



The B2B Marketer's Ultimate Guide to Storytelling

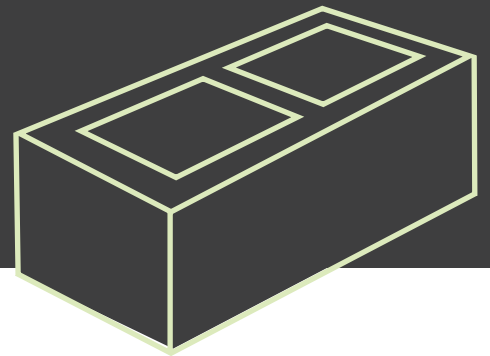
*How To Connect with Audiences
in a Busy, Noisy, Visual World*

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The Prologue

Every story needs a set-up



Are you sitting comfortably?

Then I'll begin.

Why is storytelling a hot topic for B2B marketers at the moment?

The short answer is simple. Everyone loves a good story. We're conditioned to respond to stories from the cradle onwards. And your business audience is undoubtedly no exception.

Becoming a better marketing storyteller is harder than it might seem at first. Should B2B marketers try to tell better stories? What makes a good B2B story?

Good stories are understandable, memorable and repeatable; bad ones are none of those things. To paraphrase Chip Heath and Dan Heath in their excellent book "Made To Stick", we can all remember urban myths such as the Kidney Heist but struggle terribly to remember, let alone retell, any of the salient points from, say, that presentation you sat through yesterday or that report you read last Thursday.

In his book "Tell to Win", Peter Guber argues that humans simply aren't moved to action by "data dumps" and wordy PowerPoint slides, rather by emotion, hence we need to tell stories. And Jonathan Gottschall in his book "The Storytelling Animal" further argues that science backs up the long-held belief that story is the most powerful means of communicating a message:

"Until recently we've only been able to speculate about story's persuasive effects. But over the last several decades psychology has begun a serious study of how story affects the human mind. Results repeatedly show that our attitudes, fears, hopes, and values are strongly influenced by story. In fact, fiction seems to be more effective at changing beliefs than writing that is specifically designed to persuade through argument and evidence." (Jonathan Gottschall for FastCo. Create)

Why do stories work? Because according to the research it appears that we drop our intellectual

defenses and engage with stories in a different way than with other types of content such as product specification sheets. Stories, to use Guber's central metaphor, are Trojan Horses:

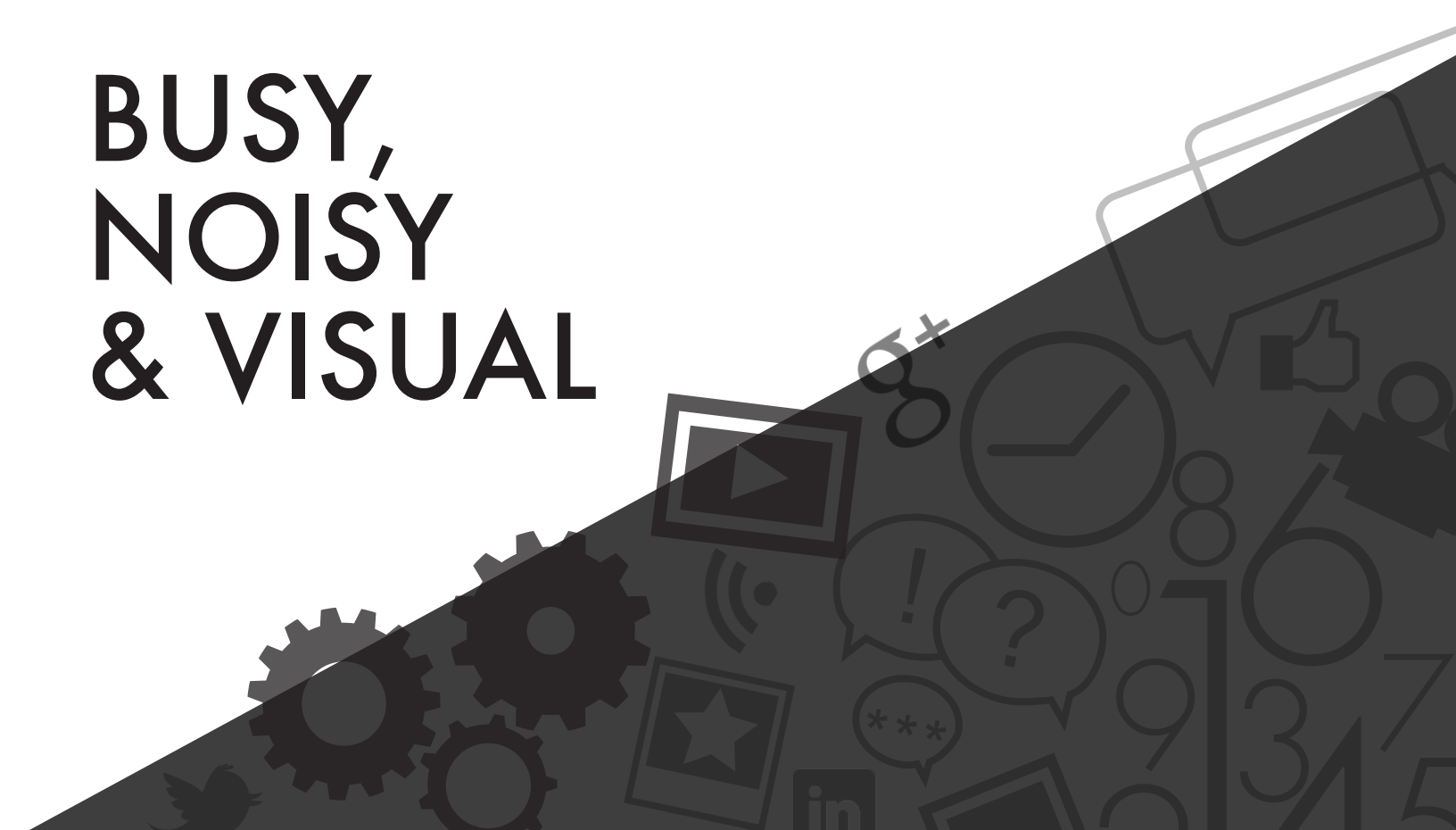
"The audience accepts the story because, for a human, a good story always seems like a gift. But the story is actually just a delivery system for the teller's agenda. A story is a trick for sneaking a message into the fortified citadel of the human mind." (Jonathan Gottschall for FastCo. Create)

Why should B2B marketers care about storytelling? Because we're learning that they are the ultimate marketing message delivery system – or as Gottschall puts it, "storytelling is a uniquely powerful form of persuasive jujitsu". Who doesn't want a black belt in persuasion? B2B marketers want to tell stories because we're looking to deliver our messages – "We're the best!", "We know what we're talking about!", "Buy our product or service!" and the myriad of far more subtle variants – in a manner that will hit home and ultimately achieve the objective.

Booo!

Enter "The Villains" ...

BUSY, NOISY & VISUAL



But unfortunately in the B2B world there's rarely a spot on anyone's calendar marked "Storytelling Time" (if only!).

Reaching your audience is going to be hard.



As a B2B Marketer trying to tell your story to your audience you need to contend with 3 key factors:

Your Audience Is Busy

You know this. You're busy so it would make sense that they are as well. But I'm not sure anyone realizes just how busy they are.

A recent study from LexisNexis on workplace productivity amongst white collar professionals paints a bleak picture:

- They spend over half of their day (51%) just receiving and managing information, rather than actually using information to do their job (in the US, this is a 10% increase since 2008).
- 62% admit that the quality of their work suffers because they can't sort the information they need quickly enough.
- 51% believe they are almost at "breaking point", at which they will be unable to handle any more information.

Ouch. The B2B audience is really busy, something to bear in mind next time you want them to read a 20-odd page White Paper or eBook (like this one. Sorry...).

Your Space Is Noisy

There are an awful lot of companies and brands competing for your audience's attention. The Futures Company, the consumer insights company and publisher of the Yankelovich MONITOR, estimates that "we've gone from being exposed to about 500 ads per day in the 1970s to as many as 5,000 a day today". And that was in early 2009. Some people are now estimating that with today's technology advances this figure may be as high as 30,000 messages per day. Regardless of the number though, it's clear that as Jay Walker Smith, Executive Chairman of The Futures Company, puts it in a CBS article on "Cutting Through Advertising Clutter": "Everywhere we turn we're saturated with advertising messages trying to get our attention."

So you need to stand out. Quick, produce more content! But then your competitors do too! So you need to produce even more content! So your competitors do too! Aaaaaahhhhh. Welcome to your B2B Marketing Vicious Cycle.

The World Is (Increasingly) Visual

3

(Okay, maybe 'visual' isn't a villain like 'busy' and 'noisy' – visual can in fact be enormously useful when you're trying to tell a story. But it certainly needs to be considered when you're thinking storytelling in 2013. Consider this characterization dramatic license!)

"The world is (increasingly) visual". That's a bit of a dumb statement: the world has always been visual. But the online world hasn't been, it's been text-based. That's changing quickly - and some.

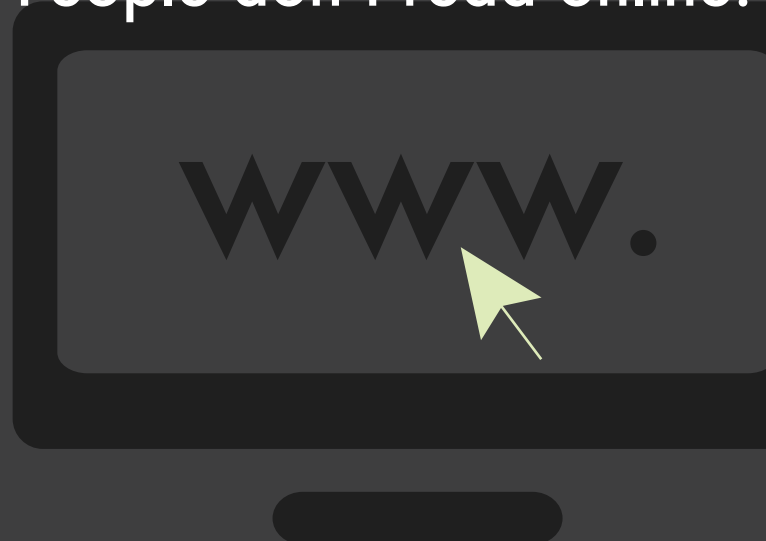
Pinterest is the fastest company to 10m monthly unique users ever. Twitter has launched Cards to introduce a visual element to 140 character communication and enabled services such as Vine. YouTube is reporting stellar growth - 1 billion monthly active users. Infographics - the good and the (many more) bad - are all the rage and the humble gif is more popular than ever (who knew?).

A picture is indeed worth a thousand words it would appear. And this makes sense as the brain "makes meaning by seeing, by an act of visual interrogation" according to leading information designer Tom Wujec at a TED Talk in 2009 ("3 ways the brain creates meaning"). He states the lessons for us are threefold:

- 1) Use images to clarify ideas.
- 2) Interact with images to create engagement.
- 3) Augment memory with persistent & evolving views.

Oh yeah....

People don't read online.



How do people read online? According to seminal research from the Nielsen Norman Group, they don't and never have (at least not since 1997).

Or perhaps more accurately, they scan - until they find the things that they want to read (assuming that they do indeed find something they want to read). The Nielsen Norman Group has concluded that, "users will read about 20% of the text on the average page".

That means they're not reading 80% of what you write. That's 80% of your website, 80% of your blog posts, 80% of your whitepapers and eBooks. Although you may never know this because this particular section is part of the 80% of this eBook that you didn't read...

How do people
read online?
They Don't.

Even the Brothers Grimm would have their work cut out for them as B2B Marketers.

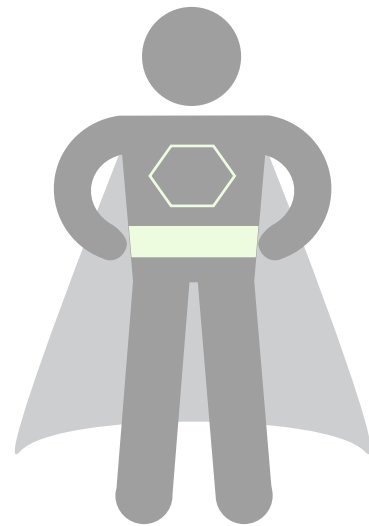
On the face of it that's a pretty bleak backdrop for a B2B marketer trying to tell their story today. Your audience is busy, your space is noisy, the world is increasingly visual and, to boot, people don't read.

And chances are you're trying to market a product or service that on the face of it doesn't appear to lend itself to storytelling particularly well. That could, dare we say it, be considered "unsexy" and maybe even "boring".

But as the adage goes, there's no such thing as a bad story, only a bad storyteller. And how does a bad storyteller become a good storyteller? This eBook is certainly a good place to start. In the course of our extensive research on B2B storytelling, we've identified 8 key things that B2B marketers need to consider when telling stories to their audience. We've also identified B2B companies that are doing each of these points well and seeded these examples throughout for inspiration.

But enough introduction! We've got our villains of this piece – Busy, Noisy and Visual – what about our heroes?

Here they come, entering stage right...



The Plot

In which our heroes save the day

So what are the key things that B2B marketers need to consider when it comes to storytelling?

In the following sections we will cover our 8 key things that B2B marketers need to consider when telling stories to their audience:

1. Understand your audience
2. Give them catchy headlines AND depth
3. Text + visuals = good - but multimedia = better
4. Avoid the slow reveal
5. Be concrete
6. Aim for an emotional response - or at the very least a laugh
7. Drive action
8. Measure your story's impact



Understand your audience

**There's a reason this is No. 1 on our list.
It's the Very Important Point here.**

Think about:

- To whom are you telling your story?
- Is there a tone, voice or language that they expect or like to hear?
- Are there particular content formats that work with them?
- Where do you expect them to be when they engage with your story - e.g. at their desks, out and about, post work, at the weekend, etc.?
- What are their concerns and pain points?

If you can't answer these questions before you start putting your story together, you're going to need to. Your Customer or Buyer Personas should be some help here. And there's presumably nothing to stop you from asking your customers what type of stories they like.

Who does this well?

JOHN DEERE

- Because John Deere's 2012 product line was designed by actual customers, the product launch featured their customers as much as it did their equipment. From live events, webcasts, websites, videos, print ads, banner ads, even marquees on the Vegas strip — these customers were always center stage. Their "You're On" campaign states: "This is about giving you a greater voice. Within our company... and throughout our industry".
- In the words of Gyro, John Deere's marketing consultancy: "Our strategy for the entire launch was focused one simple principle: Lead with the customer. We never cast a spotlight on a machine by itself. The equipment took a backseat to the customers who designed it and the relationship the company enjoys with those customers."
- Their marketing is ostensibly blue collar workers talking to blue collar workers in their own words – and enormously powerful as a result.



RUBY

- Ruby, the virtual receptionist service provider, understands that their customers are buying not a service per se but people who will be the first point of contact for their companies. As a result, they need to project "friendliness, charm, can-do attitude, and professionalism" in everything they do from your first engagement with them as a possible Ruby customer.
- Their entire marketing and web presence (e.g. their blog – "The Watercooler") is focused on their culture and their people, so that you – the audience – gain the peace of mind that you and your customers are in excellent hands.



The Watercooler. *Keeping it personal in a virtual world.*



Give them catchy headlines AND depth

2

We've established your audience is busy and your space is noisy.

So how do you grab people's attention?

You write awesome headlines - keep them short and relevant to direct their attention where it should be. Let them know what they're getting with your content.

But this is B2B - your audience needs depth, not just catchy headlines. Better still, they need layers of depth so they can engage at the level they need to. For some, the headline may be enough - remember that they scan in the first instance. For others, they're going to need to go a level below. They may read the executive summary, a paragraph or two, a section, or the whole report.

There are a lot of people advising B2B marketers to act like newsrooms as, to paraphrase, "now

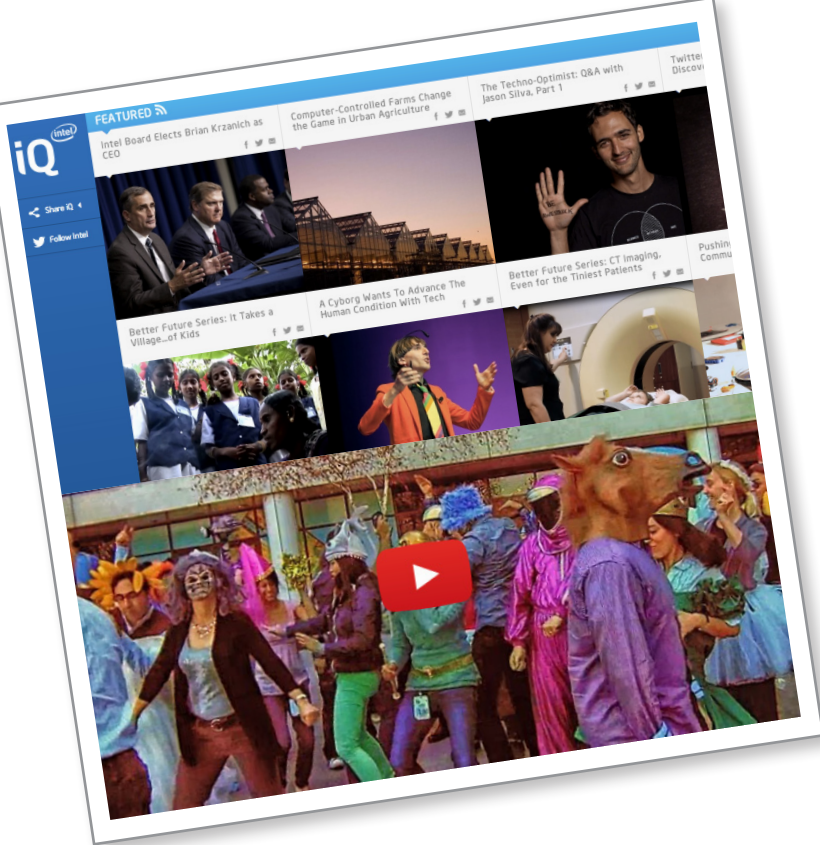
everyone is a content machine and publisher". This advice is routinely given to mean that B2B should publish more and more content. But we think it means something else, namely that you should deliver your stories and content like a newsroom. How does a newsroom deliver the news? See our BBC example. They do it brilliantly, combining succinct headlines with depth, which explains why they've been able to translate their offline success and reputation online as well.

Who does this well?

THE BBC

- No one writes engaging headlines as consistently well as the BBC. Typically they are 5 or 6 words that tell you succinctly what the story is about.
- They make it easy to scan the news stories and choose where you want to engage. And once you're in a story, they tell you the most important information upfront in the first paragraph – the "executive summary" in B2B parlance. Then, if you want to read more, you can read the rest of the story. Want to go deeper still? Then you'll be interested in the "More on this story" at the bottom of the article containing links to further relevant information.





iQ INTEL

- It's no surprise that iQ Intel looks more like the BBC news app than a standard corporate website. They're delivering content like a newsroom.
- Like the BBC, iQ Intel curates content and gives each piece a great headline, a good summary and related content recommendations.
- The objectives for iQ Intel when it launched in beta in May 2012 were threefold: 1) create a cross device storytelling experience; 2) take the pulse of the web and 3) build a media property to integrate paid, owned and earned media. We'd say they've achieved all 3.

Text + visuals = good - but multimedia = better

3

Using visuals to complement your narrative is not a new technique.

But we think there's more to it than this. A recent report from PR Newswire on "Press Releases as Lead Generators" analyzed the success of 10,000 press releases and their results are fascinating:

- Adding a photo to a press release resulted in a 14% response increase (over text-only releases)
- Adding a video, 20% response increase
- Adding both photo and video, 48% response increase
- Adding photo, video plus additional documents such as PDF, Word or PowerPoint files, a 77% response increase

The takeaway for B2B storytellers? Multimedia gets good engagement. But then you probably already know this. That's why you're telling your story across

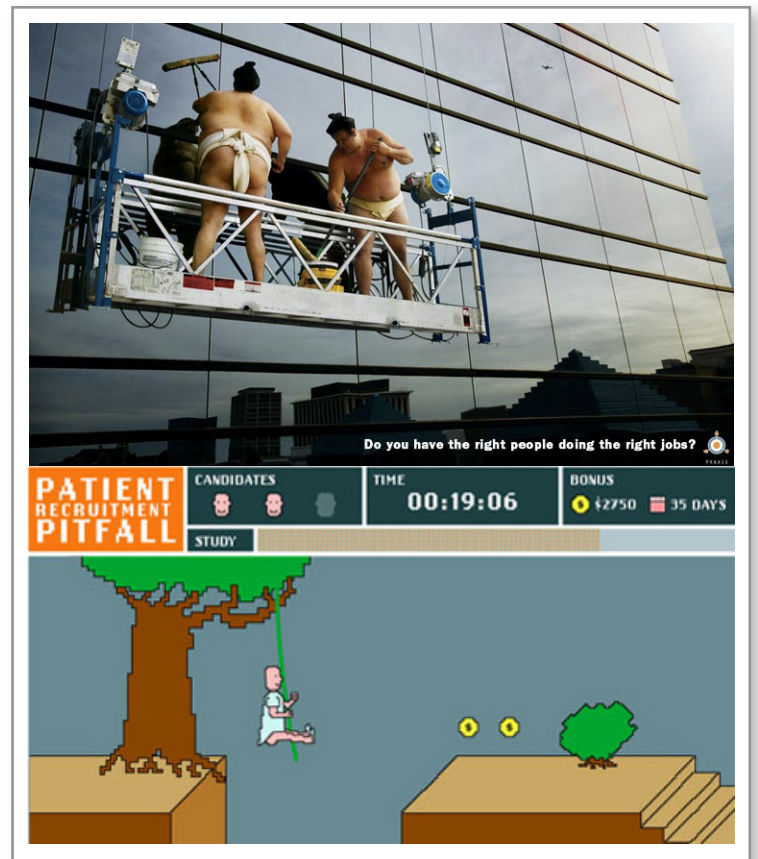
a range of different content types - e.g. video for the customer case study, interactive chart to show performance vs. competitors, PDF for the product spec, etc.

The more interesting takeaway is that combining them and delivering them in a single package gets great results and better engagement. Are you combining these currently? How? You need to find a way to package these different content types together into a coherent story, just like the most successful press releases in the PR Newswire study. And then you need to share them so you're not entirely reliant on people coming to wherever it is you've assembled this story (e.g. your blog).

Who does this well?

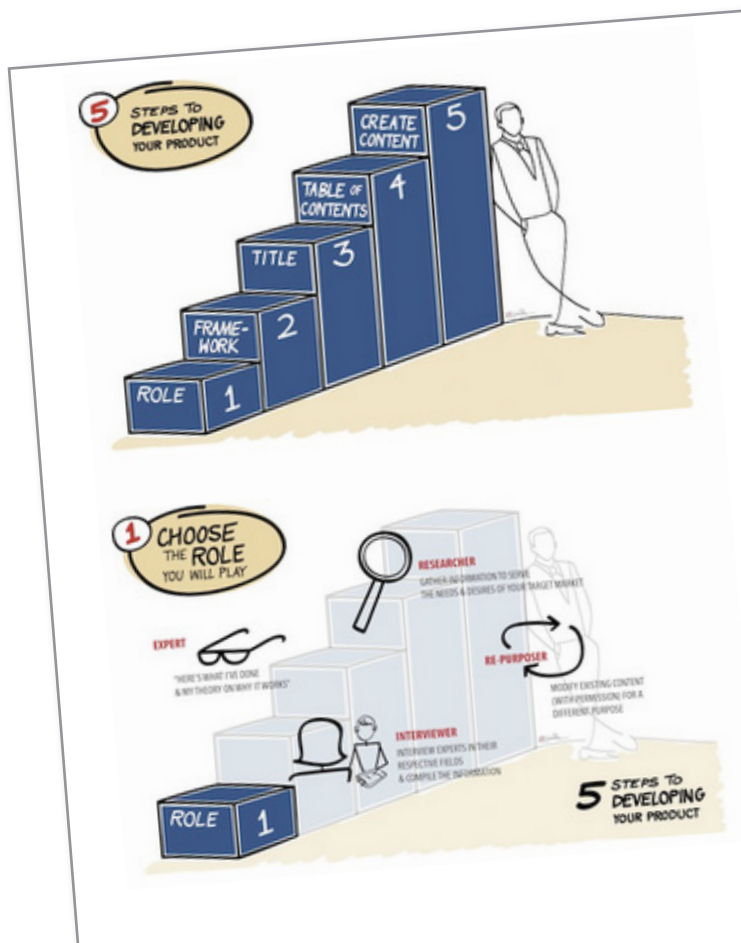
PRAXIS

- Praxis – a small patient recruitment organization specializing in finding patients for medical research studies – wanted to grow its business in the pharmaceutical sector. Working with their agency, Crowley Webb, they identified 5,000 primary sales targets – people that were decision makers regarding the outsourcing of patient studies.
- Rather than writing a whitepaper or the like stressing the benefits of Praxis relative to their competitors, they went a different route. They spoke directly to prospects with oversized direct mail posters, album covers, video games, movies and cookies – and six foot ficus trees (illustrating that with Praxis a pharma company’s study subjects could grow on trees...).
- Praxis told a coherent story consistently, visually and engagingly using a whole host of different content types. And the campaign worked – they grew their business significantly and are now working with some of the world’s leading pharma brands.



BOOK YOURSELF SOLID

- Copyblogger is well known in B2B marketing circles as a go-to-resource for excellent marketing tips and guidance. One of their authors, Michael Port, a bestselling author of 4 books, explained in a recent post why he had to make a visual edition of his book “Book Yourself Solid” – because people don’t read.
- As Port explains: “For example, in the original, it took me 20 pages to teach you how to create an information product. In Book Yourself Solid ILLUSTRATED, I do it with 5 images. Of course, I still offer some supporting text, but the combination of those two learning tools — text and visuals — helps you retain what you’ve learned so you actually use it.”



If you're anything like us (and your audience certainly is), it's the exception rather than the rule that we make it the whole way through most online presentations or videos.

This is because there's inherently a "slow reveal" aspect to online presentations and videos as people build their case to reach their conclusions. As a result, we can't easily scan it to get to the points we find interesting and useful and we lose interest, as our attention span isn't that great (and is in fact decreasing).

Steve Ballmer, Microsoft's CEO and, one would assume, a PowerPoint champion, commented on the slow reveal problem in an interview with the New York Times in 2010. Ballmer criticized the "long and winding road" of slide decks and presentations. He commented that he doesn't like to be on the receiving end of them, nor does he think this approach is "productive" or "efficient".

Sure, there are good, sometimes excellent slide decks out there - the most popular presentations on SlideShare are routinely interesting. And there's always a time and a place for a good slide deck.

But there's an awful lot of bad decks out there too - decks that don't hold the attention, decks that are basically clicked through without stopping (if indeed they are lucky enough to get someone to the end).

If anyone is to blame for "slow reveal" ennui it's the author rather than the medium per se. Strategy consultancies such as McKinsey and Bain, for example, typically structure presentations according to Barbara Minto's Pyramid Principle, whereby one presents one's conclusions first to avoid the "slow reveal" and each headline point is supported by subsequent points in a pyramid structure. Maybe we should take a leaf out of their book and tell our stories backwards? Or think of alternative ways and formats in which to tell our story that avoid the slow reveal.

Who does this well?

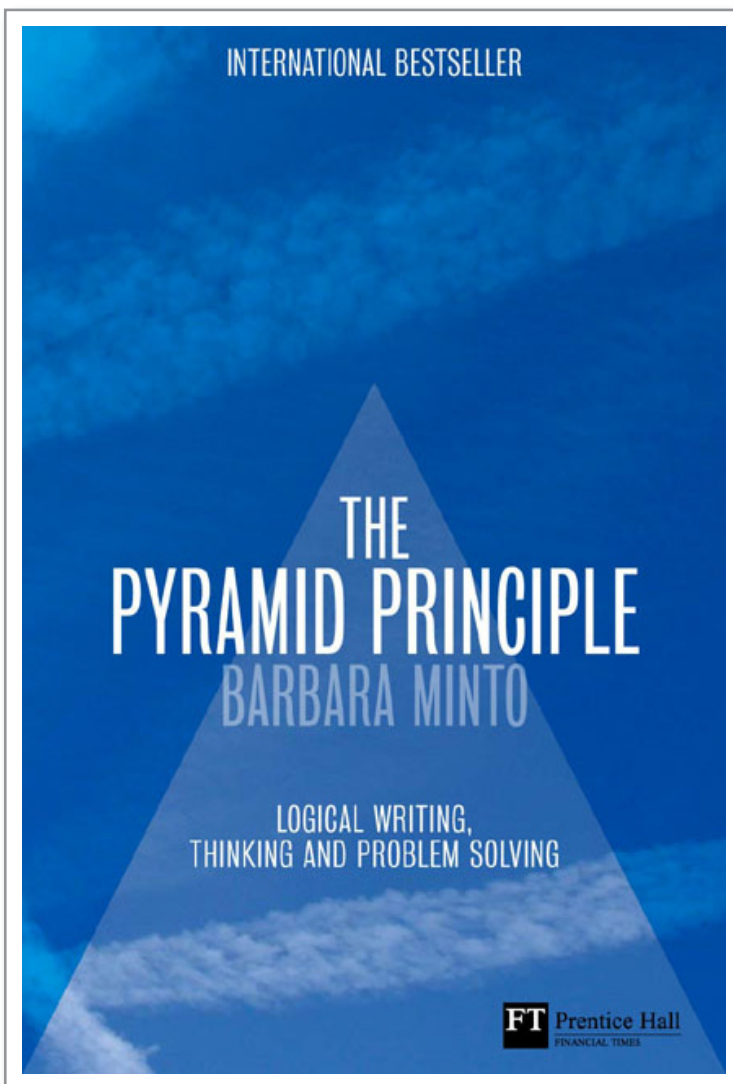
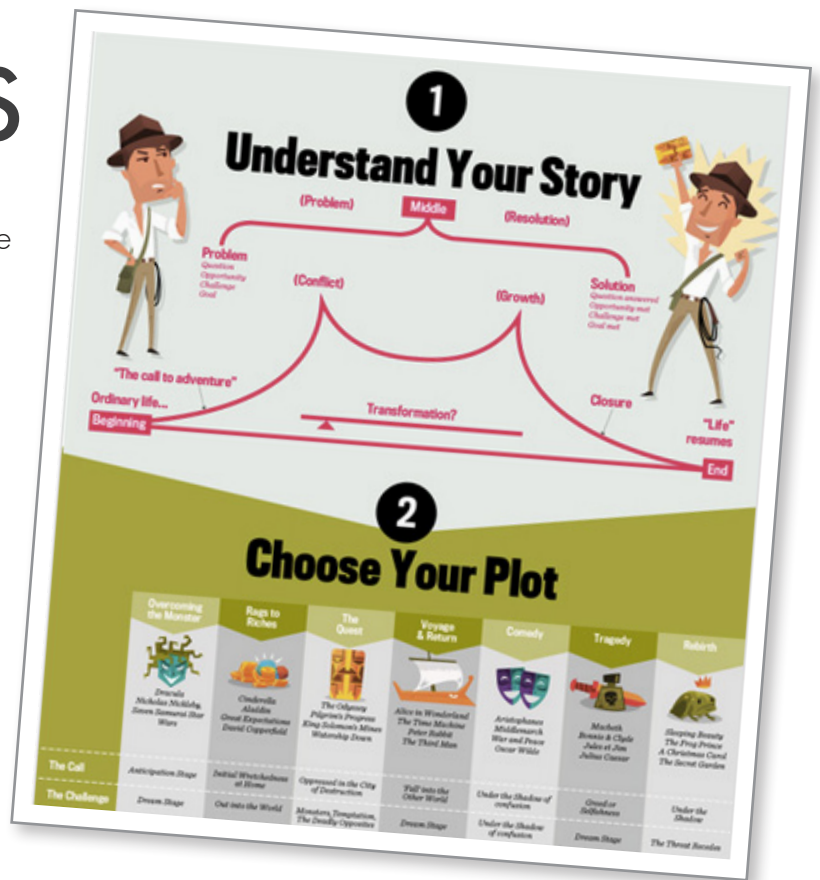


“ I decided that's not what I want to do anymore. I don't think it's productive. I don't think it's efficient. I get impatient. So most meetings nowadays, you send me the materials and I read them in advance. And I can come in and say: "I've got the following four questions. Please don't present the deck." ”

-Steve Ballmer, Microsoft CEO

INFOGRAPHICS

- Infographics have been all the rage for a couple of years now. Why? Well, making information visual is certainly a key part of their appeal. But infographics also allow a reader to skim the graphic and decide where they want to engage. There is no slow reveal inherent to an infographic.



BARBARA MINTO PYRAMID PRINCIPLE

(and Strategy Consultancies the world over)

- “The Minto Pyramid Principle says that your thinking will be easy for a reader to grasp if you present the ideas organized as a pyramid under a single point.”
- The single point is the A – the Answer – in a SCQA framework – where S = Situation, C = Complication and Q = Question.
- Because your presentation leads with the Answer, there’s no slow reveal, only supporting pieces of information that validate your Answer.

People struggle with the abstract.

And B2B business topics can certainly be abstract, particularly B2B technology products and services.

Big Data, for example, THE buzzword of 2012 – what does that actually mean to anyone who isn't a data scientist? Probably very little, maybe something to do with Twitter's "Firehose"...?!

The only way to enable people to relate to the abstract is to make things concrete for them. For example, to make the abstract Big Data concrete you could explain the tangible impact that Big Data could have on them or their business such as "it will increase your profits by 20% in 18 months" or, perhaps better still, "it will allow you to deliver your

product to your customers 48 hrs faster than now (and everyone can get Friday afternoons off during the summer)".

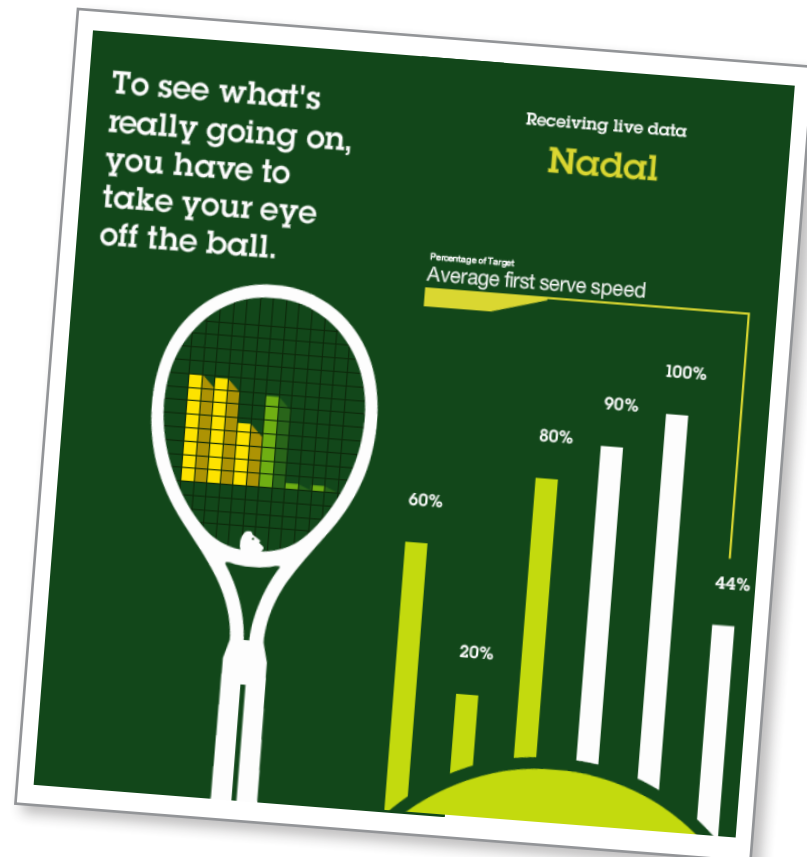
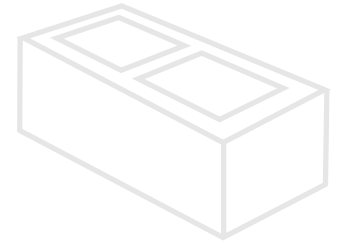
Making the abstract concrete is about focusing on the results and impacts of the abstract. What does this mean to someone in his or her normal, everyday life? There doesn't need to be a highfalutin concept or Three Letter Acronym (TLA) in sight.

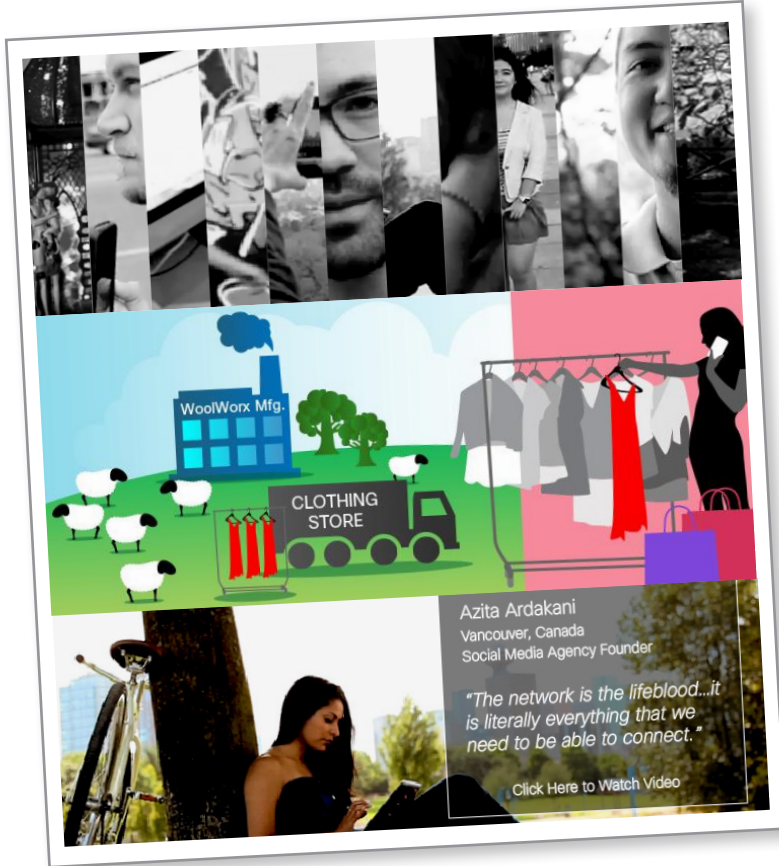
Who does this well?

IBM

(with OgilvyOne)

- How do you make predictive analysis concrete? In 2011 IBM applied it to tennis matches at Wimbledon in real-time to show people the success of IBM's predictive analysis engine. That's really putting your money where your mouth is.
- As part of the campaign, the audience was asked a question: if IBM can predict the outcome of a tennis match, what it could do for your business?
- "This campaign combined an innovative integration of IBM's analytics capabilities with an exciting creative approach. Delivering it via the Exec Channel screens provided a highly targeted way of reaching our business audience. And the research shows that it was both efficient and effective, so we will be continuing to evolve this approach for Wimbledon in 2012" Rosemary Brown, IBM UK Brand Advertising Manager





CISCO

- Cisco's "My Networked Life" is a "documentary-style video series that takes you around the world for a look at how young professionals, entrepreneurs, artists and students are using connected technology to achieve goals and realize dreams. These stories are personal, they are real and they are powerful. #networkedlife"
- Part of "The Network", Cisco's Technology News Site, there's not a product spec in sight. Instead the emphasis both in My Networked Life and in The Network in general is on the impact that technology can have on people's lives. Articles like "How Technology Lets Consumers Track Products" makes the technology RFID relevant and understandable by relating it to Europe's recent horsemeat scandal.

Aim for an emotional response - or at the very least a laugh



You're looking to make a connection with your audience - and the best connections are always emotional.

There's a reason people remember urban myths - they often involve an emotional reaction.

There's a great study from Upshot and BrainJuicer that proves that emotion has a place in B2B marketing. They sought to affect the emotional state of their audience before asking them to rate a new product. They saw significantly higher purchase intent from the inspired (vs. depressed) group and concluded: "Effective B2B marketing should affect the target's emotions while delivering its selling message".

Alright, hands up if you're probably thinking "Ha, easier said than done! How do I make [insert slightly dry, abstract product or service] emotional?!" Maybe it's not obvious where the emotion is in your business but it's there.

Consider:

- What about your founder's stories?
- How do you, your products or services help people?
- What are your staff's stories? What wonderful and extraordinary things have they done?
- What are your customers' stories? How did they get here?
- What does the world look like for your audience without your company?

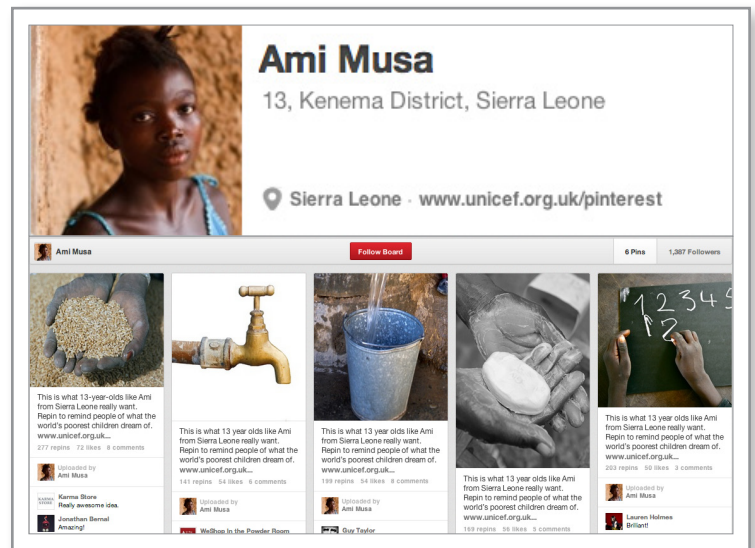
Emotional connections have the added benefit of humanizing your business, which is important because, when all is said and done, people buy from people. There's an old adage in sales that "people buy on emotion and justify by logic". Your business needs a human face to help generate an emotional connection with your audience.

Or you could just make them laugh. Which could be harder!

Who does this well?

CHARITIES

- It's not B2B but nobody does emotion in marketing better than charities.
- Ann Handley at Marketing Profs has highlighted Unicef's effective use of Pinterest. Unicef's Pinterest board shows what Ami Musa, a 13 year old from Sierra Leone, wants – grain, clean water, soap, an education, shoes. Things we rather take for granted in the First World.



DOMTAR

- We're told that the world is going paperless – which means Domtar, the paper manufacturer, would appear to have its work cut out.
- It's marketing campaign "Paper Because" is (in our opinion) nothing short of brilliant. Their "really, really short films" shine a light on the important roles that paper plays in all of our lives – the waiter who doesn't write down the order gets it completely wrong, the husband who sends his wife an eCard for their anniversary ends up dining alone ("Honey, where are you going? Did you check your spam folder?"), fortunately there's a gift receipt for the rather ugly vase the bride-to-be receives at her shower and an awkward moment passes.
- And what do you do if you're Domtar at SXSW, the tech world's leading event? You obviously create a Paper Hotspot area complete with comfortable sofas, books, sketch books, etc. Inspired.
- The Paper Because campaign is about more than video – it extends across a series of articles on the role of paper in our lives (e.g. "Bringing in the mail is one of the few things we all still have in common").

BYTES DOCUMENT SOLUTION

- We had to feature this because it made us laugh. How do you make Managed Print Services interesting and humorous? Meet Printerman – the personification of all our frustrations, trials and tribulations that we’ve suffered at the hands of printers.
- As they explain: “Paper jams, low toner, and unknown errors are typical clues that Printerman has visited your office. You may be a victim. Act NOW. Do not approach him. When provoked he is known to squirt toner over people and ruin their clothes. He’s a menace to every office worker. Already this year his victims have included Personal Assistants, IT professionals, Executives, Sales & Marketing people and H.R. People. YOU could be next.”



Drive action

Good stories frequently contain a “takeaway”.

Fairytales teach good behaviour (“stay true and you’ll be alright in the end!”), urban myths contain warnings (“never get into this situation!”). Charities are all about the ‘donate now’ call to action (after they’ve generated an emotional response).

Assuming we’re doing more than brand awareness, B2B marketers also typically want our audience to take action - register for our webinar, check out our product demo, speak to a member of the sales team. Your Call To Action (“CTA”) needs to be explicit - but not jarring. How do we achieve this?

One option is to structure your narrative deductively so that you lead your audience through your story

with lots of “therefores” and “this is whys” so that registering for your webinar seems like the only possible sensible conclusion.

Another is to replicate the architecture that Nancy Duarte brilliantly identifies as being common to great presentations. Great presentations, she explains, frequently move between explaining “what is” and “what could be” with as large a gap between them as possible. Make the status quo and the normal unappealing so that your audience wants to act on your CTA to achieve the “what could be” - the “new bliss”. Who doesn’t want some more bliss in their life? Where do I sign?

Who does this well?

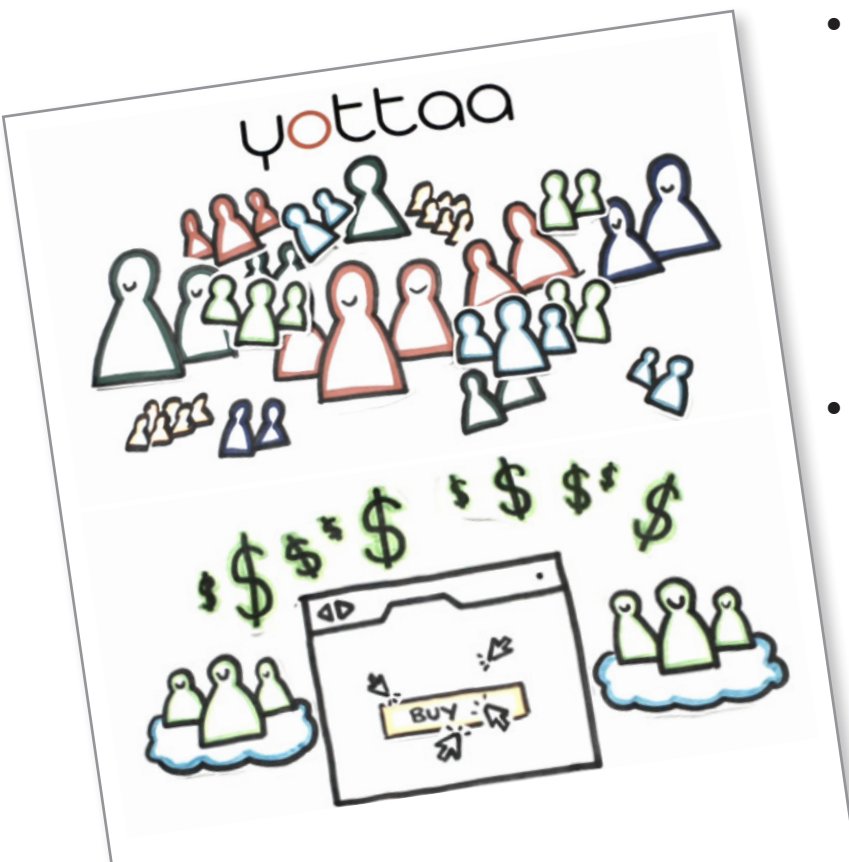
KASPERSKY LAB

- Kasperky Lab, a top four IT security company, launched its “Be Ready for What’s Next” campaign to boost market awareness, increase sales and launch its Endpoint 8 security product. It was intended as “rallying cry” for IT decision-makers looking to seize business opportunity and manage risk.
- The campaign involved a significant volume of content of different types – infographics, animations, research reports, white papers, technical product collateral and thought leadership pieces.
- The campaign was primarily educational and created a framework for its audience within which decisions could be made and acted upon. And it was very successful: the campaign drew a European audience of more than 18.5m through print media and over 157m through online coverage – and generated a pipeline of \$29m.



YOTTAA

- Yottaa sells website optimization software. It drives action by performing an analysis on a website of your choice for free and providing a detailed report on where it ranks and how you can improve your site’s performance. When you see that your Yottaa score is only 27/100, you’re keen to engage with Yottaa to see how you can make it better (if you’re anything like us anyway)!
- Yottaa also gives you the context to understand why improving your score is important – for example: “When doing business on the Web, every millisecond counts. A delay of 1 second in page load time can result in 7% loss in conversions, 11% fewer pageviews and a 16% decrease in customer satisfaction. The typical online shopper expects your pages to load in 2 seconds or less. After 3 seconds, up to 40% will abandon your site.”



Right, you've told your story.

Did it work?

Like anything we do as B2B marketers, we should know if it's providing a return on the effort that we put into it.

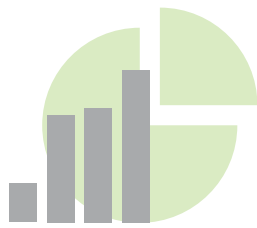
If your story contains a CTA, then conversions per that CTA are the most obvious way to measure it. 100 people engaged with our story, 12 people acted on the CTA.

But as we've seen, storytelling is complicated and involves many different parts. How do we tell which parts of it are working? If we were to change a part of it, would 32 people have acted on the CTA?

How do we tell the story better next time?

Is this something that can be measured? It certainly can be if you break the story across different pieces of content - engagement with the specific pieces of content can be tracked and measured. There are also useful tools to measure particular content types - e.g. Vidyard provides powerful metrics regarding video consumption. And of course, there's no reason not to A/B test a story.

Who does this well?



*How do we tell the story better next time?
Is this something that can be measured?*

2e2

- 2e2's submission to B2BMarketing.Net's 2012 Awards clearly explains the success of their Business Architectures project run with Purestone: "The results have been exceptional, returning investment 166 times. Segmentation of the 60,000-strong customer database gave rise to key insights to drive eCRM campaigns, delivering unique open rates of 28 per cent. Click through rates of more than 13 per cent across campaign microsites and tools saw a final customer conversion rate of 12 per cent." So the stories that they told clearly worked!





ANYONE WHO USES A LOOKBOOK

- Because a LookBook allows you to tell your story across multiple different pieces of content, you can see exactly with which pieces of content your audience actually engaged. This means that you can tell which bits of the story hooked people.
- A LookBook reports how the unique and total views, total time and average time stack up per piece of content.

The Happy Ending

Because it's that type of story

And they all lived happily ever after.

So let's recap – what have we learned? Here are our 8 key things that B2B marketers need to consider when telling stories to their audience:

1. Understand your audience
2. Give them catchy headlines AND depth
3. Text + visuals = good - but multimedia = better
4. Avoid the slow reveal
5. Be concrete
6. Aim for an emotional response - or at the very least a laugh
7. Drive action
8. Measure your story's impact

You don't need to do all of these to tell great stories... but you do need to do some of them!

We strongly recommend point 8 – get the metrics – so that you can tell better and better stories.

The Credits

All out of witty things to say...

The End

What did we miss? Get in touch.

Did you find this eBook useful? We certainly hope so.

We really enjoyed researching and writing it. But we're 100% sure that we've missed a whole host of other important things that B2B marketers should consider when telling B2B stories. What have we missed? Who have we missed? We'd love to know. Please get in touch with us at marketing@lookbookhq.com.

We're intending to make this report an annual occurrence so if you'd like to be considered for a case study or know of someone or some company whose work we should be profiling next time round, please do get in touch with us at marketing@lookbookhq.com.

About LookBookHQ

We help B2B marketers tell visual, engaging stories.

Our customers use LookBooks to package content (owned, earned and third party) together to visually tell their story. LookBooks are:

- Fast & easy to make - add anything (webpages, files, images), annotate to focus engagement and arrange in a narrative.
- Easy to share - via email and newsletters, embedded on blogs and websites, via social networks.
- Easy to measure & improve - see how your audience engages and refine your story.

This is a LookBook.

The thumbnails are arranged in two rows of three. Each thumbnail shows a different content layout with text and images. Each thumbnail has a dark grey footer with white text.

- Thumbnail 1 (top-left):** Shows a webpage layout with a header, navigation, and main content. Footer text: "Content is the #1 priority for marketers in 2013 (says 39% of marketers)." with a play button icon.
- Thumbnail 2 (top-middle):** Shows a list of "CONTENT MARKETING CHALLENGES" with a bar chart. Footer text: "But producing enough content, let alone enough engaging content, is hard." with a play button icon.
- Thumbnail 3 (top-right):** Shows the word "Crap" in a large, red, serif font with a crown on top. Footer text: "And your space is already really noisy - how does your content stand out?" with a play button icon.
- Thumbnail 4 (bottom-left):** Shows a document titled "LevinNesis® 2010 International Workplace Productivity Survey". Footer text: "And your audience doesn't have the time to read... They are already drowning in information." with a play button icon.
- Thumbnail 5 (bottom-middle):** Shows a grid of various images and text snippets. Footer text: "And people are used to consuming information like this - visually, curated and in volume." with a play button icon.
- Thumbnail 6 (bottom-right):** Shows the word "Look" in a large, black, serif font. Footer text: "Better content in 10 Minutes. That's why we developed LookBooks. This video shows you how fun and easy it is." with a play button icon.

(Click and explore!)

How do LookBooks help with B2B storytelling?

1. Understand your audience

We don't know your audience as well as you do but we're 100% sure that they are busy people with no time to read. LookBooks are designed for marketers to tell visual and engaging stories to busy people with no time to read.

2. Give them catchy headlines AND depth

LookBooks allow your audience to engage at the level they need to. You can give your content a headline and annotate it to focus your audience's engagement where you want it, while still allowing your audience to engage with the primary material in full if they want.

3. Text + visuals = good - but multimedia = better

A LookBook makes all your content visual and allows you to combine multiple different content types (owned, paid, earned, found) in different formats (webpages, files, images and videos) into a coherent, easily shareable story.

4. Avoid the slow reveal

There's no slow reveal in a LookBook. Your audience can skim the visual tiles and headlines and choose where they want to engage.

5. Be concrete

Because you can put anything in a LookBook, you're not bounded by the template format of a single content type. So however you need to make the abstract concrete, a LookBook can accommodate it.

6. Aim for an emotional response - or at the very least a laugh

You can share a high volume of content in a LookBook so not all of it has to be dry. You can juxtapose "light" and "heavy" content pieces and see what works with your audiences.

7. Drive action

Got a form on your website for people to register for your webinar? Excellent, you can add that to your LookBook as your stories CTA. A registrant's detail will still be recorded in whatever system they are normally captured.

8. Measure your story's impact

We measure and report how your audience engages with the content in your LookBook. No more guesswork as to which pieces of content get engagement – we'll tell you so that you can tell better and better stories.

How can a LookBook help YOU?

We'll show you! Give us your content and a bit of guidance as to what's a hot issue or topic for you and your audience and we'll be pleased to turn it into a visual, engaging story in a LookBook for FREE. Request your LookBook here: <http://info.lookbookhq.com/make-me-a-lookbook>.

Free content – what's better than that? And you'll see firsthand how awesome LookBooks are and how you could be using them in your marketing activities to take your storytelling to the next level.

Acknowledgements (Or "people that have helped us – take a bow!")

Thanks to April Dunford, everyone we've referenced throughout this study and the great team at LookBookHQ - and of course our customers, who will always be our greatest source of learning and inspiration.



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