

Story Selling:

How to Tell a Story In Your
Copy That Leads To Sales

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Do you remember your parents teaching you how to tie your shoes?

If so, then there's a possibility that your parents used a story to teach you this task ("first make a bunny ear, then make another...").

And if you were one of the lucky ones who learned shoe-tying through a story, then you probably picked up the skill quite fast.

Why? Because stories are memorable. And they're also great ways to turn a complex task into a simple one.

But stories don't just work on small children. They also work on your prospects to persuade them to your viewpoint, teach them a valuable lesson or to otherwise make a point.

Problem is, a lot of people don't know how to tell a good story, especially in their sales letters. If you do it wrong, the method backfires. Instead of getting people running for your buy button, you'll get them hitting the back button.

Don't let that happen to you. Just follow these three steps for storytelling selling...

Step 1: Determine the Purpose of Your Story

Even though you're writing this story for sales copy, that doesn't necessarily mean the story's purpose is purely for persuasion. You tell a story for a variety of reasons, including:

Building rapport with your readers. A story can demonstrate to your prospects that you understand and empathize with them. And if the story is about you, the story might even show that you used to be just like them.

Connecting emotionally with your readers. People make their buying decisions based on emotion. Stories help evoke emotion. So you can see why telling stories help you persuade your prospects.

Making a point. As mentioned above, a story is memorable. It allows you to make a point that wouldn't be as effective if you just laid out the facts. For example, you can tell someone not to lie. But if you tell the story of the "Boy Who Cried Wolf," your point becomes much more effective.

Giving an example. A story is also a good way to share an example of what you're referring to in your copy. So instead of just saying that many people have problems losing weight, you can share a story about how someone jumped from diet to diet, trying to find something that worked.

Once you decided on the purpose of your story, then move on to the next step...

Step 2: Choose a Story That Suits Your Purpose

Now that you know your story's purpose, you need to come up with a story that will help you achieve this purpose.

There are numerous ways to come up with this story, including:

Think about your own life. This is a great option if you want to build rapport with your prospects and/or show them that you were once just like them.

Example: If you're selling a weight loss book, then you can share a story about how you were once overweight and how being overweight ruined your life.

Look to other peoples' lives. Maybe you have a friend, colleague or other acquaintance with a story worth sharing.

Tell a popular story from books, TV or movies. This includes Bible stories, stories from bestselling novels and stories from popular movies and television programs. The idea is to pick something really popular, something your market is likely to know about, because your target market will be able to relate to it.

Example: You could share a story about how being business makes you feel like a contestant on the reality show Survivor (outwit, outlast, outplay). A lot of people would relate to that and know what you're talking about, simply because the show has been so popular over the years.

Share another story. This could be a story you make up. Or it could be an observation that you spin into a persuasive or point-making tale.

Once you pick out a story, then move on to the last step...

Step 3: Engage Your Readers

The key to making your story work in your copy is to tell a good story.

Don't just rush through it. And don't just tell it in a monotone, "just the facts" style. You need to engage your readers. Here's how...

Think about word connotation. Let's say you're telling a story about witnessing a car accident. You can say the cars collided with one another. Or you can say they smashed into each other.

Did you see what happened there? When you read the word "smashed," you get a very different mental image as opposed to when you read the word "collided." Thus you can actually paint different mental images for your

readers simply by choosing different words. In other words, you can control how your readers respond to your story.

Engage the reader's senses. If you can engage your reader's senses, then you can pull him away from his world and into your world for a few minutes. In other words, you can get his attention. And once you have his attention, you'll be in a better attention to "tell and sell."

When you tell your story, be sure to bring in your reader's sense of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Or at least bring in as many senses as possible.

Examples:

Sight: She was wearing a brilliantly colored red and blue button-up shirt.

Hearing: The fireworks went off so loud that my ears were ringing for several minutes.

Taste: My lips puckered as soon as I tasted the sour lemonade.

Touch: I felt a painful sting as the doctor plunged the needle into my arm.

Smell: The room filled with the smell of burnt toast.

Conclusion...

A well-told story can work wonders to build rapport, make a point and persuade your prospects.

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