



ANGUS ANGLE

by Julie Mais, editor

Your Story, Your Brand

Crafting a brand that endures requires strategic planning, consistent messaging and a deep understanding of your target audience. It also involves telling your story.

But what makes a compelling story? I turned to someone who wrote gripping tales like a clownfish searching for his captured son, and a jealous cowboy doll who tries to keep his spot as the favorite toy.

Andrew Stanton co-wrote and directed Disney and Pixar's *Finding Nemo* and was an Oscar-nominated screenwriter for *Toy Story*.

You might wonder what storytelling for animated movies for children, and let's be honest, their parents too, have to do with telling your story? Beyond the subject matter, the root of one good story is not that different from the next. Everyone has a story to tell.

Stanton shared some tips in a 2012 TED Talk.

1. Make me care. Stanton quoted Mr. Rogers, who he said always carried a quote in his wallet from a social worker. It read,


"Frankly, there isn't anyone you couldn't learn to love once you've heard their story." Stanton's interpretation of this is what he called the "greatest story commandment — make me care."

2. Give a promise. Stanton said all good stories, at the beginning, should give you a promise. Essentially, promise the audience it's going to be worth their time to dig a little deeper and hear the story.
3. Create tension. Give your audience honest conflicts and the anticipation that a problem can be solved.
4. Develop a strong theme. "A strong theme is always running through a well-told story," he said. A theme provides "a constant, a guideline, a road map."

5. Invoke wonder. "I think the magic ingredient, the secret sauce, is can you invoke wonder?" he said. Capture the attention of someone in their day, and lead them to wonder.

Stanton concluded his thoughts with the first lesson he learned about storytelling — strive to be worthy of the chance you are given.

"Use what you know. Draw from it," he said. "Capture a truth from your experiencing it, expressing values you personally feel deep down in your core."

Your story is your brand. Finding a way to share that with your customers, current and future, well, that's a creating a brand that endures. 

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