

The Simplified Message WORKSHEET

Don't Fail at Sales and Marketing Copy

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How to use the StoryBrand Framework
to simplify your message.

The Simplified Message

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You've been making yourself the Hero.

It's okay—most of us do. But if you want people to actually listen, you have to become the **Guide**.

Use this worksheet featuring Donald Miller's Storybrand Framework in action to strip away the noise and make your customer the Hero.

Written by Deb Murphy, Based on the Storybrand system and Framework.

How to Use the StoryBrand Framework to Simplify Your Message

Introduction

I spent years making my sales message harder than it needed to be.

I'd write about skills, credentials, methodology, and workflow. Technical details, data, and specifics that made me stand out. I'd talk about what made my approach unique, my background, my processes, what made me special... And barely anyone listened.

The problem was that I was making myself the hero of the story.

This relates to business writing, resume development, sales and marketing, even fiction stories! The Hero's Journey seeps across story applications, because it is hard wired into the human psyche for engagement.

The 7-Part StoryBrand Framework That WORKS.

Donald Miller's StoryBrand framework is built on one simple insight:

Every good story has the same structure, and your customer should be the hero of yours.

Not *you*. **Them**. Duh! It is so obvious once you see it.

Here's how it works:

A Character (Part 1)

Your customer. They want something. Not "improved efficiency" or "streamlined workflows," they want something human. To feel less stressed. To look competent. To stop losing deals to competitors who explain things better.

Has a Problem (Part 2)

And it's not just one problem. It's three:

- The external problem (the thing they say they need)
- The internal problem (how it makes them feel)
- The philosophical problem (why it's just plain wrong that this is happening)

Here's an example: Someone needs a ghostwriter (external). They feel overwhelmed and invisible (internal). They shouldn't have to choose between running their business and sharing their expertise (philosophical).

...And Meets a Guide (Part 3)

This is you. But... you're *not* the hero. You're Yoda, not Luke. You've been where they are. You understand. You have a plan. You are going to guide them to victory, and they are the Hero!

You only need to demonstrate two things: empathy ("I know this is frustrating") and authority ("I've helped people like you solve this").

Who Gives Them a Plan (Part 4)

Make it stupidly simple. Three steps, max. "First we talk, then I draft, then you approve." No overwhelming details, just the basics and the results. Problem solved. Done.

People don't buy when they're confused. They buy when the path forward is clear, and it solves their problem.

...And Calls Them to Action (Part 5)

You have to ask. "Let's start the conversation." "Schedule a call." "Download the guide."

Your goal is to show them exactly what to do next.

Then Helps Them Avoid Failure (Part 6)

What happens if they don't act? They stay stuck. They keep wasting time. Their expertise stays locked in their head while competitors with worse ideas but better marketing win.

Stakes matter. The fear of losing and pain points always outweigh the gains.

...And Ends in Success! (Part 7)

Paint the picture. What does life look like when the problem is solved? They're published. They're recognized. Their inbox is full of the right opportunities. They finally have materials that make sales easier.

What This Actually Looks Like

Here's the before and after for my own stuff:

Before (Me as Hero): "I'm a published author with a background in aviation, engineering, and sales. I offer comprehensive ghostwriting and technical writing services with a unique cross-functional approach."

After (Customer as Hero): "You have insight worth sharing—but no time to sit down and write it. I turn your expertise into language people understand."

See the difference?

One Thing to Remember

Your customer wakes up every day as the hero of their own story. We all do, as we focus on ourselves and our problems naturally.

Your ideal client, customer, or reader is not looking for a hero. They need a guide who can help them win. Succeed. Relieve their pain. Make it easier. Walk the path with them. Take them to victory!

Your job is to help them win, make their success inevitable.

Like Donald Miller always says,

“Everything else is just noise.”

Exercises

Step 1: The Hero (Character)

The hero is your customer. What do they *actually* want? Not the corporate jargon, but the human desire. What do they feel? How will they feel when their problem is solved? What's their pain?

Work Session: Complete this sentence: *"My customer wants to feel..."* > (Example: *...confident that their marketing isn't a waste of money.*)

My customer wants to feel:

Step 2: The Villain (The Problem)

A story only starts when a problem shows up. Define theirs in three layers:

- **External:** The tangible problem (e.g., "I need a website").
- **Internal:** How it makes them feel (e.g., "I feel stupid because I don't understand tech").
- **Philosophical:** Why it's just plain wrong (e.g., "You shouldn't have to be a coder to grow your business").

Work Session:

- **External:**

- **Internal:**

- **Philosophical:**

Step 3: The Guide (That's You)

You are Yoda, not Luke (pardon the Star Wars reference). You exist to give the hero what they need to win. You are their guide, so that they may become the hero.

You only need to prove two things: **Empathy** and **Authority**.

Work Session:

- **Empathy Statement** ("I get it..."):

- **Authority Statement** ("I've helped X do Y"):

Step 4: The Map (The Plan)

Confusion is the silent killer of sales. Break your process down into **three simple steps**.

Work Session:

1.

2.

3.

Step 5: The Push (Call to Action)

If you don't ask, they won't buy. Pick one direct, "Buy Now" style button and one transitional "Learn More" style button.

Work Session:

- **Direct CTA:**

- **Transitional CTA:**

Step 6: The Stakes (Success vs. Failure)

What is at risk if they walk away? What does "happily ever after" look like?

Work Session:

- **The Failure (What they stay stuck in):**

- **The Success (The bright future):**

The Ultimate Summary

Now, take everything above and turn it into one "One-Liner."

The Formula: [Character] has a [Problem], but [Guide] has a [Plan] to help them [Success].

Your New Message:

Remember: If you're talking about yourself, you're losing them. If you're helping them win, you've got their attention.

Like Donald Miller always says, *"Everything else is just noise."*