

The Stories We Tell

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Consumer Works

Key Presentation Topics

The Persuasive Power Of Story

Storytelling That Moves The Masses

Story And The Human Connection

Rhetoric Versus Storytelling

Strategic Storied Advertising

Consumer's Story versus Brand Story

Storytelling That Moves The Masses

Business is ultimately about selling, persuasion. Buy this car. Eat this cereal. Take a vacation in New York State.

Persuading people is not easy. We can try to persuade people with logic and reason... which sometimes works but...

A better, and much more powerful way to persuade people is by uniting an idea with an emotion. And the best way to do that is by telling a compelling story.

Why Story?

- As Old as Humankind
- The Great Religious Texts are essentially books of stories (i.e. parables)
- “Fictional thinking” (allegory, myth, metaphor) was the original form of human thought.

Story - The Human Connection

- The narrative impulse seems to be deeply embedded in the human psyche.
- We tell and listen to stories all the time; it comes natural to us.
- No one can resist a good story

Story

- Engaging and Entertaining
- Memorable
- Reaches the “heart zone”

Story

- **Our life is a story** - an uncertain, re-worked narrative, part truth, part fiction, that is unfolding even as we live it.
- The stories we tell reveal a lot about who we are, who we would like to be, and what is important to us.

Story

- We tell stories not only for the benefit of others, but also for ourselves - so that we may come to understand who we are, who we want to be, and what is important to us.
- Our identity (who we are), which is something we struggle with our whole life, comes to be through telling stories.

Story

- We actually create our sense of self through **telling** and **listening** to our own half-true stories!

“The most important question you can ask is:
what is the myth [story] by which you live your life?”

(Carl Jung)

THIS IS ONLY A TEST

IF THIS HAD BEEN A REAL LIFE,

YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN TOLD

WHERE TO GO

AND WHAT TO DO

Story

- “Psychoanalysis is really an attempt to help us put together a story we can live with.”

THE PERSUASIVE POWER OF STORY

TWO WAYS TO PERSUADE PEOPLE

1. Use reason & rhetoric to build a case.
2. Combine an idea/message with an emotion by telling a compelling story.

RHETORIC VS. STORYTELLING

Rhetoric

- Intellectual process
- Provokes left-brain; “...people have their own set of statistics, facts, authorities, ideas”
- “While you are trying to persuade them, people are arguing with you in their heads.”
- “...people are [generally] not inspired to act by reason alone.” (Robert McKee)

RHETORIC VS. STORYTELLING

Storytelling

- A much more powerful way to persuade people is by “uniting an idea with an emotion.”
- The best way to do this is by telling a story.

“HOW TO ARGUE & WIN EVERY TIME” Gerry Spence

- Never lost a major trial
- His secret?
- Spence says he uses the persuasive power of story to
“...speak easily, openly, powerfully, to reach the heart zone...to touch us in those soft, unprotected places where our decisions are made.”

STRATEGIC STORIED ADVERTISING

Strategic Storied Advertising

- **Combines storytelling with a strategy** - - a narrative fiction that uses fictitious characters, places, situations, etc. to create a story that connects emotionally with the consumer and creates meaning for the brand.
- Strategic storied advertising is the vehicle that allows us to access the consumers' minds and hearts, and imbue brands with meaning and personality that reflect their sensibilities, desires, values etc.
 - We live in a branded universe.
 - We consume brands not products

Strategic Storied Advertising

We need to find a compelling story idea that will resonate with the consumer and create an appealing identity and personality for the brand.

- Research, investigative reporting.
- Thinking real hard!
- Where is the brand now? Where do we want it to be?
- How will we get there?
- De-construct the brand - conduct an in-depth analysis of the brand and its current positioning vis-à-vis its competitors.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

- Good story idea/angle.
- Insights, information & ideas about the product/brand, consumer, culture etc., that can help us to pull together a compelling story idea.
- A powerful truth that will resonate with consumers.

The Search For Truth

“Tell the truth, make it interesting, and tell it in a different way.” (Bill Bernbach)

“Find the inherent drama in every product.” (Leo Burnett)

“Truth well told told.” (McCann-Erickson)

CONSUMER RESEARCH

Consumer:

- 1) What is the consumer's story?
- 2) What does the consumer really want?
(“Can we talk?” Joan Rivers)
(Core desire? - Conscious/Unconscious/Hidden reasons for using the brand/category.)
- 3) What is the story by which they convince themselves to use the product? Brand?

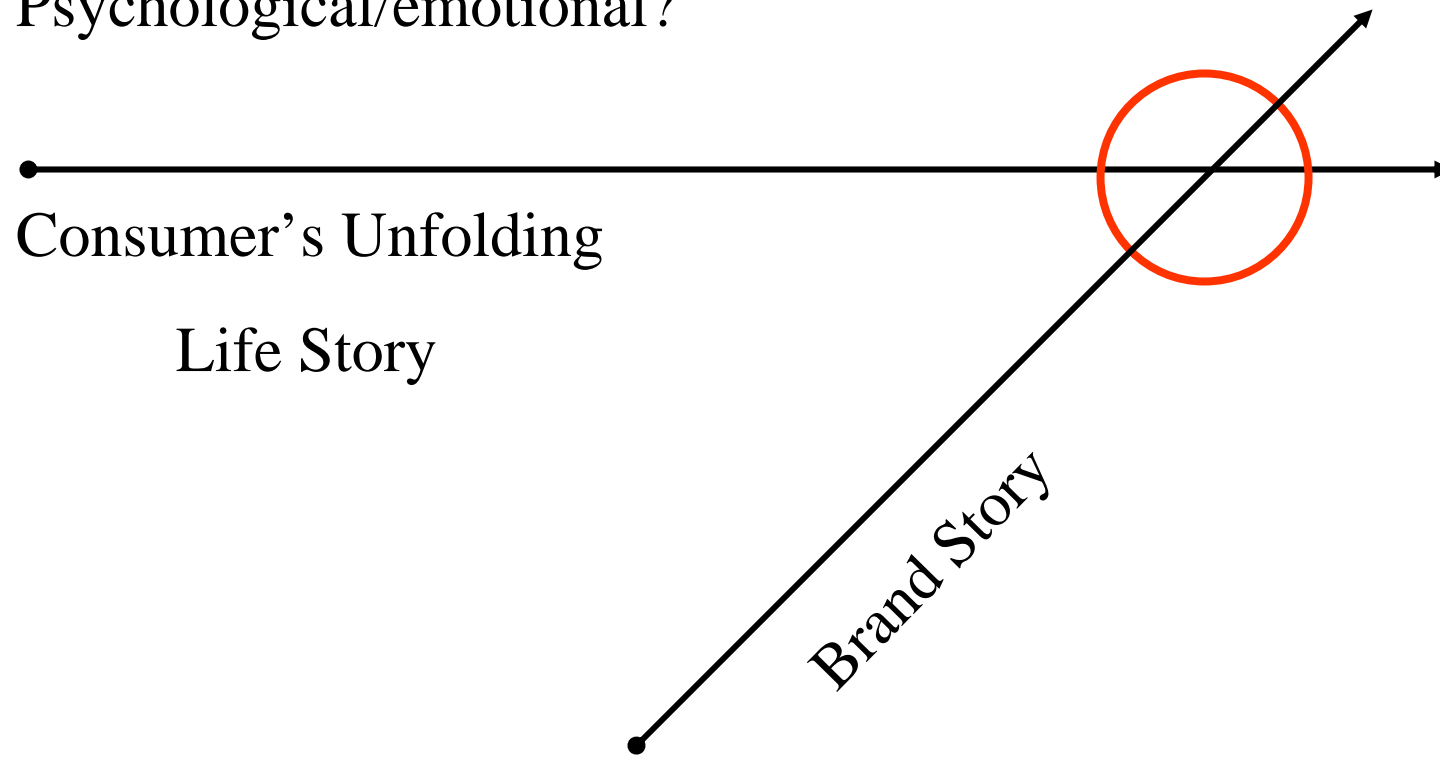
CONSUMER STORY VS. BRAND STORY

Brand:

- 1) What is the Brand's evolving story?
- 2) Does the Brand's story come out of the product story or somewhere else? (Myth?)(Budweiser) (McDonald's) (Marlboro)
- 3) What benefits, tangible, psychological and emotional does the brand provide?
- 4) What role does the brand play in the story? In the consumer's life/story? (enabler, badge, shield etc.)

Narrative Nexus

What's the point of access for the BRAND in the consumer's life? Life cycle? Life style? Benefits?
Psychological/emotional?



THE UNIQUE POWER OF STRATEGIC STORIED ADVERTISING...

The unique power of strategic storied advertising lies in its ability to go beyond communicating product information - to build strong, enduring brands that often come to represent symbolic worlds which give brands their unique identity, and create an emotional bond between the consumer and the brand.

Storytelling & Mytho-Symbolic, Brand Building Worlds

Marlboro - leveraged the powerful emotional appeal of the mythic American cowboy and the symbolic world of the American western frontier, a world that represents freedom, rugged individualism and the pioneering spirit.

McDonalds - uses strategic storytelling (along with promotional advertising) to create a very appealing mytho-symbolic world, and a wonderfully appealing all-American brand, a mythical, family-oriented world, a wondrous, magical place where *everyone* is welcome, safe, happy, loved, kind, caring, sharing and forever young or young-at-heart.

Budweiser - Website - Clydesdales; Eagle etc.

