

marketing insider

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NEWS AND KNOWLEDGE FOR
TODAY'S MARKETER



**DELIVER A 5-STAR
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**



Dear Fellow Marketer:

Gold stars as a quality standard have likely never been more important to a business than they are today – specifically in online reviews. Consider the following from BrightLocal research:

- Consumers read an average of 10 online reviews before feeling able to trust a local business.
- 57% of consumers will only use a business if it has four or more stars.
- 89% of consumers read businesses’ responses to reviews.

Most of us grew up knowing that “bad news travels fast.” Now, online business listings and company websites have supercharged the power of word-of-mouth. Customer reviews – good and bad – spread fast *and* far.

In this issue, we’re exploring some of the ways your organization can be represented across marketing channels and how everything works together to create perceptions among prospects and customers, ultimately forming your brand’s reputation. Signage (**page 12**), logoed promotional products (**page 4**) and printed communications (**page 10**) are real-world, foundational marketing strategies and tools that should be consistent in branding and messaging with your online efforts.

The goal? It’s the marketing gold standard: the 5-star customer experience (**page 6**). When every interaction with your organization is subject to review in the virtual public square, it’s wise to remember the adage, “Customer service is not a department, it’s everyone’s job.”

Let us know if you want to talk about ways to reach new markets, grow the base you already have or enhance your brand’s image. We’re here to help!

Happy Marketing,

From your friends at Allegra



C o n t e n t s

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Deliver a 5-star Customer Experience



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HOW TO TELL A GREAT NONPROFIT

Story

15 Tips
All Marketers
Can Use

Stories influence people, their emotions, behaviors and actions. Stories find their way to human hearts and heads in a way that very few (if any) other communication methods can. We are hardwired to respond to stories. We tend to remember a good story way longer than we remember a fact or figure.

This is why stories can be an incredible tool for fundraising, building awareness, mobilizing volunteers,

building trust and so much more. Nonprofits tend to have the “raw material” for powerful impact stories right at their fingertips – stories of perseverance, hope and new beginnings.

Stories create empathy. They work with commonality – highlighting things we all share or can relate to. This is incredibly meaningful to any organization, and especially a nonprofit one where emotions motivate charitable actions.

Here are 15 tips to take your storytelling to the next level:

1 Have a beginning, a middle and an end. Part of what makes a story so enticing is the structure. Make sure your story, at the very least, has these three key components:

- **Beginning:** The protagonist is placed in a context and likely has a desire or goal.
- **Middle:** In pursuing their goal, the protagonist faces challenges and takes actions.
- **End:** The protagonist's life has changed in some way. Their actions and experiences during the story have changed their situation.

2 Build characters. Characters give the audience someone to identify with, root for or root against (in case of a villain).

3 Be specific. First, help your audience understand some of the individual, emotional stories that your organization can tell; then talk about thousands you helped.

4 You can change your story. Sometimes, nonprofits inherit stories, and they feel "obliged" to keep telling them. You can change your story at any point, as long as it's aligned to your mission.

5 Know your audience. Always ask yourself, "Who am I talking to? And how am I going to tell them this story in a way that most resonates with them?" You can tell one story from many different perspectives, with different protagonists and in different formats.

6 Avoid "salesy" language. Using salesy, clinical or industry-specific language can impede individuals from understanding, connecting and empathizing – almost defeating the purpose of storytelling.

7 Include a call to action. If you have told a good story, your audience will be motivated to give. At the end of every story, place a call to action. Make sure this call to action is relevant to the story you just told.

8 Use your website. Nonprofits often use their website to show supporters their mission. This can be strengthened by using this space to highlight detailed, individual stories as well.

9 Use your blog. Compared to a website, blog posts provide more space to dive deep into the individual stories, giving your supporters a chance to learn more.

10 Use your social media. Social media tools are the perfect avenues to share stories and to get instant feedback, as well as to lead potential donors straight to your donation page.

11 Find fresh perspectives. Have the beneficiary tell the story of their life through their eyes; no one knows it better. Alternatively, consider having an employee, a contributor or a volunteer share their perspectives.

12 Use visuals. According to a study conducted by SimplyMeasured, videos are shared 12 times more often than links and text posts combined, and photos are "liked" twice as often as text updates. Consider visual mediums such as videos, photography, infographics, and even cartoons or drawings to stand out in a sea of text. Videos shot on phones can be just as, if not more, authentic.

13 Cultivate a storytelling organizational culture. Make sure your staff, board and volunteers understand how and why stories are used in fundraising. Identifying and collecting great stories should fall under everyone's job description.

14 Communicate donor impact. You can combine storytelling with impact reporting. Tell stories that directly showcase the impact your nonprofit has had, and directly highlight how a donor's contribution was used. This not only helps retain donors but attracts new ones since they get to see how their gift was or will be used.

15 Track and evaluate. When sharing stories, track their success: the number of clicks, likes, favorites, retweets, claps or vote ups – whatever the key performance indicators are for the channel you're using. Evaluate your efforts, and re-plan your marketing strategy accordingly.

The art of your story will draw your audience into your world. And the science of storytelling will help you fundraise. Storytelling is not a goal to reach; it's an ongoing process. But it is one that will be very worth it, transforming your nonprofit along the way. ■

This article has been condensed with permission. For the complete post, "*The Ultimate Guide to Nonprofit Storytelling*," visit <https://donorbox.org/nonprofit-blog/nonprofit-storytelling-guide/>.

A LASTING IMPRESSION

When you want to keep your company name and logo within easy reach, promotional products have unique staying power. Here's a breakdown of how long consumers hang on to some of the most popular products:

<p>16 Months</p>	<p>14 Months</p>	<p>14 Months</p>	<p>13 Months</p>
 <p>OUTERWEAR</p>	 <p>UMBRELLAS</p>	 <p>T-SHIRTS</p>	 <p>USB DRIVES</p>
<p>13 Months</p>	<p>13 Months</p>	<p>12 Months</p>	<p>12 Months</p>
 <p>DESK ACCESSORIES</p>	 <p>POLO SHIRTS</p>	 <p>MOBILE POWER BANKS</p>	 <p>DRINKWARE</p>
<p>11 Months</p>	<p>10 Months</p>	<p>9 Months</p>	<p>8 Months</p>
 <p>BAGS</p>	 <p>HEADWEAR</p>	 <p>WRITING INSTRUMENTS</p>	 <p>CALENDARS</p>

Ordering, Distribution and Billing are Streamlined for Multi-office Company, Thanks to Online Storefront

Challenge

A farm equipment company frequently needed printed materials and logoed apparel for its employees across its nine locations. Like many organizations with multiple offices or branches, they found it challenging to keep a far-reaching workforce well-armed with current sales and marketing collateral while maximizing budgets.

When one location's team needed product flyers, business cards, brochures or branded apparel, the process was to contact headquarters to fulfill the request. The main office would then place multiple phone calls to other locations to try to combine orders and perhaps qualify for volume discounts.

Eventually, the central accounting department would place the order, distribute the materials and allocate costs to each location.

There had to be a better way.



Solution

A key employee was familiar with the benefits of web-to-print storefronts and contacted a local provider. With this type of solution, a special website is built for the business, organization or nonprofit. Then templates for frequently ordered items are added to the site. From there, an organization's authorized users can log in to the site, place their orders and receive materials with ease.

In this case, as soon as the company solved one problem, another arose.

All of their employees are typically outfitted with branded shirts, hats, outerwear and more. But freight charges were much too high. A company representative described the situation to us, and we introduced our WorkStream™ eCommerce solution. We recommended

holding apparel orders until they qualified for free freight, bringing major savings.

Other advantages arrived with the adoption of WorkStream:

- Users appreciate the simplicity of the portal.
- The quality of the printed items and logoed apparel is consistently high.
- Branch managers enjoy the transparency the system brings to budgeting.

The company operates separate online storefronts for each of its four divisions. Well over 100 printed items and apparel products are in the mix. And, the design templates can be easily updated when needed. ■

To learn more about how WorkStream eCommerce can benefit you, contact us today.

DELIVER A 5-STAR



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE





Viewing your business or organization from your customers' perspective can be eye-opening.

No doubt, you invest lots of time, energy and money to offer a high-quality product or service. And that's important. Yet, an emotional investment in the connection between a customer and a brand is often the catalyst for loyalty and advocacy which are critical to a company's health and growth.

There's evidence that prioritizing the customer experience has a positive economic impact: 84% of companies that work to improve this area report a revenue increase.¹ And companies that excel at the customer experience grow revenues 4 to 8% above their market.²

When just 13% of consumers say they'll consider using a business that has a 1- or 2-star rating³, delivering a 5-star customer experience should be front and center for every customer touchpoint.



¹Dimension Data, ²Bain & Company, ³BrightLocal

Marketing Insider recently talked with marketing influencer Yosi Heber about how businesses can position themselves to best connect with their prospects and customers, and drive experiences that lead to positive reviews, recommendations and repeat business.



MI: What is a positioning statement, and why is it important?

HEBER: A positioning statement or strategy is an expression of how a specific product, service, brand or company fills a customer need, especially in a way that its competitors don't.

It typically includes a competitive frame (*Which category are you competing in?*), a target audience (*What type of customer do you want to reach?*), the actual positioning statement (*What makes you special versus everyone else?*), and key support points (*What are the specific benefits and fact-based claims that you'll likely communicate that support your brand's positioning statement?*).



MI: Does a start-up approach a positioning statement differently than a mature business? Does it change over time?

HEBER: Both might approach the exercise very similarly because without having a formal positioning strategy, you are likely missing out on having the ideal messaging to stand out in the marketplace and differentiate yourself from the competition in meaningful ways. Companies that develop a clear positioning strategy can often see significant revenue growth as a result.

Yes, it can change over time. Industries experience innovation, which often renders old benefits irrelevant, and competitors can change the landscape as well. I'd say that solid positioning strategies can typically last for five years or more, but you've always got to stay on your toes.



MI: Where does the customer experience fit in an organization's positioning statement?

HEBER: It is often a critical part of positioning. An important foundational exercise is to talk to existing customers to understand what they look for, need or want when searching for a product or service in your category. Then, research how well you deliver against those desired benefits.

I recently had a client who wanted to differentiate themselves with four benefits we identified as the most potent. The problem was that the customer said their experience was excellent on benefits A and B but weak on C and D. In fact, their key competitor delivered much better on C and D. Hence, to claim superiority on C and D would have been promising something they can't or don't deliver. We recommended limiting their positioning to A and B for now and then fixing C and D before focusing on them.

Companies that develop a clear positioning strategy can often see significant revenue growth as a result.



MI: How does a marketer balance emotional and tangible product or service benefits in messaging?

HEBER: A brand should consider not only “tangible” benefits as part of their positioning (*It tastes great. We’re the fastest.*), but “emotional” ones as well. Interestingly, 90% of the benefits communicated tend to be tangible and rational. This makes it hard sometimes for a brand to stand out from the crowd, as all of the brands in the category might be saying the same thing (*Our cookies are soft and taste great.*). Emotional benefits can often provide a mechanism to differentiate you from competitors in ways that no one else is doing.



MI: What are some universal emotional benefits that might resonate with a consumer? How about a business buyer?

HEBER: On the consumer side, some examples of common emotional benefits are feeling good about yourself, being a good mother or spouse, peace of mind, enjoyment or relaxation and knowing you’ve got the best. In business, common emotional benefits could include peace of mind, keeping the team happy and winning over the competition.



MI: Any examples of big brands that do this well?

HEBER: In business, I always love citing the famous Federal Express case study. Thirty years ago, they came to market as the first delivery service that guaranteed next-day package delivery. But what drove their explosive growth was not the “tangible” benefit of next day delivery versus the post office’s 2- to 3-day delivery.

It was the emotional benefit of knowing that your very important package will certainly get there the next day. (*When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight. We pack peace of mind.*) It’s all about the customer’s emotional feeling of peace of mind and not the quick delivery of the package itself.



MI: How can a small or mid-sized business (SMB) improve the odds of delivering a 5-star experience?

HEBER: Given that a company’s website can often be the first point of interaction with a new or potential customer, an SMB can start by auditing their website and digital activities to ensure they deliver a great 5-star experience. This alone can be easy, low hanging fruit that can make a huge difference right off the bat.



MI: How does an organization best capture and then extend the value of positive customer interactions?

HEBER: Some people say that email is dead, but don’t believe them! Email marketing is still one of the most powerful customer interaction tools, and it likely has the highest ROI of any digital medium these days. Once you capture an email address of a customer or potential customer, you’ve opened up a conduit to shower them with positive interactions like new product news, a discount offer, surveys and more through additional marketing channels. ■



Yosi Heber spent 17 years at Kraft, Dannon and Barry Diller’s IAC in the United States and Europe, and he invented the \$900 million “kids’ yogurt” category in the U.S. He founded Oxford Hill Partners, LLC 10 years ago and has been engaged by more than 50 B2C and B2B clients including Procter & Gamble, Novartis, Hyundai, Pitney Bowes and Nestle, as well as over two dozen small to medium-sized companies, start-ups and family businesses.

THE



• OF *print*

In a game of word association, odds are “printing” rarely – if ever – comes to mind first when someone says, “technology.” Yet the two, while not mentally married, do pair well. The result is better quality, faster production, greater personalization, reduced costs and more powerful marketing and sales pieces.

As a print communications channel, direct mail delivers in new dynamic ways, including connecting with digital strategies to drive purchases, website traffic, business location visits and sign-ups.

According to marketing decision-makers, companies are coordinating their campaigns by:¹

- Driving traffic from direct mail to digital channels (80%)
- Integrating a unique URL or discount code in direct mail (76%)
- Timing digital media once direct mail is delivered (61%)
- Sending personalized direct mail based on online actions (51%)
- Creating a digital version of direct mail (49%)

Following are some key considerations of print and mail that may have you thinking differently about how these traditional strategies can bring better results to your campaigns in 2020 and beyond.

¹Direct Mail Conversion Research, USPS

^{2,5}Two Sides North American

³Marketing Sherpa

⁴Scientific American



PAPER *choice matters.*

In a neuroscience study, subjects received one of three versions of a fictitious company brochure: one printed on high-quality coated paper, another using a lesser grade uncoated paper or a third, digital version.

The results? Those who read a version on high-quality paper remembered the content best, had the best impressions of the company they had read about and said they were more likely to recommend the brand to friends.



OKAY *to be different.*

Whether you're selling landscaping or roofing, cars or cookies, die cutting adds shape or perforated punch-outs to a printed project. Business cards, hang tags, postcards, mailers and folders get an extra shot of pizzazz when they conjure your products or services at first glance.

Pop-ups in a variety of shapes are an unexpected and fun way to drive interest and engagement. Even better, they fold flat for easy mailing.



WOW *'em with texture or shine.*

The tactile nature of print is one of its best qualities. Nearly eight out of 10 people say that print on paper is more pleasant to handle and touch when compared to other media, including 73% of 18- to 24-year-olds.²

Smooth and glossy, or rough and muted. Your print provider can help you with paper selection or finishing techniques that inspire interaction because your piece looks and feels special. Most techniques can be done with smaller print quantities, allowing you to customize images or text to be more relevant to your recipients or readers.



EASY *to digest is best.*

For understanding, retaining and using new information, more than eight out of 10 people believe it's better when delivered in print compared to electronically.³

Laboratory experiments, polls and consumer reports have shown "that modern screens and e-readers fail to adequately recreate certain tactile experiences of reading on paper that many people miss and, more importantly, prevent people from navigating long texts in an intuitive and satisfying way."⁴



RENEWABLE, *naturally.*

Paper is a product of a natural resource that is renewable. Nine out of 10 consumers agree that when responsibility produced, used and recycled, print and paper can be a sustainable way to communicate.⁵

Paper with recycled content, vegetable-based inks and a paperless workflow that includes electronic proofs to reduce hard copies are all eco-friendly processes and practices employed by many of today's print providers to meet customer preferences.

Three Surefire Ways to Elevate Your Print Communications

1 Split your print. Have some of your brochures or handouts printed on better paper for high-value prospects or as a follow-up mailing to those who visited your trade show booth and showed genuine interest.

2 Mix print and digital. For complicated content, give your audience the option of printed materials to improve their understanding and retention.

3 Add some dimension. Having a hard time reaching a key business decision-maker or your consumer target audience? Consider "lumpy" mail, defined as anything that adds dimension to your mail piece. It can be as simple as including an inexpensive promotional item in an envelope or as specific as a customized mailing tube or box and personalized messaging inside. ■



Window Graphics are Clear Winners

Windows and entry doors can provide a blank canvas for you to draw upon your creativity and build your brick-and-mortar brand image. One of the most affordable ways to update a storefront is with window graphics, decals or static clings.

The “art” can be quick to produce and with some applications, can be reused for added flexibility. Promote seasonal or limited-time specials and events with repositionable clings that are informative and inviting.

WHAT'S INSIDE MATTERS

Window graphics can serve practical purposes, too. You can dial down the glare from full-on sunshine with perforated decals without completely obstructing the view from the inside, looking out.

When choosing lettering sizes, consider distance for readability. Will someone be glancing from a passing vehicle, or will they be walking nearby? Thin characters and script flourishes can be hard to see when viewed from afar.

If you have areas where privacy is needed, apply decals and graphics that coordinate with other building décor to conference rooms, employee break areas or office windows.

As an alternative to standard window treatments, like curtains or blinds, window graphics can also help obscure an undesirable view of other buildings, parking lots or back alleys.

Along with your name and logo, hours of operation or service specialties tend to fit nicely on a glass door.

Of course, you're no longer limited to doors, windows and walls. Ceiling tiles and floor surfaces, including carpet, concrete, tile and wood are all fair game for promotional graphics.

ON THE GO

Extend your company branding to your vehicles for rolling promotions. While some businesses are large enough to have dedicated cars, vans or trucks for deliveries or service calls, others can benefit from car-top or door-side magnets.

Magnetic signs are easily removed or replaced if your vehicle is doing double-duty for business and personal use. ■

Want to learn more about how large graphics, signs and banners can add visual appeal and drive business? Let us know; we can help.



An online ordering system can solve common challenges faced by most organizations: multiple locations or branches with personalized printing requirements, hundreds of documents that need to be accessible to many or documents requiring frequent updates.

Why web-to-print? You can gain a competitive edge with a custom, branded website to:

- 1 Save time.**
With a faster turnaround on printed materials, your marketing and sales teams are well-positioned for outreach and follow-up.
- 2 Stay current.**
Help avoid the use of outdated marketing collateral that can compromise your brand. Easily remove old products, and update with current messaging.
- 3 Ensure brand consistency.**
With centralized control over the branding of your sales, marketing, technical and legal content, you can drive greater recognition in the marketplace.
- 4 Save money.**
Maximize your buying power and prevent the "one-off" spending that happens with regional offices or remote employees.
- 5 Simplify customization.**
Need market-specific imagery or content? You can easily personalize and localize the materials on your own website.
- 6 Streamline ordering and billing.**
Manage multiple offices from one convenient website to better track usage and purchases across employees and offices.

♥ There's so much to love! Talk to our web-to-print experts to learn more. ♥

Allegra businesses are independently owned and operated.

Allegra 5-Star Reviews



“Absolutely fantastic job, made everything very easy and it turned out great!”

“Excellent service!”

“I would highly recommend Allegra to anyone.”

“Truly a one-stop shop.”

“Allegra has been doing great work for my organization for years.”

“I absolutely love working with Allegra!”

“Top-quality products and a friendly touch.”

**Let's get started on your next success.
Contact Allegra today!**