

INTERNET

Ritz-Carlton gets to the essence of guest tales in six words

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Example of "Six Word Wow" from Ritz-Carlton campaign

By JOE MCCARTHY

The Ritz-Carlton is inviting fans to submit six-word stories that capture brand-related memories that will then be shared in various forms on social media.



Taking their inspiration from Ernest Hemingway and a popular flash fiction genre, eight "Six Word Wows" will appear over the next few weeks. The hard-to-decipher brevity of the six-word stories are remedied by a microsite that delves into the guest tales.

"Brands recognize that peer-to-peer marketing drives engagement," said Tiffany Dowd, founder and president of [Luxe Social Media](#), Boston.

"Sharing user-generated stories adds an element of authenticity that other consumers can relate to rather than being directly marketed to by the brand," she said.

Ms. Dowd is not affiliated with The Ritz-Carlton, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

The Ritz-Carlton was unable to respond by press deadline.

In the heart

Storytelling has always been the crux of marketing. However, only in the last few years have brands actively and explicitly involved consumers in the storytelling process.

As a hospitality brand, The Ritz-Carlton strives to create memories for its guests with unexpected acts of thoughtfulness. Indeed, the hotel chain revitalized its marketing angle to better reflect this philosophy with the "Let Us Stay With You" overarching campaign ([see story](#)).

Now, the "Six Word Wows" campaign allows guests to show their appreciation for these efforts by becoming a brand evangelist.

The Hemingway story, "For sale: baby shoes, never worn," partially inspired the campaign. Unlike this bleak story, the brand's campaign collects bright memories.



First campaign post from The Ritz-Carlton

Ritz-Carlton gathered eight of its favorite guest stories and compressed them into six words, stripping away all details except an emotional frame. The result is a series of buoyant and mysterious phrases that feel universal.

The first "Six Word Wow" that appeared says, "Dinner 'Til Dawn. Laughter. Years Regained." Although the words are vague, the reader is able to broadly deduce what occurred.

and culturally-rich information about certain regions.

The “Certified Indigenous” series provides the concierge team with an opportunity to share travel secrets and impart advice on essential places to visit. Showcasing the expertise of a concierge team on social media will allow hotel brands to infuse everyday promotional efforts with the gravity of a property’s heritage ([see story](#)).

Many brands are finding stories hidden in unexpected places, including Big Data.

Big Data tends to be regarded as a treasure chest crammed with latent sales, which can lure brands away from the benefits of traditional storytelling, according to panelists at a session March 26 at ad:tech San Francisco 2014.

During “The Myth of Big Data” session, speakers sought to clarify the foggy reverence that often surrounds the concept. Rather than viewing traditional storytelling and Big Data as divided methods that achieve the same result, the session emphasized that the two are much stronger together than apart ([see story](#)).

Once a story gains traction on social media, it tends to take on a life of its own.

"Social media is evolving more into peer-to-peer amplification on social channels," Ms. Dowd said.

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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