

Getting To The Essence Of The Problem®

By Kathy Ellis, The Business Lab Marketing Coach

Knowing what your clients' and prospects' problems are, knowing how to solve these problems, and then knowing how to tell them you can solve these problems is what marketing is all about. A great way to reenergize your marketing effort is to focus intently on the problems you are re solving, then check to be sure your marketing message is saying this loud and clear. In this month's article we will share a way to get to the essence of your client's/prospect's problems and then offer your solution.

Ideal Client/Prospect: With your team, clearly define who your ideal client and prospect is. Every client or prospect has many problems that you may be able to solve, however, by focusing your attention on your ideal clients and prospects (you know, those clients/prospects that are profitable and a true joy to do business with) you will begin to attract more and more of these types of clients because you will be speaking directly to them.

Tip from The Business Lab: Start by modeling real life examples and by identifying the following: industry, geographic location, job title, male/female, personal and professional interests — organizations, magazines/books, car, clothing, etc, how will you instantly recognize this person, etc.

Example:

"My ideal prospect is the HR Director of a large US retail company. She is in her mid-to-late forties; she drives a newer model Volvo and is the past president of the Human Resources Management Association. You'll recognize her immediately because she consistently wears her HRMA pin, is well dressed and is always asking how you found your latest new hire."

Identify Your Key Features & Benefits: Divide a large piece of paper or white board into two columns. On the left write down all the key features your product or service has to offer. On the right, write down all the benefits these features provide.

(Features are the facts, nuts and bolts of your product/service and benefits are how those facts actually help solve a problem.)

Example:

Feature = on-line access to our pre-employment screening data
Benefit = immediate response time

Next, with your team, identify those benefits that are the most significant for your ideal prospect. List these on a separate sheet of paper.

Tip from The Business Lab: Step into the shoes of your ideal prospect when identifying the benefits which are important to her. Re-read your ideal client profile and really try to see the benefit from her perspective.

Refine By Asking Why: For each of the key benefits you have defined, keep asking, "why is this important to my client/prospect?" Keep asking this question until you are sure you have a clear understanding of exactly why a particular

benefit is important to your client/prospect.

Example:

Benefit = immediate response time

Why is this important? = she needs answers fast

Why is this important? = so she can screen candidates quickly and move forward in the hiring process

Why is this important? = they are a large retailer and are growing quickly and have a lot of turn over and need to hire the best of the best when they are available

By continuing to ask why, you are really getting to the essence of your client's/prospect's problem/need. In the above example, our client needs to be able to hire the best (i.e., candidate passes the pre-employment screening process) and she needs to know they are the best quickly so she can hire them immediately.

Weave Back Into Your Ideal Prospect Profile: With your team, go through your refined benefit list and decide on the ultimate benefit for your ideal client/prospect. Take this benefit and weave it back into the description of your ideal prospect.

Example:

" You'll recognize her immediately because she consistently wears her HRMA pin, is well dressed and is always asking how you found your latest new hire. *She'll be happy to learn about me and my company because I can show her how to hire the perfect employee NOW.*"

Tip from The Business Lab: Writing and refining benefit statements is also an excellent exercise to go through when you need to write a sales letter or ad copy. By refining your benefit down the true "magic" of what you can provide, you will have created a very powerful headline and a great place to start writing from.

Example:

"Now you can hire the perfect employee!"

Tip from The Business Lab: These refined benefit statements can also be used throughout your marketing messages to help connect your solutions to the real needs of your clients and prospects.

More Information? If you would like to learn more about this important topic or would like to receive our FREE Service Ideas Booklet, please send an E-mail to kathy@thebusinesslab.com, visit our Web site at www.thebusinesslab.com, or fax a note on your letterhead to 281-374-0569.

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