

A story: The Adventures of Media Maverick

By [Candy Dempers](#), issued by [MediaHeads 360](#)

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Once upon a time a Media Maverick wanted to move an audience to feel positively about their client's product.

Media Maverick knew that people were drawn to stories and wondered if telling a story would show the audience all the unique features of the product and why it was superior to its rivals? In a congested marketplace with divided attention, could the story of the product be what made it stand out from the crowd and position the brand in an authentic way?

We will return to the adventure of the Media Maverick shortly but first, cut broadcast to ad break.

Stories convey messages

From the oldest wisdom to childhood lessons and holy scripture, stories have, through the ages, been used to convey messages that enlighten, entertain, and educate. Stories are common to every culture from fireplaces to dinner tables and children's bedsides. Stories elicit an emotion, and emotions move people to action. Stories and storytelling are central to human existence and help make sense of the world we live in. Stories help us understand ourselves and others. Stories are life, and life is a story.

The story of the hare and the tortoise, for example, teaches that persistence and consistency pay off. The ant grasshopper who did not prepare for winter is a story not far removed from what your financial advisor preaches about your savings, and the ugly duckling teaches us not to judge others by their physical appearance and that we are all beautiful in our own way. We quote these stories without thinking, so ingrained are the lessons.

Stories engage attention

The most interesting people tell good stories, they can translate their experiences into a narrative that engages and generally keeps them surrounded by people at parties hanging on to their every word.

Stories help us solve problems. Imagine a brainstorming session before a project: team members tell the story of how the project will unfold and so possible problems are ironed out before work begins. The more effective the stories are in the planning phase, the more successful the project outcome.

Stories draw our attention. Good public speakers know just when to move from the on-screen presentation and start telling a story to keep the audience's attention. Doctors' waiting rooms are littered with magazines full of stories to engage the attention of the waiting patients, and in any queue in any establishment, you will find people glued to their smartphones looking for stories to pass the time.

Good stories are good business

Businesses and products that tell a good story engender empathy amongst their clientele and are generally more profitable. Think of Apple, Tesla and Google, ranked in the top 10 in the Global Empathy Index. The top 10 on this list generated 50% more earnings and increased value than the bottom 10. The stories of these companies are well crafted and updated to keep us caring for them. Even though all three of these companies employ many thousands of people, the romantic story of Steve Jobs setting out to change the world from his garage and Elon Musk, the rookie from Pretoria Boys High, who came good and now wants to send us all to space, or the Stanford geniuses, Sergey Brin and Larry Page, who made the Internet easy to use, are easier for us to process than the faceless corporation that wants our money. Likewise, consider the horror story that Mark Zuckerberg from Facebook is currently engaged in. The stories of these companies are part of their success or downfall. People want to invest their emotions, time and attention in other people that have stories they can

relate to, are feel good, inspirational or boundary breaking.

A good story "can" create a real spin

Stories create a roadmap for organising a product's content across TV, radio and online. Each medium's nuance will dictate which part of the story is used on the different mediums. Much like spinoff TV shows, spinoff campaigns become possible once the story is well known. In fact, a good story that has the ability to live and grow, allows a brand to expand and change. The story is the lead character, the brand the main actor.

Coca-Cola are masters at spinoffs and content marketing alike and have been at it for a long time. Their stories are not long but are memorable, from the "I'd like to buy the world a Coke" campaign to the "Share a Coke" campaign, that gave everyone the opportunity to personalise their favourite fizzy drink by putting their name on a Coca-Cola can. The latter was particularly simple in idea if not execution, and massively successful. Like the thrill of hearing your name on the radio or seeing yourself on TV, seeing your name on a Coke can was intoxicating because we, the consumer, became the hero of the story. The "Share a Coke" campaign is to date the most successful of all the campaigns undertaken by Coca-Cola, because it combined the consumer and the product into one story, which turned out to be a stroke of genius, you may even say they hit the content marketing sweet spot, one can at a time!

Stories are the glue that hold us together. They have taught and entertained us, kept us safe and provided relief from queues and waiting rooms. Stories can take us to a galaxy far, far away or transport us to once upon a time. Everyone has a story to tell and when it comes to marketing, so do products and services. The crafting of a good story requires authentic brand position, consistent platform exposure and a strategic creative plan.

We need to get back to our story.... Cut ads, back to main feature.

Media Maverick blended all the wonderful advantages of the product into a story that was compelling and engaging. They then devised a content plan across all the relevant consumption platforms to narrate and share the story. From the origins to the unique selling point, all the elements were blended into the product's storyline and messaging to the audience. Well scripted and produced radio spots, social media videos, audio, and pictures made the story of the product multi layered, interesting and unforgettable. The story was the main driver and became the backbone of Media Maverick's extended campaign for the product. The audience was hooked and had no doubt that the product was exactly what they needed. They bonded with the story in their homes and at the shops. The product was purchased in great numbers and lived up to the story's promise.

The makers of the product and Media Maverick were very pleased and lived to see another campaign, happily ever after.

About Candy Dempers

Candy Dempers has loved all things media for the last twenty three years working as a sales and marketing specialist. She has a special love for radio that has seen her contribute to the success of several prominent radio brands, guiding commercial clients to best use this impactful medium. Her role in the last four years has been as managing director of MediaHeads 360 where she leads an upwardly creative and innovative specialist media team. Having studied law and marketing, Candy was drawn to radio because of the way it builds relationships and the engagement it offers clients. On her 19 year passion of working in radio, Candy loves that "radio sparks and stimulates real-time conversations that deliver instant results and feedback, time and time again."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Candy Dempers is managing director of MediaHeads 360.

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