

BONUS WORKSHEET

The H.O.W.T.R.O.O. Message Audit Worksheet™

Run any marketing message through this 7-point truth test.

Pronounced “how true.” Because every message you publish should pass this truth test.

A free tool from

Art Impact Marketing Agency

Companion gift to the Business Marketing Essentials training.

What this is

The H.O.W.T.R.O.O. framework — pronounced “how true” — is the seven-point filter for any marketing message you write. Headline. Tagline. Bio. Ad copy. Email subject line. Business card. Voicemail greeting. Website hero. Anything.

Every message you put in front of a customer should pass this truth test. If it fails on more than two letters, the message isn't ready for the public. Run it through this worksheet, rewrite it, and run it again.

This isn't about making your marketing perfect. It's about making it true — to your business, to your customer, and to the result you want.

How to use it

1. Pick ONE message to audit. Just one. Start with the message most visible to potential customers (usually your website headline or your social media bio).
2. Write the original message in the box at the top of the audit grid.
3. Go down the seven letters. For each letter, mark Pass or Fail and write a one-sentence explanation.
4. Rewrite the message using what you just discovered.
5. Run the rewrite back through the same seven-point filter. Repeat until every letter passes.

What to expect on your first audit

It is not unusual for a first audit to find three to five fails. That isn't a flaw. That's the worksheet doing what it's supposed to do — surfacing what your customer was experiencing all along.

The H.O.W.T.R.O.O. Framework

	Stands for	The question it asks	What good looks like
H	Helps	Does the message in one way or another help? Does it clearly state who you help?	“We help [specific customer type] do [specific thing].” Generic = invisible.
O	Overcomes	Does it name the problem, frustration, or obstacle you solve?	If the reader doesn’t see their own pain in your message, they keep scrolling.
W	What’s in it for me	Is the benefit to the reader immediate and obvious?	Not your features. Their outcome. “So what?” should be answered in the first 10 words.
T	Tells (story), Touches and Teaches	Does it tell a bit of story, create emotional connection AND deliver a small insight?	Information without feeling forgets. Feeling without information doesn’t convert.
R	Resonates	Does it sound like how your customer actually talks and feels?	If your message could appear in a textbook, it probably won’t appear in a sale.
O	Outstanding	Is it memorable, or does it sound like every comparable brand?	If a colleague, peer, or comparable brand could say it about themselves, you’re wallpaper.
O	Offers	Is there a clear, specific next step or offer?	“Call today” is not an offer. “Get your free 15-minute brand clarity call” is.

Your Audit Grid

Write the original message in the box below. Then go down the seven letters — mark Pass or Fail and write your one-sentence reason. Don't overthink it. Your gut is part of the data.

ORIGINAL MESSAGE

	Letter	Question	Pass / Fail	Why
H	Helps	Does the message clearly state who you help?		
O	Overcomes	Does it name the problem you solve?		
W	What's in it for me	Is the benefit to the reader immediate?		
T	Touches and Teaches	Does it connect emotionally AND inform?		
R	Resonates	Does it sound like your customer?		
O	Outstanding	Is it memorable or generic?		
O	Offers	Is there a clear next step?		

REWRITTEN MESSAGE

Self-Scoring Guide

Count how many letters passed. Use this guide to decide what to do next.

Score	Verdict	What to do next
7 of 7	Ship it.	This message is doing the work. Move on to your next message and run the same audit.
5 – 6 of 7	One more rewrite.	Address the specific fails. Do not start over — you're close.
3 – 4 of 7	Heavy rewrite needed.	The message has a foundation but is leaking value. Rebuild around the failing letters.
0 – 2 of 7	Not ready.	The message is not ready for the public. The good news: you found out before your customer did.

The 7 Messages to Audit Next

Most business owners have five to seven marketing messages working in public at any one time. Each one deserves its own audit. Print one worksheet per message. Use this checklist to make sure none of them are missed.

- Your website headline. (The first sentence visitors see when your page loads.)
- Your social media bios. (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok, X — each one is separate.)
- Your business card tagline.
- Your voicemail greeting.
- Your email signature tagline.
- Your lead magnet headline. (The thing you give away to capture an email address.)
- Your last paid ad or boosted post copy.

Pro move

Schedule one audit per week. In 7 weeks, your entire public-facing message library has been refreshed — systematically, not in a panic. That's how the H.O.W.T.R.O.O. filter compounds.

Where to Go From Here

If you want the next-level naming and positioning system

The Brand NAME Blueprint™ is the full seven-stage system that empowers your messaging through naming architecture: positioning, market mapping, exploration, testing, and launch. Message auditing is one stage in your marketing and branding journey. Brand NAME Blueprint™ serves all of them.

Founders' Limited Edition: **Coming Soon.**

If you want me and my team to do this work for you

Art Impact Marketing Agency offers full done-for-you brand and message development for owner-operators who'd rather have the result than do the audit and development themselves. We work with visionary founders, retailers, restaurants, service businesses, nonprofits, and growing brands across Metropolitan Detroit and online nationwide.

Find me at aalsyncurd@artimpactmarketing.com or reach out directly.

If you want the full 10 Truths reference

Catch the next Business Marketing Essentials session in the Livernois Merchant Training Series. The session repeats with deeper material in Week 7 (Wednesday, July 15, 2026) and Week 12 (Wednesday, August 19, 2026).

A final note from Alysyn

You came to a 30-minute training. You left with a tool. That is not common.

Most marketing trainings give you information. The H.O.W.T.R.O.O. Message Audit Worksheet™ gives you a result. Use it on something today. The next time you write a marketing message — for any channel, in any format — the seven letters are in the back of your mind whether you fill out the worksheet or not.

That is the point.

— Alysyn

Art Impact Marketing Agency

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