

Be In Demand With An Outstanding Brand

By Anne E. Collier (Presented at HBA-DC's Latina Leadership Academy on June 20, 2015)



You have a brand. In other words, people have an opinion about you. And, because it's no longer enough to be smart and hardworking in the current job market, you want to deliberately shape what

others think of you! Creating a personal brand helps you differentiate yourself from those around you, not only for potential employers but also for prospective clients.

The Messaging Pyramid

A lawyer's Messaging Pyramid incorporates Why, How, and What the lawyer does. Putting these three elements in a Messaging Pyramid will help you talk about yourself more effectively and in a way that encourages interest rather than boredom.

Step 1: Establish a Powerful Mindset

Part of what your clients (and your colleagues) pay for is confidence. That is, well-placed confidence in your strengths, thoroughness, and judgment. Clients and employers alike need to know they can rely on you. Projecting confidence is easier if you establish a powerful mindset, which is linked to what you tell yourself when you're "selling" yourself. Are you worried that you're a braggart or that you won't live up to what you say you can do? These self-defeating thoughts and negative feelings invade the thinking of many lawyers. Notice that whatever it is that you tell yourself is likely to be some version of the negative message you may be communicating to others. Solution? Replace your fears with the truth about your strengths, skills, and expertise! If you haven't done something before, tell yourself that you love challenges. If someone else knows more, tell yourself that you can figure it out!

Step 2: Identify "Why"

The second step in creating your brand is explaining why you do what you do. Leading with "why" engages, excites, and creates context. This is because prospective clients don't buy services merely because the services are a fit. They buy services from people who believe in and are driven by goals that resonate with them.

Step 3: Define Your Mission

The crisp and compelling articulation of why you do what you do will be a part of your mission statement, which should be both accurate and aspirational. Your mission statement will embody why, how, what you do, and who you do it for. You can use your mission statement in your brand description, bio, LinkedIn profile and elevator pitch. Crafting your mission statement requires you to be bold and perhaps a little vulnerable, but once your mission statement is ready, you will feel more confident going to networking events and answering the ever-present and recurring question, "What do you do?"

Step 4: Choose Your Vocabulary

A compelling and inspiring personal brand also depends on the deliberate use of words that resonate with you and remind others of your mission statement, your skills and why they would benefit from working with you. Choosing words that are uniquely yours is a creative exercise. Allow yourself to be creative instead of focusing on "getting it right" on the first try!

Step 5: Build Your Brand Description

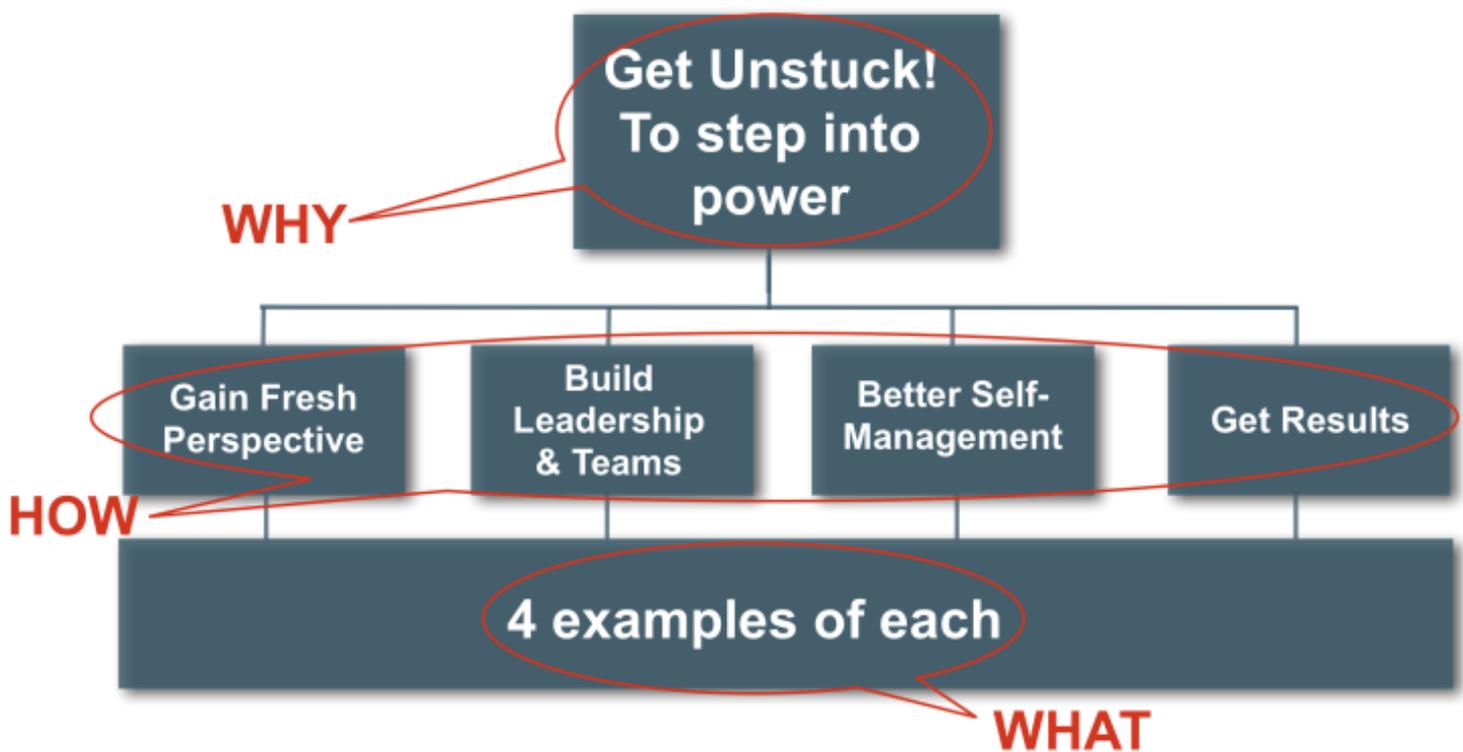
The fifth step integrates the information above and fleshes out the building blocks that complete your brand description. Remember, the apex of your Messaging Pyramid is focused on WHY. It's not the entire you, it's not your bio, it doesn't include everything you've done and how you do it. Rather, it's a statement of what is accurate, interesting and intriguing.

Be In Demand With An Outstanding Brand ... cont'd.

Conclusion

You want others to be captivated and ask follow-up questions, revealing their interest in you so that you can gear your answers to how you might work with them. When they do, you can divulge the rest of your pyramid – HOW and WHAT you do.

Working through the five-step process to create your own Messaging Pyramid will enable you to create your brand, elevator pitch, mission statement, and messaging upon which to draw which are essential to being able to talk about your work in an empowering manner. Based on Messaging Pyramid image and other materials found on Arudia.com, the apex is focused only on WHY and does not include the mission statement (which embodies why, how, what you do, and who you do it for).



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