



7 STEPS TO REFRESH YOUR BRAND MESSAGE (AND YOUR REVENUE)

If the last time you updated your corporate messaging, “Gangnam Style” was topping the charts, your customers may be turned off by what’s likely a stale message. Customer concerns, needs and attitudes are always evolving. And if you’re not keeping up - you’re falling behind.

For a memorable example, look no further than men’s grooming brand Old Spice. In 2006, the 80-year-old company saw upstart Axe beginning to steal market share. Confident in its product, Old Spice quickly identified its message as the problem. Within months, Old Spice had retooled its approach on the back of hilariously memorable ads and YouTube videos. The company’s blunt message and creative delivery resonated with consumers, increasing sales and revenue for Old Spice.

Turning back to B2B, we believe the same lesson applies: taking creative risks for a stronger message can pay off. Let’s take a page from the Old Spice playbook and better connect with our prospects and customers.



DON'T REINVENT THE WHEEL... JUST WHAT YOU CALL IT

Many of us enter our office each day confident in our product or service. But there's always the risk of losing market share – even to an inferior product. A new message allows you to retool your marketing arsenal while keeping your go-to-market strategy intact.

A good message must explain what you do and why you do it better than anyone else; ideally it will also build an emotional connection with your target market. The message communicates who you are and what your values are, which becomes even more important when you consider this: according to *Harvard Business Review*, 64 percent of people cite shared values as the main reason they have a relationship with a brand.

A new message can help you build that emotional connection without pressing the reset button on product initiatives. But before you pick up the pen, research is called for.

LOOK AT YOUR MESSAGE FROM THE OUTSIDE-IN

Market research and persona analysis go a long way to ensure you're on the right track with your message. Even then, you have to be sure your message works. Take the draft and ask some current customers, and a few key prospects, what they think of it. It's tempting to skip this step – especially if time and budget are limited – but there are ways to make the testing process quick and efficient.

For a message to truly resonate, it needs to be authentic. And there's no way to know this without market testing. Even if you love it, if your prospects don't, it's back to the drawing board.

TAKE BACK THE MONOPOLY ON CREATIVITY

As a B2B marketer, it's easy to latch onto the same buzzwords time and again. Agility... security... flexibility, and so on. All too often the result is a safe, predictable, stale message that falls flat – especially compared to the creativity we see in B2C.

Meaning and creativity aren't mutually exclusive. You may not want to go full Old Spice with inane YouTube videos, but we encourage you to take some risks in your message. After all, a “me too” message is asking for “me too” performance.

“JUST DO IT” AND KEEP DOING IT

Next, it's time to go beyond that initial tagline. Nike's “Just Do It” works because it encapsulates all of their lower-level messaging in three simple words. Nike has specific messaging for each of its individual product lines, all of which align with the “Just Do It” mentality.

So, go beyond the tagline. Develop your elevator pitch, boilerplate, supporting messages, etc. If your tagline is the chocolate frosting, these need to be the chocolate cake underneath. After all, if you just put chocolate frosting on vanilla cake, you still have vanilla cake.



MESSAGE BEYOND THE COPY

Of course you want every facet of your brand to reflect the new message. Which means updating advertisements, imagery, website and so on. All consumer-facing platforms should be included – if your message is “intuitive software,” a clunky mobile app won’t build confidence with prospects.

Repetition and consistency hammer home your message – and avoid creating disjointed perceptions amongst your prospects and customers.

NEVER LET YOUR COPY COOL

Customers’ attitudes and behaviors are constantly evolving, and a powerful message evolves with them. But just how frequently should you change your message?

The answer is, of course, it depends. As a rule of thumb, we recommend early-growth companies reevaluate their messaging every two years, while more established companies can hold off for every three to four. Market shifts, innovations, or business model pivots can force a faster timeline, but the point is you should never sit on your messaging. Constant adjustment remains key to creating a resonant message.

WATCH THE RESULTS ROLL IN

Think of refreshing your messaging as going to the doctor. An annual physical to head off any issues is preferable to letting them grow into larger problems.

Looking again at Old Spice, the year after the company refreshed its message, it reclaimed the largest share of the men’s grooming market and saw a 125% increase in annual sales.

It’s not as simple as flipping a switch. A message must be real and it must resonate, which grows from a foundation built on research and understanding the customer. It must be consistent, from the top-level tagline to the lowest level supporting message. And as it grows rusty over time, a little polish every few years will ensure it continues to connect with customers.

If you need help with your messaging – or just a second opinion – give Arketi a shout! Having developed messaging for more than 150 B2B companies, we’ve got some pointers, pitfalls and a tried-and-tested process.



Arketi Group is a public relations and digital marketing firm that helps business-to-business (B2B) technology organizations accelerate growth through intelligent strategy, messaging, public relations, digital marketing, branding, and lead generation and nurturing. Consistently recognized by Chief Marketer as one of the nation's top agencies, Arketi's core belief is that marketing generates revenue.

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