

A B C's of Getting Your Message Across

Whether you are preparing content for a website, writing a 30-second commercial, designing a sales brochure, or just talking to someone at a networking event, you should apply the ABC approach to explaining “What you do”.

A – Audience

B – Benefits

C – Concerns

A – Audience

Every business has multiple audiences. Doesn't matter whether you sell a single product or offer a single service, you have more than one audience. How you present your message should consider which audience you are addressing.

Factors that differentiate your audiences:

- Is the person(s) a current customer or a prospective customer?
- If a current customer, are you presenting the same or a different product/service than the one they already use/have?
- Are you addressing a potential referral partner?
- Are they time-starved?
- Do you have products/services that are used by some segments of the market, but not others?
 - Age
 - Male vs Female
 - Single vs Married
 - For Business or Personal use
 - For self or others
 - And so on

You have to consider your product/service from your audience's perspective, and understand what s/he knows, and more importantly doesn't know, about your company or your product/service.

Don't present your product/service from your perspective, or from your knowledge level.

- Don't use terms/phrases only someone in your industry would know. Unless your audience, for that message, IS someone in your industry. That's why knowing your audience is so important.



- Use a medium and terms that fit the audience.
 - If your audience is Seniors, using Twitter or FaceBook is probably not the right choice. A Website might work, but how it's laid out, and the content should be geared toward a potentially tech-challenged audience
 - But if your audience is high school and college age kids, then make sure your message is where they are.
- In a world of so many methods of communication, you want to be prepared to reach out to or respond to your audience in a variety of ways:
 - Someone finding you through your website may choose to reach out to you through email, or they may prefer to call you. If they've made the decision that they want to buy your product or find out more about your service, you want them to be able to do so by whatever method THEY prefer.
 - Website (regular or mobile),
 - FaceBook
 - Twitter
 - LinkedIn
 - Forums
 - Email
 - Fax (yes, Faxes are not gone)
 - Texts
 - Print
 - Even Snail Mail
 - Reach your audience via their method of choice, at a time when they are receptive, and you will have a better chance at conversion.

B – Benefits

Most people surf the web, investigate a new company, or consider a new product or service from the same perspective: What's in it for me?

In an initial contact with a prospect, it is highly unlikely that the first thing they want to hear is:

- How long you've been in business
- Where your office is
- A list of your services
- How you are going to deliver your product/service
- Technical details of your business
- And so on

They'll learn all that if they decide to work with you, so don't waste their time telling them something irrelevant (at this point in time) up-front.



What they want to know is

- What you are going to do for them.
- What results are you going to achieve
- What pain are you going to take away
- How they will benefit from your product/service

Later, once you've hooked them, the details of how you are going to do it are more likely to be relevant to them. If they are convinced that you can solve their problems, make their daily life better, then how far they have to travel, or even the cost of your service is going to be weighed against the value of that benefit.

Best way to understand Benefits is through an example:

A psychologist listed her services on her website as follows:

- Coaching/Mentoring for health, fitness, & accelerated Performance
- Psychotherapy for individuals & families
- Individual or group work for exercise, weight loss, & health exploration
- Groups for transitional needs: divorce, bereavement, or career
- Groups for family support or caregivers
- Lifestyle counseling
- Techniques for stress reduction
- Guided practice for meditation
- Other services individualized to promote healthy lifestyles

A simple list of services, without any indication of what results might be obtained. After rewriting the content so it was **Benefits oriented**, and focused on specific services, it looked like this:

Through Life Coaching, you can:

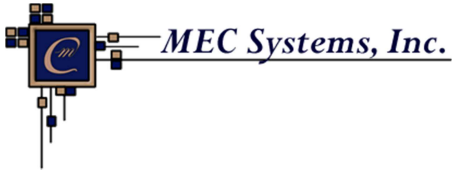
- Move life forward and take greater control over life
- Unleash natural talents, energy and enthusiasm
- Maximize success and balance at work and home

Through Psychology, you can:

- Tackle the fundamentals of the way you live
- Achieve mental health, strong relationships and fulfillment
- Discover who you really are

With Sports Psychology, you can:

- Find your motivational spirit and expand your boundaries
- Break barriers: emotional, mental or behavioral obstacles
- Increase mental skills and maintain peak performance



Through Weight Loss Coaching, you can:

- Focus on your motivational bulls-eye
- Find and Maintain the incentive to succeed
- Overcome the barriers that have prevented success in the past
- Embrace a healthy lifestyle

With the improved presentation of her services, within a couple of months, she went from having many open slots on her calendar to being booked out for six months.

Instead of telling them ‘what she would do’, she told them “what she could help them accomplish’.

Benefits and Results, not Features and Processes

C – Concerns

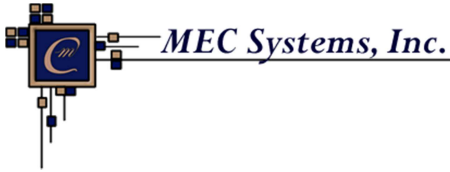
Everyone comes to you with certain questions, concerns and potentially preconceived notions. By knowing your Audience, you should know what those are likely to be.

- Does your audience have an expectation (deserved or undeserved) that your service is expensive?
- Do they want information without having to go through a “Sales Pitch”?
- Are they unaware of the type of service you offer, and don’t even know what to ask, or that they could use it?

Only you, who are (or should be) familiar with your audience can anticipate what these concerns might be. But by considering the concerns, and addressing them, answering them without having to be asked, you will go a long way to winning over a prospect.

Don’t be tempted to ask all the questions your customer might ask, and then say something like “If you can say “Yes” to any of these questions, my product is what you need.” They are coming to you for the answers, and most likely don’t want to be faced with a barrage of questions, and then a flippant answer. That doesn’t help to develop the sense of trust that is likely necessary for someone to decide to work with you.

On a website, on the FAQ’s (Frequently Asked Questions) page, it is OK to lay out individual questions, and provide a straight answer with links to pages where they can find out more. That’s the purpose of a FAQ’s page.



Applying the ABC's for different media:

30-second commercial:

You are going to need a variety of commercials:

- Different lengths for different occasions
- For different audiences
- For different products/services
- For potential customers vs potential referral partners

Prepare your commercials, don't 'wing it'

- Stick to useful info
- Be prepared and stay within the time allotted. If you are asked to give a 30-second commercial, don't take 2 minutes
- Being prepared will help keep you from rambling and sounding like you don't know your own business.
- Focus on Benefits and Results, not a laundry list of your services

Sales Brochures or Flyers:

- On a brochure think about what part of the trifold a person will see first, or second, and organize the info accordingly
- Don't try to say everything on one page. With a couple of powerful sentences you can gain their interest enough to get them to go to your website to learn more.
- Focus on who you are giving the document to, and which of your services they are most likely interested in. If you must, put a full list of your services "on the back". If they get that far, they are interested.

Social Media:

Remember to be concise. Short attention spans here, so have a plan. Don't just throw up posts at random, or according to whatever strikes you that day. Know a week or month in advance what topics you want to address, and the purpose of that post. If you know where you are going, and provide helpful information, people will follow you.

On a website:

- Keep your initial information short and make it easily scannable
 - Sentences of 18 – 20 words
 - Paragraphs of 2 -3 sentences
 - Use bullet points, boldface and images to draw attention to specific points
- Provide links to more information so they can learn more if they are interested
- Have pages specifically focused on different audience segments. You might even want to have separate websites for different services or audiences. NOTE: there's an added benefit to you, if you do it right, to help improve your Search Engine Ranking.