

MARKETING

The art of B2B storytelling

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Let me tell you a story

Do you not wish every sales pitch began that way? Here is the truth: So do your customers. They have had it up to here with "data" and "speeds and feeds" and simply want to hear how your product or solution is going to work seamlessly in their existing environment and generate the results they need.

The same is true with media and analysts in the Internet of Things, cloud, mobile, wireless, telecom and tech industries.

While some technical publications may be interested in the minutiae of a new product launch, most want to hear a good story about how you are helping your customers solve their problems with that product. And, of course, they would like to see data where it is appropriate, for example, in percentage of cost savings or reduction in man-hours.

Company line

In today's COVID-19 environment, storytelling becomes increasingly important.

Reporters are being bombarded with pitches that tie or try to their client to the storyline. Some are successful and some are not.

Customers are getting those same messages as the stories are spread.

Therefore, it is important that any storyline from the tech industry about COVID-19 shows empathy and resiliency while telling the world about your company's solutions.

The truth is, your company's story is its alone.

While there is plenty of storytelling that goes on in the consumer realm, business-to-business (B2B) companies can find it a little more challenging to ferret out a good story and get it in the hands of the right reporters.

Here are some tips to getting started in the art of storytelling:

Know your customers. At least once a month, gather background on existing and new customers that might have an

interesting story to tell. Engage with the sales team if needed to ferret them out.

While the sales team may think it is just another win, trends can easily be spotted if several customers are looking for solutions that do X. And trends backed by data make for excellent stories.

Brainstorm early and often. Get your team together often to discuss potential storylines, especially as they relate to the news of the day and pandemic coverage.

Are there other trends, topics or events that are happening around you that are a natural fit for which you can build a story? Challenge your team to come up with at least one per month.

Even if a particular storyline does not come to fruition, it keeps the juices flowing. Bring in outside team members as needed. Check out our [No News whitepaper](#) for additional tips about brainstorming new story ideas.

Stockpile your stories. When you latch on to a story that is not quite fleshed out, make sure you document it and revisit monthly until it is.

Build a "library" of these story ideas you never know when they are going to break. Sometimes the timing is not quite right for a particular storyline or the customer is the missing link. Document and revisit until the stars align.

Take a conversational tone. Nothing falls apart more quickly than a cut-and-paste story from another pitch, press release or white paper.

Start from scratch when drafting your story and aim for a clear, conversational tone.

Imagine how someone in your family or close circle of friends would tell the story and go from there. Let multiple people on the team take a pass at the story so you get different perspectives. Then pick the best one.

Make them care. In the digital era, stories and reporters succeed and fail by the numbers number of eyeballs and engagements, that is. They must make the audience care about a story and convince them to read it.

But first, you have to make the reporter care enough to write your company's story. Find ways to weave both a compelling narrative and imagery into the story for a winning combination.

Know your audience. Once it is fleshed out, it is incredibly important to get the story into the right hands.

What type of publication is most likely to cover your story? Is it a daily news outlet, a biz tech publication, or an industry publication?

While the same story can be tweaked for each, it is important to know your absolute top targets and their respective audience as the story is written.

STORYTELLING IS AN art, but it is a learned art. Today's environment is challenging, but these challenges are surmountable with the right story.

By knowing your customers as well as the intended audience, it is easy to tell a story that will gather attention.

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