



**RESPONSORY**

One Upon a Time:  
How StorySelling Can Supercharge  
Your Sales and Marketing

W H I T E  P A P E R

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# Discover the Power of StorySelling

## ***Does the name Dick Fosbury sound familiar?***

If you are a sports fan, a tad bit older, and follow the Olympics, his name will be instantly recognizable. If not, here's some background: Prior to Dick Fosbury, most elite high-jumpers used the Straddle technique, Western Roll, Eastern Cut-Off or even Scissors-Jump to clear the bar. Everyone did the high jump the same way; they ran to the bar and rolled over in a jump, face forward. Not Dick. He ran full steam ahead, contorted his body, turned and jumped backward at the bar just prior to take off, arching his back and lifting his legs over him. Everyone laughed... until he broke all the records. He won the gold medal in the 1968 Summer Olympics using his technique.

Everyone was doing the high jump the perceived correct way; but Dick and his "Fosbury Flop" showed the crowd a more effective way to do it. Every high-jumper today uses the "Fosbury Flop." The moral of the story: the popular way is not necessarily the correct way.

It's the same with regular storytelling... lots of successful salespeople and marketers do it, but they could be doing it better by transitioning to StorySelling.

It's an effective sales closing technique that will aid in soft selling your products and will become the narrative that guides your content marketing strategy. This applies to both firms that use it and to any full-service marketing agency that is hired to implement it on behalf of their clients.

**In this whitepaper, you'll discover the what, the why and the how of StorySelling, along with expert tips for doing it effectively.**

WHAT IS STORYSELLING?

STORYSELLING IN ACTION

WHY USE STORYSELLING

HOW TO TURN YOUR STORYTELLING INTO STORYSELLING

ENHANCING YOUR STORYSELLING EFFORTS

THE BOTTOM LINE

2

STORY-SELLING



## What is StorySelling?

A good story is something recipients can read easily and relate to. It effectively touches that “something” inside of them, but typically does not urge them to take action. Author Mary van de Wiel explains the power of storytelling in your communication efforts and how you and your company can benefit from it. She asks, why is storytelling so important to your business? The answer:<sup>1</sup>

- An authentic brand story makes you memorable
- It differentiates you as desirable
- It brings your brand to life
- It gives you a distinct competitive advantage
- It creates a responsive market
- It positions you as a visionary in your field

StorySelling is the art of telling an emotional and compelling story to effectively convey a call-to-action that sells a product or service or gains a donation from the recipient.

### TURNING STORYTELLING INTO STORYSELLING

Once you understand the power of *storytelling*, it's time to take this approach to the next level. The key to turning storytelling into StorySelling is to go beyond

the story and to think about your call-to-action from the prospective audience's vantage point.

If you look at Anthony Robbins, Oprah Winfrey, most seasoned politicians and legendary pitchmen, you'll discover StorySelling. It's what made Billy Mays rich and OxiClean™ famous. StorySelling took a humble operation from inside a garage and turned it into a \$325 million payoff. It's what has kept the Home Shopping Network around for more than 30 years.

StorySelling is like full-circle branding in that the story ends with a meaningful conclusion; and in the case of measurable marketing, a call-to-action to purchase or give. When done correctly, both the advertiser and the responder win because they ultimately feel good about the action they just took. Then, they go on to tell friends, engaging in additional StorySelling for you.

3

STORY-SELLING

<sup>1</sup> Mary van de Wiel, What's an Irresistible Brand Story? Why does it Matter, and Why You Should Give a Damn, <https://www.maryvandewiel.com/single-post/2017/06/19/What%E2%80%99s-an-Irresistible-Brand-Story-Why-does-it-Matter-and-Why-You-Should-Give-a-Damn>



## THE SECRET TO GREAT STORYSELLING

People hate to be sold to, but those same people love to buy, give or lend a hand. Great StorySelling:

- Gives reasons for the recipient to act and incorporates purchasing options
- Fulfills the call-to-action by explaining how the product or donation will help those who receive it
- Leads with emotion and justifies with logic. It's the logic that takes the emotional aspect of storytelling to the next level of StorySelling.

Through StorySelling techniques, companies can not only distinguish themselves from competitors and show prospects why their product or service is superior — they can nudge the recipient to a call-to-action.

4

STORY-SELLING

## Why Use StorySelling?

On average, US adults today spend slightly over 12 hours per day consuming major media.<sup>2</sup> That's 84 hours per week! With increased media exposure and an inundation of advertised media messages, it's getting harder and harder to “cut through the clutter” and make your marketing messages meaningful, even if they are relevant. While the amount of impressions we are exposed to daily is cause for debate, it's safe to say that the number is off the charts compared to only five or ten years ago. Therein lies the challenge.

<sup>2</sup> eMarketer, US Time Spent with Media: eMarketer's Updated Estimates and Forecast for 2014-2019, April 2017

## GRANTING SALES WISHES WITH EFFECTIVE STORYSELLING

EyeMed Vision Care enlisted Responsory to develop a multichannel campaign to capture the attention of historically cold broker prospects. The end goal: Encourage these brokers to consider EyeMed as a top vision benefits solution.

Responsory developed an integrated campaign that blended StorySelling with traditional direct response tactics and cutting-edge, digital technology.

### Irresistible Packaging and Relevant Messaging Drive Results

The “Make a Wish” theme played off the idea of making sales easier for the broker. The messaging walked them through EyeMed's compelling brand narrative, speaking to their pain points and specific needs and challenges.

The story came to life through multiple touches, including a dimensional mail package with a unique teaser gift, follow-up emails, Smart Zones digital advertising and an interactive landing page. The big offer? A modern-day genie lamp – an Amazon Echo Dot. And to complete the experience, we developed a custom Alexa Skill that EyeMed sales reps demoed during the sales meeting.

**To date, the campaign has resulted in 109 sales appointments (a 15% response rate!) with tough-to-motivate broker prospects.**





# 5 Tips to Turn Your Storytelling into StorySelling



## 1. START WITH A GOAL

Great StorySelling, like great marketing itself, begins with a goal. You need to determine what you expect your StorySelling efforts will do in terms of increased leads, conversions to sales or more referrals, among other

metrics. Without an established goal, you might as well continue cold calling and hope you find the right customer through sheer luck.



## 2. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE AND IDENTIFY YOUR BRAND'S NARRATIVES

Studies indicate that perception of a brand is almost entirely emotional. Always make sure that your audience is the star of your story. Your story should be about your customers and the value they get when engaging with your product or service. Avoid bombarding your readers or listeners with complicated charts and graphs.

Begin the process of StorySelling by asking a lot of questions so that you can truly understand what is important to your prospect or customers.

Once you understand their wants and needs, you can craft a brilliant, real-life example that will resonate with them at each stage of the sales funnel.

### Take a careful look at your audience and ask yourself:

- What sorts of stories will appeal to my target personas?
- What interests them?
- What are they looking for?
- What are their pain points?
- How can we help them?



## 3. CONSIDER WHAT MAKES A STORY COMPELLING

### Powerful stories:

- Must be authentic
- Come alive with personality, flair and interest
- Give life and meaning to characters and surroundings
- Build a framework and background
- Resonate with your audience
- Point to a greater cause
- Show how the hero saves the day (help your audience identify with a character to see how your product or service can fit into their lives)



## 5 Tips to Turn Your Storytelling into StorySelling



### 4. CRAFT YOUR STORY

The **philosophy behind your brand** will help you determine the story to tell.

- Why do you do what you do? What's your vision? What makes your product or service different?
- Write a short synopsis as if you're talking about your favorite film or TV show

#### Clarify the overarching idea of your story.

In other words, what do you want your audience to remember? What is the value they get when engaging with your product or service?

Build a **theme and plot** that complements your brand philosophy and resonates with your audience. Think about your story in fiction writing terms.

- Why do customers identify with your brand?
- Is there a challenge that must be overcome?
- How will you lead your audience into the next step of the journey?

6

STORY-SELLING



### 5. INCORPORATE A STRONG CALL TO ACTION

Instead of a hard sell approach, StorySelling uses intelligent, probing questions and turns those answers into a memorable story that incorporates a strong call-to-action. You naturally lead your audience to the call-to-action by first showing them how your brand, product or service creates value on their terms.

StorySelling boosts sales when implemented correctly. Not only will people want to buy what you're selling, but they will also want to buy it specifically from you, the person telling the story.

**Here's a real-life example from Responsory founder Grant A. Johnson:** *"As a youth, I wanted to purchase a good quality 35mm camera and had a very expensive brand in mind. I compared options and eventually met a salesman who convinced me to buy his brand—a name I was not even initially considering. He persuaded me through StorySelling.*

*After asking me a series of questions, he determined that my biggest fear was that the camera would break because it would not be rugged enough for my daily use. He then showed me why his camera was superior—it had a metal body, while all the other brands were made of plastic. When I was still not 100% convinced, he shared a few examples of others like me who purchased the brand and were happy with it.*

#### **Then, he did something I will never forget:**

*He put the camera on the ground and stood on it, right in front of me. The salesman likely weighed over 200 pounds. He asked if anyone else had ever done that. When I said 'no,' he explained that it was because those cameras could not withstand that type of abuse. Of course, his did. I bought his camera that day."*



## Enhancing Your StorySelling Efforts

### DEVELOP TESTIMONIALS

Testimonials, when done right, help your StorySelling efforts by adding credibility to your messaging. StorySelling makes you more successful because people remember it. In this fast-paced, uber-fragmented world we live in, testimonials make an emotional connection to your brand and lodge your product or service in the recipient's memory bank for a little bit longer, getting them to want to take action sooner, rather than later... or never.

### INCORPORATE TESTING

To help your StorySelling be the best it can be, you need to test and redefine how you execute it. The use of offers or different messaging strategies along with great guarantees will help you improve your content. A truism in marketing (assuming you have a great product or service) is this: The stronger your guarantee, the less likely the customer will have to use it. Hard to believe, but true!

### BUILD IN METRICS AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Data and metrics are a key component of successful StorySelling. As with any marketing effort, it's critical to set benchmarks and have a clear plan for how you will track results and determine success. Make sure you have a firm grasp on the purpose of your story and what you want your audience to do as a result (the call-to-action), keeping in mind that this may vary depending on where your target audience is in the buying cycle. And finally, take time to analyze your StorySelling efforts and optimize as you move forward.

### TELLING A FRESH BRAND STORY FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

A brand story told through StorySelling is more than content and a narrative. It encompasses the facts and feelings that are created by your business. Creating a compelling brand story is about building something that your target audiences care about and want to buy into.

One of our clients, Wausau Equipment Company, had undergone growth and ownership changes. The company needed a fresh brand story to reconnect with prospects and boost sales, and StorySelling offered a powerful solution.

#### Customer-Focused StorySelling Supports New Image

Responsory conducted a brand review and messaging workshop with key sales and marketing stakeholders. We walked through the sales cycle, identified customer pain points and used StorySelling to create a compelling brand narrative that would resonate with target audiences and compel prospects to engage.

After realigning the brand through a StorySelling approach, we developed a new logo and messaging platform to guide ongoing marketing endeavors. With a cohesive new brand system and creative platform, Wausau is poised to strengthen its position in the market.





## The Bottom Line

The amount of media exposure and advertising messages we are exposed to is not decreasing anytime soon. As we become overexposed to all things media, we crave simplicity. StorySelling does exactly that. It plays off simplicity and makes your message more effective. It sets you apart, makes you memorable and encourages your prospects to take action and do so now.

If you're looking to increase your sales, incorporate StorySelling into your marketing, advertising and face-to-face meetings starting today. By understanding your prospect and client needs and demonstrating that you can meet those needs through great storytelling that incorporates a strong call-to-action, you will become an effective and entertaining StorySeller. And your ROI will prove it.

Discover how StorySelling can help reshape your marketing strategy. Contact Responsory at [info@responsory.com](mailto:info@responsory.com) or **(800) 710-2750**.

### ABOUT RESPONSORY

Responsory, a Johnson Direct LLC company, is an ROI-focused, multichannel marketing agency located in the metro Milwaukee area.

The agency provides traditional and digital advertising, brand development, consulting, creative services, content marketing, email marketing, direct mail, interactive design and development, public relations and ePR, search engine optimization and social media.

Through its proprietary Direct Branding<sup>SM</sup> process, Responsory delivers innovative, data-driven marketing solutions that achieve measurable results for clients. To learn more about Responsory, visit [responsory.com](http://responsory.com).