

Art of Articulating Your Value Beyond The Elevator Speech



Why a Personal Branding Strategy is Essential

by Duncan MacPherson

When you meet someone for the first time and they ask you this question:

“What do you do?”

How do you respond? Do you say something along the lines of:

“I am a wealth advisor and I help my clients manage their assets and risk”?

That, of course, is an accurate description but does it help you stand out from the pack, get that person's attention, and enable you to engage them in a meaningful conversation?

What if you were to say the same thing and simply add the phrase:

“I have a process”?

Think about it, what does someone hear when you say something like:

“I am a wealth advisor and I have a process that helps my clients manage their assets and risk”?

As you know, there are two types of financial advisors; there are sales people and there are consultants. Clearly you want to be perceived as a consultant with a process as opposed with a salesperson with a quota. But you have to define yourself. If you don't define yourself, you will be defined automatically.

It's amazing to me how much trouble many top caliber advisors have with this issue. Some advisors try so hard to make their value proposition unique that they end up reciting a long-winded elevator speech or mission statement that is frankly, just a collection of words and sounds like everyone else.

The goal isn't to create something earth shattering or esoteric, the goal is to create something simple and clear while instantly differentiating and elevating you.



As a reminder, when someone gives you the opportunity to explain your value proposition, I instantly want you to say to yourself,

“What does this person really want?”

I say that because how you define yourself shouldn't really address what you do in the literal sense, it should address what the person really craves: a relationship with an expert who helps achieve what they aspire to - financial independence and a greater sense of control. Your value proposition essentially addresses that, and positions you as a means to that end while contrasting you favourably to other advisors.



By simply adding the phrase **“I have a process”**, you get their attention and you are instantly more attractive and compelling. But this goes beyond how a prospective client perceives you, it also addresses how an existing client describes you.

Over time, through consistent communication, your clients will absorb this phraseology and weave it in when they have the opportunity to describe you to a friend or family member.

Wouldn't it be great if a client shined a light on you by saying:

“You should talk to my advisor. I've never felt better about the track I'm on with my investments and best of all he has a process to ensure all the pieces of my financial puzzle are in place.”

or

“I've had other financial advisors in the past who didn't even come close to the professionalism of my current advisor. She has a process to ensure that everything is addressed and her service is impeccable.”

But that is just the beginning. A personal branding strategy helps people connect with you on a deeper level. The firm you represent has its own brand, but that is different. You effectively want to build a brand within a brand. Think of your firm's logo as the “INTEL INSIDE” sticker on the computer.



It adds credibility to your brand but people are still connecting with you, the messenger, not just your message in terms of solutions, products, rates of return, etc. So you have to take your branding strategy beyond just the words you verbalize in a value proposition. It has to be integrated into all other forms of communication as well: Social Media, White Papers and other forms of content.

For example, I'm working with a number of advisors who are creating White Papers and other content-marketing tools that they can use as part of their calls to action in their business development activities. Rather than asking prospective clients to "Call to receive a complimentary review of your portfolio", ask them to ask for something they can visualize and perceive as value instead of being sales-y.

Permission Marketing is a concept where you make it easy for people to raise their hands and opt-in without a significant commitment or perception that you will try to sell them something. When you ask people to "Call to receive my White Paper that outlines The Top-10 Mistakes Investors Make" you position yourself as an expert while sifting prospects from suspects.

Your call to action acts as a bridge and a Trojan horse. It also gives you something to point to in follow-up efforts down the road.

