

In a crowded marketplace, how do you differentiate your brand? Start with your story.



Custom graphic by Trevor Beach at [Wet Floor Studios](https://www.wetfloorstudios.com/)

How Do You Stand Out in the Market?

Orlando, October 30, 2020

Hi friend!

I hope you're well as we wrap up October.

What's your company's why? And how do you communicate this? A recent client project got me thinking about how companies differentiate themselves from competitors in a crowded marketplace.



For the project, I had to create a gift guide highlighting local artisans throughout the country. My first stop, of course, was to visit their company website, check out their products, and read their About page. Then I hopped on a phone call to verify some information and learn their backstory.

One kid-owned company launched because of the middle schooler's passion for saving rhinos and the product line of homemade sauces would help raise funds for his favorite conservation charity. A furniture-making business focuses on using salvaged, old-growth wood out of respect for the environment. Another company employees adults on the autism spectrum because the owners know first-hand the challenges that special needs adults face in finding meaningful work. An organic beauty line launched because the owner had sensitive skin and had trouble finding products that wouldn't irritate her skin. Finally, a custom-knife maker handpicks the cholla wood (the dried inner skeleton of the cholla cactus) used in creating his product.

Some of these companies did an "amazing" job communicating their brand story on their websites. They told the *why* behind their business, which sets them apart from their competitors in such a unique way. By telling their stories, they conveyed their brand's personality, their experiences, and their values.

But sadly, many companies didn't even mention their unique backstories, whether it was why they launched in the first place or the causes they support or the unique process used in creating their products. That's a shame because *that's what sets them apart from their competitors!* Without sharing these unique stories, they're just another company selling stuff.

In my own business, I try to communicate—in both words and images—what makes me different than every other writer. Just about every writer claims she's a great writer who's reliable and meets deadlines. Truly, this should be the bare minimum for every professional writer, right? (Surprisingly, I've heard from quite a few editors and clients that this is not always the case.)

But through my words, I share how I got where I am today and why I do what I do. For example, on my website's [About](#) page, I literally tell "The Story of Lisa Beach," which includes both professional and personal background. Potential clients definitely want to know about my past work experiences, my clients, and where I've been published, so I give a Cliff's Notes version of my 30-year career as a freelance writer. (I also convey how my experience will benefit *them*—a key element of a good About page.) But for those who want to dig a little deeper and know the person behind the professional, I share some get-to-know-me-better details.

- I explain how I temporarily parked my career while I raised and (gulp!) homeschooled my two boys for 10 years. This resonates with many parents—especially women—who try to balance family and career and understand the sacrifice involved.
- I share that I'm a recent cancer survivor (twice!). This gives me an even deeper passion to embrace a healthy lifestyle, which is important to many clients in the health/wellness industry.
- I talk about where I lived (Pennsylvania and New Jersey) and where I call home these days (Florida). Plus, I share how I love to explore new places, whether that's in Florida, on Caribbean cruises, or up and down the eastern U.S. and beyond, which resonates with my clients/editors in the travel and hospitality industries.

And through my images, like the caricature at the top of this newsletter, I convey that I don't take myself too seriously. (A big shout out to my son for creating this image for me!) But this illustration also communicates what I value (healthy eating, the environment) and my personality (a coffee-loving, sandal-wearing bookworm). And my Be Kind T-shirt underscores my desire to help others and do the right thing. This ties in nicely with my copy that says how I primarily "focus on B2B and B2C writing about travel/food/lifestyle/wellness, especially as these topics intersect with nonprofits, associations, and for-profit companies doing good in the world. (I'm looking at you, B Corporations!)"

The bottom line? Don't shy away from revealing yourself or your brand, especially through your stories. People want to do business with people and companies they know, like, and trust. They want to connect and engage with brands that resonate with them, whether that's through your values, your backstory, or something else. Customers want to know why you do what you do and what you stand for. This strengthens their connection to and engagement with you.

Remember, plenty of companies can do what you do. But no one else shares the same story. What's *your* company's why? And how do you communicate this through your brand's words and images?

Thanks for reading,



Lisa A. Beach
Orlando Freelance Writer

P.S. Like this newsletter? Forward it to a friend with an invitation to [subscribe](#). Seriously. What are you waiting for? Share it now. 😊

"Good stories surprise us. They make us think and feel. They stick in our minds and help us remember ideas and concepts in a way that a PowerPoint crammed with bar graphs never can."

-Joe Lazauskas and Shane Snow,
The Storytelling Edge

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Resources Worth Sharing

- **Planning Resource.** Already thinking about your marketing plan or editorial calendar for 2021? Weave in timely tie-ins and promotions to everyday celebrations, connecting with audiences along the way. For example, did you know that January 9 is National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day or that February is National Bird Feeding Month? From quirky holidays to impactful celebrations, [National Today](#) delivers 365 days' worth of notable events.
- **Free Subscription.** If you believe content is a strategic business asset, you'll want to grab a free digital subscription to [Chief Content Officer](#) (CCO). Each issue showcases how content leaders find success, examining the strategies, teams, processes, and technologies they use. You'll find expertise, advice, and opinion to help you excel in managing your content marketing; from creation and distribution to promotion, measurement and beyond.
- **PR Tool.** Would you like to be seen as an expert in your field and have the media come to you for interviews? Then consider registering with [ProfNet](#), a service from PR Newswire. Think of it as a "matching service" for journalists and experts. For journalists who need a quote from an expert source, they can use the service for free. For experts, there's a fee to receive ProfNet queries and submit Expert Alerts, depending on the type of institution and the number of subscribers. I've personally used this to find sources for articles I've written.

Fresh Ink

If you'd like to see what I've been writing about and where I've been published these past few months, check out a few recent links, including B2B and B2C magazine articles, website content, and newsletter articles:

- **Hemispheres:** [Friends in Deed: Why connecting with your co-workers on a personal level is a must](#)
- **USA Today Go Escape Florida & Caribbean:** [Miami Magic: Tourist Mecca Reopens Amid Coronavirus Concerns](#)
- **USA Today Go Escape California & Pacific:** [Theme Park Protocol: Masks, Hand Sanitizer, & Social Distancing Will Be Part of the Magic](#)

- RCI Magazine: [The Small-Town Charm of Shenandoah Valley](#)
- Florida Realtor: [Visual Marketing: 3 Things Homebuyers Want Now More Than Ever](#)
- Orlando Magazine: [Celebrating Pets: Happy Tales](#)
- Southern Living: [5 Florida Landscaping Rules You Should Never Break](#)
- National Environmental Education Foundation: [How Lorena Williams' Fire Career Took Her to New Heights](#); [5 Ways to Have a Green Halloween](#); [Making NPLD 2020 a Virtual Success at Carters Lake](#); [Are You Ready for Asthma Peak Week?](#); [Celebrate Children's Environmental Health Day 2020](#)

Tip: Tell Stories With Statistics

Using statistics from trustworthy sources certainly adds weight and credibility to your message. But stats can be dry and boring. Instead, bring them to life with a story. For instance, if you're trying to raise awareness and funding for a poverty-focused nonprofit organization in Florida, you might cite that, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 12.7 percent of Floridians live in poverty. But to connect with your audience on an emotional level, you might use storytelling, such as, "Imagine having to choose between buying groceries, paying your rent, or purchasing diabetes medication. That's the reality faced by 12.7 percent of Floridians living in poverty." This approach paints a picture, appeals to emotion, and makes the point more memorable.

Thanks for reading! Be well, stay safe—and, please, wear a mask.



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