



the starr conspiracy

They've **Heard** It All Before: What Do **You** Do If Buyers Can't **Tell** **Your Message** Apart?

A CASE STUDY



Deja Vu Marketing

The Copycat Conundrum

You're not like your competitors, so why sound like them? You're not like your competitors, so why sound like them? Repeatedly reading the same sentence is confusing and irritating, right? It's just as bewildering and annoying for buyers when they see multiple vendors tout the same message.

When one organization sounds like the next, it makes it that much harder for a buyer to choose one vendor over another. Or it makes the decision easier — if every company seems interchangeable, a buyer might as well flip a coin.

Worse still, if you can't differentiate yourself from your competitors, buyers may ultimately base their decision on any number of factors that may omit those unique to you. But here's the worst thing:

When you sound like your competitors, you don't sound like yourself.

To connect with your radical buyers — those who share your attitudes, beliefs, and opinions — you need a message that distinguishes you from your competition. Although you may be tempted to fit into your category by making “me too” claims — “*They can do that. So can we!*” — you should instead craft “only me” propositions to attract buyers. Forget fitting in. You want to stand out.

The good news is that when your competitors are peddling similar messages, you've got a prime opportunity to get heard. Here's an example of how we worked with a client to break away from the pack with a message that ultimately resonated with buyers and established them as a market leader.



THE PROBLEM

The Plight of the Parrot

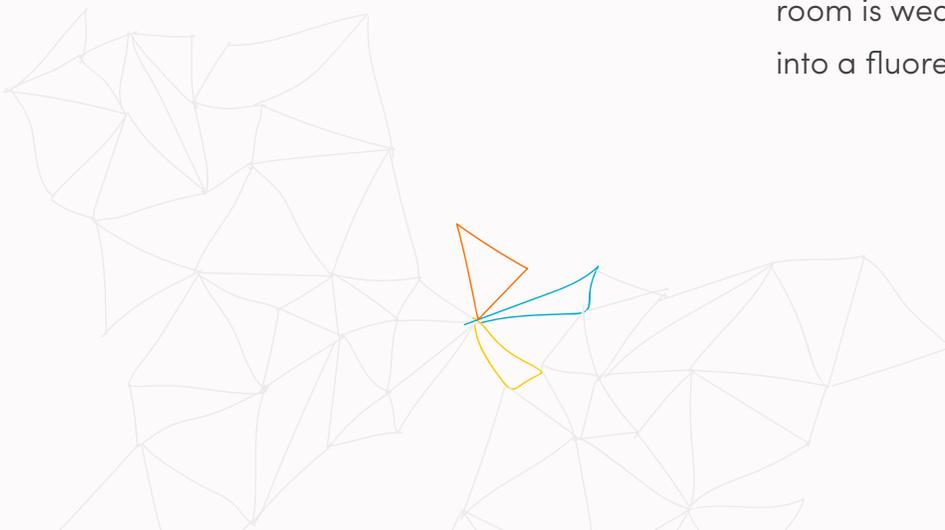
A wellness technology provider came to The Starr Conspiracy for help rising above the noise of competitors, almost all of whom were telling companies that their wellness programs would lower healthcare costs. A multitude of businesses were citing ROI and savings, and using the same stats from the same reports to promote financial benefits.

This vendor was also capable of reducing healthcare expenses for organizations, but they were hesitant to market themselves that way. And not only because everyone else was already doing that. It was because the vendor viewed themselves as a company whose values could not be captured on an accounting spreadsheet.

They understood well-being was not just about well-being. A healthy workforce impacted many corporate initiatives, from employee engagement to retention to performance and beyond — all of which could similarly benefit the bottom line. What if they could appeal to buyers who similarly saw the far-reaching potential of wellness initiatives?

What if the organization could create a message that made sense beyond healthcare dollars and cents?

Naturally, the company was a bit uneasy about rejecting the status quo when it came to promotion. But at the same time, they recognized that if everyone in the room is wearing black, it was time to slip into a fluorescent green jumpsuit.



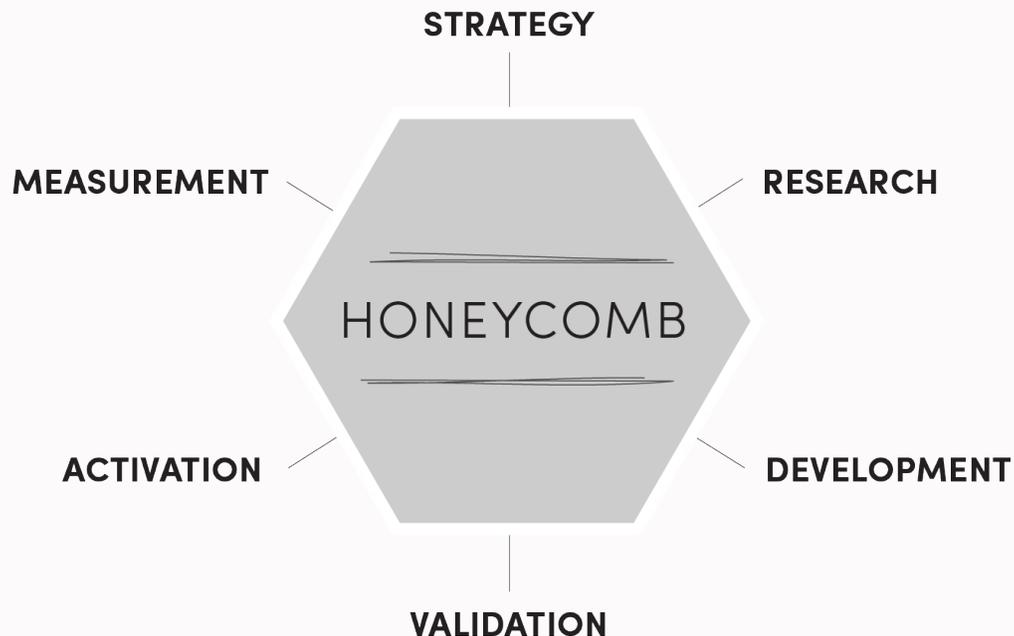


THE SOLVE

Hopping Off the Bandwagon

To help the organization develop a striking, compelling message, The Starr Conspiracy took the company through our Honeycomb Process. It's a vital journey to help the enterprise discover their Drive,¹ develop impactful messages, understand their category, and engage with radical buyers.

HERE'S WHAT WE DID:



¹ A company's Drive consists of the internal factors that define a client's voice. Those factors include: obsession (core desire), gifts, traps, fears, legacy (goal), and archetype.



Strategy: The company's first impulse was to brand themselves as an employee engagement platform. However, although their impact certainly extended into engagement, The Starr Conspiracy counseled the vendor to instead conquer the wellness niche more before moving into adjacent categories. As a result, the company would continue to concentrate on well-being, only now they would promote it as a key to unlocking employee engagement potential.

Research: The Starr Conspiracy conducted extensive internal and external stakeholder interviews, as well as a competitive analysis.

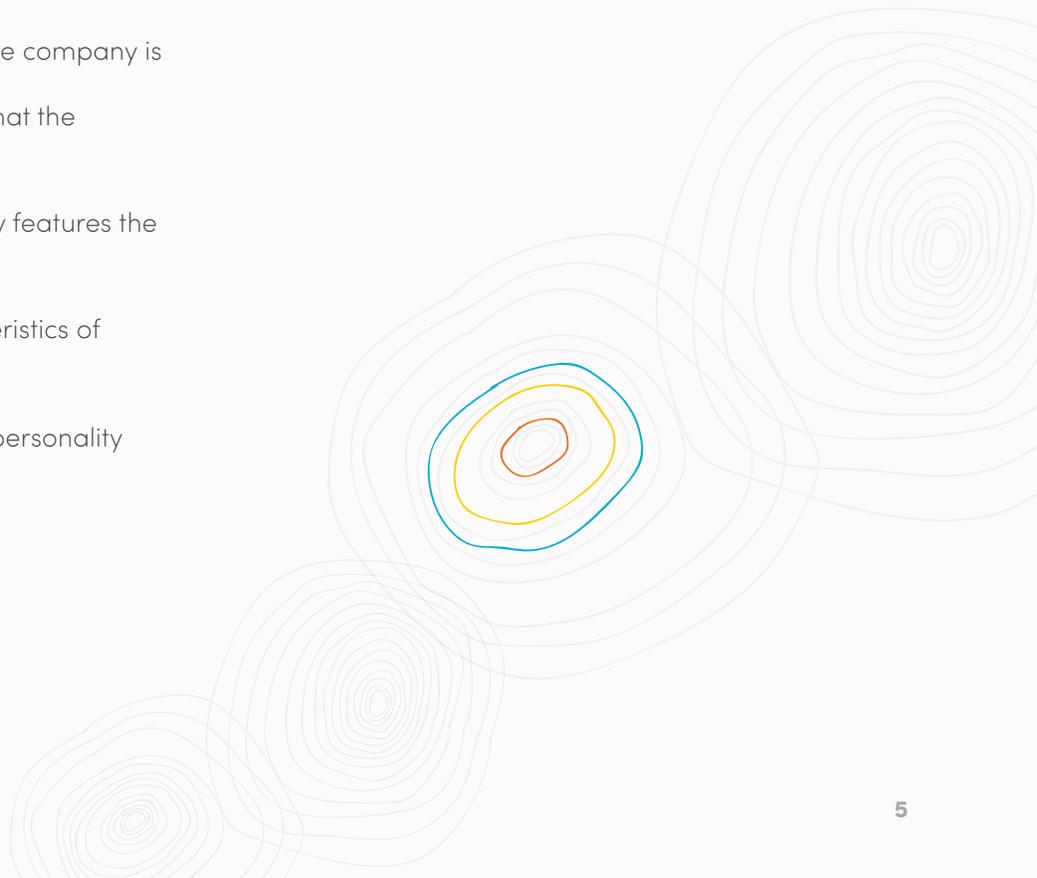
Development: The Starr Conspiracy identified a range of characteristics and variables to improve the organization's perception of themselves, their category, and their buyers, including:

- **Drive Variables:** Defining who the company is
- **Message Variables:** Detailing what the company does
- **Functional Associations:** Primary features the business wants to be known for
- **Brand Attributes:** Main characteristics of the brand
- **Brand Archetype:** Overarching personality

Validation: The Starr Conspiracy validated the project with the client's senior leadership and major customers.

Activation: The Starr Conspiracy produced message guides for internal and ongoing message development to drive marketing as well as product development.

Measurement: The Starr Conspiracy engages in continued measurement studies to bolster brand awareness, functional association, and brand affinity.





THE RESULT

A Fluorescent Green Jumpsuit

As a result of going through our Honeycomb Process, the company was able to reject using the same message that its competitors were touting and focus on one that promoted the promises of wellness beyond shaving healthcare costs. They did so not because their message was more valid than that of competitors — they did so because it enabled them to communicate more authentically and in a way that was unique to them.

And unique to buyers.

Additionally, the organization gained alignment among employees, prospects (the market), and clients around the company's Drive. A unified voice around core messages further helped the organization and its radical buyers engage with each other. Specifically, the business rallied around its Message Variables:

Radical Buyer: The company identified their most valuable, passionate audience — buyers who were eager to join forces with the vendor based on a shared belief that well-being was a portal to employee engagement. Buyers who were adamant about transforming the culture at their organizations. Buyers who appreciated having a direct relationship with the vendor rather than permit consultants to tell them what they should think.

Category: The enterprise gained a greater understanding of their category to better focus their efforts around business needs.

Essential Value: The organization discovered how to use their voice to engage employees through health and wellness to improve their lives.

Competition: The company recognized that a people-centric message was an ideal way to single themselves out.

Choice Factor: The organization gained clarity on why buyers would choose them over their competitors — namely because they could connect well-being to business results in ways that addressed the needs of employees, HR practitioners, and executive leadership.

Ultimately, the company was brave enough to adopt a novel position. They harnessed a more holistic understanding of wellness to differentiate themselves. Moreover, they are leveraging well-being to evolve into a more robust employee engagement platform.

A great success story, right? Let's discuss creating one of your own.



Are You **Fitting in** or **Standing Out**?

When Generic Won't Do

You don't have to be a freak flying a freak flag to get noticed. (Though that's cool, too!) You do, however, need to know what makes you *you* — and then let buyers know. The best companies rarely succeed by copying competitors. Instead, they triumph by revealing and cultivating their best selves.

Besides, you already know that buyers come with all sorts of unique challenges. Don't they deserve something more from you to address their problems than a generic message? We'd love to have a conversation about your messaging needs and how we can work together to help you find your voice and your radical buyers.

LET'S TALK

About The Starr Conspiracy

The Starr Conspiracy embraces the humanity in business to build brands that have emotional resonance. More than a global business-to-business marketing agency, we're a movement. We're changing the way technology companies view themselves, their customers, and the world. Unlike conventional agencies, we fuse advertising, technology, and advisory services in completely new ways — ways that defy categorization and challenge the old-school agency structure.