Marketing Foundations for Business Startups

Marketing is not promotion;
it is a set of choices about market,
customer, offer and access.

Presented by Megan Del Borrello

The biggest early marketing error is not poor content or a weak logo. It is trying to sell a vague offer to an undefined market.

What we're going to be covering

Why: The job or problem worth solving
Who: The priority customer segment and market
What: The differentiated value and position
How: Choosing your channels to market

Marketing is not promotion

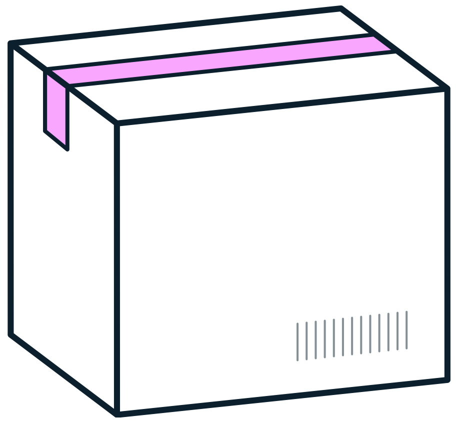
Market Insight → Priority Customer → Value Proposition → Positioning → Channels → Learning → Revenue

The reasons why customers don’t buy

- **"I've never heard of you."** → awareness / distribution problem
- **"I don't get what you do."** → clarity / value proposition problem
- **"I don't believe you."** → trust / proof problem
- **"It's not worth the price."** → perceived value / pricing problem
- **"My current way is good enough."** → problem urgency / switching cost problem

Begin with a market, not your product

Product First



We build it and hope they come.

Problem First

We solve a real problem for a real market.

Marketing begins by understanding the problem customers are trying to solve, the people experiencing it and the market they are already navigating.

People don’t want to buy a quarter-inch drill. They want to buy a quarter-inch hole.

Understand the Customer

Customers don't buy products. They 'hire' them to do a job.

Functional Job

What practical problems does it solve? What tasks does it help them complete?

Emotional Job

How does it make them feel? What emotions does it evoke?

Social Job

How does it help them connect with others or project a certain image?

Understand the Customer

Jobs to Be Done: healthy snack example

Functional: Provide a quick and easy source of energy and nutrients between meals, satisfy hunger without compromising health goals.

Emotional: Feel good about their snack choices, avoid guilt associated with unhealthy snacking.

Social: Maintain a healthy lifestyle that aligns with their professional image.

The job is your filter

Before you think about markets or demographics, you must first obsess over the customer's struggle.

Once you know the "job," find the people who need it done.

The **job itself becomes your most powerful filter.**

If you want to target everyone, you're actually targeting no one.

Define the Market

Once you know why they buy, define who you are for

Without a clear understanding of who your target audience is, your marketing efforts become shots in the dark.

Understanding your target audience is crucial to deliver the right message, to the right people, at the right time.

Market segmentation: customers are not one group

A market is not “everyone who could buy.”
It is a defined group of people or businesses with a shared job, need or problem in a specific context.

Need or job

What problem are they trying to solve?

Different needs require different value propositions.

Context or trigger

When does the problem become urgent?

Different moments require different messages and offers.

Buying behaviour

How do they make decisions?

Behaviour signals willingness to change and buy.

Profile

Who are they and how can we find them?

Demographics, firmographics and geography make segments reachable.

Healthy snack example

Target Market

Health conscious individuals looking for convenient, nutritious snacks.

Target Audience

Busy professionals aged 25-45 who work long hours and value convenience, natural ingredients and portion control.

Jobs to Be Done

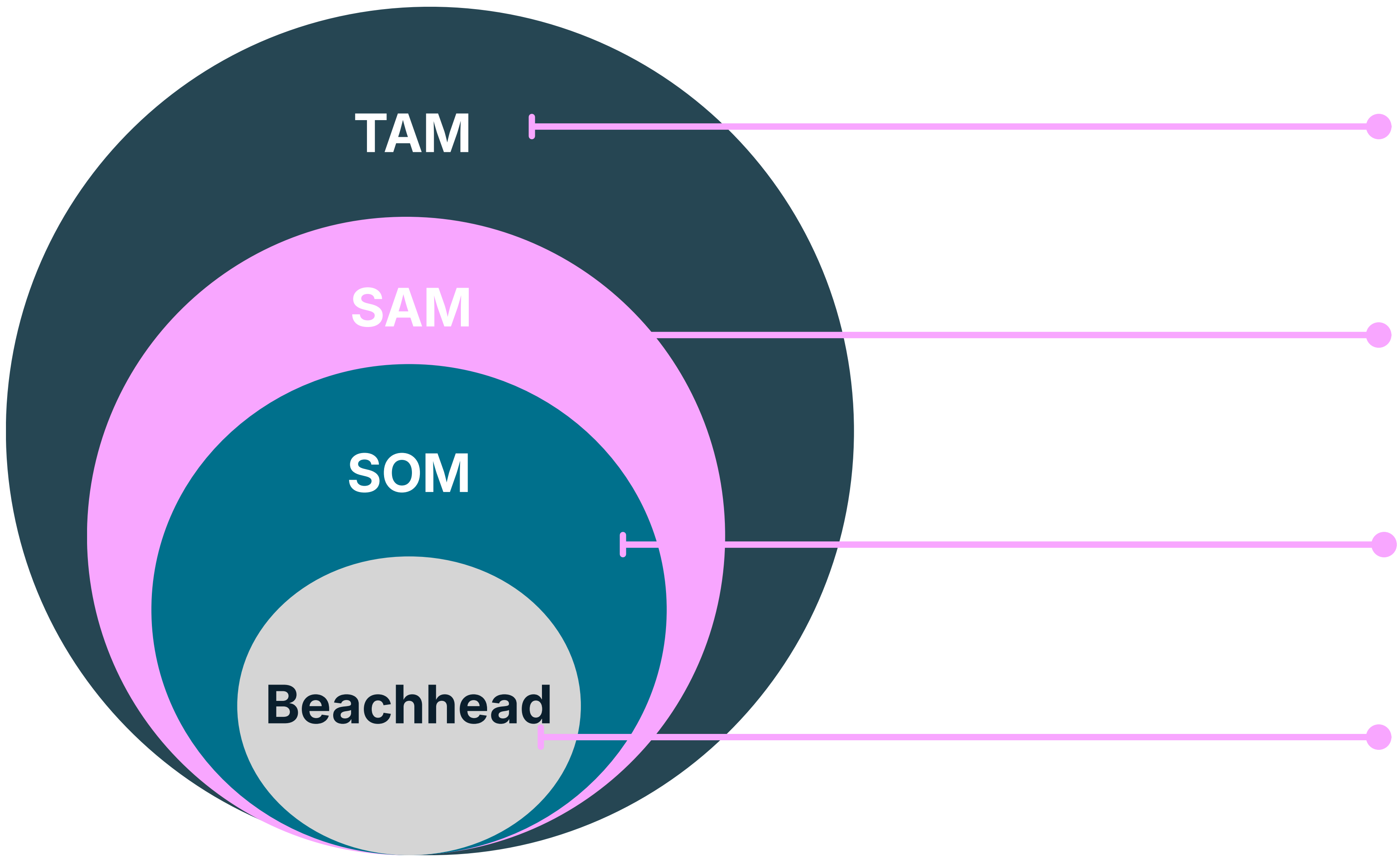
- **Functional:** Quick, healthy energy between meals.
- **Emotional:** Feel good about snack choices, avoid guilt.
- **Social:** Maintain a healthy aligned with their professional image.

Healthy snack buyers → Busy office professionals → Afternoon energy between meetings

Define the Market

Market sizing: TAM tells you the scale. Your beachhead market tells you where to start.

Without a market, a business doesn't have much of a future.



Total Addressable Market
The full market potential.

Serviceable Addressable Market
The slice of TAM that can be served by your product or service.

Serviceable Obtainable Market
The share you can realistically win.

Beachhead Market
The focused first segment where you can win and learn.

TAM, SAM & SOM: calculate the size of your market

Build from real customer numbers, not a percentage of a huge market.

1

Define the customer unit

Who exactly are you counting?

2

Find the customer count

Use ABS, industry data, own data, AI.

3

Estimate annual spend

Who exactly are you counting?

Potential market value = number of potential customers × average annual revenue per customer

Start with a narrow, reachable segment. (beachhead market)

Avoid: "If we win 1% of a billion-dollar market..."

Is this market worth serving...now?

Is the problem painful?	Urgent, frequent or costly	●●●●○
Is there demand?	Credible signals they are actively seeking a solution?	●●●●○
Can they pay?	Clear budget or credible value case	●●●●○
Can we reach them?	Specific places, networks, partners or channels exist	●●●●○
Can we win?	Clear insight, credible advantage, access or differentiated offer	●●●●○

Features tell and benefits sell

You built the feature. They're buying the outcome.

Feature	Benefit
A factual attribute or function of a product	A positive functional outcome or emotional payoff the customer experiences as a result of the feature
Tangible and can be easily listed or described	Reveals the why
Exists whether or not anyone buys	Only exists in relation to a person and their problem

The test: Where does it live?

A feature lives in the product. A benefit lives in the customer's day.

Feature
12g of protein

→

Benefit
You're not hungry an hour later

Not a benefit
"More protein.
Less sugar.
Better than the rest."

Positioning is the space you own in your customer's mind.

A deliberate choice of who you serve, what they need, what you are and why you're the better choice.

1. **Who is it for?**
2. **What do they need?**
3. **What are you?**
4. **Why you?**

The safety led car brand

Positioned against: primarily around speed, luxury, or driving excitement

Convenient, good value razors delivered directly

Positioned against: expensive, overcomplicated razor purchasing

Personalised, on-demand entertainment.

For people who want entertaining stories on their own terms, Netflix is a subscription entertainment service that makes it easy to discover and watch a broad range of films, series, and other programming whenever and wherever they choose, with personalised recommendations that help them quickly find something they will enjoy.

Positioning is not your logo, slogan or feature list.

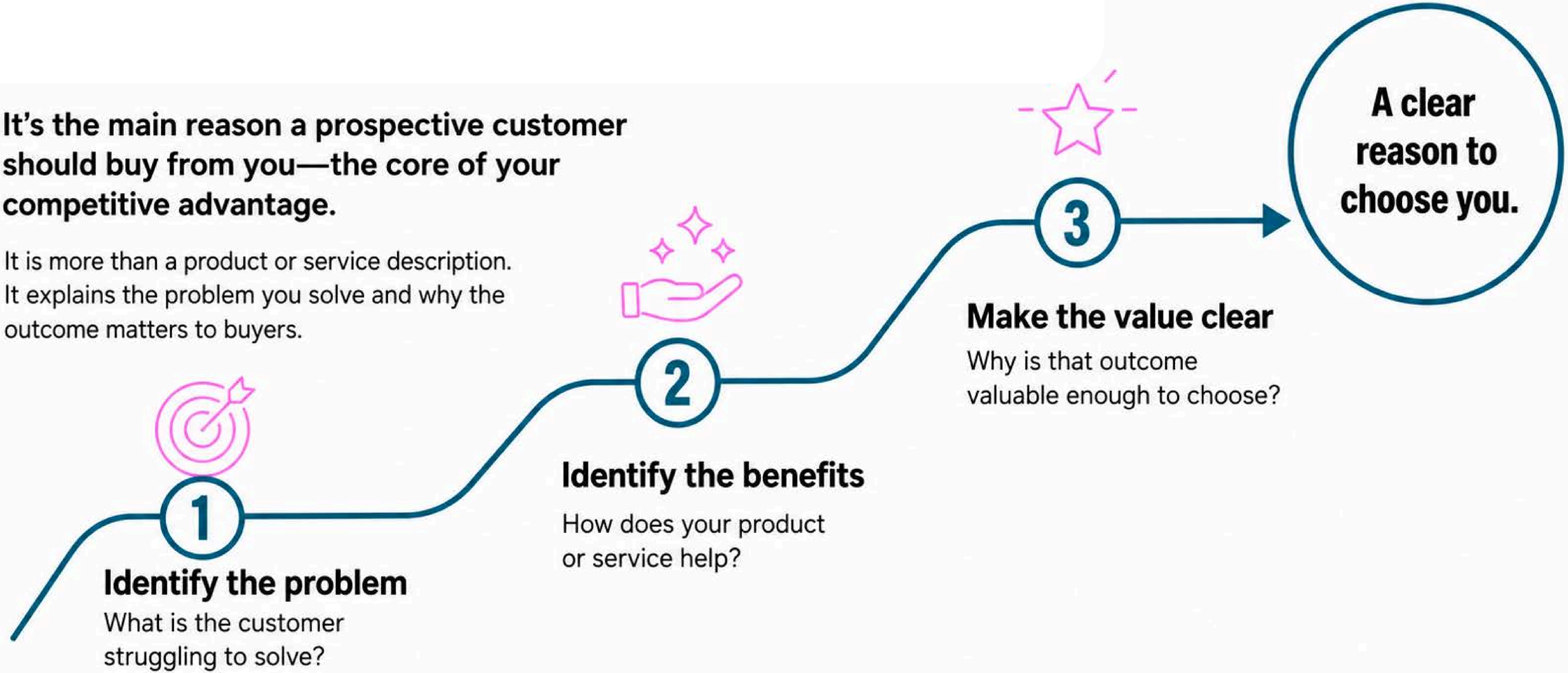
Positioning statement template

For [specific customer] who need [job/outcome], [business] is the [category] that [primary differentiated benefit]. Unlike [main alternative], we [credible reason we deliver this better].

Build a value proposition customers care about

It’s the main reason a prospective customer should buy from you—the core of your competitive advantage.

It is more than a product or service description. It explains the problem you solve and why the outcome matters to buyers.



Value proposition template

We help [X] do [Y] by doing [Z].

Unique selling proposition

The **one** specific, compelling reason a customer should choose you instead of another option.

1 Customer problem

What are they struggling with?

2 Meaningful difference

What do you do differently?

3 Proof, proof, proof

Why should they beleive it?

DOLLAR SHAVE CLUB

Shave time.
Shave money.

Melts in your mouth, not in your hand.

Notion

Bring notes, documentation, and team workflows into one flexible workspace.

Your USP is NOT free shipping, 24/7 customer service, less risky, better supported...

Developing branding

How your positioning comes to life, through what people see, hear, feel and experience whenever they encounter your business.

Value proposition	What value do we create?
Brand promise	What should customers expect from us?
Brand identity	How should we look, sound and feel?
Brand touchpoints	How do we deliver that consistently across website, product, content, sales, service and channels?

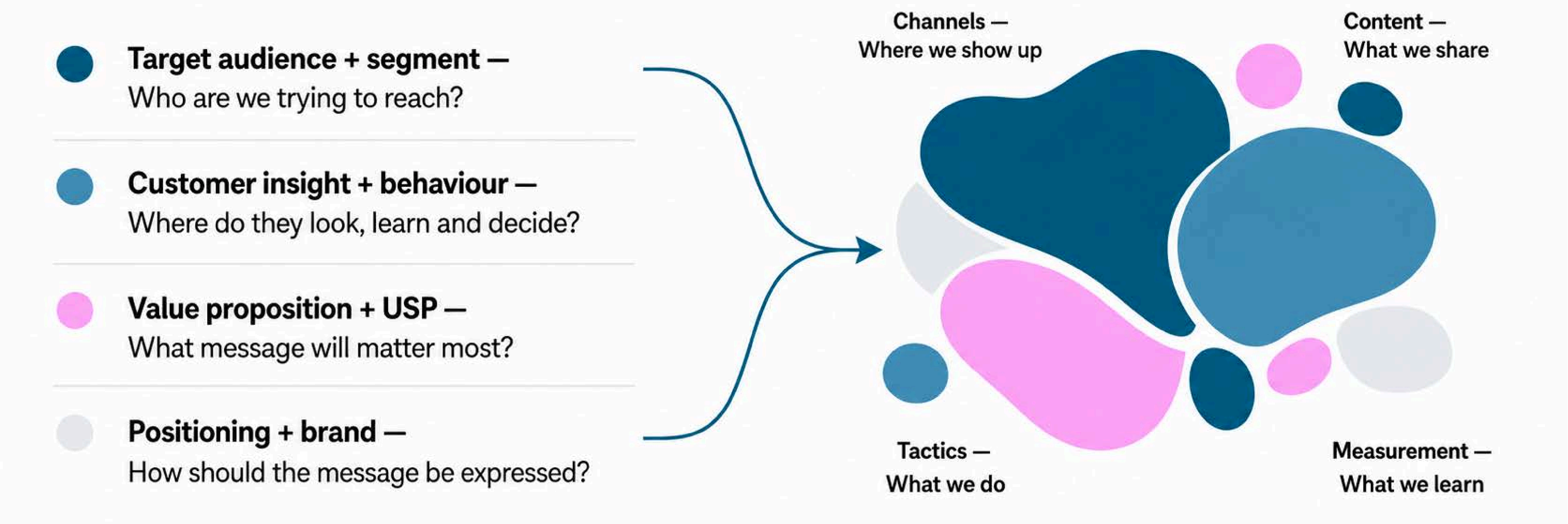
Brand: the overall perception customers hold about the business.

Branding: shaping that perception through language, design, communication and experience.

The Golden Rule:
Go where your customers already are.

What informs your channels and tactics?

Choose how and where to reach customers based on strategy...not what is trending!



Four types of channels

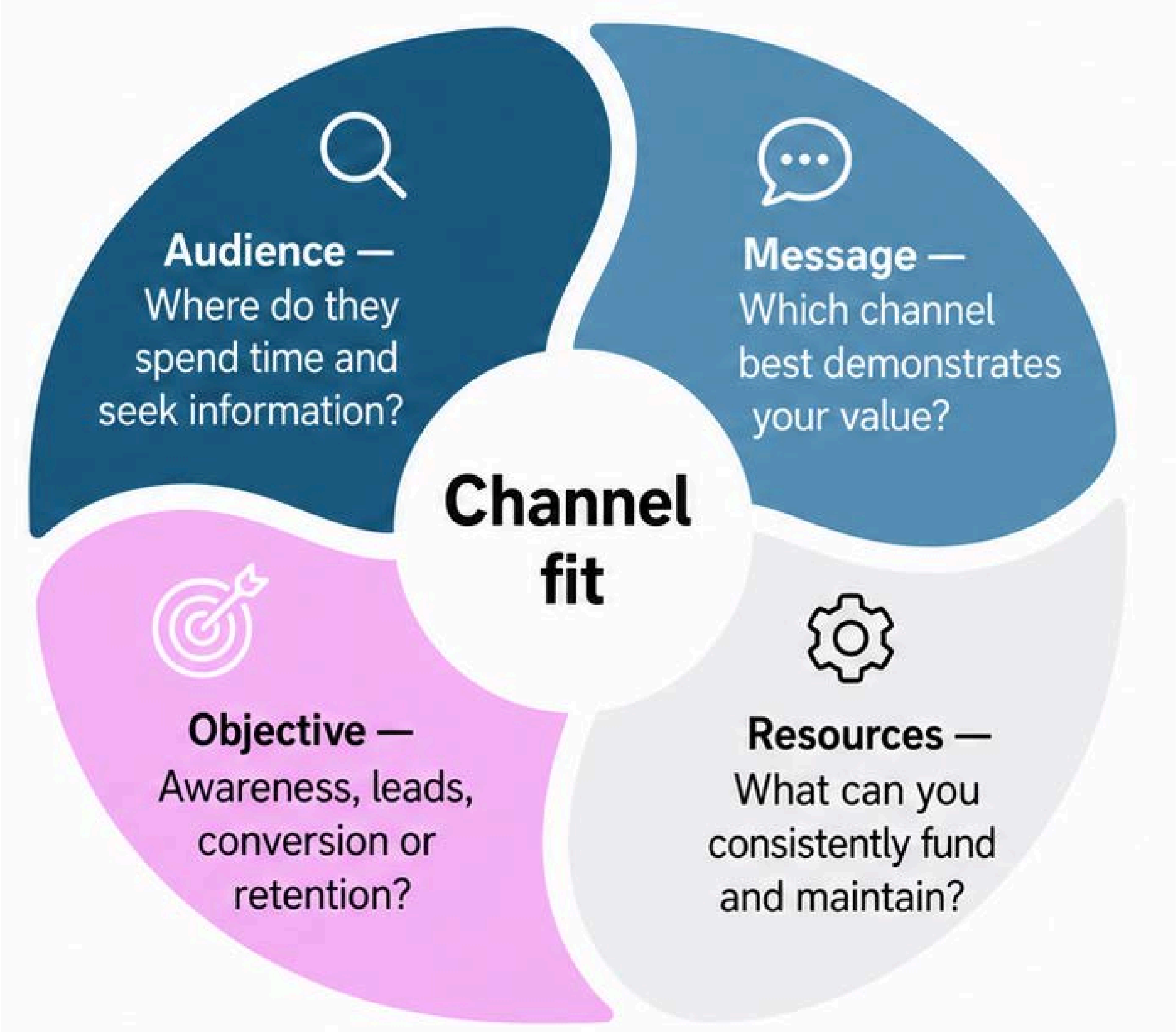
Owned channels take years, so start them on day one even when they feel pointless.

Channel	What it is	Upside	Downside
Owned	Website, email list, content	Free and fully in your control	Slow to build—start on day one
Paid	Ads, PPC, sponsorships	Reaches new people and builds your audience	You pay to play
Earned	PR, reviews, word of mouth	Builds legitimacy, credibility and reputation	Slow and cannot be bought
Borrowed	Social platforms, communities, forums	Reach and awareness	Would you build a house on borrowed land?

The goal: use borrowed and paid channels to grow reach, while building owned and earned channels for resilience.

How to choose the right channels

Build a balanced mix, then invest based on your customer, message and growth stage.



Start with 1 - 2 priority channels

Test one hypothesis at a time

Measure meaningful signals, not vanity metrics

Double down, adapt or stop based on evidence

The best channel is not the most popular one. It is where your customer is receptive, your message is useful and your business can show up consistently.

Why customers buy

- **Problem/solution fit:** you solve a real, pressing need
- **Message/market fit:** your value proposition lands with your segment
- **Channel/customer fit:** you're present where they're looking

QUESTIONS?