**Messaging Made Easy** by Beth Nagengast

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To develop great messaging for your company, product or service offering, all you need to do is answer four questions in the most compelling way possible.

1. Why does your product or service exist?
2. What is it?
3. What does it do?
4. How does it do it?

However, there are a few pre-requisites before you get started. This approach assumes that you not only know all there is to know about your product, you also know your market and industry trends, you know your competition, and you know the different personas involved in the buying process.

So if you’ve got that covered, let’s take a look at developing the most-compelling messaging possible for your offering.

#1: Why does your product or service exist in the first place?

The answer to this question includes what’s going in the market, trends that you’re seeing. What are the pain points that your offering addresses? Here, you paint the picture for what the problem is that you’re solving.

To craft your answer to this question, start out by setting up the problem and the things that are wrong, difficult, unpleasant, frustrating, annoying, outdated, or inefficient. If you have some statistics about the proliferation of the problem, this is a good place to use them. And then you can end with…and that’s why we created (insert your product’s name).

#2: What is it?

The answer to the next question, “What is it?” is comprised of two elements:

The Differentiator + The Category

Play around with some different combinations of differentiators and category here:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Differentiators + | Categories |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Here are some helpful differentiators to choose from:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The #1  The #1-selling  The best  The best-selling  The best value in  The easiest to use  The editors’ choice  The fastest  The favorite  The fan favorite | The first-ever  The largest  The leading  The most-advanced  The most-awarded  The most-innovative  The most-complete  The most-powerful  The most-preferred  The most-recommended | The most-trusted  The newest  The only  The proven  The strongest  The top-downloaded  The top-selling  The top-rated  The ultimate |

Optionally, add these as a prefix to your differentiator to further refine or expand your claim:

* The world’s
* The Earth’s
* The nation’s
* The country’s
* The region’s
* The industry’s

When you think about your category, it’s the category of products or services in which you’re competing.

If, after your research, you find that your differentiator doesn’t translate into a broad category, hone in on your category some more. For example, if you can’t say your product is the # 1-selling X in the world, what about the #1-selling X in your country or with #1-selling with a specific demographic or with a certain type of customer?

#3: What does it do?

The answer to this question is the key overarching benefit that your offering provides. What is the MOST IMPORTANT thing that is does or helps the customer do. Most products and services do a lot of things, but think hard about the most important thing that yours does — all the bells and whistles can be listed in the next section.

Here are some helpful verbs that you might like to try out for the first word in your “What does it do?” statement.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Adds  Assigns  Automates  Catalogs  Coordinates  Comes with  Consolidates  Converts  Creates  Delivers  Displays  Eliminates | Finds  Generates  Gives  Helps  Identifies  Includes  Imports  Keeps  Knows  Manages  Organizes  Plans | Puts  Prints  Records  Reports  Schedules  Searches  Secures  Shows  Showcases  Stores  Streamlines  Tracks  Transforms |

#4: How does it do it?

The answer you provide to this question is where you can list all the wonderful features that your product possesses in order to provide the overarching benefit that you’re claiming in #3 above.

Let’s use a Stamp Collection app as an example to demonstrate what your “How does it do it?” answer might look. Be sure to start each bullet with an active verb.

* Stores unlimited details about each stamp.
* Displays a picture of each stamp.
* Tracks purchase price and other purchase details.
* Prints inventory lists and labels with barcodes.
* Makes it easy to share your collection on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest.
* Imports data from Excel, Numbers and a variety of other formats.

Remember to use active verbs that end in “s” and AVOID the phrase “allows you to” whenever possible. For example, instead of saying “XYZ product *allows you to* manage information”, say “XYZ *manages* information”.

Now put it all together!

The last part of this exercise is to put all the parts together to build the base of your messaging statement.

Start with your Why paragraph from #1 and then add the answers from questions #2, #3 and #4 that you created above.

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Organizing your stamp collection can be a very cumbersome task involving large binders and hundreds of plastic inserts to hold stamps, making locating specific stamps time consuming and very frustrating. That’s why we invented Stamp Collector Pro.

Stamp Collector Pro is the world’s most-complete stamp collection organization system. It organizes all the details of your stamp collection in one place.

It does all this and more:

* Stores unlimited details about each stamp.
* Displays a picture of each stamp.
* Tracks purchase price and other purchase details.
* Prints inventory lists and labels with barcodes.
* Makes it easy to share your collection on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest.
* Imports data from Excel, Numbers and a variety of other formats.

To complement your core messaging, keep in mind that it’s always important to have proof points, such as customer quotes, app store ratings, media mentions, awards or notable statistics.  For example, in our stamp collection app, you can add on the following just before your call to action, “It has more than 1000 5-star ratings on the App Store, and it was awarded Editors’ Choice 3 years in a row.”

It’s one thing to say how great your product is, but having others say how great it is makes the entire story even that much more compelling.

Remember that this is just the base for you and your teams to pull from since different marketing assets and verticals have different word count requirements and audiences, but it should help you produce consistent and compelling messaging for your company, product or service.

If you would like advice on your messaging or just need to a bit of help to get started, please send an email to [beth@aventigroup.com](mailto:beth@aventigroup.com). We would love to help you create great messaging that will propel your product to greater success!