



From Story To Standout Brand

The 3-Step Blueprint

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From Story To Brand In 3 Steps

Are you getting queries that seem to belong to another business? Having trouble explaining what you do and what results you deliver? Wanting to promote yourself and your business without feeling like you're bragging? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you need a new brand message.

The Dreaded "Who Are You" Question

When you're a small service-based business, your clients are buying you, your services, and the way you deliver your services. Therefore your brand conveys a combination of personal style (loosely called personality) and expertise.

The best way to communicate this combination of factors is to tell a story -- and not just any story. The five story archetypes here will help you seamlessly develop your brand, message, content strategy and marketing actions. This short workbook will take you through the process.

We will use three examples to demonstrate the process. Judy is a life coach, focusing on relationships. Harry is a financial planner, focusing on wealth management for upper income clients. Anita is an attorney specializing in estate planning.

But first ...

How I Learned About Branding The Hard Way

When I first set up shop online as a copywriter, I named my business "Copy-Cat Copywriting." Many experienced marketers loved the concept. It was clever and catchy.

One "branding expert" - even suggested taking it further, with "purr-fect copy" and other feline attributes.



But the brand did nothing to create expectations. In fact, “copy-cat” is just the opposite of what I was doing. I’m an original. I abhor cookie-cutter marketing. People who know me usually sigh and say, “Well, Cathy, you’re ... different.” That’s when they’re being nice.

Ironically, I had a perfectly good story. It’s a concept story -- which I discuss in great detail in my ebook, [Grow Your Business One Story At A Time](#). On the home page, I wrote about business owners who were so afraid of sounding sales-y they went to the other extreme, with timid copy that tiptoed around the edges of their benefits.

I should have paid more attention to that story.

Match Your Story To Your Brand (And Vice Versa)

Of course it’s not enough to tell a story. It has to be a story that resonates with your audience and delivers your brand message.

You probably have that story tucked away on your website. Or you’ve told that story many times to your prospects on webinars and podcast guest gig. Maybe you even shared your story with friends, over coffee or a beer.



Most of my clients who say, “I don’t have a story,” actually have so many, we have to decide which one to use.

Some business owners tell a story on their websites to support a brand. Some share stories that have nothing to do with their brands – or tell stories that actually dilute their brands.

STEP 1: FIND YOUR BRAND STORY

When I present this idea to live audiences, they tend to push back in one of 3 understandable ways:

"But I've got so many stories! Where do I start?"

"But I don't have ANY stories! Where do I find one?"

"I don't have the right kind of story."

Maybe you've heard about story archetypes, such as the hero's journey, voyage and return, and conquering the monster. If you're like many business owners who work with me, these archetypes don't seem to relate to the way you serve your clients. They're not particularly helpful when you're coming up with your message.

The 5 Business Brand Story Archetypes

These 5 brand story archetypes are designed to answer the question, "Why should I hire you?" We will go through each in turn.

Role Model

The Role Model archetype starts with the premise of, "I'm just like you."

This business owner relates to her clients on a very personal level and markets herself as smart, and straightforward and approachable. Clients feel they know her -- they're her friends! She might be surprised when people call her to say, "Hi, we're in town - can we have lunch?"

Connie Ragen Green is the ultimate Role Model. She pivoted from being an elementary school teacher and real estate agent to running a successful online empire. This story could serve as her brand story:

She invited some friends - a retired couple - to come visit. "We're retired," they said. "We can't afford to come."

Connie told them how she's been making money with online marketing.

"Do you think we could do that?" they asked nervously

"Of course!" Connie said, following up with some suggestions and links to resources.

Several months later, Connie saw them again and repeated the invitation. This time they said, "Oh no, we can't. We're too busy. We followed your suggestions and started working on the Internet. We've got another vacation planned for next week."

Pitfalls: The Role Model thrives on saying, "I'm just like you." But she also needs to command respect.

The Role Model talks about how hard she worked and how many problems she's overcome. But she can't afford to be viewed as a victim. Role Models hire a copywriter when they need to choose the perfect story to fit their strategy.

As a copywriter, I find that Role Models often treasure a story that has special meaning for them -- a perfect story to share with a colleague or a live event.

But that story may not be the most effective for their marketing. We work together to find another story that will be more likely to inspire their prospects to take action.

The Celebrity

The Celebrity is almost the exact opposite of the Role Model. He tells stories that give glimpses into his lifestyle and shows his audience how much fun he's having.

Alexandria Brown has been a strong exemplar of this archetype. She has shared stories of staying in the Four Seasons hotel with her family. She's talked about a night on the town with her girlfriends; everyone dressed up and she rented a limo to drive everyone to the different stops and made sure everyone got home safely.

A marketing consultant we'll call Hector also draws on the celebrity archetype. He shares stories of growing up in a welfare family. But he draws credibility from stories about his current luxurious lifestyle, with \$400 haircuts and an amazing apartment in New York City.

Yet another marketing consultant mentions casually, "I deposit \$8000 a month into my savings account. That's after I pay all the household bills for my family."

This story archetype doesn't require you to be a celebrity. You need to make a credible claim that you earned this lifestyle with the talents and skills you're hoping to sell. Your lifestyle and wealth become your credentials.

Pitfalls: Celebrities need to be able to deliver on their very strong promises. They may need to change their messages as they grow and change.

As a copywriter, I often work with business owners who view a particular celebrity as a mentor. What works for a celebrity archetype won't work for business owners who are starting out or who simply resonate with a different message.

Most business owners need to anticipate the question, "What can you deliver for me?" Stories about lifestyles can actually work against you.

The Educator

Educators like to tell stories when they need to communicate complex concepts, or when they anticipate disbelief or resistance from their audience. The focus is on explaining, not on getting personal. They intrigue their audiences and create "aha" moments. They attract clients who want even more.

British marketing consultant Ian Brodie shares a story about James, a young handyman. James offers to clean the gutters for a small no-brainer sum. He does a good job. As he's getting paid, he offers to do some deck maintenance for a reasonable price. When he finished that project, James casually mentions that he can do all sorts of other jobs. He ended up painting the interiors for a tidy 4-figure sum.

This story is based on Ian's personal experience, but the point of the story isn't to get to know Ian better. The listener gets introduced to the notion of the marketing funnel.

Another Educator, Tara McMullin, illustrates business mindset with a story about her husband, Sean. When Sean decided to get serious about Novel Writing Month, his mindset shifted. Instead of working at the kitchen table, he went to a coworking space. He scheduled his time to make writing a priority. This shift changed his working style and his outcome.

The story is told to offer insight into the connections among mindset, purpose and achievement. It's not about getting to know Tara and her family better, although of course that could happen as a by-product.

Pitfalls: Educators need to make their stories suspenseful and exciting, as well as knowledgeable. They need to create "aha" moments in their copy.

Educators tend to feel more like...well, educators...than marketers. As a copywriter, I often work with Educators who want to communicate knowledge but also inspire their audience to take action. They want to be approachable and friendly but their audience doesn't want them to be as personal as a Role Model.

The Innovator

The Innovator shares stories about a process, method or approach that he's developed - something that sets him apart from others who solve similar problems.

When business coach Alicia Forest started her business, her priority was spending time with her family and children with summers off. She had to invent a new way of working to earn a good living while working these hours. Her business grew more slowly than her competitors, but she missed many of the negative side effects of fast growth: divorce, weight gain, health problems, and negative emotions.

Christina Hills runs the Website Creation Workshop. Many services will teach you how to use Wordpress. Christina's program offers a unique delivery platform. Her students get to build a Wordpress site in a protected area, safe from the web crawlers. They can try different themes and experiment playfully. They leave the course with a website that can be transferred to their own host.

Pitfalls: The Innovator brings something new to the table. Clients usually feel thrilled because nothing else has worked so far. They're ready for something new.

But newness comes with risk.

First, you have to explain what you do. That's the most difficult part of being an Innovator, and that's why many of my clients seek out a Story Consultation. Your copy has to communicate value. Often that means translating a technical or complex concept into conversational language.

And second, you face resistance. We are all hard-wired to avoid trying something new. For many people, "new" means "scary" and "dangerous."

The innovator needs to find ways to make the solution seem safe as well as special.

The Passionate Advocate

The name says it all. The Passionate Advocate feels so strongly about her mission that she goes the extra mile to help her clients. She's not a charity -- she usually charges market rates -- and she's a total professional. But she understands that her clients' needs are critical to their welfare and maybe their lives.

The Passionate Advocate tells stories about how her clients experienced distress, and she came in and saved the day. She's genuinely concerned: her passion isn't a marketing ploy.

Carlos Batara, a California-based immigration lawyer, tells a story like this: "A woman called when her son disappeared in to the system. We tracked him down to a prison in Arizona.

"Lawyers were usually not allowed on weekends, but I negotiated with the warden to meet the young man and gather what we needed to prepare for a Monday hearing. It turned out he was in the US legally and we were able to get him released and returned home to a very happy mom in California."

Similarly, a wedding florist could tell a story along the lines of: "My client wanted this wedding to be perfect. At the last minute, we discovered the flowers we ordered were starting to wilt, because the temperature was considerably hotter than expected for the season."

Pitfalls: If you're a Passionate Advocate, your clients count on you to go the extra mile. But your copywriting has to do two things.

First, your audience could view you solely as a crisis manager. Your copy has to communicate exactly how you want to work with your clients. expect you to be a miracle worker.

Second, your marketing materials have to set realistic expectations. As a lawyer, you won't always be able to obtain your client's desired result. As a wedding planner, you won't always be able to fulfill every dream your bride brings to her special day.

ACTION STEP:

(1) Which of these stories resonates for you? Does one resonate immediately?

(2) Complete the following:

My ideal clients want to solve their problems by ...

My relationship with my clients is ...

To help you work through these exercises, here are examples of 3 business owners. We will follow them through all 3 steps.

EXAMPLES

Judy, a life coach, focusing on relationships, has adopted the Role Model archetype. She shares her own experience as a painfully shy, newly divorced 40-year-old entering the dating scene.

Judy attracts clients who want a step-by-step guide to entering the dating scene. They're feeling overwhelmed by all the advice they've gotten to sign up for an online dating service, join a church, see a therapist, take a class in woodworking, or go on vacation and forget the whole thing.

Harry is a financial planner, focusing on wealth management for upper income clients. His story follows the Educator archetype. He likes to share stories of how little-known financial strategies have helped clients weather the turbulence of the stock market.

Harry's clients tend to be highly educated professionals who want to make informed decisions. They rely on Harry for information about financial instruments and tax implications, tailored to their lifestyles.

Anita is an attorney specializing in estate planning. As an Innovator, she has developed a unique process to help people who dread talking to their families about their last wishes. She assembles a team that includes life coaches and therapists who can help clients navigate these conversations and even mediate them.

Step 2: FIND YOUR MESSAGE

What credibility-building stories do you use to frame your message and promise?

The Role Model talks about her personal struggles and trials. She might talk about her experiences with illness, family, learning disabilities, or mindset. She'll also have stories about clients who went from nothing to everything.

She promises simplified processes and increased confidence. She's a big fan of step-by-step and handholding.

The Celebrity talks about how she's enjoyed "insider access" to adventures and opportunities: luxury travel, meetings with famous people and other activities that suggest "insider access."

The Celebrity promises outrageously awesome outcomes. She includes the caveat "if you work hard" and has a huge section on disclaimers.

The Educator shares stories that get responses like, "I didn't know that!" He promises lots of "aha" moments that will get clients to view their challenges in a new and more helpful way.

The Innovator likes to talk about that moment when clients exclaim, "Finally the problem is solved!" after they experience her solution. She promises straightforward, actionable solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems -- and claims that you can't get this anywhere else.

The Passionate Advocate likes "saved the day" stories -- riding in like the cavalry, making heroic rescues and helping their clients avoid a terrible fate.

The Passionate Advocate has to be careful. Sometimes the client won't get what he wants. A lawyer can't guarantee the outcome of a trial. A wedding florist may have to replace the original flowers to account for changes in climate. What they can do is promise to avoid the worst outcome. You may not get citizenship but you'll get to stay in your new country. You may not get your original flowers but you will have floral arrangements your guests will admire.

ACTION STEP: What stories do you tell to illustrate your credibility? What will you promise?

ACTION STEP: How would you frame your promise? What outcomes do you deliver?

EXAMPLES:

Judy, the Role Model relationship coach, uses her own stories on blogs, ebooks and even sales letters. She promises to cut through the confusion of what's out there and help her clients find more meaningful social encounters without going through a lot of hassles.

Harry, the financial advisor who's an Educator, provides information via webinars, live classes and in-depth consultation with clients. His clients get "aha" moments when they discover they have options even in a down market.

Anita, the trust and estates lawyer who's an Innovator, promises that her clients will be able to overcome family drama to come up with realistic estate planning solutions. Her outcomes include legal documents that will help clients make sure their assets will be distributed fairly and reduce the likelihood that their heirs will end up in court, squandering money on endless legal debates.

STEP 3: TURN YOUR MESSAGE INTO A BRAND

Your brand needs to create memories and manage expectations. Here's how we make that happen:

Part 1: Your brand persona portrays you as a ...

Your brand persona is what people remember about you when you say "She's the one who..." or, "He's the only person who can..."

You can demonstrate your brand persona when you write blog posts. It's the content even more than style...the stories you tell, the words you use, the examples you select.

Role Models have a persona that's down to earth and approachable.

The Celebrity is the star of her own show.

The Educator's persona is professional and professorial

The Innovator's persona is creative, even playful.

The Passionate Advocate's persona is dedicated and committed to the cause.

Part 2: Manage your client's expectations.

In Step 2, we talked about your promise. Now we'll talk about putting boundaries around your promise to keep it realistic. Here are some limits associated with each archetype.

The Role Model has to set limits so strangers won't show up on her doorstep, thinking they're BFFs. (It's happened!)

The Celebrity has to make sure her clients realize they can learn from her - but probably won't become her.

The Educator emphasizes that learning isn't enough to get results.

The Innovator needs to stay on top of the latest tech and trends. Additionally, innovation often scares people. The Innovator needs to clarify realistic options.

The Passionate Advocate has to make sure clients don't see her as their savior and miracle worker.

Part 3: Build your brand with marketing actions.

The Role Model creates opportunities to interact directly with prospects and be generous with invitations. One of the most successful Role Models hosts "ask me anything" days and writes blog posts that invite direct replies.

The Celebrity creates offers that promise insider access and sneak peeks into a world their clients won't find anywhere else.

Educators create webinars, white papers, videos and anything filled with content that generates "aha" moments and "Wow - I never looked at it this way... this is amazing!" They also provide tons of social proof that this knowledge can change your world.

Innovators explain exactly how the innovation works, with plenty of demonstrations and detailed success stories.

Passionate Advocates create content featuring war stories that inspire confidence and trust.

EXAMPLES

Judy, the relationship coach, is totally down to earth in all her communications. She uses slangy language and encourages clients to see her as an old friend. She holds live workshops, both online and in person in her city, with role playing opportunities. She holds Q&A call-in days for clients.

Harry, the financial expert, holds webinars for clients. He frequently sends clients copies of articles that they may not have seen. He has to be careful with testimonials (they can't say, "Harry made me a millionaire!") but he can note that some clients have been with him for many years.

Anita, the attorney, has created videos of her process to alleviate client fears. Unlike most attorneys, she has cultivated an email list and sends regular messages, showcasing successful outcomes with the details disguised. She sometimes interviews coaches and counselors to share insights that will help her clients deal with the most difficult discussions and decisions.

FAQs



Can I have more than 1 story?

You may choose different archetypes for separate audiences. For instance, some audiences may see you as an Educator, others as an Innovator.

But the clearer and more consistent you can be, the easier you'll create content and carry out your marketing. And your audience will be more comfortable when they define you as a single story archetype.

Can my archetype change?

It probably *will* change as your business grows. Ali Brown's early stories focused on how she began her business in New York, living in a five-story walkup and working off her kitchen table. Later a good part of her brand included aspirational lifestyle. Today, she's married with twins, living in Arizona, and she's undoubtedly telling different stories.

But some successful business owner don't change. Connie Ragen Green has been a Role Model since she started doing business online. I haven't seen any indicators that she's going to change in the near future, although she could become a Celebrity anytime she wanted. She likes dealing with clients and messaging as a Role Model.

If I'm totally lost, where do I start?

Listen to your stories. When you find yourself telling a certain kind of story, or your audience tends to remember certain stories, you're on your way. Archetypes emerge from stories.

About The Author



I'm Cathy Goodwin, Ph.D.

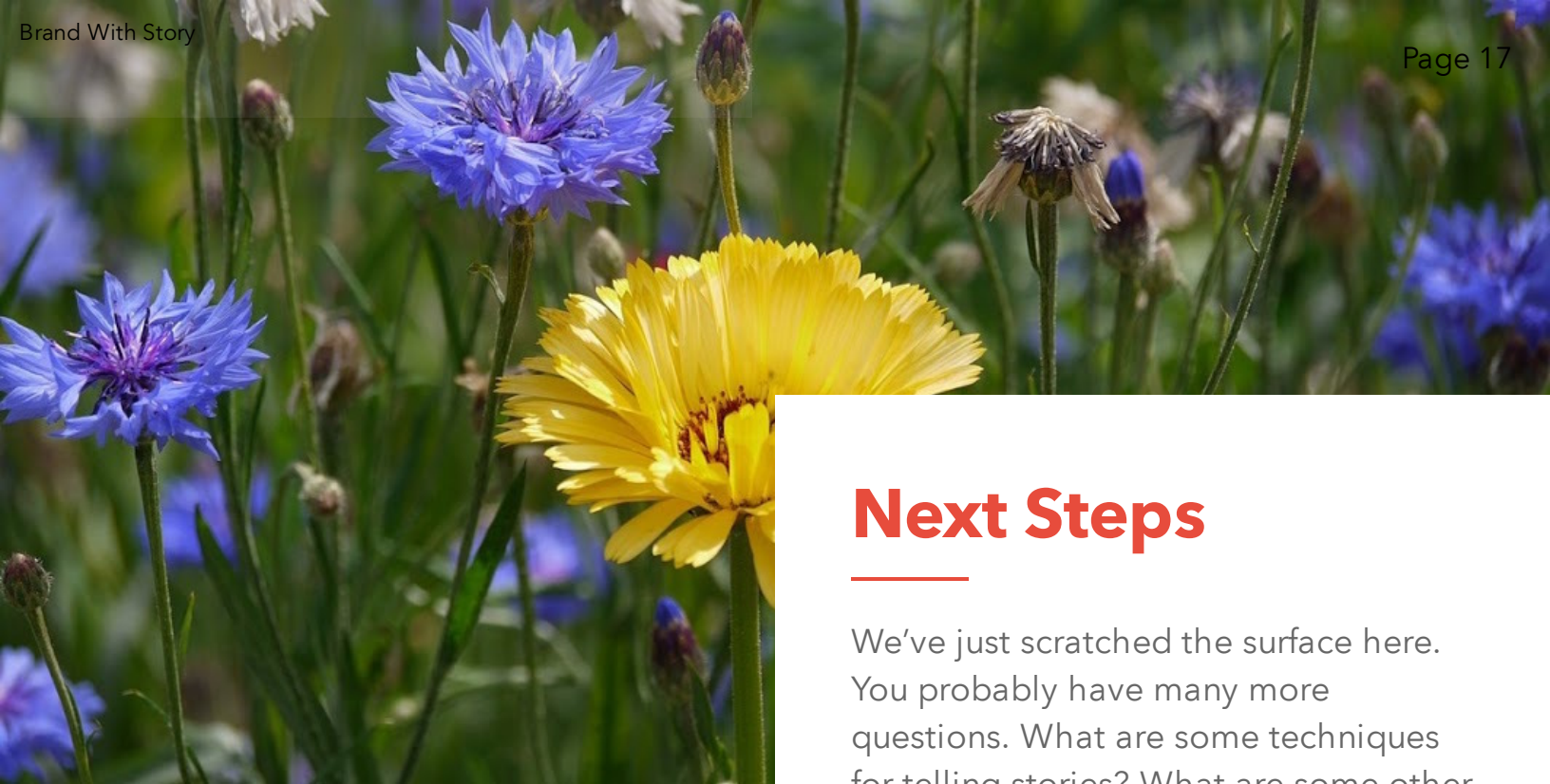
For over a decade I've been helping small business owners and independent professionals attract clients, whether they're starting out or starting over. Once you discover the power you get from a one-to-one session, you'll wonder why you EVER wasted time trying to figure things out on your own ... or why you wasted money hiring more help than you actually need.

When I first started out on the Internet, I was so terrified of sounding sales-y I went to the other extreme. My promotions were so timid, my prospects thought I was talking them out of buying. When I studied copywriting, I found straightforward ways to strengthen my message and share my value ... and my prospects began to take me seriously and sign up to become clients.

Today I work with coaches, consultants, professionals and entrepreneurs who want to combine professionalism with promotion. They want to turn visitors into prospects. They want to turn prospects into delightful, delighted clients.

And they're busy. When they're stuck, they don't want to waste time. They want a get-it-done, no-nonsense consultation so they can finish what they working on, get results, and move on to the next big thing.

And those are the folks I love to work with.



Next Steps

We've just scratched the surface here. You probably have many more questions. What are some techniques for telling stories? What are some other ways we can use stories? What are the most common storytelling mistakes?

For an in-depth, step-by-step guide, check out my online course, Build Your Brand One Story At A Time. This course introduces you to three types of storytelling that will support your business and help you get more clients. <http://mycopy.info/storybrand>

Get a customized consultation to build your brand and tell your story. The "Story Brand" consultation will be customized to your needs and interests. We'll dig into your business. We'll create or strengthen your message and help you choose stories that support your brand and resonate with your ideal clients. <http://mycopy.info/storyconsult>

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