

DEFINING YOU

S T A T E M E N T
P A R A G R A P H
D E F I N I N G S T O R Y



How Smart Professionals Craft the Answers to:

WHO ARE YOU?

WHAT DO YOU DO?

HOW CAN YOU HELP ME?

Mark LeBlanc · Kathy McAfee · Henry DeVries

DEFINING YOU

STATEMENT
PARAGRAPH
DEFINING STORY



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PART I
DEFINING
STATEMENT

by Mark LeBlanc

Preface

Professionals fail for three reasons. You will not make it in your own business or professional practice if you have a lack of clarity, a lack of congruency, and/or a lack of consistency.

It will never be due to a lack of commitment. You are committed to making something great happen in your life and work. It will not be due to a lack of conviction. Over the last twenty-five years, I have met and worked with countless business owners and independent professionals. Every single one possessed a deep sense of conviction. It was a degree of conviction that he or she had a skill, talent, message, gift and expertise that could impact the life, work or career of another person.

Unfortunately, we didn't go to school to become entrepreneurs. While there is now a select group of colleges and universities offering classes in entrepreneurship, they are usually taught by instructors who have never succeeded in their own businesses or practices.

The way you communicate who you are and what you do will ultimately help you overcome *the greatest single obstacle in the marketplace*. Seriously. It's true. While you are faced with many obstacles, the inability to communicate effectively will result in a ripple effect of chaos and confusion you may never get a handle on.



While you are faced with many obstacles, the inability to communicate effectively will result in a ripple effect of chaos and confusion you may never get a handle on.

Oh, you can still make progress. You can continue to invest in copywriters, graphic designers, branding experts, and you can still make sales. However, it will always be challenging at best to attract prospects.

Imagine a prospect saying to you, “I’d love to get together with you and talk about what you don’t know how to describe. Then when we get past that hurdle, I would like you to put together a proposal based on what you are unable to articulate.”

While that may be overly dramatic, that scenario repeats itself day after day, for professional after professional who wonder why their prospects are confused and unable to make a buying decision.

It would also likely be a very good thing for others to refer prospects to you. But if you are unable to communicate effectively about your great products or your valuable service, how do you expect others to communicate your message on your behalf?

In your hands you hold a blueprint for positioning that may be second to none. We will provide you with what you need to know and what you need to do to set yourself apart from your competition, get the ear of your decision maker, and set the stage for your fees to be an investment in the outcomes you provide versus being considered a cost to solve a problem or satisfy a need.

It is not for the faint of heart. We will do some heavy lifting. You can do this. Let’s get started!

Mark LeBlanc

CHAPTER 1

Why Define Yourself?

Let me count the ways. If meeting any or all of these outcomes, ideas and challenges is of interest to you then you are reading the right book. Please check the three reasons for defining yourself that resonate with you the most and rank them 1, 2, and 3 in order of importance.

- _____ To put you at ease when introducing yourself
- _____ To take the fear out of attending a networking event
- _____ To anchor your message in creating your marketing tools
- _____ To help you establish your expertise
- _____ To set yourself apart from your competition
- _____ To get the ear of your decision maker
- _____ To establish value early in the mind of your economic buyer
- _____ To position your fees as an investment versus a cost
- _____ To make it easier for others to refer you

In late 1999, I wrote a little blue book titled *Growing Your Business!* It became an underground bestseller and led to hundreds of quantity book sales. Most volume sales were fifty copies or more while quite a number of orders were twenty-five copies or more. The book was an easy read and one you could digest in an hour or so. It was chock full of practical and easy-to-implement ideas.

Over the years, I have received many notes and emails regarding the simplicity of the book and the ideas contained in it. However, I believe the popularity of the book can be summed up in two words: chapter 2.

In chapter 2, titled Position Yourself for More Prospects, I shared a personal story of branding pain and a path for helping professionals answer the question, “What do you do?” It is a question that strikes fear into the hearts and minds of people in business around the world. For many it is so difficult to invest the time and energy to answer the question that they will invest thousands of dollars on everything but the ability to articulate the answer.

I shared thoughts on how you can answer the question by firmly stating your titles. If the first few sentences reveal your name and your title or titles, then your primary positioning strategy is positioning by titles. If you quickly move to listing your products or services, you often find yourself competing with other professionals who offer the same or similar products and services. In the majority of instances, you can find yourself defaulting to who has the better collateral materials or competing by proposal which in many cases leads to positioning by price or lower price.

My world changed forever the day I accidentally stumbled upon or was divinely guided to a new way to introduce myself at a networking meeting. I had attended this meeting nearly ten months in a row and every time I had the opportunity to say something, I tried on a new introduction. In fact, even with best intentions I found myself repelling prospects versus attracting prospects. It was incredibly painful.

As fate would have it, and before I was ready to throw in the towel on my dream of being a business speaker and coach, I answered the question with a different approach. I skipped my titles and my services. After I stated my name and without a lot of enthusiasm, I muttered the words, “I work with people who



My world changed forever the day I accidentally stumbled upon or was divinely guided to a new way to introduce myself at a networking meeting.

want to start a business and small business owners who want to grow their business.” And I sat down.

People approached me after the meeting and wanted to find out more. I didn’t understand how or why—but I was smart enough to try it again at another networking meeting. More people wanted to find out more. And within thirty days or so, I closed seven prospects on helping them start or grow their business.

This was a welcome change, or even a miracle, because for the first twelve months of my new business, I had not attracted a prospect in a way that he or she wanted to know more. Of course, that meant in twelve months I had no business. When I share that I had no business, I mean no business. None. Nada. Zip. Zero. Not a nickel.

Now I was in business and serving my first seven clients. It would take me a while to understand the depth of what had occurred, and why it mattered. Little did I know then what I know to be true today. I had gone beyond my titles and services to the articulation of the outcomes of my work. Starting a business and growing your business were three-word outcomes.

When you reach this level of positioning you have a greater likelihood of attracting more prospects, setting yourself apart from your competition and increasing the odds your fees will be considered an investment versus a cost.

It would mark the moment I developed or conceived the four phases of the marketing and selling process. For our purposes in this book, it will help you navigate the first phase I refer to as the attraction phase.

Understanding the four phases will create a framework for marketing and selling your products and services. Developing or crafting your *defining statement*, *defining paragraph*, and *defining story* will help you master the attraction phase of the process.

My colleague Kathy McAfee will share the framework on how to craft a defining paragraph and Henry DeVries, my business partner, will provide you with what you need to know and what you need to do in order to develop your defining story.

We will provide you with real examples of our own statements, paragraphs and stories, as well as real world examples of others who have heard, taken notes, done the work, and profited in many ways.