

Your Highly Profitable Niche System

Target. Connect. Prosper.

Focus Guide Webinar 4 – Craft Your Resonant Core Message

Set intention to come away from Webinar 4 and the related exercises with:

- Insight about how to use what you learned in your informational interviews to create the centerpiece of your marketing.
- An easy formula to craft a Core Message – a single sentence that evokes engagement from your target audience.
- Your own Core Message!

One of most impactful forms of marketing is a tagline, slogan or jingle – a short verbal message that binds our memory to a brand and what it stands for. It's a catchy phrase or sentence that quickly conveys the essence of something in a way that emotionally connects with the target audience. Here are some of these messages that you're probably familiar with:

Taglines – short phrases that pair up with a brand name:

American Express... Don't leave home without it.

Nike... Just Do It.

Kentucky Fried Chicken... It's finger lickin' good!

Slogans – used in advertising campaigns:

American Dairy... Got milk?

Apple... Think different.



Jingles – slogans set to music to make them even more memorable:

Two all beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese...

My baloney has a first name...

I'd like to teach the world to sing...

Can you finish these jingles? What brand does each of them represent? These jingles are from the 1970s. Isn't it amazing how 40 years later they are still in your memory? That's successful marketing.

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Service providers, such as coaches and consultants, use a version of a short, memorable marketing message too. Sometimes called a benefit statement, it describes the specific outcomes desired by the target audience in an emotionally evocative way. In Conscious Marketing, this is called a **Core Message**.

What is a Core Message?

A Core Message is a single well-crafted sentence that describes specifically how people in your target audience will benefit from working with you. You'll use your Core Message as:

- The first marketing message in the header of your website.
- The first sentence you say to introduce yourself to prospects.
- The beginning of your “elevator” speech when you share what you do in a networking meeting.
- One of the first sentences within your “bio” for a presentation or in any kind of printed promotional material.

Your Core Message is the attention-getter. It is the centerpiece of your marketing. When you share an effective Core Message, people will understand *exactly* who you serve and why those people would want to hire you. Colleagues and friends who hear you say it will be likely to respond with “*Oh, I know someone who could really use your help!*” No more awkward moments of trying to convey why what you do has value.

Each of the streamlined sentences below was created by a service entrepreneur for their own target audience:

I help mompreneurs make more money doing work they love while taking care of priority #1: FAMILY.

I help authors get their books out of their head and into bookstores.

I help restaurant owners and managers keep the staff and patrons who keep them in business.

I help wealth advisors confidently build a lifetime of value with multi-generational clients.

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What Will a Core Message Do for You?

- Ease how you articulate your value for your target audience.
- “Weed out” non-ideal prospects.
- Spark interest with ideal prospects in seconds.
- Evoke the response “That’s me!” or “I want help with that!”
- Invite them to take a step with you.
- Open potential for an enrolling conversation.

What Will Your Core Message Do for Your Target audience?

- They feel that you “get” them and what they urgently want.
- They recognize you as a potential go-to resource for them.
- They begin to know, like and trust you (or move on).

Short marketing messages that are client-centric have a BIG IMPACT.

If you’ve ever snapped to attention when an entrepreneur introduced themselves with style, you know the power of a Core Message. You’ve also heard benefit statements that make your eyes glaze over with boredom or confusion.

You want *your* Core Message to be so clear that a 12 year-old can “get” it.

A CORE MESSAGE that attracts attention has these components:

- Based on what you learned from your target audience in informational interviews.
- A single sentence that starts with “I help”.
- Streamlined to 10 - 25 words max.
- Easy to say and read.
- Emotionally evocative.
- About a SPECIFIC and urgently desired tangible outcome.

An effective Core Message is NOT:

- About you.
- About what you do or your skills.
- A run-on sentence with many prepositional phrases.



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- A laundry list of how what you do can help your clients.
- The same as a tagline (which does not begin with “I”).
- About vague outcomes (balance, happiness, fulfillment).
- A catchall description about your market’s wants or needs.

Below are three pairs of Core Messages. Each pair shows two different versions of a Core Message used currently by an entrepreneur, using data they collected from informational interviews with their target audience. Which one of each set is better? Why?

I support entrepreneurial Occupational Therapists to get relief from the overwhelming changes happening in health care.

I help independent OTs navigate the changing health care market and build a steady stream of referrals.

I empower executive-level women to survive corporate life, earn a great living and feel good about it.

I help women executives thrive in the corporate world without selling their souls.

I assist business owners and their staffs by creating a strategic plan of action and team commitment towards continued growth and community awareness.

I help green business owners inspire their teams to take full ownership of the company vision and sustain high-profit growth.

How Will You Write Your Core Message?

... with a light heart! Writing your own Core Message is a creative and relational process, not an intellectual brainteaser. It’s about conveying a promise of transformation.

Out of all the data you have gathered from your target audience, you’ll only be using a couple of “sound bites” in your Core Message. But later on, you’ll draw on more of what you learned in your informational

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interviews for other aspects of your marketing, including your “elevator speech”, web copy and more. Your Core Message comes first. Everything other part of your marketing revolves around it because of its potential for a big impact.

Your Core Message is about grabbing the attention of your ideal prospects – just like taglines, slogans and jingles do.

On your website, in a networking meeting or on the phone, you have *mere seconds* to capture their interest. Make it short and powerful.

The formula you’ll use to create your Core Message now:

I help _____ (describe your target audience in the fewest possible words) _____ (dynamic verb)
_____ (describe a specific tangible outcome they know they want that implies a related challenge they’ll move beyond).

Aim for a Workable Draft

Focus in on the data you collected in your info interviews for points 3 - 7 in your Interview Gems. Then, wordsmith your Core Message until it feels and sounds right to you. **We’ll finesse these messages in the “Get it Done Together” call.**

Your goal now is to create a workable draft – a sentence that describes in evocative language the most urgent known outcome your target audience desires.

It may take a few tries to get a workable draft that’s streamlined, evocative and outcome based. Play with the language, trying different words and syntax to make the sentence more relevant and resonant to your target audience.

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To get your creative juices flowing, below are more examples of how to take a pretty-good Core Message and make it better. See if you can pinpoint what's changing for the better and how.

From this:

I am a confidential sounding board to help HR professionals master the maze of staff retention and development by redefining their survival mindset into more powerful mindsets.

To this:

I help HR professionals implement powerful mindsets and practices to expand their influence on company talent, development and retention.

From this:

I help females in high corporate positions who are also moms break free from the struggle of being pulled in all directions.

To this:

I help women executives with kids play by their own rules while showing up 100% at work and at home.

From this:

I help time strapped insurance agents make a difference by realizing the dream of gaining and keeping great clients and by tearing down negative perceptions.

To this:

I help time strapped insurance agents tear down negative perceptions to attract and keep more ideal clients.

Once it flows, test your Core Message on people in your market. If they respond by wanting to know more, it's good enough for now!

Caution: Testing this with people who are NOT in your target audience won't bring you useful feedback. Well meaning people who don't understand what you're doing may try to dissuade you from client-centric language and targeting.

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George's Core Message Success Story

Once there was a coach, we'll call him George, who wasn't consistently earning enough by selling his coaching services. But George was determined to have a financially successful coaching business. He believed in the power of coaching, and knew he could support others to live up to their full potential while also enjoying his chosen lifestyle.



Searching for a strategy that would help him earn more as a coach, he was referred to this course and quickly enrolled. George realized he hadn't done much marketing in the past. It was a missing piece.

Within two weeks George had committed to target solo business lawyers for his coaching business. (George had been a solo business lawyer himself for 10 years in a "past life", so this target audience was viable for him.)

The pinpointed focus gave him a sense of hope and momentum. Something surprising and wonderful was beginning to dawn on George – marketing can be fun, effective *and* aligned with my coaching values!

George jumped into his informational interviews. Within a week he'd contacted 4 past colleagues and made 8 more connections with lawyers he'd never known before. Then George went through the goldmine of information he'd collected, and compiled similar words and phrases into the Interview Gems document as a reference for all of his marketing.

We interrupt this story to look over George's shoulder at his Interview Gems. Here is what we see...

1. Similar or essential things they said they love or enjoy most:
 - *Enjoy working with enterprising entrepreneurs.*
 - *Love creativity and precise technical language of putting win/win deals together.*
 - *Enjoy solving problems; working with conflicting interests and helping business owners grow their companies.*

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2. Similar or essential things they said they are most proud of accomplishing so far:
 - *Built a successful practice through ups and downs.*
 - *Provide a good living for my family.*
 - *Skill to defuse / resolve conflicts that could have escalated.*

3. Similar or essential details of their visions:
 - *A small, stable group of mainstay clients.*
 - *Profitable ongoing work in my favorite areas of practice.*
 - *Enough new clients to keep it interesting.*

4. Similar or essential things they said about the benefits that would come to them if they could accomplish their visions:
 - *Time for the good things in life – fun, family, and personal development.*
 - *Peace of mind, not worrying about how I'm going to get my next good client.*
 - *Better annual income with less stress.*

5. Similar or essential things they said about the costs of not having their visions be their reality:
 - *Workload fluctuates, feast or famine.*
 - *Deadline stress, always feeling overloaded and behind.*
 - *Getting derailed from family commitments.*

6. Similar or essential things they said about their top goals and the strategies they are using to reach those goals:

Goals:

 - *Be recognized as a top lawyer in my field.*
 - *Achieve financial and lifestyle goals (kids' education, retirement security).*
 - *Get and keep top quality clients.*

Strategies tried:

 - *Do great work for my clients.*



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7. Similar or essential things they said about the obstacles in the way of achieving those goals. And about what they feel they need to know right now to achieve their top goals:
- Obstacles:
- *Too many urgent tasks.*
 - *Underestimating the time and fees for new projects.*
 - *No ongoing client development to build relationships with prospects and former clients.*
- Need to know:
- *An easy process to develop prospects.*
 - *A system to estimate time and fees for new projects.*
 - *How to hire and work with an assistant to handle practice management details.*
8. Similar or essential things they said about the key strengths and skills they have now. And about what they think *should* be their biggest strengths or skills:
- Key strengths:
- *Problem solving, negotiation, legal writing, ability to spot and explain risks.*
 - *Knowledge of the law.*
 - *Familiarity with clients' industries.*
- Should be:
- *Rainmaking – attracting long-term “bread & butter” clients.*
 - *Serving my clients impeccably in every way.*
9. Similar AND different ways they develop themselves personally and professionally:
- *Reading blogs/journals dedicated to issues critical to my clients.*
 - *Continuing legal education, usually long distance learning programs.*
 - *Spending (unbilled) time with my clients.*
 - *Client's industry meetings and conferences.*

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10. List favorite trade publications, blogs or journals, associations; conferences; social networks they use to build connections:
 - State bar association meetings
 - *ABA Journal, Business Law Today, Fast Company, VC Experts, LawSites, Legal Ease Blog, Avvo*
 - *LinkedIn*
 - *CLE conferences*

11. List any details they mentioned about confidantes or a go-to person who helps them implement ideas, work through challenges and important decisions:
 - *Don't have one. Miss collegiality of a firm environment.*
 - *Periodic conversations with other solo or firm lawyers.*

12. List anything else they thought was important to share with you that stands out from the things above.
 - *Fear of selling. Not devoting enough time to marketing.*
 - *Not thinking of practice as a business. No strategic view. Not taking my business as seriously as I take my clients' businesses.*
 - *Inefficient work habits, lack of discipline. Needing to be under pressure in order to work efficiently.*
 - *Fear of isolation, losing touch with colleagues, trends.*
 - *Workaholic tendencies, inability to relax.*

Resuming George's story...

"Wow!" George thought: "My interviews uncovered some very interesting stuff! I'm glad I didn't just go from my own experience, because I would have missed so much of what's important for solo biz lawyers today."

But then George began to feel overwhelmed, and wondered how he could possibly fit all of this stuff into one sentence of just 15 - 20 words. He tried lumping it all together like this:

I support independent business lawyers to achieve balance between their business goals and their personal life.

George immediately realized he'd created one of those "catchall" sentences with vague outcomes that were cautioned against. "Oops, I forgot to focus in on specifics." So, looking again through his Interview

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Gems, George took another stab at his Core Message:

I work with independent business lawyers to create referral engines and marketing systems that keep a steady flow of work coming in, using strengths they already have.

Before he'd even finished writing it, he knew that, with 27 words and a complex sentence structure, it was a "run-on." And after he read it out loud, he knew it also lacked that emotionally evocative factor that makes a Core Message high impact.

George got up from his desk and took the dog for a walk. He recalled one of his interviews, where the lawyer was talking about his "feast or famine" business. That phrase spoke volumes! Stress, deadlines, getting derailed from family activities – the costs of not "getting and keeping top quality clients" all jelled into one sentence in George's mind. He pulled out his cell phone and jotted it down.



I help solo business lawyers break the pattern of feast or famine in their practice by getting and keeping top quality clients.

"By George, I've got it!" said George.

Your Homework to complete now and BEFORE Webinar 5

Read through and complete Exercise #8 and 9 in the separate document called **YHPN Homework Instructions – Webinar 4**.

Start with your Core Message, get to a workable draft. Then move on to craft the rest of your elevator speech. This is where you can pull in more specifics from your Interview Gems or use words and phrases that "didn't make the grade" for your Core Message.

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Definitions

Brand and Branding

Your company colors, logo, tagline – anything that distinguishes you and your company from others.

Centers of influence

People or organizations that are high profile and connect with a potentially large list of people in your target audience. They are well-informed and influential with your potential future clients.

Converting or Conversion

A process that assists prospects in making the decision about whether or not to engage with you and eventually hire you or buy your programs.

Conversion Rate

The percentage of prospects that opt-in, or the percentage of opted-in prospects that buy/enroll.

Expertise

A well developed and credible knowledge-base through depth of experience and study in a well-defined domain.

Gateway Skills

Foundational skills such as writing, speaking, facilitating, coaching, networking or marketing, that can be leveraged into other business skills. For example, if you write well, you can easily create presentations, keynote talks, curriculum, marketing messages and more. If you know how to coach, it's easy to learn how to facilitate, train, teach, or consult.

Infrastructure

Includes a robust leads list, a working website, and various online systems such as a shopping cart, affiliate program, etc.

Leads list

A database of potential future clients that you connect with regularly in order to build a relationship of trust and promote your programs.

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Definitions

Target Audience

The focused group of people that you intend to engage, enroll and serve through your marketing messages and offers. Also called a target market or niche market.

Specialty Skills

Specialty Skills are tools that you've studied and practiced enough to use competently, such as neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), emotional intelligence (EI), emotional freedom techniques (EFT), graphic design, programming, negotiation, etc. There are specialty skills in every type of business domain.