



# WHAT YOU SAY (AND HOW YOU SAY IT) IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

With the rapidly evolving technology landscape, many organizations are retooling their service offerings to be more in line with their customers' needs. Things are changing, including how we communicate. You need manage information around these changes. For many, who they were, what they did, and how they did it has dramatically evolved. Do the people who matter to you know about your changes?

From your website, to handouts to tweets—what you say and how you say it is critical to ensure you remain current, relevant and influential in your markets. Who needs you? Why do they need you? What do you do and for whom? What is your value?

The words that answer these questions form your key messages. These are unique to you. Key messages describe how everyone in your organization communicates 'who you are' and 'why you exist' and, most importantly, why your audiences should care. They communicate the key points your people, or those speaking on your behalf, should use to ensure your benefits are consistently communicated to your audiences.

Key messages can be developed differently for a variety of purposes such as speeches, public service announcements or industry presentations. The core, however, must be consistent and stem from the corporate key messages.

A well-crafted set of key messages will highlight your unique benefits, target your audiences, support your mission and highlight your value. They serve as the underpinning of all communications.

## A 10 STEP RECIPE TO CREATING KEY MESSAGES

Good, clear key messages are not easy to develop on your own. Time and time again we see clients struggle with this exercise because they cannot see the forest for the trees. It often

takes a skilled, neutral third party to interview and re-present how the outside world sees you and your services. For many it can be an eye-opening experience. But it is also a very healthy one as the process brings the entire organization's views together into a common place from which they can move forward.

Getting the outcome right is like baking a cake—you need to follow a tried and true recipe. To help you understand the process, we'll use our agency as a demonstration to break down the 10 step model. Depending on who you are and who you serve, your recipe could be different. This sample should give you a snapshot of the type of process every organization should follow to develop key messages.

From your website, to handouts to tweets—what you say and how you say it is critical to ensure you remain current, relevant and influential in your markets. Who needs you? Why do they need you? What do you do and for whom? What is your value?

## 1. WHO ARE YOU?

Your name and tagline should immediately say who you are, what you do and offer a benefit.

This is Accurate's model:

**Accurate**

**Strategic Marketing and Communications**

## 2. DEFINE YOUR MISSION

What do you want to do and what is your reason for being?

This is how Accurate defines our mission:

**We exist to provide progressive, extraordinary creative services. We do this by continually aiming to exceed our best creating innovative strategies and exceptional products that are results-oriented.**

## 3. DEFINE YOUR VISION

What is your big picture goal?

This is Accurate's over-arching goal:

**Provide our clients with the most outstanding, successful marketing and communication tools—positioning our clients as leaders in the industry.**

## 4. CREATE A COMPELLING POSITIONING STATEMENT

Create one or two sentences describing who you are, what you do and for whom.

This is how we position Accurate:

**We are a visual communications firm serving small businesses, associations and governments. Our team inspires each other to grow and learn, keeping us ahead of the curve and top of mind with our clients.**

## 5. DEFINE YOUR SERVICES

Create a short statement defining the purpose of your services and a list of what you do.

This is how we define our services:

**We are an extension of our client's marketing team. We help them realize their goals by ensuring their message resonates with their audiences and generates their desired results.**

Accurate's services include:

- **Communications planning**
- **Brand and communication audits**
- **SEO strategies**
- **Social media engagement**
- **Brand development and implementation**
- **Website design and development**
- **Graphic design**
- **Infographics and illustration**
- **Motion graphics and animation**
- **Video and sound production**
- **Advertising and campaigns**
- **Accessibility compliance**
- **Writing, editing and French adaptation**
- **Exhibit design and consultation**
- **Print coordination and project management**

## 6. WHO DO YOU SERVE?

Focus in and define who your client base is.

This should be clear to your marketing staff as well as your client base.

We define Accurate's client base this way:

**We serve small-to-medium sized businesses, associations and governments.**

## 7. STATE YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

Boil down into one or two short sentences a statement that conveys the value you bring to your clients.

Accurate's value proposition is:

**We help our clients realize their creative goals. We are an extension of their marketing team ensuring their message resonates with their audience.**

And this as our marketing tagline/value proposition:

**People Love Working With Us. You Will Too.**

At Accurate we post our core values in a common area for all to observe

At Accurate we post our core values in a common area.

## 8. CREATE CORE VALUES

Define four or five beliefs you will never compromise on and which you measure your performance against.

Accurate's core values are:

- **Strive for perfection**
- **Break the mold**
- **Always be our word**
- **Live and breath quality**
- **Trust and respect each other**

## 9. DEFINE YOUR KEY DIFFERENTIATORS IN NUMBERS

Crunch your numbers in such a way that it defines who you are and what makes you stand out from your competitors. These types of numbers are valuable to your sales staff or communications people because they give

your team data to back up your organization's value.

These are Accurate's numbers:

- **27 years in business**
- **2 original owners**
- **20 full-time staff members**
- **from 16 different educational institutions**
- **4 with 2 or more degrees / diplomas**
- **331 years combined creative experience**
- **internal services of 19 professional skill sets**
- **over 14,000 projects since opening in 1988**
- **5,000 square foot studio space**
- **over 800 different clients/organizations served**
- **average quote win 66%**

## 10. DEVELOP AN ELEVATOR PITCH

Have you ever met someone that has asked you to tell them about your company or organization? Many people struggle to give that quick, 20 second 'elevator pitch' summarizing who you are, what you do and your brand benefits.

The elevator pitch is #10 on the recipe for a reason. It's the boiled down essence of your organization and probably the hardest thing to write because it requires discipline. You have to resist the urge to throw everything plus the kitchen sink in. In Accurate's case, we opted to develop a modular elevator pitch:

### AN AGENCY LIKE NO OTHER

Short elevator pitch statement:

**Accurate is a full-service creative agency specializing in brand, digital, video and print. Our team of 20+ strategic professionals is united by four shared values:**

**Creativity: Tell stories. Create experiences.**

**Quality: Aim for perfection.**

**Capacity: Deliver when no one else can.**

**Service: Go above and beyond.**

## DEMONSTRATE YOUR VALUE!

As said earlier, writing and refining your key messages means approaching the task with an objective lens. Some groups succeed while others struggle to find their true voice on their own. If your organization falls into the second camp, consider asking professionals like Accurate to help you achieve the goal of clearly communicating your brand value to your clients or prospects.