

# Verbal Business Card Guide

How to develop and deliver a powerful verbal business card.



REVENUE WISE

THE SMART WAY TO GROW

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# Introduction

## The Goals of this Guide:

1. Develop a compelling answer to the question “what do you do?”
2. Deliver your verbal business card in a natural and engaging way.

## Introduction

The Verbal Business Card (VBC) translates your Personal Brand into an easy to deliver and memorable introduction. The VBC should become an ingrained response to the question, “What do you do?”

Most professionals provide a stock answer to the question, “What do you do?” The most common answer has become, “I’m a professional who does X.” Stock answers do nothing to make a unique impression that the listener will remember. When crafting your VBC, you want to ensure it is unique, memorable, and speaks to the results you produce and the benefits you provide.

An elegant and memorable VBC is invaluable. Indeed, some sources estimate that we deliver our VBC thirty times more frequently than we hand over our paper business cards.

When you develop your collateral materials (bios, brochures, talks, etc.), use your VBC as the foundation. If you work with different types of clients in different industries, craft a unique VBC for each offering.

In the following section, you will learn how to effectively deliver your VBC.

# Capture Your VBC Elements

## Whom do you serve?

Write down the specific group of people or industry sector (your Target Client) you serve. If you have more than one, and they are significantly different, then just pick one for this exercise.

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## What specific services do you offer?

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## What are your three main points-of-difference?

Articulate the three main qualities that set you apart from other professionals in your field. Articulate the “benefits” that each of those differences provides.

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## What is the core value you provide?

The core value you provide, also known as your Core Value Proposition, serves as the heart of your VBC and often provides you with your opening line.

In defining your Core Value Proposition, you focus on the “ends” you provide for your Target Clients, *not* the “means” by which you provide it. The ends can become the primary problem you solve, the main opportunity on which you help clients capitalize, or the primary result you deliver.

### Some examples for different professionals:

“I keep high-level executives out of jail.” (white-collar crime litigator);

“I help emerging companies reach their liquidity event.” (corporate start-up attorney);

“I protect my clients’ most important assets.” (IP and trade secret litigator);

“I help natural resource companies extract money from the ground.” (natural resources litigator);

“I help Cleantech companies grow into sustainable businesses.” (emerging companies attorney).

Notice that in each of these examples, the listener does not know exactly what the lawyer does, but the line is evocative enough that the listener is curious to know more.

### List the core value you provide in this space:

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## Provide One Example of a Past Success

In this section, you will list one success story that provides concrete evidence that you can deliver on your Core Value Proposition. This success story validates the assertion of your Core Value Proposition.

Translate one of your successes into the format on the next page:

This is an example from one our legal clients.

*In a recent case, an employee left a client's employ and landed at the door of the client's fiercest rival, with a treasure trove of trade secrets. If we had not stopped them from using these trade secrets, the rival would have gained a competitive edge on my client in a key product area (with disastrous consequences). We filed suit, which the other side tried to have dismissed, but the judge made it clear that the defense was totally incorrect. Based on the Judge's remarks, defense was compelled to agree to a huge financial settlement and to cease use of the trade secrets.*

See form on next page...

**Use this three-part format:**

The Client’s Problem and the Implications if it was not Resolved:

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What I Did/My Intervention:

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The Result I Achieved:

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# How to Assemble Your VBC

## Step-by-Step Example

The following method effectively develops your VBC. In this example, we walk you through a sample VBC (you will assemble your own in the next section). I am using an example from one of our IP litigators.

1. Start with your Core Value Proposition. This is the “ends,” or core result, you intend to provide to your Target Client.

*I help high-tech companies protect their most important assets.*

2. Next, clarify what you do. You need to let people know you practice law.

*As an intellectual property litigator, I help my clients protect and defend their most important assets – their trade secrets and other intellectual property.*

3. Next, talk about your points of difference. Understandably, some people feel uncomfortable talking about what makes them unique. One way to overcome the discomfort is to open with the line, “This is what my clients say sets me apart from other professionals...”

*My clients pretty consistently tell me...*

*They have not found another litigator who understands the law, their business issues, and the nitty-gritty technical aspects of their products as well as I do. This combination of skills allows me to act as a translator or interface between the engineers, in-house counsel, and the executive team. The end result is that their issues are resolved sooner and their cases move more smoothly.*

*I know my way around a courtroom and have litigated numerous complex cases during which I was able to translate the technical jargon into something the jury could understand. And for the most part, I have won the cases I took on.*

*Lastly, I pride myself on matching my working style to the preferred style of my clients. Nothing is worse than working for an extended time with an attorney who does not listen to you, doesn't communicate the way you want, or fails to follow the procedures you find work best for your company. By matching your working style, I make the day-to-day work much more enjoyable and effective.*

This example shows a "long" version. Many times you will give a much more abbreviated description of the three things that distinguish you.

4. Finish up with your success story that proves what you have just asserted.

*In a recent case, an employee left a client's employ and landed at the door of the client's fiercest rival, with a treasure trove of trade secrets.*

*If we had not stopped them from using these trade secrets, the rival would have gained a competitive edge on my client in a key product area (with disastrous consequences).*

*We filed suit, which the other side tried to have dismissed, but the judge made it clear that the defense was totally incorrect.*

*Based on the Judge's remarks, defense was compelled to agree to a huge financial settlement and to cease use of the trade secrets.*

# Final VBC Worksheet

## Final Worksheet

Now it's your turn. Follow the example above and assemble your VBC.

**I...**

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(The opening line is the "hook," an opening designed to evoke curiosity in the listener. This is your core value proposition, the "end" you provide. Include your Target Client in this section or the following one.)

**As a...**

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(Tell them the type of service you provide.)

**What makes me stand out is . . .or what clients like about me is...**

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(These are your three points of difference.)

**I recently did this for...**

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(Explain your success story.)

# How to Deliver Your VBC

## Use a Natural Approach

Never try to *memorize* your *entire* Verbal Business Card or attempt to recite it verbatim. This results in a stilted, awkward, and inauthentic delivery.

We advocate a more natural way of delivering your VBC.

Throughout your personal and professional life, you will have occasion to deliver your VBC in many different situations. So be certain that it fits appropriately into each context. What you say to an old college friend — not a prospect for your services — will differ from what you say to an ideal prospect you have just met at a leading industry conference.

We suggest you use a “modular” approach when you deliver your VBC. The modular approach always starts with your Core Value Proposition (the opening line of your VBC). Your opening line acts as a “platform” on which you stack the other “modules” of your VBC: what you do, how you do it, what sets you apart, and your success stories.

This more natural delivery allows you to improvise additional material based on whom you are speaking with, their interests, and their needs.

### **When delivering your VBC, follow these guidelines:**

- Memorize and state verbatim the opening line of your VBC — the one containing your Core Value Proposition — every time you deliver your VBC. In this way, you consistently advance your personal brand.
- Insert the “modules” appropriate to the person and situation (what you do, how you do it, what sets you apart, and how you deliver your success stories).

- Vary the order of the modules to adapt to new situations. This will keep them fresh, and they will come across naturally.
- If appropriate, develop a VBC for each key constituency or distinct service you provide.
- Emphasize the module(s) that make the most sense for the person to whom you are speaking. Some may be more interested in your success stories, while others may be more interested in how you do what you do.
- A quick and effective way of delivering your VBC is to state your opening line and follow it with a couple of success stories. In fact, sometimes this is all you need to say.

# Revenue Wise Information

## David Adams



David Adams is a seasoned coach, author and speaker. He brings over 20 years of experience to his role of helping attorneys and firm leaders improve their business development and leadership skills. David is expert in helping lawyers, working individually and in practice groups, develop the necessary attitudes, behaviors and capabilities to succeed. He is committed to helping attorneys achieve that ideal combination of professional success and personal fulfillment.

## Revenue Wise

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