



**MARKETING
GUARDIANS**



The Framework That Makes Marketing Easy

Story is the most powerful tool in the world to captivate the human brain. When you learn to use story in your brand's communication, your customers will finally pay attention to what you're saying. You can learn to use story to clarify your message. We'll show you just how it works.

Marketing Guardians

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Introduction

How much is unclear messaging costing you? How many potential customers can't hear your offer in the sea of noise? How many of your events are half empty because people don't know why they should come? How many people are passing up your consulting? Can potential customers understand why they need your product or service? A lack of clarity may already be costing you a great deal.

We know how hard it is to communicate clearly. And when you clarify your message, your website starts working for you, your team members are converted into a sales force and your customers speak a viral message that spreads.

The human brain is drawn to clarity and away from confusion. If customers are confused about what you offer, they'll look past you for somebody who can say it clearly. Once you clarify your message, your company will begin to grow. Companies that clarify their messaging win in the marketplace.

Let's take the guesswork out of marketing so your business can grow. With the StoryBrand Framework created by Donald Miller, you can confidently create marketing campaigns, collateral, websites, emails, and more that actually work, without spending a fortune.

The key to the StoryBrand framework is that it helps you create clarity. People are drawn to clarity and away from confusion, so if your marketing messages are confusing, you're likely losing customers.

It's time you clarified your message and started growing your business.

About Marketing Guardians.

We support businesses in creating long-term sustainable growth through strategic marketing design.



We believe that Marketing is a relationship - People do business with people they trust, and they trust people they are in a relationship with. We choose to be an extension of your team rather than be seen as an outsourced marketing team. We don't just want to be the fix for just one problem but want to support your long-term strategic growth. To do this we want to work with you and not just for you.

Our goal as an agency is to bring offers to our clients and not just try to sell them on products. We don't lead with solutions that you should pursue, we lead with active listening and inquiry. We listen to you and your story, your successes, the work that is meaningful and excites you and then to your pain points. We listen first to connect, and then to create new possibilities.

Because we have a listening mindset; before we offer solutions to our clients, it gives us the best chance of discovering the needs and problems that challenge their growth. Our approach to creating our strategic marketing solutions to these challenges are anything but traditional. We pursue ideas that may be expected but also combine those with the unorthodox to create a unique offering to our clients that endear us and our approach to their efforts to grow.

A person's hand is visible, holding a white pen over a wooden table. The table is covered with various documents and sticky notes. One document features a Venn diagram with three overlapping circles in red, blue, and green, each containing a number: 27, 22, and 23. Another document has the word 'INFORMATION' at the top. The scene is dimly lit, with a dark overlay. A light blue rectangular box is centered over the text.

HOW STORY WORKS

How Story Works

The StoryBrand framework will help your brand tell a clear and compelling story.

Stephen Ramkissoon (Owner, Managing Director at Marketing Guardians)

Stories about Your Customers

Consider any story that you remember right now. Now, think about why you remember it. The answer is probably because it resonated with you. When it comes to storytelling for businesses, there is one common mistake that is often repeated. Businesses tell a story about themselves. Of course, you need to market your services, but boasting is not the answer. Your customers are less interested in why you are serving in this sector or how well established your coaching practice is. What they need the answer to is, how can they benefit by choosing you?

Will you be able to help them with what they need? And can you alleviate their troubles and ease their worries? And the tactic to approach them is to tell stories about your own clients. Turn your past accomplished tasks into motivational stories that your prospective clients can relate to. Help them envision how their life will improve when they invest in your services. This is the ultimate way to build your brand.

What Makes StoryBrand So Different?

The StoryBrand Framework is revolutionary because it teaches you to stop playing the hero in the story, and instead, invite customers **into** a story. Thousands of companies have made millions of dollars using the StoryBrand Framework and marketing system.

- Do you struggle with your message?
- Is explaining what you do complicated?
- Are you struggling to get new leads?
- Did your last marketing effort flop?
- Do you need a common story to unite your staff?
- Is it time to revamp your website?
- Does marketing make your brain hurt?

Generally speaking, stories follow a seven-part framework. After researching and discovering this framework, Donald applied it to his own business and saw massive revenue gains over the next several years with no money on advertising.

“If you’re spending a lot of money on Facebook ads and all these kinds of ways to get your message out there, but you haven’t clarified your message, you really just bought a very expensive bullhorn and you’re holding it up to a monkey.”

Donald Miller

Create a story around your brand, defining who your characters are and who they want to become; the external, internal and philosophical problems that they are dealing with; how you can help guide them; the process and agreement plans that you will put in place to address their questions and assuage their fears; the calls-to-action that you will put in your marketing material; and how your plan will help them to avoid failure and end in success.

The 7 basic elements of story:



When properly implemented, the seven characteristics of a story will make right people hear your message, identify with your service(s), and want your help.

In a sentence, the story goes: a character wants something but has a problem, meets a guide who gives them a plan, and calls them to action which either ends in a success or a failure.

1. **The Hero:** A character who wants something/ has a goal to accomplish (the customer).
2. **The Problem:** Something that opposes the Hero and what they want (the problem your business solves for the customer).
3. **The Guide:** A person who helps the hero overcome the Problem (your business).
4. **The Plan:** What the Guide gives the Hero to overcome the Problem.
5. **The Challenge:** The Guide calls the Hero to action and challenges the Hero to do something.
6. **The Failure:** The things that could be tragic for the hero.
7. **The Success:** The victory of the Hero over the problem.

To ensure that your audience doesn't get lost, tell them exactly how you solve their problem.

The three levels of problems are internal, external and philosophical. Most businesses typically focus on the external problem, when the customer is actually buying because of the internal problem. People are not motivated to buy because of the external problem they are facing. They buy because of the internal frustration the external problem causes. All stories are based on internal problems.

At the end of the day, your audience doesn't care about *your* story, they want to know how you will fix *their* problem.

Part of solving this problem is authentically caring and establishing authority by sharing your expertise. This will also help you build trust as the guide. Then, you move the customer to action by offering a challenge, framed by what success and failure look like.

While it isn't necessary to have all seven characteristics in your marketing message, anything you use in your message should fit within these characteristics.

These "rules" will help your creative be more clear and less noisy.

TIME FOR
SOMETHING
NEW!



#1 The Character

Every story begins with a character **who wants something**. In movies, screenwriters identify the hero at the start of the movie and, within minutes, the audience knows what they want.

For example, if 12 minutes into *The Bourne Identity* the audience still doesn't know exactly what Jason Bourne wants, they're going to walk out.

Most companies aren't clear in explaining what they offer. When you define something your customer wants, you invite them into a very specific story. And that's what they're looking for; they're looking for you to invite them into a story.

You must summarize what you offer in just a few words. If you throw out multiple solutions to multiple problems, you'll be ignored. The human brain just isn't made to process that many storylines.

You have to be known for something, preferably one thing.

Ask: What do my customers want as it relates to my brand? Is my brand known for one thing it offers?

#2 The Problem

Do you remember the old Rolodex files that sat on people's desks? The ones that held business cards?

People have a Rolodex file in their brains. And when they hear about your business, they don't file your business alphabetically — *they file your business under the problem you solve*.

If you haven't clearly defined the problem you solve, **they're going to throw your business card away**.

The only reason people are calling you, going to your website, or walking into your retail store is because they have a problem and they need you to solve that problem.

When you **define that problem** for your customers and offer to resolve it, they're interested.

Ask: Have you clearly defined the problem your brand solves?

#3 And Meets A Guide

This is a big paradigm shift.

Customers aren't looking for a hero. They're looking for a guide.

If you understand this important principle, you'll change how you talk about your business.

Potential clients don't need another hero. They need a guide.

You need to position yourself as a guide, but, the first step is understanding your role in your customer's story:

- You're not Luke Skywalker. You're Yoda.
- You're not Katniss. You're Haymitch.
- You're not James Bond. You're Q.

So, when your customers come to you, don't talk about what *you're* trying to do. Lay out your products and services as weapons that will help them save the world, get the girl, or win the day.

That's the message they respond to.

Ask: Are you positioning yourself as the guide?

#4 Who Gives Them A Plan

Let's recap:

1. You've identified what your customer wants, which invites them into a story.
2. You've identified a problem that makes them feel something which hooks them into the story.
3. You've positioned yourself as a guide so now there's some hope they can solve their problem.

You've done well. This is farther than most companies get with their customers, *but it's too soon to ask them for the sale*. If you ask for the sale now, your customer can only see a yawning chasm between where they are and where they need to go. Pulling out their wallet is scary. If they spend money, they might lose money. If it doesn't work, they may be embarrassed.

How do you overcome this? You need to give your customers a plan. Just three or four steps that explain how easy it is to work with you.

For example, a financial advisor might say: *I think you can probably retire earlier than you thought. I have a really easy process that helps you to make that decision.*

1. *We meet for an informal meeting.*
2. *We assess your goals.*
3. *You get a customized strategy to retire early. If you choose, I can help you execute that strategy for the rest of your life.*

When you give your customers a plan, you're helping them overcome the barriers to their success. Because this element is so important, there's much more information about it. Since you're the guide, you're going to have to outline a plan so your hero can win the day.

Ask: Do you have a simple plan that makes it easy for your customers to do business with you?

#5 And Calls Them To Action

Finally, the time has come to ask for the sale. Here's something to remember:

Customers don't take action unless they are challenged to take action.

As the guide in your customer's story, you must challenge them to buy something from you and this challenge must be very, very clear.

If there's not a *Buy Now* button in the top right corner of your website, you're losing sales. Do not crowd that section of your website with 25 other choices like *About*, *Contact*, and *FAQs*. Your direct call to action (the *Buy Now* button) should be a different colour and it should be the obvious button to press.

In addition to a direct call to action you should always have a transitional call to action that helps your customer stay in relationship with you even if they're aren't ready to buy right away. That could be a PDF with some valuable content for them to download - essentially something free to give away.

We have to give our customers something to accept or reject.

Ask: Do you have a clear call to action?

#6 That Helps Them Avoid Failure

This is a classic piece of storytelling. Heroes are compelled into action because something is at stake.

- Katniss volunteers for the Hunger Games to save her sister, Prim.
- A retired CIA officer must use all his past connections and skills to rescue his daughter from an abductor in *Taken*.

None of these characters wanted to engage in the action of the story. They were compelled to in order to avoid a tragic ending (failure). Every customer is trying to avoid a tragic ending, too. What that means for your brand is you must clearly communicate the negative consequences of what will happen to your customers if they do not buy your products or services.

Ask: Have you communicated what's at stake to your customers? What are the negative consequences of not doing business with you?

#7 And Ends In Success

You need to show customers how your products can positively affect their lives.

Both your website images and your sales copy should help your customers envision life with their problems solved. Show them what their life can be like without a toothache, with more money in the stock market, with their lawn looking amazing, or loving the way those clothes feel or fit.

People naturally steer toward a happy ending. An excellent example is booking.com. Competing with Travelocity, Priceline and Hotwire, they set themselves apart from their competitors by focusing on one thing: displaying success over and over. *You're going to like your trip, your hotel room, the food, the plush carpet, the weird yoga class, your whatever. You're going to love your vacation.* People started booking there because they wanted to have that incredible experience.

If you're not telling people what their life will look like when they do business with you, they're not going to do business with you.

Ask: How can you help your customer envision success after doing business with you?

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THE KEY IS CLARITY



Let's Face It, Marketing Is Confusing

We understand that knowing where to invest your marketing energy can be overwhelming when you don't have a clear message or a plan.

That's why we help organizations use the StoryBrand Framework to get on track with an easy-to-understand, repeatable method for creating top-notch content that attracts your best clients.

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Schedule An Introduction Call