

DEVELOPING A COMPELLING  
VALUE PROPOSITION (PT. 2 of 4)  
DETERMING YOUR ONE THING



BY:

Doug Davidoff  
Founder & President  
the Imagine companies  
doug@imaginellc.com

*The INTELLIGENT GROWTH Ezine*  
*Volume 3, Issue 2*

In the last issue of The INTELLIGENT GROWTH Ezine I introduced you to the successful accounting firm of White & Whitfield, a composite of many of the clients I work with. While successful, White & Whitfield was not growing at the rate that its managing partner, Bill White, desired.

I explained that White & Whitfield was struggling in its go-to-market strategy because in trying to communicate what they did for the clients, they communicated too much. In much the same way that the creators of word processing software struggled with getting people to adopt their offering, White & Whitfield's message was too complicated and too commoditized. Additionally, as White & Whitfield attempted to 'explain' to clients why their offering was compelling the firm's message became internally focused — on White & Whitfield — instead of focused externally on its target market. Through an effective discovery process, Bill White, realized that he needed to focus his message on White & Whitfield's 'One Thing'.

In this issue of The INTELLIGENT GROWTH Ezine I will introduce some important questions to determine your "one thing." This one thing leads to an effective value proposition and a compelling brand promise — topics I will discuss over the next two issues.

First, you must determine your one thing. Without determining what your one thing is, sustaining your growth will always be precarious.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THE WORLD?**

Answering this question is critical to determining what your one thing is. At Imagine Business Development, we are the best in the world at enabling companies from the post-startup stage through \$20 million in gross profits to transform their go-to-market approach to accelerate their growth, cut their sales cycle times in half and increase their margins. Everything we do, internally or externally, is focused on delivering that message and delivering those results. While we do many things at Imagine and our clients use some of our services more than others, we never forget that it is our go-to-market approach that makes us special. What is the one thing that your company is doing, or can do, better than anyone else in the world?

## THE PURPOSE OF ANY BUSINESS AND VALUE PROPOSITION

The purpose of any business is to create a customer. In order to create a customer, a business must solve a problem. The problem, or problems, a business promises to solve is the basis of that business' value proposition.

When I consult with companies and when I conduct seminars, I'll often ask what the difference between a lever and a stick is. Think about the difference for a moment. It was Archimedes who said; with a lever long enough one can move the world.

The difference is that a lever has a fulcrum and a stick does not. When developing a business, a company's fulcrum is their value proposition. There is no such thing as strategy without a value proposition. The entire purpose of strategy is to manage the trade-offs that exist as a company attempts to deliver on its value proposition. A successful strategy enables a company to deliver its value proposition better than anyone else.

Let me be clear — if you want sustainable, profitable growth you must do something better than anyone else in the world. When a company decides what they are going to be the best in the world at, they are simultaneously deciding what they are NOT going to be the best in the world at. This is difficult for many executives, especially successful entrepreneurs, to come to grips with.

It is critical that you decide what your one thing is. No matter how many things you may be good at, you must decide what you will do better than anyone else in the world. The reason for this is that it is the only way your potential customers will be able to distinguish you from your competition. Your one thing will enable them to decide whether you are worth spending their precious time and attention on.

In my experience, the failure to articulate your one thing effectively is one of the primary causes of getting stuck. Mind you, getting stuck is often worse than failing. When a business gets stuck in the 21<sup>st</sup> century it means that its margins fade. Its workers must work harder and harder, just to stay in the game. Meaningful victories get farther and farther apart. It becomes more

difficult to hire the talent you need to compete. The focus becomes survival and words like thrive and excel fade from the organizations vocabulary.

#### HOW TO DETERMINE YOUR ONE THING

Your value proposition should be the embodiment of your one thing and focus on the problem or problems you solve better than anyone else. So the first place to start when determining your one thing, or your value proposition, is what problems do you solve better than anyone else does? By the way, for those of you that have not figured it out yet, your value proposition IS your one thing.

Another question you can ask yourself, or your clients, to help determine your one thing is, “What are our clients/customers are really buying from us?” Close to 90% of businesses focus their sales efforts on what they think they are selling; while their customers are actually buying something else. When a business understands this and transforms their focus, their profits explode.

#### WHITE & WHITFIELD’S ONE THING

Bill White realized that accounting services, audits, financial planning and the myriad other services they offered were merely commodities, and that if he continued to focus his growth efforts on communicating these services he was going to remain stuck. Through a facilitated process that involved talking with employees and clients, Bill realized that his best engagements were with small and mid-sized businesses that were undergoing significant transitions, both positive and negative.

Bill realized that this was White & Whitfield’s one thing. In next month’s issue of The INTELLIGENT GROWTH Ezine I will discuss another important issue to consider when determining your one thing — figuring out what Value Proposition Foundation™ he would use to deliver his one thing better than anyone else. In April, I will finish off this series and explain the power and process in developing a meaningful and effective brand promise.