

# It's All About The Story:

## A Book Is More Than Plot Or Pictures

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Human beings connect through stories. Stories are used to communicate information, history, and emotion. A properly crafted story can move people to do amazing things. And a great story can move your customers in ways that generic marketing copy never will. When you hear a good story, you want to share it, maybe because it impacted your life in a profound way, maybe because it will make others laugh, maybe because you found it to be really useful. If you can find the stories that resonate with your customers, they will share that story, and your product, with more people than you could hope to reach on your own.

For instance, earlier this year, a New York hotel called Yotel created an amazing User Generated Content campaign. Rather than post the usual “please excuse our dust” signs during a period of renovation, they built a wall with a Lego board on it and allowed people to build on that wall. Visitors could then tweet #mylegomasterpiece and winners would be selected to win a free stay at the Yotel. Now, rather than looking like every other hotel out there, the hotel had people coming to stay just to build on their Lego wall. And their customers were spreading the word for them. That is a great story, and one that people want to share.

At Put Me In The Story, we work with personalized books. Do a quick search and you will find dozens of companies that can personalize a book for you. Because we are part of a book publishing company, we understood the value inherent in extraordinary content. So we chose to differentiate on content quality. Our personalized books are based on bestselling books. We chose to make that content even better by allowing the customer to create a version of that amazing book just for them. The positioning of “Bestselling” helps Put Me In The Story to stand out from a sea of personalized books that otherwise look remarkably alike.

To get to our messaging, we did a lot of testing and a lot of listening. We listened to what customers were saying about the trade titles through reviews in order to create a starting point for how to talk about our new personalized product. Then we created positioning and messaging around that product and put it out into the world to test. We did this through various advertising and marketing campaigns, through talking with partners, peers, competitors, and more customers.

And then we iterated. We tweaked and tested. And we continue to do that today, on all levels. For instance, we launched a product called My First Year from Anne Geddes with the intention of allowing the customer to personalize every piece of the book. We have since changed the personalization model on this product two more times based on customer feedback, surveys, and product engagement data. By constantly improving your story, not only on your homepage, but also on your landing pages, product pages, About Us pages, even your contact page, you have the opportunity to continuously grow customer engagement. When we first launched with our category of baby products, we created a new, beautifully designed category page. We felt that it was the best way to showcase our offerings and tell the story of our products. However, in watching the data, we realized that the existing category page was significantly outperforming the new category page. Customers weren't engaging with that form of story the way we expected. It is important to listen to your customers and make sure that you are telling the story that they care about, not just the one you *think* they want.

Customers' stories are a great way of reinforcing your own stories. Potential customers are more likely to trust a candidly written review than your marketing copy. At the same time, you can use those reviews to refine your marketing copy so that you are speaking the same language as your customer, and perhaps more importantly, that

you are explaining to the customer what people really love about your product. We have found that there is nothing more powerful to a customer than coming to a product page and seeing that the 256 people who were there before them loved the book because it made them cry, made their child squeal with delight, or extended bedtime because they had to read a story three times in a row. All of these examples are pulled directly from our product reviews.

Stories create possibilities. The stories we tell each other within our company are important, but they are only a starting place as we craft and refine the stories we tell to our customers and to the world. **N**

