

People connect with stories faster than any other medium. Are you giving consumers a reason to listen to your story? Does your story align in some way with what the consumer wants in their world? A story that connects and rings true with the consumer can lead them to an experience with your brand, and can be a factor in re-engagement.

For brands with existing stories

If your brand has already crafted a story, the following checklist will help keep executions on-track:

- Executions need to be clear and consistent; all elements of the execution need to fit the message. These include:
 - product (ingredients, pack, segmentation),
 - verbal (tone, voice, language),
 - visual (substrate, styles, scale),
 - processes and
 - partnerships.
- How do you want the consumer to feel? The goal is for her to be glad that she 'found' your brand because it *belongs* in her life. Recommended: an annual review of your brand's story relative to *today's* consumers.
- What are you doing on-pack to tell the story? The pack is oftentimes the consumer's first (and may be the most frequent) encounter with your brand, so it is a natural venue for storytelling. The back panel is the default position for the brand story, as there is more real estate. On the front panel, there is also opportunity: in the SKU name, image style, layout, angle/crop of photography, etc. Don't fear breaking out from category norms when supporting your brand's unique story.
- Take the time to do it right. There is no connection with the consumer, or advantage to the brand, with inauthentic attempts at executing the brand story.

Need to craft your brand's story?

A story is an opportunity to reveal your brand's "authentic self" in such a way that the consumer feels they *know* your brand, beyond the product and benefits.

The following writing exercises will put you on the path to crafting a unique and desired brand story:

- What does your brand stand for? This can include beliefs, values, points-of-view.
- What are your brand's attributes, personality and attitude?
- Of the above, which defines your brand and sets it apart from competition?
- What about your brand resolves an emotional dilemma for the consumer? What satisfies the consumer's underlying / subconscious emotional need or desire?
- How do you want the consumer to talk about your brand to her friends?

Once you have written the answers to these questions:

- Review brand stories of the other brands in your category.
- Review brand stories of the brands that your target consumers respond favorably to.
- Start crafting a differentiated story that only your brand can own, that involves the consumer's heart and mind.



Conclusion

There are many "must-haves" for a brand; a differentiated brand story is easy for the consumer to remember, and is one aspect of word-of-mouth branding that you can positively influence.

For help with your brand's story, or a complimentary review of your current brand story by a Brandesign branding specialist, see contact information below.

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