



# Ultimate Guide To Brand Messaging

PRESENTED BY LÚGH STUDIO

Whether you're a [nonprofit](#) or business, good brand messaging is essential. It's how you stand out from your competition. It's also how you build real trust with your audience by showing them exactly how you can help.

But here's the thing: brand messaging isn't just about making a clever tagline. Instead, it's about crafting a clear and consistent voice that truly connects with your audience. So — how do you do that?

In our latest ultimate guide, we cover the most important elements of brand messaging. This includes what it is, how to get better at consistent messaging, and a few tools that can help.

- What Is Brand Messaging?
- Why Brand Messaging Matters
- A 6-Step Process To Better Brand Messaging
- Common Mistakes To Avoid
- Tools And Resources
- Conclusion

## WHAT IS BRAND MESSAGING?

Brand messaging is the core language you use to describe the most important parts of your organization. This includes what you stand for, what you do, and [why it matters](#).

It's important to understand that brand messaging isn't just one statement. Instead, it's an entire set of messages that reflect your mission and speak directly to your audience's needs.

Brand messaging is a large concept. In fact, it's so big that you could apply it to most of your marketing. But let's get specific. For most organizations (both for-profit companies and nonprofits), brand messaging includes:

- Your elevator pitch about what you do
- Your mission and vision statements that you share
- Your value proposition (why people should choose you instead of your competitors)
- Your overall tone of voice
- The way you present [calls-to-action](#)
- The big ideas you frequently come back to (more on "messaging pillars" in the next section)

This is *what* brand messaging is. As for *why* it's so important?



## WHY BRAND MESSAGING MATTERS

As we point out above, brand messaging is important for every organization. Here are a few reasons why (and why you should make better brand messaging a priority):

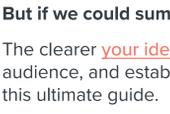
- Unclear messaging results in confusion. And confusion? It results in inaction. To get your prospects to do anything (whether that's purchase your product, book a call, or contribute to your fundraiser), [clarity is vital](#). When you get your brand messaging on-point, that clarity becomes a natural by-product.
- You build trust with brand messaging. Think about your own interactions with different organizations. Do you trust the one that is consistent — or one that sounds different every time you see them? It's the same thing with credibility. The more coherent your brand messaging is, the more people naturally trust you.

- It allows you to differentiate your organization. You never want to sound the exact same as your competition. You need something that helps you stand out. This is where brand messaging can help. It's not a magic bullet. Still, nail your organization's brand, and it becomes so much easier to [separate yourself from the crowd](#).
- Brand messaging makes it easy for people to say "yes." Let's face it: we want to work with people that are confident in what they do. And brand messaging is a great way to display that confidence.
- Lastly, clear brand messaging saves you time and energy. Imagine needing to reinvent the wheel every time your team wrote an email, pitched a funder, or launched a campaign. Well, that's exactly what happens when your brand messaging is vague. The more specific you get with your messaging, the clearer your team is on what to say.

Quality brand messaging clearly has many benefits. When done well, it helps your team communicate clearly and consistently (no matter who's speaking or writing).

But if we could summarize it with one phrase, it would be this: **Brand messaging = a clear identity.**

The clearer [your identity](#) is, the more good things start to happen: attracting the right people, building your audience, and establishing the trust that you can get them results. Remember this as you go through the rest of this ultimate guide.



## A 6-STEP PROCESS TO BETTER BRAND MESSAGING

### 1. Clarify Who You're Talking To

Start with your audience. Good brand messaging starts with clarity on a few key questions:

- What does your audience value?
- What problems are they trying to solve?
- What are the key factors that motivate them to act?



It's important here that you don't operate based on assumptions. Instead, understand your audience from the data that you gather. It's not about who you think your audience is. It's about *who they actually are*. There is often a meaningful difference.

There are several ways to gather this data. Deep [audience research](#) is a great place to start, and it's always useful to send informal surveys to your list. Once you've gotten clear on who you are talking to, it's also helpful to segment your audience. This makes it easy to create targeted marketing later on.

### 2. Write Your One-Liner

Your one-liner is a concise sentence that states who you help, what you help them with, and why it matters. This is important because it summarizes what you stand for. This clarifies your brand messaging in a quick and simple way and makes it easier to create a mission statement.

Your one-liner should be [as concise as possible](#). Skip the jargon and buzzwords. Often, they simply cause unnecessary confusion. This one-liner is more important than it might first appear. By forcing yourself to simplify what you stand for, you make it much easier to get crystal clear on your overall messaging.

### 3. Define Your Messaging Pillars

Messaging pillars are your core talking points. They are the key themes or topics that you want to be known for. In other words, the main ideas that [guide all of your content](#).

Each organization should make 3-5 messaging pillars. Each one should be short, memorable, and rooted in your values. Feedback from your entire team is essential here. What you think is an obvious pillar might not be so obvious to your colleagues.

Once you have these, try to stick to them. That's not to say that you can't talk about other things. But a key component of good brand messaging is consistency. And when you limit your main messaging pillars to just a couple, that consistency is much easier.

It's important to note here that messaging pillars for nonprofits are quite different from those for private companies. Is your organization [a nonprofit](#)? Your messaging pillars should be more aspirational ("Everyone deserves access to healthy, affordable food.") Do you work for a company? In that case, your pillars should be more focused on the individual benefit ("You can get below 15% body fat with 90 days of focus.")

### 4. Nail Your Tone of Voice

Your tone is how you sound. It should reflect your culture, your audience, and your values. This is difficult to pinpoint. It's especially tricky if you have multiple people on your team creating content that reflects your brand messaging.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself about your tone:

- Is our tone casual or formal?
- Are we bold in how we sound, or more gentle?
- Are we trying to be urgent in our communication, or calm?

Create a few [tone attributes](#) that you want to reflect with your messaging. These can be things like "clear", "warm", or "informed". Once you've done that, apply that tone across all platforms. This is one of the most important steps in staying consistent with your brand messaging.

### 5. Create An Internal Messaging Guide

Once you've gone through these first few steps, it's time to document it. This messaging guide will become your organization's reference point. The result? A team that is aligned and consistent with messaging across departments. (This is the same reason [creating a brand style guide](#) is so helpful.)

Here are things that you should include in your guide:

- Any specific data about your ideal audience and who you are trying to reach
- Your one-liner and any necessary description of what your organization does
- Your agreed-upon messaging pillars that your entire team sticks to
- Examples of your brand messaging in action
- Boilerplate language for press releases, [grant applications](#), and anything else you typically have to write copy for

A messaging guide is not "set it and forget it." It's a living document that is meant to be added to (and referenced) constantly. Which leads us to our last point:

### 6. Test And Refine

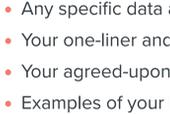
Good brand messaging is never set in stone. It's alive. To ensure that your messaging always hits the mark, try to:

- Test it in real conversations
- Try it out in email subject lines
- Include it in your various pieces of content
- Implement it during any [website redesign](#).

The main point here is that you need to watch how your audience responds. Just because you think something sounds great, doesn't mean it's messaging that's going to resonate with your audience.

Brand messaging that worked five years ago isn't necessarily the same one that will work now. Over time, your organization will grow and your community will shift. Make sure your brand messaging shifts with it.

## COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID



If you are going to take brand messaging seriously, it's not enough to follow the six steps above. There are also a few things you need to avoid. Below you will find four of them, why they are destructive, and what you should do instead.

### 1. Trying to speak to everyone

If you try to appeal to everyone, you end up with brand messaging that is generic and forgettable. Marketing that lacks focus is how you appeal to no one. If you want effective brand messaging, you need to start with two things: who you're speaking to and why they should care.

**The solution:** [get specific](#). Even if it's uncomfortable. It's almost always better to be more specific with your brand messaging than not specific enough.

### 2. Inconsistent messaging across platforms

Good brand messaging is all about staying consistent. Imagine having a different tone or writing style on [social media](#), your website, and your pitch deck. That inconsistency? It breeds distrust.

**The solution:** try to "show up" in the same voice across platforms and channels. Good brand messaging feels recognizable anywhere your audience comes across it. (Like we said above, this doesn't mean your brand messaging can't evolve over time).

### 3. Focusing too much on features

We all want to explain what we do. Much more effective (both for your organization and business metrics) is to talk about why that matters. People don't engage with your brand because of your services or programs. They engage because of [outcomes](#).

**The solution:** your messaging should lead with impact and value. This is how you get prospects to actually care about what you have to say.

### 4. Overlooking emotional connection

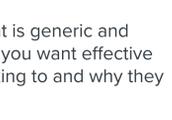
Facts are great. They are how you inform and reassure people that you are the choice for them. But appealing to emotions? That's how you inspire people to take action.

**The solution:** try to inject [more emotion](#) into your branding. This can usually be done by putting your audience's values, hopes, and challenges at the center. Do that, and your brand messaging becomes more effective than "facts only."

## TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Lastly, to create brand messaging that drives results, here are some things that can help. It doesn't matter if you are a business or nonprofit. Use these tools and resources consistently, and your brand messaging will become more compelling as a result.

- [The Brand Deck](#): a card-based tool that helps you define your brand with clarity.
- [Typeform](#): gather insights with audience surveys so that you can understand the kind of messaging that actually resonates.
- [SparkToro](#): discover the kind of content your audience actually consumes to align your messaging with their online habits.
- [ChatGPT](#): one of the best [AI tools](#) to brainstorm messaging variations and tone.
- [Notion](#): create a centralized messaging guide that your entire team can access and update over time.
- [Canva](#): helpful and easy-to-use tool for creating visual brand elements (and keeping them aligned).



## CONCLUSION

Your brand messaging isn't just fancy words on a page. It's how people feel when they hear from you, and how consistent that experience is.

Our advice to you? Use the first couple of months of 2026 to get clear on your brand messaging. We promise: it will set you up for success the rest of the year!