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## Positioning your advice business in a competitive landscape

Perfecting the message that sets you apart from your competitors is a critical component of business success. This message needs to be delivered in several different versions so that you can maximize the marketing impact of different everyday interactions. In short, you need to be ready to articulate your value whenever you are out, wherever you are and wherever you go.

Practice101

**Author:** Johann Maree

**Web:** <https://www.practice101.com.au>

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## 1. WHAT IS A VALUE PROPOSITION?

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A value proposition is a statement that tells a prospective client why they should collaborate with you instead of someone else. It articulates in a clear way what differentiates you and your advice business from the competition and answers these questions we are all often asked:

- Who are you?
- What do you do?
- How do you do it?
- Why should I do business with you?
- What makes you different?

Simply put, your value proposition is an answer to this question: "What superior alternative do you offer at a price clients are willing to pay you for?"

You need to believe in your value proposition and know that you can deliver on its promises. It should contain the message that delivers an experience to clients that reflects your belief that it is your destiny to help your client realize theirs. You should be able to articulate this in a clear and concise manner and be enthusiastic about it when delivering it to prospects and clients alike.

Your value proposition must be adaptable depending on the prospects and the circumstances when you deliver it allowing you to expand its usefulness in either a professional prospect or client engagement or a social occasion.

## 2. THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

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Your value proposition will help you connect emotionally with prospects. And we know that people are more likely to do business with people to which they can relate. It also helps to create a strong point of differentiation between you and your competition. As you go through the process of creating your value proposition it will help you uncover why people choose to collaborate with you and help you focus on your uniqueness. You should look to create your services around your value proposition, not the other way around.

Remember that two kinds of value exist, these being unique and comparable value. Unique value cannot be matched by the competition and comparable value is value that is transformed from what we know to what our client experiences. Being able to articulate value requires you to connect your value proposition to the client's success.



If you are new to financial advice, going through this process will help you move in the right direction and will help you become a problem solver for your clients. If you have been in a business for a while, it will help you keep up to date. Updating your value proposition allows you to understand your clients and your competitors better.

A well thought out and meaningful value proposition also has the potential to help you:

- Increase the quality and quantity of your referrals
- Increase clients who are in your target market
- Improves the delivery of your tailored client experience
- Improves your operational efficiency
- Decreases the time spent with uninterested prospects
- Increases the speed with which new clients are onboarded
- Illustrates to clients and prospects that you have their best interest in mind

Prospective clients must hear your value proposition and want to experience it. Value propositions are important, and will inform every part of your advice business, from your service development to your marketing and sales strategy.

It will provide understanding, clarity, trust, and force everyone in your team to think of the customer first.

### 3. WHERE DO VALUE PROPOSITIONS FALL SHORT?

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Most value propositions in the financial advice make use of technical jargon, recite adviser qualifications and their years of experience, or set out how honest, trustworthy, or dependable the team is.

Using the above wording in a value proposition does not translate into tangible value for the prospect or client. Value to a prospect or client is derived from the benefit they receive from working with you and it is that benefit that must be encapsulated in your value proposition.

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Value derived from the benefit they receive from working with you

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## 4. CREATING YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

Prior to creating your value proposition, you need to have created your values, developed your mission and vision statement, and considered your target client - as these are important aspects to consider when putting together your value proposition. If you have not yet gone through the exercise of developing those documents, consider doing so.

To begin thinking through your value proposition, review each question and the two types of responses that are offered:

Questions from prospects	What are they asking?	Typical response	Suggested response
Who are you?	Tell me about yourself	My name is Bob and I have worked at XYZ Wealth for 15 years and have a CFP and Masters in Fin Planning	My name is Bob and I have spent 15 years with ABC Wealth Management. We serve the needs of accomplished professionals and guide them toward integrated wealth management solutions. Our team's core strengths are in creating a client experience that delivers our clients financial dreams.
What do you do?	Tell me what it is you do	I am a Financial Advisor at XYZ Wealth, a financial advice business that plans and builds investment solutions for clients	I offer my clients a discovery process built around them and then support and guide them in achieving their goals. We work with our clients to identify where they are versus where they are headed, being sure to efficiently integrate all the key components of Wealth Management.
How do you do it?	Tell me how you help your clients	I research and select the best investment managers for my clients.	We focus on understanding our client's story first and then evaluate and coordinate their life needs and financial goals, all the while managing their assets and implementing strategies that underpin their goal attainment. This process gives our clients clarity and peace of mind on their journey to retirement and beyond.
	Who are your clients	I have a truly diverse client base.	We serve the needs of accomplished professionals who are looking to achieve personal and financial goals but do not have the time to manage the complexity their wealth brings. Our integrated approach to wealth management helps them maximize the wealth they have earned so that they can spend more time enjoying the achievements of their life and work.
Why should I work with you?	Tell me why it should be you	I look at my clients' risk appetite and propose and appropriate strategy and products.	We engage our clients in collaborative, in-depth discussion to gain clear understanding and develop integrated solutions. Many of our clients want to grow and protect their wealth as they prepare for retirement. We help clients achieve these goals through having honest conversations with our clients throughout our long-term relationship with them. This provides our clients with peace of mind and time to pursue their passions.
What makes you different?	I am seeing four different advisers before I make up my mind	You can count on my experience. I have been in the business for 15 years, and I have worked with hundreds of clients.	Three core capabilities differentiate ABC Wealth Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We provide clarity and peace of mind</li> <li>• We build personal relationships based on trust.</li> <li>• We provide integrated solutions tailored to meet specific needs.</li> </ul> We give you advice you can trust from a team that cares about your financial life.

## 5. USING YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

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Once you have prepared your value proposition it will form the basis of how you brand yourself and influence your tag line. A tagline is part of your Value Proposition and is an effective way to tell potential clients the benefit they receive by working with you.

Taglines are a fantastic way for advice businesses to position themselves uniquely in the marketplace. Using a tagline can impart a sense or feeling that your business name lacks and can “finish off” your brand. This is the phrase that you want your clients to remember when they think about what you do. Remember that the more financially focused your tagline is, the less of a differentiator it will be.

These may be considered successful taglines:

- “Growing your retirement dreams”
- “Creating the life, you love in retirement”
- “We help our clients understand the financial implications of the life decisions they make”
- “Your plan and our advice – building your future together”
- “Financial dreams delivered”

So, at your next annual planning process, ask yourself “Is our brand and tagline still representative of what we are doing?”

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## 6. A LAST POINT

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Use your value proposition as much as you can. It should make you look like the expert you are in providing financial advice to your target market. Using it in both your professional and social setting will grow your sphere of influence and your bottom line.

*Johann Maree*

*[www.practice101.com.au](http://www.practice101.com.au)*

