

2016 EDITION

Storytelling

How to Acquire Customers IN THREE ACTS



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KUNO CREATIVE



Close your eyes.

Imagine you're in second grade again. It's story time, and your teacher asks you and your classmates to come sit in a circle around her chair.

You walk as quickly as possible (there's no running indoors!) and plop down cross-legged on the brown carpet. You know you are about to be transported somewhere new: outer space, a pirate ship... maybe a magical forest. As the pages turn, you forget you're in a classroom. You lose yourself in the story you're listening to—all of the sudden, you're discovering new planets, winning sword fights and swinging from vines.

How great does that sound?

It's no wonder we loved story time back then.

Even as adults, we're captivated by the power of a good story. That's a valuable piece of information for marketers who happen to be in the business of capturing buyers' attention.



“When you stumble upon a good story, it will: move you deeply, make you squirm, wake you up, make you want to share it with your best friend, make you want to rally to the cause &, once in a great while, make you want to buy.”

—Neil White, President & CEO, BBDOProximity

Storytelling is a powerful yet immensely underutilized marketing tactic. Take The LEGO Movie, which Marcus Sheridan calls “the *most effective 90-minute commercial* for a ‘toy’ we’ve ever seen.”

As a marketer, don't you think it's time you caught up?



Incorporating Storytelling into Marketing

Lead generation and marketing automation should tell a complete story through a series of interactions that extend from the top of the sales funnel to the bottom. The jury's still out on whether email marketing is an inbound or outbound technique, but one thing's no longer unclear: When you tell a story through a series of emails, your message captivates buyers more and annoys them less. **Storytelling can help humanize your brand, especially for large corporate enterprises.**

Storytelling is most effective when it's part of a campaign that uses lead nurturing and marketing automation tools to generate qualified leads. **Think of lead generation and marketing automation campaigns as three-act narratives that move your story—and your leads—forward.**

If you fail to captivate your audience at any point, you could lose their attention forever. When there's that much at stake, how do you make sure you've got something that'll woo leads from "once upon a time" to "happily ever after"?

When successful, a good story will:

- ☛ Make your marketing message exciting and energize your campaigns
- ☛ Engage with your audience and establish relationships with potential customers
- ☛ Humanize your brand, creating an emotional connection to your products and services
- ☛ Educate your audience without overwhelming your buyers

Storytelling offers an enormous opportunity to show how your product or service will affect the lives of your buyers. It's your chance to lead your target consumer group on a fantastic journey with one simple destination — conversion.

A note about the journey:

Your hero should inspire your target buyer, but here's the secret: the "hero" is your customer.

As the [Copyblogger](#) points out, "The hero of the story is **the one who is transformed** as the story progresses, from an ordinary person into someone extraordinary," — all thanks to your product or service, of course.

The task of storytelling may seem overwhelming since marketers don't traditionally focus their efforts on narrative writing. But there are steps you can take to increase your chances of success.

Here, we look at marketing your message in three acts.



ACT I

Attract Your Audience with Emotion

No matter what topic, product or industry you're writing about, there are stories to tell. Nonprofits have been using this tactic for years: When people see a frail, hungry child in Africa or rooms full of abandoned kittens with matted fur and sad eyes, they're more compelled to donate. Why? Because their emotions have been activated.

If you want potential customers to remember you, don't push products. It's a proven fact the human brain gives *special resonance to emotional memories*; use this information to your advantage. Stories are universal and can bridge the divide, which is why storytelling works so well at the top of funnel as a lead generating tool. Tell readers a story that makes them want to offer up their contact information.

Emotion doesn't have to mean sympathy or guilt. You can do a lot with positive emotions like enjoyment and pride, or even inspiration. General Electric publishes the wildly successful *GE Reports*, which produces about 10 stories a week, with a broad audience stretching from investors to geeks and technology enthusiasts. "When you tell a story and tell it right," *says Managing Editor Tomas Kellner*, "people will start paying attention."



ACT I

Attract Your Audience with Emoc

If you're having trouble finding stories to tell about your product or service, dig beyond product features and concentrate on emotional appeals. **What benefits will your customers experience if they choose to purchase from you? Be compelling. Use simple, vivid details to "show" instead of "tell" the story.**

Pricing strategy consultants INSIGHT2PROFIT used a quasi-fictional approach for the eBook, *"Why Bad Pricing Happens to Good Companies."*

The eBook, which uses details from interviews with real-life clients, takes the form of a fictional case study about Gordon McGrath, the new CFO of imaginary company, Luxentra. As readers dive deeper into the story, they follow Gordon as he navigates multiple pricing challenges, implements best practices and, ultimately, emerges as his company's pricing hero.

This approach—assembling recognizable details into a coherent, amusing narrative—offers even the most scrutinizing audience member an authentic, useful and entertaining reading experience.



"The world definitely does not need just another corporate Web site. They all telegraph, immediately, that they have something to sell. It's like going into a retail store and hearing a clerk ask, 'What can I sell you?' instead of, 'How can I help you?'"

— *The Wonderfactory*

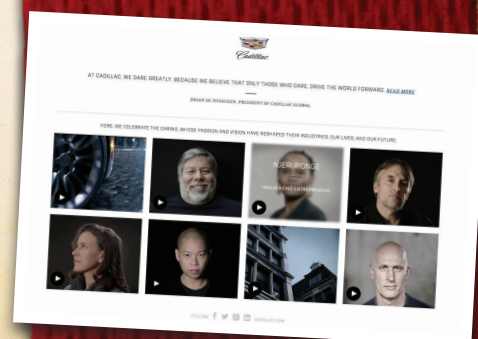
CORPORATE MANUFACTURING EXAMPLE:

In an effort to reinvent its image, Cadillac launched its *"Dare Greatly"* campaign in 2014.

The storytelling aspect is rooted in human interest, with visionary inventors, iconic designers and healthcare advocates sharing how they help "drive the world forward."

This engaging content doesn't mention horsepower, torque or anything vehicle-related. It simply resonates with the brand's target audience, and effectively builds and strengthens loyal relationships over time.

With a grandiose goal, which "celebrates the daring, whose passion and vision have reshaped their industries, our lives and our future," Cadillac provides a valuable and engaging experience for its customers. **Can your brand do the same?**



ACT II

Show Buyers the Solution to Their Problems

Now that you have leads, what are you doing with them? All of those names, emails and zip codes are a treasure trove of valuable data. This is where marketing automation comes into play. Marketing automation is an automated way to develop leads into marketing and sales qualified leads. It enables your company to deliver the right content to the right people at exactly the right time.

Once again, storytelling is a great opportunity to start building relationships with your new leads. Start by sending a series of emails that offer additional educational content for their specified issues. These emails will provide the exposition needed to introduce your solution—even if the leads aren't ready to become customers just yet. Use stories to tie your solution into the narrative and escort your leads through the sales funnel until they come out at the bottom—this time, as customers.

The breakdown of your collected leads:

- ☛ 25% are ready to buy now
- ☛ 25% are unqualified
- ☛ 50% are qualified but not ready to buy quite yet

That 50%
is the group we're interested in:

Studies show that, even though they're not sales ready at the moment, they'll likely buy from you or your competitors in the future.

ACT II

Show Buyers the Solution to Their Problems cont...

Here's where your storytelling can have a serious impact. By keeping the 50% engaged, you can inspire them to become your customers. Storytelling can be the fuel that drives your leads through the sales funnel as they search for the most efficient solutions to their problems.

When you're marketing to the 50% who aren't sales ready, the biggest mistake you can make is to send them overly salesy content. You're on their radar because they've grown interested in the story you're telling; they don't want to be jolted back to reality yet! If you can't make your product part of the story naturally, don't do it at all.

Incorporating your product into the story naturally, though, is easier than you may think. For example, Rapid Micro Biosystems, which provides innovative products for faster detection of microbial contamination, created a [*SlideShare presentation*](#) to introduce quality control microbiologists in pharmaceutical laboratories to a new technology.

The story begins with Webster, a microbial QC lab technician, experiencing a frustration with his job. The story continues as he discovers the power of automated growth-based RMM technology. Only once the "story" reaches a natural point does the brand mention its product.

The reader walks away with a better understanding of the technology and how the organization's equipment can truly improve daily workflows.



CORPORATE HEALTHCARE EXAMPLE:

ACT II Show Buyers the Solution to Their

By continuing the storytelling journey you started at the top of the sales funnel, you help potential buyers understand their problems and how to solve them. But the most important part to talk about is always the outcome—how someone’s life, work or emotional reality will improve once her problems are solved.

To make the biggest impact with regard to the outcome, weave the following into your story:

- ❖ Frustrations and worries people face while attempting to solve their problems
- ❖ Data and facts that help exemplify your solution—humans remember facts and statistics better when they are [presented in story form](#)
- ❖ Intangible effects and ultimate worth of your product or service

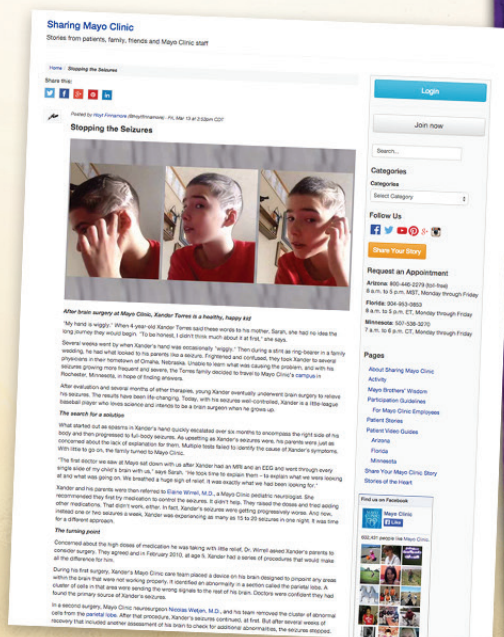
Showing your solution to the problem lends credibility to your brand, and showcasing how your solution changed the lives of your characters helps your readers get to the finish line—and become customers—faster.

The Mayo Clinic, a community health system based in Rochester, Minnesota, puts its patient stories front and center. As the headline explains, “patient stories are the story of Mayo Clinic. Patients tell that story best.”

Take Xander Torres, for example. He [underwent brain surgery](#) at Mayo Clinic and now lives a happy, healthy life. But the hospital doesn’t simply share the facts. The story begins with an intriguing yet equally heartbreaking scenario:

“My hand is wiggly.” When 4-year-old Xander Torres said these words to his mother, Sarah, she had no idea the long journey they would begin. “To be honest, I didn’t think much about it at first,” she says.

By telling such in-depth, narrative stories of patient experiences, Mayo Clinic establishes several things: It develops an emotional bond with the reader, lets him know he does not have to experience his trials on his own, and portrays the brand’s successes without boasting. **Can your organization do that?**





ACT III

Everyone Loves a Happy Ending

(With a Call to Action)

The right time to talk openly about your product is during the third act of your story. Tie together all of the messages that came before—show your character’s problem has been solved, and encourage your audience to get that same outcome. This is where you nudge marketing-qualified leads to engage in a bottom-of-the-funnel offer, such as contacting a sales rep or requesting a free demo.



Set Targets.
Meet Demands.

A goal-centered approach to marketing is the only way to meet the increasing demand for accountability.

DO YOU...

- Want to better qualify leads with nurturing campaigns?
- Require support for operating marketing automation software?
- Want a larger volume of leads for your sales team?
- Need to improve the overall efficiency of your marketing programs?
- Want to streamline the connection between your marketing software and CRM?
- Need help producing enough content for lead nurturing?

Whether you're looking to take full advantage of your marketing automation software or you simply need to boost your leads, Kuno Creative can help.

Let's start with a 15-minute call to get to know each other and see how we can work together to meet your goals.

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REQUEST A CONSULTATION

First Name *

Last *

Company Email *

Company Name *

Company Phone *

What Are Your Marketing Goals? *

What is your current CRM system? *



Even on a bottom-of-the-funnel landing page, Kuno Creative is committed to telling a story with content. On this particular page, we show that we understand the reader’s marketing goals: We identify them by name, offer solutions and paint a picture of a clear journey that can lead to a positive outcome.

ACT III

Severyone Loves a Happy Ending (With a Call to Action) cont..

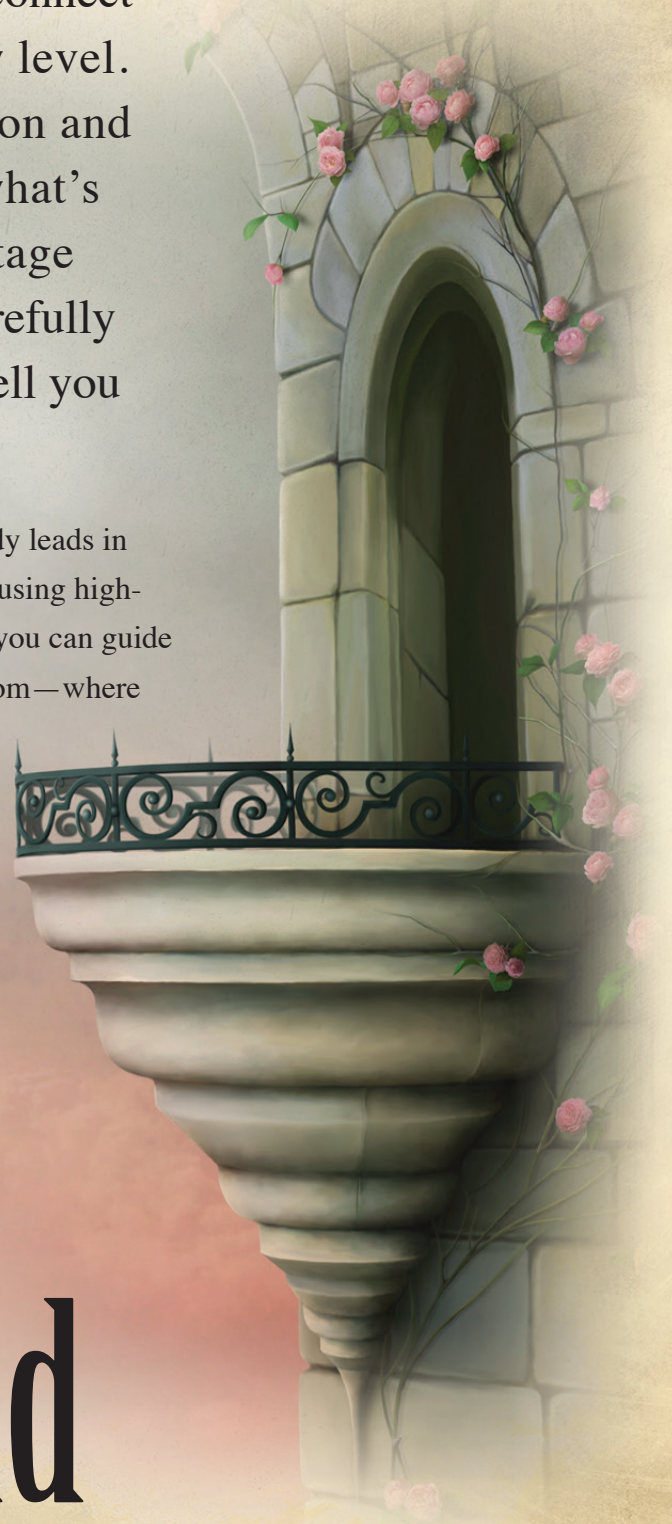
Be sure to leave your leads wanting more, but don't forget to tell them where to find it. Make your call to action quick and simple with strong action verbs. *Make it clear that taking the next step will help solve their problem.*



The Bottom Line

Storytelling helps potential buyers connect with your brand on an entirely new level. With the right marketing automation and analytics tools, you can monitor what's working and what's not at every stage of the sales funnel. If you listen carefully enough, your buyers may actually tell you the stories they want to hear.

If you want to capture the 50% of not-quite-sales-ready leads in your funnel, storytelling can be a powerful tactic. By using high-quality, emotionally relevant storytelling techniques, you can guide your leads from the top of the sales funnel to the bottom—where they can live, happily ever after.



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