

# Pharma Message Optimization Guidebook

20

Cognitive science  
techniques to create  
highly effective  
messaging for pharma  
brands



# DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOOD VS GREAT MESSAGING

All major brands have messaging that is

**80% GOOD**



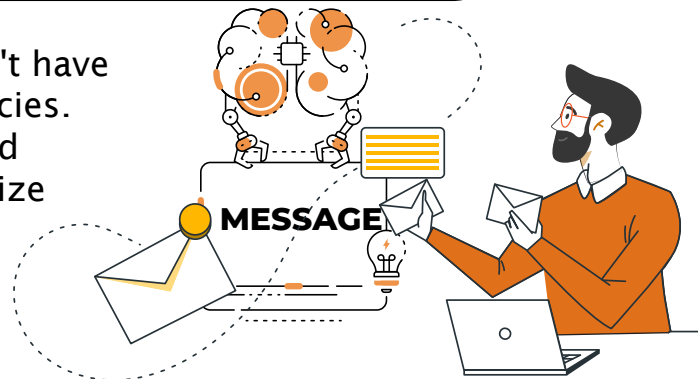
Only some have messaging that is

**100% GREAT**



## THE DIFFERENCE?

Winning brands don't have better creative agencies. They use science and algorithms to optimize their creative messages instead.



**100%**

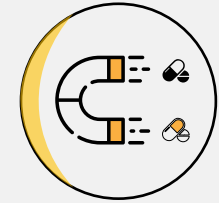
VS

**80%**

=

In pharma messaging, this difference can be worth **\$100s of millions** in revenue!

Whether your messaging is trying to:



Launch a New Drug



Increase Market Share



Change Customer Behaviors

Wouldn't it be great if you could easily optimize your brand messaging **AND MAKE IT SIGNIFICANTLY MORE EFFECTIVE?**



### **COGNITIVE SCIENCE TECHNIQUES**

This pharma messaging guidebook features 20 proven cognitive science techniques that can be used to optimize pharmaceutical claims and messages.

If you are ever struggling to find the best way to articulate your clinical data or MOA, this guidebook can serve as a valuable resource for all pharma marketers.

## TECHNIQUE #1

# START WITH A NUMBER

You can make a message more powerful by starting it with a “power” number. It attracts attention and can quickly communicate a specific benefit/claim to entice followers to click to read more. Your English teacher may not be happy about you starting a sentence with a number, but your customers may find it engaging.

### Message 1 *Before technique*

At each measured timepoint, from 1.5 to 13 hours post dose, patients see consistent efficacy with Product X.

### Message 1 *After technique*

**1.5 hours** is all it takes for Product X to start showing results in patients, results that consistently last for up to **13 hours**.

### Message 2 *Before technique*

Disease Y still prevails. 1 in 23 adults in the US suffers from the disorder.

### Message 2 *After technique*

**4 or more!** For every 100 adults you meet, 4 or more will likely have Disease Y.

# HALVE IT!

Just focus on cutting the number of words in the original message by half. Ruthlessly get rid of every word that is not essential to the existence of the message. When in doubt, delete it.

### Message 1 *Before technique*

You can't see Disease Y but it is everywhere. It's highly contagious - one wrong touch, one person who sneezed or coughed, and you can contract it.

### Message 1 *After technique*

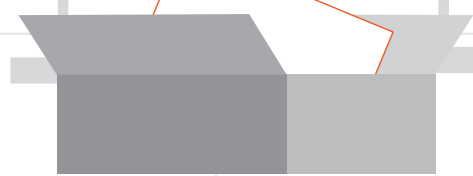
Disease Y is highly contagious - one single touch, cough or sneeze can be fatal.

### Message 2 *Before technique*

Disease Y is a 24-hour problem. Prescribe the 24-hour solution - once daily Product X.

### Message 2 *After technique*

One dose of Product X = 24 hour protection from Disease Y.



## TECHNIQUE # 3

### WRITE IN METAPHORS

A Metaphor is a psychological as well as literary technique to help create understanding. For a writer, it is a way of using language to manipulate the way the reader responds.

**Message 1  
Before technique**

Get rid of your heartburn fast and easily with Product X. Be **FREE** again.

**Message 1  
After technique**

Product X is **your fireman** for heartburn.

**Message 2  
After technique**

“Don’t fall into a **trapdoor** of embarrassment. Get a financial advisor today.

**Message 2  
Before technique**

“All we need is guidance in our finances, but we don’t share our worries for fear of looking silly.

**FEEL  
IT!**

The key to capturing attention is tapping into your readers' emotions. Content that appeals to your audience's senses will help them resonate with your writing and keep them interested.

**Message 1  
Before technique**  
These real people tried Product X and achieved their weight loss goals. Wouldn't you like to join them?

**Message 1  
After technique**  
Remember that **feeling** of looking at a fit person with no extra weight? Product X can help you become one of them.

**Message 2  
Before technique**  
Lose more and save when you bring in a friend.

**Message 2  
Before technique**  
Feel the excitement of losing more and saving more. Just bring in a friend.



# SYNONYMIZE KEYWORDS

Don't get stuck using the same circle of words you know. Try something new for a change! Use a tool like Visual Thesaurus to discover new synonyms that you may not think of on your own.

### Message 1 *Before technique*

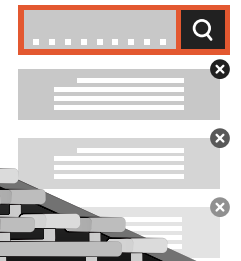
Let patients' pain relief and tolerability guide you when titrating Product X.

### Message 1 *After technique*

Titration of Product X can be easy. Simply follow the patients' threshold for pain.

### Message 2 *Before technique*

New sequencing saves time, money, and gets them to goal faster.



### Message 2 *After technique*

New sequencing is cheaper and faster in getting patients to goal.

SYNONYMS



**BREAK  
IT INTO  
FRAGMENTS**

**Lengthy sentences won't make you look smarter.** In fact, they do quite the opposite. By cutting your words short, you make it easier for readers to digest your content and encourage them to keep reading.

**Message 1  
Before technique**

Product X lets you enjoy food with no regrets.

**Message 1  
After technique**

Enjoy the food.  
No regrets.  
Product X.

**Message 2  
After technique**

Citrates are irritants.  
Product Y eliminated them.

**Message 2  
Before technique**

Since citrates are known irritants, Product Y got rid of them.

## TECHNIQUE # 7

# LEVERAGE ATTENTION GRABBING HEADLINES

Your headline is often the first, and sometimes the only chance to get your target customer's attention, and if you want your writing to get noticed, it's time to start creating headlines that your readers just cannot ignore.

### Message 1 *Before technique*

Product X offers proven efficacy to treat your patients' manic highs and depressive lows.

### Message 1 *After technique*

There is now a product to treat patients' manic highs and depressive lows.

### Message 2 *Before technique*

Once-daily treatment for the acute treatment of both poles to help get patients on the path to stabilization.

### Message 2 *After technique*

A path to stabilization for patients of both poles in acute treatment.



**CHANGE  
THE  
TONALITY**

**Tone makes a statement and either breathes life into it - or sucks the life out of it. A great tone can inspire desirable emotional responses in your audience. And emotional responses are huge in human decision-making.**

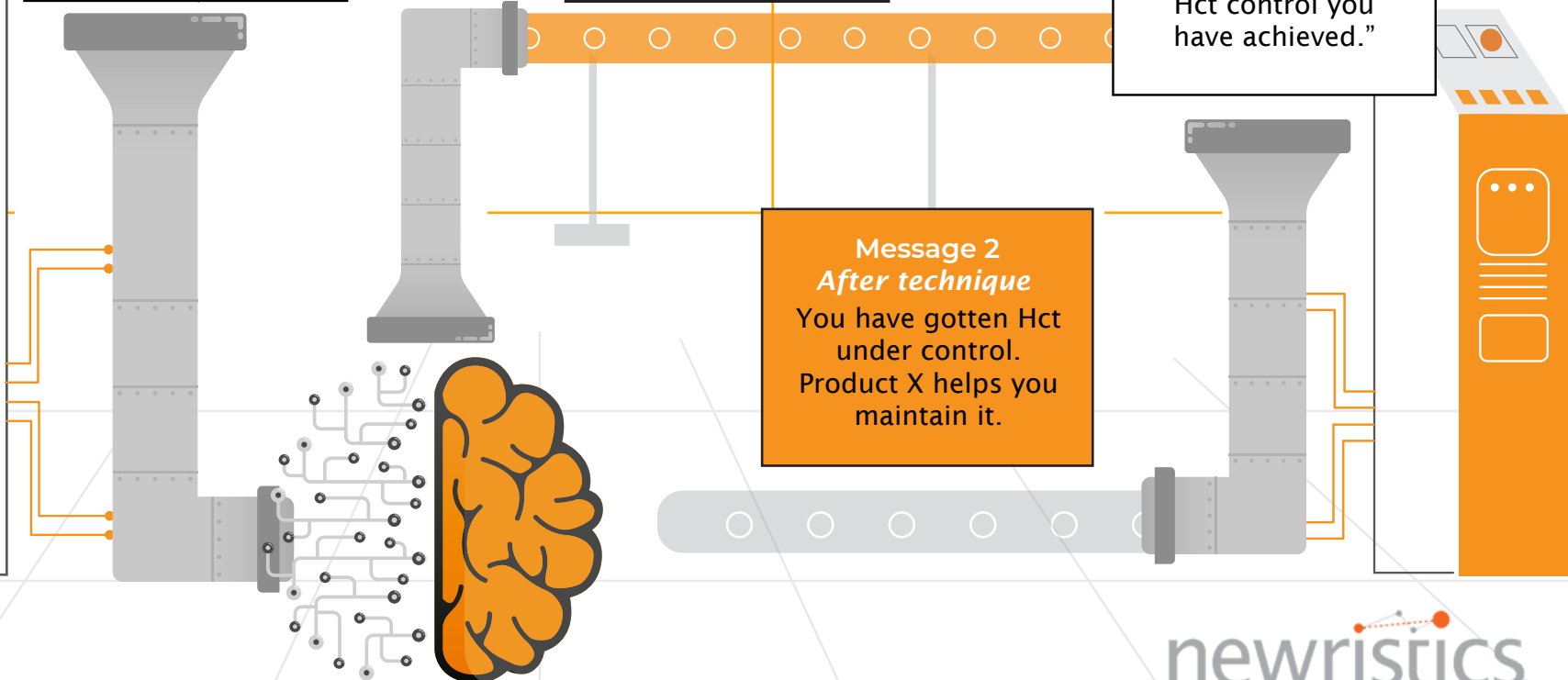


**Message 1  
Before technique**  
The Extended Release of Product X is proven effective in treating the highs and lows of Bipolar Disorder.

**Message 1  
After technique**  
“Extended release Product X effectively treats the highs and lows of Bipolar Disorder.”

**Message 2  
Before technique**  
“Product X: Keep the Hct control you have achieved.”

**Message 2  
After technique**  
You have gotten Hct under control. Product X helps you maintain it.



## TECHNIQUE # 9

### START WITH A BANG!

The use exclamation points, especially at the start of your copy can bring a touch of excitement or emotion to your writing. This addition when used sparingly adds an element of emphasis or surprise to keep the reader engaged.



#### Message 1 *Before technique*

No need for needles. One single pill helps you achieve your X goals in just 24 weeks.

#### Message 1 *After technique*

**No need for needles anymore!** One single pill helps you achieve your X goals in just 6 months.

#### Message 2 *Before technique*

Product X yields weight loss of more than 2 kg, an additional benefit besides its powerful management of glucose levels.

#### Message 2 *After technique*

**Product X yields weight loss of more than 2 kgs!** This is an additional benefit besides its powerful management of glucose levels.

TECHNIQUE # 10

**WRITE**  
A RHETORICAL QUESTION

Asking a question in the first line of a paragraph grabs readers' attention and sets up your point. Presenting a message in the form of a question also makes it seem less salesy!

**Message 1**  
*Before technique*

Heart Failure is the fourth most common reason for hospital stays in the US.

**Message 1**  
*After technique*

Did you know that Heart Failure is the #4 cause of hospital stays in the US?

**Message 2**  
*Before technique*

Don't lose control of your life to fibromyalgia pain.

**Message 2**  
*After technique*

Why let fibromyalgia pain control your life?

## TECHNIQUE # 11

# SET UP THE CUSTOMER'S WISH

Your writing should make your audience imagine an ideal world scenario - one that promises to address their painpoints. Setting up the audience with what they are going to gain will help keep their attention on your product.

### Message 1 *Before technique*

With Product X, diabetes medicine without serious side effects is no more a distant dream.

### Message 1 *After technique*

What if treating diabetes without serious side effects was possible? With Product X, it can be.

### Message 2 *After technique*

What if your meals were perfectly portioned already, so you could just enjoy the food and not count calories? Wish granted!

### Message 2 *Before technique*

Portion Control: Your only job is eating. We do the counting for you.

## TECHNIQUE # 12

### THE HIGH FIVE

**The first few words are the highlight of your pitch so make them count.** Let people know what the core message and your offer is within the five words. If your core message and promise is hidden half way down the paragraph, it will likely be missed.

**Message 1**  
*Before technique*  
Product X is not only effective, it's also sleek and discreet in design.

**Message 2**  
*Before technique*  
Zero copay every month for qualifying patients. Now that's a difference.

**Message 1**  
*After technique*  
Qualities that matter: sleek, functional, and discreet...Product X has it all.

**Message 2**  
*After technique*  
Access is our priority. Most patients qualify for \$0 copay every month.



# TECHNIQUE # 13

## USE THE WORD "BECAUSE"

Using the word "because" is a magical way to get people to do things! Usage of "because" and then following it up with a reason, results in significantly more compliance.

**Message 1  
Before technique**  
PRODUCT X allows for affordable support to be available for patients who are privately insured.

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**Message 1  
After technique**  
Because Product X provides affordable support to privately insured patients, they will not be left out.

**Message 2  
After technique**  
"You don't have to worry about needles anymore because only one Product X pill helps you control blood sugar for 24 hours."

**Message 2  
Before technique**  
One pill a day, put the needles away. With Product X, you can finally control your blood sugar for 24 hours with just a single pill.

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## TECHNIQUE # 14

### CHANGE THE UNITS

Swapping units of measurement to your advantage can significantly dial up the persuasion quotient of a message. You could say the exact same thing by switching years for months, feet for inches, and so on. This small change can often cause a big change in perception for the reader.

**Message 1  
Before technique**

No need for needles.  
One single pill per day  
can help you achieve  
your A1C goals in just  
24 weeks.

**Message 1  
After technique**

No need for needles.  
One single pill per day  
can help you achieve your A1C  
goals in as little as 6  
months.

cm pt lb mm  
g m  
ft kg km

**Message 2  
Before technique**

Product X yields weight  
loss of more than **2 kg**,  
an additional benefit  
besides its powerful  
management of  
glucose levels.

**Message 2  
After technique**

Product X yields weight  
loss of more than **4.4  
pounds**, an additional  
benefit besides its  
powerful management  
of glucose levels.

AVOID  
**NEGATIVE  
WORDS**

**Replace negative words with positive alternatives.** Some words have negative connotations and you want to steer clear of those when referencing your product. Pick the right words and your copy is memorable and persuasive. Choose the wrong ones and you lose your reader's attention or worse still - turn them off your product.

**Message 1  
Before technique**

Product X focuses on comfort. You won't have to call your doctor to get rid of your **injection** discomfort anymore.

**Message 2  
Before technique**

Product X focuses on your comfort. You won't have to call your doctor to get rid of dosing discomfort anymore.

DELETE  
NEGATIVE

**Message 1  
After technique**

For patients **losing** motivation in managing their diabetes and weight.

**Message 2  
After technique**

For patients who need more motivation in managing their diabetes and weight.

**EVOKE A FOLLOW-UP QUESTION**

**As a writer your aim is to keep people glued to your copy.**  
You want them to read one line, then the next and then the next. Asking a question can build suspense and using suspense is preying on this human desire for closure. This is why building suspense can be such an effective tactic for writers.

**Message 1  
Before technique**

Titrating X to patients' needs is the best way to start.

**Message 1  
After technique**

**First best step?**  
Titration X to patients' needs.

**Message 2  
Before technique**

Product X is well tolerated in most patients with T2D.

**Message 2  
After technique**

We now have a product that is well tolerated in most patients with T2D. Product X.



INCLUDE A  
**2-WORD  
PARADOX**

A short paradox can be an effective tool in your writing toolkit. It forces the reader to think, to consider, to work things out for themselves. It can also be a very effective tool to highlight the absurdity of what characters are doing or saying.

Message 1  
*Before technique*

No more saying "No" to your family and friends because of heartburn. Product X.

Message 1  
*After technique*

No more **minor crises** resulting from heartburn at family gatherings. Use Product X.

Message 2  
*Before technique*

Betterment - the next generation investment advice made easier.

Message 2  
*After technique*

If you are **clearly confused** by all the financial jargon, it's time for Betterment.

## TECHNIQUE #18

COMPARE  
ONE  
OBJECT TO  
ANOTHER  
**(SIMILE)**

**Make use of similes in your writing.** A simile makes the writing more interesting and lyrical. Similes spark your reader's imagination while getting the information across. They help the reader 'see' the scene in their heads.

### Message 1 *Before technique*

Don't settle for slower healing when PRODUCT X can cut treatment duration in half for Disease Y patients.

### Message 2 *Before technique*

Asthma patients may be experiencing more symptoms than you realize.

### Message 1 *After technique*

Come out of the gates strong with Product X. Treat your Disease Y patients in half the time.

### Message 2 *After technique*

Asthma symptoms may be like the tip of an iceberg. Patients may not be reporting many symptoms.

## TECHNIQUE # 19

BEGIN WITH THE WORDS WITH THE SAME CONSONANT SOUND  
**(ALLITERATION)**

**Smart writers use alliterations to make their words stick.** Alliterations can add a poetic richness to writing, which most readers appreciate when used skillfully. Engaging writing should flow well and alliterations can help or hinder this depending on how well and in context they are used.

**Message 1**  
*Before technique*  
Completely eradicating hepatitis C isn't too big a goal for Merck. We will strive until we succeed.

**Message 1**  
*After technique*  
"Effective eradication of hepatitis C isn't an **enormous** goal for Merck. We will strive until we succeed."

**Message 2**  
*Before technique*  
Making your goals come true with Discover student loans.

**Message 2**  
*After technique*  
With **Discover** student loans, you can **dare** to make your **dreams** come true.

ALLITERATION

**COMBINE  
TWO  
MESSAGES**

**Combining sentences can help improve the overall quality of your writing. The process encourages interesting word choices and transition words.**

**Message 1  
Before technique**  
Product X can be taken on an empty stomach, at any time of the day.

Product X offers the flexibility to be taken in a 5mg or 10mg dosage.

**Message 2  
Before technique**  
Product X takes the sugar out and brings weight down.

Product X removes excess glucose via the kidney.

**Message 1  
After technique**  
Experience the flexibility of Product X. Choose either 5mg or 10mg dosage and take it at any time of the day.

**Message 2  
After technique**  
Bring your sugar and weight down by removing excess glucose via the kidney.

# SUMMARY

If you are a marketer and you frequently find yourself rewriting messages that were developed by someone else in order to make them more persuasive, then keep this Guidebook handy.

Some people are gifted writers. You may or may not be one of them. But, that doesn't mean you can't make your writing more persuasive by using cognitive science techniques that have been tested on 100,000s of messages in the past.

In this Guidebook, Newristics has compiled 20 simple but highly effective cognitive science techniques that can be used to improve any message. Using real-life examples for every technique, this Guidebook makes it easy for anyone to up their game and write better messages after just 1 hour...guaranteed!







Newristics is a leader in messaging optimization services and is famous for its AiGILE Messaging service that uses behavioral science and AI to rewrite messages and make them up to 2-5X more effective.

**FREE TRIAL**



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