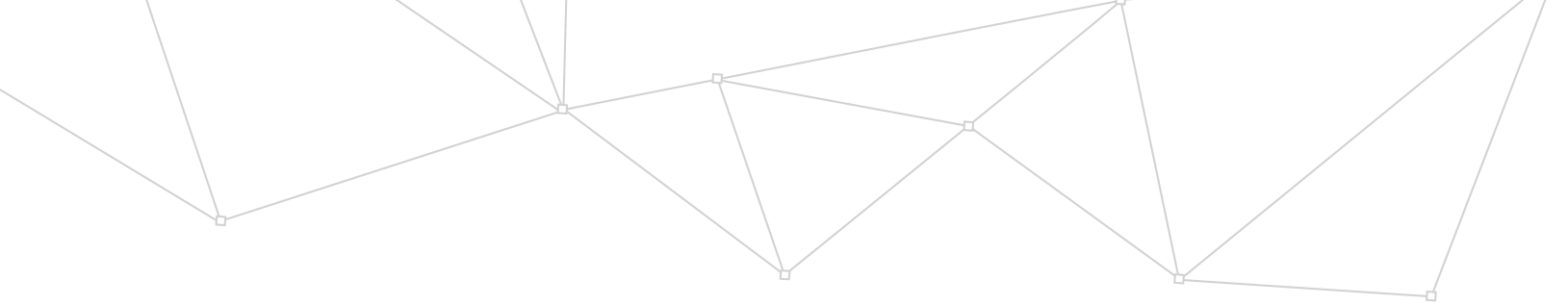
Success rates drop because this effort requires unwavering commitment and persistence. Getting employees and partners engaged is difficult. To do it right, the entire leadership team must get behind the initiative and drive organizational change over time. Again, the key to success is consistency. Leaders, managers and ultimately every employee must ensure the strategy and story are delivered in a consistent manner inside and outside of the organization. Harvard Business Review explained the importance of delivering a consistent message to employees in, "Selling the Brand Inside." The article stated, "Employees need to hear the same messages that you send out to the marketplace. At most companies, however, internal and external communications are often mismatched. This can be very confusing, and it threatens employees' perceptions of the company's integrity: They are told one thing by management but observe that a different message is being sent to the public."

An example of this misstep occurred recently when a health insurance company advertised that the welfare of patients was the company's number one priority, while employees were told that their main goal was to increase the value of their stock options through cost reductions. Needless to say, the strategy and story backfired.

"Leaders, managers and every employee must ensure the story is delivered in a consistent manner inside and outside of the organization."

To illustrate the importance of unwavering commitment, we share this experience of a major financial services institution. Leaders in the firm told customers that it was shifting from being a financial retailer to a financial adviser, but a year later, research showed the customer experience with the company had not changed. It turned out leaders across the company did not support the change internally, so employees were still churning out transactions and hadn't changed their story or behavior to match their new adviser role.

For employees to embrace and activate your strategy and story — leaders must drive mindset, behavior and cultural change throughout the employee population. To make this happen, CMOs must lead the charge. They must devise a strategy that is backed by the entire executive team and execute consistently throughout the company.



To drive lasting change that will improve the customer experience, we recommend the following initiatives:

Formal messaging training

Companies spend thousands, if not millions of dollars, training their general employee population, sales teams and customer service representatives just on how to do their job. Yet, the fundamental requirement of every employee is to be able to articulate a clear, compelling corporate story. Every employee should be able to share with conviction who your company is, what it does, the value it delivers to customers and ultimately why someone should do business with your organization. Why is it then, that very few companies train their employees on how to tell the corporate story? Don't make this mistake. Develop formal educational courses that enable employees to internalize, personalize and activate the corporate story in their daily work activities. Make it part of your employee orientation and onboarding process. This investment will pay off in bottom-line business results. In fact, a recent article published in Harvard Business Review stated, "We've found that when people care about and believe in the brand, they're motivated to work harder and their loyalty to the company increases." Formal education and knowledge transfer can be accomplished through a combination of classroom training as well as on-demand or virtual classes offered online or through your Learning Management System. This is not a one-time effort. It should be part of the overall learning and development process for every employee.

Educational tools and content

Formal training is a start, but you need to make the corporate Messaging Platform and Storytelling content

easily accessible. For this to happen, you need to develop educational tools that can be leveraged by employees in their daily work activities. Tools that help them structure and deliver customer conversations; quickly produce consistent content; build presentations; and develop customer-facing communication vehicles. Employees need to be able to quickly and easily activate the story as they work. This is not easy. Maybe that's why a recent article in Forbes noted, "At the end of the day, this step is just hard because the magnitude of change and innovation required to bridge the knowing / doing gap is so enormous." You have to not only develop relevant messaging education and activation tools; you also need to train stakeholders how they can be used in customer-facing situations. Things like department or role-specific quick reference guides, handbooks and online messaging content can dramatically increase employee productivity as well as corporate messaging adoption and activation across the organization.

"Every employee should be able to share with conviction who your company is, what the company does, the value it delivers to customers and ultimately why someone should do business with your organization."



Internal communication and engagement

Employees need to be immersed in your strategy and story for it to stick. A sustained, 18-24 month, internal communications initiative should be launched and executed. This is where you blend cognitive learning (formal training and education) with emotional engagement to infuse the corporate story into your culture and into your employees' DNA. This is where you engage employees in such a way that they instinctively align the strategy, story and actions required to deliver a differentiated customer experience. Colin Mitchell, worldwide head of planning at Ogilvy & Mather, once said, "By weaving the corporate messages into employees' everyday experiences, managers can ensure that on-brand behavior becomes instinctive."

"Blend cognitive learning (formal training and education) with emotional engagement to infuse the corporate story into your culture and employees' DNA."


This is also how you really cultivate lasting change and a differentiated culture — a culture that unites the organization behind the strategy and story. When this takes root, magic happens in the customer experience. However, much like the formal training process we just discussed, this critical element is often overlooked and underused. Maybe that's why Harvard Business Review

recently said, "Employees are unified and inspired by a common sense of purpose and identity. Unfortunately, in most companies, internal marketing is done poorly, if at all."

"You want the strategy and story to be activated 'instinctively' by employees as they connect and communicate with customers and one another."

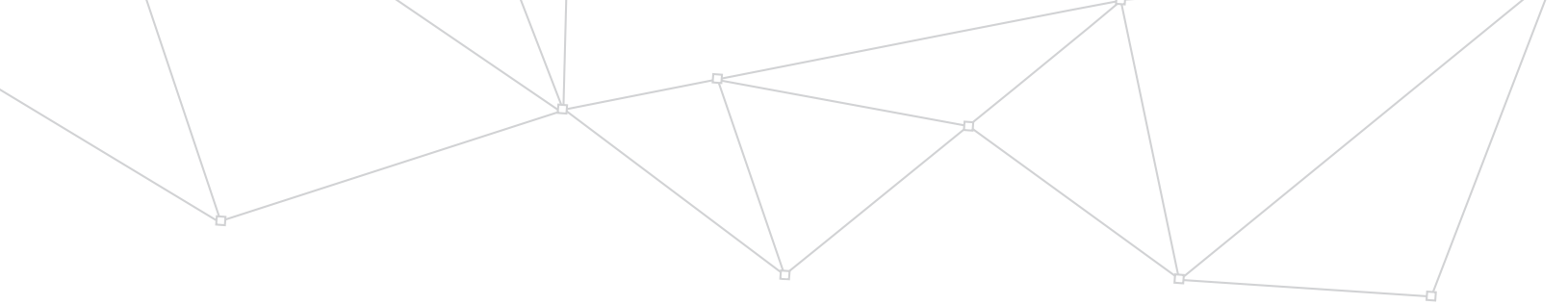
For your internal communication strategy to be effective it must be designed much like a market-facing initiative. Your target audience must be clearly defined and segmented. Engagement and activation goals must be set. And you need to design a multi-channel, sustained communications strategy. Again, your goal is to infuse your corporate strategy and story into the DNA of your employee population. You want the strategy and story to be activated instinctively by employees as they connect and communicate with customers and one another.

The key to success is consistency. Your goal is to infuse your corporate strategy and story into the DNA of your employee population.



“Companies that deliver
a consistent message
throughout the customer
journey increase revenue
10–15 percent and reduce
costs 15–20 percent.”

— Harvard Business Review



A story that stays connected throughout the customer experience.

Congratulations. If you have followed this disciplined and intentional process, you now have a clearly documented strategy and story. You also have an educated and engaged employee population that consists of compelling corporate storytellers. But you are not finished. Now you need to connect the dots. You need to deconstruct and reconstruct your internal and external communications processes. In some cases, you will need to redefine or create new roles. Why? Because you need to design and implement an enterprise-wide communications model that is optimized to deliver a clear, compelling and consistent story throughout your customer's journey.

This starts by conducting a comprehensive messaging development and delivery audit inside and outside of your organization. You will need to understand and paint a picture of how your story is currently developed and delivered — where it's told, by whom, and what messaging is being utilized. With a clear and complete understanding of how your corporate story is currently being communicated through various stakeholders and methods, you can compare your current state with your desired state.

To do this, you need to understand the touchpoints and moments in the customer journey that matter. This means you need to develop an accurate customer journey map. You will also need to ensure that each touchpoint is optimized to deliver the message, the memorable moment and the desired outcome that will ultimately exceed customer expectations.

To optimize these interactions, you will need to have a deep understanding of the functional areas of the business, along with the specific roles, technologies, communication channels and messages being delivered across critical touchpoints.

With an accurate picture of your current messaging development and delivery model, and an understanding of your customer's actual journey, you can pinpoint areas where corporate messaging delivery can be improved.

A story that delivers top- and bottom-line results.

As you can see, developing and delivering a story that strengthens the customer experience is challenging work. It requires persistence and dedication at every level of the organization. You might ask, "Is it worth it?" According to Harvard Business Review (HBR), it is. HBR has noted that companies that deliver a consistent message throughout the customer journey increase revenue 10–15 percent and reduce costs 15–20 percent. However, delivering a clear, compelling and consistent message throughout the customer experience won't happen by chance. You have to be disciplined and intentional in your approach.

Companies that make strategy, story alignment and activation a priority and who infuse it into the fabric of their organization will reap significant rewards. In fact, Bain & Company states, "Great customer experiences produce great business results. Look at companies such as Apple, Costco, American Express, Philips and Allianz. Different industries, different business models. But they have one thing in common — large and growing groups of passionate customer advocates, earned by delivering an experience competitors can't match."



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— Bain & Company



About OnMessage

OnMessage is a messaging infusion company with a proven model for helping you develop a clear, compelling and consistent corporate message. Our methodology aligns your company's strengths and true points of difference with customer needs to create a messaging platform that elicits optimal engagement throughout the customer experience. This methodology, when combined with our organizational change, sales enablement, content development and brand integration services, enables you to achieve a higher return on every connection you make.

We do this through five highly integrated service offerings that enable you to:





- > Develop and deliver a clear, compelling and consistent corporate message
- > Train employees so they can bring your corporate message to life
- > Provide sales with engaging messages, stories and tools
- > Extend and amplify your story with compelling content
- > Integrate your corporate message with captivating brand creative

By partnering with us and infusing consistent messaging in all five of these areas, you can create a differentiated customer experience that will accelerate business growth.

For more information

For more valuable and informative resources that can help you improve your customer's experience, go to: itsonmessage.com/resource

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James O'Gara

President and Founder

James O'Gara is the president and founder of OnMessage — a messaging infusion company. Under his leadership, OnMessage has developed a proven model for helping companies develop a clear, compelling and consistent message. With almost 25 years' experience working in business and marketing leadership positions, O'Gara is known and respected for building collaborative relationships with executive teams that result in highly effective go-to-market, messaging / positioning and demand generation strategies.