



Better Story Telling

Really good story telling is experience telling

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“How do we tell our story?” This question is asked almost every time a new campaign or new marketing initiative is being discussed between a client and its agency partners. It is an important question. But maybe not the best question to arrive at the most engaging, and brand impacting story. Is the story as a story the best way to connect with a consumer vis-à-vis your brand and product? We believe the question instead should be something along the lines of, “how can we have the customer experience what we are about?”

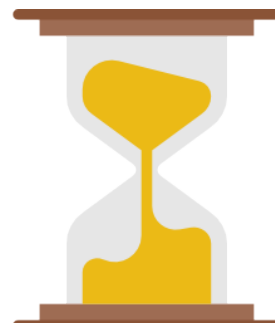
THE PROBLEMS WITH “STORY”



Is It Really A Story That You Need To Tell?

We ask you to challenge the use of the word “story”. A story is a narrative, an account of things, a myth, etc. It has characters, events, and so on.

Except for certain opportunities does your story have relevance to the consumer’s need or want? Usually a customer-brand interaction is some type of transaction/action; sharing, eating, refueling, buying, running, an ‘ing’ of some type. Company (the “our story” bit) stories are sometimes compelling and powerful stuff to be used when appropriate. When not appropriate they can seem inward facing self-indulgence. Irrelevant.



Do People Have Time For Your Story?

The idea of “telling” (or “showing” by implication in much of our media) makes a huge assumption. Time. Do overtaxed consumers really have time to listen or watch your story? No. A story needs some element of space and time to be shared. That’s asking an awful lot of the time and patience challenge consumer. The idea of a “story arc” is often used in describing story-telling advertising. Consumers getting on with their lives do not have



the time for your arc. Distracting.

BRAND

A Story Can Put Your Brand And Product Somewhat Out Of Focus?

Often a story kind of off-shores and packages things in places that require extra engagement, i.e. extraneous to the core of what you are offering someone. Stories are mostly in video, print, audio, events, etc. This means you must buy out-reach media or incite people to engage with your own in-reach media. In a sense it is an appendage, an associative thing, not integral. Something created. Diffusing.

THE COMMON SENSE OF EXPERIENCE



Experience Creates Immediate Meaning For Your Marketing and Consumer

“How can we have the customer experience what we are about?” By “what we are about” we mean:

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what we are doing for you right now, how we do it for you and being of intrinsic value to you. This a better business building question?



Why Experiences Works!

- It is more about the consumer not so much about you.
- It is present and meaningful to the needed/wanted action at hand.
- It requires no consumer extra time, no show on the side, and so on. It is a compound thing, not separate.
- It is true as it is in the experience. No connections to be made, no disbelief to be overcome, and completely relevant as it is grounded in what the customer come to you for. It is genuine not produced.

And it's not a job for just marketing, it's your entire company's responsibility to be cohesive.

It Just Feels Right

A great example (as a customer as well as busi-



ness success) is Southwest Airlines, a former client. They've rarely, if ever, officially told us their story, yet we feel we know them very well and exactly what they do and how they do it. How? By almost every experience we have had with them. Booking, staff, rewards, planes, smiles, uniforms, exceptional actions; at every experience Southwest has delivered experiences which did so much more to tell their story while not actually "telling" it.



Long Live The Well Experienced Story

Telling good and true stories when the opportunity and content is right is highly engaging marketing. They are entertaining yet also matter. However, if companies really want consumers to know them, and value them in their lives, there is something better than "telling your story". Consider using some form of the universal idea of "knowing a

man through his work", in other words let your consumers' and customers' experience with you be the best way for them to know you. Personal experience is the best story telling of all.

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