

Grab Their Attention with a Story

*"The best copy touches a nerve, like a story illuminating an important truth."
- Joe Coplans, freelance copywriter*

Put yourself in your reader's shoes. Which case story would you be more likely to read based on these introductions?

Introduction - Before	Introduction - After
"All United Bank always embraced technology. So when the time required to print, copy, and distribute 100+ reports on their IBM platform crept up to two hours per day, they naturally looked for a technology solution."	"Every day, Jacob Right, VP at All United Bank, arrived at the bank ready to work. But first he had to wait for 2 or 3 people to distribute the previous day's reports. Although the bank's software provided a wealth of data consisting of 135 reports, Right was fed up."

Even for those of us that claim to not like fiction, the "After" version is more appealing because it's about a person. And most of us (Dare I say all?) have more in common with another person than with a software application, hardware server, or corporation.

Excuses, Excuses ...

I don't have room here to refute all the reasons why a company might not want to start out a marketing piece with a story, but let me quickly mention two:

"The subject won't be comfortable with us mentioning their name."

So don't use real names; instead, change the details. As a stickler for the truth, this first made me uncomfortable. But writing marketing copy isn't on the same level as journalistic reporting. As long as you're not lying about the facts ("John Smith saw a 110% increase in productivity."), changing names and minor details hurts no one.

"It's not the right approach for this piece."

I agree that not every type of marketing collateral can benefit by starting with a story. But then again, are you making this decision based on what "everyone else" in your industry is doing (i.e., what's traditional) or based on an honest, thorough evaluation of what will appeal to your prospect/client?

Put the Story on Your Project To Do List

When you're trying to organize and write a marketing piece, finding a story that you can use is probably the last thing on your mind. But I encourage you to add it to the project To Do list. Not only will your prospects and clients be more likely to read it, you'll enjoy writing it more.

I hope you enjoyed reading this issue! If you know someone who would also enjoy it, please forward it to them.

Regards,
Mary

P.S. Remember to change the copyright information (on the bottom of Web pages and other marketing collateral) from "© 2006" to "© 2007."

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If you have a writing project coming up, I'd love to talk to you about it. Please contact me for a complimentary 30-minute consultation.

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