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ENGAGING MARKETING MINDS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020



# MAKE IT A... STORY

THE POWER OF METAPHORS AND ANALOGY IN STORYTELLING





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# I SEE YOU

# A

wareness is the first step to marketing success. Nobody can buy from you unless they know who you are. And nobody will buy from you unless they are at least somewhat interested in your solutions. Yet, most businesses are married to the concept of immediate ROI and ignore the impact that awareness has on the business.

Being unaware is a huge issue in today's world. And it is happening more regularly in the modern business climate. People may offend others inadvertently. Sales can be lost by ignoring a client's concern. Or a leader may lose the faith of her team by not listening to their input. All in all, the cost of being unaware is enormous. And becoming more aware costs very little and pays great dividends over time.

When we are unaware, we do not challenge outdated assumptions. We limit our perspective and we fail to evolve. Many of us get frustrated when people are unaware of our own existence. We wish they could see how robust their lives would be with us in it. But just like our personal lives, awareness starts with listening. And if we took the time to be more conscious of others, we could start to ignite the power within ourselves.

Companies are feeling the brunt of our lack of awareness. Markets are changing faster than organizations can reinvent themselves. Leaders are being questioned about their ability to lead change in the future, while studies show a high level of employee disengagement. As a result, brands are hindered by slow execution, a lack of growth and unhealthy cultures.

We are heading toward to a new decade and it may make sense to simply take note of others. Awareness is a derivative of being more aware of others. So, if you want people to know you, get to know them first. Being conscious of others may seem pretty obvious, but sometimes the simple answer is the best. Next year will be one to become more aware and to see a world of possibilities.

We wish you all the best in the new decade and beyond. In the meantime, enjoy our latest issue.

Warmest Regards,



Gina M. Danner, CEO



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make it real**

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**AWARENESS IS A DERIVATIVE OF  
BEING MORE AWARE OF OTHERS.  
SO, IF YOU WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW  
YOU, GET TO KNOW THEM FIRST.**

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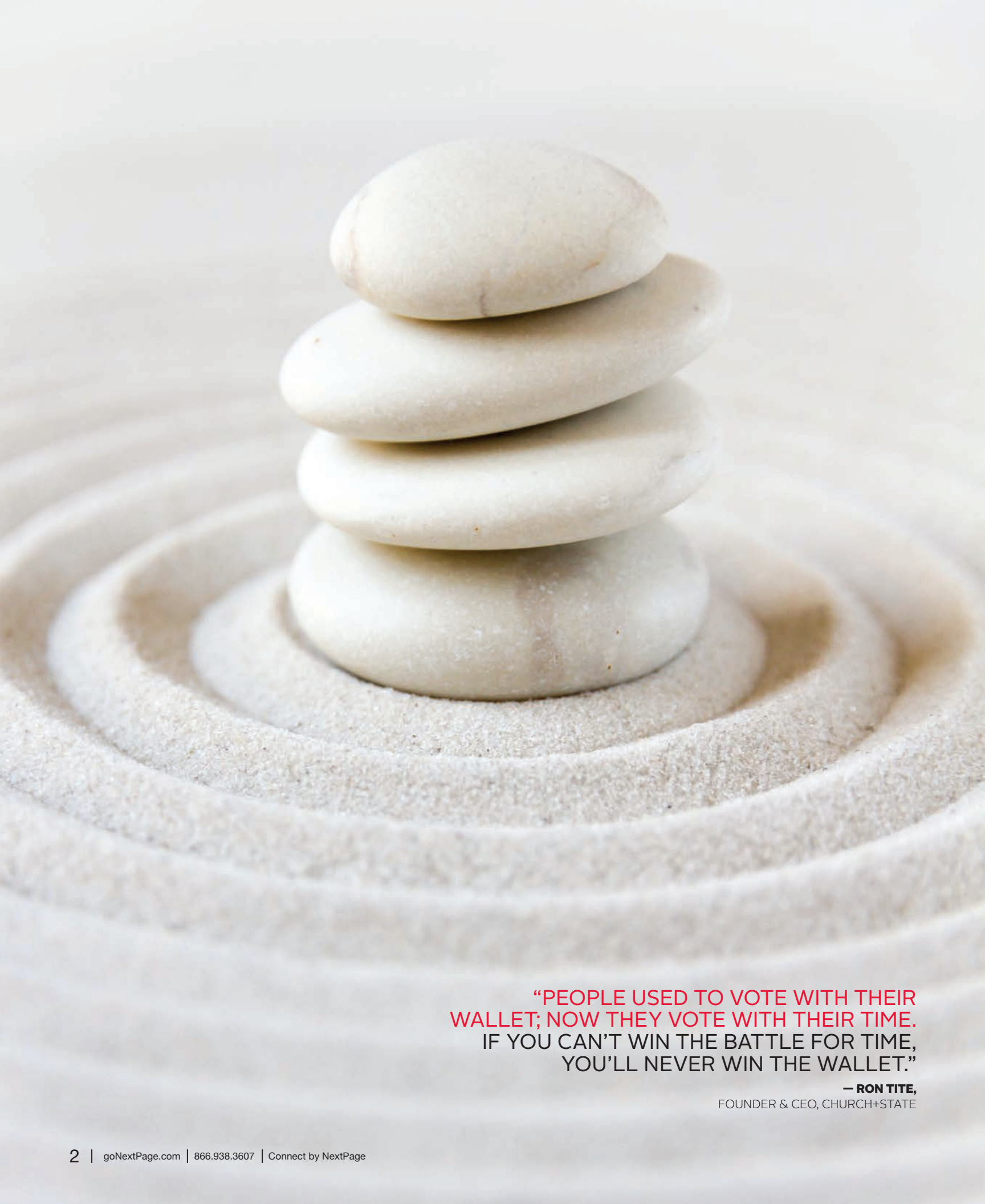
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**“PEOPLE USED TO VOTE WITH THEIR  
WALLET; NOW THEY VOTE WITH THEIR TIME.  
IF YOU CAN’T WIN THE BATTLE FOR TIME,  
YOU’LL NEVER WIN THE WALLET.”**

**— RON TITE,**  
FOUNDER & CEO, CHURCH+STATE



# PURPOSEFULLY



## **DURING THE 2011 THANKSGIVING**

shopping season, outdoor gear and apparel designer Patagonia ran an ad that turned more than a few heads. In big, bold letters, the ad read, "Don't buy this jacket." A closer look at the brand's decision showed how it detailed the detrimental cost one of its best-selling jackets had on the environment. Even more groundbreaking, the brand recommended that its customers consider buying a used Patagonia product instead of the newer one.

That year, Patagonia's revenue grew about 30%.

Patagonia's strategy, one which is rooted in a "buy less, buy quality" philosophy, centers on the belief that the purpose of a company is not always to make money. Sometimes, the mission can be to advance a cause or draw attention to a situation that has fallen off the radar. Truth be told, the brand literally tells its customers not to buy its clothing and invest in used versions instead.

According to a 2017 YouGov survey, 61% of outdoor retail customers consider themselves well-dressed, stylish individuals. Interestingly, the study also showed that when it comes to having ethical shopping habits, 69% of Patagonia customers say they like to be conscious of where their products come from, while 67% believe it is important to protect the environment.

"Patagonia is an ideal example of a brand that does cause marketing exceptionally well," says Shahla Hebets, founder and CEO, Think Media Consulting. "It understands



**“UNCOVERING ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE DOES NOT REQUIRE YEARS OF NAVEL GAZING, IN ALL PROBABILITY, IT ALREADY EXISTS EMBEDDED WITHIN THE VALUES OF THE BRAND.”**

**— JANE HORAN, FOUNDER, THE HORAN GROUP**

what its customers care about. It understands that protecting the planet is core to who its customers are, and that it wants to support brands that reflect its thoughts.”

That’s why Patagonia continues to make environmental activism synonymous with its brand. For example, a 2018 Cone/Porter Novelli Purpose Study found that


77% of consumers feel more connected to companies that care about environmental issues, which means that Patagonia’s strategy does not just ingratiate itself with its loyal customer base, it also appeals to new customers. The brand’s focus remains centered on fostering customer loyalty through emotional triggers. Through donations to environmental

causes, efforts to expand the functional life of its products, investments in optimized sustainability, and the use of recycled and organic materials, Patagonia backs its eco-responsible talk with concrete actions.

Levi’s is another example of a brand that has taken its message of corporate responsibility to the people with initiatives like dramatically reducing the water usage in their denim production and its recent partnership with Everytown for Gun Safety, a movement geared toward fighting for common-sense reforms to reduce gun violence.

“Clearly, Levi’s sees the rewards and long-term success of taking a stand with the issues that matter to their customers,” Hebets says. “It reflects that it is listening to its customers, and the younger demographic who have embraced the brand. It is not only smart corporate responsibility, it is an astute marketing strategy which has driven resurgence in their brand.”

Hebets, who also wrote the book, “What’s Working Now? YOU-centric Marketing,” has spent the past two decades helping brands like Kellogg’s, Visa, Marriott and Apple find their branding and marketing synergies. And as she looks at a world where the call out for social issues and environmental awareness are at an all-time high, she believes that every brand must recognize the customers’ sentiments. Hint: It is not all about the money.

“Purposefully marketing is the perfect way to say essentially, ‘We hear you, and we care too,’” Hebets says. “The more brands understand this, the more they can show customers that they value them through their purpose-driven efforts.” 



# MAKE IT COUNT, MAKE IT REAL

**EARLIER THIS YEAR,** Larry Fink, CEO of Blackstone, caused a stir in the business world when he published a letter highlighting the positive relationship with purpose and profits, suggesting that CEOs should rethink their business model to deliberately link purpose with profit.

“Unnerved by fundamental economic changes and the failure of government to provide lasting solutions,” Fink wrote, “society is increasingly looking to companies, both public and private, to address pressing social and economic issues. These issues range from protecting the environment, to retirement, to gender and racial inequality, among others. Fueled in part by social media, the public pressure is on corporations to build faster and reach further than ever before. In addition to these pressures, companies must navigate the complexities of a late-cycle financial environment—including increased volatility—which can create incentives to maximize short-term returns at the expense of long-term growth.”

Jane Horan says that Fink’s letter is a call to arms. The well sought-after consultant, who has worked with brands like Kraft, Disney and GE, says that purpose has moved into the mainstream, with a slate of recent research connecting purpose and performance. For example, when management consulting firm Bain & Company examined workforce productivity and performance, it found inspired employees deliver more discretionary energy and were 125% more productive than satisfied employees.

“This inspiration comes from leaders removing barriers and connecting the firm’s purpose to the individual’s purpose,” says Horan, founder of The Horan Group and author of several books, including “Now It’s Clear: The Career You Own.”

Horan believes that connecting employees to their personal purpose drives key performance outcomes and higher levels of fulfillment. Connecting them with

organizational purpose has a knock-on effect. “Uncovering organizational purpose does not require years of navel gazing, in all probability; it already exists embedded within the values of the brand,” Horan says. “Peel back the brand to uncover values, personality, promise and ultimately, purpose.”

Ron Tite, founder and CEO of content marketing firm Church+State, says that today’s corporations are morally obligated to stand for something that transcends their shareholder constituency. “Purpose is the reason—beyond superficial profits—that you’re in business.”

An award-winning brander, Tite has helped craft the messages for brands like Air France, Evian, Fidelity, Hershey, Johnson & Johnson, Kraft, Intel, Microsoft, Volvo, and others. His philosophy on purposeful marketing falls into three areas:

## 1. THE MORAL FACTOR

Brands have to put purpose before profit because consumers want to do business with organizations that share their values. Recently, The Business Roundtable, a group of 181 CEOs representing 35% of the total market cap in the U.S., voted to define the corporation with five stakeholders in mind: Customers, Employees, Suppliers, Shareholders and the Community.

## 2. THE DIVERSIFICATION FACTOR

When a brand believes in something beyond its products and price points, it is

easier to diversify its portfolio, pivot to complementary services and generate growth. With the production of the ARIV, GM is moving into the bike market. “If it exclusively defined itself by cars, it wouldn’t be able to grow beyond cars, especially at a time when fewer people are buying cars,” Tite says.

## 3. THE PITCH FACTOR

Consumers are tired of getting pitch slapped. Everyone has a special promo, price point or sale to offer. These days, that kind of messaging is not cutting it anymore. “People used to vote with their wallet; now they vote with their time,” Tite says. “If you can’t win the battle for time, you’ll never win the wallet. Elevating the conversation to other things is refreshing for consumers and has a much better chance of cutting through.”

Every brand needs a story (or stories) to tell, which makes purposeful marketing a great feel-good story. It resonates with your customers. It increases engagement. And it creates a lasting connection.

“Aligning the brand’s purpose with its employees, interests and concerns is equally as important as allying it with their customers,” Heberts says. “They need to feel that it serves the company’s higher purpose, vision and mission. It starts by bringing your employees into the discussion and sharing your customer behaviors, attitudes and interests.”





# MAKE IT A...

## THE POWER OF METAPHORS AND ANALOGY IN STORYTELLING BY ALYSSA RUANE

Think your product is perfect? Cool, but that won't help you sell more of it. John Livesay, author of "Better Selling Through Storytelling," learned this the old-fashioned way. Before the Great Recession hit, he was selling multi-million dollar computers in Silicon Valley when he had his first "a-ha moment."

Operating under the sales approach of FUD—fear, uncertainty and doubt—Livesay realized that even if he had a product that is faster, less expensive and more reliable, there are still all these psychological issues going on that he had to address with the salesperson.

That's where storytelling can steal the show (and where facts and figures become fossilized). "Most people believe, 'If I give you enough information on

my company, on my product, you'll logically make a decision,'" says Livesay, a sales keynote speaker. "The problem with that is people buy emotionally and then back it up with logic."

As a marketer or salesperson, it is crucial to know this and every other little thing about your buyer. When crafting brand communications or preparing your pitch, beginning with your audience's pain points is the first place to start, says Nancy Duarte, author of "DataStory: Explain Data and Inspire Action Through Story."

"Most people start with themselves instead of the customer and the problem they have and how to solve it," Duarte says, whose Silicon Valley company, Duarte, is in its 31st year.









In every story, there is a protagonist or a hero. Both Duarte and Livesay make it clear that the marketer and salesperson play the mentor, not the hero. You are like Obi Wan Kenobi, bringing a lightsaber and The Force to Luke Skywalker, Duarte says. Or, as Livesay suggests, you are like a Sherpa leading hikers up Mount Everest.

By bringing story into sales, you are showing the customer the full context of what your product or service can do for them. With fact-centric sales, the customer's connection to your brand is a lost battle from the start. So what if you have 22 locations? Why do I care if I only live near one?

"Tell your story, not your information," Livesay reiterates.

Duarte says that one of the things stories do is make you authentic, more vulnerable. A lot of people do not like to talk about the tough stuff, or "the messy middle," as she calls it. But once you show your buyer that you had a problem similar to theirs, and you solved it, they will be more likely to relate (and buy in).

For true impact, turn your case studies into memorable stories. When you use storytelling and structure to communicate your brand to customers, you help them visualize themselves in the story with your brand. It is just natural. "Storytelling is in our DNA. We're wired for stories," Livesay says.

Duarte envisions a trend where instead of having a bunch of closers, we have a bunch of relational people who truly are in it for the relationship.

#### **LESSON LEARNED, LESSON SHARED**

To infuse your sales with storytelling, it is important to remember the lessons you learned in school. For example, each story has four parts: exposition, problem, solution and resolution. When crafting your own sales story, Livesay says you must remember to include each important piece.

Setting the scene, describing a real problem someone had, then going into the solution and resolution will give customers a real look at how your product or service can benefit them. People do not care about state-of-the-art technology if they do not understand what it can do for their day-to-day or bottom line. Paint that picture of their pain point being relieved.

Another old-school lesson you can apply in sales today? The adage about "walking a mile in someone else's shoes" goes a long way. Empathy is the heart of your story. Without an empathetic perspective, you can't offer a solution, because you don't understand the problem.

Once you understand the problem you are working to resolve, you can figure out which story framework and/or genre to use to make the sale.

Livesay says there are four genres of storytelling. The quest genre is all about chronicling a journey. With the Wizard of


**"MOST PEOPLE BELIEVE, 'IF I GIVE YOU ENOUGH INFORMATION ON MY COMPANY, ON MY PRODUCT, YOU'LL LOGICALLY MAKE A DECISION. THE PROBLEM WITH THAT IS PEOPLE BUY EMOTIONALLY AND THEN BACK IT UP WITH LOGIC.'"**

**— JOHN LIVESAY,**

AUTHOR, 'BETTER SELLING THROUGH STORYTELLING'

Oz genre, you're leaving home, having an adventure, then coming back home to tell your friends about the adventure. The rags-to-riches storyline is not new, but for well-known brands, it can be a smart way to show new consumers your humble beginnings. Lastly, the consumer can be your storyteller—e.g. brand ambassadors, influencer campaigns, and good old word-of-mouth.

With all of these options for storytelling, though, it is important to take a step back and look at your brand and your audience to find the right fit. Depending on which problem you are trying to solve, the actual story can differ quite a bit.

But if you define the impact of your product and use storytelling to tie the impact to your buyer's business outcome, do not worry—your buyer is all ears. 







# TACTICS



## OLD SCHOOL RULES

### SALES TRENDS SHOW READERS STILL LOVE PRINT BOOKS

Old school wins every time. How many times do you get to say that these days? Well, according to Association of American Publishers, print books (the old way we used to read) generated \$22.6 billion of the total \$26 billion in U.S. book sales last year—a figure that includes trade and educational books, as well as fiction. Take that e-books. If you are keeping score at home, genres that perform well in print include nature, cookery and children's books, according to Nielsen Book International.

## 5 WAYS YOU CAN BECOME A THOUGHT LEADER TODAY

You can blog, we get it. Not that there is anything wrong with that. But if you want to be recognized as a thought leader to the nth degree, you need to take your efforts to the next level. That means getting a little more creative (and in depth) in exercising your opinions, i.e., do more now. Barry Feldman, founder of Feldman Creative ([www.feldmancreative.com](http://www.feldmancreative.com)), and author of “SEO Simplified for Short Attention Spans,” lays out your plan here:

### 1. TEACH A COURSE

Create an (free) online course. Believe it or not, it is the easiest part of these strategies. Online courses give you credibility, produce leads and create passive income. Take what you do, figure out a way to share your expertise, and go.

### 2. PUBLISH RESEARCH

If you seek to engage with people, research rocks. Because content comes in all shapes and sizes, go for it. How-to's. Webinars. Whitepapers. Roundups and rants. The mother of all research: organic data. Publish it and they will come.

### 3. HOST A PODCAST

Podcasting is the new go-to thing. According to The Podcast Consumer Report, 22% of Americans listen to a podcast each week. There are few better ways to bond with your community than by them listening to you (and a guest) wax on about whatever.

### 4. PUBLIC SPEAKING

To get in front of an audience or not to ... that is the question. But when people invest time and money to attend conferences and events, they want to hear from the experts. Enter you. Speaking from experience goes a long way toward solidifying your standing.

### 5. WRITE A BOOK

We are all writers at heart. There are scores of software programs out there that can help you pull your musings into book form. You just need to find a topic that makes what you write about worth reading.



## RAISE THE ROOF

### YOUR 5-STEP PLAN TO BUILDING A BETTER CONTENT PLATFORM

**IS THERE ANYTHING WORSE** than having engaging, insightful content, only to have the presentation stink? If you are going to continue to build the content experience for your customers, you better make it count. Exquisitely designed and executed content platforms should make you stand out. Here are five ways to build a better content trap, so to speak:

- ◆ Create a dedicated content hub on your domain but separate from the main site
- ◆ Create the look, feel, and experience of a media company
- ◆ Build an owned audience with email subscriptions acquired through a masterful, multifaceted plan of

acquisition boxes, overlays, in-line forms, content upgrades, and more

- ◆ Embrace multimedia. Supplement text-based content with imagery, interactive infographics, videos, audio, quotes, shoppable media, and more
- ◆ Consider the reader experience down to the finest details—hyperlinks, chat boxes, etc.

**SOURCE:** Michael Becker, content hub manager, Emarsys, and the Content Marketing Institute ([contentmarketinginstitute.com](http://contentmarketinginstitute.com))

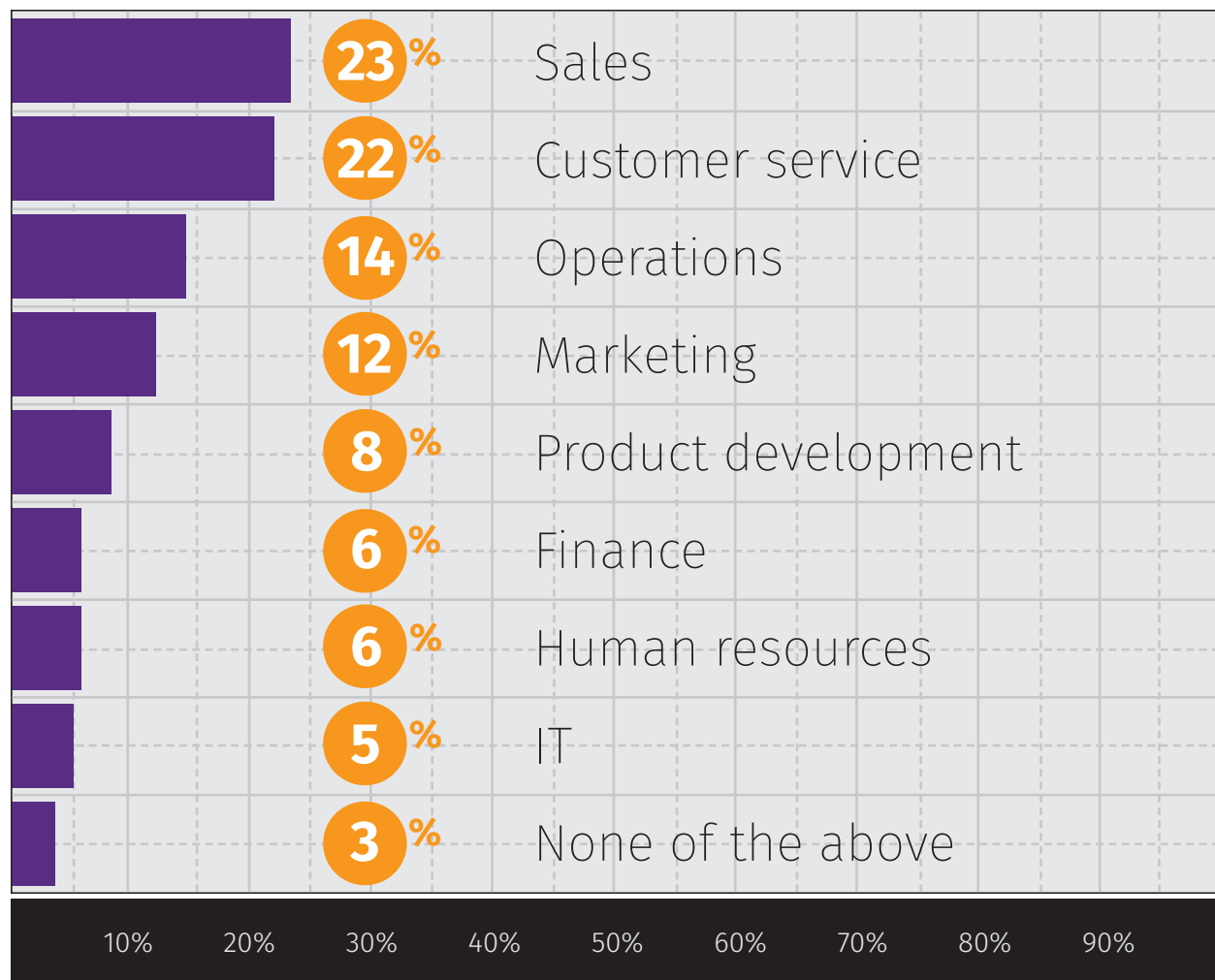


# WHAT'S YOUR SECRET TO SUCCESS?

When it comes to success at the small business level—any level, really—sales and customer service top the list. Ask any small business leader and they will tell you that the key is not only in acquiring

customers, but keeping them happy for the long haul. So, how do you do it? Salesforce's "Third Edition Small & Medium Business Trends Report" delved into the minds of 2,000-plus small and

medium business (SMB) owners to see what works for them. Here's a look at what plays the most crucial role in their success. Where does your strategy fit in:





# QA

## ON THE RECORD WITH **TORI TASCH** Senior Brand Strategist, FRCH NELSON



### **Why is it important for brands to create engaging customer experiences today?**

Think about customer experiences as the tangible relationship that brands have with their users. If a relationship in any other facet of your life wasn't engaging or enriching, you wouldn't give it the time of day. Brands must remember that consumers' time and energy are precious. Any touchpoint where your brand shows up is an opportunity to build a connection with that consumer, but it will only be successful if it truly adds value to their lives. You simply can't afford to waste that chance with a mediocre experience.

### **What are the strategic benefits of having a strong, consistent brand image today? Why does that matter more than ever?**

It's all about establishing a solid strategic foundation. One that's grounded in a strong sense of (brand) self and bleeds into everything the brand does. Culture's exposure to media, information and options is through the roof—our attention spans are shorter, our BS meter is stronger and we're more overwhelmed and fickle than ever. A strong, consistent brand image boosts awareness and recall, guarantees the brand stands out from all that noise, helps consumers anticipate expectations and, ultimately, ensures brand survival.

### **What's the best piece of advice you can give a brand today on perfecting their branding image?**

Let go of perfection. Consumers are more and more receptive to brands that experiment—even if they occasionally miss the mark. If you don't make small, smart moves along the way, you'll wake up one day and realize you fell light years behind. Experiment wisely with the core of your brand in mind; don't blindly respond to every single trend; and maintain an honest dialogue with consumers about why and

### **BRAND STRATEGIST LEADER ON PERFECTING THE ART OF CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT TODAY**

**T**ori Tasch has had a front row seat to the evolving minds of today's business executive. Whether it is an entrepreneurial company forging its way in a new endeavor or Fortune 100 brand flexing its marketing muscles, Tasch's job is to help maximize consumer engagement and solve complex issues for her partners.

With a background in branding, consulting, consumer research and innovation, the senior brand strategist for FRCH NELSON is uniquely equipped to take on the challenge. Over the years, working throughout the CPG, retail, service, B2B and non-profit sectors, Tasch has worked with the global brand experience firm whose client list includes the likes of Macy's, Saks Fifth Avenue, Tiffany's, Yum! Brands, The Kroger Co., Disney, American Girl, T-Mobile, Dick's Sporting Goods and Target Stores.

We sat down with Tasch to get her insights on why it is important to engage more with your customers.



Take the concept of a purpose-driven, lifestyle brand to the next level by authentically reflecting your brand values and messages in the way you actually run your business. Also build a portfolio of brand experiences where one-size-doesn't-fit all, allowing you to push and pull on different elements of the brand and keep consumers on their toes.

### **Is there a story you can share of a recent success where you helped a brand reinvent its creative approach?**

My favorite soundbite that I remember from school is, "Great strategists have creative envy; great creatives have strategic envy." I'm sure we've all worked with clients where creative drove the strategy ship, or vice versa. But the magic happens when creative and strategy work seamlessly together on the agency side, and the client acknowledges us as partners in both areas. Our job is to push them, while simultaneously using the process to gain alignment. A mutual recognition that strategic decisions are made with creative implications in mind, from day one. And that a purposely divergent process is key in helping to imagine those opportunities.

when you experiment, and sometimes fail.

Also let go of the misconception that consistent equals uniform. Absolutely protect your sacred brand assets and invest in ways that amplify them, but also invite consumers to interpret your brand themselves. Dimensionalize your brand to give it nuance, layers and meaning that serve niche audiences and needs.

### **From a marketing perspective, what are some of the ways that brands can step up their customer experience image?**

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