

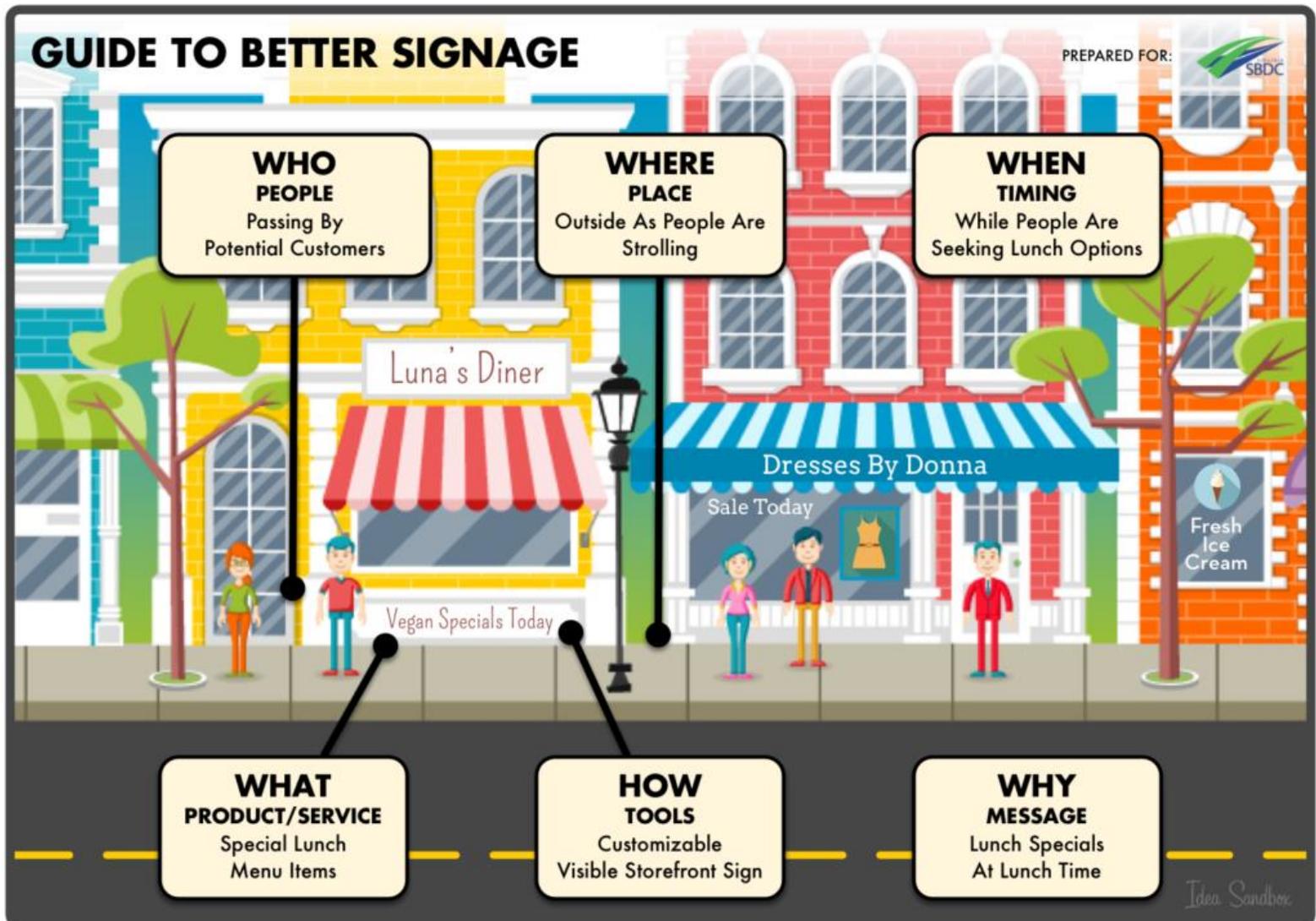
Paul Williams, founder of Idea Sandbox (www.idea-sandbox.com), is an expert at helping brands develop remarkable marketing programs that increase sales and allow companies to stand apart from their competition.

Guide To Better Awareness: The People, Place and Things of Marketing

It is important to be able to communicate your business concept and model to the outside world. If you want to reach customers in a meaningful way you need to:

1. Reach the right **PEOPLE/POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS** (who)
2. With a specific **NEED** (why)
3. Seeking a relevant **PRODUCT/SERVICE** (what)
4. By conveying a meaningful, relevant **MESSAGE** (how)
5. In the right **PLACE** (where) they're willing and able to pay attention
6. At the right **TIME** (when)
7. Using the right **TOOL(S)** (how)

To do this, it is sometimes helpful to use a worksheet to consider each of these elements separately. See the graphic below and use the fill-in-the-blank worksheet to create your message.



Sample Survey:

Fill in the blanks for the following questions:

*(Sometimes it is easier to answer **NEED** first then **CUSTOMER**)*

1. **PEOPLE:** Who are we trying to reach?

2. **NEED:** Why do they need something?

3. **PRODUCT/SERVICE:** What do we offer that satisfies that need?

4. **MESSAGE:** What message would be the most meaningful to reach them?

5. **PLACE:** Where is the right place these folks are willing to pay attention?
(at work, through the mail, online, at play, while out shopping, when with friends, etc.)

6. **TIME:** When will potential customers most likely view this message?

7. **TOOLS:** What is the right tool to share this **MESSAGE** at this **PLACE** at this **TIME**?

Example: Tennis Shop Offering Lessons:

Joe runs a sporting goods store and, based on feedback from customers, wants to add tennis instruction to his services. This is the worksheet that Joe might develop:

PEOPLE:

Who are we trying to reach? We know from speaking with our customers that it is mostly our older female clients who buy tennis shoes who are looking for this service. The way they shop with us, we know they're willing to spend money on a quality product. We also understand they are a very busy group.

NEED:

Why do they need something? Again, from listening to customers we understand that they are tired of losing tennis matches at the country club, and they are skilled players who want to be better. We've also heard complaints that the area doesn't have good instructors.

PRODUCT/SERVICE:

What do we offer that satisfies that need? We've determined we should provide tennis instruction. However, we also know this group is very busy. We'll offer pre-lunch 50-minute coaching sessions—with a focus on "how to think like your opponent." Finally, we'll make this a women-only event. No men allowed! This may also create a clubhouse feel for the group that participates.

MESSAGE:

What is the meaningful, relevant message that will pique their interest? We'll have to come up with something clever, but our signage should promote:

- Emphasis on skill development - we don't want to promote beginner's tennis
- Being a more confident player
- 50-minute sessions easily fit into someone's busy schedule
- We will include price, time, date, place, deadline, and how/where to enroll
- Maybe we'll promote the fact we'll have limited slots - keeping the instruction small - but also this could build a sense of urgency to sign up.
- Let's promote "women only" as well.

When we design our final sign, we'll create a hierarchy of information. Some information should be large "Hone Your Tennis Skills Like A Master!" for example, just like signage on our building. We'll draw to our content with a headline, then when they're interested/up close – the smaller print will provide the details.

PLACE:

Where is the right place these customers are willing to pay attention? Inside our store is the perfect place to start. But we also know these people are at the Saturday Farmer's Market, at the Country Club, shopping at Trader Joe's and getting coffee at the Starbucks on the waterfront.

TIME:

When are they able at this place to be receptive to this message? When they're shopping for tennis gear and when they're playing on the courts on the weekends are obvious times, but perhaps they would also be receptive while getting coffee or shopping.

TOOLS:

*What is the right tool to share this **message** at this **place** at this **time**?* With everything we outlined above, a couple of ideas include:

- Flyers that we could hand out to people at the Farmer's Market, country club, and community courts
- All that said, the easiest and most powerful way to build awareness is among our current customers in our store, due to existing relationships of trust.
- We could establish a referral program with incentives for signing up, and maybe even turn it into a "lunch and learn"

In conclusion...

By using this fill-in-the-blank survey approach it makes it easy to think about the relevant details of effective communication. Furthermore, it helps build ideas.