

The Marketing Plan Mini-Camp

with Juliet Austin

Transcript of Module 2

Hi, everyone, Juliet Austin here. This is Module 2 of the Marketing Plan Mini-Camp. Today, we're going to talk about your marketing message.

In Module 1, we talked about the groundwork and getting prepared with your habits, your vision, and your goals so that you know where you're going. Then once you know where you're going, you need to develop and craft a marketing message for your audience so that they know how you help them or how you're going to benefit them, basically.

Your marketing message is the unique message that you tell your audience explaining why they should work with you. It needs to be crafted in a specific way following certain principles that are proven to get better results. Know that it should be unique to you and your service program or product. It's not going to be like somebody else's and the whole idea in marketing is to make yourself stand out from the crowd so that you're drawing to you the specific people who can best be helped by what you have to offer.

The goal of your message is that you want the unique audience that you've targeting to read your message. Usually, it's going to be on your website and they're going to say, "Yes, this is for me. I want this. I like this. Maybe this can help me. This is what I've been looking for." You want to get that gut visceral emotional reaction from them. You don't want them to be looking at and going, "Uh, well, I can take this or leave this, or well, maybe..." You want it to be compelling and clear and consistent. We're going to get into those in a moment, but that's the reaction that you're looking for from your message.

Obviously, you have to craft a good message to get that kind of response from your specific audience that you want to attract. Keep in mind that some people aren't going to say that and that's fine, because you only want to attract the people that you're going to be able to serve best. The whole idea of having a message is that you will deter some people or send them away, and that's okay because you cannot possibly serve everyone or have everyone buy whatever it is you're selling.

Another way to look at your message as if it's a story - It's your story of who you help or the kinds of people that can benefit from what you have to offer, what kind of outcomes they can expect, if it's a service, what kind of features they can expect from your product, and why is it you that they

should be working with or why is it your product they should buy - creating a story around your service or product and explaining to them why they should work with you and what they're going to get out of working with you or from buying something from you.

I'm going to read you this quote here:

"Great storytelling is the difference between someone paying attention to you and someone tuning you out."

When you're writing your message, you have to write a good message and it should be using the principles of copywriting that I'll tell you a little bit about and it really needs to make people be compelled to take action. You don't want them to be bored. You don't want them tuning out. People do not respond to messages like that.

I'm going to talk about the 3 C's, what I call the 3 C's of an effective message.

It's basically clear, consistent and compelling. I'm going to explain that in more detail. If you remember that and as you're writing your message, keep going back over it and looking, "Is this clear enough? Is this consistent? Is this consistent within the message? Is it consistent across all platforms? Is it compelling? Is this something that's going to make them go 'Yes'? Is this something that's going to resonate with people on a deep emotional level?"

First of all, your message should be crystal clear. Never for one split second should someone go, "What? What does that mean?" or "Well, I don't really understand that," or "Geez, this doesn't make any sense to me. I'm leaving." You do not want those responses. The clearer your message is, the more they're going to stay with it, the more engaged they're going to be with it. There's a lot of research out there that shows on websites, in particular, that the moment that a person is distracted, irritated, confused, that's when they're more likely to leave your website, so you want your message to be clear. You want it targeted to a specific audience, like I said earlier.

Now, some people who are therapists like to be generalists, and that's fine if you want to do that. Just remember that there are pros and cons to every single decision you make in marketing. You have to be prepared to live with the consequences of the decisions you're making. While there's often not any right or wrong answer, there are pros and cons. It's good to educate yourself and learn what's going to work best and what might be the cost of some of the decisions you're making.

Online, it does tend to work better if you're targeting your audience. I mean if you're out there in the community marketing a lot as a therapist, you can certainly have a full practice. It's not like it's impossible.

It's so crowded online and people are looking for something specific. If they see that your copy is speaking to them and they feel that, then they're more likely to respond. If you're trying to speak to everybody at the same time, you're not going to be able to be as specific in your writing or as compelling. You really need to keep that in mind.

Again, some people get stuck on this. Should I be a generalist? Should I be a specialist? There's no right answer. The thing is you just have to, at some point, make a decision and do it and try it out. Sometimes you learn by trying things, as you know. You try it out and if you can't make it work or decide you don't like it, it's not working for you then you can always change it later.

Generally, the more targeted the message to a specific audience, the clearer it's going to be. That just totally makes sense because if you're trying to speak to everybody, you can't be that clear, you can't be that specific.

You want your message to be easy to read and understand.

That means not using jargon, not using vocabulary that's too sophisticated, not using long sentences and paragraphs. People just don't read online like they do a book. Therapists think often, "Oh well, I've got this on my website on this page and I've got something else on this page. My web visitors are going to read it all and they're going to know it." That's not how people read websites. People tend to scan websites, looking to see if there's something there for them, and then what they'll do is maybe read sections if there's interest and if it speaks to them -eventually, they may read the whole site if they are really interested.

You need headlines. You need sub-headlines, so it's easy to scan and to see if it's worthwhile reading more of the fine print, you might say. These are key reasons. Don't ever assume that people are going to read everything on your site and you really need to have the important points clarified in headlines and sub-headlines, and even reiterate some of those important points on other pages if we're talking about a website.

Your message needs to be consistent. No matter where you write a message, whether it's on a website, whether it's on a flyer, whether it's on a brochure, whether you're speaking to somebody in the community and giving them a verbal explanation of what you do, you should be saying the

same thing. I've seen many people even on a one page website writing copy as if they're talking to somebody and all of a sudden they start veering away from that or talking to some other population.

That just creates confusion, and if I'm your target audience and you were writing to me and all of a sudden you're writing to somebody else, you're going to lose me. You have to remember that we are basically self-centered when we're looking on the web for a service or a product that we're looking to buy. We're in a hurry. Time is really limited in our lives and so we want to get the information that we want as quickly as possible so we can make our decision. If you don't give me that when I'm at your site, if you get me frustrated, irritated, angry, confused, I'm just going to leave and go find it somewhere else. You really want your message to be consistent and cohesive so it all fits together.

As I said, that means the same consistency within the message, the same across platforms - social media, print publications, talking to people. Every single step you take, you have to be thinking of who's my target audience, what are their needs, what do they want, what are they looking for, how can I write to them in a way that's going to compel them to action if that's what they're looking for.

I just want to say something - that you can't make people buy or do something they don't want to do. We're just writing in a way so that those people that do fit our target audience and do want our service or product are more likely to get it from us.

Number three, you need a compelling message.

This means you need to draw them into your message and compel them to continue reading and compel them to think about working with you or buying from you. Your message needs to be inspiring and motivating. First of all, it needs to be attention getting, so this is where the headline comes in. So many websites just don't even have a headline because they haven't studied websites and don't know the importance of them.

A headline is focused on the client or your customer and it's something compelling that gets their attention and shows them immediately within the first few seconds of landing on your site that your site is for them. Or, they read the headline, and decide it's not for them. And then say, "I'm out of here". You don't want to waste people's time and you don't want people calling you or emailing you asking if they are an unsuitable client. This needs to be clearly laid out on your site. You need an attention-grabbing headline.

I could do a whole course on headlines only, but the way I like to explain that to people who are new to the whole concept of having a headline is to either focus on the benefit, so the ultimate outcome of what they're going to get from buying your service or product, or looking at the core problem they're having that has brought them to your website.

Now, even if you're selling a product like a bar of soap, not a very good example, but a bar of soap. The problem might be as a web visitor is that I can't find the right soap with the right scent or something like that. In marketing language, even for whatever kind of product that you're selling, we still use the term 'problem'. We define it in the sense that they have a problem in that they're looking to buy something or they're looking to find the right thing. That could be defined as their problem.

The compelling message is, like I said, it's focused on their problems, their pains, their predicament, and their desires, what they're looking for, what they want, the benefits that they can expect, the solutions to their problems, the outcomes that they're looking for. It needs to be unique and stand out from the crowd, as I said earlier.

A lot of people have trouble with this - in articulating how they are unique. That can be challenging if you're not used to it and especially if you're a service professional. Sometimes people find it difficult to see what their unique strengths are - or their business strengths. You might need to work with somebody or ask somebody for help in this area. Write these things down when you think of them because you need to say why you're different than the person next door or the business next door.

People will respond to something that they believe sounds like it's going to serve their needs and it's uniquely speaking to them. If you're trying to attract a specific target audience, then you need to explain why this service or product or program is going to appeal to me in that target audience.

There's a classic case study done about a copywriter, Claude Hopkins. He was hired to write an ad for Schlitz Beer Company, I believe. He was going to write a new ad for them, and so he went to the place where they make the beer and looked around the procedures and everything. Then he noticed that, or found out that they do some kind of special process to purify the beer. He said, "Why aren't you writing this in your message or your ads?" They said, "Well, every beer company does that." He said, "Yeah. Well, but nobody is saying it."

What they did is they put this procedure, made it sound pure, more fresh or whatever, the beer. Then what happened was the sales skyrocketed after that.

It was all in the messaging. People responded to something that was already being done. It just hadn't been articulated before by the Schlitz Beer Company or any other company. It really does pay to put these kinds of things in there because people do resonate with it.

Your message should be engaging and able to hold their interest, especially if it's on a website. If it's a short message you're saying to them verbally in person, but you might not need this ... They can ask questions and you have that ability to respond to their questions. If it's on a website where most of you are going to be putting this, people, again, they're not going to read everything. It needs to be engaging. It needs to be specific. Every word should be holding their interest. It should be conversational in a way that's really engaging with them on an emotional level.

Of course, it needs to be convincing and credible. If it sounds too good to be true, or it sounds like this is over the top, people just aren't going to buy it. People are skeptical these days and you need to show how you're credible.

There are many ways to be convincing, some of it is in you're language and, no, it's not using five exclamation marks after every sentence. You should be using exclamation marks very sparingly because it does sound over the top. For your credibility, some of it might be awards or things like that or could be that the methods you're using are scientifically studied and has proven research behind it. It could be that you've tested out your product and programs and you have a lot of testimonials.

Many therapists can't use testimonials for ethical reasons, but most of them can use case studies, whether they're hypothetical or composite. I do encourage you to do that, because, again, people do respond to stories. If you can write a story and say how you're credible in a story through a case study or testimonial, people respond to that.

Anything that anybody else has said about you holds more weight than what you say about yourself for one, and also, again people like to imagine themselves in the story. "Well, if this person had this experience, maybe I can, too." It builds hope in them. Again, it should be inspiring and motivating because if they don't feel hope and inspiration that maybe this is going to give me what I want, it's not going to motivate them to take action.

The mini-message. I like to break the message into the mini-message and then a full message. The mini message might be something that you have a brief bio somewhere or it might be something you say verbally in a social situation or if you're networking.

I'm going to show you some examples of that. Basically, the idea is that in a mini message, you're just saying what you do and how you can help. You can create the short statement first and then do the full message. Sometimes for people it works better to do the full message first because it's always hard to bring something down to fewer words than it is to write more words.

Either way, you should try to identify your target audience obviously before you write the full message because you have to know who you're writing to before you can write. I've seen this happen a lot - People start writing they don't know who they're writing to and they wonder why they're having trouble writing.

Okay, so you want to identify your target audience, you want to explain the problem they want solved, and you want to include the demographics and psychographics. I'm going to give you some examples of that. When you're thinking of marketing, always talk to who you're targeting, these are the core things, what's their problem that they want solved, or it could be the benefit and some of the examples.

I'm going to show you the benefits that they want, and the demographics, which are the observable characteristics like income, gender, age. Psychographic are more unobservable things like values or your specific religion, those kinds of things. I'll show you some examples here.

Example number one: "I help people," which is the demographic, very general this one is, "who have been unhappy," which is the problem, "For much of their lives." That's the psychographic. It's defining the problem even more. It's not just that they're unhappy and they've been unhappy for a day or a month or whatever, they've been unhappy for a long time much of their lives.

Then the solution is to help them find more meaning, purpose, and joy. That would be an example of a mini-message. I mean, of course, depending on what medium you're using or if you're having a conversation with people, you would expand on this, but this is just something meant to be short and to the point, and then you can play with the words and expand on it as needed.

Number two: "I help driven," so there's the psychographic. It's "driven, career people," that's the demographic, "who are overloaded with stress" ... That's the problem, "overloaded with stress" ... "Feel more in control of their lives." That's solution. You can see how this is broken down.

Those are very specific target audience. People who are driven, but yet overloaded with stress. There's a lot of people in this category, a lot of people. These people show up in therapy.

Example three: "I help midlife single women," so there's the demographic, "With a Christian faith," that's more of a psychographic. It's not something you can observe unless you see them or hear them talking about their religion. "... Who are unhappy in their relationships." Or instead of stating the problem, you could state the solution. "I help midlife single women with a Christian faith who want to save their relationship, or they're unhappy in their relationship and they want to save it. Sometimes you can use the problem and the benefit if it isn't too long or lengthy.

Number four: "I help infertile couples," the demographic, "who don't want to give up hope of having a child," which is the psychographic, the hope and the desire to have a child. That's unique to them. The problem is to overcome the stress and heartache due to their failure to conceive. With infertile couples, there is a lot of heartache and many of them don't get pregnant even when they're doing infertility treatment.

You might, if you were working with these people, you might say something like, if you didn't want to do the problem, you might state something like, "I help infertile couples who ... I help them come to accept and enjoy their lives with or without children." "It's coming to peace with maybe that I won't have children and still feeling okay about my life and how can I find meaning then? If this was how I was going to get meaning in my life, what else can I do instead?"

Let's talk about the full message now.

This is something you'd probably put on a website and you might use other materials as well, but definitely on a website. There are five steps I'm going to show you here and the first one is getting attention. I've mentioned this earlier. The first reaction is like get the attention, "Wow, I want to read this. So yes, I'm in the right place." Again, the headline does this.

To some extent, some of the branding, the colors and the design of the site are going to play a role in the message. Obviously, if you have a great headline and a lousy looking site that's outdated and old fashioned and done by an amateur and looks amateur, it's not going to have the same impact.

This is your first impression, a website that you're putting out there and first impressions count and you're asking for a significant amount of money if you're selling health products or you're doing therapy, and so you need to show that respect and understanding that you get that these people have a certain amount of income and that you're presenting as a professional business and having a really nice site that compels them to take action in the end.

First step - get their attention. Make sure that you're speaking to them correctly. Again, identifying the target audience by the headline, and like I said, people just don't read your message if you don't get their attention on the headline. The headline, of course, weeds out people not in your target audience so you don't get the calls.

The next step is to validate their pains. If they are a therapy client, it's pretty easy to do that. If it's a product, if it's a health issue, they're in pain, it's pretty easy to do that. Most of the time, the people that do have some kind of struggle or pain, they're going to be coming to you, looking for a solution to that pain.

You want to validate the pain, you want to draw them into the copy, into your message by showing empathy for their problem. You'd say, if somebody who's depressed, "I understand how it feels to be depressed" or "It seems like you've been depressed a long time if you're coming to my site or maybe you've been depressed a long time." Maybe it's been your whole life, if that's who you're targeting, or maybe it's just a situational thing and it's just due to a recent loss or the ending of a relationship or perhaps a death. You write tentatively like that and show them that you understand how they feel.

You need to identify their emotions either explicitly or implicitly. The research does show even if people are buying products, people respond to emotions. They actually make their buying decisions based on the emotions and then they back up their decisions rationally. Even when people say they didn't do that, the research shows that most of us are doing that. It's an emotional decision we're making.

Now, in order to do that, again, you have to be showing empathy and stating the emotions. You feel hurt, confused, or implying these things by saying perhaps you might be feeling like you're walking around with black clouds over your head if you're writing to someone who has depression. Not only am I speaking indirectly to the emotions when saying, 'a black cloud over their head', I'm also using a metaphor.

Metaphors can be really effective because they help make pictures in our head which just, again, resonates with us on a deeper level. It's really good to use metaphors if you can. I like to use the words like "paint a picture of what their life is like" to illustrate this point.

You might use a metaphor to do that or you might just say, again, I'm using the example of the depressed person. "You might wake up every day wondering like what's the point of living. It might be really hard to get out of bed and you might push and push and push and wish you could just hide under the covers, but then you realize that you have to get up to go to work, and so you make yourself go to work and you struggle through the day" or whatever.

You're really painting the picture so they're going, "Yeah, yeah. That's me." They're also feeling that "Yeah, wow, this person understands me". Yes, there's a little bit of excitement there that they're feeling understood by you.

Next, you want to look at the 'solution', 'benefits' or 'outcomes'.

I like to use different words to describe this because different words resonate with some people more than others, but they're basically all saying the same thing. People are looking for solutions to their problems or they're looking for the benefits - they're looking for outcomes. This is not about the features of your product and how well they're made or the features or the process of how you do therapy and that you listen to them and that you're compassionate and you'll help them understand themselves and look at their childhood.

It doesn't mean you can't say those things, but those aren't benefits. Those are processes and features. What we're looking for here is basically the outcome, benefit, and solution, because people, in the end, pay for an outcome or a benefit or solution. They're not paying for a process. If you're a therapist, people don't go to therapy because they want to be heard or to understand themselves. They want more than that. They want to feel better and that's an outcome.

Writing about solutions inspire hope that things can be different, if they're struggling in pain or hope that the product is going to work for them. Again, you want to describe what their life could be like when the problem is solved. Again, you can use metaphors or just 'paint the picture'. A metaphor for a depressed person might be "Imagine what it could feel like to look up in your mind's eye and see the sun shining instead of the dark black cloud, to feel more energy and feel uplifted, instead of you're being held down by a black cloud or there's a brick or a heavy energy over you.

Again, you're painting the picture of what the solution would look like or could look like. You're not making any promises here. You're just saying that this is what they might expect, or could expect from what you have to offer.

For those of you, I've been doing this for over 16 years, so I know almost everybody's thinking and objections to this. I've heard them all. One of them is, "Well, I can't make guarantees." You're not making guarantees. You have to realize that if you're a therapist, you're charging between 1 and 2 hundred dollars an hour and that's a significant amount of money, especially if you want people to come weekly.

In order to get people to spend their hard earned money, you better be convincing and show that you can help them with these things. Not making a promise because obviously a lot of the outcome is determined by the client, but at least to show them that this is what they can expect or this is what some of your other past clients have achieved so that they feel motivated to come and see you or spend their money.

Then you want to show credibility. This could be through an award. It could be through testimonials or statistics. It could be through case studies, as I've said. This is how you show how you're credible. People are more likely to believe what other people say about you than what you say about yourself.

For those of you that are concerned about using testimonials, case studies, anybody should be able to do especially if you do hypothetical or composite ones. If you're not comfortable doing that, you could use endorsements. Endorsements are somebody who knows you, your service or your product or knows your work. They don't have to be past clients - someone who can vouch for you write something about you or your service or product.

If you're a therapist or a health practitioner, these could be supervisors, teachers, it could be colleagues, or just someone who knows about your work. It could be a neighbor or something who has watched you work hard and develop your business and you. These are endorsements. You often see endorsements on book covers, especially well-known authors often use other well-known authors to endorse their book. The reason they do that is because, if this well-known author is endorsing this other author, and you like or know that other author, well then you might be more compelled to read this book.

Statistics. If you have statistics on the outcome of your treatment methods or the outcome of other people using your product or service or if there's research done in the field, you can use that. If there's research on your own success rate, many therapists don't keep track of their own success rate, but it is a good idea to do that because then you can use it in your copy. Statistics are pretty important.

If you have any awards or outstanding achievements that are relevant that just increase your credibility again.

Obviously, if you're trained in a specific technique, that might be part of your credibility, but then you need to explain why because most clients don't know what the techniques are or why they should care about them. If you're talking about them, you should always say why they're important and how they're going to benefit the client.

Finally, the last step is a call to action.

You really want to make sure that you are having a call to action. I encourage people to put them on all pages of their website because there is a lot of research that shows that even if it seems obvious that people can contact you or call you, if you ask them to do it, they're more likely to do it, and especially if you ask them in an engaging way.

In terms of a call to action, if it's on your website, many practitioners and therapists will often try to get potential clients to call or book an appointment. I think often they do it too soon. It doesn't mean you can't have a book now button or anything on your home page or in the top of the page, but just realize most people just don't go to your website and all of a sudden book right away. They want to look around and check you out for a bit first.

If you want to have a call to action on your home page, to contact you or to do a free consult, you can do that. A free consult or a free phone consult might be more compelling than to book an appointment that they have to pay for because there's less risk involved. It's easier to have calls to actions where there's less risk involved. A free consultation, sign up for a blog, or a newsletter, etc. These are the best things you can do because then you have permission to send them emails on a regular basis to build a relationship with them.

You may get some people who go to your site right away and phone you or call you, but, if you don't have an email list, there's all those people you're missing who go to your site and don't call you and phone you right away. If you can get a large percentage of them on an email list, then you

have an opportunity to build a relationship with them to help show them your expertise and how helpful you are in all those things. Then maybe either they'll refer someone else if they come across someone who needs what you have to offer, or perhaps they'll come around later when they're more ready.

Not everybody is ready when they go to a website. Sometimes they're looking and they don't go back to it for months or years, so keep that in mind again. If you think about your own behavior, you do the same thing when you're looking to buy things. Most of us do, at least. You want to get them to take action. Call for a free consult. Sign up for my email list, it's free and this is what's going to happen when you do that. Maybe to sign up for a course or a program or buy a product. Like I said, if you're going to give something away for free first, the newsletter or free consult, those kinds of things are just easier call to actions because there's less risk involved.

All your pages should have some type of call to action. It might be to go to another page so that people aren't scrolling down to the bottom of the page and then they're there's nothing to do, so they're distracted and they leave. Again, you want to keep them engaged, and to some extent, control as much as possible where they should go next and what you want them to do. I mean you're not really controlling, you're guiding them towards that. If they want to do that, if it makes sense to them to do it and they don't have to think, then they're more likely to do what you ask them to do.

There's a book written on website usability on how users use the web, and it's called, 'Don't Make Me Think', which is exactly what you don't want people to do when they're at their site. You want to make it easy, give them the information, tell them what to do, what actions to take so that they're more likely to do it.

Keep in mind, when you're doing a call to action, if you have a several call to actions, the more call to actions you have, the less likely they are to take any, because the research shows and it makes sense, the more options that there are, the more thinking I have to do and weighing of which one I want and the more I might hesitate or not decide right now because it's too much work to decide.

Obviously, if you give one choice, sign up for my email or not, I have a choice of doing it, "Yeah. Do I want to do that? Yeah or no." It's just an easier decision to make. Certainly, when it's free, it's quite a bit easier and faster to make that decision. Just keep that in mind, to keep your options for call to actions limited. One is best. Two would be the most, I would say.

Then there's the whole issue of people who want to have more than one message, so more than one target audience. I thought I should address that here. Of course, you can have more than one audience. Again, there's no right or wrong. There's always a consequence, positive and negative of every decision you make. If you have more than one niche or more than one population or audience that you're marketing to, obviously it's going to take more time, energy, and more money, of course. You have to think about, Do you really want to spend that time and energy marketing and reaching out to these groups or would you rather focus on one group or try to market yourself as a generalist and save time and energy?

The other thing is if you're doing it on one website or even if you're doing it off website, you don't want ... Again, you can confuse people and you might lose one audience if you're speaking to another, especially if you're trying to do it on the same page and with the same web copy. It just doesn't work.

If you're going to have a few different target audiences, then it's best to have different pathways, either different websites or different pathways on the home page where they can go read about only the issue that pertains to them, they don't have to read through other stuff. People will click away if they start feeling it's not relevant to them. Again, they will lose interest and go away.

If you can have more than one target audience, I would suggest, in most cases, not always, to focus on building one at a time and then see how that goes and then maybe try another one. If you're creating a website and you want to have a couple of audiences on there, you might have to do that upfront so that you save some money and don't have to redesign it later, but then I might just focus on maybe marketing to one audience because, obviously, the message is an important part of a website.

You can have the best website and the best message in the world but if people don't know about you and you're not sending traffic to your website by marketing online and offline ,of course they're not going to find out about it.

I want to close with this quote:

"Marketing is no longer about the stuff you make or the services you offer, but about the stories you tell."

In a really busy crowded market like it is online and with the information overload that we all have, your story, your message, has to stand out from

the crowd if you want to draw people to you. Keep that in mind and hope you enjoyed Module 2. Thank you so much.