

# TELLING YOUR STORY

Best Practices Guidebook



LIMITLESS

# Telling Your Story GUIDEBOOK

There's no doubt about FA's ability to deliver massive value to their clients' lives. But too many advisors still haven't developed the strategies, skills or scripts needed to tell their stories clearly and confidently. Your story, simply, is: what work you do, who you do it for and what value you can offer. When you *tell* your story in an effective, concise and compelling way, you will never need to *sell* your story.

Instead, you'll simply share what you do, enabling your audience to decide if there is value in speaking with you further. No high-pressure sales pitches required.

Shift the conversation from your knowledge, attributes, features and benefits to the problems you can solve, the experience you can offer and the outcomes you can help clients create.

Being a Trusted Advisor begins with telling your story in a way that communicates to the prospect, *I see you, I understand you and I can help you.*

Your goal with this lesson is to define, draft and ultimately deliver a clear and confident message about the who, what and how of your work as a Trusted Advisor.

**TELL** Your Story, Don't **SELL** Your Story

 <b>WHAT I DO</b> The Value I Add	 <b>WHO I DO IT FOR</b> I Do My Best Work With...	 <b>WHAT IT COSTS</b> How I Charge
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# Best Practices

Telling your story effectively ensures that you never have to sell your story. Get clear on what you do, the value you add, who you do your best work with and how you charge.

When seeking to communicate our value, too often we instead focus on features, benefits and financial jargon. Instead, own your value by focusing on the impact, outcome and experience you deliver.

**Remember, your value is advice...not information!**

You have two options: 1) Pick up a customer, or 2) Establish yourself as a Trusted Advisor.

The second, higher road begins with the first interaction you have with a prospect.

Packaging and communicating what you do to the marketplace is fundamental to your business strategy. Yet, even though it's the base of your business, continued refinement and a willingness to practice help you craft a story that attracts a steady stream of satisfied clients you can serve well.



## RECOMMENDED READING

[How to Define Your Value](#),  
Stephanie Bogan

[How to Sell Yourself – 8 Points for Every Financial Advisor](#)  
Orion Portfolio Solutions

[6 Key Value Propositions a Good Financial Planner / Seeking a Better 'Return on Life](#), Michael Kitces

## BUILDING YOUR STORY FRAMEWORK

As the advisory profession evolves, the benefits of working with an advisor are becoming better understood. When telling your story, look at the following areas of value highlighted by Orion to help you get clear on what you do and the value you add.



### 1. OBJECTIVE INSIGHT

We're all prone to shortsightedness and bias, and investors are no different. Your goal is to act as an objective guide through the field of finance, giving clients a transparent understanding of each investment decision.



### 2. GOAL GUIDANCE

Your role as guide should start at the beginning: the creation of financial goals. Investors need help developing goals that are both challenging and realistic, a difficult balance. If clients invest too cautiously, they could forfeit needed earnings. Or, if they set unattainable goals, Orion warns, "the client can easily become discouraged – a precursor to abandoning [goals] altogether." Reassure prospects that you can help bridge that gap.





### 3. GOAL TRACKING

Another key role you fill is that of reporter. How are your clients' investments progressing? Can they expect to meet their established financial goals? Assure prospective clients that you will stay on top of these figures so that they won't have to, allowing them peace of mind.



### 4. PORTFOLIO DESIGN

Think of yourself as not just a portfolio creator but as a portfolio designer. Distinguish yourself from the crowd by explaining that you custom-make each of your clients' investments to suit their specific goals and risk tolerance.



### 5. TAX MANAGEMENT

Take the burden of understanding tax law off your clients' backs. "Discuss your process for managing taxes," Orion suggests. A defined tax-management plan will put your clients' minds at ease.



### 6. BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT

The investment field can be unpredictable and volatile, causing skittish investors to make snap decisions. So explain the hows and whys of market movement to clients, as well as what such movement will mean for their investments. Market yourself as "a capable moderator between investor, their emotions and their financial well-being" to set yourself apart from the crowd.



### 7. LONG-TERM VIEW

Another burden you can lift from clients' backs is the weight of future planning. Are they setting aside money for retirement? Sending kids off to college someday? Let potential clients know that you'll help them map those uncharted waters so the onus doesn't fall fully to them.



### 8. HOLISTIC PROBLEM-SOLVING

The rise of technology and more affordable and accessible investment options means advisor value is shifting. The primary benefit of a financial advisor no longer revolves around investment management, but rather, the ability to solve broader financial problems. You serve as a holistic source of financial guidance, making clients' lives easier through one, simplified relationship.

As you cultivate your own story, consider these and other ways you can serve potential clients. What practical, valuable benefits are you capable of offering? By helping clients clearly understand their financial challenges, and how you're prepared to solve them, you will stand apart as a trusted guide in a world of uncertainty.



## YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

We and Michael Kitces believe in addressing clients' "Return on Life" as defined by Mitch Anthony, by addressing the outcomes that impact their financial life in ways that benefit to a positive financial outcome and peace of mind. Here are six key value propositions to consider incorporating into your value story.



**ORGANIZATION:** You can help investors get their "financial house in order," as Anthony puts it, managing everything from large-scale investments, insurance and taxes to household cash flow.



**ACCOUNTABILITY:** As an advisor, you can keep clients focused on their goals, first by making those goals firm and concrete, and later by regularly reviewing clients' steps toward goal achievement.



**OBJECTIVITY:** Like Orion, Anthony emphasizes an advisor's ability to bring stability and objectivity to financial choices. Your honest, transparent insights can help rescue clients from emotionally driven decision-making.



**PROACTIVITY:** As an advisor, you have the experience and foresight to anticipate major life transitions for clients, helping them plan for and manage those events accordingly.



**EDUCATION:** Another hat advisors wear is that of educator. Emphasize to prospects that you will always strive to understand their specific needs and circumstances. This will enable you to provide them the best resources to understand their financial options, as well as any associated risks.



**PARTNERSHIP:** Finally, Anthony explains the kind of relationship advisors should strive for with clients: "We attempt to help you achieve the best life possible but will work in concert with you, not just for you, to make this possible, by taking the time to clearly understand your background, philosophy, needs and objectives, work collaboratively with you and on your behalf (with your permission), and offer transparency around our own costs and compensation."

The above value propositions will help you create a clear picture of what intangible services you provide, solidifying your worth to prospects. Communicate these in person during your prospect meeting and through your marketing and branding.

## BUILDING YOUR STORY MESSAGING WORKSHEET

Ready to get started? Use the *Building Your Story Messaging Worksheet* to help you identify and draft the key elements of your prospecting story.



# Telling Your Story Resources

Reference the below Lessons and Resources to help you craft a compelling prospect story that reflects the value you can deliver.



**Telling your story defines the value you deliver to clients.**

### MESSAGING WHEEL

FUNCTIONAL NEEDS





Your messaging needs to express the value you offer to your clients, along with the benefits you are positioned to deliver. Your messaging should cover:

- Whom you serve, your target audience
- What you offer, including benefits, outcomes, emotional state, etc.
- What specific problems you solve
- Your approach to solving them
- The before and after state of your client
- Why you, rather than any other advisor
- Proof points, demonstrate your expertise

All of these ideas need to be shared succinctly in a few sentences in a clear, concise and compelling prospect story.

### VALUE MESSAGING WORKSHEET

Complete this worksheet to help you clarify, define and package your brand messaging points into a clear, concise and compelling prospect story.

**IDEAL CLIENTS**  
Who are your ideal clients? List the top 5-10 characteristics of the clients your message intends to attract.

1. _____	6. _____
2. _____	7. _____
3. _____	8. _____
4. _____	9. _____
5. _____	10. _____

FROM HERE | BEFORE STATE

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SOLUTIONS & BENEFITS

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TO HERE | AFTER STATE

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<p style="font-size: small;"><b>WHAT I DO</b> What I Do &amp; The Value I Add</p>	<p style="font-size: small;">What is the work you do? And what is the main impact, outcome and/or experience you help to create with your work?</p>		
<p style="font-size: small;"><b>THE VALUE OFFER</b> Describe the 3 key (client-centric) outcomes you help create. Include 2-3 points that support these points in more detail.</p>	<p style="font-size: small;">Key Outcome #1: _____</p> <p style="font-size: small;">Supporting Points</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>	<p style="font-size: small;">Key Outcome #2: _____</p> <p style="font-size: small;">Supporting Points</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>	<p style="font-size: small;">Key Outcome #3: _____</p> <p style="font-size: small;">Supporting Points</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>
<p style="font-size: small;"><b>3 KEYS</b> Define the 3 messaging points that best support your role, the approach you take and the process you follow for delivering value.</p>	<p style="font-size: small;">Define key points regarding the <b>ROLE</b> you play as their Financial Advisor:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>	<p style="font-size: small;">Define key points regarding the <b>APPROACH</b> you play as their Financial Advisor:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>	<p style="font-size: small;">Define key points regarding the <b>PROCESS</b> you play as their Financial Advisor:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>

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