

# The Power of Social Media Stories for Marketers

How Social Media Stories  
Are Making Their Way Into Marketing

# Introduction



There is a saying among marketers that “storytelling is SEO for the human brain.” Of course, when this saying was first coined, it had nothing to do with social media stories.

But perhaps it should have done. Social media stories in fact have HUGE potential to engage audiences, to build authority and trust, and to generally boost your brand. Not only that, but they’re also gaining in popularity all the time. Social media stories took the internet by storm and they’re not showing any signs of slowing down now.

In this book, you will learn precisely what a story is, how to create them, and how to have huge success using them to grow your audience and increase brand loyalty. Four out of five major brands report using stories to promote themselves, and that should tell you something about how big this is going to be going forward.

# What is a Social Media Story?



## Chapter 1

The first social network to use stories as we know them today was Snapchat. In fact, this was the core feature of that app and the one that set it apart. Snapchat was a surprise hit, despite being built on some slightly shaky code, and so it wasn't long before the other major players had jumped on board. YouTube introduced reels, and Facebook brought us Stories (also available on Instagram). Twitter gave us Twitter Moments, and Skype created Skype Highlights. The idea behind a story is unique and quite unlike other forms of content found on social media. A story is a post that is usually delivered through a different feed than the rest of a user's content, and that is only available for a short period of time. After this, the story will disappear and no longer be available.

Stories can take a number of different formats. Often they will be videos, but they can also be still images. Also a common trope for stories on multiple platforms, is to allow the use of stickers and text. These are usually placed on top of the main media, giving them pride of position and leading to very impressive engagement and open-rates.

### Why More and More Companies Are Using Stories

There are a number of compelling reasons that many brands are starting to rely more and more on the use of Stories. One is that the organic reach of business accounts on a number of social platforms is decreasing – and this is something we'll encounter a few times in this book. Another is that stories provide a great ROI in terms of the time and effort they require and the benefits they offer.

The great thing about Stories is that they are temporary – normally lasting just 24 hours. That means that they don't leave a lasting impression on your page, feed, or account. That gives them a much more personal and off-the-hip feel that customers and fans really dig, but it also means they can afford to be a little less polished and tailored. That means you don't need to shoot a product using studio lighting and a DSLR camera: you can just snap it on your phone and send it off. For businesses, this can be seen as a revelation.

Finally, Stories are also extremely popular with customers and users right now. While it's better to stay away from such terms in marketing, stories are undeniably "trendy." In fact, Facebook introduced Stories to its platform for that very reason. At the time, the site was seeing fewer and fewer members of the younger generation sign up, as the demographic began to skew upwards in age. Meanwhile, Snapchat was enjoying a lot of success for a new option – and particularly among the younger contingent of users. Snapchat provided a way for kids to share messages that couldn't be held for posterity, and in a very immediate and fun manner. Facebook had to adapt or risk becoming obsolete. And as marketers, we need to do the same!

# Using Stories For Marketing -The Basics

## Chapter 2

So how do you go about using Stories for marketing? How do you take a form of communication that is designed to self-destruct like the start of Mission Impossible, and use that as a way to draw in more visitors and to make more sales?

Well, that's where you're going wrong to start with!

If you're used to traditional forms of marketing, and if you have been creating ads and posts for Instagram and Facebook for a while now, then you might be accustomed to thinking in a more straightforward and direct manner. Marketing makes leads, and ads make sales.

But in truth, Stories are not for either of those things. Stories are perfectly suited not for increasing the number of followers you have, OR for selling directly to those followers. So if that's the case, what *is* this form of marketing for? The simple answer is that it is for building stronger relationships with your existing followers. It's about deepening that connection – and that's huge when it comes to increasing profits in the long term.

You might have heard of the book *1,000 True Fans* by Kevin Kelly. In it, the author describes the value of creating meaningful relationships with your followers. He describes how as long as a business genuinely manages to obtain 1,000 TRUE fans, it will likely be able to succeed.

What is this based on? Simply the notion that a true fan is not only someone that will buy nearly every one of your products, but also someone who will like all your posts, and who will rave about those same products to anyone who will listen. In short, a TRUE fan is a brand ambassador. And it's through brand ambassadors that your business can begin to grow exponentially.

How do you get to this point with your followers though, and what does it have to do with Stories? There are lots of ways you build true fans. One is by having a very clear mission statement for your business. One is by knowing precisely who your business is “for” meaning that you understand the psychology of your buyer persona. But the other is through meaningful interactions. And in the case of Stories, that can also mean building a personal brand.

**Stories for Trust, Engagement, and Personal Brands**

It is common knowledge that most buying behavior is based on emotion rather than logic. We buy things because we see them in the store, think they look desirable, feel tired, and are worried we'll miss out if we don't buy. That's why, often when we go away and really think about a purchase prior to making it, we decide better of it.

With emotion being such a key factor when it comes to spending, it should be no huge surprise to learn that we are more likely to buy when we feel that we really know, understand, and like the seller. Better yet if we feel that the seller has views that agree with our own.

This puts us at ease. We feel better about buying from someone we know because we feel it's less likely they're going to try and con us. Likewise, we often want to please the seller. Finally, if we feel that their beliefs are aligned with ours, then we might feel as though buying from them will in some way "align" us with them and help to strengthen our sense of identity.

And that's where Stories come in.

Many businesses will create a lot of marketing and advertising that is highly polished and staged. Products look perfect with ideal lighting and professional-looking backdrops, while the personality selling the product is never shown. We feel very detached from these kinds of brands, which is why the average person doesn't exactly shed a tear when they feel that a big corporation is going bankrupt.

This is even MORE true when it comes to selling B2B a lot of the time.

This method is getting increasingly old-fashioned though, as the company in question fails to build any trust, to demonstrate anything that would make it unique or stand out, or to demonstrate any personality.

If you run an online business, then your Instagram account might have the same problem. It might well be filled with lots of stunning looking images of products, or perhaps lots of inspiring quotes, or photos of your lifestyle that are designed to look perfect. This is the image you want to portray, and you know that by including even one unpolished looking photo, you will make the entire account look less messy.

But this is where the nature of the Story is ideal. This is a TEMPORARY image that will never be included on your profile. That means you can include anything you like here, and in 24 hours it is going to be gone. This in turn means you're permitted to peel back the curtain just a little, and to show your followers "how the sausages are made" so to speak.

Stories can be the kinds of insights that you would never include on the main account, but that help to give you a little personality and help to make you seem much more approachable. Let's say for example that you were a high profile lawyer, you could use Stories to share aspects of your life – not only the travel and nice hotels, but also your preference in sandwich, your gripes with the queues at your bank... you know *normal* stuff.

Likewise, a local business might share a Story about a fun customer who came into their store. Or about the parade outside that is driving away customers. They might even include a photo of their dog, or a short post about how they loved the latest Marvel movie.

Things like that might not sound like strategies that would gel with traditional approaches to business... But that should be considered a GOOD thing. This is not a traditional approach to business, but a much more modern strategy for improving relationships.

These posts don't need to be on-topic, but they do need to be on-brand in as much as they should show a side of you and your business that you want to be seen.

In the next chapter, you'll see just how this kind of interaction can not only strengthen relationships, but also invite meaningful interactions that translate to sales.