



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

S E R I E S

THE NUTSHELL OF BUILDING A STORY BRAND

By Donald Miller
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Customers don't care about your story; they care about their own. Your customer is the hero, not your brand, and the human brain is drawn toward clarity and away from confusion. 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. Noise is the real enemy, so we must filter every bit of communication through a simple, proven sense-making mechanism: story.

A story that works contains seven beats. A CHARACTER wants something. A PROBLEM—external, internal, and even philosophical—blocks the way. The hero meets a GUIDE who shows EMPATHY and AUTHORITY. The guide gives a clear PLAN: “Step 1, Step 2, Step 3” or an agreement that removes fear. The guide then CALLS THE HERO TO ACTION—“Buy Now,” “Schedule a Call”—because people do not act unless they are challenged. The plan helps them AVOID FAILURE (wasted money, embarrassment, missed opportunity), and they END IN SUCCESS: health, wealth,

#1 Wall Street Journal Bestseller

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BUILDING A STORY BRAND



Clarify Your Message
So Customers Will Listen

Use the 7 Elements of Great Storytelling to Grow Your Business

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status, belonging, meaning. Spell out those wins; never assume people understand how your brand can change their lives—tell them.

Name one specific thing the hero wants so a story gap opens and attention locks on. Sell to the frustration beneath the surface, because companies tend to pitch solutions to external problems, but customers buy resolutions to internal pain. Position yourself as Yoda, not Luke; audiences trust guides who’ve “been there and done that.” Place stones in the rushing creek so buyers see exactly where to step, then invite them across. A timid hint is invisible amid three thousand daily ads; a bold, repeated button gets the click. Salt the narrative with just enough mayhem to raise the stakes—if there are no stakes, there is no story.

Brands that participate in the customer’s transformation create passionate evangelists. Gerber Knives doesn’t just sell steel; it says, “Hello, Trouble,” inviting ordinary people to see themselves as tough, fearless, competent. Dave Ramsey frames listeners’ debt as a villain, hands them a baby-step plan, and celebrates their “Debt-Free Scream,” marking the moment they become disciplined and strong. Define how your customer wants friends to describe them, then weave that aspirational identity into every email, video, and hallway conversation.

Start by rebuilding your website. Above the fold, promise a clear benefit in one short line and an image of smiling customers who have closed their story loop. Add an obvious call-to-action button in a standout color, pair it with a low-risk transitional offer, break revenue streams into bite-sized options, and ruthlessly cut copy until only clarity remains. A site that passes the caveman grunt test—“You sell this, it helps me survive, I click here”—becomes the centerpiece of a narrative that drives revenue.

Inside large organizations the same framework expels the Narrative Void that causes disengagement. When every associate can state the plot and their role in it, productivity rises, turnover falls, and growth accelerates. Leaders who stop losing sleep over the success of the business and start losing sleep over the success of their customers and teams discover the irony: guides win the day.

If you confuse, you’ll lose. Create a StoryBrand BrandScript, cut the noise, invite customers into a story that helps them survive, thrive, and transform—and watch your company grow.

