

HOW TO:
START
BEFORE YOU
GET STARTED.

**THE BEST WAY TO ELIMINATE PROBLEMS
WITH A PREFLIGHT DOCUMENT.**

BY BRUCE TURKEL & WILL EZELL

42 QUESTIONS TO ANSWER BEFORE YOU WRITE OR CREATE ANYTHING.

Confusion and lack of clarity are two of the biggest conversion killers. The more you ask your prospects to consider, the more likely they will do nothing. Every extra second your prospects have to think to understand your offer increases the chance that they'll get irritated and move on to your competitor.

Define one clear goal for your solution – one specific, measurable action you want your prospects to take – and focus your solution on building momentum for that action.

Make sure you understand all the aspects of the offer you are presenting – every feature, benefit, selling point, term, and condition – before you start writing a single word.

Your prospects are busy, and they will not spend several minutes trying to figure out what your offer will do for them.

Don't waste their time – immediately tell them what's in it for them. Write all the features and benefits down and make a prioritized list based on what you know about your target audience. Then, select only the most important key points to emphasize and form a solid, credible value proposition.

It's tempting just to jump in and start creating. But as the old saying goes, "If you don't ask the right questions, the answers don't matter."

This simple outline will ensure that your efforts are always focused on creating the best results for you (and your client if that's who you're working for).

The most important thing is understanding who you're working for and what you're trying to accomplish.

Remember that you are not your prospect.

Be careful not to assume how they behave or to put words in their mouth. Instead, try to be as empathetic as possible and look at what they will respond to, regardless of whether you would respond to the same stimuli or offer.

Make sure you've done all the research you need.

Include keywords and phrases (not to be confused with search engine optimization) that your prospects would use and understand. Your goal is to speak to them, not at them.

All you have to do is answer these five questions:

Who? Who are we trying to reach?

What? What do we want them to do?

Where? Where are we going to reach them?

When? When will we reach them? When will they respond?

Why? Why should they respond?

HOW WELL DO WE KNOW OUR TARGET AUDIENCE?

1. What keeps your prospect(s) awake at night?

2. What are they happy about?

3. Who and what are they angry at?

4. What are they afraid of?

5. What are their three biggest frustrations?

6. What do they secretly desire?

7. What products and services are they already buying?

8. What types of offers work best with these prospects?

9. Who is our “dream buyer?”

10. What is their “dream-come-true” result, experience, or optimal outcome?

11. What conversation is already going on in their mind?

12. Where do they spend their time (online and offline)?

13. What is the best way to reach them?

14. Why?

WHAT IS OUR OFFER?

1. Are we making a truly compelling offer?

2. Is our offer compelling enough to get someone to raise their hand?

3. Will our offer get them to respond?

4. Do we have a sense of urgency, or can they respond anytime?

5. Does our offer look like a solution, or does it look like a promotion?

6. If our offer looks contrived, what can we do to give it authenticity?

WHAT IS OUR MESSAGE?

1. Will our message be perceived as valuable information, or does it look like an advertisement?

2. Are we using conversational language?

3. Are we talking to one person at a time?

4. Is our message clear?

5. Are we sacrificing clarity for cleverness?

6. Are we telling the truth?

7. What are they attracted to?

8. Why?

WHAT SHOULD OUR MESSAGE ACCOMPLISH?

1. What are we writing?

2. What's the one clear purpose of our message?

3. What is the short-term benefit our message will achieve?

4. What is the long-term benefit our message will achieve?

5. Is our message congruent with our brand personality?

6. Why should our prospect believe what we're saying?

WHAT DO WE WANT OUR PROSPECT'S NEXT STEP TO BE?

1. Are we expecting our prospect to take the initiative?

2. Are we directing them toward the solution to their problem?

3. Are we clearly showing them what to do next?

4. Are we making it “safe” for them to take the next step?

5. How are we doing that? For example, giving them different ways to reach out (text, call, URL)?

6. Do we show them how our recommendations will improve their lives?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER YOU'VE CREATED YOUR FIRST DRAFT:

Have I given my prospects a compelling reason to accept my offer?

Read your copy and make sure that you've covered the most important selling points, features, and benefits.

If you've left out anything, you know what to do!

Are the most vital selling point(s) summarized in the title?

Your title is the most prominent part of your message offering. Plus, it's the one part of your copy you can be 99.9% sure your prospects will read.

You can't afford to lose qualified leads, so don't try to be quirky, funny, or cute. Choose the safe way and tell your potential customers what they'll get from accepting your offer. That way, there'll be no doubt in their minds that it's worth investing time in reading the rest of your landing page copy.

Is there anything I can leave out?

Some messages work best with a lot of copy – others with very little copy. But one thing is sure: no message has ever benefited from too much copy!

The more specific and targeted your message is, the better. So go through your copy, look for redundant passages, and edit ruthlessly. Remember that the real craft is not in the writing but in the rewriting.

Also, consider if some passages might work better if they were summed up in bullet points. Bullet points are a great way of creating white space and making heavy passages easier to swallow.

Have I made it as easy as possible for my prospects to do what I want them to do?

Make sure that your message includes the next step for your prospect to take. And be doubly sure that that step is easy, safe, and understandable. Remember that the result of confusion is almost always inaction.

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER.

Giving people **WHAT** they want and need **WHEN** they want and need it is the foundation of good communication, excellent customer service, and successful messaging.

The key is to let people know you're thinking about them and care about what's best for them. It's critical to understand who you're trying to reach, what they care about, and how they will best respond to your outreach.

To do this without wasting your time or spinning your wheels, it makes good sense to answer the questions in this booklet before you start crafting your message. That way, you'll have already done the hard work of creating the specifications you'll need to work with.

They say that if you don't ask the right question, the answer doesn't matter. Also, if you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there. This Preflight document will ensure that that never happens to you!



BRUCE TURKEL

Meet the branding guru who makes his clients more valuable.

He has helped build great brands, including Nike, Discovery Channel, HBO, Hasbro, Bacardi, and the Miami, Kissimmee, and Puerto Rico Visitors Bureaus.

Bruce has keynoted for many great companies, been on NPR, CNN, FOX, and MSNBC over 400 times, and featured in *Fast Company*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

Bruce has published four books on branding and customer service. His fifth, *Is That All There Is?* is a roadmap for people who want to change their lives to thrive in today's challenging times.

Why has he done this? Bruce says it's simple: "I don't play harmonica that well."

Contact Bruce at bruce@bruceturkel.com