

from
Vivien

The Messaging Survival Framework

For comms pros whose one shot messages have to survive the manager who only reads the first line, an employee with no desk, being summarised into 3 bullet points, and the exec skimming your comms while watching their kid play football.

FROM-VIVIEN.COM



Why Your “Good” Messaging Keeps Dying Before It Reaches the Decision — and how to fix it

I partner with corporate communications leaders and teams who keep being told the message landed — but keep seeing evidence that it didn't.

Somewhere between your desk and their decision, your message gets rewritten by people who were never in the room.

A manager compresses it for standup. A committee reads three bullet points instead of the deck. An employee hears it secondhand, from someone who heard it thirdhand, at the end of a long day. A reporter runs with the first soundbite.

At every one of those handoffs, something goes missing. Context first. Then logic. Then trust.

Most companies think they have a copy problem. So they sharpen the headline, rewrite the memo, add a catchier line to the deck. Nothing changes, and nobody can explain why.

This is the Multi-Audience Messaging Problem — because most messaging is never built to survive being read by more than one of them.

Meet the Perfect Reader

Every messaging framework, every brand voice guide, every "clear and confident" positioning deck is secretly written for the same fictional person.

The Perfect Reader has full attention. The Perfect Reader has time. The Perfect Reader has read everything you've published before this, remembers it, and has no competing priorities crowding out your message the second it lands. The Perfect Reader reads every word, in order, exactly as you intended.

The Perfect Reader does not exist.

What it costs you

You already know this. You've watched it happen.

It's why a restructuring memo that took three weeks to get right ends up as a screenshot of just the worst paragraph. It's why a positioning deck that made total sense in the room falls apart the moment a prospect tries to repeat it to their own boss. It's why "clear, confident messaging" reads perfectly in the Google Doc and still gets misquoted by the fifth person who touches it.

The fix isn't "write more clearly"

This is where most messaging advice gets it wrong. Cleaner sentences and fewer big words are just a different assumption about the same fictional reader: one who'll definitely finish reading if you just make it easy enough.

Most of what dies in the room was already clear.

The real fix is designing for distortion from the start — building a message that still holds its shape after it's been compressed, forwarded, half-read, and repeated by someone who never saw the original.

Stop writing for the reader you wish you had. Write for the one you're going to get: tired, skimming, about to repeat what they think you said to someone else.

In the next few pages, you'll learn the five specific points where that breakdown happens — the same five, whether it's a change announcement, a sales deck, or an investor update — and the framework built to fix each one before your message ever leaves your desk.

from
Vivien



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The reality of internal communication

The following statistics are drawn from Axios HQ's State of Internal Communications 2025/2026 Report, based on a US survey at organisations with 11 or more employees.

- 813 employees in full-time entry-level, intermediate, or middle-management roles
- 457 leaders in full-time C-level, executive, or senior roles, at organisations with 11 or more employees

80% of leaders think their communications are clear and engaging but only 50% of employees agree.

The average employee loses 35+ working days a year to ineffective communication. That translates roughly to seven working weeks of productive capacity lost to confusion, miscommunication, and time spent searching for information.

\$10,140 per employee per year in lost salary when employees deal with unclear or poorly targeted communications rather than focusing on their core responsibilities.

73% of organisations that increased their investment in internal communication saw improved employee retention.

The reality of external communication

The following statistics are drawn from several sources

- Gartner "The Challenger Customer" (2015); Forrester State of Business Buying 2026; CEB/Gartner
- Forrester State of Business Buying 2026
- G2 Learn Hub, "Sales Enablement Statistics"

The average B2B buyer receives over 120 emails per week — roughly 25 per business day

86% of B2B purchases stall during the buying process

B2B buying committees have grown 8-13 in 2025 — nearly doubling from 5.4 decision-makers in 2015 to in a single decade.

Underused or unused marketing content costs enterprises an estimated \$2.3million annually in missed opportunities.

70-80% of the decision happens before you're in the room,

65% of marketing-created content goes completely unused by sales

What I see happen to **every** message

Five common failure points

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FAILURE POINT 1:

No clear key message prioritised or too many competing messages. The reader edits what's important for themselves.

The message grew around several important ideas, but none were prioritised over the others.

- Each stakeholder who reviewed the draft added their priority, qualifier, or context. The final version carries the fingerprints of everyone who approved it but no longer has a clear key message.
- Everything in it seems important, so nothing lands as the point. With nothing prioritised, the reader ends up doing the editing: deciding for themselves what to remember and repeat.
- **Diagnostic signal:** Read only the first sentence of each paragraph. If you can't reconstruct the main point from those alone, the message doesn't have one — it has several, evenly weighted.
- Ask two people what the main point was. Do they give different answers.?

FAILURE POINT 2:

The message was written from the inside out. The reader has to translate it into their world before they can act. Most won't.

It leads with what the organisation wants to say — the announcement, the initiative, the decision, the features, the solution, — before it says anything about the reader's situation. It reads as your priority, not their problem, so it gets filed and ignored.

This isn't usually a choice — it's the order the message was written in. It follows your process, in sequence: the background, the reasoning, then the conclusion. That order made sense while writing it. To the reader, it's three paragraphs of setup before the one line they were looking for.

It might be accurate and well-argued, but your reader skims for the part that mentions them, and if they don't find it fast, they guess at what the rest must say — and act on the guess, not the message.

Diagnostic signal: The first paragraph uses the words 'we', 'our', or 'I am pleased to announce'.

FAILURE POINT 3:

The message was built for ideal reading conditions. The reader gets a distorted partial read, not an accurate one.

It was written assuming the reader had time, context, and motivation to read every word in sequence. It wasn't designed for the forwarded email, the mobile skim, or the verbal summary — the conditions most readers actually meet it in.

That assumption puts equal weight on context and conclusion, so a partial read gives a distorted picture rather than a smaller, accurate one. If the decision-relevant line is buried in paragraph three, anyone who doesn't finish reading (which is most people) walks away with the setup, not the point.

Diagnostic signal: The most important information is in paragraph three or later.

FAILURE POINT 4:

Audiences were not anchored differently. The reader has to decide "does this apply to me."

The message was sent to audiences with different stakes, different roles, and different levels of context — but it wasn't adapted for any of them. The audience was expected to do the adapting.

The clearest sign is the "all employees" email or the "dear customer" blast sent to a segmented list. If the content is identical for the customer about to churn and the one who just onboarded, the segmentation is cosmetic — both readers are still left to work out "does this apply to me?" on their own.

Diagnostic signal: Remove the greeting line. If nothing else in the message reveals who it was written for, the greeting was the only audience-awareness the message had.

FAILURE POINT 5:

No translation layer — full of undefined jargon. The reader has to fill in their own gaps with guesses.

Every acronym, leadership term, or industry phrase your reader doesn't already know is a small tax on their attention — and most won't pay it. They'll nod along, or move past the sentence, rather than stop to work out what it means.

Unfamiliar language signals distance: it tells the reader this was delivered to them, not written for them.

But it doesn't just get skipped — it gets replaced. The reader fills the gap with their closest guess at what you meant, and that guess is what gets repeated at the next handoff.

Diagnostic signal: If you can substitute a term for "magic" and the sentence still reads the same, it hasn't been defined for your audience.



The Four Fates of Every Message

As your message passes through your multi-audience, their filters, and third space fragmented attention it heads toward one of four possible outcomes.

Knowing which fate yours is heading toward before it goes out is the first test of messaging.

Nobody tells you when your Multi-Audience Messaging fails. There's no error message. You just see the symptoms later — the rollout that stalls for no clear reason, the deal that goes quiet after the champion takes it to committee, the policy update everyone "read" but nobody followed. By the time you notice, the message has already failed, and you're left reverse-engineering where it broke.

01

Amplified

The best possible outcome.

The message spreads accurately with growing support. Each person understands it, repeats it clearly, and passes it forward without losing the core idea. Every handoff strengthens it. This happens only when the message was designed for every touchpoint in the chain.

02

Drifted

Normal & Recoverable.

The message is shortened and simplified as it moves. A strategy presentation becomes a two-sentence summary. A detailed proposal becomes a quick explanation in a meeting. As long as the core meaning remains intact, this is healthy. Nuance is often lost but if your message is designed well, it will bend — but it won't break.

03

Distorted

The most common failure outcome

Distortion happens when a message is unclear from the start. Vague language means people fill gaps with assumptions. . Different people begin repeating different versions of the same message, changing the meaning and emphasising the wrong part. By the time it reaches a decision-maker, it no longer represents the original idea.

04

Blocked

The silent killer

The message never reaches a decision. It loses momentum. Blockers don't say no — they ask 'have we really thought this through?' and suddenly the initiative stalls.

Blocked messages sit in organisations where priorities, budgets, or stakeholders aren't addressed so no one moves it forward. In multi-audience organisations, this is one of the most common outcomes.

The F.A.S.T. Framework

I didn't set out to build a framework. I set out to stop watching good ideas die between one desk and another.

So I started tracking where message erosion happened — not where people assumed it did. The same failure points kept showing up, across industries and audiences, and through the lens of how people process and misremember information, they weren't communication failures at all. They were predictable cognitive ones: no clear key message, so the reader's brain picked one for you. No foothold in their world, so nothing stuck. One document built for every reader, when each one filters differently. Language only the writer understood. A structure built for attention nobody has.

For each failure point, I wanted a direct fix — something you could run a message through before it ever left your desk, grounded in the mechanism causing the failure rather than a guess at good writing. That's FAST.

Frame It — Decide the single thing your reader needs to walk away with, before anything else, and put it first. Working memory holds almost nothing under pressure, and people default to whatever they encounter first when they decide what a message was "about."

Anchor It — Open in the reader's world, not yours. People retain information faster and longer when it connects to something they already care about — a stake, a problem, a fear, a goal. Nobody re-anchors your message to their own situation for you; if you don't do it, they'll either do it badly or not at all. Don't assume one anchor works for every reader. What lands for a director isn't what lands for the frontline.

Simplify — Unfamiliar language takes the brain more effort to process, and readers misread that extra effort as distrust — they assume something hard to follow is hard to follow because it's hiding something.

Travel-ready — Each retelling drops detail and nuance first. Design for the skim, the forward, the retelling.

Run a message through all four, in order, and what's left is a message built to survive being retold — not just read once.

Each fate has a root cause — and each root cause has a direct fix.

Together, they form a simple filter grounded in human psychology to ensure your message survives the journey

F

FRAME IT: What is the one thing they must leave knowing?

A strong frame gives your audience a single, idea to hold onto. It is the sentence that every other piece of your communication serves.

Decide the one thing your reader must walk away knowing. If you can't say it in a single sentence, you haven't finished thinking — you've just finished drafting.

If two people who read your draft give different answers to 'what is this about?'

A

ANCHOR IT: Map each audience's current context

People do not hear messages in a vacuum — they filter everything through their own concerns, pressures, and priorities. Open in their world, not yours. A message that starts with your priorities before theirs gets filed, not felt

If your message opens with 'we', 'our', or 'I am pleased to announce' it's anchored in your world, not theirs.

S

SIMPLIFY IT: Sharpen, don't dumb down.

Simplifying isn't shrinking the idea. It's sharpening. What has to go is anything vague standing in for something specific. Complex language makes audiences work harder and feel excluded. Jargon signals insider status, not clarity.

If your message cannot pass the "new joiner test" — would someone on their first day understand it? — rewrite it.

T

TRAVEL IT: TEST IT for the Journey. Can they repeat what they read in one or two sentences?

Most messages aren't delivered directly — they pass through managers, team leads, and informal networks. A message that cannot survive three layers of retelling is not ready to send. Design for the fifth reader, not just the first.

Your test reader says 'what they're trying to say is...' — it is not yet clear enough to travel.

Case Studies

[FROM-VIVIEN.COM](https://from-vivien.com)

The examples in this book came from teams with skilled writers, careful review processes, and every reason to get it right. But just because a message reads perfectly in the room when it was written doesn't mean it'll survive the scrutiny of being summarised, passed along, and paraphrased by someone who wasn't there.

That's the pattern behind the first three cases here: Google's Next Chapter of Gemini era announcement, Yahoo's remote-working memo, and Ricoh's homepage — three messages that worked for their author but got lost in the retelling.

I've also included three examples of what can be achieved: Discord's vendor-breach response, Google's layoff memo, and Basecamp's Homepage to give you a sense of what can be achieved.

Every example is broken down against the same four questions from the FAST framework: did it frame one key message clearly? Did it anchor in the reader's world? Did it simplify instead of relying on jargon? Was it built to survive the journey?

All of them are real, sourced, and still findable today — which is exactly the point. This isn't theoretical. It's happening in plain sight, from the biggest companies in the world, every week.

The goal isn't to point at what went wrong. It's to notice the pattern early enough to catch it in your own next message, before it becomes someone else's case study.



The Next Chapter of Our Gemini Era"

Sundar Pichai's: CEO of Google and Alphabet

(Feb 8, 2024)

NOT FRAMED: Not ONE but Four topics precede the news

The post opens with Google's broader AI investment story — Search Generative Experience, Google Cloud, Workspace, and Google One "just about to cross 100 million subscribers" — followed by a paragraph of model benchmark bragging about Ultra 1.0 outperforming human experts on MMLU. The actual headline news — Bard is being renamed Gemini — doesn't appear until the third section, under the heading "Introducing Gemini Advanced," which is itself a confusing label for a post whose real news is the rename, not just the Advanced tier

NO ANCHOR: Written for investors and press, not the person using the product

The language throughout is business-facing: subscriber counts, benchmark performance, "two businesses that have grown rapidly." A user who just wants to know “what does this mean for the tool I already use?” has to extract that from a post structured around company growth metrics and Google's internal product-org logic.

Google didn't publish one Gemini rebrand announcement, it had to published two to clarify and expand.



The next chapter of our Gemini era

For years, we've been investing deeply in AI as the single best way to improve Search and all of our products. We're excited by the progress, for example with our Search Generative Experience, or SGE, which you can try in [Search Labs](#). AI is also now central to two businesses that have grown rapidly in recent years: our Cloud and Workspace services and our popular subscription service Google One, which is just about to cross 100 million subscribers.

A new state of the art

In December, we took a significant step on our journey to make AI more helpful for everyone with [the start of the Gemini era](#), setting a new state of the art across a wide range of text, image, audio, and video benchmarks. However, Gemini is evolving to be more than just the models. It supports an entire ecosystem — from the products that billions of people use every day, to the APIs and platforms helping developers and businesses innovate.

The largest model Ultra 1.0 is the first to outperform human experts on MMLU (massive multitask language understanding), which uses a combination of 57 subjects — including math, physics, history, law, medicine and ethics — to test knowledge and problem-solving abilities.

Today we're taking our next step and bringing Ultra to our products and the world.

Introducing Gemini Advanced

Bard has been the best way for people to directly experience our most capable models. To reflect the advanced tech at its core, Bard will now simply be called Gemini. It's available in 40 languages on the web, and is coming to a new [Gemini app on Android](#) and on the [Google app on iOS](#).

The version with Ultra will be called [Gemini Advanced](#), a new experience far more capable at reasoning, following instructions, coding, and creative collaboration. For example, it can be a personal tutor, tailored to your learning style. Or it can be a creative partner, helping you plan a content strategy or build a business plan. You can read more [in this post](#).

You can start using Gemini Advanced by subscribing to the new [Google One AI Premium plan](#), which offers the best of Google's AI features in a single place. This premium plan builds off the popular Google One service offering expanded storage and exclusive product features.

Bringing Gemini's capabilities to more products

Gemini models are also coming to products that people and businesses use every day, including Workspace and Google Cloud:

- **Workspace:** Already, more than 1 million people are using features like Help me write to enhance their productivity and creativity through Duet AI. Duet AI will become Gemini for Workspace, and soon consumers with the Google One AI Premium plan can use Gemini in Gmail, Docs, Sheets, Slides and Meet.
- **Google Cloud:** For Cloud customers, Duet AI will also become Gemini in the coming weeks. Gemini will help companies boost productivity, developers code faster, and organizations to protect themselves from cyber attacks, along with countless other benefits.

More to come

Developers have been fundamental to every major technology shift and will play an equally important role in the Gemini ecosystem. Hundreds of thousands of developers and businesses have already been building with Gemini models. While today is about Gemini Advanced and its new capabilities, next week we'll share more details on what's coming for developers and Cloud customers.

These latest updates reflect how we're approaching innovation boldly, and advancing and deploying this technology responsibly. And we're already well underway training the next iteration of our Gemini models — so stay tuned for more!

NOT SIMPLIFIED:

The number of new tier names (Gemini, Gemini Advanced, Gemini for Workspace) added jargon used inside Google rather than outside. None of this made the message memorable.

NOT TRAVEL READY: The Test

This is the clearest failure. A reader trying to understand "what happened with Google today" has to sift through a lot of information. Tech press spent days publishing "explainer" articles just to clarify what Google's own announcement meant — a sign the original didn't survive its first retelling. The post closes by saying developer and Cloud details are coming "next week," meaning the rollout itself wasn't a finished announcement with a third wave of information still to come.

Google Rebrands Bard to Gemini

Say goodbye to [Google Bard](#), and say hello to Google Gemini. On Thursday, Alphabet and Google CEO Sundar Pichai announced the company will be rebranding its [AI model](#) Bard as Gemini. The company [launched Gemini](#) late last year, calling it its "largest and most capable AI model." and Bard and Gemini existed side-by-side for a while. But now, the entirety of Google's public-facing AI universe is being rolled into different variants of Gemini.

Google rebrands Bard chatbot as Gemini, rolls out paid subscription

Google Bard is no more. Almost exactly a year after first [introducing](#) its (rushed) efforts to challenge OpenAI's ChatGPT, the company is retiring the name and rebranding Bard as [Gemini](#), the name of its [family of foundation models](#). More importantly, though, it is also now launching Gemini Ultra, its most capable large language model yet. Gemini Ultra will be a paid experience, though. Google is making it available through a new \$20 [Google One](#) tier (with a two-month free trial) that also includes 2TB of storage and the rest of Google One's feature set, as well as access to Gemini in Google Workspace apps like Docs, Slides, Sheets and Meet. With that, Google will also sunset the Duet AI brand, which was mostly restricted to its AI features in Workspace, and move that to Gemini as well.

Yahoo's Remote Work Ban Memo

Feb 2013

In a statement released to employees at Yahoo head of Human Resources Jackie Reses wrote for the industry not the reader.

PARTIAL FRAMED, but the wrong one

The memo does have one clear instruction — remote workers must relocate to an office — so it doesn't fail the key message being framed. The problem is what it leads with instead of that instruction: three sentences of philosophy about collaboration before the policy change appears.

NO ANCHOR — written from the company's ideal situation, not the employee's.

The memo states that speed and quality are often sacrificed when people work from home, a blanket claim offered with no acknowledgment of why any individual employee was working remotely in the first place — caregiving, relocation, disability, or a role that never required an office. It assumes one shared context that plainly didn't exist across 14,500 employees.

YAHOO! PROPRIETARY AND CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION — DO NOT FORWARD

Yahoos,

Over the past few months, we have introduced a number of great benefits and tools to make us more productive, efficient and fun. With the introduction of initiatives like FYI, Goals and PB&J, we want everyone to participate in our culture and contribute to the positive momentum. From Sunnyvale to Santa Monica, Bangalore to Beijing — I think we can all feel the energy and buzz in our offices.

To become the absolute best place to work, communication and collaboration will be important, so we need to be working side-by-side. That is why it is critical that we are all present in our offices. Some of the best decisions and insights come from hallway and cafeteria discussions, meeting new people, and impromptu team meetings. Speed and quality are often sacrificed when we work from home. We need to be one Yahoo!, and that starts with physically being together.

Beginning in June, we're asking all employees with work-from-home arrangements to work in Yahoo! offices. If this impacts you, your management has already been in touch with next steps. And, for the rest of us who occasionally have to stay home for the cable guy, please use your best judgment in the spirit of collaboration. Being a Yahoo isn't just about your day-to-day job, it is about the interactions and experiences that are only possible in our offices.

Thanks to all of you, we've already made remarkable progress as a company — and the best is yet to come.

Jackie

NOT SIMPLIFIED

The often-cited closing line telling employees who occasionally need to stay home for a repair appointment to use their best judgment reads as permission with an implied guilt for not being a team player. Yes, the words are plain, but not clarifying ones. It leaves the reader unsure whether they still need to wait for management to contact them.

NOT TRAVEL READY: The Test — it was built for internal eyes but instantly went global

The memo was written in internal HR language, never intended for public release, and was leaked to press by multiple disgruntled employees within a day. It became international news within 48 hours targeting Yahoo's new CEO as the reason for the change. It is still cited today, over a decade later, as the reference case for how not to announce a return-to-office policy — proof that poor messaging can end up defining a company's reputation for years.

Yahoo chief bans working from home

Marissa Mayer has ordered an end to 'remote' work as all staff are told to be in the office as part of a new era of collaboration

Friday, we reported that Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer gave hundreds of employees a tough ultimatum. Employees who regularly work from home must now come into the office or quit.

Ricoh's Global Homepage

(ricoh.com)

Ricoh makes printers, office equipment, and workplace software for businesses. None of that appears on the homepage.

NOT FRAMED: The hero section doesn't say what the company does. A first-time visitor reading this has no way to know Ricoh sells printers. There's no single sentence anywhere above the fold that names the product, the industry, or the problem it solves — just an abstract philosophy about work and fulfillment that could belong to almost any company in any category.

NO ANCHOR — written from the company's mission, not the visitor's task

The "Learn more" call-to-action under the hero section links not to products or solutions, but to "Stories." A B2B buyer arriving with a real, specific need — evaluating office printing infrastructure, comparing vendors, checking specs — is routed toward brand storytelling instead of anything that helps them do their job. The page is built around what Ricoh wants to say about itself, not what the visitor came to find out.

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imagine. change.

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Q

Global

Fulfillment through Work

||

Fulfillment can be defined as a feeling gained from achievement and self-development.
RICOH enables individuals to work smarter, and by providing fulfillment through work, we will enhance the quality of life.

Learn more >



2026.08.04

Information

Ricoh named a Leader in the 2026 Worldwide Laser Production Printers by IDC MarketScape



2026.07.23

News Release

Ricoh accelerates customers' decarbonization through additional Innovation Fund investment in ASUENE



2026.07.24

Stories

Beyond Integration: How ETRIA Is Shaping the Future Through Co-Creation

About RICOH



To Our Stakeholders

Ricoh has remained close to the changing nature of work since its founding in 1936.
We will continue to drive innovation, support the creativity of working people, and realize "Fulfillment through Work."

Learn more >

NOT SIMPLIFIED: the word "fulfillment" gets repeated without saying anything concrete

A word that sounds like it's saying something while communicating nothing a reader could act on. The copy has to try and define it for the reader because it is so abstract and generic.

NOT TRAVEL READY: The Test— nothing on the page is quotable or forwardable

"They help you find fulfillment through work" doesn't tell anyone what Ricoh sells, why it's better, or what problem it solves — so the message simply can't travel past the first person who reads it.

What Messaging Survival Looks Like

Discord's Vendor-Breach Notice

(October 2025)

In early October 2025, Discord disclosed that an unauthorized party had compromised one of its third-party customer-service vendors, 5CA — not Discord's own systems. The statement is worth studying because it does the opposite of most breach comms: it gets more specific as it goes.

FRAMED: What is the one thing they must leave knowing?

One root cause, stated immediately

They called it an incident and immediately framed a single fact that would determine how seriously any individual user needed to react, Everything was stated in the first paragraphs not buried under incident-response processes or organisation throat-clearing.

At Discord, protecting the privacy and security of our users is a top priority. That's why it's important to us that we're transparent with them about events that impact their personal information.

Recently, we discovered an incident where an unauthorised party compromised one of Discord's third-party customer service providers. The unauthorised party then gained access to information from a limited number of users who had contacted Discord through our Customer Support and/or Trust & Safety teams.

As soon as we became aware of this attack, we took immediate steps to address the situation. This included revoking the customer support provider's access to our ticketing system, launching an internal investigation, engaging a leading computer forensics firm to support our investigation and remediation efforts and engaging law enforcement.

We are in the process of contacting impacted users. If you were impacted, you will receive an email from *noreply@discord.com*. We will not contact you about this incident via phone — official Discord communications channels are limited to emails from *noreply@discord.com*.



Updated: 9 October, 2025

TL;DR:

- Discord recently discovered an incident where an unauthorised party compromised one of our third-party vendors.
- This was *not* a breach of Discord, but rather a breach of a third party service provider, 5CA, that we used to support our customer service efforts.
- This incident impacted a limited number of users who had communicated with our Customer Support or Trust & Safety teams.
- Of the accounts impacted globally, we have identified approximately 70,000 users that may have had government-ID photos exposed, which our vendor used to review age-related appeals.
- No messages or activities were accessed beyond what users may have discussed with Customer Support or Trust & Safety agents.
- We immediately revoked the customer support provider's access to our ticketing system and continue to investigate this matter.
- We're working closely with law enforcement to investigate this matter.
- We are in the process of emailing the users impacted.

What happened?

An unauthorised party targeted our third-party customer support services to access user data, with a view to extort a financial ransom from Discord.

What data was involved?

The data that may have been impacted was related to our customer service system. This may include:

- Name, Discord username, email and other contact details if provided to Discord customer support
- Limited billing information such as payment type, the last four digits of your credit card, and purchase history if associated with your account
- IP addresses
- Messages with our customer service agents
- Limited corporate data (training materials, internal presentations)
- The unauthorised party also gained access to a small number of government-ID images

If your ID may have been accessed, that will be specified in the email you receive.

What data was not involved?

- Full credit card numbers or CCV codes
- Messages or activity on Discord beyond what users may have discussed with customer support
- Passwords or authentication data

What are we doing about this?

Discord has and will continue to take all appropriate steps in response to this situation. As standard, we will continue to frequently audit our third-party systems to ensure they meet our security and privacy standards. In addition, we have:

- Notified relevant data protection authorities.
- Proactively engaged with law enforcement to investigate this attack.
- Reviewed our threat detection systems and security controls for third-party support providers.

SIMPLIFIED: Inside jargon was cut.

Short declarative sentences, no industry language. The use of TL:DR with each key point and bullet points for what happens next give a clear action plan. The reader can quickly and easily remember the key message and what to do next “Stay alert when receiving messages or other communication that may seem suspicious” Why? because Discord had a data breach and some customer information was compromised.

ANCHORED: Built around the question the reader is asking "Am I affected?"

The statement specified that the incident impacted a limited number of users who had communicated with Customer Support or Trust & Safety, and gave an exact figure: approximately 70,000 users who may have had government-ID photos exposed.

That's the difference between a vague "some users may have been affected" and a number a reader can actually check themselves against — did I contact support? did I submit an ID?

Taking next steps

Looking ahead, we recommend impacted users stay alert when receiving messages or other communication that may seem suspicious. We have service agents on hand to answer questions and provide additional support.

We take our responsibility to protect your personal data seriously and understand the inconvenience and concern this may cause.

TRAVEL READY: The Test

Fox News's coverage repeated the same core facts, so did Bitdefender, BankInfoSecurity and other channels.

The statement survived being retold across separate outlets without needing a follow-up clarification, which is the real test of Travel-ready messages.

Discord Customer Support Data Breach via Third-Party Vendor

Discord has reported a breach involving one of its third-party support vendors (Zendesk). Some user data — including names, email addresses, IPs, and uploaded ID images — was exposed after an attacker gained access to a vendor support account. Discord's own systems were not breached.

Sundar Pichai's Google A Difficult decision to set us up for the future (January 2023)

In January 2023, Sundar Pichai told Google staff the company was cutting roughly 12,000 jobs. A hard message, delivered under pressure, that still led with the one thing employees needed to know first.

FRAMED: The single fact stated in the first sentence

The memo opens with the news immediately: 12,000 roles cut, no preamble, no burying it in strategy talk. Pichai's gives the reader the one thing they need before anything else.

ANCHORED: Names the human cost directly, and takes personal ownership

Pichai doesn't hide behind "the organization" or passive voice. He writes plainly that this means losing people he "worked hard to hire and loved working with," and later tells staff he takes full responsibility for the decisions that led there — a direct, first-person acknowledgment rather than a deflection to "market conditions."

Sundar sent the following email to Google employees earlier today.

Googlers,

I have some difficult news to share. We've decided to reduce our workforce by approximately 12,000 roles. We've already sent a separate email to employees in the US who are affected. In other countries, this process will take longer due to local laws and practices.

This will mean saying goodbye to some incredibly talented people we worked hard to hire and have loved working with. I'm deeply sorry for that. The fact that these changes will impact the lives of Googlers weighs heavily on me, and I take full responsibility for the decisions that led us here.

Over the past two years we've seen periods of dramatic growth. To match and fuel that growth, we hired for a different economic reality than the one we face today.

I am confident about the huge opportunity in front of us thanks to the strength of our mission, the value of our products and services, and our early investments in AI. To fully capture it, we'll need to make tough choices. So, we've undertaken a rigorous review across product areas and functions to ensure that our people and roles are aligned with our highest priorities as a company. The roles we're eliminating reflect the outcome of that review. They cut across Alphabet, product areas, functions, levels and regions.

To the Googlers who are leaving us: Thank you for working so hard to help people and businesses everywhere. Your contributions have been invaluable and we are grateful for them.

While this transition won't be easy, we're going to support employees as they look for their next opportunity.

SIMPLIFIED: Mostly plain language, plus one soft spot

Almost the entire memo avoids corporate jargon and leans into a human side by asking staff to take the day to "absorb this difficult news"
Bulleted next steps for those affected are short and clear.

In the US:

- We'll pay employees during the full notification period (minimum 60 days).
- We'll also offer a severance package starting at 16 weeks salary plus two weeks for every additional year at Google, and accelerate at least 16 weeks of GSU vesting.
- We'll pay 2022 bonuses and remaining vacation time.
- We'll be offering 6 months of healthcare, job placement services, and immigration support for those affected.
- Outside the US, we'll support employees in line with local practices.

As an almost 25-year-old company, we're bound to go through difficult economic cycles. These are important moments to sharpen our focus, reengineer our cost base, and direct our talent and capital to our highest priorities.

Being constrained in some areas allows us to bet big on others. Pivoting the company to be AI-first years ago led to groundbreaking advances across our businesses and the whole industry.

Thanks to those early investments, Google's products are better than ever. And we're getting ready to share some entirely new experiences for users, developers and businesses, too. We have a substantial opportunity in front of us with AI across our products and are prepared to approach it boldly and responsibly.

All this work is a continuation of the "healthy disregard for the impossible" that's been core to our culture from the beginning. When I look around Google today, I see that same spirit and energy driving our efforts. That's why I remain optimistic about our ability to deliver on our mission, even on our toughest days. Today is certainly one of them.

I'm sure you have many questions about how we'll move forward. We'll be organizing a town hall on Monday. Check your calendar for details. Until then, please take good care of yourselves as you absorb this difficult news. As part of that, if you are just starting your work day, please feel free to work from home today.

-Sundar

TRAVEL READY: The Test: Quoted near-verbatim everywhere, no correction needed

CNBC ran it under the headline "read the memo," Fortune and Ars Technica quoted the same lines without needing to reinterpret them. That's the clearest signal of all — a message built well enough that the press could just quote it instead of having to explain it.

TECH
Google to lay off 12,000 people — read the memo CEO Sundar Pichai sent to staff

Google delivers a harsh message to loyal employees

Google to Lay Off Around 12,000 Staff to "Set up for the Future"

Basecamp's Homepage

(basecamp.com)

Most B2B software homepages lead with a features list. Basecamp leads with a sentence describing your Tuesday.

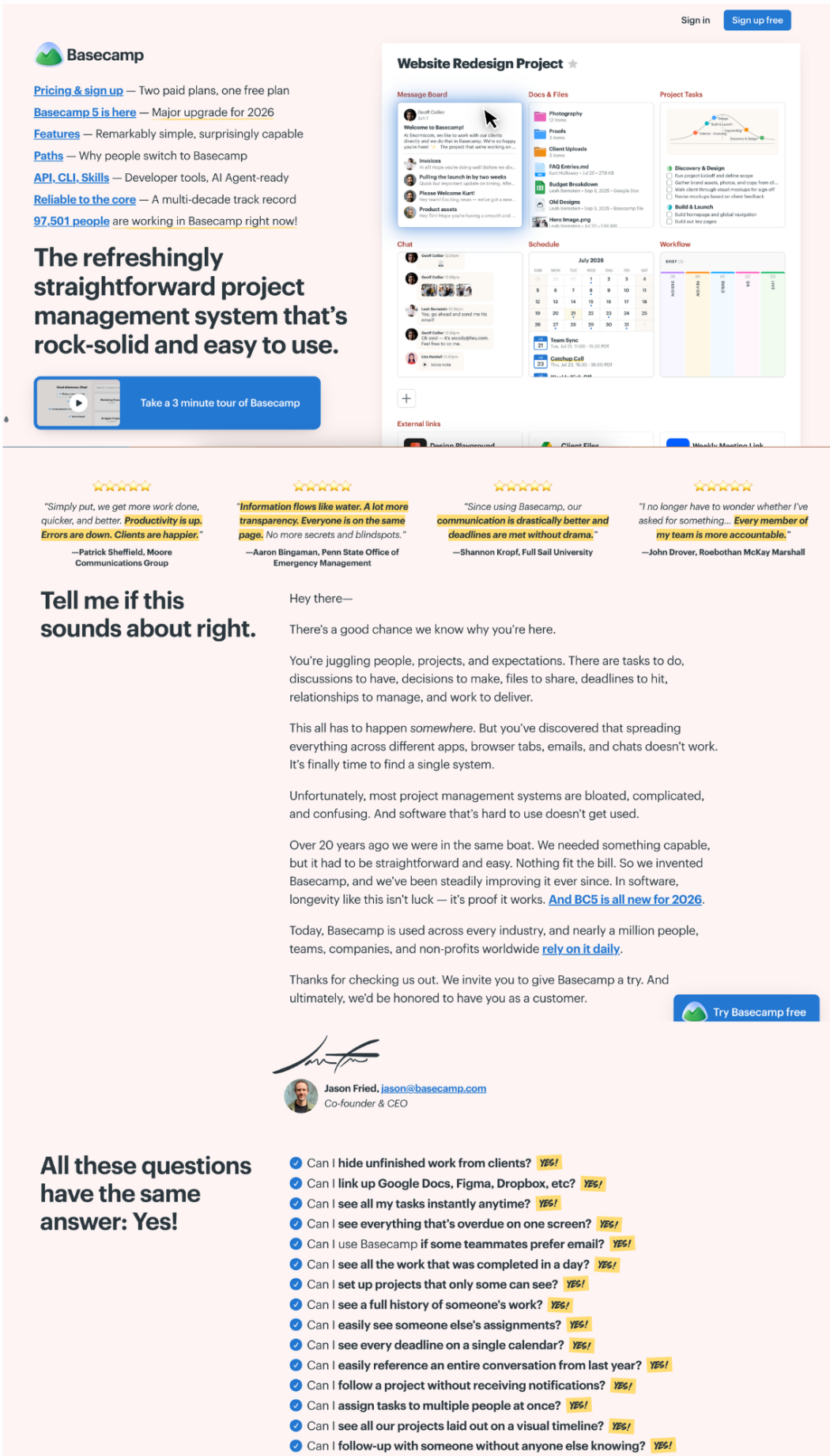
It's a clean example of what FAST looks like when it's working — one clear claim, grounded in the reader's actual day, stripped of jargon, and built in pieces a buyer can lift straight into a message to their own team.

FRAMED: One sentence, stated as the headline

The page opens with a single clear claim: "The refreshingly straightforward project management system that's rock-solid and easy to use." One sentence, one category, one differentiator (simple, not bloated) — everything else on the page supports that one idea rather than competing with it.

ANCHORED: CEO's letter describes the reader's exact situation, not the product

Before the product is even explained, the page addresses the visitor directly: "You're juggling people, projects, and expectations... spreading everything across different apps, browser tabs, emails, and chats doesn't work." That's the reader's Tuesday, described back to them, before Basecamp says a single word about its own features. It even frames the mismatch precisely: "most project management systems are bloated, complicated, and confusing. And software that's hard to use doesn't get used" — naming the exact frustration a buyer already has with competitors, in the buyer's own language.



SIMPLIFIED: Features become questions a customer would actually ask, not a spec list

This is the strongest part of the page. Instead of a long features table ("Kanban boards, client permissions, calendar sync"), Basecamp uses a series of real questions: "Can I hide unfinished work from clients?" "Can I see everything that's overdue on one screen?" "Can Basecamp help me get a client to approve a design?" Every feature is translated into a question a user, a buyer, the CFO would type into a search bar or ask a colleague — and every answer is simply "Yes." That's the jargon-cutting principle taken to its logical extreme: don't describe the capability, restate the reader's own question and confirm it.

TRAVEL READY: The Test: Built in clear sections that a buyer can lift straight into an internal conversation

The page is stacked with short, quotable customer lines built for exactly this kind of retelling: "Productivity is up. Errors are down. Clients are happier." "Information flows like water... no more secrets and blind spots." Concrete numbers reinforce this same travel-readiness: 84 million accounts, 60 million projects, 99.99% uptime — specific facts a skeptical stakeholder (finance, IT) can independently verify.

Now **test** your messaging



F — Frame it

- ☐ Can you say the one thing they must leave knowing in a single sentence?
- ☐ Does that sentence appear in your first paragraph — not your third?
- ☐ If you removed everything except that one sentence, would the message still do its job?
- ☐ Ask two people who read the draft what the main point was — do they give the same answer?

A — Anchor it

- ☐ Does the opening line speak to their world, not yours?
- ☐ Have you cut "we," "our," and "I am pleased to announce" from the first paragraph?
- ☐ Does the message name the reader's actual stake in this — what changes for them, specifically?
- ☐ Does the message clearly communicate what your customer can now do, be, or feel?

S — Simplify it

- ☐ Would someone on their first day at your company understand every term?
- ☐ Have you replaced internal acronyms, project code names, and jargon?
- ☐ Could you read this out loud to someone without stopping to explain a word?
- ☐ Is there a shorter, more common word available for every "big" word you've used?

T — Travel it

- ☐ Could a reader who only skims the first two lines still get the point?
- ☐ Could someone repeat your message back in one or two sentences after hearing it secondhand?
- ☐ If this got forwarded without the original context attached, would it still make sense?

From Your Desk to Their Decision.

When it comes to multi-audience messaging you have to design your message for the journey.
If any of this resonated with you, there are four ways I can help you:

Key Messaging Library

One approved set of core messages — what you do, what you stand for, how you talk about your biggest moments. Every team pulls from it instead of writing their own version.

Executive Comms Support:

I turn high-stakes topics (ESG, impact reports, organisational change, strategy announcements) into messaging that's clear, credible, builds trust, and sounds like them. No drama.

Brand Narrative

Positioning decks and feature lists aren't a story.
I take what your product does, who it's for, and what matters most and figure out what to lead with, what to cut, and how to make something complicated sound obvious.

The Messaging Room: Team Training

Four LIVE training sessions for comms directors, cross-functional teams, and everyone else whose name is on the message.
You bring your work. We find exactly where it stops surviving — and use the F.A.S.T framework to rebuild it so it doesn't happen again.

I support Heads of Communications, CMOs, Internal and external comms teams — helping them protect their reputation and champion their product as they navigate a multi-audience reality.

From your desk to their decision.

Contact me to save your messaging

from
vivien

“provided our organization with great insights and solutions.

If you need support with your branding, internal/external communication, she is the person to connect with.

Overall grateful for this experience and the outcome!”



CHRISTIAN O
MARKETING
COMMUNICATIONS
MANAGER
WISCONSIN, USA

“This really gave me a different perspective on how we can impactfully market to our audience.”

BRANDY L
MANAGER
BUFFALO NY, USA

I've heard great feedback from the team.

Each of us took away some things that we're using in our writing.



We still have a ways to go but the workshop was a solid grounding for the team.

SHARYN N
VICE PRESIDENT,
COMMUNICATIONS &
GOVERNMENT
AFFAIRS
W..R. GRACE
WASHINGTON DC, USA

*“This changed how we think about messaging.
Such simplicity that it opened my way of thinking.
Made this work exciting in a way I never imagined.*



She is great at what she does and it is my goal to tap into her wisdom every chance I get.””

NINA S
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KFAN
KANSAS, USA

FROM-VIVIEN.COM