

The POWER of Storytelling

Building Loyalty and Humanizing Brands

“In order to tell better stories, brands must actually be better stories. Our brave new media world hasn’t just put audiences in charge; it has also given them the tools to instantly peel back the curtain on marketing campaigns and to look at the substance behind them.”

—Jonah Sachs, Author, Executive Director, Speaker, Thought Leader

Why Storytelling Matters

Research shows that **79% of respondents want to hear brands telling stories, particularly 18- to 34-year-olds.** Rather than merely presenting a product or service, brands that tell compelling stories can engage their audiences on a deeper emotional level and create lasting bonds.

1. Trust and Emotional Connection

Storytelling humanizes brands and helps establish a personal connection with audiences. When customers relate to a brand’s story, they are more likely to trust and engage with it. According to Edelman, **81% of consumers say they need to be able to trust the brand in order to buy from them.**

2. Memorability

People are **22 times more likely to remember facts presented within a story** compared to standalone information. A well-told narrative sticks with audiences long after the marketing message fades.

3. Differentiation

In a saturated market, storytelling allows brands to stand out. Sharing a unique narrative creates distinction from competitors and fosters a sense of authenticity. According to research by The Drum, **people are exposed to 5,000+ brand messages every day, aware of about 86, with only 12 making a lasting impression.**

4. Building Loyalty

A good story resonates with the audience’s values, reinforcing brand loyalty. Customers who feel emotionally connected to a brand’s story are more likely to become long-term advocates.



“Marketing is the art of telling a story that moves people to act.”

—Bernadette Jiwa, Author, Marketing Guru

Best Practices

1. Know Your Audience

You need to understand the values, needs, and aspirations of your target market before you can create a story that will resonate with them.

2. Be Authentic

Audiences can sense when a story is disingenuous. Fake or exaggerated stories can lead to negative backlash.

3. Create a Clear Structure

Every great story has a beginning, middle, and end. Introduce a relatable protagonist, present their challenge or problem, and show how they resolve it (ideally through your product or service).

4. Show, Don't Tell

Use visuals, testimonials, and real-life examples to illustrate your story. Show how your product or service has transformed lives or solved real problems.

5. Focus on the Customer, Not the Brand

Your audience should see themselves as the hero of the story. Shift the focus from your brand to how your product or service enhances the lives of your customers.

6. Use Multiple Formats

Leverage various platforms—social media, blogs, video, podcasts, or email—to tell your story. Consistency across these formats ensures your message reaches a wider audience in engaging ways.

Case Studies

While many banks have traditionally been seen as serious, transactional institutions, they have increasingly turned to storytelling to humanize their brands and connect emotionally with customers. While the examples below are all global banks, the case studies are relevant to any size bank.

1. HSBC's "Together We Thrive" Campaign

The "Together We Thrive" campaign tells stories of individuals and communities who have overcome obstacles or achieved goals with the bank's support. By highlighting personal narratives of growth and success, HSBC positions itself as a bank that helps customers thrive, rather than just providing financial services.

2. JPMorganChase's "Stories of Us" Series

Chase's campaign "Stories of Us" featured real customers discussing life milestones like buying their first home or starting a business and the emotional highs and lows of these experiences.

3. Bank of America's "What Would You Like the Power to Do?" Campaign

This campaign invited customers to imagine what they could achieve with the power of financial independence. It featured real people sharing their dreams, from starting a business to buying a home, all while positioning Bank of America as the enabler of those dreams.

4. U.S. Bank's "Real Good" Campaign

The "Real Good" campaign focused on impact within communities, particularly through helping small businesses thrive. Their Real Good podcast, videos and stories highlight the passion, commitment, and opportunities that their customers bring to the people and communities they serve.

5. Barclays' "Digital Eagles" Program

Barclays created a program called "Digital Eagles" to help older customers become more comfortable with technology. The bank shared stories of how these efforts helped people connect with loved ones or manage their finances online. This initiative not only highlighted Barclays' commitment to inclusion but also told the story of how they empowered individuals through digital literacy.

Key Takeaways

- **Emotional Resonance:** Storytelling allows banks to connect with customers on a human level, turning financial transactions into meaningful narratives.
- **Authenticity:** Real stories of customers or community initiatives add credibility and relatability to the bank's messaging.
- **Empowerment:** By positioning themselves as enablers of personal and financial success, banks can inspire trust and loyalty.

Conclusion Storytelling in marketing isn't a trend—it's a necessity. Brands that master the art in marketing can forge emotional connections, differentiate themselves, and build customer loyalty. And don't forget your employees. They can be your ultimate brand ambassadors and participate in the storytelling process as well.