

MESSAGE SCORECARD

RATE YOURSELF

Take a few minutes to assess the effectiveness of your organization's current messages. Print out this scorecard and rate yourself from 1 to 5 on each question as follows, then subtotal each section. Compare subtotals to identify areas for improvement. Add all scores to evaluate total effectiveness.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; and 5 = Always

MESSAGE COMPONENTS



Audience Insight

Take a closer look at the audience vital to your success. Be clear about who you're targeting, what matters most to them, and what you want to achieve with this audience as a result of your message.

Relevance – I know what keeps my target awake at night; our messages address those issues.	1	2	3	4	5
Audience Values – Our messages appeal to my target's personal value system.	1	2	3	4	5
Barrier Identification – I have identified at least three barriers I must overcome for my target to be receptive to our messages.	1	2	3	4	5
Motivation – I know what will motivate my target to be open to our messages.	1	2	3	4	5
Appeals – Our messages appeal to both rational and emotional issues.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Subtotal (25 points possible)</i>					



Differentiation

Consider your brand to be True North. Brand-driven messages create consistent impressions about your differentiation. Explore leverage of brand attributes to differentiate products and services.

Competition – I know what differentiates my organization from competing interests.	1	2	3	4	5
Brand Attributes – I have defined three to six attributes that consistently represent our differentiation.	1	2	3	4	5
Impact – Our messages create a distinct impression.	1	2	3	4	5
Problem-solving – Our messages help my target solve an immediate problem.	1	2	3	4	5
Value Proposition – Our messages always support our value proposition (brand positioning).	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Subtotal (25 points possible)</i>					



Evidence

Carry a varied supply of proof points to keep your messages credible. Be ready to support your messages with anecdotes, facts and statistics that are relevant to audience needs and interests.

Inquiry – My target audience asks me to elaborate upon our messages.	1	2	3	4	5
Proof Points – I have several examples of evidence to validate our differentiation.	1	2	3	4	5
Visualization – My target can visualize the benefits of that differentiation.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Subtotal (15 points possible)</i>					



Message Execution

Messages are effective when they're compelling enough to be repeated easily by the target audience. Look for signals that your messages are pervasive through all your communications.

Pervasiveness – Our core messages are reflected consistently in all communications.	1	2	3	4	5
Acknowledgement – Our messages are repeated or paraphrased by others.	1	2	3	4	5
Outcome – My target is taking the action intended by the messages.	1	2	3	4	5
Language – Our messages are conversational, easy to recall.	1	2	3	4	5
Criteria – Our messages are clear, consistent and credible.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Subtotal (25 points possible)</i>					

TOTAL (90 points possible)





SCORING KEY

75 – 90 -- Wow!

Your score indicates you've identified what your target audience really needs and you know how to appeal to their interests in your communications. Your challenge is to keep your messages fresh and relevant by continually documenting new evidence – examples of your value in action.

46-74 -- Ho Hum ...

You have the right intentions but somehow your story isn't being told effectively. Compare the scores in each section and identify the weak spots. Perhaps you have great research on your advantage over competitors, but you still haven't pinpointed your target customer's critical needs. Maybe you've invested in a terrific branding campaign but still struggle with putting the brand into words that make a difference in all your communications programs. You have great potential to pull together messages that achieve your business objectives and demonstrate real value to your target audience.

Less than 45 -- Zzzzz

It's difficult to arouse the audience's interest if you've neglected their interests or failed to prove what makes you different from everyone else trying to get their attention. It's time to take a closer look at what you're saying both internally and externally and devise a plan to create compelling core messages – the foundation for successful communication.



Effective messages create impact through clarity, consistency and credibility.