



E-Learning Directory

**A Business Storytelling Masterclass
free study aid***

(*These videos and articles are sourced from external websites and were all checked on June 17, 2022. Storiesforbiz.com obviously cannot guarantee they will still be live any time students access them after this date.)

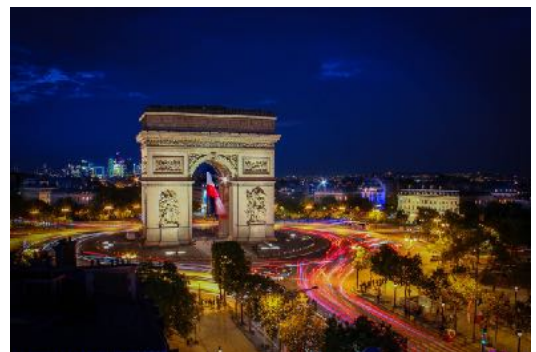
Introduction



Video: *Never underestimate the power of a great story*

I love this classic ad from French TV station **Canal+**. It's a very clever introduction to the message behind this course and the tale our protagonist tells is pretty much guaranteed to make you smile. And it's very hard to argue with the tagline, but maybe I'm biased: "Never underestimate the power of a great story."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gd3dIXXLcdE>



Objection(s)!

The Five Myths Holding You Back



Article: Journaling can do us all some good. Researchers from the University of California, Davis and the University of Miami found that keeping a journal of what you're thankful for, even if you only write in it once a week for two months, could help you feel happier... and exercise more!

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/writing-health-benefits-journal_n_4242456



Article: F Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemmingway and Franz Kafka all had access to typewriters... but instead chose to write longhand when they created their works of literary genius.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/nancyolson/2016/05/15/three-ways-that-writing-with-a-pen-positively-affects-your-brain/?sh=5ea0c5cc5705>

You might protest that today's authors are very unlikely to do so, given how far technology has come.

Tell that to Stephen King.

He famously wrote *Dreamcatcher* in cursive over six months while recuperating from a 1999 car accident.

His leg was in a painful brace and sitting down at a desk to tap away on a typewriter was just too painful for him.

He picked up a Waterman pen... *et voila*. "Suddenly I had this huge, huge book... I didn't think about the pain as much. It's like being hypnotized," he said.

He even once called a fountain pen "the world's finest word processor".

[https://
www.dayspringpens.com/
blogs/the-jotted-line/
stephen-king-fountain-
pen](https://www.dayspringpens.com/blogs/the-jotted-line/stephen-king-fountain-pen)



Engaging Our Audience



Chad Kirchoff/Unsplash

Video: *Philadelphia: I Have a Case*

You only need to watch the first 30 seconds of this clip to see the classic quote I want to point out here... “Explain it to me like I’m a six-year-old.”

Anytime you’re talking to somebody and they tell you what their job is but you still can’t quite get to grips with it... just get them to explain it to you as if you’re six and tell them you won’t be insulted. It’s amazing the clarity this brings.

As for Philadelphia itself, it’s called the City of Brotherly Love because it’s a combination of the Greek words *phileo* (love) and *adelphos* (brother). It was named by founder William Penn, who envisioned a city of religious tolerance.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUysELdf3Cw>





Video: *EDS, an HP
Company 'Cat Herders'*

This ad from **EDS Solutions** was an instant classic when it was first shown in the 2000 Super Bowl. Sure, it's got a big budget for the occasion, but it's included here to show you that solving problems is what every protagonist sets out to do in every good story.

[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=m_MaJDK3VNE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_MaJDK3VNE)

Video: *Michelin Television Commercial 1991*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=498z-z7Nio>

This ad, which ran in newspapers and magazines as well as on TV, had one of the greatest taglines in advertising history. The TV spot and print display ads both featured a baby sitting inside a tire, with the clever payoff being: "Michelin. Because so much is riding on your tires." It basically said, "Don't be a cheapskate... buy quality tires for your most precious cargo."



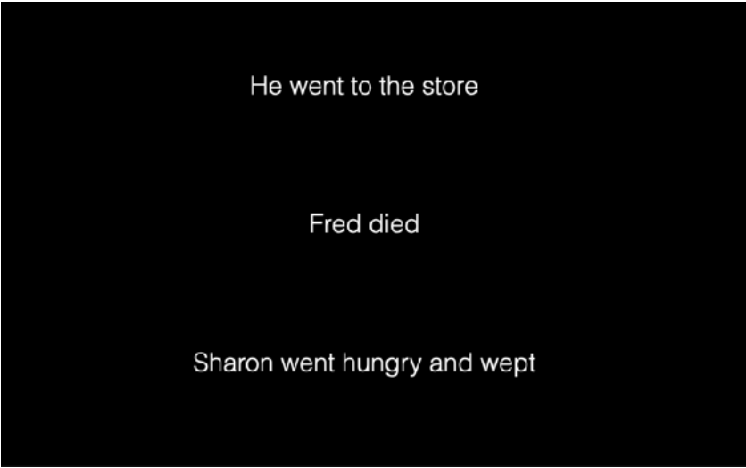
Your Brain on Stories: The Neuroscience



Video: *Future of StoryTelling: Paul Zak*

Paul Zak, a pioneering neuroeconomist, introduces a simple yet remarkable case study on how the brain responds to emotionally charged and effective storytelling.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHeqQAKHh3M>



He went to the store

Fred died

Sharon went hungry and wept

Video (on YouTube)

Search terms: *Science of
Storytelling: Stanford
Graduate School of
Business*

This is a fun explanation
of storytelling guru
Kendall Haven's simple
exercise to illustrate
some of the science
behind story structure.

(Note: Apologies but there is no link available for this video without it automatically embedding itself into the document. Please use the search terms above to view it.)

Story Structure

The Hero's Journey & Key Story Types



Video: *The Wire: All the Pieces Matter*

I love this famous clip because it drives home the point that everything is connected to everything else when it comes to stories. Greek philosopher Aristotle's thinking was critical in this regard. He was also a biologist who applied his work dissecting frogs to play structure (Greek tragedies) when he wrote his famous critique *Poetics*. Essentially he was a big believer that the parts contributed to the organism's function as a whole, in this case the organism being a living, breathing piece of art such as a play.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8OHLy0CIPs>





Video: *What Makes a Hero:*
Matthew Winkler (TED-Ed)

This great TED-Ed talk by Matthew Winkler outlines the key events that define a hero – and how mere mortals like us might have more in common with them than we think.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hhk4N9A0oCA>

Article: Nick Williams (Hero's Journey)

This is a good example of the Hero's Journey applied to an average person's life. It charts Nick Williams' ups and downs and acts as an inspirational tale for anyone who takes the time to read his story. It's basic structure is something we can learn from as we craft website or print content for our own businesses.

<https://experiencelife.lifetime.life/article/by-leaps-and-bounds-nick-williamss-success-story/>



Video: *Keep Going with Permanent TSB:*

When I first saw this TV ad for an Irish bank I was floored. That's because it was using the Hero's Journey, which I had learned about while studying screenwriting, in a pitch to consumers. And its message of perseverance echoes what the Hero's Journey is all about.

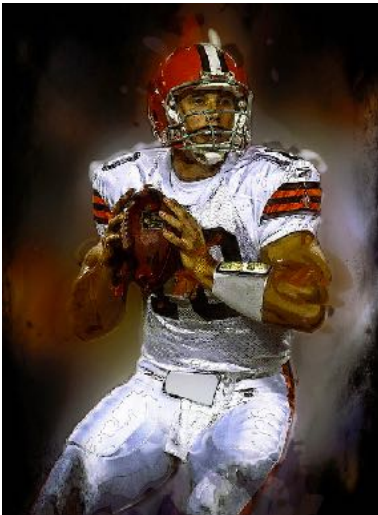
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30rgRGiQ39E>

Video: *Mercedes-Benz: The Journey*

The reason I have so many examples of the Hero's Journey story structure is that it is so common in storytelling across all mediums. This brilliant ad from Germany is also a great example of how all the pieces matter as you'll see in the opening image of a mobile hanging with wooden cars hanging over the boy's head, and more wooden cars strewn on the floor beside him.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-V2vHSuUJog>



Video: *Budweiser: Super Bowl XLVIII Puppy Love*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dlNO2trC-mk>

Article: A newspaper story about it being most popular Super Bowl commercial the year it aired. It was shown near the end of the game.

<https://eu.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2014/02/02/ad-meter-winner-story/5087939/>

Video Sequel: The Puppy Love ad was so popular that it spurred Budweiser on to create an emotional sequel (2015):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPKgC8KPBMg>

Video: *DollarShaveClub.com - Our Blades Are F***ing Great*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUG9qYTJMsI>

This ad is so inspirational to me given how it was all shot in one location with an entrepreneur and a few of his employees, with presumably next to no budget. It has 27 million views for a reason! So be inspired.



The Key Elements of a Story



Aaron Burden/Unsplash

Film Trailer: *La La Land*

Themes are so important in stories that they're used by Hollywood marketers in 30-second TV spots ahead of a film's opening weekend. This TV spot is called Dreams:

"You said it, you change your dreams and then you grow up Vs This is the dream."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3miAGAeuANQ>



Film Trailer: *Hacksaw Ridge*

This is about a World War Two US Army medic who became the first American man to receive the Medal of Honour without firing a shot, because he refused to kill people. This TV spot is called "Stay True", which is also the film's main theme.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7v1yoWWav8>



Film Trailer: *War for the Planet of the Apes*

This TV spot is called “Apes Together Strong”, essentially meaning Stronger Together, which is a common theme in storytelling:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ow6knAIV86A>

You’ll also find 15-second TV spots on YouTube with the same theme, which is a recurring one for the series of Planet of the Apes films.

In fact, this next clip is from Rise of the Planet of the Apes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20LuSlZT4S4>

Cross-platform strategy:

Guinness’ “Made of More”

The iconic brew uses its Made of More theme prominently on its website page titles and in its TV ads. Here’s the website link (Explore Guinness: Beer Made of More): <https://www.guinness.com/en-ie/>

Wheelchair Basketball TV ad campaign:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iiB3YNTcsAA>





@alexnb/Unsplash

Show, Don't Tell:

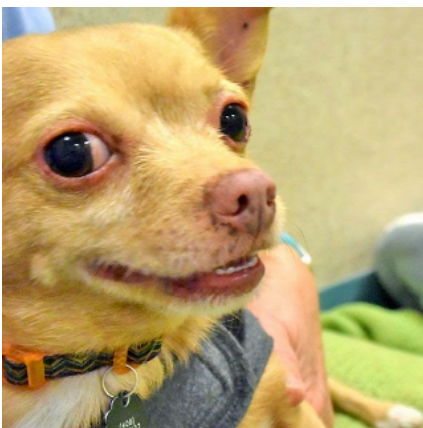
This is a brilliant ad from Argentina with NO dialogue. Saying anything more about it would only spoil its impact. So please check it out for yourself.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nySUhtaf2QQ>

Trey Parker and Matt Stone's advice

This video where the South Park creators talk to a bunch of NYU film students is gold dust simply because it will explain to you how to ensure your story moves along at an interesting clip.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGUNqq3jVLg>



Brilliant blog: *Eddie the Terrible*

This is a great post by the Humane Society of Silicon Valley and one small businesses can learn from.

<https://hssvacc.blogspot.com/2014/12/a-full-disclosure-blog-three-reasons.html>

It also got free “earned media” coverage, which shows how humorous posts can really pay off:

<https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2014/12/16/humane-society-silicon-valley-chihuahua-eddie-the-terrible/20474595/>



Clever campaign:

GE Owen ad

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW_7Q_tAk9I

Three Owen ads:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJZHxfNzBU>

These ads were all shot in single locations... the script was what made the difference.

Again, Owen has a problem in convincing others that GE is different. So in the ad, like in any story, he sets out to solve the problem. The ad was so successful in attracting new recruits who realised that GE wasn't just an industrial behemoth, but instead a *digital* industrial company, that it led to a spike in job applicants. In fact, so successful was GE in its mission that it released a second series of ads featuring would-be recruits trying to impress Owen so that they can get hired.

14 Ways to Amplify Your Content



Origin Story (First Steps):

Irish clothing company Hairy Baby is a really good example of an origin story that just sings... meaning it flows along nicely and tells us an engaging mini-tale about how Hairy Baby was founded and what truly keeps it ticking over.

Interestingly, an earlier version of this page I saw a few years ago had all the type in one big block, with no sub-headings. The page layout as it is now is infinitely more inviting.



When our brain sees lots of type on a page (online or in print) with no subheads to break it up, it basically treats the text as “homework”. It’s too much of an effort to navigate through. So please space out your paragraphs if you want people to read your copy.

<https://www.hairybaby.com/about-hairy-baby>

Emphasize benefits over features

Benefits always beat features. Say, for instance, you live in Seattle and want to get a new umbrella. You don't care about its features, you only care about the fact that it will keep you dry... which is obviously its main benefit. And you can argue that because keeping you dry solves a major problem.... ie how do I avoid getting wet?

It's a similar story with this ad for Weight Watchers.



“Awaken your incredible”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkuEA95rFOs>

Time Magazine called this Australian ad the most covert weight loss ad you'll ever see. Its tagline... Awaken Your Incredible... is something everyone aspires to when they're just trying to get through life's personal struggles, a bunch of which are shown here, which is why it's so inspiring. Its only mention of weight loss is a small logo, which shows how brilliant it is in its subtlety.



Send a message/Start a debate

This is another ad from a big brand. Obviously budget isn't the issue it is for small businesses, but I still think it's worth looking at in the hope it sparks some brilliant ideas for your own content.

Pantene's Labels
Against Women ad
from the Philippines
doesn't talk about what

its shampoo can do for your hair. Instead, it inspires women to push back against sexist stereotypes that pervade the workplace. And it uses the clever #shinestrong hashtag, deliberately giving it a meaning far beyond haircare.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kaB3BT9v-P4>

However, if you want to concentrate on sending a message through words alone, then your company blog is the perfect place to start. This item from Qualcomm has the slightly provocative title Smartphones Suck at Gaming.

In fact it flags it as one-half of a point-counterpoint, which actually gives you double the bang for your buck in terms of populating your website with engaging blogs.

It also obviously mentions its own product, or those offered by its subsidiaries.

<https://www.qualcomm.com/news/onq/2012/04/04/smartphones-suck-gaming>



Show your personal side

Here's another blog post that has a brilliant opening line and really speaks to how Southwest sees itself as the king of low-cost carriers. The line is: Have you ever thought that one trip would change your life forever? How could you not read that?

<https://community.southwest.com/t5/Blog/LUV-Is-in-the-Air/ba-p/51838>

And here's a great story about why the Airline chose the LUV ticker symbol for its NYSE listing... plus a bunch of other stories from its history to date that may hopefully inspire you in terms of digging up your own company stories.

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/072315/4-things-you-didnt-know-about-southwest-airlines.asp>

Blow them away with your usefulness

Writing web content that helps people get a better handle on things... whether that's the ever changing global picture.... Or domestic worries such as properly sorting their recycling... is always appreciated by consumers.

Two sites that do exactly this are financial services company Credit Suisse... and, on a much smaller scale, Irish waste company Thorntons Recycling.

<https://www.credit-suisse.com/about-us-news/en/articles/news-and-expertise/which-way-to-a-multipolar-world-201702.html>

<https://thorntons-recycling.ie/why-recycle>



Be Immersive

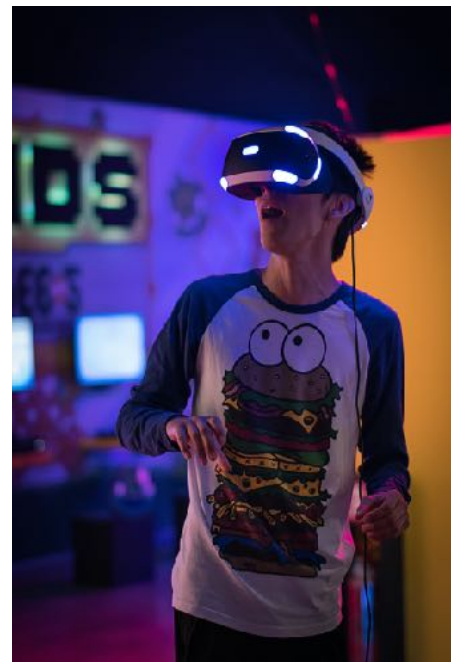
These two websites do an amazing job of truly immersing readers in the stories behind their brands.

Four Seasons Hotels know how to really make you live and breathe a stay at their luxury properties worldwide. Even the headings on its home page... Discover, Taste and Rejuvenate... suggest a very inviting read for anyone who cares to have a browse through the site.

<https://www.fourseasons.com/magazine/>

And when it comes to connecting with grass roots customers, farm equipment maker John Deere is streets ahead of almost everyone else.

<https://www.deere.com/en/publications/the-furrow/>



Its publication The Furrow is a lifestyle magazine for people interested in farming. In fact, it's the agricultural version of Rolling Stone. From its first print issue in 1895, it has now grown to a massive two million subscribers in digital and print.

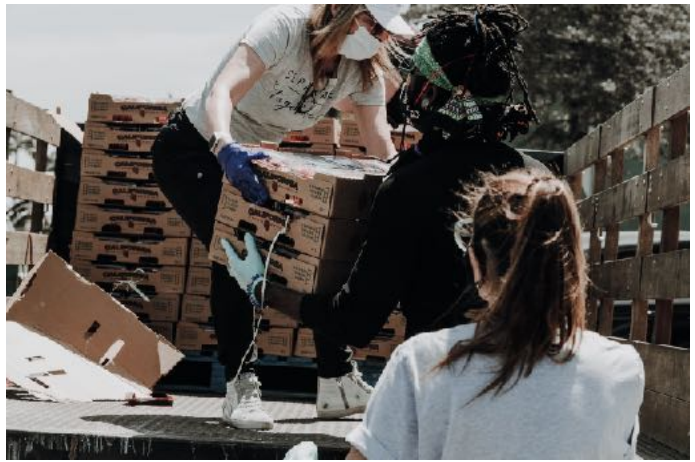
And it connects the brand to personal stories that give it a wider appeal. Some say it's one of the oldest examples of content marketing ever.

Here's a great piece that elaborates on that:

<https://contently.com/2013/10/03/the-story-behind-the-furrow-2/>

Be a Concerned Citizen/ Be Socially Responsible

Toms Shoes famously went from donating a pair of shoes to a child in the developing world for every pair sold in richer nations... to a host of other charitable initiatives. As it says on its website: “We believe in a more equitable tomorrow. That’s why we invest ⅓ of profits for grassroots good, including cash grants and partnerships with community organizations, to drive sustainable change.”



You can read more about it via the link in the E Learning Directory.
<https://www.toms.com/us/impact.html>

Reflect your Traditions and Values

As Coca-Cola says on its website, “People are at the center of everything we do, from our employees to those who touch our business to the communities we call home. Each one of us can make a big difference for a better shared future.”

It elaborates on this under a host of headings from Diversity, to Equality to Workplace Rights and a story on how it’s collaborating with tech partners to create a prototype bottle made from 100% plant-based sources.

You can see how it addresses these issues at the link in the extra resources.

<https://www.coca-colacompany.com/social-impact/people-values>





Be Open and Fess Up to Shortcomings (Because We're All Flawed)

Don't always be talking about success... mention your failures too.

We're all flawed... so it's good to be open because it humanises you and your company.

Patagonia is an excellent example of this. And it's why it has so much credibility with fans of the ethical clothing line. Here Patagonia elaborates on its efforts to make sure every worker has a right to fair compensation and a living wage... and it's a noteworthy example of how the clothing line is open and upfront with customers.

<https://eu.patagonia.com/ic/en/our-footprint/living-wage.html>

Be Memorable

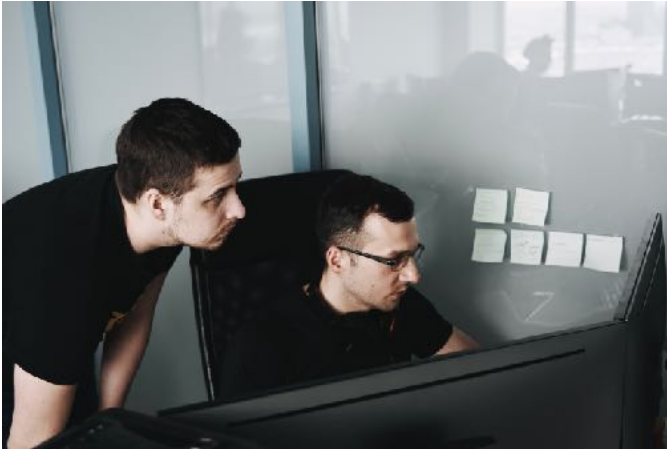
Dove created a truly moving and unforgettable ad for Father's Day 2015 that has to date racked up more than 18 million views.

The marketing for its Men + Care range aims to show that displaying real tenderness is a sign of strength. And best of all, it was apparently made from home videos.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0-5HORRXU0>

It was such a phenomenal success that it earned free media. Check out this link:
<https://www.thedrum.com/news/2015/06/16/dove-mencare-embarks-fathers-day-marketing-drive-first-fatherhood-moments-campaign>



Be an Expert

If you're a brand such as Gore_Tex, then your outdoor credentials are more than well earned.

And the brand shows what it's made of by touting its expertise with useful blogs across its website. For instance, there's one about Tips for Hiking With Dogs in the extra resources.

<https://www.gore-tex.com/blog/tips-for-hiking-with-dogs>

You can do the same for your customers or potential clients.

Another great example of this is the Pinsent Masons website. The international law firm specializes in the real estate, financial services, tech, energy and infrastructure sectors in addition to advanced manufacturing.

It even writes blog items on current issues in the news, showing that it always has its fingers on the pulse. <https://www.pinsentmasons.com/out-law>

Make (Riveting) Content They Can't Stop Thinking About

For instance, it could be funny, educational, useful, newsworthy or motivational, among others.

The Oatmeal website is an excellent example of this. Yes, it's an educational web comic, but it could still inspire you to think about your content in a whole new way... as well as its design and layout.

Take this item, for example:

https://theoatmeal.com/comics/mantis_shrimp





Remind Us of Our Shared Humanity

Clif Bar's The Story of Clif video, which has over 14 million views to date, does a great job of this. For instance, the family-owned company has already completed over 200,000 hours of community service

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Txp0MSV_OMU

And its website complements this effort.

<https://www.clifbar.com/stories/the-clif-bar-and-company-story>

It Shouldn't Feel Like Marketing:

This is another shout-out to Dove. In this campaign from 2013, Dove got a number of women to sit for two portraits, one based on how she saw herself, and another base on how a stranger saw her. Both were drawn by an FBI-trained forensic artist. And the results are surprising.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=litXW91UauE>

Here's their website's take on the initiative: <https://www.dove.com/us/en/stories/campaigns/real-beauty-sketches.html>

According to this article, the ad has been viewed in over 110 countries by over 114 million people... making it the most successful ad of all time.

<https://unruly.co/news/article/2013/05/20/dove-real-beauty-sketches-becomes-viewed-online-video-ad-time/>

