The Art of Visual Storytelling

in an era of scorched earth marketing
Innovation Begins with Understanding.

[ An emotional connection is your most powerful tool ]
There has always been social media
Putin has always been calling the shots in Russia
The Sandy Hook tragedy is their Columbine.
College does not guarantee success – the recession showed educated family members losing stability.
The United States has always been at war.
Euros have always been the coin of the realm...well, at least part of the realm.
Serena Williams has always been winning Grand Slam singles titles.
SpongeBob has always lived at Bikini Bottom.
They have never had to watch or listen to programs at a scheduled time.
They have never seen billboard ads for cigarettes.
Each year they've been alive the U.S. population has grown by more than one million Latinos.
Vaccines have always been linked to autism.
If you want to reach them, you'd better send a text—emails are oft ignored.
They disagree with their parents as to which was the “first” Star Wars episode.
Bluetooth has always been keeping us wireless and synchronized.
Snowboarding has always been an Olympic sport.
DreamWorks has always been making animated creatures heroic and loveable.
They have never used a rotary phone – or a pay phone or dial-up.
Robots have always been in the O.R.
THE SCIENCE OF STORYTELLING

As more brands make the move towards content marketing, cutting through the noise is more vital than ever before. But our brains are built to connect with compelling stories.

HOW STORYTELLING AFFECTS THE BRAIN

NEURAL COUPLING
A story activates parts in the brain that allows the listener to turn the story in to their own ideas and experiences thanks to a process called neural coupling.

MIRRORING
Listeners will not only experience the similar brain activity to each other, but also to the speaker.

DOPAMINE
The brain releases dopamine into the system when it experiences an emotionally-charged event, making it easier to remember and with greater accuracy.

CORTEX ACTIVITY
When processing facts, two areas of the brain are activated (Broca's and Wernicke's area). A well-told story can engage many additional areas, including the motor cortex, sensory cortex and frontal cortex.
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IF

100,500

digital words are consumed by the average US citizen every day

92%

of consumers want brands to make ads that feel like a story

60x faster

rate at which the brain processes images in comparison to words

THEN

Keep it short. Have a great title to grab attention.

Deliver content that is linear and expresses a clear narrative.

Show more, tell less. Use video/images for more compelling content.
The Enemy of Remarkable Storytelling is Impatience.

There is a desperation at play in most marketing organizations. A low grade panic to solve short-term needs and strategy has become as fleeting as a Snapchat video.
Scorched Earth Marketing

New media channels emerge, in part, because we marketers ruin old one – we trade strategy for tactics, storytelling turns into rabid gaming the system.
Growth of the marketing technology landscape over 7 years

- 2011: ~150
- 2012: ~350
- 2014: ~1,000
- 2015: ~2,000
- 2016: ~3,500
- 2017: ~5,000
We’ve become experts at spotting a fake. As consumers, our eyes have become more sophisticated and what we look for above all, is something real.
We live in a world that is built on empty promises constructed by liars.
And to be effective, use **high quality real-world photos** to tell your story.
83% of learning is visual
For most, understanding of the world is being accomplished, not through words, but by reading images.”

— Paul Martin Lester, “Syntactic Theory of Visual Communication”
THINSLICING

COGNITIVE TASKS
Cerebral Cortex: Left Hemisphere – Logical & Analytical Thinking.

SENSORY INPUT

EMOTIVE RESPONSE
Amygdala: Medial Temporal Lobe – Emotions, Behavior & Motivation

RESPONSE

FEELS RIGHT

FEELS WRONG

FEEL NOTHING
“Truly successful decision-making relies on a balance between deliberate and instinctive thinking.”

-Malcolm Gladwell
Q: How do we increase quality, diversity, geography, and lower discount rate – right?
Q: How do WE forge a strong emotive connection through powerful and authentic narrative?
- and -
How’s that story going to be told so we can turn connection into desire?
SAFE
IS
DEATH
KEEP IT SIMPLE
FLEXSTER: Hipster types, merging the best of the past with the present. (best of both worlds)

VISIONIST: Adventurous, outgoing, looking to blaze new trails & startups (entitlement is a good thing)

EXPRESSIONAL: Leadership, traveler & social media mogul sharing every experience (Memories over milestones)

PROFSSIONIST: Flex Schedules, professional & personal growth with purpose (More than a paycheck)

EMERGENT: Explorers, connecting to causes over careers. Acceptance and equality (longer to launch)

TECHSTER: Knows code and Comic Con. Gamers who can make an app for that...
Discover

- What is the Problem
- Budget and Resources
- Competitive Research
- Audience Personas
- Strategic Approach

Develop

- Creative Brief - Big Idea
- Ideation - Brainstorm
- Conceptual Approach
- Emotive Appeal
- Channel Integration

Design

- Photo/Video Shoots
- Narrative Development
- Layout & Design
- Test & Refine
- Coordinate & Schedule

Deploy

- Launch
- Measure & Track
- Refine and A/B Test
- Promote & Survey
- Adjust/Improve
IF THERE IS NO CONNECTION
THERE IS NO EXPERIENCE

EMOTIVE CONNECTION IS HOW
SUCCESSFUL BRANDS ARE BUILT
True storytelling relies on the audience to develop their own imagery and detail to complete and, most importantly, to co-create, whereas content does not.
“In Space No One Can Hear You Scream”
The truly great storytellers have long embraced the fact that the most powerful stories happen in the mind of the audience, making each story unique and personal for the individual.
Principles of Storytelling:

1. Authenticity
2. Relevance
3. Emotive
4. Archetype
Authenticity
Authenticity taps into the passions and emotions of an audience, letting them see something of themselves in the narrative and imagery of a storyline.
Freshman Year

Click here to watch video
Dan Levins 1 week ago
can't wait for this! moving in in 20 days!

Rachel Mikaela 1 year ago
LOVE THIS.
You're gorgeous and your college life looks like it was so much fun.
I hope you make another video like this next year. :)

autumn rain 3 months ago
my dream college

Vanessa 5 months ago
mah hometownnn

Mckenzie Hannon 8 months ago
What was the background music used?
The power of the story – real social posts
GIVE THEM A PICTURE FRAME
WE'RE CREATING MORE CONTENT THAN OUR AUDIENCE CAN ACTUALLY CONSUME.

THAT'S A GOOD TOPIC FOR OUR NEXT BLOG POST, WHITEPAPER, INFOGRAPHIC, LISTICLE, AND ANIMATED GIF.
Tie strong and important ideas into real slice-of-life imagery. Share that you understand who you’re talking with and their life and concerns.
Screens are the most relevant

Social Media: 59%
TV: 57%
Word of Mouth: 45%
Newspapers: 42%
Online News: 41%

In today's macro trends, screens win out over people every time as the most important place for finding relevant information.
The image that speaks to each generation is constantly changing, and visual producers need to be on top of that evolution.
Studies show that people remember:

- 10% of what they hear
- 20% of what they read
- 80% of what they see and do
Senses
What Makes Online Content Viral?

Research Shows It's Anger, Shock and Awe.

- AMA, August 5, 2017
We Share Because:

*We want to strengthen social bonds/status*

*We want to equalize the emotional impact of content*

*We want to share awe-inspiring stories*
Archetypes
The Innocent — pure, forgiving, trustworthy, optimistic and happy. Wants to be happy and do things right. Is a faithful optimist but lives with a fear of being punished for doing something bad. Might also be naive or boring.
The Explorer — adventurous, searcher, independent, values liberty and self-driven. He helps people feel free and express their individuality. He is associated with new and exciting products or experiences. His weakness is the possibility of becoming a misfit.
The Sage — philosopher, dependable, efficient, confident, an advisor and a teacher. Main goal is to use intelligence and analysis to understand the world. Acts are often based on new scientific findings or esoteric knowledge. Has wisdom and intelligence but there is a chance that they will study details forever and never act.
The Hero — warrior, competitive, righteous, upright, improves the world, proud and superior. Goal is to master expertise in a way that improves the world. Can be arrogant, too focused on being as strong and competent as possible. Needs a clear opponent that he wants to beat.
THE OUTLAW

The Outlaw — rebellious, outrageous, influential, authoritative, radical and openminded. Breaks the industry conventions and wants to overturn what isn’t working. Does things radically differently on purpose. Bad feature is temptation for illegal activity.
The Magician — charismatic, values magical moments, transformative experiences and instinctive. Best fits with transformative products or services (medium to high pricing). Is the master of experience and details. Has a tendency to become manipulative.
The Regular Guy—dependable, realistic, values practice, down to earth and unpretentious. Main advantage is the ease of connecting with others. Is grounded and sticks to the common truth. Believes that all men and women are created equal.
The Lover — passionate, intimate, likes to pamper, searching for true love and seeks enjoyment and. Strategy is to become more and more physically and emotionally attractive. Helps people belong. Lovers tap into our senses by building relationships and long-lasting memories. This archetype contains the risk of losing its own identity.
The Jester — funny, playful, impetuous and spontaneous.
Wants to lighten up the world.
Gives people a sense of belonging and helps them to have a good time. Can be reckless and lazy. Greatest fear is becoming boring to others.
The Care Giver — caring, unselfish, noble, nurturing, considerate, compassionate and generous. Wants to help others. Often serves the public sector, helps people care for themselves and, for example, gives customers a competitive advantage. Main fear is ingratitude.
The Artist — inventive, creative, imaginative, determined and experimental. Life is not about finding themselves but about creating themselves. Goal is to realize a vision. Best creative fields are marketing, public relations, the arts, or tech innovation. Most problematic feature could be perfectionism.
The Ruler — dominant, efficient, well organized, role model, responsible and dynamic. Strategy is to exercise power and his driving desire is to control. Mostly wants to create a prosperous, successful family/community. Encourages people to be more organized but can also bring micromanagement to the organization.
In every story ever told, a powerful character has fueled the narrative. These figures embody an array of personas that have remained more or less the same for thousands of years.
Discover which Jungian Archetype you are with this test. It is passé for a man to be a warrior.
You can’t be what you can’t see

Sheryl Sandberg
COO, Facebook

http://leanin.org/
Create an aspirational persona for your brand – move beyond demographic and think about emotional connection.

(Hint: Most of us are the Sage)
Create personas for your target audience.

Defining the personas for your audience is key to understanding the images and people that will resonate with them.
See within the story.

1. You admire a character more for trying than for their success
2. Keep in mind what’s interesting to an audience, not what’s fun to do as a writer or designer – they can be very different.
3. Trying for theme is important, but you won’t always see what the story is actually about until the end – write and rewrite
4. Once upon a time there was ______
    Every day, ______. One Day ________.
    Because of that, ______. Because of that,
    ______. Until finally ______.
5. Simplify. Focus. Combine and shorten, cutting detours – you’ll feel like you’re losing valuable stuff – but your shortening the path from A to E.
6. What is your hero good at? Throw a challenge at them and show how they deal with it.
7. Figure out the ending before the middle. Endings are hard, get yours worked out up front.
8. Finish your stories and let them go. Even if it’s not perfect, move on and do better next time.
10. Pull apart the stories you like. What you like and dislike in a story is usually part of you – recognize it to use it.
11. Put it on paper. Ideas in your head could be outstanding, but we will never know will we.
12. The first thing is usually not the thing (or the 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 4\textsuperscript{th}). Move past the obvious to surprise yourself and the audience.
13. Give your characters opinions. Passive characteristics are poison to the audience.
14. Go for the heart – why must you tell the story? What’s the single most important idea – that’s the heart of it.
15. If you were the main character in the story, how would you feel? Honesty and lends credibility.
16. If it’s not working, let it go – it might be useful later, but don’t keep wasting time forcing it.
17. You have to identify with your storyline and characters. You just can’t create cool – do you believe it?
18. Take a story you don’t like and rearrange it into what you do like.
19. Always know the essence of the story. If you know that, you can always build out from there.
20. Know thy self to know thy audience.
How we embrace this difference between content and stories is the key to the future success of our industry.

Content is dead. Long live storytelling. Thank you.