Compelling Copy
PUTTING YOUR MARKETING MESSAGE TO WORDS

Marketing
the Value of Your Library
October 1, 15, 29
1 p.m.
Library Marketing Connections

- MS LIS from Drexel University
- IMLS-funded scholarship for PhD study and research in digital libraries, also at Drexel
- Columnist for Marketing Library Services newsletter from InfoToday
- Advisory Board, Communications Director, for Marketing Libraries Journal – open-access, peer-reviewed
- President of Board of Directors for new Library Marketing Conference Group – in charge of popular LMCC
Today’s Agenda

➢ TELLING OUR STORIES
➢ WRITING FOR MARKETING
➢ SHORTCUTS – TEMPLATES, FORMULAS, GUIDES
Why Are You Marketing?

ASK: Why Should My Community Care?
2 Questions
Why We Tell Stories – Marketing and Advocacy

✓ To remember
✓ To influence decisions
✓ To link to our sense of community and generosity
✓ To cut through the clutter and noise
✓ To create context
✓ To help others do their work
✓ To lead to action
Marketing IS Storytelling

You got this

Marketing IS Advocacy
Tell Our Stories

STORY BASICS
WHO’S THE HERO?
Classic Story Arc

Plus Classic Story Plots
- Hero’s Journey
- A Quest or a Voyage & Return
- Conquer the Monster
- Rags to Riches
- Rebirth
Types of Stories Your Library Needs To Tell

- Brand stories
- Personal Stories
- Origin Stories
- Product/Service stories
- Customer/patron stories
- Customer-generated stories
- Staff/Employee stories
- Case Studies
Tell Me About a Time When...

- Your library overcame a specific challenging situation
- Your library staff went beyond their comfort zones to deliver for your community
- Your staff ‘quested’ to solve a problem for patrons
Goal of St. Peter’s Univ (NJ) social media takeover project: Reduction of “library anxiety” or a sense of not belonging in an academic setting

https://www.instagram.com/spulibrary/

Snapchat takeovers – LMU Library takes over university acct → U Dayton + Roesch Library ←
More Story Ideas

- Coming Attractions
- Behind the Scenes
- Library Tours
- Community Partnerships
- FAQs
- Story of an event
- Testimonials, User Stories

Worcester (MA) PL Summer Reading promo video

Univ. Florida – librarian intro videos – April Hines
Are We Telling ALL Our Stories?
Marketing is about inspiring ACTION

What Action Will You Inspire Today?
Engaging Stories

- Have a purpose
- Make emotional connections
- Relatable characters
- Clear beginning, middle, end
- Sense of relief, resolution at the climax of story
- Product/service is secondary, in the background (the ‘sidekick’)
- Connects to an even bigger story
- Let brand personality show
- Inspiration influences action

Pop-culture Sidekicks
What’s Copy?

- Copy = text for marketing purposes – to inspire action
- Copy = “persuasive writing.”
- Copy = “Words that sell”
- What else is it?
  - Headline copy, body copy, footer copy, sales copy, etc
  - It’s short, clear, concise
  - Copy is EVERYWHERE! Emails, signs, social media, print ads, TV ads, sales pages, websites, etc
- Good copy doesn’t have to feel ‘sales-y’ or pushy. It’s a conversation.
we’re not writing serious literature here. We’re writing advertising, blogging, and social media copy with the ultimate goal of persuading our readers to do something.
Better Copy in A B C

- **A = Always Think About the Other Person**
  - What do they want? Need? What care about? Hate?
  - Remember, short attention spans!
  - Don’t use I, me, we, our. Use you, yours. Talk to them.

- **B = Burnish. Shine it up! Edit.**
  - Give yourself time to set aside for 24hrs, sit on it, tweak it before sending to the world.
  - Have someone proofread.

- **C = Call to Action.**
  - Focusing on having 1 clear, compelling CTA per piece wins the battle.
Benefits, Not Features

We can’t assume that people will use our services or attend events just because they were told about them.

- **Features** are factual statements about products/services. Features say what something does.

- **Benefits** answer “so what” and “what’s in it for me?”
  - Think value to the user
  - Think emotional benefits
  - Make the ‘why’ connection for your users
  - Trust signals, social proof
  - Benefits = RESULTS
Features vs. Benefits

Feature

➤ Automatic brewing
➤ Automatic shut off
➤ 12 C capacity

Benefit

➤ No more worrying about if you’ll get out of the house on time in the morning, while waiting for your coffee. Set it all up the night before, it brews while you’re getting dressed. Hot, fresh coffee ready to go when you are.

➤ Run out the door with no worries of burning, pots breaking – the machine shuts off automatically after 30 minutes.

➤ With a generous 12 cups there’s always enough hot coffee for you, your spouse and any guests who drop by.
Feature or Benefit?

- One-click financial reports
- Self-setting clock
- We’re open 24 hours so you can buy when you want
- Your public library at your fingertips
- Millions of songs. Play your favorites.
- “explore the city’s history and cartography’s most expansive form in these visually striking and content-rich maps of New York City.”
- “Sensory Storytimes are 30-minute interactive storytimes using preschool-level books, songs, and activities.”
“just because you know why your product will make your ideal customer’s life better doesn’t mean they do.”
**ACTION! CTAs**

- **CTA = Call to Action** – the message designed to prompt an immediate action

- **Action verbs + specific timeframe**
  - “Would you share this with your friends today?”
  - “Click below to register right now”
  - “To be the first to hear about new books we receive, enter your email below”
  - “Drop a comment below to tell us if you want this event to return”
  - “Call today to save your seat”
  - “Donate now”
Marketing is about inspiring ACTION

- Don’t assume - ask or tell
- Don’t over-promise or under-deliver
- No vague or passive language
- Keep it short and sweet
- Does it answer “So what” factor?
- Make it POP! (but stay brand consistent)
- 1 CTA per marketing piece. ONLY 1!
- Do NOT forget to include a CTA on EVERY piece of marketing
Improve CTAs, Improve Your Marketing

- “Learn More”
- “Submit”

- “Click here” → “Enter your best email here”
- “Contact Us” → “Download your ebook right now”
- “Get Everything I Need to Know About X”
- “Send me my personalized reading list”
Be Our Hero

Great libraries shape great cities. They are a powerful force in the economic, social and cultural well-being of a vibrant society. Public libraries provide amazing essential service in the communities they serve all over the world.

With your help, we can play a meaningful role in enhancing Edmonton and building a better community.

Like many other leading libraries, EPL has a broad and growing e-collection, comprehensive world language materials and extensive early literacy programs to name just a few. But what sets EPL apart – where we lead and where other libraries are taking notice – is in the many ways we are changing, adapting and transforming library services to best serve our community.

Our current priority project is the revitalization of the Stanley A. Milner Library.
“You’re not selling a product. You’re not selling a service... you’re selling your prospects a better version of themselves.”

Joanna Wiebe, Copy Hackers
Copywriting Tips, Tricks

“Pull Questions” = ‘powerful questions’ or ‘hooks’– to engage your audience/reader and ‘pull’ them into your marketing content

Pull questions ...

- Paint picture of your reader’s current situation, a problem showing up in daily life
- Could be desire-based or problem-based
- Keep to one line whenever possible
- Have one (and only 1) idea
- Use power, emotion, feeling words – nothing fancy, no complex concepts
- Simple, clear, powerful
What do they look like?

Examples –

- Do you look at the kale, but buy ice cream instead?
- Are your friends getting married, and you’re tired of getting parked at the singles table?
- Do you need your drains cleared before your bathroom floods, but you’re afraid of getting ripped off?
- Do you want to hear stories and writing tips from your favorite authors, but you don’t want to get out of your PJs today?
Problem -> Agitation -> Solution

- Always running late? Too much to juggle in the mornings. Fighting with your spouse over who took the last mug of coffee? So now you have to stop and buy an over-priced café coffee. And you’re worried the pot might still be on because you were so stressed you don’t remember if you turned it off.

- You know you’re wasting time and money. You don’t like fighting over coffee and you can’t afford another burned-on, cracked glass pot.

- You can have brighter mornings, a happier spouse, and a well-caffeinated day, all with the Barista Brew 1200!

https://www.copyblogger.com/problem-agitate-solve/
More copy formulas ...

**Before -> After - > Bridge**

- **Before** – Here’s your current world ...

- **After** – Imagine what it could be like with problem A solved ...

- **Bridge** – Now here’s how you get there.

**Example:**

- “creating social media images takes time. Imagine cutting 1 hour into 15 minutes. Here’s how ...”
More copy formulas ...

- **AIDA = Attention -> Interest -> Desire -> Action**
  - Get your reader’s **Attention**
  - Give **Interesting** and fresh info that appeals
  - The benefits of your product/service and proof it does what you say build **Desire**
  - Now **Ask** for a response

- **Example:**
  - “sneak peek! The alpha version of our new project – concierge music service. Want in? ...”
Even more copywriting hacks!

- **The 4 C’s**
  - Clear, Concise, Compelling, Credible

- **The 4 U’s**
  - Useful, Urgent, Unique, Ultra-specific

- **Open Loops** (aka a ‘copy cliffhanger’)  
  - Our brains demand closure, if we don’t get it immediately we feel anxious and are spurred to find closure – we keep reading!
  
  - E.g. ‘how losing our biggest client led to our biggest month in sales’

- Keep asking “**so what**” for anything you think is a benefit - dig deeper
You Are Telling the Story of Your Library EVERY Day

DO SOMETHING GREAT

Help Your Community Advocate and Tell Your Story Too
Copywriting Resources

- **Copyblogger** – register for free and get access to ebooks like Copywriting 101
- Joanna Wiebe, **CopyHackers**
- **Ann Handley**, *Everybody Writes*
- Content Marketing Institute
- Buffer’s blog; Hootsuite’s blog– each gives good, meaty, valuable tips and doesn’t always push their own products
  - Buffer’s **27 Best Copywriting Formulas**
- QuickSprout’s **Definitive Guide to Copywriting** – an e-guide
- **Emotional Marketing Value Headline Analyzer**
- **Sharethrough Headline Analyzer**
- **Readability Test** – for webpages and copy

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