

Author of the #1 *Wall Street Journal*  
bestseller ***Building a StoryBrand***



**DONALD MILLER**  
**WITH DR. J.J. PETERSON**

# MARKETING MADE SIMPLE

**A STEP-BY-STEP STORYBRAND  
GUIDE FOR ANY BUSINESS**



# **MARKETING MADE SIMPLE**



# MARKETING MADE SIMPLE

---

A STEP-BY-STEP STORYBRAND  
GUIDE FOR ANY BUSINESS

**DONALD MILLER**

WITH DR. J. J. PETERSON



HARPERCOLLINS  
LEADERSHIP

AN IMPRINT OF HARPERCOLLINS

© 2020 Donald Miller

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other—except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Published by HarperCollins Leadership, an imprint of HarperCollins Focus LLC.

Book design by Aubrey Khan, Neuwirth & Associates.

ISBN 978-1-4002-0380-2 (eBook)

ISBN 978-1-4002-0379-6 (HC)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020930312

Printed in the United States of America

20 21 22 23 LSC 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



# CONTENTS

Introduction	vii
 <b>Part I</b>	
The Three Stages of Relationship	1
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	
The One Marketing Plan You Will Never Regret	3
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	
The Actual Stages of a Relationship	7
<b>CHAPTER 3</b>	
An Introduction to the Marketing Made Simple Checklist	23
 <b>Part II</b>	
Create Your Marketing Made Simple Sales Funnel	33
<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	
Create Your One-Liner	35
<b>CHAPTER 5</b>	
A Wireframed Website That Works	53
<b>CHAPTER 6</b>	
Lead Generator	113

## CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER 7</b>	
The Power of Email	137
<b>CHAPTER 8</b>	
Nurture Email Campaigns	141
<b>CHAPTER 9</b>	
Sales Email Campaigns	159
<b>CHAPTER 10</b>	
How to Execute the Marketing Made Simple Sales Funnel	167
Conclusion	185
Index	187
About the Authors	195



# INTRODUCTION

Marketing should be easy and it should work.

Whether you run a small business or a large business, the easiest and best marketing plan starts with a sales funnel.

It doesn't matter what you sell, if you use words to sell your products, a sales funnel will work.

A sales funnel is the basic foundation of a good digital marketing plan. Once you create a sales funnel, your advertising can then support your sales funnel.

While there is more to marketing than a digital plan, your digital strategy, including your website, lead generator, and email campaign will serve as the foundation for all your other collateral.

But, most importantly, you need a sales funnel—and this book will teach you to create one.

A sales funnel is a way to capture and convert leads.

Every entrepreneur, business owner, and marketer must know how a sales funnel works. Whether you create a sales funnel yourself or have somebody else create it for you, the checklist in this book will spell out everything you need to know to build a sales funnel that works. Each chapter of this book will give you tips and strategies for creating each piece correctly.

At [MarketingMadeSimple.com](http://MarketingMadeSimple.com) you can download a free paper wireframe that, along with this book, will save you an enormous amount of time and mental anguish.

## INTRODUCTION

At StoryBrand, we've helped over ten thousand small, medium, and large size companies create sales funnels that work. Nearly all of them started by simply filling out these pieces of paper.

When you download your paper wireframe, you'll also get two sample wireframes to help you understand where you are headed.

This book is all about making the execution of a marketing strategy easy. We can talk about marketing all day, but you will only make money on what you execute.

Most marketing plans do not fail in intent or philosophy of communication, they fail in execution. People simply don't get it done.

Last year, my contributing writer Dr. J. J. Peterson turned in his doctoral dissertation on the StoryBrand messaging framework. In the dissertation J. J. defended the idea that the framework works for any kind of business, large or small, B2B or B2C. However, J. J. found that success with the framework hinges on one crucial imperative: execution. This book is all about execution. It exists to help you get the job done.

If you have a clear message and no sales funnel, your business will not grow. Your visitors will assume you can't solve their problem and they will leave in search of someone who can.

## DON'T WASTE YOUR MONEY ON MARKETING THAT DOESN'T WORK

---

If you haven't started spending money on marketing yet, this book will save you thousands if not millions of dollars. And if you've been wasting money on marketing, this book will stop that waste in its tracks.

Over the years we've run StoryBrand, we've met lots of marketing agencies that will sell you new logos, color schemes, and brand guidelines followed by Facebook ads and slick landing pages. Without a sales funnel in place, most of that stuff won't work.

## INTRODUCTION

J.J. and I have trained hundreds of StoryBrand certified marketing guides and in that time experimented with dozens of marketing ideas. Yet we keep coming back to the old, trusty sales funnel.

The checklist in this book will get results.

If you are an entrepreneur, a business owner, or serve in the marketing department of a large organization, this book will serve as an easy-to-understand blueprint.

If you're in charge of the marketing for your company, consider this your new playbook. And if you run a company, hand this book to your marketing team and ask them to create exactly what is in this checklist.

## PAYING FOR MARKETING THAT DOESN'T WORK IS WRONG

---

It is wrong for a marketing company to charge you money and fail to get you a return on your investment. It's an equal injustice that you, personally, would spend your time on an effort that does not pay you for your work. Your time is too valuable for that.

If you read this book and need help, visit [MarketingMadeSimple.com](http://MarketingMadeSimple.com) where you can find a StoryBrand certified guide to create your sales funnel for you. Even if you hire a guide, however, this book will be important to show you what the guide will be doing. You will be able to offer valuable direction and feedback in the creation of your marketing plan after you fully understand what your marketing plan should be.

Marketing does not have to be complicated. Do what we've laid out in this book and you'll have confidence in your marketing, you'll grow your mission, and you will connect with customers.

Let's get started.



# Part I

---

## THE THREE STAGES OF RELATIONSHIP





# 1

## THE ONE MARKETING PLAN YOU WILL NEVER REGRET

Twenty years ago I'd just written my first bestselling book. I'd written a book before that but my mother was the only one who bought copies, so that doesn't count. It took me two tries to write a book people actually wanted to read, and from what I hear, even hitting it big on your second try is pretty rare. More than 99 percent of book writers fail to sell enough copies to make a living. I was lucky.

After writing a bestselling book, I thought, everything else would come easy. I assumed every book I'd release after that would also be a bestseller. I assumed thousands of people would show up every time I gave a speech. And I supposed I could make movies out of my books and become some kind of literary/Hollywood phenomenon.

It turns out that for more than 99 percent of writers who write a bestselling book, none of that other stuff happens.

Writing a bestseller is a huge help, but thousands of bestselling authors have dwindled away their money and influence so that, in

the end, they had nothing to show for it. And that's what nearly happened to me.

Instead of building a platform, I rested on my past success. In my calculation, I wasted about ten years not taking my opportunity as a successful author (and human being) seriously.

If I could go back in time twenty years, this book is the letter I'd write to myself.

I know it sounds strange to say if I could go back twenty years I'd sit down and teach myself a basic marketing plan, but it's true.

Not having a marketing plan cost me millions of dollars, serious international influence, and the chance to accomplish at least some of my dreams.

Don't get me wrong. Things have turned out okay, but the only reason things worked out is because I executed this plan.

## THE FIVE-STEP MARKETING PLAN THAT WORKS

---

In short, there are five things I should have done twenty years ago to keep the momentum going. And after I did these five things, I should have done them again and then again and then again.

They are ridiculously pragmatic. Here they are:

1. **Created a BrandScript.** I should have clarified my message.
2. **Created a one-liner.** I should have distilled that message into a single sentence.
3. **Wireframed a landing page.** I should have elaborated on that message and brought it to life on a clear and compelling website.
4. **Created a lead-generating PDF.** I should have used a lead generator to capture emails.

5. **Created an email campaign.** I should have earned the trust of people who had given me their email address by sending them helpful emails that practically solved their problems.

This is a book about building a platform and growing a company. I'm going to keep it simple and specific.

Most business books are long on theory and short on application, but J. J. and I are going to tell you exactly what you should do and what order you should do it in so that your marketing works.

## THIS PLAN WILL DIG YOU OUT OF A HOLE

---

I learned to execute this simple marketing plan because I had to.

Twenty years ago, after having sold millions of books, I lost everything.

I put all my money into an investment that failed.

On a bright and cool September morning I got a call saying the investment hadn't worked and that my life savings was gone.

It was one of the hardest seasons of my life. I felt like I'd squandered everything.

In the weeks following that excruciating loss, I realized I'd not taken responsibility for my career. I'd trusted outside managers, publicists, investors, and publishers to guide me.

I decided then to become the CEO of my own life. I'd make the decisions.

I rebuilt.

Instead of writing another book, sending it to the publisher, and hoping for another bestseller, I self-published my next book and started a little company. I began searching for an inexpensive

marketing plan that would work, and after years of experimenting, came up with the plan that is in this book.

Today, my wife and I own a company called Business Made Simple that is tackling the problem of college debt by offering inexpensive online business courses to anybody trying to develop themselves.

Today, only seven years later, we give away more to charity every year than I lost on that Monday morning.

How did all this happen? Following this simple, five-step marketing plan over and over is what built my company and rebuilt my life.

The good news is, you don't have to lose all your money to build a great company. If you follow the five steps outlined in this book, you'll grow your brand correctly the first time.

If you work for a large company, this plan will work for every division and every product within each division. Yes, you can use this book to create multiple sales funnels. In fact, I recommend doing exactly that. Once you create your first sales funnel, start working on the next one. Ultimately, your marketing plan will exist of many sales funnels, each selling your products and services to varying demographics.

Regardless of whether you're a small company creating a few sales funnels or a large company creating hundreds, the plan works.

You do not have to struggle with marketing. You can be confident, proud, and see a return.

If you execute the plan that is in this book, you will succeed.



# 2

## THE ACTUAL STAGES OF A RELATIONSHIP

*Why People Have to Get Curious and  
Enlightened Before They Will Commit*

Our five-step marketing plan will invite people into a trusted relationship with your brand. Not only will you sell more products, but customers will start thinking of you, your salespeople, and even your products as friends who are helping them on their journey.

Understanding the stages of a relationship is important because it helps us understand what our sales funnel has to accomplish.

We all want people to understand how our products can solve their problems so that they will make a purchase. But it turns out, simply asking people to buy our products doesn't work. At least not right away.

Asking for a sale is a relational proposition. And relationships have rules.

Most of us ask people to buy our products the way a shy, young boy might ask a girl to go on a date. We clumsily walk up to her in the hallway, shake her hand with a strong grip the way our dad taught us, and ask her if she'd like to go to a movie with us and

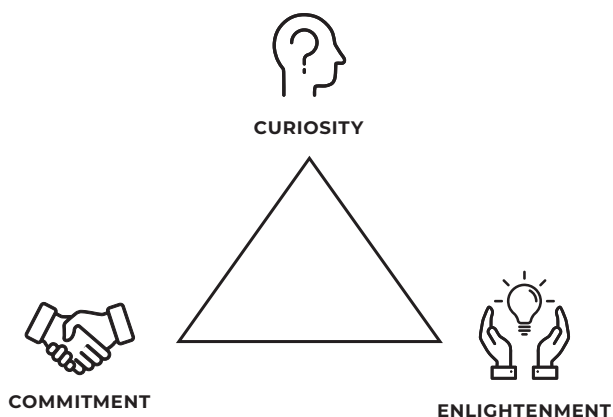
our mom, who just bought a new car. (I'm relating the story for a friend.)

Who knows whether that relationship will work out. Let's hope so for the kid's sake. Regardless, though, the kid would do a lot better if he understood how relationships really work. And the truth is relationships are built slowly.

Whether we are talking about a romantic relationship, a friendship, or even a relationship with a brand, all relationships move through three stages. And, these stages cannot be rushed.

The stages of a relationship are:

1. Curiosity
2. Enlightenment
3. Commitment



People do not want to be enlightened about you (get to know you more) unless they are curious about you (you have something that can help them survive), and until they are enlightened about how you can help them survive, they will never commit.

Every relationship you have ever been in has gone through these three stages. Even relationships you have with brands.

## THE JOURNEY EVERY CUSTOMER TAKES

---

Recently I began exploring high-end audio equipment. Betsy and I live in Nashville and because so many people in this town are in the music industry, we often find ourselves hosting small get-togethers with artists who are working on an album.

After the fifth or sixth impromptu listening party, I realized the tiny Bluetooth speaker in our kitchen wasn't good enough.

I spent a little time on Google and came across a small company named Oswalds Mill Audio that makes custom audio equipment. The pictures of the speakers and turntables were beautiful. The turntable itself weighed eighty pounds and the speakers looked like steel bullhorns pulled from an old football stadium. Everything was mounted on beautiful hardwood, and the guy in the picture playing the vinyl record was wearing a cool sweater, which is the sign of a guy who knows a lot about how a sound system works. Anyway, there was something different about this sound system and the way the product was talked about on the website that made me curious.

But how? And curious about what?

I'll tell you whether I bought the sound system in a minute, but first, let's explore what we need to do to help a customer be more interested in a brand.

### Stage 1: Curiosity

Can this person, product, or service help me survive? The first stage of a relationship is curiosity. This is the stage where you meet somebody and you want to know more about them. At a

party, this is the person you leave the party hoping for a second interaction with. Perhaps you went to the same school or perhaps they are a few years ahead of you in the same career.

Without knowing it, what's making you curious about this person is one thing: you sense they can help you survive or thrive.

You might wonder how a person can help you survive just by having gone to the same school as you. The truth is, the filter that decides what helps us survive is incredibly nuanced and particular. Your filter is a ridiculously refined instrument.

That person who went to the same school as you solves the problem of you not feeling alone, that there is somebody who has a similar life journey as yours. We tend to collect people with similar life journeys for that very reason; they make us feel like we have a tribe.

Being alone, by the way, is a vulnerable state. Human beings move in families and tribes. We may go through seasons where we are alone but mostly we like being around other human beings.

When we meet somebody who is like us, we feel more safe, mainly because we understand the person better. Confusion about who somebody is makes us feel slightly threatened, so similarities break down those threats faster.

If the person we are talking to is a few years ahead of us in the same career, the way they can help us survive is more obvious. They can help us avoid pitfalls and may know some strategies so our career can advance a little faster.

None of this thinking is happening on a conscious level, of course, but it's definitely happening.

A person, product, or brand that can help us survive or thrive activates a survival mechanism within us that piques our curiosity.

### *Curiosity Is a Snap Judgment*

The curiosity stage of a relationship is mostly about snap judgments. Scanning our environment is like sorting through a stack of mail.

We place anything we see as junk, or not relevant to our survival, in the recycle bin. Bills, letters from friends, catalogs we might be interested in, and such go into a pile to be sorted later. At the curiosity stage we are really only making two large piles: *keep* and *discard*.

This is how our customers' brains work as they scan the three thousand pieces of marketing collateral they encounter each day. The overwhelming majority of material gets discarded, but the occasional message gets sorted to the keep pile.

I know this all sounds harshly utilitarian, but it's quite normal and healthy. Each of us are trying to live a meaningful story, and not everybody or everything is useful to whatever story we've decided to live.

Human beings collect physical, emotional, and social resources that help them survive in the world. Just like the squirrels in my backyard collect nuts, we collect anything we might need to stay alive on this planet. And that's not a bad thing. We are, after all, primates. And primates are terrific at survival.

A person with no curiosity filter would not survive in the world. In fact, people with no curiosity filter wouldn't even make it out of their house in the morning. They'd just stand in the kitchen all day wondering about how the toaster works. Why? Because their curiosity filter wouldn't tell them they don't need to know how the toaster works and that if they don't leave soon they will be late to work and if that keeps happening they will lose their job.

The point is this: if you don't tell somebody how you can help them survive, they will set you aside—or worse, discard you.

When it comes to marketing, the header on your website, the subject line of your email, the opening statement of your proposal, the title of your lead generator, your entire elevator pitch, the first line of your keynote address, and a thousand other things need to succinctly express one of the ways you help people survive. If they don't, people will not listen.

### *How Do You Get Past a Person's Curiosity Filter?*

So what made me curious about the expensive audio equipment? Several things, most of which were being communicated to my subconscious.

The main thing that made me curious was status. More than even a sound system that sounded good, the beautiful equipment was going to make my living room look and feel awesome. People were going to think more of me when they saw that equipment (or so my primate mind believed), and so the pictures on the website were doing a lot of the heavy lifting. Not only that, but the guy in the sweater was acting as a proxy for my aspirational identity. Who wouldn't want to be ten years younger dressed in a cool sweater listening to an Al Green record while their spouse mixed them an old-fashioned in the background? Fantastic!

I know it all sounds irrational, but very little of what makes us curious is actually rational. People don't buy products, vote for candidates, or join a movement because they are thinking rationally. If you look around, that's pretty obvious.

Regardless, the point is this: to pique somebody's curiosity, you must associate your products with something that will help them survive.

### *Your Customers Are Not Curious About You, They Are Curious About How You Can Solve Their Problem*

Most businesses make the enormous mistake of telling their story to their customers, as though their customers are somehow interested. Customers are not interested in your story. They are, rather, interested in being invited into a story that has them surviving and winning in the end.

Instead of telling your story, the first stage of your marketing plan should pique a customer's curiosity about how their own story could be made better.

### *Curiosity Isn't Enough*

Curiosity aside, I still wasn't ready to buy the expensive sound system. The sound system was no impulse buy. I needed more information.

Without knowing it, I was moving into the second stage of relationships. I wanted the company to enlighten me about how, exactly, their product was going to increase my chances of survival.

## Stage 2: Enlightenment

This is the process by which your customer begins to trust you. If curiosity is what gets us to pay attention to a brand, enlightenment invites us into a relationship.

I'm not talking about the "you'll understand the meaning of the universe" kind of enlightenment: I'm talking about the kind of enlightenment that helps us understand how something works.

An enlightened person is somebody who understands and an unenlightened person is somebody who doesn't. You are either enlightened about how the tectonic plates once moved, or you are not. And that goes for physics, gardening, neuroscience, or how to make snow cones. With the exception of how to actually eat snow cones, I, for example, am not enlightened about any of those things.

If you want customers to take the next step in a relationship with your brand, you need to enlighten them about how you can solve their problem and help them survive.

After piquing your customers' curiosity on a website, in an email, or in some form of advertising or sales presentation, the next question they will likely ask is "but how?"

You sell a medicine that can cure a hangover. But how does it work?

You can improve education without raising taxes. But how?

You can safely rid their garden of pesky pests. But how?

The next phase of your marketing should enlighten them about how your products work to solve their problems.

Notice I didn't say that you should enlighten your customers about how your product works. That's hardly important. You should enlighten your customers about how your product *works to solve their problem*.

Never forget, we are not telling our story or even talking about our products. We are always inviting our customers on a journey in which their lives are made better through the use of our products.

Customers being invited on a journey want to know what tools we have to help them save the day and exactly how those tools will help them accomplish whatever task lays before them. If they are confused about how our products can help them win, they will walk away without making a purchase.

### *Customers Will Not Move Into a Fog*

Being confused about something is a vulnerable state. If you drive a car in a country where traffic rules are different, your confusion could get you hurt. If you are confused about what kind of berries are poisonous and what kind are edible, you could get killed!

A human brain is designed to experience pleasure when it understands something and fear or resistance when it doesn't. This is a basic survival mechanism and it's one that very few companies take into account when they communicate with their customers.

When somebody is confused, in varying degrees, they feel exposed to danger. Therefore, people move away from situations in which they are confused and toward contexts in which they understand the situation and feel in control.

This principle is why politicians with repeatable, simple messaging statements usually win. It's not because their plan will work or has even been thought through, it's because voters feel a sense of understanding and associate that feeling of comfort and survival with that candidate.

The answer to confusion is always no.

When you enlighten your customers, you lift the fog and help them see clearly how your product can help them solve their problem.

If the header of your website, the first words of your proposal, or even the first thing you say in a keynote is meant to pique curiosity, the next idea you communicate should answer the “but how.”

### *Your Marketing Should Enlighten Customers*

I built StoryBrand, the marketing division of BusinessMadeSimple, using a lead-generating PDF called “Five Things Your Website Should Include” because my potential customers wanted to know more. I convinced them their message wasn’t clear enough and then taught them how to clarify their message in a specific application. That lead generator was incredibly successful for me. It was a great “next step” in my customers’ relational journey with my brand.

There are many ways you can enlighten your customers, including long-form copy toward the bottom of your website in a lead generator, a live event, an email sequence, or even a video.

As I did further research on the speaker company, I found a video in which the founder explained how sound waves work. It turns out sound waves take up actual physical space. Some sound waves are an inch wide, and others are two or three inches wide. What this means is if you have speakers that aren’t the right dimensions to produce the physical sound waves, those waves become distorted.

The video enlightened me. No wonder the cheap Bluetooth speaker in our kitchen was so inferior. My speaker was squishing the precious sound waves!

After becoming enlightened, I realized *why* the sound coming from these new expensive speakers would deliver a terrific experience. And, of course, I wanted the experience all the more.

One thing the video could have done a little better would have been to connect the enlightenment about how their speakers work with my own survival. A simple line saying “so that’s why your friends aren’t super impressed with your current sound system and they will be really impressed when you install ours” would sell a lot more speakers. Why? Because now your big bullhorn speakers don’t just help me listen to music, they help me bond with and serve my tribe.

As you think about your marketing campaigns, are you piquing your customers’ curiosity and then enlightening them as to how you can solve their problems, help them survive, and improve their lives?

Later in this book we will give you step-by-step instructions on how to do this, but for now, know that even these first two steps are not enough. Now that we are in a trusted relationship with our customers, we have to ask them to commit.

### Stage 3: Commitment

The point at which your customer is asked to make a risky decision. The two main reasons customers do not place orders are because:

1. The brand never asked them for the sale, or
2. The brand asked them for a sale too early.

The reason asking for a commitment too early in a relationship doesn’t work is because a commitment is risky, and taking risks works against our survival mechanisms.

Making our customers curious and then gradually enlightening them reduces the sense of risk and greatly increases the chance they will commit their hard-earned dollars on our products.

*Timing Is Everything*

The day I met my wife I knew I wanted to marry her. I did. Much later, of course. But the morning we met, it was all I could do to patiently wait and take small steps.

I was in and out of D.C. working on a government task force, and she worked at a bed and breakfast I was staying at. My only goal the morning we first met was to not spill coffee on my shirt as we sat at the breakfast table and talked. Luckily, I made it through that breakfast alive and could tell she was open to another conversation in the future.

But that's when I screwed up. As we e-mailed back and forth over the next month, I never made my intentions known. Because I wasn't asking her out, she assumed I only wanted to be friends and started dating somebody else. It would be nearly three more years before I had the chance to recover from my mistake.

What I should have said early on was that I enjoyed talking to her and whenever I happened to be in D.C. next, I'd love to take her on a date. If I'd have just said that, I might have gotten an earlier start on a great love story.

The reason I didn't ask her out, though, was the same reason many of us don't ask our customers to commit. We are a little scared of rejection and we don't want to come off as pushy.

When the time is right, though, we have to make our intentions known or we will lose the relationship.

We often believe that being passive is a way of respecting our customer. We don't ask for the sale because we don't want them to be bothered. However, the last thing we want our customers saying is something along the lines of "I really like that brand, I consider them a friend, but I don't buy anything from them. I do, however, make out with their competitor all the time."

Blah.

Wise men say only fools rush in, but wise men also make a move eventually.

*Move Slow, But Move*

Having a “buy now” button on your website is not pushy. Customers always want to know where the relationship is going and you want to make sure to tell them that this relationship is a business relationship that is transactional in nature. They will respect you for being honest. Having a “buy now” or “schedule a call” button on your website makes sure they always understand the kind of relationship you are inviting them into.

Businesses that pretend to be their customers’ friend in order to create sales come off as users and stalkers. As a business leader, it’s our role to be trusted advisors to our customers. And customers absolutely love trusted advisors. We do not have to take the place of their parents or their spouses. That’s creepy.

Later in the book when we teach you to wireframe a website, we’ll show you how to always be asking for the sale without being pushy.

And being pushy is a problem.

When a sales relationship moves too quickly, the customer feels threatened. The reason people feel threatened is because making a purchase is always a decision to forgo valuable survival resources in exchange for resources they hope will increase their chances of survival even more. If they are wrong in that calculation, they are under greater threat than they were before they made the purchase.

That’s why so many people hate it when a car salesman rushes out of the building when we walk onto a lot to shop for a car. Nobody wants to be “tricked” into giving up their resources. They want to be invited into a journey in which they will discover a product that can help them survive, and preferably for a great value.

The same is true in social relationships. Commitment in a relationship takes time.

Why does commitment take time? Because commitment is the first stage in a relationship in which a person has to take a calculated risk. Commitment is when they put skin in the game.

*Rushed Relationships Are Not Healthy*

We all remember how relationships felt in junior high. We'd have a best friend one week and a new one the following week. We fell in love one month only to fall in love with somebody else a month later. As we grew older, the pace of those transitions slowed down and became healthier.

If an adult falls in love with somebody new every couple months, most people would think of that person as unhealthy and not want to risk being with them.

I say that because when we rush in to close a deal or make a sale too soon, the customer smells "unhealth."

Our sales funnels should invite people into a journey that never attempts to trick or coerce them to make a decision they will later regret. That's one of the keys to staying in business for decades rather than months.

When we push customers to make a purchase, we end up with frustrated customers—or worse, unhealthy customers who don't have good boundaries. The latter tend to light up our customer service lines and create more problems than the sale was worth.

It's true you always want to be asking for the sale, but if the relationship is moving at the right pace asking for the sale, even when the customer isn't ready, won't break the deal. Always piquing their curiosity while enlightening them allows a customer to reject your offer while still asking to know more.

The key to marketing—and sales for that matter—is to invite the customer on a journey at the pace of a natural, healthy relationship.

*To Create a Good Relationship You Must Keep in Touch*

So what's the correct pace? In my opinion, for most products a customer needs to experience about eight touchpoints before they are ready to place an order.

A “touch” in this context is an email, a visit to your website, a radio ad, a keynote that they hear, or any other piece of marketing collateral you send their way.

The sad news is, in order for your touchpoints to reach a customer eight times, you need to send out dozens of pieces of communication they may actually ignore. In other words, you may have to reach out to them fifty times just to get your customer to notice.

The less expensive the product, the more likely they are to impulse buy, which means fewer touches. But the more expensive the product, the more they will need to hear from you before they will take a risk.

The absolute best way to stay in a relationship with a customer is to email them. Depending on the kind of email campaign you are creating, you will continue piquing their curiosity, further enlighten them, and call them to action.

In the email section of this book, we will help you craft emails that do all three. Of specific importance to you, though, are the emails that close the deal.

Customers can be invited on a journey that builds a trusting relationship and invites them to buy your products all through email.

You should have an email campaign for every product you sell. Likely your salespeople should be interacting with clients at various stages of an email campaign.

### *A Sales Funnel Controls the Pace of the Relationship*

In a relationship, you talk about things on a fourth or fifth date you might never talk about on a first date. Intimacy and trust take time.

The rest of this book will walk you through the creation of a sales funnel that will build trust with your customers in a way that is natural and safe.

## THE ACTUAL STAGES OF A RELATIONSHIP

As you create your sales funnel, you will be piquing your customers' curiosity, enlightening them, and then asking them to commit. Different pieces of your sales funnel will accomplish these tasks and to some degree they overlap, but in the end your customer will enjoy interacting with your brand because you've respected their autonomy and space.



### *Assess the Strength of Your Marketing Campaign*

Are you piquing your customers' curiosity with your website, your signage, the first pages of your proposals, and through the talking points your salespeople employ?

Are you earning your customers' trust by enlightening them about how you can solve their problems and help them survive?

Are you inviting your customers to place an order through a complimentary and direct ask?

Once you create your sales funnel, you'll be inviting your customers into a trusted relationship that feels safe, consistent, and useful in their lives.

People fall in love with brands for the same reason they fall in love with each other. The brand helped them survive and got

them a great return on their social, emotional, or financial investment.

What if a significant amount of trust building could be automated? What if, by the time you or one of your sales representatives sat down with a potential client, it felt like that client was already on the fourth or fifth date with your brand?

How much would your sales increase if by the time you interacted with a potential customer your customer's curiosity had already been piqued and your brand had enlightened them on how you could solve their problem?

Customers can fall in love with your brand too. Just invite them into the stages of a relationship and do so at the right pace.

The Marketing Made Simple Checklist will show you the way.



# 3

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MARKETING MADE SIMPLE CHECKLIST

Many companies confuse branding with marketing, and this confusion is costing them millions.

Branding affects how a customer feels about your brand, while marketing communicates a specific offer.

Branding concerns itself with fonts and colors and design, while marketing puts the right words together to pique a customer's interest and close the deal.

Most of us are so concerned with the way our brand looks and feels, we neglect to communicate what customers are actually looking for: a solution to their problem.

Imagine getting a job as an NFL football coach and spending 90 percent of your time choosing the new team logo, the new jersey designs, and the “branding” for game-day trinkets the team will hand out to fans? Meanwhile, your team hasn't been drilled on the fundamentals of the game.

It doesn't matter how pretty your jerseys are, your team is going to lose.

It's easy for us to think of branding as more important than marketing. We watch the Super Bowl and get sentimental when the new Coca-Cola commercial comes on. We want people to feel just as great about our company. What we fail to realize is that Coca-Cola is a household brand name. Coke was invented in the nineteenth century and brilliantly marketed in the early twentieth century. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent telling the world what Coca-Cola is. And not only this, we've all tasted it and enjoyed it. Coke has extreme brand familiarity, which means they can afford to do more branding and less marketing.

Now imagine a company that has created an automotive product allowing you to only change the oil in your car once every year. That would be a pretty amazing product. Let's say you can drive up to fifteen thousand miles between oil changes. Incredible. The problem is, nobody has heard of this company. A rookie mistake would be to "brand" the company rather than "market" the product.

A novice marketing director might want to use a tag line like "save time, save money," which at first glance sounds great. But look again. To an outsider, it's invisible language. Let's say you're driving down the street and see a random company logo on a billboard with giant words that say "save time, save money." If you didn't know what the product did or what problem the product solved, would that mean anything to you? No! People don't pull their cars over to sit on their hood and study billboards. They pass by them at eighty miles per hour. That billboard needs to say "The oil you only have to change once a year!"

## DON'T BE INVISIBLE

---

Most brands make what I call an invisible first impression. It's not that they make a bad first impression—but it's also not a good first impression. It's just invisible.

A nutritional supplement company we worked with introduced me to their line of products by saying they give their customers *more life and more fulfillment*. That sounds great but the same could be said of a church, an executive coach, a gym, or a daycare! Those words go in one ear and out the other and come off as standard marketing speak. It's an invisible first impression.

Consider all of the invisible first impressions you see as a consumer every day. How many billboards do you drive past that you pay no attention to? How many commercials run in the background of your TV or radio that you're tuning out? Think about how much money was spent to put those forgettable ads into the world.

Anecdotally, I'd say more than 50 percent of all advertising makes this mistake. They create invisible ads that nobody reads or cares about.

## MARKETING MADE SIMPLE WILL CAUSE PEOPLE TO MEMORIZE YOUR OFFER

---

The one final thing a sales funnel needs to do is help your customers to memorize your offer.

Good marketing is an exercise in memorization and successful brands know it.

Repeating the same language in the same way in your one-liner, landing page, emails, and direct sales letters helps you brand yourself into your customer's mind.

We know that in only fifteen minutes, Geico can help us save up to 15 percent on car insurance. Why do we know this? Because their marketing led us through an exercise in memorization that caused us to memorize their offer.

After a customer has gone through your sales funnel, they will have memorized the talking points you want them to memorize. And when they've memorized your talking points, you will take up valuable real estate in their brains. They will know why you matter in their story, and they will be able to tell their friends why you matter in theirs too.

The key to going viral is to give people something very simple to think about and say regarding your products or services.

Before you create your sales funnel, come up with three or four things you want your customers to know about your brand.

If you understand the StoryBrand framework this is simple. Just use the words from your BrandScript to populate your sales funnel.

If you don't understand the StoryBrand framework, consider answering these questions in your sales funnel:

What problem do you solve for customers?

What will your customer's life look like if they buy your product?

What consequences does your product help customers avoid?

What does somebody need to do to buy your product?  
("Click *buy* now?" "Call today?")

The answers to these questions should be short, simple, and easy to understand. Remember, customers do not move into confusion.

If you are a dentist, you might say:

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CHECKLIST

Could your smile be better?

You could be happy with your smile.

Schedule an appointment today.

I know that sounds simple, but we interact with thousands of brands who fail to tell their customers exactly what they offer and exactly how they can change their customers' lives for the better.

In your marketing copy, don't be cute, be clear. Simplify your message and repeat it over and over using the same language and customers will finally figure out where you fit in their lives.

## THE MARKETING MADE SIMPLE CHECKLIST

---

Each sales funnel you create should break through the advertising clutter and speak directly to customers.

Your sales funnels are the foundation of your entire marketing effort. Again, once your sales funnels are created, your advertising campaigns should support those sales funnels, which then sell your product or service.

If you're a visual learner or are looking for inspiration, start there.

There are many kinds of sales funnels. If done well, they all work. The Marketing Made Simple Checklist is a collection of best practices we've learned, having helped more than ten thousand businesses create marketing campaigns that work.

The practical tools we will help you build will guide customers through the three stages of relationships. We'll help you create one-liners that pique a customer's curiosity, wireframe websites and landing pages that further intrigue them about the problems

you solve, lead generators that enlighten them as to why your products and services will work for them, email campaigns that establish trust with customers, and sales emails and calls to action that ask for a commitment without making you sound like a sleazy salesperson.

The five pieces of your sales funnel will be:



Curiosity	Enlightenment	Commitment
One-Liner	Lead generators	Sales email campaigns
Website	Nuture email campaigns	

The next few chapters walk you step by step through how to create a marketing sales funnel. It is a checklist for you to walk through and make sure you have what you need and that you are doing it right.

You will start with building curiosity for your business through a one-liner and website wireframe. Then you will take your customer through the enlightenment phase by creating lead generators and nurture emails. Finally, you ask them to make a commitment with a sales email sequence. Each piece of collateral

you create from the checklist will further engage your customer in a relationship with you and lead toward a sale.

So you know you are doing it right, each chapter contains an explanation of why you are creating the piece you are creating, a step-by-step guide to writing the material—and then we tell you how to implement it.

In the chapter on execution, we even give you a complete plan including a meeting schedule and agendas so that your team can create a series of sales funnels together.

## EXECUTION IS KEY

---

We recently hired an independent research company to survey thousands of our customers to find out who sees greater success from clarifying their message and creating marketing that sells.

After all the surveys and all the data were compiled, you know what made the greatest difference? It wasn't size, background, education, or business type. The companies that showed the greatest growth in profit, saw greater ease in the creation of marketing collateral, and saved more time and money in creating marketing collateral were the ones who actually followed the exact plan I am going to walk you through. The only thing that had a statistical impact on growth was how they implemented the framework.

Bottom line: when customers were asked what level of success they saw compared to how much they implemented the checklist, there was a striking correlation between the level of success as compared with implementation across all channels of marketing. This pattern was the same across every individual area of marketing as well as overall implementation. It also influenced every area of success. While simply implementing one part of the checklist still showed positive results, higher levels of implementation resulted in more positive results. The more thoroughly an organiza-

tion implemented the Marketing Made Simple Checklist, the more confidence employees had in creating marketing messaging, and the more time and money was saved in creating marketing collateral.

Most importantly, the more a company executed the Marketing Made Simple Checklist, the more money they made.

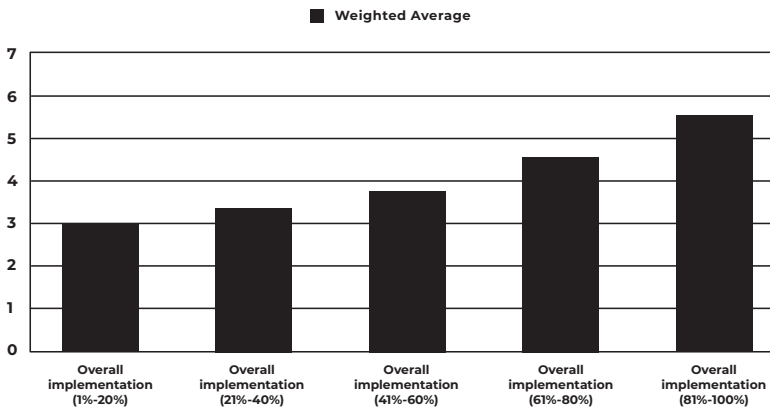
In the graphs below you can see clearly, the more you implement the checklist throughout your marketing, the more growth your company will see, the more confident your team will become in creating marketing, and the more time you will save.

The data shows that the Marketing Made Simple Checklist works and it works for everybody.

You just have to execute.

If you want J. J. and I to take you through the Marketing Made Simple Checklist in video format, visit [BusinessMadeSimple.com](http://BusinessMadeSimple.com) and register for our very inexpensive online platform. Use the code “Marketing” to get a buy-one-gift-one offer, allowing you and your entire team to use the platform for half the cost.

### StoryBrand Messaging has directly contributed to our organization's growth.

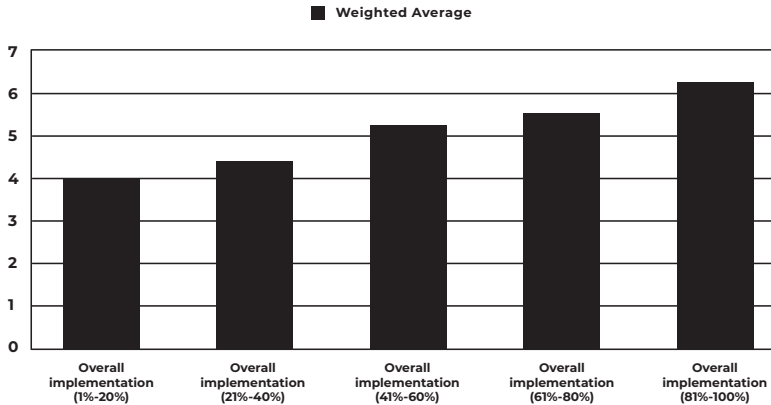


*Graph of relationship between implementation and growth*

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CHECKLIST

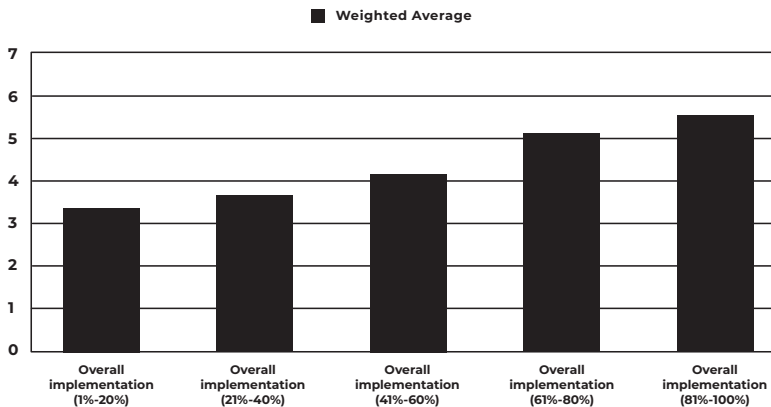
Whether you're going it alone with this book, hiring a guide, or learning from us on video, make a commitment today to follow through on this simple sales funnel and you will see results.

### StoryBrand has made our team more confident.



*Graph of relationship between implementation and team confidence*

### StoryBrand has saved us time.



*Graph of relationship between implementation and time saving*

