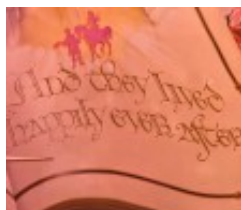


The recipe for telling a great story on social

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Once upon a time, **Adam Etheridge** and **David Watson**, **executive director and executive creative director**, respectively, at video **marketing** agency **Aspect**, explained the six fundamental ingredients needed for **social** storytelling, as demonstrated by the likes of **Turkish Airlines** and **Coca-Cola** Life.

Etheridge was speaking to the [Social Media Week London](#) audience at The Hospital Club. He said: "Storytelling – there's nothing new about it, it's an ancient tradition. But in the last few years it's become such a buzzword and an important part of the **marketing** mix."

One statistic highlighted was that 79% of UK adults think it's a good idea for **brands** to tell stories, according to [The Brand Storytelling Report 2015 commissioned by Headstream](#).

Etheridge continued: "Rules and formulas for stories can be seen as limiting. However, it can help **brands** to liberate themselves and give the opportunity for companies to play in them."

Based on **Aspect**'s work with **brands** on video content, as well as the film industry, they've concocted a recipe for **brands** and **digital** marketers to create a tasty story on [social media](#).

Ingredients

You will need...

A tablespoon of quest

Etheridge explained: "A quest needs to be a central want or goal for a story. It is the fuel to drive a story," adding it can come in the form of a personal goal, or something much bigger and more tangible.

When it comes to online content, quests in storytelling don't always have to be big because of the lack of time to get it across.

He said: "Quests will drive the narrative, and usually feature a protagonist or central hero, initiated by a catalyst and preceded by a status quo. Quests are important because they give an

audience something to relate to, an alignment."

A dash of antagonism

Watson explained antagonism in storytelling is the conflict, which results in a solution. It is often embodied by the bad guy.

He said: "In **branded** content we often don't like to do it because it means dwelling on a negative. **Brands** normally want to say how great their product or service is. But, instead of incorporating a bad guy it could be obstacles – if you want light, you have to include shade."

One cup of what's at stake?

Etheridge told the audience good storytelling comes down to one question, "why do we care about a want or goal?"

Without making this personal, there won't be an emotional connection. He said: "Lay your emotional dynamite with significance – why does the hero or main protagonist succeed or not?"

A pinch of story climax

There are two parts to a good story ending, the first being a story's climax. **Watson** explained: "The story needs to come to a heading, reaching a crescendo."

Social content often has a great idea, but then flattens. **Watson** said: "You have to build to something worth waiting for. Any story has to feel like it's paying off."

A dusting of emotional resolution

As well as the narrative paying off, an emotional pay off should follow a dramatic climax.

Watson argued: "Emotional value is what a story is all about, it has to be something that affects us."

This is where brand value can be expressed by being heavily used and demoed throughout the story. He said. "Consumers will feel and know that if it's done properly."

Finish off with a sprinkling of the role of a product and/or brand

This is important in the role of **social** and story content, however, **Etheridge** pointed out it has to be done delicately and sensitively.

He said: "In entertainment, like when you're going to the cinema, there's a default permission for consumers to sit back and relax.

"**Brands** need to play a credible role in telling a story because audiences are only just getting used to commercial content like this on **social**."

In **social** storytelling **Etheridge** said this might be achieved through the physical presence of a product, making the brand the hero. "However, it's always better to make the customer the hero."

It can also be done through a brand value being expressed throughout the story.

Etheridge said: "In **social** this works for **brands** who have this as a well-established and widely-known value." But he warned that no one wants to feel manipulated, so it must align with what the consumer believes.

Serving suggestions

To help bring together these **social** storytelling ingredients, here are a couple of good examples from **Aspect**:

Turkish Airlines "dreams"

Quest: Get the plane to the village.

Obstacles: The kids are the underdogs with limited resources.

Stakes: Isolation and disappointment, or happiness.

Climax: The plane lands.

Emotional: The main boy salutes the pilot, this highlights the brand's value of connectivity.

Role of brand: Direct use of service.

Coca-Cola Life "ser padres (parents)"

Quest: Maintaining a normal life.

Obstacles: Baby.

Stakes: Sanity, relationship and lifestyle.

Climax: Second pregnancy.

Emotional: Shock to joy, this reflects the brand's value of the reality of life and growing up.

Role of product: Softening the blow of the big news and establishing a new product with a new value.

Picture credit: Flickr/Cliff Johnson

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