

Welcome to Bridge the Gap Contributor Wednesday, I'm Chris Watson and I am excited to be a contributor for the next six weeks here in 2022. I am the CEO and Founder of Craft and Compel. We help organizations strategically communicate to increase revenue and engagement. And my hope is on these episodes is to give you some strategies, some tips that you're gonna be able to utilize within your own organization and in your life. So let's kick it off. In my very first, one of my very first sales jobs at a fortune 500 company, I kept coming up against the same objection, kept banging my head against it and not really knowing how do I overcome it? Well the objection was is that the product I was selling didn't offer a large enough profit margin. I sold contact lenses for a company that you all might have heard of.

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It was a subsidy of Johnson and Johnson. And as I went into each of these optometrists selling the product, I kept getting the same objection over and over. Yeah, Chris there's just not a big enough profit margin in your product. It's one of the most expensive products on the market. And so I can't increase the cost anymore than what I already have. With the competitive products. I can increase it 20 to 30% and make a nice margin. Well I, as one of my very first sales jobs, didn't really know how to overcome the cost objection, other than to continue to say what our marketing was saying and what I had been told by the sales trainers, that our product was the best, that your customers would love it the most, but it wasn't enough. So I went to my manager and I said, "how do I need to overcome this objection?"

And he said, it's to time, to be honest with them, it's time to be bold. You need to be forthright about the reality that there isn't a big profit margin within the product. And I said, "okay." So I went back to two or three of my biggest potential customers that were utilizing our competitors' product. And I said, "you know what? You're right." I don't wanna argue at this point anymore, cuz you're exactly right. You will not get as much revenue off of our product as you will. Your competitor's. He looked at me and he said, "well, I guess we don't need a meet anymore." And he left and I was shocked. I had done exactly what my boss had told me to do. I had done what I thought was the right way to communicate to my buyer. Well, I went back to my boss and I said, "I did what you told me to do.

I was honest with..I communicated effectively. I said exactly what we needed to say. And I was truthful. I was honest with him." And he said, "well, what did you say?" I told him what I said. And he said, "that's not what I meant." Uh-oh. This happens in our organizations all the time. It happens in sales. It happens in marketing. It happens in leadership, that we think that we're getting our point across that we think that our intention is wrong enough that it's coming through on the execution of our communication. And quite frankly, it's not. It happens over and over and it has a massive effect. What I want to walk you through is I want to walk you through three quick things that can improve your communication and how you should view communication within your organization. Number one, your communication should be strategic.

There should be a strategy behind the way that you're communication, the way you're communicating internally in your organization. Many times there isn't a strategy. Many times it's an additive, it's an

enhancement, it's an afterthought. It's something that we do after we do the other strategies. We do financial strategy. We will even do customer acquisition strategy. We'll even do sales process strategy, but we're not talking about well, what is the communication within that? So, number one, we have to make sure that we're building a strategy with our communication. Really, we need to be thinking about that when we are communicating, we're gonna save time. We're gonna save money. If we can effectively communicate, we will make sure every single time that there is alignment. That what I'm saying and what my manager is saying, what we're saying internally, as well as what we're saying externally is going to align.

Cause quite frankly, that is one of the most important things in both sales and marketing, because it's outbound that we want to make sure that what is being said internally is then being said effectively, externally to our buyers, to our prospects and to our partners. We also can create a better culture. If we, if everyone is on the same page and we know how we're communicating we know what is the strategy behind the way we are communicating both internally and externally, it increases our ability to work with one another. And we all want to work in an environment where each of us are saying the same thing. There's common language. I know I have, plus I know you have worked in an environment where that wasn't the case where we were saying slightly the same, but we decided to make it our own every time, make it your own, make it your own.

Well, after time, if we distill this, "make it your own enough." We aren't saying the same thing anymore. Number two. We like to use the what, how and who model that was, I believe created by Georgia Everest. So the what category, okay. Why is a customer going to want to buy your product? Why should they buy your product? When we think about the what, when we're building out this strategy behind our communication, we want to know why should a customer want to buy your product? And what is the information they can go and find about your organization? You need to know that internally, as well as how we're going to communicate it externally, which leads me into the how, what channel are we going to put this communication out? Are we going to use social media? Are we going to use direct mail? Are we going to use radio?

Are we going to use TV? Are we going to use a combination? Are we going to use maybe an icon that goes with a flyer? What are we going to use to effectively communicate our products and our services to our buyer? We also need to know what are the strengths and the weakness of each of these channels. For some of our buyers, they may not be on social media. For some of our buyers they may be streaming and they aren't watching cable TV. For some of our buyers they work remotely, which means that they may not be receiving mail directly to their home. They may be receiving it somewhere else. So we need to consider all of these things. On average, an executive leader receives about 144 emails a day. If you have chosen email as your channel for communicating to a buyer, why they should buy, why they should hop on phone call, why they should have a discovery call?

Well, your email has to be better than the other 143, and has to stand out in a way that they choose to read it, to consume it. You also are hoping that throughout their day, they have the time to do that. And we all know that those things are, it's a guessing game. So we have to make sure that we're choosing the

right, the who audience. We have to know who our audience is. We have to have strategies for all of the specific groups of our audience. In most cases, the audiences you might have is you're going to have obviously new buyers, you're going to have existing buyers. You're gonna have strategic partners, but you might also have things like investors. I also like to think about that one of our audiences is our people internally. And so I want to know what is the communication?

What is the strategy? Who is the audience and how am I communicating with them internally? How am I communicating with my people? How am I communicating with my partners? How am I communicating with my new customers versus my existing customers? Now you're listening to this and you're probably saying, "oh yeah, of course this makes complete sense. It doesn't rocket science." Well, unfortunately, a lot of organizations have chosen one form of communication, one strategy, and they're deploying it to each of these groups the same. Now they may change one or two words past tense, future tense, present tense. But in reality, they're not really changing. They're not customizing, they're not making it specific for the groups. And we all know that when you speak specifically to me being a almost 40 year old with a son that lives in a suburb of a large city that owns his own business.

When you start speaking to that category, I perk up. But if you just speak to a man who is married and has a kid, you know, some of that might miss because maybe you're speaking about like an eight to five job. Well, I don't work an eight to five job. Or maybe you're speak to something very specific that I don't actually do in my world. So the more that we can build a strategy for our specific group, the more that we're going to see that we are enabling revenue more effectively. Lastly, you need people internally. Once you've built this strategy, once you have developed the what, how and who model, but you need people internally that can own the process. So this isn't a, we build the model and then we do it. That doesn't work. There has to be a process that can be utilized and work through by people who can own it.

So here's what I mean, each department needs to have some initiatives of what and how they are communicating. Why? Because human resources, HR is gonna have a different audience to who they're speaking to more regularly than say your sales team or your marketing team. So we need them to, one be aligned with our internal communication and how we're communicating. But two, we need them to be able to build communication for the specific audiences that they're interacting with. And there needs to be a process that every department can follow to be able to know, how am I communicating to the audiences that I have, the audiences that are high priority, the audiences that are more frequent, and the audiences that I love to work with and the audiences that may be you know, creating conflict or may be difficult and whatever those are, I need to have a strategy for those. And there needs to be a process for how that I am creating these communication strategies that we're going to be utilizing.

Your people need to feel like that there is a future for them internally. So no matter what department, they're a part of. If you want them to own the process, they need to understand the future. They need to understand the why. Why am I doing this? Why is this important? How does this affect me? How does this affect the organization? We can't get buy in until someone understands why they're getting ready to go through the process instead of just throwing a process and say, "do this." You know, I like to think about what a company like Weight Watchers does, where they have the split screen and they show you

the before and the after. Well, the after is the future in those people's mind, lost X amount of pounds. They look like this, they're more healthy. They can work out all the time. They can see their kids or grandkids, but that's the future.

So then they say, "okay, the middle part before and after is our process come to our process and then you will have this future." And that's what our internal people are thinking of all the time. Too often, we focus so much on our prospects externally. We don't realize that really our internal people are like an existing customer in order to retain them. We have to continue to remind them the future that we see with them. At Craft and Compel, we like to use a very simple model framework that you can take. We like to think about it as what is our audience's story, what is our story? And then what's the future story that we could have together. So whenever we're in sales or whenever we're in and marketing, and we are putting marketing out there for inbound to come in and then for us to determine that this prospect is now conversation ready.

So then the salesperson's going to reach out to them. And when we reach out to them, we make sure to remind them of what? The future story. So each of us, we all buy a core to the future. We buy a car thinking of how does this improve my future? We buy a TV thinking about how does this improve my future? We buy a trip, a vacation. How does this improve my future? We invest in a college into a degree. How does this improve my future? In fact, I would even, and go as far as saying, is that when you go in maybe eat a, a double double from, In and Out or a burger from Whataburger, you're actually, when you buy that are thinking, "this will improve my future even though that future may be four minutes from now that you're full and your red day to go back to work." Every purchase we make every money we invest.

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Every time we invest into anything, we are believing in our hearts that this improves our future. Otherwise we don't do it. Does it always impact our future in a positive way? No, it does not, but that is what we are considering. So let's go through each of these. What does it mean when we're talking about this framework in terms of what is their story? Well, any audience that we have, we need to be determining, what is their story. Meaning what are they presently going through? What are their hopes and dreams? Where do they want to end up? So when we think about that, and I think about that in terms of my internal people, I think about that as a, a new buyer, a new prospect. And I think about that as an existing customer, I need to make sure that I have the strategy that is ongoingly communicating to this group of people that I understand your story.

I understand where you are. I understand where you come from. I understand where you want to go and we can offer that. And this is how, transition to our story. This is who we are. This is what we stand for. We work with people just like you. This is what we've allowed them to do. This is how we've helped enhance their world. We understand that when you're going through X, that really what you want is Y. We need to communicate our story in a way that is aligned with their story. We work with people like you often. We help people solve the problem that you're up against. We know the, the pain that you might be going through, or the struggle that you might be going through. Unfortunately, what tends to happen, I will tell you is, is that when we communicate our story, we're only communicating our story as if we are a vitamin and we want to be a pain killer.

We don't want to be just a vitamin. We want to be a pain killer, but we can't be a pain killer. If we don't know what they're going through. If we don't know the pain they're going through my good buddy, Torlando Hakes, him and I talk a lot about this idea of there is a future world with an elixir that every one of our buyers or every one of our audience members want, and that we want to be the guide on the journey, helping them get to that magical kingdom with the elixir. And the elixir is our product, our service, or it is us, our organization. So when you think about the journey that your people, that your prospects and that your partners are on and where they currently are at in the world right now, which is the ordinary world with a lot of pain on a lot of problems, you have to be the magical world with the elixir.

And you have to communicate that in this framework. What is their story? Ordinary world where are you? What is our story? I want to guide you. I have things that can help guide you to the journey that you want. And then lastly, what's the future story? What's the story that we have together? The magical kingdom with the elixir. If you can follow that framework from what is their story? To what is our story? To what is the future story? You will have more success in both your sales and in your marketing, because too often in sales and marketing, we are leading with our story. We're communicating our story very first, we're saying, "Hey, let me tell you all the great things that we do. Let me tell you all the value propositions that we have." And unfortunately what happens in those moments is that we don't do a very good job of letting them know our audience, letting them know that we understand their world.

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We understand their story. We understand where they currently are at and where they want to go. So communication has to be a strategy in order to have a high performance organization. And in order to save time and money, to have alignment and to improve your culture, you have to make it that we are going to have a strategy in everything that we do with communication. Communication, no longer can just be an enhancement. You want to use the what, how and who model. The what is the category? The category is why should a consumer buy our product and service and a little bit where I can learn about your organization. The how is the channel in which they're going to put this communication out, whether it be social media, direct mail, radio, whatever, whatever, all those channels are concerning your product or service, and then the who, who's our audience? And strategies for each of those audiences.

And then lastly, I need to know do I have the right people who can own the process that we need to make sure that we're deploying this strategic communication in all of our departments? And are they, do they know the future that this organization offers them? Do they understand the importance of community indicating effectively, externally, because we're doing such a great job internally. And can they take your process and utilize that in their specific department? Or are they on an island choosing what words and what language and what strategies that they're going to use on their own? Because we haven't done a great job of teaching them the process. At Craft and Compel. We use a framework that is what is our audience's story, what is our story? And what's the future story? You can take that framework and you can utilize it in your sales process.

You can utilize it in your marketing. Now, as you're listening to this, what I'll tell you is that my goal is to be the guide. To be the guide on the journey of you understanding the importance of strategic communication. Because we are in a world now where so many people are working remotely, or they're working on a hybrid model, or quite frankly, people don't want to have face to face communications as often. They want you to text them. They want you to email them. They want you to send them a voice memo. And because of that, we have to as individuals get so much more strategic in our communication. Now, disclaimer. Strategic does not mean manipulative. Those are two different things. Because my goal and every time I communicate is to make you feel a certain way, as well as want you to take a specific action.

Now, I believe that that emotion and that action is what's best for you because I believe in my product, I believe in my service, I believe in who I am. If I don't believe in my product or service, then I may not be the right to be communicating to outward buyers or to the audience our products and services. I have to believe in our own product that can impact your life for it to be strategic, for it to be communication that actually impacts your life. And so we are in this world right now where we you're in the digital age. And in the digital age, as we have seen the metaverse, as we have seen NFTs, as we have seen more ways for us to isolate, then we have to become strategic in the way that we communicate, we have to make the most impact. And the shortest amount of time, we have to let people know that we understand the situation that they're in the world that they live in. And then we have to offer them to be a guide, to help them get to a better world to the future world that will make them happier. That will improve their life. That will increase their business, that will help them increase their revenue, or maybe increase their engagement internally.

We are currently in a world that as we continue to pull further away from people, we are diving deeper into technologies that are communicating for us, and that we may lose the communication we want, the strategy we want in translation. And so what I would challenge you to do is to take everything you learned from this podcast and the ones that are upcoming and from all the other contributors and start thinking about how can we strategically communicate better internally so that I can trust my people, I can trust our organization, that we are effectively communicating externally.

As I sat back down with my boss, he said, "I need you to go back in and have an honest conversation with him." And I said, "I've already had an honest conversation with them." They say, no, what we need to communicate is that "yes, our product may not give them a great profit margin upfront, but that if they don't utilize our product, they may lose the customer completely because our product feels so great. And that our product will get such great results from the patient, the customer that they will actually retain the customer for so much longer, as well as any other family members or any other friends or people that they tell about our great contact lens." So I went back and I begged and I plead in, I said, can I just have one more conversation? And I said, I want to apologize because I was a poor communicator.

What I meant to say, and to follow up on my last communication was that yes, initially you are exactly right. We aren't gonna give you the profit margin that you want. But what I can tell you is that unless you want your patients to leave because they weren't offered the best product, then you need to try our

product more frequently because what our product offers is maybe not the initial revenue, but instead what it offers is retention. And so I asked questions like, how much money do you make often customer if they stay here for a full year? And he told me the number, okay, what about two years? What about five years? Well, how much do you lose if that customer leaves? So began to help them see a better future by that using our product allows them to retain their customers, which means it builds the practice quicker because they're not just replacing customers.

They're actually building on top of a customer base. That would've been a better strategy upfront. Now, did it work for every single one? No, I'm not here to say that, but I am here to say that if someone had given me a better strategy upfront into why we're communicating what we're communicating, if we hadn't just used words of, "Hey, go be honest, go talk to them." That there's a very good chance that I would've never had to go back and beg for a conversation. And I also probably lost a lot of orders, a lot of revenue for my own territory, for my own business, being a salesperson in that moment. So I will challenge you if you're listening to of this to think about the way you're communicating, to think about your intent, to think about your execution. In every moment that we communicate in the micro, we are having a drastic effect on the macro outcomes of what we're doing in our lives. So today, while you're listening to this, think about your next conversation. Think about your intent. Think about your execution. Think about how you want to communicate. Do you have a strategy? Do you understand the, what, the how the who? Do you understand how you're going to communicate a better future for your audience? Thanks so much for listening to this week's BTG Contributor Wednesday, please connect with me over at BTGvoice.com.