WBA

WORKSHOP TOOLS – THE 5 WHYS

The last workshop tool in this module bears some resemblance to Claim, Value, Proof in that it forces you to look more deeply at the claim you want to make and decide if there is a more powerful claim hiding underneath it.

It’s a very simple process.

Take a claim, any claim you think is worth making and ask ‘Why does this matter?’

And whatever the answer, ask the same question again. ‘And why does that matter?’

Try and do this five times!

It might be that you hit on something of real significance after just two or three ‘Whys’. But keep going if you can.

To illustrate this process, I’ll give you an example from my own experience.

Some years ago, while I was working as the Creative Director of Leo Burnett’s offices in Sydney, we were voted ‘Creative Agency of the Year’.

In the subsequent months, we felt this award would be a good claim to make in our presentations to prospective clients.

So, essentially our pitch became, “Give us your business, we’re the most creative agency in town!”

Now, if you’ve worked through the Claim, Value, Proof model, you’ll have noticed that this claim hasn’t attached itself to a value. As for proof, we did have the various gongs and awards on display in our reception area.

One way of getting at the Value is to ask the 5 Whys.

Here’s how it might have worked.

Claim: We’re the most creative agency.

Why #1. We ask why does that matter? After all, this sounds as if it’s in the agency’s interest more than the client’s.

After a scratch of the head, we might say:

Claim: We create the sort of advertising that gets noticed.

Again, the client might wonder exactly what is in it for them.

Why #2: And why does that matter?

Another scratch of the head and then:

Claim: People won’t just notice the advertising, they’ll talk about it.

Why #3: And why does that matter?

Claim: Well, if they’re talking about it, awareness of your brand and message will go up.

Why #4: And why does that matter?

Claim: You’ll be able to do less advertising!

Why #5: And why does that matter?

Claim: You’ll save money!!!!

Aha! Pay dirt.

Five levels beneath, ‘We’re the most creative agency in town, you’ve said something that has the client rivetted.

Think back to the six core values we explored in Claim, Value, Proof.

#2 – Save Money

This is the benefit you could have substituted for your initial claim.

Look at how the conversation could have flowed.

‘We can help you save money.’ (You now have the client’s full attention.)

‘How?’

“By promoting your product with less advertising. We do that by creating the sort of advertising that not only gets noticed but talked about, in so doing, it raises the awareness of your brand and your message. That’s the power of creative advertising. And that what all those medals and awards in reception are all about.”

In other words, we’ve reversed the order of the argument by starting with a claim that was lying underneath the obvious.

And that really is the power of the 5 Whys.

It’s a very simple tool that takes you beyond the obvious to something that is more meaningful and motivating.

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