

PERSONAL INTRODUCTIONS CAN MAKE OR BREAK A BRAND.
USE THIS FRAMEWORK TO STRENGTHEN YOURS.

Personal introductions are often missed opportunities, even among seasoned executives. Discover the framework for answering “So, what do you do?” purposefully and compellingly, whatever the audience or venue.

“So, what do you do?”

“Please provide a brief introduction.”

“Tell us about yourself.”

At this point in your career, these questions are commonplace – even expected. Your responses might be, too.

Maybe you answer with your job title.

Maybe with a one-size-fits-all elevator pitch.

Maybe you improvise, pausing to read the room before responding. After all, an introduction to a new neighbor will be different from your personal introduction as keynote speaker.

The problem with these common choices? *They almost always leave opportunity on the table.*

Job titles, however impressive, fail to fully convey your value and essence. An elevator pitch well-suited for some contexts can read as tone-deaf in others. And taking a beat before introducing yourself is risky given what we know: that, according to Princeton researchers, people judge core traits like trustworthiness within *one-tenth of a second of meeting someone new*.¹ Business Insider reports that complete first impressions are formed in a mere seven seconds. Meanwhile, research underscores the impact of first impressions on everything from professional outcomes to court rulings.²

¹ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01750.x>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3267862/>

In short, we live in a *seconds count* world where first impressions matter – and first impressions are largely driven by our words. There is no time to waste when asked about yourself, and a lot to lose if your response is less than impactful and immediate. To move your executive presence in the intended direction, then, your response to “So, what do you do?” (and related questions) must be memorable, match the circumstances, and roll off your tongue authentically - with conviction.

The Positioning Matrix is the answer.

The Positioning Matrix

The Positioning Matrix harnesses the belief that different situations and audiences call for different messaging, necessitating more than one personal introduction in your toolkit. You need a mix-and-match collection of ever-so-slightly-different introductions primed for the nuance of every possible scenario you might encounter. Luckily, the Positioning Matrix makes this easier than it sounds.

There are a few prerequisites to complete before you can harness the Positioning Matrix.

First, identify your two-word purpose. The website onpurpose.me is a great tool.

Once your two-word purpose is determined, flesh it out further using this formula:

I
<action word>
<my target audience or bullseye client, which we call “beloved avatar”,>
how to
<do what they want to accomplish>
so that they can
<achieve the result/transformation>

Once you’ve filled in the blanks, read the sentence through. *This is your positioning statement.*

Now you can move on to the Positioning Matrix, your blueprint for personal introductions that reflect your positioning statement.

The Positioning Matrix organizes all possible introductory venues into two categories – formal and informal. It classifies audiences as either professional or personal. This is the framework for developing your [Capsule Messaging Collection](#)™* (a phrase coined by our colleague [Colleen Scollans](#) from [Clarke & Esposito](#)) – that is, your prepared mix-and-match messages – in this case, self-introductions for each of the four scenarios below.

	Audience 1: Professional	Audience 2: Personal
Formal venue	<i>Brainstorm common or foreseeable scenarios, e.g. interview or board meeting.</i>	<i>Brainstorm common or foreseeable scenarios, e.g. charity event or press interview.</i>
Informal venue	<i>Brainstorm common or foreseeable scenarios, e.g. airport lounge or team building event.</i>	<i>Brainstorm common or foreseeable scenarios, e.g. gym or drugstore.</i>

Build your [Capsule Messaging Collection](#) by completing the thought starters below. Carefully develop four answers – one for each of the four possible scenarios in the grid above. Answers should be thematically similar, but have wording, detail, and nuance that varies slightly to fit each scenario:

- For the last three months, I've been working on [four answer variations here – one per scenario].
- I've been told I have expertise in [X]. I suppose that's because [four answer variations here – one per scenario].
- I spend most of my energy these days on [four answer variations here – one per scenario].
- I recently completed something I'm really jazzed about: [four answer variations here – one per scenario].
- It's easier to use an analogy to describe what I do. It's kind of like [four answer variations here – one per scenario].
- The thing that's different about my approach is [four answer variations here – one per scenario].
- The things I've been able to do exceptionally well include [four answer variations here – one per scenario].
- The way I see it, I help people [four answer variations here – one per scenario].
- I do what I love and that is [four answer variations here – one per scenario].

Once you're confident in your responses and the nuanced differences between each one, commit them to memory. Need assistance? We recommend flashcards. Create a small pile of four flashcards – one card for each of the scenarios (Formal/Professional, Formal/Personal, Informal/Professional, Informal/Personal). Then create a second pile of flashcards – one for each thought starter. Pull one card from each of the two piles. Practice your pre-determined response to that card combination until you can respond to all of the combinations seamlessly, immediately, and confidently. Once these responses are committed to memory, pick and choose from them as the situation dictates.

This is your [Capsule Messaging Collection](#).

Social Proof

One Revealing Genius client, a COO named Andrea, felt conversationally prepared in formal settings but struggled to communicate her essence in informal scenarios. Rehearsing her thought starters helped her easily and accurately communicate her personal brand in casual conversations at a conference lunch where she was keynote speaker.

Another Revealing Genius client, Denise – a doctorate and first-time CEO – used the Positioning Matrix to prepare for meetings with private equity firms. Preparing in advance for the inevitable “Tell us about yourself” prompt in contexts spanning boardrooms to elevators helped her direct conversations in her favor. She ultimately stood out from other CEOs and landed desired funding.

Key Takeaway

Does a [Capsule Messaging Collection](#) require energy and focus? Yes. Executed effectively, though, it ensures you're always prepared with a thoughtful, true-to-you, and strategic personal statement, which is professional gold. At Revealing Genius, we believe that [Capsule Messaging Collection](#) development is a discipline every thought leader should pursue. Reach out to us if you'd like a professional's involvement in this critical aspect of creating your personal brand.

*[Capsule Messaging Collection](#)[™], a phrase trademarked by our colleague [Colleen Scollans](#) from [Clarke & Esposito](#), is a carefully curated, AI-forward-mix-and-match set of messages used strategically in conversation or in writing that can stand alone or be used in tandem to ensure brand consistency and credibility.