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For Marketing Success, Channel Your Inner Journalist

The best marketing communications tell a story that is concise, clear, and simple

Kristy Short • Dec. 18, 2012



Top journalists engage their readers because they know how to tell a good story. Tried and true journalistic skills are the key to developing an article that is both informative and engaging—keeping the reader on the hook until the very last sentence.

Marketing works the same way. It's all about telling a story. Too many marketers make the mistake of getting caught up explaining features and functions of a product or service. One word: BORING. Following the “boring” formula, rest assured that after the third or fourth feature/function bullet your abort rate will soar and/or you'll incite nothing more than a big snooze fest.

Marketing is meant to get the attention of your audience and eventually incite them to action. However, it's difficult to get your reader to the take-action point if your initial communications fail to garner enough interest to even finish reading. So, take the advice of this journalist and adopt a few proven journalistic guidelines to enhance your marketing communications.

Keep it Simple—There is no guideline simpler than this. Don't drag out your story with long overwhelming paragraphs packed full of detailed information. Keep your message simple and to the point. You can always direct your reader to detailed content on your website if you want them to learn more. You only need enough copy to engage your audience and tell them where to go to find more information.

Create Balance—While you want to market your services, don't spend all your time “selling.” Be sure to balance your story with some “telling.” Tell your readers the value the service offers them and how it will make their lives better. Explaining that you understand the readers' unique challenges and that you have the solution to resolve their issues helps you create a real connection with them. You can also support value propositions with client testimonials to offer more credibility.

Stay on Point—While some like the twisting, turning plot of a good novel, too many twists in your marketing communication will get your reader lost. Your communication should start and end with a clear point. For example, if you begin your message by identifying the issue of drastically rising IRS notices, continue by explaining how this trend affects your audience, and then end your story with a resolution for the issue (i.e., IRS Representation services). A clear and concise message is the best message.

Stay In tune with What's Going On Around You—Keep up with current news and industry trends to create educational, informed content. For firms that send client newsletters (a great component of any marketing program), your news needs to be timely and helpful to your readers. Current content will keep your clients coming back to your newsletter, which helps build client loyalty and a strong brand.

Be Truthful—Don't exaggerate the facts. Most people can smell b#llsh!t a mile away. Your readers, whether prospects or clients, will appreciate the truth. Don't you? Tell them what you offer and how it can help them. The plain, simple truth is where it's at...so keep your content honest.

Everyone has a little bit of writer in them. Follow these tips and channel your inner journalist to create marketing content that will help you engage new leads, enhance existing client relationships, and make you sound like a storytelling pro. Pretty soon you'll be creating content with some real BA-Ziiiing!

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