

Key Message development

Once you've established your audience and what you want to achieve, it's time to start developing your key message (and sub-messages). This comes down to three things:

What do you want to say? (don't overcomplicate your message; keep it simple, short, memorable and repeatable).

In what order do you need to say it? (don't start at the beginning, start with what's most important).

How do you say it? Think about the words, phrases and tone that appeal to your audience. In other words, passing the 'what's in it for me?' test.

Getting started

The '6Ws' are a good starting point for planning out your story. Ideally, you should cover all of these. Here's a hypothetical example to get you started:

You are responsible for coordinating communications on the (imaginary!) 'DoIT' computer system. Before you start writing, let's think about how this relates to the 6Ws.

- **Why:** Important upgrades to the system will make users more efficient.
- **What:** Several new modules plus usability improvements
- **Who:** All users of the system
- **Where:** At their desks (and fingertips!)
- **When:** Available right now!
- **How:** They need to log-in to start exploring and using these new features

If you have multiple audiences, you can tailor this basic template for each one.

Creating the key messaging document

This doesn't have to be complicated. Use a 3x3 grid.

- No more than three key messages.
- No more than three sub-messages for each.
- No more than 9 words for each.

Remember: this is a reference tool. Once created and approved, it provides a single and definitive high-level story for you, your team – and any third-party creative vendors you might use. Why reinvent the wheel?

Stakeholder	Users of the DoIT IT system	
Main objective	To ensure that users understand and use the new features	
Message #1	We've upgraded DoIT!	It has a new intuitive user interface to make your life easier.
		A new module has been added that enables you to connect with third parties.
		We've simplified the log-in process.
Message #2	Check out the new, improved DoIT	Visit the home page.
		Check out the short video on the new features.
		Start exploring. Contact us if you have questions.
Message #3	Better for you and your fellow users	This new system will save you time and effort
		Based on direct feedback from our pilot group.
		Spread the word to fellow users.

Tips to remember

- Avoid the temptation to tell everyone everything. They are unlikely to have the time to read it all.
- Don't assume your audience knows your topic as intimately as you do. Keep the language simple, jargon-light, and concise.
- Use active and positive language where possible (we are a 'bright' company, after all!).

If in doubt, consult the [DSM Writing Guide](#)

Stakeholder	...	
Main concern		
Message #1	<i>your message</i>	Proof point 1
		Proof point 2
		Proof point 3
Message #2	<i>your message</i>	Proof point 1
		Proof point 2
		Proof point 3
Message #3	<i>your message</i>	Proof point 1
		Proof point 2
		Proof point 3