

Using storytelling to strengthen your brand

Fundamentals of storytelling

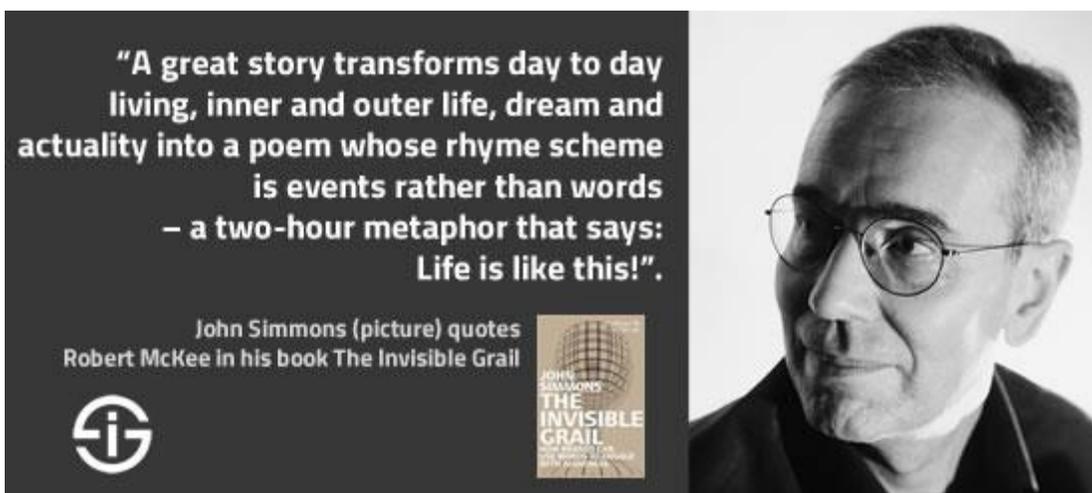
Stories are captivating for a reason. From childhood through adulthood, we are drawn to the lessons we learn, the exciting journeys we embark upon, the knowledge we gain and the opportunity to unleash our imaginations.

Stories celebrate our culture, and stories are a testament to the lives we have led. Stories also make messages pass easier. Remember that great teacher that used to tell stories about what he was teaching and how those stories made you remember better what you learned as compared with that boring teacher that just ‘teached’ and whose name you have probably forgotten? Finally we are social animals with language as the ultimate way of communicating, expressing emotions, perceiving the world around us and ourselves and even simply being. Storytelling is the oldest form of passing knowledge and much of how we look at what we like to call facts is influenced by stories and how we interpret them.

When crafting your brand story, you must illustrate what your voice is, what you stand for and why it matters to the lives of the audience that has its own stories.

Stories are continuously evolving and spontaneous iterations are frequent based on community memes, popular culture and events.

Lee Odden



“A great story transforms day to day living, inner and outer life, dream and actuality into a poem whose rhyme scheme is events rather than words – a two-hour metaphor that says: Life is like this!”.

John Simmons (picture) quotes Robert McKee in his book *The Invisible Grail*



Just like a fairy tale, a captivating brand story must have three acts that set up the situation, chronicle the conflict and offer a resolution. The ultimate goal of marketing is to inspire, whether it motivates change, encourages the buying of a product or draws people into your store, regardless of the timeframe. Your desired outcome in the end drives the direction of the story.

Identifying stories to tell

Stories must be personal. Think about how your brand was born, what inspired you and what your personal mission is. But most of all think about what the needs of the ‘audience’ were when doing so.

Testimonials can be your most powerful weapon in building customer loyalty if they are told in the right way. A testimonial that is just a few sentences is forgettable, but a story that delves into a customer’s personal life and challenges, chronicles the lengths an employee goes to solve the problem and illustrates the positive outcome achieved will stick with readers long after they move on from your marketing materials (ie. Resume, application).

Tapping the most effective medium

Any medium can be used to tell a story, including blogs, film, print, social channels and multimedia. Each medium elicits a different reaction from your audience, so stories must be tailored to fit. The key to success is knowing which story to tell in which medium. Short, snappy messages work best on television and the Internet, while online conversations, conferences and seminars provide a personal connection.

In order to be a good storyteller, you must listen to your audience so you can genuinely understand their desires and concerns, their beliefs and attitudes. You must continue to listen as your story unfolds so you can gauge the reactions of your audience. Let this help determine how your brand evolves. As your objectives and goals shift, you must plan new initiatives that propel the story forward and inspire renewed calls of action.

The rules of storytelling haven’t changed that much, the scale and integrated approach have. But it still starts with listening and isn’t just about sharing.

STORYTELLING IS NOT JUST FOR CAMPFIRES



A GOOD STORY

IS AUTHENTIC, IS CREATIVE, MAKES AN EMOTIONAL AND PERSONAL CONNECTION, INSPIRES ACTION, TAKES AN AUDIENCE ON A JOURNEY WITH THE BRAND

STORYTELLING CAN INCREASE REVENUE, BELIEVE IT OR NOT



GOOD STORIES COMPEL PEOPLE TO CHANGE

THE WAY WE FEEL

Stories demand an emotional investment.

THE WAY WE THINK

Stories pique and hold interest.

THE WAY WE ACT

Stories bring energy to the message.

THE WAY WE BEHAVE

Stories cause us to take action.

GOOD STORIES DRIVE THE AUDIENCE TO ACTION



It is key to ensure that your audience does not feel sold, but instead is led down a path that arrives at the destination or desired action.

MASTERING THE ART OF CRAFTING A STORY

LISTEN

BE PERSONAL

INSPIRE ACTION

CONTINUE TO LISTEN

THINK AHEAD

FINDING THE RIGHT MEDIUM



YOUR BRAND IS YOUR BEST STORY

Find your inner fireside storyteller. No matter what the industry, product or service, there are stories in every company to help get the message out and acted upon in a simple and cost-effective way.

Start by learning the principles of storytelling and you will see your revenue ignite and your engagement spread like wildfire.

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