You may think you know your story. You may even know details and dates that are important parts of it. But I’m willing to bet you don’t know the whole story, even though you’ve lived it.

In a way, we are better experts on other people’s lives, businesses and communities than we are on our own. That’s because the unbiased perspective without emotion entangled in the telling is what creates connections and encourages relationships that endure.

In my work and in my personal life, I have always told stories. I was a journalist for a long time and a book author and a teacher of writing. In 2007, I created Your People LLC, a Michigan company that provides public relations and marketing communications guidance to entrepreneurs, businesses and non-profits. This year, we are launching a number of workshops, seminars and conferences to guide entrepreneurs and non-profit leaders in storytelling to build business and community.

My well-known secret is that I don’t do business (or anything, really) according to other people’s expectations. I live outside the box. You might too since you’re an entrepreneur with a dream. Anybody who really thought about the potential outcomes or failures would never take a step toward their own exciting ventures, right?

When I got into business, I was led by a belief that everybody needs PR and not everybody should have to pay a fortune for it. Now that I’ve been in the PR biz for six years, I realize why it costs so much. If you have me do your public relations and marketing communications for you, I will spend a lot of hours telling your story to the right people to build you the strategic relationships you need to grow your efforts.

**So what if you could do all that yourself? Or at least some of that?** That’s the premise behind my upcoming DIY PR conference, later in the year. What would it be worth to gain a few skills and tools that you could implement easily into the natural course of everyday work and build your reach practically, yourself? Everyone can do that at least some of their own PR.

**The Principle:** Everyone has a story worth telling. We may humbly think there’s nothing interesting about who we are or what we do, but we are sadly mistaken. Because people do business with people, and because communities are built on compassionate and caring personalities coming together, understanding the value of your story is vital.

There’s a difference between content and storytelling. In a January Forbes article, writer Mark Evans makes this distinction: “Content is just a commodity without storytelling to give it a rock-solid foundation. Without storytelling, content is nondescript, uninspiring and, frankly, a waste of time and energy.”

So how do you discern your own story? How do you boil down all the dates and details to a quick, compelling narrative that draws people to you, and thus, to your brand?

**Discerning Your Story**

You began with a family and grew into adulthood. You were born with a personality so distinct, it directed you toward engagements and friendships and tussles and tasks. Your work path grew out of all of your life experiences, leading you to This Moment.

**What, exactly, happened to bring you to where you stand today?**

I used to tell the story that I was a writer who, when journalism started changing, needed to figure out a way to earn a living. I used to add in the quick detail that I decided to divorce my first husband when my three children were very young, creating that sense of urgency to find a steady source of income.

Well, I later learned that the story I was telling was only half of the real story. A mentor sat me down and asked me to start from the beginning. I shifted in my seat. I started to sweat. What did he want to know, exactly? Why would any business audience care about my trivial childhood insecurities? I’m not the kind of person to play the woe-is-me card as a path toward business growth.

I sat still and played out the conversation. What I discovered was that a select few details from early in my life had, in fact, directed me toward this very moment. And that story was interesting. Not only that...my story has universal truths to which other people can relate. And when that happens, we have a connection - which makes business easier and much more meaningful.

Your story is your open-door to making honest, heart-to-heart connections with the people who will patronize your business in a real and ongoing way. And using your story as a way to connect with customers toward mutual benefit is a whole lot easier than trying to do it stiffly, with only the professional viewpoint.

**Here’s what I learned**

For as long as I can remember, I was told that I was bossy and had a big mouth. Had my family told me that I was a leader and channeled that energy into a positive, rather than, let’s face it, bossy, direction, I might not be where I am today. But that bossy-big mouth billboard followed me like a wart that won’t go away. I was smart and attractive, but insecure as can be, always looking for love in the wrong places.

You know how when you’re not in alignment with yourself, everything seems to go wrong? Well, in the first year of my first marriage, I got strep throat three times. I was 29 and otherwise healthy, and my doctor said, “What’s a healthy woman like you doing getting strep throat so many times?”

Finally, the light came on and I came to the realization that I would rather spend my life alone than spend it in misery with a bad match. I filed for divorce and at the same time, started my company. Without the heaviness of a bad situation over my head, I thrived. Clients arrived, I did great work, I poured my passion into using my strong voice and leadership skills to help others build business and brand awareness.

That story usually causes my audience to fall into absolute silence in rapt attention. I tell them how my business has grown, and how I finally found love, and how my marriage now, is a dream. I finally found the courage to embrace my strong personality and not feel bad about it, but rather channel it toward good use.

Everyone in my audiences can relate to some element of my story: a bad relationship, a bad choice, a mistake they wish they hadn’t made, the courage to start over, the daring to create a business. I tell enough to lay the foundation for true bonding between me and the people with whom I share my journey. The universal truths in my story become evident in the faces of my audience.

Here’s another universal truth: You’ve got a valuable, compelling story. We all do. If you are honest and carefully choose the details you share, you will connect in ways you couldn’t have imagined.

Cont. on pg. 4
Chairman's’ Corner  
Entrepreneurs Alive and Doing Well In Michigan

I attended two events in the last month that illustrate the opportunities for entrepreneurship in Detroit and in the State of Michigan. First was Fast Connections Resource Expo at Macomb-OU Incubator at Velocity Collaboration Center in Sterling Heights. The second was the Xconomy Xchange: Jason Mendelson – Sustaining and Nurturing a Startup Ecosystem held at TechTown.

The Fast Connections Expo was put on by MIFASTConnect a program established by SBA and assisted by Michigan Economic Development Corporation. FASTconnect helps Michigan Entrepreneurs better leverage their SBIR/STTR grants by connecting awardees with commercialization resources within the state. The expo provided an opportunity for 39 awardees to talk with 20 different resource providers including SCORE.

The awardees were all from existing companies who had won grants and completed the first phase of their research. Almost all of them had a product or service that they were ready to take to market. They came from all parts of the State including as far away as Houghton in the U.P. It was exciting to talk to these successful entrepreneurs and see products as varied as a new material for athletic mouth guards to advanced medical devices to monitor oxygen levels or record differences in a person’s walking abilities.

The Xconomy event had a presentation by Jason Mendelson, a venture capitalist from Boulder, Colorado, describing some of the activities that they used in Boulder to encourage startups. This was followed by a panel including Mr. Mendelson and three local entrepreneurs answering questions about local efforts to connect entrepreneurs.

Some of the suggestions for a successful tech startup community include:

Let entrepreneurs, not politicians, lead with things such as twice-a-month coffee meetups (Bizdom U), brown bag lunches (Green Garage) and mentoring (SCORE).

Give before you get – Contribute something. Anything.

Give back to the community once you make it big (Dan Gilbert) or even before you make it big.

Venture capitalist and angel investors - take random meetings or walk-ins on a regular basis

Show people around town and the entrepreneur community.

Don’t complain. Act.

If you get out and around the entrepreneur communities with David Broner in Detroit or Tom Raymond in Pontiac you will see how we are in the middle of a growing and nurturing startup community that you can help.

Lorne Greenwood
Chapter Chair

Tax Season For Business Owners by Crystal Foster

Are you among the business owners who have a box of overflowing receipts with very little time to get all ready for the tax filing deadline? If so, this article is for you. Here are three reasons why stopping or spending time getting your taxes done for filling deadline may make you more money than you realize.

1. Reflection - "an unexamined life is not worth living." This holds true for your business and your business taxes. Often, for some of us, this is the only time we take a moment to say WOW! I spent that much? Why was I billed for this? Hey, I made that much, where did my money go? Let's face it with the hustle and bustle of running a small business sometime the financial impact of our action are the furthest for our mind. But, when we gather our records together we get a peak at our profits, losses, assets, etc.

2. The rewarding feeling of accomplishing an important task. Okay, I know this is a stretch for most. But, being an accountant for over five years, I have seen how relieved business owners are to know their taxes are done and they can move in to the fun things in their life like running their business.

3. Save your future for what matters. Let's face it the statement is true "There's two things you can't avoid death and taxes." If you're worried about how long it's going to take to organize one years worth of business, imagine what it will feel like to have to organize three or five years worth of business documents with the pressure of Uncle Sam over your shoulder. Having to meet a shorter deadline, because you received a letter stating you haven't filed for x number of years. He (Uncle Sam) is willing to file for you and send you a bill. Yikes! Now that is more pressure, you simply don't need.

So, take a Sunday or block a day in office that is devoted to getting 2014 taxes done. It will be worth it. Happy Organizing!
Welcome to SCORE Detroit

Recently Certified
Congratulations!

Roger Nelson, Chief Information Officer, Technology and IT Services, Business Finance, Strategy, Planning & Accounting. Currently Counseling at the Pontiac Location.

Pam Martin, Commercial Financing, Banking, Financial services and Insurance, Real Estate, Rental Services and Leasing. Currently Counseling Downtown and Establishing Location in Macomb County (Mt. Clemens)

Ranjit Roy, Mechanical Engineer - 3 years in computer industry - 12 years in automotive industry - 27 years running own engineering consulting and training business - Author of 3 books and 1 software. Currently Counseling late afternoons at the Ferndale Location.

Kenneth Johnson, (Trained Transfer Mentor) Media and Communications Technology and Web-Based Services, Transportation and Warehousing.

Welcome our New Members-in-Training:
Carlotta Tutt Holloway
Donna Hover
Atul Kalia
Howard Katz
Kenneth Taylor
Allen Weaks

The following members continue the process of working through the training system
John Turk, Rhonda Morman, Don Betts, Karim Igeria, Ted Zellers

We look forward to their active participation in the near future

SBA Updates

Loan Performance is Up:

7(a) Loan guaranty program:
Fiscal Year 2010
10-1-2009 to 9-30-2010
Total # of Loans: 1406
Total Dollar Amount: $383,632,850
Fiscal Year 2011 YTD
9-1-2011 to 5-31-2011
Total # of Loans: 1288
Total Dollar Amount: $472,511,600

504 Loan Program
Fiscal Year 2010
10-1-2009 to 9-30-2010
Total # of Loans: 208
Total Dollar Amount: $95,041,000
Fiscal Year 2011 YTD
9-1-2010 to 5-31-2011
Total # of Loans: 163
Total Dollar Amount: $71,876,000.00

SBA Updates

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SBA created a Facebook fan page and Twitter handle for SBA’s Region V Office (which covers Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin) to provide prospective, new or established persons in our small business community with financial, procurement, counseling and technical assistance information.

Right now, you can follow SBA Region V at www.facebook.com/SBAGreatlakes and www.twitter.com/SBAgreatlakes.

If you have a chance, please “like” our Facebook fan page. We hope these efforts will help you in your entrepreneurial endeavors.

Online Resources: www.sba.gov/mi

Small Business and Social Media

Innovative companies are flocking to social media as if it were some kind of superpower. Unlike a comic book hero, however, social media provides very real benefits. Many U.S. companies are getting tangible, positive ROI from their social media efforts, according to a recent survey from Tata Consultancy Services. And organizations that are fully exploiting all of social media’s potential are getting faster, better insights into their customers, thereby enabling them to build brand loyalty, expand their customer base and create more successful products. "We are well on our way toward being an always-on world," says Natarajan Chandrasekaran, Tata’s CEO and managing director. "Social networking sites are driving this change. [In our research,] companies that realized maximum gains from social media viewed it more than just a marketing channel. These companies use social media to hold meaningful conversations with their loyalists, evangelize their products to those who aren’t and listen to the voices of discontented customers." The findings divide companies into the categories of social network "leaders" (organizations getting the most benefit from social media) and "followers" (those getting the least). More than 650 U.S. companies that market directly to consumers took part in the research. See more at: http://www.baselinemag.com/social-media/slideshows/social-media-gives-companies-positive-roi.html/#!
As I travel through the small business communities in the Detroit region, entrepreneurs ask one common question; ...I'm not reaching the larger community of customers; how do I get more exposure? She/he continues to say, I need a PR plan and/or I need a good marketing plan. To my amazement, many of these business owners do not have a clear distinguish between Public Relations and/or Marketing.

There are many factors that will prevent businesses from reaching its’ desired population. As part of Best Practices, a marketing plan is a model for success. A sound marketing plan is one of the necessary elements imbedded in the business plan. A Marketing plan as defined by Entrepreneur.com, "The written document that describes your advertising and marketing efforts for the coming year; it includes a statement of the marketing situation, a discussion of target markets and company positioning and a description of the marketing mix you intend to use to reach your marketing goals." In the case of public relations, it is the foundation of building relationships. Public Relations as defined by Entrepreneur.com, "Using the news or business press to carry positive stories about your company or your products; cultivating a good relationship with local press representatives."

The spotlight in this issue is on Marketing. SCORE Detroit’s vice chair of marketing article on page 6 offers a detailed view of a good marketing plan. The front-page story, "The Art Of Telling Your Story", is on public relations. It gives a good baseline of how to begin.

New businesses are popping up throughout our region and organizations to help support the business resurgence. You can feel the business energy all around Detroit’s region. If you haven’t started your dream business, there’s no better time than now. If you are thinking about growing your business, this is your time. SCORE Detroit’s chairmen’s’ article (pg.2) is a good sampling of positive business growth in the region. You can see the level of involvement SCORE Detroit has – we have our fingers on the pulse of Detroit’s business community.

In February 2014 SCORE Detroit had its’ first meet & greet event. Mentors, clients and friends of SCORE Detroit all enjoyed mingling while taken in the complexity of Detroit’s Federal Reserve Bank-Chicago. (Networking is another form of public relations).

Look for upcoming detail on our spring mingle on May 14th.

Would you like to become a Friend of SCORE Detroit? You can email me gwendolyn.davis@scorevolunteer.org and I will send you information.

Gwendolyn Esco Davis

From the Editor’s Desk.....

The Importance of Public Relations and Marketing in Small Businesses

Choosing what to tell

There are many points along your path that are important to include in your professional story. Let’s start with three key questions to help you frame it:

1. Who are you, truly, at the core? What matters to you, personally?
2. Why do you do the work that you do?
3. How is what you do helping the world become a better place?

You’ll notice that none of these questions ask for the price of your services or products, and none of them require the address, day and time of an upcoming sale. That stuff is easy, and you can fill it in later. Before you can claim new customers into your product or service line, you have to win their hearts. Hit on the core story behind what you’re doing and what makes you unique before they will care about any of the other stuff.

In my workshops and retreats, and in my client work, I start here. I need and want to understand the person or people I’m working with, so I can help them pull out those gold nuggets of details that make all the difference in connecting authentically with their ideal audience and building relationships of mutual benefit.

Lynne Godlodner is the Founder of Your People llc., http://www.yourppl.com/
Bernard Sullivan has been a member of SCORE since May of 2004 and continues to counsel in the Rochester Hills area.

The Sunrise Pinnacle Awards is Rochester and neighboring communities' preeminent celebration of the area's visionary entrepreneurs, business and civic leaders, and exemplary corporate citizens.

Created by the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Sunrise Pinnacle Awards event honors area businesses and leaders for their innovation, success and contributions to the quality of life in the community.

The Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce held the Sunrise Pinnacle Awards at the Royal Park Hotel in downtown Rochester, to honor various members of the community for their services. Oakland University mechanical engineering professor Chris Kobus presented the OU INC Economic Development Award to Bernard Sullivan.

Sullivan, founder of the Livonia-based Sullivan Corporation, was given the award based on his work with the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce SCORE program, which helps new businesses get off the ground. Sullivan has been a part of this entrepreneurial development program for the past decade.

Oakland University and OU INC have been involved with the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce for a number of years, and has been their lead sponsor since 2006. Chamber President Sheri Heiney is enthusiastic about the relationship with the University and with SCORE.

Acknowledgements

Happy Birthday

Jack Caminker and Jay Stark

Thank you for your Donations and Tributes

Nancy Grose, Jerry Knoppow, Eileen Hyman and Family

Anyone wishing to send a Tribute may do so by sending a check in any amount to the SCORE office along with the name and address of the persons involved.

Our Condolences

To the Family of Paul Kennedy

To the Family of Lister Worth

and to Terrence O'Flynn and Family
Marketing

...KEYS to Your Business Success

By Tom Raymond, Vice Chair Marketing—Detroit SCORE Chapter 18

Your Marketing Plan is your navigational tool to locate your Suspects, Prospects, Customers & Clients and also your path to Funding. Who is Your Customer? What Does Your Customer Look Like? What Does Your Customer Want to Buy From You? Where Will I Find My Customers? The Answers to These Questions are in You and in Your Research!

Do your research and you will answer these questions and a lot more! Targeting your customers is vital to defining your Target Markets and your Target Revenue Streams! Let's Get Down To Business!

2. Due the research into the industries you want to penetrate-sic codes/nacis codes are found in your local business library, online, thru SCORE Workshops, OCBC One Stop Shop.
3. Clearly define in writing your Products & Services in detail. Know and define your capabilities to deliver your products & services thru your research as defined in #2.
4. Define Your Ideal Customer who wants to buy your Products by understanding the Demographics of your customer, age, ethnicity, income, education etc. found in the SCORE Business Plan Workshops.
5. Determine to your customers the *direct benefits derived from buying your products & services.
6. Research your competitors who, what, when, where, why and how of them online and go visit them, investigate them, their website etc. contact the Better Business Bureau etc, Find out what they do or do not do that makes you unique?
7. Are you going to market and sell your products and services locally on or near your location; City, County, regionally, statewide, or nationally? Keep in mind your capabilities!
8. Look at your finances nothing is FREE (except SCORE & OCBC). Your start up budget is vital!
9. Your Marketing Materials and Promotions should Mirror Your Website and You need Testimonials to bring traffic to You.
10. Come to SCORE, the Oakland County Business Center, Local Business Networking to enhance your marketing plan, your demographic research, sales models and networking. Social Media, the Internet, and mobile applications can get you connected with your ideal customers.

Marketing on a Budget

10 Ways to Market Your Small Business on a Shoestring Budget

Famed author Mark Twain once said, “Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising.” But advertising can be expensive, and in a tight economy, many small businesses cut their marketing budgets first. However, when times are tough, it’s even more important to keep your business brand front and center. Social media is undoubtedly one of the most effective and affordable ways to engage your customers and keep your brand top-of-mind, but it’s not the only way. Here are ten tried and true marketing strategies that can help you market your business on a shoestring budget.

1. Craft an elevator pitch - You should be marketing all the time — wherever you are. Therefore, you need a compelling elevator pitch. You have about 6 to 8 seconds to grab someone’s attention. If you successfully engage them, then you only have a little over a minute to really sell them on your product or service.
2. Leverage your community - Think locally. What’s going on in your community? Sponsor a team or leave bookmarks at the local library. Get to know your ideal customer and think about how and where they spend their time. Then search for opportunities to get in front of your customer with your marketing message.
3. Collaborate - Put together a group of non-competitive businesses in your area and agree to cross-promote. You can use coupons, fliers, reciprocal website links, bundled promotions or social media platforms. By collaborating, you can expand your customer base because you’ll be reaching new people.
4. Network - The best way to build a business is to get out there, shake some hands, and get to know people. Networking requires a time commitment and it doesn’t provide instant gratification, but a strong network is one of the greatest assets any business person can have.
5. Give a speech - There are many organizations looking for qualified, subject-matter experts who can present to their groups. Just volunteer. You don’t have to be a pro as long as the information you share is helpful to the audience. This will help to position you as a credible authority in your field.
6. Create buzz - Because of technology, a small business owner can accomplish a lot without hiring a professional PR firm. Subscribe to Help - A - Reporter - Out www.helpareporter.com. You can respond with story ideas and resources. Some are small media opportunities, but others are major media outlets.
7. Ask for referrals - Don’t be shy about asking for customer referrals. The majority of people say they are willing to provide a referral.
8. Build relationships - It is a lot less expensive to keep a customer than it is to get a new one. That’s why establishing strong relationships with your customer base is crucial. Launch email and/or Social media campaigns to keep the communication channel open.
9. Offer coupons - Coupons are a good way for many businesses to attract new customers. People will go out of their way to use a coupon and can also generate return visits. For example, if you give a customer a coupon for a discount to use on future business, there’s a high probability they’ll be back.
10. Give it away - If someone has the opportunity to experience your product or service, chances are they will want to purchase more. Don’t be afraid to give someone a free trial sample. People are more comfortable purchasing something they have been able to experience first.

These ten, inexpensive marketing strategies will help you engage customers, build relationships, and ultimately keep your brand top-of-mind. It’s not always about the money you have to spend on marketing, it’s about the time and effort you put into it and above all, the relevance it has for your customers.

About the Author: Susan Solovic is THE Small Business Expert. Sign up for Susan’s Success Tips Newsletter and get your free copy of “Smart Marketing Strategies for Small Biz” ebook.
Save the Date: Next Meet and Greet - May 14, 2014

**Friends of SCOREDetroit** - is a program where individuals and small businesses may donate $50–$5,000 in honor of a friend or business associate that mentors for SCORE, or perhaps SCORE was helpful to you and your business or even as a way to celebrate and or honor a happy event. **SCORE Detroit Chapter 18** has a way to pay tribute to someone who has touched your life. By making a small donation to SCORE in their name, makes you a **Friend of SCOREDetroit** committed to helping make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

**SCORE with SCOREDetroit** This campaign is designed for businesses, corporations and foundation to contribute $5,000 and up. **SCORE with SCOREDetroit** provides an opportunity for us to continue with our community outreach and mentoring to thousands of small business owners in Southeast Michigan. These partnerships make it possible for **SCOREDetroit Chapter 18** to fulfill it’s dedication to help entrepreneurs make good business decisions for the life of their business. For more information on the opportunity to become a partner and **SCORE with SCOREDetroit**, please contact Vice Chair – Fundraising, Gwendolyn Esco Davis @ gwendolyn.davis@scorevolunteer.org

On February 12th we held our first Meet and Greet at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago–Detroit Branch

This was an opportunity for **SCORE** Volunteer Mentors, Supporters, and clients to meet, mix and mingle in a relaxed atmosphere.

A good time was had by all!

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SCORE is a 501(c)3 organization

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY
March was National Women's History Month, a perfect time to celebrate the accomplishments of women business owners today. Recent years have seen an increasing number of women starting businesses, and growing them into ever more substantial enterprises. There are an estimated 7.7 million majority women-owned businesses in the United States as of 2006, and another 2.7 million jointly-owned firms. The diversity of women-owned firms – both the types of businesses being created and the ethnicity of the women creating them – is also increasing. SCORE is privileged to have served some women of immense business accomplishment who serve as examples of what can be achieved. Women's History Month is a time to look back at our entrepreneurial past as well as celebrate our current progress. We Salute some of our Past and Present Notable Women Entrepreneurs: Maria Aldana – Las Cazuelas Mexican Food Restaurant, Rachel Lutz – The Peacock Room Clothing Accessory Boutique, Amy Wentrack – Orbis Holdings HRO-Human Resources Organization, Sherita Johnson – J J Non-Emergency Transportation Service, Beth Collison – Faith@Work, Book Store, Debbie Scartozzi and Carolyn Scully – Check Mate Associates, a Business Development and Marketing Firm, and of course our very own Lydia Gutierrez – Founder of Hacienda Food Manufacturers, employing many in Southwest Detroit.