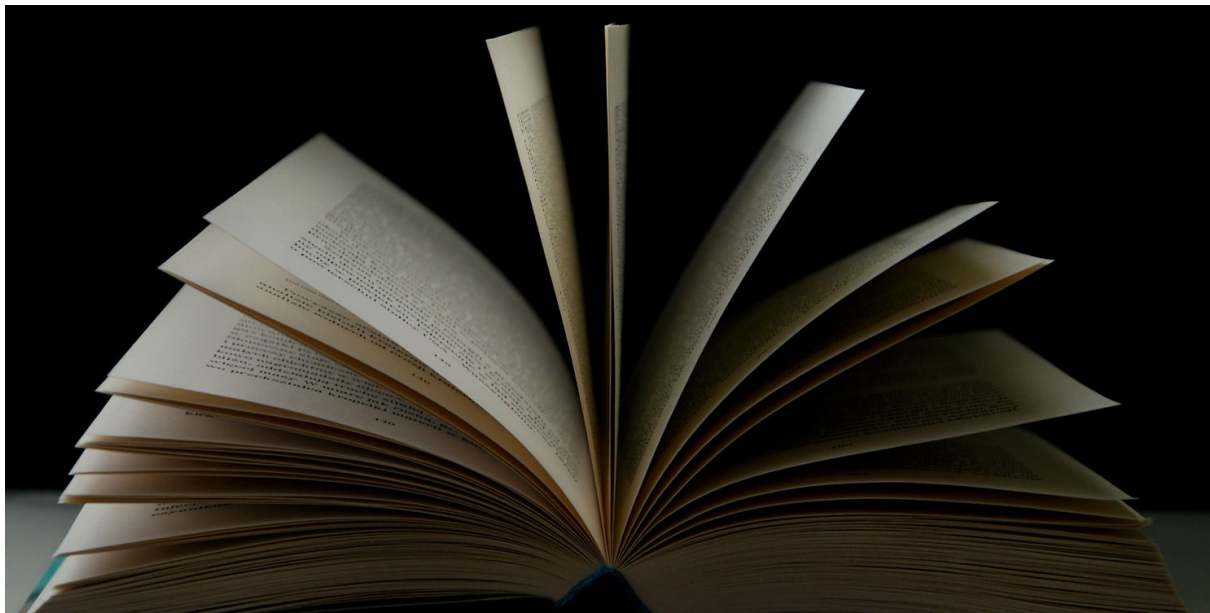




Insite Insights

Using storytelling to create stand out



Marketing storytelling helps brands stand out

Does your marketing team talk at your audience or enter into a discussion with them?

Brands often have an approach of “telling it as it is” or “doing what it says on the tin” where communications list out product features or benefits, even outcomes but they often boil down to the same sort of claims that everyone else makes. Save time, reduce cost, grow sales or improve customer experience.

All a bit “meh” really.

Brands need to stand out from the crowd

To get stand out, we can start to see that the tell it as it is approach just won't cut it. First, it's a bit lazy. The job of marketing is not to cut and paste internal documents, add a logo at the top and publish. So while teams might be producing lots of collateral (how dare you say we're lazy!), how much of it will stand out, and how much is me too. You see, beige or grey marketing quickly drops from memory. Marketing need to look for differentiation. Add the sizzle.

Second – and this is a more subtle (but important) difference, telling it as it is approach is talking **at** your audience, not **with** them. It's Push versus Pull communication.

That's why a strategy of Storytelling will drive brand standout and improve Marketing Rol

Storytelling isn't just for children, and it's not just for consumer brands either – as adults we all need to relate to the situation being described.

Think about it. If someone talks at you, going on and on about themselves, it's a bore. Pretty quickly you stifle a yawn and switch off, thoughts wandering elsewhere.

Two way marketing conversations are much more engaging – they involve listening as well as talking. When conversations are two way, a few things happen. You listen, so you find out more. You build understanding – and a relationship. Trust follows. You talk about things that matter to your audience. They begin to feel valued.

Some principles for storytell strategy

As a start point, avoid communications that “tell, tell, sell” your solution. There is a time and place for this, but it's much further down the funnel. Instead, invest time in trying to understand your audience. Listen. Gather desktop research, ask executive leaders and business development what they are hearing, speak to a few friendly contacts. Build a picture.

The aim here is to understand their pain points, barriers and opportunities – then try to frame how your solution is relevant or helpful.

Gathering intel and insight helps marketing to be client led, but it still doesn't avoid falling into the trap fall of “tell it as it is” .

This is where marketing teams and creative agencies earn their stripes – adding some creativity. A hook. Storytelling metaphor.

Take a creative leap

Here's How - Bounce facts into a new place

Use a trampoline analogy - bounce your insights and proposition facts into a new place. Take a creative leap. Start with rational facts and data about your proposition features, then bounce your thinking across into an intuitive and emotive understanding about what this is telling you – from there you can create storytell around a persona or situation your audience will relate to.



Bringing it to life - some examples

Providing risk advice to financial services clients is a serious and pretty dry subject, but that didn't stop law firm BCLP from storytelling. They created a series of case studies and videos called Cautionary Tales. Based on true events, the tales centre round senior leaders at the Banque de Chance in London and explain risk situations, potential outcomes – and why you need their advice. Commercially, the idea outperformed all their previous marketing campaigns – and blew all expectations on new leads out the water. You can check out an example [here](#).

Another serious B2B topic is integrating and managing multi source technologies and data. HP subsidiary EDS bounced the technical jargon and facts about what they do into a new place to describe themselves as cat herders. They used humour to create a story about cat herders in this [video](#) proving you can be memorable and entertaining in B2B.

While Cat Herders was an expensive production, you can see how the core idea could work in less expensive formats. Storytelling can be at every level of marketing. A brand idea, a campaign idea or in the everyday – writing a case study or sales presentation. Sometimes it can involve an agency, but the basic approach can be adopted by inhouse teams. It's also worth noting that storytelling doesn't have to be a "big idea" either. Storytelling can be a subtle difference in the way we write emails or use cases - and it's good way to remove jargon.

The advantages of Storytelling

Your brand stands out from the crowd

Your marketing is more memorable

Authenticity – you relate to your audience

Shines a light on your audience - not you

Demonstrate an understanding of their world
Story is centred around their pain points or opportunities
You build emotive connection
Idea enables creative visualisation – no more stock pics of people round a whiteboard
Commercial success - RoI outperforms

Story telling helps you stand out and improves performance. All you have to do is take a creative leap.

Get in touch if you need expert help with a storytelling strategy or content creation

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