

“...Oh the places you'll go!”

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*“You'll be on your way up!
You'll be seeing great sights!
You'll join the high flyers
Who soar to high heights.”*



It's a classic, one of Dr Seuss's best, and if you haven't heard it, do yourself a favour, and find a copy to enjoy.

Dr Seuss is a wizard at storytelling. Drawing readers into a rhythmic tale that flows off the tongue and sticks in the mind. Storytelling is as old as humankind and has been an important means of connecting, sharing, teaching, and entertaining. As brands, we are encouraged to use stories to connect with our consumers. Through relatable anecdotes, we evoke emotions that resonate with the consumer to form a longer-lasting recall and a bigger share of mind. A great story unlocks creativity and inspires organic reach through the need to share.

Over time stories have been told in different ways and environments. There were fireside enactments of daily life to share accomplishments and teach the young. Courtyard theatre to entertain market goers and make political statements. Bedtime stories that evoke dreams and open the mind. News bulletins that keep communities connected on a global level. Now we have blogs, podcasts, fiction, documentaries, independent news, global media houses... the list goes on! We consume via TVs, phones, computers, hardcopies, kindles and radios. We converse face-to-face, on screen, audibly or through text. Stories surround us and are more accessible than ever. Algorithms know us better than we know ourselves and feed us the stories we want to hear or read.

So, in this ocean of communication and stories, how do brands connect the right story with the right consumer? How do they, dare I say, 'break through the endless clutter' to be heard above all the other voices? And how do brands hang onto that ever-sought-after share of mind?

*“You won't lag behind, because you'll have the speed.
You'll pass the whole gang and you'll soon take the lead.
Wherever you fly, you'll be the best of the best.*

Wherever you go, you will top all the rest.”

There are three simple things to consider when telling your story, these are not new concepts, but possibly new solutions for you to consider:

1. Clickbait... kinda:

We have all been sucked in by clickbait, even though we know it's clickbait, there are some stories we just can't resist. It's psychological. Entice consumers and lure them in with exciting headlines – you have mere seconds to grab their attention and create that need to find out more. I am not suggesting you go full-blown clickbait, simply learn from and leverage the concept. After all, if you don't have a juicy headline, you probably don't have a juicy story.

If you are telling a visual story, your image is your headline. Be bold, absurd even. Use eye-catching techniques like composite colours, and strange juxtaposition. Enlarge the small and minimise the big. Use negative space to draw the eye to the crux of your story. If the visual throws the consumer, then they will have the need to understand the rest of your story.

2. If you're not relevant, you're not relevant:

A consumer is far more interested in stories about things that interest them. A brand must have a good understanding of who they resonate with, and how they prefer to consume their stories. You need to be in the right place, at the right time, talking to the right person with the right message. But how do we do this?

Understanding your consumer's daily journey is essential! To be clear, this is not just the buying journey, it's being present wherever your consumer may be. This includes online and offline. Having a clear understanding allows you to pinpoint opportunities to connect. From there you drill down into the frame of mind at each point, which allows you to tailor the flow of the story.

Each platform (OOH, TV, print, or digital) has its own role to play in your story. For example: Set the scene with billboards, get to know the characters with wall murals and spaza branding, introduce the plot twist with TV, build up to the climax with digital, and drive home the happy ending with POS.

3. Style is everything:

Like Dr Seuss and many other great storytellers, you need to find your style. Dr Seuss used rhyme and ridiculousness to create catchy tales and poems that resonated with his audience... parents and children alike. Parents enjoy reading it and kids enjoy listening to it.

So what style encapsulates your brand and resonates with your audience? Your style brings your story to life and sticks with the consumer. Allan Gray's style is nostalgic. The use of black and white imagery and bringing the past into focus creates trust and conveys their story of investment over time. Nike's style is power. Bold statements and mighty people doing powerful actions, driving formidable movements. You feel empowered after engaging with Nike.

*“Except when you don't.
Because sometimes, you won't.”*

Some stories are award-winning and some never get published, it is the nature of all things. To know what works, we must know what doesn't. Test, track, analyse and improve. Some of your stories may live on forever in the hearts of South Africans and some may only get one like on Facebook. Work towards quality over quantity. Entice the right audience, and they will respond. You don't need one million people to read your story, you just need a few to relate to it. Once that bond is formed it is easier to nurture and keep the brand buy-in alive.

At Mamela we believe in telling the right story. Reach the right consumer at the right point in their journey and you will do so

much more than just drive a conversion, you will gain a brand advocate. Marketing to the township audience is all about gaining trust and forming a deeper connection. It is pushing for long-term gain which will ultimately result in a brand winning within this market.

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