



*If you've got a great product to sell, you should have a great story to tell, without exaggeration or hype. The Purple Cow best-selling author and marketing guru Seth Godin sums it up:*

*“Stories make it easier to understand the world. Stories are the only way we know to spread an idea. Marketers didn't invent storytelling. They just perfected it.”*

## The Power of Storytelling in Direct Marketing

The concept is as old as cave people crouched around a fire, swapping stories on a chilly post Ice Age evening. Stories bring things to life. They evoke an emotional response, as you can put yourself in the story or relate it to someone you know or an experience you've had.

### So what's this got to do with direct marketing?

Emotions are at the root of why people buy many things. A purchase decision for a basic need might be fact-driven, while something we really want – like a shiny new car, the latest iPhone or dream vacation is driven by emotion.

Here are 5 emotions that drive us to buy what we want:

#### 1. LOVE

What do your customers love? Their family, pets, career, hobbies, free time, fellow man, God and country, themselves? Love is a powerful emotion; people can spend a lifetime and great sums of money pursuing their true love.

#### 2. PRIDE

Think back to your childhood. Remember how you felt when you hit that home run, aced that test or won that award? Flash forward to today when you drive into the company parking lot in your shiny new car. If pride is a sin, it sure feels good, doesn't it?

#### 3. GUILT

If you're a parent, aunt or uncle, you've likely fallen prey to a guilt-trip from a child. They are the masters!

#### 4. GREED

Some people just want a lot of things. The best, the biggest, the newest. These are among your best prospects. Remember what Gordon Gecko from the movie Wall Street said, "greed is good."

*Stories bring things to life. They evoke an emotional response, as you can put yourself in the story or relate it to someone you know or an experience you've had.*



## 5. FEAR

This may be the most powerful emotion of all. The fear of making the wrong decision, not providing for your family or making a career misstep. So if your product or service can help the prospect overcome this fear, you begin to build trust in the relationship.

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So we know the emotions that are at the heart of why we buy. How do we evoke emotions in our storytelling to sell our products and services?

### Let's start with a classic.

In fact, according to Ad Age it's arguably the most successful direct response copy of the 20th century, written by the legendary John Caples in 1925.

*So we know the emotions that  
are at the heart of why we buy.  
How do we evoke emotions in our  
storytelling to sell our products and  
services?*



*"Can he really play?" a girl whispered.  
"Heavenly no!" Arthur exclaimed. "He  
never played a note in his life."*

**They Laughed When I Sat Down  
At the Piano  
But When I Started to Play!—**

It's a story about an average Joe, or in this case his name was Jack, who learned to play the piano by taking a correspondence course from the U.S. School of Music.

One paragraph reads...

"The laughter died on their lips as if by magic. I played through the first few bars of Beethoven's immortal Moonlight Sonata. I heard gasps of amazement. My friends sat breathless - spellbound!"

The copy is just oozing with emotion – the pride that Jack had learned to play the piano, the skepticism of his friends (or could that be envy?), and the assurance that anyone can get started by sending for a free booklet.



tivolipartners.com

And this is what the full-page ad looked like:



**They Laughed When I Sat Down At the Piano But When I Started to Play!—**

**A** RTHUR had just played "The Rosary." The room rang with applause. I decided that this would be a dramatic moment for me to make my debut. To the amazement of all my friends, I strode confidently over to the piano and sat down.

"Jack is up to his old tricks," somebody chuckled. The crowd laughed. They were all certain that I couldn't play a single note.

"Can he really play?" I heard a girl whisper to Arthur.

"Heavens, no!" Arthur exclaimed. "He never played a note in all his life. . . But just you watch him. This is going to be good."

I decided to make the most of the situation. With mock dignity I drew out a silk handkerchief and lightly dusted off the piano keys. Then I rose and gave the revolving piano stool a quarter of a turn, just as I had seen an imitator of Paderewski do in a vaudeville sketch.

"What do you think of his execution?" called a voice from the rear.

"We're in favor of it!" came back the answer, and the crowd rocked with laughter.

**Then I Started to Play**

Instantly a tense silence fell on the guests. The laughter died on their lips as if by magic. I played through the first few bars of Beethoven's immortal Moonlight Sonata. I heard gasps of amazement. My friends sat breathless—spellbound!

I played on and as I played I forgot the people around me. I forgot the hour, the place, the breathless listeners. The little world I lived in seemed to fade—seemed to grow dim—until. Only the music was real. Only the music and visions it brought me, as various as beautiful and as changing as the wind blown clouds and drifting moonlight that long ago inspired the master composer. It seemed as if the master musician himself were speaking to me—speaking through the medium of music—not in words but in chords. Not in sentences but in exquisite melodies!

**A Complete Triumph!**

As the last notes of the Moonlight Sonata died away, the room resounded with a sudden roar of applause. I found myself surrounded by excited faces. How my friends carried on! Men shook my hand—wildly congratulated me—pounded me on the back in their enthusiasm! Everybody was exclaiming with delight—playing me with rapid questions. . . "Jack! Why didn't you tell us you could play in the first place?" "Where did you learn?" "How long have you studied?" "Who was your teacher?"

"I have never even seen my teacher," I replied. "And just a short while ago I couldn't play a note."

"Quit your kidding," laughed Arthur, himself an accomplished pianist. "You've been studying for years. I can tell."

"I have been studying only a short while," I insisted. "I decided to keep it a secret so that I could surprise all you folks."

Then I told them the whole story.

"Have you ever heard of the U. S. School of Music?" I asked.

A few of my friends nodded. "That's a correspondence school, isn't it?" they exclaimed.

"Exactly," I replied. "They have a new simplified method that can teach you to play any instrument by mail in just a few months."

**How I Learned to Play Without a Teacher**

And then I explained how for years I had longed to play the piano.

"A few months ago," I continued, "I saw an interesting ad for the U. S. School of Music—a new method of learning to play which only cost a few cents a day! The ad told how a woman had mastered the piano in her spare time at home—and sought a teacher! Best of all, the wonderful new method she used, required no laborious scales—no heartless exercises—no tiresome practicing. It sounded so convincing that I filled out the coupon requesting the Free Demonstration Lesson."

"The free book arrived promptly and I started in that very night to study the Demonstration Lesson. I was amazed to see how easy it was to play this new way. Then I sent for the course."

"When the course arrived I found it was just as the ad said—as easy as A.B.C! And, as

the lessons continued they got easier and easier. Before I knew it I was playing all the pieces I liked best. Nothing stopped me. I could play ballads or classical numbers or jazz, all with equal ease! And I never did have any special talent for music!"

**Play Any Instrument**

You too, can now teach yourself to be an accomplished musician—right at home—in half the usual time. You can't go wrong with this simple new method which has already shown 50,000 people how to play their favorite instruments. Forget that old-fashioned idea that you need special "talent." Just read the list of instruments in the panel, decide which one you want to play and the U. S. School will do the rest. And bear in mind no matter which instrument you choose, the cost in each case will be the same—just a few cents a day. No matter whether you are a mere beginner or already a good performer, you will be interested in learning about this new and wonderful method.

**Send for Our Free Booklet and Demonstration Lesson**

Thousands of successful students never dreamed they possessed musical ability until it was revealed to them by a remarkable "Musical Ability Test" which we send entirely without cost with our interesting free booklet.

If you are in earnest about wanting to play your favorite instrument—if you really want to gain happiness and increase your popularity—send at once for the free booklet and Demonstration Lesson. No cost—no obligation. Right now we are making a Special offer for a limited number of new students. Sign and send the convenient coupon now—before it's too late to gain the benefits of this offer. Instruments supplied when needed, cash or credit. U. S. School of Music, 1811 Brunswick Bldg., New York City.

**U. S. School of Music, 1811 Brunswick Bldg., New York City.** Please send me your free book, "Music Lessons in Your Own Home", with introduction by Dr. Frank Crane, Demonstration Lesson and particulars of your Special Offer. I am interested in the following course:

.....

Have you above instrument?.....

Name..... (Please write plainly)

Address.....

City..... State.....

**Pick Your Instrument**

Piano	Cello
Organ	Harp
Violin	Composition
Drums and	Sight Singing
Trump	Ukulele
Banjo	Guitar
Tenor	Hawaiian
Saxie	Steel Guitar
Mandolin	Harp
Clarinet	Contra
Piano	Piccolo
Saxophone	Trombone
Viola and	French Clarinet
Automatic	Finger Control
Piano	Accordion

A longer message, targeted to the right person with the right offer CAN and DOES still sell, as long as it's well crafted.

Complete with a call-out box listing all the other instruments you can learn to play and a mail back coupon. Boy, you don't see those anymore...

**So you're thinking, well that was over 90 years ago.**

Nobody has the time to read something that long today!

Well, yes and no. Yes, people are busy. There are more forms of media and millions of messages bombarding us every year. Texting and tweeting have shortened our attention spans.

And no, a longer message, targeted to the right person with the right offer CAN and DOES still sell, as long as it's well crafted. Otherwise, we wouldn't still be seeing these in our mailboxes:

I recently received a direct mail piece for the Perot Museum of Nature and Science in Dallas. The letter is a full two pages. It includes a brochure, donation card, reply envelope, the works. In the words of David Ogilvy, one of the pioneers of powerful direct marketing - long copy sells, as long as it's good copy and it's tailored for the right prospect.

## So how do we harness the power of storytelling in our direct marketing communications?

**LISTEN AND LEARN FROM YOUR AUDIENCE** - you'll find those storytelling nuggets of gold from customer feedback, including emails, focus groups and social media posts.

Actual testimonials are great, but they're sometimes hard to get. If that's the case, focus on trends or generalities, like "70% of Atlanta homeowners have given us a try" or "one of our satisfied clients used XYZ to grow her business by more than X%."

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**PAINT A PICTURE WITH WORDS AND VISUALS** - yes, a picture's worth 1,000 words, and the clothing company J. Peterman uses both to tell amazing stories about their "uncommonly good stuff."

Featuring illustrations instead of photos with models, readers can picture themselves wearing items like this 90210 sweater. The copy reads, "Mass panic in Beverly Hills. The temperature dipped below 61 degrees at night. Cries of 'what shall I wear?' sprang through every room in Beverly Hills, Brentwood and the Pacific Palisades. This is it."

The screenshot shows the product page for the 90210 Sweater on The J. Peterman Company website. The page features a navigation menu on the left with categories like Men, Women, Dresses, and Sweaters. The main content area displays the product name "90210 Sweater." with a price of \$250. The product description includes a story: "Mass panic in Beverly Hills. The temperature dipped below 61 degrees at night. Cries of 'What shall I wear?' sprang through every room in Beverly Hills, Brentwood, and the Pacific Palisades. This is it." The page also shows a color selection option (Black), size selection (LARGE, XLARGE, XXLARGE), and a quantity selector (1). There are buttons for "ADD TO BAG", "WISH FOR THIS", "REVIEW BAG", and "TELL A FRIEND".

**BE PERSONAL** - what's the most powerful word in direct marketing? If you said FREE, that's certainly high on the list. And if you said YOU, you're getting even warmer. We think the most powerful word is the reader's name. In fact the leadership guru Dale Carnegie said, "a person's name is to him or her the sweetest and most important sound in any language."

And in this day and age of digital printing and BIG DATA, personalizing the message is even easier and more cost effective.

**MAKE THE READER THE HERO** - demonstrate how your product or service is going to improve the reader's life, drawing upon those emotional appeals. Focus on the benefits, not the features. Put yourself in the reader's shoes and ask "what's in it for me?" If your copy is all about you and your company, chances are your direct mail or email will hit the trash.

A quick exercise: Take one of your DM letters or emails and count the number of times you use the person's name, you and your. Then count the number of times you use the words we, our, I, my and your company's name.

For every "we or I" words, you should have three times as many "you" words. Exempt the legalese. Try it and see just how You-centric your communications are!

**ESTABLISH TRUST** - people like to do business with companies they trust.

Trust can be conveyed:

- in the tone and manner of your communication - be authentic
- by using testimonials
- by including research and credible third party endorsements
- use of guarantees
- money-back if not satisfied
- free trial offer

**MAKE IT EASY TO READ** - this may sound like a big old "duh" but we like to remind clients that their messages won't be read if the reader is turned off by a tiny font size, dull first sentence or lengthy paragraphs. Here are a few pointers to improve readability:

- Use a conversational style - avoid industry lingo
- Grab the reader with an interesting headline and first paragraph
- Keep paragraphs short - 7 lines or less; even shorter for email
- Short words (6 letters or less) and sentences (15 words or less) are easier to read
- Ask questions to draw the reader in
- Avoid large blocks of copy in reverse type
- Use bullet points - short and loaded with benefits!
- Use the P.S. to restate the offer or highlight another benefit

*A quick exercise: Take one of your DM letters or emails and count the number of times you use the person's name, you and your. Then count the number of times you use the words we, our, I, my and your company's name. For every "we or I" words, you should have three times as many "you" words.*



Here's a B2B email that does a lot of things we love—it has an interesting visual, it opens with a question and uses the word “you” many times. “If you're like me, you're probably encountering more and more technology designed to make your business faster, smarter and more mobile.” We would recommend breaking that first paragraph into two, though.

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Business and technology working as one

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*“Craft your direct marketing messages for others like those you’d want to read yourself” – interesting, relevant, and life enhancing.*

## Who do tech guys turn to with tech questions?

If you're like me, you're probably encountering more and more technology designed to make your business faster, smarter and more mobile. And you're also probably finding less and less time to assess everything. You can't possibly see and hear about every technology – but as the top IT professional for your organization, that's one of your jobs, right? I know I rely on our talented internal IT staff as well as our consultants when I have questions about a specific technology or trend.



Terry Flood  
President and CEO  
Logicalis

### Do blogs provide value to you?

Take our short survey and get a \$10 iTunes gift card!

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That's why, in this issue of our Logicalis customer newsletter, we have focused on providing a series of quick takes on the technology that matters – not just cloud computing but things like mobility and compliance as well. We've also recapped some of the hottest topics from last year with a look ahead for this year.

## Have a happy ending

We want our readers to become customers, so the story should end with the hero (the customer) feeling empowered to call, click, scan or stop by to buy or learn more about our product or service. Make sure the call-to-action stands out, inspires a sense of urgency and appears two or more times.

You could sum up it up with this golden rule:

“Craft your direct marketing messages for others like those you’d want to read yourself” – interesting, relevant, and life enhancing.

**Do this and you'll harness the power of storytelling to gain new customers and keep the loyal ones coming back.**



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