

The Storytelling Tree – A simple concept for successful social storytelling

In 2015, Social Media Marketing still proves to be a challenge for companies of all sizes. To have a strong and successful social media strategy, you have to build a strong base. One simple – but very important step – is to work out your storytelling. In this month's Ask-the-Experts Article, Anabelle Atchison, a specialist in social business, explains the basics of social storytelling and gives us a first snap into her presentation at the [DMC Master Class](#), prior to [Teradata Connect 2015 on June 9th – 10th](#).

The words “Storytelling” and “Content Marketing” have been flying around the marketing circuit for a while now. Marketers are continually faced with a changing communication landscape – be it the rise of blogging or the mass adoption of social media channels. Though when it comes to the hypes of Storytelling and Content Marketing, one has to wonder if this isn't old news ?

The gist of it: ***To be successful and resonate with their customers, brands need to produce compelling contents, ideally in the form of engaging and emotionally appealing stories, rather than communicate with a sole product focus.*** While many marketing professionals might be under the impression they're already doing just that, a closer look at the reality of their communication will reveal that most brands are still light years away from an authentic, emotional and engaging communications strategy.

Classic product, feature and information overflow, sprinkled with every buzz word marketers can think of doesn't make websites, blogs, brochures or social media channels more engaging. ***Especially on social media, you need a good hook and a great storyline to capture the audience. The same old product slinging lingo will not cut it.***

The Storytelling Tree

Every story needs a good framework. That's why we like the concept of the Storytelling Tree. It's a simple concept that visualises the different levels companies need to address to effectively and successfully find and tell their stories. It helps marketers go from unemotional, impersonal communication to stories filled with authenticity.

- **The Trunk**

The tree trunk stands for your company's values, mission and your promise to customers. You have to know who you are and what you stand for. Being certain in yourself is the foundation of all communication. Here's where authenticity comes into play.

- **The Branches**

Once you know who you are and what you stand for, you start developing stories. Starting from who you are and what you offer, you create strings of stories and messages. What's essential here is that you don't just focus on what you want to talk about, but figure out what your target audience wants to hear. Important: Target audiences are not necessarily defined by demographics or gender, but – especially online – should be defined by a common interest.

- **The Leaves**

Each branch – each story (or campaign, as you will) – then grows itself out into different leaves. The leaves represent the various touchpoints with your target interest group. For some stories that can be the entire array of communications channels from mail to print to Facebook to TV to face to face. For other stories that might mean only your internal communications channels or only your website. The touchpoints matter in regards of the delivery format of your story, but should not dictate the story itself.

Why the roots are just as important

Unseen, but the most important part. The roots stand for the internal structures, processes and culture within your organisation. ***Without a framework and tools in place to support a new project, it's doomed to fail.*** Especially a project that touches the core of how things have been done so far. This means that organisations need to:

- Establish a joint communications guideline for the entire organisation: PR, Marketing, Customer Support, HR, etc.
- Create editorial processes that enable the entire organisation to go from One Voice to "One Story, Many Voices"
- Implement and utilise a tool for multiple departments to effectively manage all marketing communications streams in one place, with planning, analysis and a reporting functions



- Get Internal Communications on board to support with this change, and most importantly provide trainings for all employees on the new tools, processes and guidelines.

This article is a summary of Teradata's newsletter "Inside Digital Marketing". If this article was forwarded to you as a recommendation and you wish to receive further marketing news yourself, you can [subscribe here](#).