
B2B MESSAGING SURVIVAL GUIDE



Essential tips for navigating the marketing wilderness
and reaching your destination.

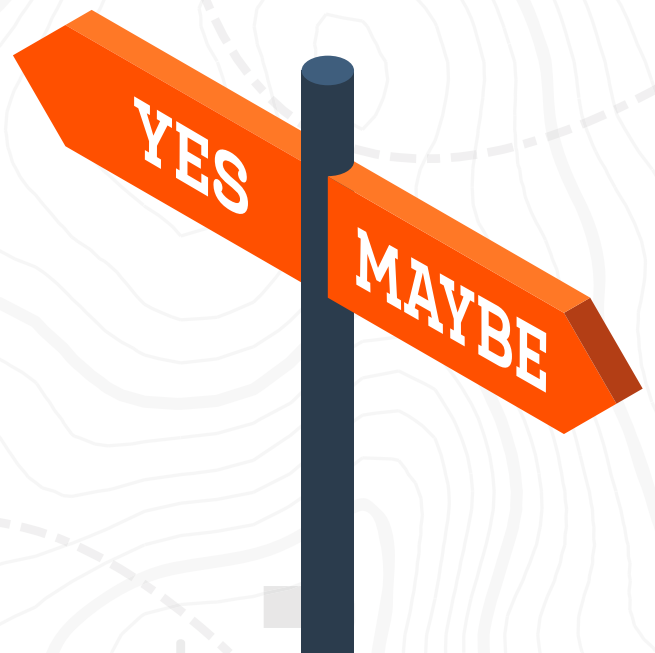
Lead the way to “yes”.

Being a B2B marketer is like being a wilderness guide. Your job is to **get your audience to a destination** — a buying decision — by laying a **clear trail of messages** to follow.

But be careful! The many perils of the marketing wilderness can take you and your buyers off-course. This guide offers practical, proven tips for dodging the pitfalls so you can achieve your marketing goals.

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SURVIVAL TIP #1

Be a good guide.

If you're preparing people for a wilderness journey, focus on what they need to know. For first-timers, it's the basics: how to choose a campsite, where to store food, what exactly is a latrine. Pros will have more technical questions like, "What's the hydrostatic head test rating on that tent?"

As a B2B marketer leading an audience through the buyer journey, be ready to **meet people where they're at** — with messages tailored to their stage and expertise so they can advance along their way.



HOW TO CONNECT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

- ✓ **Know what they expect.** Business leaders will always come back to costs and return on investment; engineers seek technical details. As they progress through the buyer journey, all audiences will want progressively *more* information, but still in line with their responsibilities and concerns.
- ✓ **Talk about *their* needs, not about yourself.** No matter who your audience is, their biggest underlying question is, "What can you do for me?" There may be a bazillion awesome things about your product, service or solution, but the only measure of awesomeness that matters is how you'll make their lives easier.



TEST IT OUT

Not every organization can afford formal message testing, but if you have friendly contacts who represent your target audiences, run your messaging by them to see how it resonates. The feedback you get can be invaluable.



SURVIVAL TIP #2

Stick to the route.

Imagine you're in charge of a days-long canoe trip. You'd want to know ahead of time where you're going as well as where you'll camp and portage along the way. Changing things up once you're out on the water can send you off-course or get you bogged down.

The same is true for B2B messaging. **Consistency and follow-through are key.** If what you're telling the marketplace keeps changing, people will lose track of what you want them to know.

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HOW TO KEEP YOUR MESSAGING ON TRACK

- ✓ **Create a messaging script and stick to it.** Define clear messages for each audience you intend to reach before you start creating content, and write them up in a practical format anyone in your organization can use. Always refer back to your script when you develop marketing material to ensure you're being consistent. .
- ✓ **Repeat your messages across all content.** Reinforcement is essential so whoever encounters your messaging on whichever platform at any stage of the buyer journey, they take away the same points — and can repeat them to others!

SEVEN IS MESSAGING HEAVEN

It's an old marketing truism but still holds up: on average, an audience needs to **hear (or see) your message about seven times** to internalize and remember it. In other words, repetition is a powerful tool.

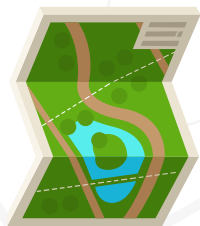


SURVIVAL TIP #3

Give everyone the same map.

If you and your friends are meeting up at a remote cabin for a weekend getaway, you should all have the same directions and details to get to the right place — on the right date.

With messaging, your sales, product management, contact centre, senior execs and other **teams need to tell a common story** to avoid confusing customers with conflicting information.



HOW TO ENSURE INTERNAL MESSAGING ALIGNMENT

- ✓ **Practice together.** Once you've developed your messaging script, bring your various teams together to test it out. Give them a chance to weigh in and help refine based on their own experience and needs. When everyone is comfortable with the script, odds are they'll use it consistently.
- ✓ **Create cut-and-paste tools.** A messaging script lays out your key points but doesn't necessarily give people finished copy they can drop into materials they create. When different groups start re-expressing messages their own ways, changes can sneak in. You can avoid that by providing everyone with ready-to-use copy they can drop in unedited.

SEEK EARLY INPUT

Reach out to colleagues throughout the organization when you're developing your messages and ask for their input. Giving them a chance to co-create the messages will make them more open to adopting and using them once you have a final product.



SURVIVAL TIP #4

Make sure you stand out.

If you've gone ahead to set up camp for hikers in a busy park, you want them to pick out your site from all the others. Flags, banners, signage, a giant bonfire — you need to differentiate clearly so they come to you and not someone else.

In B2B messaging, **clear differentiation is a business lifesaver**. If customers can't tell what sets your company apart from your competitors, they have no obvious reason to choose you — which could very well mean they don't.



HOW TO MAKE SURE YOU STAND OUT

- ✓ **Stay in touch with your competitors' messaging.** You should know what they're saying — and how they're saying it — so you can take the opportunities to make sure your messages are distinct. Most B2B marketers know this, but a surprising number don't have as tight a grip on other companies' messages as they should.
- ✓ **Differentiate on how you understand the customer.** Standing out isn't just a matter of saying how you're different. It can also come from showing how your take on the customer need is deeper, smarter, sharper or more sensitive than other players in your space. Make them think, "No one's said that before, I want to hear more."

INSERT NAME HERE

To test whether or not your messaging is truly distinct, replace your company name with a competitor's. If everything you've said holds for them equally well, you still have more work to do.



SURVIVAL TIP #5

Keep it simple.

In the back country, clarity and survival go hand in hand. Interrupting a campfire skit by shouting, "*Ursus arctos horribilis!*" might make people think you're complaining about a really bad performer — not warning them there's a Grizzly bear on the way.

In messaging, it's also usually best to **avoid jargon and over-specialized language**, even when you're communicating with an expert audience.



HOW TO MAKE YOUR MESSAGES EASY TO UNDERSTAND

- ✓ **Write for the reader as a human.** No matter who your readers are, what they want most is a quick sense of what you're trying to tell them and how it fits with their needs. While technical audiences definitely want technical information, the easier and faster they can take it in, the better. Writing plainly, clearly and with minimal jargon goes a long way on that front.
- ✓ **Use short forms sparingly.** Reserve acronyms and abbreviations for common, recognizable terms. If you're writing about display technologies, HDR is well known as "high dynamic range", so using the short form can help keep your copy moving along. More specialized terms, such as "active matrix OLED" or "device under test", are likely better spelled out than shortened to the alphabet soup of AMOLED and DUT.



DON'T TRY TO CHANGE CONVENTIONS

Common acronyms and abbreviations like SaaS (software-as-a-service) and GPS (global positioning system) have well understood definitions that make them handy units of meaning. Don't try to alter them to your purposes — by making SaaS 'spaghetti as a service' or GPS 'great pants store'. You'll only confuse your readers.

Your B2B messaging team.

DON'T GO IT ALONE

If you're looking for a partner to help you sharpen your messaging and get across today's B2B marketing wilderness, talk to us.

Our expert team can help you with all your marketing — from strategy to execution. We can extend your in-house marketing resources or serve as an outsourced marketing team if you don't have one, defining your strategy, creating content and driving demand. We also offer consulting services and workshops to help you strengthen your messages and how they're delivered for maximum impact.

Find out what we can do for you:
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