

YOUR
Customer-Focused
Story

*Segment Two:
The First Element of Marketing Syntax -
The Problem*

TRANSFORMATIONAL BUSINESS LEARNING
WITH MARK SILVER AND HEART OF BUSINESS, INC.

YOUR *Customer-Focused* Story



By Mark Silver

*Fourth generation entrepreneur,
and master Sufi teacher.*

*May the peace and love and mercy and justice of the Real
be upon all of the holy prophets, guides, knowers, teachers,
and each one of us and all of our hearts, so that we may
become of the family of the Real.*



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*In the Name of the One, the Infinitely Merciful,
the Most Tenderly Compassionate, this book is
dedicated to the Face of the Real.*

*Anything of the Truth that is written here has
come from the One, and any mistakes or
omissions are from myself.*



The Simple Idea

Name the problem being faced.

*N*aming the problem lets people know you “see” them, and it gives them a chance to relax. This is incredibly healing and compelling.



The Teaching

When you call someone's name, what's the appropriate and polite way to follow up? Do you call someone's name and then just jump in with two feet? "Hey Mary, I want to tell you this story."

Well, it might work. But it's more polite to acknowledge what they are doing. "Hello Mary, I can see that you are working hard on that spreadsheet."

When someone trusts that you see what she's involved in at the moment, they can relax. Not only that, she begins to wonder if what you are going to say will somehow relate to what she is already doing..

The Problem expands on whatever problem your clients face that you help them with. It describes what's not working about the problem they are confronting and typically includes physical descriptions and emotional reactions.

You know what's going on for your typical client. Describe it, use words you've heard new clients use before, and it will sound very authentic and true, because it will be. They will feel seen and understand. In fact, using this approach folks will sometimes respond, "Are you following me around with a video camera?"

Example

Most people start a small business because they are excited to make a difference, in addition to making a profit.

Unfortunately, the whirl of details and the pressure of the bottom-line obscures the larger vision, and leaves them exhausted and burnt out.

Bringing Clarity

One wonderful side-effect of writing up a Problem Paragraph is that it can help to bring a lot more clarity to you about what your clients are facing. If you're feeling vague, or otherwise not as clear as you feel you could be, the exercise in this class and the practice of writing up your Problem Paragraph can bring you insights into what your clients are actually experiencing, enabling you to connect with them more powerfully.

As you go through the exercise, you will probably gain insights into what's really going on for your clients, and how they self-identify, how they see themselves, where they feel stuck and how it affects them. Describing that is powerful, and it will also help you know which elements to emphasize.

Using a Problem Paragraph

Once you have an effective Problem Paragraph, you can use it, or a variation of it, in many places. The home page of your website, the beginning of a description of a new offer, in starting off a blog post, article, or other content.

Anywhere you know that someone is going to need empathy and witnessing before being able to really take in the message you are wanting them to hear.

Your Marketing Can Create Healing

When a Problem Paragraph is written effectively, when it lands for someone in their heart, it's a powerful catalyst for healing. The first step in healing is being witnessed without being judged. By talking about the problem with a sense of empathy and caring, you may be helping someone begin or further a process of healing and transformation.

Marketing as a healing modality is, for me, one of the most inspiring aspects of business, and why I hope you take on the exercise with sincerity and passion.



Stay Awake

Watch out!

It's all too easy to fall into using acronyms or phrases that are professional lingo for you instead of conversational phrases that you've actually heard people say. Make sure after you write out your Problem Paragraph to scan it, maybe have someone else read it as well, looking for professional or expert language, and replacing those with how someone who isn't a professional or practitioner would say it.



Worksheet

Standing In Their Shoes.

1. Ask in your heart to be shown someone who is fairly typical of the kind of client you want to work with. It could be an actual current or past client, or simply someone who your heart brings to your attention. Don't force it, and don't try to pick the "perfect" person. Who is it?

Example: My past client Steve popped up for me. If I could have more like him, that would be fantastic. He's the Chief Operations Officer for a small-ish-medium-sized company in the food service industry.

3. Take it a little deeper. Ask to be shown more of their situation. What emotions are present as they face the challenge they are facing? How is their life affected? Ask to be shown more of their experience.

What did you notice?

Example: Steve's company had been riding the edge revenue-wise for awhile and they were just coming out of it. He's been excited at seeing the upward trend in the business, how much easier things were getting, and how much relief and fun was coming back into the people on his team. People seemed to like their jobs again! The new project they were just taking on seemed certain to put the company on firm footing again for the next several years.

The lawsuit threatened all of that. Bad publicity, which could scare off new clients. He'd have to assign several key people to supporting the legal staff, and of course it was going to suck up a big part of his budget, when they were finally on-budget. Steve was anxious, angry, nervous, and just plain exhausted. I remember him saying, "Can't I just get a break?"

4. Connecting with empathy and care for anyone facing this situation, write a paragraph describing what you saw. Ideally, write it in the second person, using the word “you.”

Example: “You are a top-level executive whose company is in a dispute, and you are feeling attacked. Maybe it’s a rival company, a strategic partner, even an unhappy employee or customer. What they are doing endangers your business and takes up too much of your time. It threatens to drain your resources and makes it difficult for you to compete effectively. You dread that it may end up as an expensive lawsuit that will ravage your cash and attention. Just thinking about it gives you a headache and leaves you exhausted.”

Note: one of our clients, who does legal mediation as an alternative to litigation, wrote this paragraph for his business in response to this very exercise. You can see more at <http://www.conflictalchemy.com/>

The example text in Steps 1, 2, and 3 was fictitious, not from our client.

Fantastic! This Problem Paragraph can now be used in a variety of ways in your marketing and content.



The Simple Idea Revisited

Before someone can hear what you have to say, they need to be witnessed.

*I*t is much easier for someone to relax, once they know you “get them.” Once they relax, because you’ve truly witnessed them, it opens up a listening space.

*When you find the love, you find yourself.
The secret is in the love. You are the love, not another.
Everything is in the love, and everyone needs the love.*

*When you have the knowledge of the love, you feel
peace in your heart. The jewels are inside you.*

FROM *MUSIC OF THE SOUL*, BY SUFI SHEIKH SIDI SA'ID AL-JAMAL



Every act of business can be an act of love

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