



A Step-By-Step Guide

# How to Establish Gallery Value in the Minds of Art Collectors

# Introduction

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Your art gallery's competitive edge comes from being able to communicate why a collector should work with and trust your gallery to acquire artworks over all other options. You can do this by effectively communicating your gallery's value proposition. It is a very powerful persuasion tool.

An art gallery's usage of a value proposition is particularly important and often overlooked or underutilized in today's digital age. But for your gallery that is about to change right now.

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“A STRONG VALUE PROPOSITION  
THAT RESONATES WITH YOUR IDEAL  
PROSPECTIVE ART COLLECTOR  
MUST BE AT THE VERY  
FOUNDATION OF YOUR BUSINESS.”

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This blueprint will provide you with a step-by-step guide to help you evaluate and communicate the value your gallery offers to collectors, artists and the community you serve.

After you have completed all the steps outlined here, you will be the master of:

- Creating a healthy gallery reputation that has high impact in a competitive art market.
- Ensuring the message delivered is on point for your clients' needs.
- Efficiently putting that message to work to attract new art collectors for your artists.

Your art gallery's value proposition is the foundation for sales and marketing efforts and the overall customer experience.

You already know competition for art galleries has skyrocketed as more artists prefer to represent themselves and collectors can view and buy art from a large variety of online sources right from their couch.

# The End Goal

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A value proposition, regardless of industry, does three essential things:

1. Speaks directly to buyer motivations.
2. Solves a problem or meets a specific need.
3. Defines how your business is different or better than competitors.

The end goal here is to create a value proposition that both attracts collectors to your gallery and assures them that acquiring your gallery's artists will provide the benefits they want and aligns with their priorities for incorporating art into their lives.

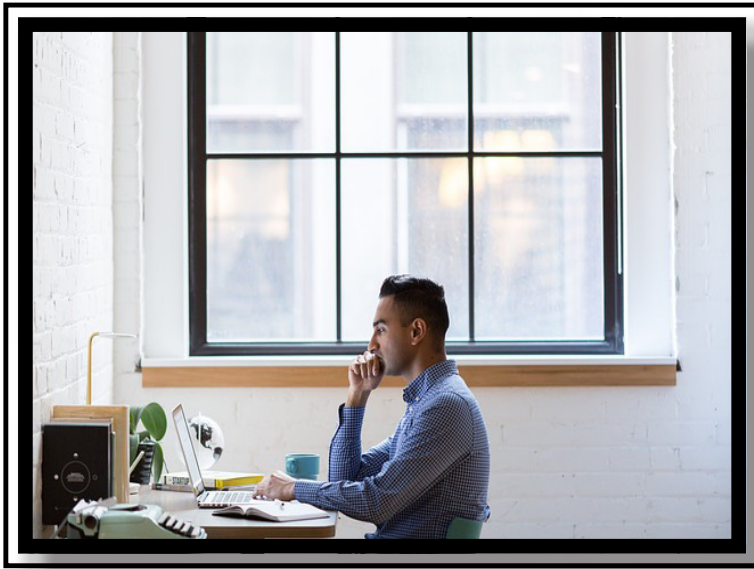


I encourage you to involve your staff throughout this process as they will provide fresh and insightful viewpoints.

# Step 1: Research

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The first step is to research your gallery's top competitors that are targeting the same types collectors. Research is also necessary on your existing collector base.



I realize you probably already have a pretty good understanding of your top competitors and collectors, but please do not skip this step. The point is to look at these two critical groups of your gallery's success with a focused view on needs and value. Pay

careful attention to the needs of collectors and how your competitors are communicating their promised value that meets those needs. Your research will reveal new insights.



# Competitive Research

Identify your gallery's top five competitors. Consider other physical galleries in town, artist-run galleries and studios, online resources and art fairs and festivals, etc. Review their websites and social media profiles as part of this process. For each competitor, ask yourself the following questions:

- What value are they communicating and how clear is their message?
- How does their value proposition differ from your gallery?
- What benefits or need do they offer your collector base?



# Client Research

A successful value proposition must speak to the needs of your buyers and motivations for collecting art. In addition to researching competitors, look at your past sales and buyers. You may need to go back a year or two to have a large enough sample.

What I want you to do here is try to identify patterns for motivation and need.

“VALUE PROPOSITION DESIGN IS A 'MUST HAVE' FOR ANYONE CREATING A NEW VENTURE. IT CAPTURES THE CORE ISSUES AROUND UNDERSTANDING AND FINDING CUSTOMER PROBLEMS AND DESIGNING AND VALIDATING POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS.”

- STEVE BLANK

As you review those past sales wins, ask the following questions.

- What were the motivating factors or need that your gallery served for the buyer?
- Were these first time or repeat customers?
- Did impulse drive the purchase or was there a lengthy sales cycle?
- Were most sales connected with attending a gallery event?
- Were the majority of buyers local or from out of town?

Specific patterns are likely to emerge, some of which you may not have recognized outside of the context of this exercise.

The patterns will help guide you through the remaining steps.

# Step 2: Defining your gallery's value

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Now that you have a better understanding of how well (or poorly) your competitors are communicating their value to collectors, you can begin to define your value proposition in a way that stands out to your target art buyer.



In this step, I want you to outline your gallery's distinctive value that your gallery program and services offer to meet the needs of your collectors and community. Just make a running list that

includes everything you and your staff think sets the gallery apart.

As you start building this list keep the following in mind.

- This process is intended to be a brain dump. You have permission to make this exercise as long and as messy as it needs to be. We will refine to a core value in a bit.
- Also think back to collectors' comments or review testimonials you have received. I guarantee you they will be a rich source of inspiration.



With your list complete, now select the best from the list that communicate:

- Value for buyer's motivations to collect the art you offer
- Meet a specific need, such as service or niche in your market
- Show how your gallery is different from competitors.

A warning about this process... You may find your gallery's value proposition is indistinguishable from that of your competitors identified in Step 1, especially from an art collector's point of view. For example, offering gallery events in the form of exhibition openings or artist talks, while undoubtedly valuable, probably does not distinguish your gallery from your competitors.

If you do not have a unique value proposition, you should strongly consider how you will adjust your gallery program or services for the future.

“TO MAINTAIN THE GALLERIST MODEL'S RELEVANCE, TO BOTH ARTISTS AND COLLECTORS, MAY REQUIRE MESSAGING THE GALLERISTS VALUE PROPOSITION MORE EFFECTIVELY.

WHETHER THROUGH DEVELOPMENT OF NEW COMPETENCIES THAT MEET COLLECTORS' AND ARTISTS' NEEDS, DIVERSIFICATION OF THE SERVICES THAT FUND THEIR GALLERY, OR DELIVERING A MORE COMPELLING VALUE PROPOSITION, GALLERISTS CLEARLY NEED TO RESPOND TO THE EVOLVING ROLE OF THE PRIVATE COLLECTOR IN THE CONTEMPORARY ART WORLD.”

Ed Winkleman

*Selling Contemporary Art: How to Navigate the Evolving Market*

# Step 3: Creating Your Value Proposition

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Let's start creating!

In step 2 you probably captured a lot of great value your gallery provides. Here is where you can make that shine. Using your top picks from the list you created, now you're going to craft a gallery value statement.

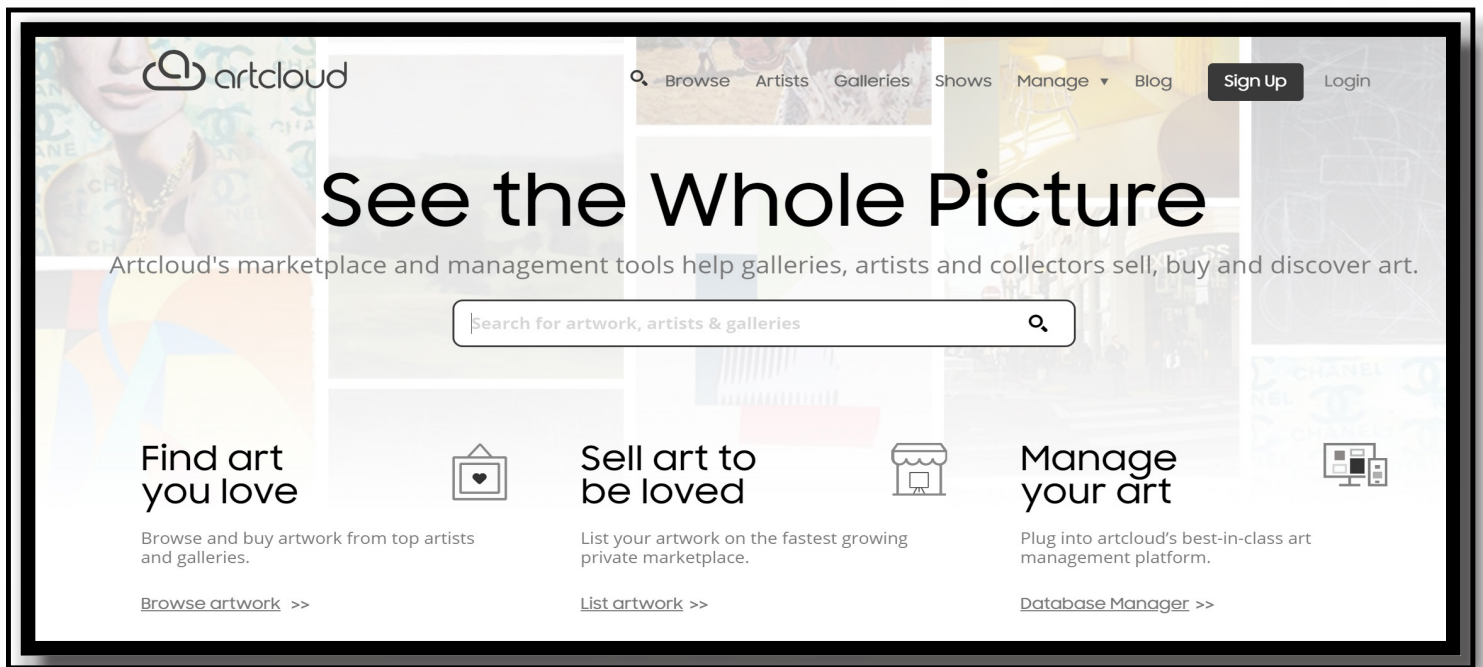
You have likely helped many of your artists with their artist statements. This process is similar for your gallery business. Create a short statement or bulleted list that communicates your value proposition. There are no rules on how this statement should be formatted, but it should be clear and concise.

Think back to the end goal we discussed at the beginning of this guide and the three essential things a value proposition says. Here is what this statement should include.

Buyer motivation	→	What you offer
Solution for need or problem	→	Key features or benefits
Defines how different or better	→	Why you are unique

Your value proposition is an essential tool for creating a connection with qualified art collectors and helping your art gallery stand out as a dealer who is a trusted asset in the art collecting process.

Look at how artcloud, for example, communicates their key features and benefits.



"Artcloud's marketplace and management tools help galleries, artists and collectors sell, buy and discover art." This statement makes it clear exactly what artcloud offers and for whom. Their tagline "See the Whole Picture" is how they are different and what benefit they offer.

This information is front and center on their home page, so the message is immediate.

# Step 4: Develop a high-level value tagline

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A tagline is a powerful tool for businesses to speak to how their value is parallel with their target market's needs or desires. However, art galleries rarely use them.

Many brands use taglines to communicate purpose, promise or personality of their business. Crafting a tagline for your art gallery brand could be tricky. As you go through the steps below, remember your tagline should also relate to your target audience in a significant way.

Here is how to go about creating compelling tagline for your gallery.

- Brainstorm different ideas with gallery staff to capture the essence of your value proposition created in step 3 into a memorable tagline.
- Write down four or five possible taglines that sum up your gallery's program, uniqueness and/or speaks to your clients' motivations/needs.
- Keep your tagline under 10 words so it can be memorable.
- A successful tagline will also reflects your gallery's brand and align with your collector's needs. If it does, you have a winner!

The reality today is new online marketplace competitors are embracing this communication tool to resonate with your target market. Look at how some of these art businesses use a tagline. Some are very direct, and others are creative or whimsical.

- askART - Find, Learn, Price
- Artfinder - Buying art, made simple
- artcloud - See the Whole Picture
- Sozo Gallery - Inspiring Soulful Connections
- Quent Cordair Fine Art - The finest in Romantic Realism

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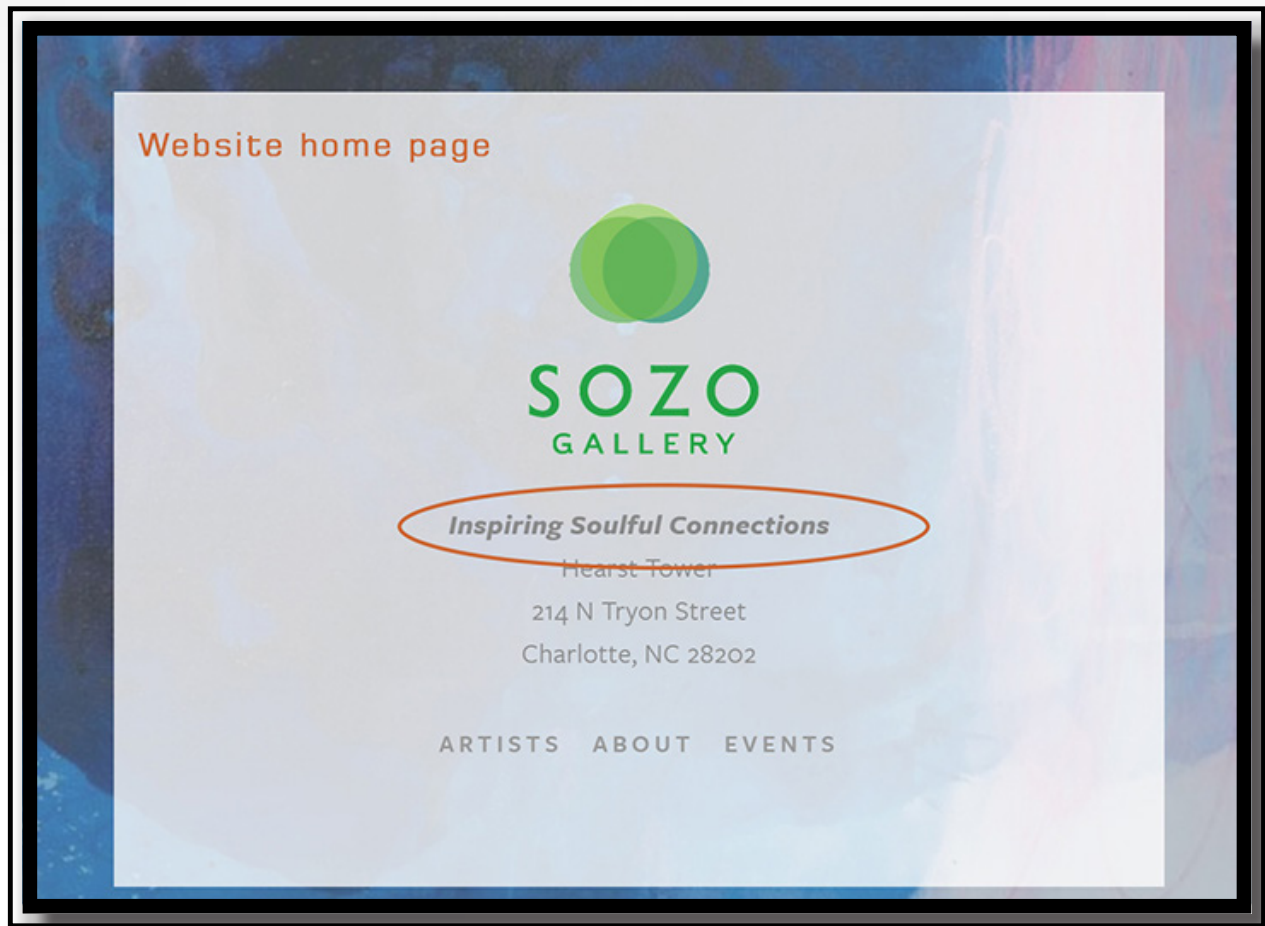
“NO MATTER WHAT YOUR  
PRODUCT IS, YOU ARE  
ULTIMATELY IN THE  
EDUCATION BUSINESS.

YOUR CUSTOMERS NEED  
TO BE CONSTANTLY  
EDUCATED ABOUT THE  
MANY ADVANTAGES OF  
DOING BUSINESS WITH  
YOU...”

- ROBERT G. ALLEN

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Below are more examples, for inspiration, that speak to some common motivations of art collectors.

- Art that enhances your life and legacy.
- Regional fine art that creates beauty in the lives of those who collect it.
- Artwork to revitalize your life.
- Inspiring a sophistication and elegance for your home.

# Step 5: Put your Value Proposition to Work

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## Articulation Online

Now it is finally time to put your value statement to work by placing your clean and clear value statement and tagline in these places online. To be genuinely absorbed and be an effective marketing tool that attracts art collectors, repetition is critical.

### **Website:**

- Tagline on the Home page
- Tagline and value proposition on the gallery About page
- Include your value proposition in the description meta tag of your website so people see it in search engine index results

### **All social media profiles:**

- Your gallery description section
- Include your tagline on your cover image

### **Other Digital Places:**

- Boilerplate at the bottom of your email newsletter
- Art sales platform profiles
- Schedule monthly social media posts that communicate elements of your value proposition

Communicating your art gallery's value in multiple places will ensure the message gets across to prospective art buyers and will help give your art gallery a competitive edge.

## Articulation Offline

Gallery staff must have an acute understanding of the value your gallery offers to collectors, artists and the community. They should be able to articulate it effectively as part of their client-facing role.



Your value proposition should become a natural part of all sales conversations. Different features and benefits will resonate with different kinds of buyers. A good salesperson will understand how and when to use them.

How well can your staff articulate your gallery's value and the value of the artists represented? The ability to communicate value is an important thing to test.

If you are a gallery owner or director, you may be intimately familiar with the gallery's value and how it differentiates from your competitors. You may be shocked to learn that mixed messages are being communicated, or worse, not being delivered within sales and marketing efforts.

The consequences could directly affect your gallery's revenue and qualified leads coming into the gallery because it weakens your overall marketing message.

- Educate staff and influencers on your gallery's value.
- Test your staff to ensure they truly understand it and can articulate it to clients.
- Create signage with your tagline for both inside and out of the gallery for events such as pop-ups and art fairs.
- Incorporate your tagline on business cards, letterhead, and invoices.



# Congratulations!

By re-examining your art gallery's value proposition following the steps in this guide, you just put your art business in a stronger position within the competitive art market.

The great thing about a strong value proposition and tagline as a marketing tool is that you only need to revisit it every few years to ensure it still accurately reflects the value offered by your gallery program and services.

Adopting this strategy across all your sales and marketing efforts will give you a competitive edge by making it easier for prospects to remember your gallery and understand how stand out over your competitors.

Your art gallery's value proposition is the foundation for sales, marketing, and client experience you deliver.





# About Gallery Fuel

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Gallery Fuel is dedicated to helping fine art dealers and galleries in small to mid-sized markets grow and improve their businesses.

Meeting the needs of both artists and collectors takes a special knowledge base and skill set. Gallery Fuel is here to help cultivate those skills.

It is our goal to help both experienced and emerging art dealers and gallery staff excel in sales, marketing and creating strong relationships with both artist and client. This is how an art gallery business can thrive long into the future.

By subscribing to Gallery Fuel, you will stay on top of what business trends and technology make the most sense for running your fine art gallery, nurture artists and the next generation of collectors.



**Visit [www.GalleryFuel.com](http://www.GalleryFuel.com) to see how we can fuel your gallery business.**

