








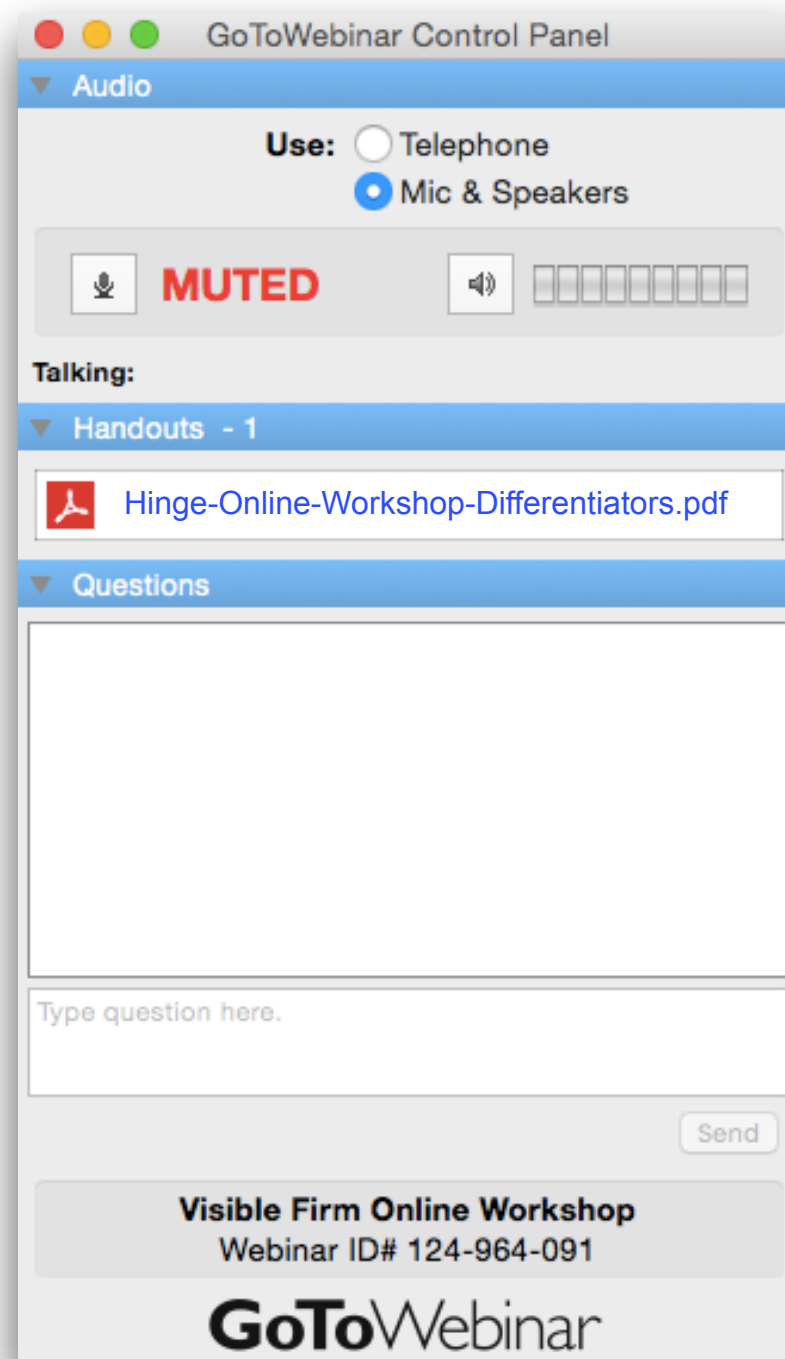
# The Visible Firm<sup>SM</sup>

Online Workshop:



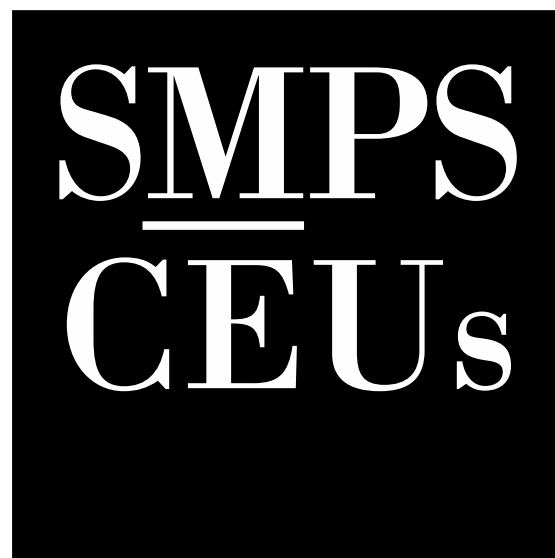
## Differentiate Your Firm

# Download Today's Worksheet



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# Workshop Instructor



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# What We'll Cover

- ① **Understanding Differentiators**
- ② **Creating Your Differentiators**
- ③ **Communicating Your Differentiators Through a Positioning Statement**
- ④ **Demonstrating Your Expertise**



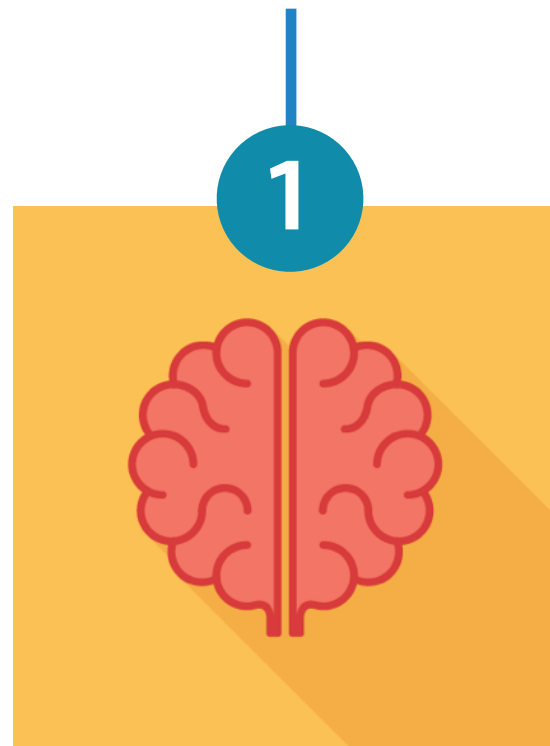


## *The Visible Firm*

**A firm that has attained high visibility and a reputation for expertise in their industry niche.**



## Phase 1. The Strategy



## Phase 3. The Rollout

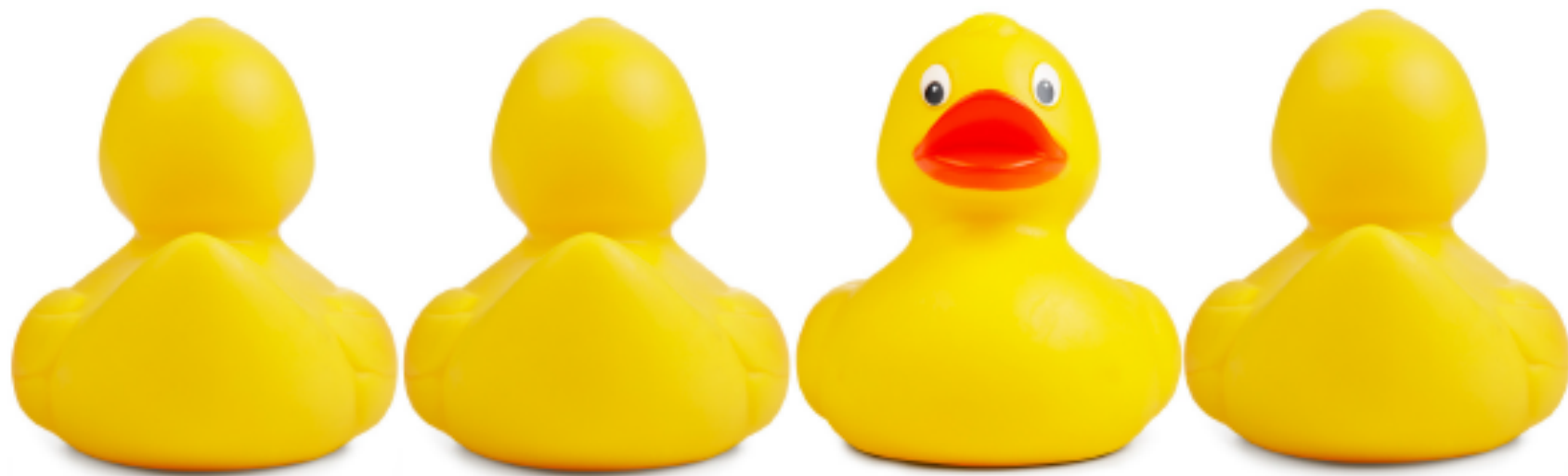


## Phase 2. The Build

# Understanding Differentiators



# *What is a differentiator?*



A differentiator is something that makes your firm *meaningfully different* from other firms.

High growth firms

3X

more likely to have a  
**strong differentiator.**

# Sources of Differentiators

```
graph TD; A[Sources of Differentiators] --> B[Discovered through your research]; A --> C[Decide to do something differently];
```

**Discovered** through  
your research

**Decide** to do  
something differently

# Differentiators must be

☒ True

☒ Provable

☒ Relevant



# Draw From Your Research

- Why are your current clients selecting you?
- Who are your competitors?
- How are you different from them?

# Examples of Strong Differentiators

- We work exclusively in litigation support
- We specialize in the restaurant industry
- We work exclusively with owner-operators of family-owned businesses
- We specialize in restructuring and turnarounds
- We work exclusively with Fortune 50 firms



# Examples of Weak Differentiators

- We have great people
- We have a proprietary process
- We put the client first
- We always strive for excellence
- We have a passion for innovation
- We are a trusted advisor

# Supporting Your Differentiators

- Client list
- Case studies
- Awards
- Independent research
- Publications
- Bios
- Tell the story



# Combining Your Differentiators

- Look for strong benefits that aren't unique in themselves
- Combining two can add differentiation
- Avoid simply adding marketing buzz words

# Combining Your Differentiators

We specialize in working with family-owned businesses.

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We focus on franchises in the fast food industry.

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We specialize in working with family-owned businesses.



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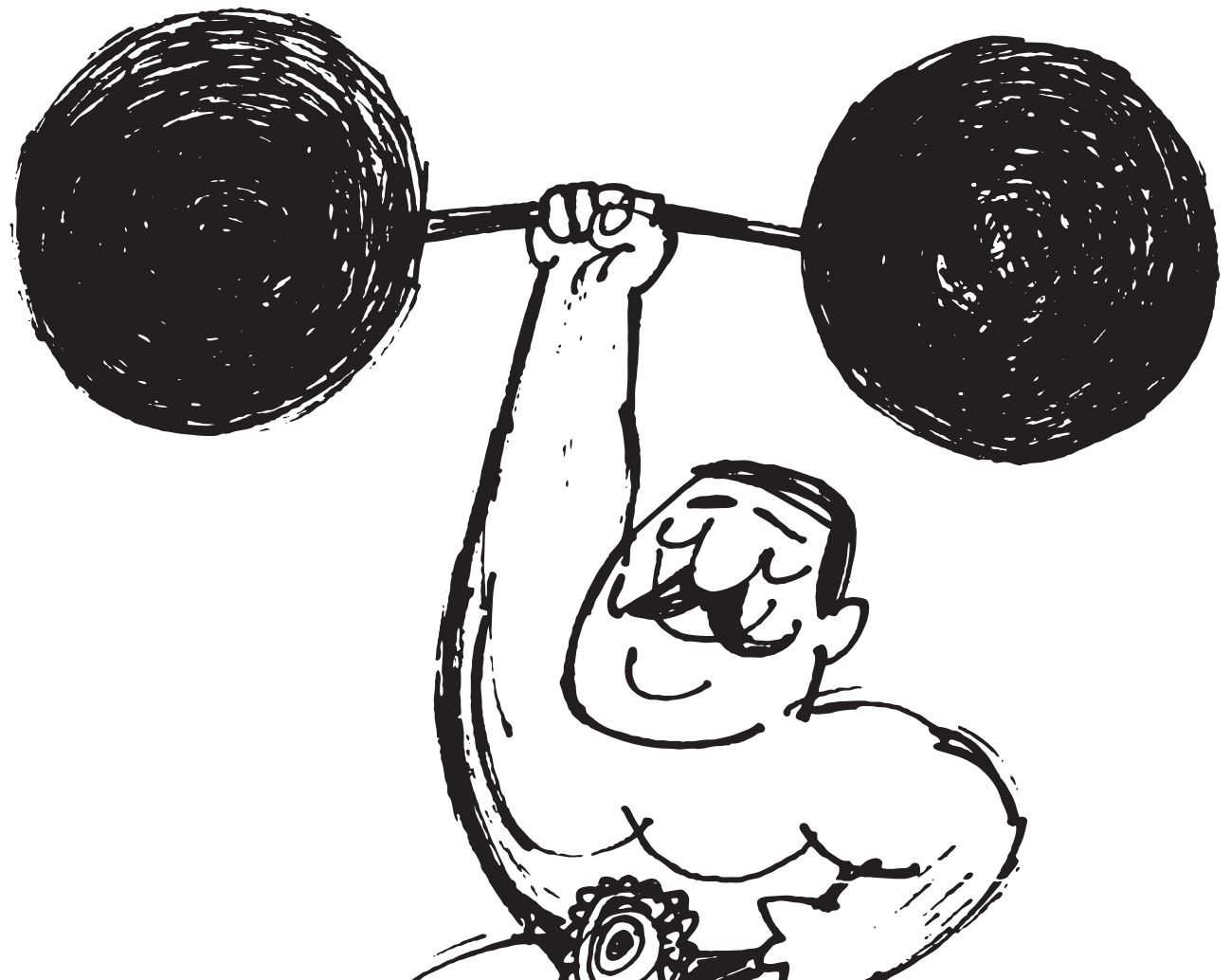
**We specialize in family-owned fast food franchises.**



*Aim to have three to five differentiators.*

# Prioritize Your Differentiators

- Rank by strength and importance to target client
- Consider what best differentiates firm from competitors
- Consider what best supports your overall strategy



*You must live your differentiators every day,  
working and acting in ways consistent with them.*

# Creating Your Differentiators



## Example Firm- Slingshot International

- **Industry-** Management Consulting
- **Backstory-** Steady growth since conception in 1985
- **Services-** Helps middle and upper management implement important changes in strategy and business model
- **Challenges-** Struggling to bridge gap between mid-sized companies they serve most often and Fortune 500 companies they aspire to serve
- **Goals-** Win higher percentage of competitive situations with Big 4 and elevate the way they are perceived

## *Slingshot International Example-* Initial List of Differentiators

- We bring bold strategies to life for brands around the world.
- Our people are our greatest asset.
- We are an affordable alternative to the Big 4.
- We prepare companies to implement critical changes in their strategy or business model.
- 89 percent of our clients have referred or plan to refer us.
- We've been in business for 30 years.

# Differentiators

Use the tables below to help address your firm’s differentiators.

- 1. Write your potential differentiator in the first column, and then use the columns to the right to indicate whether that differentiator is true, relevant, and provable.

Potential Differentiator	Is it true?	Is it relevant?	Is it provable?

## *Slingshot International Example-* Narrowing Your Differentiators

- We bring bold strategies to life for brands around the world.
- ~~Our people are our greatest asset.~~
- ~~We are an affordable alternative to the Big 4.~~
- We prepare companies to implement critical changes in their strategy or business model.
- 89 percent of our clients have referred or plan to refer us.
- We've been in business for 30 years.

## *Slingshot International Example-* Supporting Your Differentiators

Claim	Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Bold strategies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Case studies of your previous work</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Brands around the world</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Logos of international companies</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Implement critical changes in strategy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Success stories from previous clients</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 89% of clients refer</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Showcase your primary research</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 30 years of experience</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Started in 1985</li></ul>

2. Support for your differentiators

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## *Slingshot International Example-* Intermediate Differentiators

- We bring bold strategies to life for brands around the world.
- We prepare companies to implement critical changes in their strategy or business model.
- 89 percent of our clients have referred or plan to refer us.
- We've been in business for 30 years.

# Combining Your Differentiators

We bring bold strategies to life for brands around the world.



# Combining Your Differentiators

We bring bold strategies to life for brands around the world.



We've been in business for 30 years.

# Combining Your Differentiators

We bring bold strategies to life for brands around the world.



We've been in business for 30 years.



**For over 30 years, many of the world's biggest brands have relied on us to bring their bold strategies to life.**

## *Slingshot International Example-* Final List of Differentiators

- For over 30 years, many of the world's biggest brands have relied on us to bring their bold strategies to life.
- We prepare companies to implement critical changes in their strategy or business model.
- 89 percent of our clients have referred or plan to refer us.

### 3. Final Differentiators

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## *Slingshot International Example-* Ranking Your Differentiators

- ① We prepare companies to implement critical changes in their strategy or business model.
- ② For over 30 years, many of the world's biggest brands have relied on us to bring their bold strategies to life.
- ③ 89 percent of our clients have referred or plan to refer us.

#### 4. Rank your Differentiators

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

# Communicating Your Differentiators Through a Positioning Statement

# What is Positioning?

- The big idea that captures why you are the best choice for your target clients





# What Should a Positioning Statement Accomplish?

- Describe both who you are today and who you want to become
- Identify what you do and (if appropriate) for whom
- Do all of this in simple, engaging, non-technical language
- Serve as an internal resource

# Draft the Positioning Statement(s)

- Start with ranked list of differentiators
- Follow the 3-part structure (see How-To document)
- Don't add "new" differentiators
- Aim for 3-5 sentences
- Not marketing copy

## Positioning Statement

Sentence 1

Sentence 2-3

Final Sentence

Write Final Positioning Statement

# *Slingshot International Example-* Positioning Statement

## **Sentence 1:**

Most important point of what you do and who you do it for

***For 30 years, brands around the globe have  
relied on Slingshot International to bring bold  
strategies to life.***

## *Slingshot International Example-* Positioning Statement

### **Sentence 2-4:**

Supports first sentence and adds to it

***We equip companies and their leaders with the tools and processes to change employees' mindset, deliver buy-in and unleash their potential. In fact, our approach is so successful that more than 9 out of 10 clients are referral sources.***

## *Slingshot International Example-* Positioning Statement

### **Final Sentence:**

Reinforces the value of your service and summarizes  
the major benefits of choosing your firm

***When you need to turn strategy into action,  
Slingshot International gives your people the  
power to perform.***

## *Slingshot International Example-* Positioning Statement

### **Full Positioning Statement:**

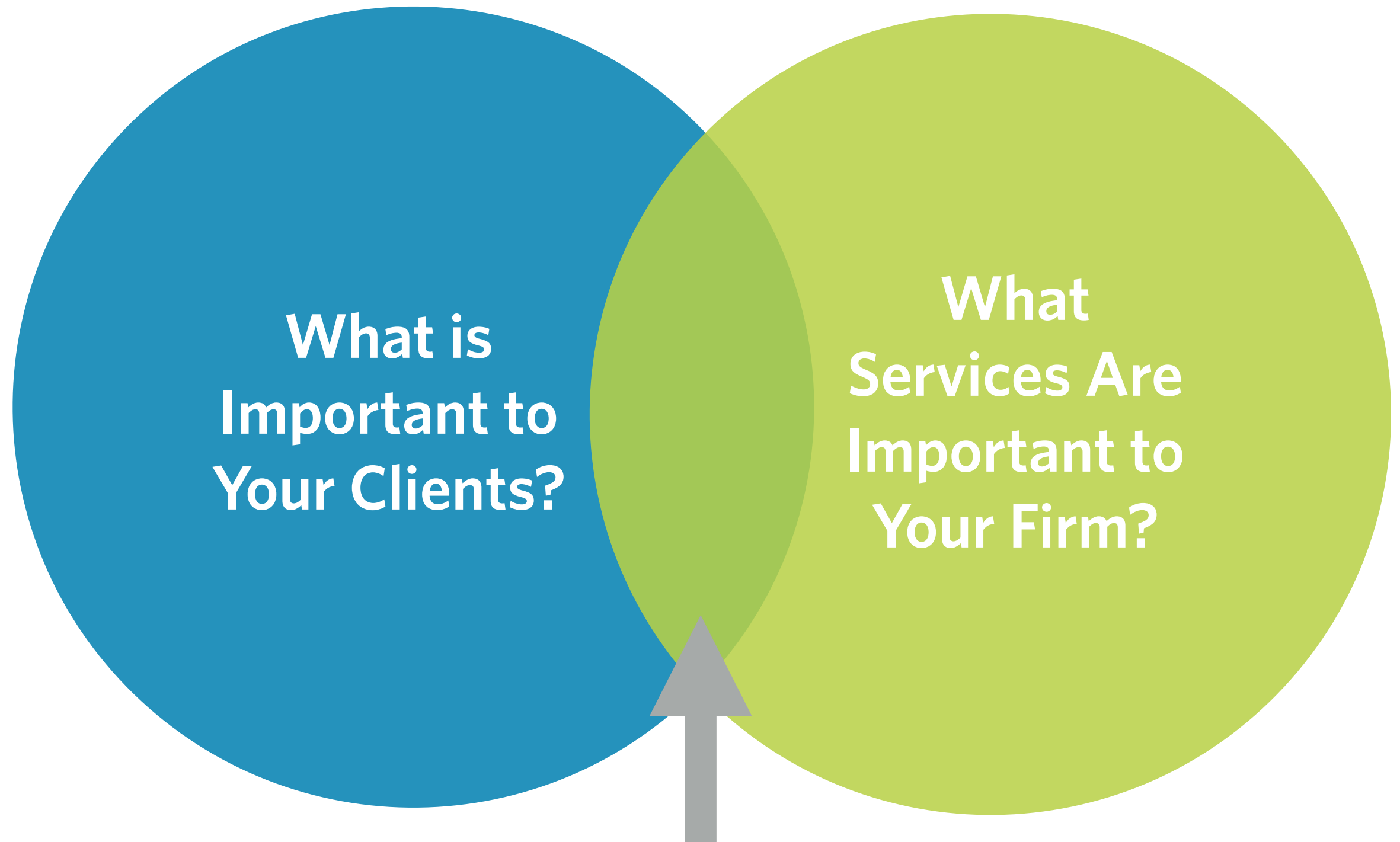
*Brands around the globe rely on Slingshot International to bring bold strategies to life. We equip companies to deftly change course as new market opportunities arise. And our approach is so successful that 9 out of 10 clients are referral sources. When you need to turn strategy into action, Slingshot International gives your people the power to perform.*

Demonstrating Your Expertise





**What is  
Important to  
Your Clients?**



***Focus on  
These Issues***

# Research Questions That Will Help You Select Your Issues

- What are the organizational priorities that your services help address?
- What approaches are your target audiences considering to address their priority issues?

# Criteria for a Selecting an Issue

- Relevant to client and service you provide
- No consensus on the solution
- Not something that is likely to go away in the short-term
- Not already “owned” by another firm
- You can offer a valuable perspective
- Broad enough for multiple topics

# Examples of Issues

- Ensuring the security of health care data
- Managing millennials in the workplace
- Fashion and international intellectual property laws
- Adaptive reuse of historic theaters

**Issue 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

Topic 1A: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic 1B: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic 1C: \_\_\_\_\_

**Issue 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

Topic 2A: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic 2B: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic 2C: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Slingshot International Example-* List of Issues

- Issue 1: Implementing a new business model
- Issue 2: Coping with resistance to change



# What is a Topic?

- An individual blog post, article, or other short content that covers one aspect of a larger issue
- Consider the format (e.g. blog post, video, webinar)
- Think in terms of a title
- You will put these titles in your content calendar

# How an Issue Becomes a Topic

1. Start with a specific question or perspective on an issue
2. Find a keyword that fits
3. Take a new perspective or add some new value

## *Slingshot International Example-* List of Issues and Topics

- Issue 1: Implementing a new business model
  - Topic A: The Human Side of Implementing a New Business Model
  - Topic B: Coping with Regulatory Issues When Your Business Model Changes
- Issue 2: Coping with resistance to change
  - Topic A: How to Recruit for a New Business Model
  - Topic B: 10 Reasons Organizational Change is So Hard

## Next Steps

- Once you've created your issues and topics and developed your content, you will need to publish and promote it
- In our next session you'll learn about the different formats of content and how to reach your target audience in each stage of the buying process



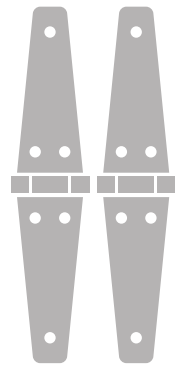
# Join our next hands-on Visible Firm Workshop: **Content Marketing the Right Way**

In this workshop, you will learn how to develop  
a sophisticated but practical content marketing plan.

Thursday, September 10 at 1:00pm EST

**How?**

Register at: <https://goo.gl/DhLD6s>



## Contact Info

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