



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

S E R I E S

THE SUMMARY OF BUILDING A STORY BRAND

By Donald Miller
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Introduction

This is not a book about telling your company's story. A book like that would be a waste of time. Customers don't generally care about your story; they care about their own.

Your customer should be the hero of the story, not your brand. This is the secret every phenomenally successful business understands.

What follows is a seven-part framework that will change the way you talk about your business and perhaps the way you do business.

Each year we help more than three thousand businesses stop wasting money on marketing and get their company growing by helping them clarify their message. This framework will work for you, regardless of your industry.

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#1 Wall Street Journal Bestseller

DONALD MILLER
New York Times Bestselling Author

BUILDING A STORY BRAND



Clarify Your Message
So Customers Will Listen

Use the 7 Elements of Great Storytelling to Grow Your Business

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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To get the most out of this book, I encourage you to do three things:

- 1. Read the book and understand the SB7 Framework.
- 2. Filter your message through the framework.
- 3. Clarify your message so more customers listen.

Marketing has changed. Businesses that invite their customers into a heroic story grow. Businesses that don't are forgotten.

May we all be richly rewarded for putting our customers' stories above our own.

SECTION 1:
Why Most Marketing is a Money Pit

1. The Key to Being Seen, Heard, and Understood

Most companies waste enormous amounts of money on marketing. We launch a slick campaign, stare at the dismal report, and wonder whether the product—or our message—failed. The problem is simple: the designers we hire know everything about Photoshop, but few have read a single book about writing good sales copy. Pretty websites don't sell; **words sell things**, and if our message isn't clear, we might as well be holding a bullhorn up to a monkey.

The agony of staring at a blank screen pushed me to invent a communication framework based on the proven power of story. Once I filtered my own marketing through it, we doubled in revenue for four consecutive years. At StoryBrand, clients who adopt the framework routinely double, triple, and even quadruple their revenue. Why? The human brain is naturally drawn toward clarity and away from confusion. **Even a superior product loses to an inferior one if the competitor's message is clearer.**

So ask yourself: Can everyone on the team state our message—simply, relevantly, repeatably? Can a visitor grasp our offer within five seconds? If not, we're bleeding sales.

To understand why, I called Science Mike. After two days with the StoryBrand 7-Part Framework, he said, "Their marketing is too complicated. The more simple and predictable the communication, the easier it is for the brain to digest. Story is a sense-making mechanism." The brain's prime directive is survival: food, safety, relationships, meaning. Anything that doesn't help a customer survive gets tuned out.

That leads to two fatal mistakes:

- 1. **Brands fail to focus on the aspects of their offer that will help people survive and thrive.** If our product doesn't promise health, wealth, status, belonging, or meaning, nobody cares.
- 2. **They cause their customers to burn too many calories in an effort to understand their offer.** Confusing copy forces the brain onto a mental treadmill; survival instincts tell it to conserve energy and ignore us.

The key, then, is to make your company's message about something that helps the customer survive and to do so in such a way that they can understand it without burning too many calories.

Story supplies the structure. It identifies a necessary

ambition, defines challenges, and provides a plan. The StoryBrand Framework distills centuries-old storytelling best practices into a repeatable business formula: clarity in, revenue out. **If you confuse, you'll lose.**

Noise is the real enemy. I once showed a client's website—an industrial painter—that looked like an Italian restaurant. A hundred links, a painted building, zero clarity. I asked the workshop to imagine wiping it clean and replacing it with a photo of a tech in a lab coat beside the line “We Paint All Kinds of S#%.” Everyone agreed his sales would spike—because customers would finally see the exit, not count the chairs.

What we think we are saying and what our customers actually hear are two different things. Great writing is mostly cutting; the key isn't what we say, it's what we don't say. The SB7 formula organizes our thinking, reduces marketing effort, obliterates confusion, terrifies the competition, and finally gets our businesses growing again.

Let's clarify the message—and stop paying the monkey with the bullhorn.

2. The Secret Weapon That Will Grow Your Business

I'm going to cut the noise by boiling our message into seven, repeatable sound bites. Nail those and any dread you feel talking about the brand evaporates; customers lean in. In other words, we jump into *their* story.

Story is atomic. It holds attention the way nothing else can. Neuroscientists say we daydream 30 percent of the time—**except** when a story hijacks the brain and does the day-dreaming for us. Story is the single best weapon against noise *because it organizes random information into meaning.*

Living in Nashville taught me the music-versus-noise lesson firsthand. Both are just sound waves, but music obeys rules the brain loves. Play a dump-truck, some birds, and giggling kids—you'll forget by morning. Play the Beatles and you're humming all week. Corporate websites often sound like a cat chasing a rat through a wind-chime factory. **Great brands sound like music; forgettable ones like clatter.**

Why? Storytellers **cut**. Anything that doesn't serve the plot hits the floor. If *The Bourne Identity* added scenes of Jason Bourne losing weight, passing the bar, and adopting a cat, audiences would bail—exactly what visitors do on cluttered sites.

So we need a filter. Branding is simple, relevant messages we can repeat over and over. Steve Jobs learned this at Pixar. Before Pixar, Apple launched the Lisa with a *nine-page* New York Times ad stuffed with specs—nobody cared and the product tanked. Post-Pixar, Jobs slashed Apple's message to two billboard words: “Think Different.” He pinpointed the customer's desire (be seen and heard), named the obstacle (hidden genius ignored), and offered a tool (Macs, iPhones). Apple stopped talking about computers and started talking about “us”. Result: they leapt into the world's top-ten companies—not because they sell the “best” tech, but because people grasp their story fastest.

Every compelling tale shares seven beats: A CHARACTER wants something, faces a PROBLEM, meets a GUIDE who gives a PLAN and CALLS TO ACTION, helping them avoid FAILURE and end in SUCCESS. Veer from these chords and you slide into noise. The framework explains everything from *The Hunger Games* (Katniss + Haymitch) to *Star Wars* (Luke + Obi-Wan). Same rule for your brand.

Three questions must stay crystal clear:

- 1. What does the hero want?
- 2. Who or what blocks her?
- 3. What will life look like if she wins or loses?

If a movie (or your copy) hides these answers, viewers start daydreaming.

Translate that into marketing’s “grunt test”—within five seconds a caveman should grunt:

- 1. “What you offer.”
- 2. “How it makes *my* life better.”
- 3. “What to do to buy.”

Fail that and sales vanish.

Clarity works. Firefighter Kyle Shultz sold \$25K worth of an online photo course. After stripping 90 percent of the copy and ditching jargon (“f-stop,” “depth of field”) for benefits (“those great pictures with blurry backgrounds”), the *same list* bought \$103 K overnight. He quit firefighting and runs Shultz Photo School full-time.

Alfred Hitchcock called a good story “life with the dull parts taken out.” The SB7 Framework does that for business. It squeezes your brand message onto a single sheet—the StoryBrand BrandScript—then lets you echo it everywhere. When customers finally see how you help them live a better story, your company will grow.

Next up: the Framework itself.

3. The Simple SB7 Framework

The SB7 Framework is a single, repeatable storyline that makes your brand inviting to customers by turning noise into clarity. Here’s the quick flyover before we dive deep.

1. A Character

The customer is the hero, not your brand. Your job isn’t to steal the spotlight; it’s to spotlight the customer’s journey. Nancy Duarte tells presenters: be Yoda, let the audience be Luke. Identify exactly what the hero wants in relation to your brand or they’ll never enter the story.

2. Has a Problem

Most companies sell fixes to external headaches, but customers buy solutions to internal problems. Heroes leave home only when peace is disrupted; buyers come to you because embarrassment, fear, or frustration nags them. Stories (and real life) operate on three problem levels—external, internal, philosophical. Target the inner tension and you ignite motivation.

3. And Meets a Guide

Customers aren’t looking for another hero; they’re looking for a guide. Think Lionel Logue to King George VI, Obi-Wan to Luke, Haymitch to Katniss. Positioning yourself as guide signals empathy and authority—two triggers that make people trust you rather than see you as competition.

4. Who Gives Them a Plan

Customers trust a guide who has a plan. Big purchases feel risky; a simple path removes friction. Offer either a process plan (“Step 1, Step 2, Step 3”) or an agreement plan (a list of commitments that ease fear). Without that roadmap, admiration rarely converts to sales.

5. And Calls Them to Action

Customers do not take action unless they are challenged. In real stories someone issues the dare; in

business it's your call-to-action button. Use two kinds: a direct ask ("Buy Now," "Schedule a Call") and a transitional ask that nurtures the lead (free PDF, demo, webinar). No clear challenge, no movement.

6. That Helps Them Avoid Failure

Every human being is trying to avoid a tragic ending. If nothing's at stake, nobody cares. Wendy's "Where's the beef?" warned us of puny burgers; Whole Foods sells escape from processed food. Spell out the negative result of inaction—just enough "salt" to give the loaf flavor.

7. And Ends in Success

Never assume people understand how your brand can change their lives. Tell them. Reagan promised "a shining city on a hill"; Apple promises tools that let you "Think Different." Paint the after-picture—healthier, richer, admired—so the brain concludes, I want that.

Thousands of businesses die each year not because they don't have a great product, but because potential customers can't figure out how that product will make their lives better. Outwork the complacent. Master each of the seven beats, speak the native language of story, and watch clarity drive growth.

SECTION 2:
Building Your StoryBrand

4. A Character

StoryBrand Principle 1: **"The customer is the hero, not your brand."**

A story only ignites when the hero wants something. Screenwriters reveal that desire within nine minutes or audiences tune out. Likewise, a brand must define one clear thing the customer wants so a silent question forms: Can this company get me what I want?

A luxury resort learned this the hard way. Their brochures spotlighted the lobby and staff—themselves. After StoryBranding, the imagery switched to "a warm bath, plush towels, a rocking chair against the trees," and the headline became "Find the luxury and rest you've been looking for." Every employee now repeats two words—luxury and rest—and guests instantly see where the story leads.

Other examples we've crafted:

- Financial advisor: "A Plan for Your Retirement"
- Landscaping: "A Yard That Looks Better Than Your Neighbor's"
- Caterer: "A Mobile Fine-Dining Experience"

Naming a desire places a gap between a character and what they want. Jason Bourne seeks identity; each obstacle opens a new gap that pulls us forward. Classical music, poetry, even hunger work the same way—tension then resolution. Fail to define a want, fail to create a gap, and customers feel no pull.

Leaders protest, "We provide twenty-seven things!" Not yet. Until you're known for delivering one promise, multiple ambitions only clutter the plot—exactly what sinks amateur screenplays. Use sub-Brand-

Scripts later for divisions or products.

Mistake two: picking a want unrelated to survival. A coach's tagline "Inhale knowledge, exhale success" sounded clever but vague. We recast it as "Helping you become everyone's favorite leader." Instantly the brain linked it to social standing, opportunity, and meaning—real survival stakes.

Survival themes include:

- Conserving money (Walmart: "Save Money. Live Better").
- Saving time (house-cleaning so clients see family).
- Building social networks (coffee for coworkers).
- Gaining status (Rolex, Mercedes sell prestige).
- Accumulating resources (B2B firms promise revenue, reduced waste).
- Generosity & meaning (people crave causes bigger than themselves).

Customers want to know where you can take them. If a hitchhiker asks, "Where are you going?" and you ramble about your mission or your grandpa's car, he walks away. He just wants to get to San Francisco.

Action Steps:

1. Visit mystorybrand.com and open your BrandScript.
2. Brainstorm possible customer desires.
3. Pick one that connects to survival and fill the Character module.
4. Hold off on other sections until you read each chapter.

Define the want, and you've hooked the audience.

Next we'll deepen the intrigue by describing the problem that stands in their way.

5. Has a Problem

StoryBrand Principle 2: "Companies tend to sell solutions to external problems, but customers buy solutions to internal problems."

Once we've named what the hero wants, we keep them riveted by spotlighting the problem. "Readers want to fret," so brands must talk about what's wrong in the customer's world.

Every story needs a villain, so our marketing should cast one. The mop defeats dust-bunny gangs, tooth-paste destroys smug yellow plaque, time-management apps slay relentless distractions. When we frame our offer as a weapon against something dastardly, customers lean in. A useful villain is :

1. a root cause, not a symptom,
2. instantly relatable,
3. single and clear,
4. real—not fear mongering.

That villain creates three concentric problems. First comes the external obstacle: leaky pipes, hunger, runaway software, termites. Solving that is basic business. But an external hassle triggers an internal frustration—embarrassment about the ugliest house on the street, dread of chitchat at the rental counter, intimidation by tech jargon. People spend money to quiet that inner storm. Beneath both lies a philosophical tension expressed with ought or shouldn't: bad actors shouldn't win, pets ought to eat healthy food, music ought to matter.

Limit each category to one clear statement. Multiple villains or six internal woes muddy the plot.

Here are some examples in the Wild:

1. Tesla

- **Villain:** gas-guzzling, outdated tech
- **External:** “I need a car.”
- **Internal:** “I want to be early-adopter cool.”
- **Philosophical:** “My car ought to help save the planet.”

2. Nespresso

- **Villain:** awful home coffee
- **External:** “I want café-quality at home.”
- **Internal:** “I want to feel sophisticated.”
- **Philosophical:** “I shouldn’t need barista skills for a gourmet cup.”

3. Edward Jones

- **Villain:** big firms that don’t listen
- **External:** “I need investment help.”
- **Internal:** “I’m confused and anxious.”
- **Philosophical:** “If I risk my money, I deserve a thoughtful human guide.”

Apple blew past competitors when it stopped tout-ing specs and confronted intimidation: cool creatives versus the nerd droning about operating systems. National Car Rental sold silence by letting weary travelers walk straight to the car. CarMax removed wrestling-match haggling and built a \$15-billion brand on honesty. Starbucks charged triple by offering a place where people felt sophisticated and connected.

Great brands promise closure on all three levels at once—the climactic moment when Luke’s torpedo destroys the Death Star, proves he does have what it takes, and affirms that good should triumph. Our job is to choose, not clutter. One villain, one external pain, one visceral feeling, one larger “why.”

To craft your BrandScript, you too need to ask these four questions:

1. **Villain:** Who/what are we fighting?
2. **External:** What tangible obstacle does it create?
3. **Internal:** How does that make the customer feel?
4. **Philosophical:** Why is it just plain wrong?

Answer once—clearly—and you’ll open the story loop that demands closure. The hero will wonder, Will this brand help me win? And to find out, they’ll step into your story.

6. And Meets a Guide

StoryBrand Principle Three: **“Customers aren’t looking for another hero; they’re looking for a guide.”**

Every human life moves through chapters marked by doorways of no return, and in most of those chapters a mystical helper shows up—a coach, teacher, parent, therapist, or even a brand—who interprets the moment and equips the hero. Frodo has Gandalf, Katniss has Haymitch, Luke has Yoda. Humans wake up every morning starring in their own movie and, like those heroes, they know they can’t conquer external, internal, and philosophical conflicts alone.

Brands that step onto the stage shouting “Look at us!” commit the fatal mistake Tidal made. Jay Z built a platform to help artists pocket more profit, but his launch put millionaires front-and-center, ignoring the ordinary listener’s silent question: How are you

helping me win the day? Twitter mocked the “water is free, music is six bucks” speech, and Tidal sank. **Always put the customer in the hero’s role and your company in the guide’s.**

Guides outshine heroes in one crucial way: they radiate empathy and authority. Empathy whispers, “I feel your pain,” forming a bond of trust; authority shows competence so the customer can relax. Bill Clinton’s town-hall “I feel your pain” instantly bonded him to voters. Oprah’s entire empire rests on making millions feel seen, heard, understood. Yoda couples warm understanding with proven Jedi mastery. The one-two punch moves the story forward.

Empathy is easy once we’ve named the customer’s internal struggle. Phrases such as “We understand how it feels to...” or “Nobody should have to experience...” let buyers know we’re on their side. Commonality does the same heavy lifting; Discover Card’s ads featuring customers speaking to mirror-image agents signal, “We treat you the way you’d treat yourself.”

Authority needn’t be boastful; people just want to check a mental box that says, “They can handle this.” Four subtle signals work:

1. **Testimonials** – short, specific stories from happy buyers give prospects the gift of going second.
2. **Statistics** – concise numbers (“125,000 users trust our software”) satisfy left-brained skeptics.
3. **Awards** – modest logos or mentions of credible honors cue competence without chest-thumping.
4. **Client logos** – known brands you’ve served offer social proof you solve problems like theirs.

Harvard’s Amy Cuddy says first impressions boil down to two subconscious questions: “Can I trust this per-

son?” and “Can I respect this person?” Empathy answers the first, authority answers the second. When both lights turn green, strangers will consider a partnership, and customers will consider a purchase.

Scan your marketing. Does every page, e-mail, and ad say, in effect, “We get it, and we’ve helped others just like you”? If not, add an empathetic sentence or two and a clear marker of competence. Turn the spotlight from your achievements to their struggle, offer a steady hand, and you’ll become the guide they’ve been hoping for.

Affection alone won’t trigger a transaction, but without empathy and authority no transaction is possible. Nail these guide signals now, and in the next chapter we’ll show how to convert trust into decisive action.

7. Who Gives Them a Plan

StoryBrand Principle Four: **“Customers trust a guide who has a plan.”**

We’ve named what the customer wants, highlighted their problem, and proven we’re the empathetic, competent guide—but they still hesitate. Buying feels risky, like standing at the edge of a rushing creek while a waterfall roars downstream. They need stepping-stones. A clear plan shows exactly where to place each foot, removes fear of the falls, and turns casual interest into commitment.

In every good movie, the guide supplies that bridge. Peter Brand hands Billy Beane an algorithm, Rocky gets an unorthodox training routine, Juliet drinks the apothecary’s potion. The plan narrows the focus and offers a path of hope.

Plans work because they either clarify how to do business with us or reduce the risk of doing so. Con-

fusion kills sales; “If you confuse, you lose.” When visitors wonder, What do I do now? they back away. Spell out the steps and the creek looks crossable.

Process plans are the simplest stones. They can outline the steps to purchase, to use the product, or both.

Examples:

- 1. Measure your space.
- 2. Order the items that fit.
- 3. Install with basic tools.

For a complex sale:

- 1. Schedule an appointment.
- 2. Let us create a customized plan.
- 3. Execute the plan together.

For post-purchase clarity:

- 1. Download the software.
- 2. Integrate your database.
- 3. Revolutionize customer interaction.

Combine pre- and post-purchase if helpful:

- 1. Test-drive a car.
- 2. Purchase.
- 3. Enjoy free maintenance for life.

Keep a process plan to three–six steps; more overwhelms and revives doubt.

Agreement plans tackle fear instead of confusion. They list promises that calm hidden objections: no

haggling, rigorous inspection, money-back guarantee. CarMax’s four-point pledge (“No haggle pricing,” “Every car meets our quality certification,” etc.) transformed a distrusted industry and sells more used cars than the next three competitors combined. Gingrich’s “Contract with America” was an agreement plan in politics; Whole Foods’ values list reassures shoppers their food is sourced responsibly.

Draft an agreement plan by listing everything that scares the customer and countering each worry with a commitment. Short lists can live on walls, packaging, or checkout pages; longer versions wait in the background, reinforcing confidence as buyers explore.

Whether stones take the shape of three easy steps or a set of promises, the aim is the same: show the hero exactly how to reach the other side and assure them they won’t drown on the way. When the plan is clear and the risk feels managed, the mouse clicks “Buy Now” and the story moves to its climax.

8. And Calls Them to Action

StoryBrand Principle Five: **“Customers do not take action unless they are challenged to take action.”**

We have teased the desire, named the problem, proven empathy and authority, and laid step-by-step-stones, yet people still hover at the edge of the creek. Bodies at rest stay at rest; heroes need an outside nudge. Movies prove it: Rain Man’s phone call, Juliet’s heartbreak, Liam Neeson’s kidnapped daughter—without a shove, no plot moves.

So we must plainly invite the customer to place an order. A timid hint won’t cut it; life bombards them with three-thousand ads a day. A bold “Buy Now” button, isolated and repeated, tells the brain exactly what to do. My friend who flips companies makes millions simply by clarifying and repeating the call to action.

Two kinds of calls matter.

The first are **Direct** calls to action:

- Order now
- Call today
- Schedule an appointment
- Register today
- Buy now

These belong in the top-right corner, above the fold, and sprinkled as people scroll.

Transitional calls to action are low-risk offers that deepen the relationship when buyers aren't ready to commit. Think of them as casual dates that keep the romance alive until the proposal lands.

- Free information: white papers, PDFs, webinars, videos, podcasts.
- Testimonials: brief success stories that map the journey.
- Samples: test-drives, seasoning tastes, song snippets, chapter previews.
- Free trial: limited-time access that removes risk.

A strong transitional offer stakes your claim, creates reciprocity, and cements your role as guide. StoryBrand itself doubled revenue in a year with one free PDF: "5 Things Your Website Should Include."

Here's what your process should look like:

1. Draft a direct call—clear, prominent, repeated.
2. Pair it with a transitional invite—helpful and free.
3. Pursue politely but persistently: Marry me? No? Coffee then? Eventually the answer turns into a sale.

When a design house courted me, the prettier site never asked for the date; the plainer site offered a helpful PDF and a "Schedule an appointment" button—guess who won my thousands of dollars. Clarity beats beauty every time.

Before moving on, brainstorm the strongest direct phrase you can repeat and a generous transitional offer that positions you as expert. Without these, customers remain frozen at the creek; with them, they step across and the story marches toward its climax.

9. That Helps Them Avoid Failure

StoryBrand Principle Six: **"Every human being is trying to avoid a tragic ending."**

A story lives or dies on the tension between success and failure; audiences care only while a hero teeters on that edge. The same is true in business. If we don't hint at the no-good, terrible consequences of ignoring our offer, customers quietly ask, So what? and move on.

People act to escape pain or experience pleasure. If nothing bad can happen, stakes vanish and the narrative collapses. Jane Eyre kept readers turning pages to uncover Mr. Rochester's secret; Jaws glued us to seats because a shark threatened Amity Island. Likewise, brands that never foreshadow loss bore prospects.

Allstate's "Mayhem" campaign nails this. Dean Winters—falling trees, attic raccoons, house fires—shows mayhem poised to strike while the tagline asks, "Are you in good hands?" A 2015 Sugar Bowl stunt even auctioned a couple's "possessions" on live TV to warn viewers about oversharing online. One game, 18 million site hits, #Mayhemsale at #1 worldwide—proof that hinting at disaster moves people.

Fear works because loss aversion drives decisions.

Kahneman's Prospect Theory shows people dislike losing \$100 more than they enjoy winning it. They'll act two to three times faster to avoid pain than to seize gain. Lyndon Johnson secured civil-rights votes by warning George Wallace he'd be on the wrong side of history; Wallace caved.

A tasteful "fear appeal" has four parts:

- 1. **Show vulnerability:** "Thirty percent of homes have termites."
- 2. **Suggest action:** "Smart owners protect their investment."
- 3. **Offer a specific solution:** "Our treatment guarantees a termite-free house."
- 4. **Call for response:** "Book your inspection today."

Fear is salt—just a pinch. Too little and nothing flavors the dish; too much and everyone spits it out. Moderate fear is what changes attitudes and behavior.

Ask, What could my customer lose if they ignore me? Possible losses:

- **Money:** hidden fees, fines, wasted investment.
- **Health:** untreated symptoms, long-term damage.
- **Opportunity:** missed revenue or market share.
- **Reputation:** looking amateurish, being passed by rivals.
- **Quality of life:** stress, boredom, regret.

StoryBrand clients frame risks this way:

- **Perkins Motorplex:** getting ripped off, stuck with a lemon, feeling duped.
- **Rely Technology:** a boring living room, no one wants to watch the game at your house, tech so complex you need a PhD.

- **Aerospace Market Entry:** product failures that tarnish your reputation, inefficient output, competitors racing ahead.
- **WinShape Camps:** a long, dull summer, restless kids at home, regret over wasted months.

Only a few bullet points go in the "failure" box of your BrandScript—just enough to remind buyers of the waterfall downstream. Once stakes are clear, we'll paint the opposite picture: the success awaiting those who step across the creek. For now, warn customers what they stand to lose; without that tension, they'll never feel the urgency to act.

10. And Ends in a Success

StoryBrand Principle Seven: **"Never assume people understand how your brand can change their lives. Tell them."**

People want to be taken somewhere. Reagan's shining city, Clinton's bridge, Nike's promise to inspire every athlete—all cast a clear, aspirational future. Without that vision, brands perish.

Make the ending specific. Kennedy didn't sell a "robust space program"; he vowed to "put a man on the moon." A fuzzy promise excites no one; a defined outcome keeps the audience hoping. Fill in a before-and-after grid: how life will look, feel, and function once the customer engages. Then say it plainly—on the website, in email, in speeches, and through images that show happy users enjoying the product.

A success story must solve external, internal, and philosophical problems. Story experts note three classic resolutions that satisfy audiences:

- **Gain power or status.** Customers crave esteem. Offer access (Starbucks tiers), scarcity (limited editions), premiums (Emerald Club), or identity

association (Mercedes, Rolex) that lifts social standing.

- **Union that makes the hero whole.** Completion can mean reduced anxiety, lighter workload, or more time. Tools, services, or even spotless floors give customers the missing piece that restores peace.
- **Self-realization or acceptance.** Inspire potential (Red Bull, Under Armour), foster acceptance (Dove's Real Beauty, American Eagle's untouched models), or invite transcendence through a larger cause (TOMS "One for One," FUBU's community pride).

List these promised wins in your BrandScript's success box. Keep it simple: a beautiful floor, a creamy taste of heaven, an unforgettable adventure. Even smiling faces on your homepage signal the loop will close in happiness.

People buy the happy ending. Tell them exactly what it looks like—and they'll follow.

11. People Want Your Brand to Participate in Their Transformation

Your BrandScript still needs its foundation: the customer's transformation. Every human wants to be somebody different, somebody better, or simply more self-accepting. Brands that participate in this identity shift create passionate evangelists.

At a story's start, the hero is flawed and doubtful. Conflict forces growth; the climactic victory proves the hero is now competent and courageous. That arc—from ill-equipped to capable—is universal. So ask: Who does my customer want to become? What is their aspirational identity?

Smart brands define that identity. Gerber Knives sells more than steel; its "Hello, Trouble" campaign invites buyers to see themselves as tough, fearless, competent. I'm a writer who rarely needs a blade, yet I longed for one because Gerber promised a better version of me. Forty dollars for a knife plus confidence wasn't a waste; it was a bargain.

To find your customer's aspirational identity, imagine how they want friends to describe them. Executive-coaching clients may want to be seen as disciplined leaders; athletes as fit and successful. Once you know, weave that language into emails, blogs, and ads.

The guide offers more than a product and plan; the guide cares about the hero's journey. Dave Ramsey lives this. His radio intro—"debt is dumb, cash is king, and the paid-off home mortgage has taken the place of the BMW as the status symbol of choice"—maps a story, spotlights an identity, and invites listeners to a "Debt-Free Scream" that marks their transformation. Ramsey's obsession with listeners' external (debt), internal (hopelessness), and philosophical (moral questions about overspending) problems, plus an aspirational identity of disciplined strength, builds millions of raving fans.

Great stories end with the guide affirming change: Obi-Wan's ghost beside Luke, Lionel praising King George, Peter Brand telling Billy Beane he hit a home run. Your brand must do the same—declare the customer different and better.

Use the Identity Transformation box in your BrandScript:

- **From:** passive dog owner **To:** every dog's hero
- **From:** confused and ill-equipped **To:** competent and smart investor
- **From:** anxious and glum **To:** carefree and radiant

When teams realize they sell more than products—that they guide people toward stronger self-belief—their work gains purpose and customers feel it.

Define who your customer longs to be, speak to that image everywhere, and your brand will do more than help heroes win; it will help them transform.

SECTION 3: Implementing Your StoryBrand BrandScript

12. Building a Better Website

We'll only see more engagement if we actually embed our StoryBrand BrandScript into every touch-point—site, emails, elevator pitch, sales scripts. The more we execute, the more clearly we communicate, the more the brand stands out.

Start with your website. Most buyers hear about us elsewhere but go to the site to confirm hopes and decide. A page that “passes the grunt test” and converts browsers to buyers is non-negotiable. Websites used to be clearinghouses of info; today they must act like elevator pitches—short, enticing, customer-centric.

After thousands of reviews we've landed on five essentials. Nail these before fussing with anything else.

1. A clear offer above the fold

Treat the top section like a first date: brief, relevant, exclusively about the customer. Use one short line that

- promises an aspirational identity,
- solves a problem, or
- simply states what you do.

“We Help You Make Beautiful Websites” (Squarespace) or “We'll Make You a Pro in the Kitchen” would do the trick. Hide the company backstory for later dates.

2. Obvious calls to action

Place the direct CTA at the top-right and again center-screen above the fold. Make the button a stand-out color and repeat it as users scroll. Pair it with a subtler transitional CTA so “Will you marry me?” sits next to “Want to grab coffee?” If you aren't boldly asking, customers won't act.

3. Images of success

Pictures speak. Show happy customers who've closed their story loop. Feature products in use by satisfied people; communicate health, well-being, and satisfaction at a glance.

4. A bite-sized breakdown of your revenue streams

If you sell multiple things, unite them under one umbrella message, then let visitors “choose their own adventure.” Example: headline “The Key to Success Is a Customized Plan,” followed by buttons for Life Plan, Strat-Ops Plan, and “Become a Trained Facilitator.” Clarity turns diversity into strength.

5. Very few words

Visitors scan, they don't read. Write copy in “Morse code”: brief, punchy, benefit-focused. Replace paragraphs with bullet points, collapse long text behind “read more.” The fewer words you use, the more

people will read.

Think of your BrandScript as a drum kit and the web-site as the drum solo: no word, image, or idea should stray outside the SB7 framework. When every element echoes the script, noise disappears and the story lands.

13. Using StoryBrand to Transform Company Culture

StoryBrand isn't just for customers; the same Brand-Script that clarifies your marketing can close the "Narrative Void" haunting big organizations. When no clear story unifies a company, divisions drift, tiny mis-choices bleed productivity, and employees dis-engage. Gallup found barely one in five workers truly excited about their job—a disengagement tab of \$450-\$550 billion a year. White-noise communica-tion plus remote work has deepened the void; mis-sion statements alone don't fill it.

Without a shared narrative, onboarding is a check-list: key fob, harassment video, cube. A good per-former hits his metrics, wins a bonus, and bolts when a recruiter calls. Nothing wrong—nothing special. The company sleepwalks.

Inject a StoryBrand BrandScript and the plot chang-es. Prospects hear buzz about a place alive with pur-pose; interviews feel like being recruited for an expe-dition. On day one a facilitator walks new hires through the company's BrandScript—customers are the heroes, the firm the guide. The CEO hosts lunch, retells the story, shows a short film of custom-er wins. Walls feature photos of clients whose prob-lems were solved. Daily tasks become story beats; coworkers are allies, not rivals. Headhunters call, but employees forget to return calls. Low turnover pre-serves priceless experience and fuels growth.

How to eradicate the Narrative Void:

- 1. **craft** a BrandScript with leadership;
- 2. **audit** the current "thoughtmosphere";
- 3. **design** a custom On-Mission plan;
- 4. **align** internal comms to reinforce the narrative;
- 5. **embed** a self-sustaining team to guard the script.

One fast-food chain stuck at 5% growth did just that. Video curriculum, regional meetings, CEO updates, and brand-aligned events rekindled zeal; three years later growth neared 30%, adding hundreds of millions.

An On-Mission company turns every employee into a sales force. Short, disciplined sound bites replace muddled explanations; inspired staff spread the word faster than any ad spend. Leaders stop posing as heroes and act as guides, supplying tools—comp, development, events—that help team members win their own stories. External BrandScript (customer as hero) and internal BrandScript (team as hero, leader-ship as guide) align, producing a profitable, healing alchemy.

Getting on mission means weaving the story into strategies, ops, and customer experiences until it be-comes the air everyone breathes. Where there's no story, there's no engagement; where a clear narra-tive drives every decision, customers, employees, and profits all thrive.