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STORYBUILDING

YOUR BRAND FROM THEIR STANDPOINT

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John Elbing - 2025

standpoint


STOP
TALKING ABOUT YOU



J O H N E L B I N G

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- Strategic Business STORYBUILDING Consultant at 
- Startup & business coach for Innosuisse, FONGIT, Platinn, Pulse, UNIL HEC, Ucreate, Singa, BOWIE.
- Teach for Innosuisse, Venturelab, HEG, CREA, ITC/UN, Geneva Business School, EU Business School.

Linked 



**Companies
talk about what they do,
from their standpoint.
We, we, we...**



**Customers have to figure out
if it's for them, and
how it will make their life better.**

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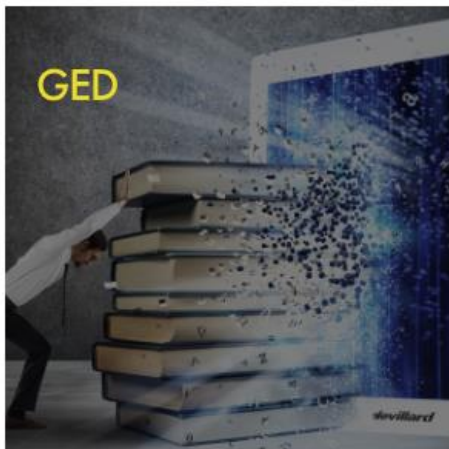
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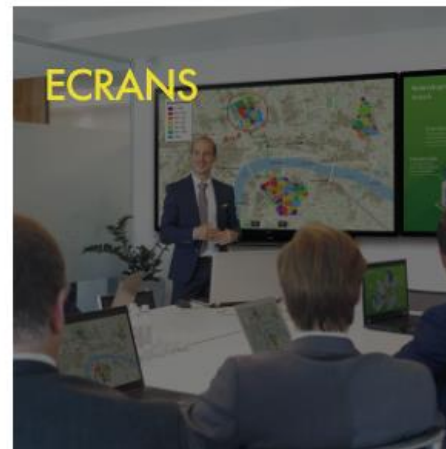
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Screens



MAINTENANCE



ÉVÉNEMENTS - PARTENARIATS





**Tell their story from
their customer's standpoint,
following the natural emotional
steps of brand discovery.**



You encounter a brand



Is it for people like me or
companies like mine?



Do I clearly understand how they
are different and their offer?



What will the experience be like
and how will my life be better?

Recognition






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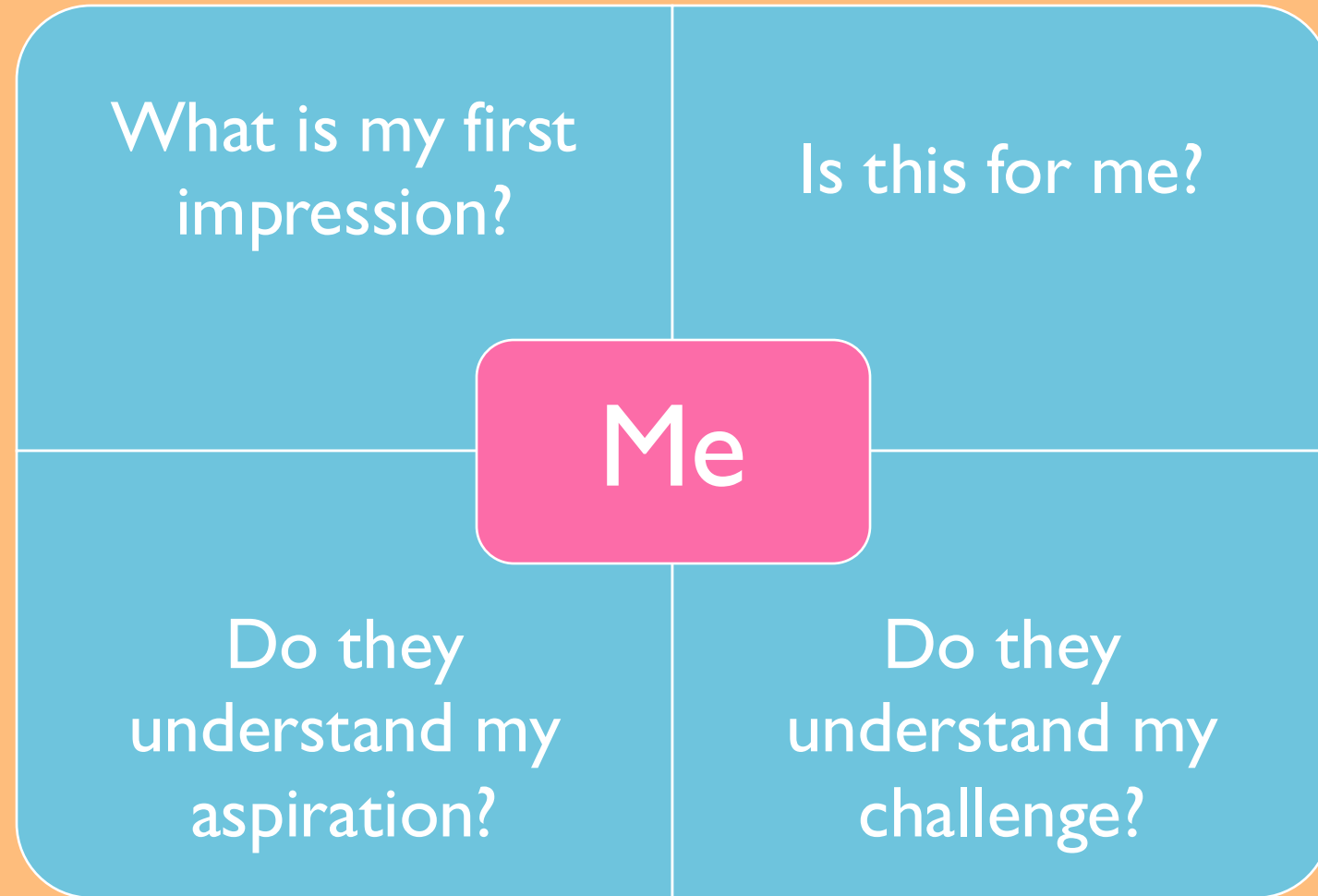
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Recognition – Do we match?

Emotional



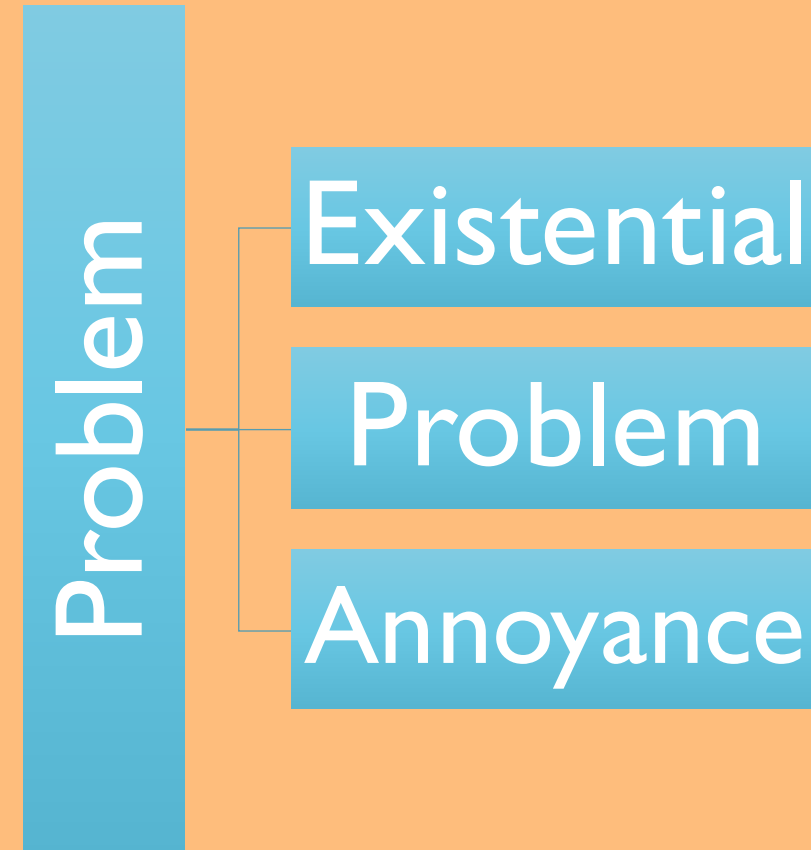
Stakeholder

Take their
standpoint



Balance and Contrast between Aspiration & Challenge

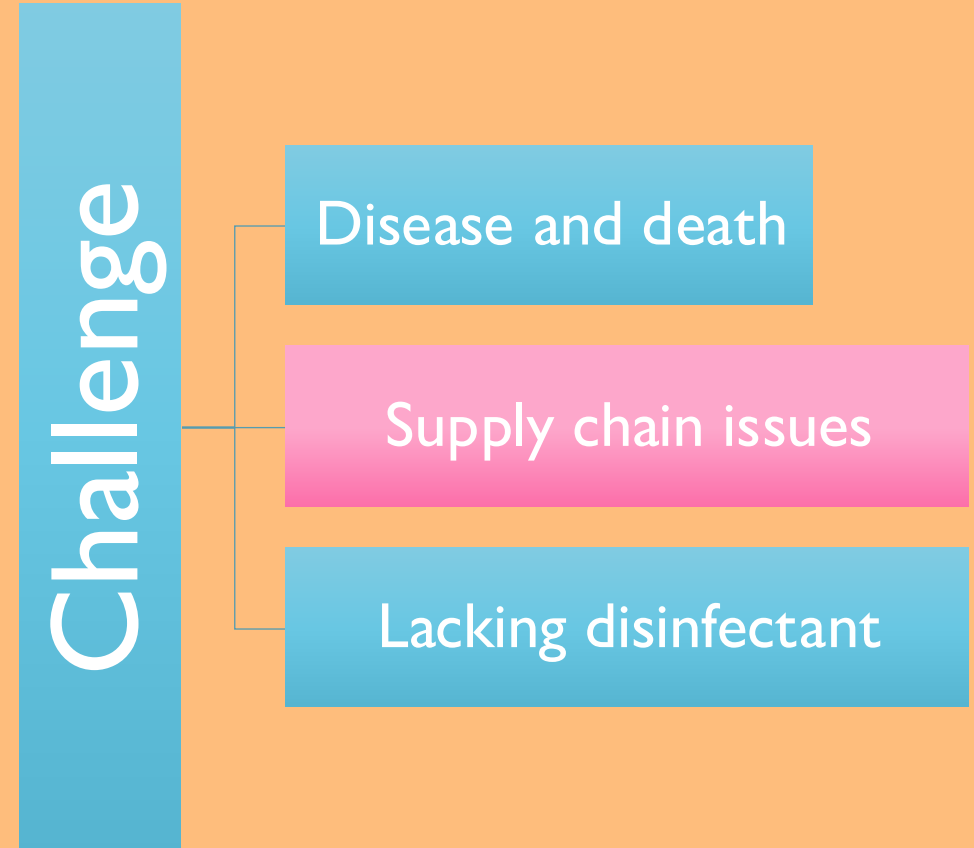
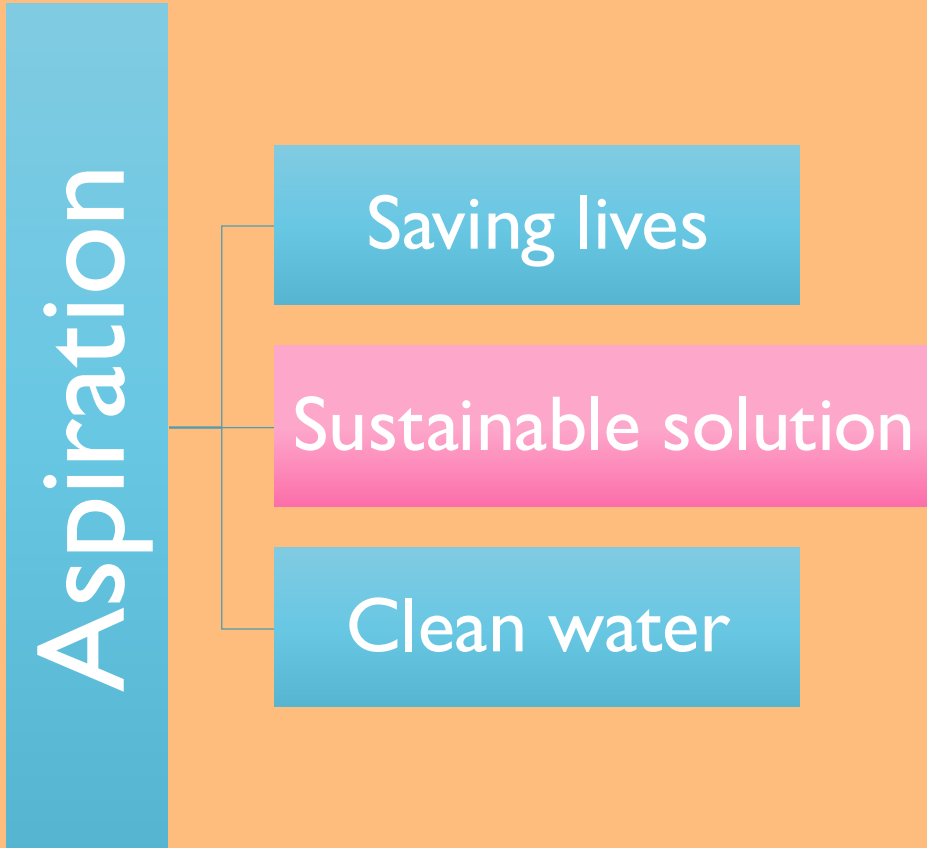
3-level method





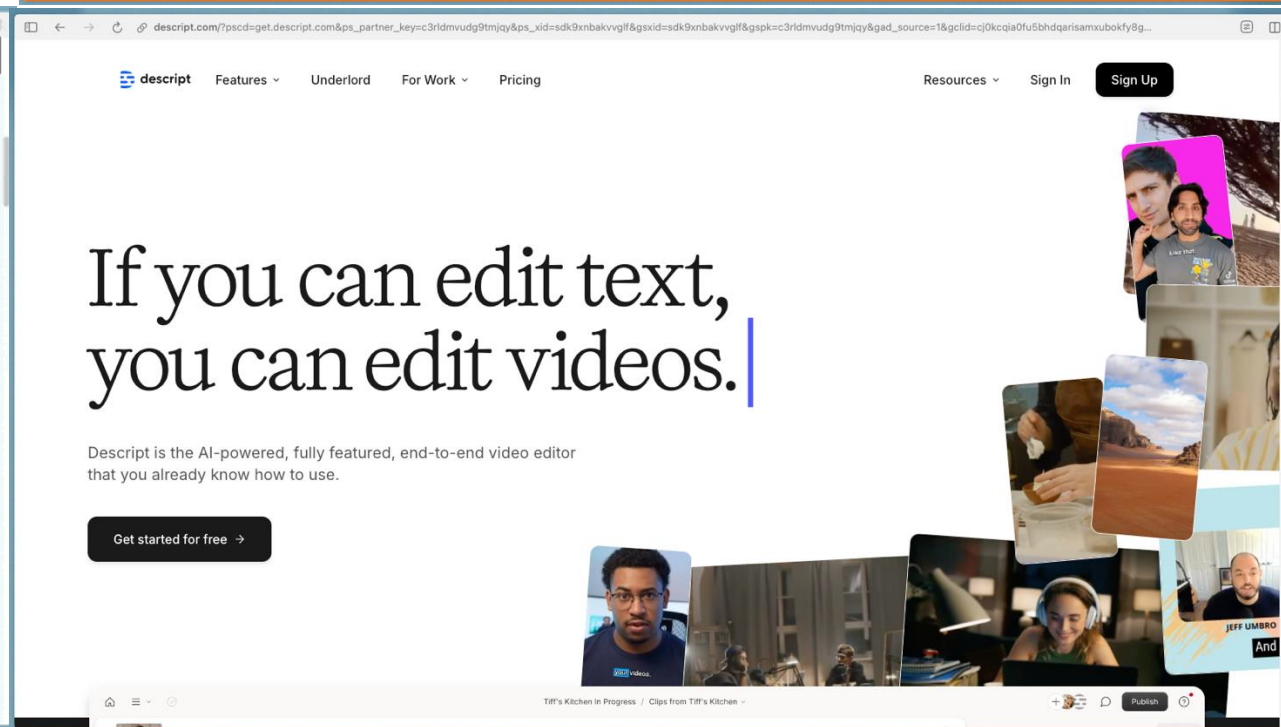
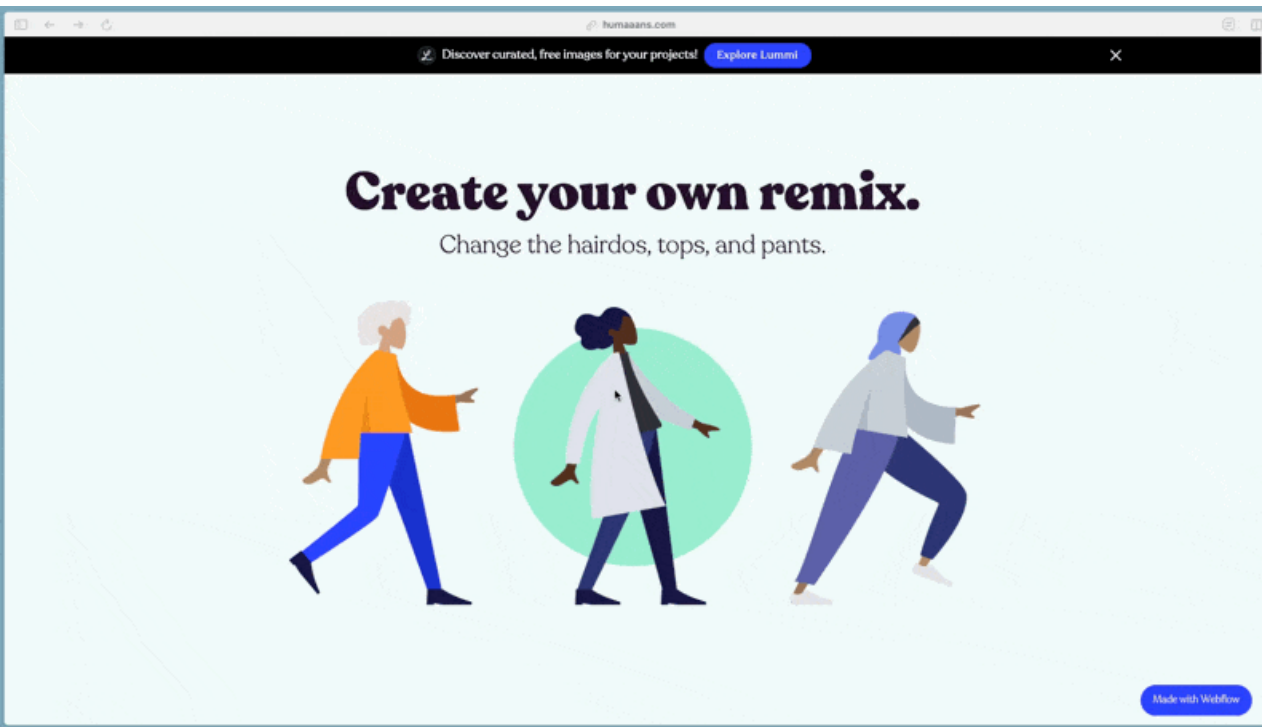
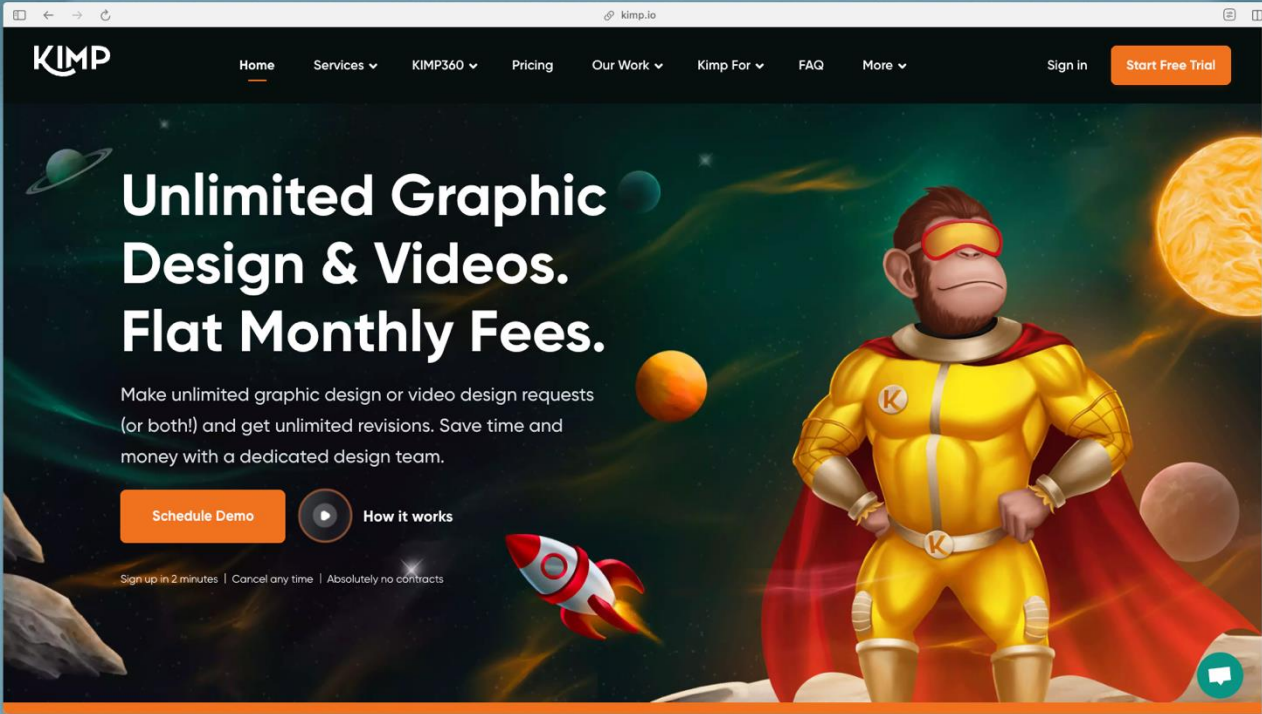
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WATER TREATMENT



Perception

Standpoint & Category




Solution

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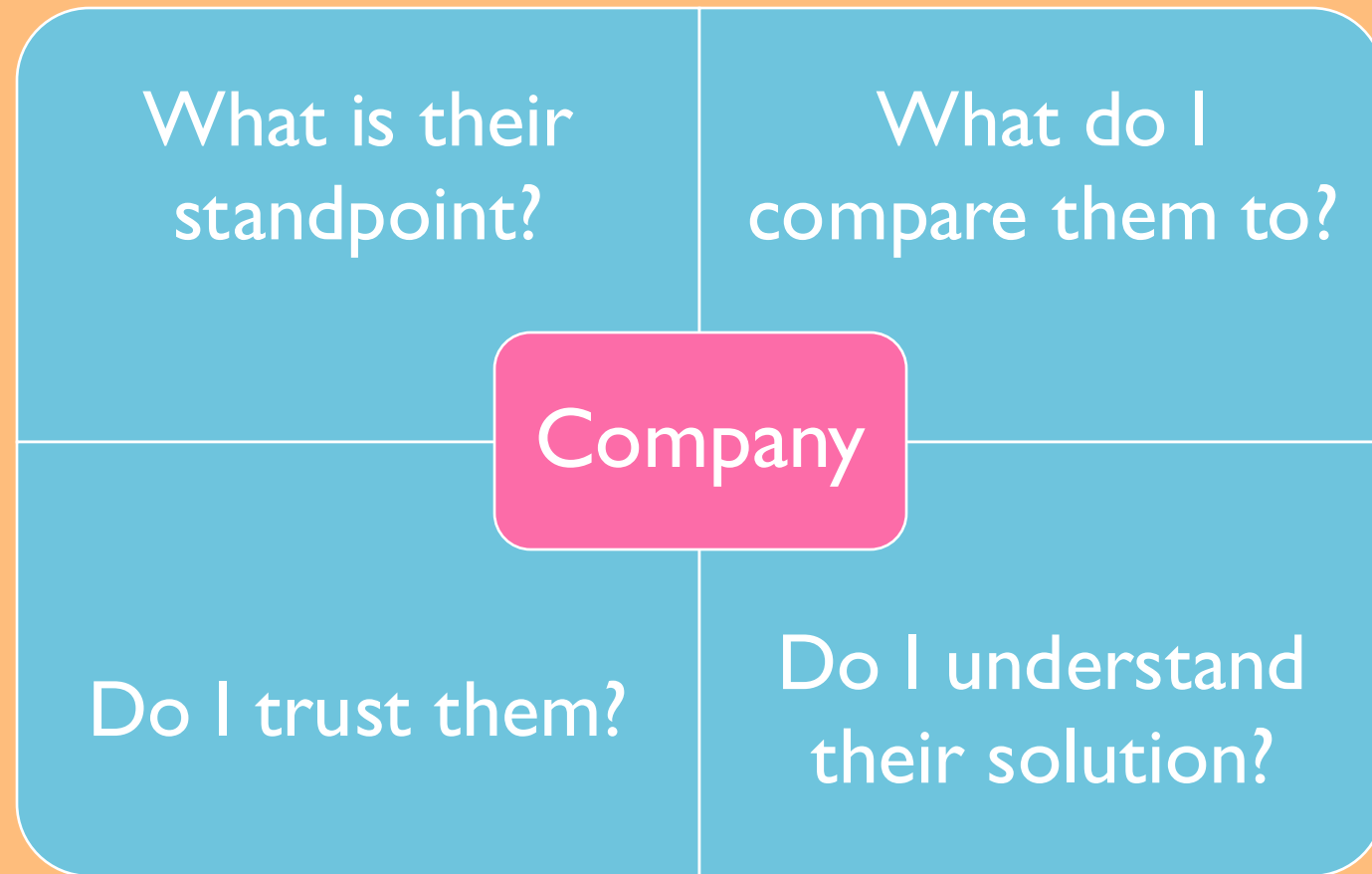
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Perception – Can I work with them?




Projection

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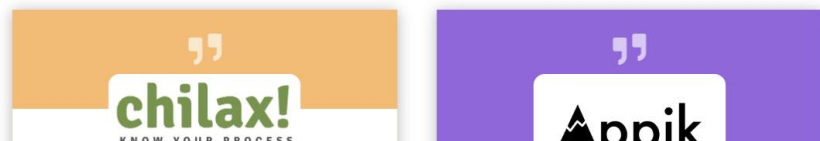
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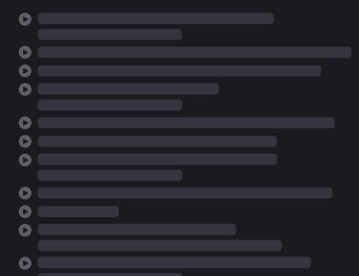
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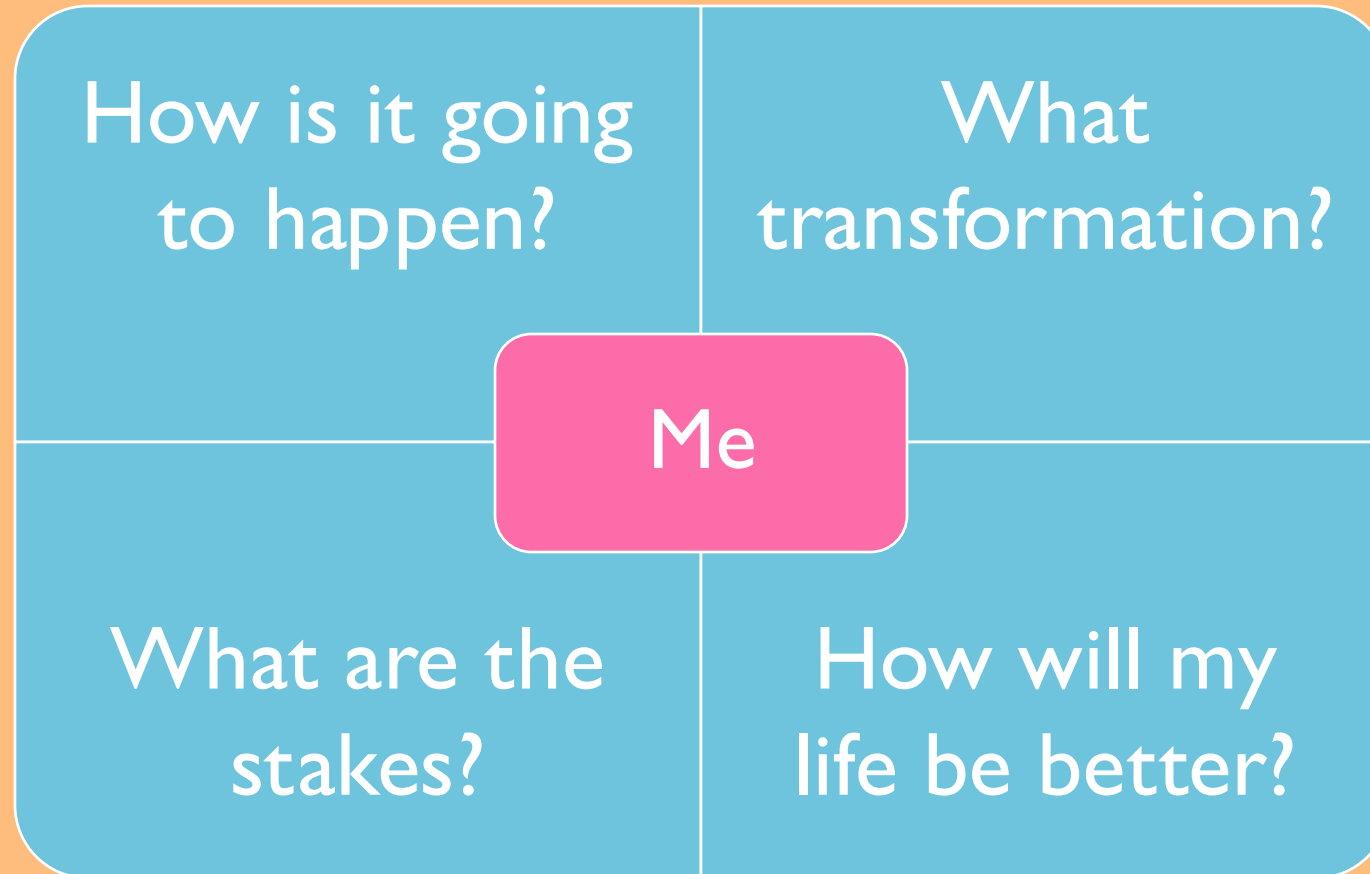
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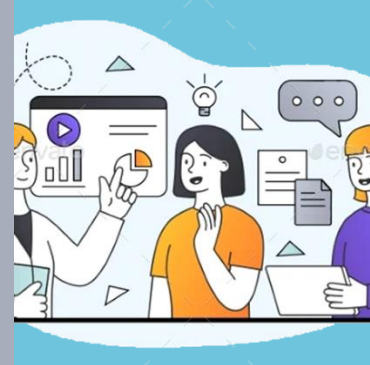
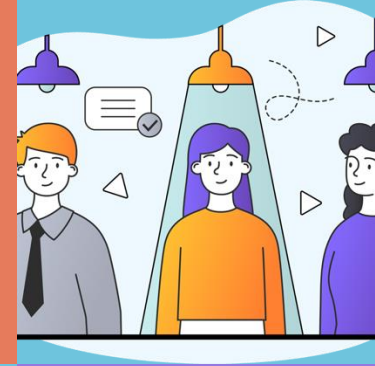
Projection





Examples

Tell me briefly about your project



Storybuilding

Building your brand narrative from your customer's standpoint, creating recognition, understanding and engagement.

Storybuilding

Stakeholder Analysis



Organisation Analysis



Storytelling Framework



Brand Narrative

Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder (customer)

Scope Take the general scope of your offer, the category as seen from the stakeholder's standpoint. Define the scope based on the general goal or problem to be solved. Not too narrow, being exactly or very close to what you offer. Not too broad, encompassing things that are not relevant. For example, is the scope "mattress" or "sleep"?	Segments Who is your customer, audience, important stakeholder? Are there defining characteristics? How can they be grouped? By aspiration, by problem, by industry, by role, by risk-tolerance?	Aspiration (Jobs) Aspirational ↑ What do they want to accomplish? What are their aspirations, goals, tasks, from the most aspirational to the most practical? How do they measure success or failure? Is there a major societal, technical, economic change (e.g. AI) that could be an opportunity? "We want more clients!" is an aspiration. What is the best contrast between an aspiration and the associated challenge?	Challenges (Pains) What is holding them back? What are the obstacles, problems, pains, annoyances that keep them from attaining their goals? What are the negative emotions that accompany them, such as frustration, anger or fear? How aware are they of the things that hinder their progress? Is there a major societal, technical, economic change (e.g. AI) that could be a threat? "We don't have enough clients!" is a challenge..
Extras What are their values? How do they want to feel? How do they want to be perceived? What style of experience are they looking for?		Triggers Knowable ↑ What triggers the need for a solution? What situation, event, emotion brings the scope of your offer to front of mind? Can you identify stakeholders who are in those trigger moments (knowable)? Would the stakeholders who are in those trigger moments recognize themselves if you describe a trigger moment (recognizable)?	Current Solution Unsatisfied ↑ What is their current solution? How do they manage today? Are they satisfied with their solution/situation? Are they struggling to find a workaround? Or are they resigned?
5		6 ← Recognizable Unknowable and not recognizable	7 Resigned ↓

Importance
Put stars on the most important elements from your stakeholder's perspective

Organisation Analysis

Organisation (company)

<div><div>Enablers</div><div>How do you help them make progress and achieve their goals?</div><div>What are the core features of your offer?</div><div>How do they measure success and failure? How do you make that easy?</div><div>How can you explain your offer in the simplest terms (clarity)?</div><div>A</div></div>		<div><div>Solvers</div><div>How do you solve their problems?</div><div>How do you help them save time, money or effort?</div><div>How can you reassure them?</div><div>How can you make them more aware of a problem?</div><div>B</div></div>		<div><div>Experience</div><div>First, what is the purchase/onboarding experience like? How can you summarize the process in 3 steps, showing them how simple it is? Is it easy to understand, to test, to adopt/buy? What is the next thing you want them to do?</div><div>Then, what will the overall experience be like? How will it feel? How would you describe your interaction and/or relationship?</div><div>How can you signal trust?</div><div>C</div></div>
<div><div>Uniqueness</div><div>How are you different, not just better, cheaper, faster?</div><div>What is your unique point of view for your industry, for the scope of your "solution"?</div><div>What is the "old" way, and what is your "new" way?</div><div>What do you want to be known for?</div><div>D</div></div>	<div><div>Brand Persona</div><div>What is the category, the scope you want your stakeholders to identify you with (mattress salesman or sleep specialist)?</div><div>What are your values? Do they match?</div><div>What are your main archetypes?</div><div>What are your brand's style & tone?</div><div>What are your distinctive visual and textual characteristics?</div><div>E</div></div>		<div><div>Extra Delight</div><div>How do you set and exceed expectations?</div><div>What transformation do you offer?</div><div>How do you make it easy to switch solutions?</div><div>How easy is it to interact with you?</div><div>Can they easily test your offer?</div><div>What quick wins do you offer them?</div><div>F</div></div>	<div><div>Matching</div><div>How does your offer match the aspiration, challenges, etc. of the stakeholders?</div><div>Are you purposeful in your decision of which needs to meet and those you do not?</div><div>Are there low-cost/high-gain features you could add that make sense for the stakeholders?</div><div>G</div></div>

Storytelling Framework

Storybuilding

Recognition (me = stakeholder)

Do I feel welcome?
Do they work with people like me?
Do they understand my situation,
my problem?

The first phase is emotional.

First impression

How do they make me feel?
What vibe? What feeling?
What style?

Include
Brand colors, illustrations,
tone of copy, how you dress, talk

E

Stakeholder

Is this for me?
Am I their type of customer,
do they really work with people /
companies like me?
Do I recognize myself?

Include
Target customers, common
situations, positive descriptions

2

Aspirations (Jobs)

Do they get me?
Do they get my situation?
Do they understand my aspiration,
what I want to achieve,
the path I'm on?

Include
Empathy symbols (I get you)
Main aspiration, goals, objectives
Positive emotion.

3

Challenges (Pains)

Do they get my pain?
Do they understand my situation,
the obstacles in my way,
my problems?
Do they get my pain,
my frustration?

Include
Main problems, obstacles, pains
Connected negative emotions

4

Do I recognize myself in this offer?
Am I comfortable to continues my
exploration?

Yes, I continue

No, I give up

Perception (them = organisation)

Can I work with them?
Do I trust them, respect them?
What do I compare them to?
Do I understand their solution?

The second phase is more
intellectual.

Values & Trust

Do I want to work with
someone like them?
What are their values?
What is their mission?

Do I trust them?
Are they good? Is it of quality?
What are people saying
about them?

Include
Value statements
Authority symbols (expertise,
social proof)

5CE

Standpoint

What is your unique point of view for
your industry, for the scope of your
"solution"?

What is the "old" way, and what
is your "new" way?

Include
Contrast with the "normal" way
to solve the problem or
reframe the need

D

Category

What can I compare them to?
What category are they in?
What are other options or
alternatives?

Include
Targeted category
Unique differentiator

D

Solution

Do I understand their offer?
Is it clear what they do?
And what they don't?
Are the conditions clear?

Include
Solution, offer, product or
service presentation

AB

Can I continue with them?
Do I trust them respect them?
Do I clearly understand what they offer?

Yes, I continue

No, I give up

Projection (future me)

What will it be like?
How will I feel? Will I be happy?
What will I avoid? What will I gain?

The third phase is emotional
again.
Decisions are made more at
an emotional level than an
intellectual one.

Experience

How is it going to happen?
What will it be like working with
them? Are the next steps, is the
process clear?
Isn't it complicated? Can I do this?
Am I comfortable with how it
will happen?

Include
Descriptions of how it will be like
Longer descriptions of the steps
Simple 3 step plan
Reassuring copy

C

Transformation

What transformation will be
produced?
How will things change? What will I/we
become? How will we grow, evolve?

Include
Help visualize the future state
Redefine their "identity"

F

Stakes

What if I don't move forward?
What is the worst that could happen?
Would it be so bad?
Will I fall behind?
What are the stakes?

Include
What current bad situations will
continue?
What negative outcomes will happen?
Connected negative emotions

4B

Positive future

Will I be happy with moving forward?
What will I get out of it?
Will it help me personally?
Will I get ahead?
What other problems do they solve?
What are other benefits?
What transformation are they selling?
Will my boss be happy?

Include
Help them visualize the positive
future, the many benefits, and the
connected positive emotions

3A

Am I excited with the proposed
future?
Is the experience engaging?
Does it relieve my pains?

Yes, I continue

No, I give up

Brand Narrative

Storybuilding

Recognition ↓	First impression	Blurb / tagline	Emotional
	Stakeholder	This type of person / company...	
	Aspirations (Jobs)	Has this aspiration...	
	Challenges (Pains)	But, there is a problem...	
Perception ↓	Values & Trust	You can trust us because... Our mission is...	Intellectual
	Standpoint	Old way vs new way...	
	Category	In this new category...	
	Solution	Here is our solution...	
Projection ↓	Experience	There is a simple 3 steps process...	Emotional
	Transformation	You will become...	
	Stakes	You will avoid...	
	Positive future	Your life will be better...	
	Easy interaction	Simple Call-to-action	

What kind of company?



B2C



B2B



Service or
Product



Non-Profit



Marketplace



Competitor
Differentiation



Contrasting
Brands



Investor

Mural

Self-service

Storybuildin...

Outline

1 Storybuilding Intro

2 Method

3 Stakeholder

4 Stakeholder canv...

5 Organisation

6 Organisation can...

7 Storybuilding

8 Storybuilding ca...

9 The Story

10 The story canvas

11 Trigger Marketing

12 Trigger Marketin...

13 Competitors

14 Competitors can...

15 Unique Category

16 Unique Category ...

17 Taglines

18 Taglines canvas

Storybuilding

Stakeholder

Organisation

Storybuilding

The Story

Trigger Marketing

Archetypes

Competitors

Your unique category

Taglines

Good Offer (The Grid)

STOP TALKING ABOUT YOU

JOHN ELBING

standpoint

Storybuilding



Stakeholder



Organisation



Storybuilding



The Story



Offers: Good, Better, Best



Trigger Marketing



Archetypes



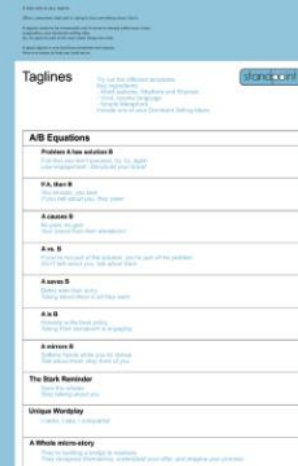
Competitors



Your unique category



Taglines



Good Offer (The Grid)



STOP

Stakeholder

Define the scope of the exercise. List your target stakeholders.

Go through the blocks describing them as best you can. Force yourself to think on several levels, from the mundane to the existential.

Stay within the scope of your offer, but forget the specifics of your offer. Everything on this sheet is from your customer's standpoint. They don't know what you do.

Once you have this view of your stakeholders, step back and think of how you experience them. Could you group some? Are there new ones?

Finally go back over all your answers and list the most important ones for your stakeholders. What is unique for them?

Of course, you can prepare with market research and customer interviews. Ask existing customers why they like your product or service. You might be surprised.

Use the
standpoint

Stakeholder (customer)

Scope Take the general scope of your offer. On categories, list down from the mundane to the existential. Customer Experience and Reputation Management What are the main goals? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Segments The Customer: Existing customer management with automatic business insights. The Business: Managing reputation management with unique tools. Manage online reputation. Digitalize their process of managing reviews.	Aspiration (Jobs) Increase ratings online. Understand your customer's voice. Manage online reputation. Digitalize their process of managing reviews.	Challenges (Pains) Generalized by online tools. Promotion to this marketplace with reviews. Lack of respect from first online marketplace management. Too many reviews. Too many reviews. How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?
Extra What are the main goals? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Triggers What happens for need for a solution? What solution would you want to use? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Current Solution I am doing everything manually on each platform. I am not interested in managing my online reputation. I am not interested in managing my online reputation.	Importance How important is this for you? How important is this for you? How important is this for you?

Organisation

Go through the 6 blocks describing your company, keeping your stakeholder in mind.

The first two are the features of your offer that either help your stakeholder achieve something, or solve a problem. Then describe how it will happen for them.

Different is better than better.

What makes your organisation or offer unique? What category should they put you in? Can it be a new category?

Then describe your brand personality. It is important to them.

Finally, imagine how you can bring them delight, how you can make their life easier or more enjoyable.

Organisation (company)

Enablers What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Solvers Action Board: Business intelligence, turning limited data into action. Review Board: AI generated sentiment scores. What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Experience 3- Get in touch with your customer. 4- Personalize your offer. 5- Monitor your customer's experience. What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	
Uniqueness Action Board: Business intelligence, turning limited data into action. Review Board: AI generated sentiment scores. What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Brand Persona Organic Manager: Business Analyst. What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Extra Delight Free trial of 2 weeks. Instantaneous visibility on reviews and ratings. What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Matching What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?

Storybuilding

With all the gathered information, we will now start building the structure of the story.

Each square links back to a part of one of the previous canvases. Among all your ideas, at the different levels, try to imagine, to feel, what would resonate the most with your stakeholder. Sometimes, it's a high-level aspiration, sometimes it's a pesky annoyance. What has the best chance of connecting with them?

There is a lot here. Two of the most important, the Aspirations and the Challenges, are divided. The important ones at the beginning and the secondary ones on the three, under Status and Positive Future.

Don't start composing beautiful sentences just yet. For now, identify your choices with one or two simple ideas.

Storybuilding

Recognition The first phase to understand the customer's experience.	First Impression What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Stakeholder What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Aspirations (Jobs) What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Challenges (Pains) What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?
Perception The second phase to understand the customer's experience.	Values & Trust What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Standpoint What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Category What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Solution What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?
Projection The third phase to understand the customer's experience.	Experience What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Transformation What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Stakes What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?	Positive Future What makes your offer unique? How do you want to be perceived? What are the main challenges? What are the main opportunities?

Stakeholder (customer)

Scope

Aspirations (Jobs)

Challenges (Pains)

Drivers

Progress

Current Business

Importance

[illegible][illegible][illegible]





Storybuilding



Website Audit

Category	Score
Overall	8.5/10
Content	8.0/10
Design	8.5/10
Usability	8.0/10
Performance	8.5/10
SEO	8.0/10
Mobile	8.5/10
Accessibility	8.0/10

Stakeholder



Organisation



Category

Category	Sub-category	Score
Category 1	Sub-category 1	8.5/10
Category 1	Sub-category 2	8.0/10
Category 1	Sub-category 3	8.5/10
Category 1	Sub-category 4	8.0/10
Category 1	Sub-category 5	8.5/10
Category 1	Sub-category 6	8.0/10
Category 1	Sub-category 7	8.5/10
Category 1	Sub-category 8	8.0/10
Category 1	Sub-category 9	8.5/10
Category 1	Sub-category 10	8.0/10

Offers: Good, Better, Best

Offer	Good	Better	Best
Offer 1	8.5/10	8.0/10	8.5/10
Offer 2	8.0/10	8.5/10	8.0/10
Offer 3	8.5/10	8.0/10	8.5/10
Offer 4	8.0/10	8.5/10	8.0/10
Offer 5	8.5/10	8.0/10	8.5/10
Offer 6	8.0/10	8.5/10	8.0/10
Offer 7	8.5/10	8.0/10	8.5/10
Offer 8	8.0/10	8.5/10	8.0/10
Offer 9	8.5/10	8.0/10	8.5/10
Offer 10	8.0/10	8.5/10	8.0/10

Good Offer (The Grid)

Offer	Good	Better	Best
Offer 1	8.5/10	8.0/10	8.5/10
Offer 2	8.0/10	8.5/10	8.0/10
Offer 3	8.5/10	8.0/10	8.5/10
Offer 4	8.0/10	8.5/10	8.0/10
Offer 5	8.5/10	8.0/10	8.5/10
Offer 6	8.0/10	8.5/10	8.0/10
Offer 7	8.5/10	8.0/10	8.5/10
Offer 8	8.0/10	8.5/10	8.0/10
Offer 9	8.5/10	8.0/10	8.5/10
Offer 10	8.0/10	8.5/10	8.0/10

Text content for the Good Offer (The Grid) section.

Archetypes

Archetype	Score
Archetype 1	8.5/10
Archetype 2	8.0/10
Archetype 3	8.5/10
Archetype 4	8.0/10
Archetype 5	8.5/10
Archetype 6	8.0/10
Archetype 7	8.5/10
Archetype 8	8.0/10
Archetype 9	8.5/10
Archetype 10	8.0/10



Storybuilding

Story	Score
Story 1	8.5/10
Story 2	8.0/10
Story 3	8.5/10
Story 4	8.0/10
Story 5	8.5/10
Story 6	8.0/10
Story 7	8.5/10
Story 8	8.0/10
Story 9	8.5/10
Story 10	8.0/10

Storybuilding

Story	Score
Story 1	8.5/10
Story 2	8.0/10
Story 3	8.5/10
Story 4	8.0/10
Story 5	8.5/10
Story 6	8.0/10
Story 7	8.5/10
Story 8	8.0/10
Story 9	8.5/10
Story 10	8.0/10

The Story

Story	Score
Story 1	8.5/10
Story 2	8.0/10
Story 3	8.5/10
Story 4	8.0/10
Story 5	8.5/10
Story 6	8.0/10
Story 7	8.5/10
Story 8	8.0/10
Story 9	8.5/10
Story 10	8.0/10

Taglines

Tagline	Score
Tagline 1	8.5/10
Tagline 2	8.0/10
Tagline 3	8.5/10
Tagline 4	8.0/10
Tagline 5	8.5/10
Tagline 6	8.0/10
Tagline 7	8.5/10
Tagline 8	8.0/10
Tagline 9	8.5/10
Tagline 10	8.0/10

Confusing or Bored

Tech

Features

Benefits

Client segment

The future

Client segment?

Time to revenue?

Page	Score
Page 1	8.5/10
Page 2	8.0/10
Page 3	8.5/10
Page 4	8.0/10
Page 5	8.5/10
Page 6	8.0/10
Page 7	8.5/10
Page 8	8.0/10
Page 9	8.5/10
Page 10	8.0/10

Trojan Horse

Storybuilding isn't just about marketing.

It reshapes how a company views itself and its customers.

Storybuilding aligns brand positioning with both emotional and logical decision-making factors.

John Elbing



LinkedIn





#1 INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

STORYBUILDING

YOUR BRAND FROM THEIR STANDPOINT

CUSTOMER, USER, INVESTOR, DONOR, PARTNER, SUPPLIER, BOSS

John Elbing - 2025

standpoint

STOP
TALKING ABOUT YOU



J O H N E L B I N G