

Stories That Sell: Turn Satisfied Customers into your Most Powerful Sales and Marketing Asset

Casey Hibbard

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Reviewed by Kathleen Dowdell for Reader Views (7/09)

A dynamic quote on page one in the introduction of this book jumped out at me and fired me up. I thought this book would be just about customer sales, specifically how to find customers who will buy your product, until I read Jay Abraham's words "The fact is, everyone is in sales. Whatever area you work in, you do have clients and you do need to sell." This profound statement prompted me to read this book with the idea that all of us who work or who have worked in any kind of business make sales by simply telling about what we do. Hence, we all have stories that sell or tell. Casey Hibbard takes this approach one step further by taking satisfied customers' stories and turns them into a company's selling tool, showing us how successful marketing is done through customers' stories.

In the introduction of "Stories That Sell," Hibbard explains how she has created a seven-step customer story system based on her years of experience in helping companies capture and tell customer stories. In chapter two she gives an overview of the steps needed to create and execute success-story marketing. Chapters three through nine detail these steps. At the end of each chapter is a chapter-take-away that is extremely useful in recapping what was just read as well as a quick reference to find the information when needed in the future.

As she notes, compelling stories are comprised of three steps:

- the setup - introduction to the characters
- the complication - characters encounter challenge
- the resolution – characters solve or succumb to challenge

The author ties this framework to organizations where real challenges do occur. This connection is quite binding because the audience can relate to the real world challenges that businesses face on a daily basis.

I was particularly interested in the chapter about leveraging customer stories. The author devotes a good section of this chapter to branding, marketing, maintaining a presence on the internet, and social media targeting as well as an entire chapter on gathering information and interviewing customers. And as she sums up the book in her final chapter she points out a very interesting, often forgotten concept that “storytelling lies at the heart of human experience—a compelling form of personal communication as ancient as language itself.” In our fast-paced, need to know/have it now world, we should be mindful of her words and reconnect as humans. We all have stories that need to be told and heard. Our World War II veterans are dying daily and if not captured, those oral histories about their lives will never be heard. So whether we have a story to tell about our work or a story to tell about our life, we need to capture, embrace, and expound on those experiences.

“Stories That Sell” by Casey Hibbard contains a gold mine of information that goes beyond just selling or telling stories. Readers using the applicable content and guide approach the author lays out, will be able to communicate more effectively when telling stories.