

From The Field/ Branding & Communications

# How To Deliver The Value In Your Value Proposition

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**A value proposition is a simple statement about the value you create in customer terms. It's the ability of your product or service to provide benefits that will outweigh costs and motivate a customer to use it.**

But that's just part of what you gain. Having a well-articulated, customer-focused value proposition can help develop powerful alignment within your organization.

Here's a quick test: Ask your front-line staff what they need to do every day to deliver on your value proposition. If they can't answer that question, it's probably because the value proposition hasn't been clearly defined, communicated, or implemented.

**ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS:**

- *A value proposition is a simple statement about the value you create in customer terms.*
- *It's important to ensure all of your executives are on board, engaged, and accountable.*
- *The customer must be at the center of the value proposition development.*

But let's be clear: This is not about creating a marketing positioning statement. It's about defining the activities and actions your organization must take to deliver a consistent and valuable customer experience that is aligned to your brand. And it isn't something that should be left for marketing to sort out on its own. Defining and implementing a value proposition is an organizational exercise. That's why it's important to ensure all of your executives are on board, engaged, and accountable.

**Creating Your Value Proposition**

Best practices say you should have at least one executive sponsor, but executives from each key functional area should also be on board. That way you can ensure the successful and consistent delivery of the value proposition proof points. It is also very important that the CEO is involved in the value proposition development, as well as key milestones along the way.

The customer must be at the center of the value proposition development. Many organizations have proprietary and syndicated customer information, including customer satisfaction surveys that can be used as input, but that's just the starting point.

Also important is gathering customer information from all touch points in your organization, including sales, service, and customer care. Gather reports and listen in, or visit customers with representatives. Once you've gathered all of these sources of input, break the information down into customers' needs and pain points.

From your analysis, create two or three distinct value proposition hypotheses. These should be statements with clear descriptions of the value you create in customer terms, such as an account of how the customer feels after interacting with your product or service. You will also need to define the related activities (proof points) that the organization needs to engage in to deliver on the value proposition hypotheses.

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The value proposition hypotheses should then be validated with your customers. You can use a methodology called co-creation that involves customers and employees working together in a professionally facilitated session. The direct interaction between customers and employees results in valuable insights and deep understanding. Using a collaborative, cross-functional, customer-focused approach will help you to select and fine tune the final value proposition, achieve alignment and buy-in, and create the impetus for change within the organization.

Remember that this type of work should be used to guide the organization. A value proposition that is developed with customers and employees and communicated in the customer's voice can rally an organization to action.

### Six Ways To Keep Your Value Proposition From Withering On The Vine

Implementing the value proposition proof points consistently creates strong customer relationships and can transform an organization. But you have to keep the work alive. Here's how:

- 1. Support it with a cross-functional team:** Just like the executive buy-in, you need to have all key stakeholders involved in the development and implementation.
- 2. Use it to feed the planning process:** The proof points should be projects and activities unto themselves and need to become part of the strategic plan for the next one to three years.
- 3. Use it to help set priorities:** When completed, the proof points need to be discussed and prioritized. Determine which ones must be delivered because they are expected and which ones differentiate you from your competitors.
- 4. Sustain it with action plans for each proof point:** Each proof point needs to be scoped out with detailed activities that look at how each functional area will deliver. Developing these plans cross-functionally will guarantee alignment and consistent delivery.
- 5. Monitor its progress:** Create milestones and measurements at the strategy and execution levels so that the organization sees the progress and impact.
- 6. Talk about it:** Regular updates will make sure that the people in your organization understand what is being done and what their role is in its success.

Your value proposition is the single most important element driving your brand. A well-executed value proposition can bring your brand to life and improve the customer experience. Don't leave it open to interpretation or let others define it. Ensure that everyone is engaged and that each employee understands what actions they have to take to deliver on the value proposition at every customer touch point.

### About Pat Tremaine

*Pat Tremaine is a partner at TMG International, where she draws on more than 30 years of strategic marketing experience to help senior executives of corporations, not-for-profits, start-ups, and associations build actionable marketing plans, develop value propositions, and deliver sustainable customer experiences.*