

Does your brand have a soul?

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In today's fast-paced, overly automated, and digitally driven society, humanity has a new prominence. The internet constantly rewards us with convenience and instant gratification, making the human touch increasingly more scarce, nevertheless essential.



Screengrab from Budweiser ad on [Youtube](#).

In this environment, businesses can no longer afford to be undisclosed entities. To survive, businesses need to connect with audiences, pull at their heartstrings, and engage with them on a much deeper level than has been done before. That is where brand storytelling becomes an important element of the marketing strategy.

Brand storytelling is the cohesive narrative that weaves together the facts and emotions that your brand inspires. In addition to giving your customers reasons why they should buy a product or service, businesses need to start sharing the story behind their brand, why it exists, and why this matters, consistently across all communication.

Brand storytelling is no longer a nice to have. It is a need to have, and it is the difference that will ultimately maximize your business's visibility, profit, and impact. It should be a compass for your marketing strategy, and the result will be a brand that is as profitable as it is captivating. Here are three top tips to boost your marketing strategy through brand storytelling



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Be unforgettable and distinctive in a crowded marketplace

There is an overwhelming amount of content being created and shared every day. Businesses are budgeting big worldwide, fighting for seconds of attention from audiences that are being bombarded with similar messaging. The internet has carefully crafted a platform for marketing by making it accessible, but amid this, it's also made it very difficult for quality brands to stand out. It's no longer enough to have a quality product or service, you need to know how to talk about it in a way that differentiates you from the monotonous crowd. That's why brand storytelling is so important.

Rather than throwing out facts, statistics, and testimonials at your target audience, focus on making your brand thoughtful, memorable, and real. Immerse your message into a story that moves people, simplifies information, and provokes an emotional response. Use narrative to share your brand's history, challenges, successes, and value propositions – this way, no other brand can copy YOUR story. Storytelling will not only increase your brand approval in your audience's eyes, it can also be up to 22 times more memorable than facts.

Consider, for example, the Budweiser's "Lost Dog" ad from Superbowl XLIX, in 2015.

Of course, we're not saying that every presentation should include puppies — but do consider the power of emotion in crafting memorable, persuasive messages.

Ask yourself: what do you want to be remembered for? What is the message you want to stand out for your audience, and what do you never want them to forget? Consider the emotion you want to evoke in your audience every time they interact with your brand. Your audience may forget what you say, but they will not forget how you made them feel. Emotions drive purchases way more than logic.

Build a clan of loyal devotees, instead of just customers

Other than a product or service, look carefully at what your audience needs from you before crafting your message. Make sure the agency you use, understands the core of the business and that they exceed expectations when developing your strategies. Bigger is not always better! Choose an agency with a diverse talent pool that is passionate about brand storytelling.

Take Apple, for example. They sell technology, but from the beginning, their audience needed to feel that it was okay (and

even be encouraged) to be brave, bold, and think differently from the crowd.

For your brand to be authentic and be the brand of choice, it needs to become so much more than your product and service and that's where storytelling comes in. It's advisable to look at what emotions, values, and ideas you can offer your audience. What do you want them to walk away feeling when they interact with you? What sort of value are you offering them every time they engage with your content? What does your brand mean to them, beyond what you are selling?



Is your brand telling the true story?

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Use your story to create a deep emotional connection: start conversations, ask for engagement (no strings attached), involve your audience in what you do as a business. Turn your brand into an experience they can consume. This will make your brand something people will want to pay for as they see you as a 360-degree solution to their needs. You want a devoted clan that will support your success, follow along, be loyal, and always come back for more.

Once your audience knows, trusts, and likes you, you can ensure, at the very least, you'll have created relationships with people who will become advocates for years to come.

Humanity is key

A brand story can do so much more than connect you with your ideal audience, get you noticed in the noise of your competitors' messaging, and drive profits, it also has the potential to create major impact.

Already beckoning before Covid-19, now greatly enhanced, marketing is no longer the key competitive differentiator. Consumers are increasingly demanding brands be held accountable for sustainability, watching them closely to see how their efforts are making an impact, supporting a cause, and achieving results beyond just profit. Ironically, knowing that a company cares about something other than their own profit is the incentive that often drives consumers to buy more.

Your mission matters. A desire to "change the world" is no longer just a cliched start to your mission statement. However, if your values and mission is stated – it is something you have to be seen to be acting on, as it's guaranteed that your audience is checking up and watching. Consumers gravitate toward brands that feel more human. It's no coincidence that the top 10 most empathetic companies in the Global Empathy Index are amongst the most profitable and fastest-growing in the world.



Building your brand through the power of storytelling

Nicole Shapiro 2 Feb 2017



How do you make your brand more human? Storytelling - the most ancient and powerful tool for effective education. We are genetically wired to love and respond to stories, and a memorable brand story is exactly what people need to feel connected to your business, have a lasting positive impression of who you are and what you stand for, and become loyal clients.

When creating your marketing strategy, don't forget about the bigger story: what makes you human? How do you touch and transform people's lives? How do you put a positive dent in society? In short, does your brand have a soul?

People will feel this, and not only that, they will buy from you before they buy from a competitor who offers a similar product or service. In a crowded marketplace where everyone is focused on doing things faster, more efficiently, and automated,

be the brand who dares to be human. Show your customers that you care even if it means slowing down and doing things differently.

In this ever-changing world, those are the brands that stand out, and ultimately, endure the test of time.

ABOUT SIZWE DLAMINI

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