



Episode 88

Messaging for Your Ideal Client



**Jason: (00:00)**

Hello and welcome to designer discussions with Jason, Mirjam and Maria. Today we are talking about messaging for your ideal client.

Intro: [00:10]

Welcome to the designer discussions podcast with Jason, Maria, and Mirjam. Tune in each week where we talk about marketing, PR, and business advice for design professionals. Are you wondering where to start marketing your interior design business? We are opening the Designer Discussions Marketing Studio, a monthly series of indepth actionable content to guide your marketing, PR and business development. We want to help you transform your business and elevate it to work with your dream clients. You are going to want to hear this episode. Jason is going to tell you how to get your new website paid for and include all the bells and whistles that you're going to need for 2023. Let's get out there and let's update that interior design website.

Mirjam: (00:57)

Okay. So today we are talking about messaging. And messaging is one of basically the foundational key elements in communication. So I've been a PR and communications professional for more than more years than I care to talk about, but let's just say 25 plus. I've worked for smaller companies and bigger companies, and I've been part of many campaigns that start from scratch. And marketing campaigns, be it for a launch or for the redesigning of a brand or for anything, it always starts with messaging. And it's a process that's very involved. Actually, there's agencies out there that's pretty much all they do and they charge millions of dollars to provide the service. So it can be very, very complicated. And obviously for us as small business owners and for you with an interior design business, we don't have to go to that length. But it's helpful to understand a little bit about the process and also why it really is important that you define your messaging before you jump into whatever it may be creating your website or your offering or pretty much anything. It's like you have to establish who you are and what you want to say before you start developing your tactics.



Mirjam: (02:17)

But how do you get to do we go about that? I think one framework that I find very helpful, it involves three elements. It's the why and the how and the who. The why is really, really important. About 10 years ago or so, I read the book Start With Why from Simon S inak, which is a classic, really. It's an amazing book. I think it changed how a lot of people think about messaging. What he really says is he says people don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it. You don't just want to tell people all the services you offer, but you have to help them understand who you are and why you do the things you do and how you do them. That sounds more complicated than it really is, but it's part of establishing, basically, to differentiate yourself from the competition. I think a big challenge in interior design is that when you look at websites, the messaging is very similar. It's like everybody wants to create their client's dream space and make them the happiest person ever in their new space. But it's like, well, everybody says they can do the same thing. So how are you different from anybody else? What makes your company valuable? It's like, what promise? There's a thing called the brand promise that bigger companies often talk about. But it's like, what promise do you make to your customer that's different from another customer? I'll try to give some examples of different directions. This can go in a little bit. But once you establish why you do the things you do, why you are who you are, then you can go talk about how you do the things you do. How do you deliver your service? How do you demonstrate your why in your daily operations? I don't know what your why, everybody has a different why. It takes a little digging, and there's definitely frameworks that help you do that. Maybe you read the book. I honestly highly recommend it. But once you go about how, that's when you start putting the different pieces together. It's like, how do you talk? What style? What tone of voice do you use? What's your visual language in how you communicate that? When you have the why and the how, we talk about this a lot. We've done a lot of club houses, and there's a podcast episode about it, too, where we talk about who you talk to.

**Mirjam: (05:17)**

In the world of messaging and message development, it's called personas, but it's really nothing else than what we also call the client avatar. So it's your ideal client. Who is your ideal client? And the more clear you can get about who your ideal client is, the more concise and impactful your messages are going to be. And if this sounds a little overwhelming, it really doesn't have to be that way. In some of the coaching that I do, I will just say to designers, Okay, give me five bullet points. What are the five most important things about your business? And that's how you have to start somewhere. So you don't have to jump through all the hoops, but it's like, think about why you do what you do and what makes you different from everybody else? Because that's really where we want to get to. And when I say different, it's what we call the unique selling proposition. It's what we call the USP. We just talked about this before the podcast. But what different things could this be? It could be that you have a background in art that influences how you approach your design work. It could be that you are very much focused on sustainability. It could be universal design. It could be that your process is different from everybody else's, or if you take into account more psychological or spiritual elements when you work with your clients. Maybe you just love working with color or different materials that other people don't. It could be any of these things, and only you are going to know what those things are. Maybe because you think it's normal to you, it doesn't always come to the surface very easily. I do think there's value in collaborating with other people when you develop your messaging because they'll be able to identify things that maybe you don't understand that those are your differentiators because that's so much the person that you are. I definitely recommend that. It could be a colleague of yours or if you work with a marketer, that's always a good idea. But I definitely recommend that you bounce it off other people so you can define those key messages is really where we want to get to. I'd say between three and five key messages that are going to be the foundation of everything that you talk about in your marketing.

Maria: (07:54)

So, Jason, as a marketing agency, what is the first step someone needs to take to start to pinpoint who their ideal client is?



Jason: (08:17)

If you've heard our podcast at all, if you listen to Episode Six, where we talk about how to develop a marketing plan for your design agency, we talk about the first step is really understanding your client. And we talk about the client avatar. We actually have a client avatar workbook in the marketing studio. So once you listen to this, go there, get access to that, where we outline how to understand who that is. Because what we see on the marketing side is a lot of times designers have an idea, but they don't really know who their ideal client is. You need to head through the exercise. You need to do the exercise going through your top clients, like I always say, not your highest paying clients, but the clients you want to work with, the clients you like working with, going through that exercise, seeing where there's overlaps and seeing what their issues are, what their tribulations are, and understanding that once you understand your client or who that ideal client advert is, now you can optimize your messaging to best resonate with them. Because what we often say, too, if you're marketing to everybody, you're actually marketing to no one. So if you know who your ideal client is, now you can write your messaging in a way that will resonate with them. The example that I'll often use is that when we hear from designers that do any type of ads, whether it be Google ads, Google ads, Facebook ads, and they say they don't work, when we look at their messaging, it's often generic in nature, or it's often not targeted to who they're looking for. When that happens, they're not resonating with their ideal client, and so that way they're missing the mark on who should be replying to their ads. And so they're getting a lot of junk as opposed to getting the ideal client that will reach out to them because their messaging is off because they don't really understand their ideal client. So again, go to our studio to get access to the client Avatar book so you could run through that exercise because you need to go through the exercise, take about an hour and really understand who your client Avatar is. Now you can develop messaging that will resonate with them.

**Maria: (10:17)**

So one of the first things that you would be paying for if you were to hire an advertising firm, marketing agency, or a PR professional would be to they would ask you a series of questions to try to pinpoint who your ideal client will be. So what we did is we put that together for you. And this is a free download off of our website. It's going to be designer discussions. Marketing. Studio is our page that will have that free download on there for you. And what does better quality marketing and speaking to your client open your eyes to? Well, number one, number one, as you start asking yourselves deep, meaningful questions about who your ideal client is, are they someone who flies first class and is willing to pay the extra thousands of dollars to be in a larger, more comfortable seat where they're served a glass of chilled champagne the second that they sit down? Or are they on Southwest and waiting to have a plastic cup handed across the aisle to them and sit next to a stranger's kid. Who is your ideal client? And you need these characterized, fun, personable communication style that is already fine tuned and crafted for your client. So if you know that your clients don't even go to the main airport and they go to the private hangar and they go to the private lounge and they get on their own private jet, you don't want to be talking to someone who would be okay with Southwest level service. And there's this huge difference between what we do as interior designers and being a personal assistant. And we have to look at things sometimes as am I a personal assistant or am I a professional with a very established career? And one of the things that I like to use as a reference point is that your client will either charter a boat to go on vacation and it will come with a chef and it will come with a captain and they won't have to do all the work and the labor, or they will be bringing their own boat and doing all of the work and all the labor and one person will never actually be on vacation. And you have to explain your client in their terms. And maybe they don't, maybe they're not yachties, maybe they don't boat, maybe they're the types of people that they run an Airbnb, they will understand that you're not on vacation when you're doing the laundry and you're making the bed and you're going grocery shopping and you're doing all the cooking.

**Maria: (12:17)**

Whereas when you stay in a hotel, you have all of those services already lined up and taken care of for you. And there's a difference between being a personal assistant to someone who wants to do it all themselves and being a professional interior designer that already handles everything, already has all the expectations under control and knows that they can execute it. And so what you want to start looking at is who's your ideal client? What is the level of service that they expect? And then start speaking to them in those words. If you want them to take an adventure with you where you tap into their creative spirit and create something that is unique to them that is going to set them apart in their social circles because that's what's important to them, or it provides these event spaces that they want to have people over at that are going to bring their social status up. You have to start understanding that about your client and speak to them on that level. Otherwise, you will just be Southwest Airlines and you will always be an assistant to someone who makes a lot more money than you will.

Outro: (14:09)

Anyway, we are here for you to help you understand your messaging so that you can become the design business that you want to be. And we're here as your cheering squad and your support. We think that the industry should be brought up where it has better business support and resources available. And we're doing that through our marketing studio. So we hope to hear and see you soon. So we are super excited to announce that the marketing studio is open. We are providing simple and easy to use resources to help keep your marketing, PR, and client communication the best that it can be. Go to designerdiscussions.com marketing studio to get started. We hope you've enjoyed this episode of designer discussions and all of the helpful information. Subscribe to our podcast, leave us a review and share it with your friends. We look forward to having you back next week. For more information on the podcast and the marketing studio, visit designardiscussions.com and follow us on social media.



DESIGNER DISCUSSIONS

DIGITAL MARKETING,
PR & BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT

