



How to Build a Unique Value Proposition

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Whom does your financial advisory firm specifically serve? What's the main value you offer your clients? What separates you from other firms, especially the ones competing for the same clients? How do you deliver on what you promise?



If you're not sure how to answer these questions, it's time to craft a unique value proposition that defines what makes your firm different. This short statement, which is a crucial part of your messaging, shows potential clients whom you serve, how you're different and how you deliver on your commitment.

The unique exercise below will help you develop a value proposition that defines your company and catches the eye of future clients. Here's how it works:

Step 1: Define your market

Narrow down your client base. If most of your clients are affluent engineers, union workers or multigenerational families, here's where you get specific. While you'll want to list the very specific groups your firm caters to – affluent engineers, for instance – you will want to cast a slightly wider net to gain clients that fall just outside of that description.

Your market should be sufficiently well-defined such that any potential client could read your value proposition and say, "This firm doesn't serve me" or "This is exactly what I'm looking for."

Step 2: Explain the main benefit you offer clients

If you run an advisory firm, then wealth management, investment management and financial planning are what you do, plain and simple. For this section, go beyond what your firm does, and explain how your services set you apart.

How do you do this? Define a main benefit. Here are two examples of main benefits, one that's too broad and another that sets just the right tone:

Example 1 (too broad):

We are a financial services firm that helps families save for the future.

Example 2 (just right):

We are a financial services firm that helps retirees maximize the distribution of their wealth to charitable institutions.

Step 3: Identify how you deliver on your promise

Get into the mind of your potential clients. You've already told them *whom* you serve and *what* you do, but they want to know *how* you're going to get them there. In this section, you explain how you deliver on your promises.

For example:

Using a 50-point assessment that helps us identify and address weak points in financial plans

Or

Portfolios using an investment strategy developed by Nobel Prize-winning economists

To create your unique value proposition, fill in these blanks:

_____ (firm name) is a _____ (category) that provides _____ (market) with _____ (key benefit) through _____ (delivery).

Examples of complete unique value propositions:

1. *Legacy Wealth Management is a fee-only Registered Investment Advisor that helps families create a legacy for future generations through a proprietary process that builds personal financial success in line with their charitable and spiritual values.*
2. *Aviation Capital Management is an independent Registered Advisor that helps private, commercial and airline pilots make smart financial decisions that will allow them to achieve their professional and recreational goals through our 25 years of experience in providing investment, retirement, financial, tax, insurance and career advice to aviators.*

The outcome!

With a strong and unique value proposition, you'll explain exactly the type of client you want to serve without having to give a long, winding explanation. You'll also attract the clients who will benefit most from your services.

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