

# The CLEAR Brand Plan™

Brad Cochrane

They say that first impressions are everything –but they’re not the only thing. Your customers are always judging you in subtle and unseen ways. What they think of you matters and can be the difference between a pass or a purchase. Our brand isn’t defined by what we think it should be but by what our customers say it is.

Today’s customers aren’t waiting passively to be marketed at with slogans and pressure sales; they’re on a self-directed information gathering journey in which they delight in their own power. Transactional selling measured by sales has transformed into relationship selling measured by reputation. It’s driven less by data and more by emotional conclusions. The customer doesn’t buy the product, they buy into an idea –and that idea is you.

Often sub-consciously, your customer asks five questions; the answers convey your brand.

- What’s in it for me?
- Why should I listen to you?
- Who are you really?
- How do you operate?
- What’s your proof?

Can you afford to ignore your branding plan? Roll up your sleeves and let’s get to work.

## The Messaging Framework

The CLEAR Brand Plan™ creates an overall brand story


| The CLEAR Brand Plan™  |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Crave  | Legitimacy  | Ethos  | Anchor   | Record   |
| The customer’s desired experience including an action and resulting emotional state; what the brand does and how the customer feels.   | Establishes professional status by acumen, expertise, values, and achievements.<br><br>Proves the value of continuing the conversation. | A character defining incident about a person, a company, or a product that proves their worth with passion, determination, and capability. It’s an insight that exposes genuine character, a revelatory moment that illuminates true nature. | Communicates the passion and purpose that drives activities and keeps efforts focused and on track. An action statement, it organizes efforts and communicates goals clearly to others. It is the <i>what</i> and the <i>why</i> linked together by the conjunction <i>because</i> . | The hard facts that support claims and prove value. For services and products, it’s features and specifications while for a job seeker, it’s the resume. Often, companies and people make their data the star when it’s better relegated to a supporting role. |
| <b>Story Summary</b>   |   |  |  |  |
| The CLEAR Brand Plan distills into a single coherent message. It can be a slogan, a process, an aspirational goal, or an in-depth real-world description, but above all, the Story Summary must be complete in experience, credibility, character, purpose, and provability. |   |  |  |  |

## Examples

No one wants to hire a lawyer. It means trouble, expense, and anxiety. A law office should understand their client's emotional state and set a calming, competent, and confident tone.

| The Law Offices of Smith & Jones   |  |   |   |  |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Crave  | Legitimacy   | Ethos   | Anchor  | Record   |
| <p>Legal woes got you stressed?</p> <p>Let's make your tomorrow better than today.</p> <p>Our approach respects your needs and defends your rights - all with a compassionate smile.</p> | <p>The Law Offices of Smith &amp; Jones has been helping people like you for over 25 years.</p> <p>In fact, the Better Business Bureau rates us an A+.</p> | <p>As a child, Elisabeth Smith watched as an unfounded lawsuit nearly destroyed her parents financially and emotionally. She learned the hard lesson of staying calm, smart, and steadfast while standing up to the schoolyard bully. It's a lesson she embraces today.</p> | <p>The Law Offices of Smith and Jones only exist because we serve our clients by vigorously defending their legal rights.</p> | <p>Areas of Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bankruptcy</li> <li>• Family Law</li> <li>• Estate</li> </ul> <p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Offices</li> <li>• 23 Attorneys</li> <li>• 3200 Years of Experience</li> </ul> <p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit Cards</li> <li>• Payment Plans</li> </ul> |
| Story Summary  |  |   |   |  |
| <p><b>Making your tomorrow better than today</b></p> <p><b>The Law Offices of Smith &amp; Jones</b></p>  |  |   |   |  |

Juli is an experienced project manager looking for a new job. Her resume is excellent but her interviews unsuccessful. Then Juli developed her CLEAR Brand Plan™ and she's now happily working at a job she loves.

|  <b>Juli Booze-Jervis</b>  |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Crave   | Legitimacy  | Ethos   | Anchor   | Record   |
| <p>When I show up, everyone breathes a sigh of relief. It takes humor to keep people human, relaxed, and productive, and patience and understanding to coach others.</p>  | <p>PMP certified and CPLP with 10+ years in the learning and development field.</p> | <p>As a child, I loved organizing my room, my toys, and games with my friends. As an adult, I arrive early to meetings and make sure that all the chairs are organized so that everyone has a place to sit.</p> | <p>I help people and projects succeed because everyone does better when we're organized.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Project Management</li> <li>• Cross-Functional Collaboration</li> <li>• Performance Gap Analysis</li> <li>• Instructional Design</li> </ul> |
| Story Summary   |   |   |  |  |
| <p>When I show up, everyone breathes a sigh of relief because I know that it takes humor to keep people human, relaxed, and productive as well as patience and understanding to coach others. I'm Juli Booze-Jervis, PMP, CPLP with 10+ years in the learning and development field. As a child, I loved organizing my room, my toys, and games with my friends. As an adult, I arrive early to meetings and make sure that all the chairs are organized so that everyone has a place to sit. I help people and projects succeed because everyone does better when we're organized. Some of the skills I bring to you include Leadership, Project Management, Cross Functional Collaboration, Performance Gap Analysis, and Instructional Design.</p> |   |   |  |  |

# Write Your Brand Plan

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| The CLEAR Brand Plan™ |            |       |        |        |
|-----------------------|------------|-------|--------|--------|
| Crave                 | Legitimacy | Ethos | Anchor | Record |
|                       |            |       |        |        |
| <b>Story Summary</b>  |            |       |        |        |
|                       |            |       |        |        |

# Bonus Takeaway

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With the CLEAR Brand Plan™ in place, it's time to introduce your brand and encourage engagement. Remember, unless your customer responds in a meaningful way, you aren't marketing correctly.

## The Invitation

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*To catch more fish, you need good bait.*

-Taj Mahal, musician

In today's world of too much information and too little time, the brain has become an efficient sorting machine that turns away most incoming messages. The right invitation cuts through the clutter and proves to the brain that we are worth investing scarce time.

Marketers often use a *Hook* to draw customers in but think about the Invitation as *Bait* that attracts. Offer a different perspective or unlock a secret. Stimulate aspirations or intrigue with a puzzle. The Invitation is integral to the brand and not merely an attention-getting trick.

An Invitation can be a headline or a question, a picture or paragraph. The purpose isn't to explain everything but lead customers into a conversation. It's closely aligned with the Crave column because it speaks directly to your customer's question "What's in it for me?"

| Law Offices of Smith & Jones        | Juli Booze-Jervis, Project Manager                         | Morton Salt   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Legal woes got you stressed?</i> | <i>When I show up, everyone breathes a sigh of relief.</i> |  |

## Write Your Invitation

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## The Call-to-Action

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*“If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll never get there.”*

--Yogi Berra, philosopher

On the other end, the Call-to-Action is frequently overlooked. Your customer wants to know the next step and if it’s missing, will feel they’ve wasted their time.

Marketing today isn’t a traditional one-way monologue but rather an ongoing conversation with the customer. It’s not necessarily about the sale but rather a way to keep the conversation going through a series of incremental actions. In a general sense, it’s a direction to Learn More, Try, or Buy.

The biggest mistake marketers make is using a vague, weak Call-to-Action or even omit it. Make it clear, concise, and specific as well as directing an immediate action for a better outcome.

Examples

- **Return this no-obligation card today for your no-cost guide.**
- **Your Free Trial starts now. Click here.**
- **Space is limited so sign up today by clicking here.**

| Law Offices of Smith & Jones                           | Juli Booze-Jervis, Project Manager                                | Morton Salt                     |
|--|---|---------------------------------|
| <i>Call us anytime of the day or night at 555-1212</i> | <i>May I schedule an informational interview Tuesday at 10AM?</i> | <i>Buy at your local grocer</i> |

## Write Your Call-to-Action

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# Can you spot the CLEAR Brand Plan™ below?

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## About Brad Cochrane

They say that first impressions are everything –but they’re not the only thing. Your customers are always judging you in subtle and unseen ways. What they think of you matters and are the difference between a pass or a purchase.

In my CLEAR Brand Plan™ program, you’ll take away the knowledge, skills, and framework to build your brand’s credibility, confidence, and trust so that customers will buy –and buy again.

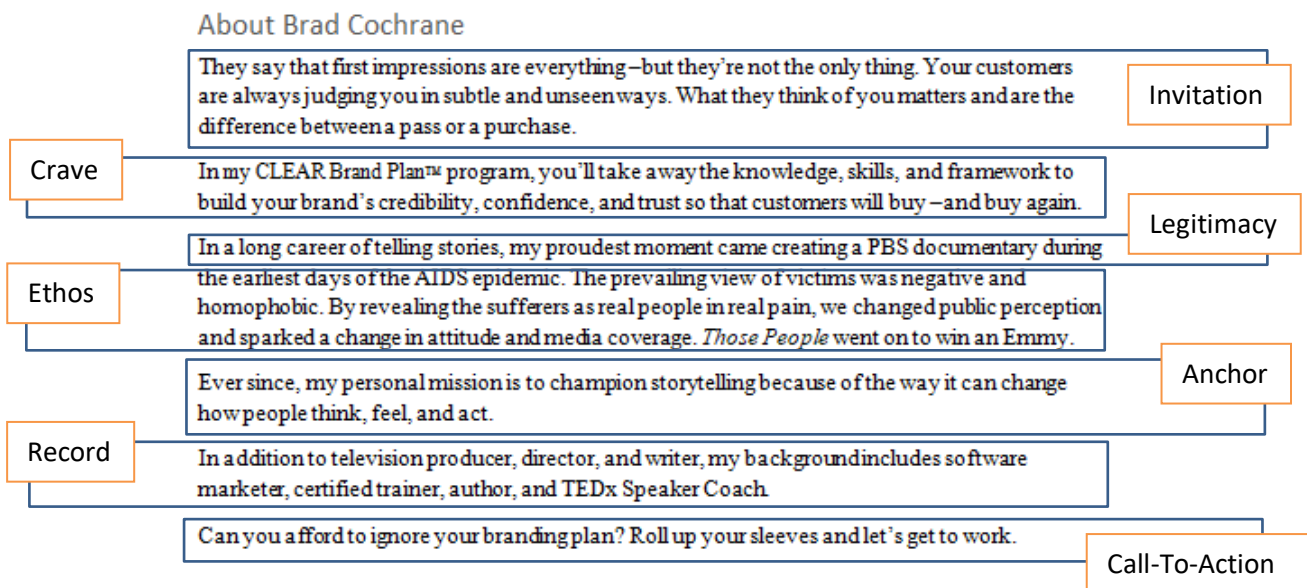
In a long career of telling stories, my proudest moment came creating a PBS documentary during the earliest days of the AIDS epidemic. The prevailing view of victims was negative and homophobic. By revealing the sufferers as real people in real pain, we changed public perception and sparked a change in attitude and media coverage. *Those People* went on to win an Emmy.

Ever since, my personal mission is to champion storytelling because of the way it can change how people think, feel, and act.

In addition to television producer, director, and writer, my background includes software marketer, certified trainer, author, and TEDx Speaker Coach.

Can you afford to ignore your branding plan? Roll up your sleeves and let’s get to work.

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Contact me at [Brad@Cochrane.net](mailto:Brad@Cochrane.net)

Visit [www.StoryFirstSpeaker.com](http://www.StoryFirstSpeaker.com)

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