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Positioning for Growth:
Using Market Research to Send the
Right Message to Your Customers

This presentation can be accessed at www.shepherdadvisors.com

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About Shepherd Advisors

Shepherd Advisors is a management consulting and market research firm that helps companies and communities accelerate business success in clean energy and other markets.

Companies engage Shepherd Advisors to build and implement growth strategies, improve marketing and sales, diversify market opportunities, sharpen their competitive edge, and access public funding.

Today's Objective

To discuss customer messaging – a fundamental factor in achieving sales success!

Explore the need for and how to identify the “right messages” or your audience

*The “**Right Messages**” = the marketing messages that will prompt your target customers to do business with you*

Today's Agenda

- Objective
- The Right Messages
 - Why Messaging Matters
 - The “Right Messages”
 - Needs Hierarchy
 - Identifying the “Right Messages”
 - Creating the Narrative
- Cases
- Recap
- Q&A

The Right Messages

Why Messaging Matters

- Effectively communicating your **value proposition** to **target customers** is key to attracting more customers you want
- Marketing Messages should convey the **key aspects** of your offering/value prop
 - How it contrasts w/competitors
- Developing the “Right Messages” will resonate with your target customers

Your Target Customers

- Knowing your target customer is vital for formulating the right messages
 - Your messaging should speak to your target customer's needs
- Focus on the needs of target customer rather than the needs of all customers
- Increases likelihood of your message resonating and leading to sales

The Right Messages

While several needs are valued by customers (therefore influencing purchase decisions), there are generally 1 or 2 “**essential needs**” or motivating factors

Example 1....

“They are willing to go **above and beyond others** in meeting my needs – I’m willing to pay extra for that”

Example 2....

“Their ability to **solve my complex mfg needs** wins my business – I trust them to get it done”

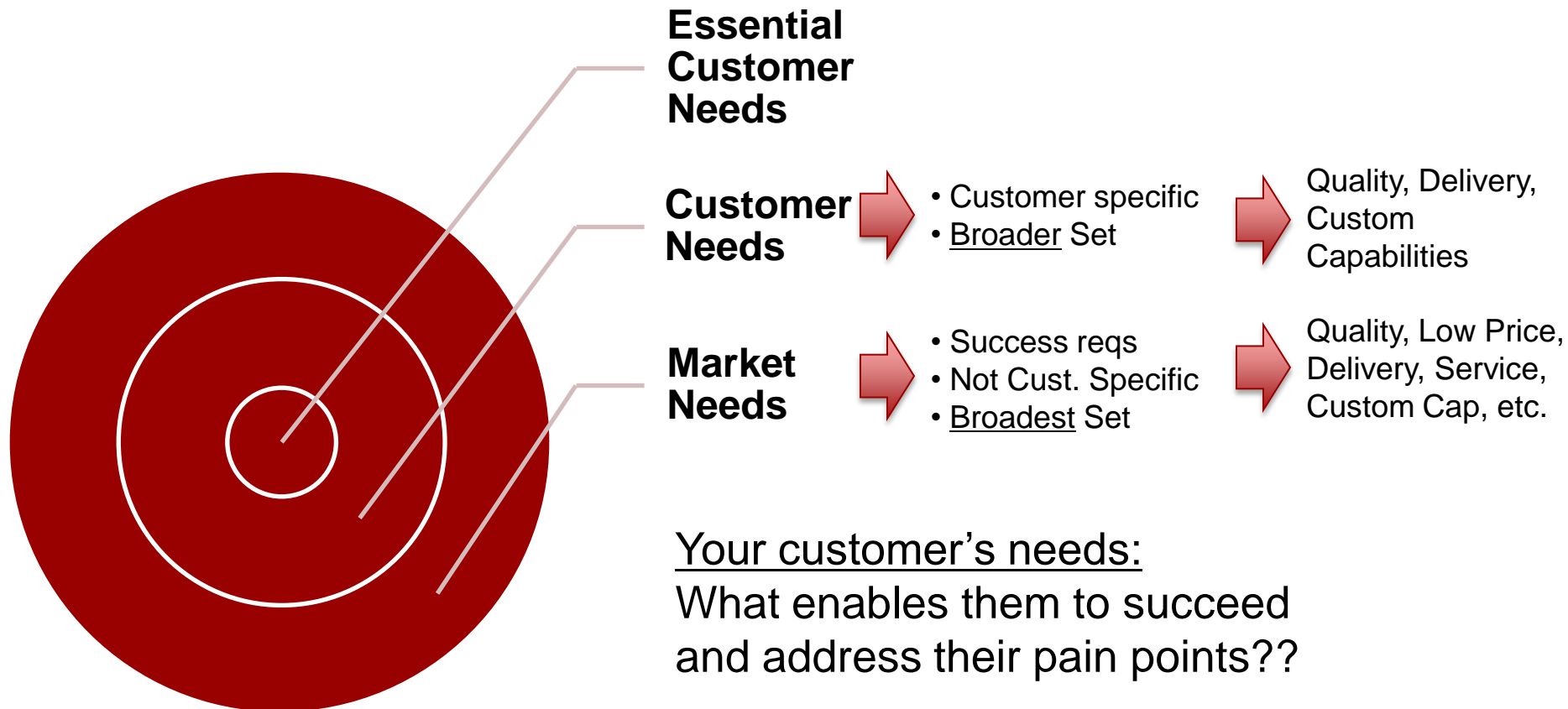
Needs Hierarchy

Your messaging points are shaped by:



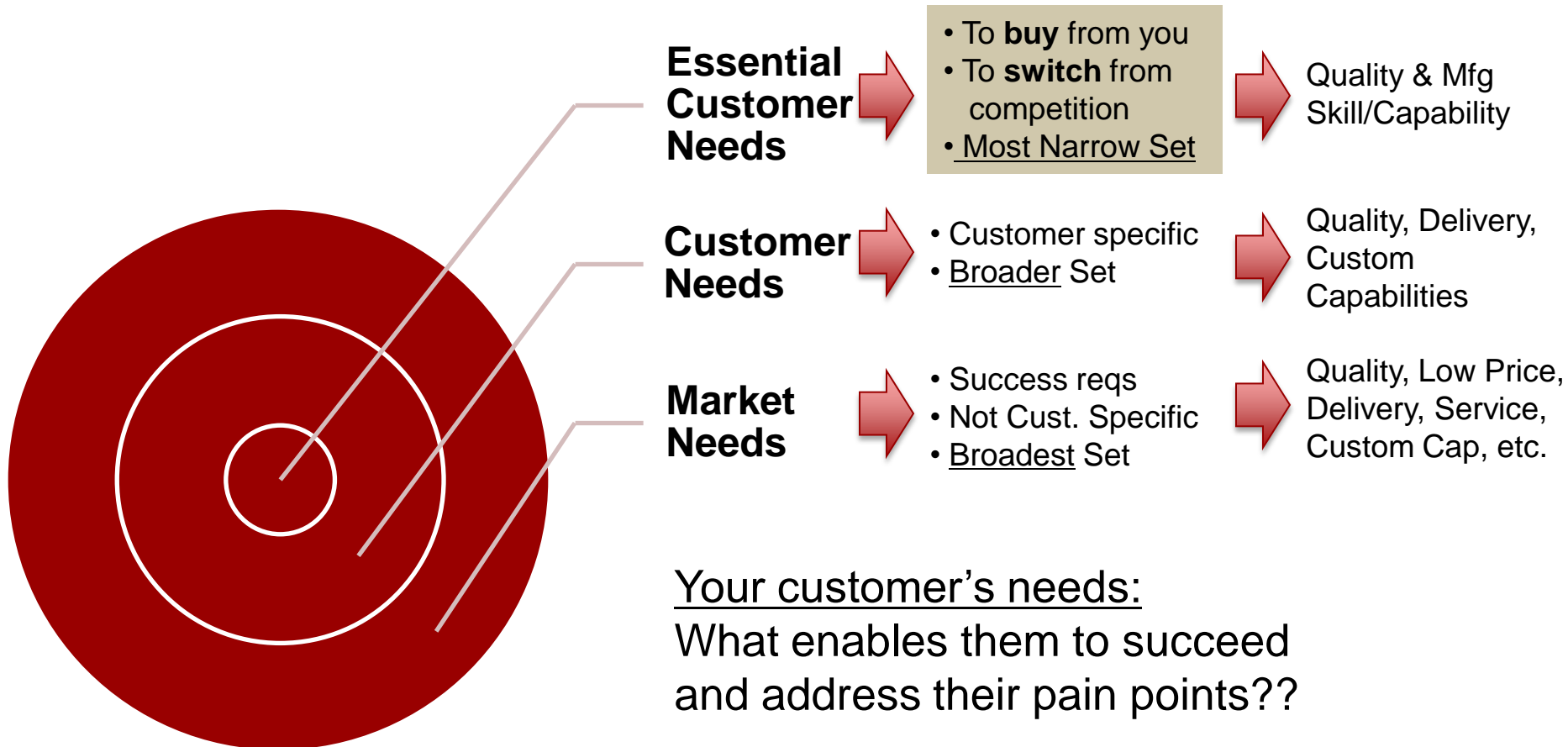
Needs Hierarchy

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Needs Hierarchy

Your messaging points are shaped by:



Identifying the Right Messages: The Market Research Process



Shepherd Research Output: Takeaways from Customer/Prospect Interviews

Target Cust.	Key Customer Needs	Essential Needs
1	Quality, Delivery, Service, Skill	Willing to pay premium for Skill & Service
2	Quality, Delivery, Service	Quality and Service are priority – Price is important but not decision driver
3	Price, Quality, Delivery	Price is important but not King – will pay more if quality warrants
4	Quality, Delivery, Service	On time delivery and follow up on servicing is key
5	Price, Delivery, Service	<u>Low price will win</u>
6	Quality, Service, Custom Capability	Willing to pay premium for skill & service
<u>Takeaways</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service and Quality are common across all • Price plays varying role 	<p><u>Essential needs (right messages to convey):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Mfg Capabilities(Skill)</u> • <u>Service</u> <p>Price is subordinate for these customers</p>

Strategic Implication: Focus on less price oriented customers & prospects

Create the Marketing Messaging Narrative

- Narrative from Prior Example:
 - “*We offer high quality products with the ability to provide custom solutions and **solve your manufacturing needs**. We focus on consistent on time delivery and **provide industry leading customer service**. We are the large scale **manufacturing experts!**”*
- Cites several customer needs but places emphasis on essential needs
- Test your findings/conclusions with customers
- Refine as needed to ensure it’s truly motivating!

Adapting Your Narrative to Marketing Collateral

Marketing Collateral	Primary Audience	Narrative Length	Narrative Style
Sales Talking Points	Sales Leads & Prospects	Relatively Brief (elevator pitch)	Less formal
Website Copy	The Market including sales leads & prospects	Brief (home page) More detail on secondary pages	Can be Less formal
Trade Show Collateral	Partners, vendors, sales leads & prospects	More detail	More formal
Brochures	Partners, vendors, sales leads & prospects	More detail	More formal

Shepherd Client Cases

Shepherd Client Case

Client:	Manufacturer of Bullet Resistant & Safety Products Looking to Grow Sales
Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Felt business was viewed as providing better service vs. competitors• Large competitors focusing on non-custom, off the shelf solution solutions
Business Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grow sales leveraging his competitive strengths & optimize his sales channels
Our Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interview customers to ascertain needs & how business was viewed
Findings to Inform the “Right Messages”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customers <u>strongly valued</u> his attention to detail, problem solving ability, and overall customer service• They <u>stated willingness to pay a premium</u> for his service• Client implemented updated messaging speaking to these needs with new brochures and redesigned website - feels his message is being better received by sales prospects.
Other Key Learnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Client strongly committed to messaging his position and focused it more on custom projects• POV varied somewhat across sales channels - emphasized the premium service qualities to differing extents• Client placed less emphasis on channels that valued his service less

Shepherd Client Case

Client:	Manufacturer of mobility carts for athletes w/ disabilities
Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company was always been reactive in marketing and sales • Looking to proactively grow sales through better customer outreach
Business Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand customer desires and sales process • Understand recreational therapy as sales channels
Our Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewed past customers • Surveyed members of recreational therapy programs
Findings to Inform the “Right Messages”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers really liked the product’s dependability and affordability, and firm’s customer service • Many therapy programs buy/recommend carts, AND need grant funding to purchase carts – so helping to link buyers with grants is a BIG BONUS
Other Key Learnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve web site to highlight products’ dependability and customer support. Augment with great stories. • Partner with, not just sell to, recreational therapy programs • Get on facebook and join relevant facebook groups

Shepherd Client Case

Client:	Metal fabrication and welding company
Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Owner is a creative designer and inventor with many patents• Highest margins on shipping rack and racking systems
Business Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Position company and website to increase sales of shipping racks and racking systems
Our Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interview current customers• Interview prospective customers• Review web site
Findings to Inform the “Right Messages”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appreciate firm’s ability to innovate and its attention to detail when creating shipping racks and racking for new parts• Really liked ability to both design AND build custom racks
Other Key Learnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pricing was competitive• Potential customers are open to new suppliers – but have to be persistent and prove oneself• Web content needed to focus on needs of shipping rack customers

Recap

- “Right Messages” prompt customers to buy
- Right messaging matters to target customers
- Focus on your customer’s “essential” needs
- Use market research to uncover right messaging
- Create a narrative – test & refine
- Adapt right messaging to different collateral
- Cases

Q&A

- Questions/Comments?
 - To Ask Questions:
 - write question/comment(s)
in the question box and send



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