

# YOUR MESSAGE FOUNDATION

A

## CORE QUESTION

What urgent, important question is your ideal audience **actively and knowingly** asking?  
No ands!

Ex: What's a better way to carry my music with me?

F

## CORE CLAIM

"To get [A], [combine B1 & B2]."

Ex: The best way to carry your music with you is to make maximum variety as portable as possible.

E

## CORE IDEA

How do your Essential Elements (B1 & B2) **combine** to answer the Core Question (A)?

Ex: Make variety portable /  
Make maximum variety as portable as possible

B1

## ESSENTIAL ELEMENT #1

A component that **must** be part of the answer to A  
Single nouns only! Ex: VARIETY

B2

## ESSENTIAL ELEMENT #2

A component that **must** be part of the answer to A  
Single nouns only! Ex: PORTABILITY

D

## CORE CASE

"Because [C1] and [C2], to get [A], [combine B1 & B2]."

Ex: Because the more variety you have, the more music you can listen to and the smaller something is, the more places it can go, the best way to carry your music with you is to make maximum variety as portable as possible.

C1

## BEDROCK BELIEF #1

A concept or principle—**that your audience already agrees is true**—that explains why the Essential Element (B1) *must* be part of answering the Core Question (A). Frame positively!

Ex: The more variety you have, the more music you can listen to (More is more!)

C2

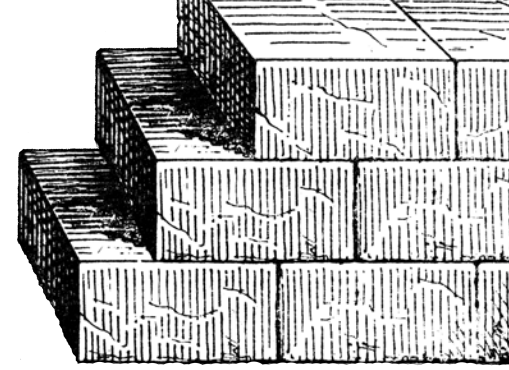
## BEDROCK BELIEF #2

A concept or principle—**that your audience already agrees is true**—that explains why the Essential Element (B2) *must* be part of answering the Core Question (A). Frame positively!

Ex: The smaller something is, the more places it can go (Less is more!)

## HANDOUT

# FIND YOUR MESSAGE FOUNDATION



### BUILT FOR BUY-IN

If you want to fund, differentiate, or build your business, **you need buy-in**. People need to believe enough in you and your ideas to act. People act when they've agreed with an internal argument for why that action makes sense. People agree when an argument aligns with their existing beliefs and desires.

The simplest, strongest version of that argument is your **CORE CASE**, a 30-second summary of why you do what you do in the way only you do it. From the Core Case, you develop your **CORE CLAIM**, a one-sentence statement of what you do and why your ideal audience would care. You'll combine the following components to craft both the Core Claim and Core Case.

### A CORE QUESTION

The Core Question is **the urgent, important audience question that your offering or approach exists to answer**. Make sure it:

- ☐ Starts with "What...?" or "How...?"
  - How can I/we...?
  - How do I/we...?
  - What's the best way to...?
  - What can I/we do to...?
  - How can/do/should I/we start to...?
- ☐ Articulates a **single goal** (no "ands"!)
- ☐ Is **as low (left!) as possible** on the hierarchy of needs
  - PERSONAL: Physiological > Safety > Love & Belonging > Esteem > Self-Actualization
  - BUSINESS: Offerings & Capital > Systems & Processes > Culture & Engagement > Awards & Recognition > Market Leadership
- ☐ Is a question your audience is **actively and knowingly** asking
- ☐ **Will be answered** by your offering or approach

**BONUS!** Once you have your Core Question, you also have your Minimum Viable Mission, your Why:

"We help [AUDIENCE][answer the **CORE QUESTION**]"

**B1****B2**

### ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Each of the Essential Elements is a **required** or "load-bearing" component of any new or improved answer to the Core Question (A). Make sure:

- ☐ There are **only two**
- ☐ Each element is a **one-word noun** (e.g., Accountability, Variety, Embodiment, Belief, Alignment, Etc.)
- ☐ Neither element is already considered to be "table stakes"

**BONUS!** Once you have your Essential Elements, you also have your Core Differentiators (Ex: Variety, Portability)

**C1****C2**

### BEDROCK BELIEFS

Ground each Essential Element in a Bedrock Belief: a **concept or principle that explains what is true about the element that makes it a required part of the answer**. Make sure:

- ☐ Your ideal audience **can't argue with it**
- ☐ It's stated as a complete, but short, sentence
- ☐ It argues for something, not against it—only use positive language (no "can't" or "won't")

**D**

### HOW TO CRAFT YOUR CORE CASE

The Core Case simply combines the components into this format:

- Because [**BEDROCK BELIEF 1**]
- And [**BEDROCK BELIEF 2**]
- To get [answer to **CORE QUESTION**]
- [Combine **ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS**]

**BONUS!** Combine the Essential Elements to find and state your **CORE IDEA**! (Ex: "Make variety portable.")

**E****F**

### HOW TO CRAFT YOUR CORE CLAIM

Your Core Claim combines the Core Question and Core Idea (your combined Essential Elements).

"To get [the **CORE QUESTION**], do [**CORE IDEA**]."



**A**

*Core Question*

[An urgent, important question  
your audience is actively and  
knowingly asking]

**CORE CLAIM**

*Strategy in a Sentence*

*“Z answers A,” “To answer A, do Z”*

To answer **A**, do **Z**

**Z (= X + Y)**

*Core Idea*

[Your answer to that question,  
which combines the two  
Essential Elements]

## TEMPLATE

**X**

*Essential Element*

An overlooked or  
underappreciated core  
component of any better  
answer to the core question

**B = Why A needs X**

*Bedrock Belief*

Inarguable principle that  
explains why this element  
**MUST** be part of the answer to  
the question

**CORE CASE**

*30-Second Theory*

*“Because B and C, Z is the answer to A.”*

Because **B** and **C**,  
**Z** is the answer to **A**.

**Y**

*Essential Element*

An overlooked or  
underappreciated core  
component of any better  
answer to the core question

**C = Why A needs Y**

*Bedrock Belief*

Inarguable principle that  
explains why this element  
**MUST** be part of the answer  
to the question

**A**

*Core Question*

What's a better way to carry  
my music with me?

**CORE CLAIM**

*Strategy in a Sentence*

*"Z answers A," "To answer A, do Z"*

The **best way to to carry your music  
with you** is to **make maximum variety  
as portable as possible.**

**Z (= X + Y)**

*Core Idea*

Make maximum variety as  
portable as possible  
(make storage small)

**PRODUCT: IPOD**

**PRODUCT: IPOD**

**X**

*Essential Element*

**VARIETY**

(feature: storage)

**Y**

*Essential Element*

**PORTABILITY**

(feature: size)

**CORE CASE**

*30-Second Theory*

*"Because B and C, Z is the answer to A."*

Because **the more of your library you  
can carry with you, the better**  
and **the smaller something is, the more**  
**places it can go,**  
the **best way to to carry your music  
with you** is to **make maximum variety  
as portable as possible.**

**B = Why A needs X**

*Bedrock Belief*

The more of your library you  
can carry with you, the better.

(More is more!)

**C = Why A needs Y**

*Bedrock Belief*

The smaller something is,  
the more places it can go.

(Less is more!)

**A**

*Core Question*

How can we successfully  
execute a strategic shift?

**CORE CLAIM**

*Strategy in a Sentence*

*“Z answers A,” “To answer A, do Z”*

To **successfully execute a strategic  
shift, scale accountability.**

**Z (= X + Y)**

*Core Idea*

**Scale accountability**

**X**

*Essential Element*

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

**B = Why A needs X**

*Bedrock Belief*

**Accountability is the ownership  
of outcomes.**

**Y**

*Essential Element*

**SCALE**

**C = Why A needs Y**

*Bedrock Belief*

**Success requires execution  
at scale.**

**IDEA: V. Molinaro**

**CORE CASE**

*30-Second Theory*

*“Because B and C, Z is the answer to A.”*

Because **accountability is  
the ownership of outcomes**  
and **success requires execution at scale,**  
to **successfully execute a strategic shift,  
scale accountability.**

**A**

*Core Question*

How can we understand why viruses are the way they are?

**CORE CLAIM**

*Strategy in a Sentence*

*“Z answers A,” “To answer A, do Z”*

To **understand why viruses are the way they are, study the evolution of sociality in viruses**

**Z (= X + Y)**

*Core Idea*

**Study the evolution of sociality (social interactions) in viruses**

**X**

*Essential Element*

**SOCIALITY**

(social interaction)

**B = Why A needs X**

*Bedrock Belief*

The action of individuals affect other individuals in a population.

**Y**

*Essential Element*

**EVOLUTION**

**C = Why A needs Y**

*Bedrock Belief*

The better an individual is at a particular action the more likely it is to survive and reproduce.

**TEDx: A. Leeks**

**CORE CASE**

*30-Second Theory*

*“Because B and C, Z is the answer to A.”*

Because **the action of individuals affect other individuals in a population and the better an individual is at a particular action the more likely it is to survive and reproduce, studying the evolution of sociality in viruses helps us understand why they are the way they are.**