

Your customers are smarter than you think - talk to them better

By [Laura Owings Rawden](#)

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Marketing is all about crafting the right message for your audience. And since the dawn of the *Mad Men* age, there's been no limit to how we do that - until now.



Laura Owings Rawden, director at Locomedia.

With radio, TV and print saturating our daily lives, and billboards that wrap around entire buildings, we've been challenged to up the ante in our communications. Catchier slogans, stronger calls-to-action and even better-looking models are how we keep one step ahead.

But, as it has with every aspect of our lives, social media has arrived and disrupted the way we play the marketing game. It's become essential, and it's become the most significant test of our communications savvy.



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I could go on about the huge benefits of social media, and why it's an absolute must in marketing. If I did, I'd probably mention that it's **extremely cost-effective, highly engaging, boasts real-time monitoring and audience insights**. But

we know about all this already, which is why we're on social (and if you're not, you're doing a serious disservice to your clients).

What's far more important is the way we communicate on social and how we are changing the way we speak to audiences in 2018.

Sure, Facebook, Instagram and to some extent Twitter, offer traditional advertising opportunities. Those sponsored posts go a long way to targeting our customers and getting the right eyes on our messages.

But what about those messages?

“ Audiences on social aren't game for the tag lines that work in magazines. They're not wowed by the catchy slogan and call-to-action that works in traditional media. They've seen it, and they've seen it way more than once. ”

Even the tried and true give-away is falling short of expectations. We think it's a brilliant tactic, which it was, but now that everyone's doing it, the faults are coming to the surface.

While the results look great on paper, what we get with these types of posts isn't an audience that really wants to connect – what we get are followers who really want that prize.

What is missing in our social media communication is a fundamental shift in the way we communicate. While it's great to boast a huge follower count, it's not what defines our social media strategy. **It's the everyday posts that count. And whether those posts are getting audience engagement.** And very often, they're not.

The flaw is that we're not speaking *to* our customers, we're speaking *at* them. What we should be doing is connecting with followers using great storytelling.

Storytelling has been part of our lives since we were cave men and women.

It's part of who we are, and the kind of communications that we connect with and remember.

But for some reason, we've lost that on social media. Maybe we feel restricted by that character count or the daunting blue 'read more' tab.

Speak your customers' language

But our audience doesn't feel the same way. They're craving something real, something they can relate to – a marketer that speaks their language.

Be brave enough to give audiences what they want. Drop the sales and PR language, and speak to your followers like friends.

[Give them a story](#) with a beginning, middle, climax and message. Wow them by putting some heart behind the social post, and watch your audience – the kind of audience that cares about your client's brand – grow.

When we write for social, we must remember that every word counts. It's fleeting, but its impression lasts forever. Use the space to tell your audience something they'll care about, share with them something they want to see, be their trusted voice and not a punter selling a product.

Talk to your audience the way you want to be talked to, and your results will start to speak for themselves.

ABOUT LAURA OWINGS RAWDEN

With a background in science, journalism and international media, Laura's passion is communication. A self-proclaimed news addict and social media junkie, she is always inspired by new ways to tell great stories. Locomedia is her content, social media and PR company, which supports clients including FindWine, Mercury FX International and Cape Town Tourism.

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