



Once upon a time...

Don't you just love a good story that entertains and inspires? Stories can be powerful. Your marketing communications need to be powerful, too. They should comprise of (and tell) a great Brand Story!

It's your job to give client a good story to tell – let your customers be your brand advocates. If you're telling great stories, people are more likely to tune in – rather than tune out. Tell a great story and people will listen. Good stories influence how you think and feel, making you believe you're part of the plot, whilst stirring feelings that pull and draw you into the script.

Stories make life interesting and give people a way to connect. When you give your audience (customer!) fun and tangible ways to get involved with a brand they love, they often jump at the chance to play a role in the story – which can then create big opportunities for brands.



There are many ways to tell **your Brand Story**

A brand story is made up of all that you are and all that you do – it's a company's ethos, mission statement, inspirations, aspirations, goals and how they convey this to their audience – comprising of employees, stakeholders and consumers. Your brand story should be the people, places and ideas that your company thrives on. It's the foundation that keeps the brand going and growing. It's a blend of those vital little core pieces of information about your business.

People love a serialised story – think of all your marketing communications channels as one weaving, ongoing, evolving, captivating conversation over time.

Each individual marketing channel provides a chance for you to frame information and/or imperatives forming as a line of conversation – brand story lines.

Your Brand Story evolves over time. It's not just lines of carefully crafted copy about your webpage – your Brand Story is communicated in the values that your company stands for, how your staff greet customers, the hurried email you sent, your website design and email campaign packaging. Anything that the customer touched or that touches the customer is your Brand Story.





More than just **words** on a page

A Brand Story is more than content and a narrative, it goes beyond what is written in the copy of a website, the text in a brochure or the presentation used to pitch to investors or customers.

Brand Stories begin with culture – your brand's intension, USP's and operations. It's the foundation of your brand and the strategy for growth – it's here that you craft your brand identity and shape perceptions.

Your Brand Story should offer a complete picture made up of facts, feeling and interpretations. The signals you send about not

just what you do and how well you do it, but about what you stand for. Build the complete picture of your brand.

Unfortunately a lot of companies don't think of themselves as a brand, or place any importance on their brand, let alone consider whether they have a story to tell.

The problem is not that they don't have a story – they just don't understand how to uncover it, or how it should be shared and communicated. Brands need to be less like marketing machines and more like 'friends' telling stories and sharing experiences.

"The best brands aren't built on great products, the best brands are built on great stories."

Ian Rowden, Chief Marketing Officer, Virgin Group





Where to start

A Brand Story begins with the connection made when the customer hears your name for the first time, when he/she sees your logo, visits your website, reads your brochure, their experience and your interactions across social media.

Let's look at a pretty familiar brand to help explain this.



Google's mission statement since 1998 has been in serving the most relevant results to its users: "organise the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful" – this mission statement does reveal their core purpose.

In 2013, Google India reinforced this mission statement by showing a 3½ minute relatable customer brand story ad, demonstrating what it does by facilitating a reunion between two childhood friends by the 1947 India-Pakistan partition. A granddaughter of one of these friends in India decides to surprise her grandfather on his birthday by reuniting him with his childhood friend (who is now in Pakistan) after over 6 decades of separation... and all with a little help from Google Search >



The results...

Google's reunion ad received over **4 million YouTube hits** in under a month, encouraging Google India to launch a successive series of small Brand Story ads featuring these two long lost best friends and their grandchildren.

Here Google demonstrates how to weave its USP into a visual narrative that reinforced its mission statement. Off the back of this they were able to continue the dialogue.

Most brand communication strategies fall down because they fail to communicate to their intended audience. Tell stories that people want to hear, and communicate stories that engage your customers and audiences with your brand and how it is relevant to them, their business and their lives.



A few handy tips

1. Honesty

Honesty and transparency are important in brand storytelling. Essentially, you are crafting stories but they need to be rooted in the reality of your brand, products and industry.

2. Personality

Infuse personality into your brand story. Brand stories are not marketing materials. They are not ads and they are not sales pitches.



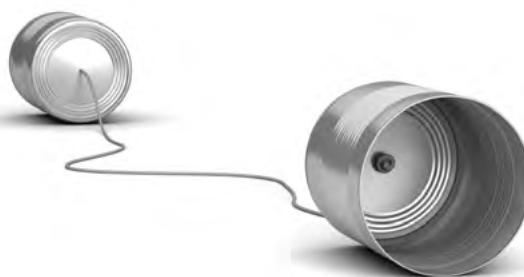
Your brand story should be told with the brand persona and the writer's personality at centre stage. Boring stories will not attract or retain existing or potential customers, or brand advocates, whereas stories brimming with personality can.

3. Engagement

Connect with your customers by telling engaging and entertaining stories that the audience want to hear.

4. On going dialogue

Most importantly, pinpoint the ways in which your Brand Story should be told across traditional and digital media platforms. A Brand Story shouldn't end with a full stop, but with a 'coma' for a continued cycle of interactive narrative and conversations.



5. Be FABulous

In telling your story, and in all marketing communications generally, remember to be FAB:

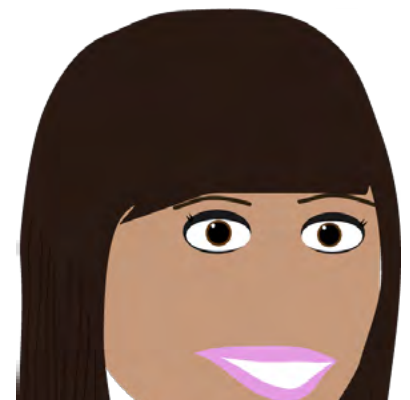
- **Features** – what your product or service actually does.
- **Advantages** – how you do it that's better than your competition; your differentiators.
- **Benefits** – most importantly, what it will mean for your clients.



What's next?

Getting your Brand Story right isn't easy, but it's incredibly important as the foundations to all your efforts in communicating your Brand values to existing and prospective customers.

If you feel you could do with some support, Square1 is perfectly positioned to help. Get in touch with us and make sure that in your Brand Story everybody lives happily ever after.



About Square1

Square1 is an award-winning marketing communications agency.

By taking our clients back to the beginning, we help them identify their points of difference and define their corporate personality. We then translate that unique essence into strategic, creative, engaging and consistent communication across all platforms – web, print, video, exhibition, social, presentation, campaign... whatever canvas is right to achieve their objectives and to bring their brands to life!

In partnership, we encourage our clients to build and nurture strong, relevant brands that not just stand out, but stand for something.



Consult. Create. Communicate.