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# Define your brand message.

Seven simple questions, which can be very hard to answer, that give your brand a clear message for the people you want to reach.

# Create a clear, simple message for your target market.

There's no one more powerful than a person who knows where they are going and can tell you how they are going to get there. Your brand needs to do the same.

To develop a really great message, ask yourself some very simple questions that you may find very hard to answer. Getting a good answer to each one will help you define the message your brand sends to the market.

## 1 Who are you?

A quick, clear, no-frills, no-spin description of what your business does. One sentence at most.

## 2 Who is it for?

A simple description of your primary target market, and your secondary target market if you have one.

## 3 What are the top three problems you solve for the market?

Why do people come to you instead of going somewhere else or doing it themselves? Three dot points, not long sentences.

## 4 Why are you different?

Three to five dot points that are very clear about what makes you different. If you are really struggling to find anything, it's a sign you need to develop some points of difference: things your competitors are not doing, or not doing well.

It's really important to identify things that truly set you apart. Saying "we provide really great service" or "our staff and volunteers are really friendly" is nowhere near good enough. People expect these things, and anyone could say them. Today they are the most basic things you need just to be in business.

## 5 Why should anyone trust you?

Prove your credibility. Explain your achievements, what you have done well as an organisation, and the feedback you receive. Some businesses dismiss this as unimportant: "We don't have to do that, because everyone around here knows what we have achieved

and they trust us."

That is a very dangerous thing to do. Just because you live and breathe your business doesn't mean everyone else does too. People do not know how good you are, or that they should trust you. Gather all the evidence you can to prove your credibility.

## **6 What emotional benefits do you deliver?**

How do you want people to feel when they deal with your business? Elated, relieved, excited, relaxed, or something else completely? Write down three emotions that sum up how you want people to feel.

## **7 What is your big idea as a business?**

This is the why. It needs to make an emotional connection with people and show them they are dealing with an organisation that really cares about making the world a better place.

Sound a bit airy-fairy? I'm not suggesting you make this your key marketing message. But you need a higher purpose than just churning people through and taking their money so you can survive until next season. How is your organisation going to really contribute to the community, and become a compelling, engaging brand that people want to be part of?

# An example:

## Athletes Game Plan.

To make it easier to create your own brand message, here are example answers for a fictional business called Athletes Game Plan.

### 1. Who are you?

Athletes Game Plan develops brands and marketing for elite athletes who want to continue their careers off the sporting field.

### 2. Who is it for?

We work with elite athletes and organisations involved in sport.

### 3. What are the top three problems you solve?

Elite athletes have profile and credibility very early in their lives, but often don't know how to make use of it when their playing days are over. We develop brands for them and their business ventures that ensure continued success off the field of play, often starting well before the athlete's career finishes.

These athletes often have great personal contacts, excellent leadership skills and the ability to perform under pressure, but don't know how to bring it all together. We make sure they have strong brands, effective marketing strategies and a focus on their future. We:

1. give athletes a focus after their playing days are over
2. develop a sense of worth that is not directly tied to their sporting achievements
3. identify opportunities and partnerships that are a natural fit with each client.

#### 4. Why are you different?

- I've been a professional athlete, and I've done this for myself. I have helped others do the same.
- I have extensive experience in developing brands and marketing strategies for people and products, from multinationals to individuals.
- We use proven systems that have worked for us and others over many years, and we use these systems ourselves. We don't just talk about it.
- Every client receives a personalised critique of their own situation from someone (me) who is a lateral thinker and has worked with numerous businesses in many categories.
- We provide ongoing education and workshops so clients stay ahead of the game. We don't take your money and forget you.
- I can quickly gain people's trust and set them at ease, so they feel comfortable telling me the truth about their issues.

#### 5. Why should anyone trust you?

I've been a professional athlete and done this for myself. I've run my own successful businesses using these methods, and I've spoken on this subject to numerous groups over the past 20 years. I have developed brands for athletes and organisations, and I've written a book on branding and marketing for sporting organisations. I've helped develop branding and marketing for some of Australia's best-known brands, and I use all the technology and systems we deliver in my own businesses.

I have hundreds of testimonials from happy clients and examples of the work I have done. You can visit the websites of my other businesses to see that I practise what I preach.

#### 6. What emotional benefits do you deliver?

Relieved, empowered, and in total control of their lives.

## 7. What is your big idea?

I want to be known as the person who helps make ordinary businesses good and good businesses great, and gives people the freedom to do what they really want with their lives. My mission is to empower athletes to continue their success and live their real dreams.

## Example elevator pitches.

### Ten seconds

I'm Ned from Athletes Game Plan. We transition athletes from one successful career to the next, so they don't go from hero to zero when their playing days are over. We only work with elite athletes who are one to four years from retirement.

## Sixty seconds

Hi, I'm Ned Coten from Athletes Game Plan, and I'm in the marketing business. We work with athletes so they don't go from hero to zero, financially and emotionally, when their playing days are over. We only work with elite athletes who are one to four years from retirement.

I'm a former professional athlete with significant experience in branding and marketing, which we use as the basis for our work. I've built a number of successful businesses, so I've made this transition myself. I've worked with some of the world's best-known brands, including Heinz, Wrigley, Kimberly-Clark and Novartis, and with numerous athletes, including Lauren Jackson, the world's premier female basketball player.

After years of success, athletes are often scared about the future and unsure what to do next. They don't understand the world of business, and often don't know how to make the most of their profile and the significant skills they have from their time as an elite athlete. We solve these problems by identifying the core talents and interests they can build a career or business on, then developing a comprehensive plan for the next ten years of their life. We then use our proven branding and marketing techniques to build their profile and credibility, and help them reach their goals.

I believe the world is crying out for people who are willing to step up, use their skills, resources and passion, and make a real difference for themselves and others. Athletes see us as the company that helps them get a life after sport. I leave people feeling relieved, empowered and in total control of their lives.

# Your brand message.

## 1. Who are you?

One sentence, no spin.

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## 2. Who is it for?

Your primary target market, and your secondary one if you have one.

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## 3. What are the top three problems you solve for the market?

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## 4. Why are you different?

Three to five things your competitors are not doing, or not doing well.

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## 5. Why should anyone trust you?

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## 6. What emotional benefits do you deliver?

Three emotions.

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## 7. What is your big idea as a business?

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NED COTEN

**Don't seek to be a person of  
Importance.  
Seek to be a person of Value.**

Email

[ned@nedcoten.com](mailto:ned@nedcoten.com)

Website

[nedcoten.com](http://nedcoten.com)

LinkedIn

[linkedin.com/in/nedcoten](https://linkedin.com/in/nedcoten)

Ned Coten AM is an investor, board chair, and passionate volunteer in basketball & other sports. He has over 30 years of experience at every level of business, sport & technology within Australia and globally, based in Melbourne, Australia.

[nedcoten.com](http://nedcoten.com)