Better Messaging, Better Marketing
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*Please put “FTF Conference” in the subject line, and we’ll do our best to get back to you shortly

Goal: To offer insight into the state of FT messaging today and thoughts about how to approach your future messaging strategy using the FT principles.

- Fair Trade is Complicated
  - With many definitions and expressions, “FT” can seem messy at times. It’s okay! “Fair” is not a place we arrive at, it is a process we are in.

- Consumers are Curious
  - Recent market research (BBMG, et al., 2012) suggests that consumers want to be involved and have relationships with companies making social change. Bring them into your process.

- Messaging Matters
  - Messaging, for a fair trade company, is more than the expression of a product or brand—it is also a vehicle for promoting the identity of fair trade and representing sourcing partners.

- Define or Die
  - Continued confusion about FTs identity both internally and externally may lead to its dilution or collapse (see Doherty & Huybrechts, 2013; Audebrand and Iacobus, 2008). Now is the time to be intentional about your messaging, and strengthen it using the principles as your guide.

- Quick Fixes—Clarity
  - Have people who don’t know fair trade read your work; let them help you edit for quick comprehension
  - If you can copy your information from one section into another, rewrite, reorganize, or remove that section
Show, don’t tell, your customers about the impact your work makes by using more details and less emphatic words (i.e. “truly makes a difference”)

- Putting “Fair” and “Trade” together
  - Sit down with each principle, brainstorm your current efforts and your goals for each one. Find the middle ground and make an action plan to achieve that middle ground—Use that plan to tell the story of a company in process
  - Use the context of global trade and systemic economic difficulties to make the case for FT rather than personal poverty—especially when presenting information about sourcing partners
  - Set the stage for connection when you write bios for yourself and others involved in your company, including sourcing partners—present people as equals

- Take the time
  - Evaluating your strategy through FT principles can be a time intensive process, but it is worth it to strengthen your understanding of your own company, your position on fair trade, and your relationships with sourcing partners

Additional Resources

Academic articles may be available from Fair Trade Resource Institute
http://www.fairtrade-institute.org/ or Google Scholar