

THE COMPLETE PLAYBOOK

People Trust

People, Not Logos.

The frameworks, templates, and exercises to shift your B2B brand from polished collateral to genuine human presence — and actually build trust at scale.

REACH MULTIPLIER

8–12× individual vs. brand page

NON-NEGOTIABLE TRAITS

POV · Specificity · Consistency

THE BRIEF QUESTION

"What feeling should this leave?"

8–12×

MORE REACH:
INDIVIDUAL VS. BRAND PAGE

3

NON-NEGOTIABLES:
POV · SPECIFICITY · CONSISTENCY

∞

COMPOUNDING TRUST —
THE NORTH STAR METRIC

What's Inside

- 01 The Brand Voice Audit**
Diagnose where you actually stand

- 02 The Three Non-Negotiables**
POV, Specificity, Consistency — the filter

- 03 Identify Your Human Voices**
Map the voices and build the roster

- 04 The Source → Distribution Engine**
Turn one conversation into 30 days of content

- 05 Fill-in-the-Blank Templates**
POV post, story post, creator brief, hook formula

- 06 Four Practical Exercises**
The Competitor Swap, Voice Excavation, Hook Lab, Engine Build

- 07 Name the Fear. Reframe It.**
The four fears holding most brands back

- 08 What to Actually Measure**
Trust metrics, conversion signals, the north star

MODULE 01 — DIAGNOSE

The Brand Voice Audit

Before you build anything new, you need to know where you actually stand. Run this audit honestly. The results will tell you exactly what needs to change.

■ Signs Your Content Is Brand-Speak

Any competitor could publish it with their logo. It went through 3+ rounds of review. There's no named human behind it. It talks about what the product does, not what the customer feels. It uses words like "robust," "seamless," or "best-in-class."

■ Signs Your Content Is Human-First

It has a clear POV someone could disagree with. It's written in one person's voice. It references a specific moment. It made someone DM it to a colleague. It got a comment that said "this is exactly us."

■ The Polish Problem

High production value signals distance, not quality. When every post looks identical, perfectly on-brand, and reviewed to death — readers subconsciously clock it as marketing and scroll past.

■ The Authenticity Signal

Specificity is the shortcut to credibility. The founder who references a real conversation. The sales leader who shares what made them rethink their pitch. The SME who explains one thing deeply, in their own words.

THE 60-SECOND BRAND VOICE AUDIT

Pull your last 5 posts. Check every box that honestly applies.

- Could a competitor publish this content by swapping their logo for yours?
- Did this content go through more than two rounds of review before publishing?
- Is there no named human voice or perspective behind this content?
- Does the content avoid taking any position someone could disagree with?
- Is the goal to inform, rather than to make the reader feel understood?
- Would you be surprised if someone DM'd this to a colleague?

SCORING GUIDE

0–2 checked: You're in decent shape. | 3–4 checked: Content problem, not a budget problem. | 5–6 checked: Significant rethink needed. Start with Module 03.

"You can feel when somebody gives a shit. That's not a soft observation. That's a measurable differentiator."

— BRENDAN HUFFORD

MODULE 02 — FRAMEWORK

The Three Non-Negotiables

Every piece of human-first content that builds trust shares three traits. Not two. All three. Use this as your filter before anything gets published.

0
1

A Genuine Point of View

Not a brand position. Not a mission statement. A perspective that could only come from someone who has been in the arena — with an opinion they're not afraid to say out loud, even if it doesn't land universally.

"What does this person actually believe that most people wouldn't say publicly?"

DISAGREEMENT TEST

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2

Specificity

Niche credibility beats mass awareness in almost every B2B context. The content that earns deep trust isn't content that speaks to everyone — it's content that makes the right people feel completely understood.

"Will the exact right person read this and think 'they get it'?"

THE "THAT'S SO US" TEST

0
3

Consistency Over Perfection

Most brands break down here. They wait for the perfect insight, the perfect format, the perfect moment. Meanwhile the people they're trying to reach are watching someone else show up every week with something real.

"Can we commit to this cadence for 12 months, not just 12 posts?"

THE INFRASTRUCTURE TEST

THE TRUST COMPOUND FORMULA

Real Person + Real Perspective + Consistent Presence = Compounding Trust

The goal isn't awareness. Not impressions. Trust. You compound trust through content that consistently puts a real person, with a real perspective, in front of the audience that needs to know them. The leverage isn't persuasion. It's proximity.

"The eighth wonder of the world for a marketer is compounding trust. Not awareness. Not impressions. Trust."

— RACHEL ELSTS DOWNEY, CEO, SHARE YOUR GENIUS

MODULE 03 — VOICE STRATEGY

Identify Your Human Voices

Human-first content at scale starts with one decision most organizations haven't made clearly: who are the voices?
Not the brand voice. The human voices.

THE FOUNDER / CEO

Highest credibility, highest trust transfer. People follow founders because founders have skin in the game.

BEST CONTENT ANGLES

- Sharp takes on what's broken in the industry
- What you got wrong and what you now believe
- The conversation that changed how you think
- What everyone else is doing wrong (with receipts)

INFRASTRUCTURE TO CAPTURE THIS VOICE

- 30-min monthly recorded conversation with a content lead
- A standing Slack channel to drop raw thoughts for repurposing
- Post-sales-call debrief: "What surprised you?"
- Phone video: 2 minutes, sharp take, no script
- Ghost-drafted posts reviewed by founder, not written from scratch

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT

The most underutilized asset in most B2B companies. SMEs build niche credibility that makes the right people feel completely understood.

BEST CONTENT ANGLES

- Deep explanations of craft — "how we actually do X"
- Industry myths they're tired of hearing
- What clients always get wrong about this topic
- A breakdown of a real example (anonymized if needed)

INFRASTRUCTURE TO CAPTURE THIS VOICE

- Interview them — ask "what do clients always misunderstand?"
- Turn email explanations into LinkedIn posts (with permission)
- Give them a ghostwriter to refine their raw thinking
- One format commitment: one 600-word post per month

SALES LEADER

Sales leaders sit closest to the customer's actual language. Their content sounds different because it comes from real conversations, not marketing briefs.

BEST CONTENT ANGLES

- The conversation that made them rethink their pitch
- What objection they keep hearing (and what's really behind it)
- What great buyers do differently from average ones
- The real reason deals fall through

INFRASTRUCTURE TO CAPTURE THIS VOICE

- Post-call voice memo → transcribed → drafted → reviewed
- Weekly "best conversation of the week" capture ritual
- Content team pulls quotes from Gong/call recordings
- Monthly 30-min interview recorded and repurposed

MARKETING OPERATOR

The marketing team member who builds in public earns trust for the brand while building their own career. A rare win-win when supported properly.

BEST CONTENT ANGLES

- Behind-the-scenes: how a campaign was built
- What the data actually showed vs. what we expected
- Tools, frameworks, processes they actually use
- The metric nobody talks about in their industry

INFRASTRUCTURE TO CAPTURE THIS VOICE

- Formalize it: "create content" is in the job description
- Give them a posting budget (time, not just money)
- Set a cadence: 1–2 posts per week, reviewed not rewritten
- Don't over-approve — trust the voice you hired

VOICE ROSTER TEMPLATE

Complete this before building any content calendar.

PRIMARY VOICE (FOUNDER / CEO)

Name + 1-sentence POV they own publicly

SME VOICE

Name + their specific area of niche credibility

REVENUE / SALES VOICE

Name + the customer insight they carry

CAPTURE SYSTEM

Monthly interview? Slack channel? Post-call memo?

MODULE 04 — CONTENT ENGINE

The Source → Distribution Engine

The mic is not the destination — it's the start of the media strategy. Every conversation, interview, or recording is source material that fuels your entire content ecosystem.

01

Capture the Source

30-minute recorded conversation, podcast episode, or post-call voice memo. Unscripted. Real. The actual perspective in the actual voice.

02

Extract the Insights

Transcribe. Pull the 5–8 best moments: sharp takes, surprising data points, the story within the story. Tag by topic and voice.

03

Adapt by Channel

The idea travels. The format changes. The voice stays. Each insight becomes a native post for each channel — not copy-pasted, adapted.

04

Publish From People

Individual profiles, not brand pages. Get the humans in the content to share from their own profiles. 8–12× more reach. Every time.

05

Listen + Compound

Comments and DMs are your editorial calendar. What generated the "this is exactly us" response? Double down on it.

THE ZERO-CLICK PRINCIPLE

"Give them the idea. Give them the insight. Give them the punchline — not the path to the punchline. You earn the right to make an ask by being consistently useful before you ever make one."

— Amanda Natividad, VP Marketing, SparkToro

"Just at the moment when you as a marketer are exhausted about saying a specific message — that's the moment when it's just starting to click."

— ADAM SOKOL, VP MARKETING, SHARE YOUR GENIUS

Fill-in-the-Blank Frameworks

Use these as starting scaffolding — not scripts. Fill them in, then rewrite them in the actual human's voice. The structure holds the container; the personality fills it.

TEMPLATE 01: THE SHARP POV POST

Best for: Founder, Sales Leader, SME. Goal: establish a clear perspective that the right audience immediately recognizes as true.

THE CONTRARIAN HOOK

Most [industry] companies think [X]. They're wrong.

Open with the thing that will make your target audience stop scrolling.

THE SPECIFIC EVIDENCE

[2–3 specific, concrete observations. What you keep seeing. What the data shows.]

No vague generalities. Reference real moments.

THE REAL BELIEF

[The take that not everyone will agree with. Say the thing most people won't.]

This is the paragraph that earns trust.

THE INVITATION

[Not a CTA to your product. An invitation to continue the conversation.]

"Curious what others are seeing. Is this just us?"

TEMPLATE 02: THE STORY-LED POST

Best for: any voice. Two layers of narrative: what happened on the surface, and what it actually means underneath.

THE SCENE-SETTING OPEN

[Date/time]. [Specific place]. [Something unexpected happened.]

Ground it in a real, specific moment. Not "I was in a meeting."

WHAT HAPPENED

[Describe the situation simply. What did they say? What surprised you?]

Keep it concrete and sequential.

WHAT IT MADE YOU REALIZE

That's when it clicked for me: [the insight underneath the surface story]

This is the second narrative layer — the meaning beneath the event.

THE BROADER TRUTH

The real issue isn't [surface problem]. It's [the actual underlying problem].

This makes it shareable beyond people in the exact same situation.

TEMPLATE 03: THE CREATOR BRIEF

The one shift that changes everything: brief creators on the feeling, not the words. Give them the objective and emotional target — not the script.

CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE

[What business outcome are we trying to move?]

Be specific about the metric or behavior you want to shift.

THE TARGET PERSON

[Role, company stage, pain they're sitting with right now]

Not a demographic. A specific person in a specific moment.

DESIRED FEELING

[What do you want them to feel when they finish reading/watching this?]

Not 'informed' or 'aware.' Try: understood, challenged, relieved, motivated, seen.

WHAT'S ENCOURAGED

[Where can the creator take risks? Humor? Strong opinions? Personal stories?]

The best briefs are as explicit about what's encouraged as what's restricted.

Do the Work

Reading a playbook doesn't build a media brand. These exercises do. Block 30 minutes. Complete one per week for the next four weeks.

01

20 min · Marketing Lead · Output: Honest diagnosis

01 Pull your last 10 LinkedIn posts (brand page or team members' profiles).

02 For each post, replace your logo/name with your top 3 competitors. Could any of them have published it?

POSTS THAT FAILED THE SWAP TEST:

03 For each that failed: what would have made it uniquely yours? What's the one true thing only your company could say?

THE MISSING POV:

04 Write one replacement post using a real perspective from a real person on your team.

REPLACEMENT POST:

02

30 min · Content lead + one internal voice · Output: 3-5 post ideas

01 Pick one internal voice (founder, SME, or sales leader). Schedule 30 minutes. Record it.

02 Ask only these four questions. Let them talk. Don't interrupt. Q1: What does everyone in your industry believe that you think is wrong? Q2: What's the most surprising customer conversation you've had in 90 days? Q3: What do you know now that you wish you'd known three years ago? Q4: What's the question you wish more people asked you?

03 Transcribe. Underline the 3 moments where you thought "that's the thing."

THE 3 MOMENTS WORTH TURNING INTO CONTENT:

04 Draft one LinkedIn post per moment in their voice. Send for 10-min review — no full rewrites.

DRAFT 1 OF 3 POSTS:

03

25 min · Any content creator · Output: 5 tested hooks

01 Pick one non-obvious insight your team has. Write it in one sentence.

THE INSIGHT:

02 Write 5 different hooks for the same insight: a question, a number, a confession, a counterintuitive claim, and a direct address.

HOOK 1 (QUESTION):

HOOK 2 (NUMBER):

HOOK 3 (CONFESSION):

HOOK 4 (COUNTERINTUITIVE):

HOOK 5 (DIRECT ADDRESS):

03 Send all 5 to 3 people who match your target audience. Ask: "Which would make you stop scrolling?"

WHICH HOOK WON? WHAT DID PEOPLE SAY:

04

60 min setup · Marketing lead · Output: A repeatable system

01 Define your source format: How will you capture voice consistently?

OUR SOURCE FORMAT IS:

02 Define your two primary channels.

PRIMARY CHANNEL 1: PRIMARY CHANNEL 2:

03 Set a realistic cadence you can sustain for 12 months.

OUR SUSTAINABLE CADENCE IS: [X POSTS/WEEK, FROM Y VOICES, ON Z CHANNELS]

04 Name the one person who owns this system.

CONTENT SYSTEM OWNER:

05 Block the first capture session on the calendar before closing this playbook.

DATE/TIME OF FIRST CAPTURE SESSION:

MODULE 07 — OBSTACLE REMOVAL

Name the Fear. Reframe It.

The reason most brands don't do this isn't budget, talent, or time. It's fear. Fear produces content designed not to offend — which turns everyone off equally.

■ "We might say something wrong."

The instinct: over-review everything until the voice is gone and the risk is zero.

Content that can't be wrong also can't be right. If nobody could disagree with it, nobody will care about it. Some turn-off is proof you have a point of view.

"The CEO will seem too casual."

The instinct: put the CEO through messaging training until they sound like a press release.

Casual is not unprofessional. The two-minute phone video from a founder who has something real to say outperforms the polished keynote clip. Proximity, not polish, builds trust.

"What if they take the audience and leave?"

The instinct: don't invest in building anyone's personal brand.

The cost of not building human voices is far greater than the risk of one person leaving. And people who are growing stay longer. Make it part of the job and share the upside.

"We can't measure if it works."

The instinct: demand hard attribution before committing to a trust-building strategy.

You can't A/B test trust. The deals that close faster because the buyer already knows the founder — that's the compounding return. It shows up in sales cycles, not dashboards.

MODULE 08 — MEASUREMENT

What to Actually Measure

Most B2B teams measure the wrong things. Reach and impressions tell you nothing about trust. Here's the framework that connects human-first content to actual business outcomes.

| Metric | What It Measures | Track How | Type |
|----------------------------|--|--|------------|
| DMs + Inbound Mentions | Did someone care enough to respond privately? | Manual tally weekly | Trust |
| "Sent to a colleague" rate | Did someone DM this to another person? | Ask in comments; log anecdotally | Trust |
| Sales cycle length | Are buyers arriving already familiar with your thinking? | Compare inbound vs. cold outbound velocity | Conversion |
| Qualified inbound rate | Are the right people coming to you? | ICP match % month over month | Conversion |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Individual profile follower growth | Are your human voices building real audiences? | Monthly tracking — not brand page | Reach |
| Comment quality | Are comments substantive? Are the right people engaging? | Qualitative review; flag ICP comments | Trust |
| "How did you hear about us?" | How many prospects cite a person's content as first exposure? | Every discovery call | Conversion |
| Compounding organic reach | Is reach growing without paid amplification? | Month-over-month organic impressions | Reach |

THE NORTH STAR METRIC

"How many sales conversations start with 'I've been following you for a while'?"

That sentence is the proof of compounding trust. When buyers arrive pre-sold on the person before they're sold on the product — that's the leverage. Less selling required. Faster cycles. Higher close rates. Track this number. Watch it grow.

"The brands that win the next five years won't have the biggest budgets. They'll have the most consistently present humans."

— THE HUMAN-FIRST MEDIA PLAYBOOK

SLOWLY. *THEN ALL AT ONCE.*

Go back to Module 01. Run the audit. Pick one voice. Set the cadence. The brands that win the next five years of B2B marketing won't be the ones with the biggest ad budgets or the most sophisticated tech stacks. They'll be the ones who figured out how to be genuinely interesting to the specific people they serve.

Through people, not logos. Through conversation, not collateral. Through consistent, specific, opinionated human presence.