

## 5.2 The Reason to Act

A good message is organized around a central theme—the main reason why landowners will take the desired action. All the visual and verbal elements of your message should be pulling in the same direction to reinforce the ideas and emotions associated with the main reason to take action.

The Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively (TELE) process uses a tool called the Because Statement to help identify and clarify the essential elements of the message. The format for the statement is as follows:

**[Landowner Audience X]  
will take [Action Y] because  
[Compelling Reason to Act].**

If you used the Stick Person Tool and Pain/Gain Chart (see [Section 4.5: How to Develop an Audience Profile](#)), you already have the raw material to identify the main reason landowners will take action. Take another look at the benefits you identified in the Gain column. Can you identify one or two important themes in those benefits? Can any of those be developed into a compelling reason to take action?

Once you've written a Because Statement, evaluate it from the landowners' perspective. Does the reason to act outweigh the costs of and barriers to taking action? If yes, you have a compelling reason for landowners to take action. If not, try again. Sometimes, the main reason why landowners will take the desired action is easy to find, but often it takes a few tries to get it right. If you still can't find a strong reason for landowners to take the desired action, you may need to change the action itself or reduce key barriers to make the decision dynamic work in favor of taking action.

A clear, compelling reason to take action is fundamental to effective marketing messages. From the landowners' perspective, the motivation to act needs to be powerful enough to overcome costs and barriers, including inertia and other demands on their time and resources.

### BECAUSE THEY WANT TO LEARN

What is the main reason that landowners go to workshops, trainings, and other educational events? If you answered, "Because they want to learn about ... [insert topic]," you're not alone. But you are only half right. Yes, the people who come to the workshop want to learn about the content you'll present, but they usually have deeper reasons for wanting that information. They have an idea about how they'll use that information and how it'll advance their goals. This deeper motive is what you need to highlight in marketing materials directed at motivating more landowners to come to your workshop.

For example, if you're offering a workshop on making woods more resilient to fire, ask yourself why this matters to landowners. Is it because they don't like looking out at dry, dead trees? Do they fear for their lives and homes? Or is it because they are concerned about loss of timber income? Although the educational content of your workshop might be fairly similar in all these situations, your marketing materials should focus on why that information matters in the first place.