

Arm Your Sales Force to Win with Value Propositions that Shine

Is your sales force clearly articulating the benefits and results of using your products or services? Are you giving prospects a compelling reason to buy from your company? If not, read on to find out how to write effective value propositions.

If you send your sales reps out the door without strong value propositions in hand, you are undermining their efforts. Value propositions are the foundation of all communications about a company's offering.

What is the Purpose of a Value Proposition?

Think of value propositions as “elevator pitches” – concise, compelling statements that convey the essence of a product or service, most notably, how your offering addresses a business pain or need. Ultimately, you need to explain how you improve a situation for the customer – and the more personal you can make the value, the better.

Effective value propositions answer the following questions:

- What are the buyer's problems and issues?
- How does our solution/service address those issues and concerns?
- Have we clearly explained how the buyer benefits from the solution, specifically, how it impacts his or her particular area of responsibility?

Understand Your Buyer

Answering these questions requires some up-front work to identify and analyze the buyer in your target market. You need to understand what drives these people to ultimately choose a particular solution. At a minimum, you need to comprehend the following. And the more specific you can be, the better!

- **Title:** What is the target person's area of responsibility within the company?

A value proposition concisely explains how you can help your target buyer solve his or her problem

- **Role:** What part does he or she play in making a decision about purchasing a solution? Is that person the decision maker, the one who approves or influences a purchase, or the one who signs the purchase order?
- **Benefits sought:** What benefits does the person expect to see by resolving his or her business issues?

Follow the Formula for Success

With a clear understanding of these points, you can craft value propositions using the following formula. Remember, you might need to develop multiple messages for each buyer. And you certainly need value propositions for each relevant role within an organization.

First Sentence (describes value)

- For (target customer by industry and title)
- who (statement of the need or opportunity),
- the (product/service name) is a (product/service category)
- that (statement of benefit).

Second Sentence (positions value)

- Unlike (primary competitive alternative),
- our offering (statement of primary differentiation).

Craft your positioning statements to be concise and memorable yet comprehensive enough to convey the benefits and unique value. And if at all possible, embed customer results into these statements to really drive home the value.

The following is a fictitious value proposition that follows this formula:

“For COOs in the professional services industry who need to reduce overhead costs quickly, CubesAtHome is an office solution that enables employees to work from home immediately. Unlike leased office space, our offering helps organizations cut facility-related expenses by up to 85%.”

Go Beyond the Obvious – But Don't Overreach

To craft the most compelling value propositions, you need to consider all aspects of your offering, as well as how you compare to the

One size does not fit all when it comes to value propositions – the more you can tailor them, the better

competition. While you want to set yourself apart, you need to be realistic in what you promise. As you survey your options, keep in mind the following:

Spend the time to figure out where your organization can offer the most value

- Consider whether or not your strongest value proposition is tied to something beyond your product or service, such as the responsiveness of your organization
- Highlight the way(s) in which your offering is superior to alternatives
- Don't promise what you can't deliver

By following this time-tested formula to create compelling value propositions, you'll be arming your sales force to win.

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