

THE ESSENTIALS

**MARKET AND
CUSTOMER
VALUE STORY**

BY ANDREAS PHILIPP

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**THE
DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN
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VALUE STORY**

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“If you don’t know what to play, play nothing.” Miles Davis (Jazz Trumpeter)

ABOUT THE SERIES "THE ESSENTIALS"

With „**The Essentials**“ I would like to pick up detailed topics from the area Sales and Marketing and provide fundamental considerations to the reader.

UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF VALUE STORIES

Story Telling Marketing is an important component in B2B marketing today. It is important to understand the differences between the macro view (Market Value Story) and the micro (Customer value Story) view in order to understand the relationship between the two story types and what the differences are.

Basically you have to distinguish between your **Market Value Story** and your **Customer Value Story**.

Your **Market Value Story** is a consistently communicated message that appeals to your audience in the target market and expresses how your approach to solving the most common challenges of this market is and how it differs from the other options. It is designed to attract suitable prospects and get them to engage with you.

Your **Customer Value Story**, on the other hand, must be tailored to the dedicated requirements of specific Customer segment. It should clearly illustrate how you intend to deliver a relevant value with your offering.

MARKET VALUE STORY

Market Value Stories are the Pioneers of successful communication. Because they transporting much more than just facts - they set things in motion!

We know the principle of stories from everyday life. Before we go on vacation, we take a look at the stories that friends and web reviewers tell us about our vacation spot. Fairy tales, novels and Movies also show us the power of storytelling: Good stories arouse feelings, are memorable and are able to change our thinking and acting in a sustainable way.

After hearing a good story, something in us has changed. Perhaps it is a small change in our inner attitude towards something, a new view of something familiar, a sudden realization, a new driver for our tasks.

Always keep in mind that your market Values Story is not only heard by your potential customers but also by your competitors.

To create a good Market Value Story you only need the following structure:

NAMING THE BIG, RELEVANT CHANGES IN YOUR TARGET MARKET

Let's be honest, none of us would start a Market Value Story by presenting your products, your company with your locations or your reference customers. Ultimately, this information is very important if the prospective customer should build trust in you as a supplier.

Instead, start by addressing and naming the major upcoming changes in your potential target market. Point out that this change will have significant consequences in both a positive (opportunities) and negative (threats) sense.

TO LOSE IS TO WIN

Point out that these threats and opportunities will create winners and losers. You need to draw your potential customer's attention to the idea, that how he will deal with the identified changes, will have a significant impact on his current and future business success.

Start with the threats, because according to the behavioral economics, we respond more often to the fear of a threat than to the hope of a future opportunity. But always remember, create contrasts in your story. The more likely your audience will recognize the need to act.

TEASE THE PROMISED LAND

Point out that these threats and opportunities will create winners and losers. You need to draw your potential customer's attention to the idea, that how he will deal with the identified changes, will have a significant impact on his current and future business success.

Now it's basically about you building a vision of what a positive future looks like. In other words, concretely what your target group can achieve if they deal with the changes in the best possible way.

But be careful, don't make the mistake of pitching your products or services right now.

The future represents the desired future of your audience, not your solution with your products!

If you create a strong and credible contrast at this point, you will reinforce the message.

INTRODUCE KEY CAPABILITIES AS OBSTACLE BUSTERS

You have now created the perfect platform to showcase your product or service. You need to carefully position some of your most powerful (and preferably unique) capabilities to remove the obstacles that would otherwise prevent or delay your customer from reaching the promising future.

By focusing on a few important key themes, rather than a long list of product features, you can differentiate your approach from other options and offerings your customer may be considering. You also have the effect of positioning your competition as an anchor that keeps their customers in the past rather than the future.

PROVIDE PROOF

You've done quite a good job showing the promising future. Also, you have managed to present how difficult and littered with obstacles the way there is.

At this point, your target group is right to be skeptical that anyone is capable of treading this path.

This is where references and testimonials come into play. Show how you manage to tread this difficult path.

Are you early in the market and lacking references? Then demonstrate your solution in a series of "before and after" scenarios. Rather than a list of disconnected features and functions.

TAKE EVERYONE WITH YOU

For this approach to be most effective, everyone in your organization - whether in the context of communicating with the marketplace to answering the question "What do you do?" in the elevator - must be able to articulate and reinforce the same shared vision.

OK, now you have managed to present your consistent and convincing market value story to your target market. As a result, a prospect has an active interest. Now it's time to make the general market relevant story specifically relevant to them. The Customer Value Story.

CUSTOMER VALUE STORY

Now it's time to modify your Market Value Story, which is told to a broad audience of potential customers in a market, so that you can show how you can add value for a particular potential customer specific to their situation.

Of course, many of the points are consistent with those in the Market Value Story. You have to structured them slightly differently so that they reflect your potential customer's current situation and desired future situation.

CUSTOM(ER)ISED VALUE STORY

Ask yourself the question:

What are the triggers for change in the specific market of your potential customer?

Of course, it is also the major, relevant changes in the market itself, but probably also external triggers, such as changed laws or regulations, or competitive activities. So take

a close look at the markets in which your potential customer operates.

But beware, the triggers can also be internal. For example, a change in management, a merger, a change in the direction of the company.

Basically, it is important for a successful customer value story to identify the customer-specific triggers for change.

CHALLENGES AND PITFALLS

These customer-specific triggers create challenges for the customer in the form of problems, questions, opportunities or threats. What is clear to your customer in each case is that if these challenges are not successfully addressed - they have the potential to harm their business.

Note: Some of these challenges will already be obvious to your customer, but he may be underestimating them. Within limits, we can help guide his thinking by presenting additional challenges that we think may also be relevant to him. But this should only be done to a certain extent.

SHOW THEM YOUR VALUES

Having identified the challenges our customer is facing, it is now up to us to identify the resulting consequences. And this on all levels (technical, organizational, functional, ...).

These consequences leads us into our customer value story, to show how we can create relevant value for our customer with our offering. So how we can make it possible to develop a clearly defined state from the current situation.

FEATURES & CAPABILITIES

Now is the time to introduce our key features and capabilities (these can be product features as well as services offerings), of course we highlight the capabilities that we are particularly good at delivering and that our competitors have difficulty providing.

Effectively, we try to help our customers to create their "vision of a solution" with our offering

BLACK AND WHITE

Now we have created the basis to draw a clear picture, also towards our competitors.

While we're at it, we might as well reinforce the consequences of sticking with the current situation and the potential benefits of moving to the desired future state.

PROOF & REFERENCES

Last but not least, our client will be looking for proof points - but instead of using our generic success stories, we need to show him how our offering will deliver specific positive results for him, just as it has for other similar organizations with similar challenges.

PROOF & REFERENCES

Ihope it has become clear that we need two basic stories for our offering. On the one hand we need a clear market value story to formulate and widely told, on the other hand we need a framework to tailor the individual customer specific customer value story.