



The practical and successful

# STORYTELLING METHOD FOR ENTREPRENEURS

INSPIRATIONAL PAPER

author Reinoud Wolff



INSPIRATION PAPER FOR ENTREPRENEURS

And everyone engaged in entrepreneurial pursuits. Reading time: 5 minutes.



# INTRODUCTION

## AVOID THE FLUFF

We live in the age of content. Companies want to reach their target audiences through various channels to build a connection, boost sales, or gather data. Unfortunately, not all content on all channels is equally relevant.

**According to a LinkedIn study on storytelling, a staggering 79% of all content is perceived as irrelevant.** Many companies seem to follow the motto of “being present and making a lot of noise.” Attention-seeking with a weak story. I call that “slap gelul,” in plain words, meaningless talk!

## OVER 150 BRANDS POSITIONED

Over the past few years, I have had the opportunity to help over 150 companies and entrepreneurs position their businesses, brands, products, or services using the “storytelling method for entrepreneurs.” It’s a practical and accessible method that creates an inspiring story, allowing you to quickly and effectively base your content on:

1. **Distinguishing your company, brand, product, or service**
2. **Running efficient and effective campaigns targeting your audience**

## STORYTELLING IS EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT

My practical storytelling method is the way to touch people with your entrepreneurial story. To involve and engage them. To entice them to choose your company, brand, product, or service. Stories are the ideal way to connect and engage with people. People want to identify with other people. It has always been that way. Entrepreneurs are the driving force behind their businesses. People want to know more about them. This is an advantage that large companies often lack, as they have shareholders and changing boards. Entrepreneurs can make it personal. So, do it and tell your entrepreneurial story. That’s always my advice. It creates an emotional connection with the audience. It generates sympathy and preference.

**Ben & Jerry’s were those hippies with ‘peace, love & ice cream,’** always coming up with crazy flavors, wild actions, and their commitment to a better world, which resonated with many people in their target audience. Albert Heijn, Jumbo, and Lidl might not have the same approach anymore, but they create characters in their marketing that people can connect with. For example, the store manager at AH or the ‘misfit cuddly bear’ at Jumbo. On the other hand, Aldi still focuses solely on price promotions in their product marketing. They need to figure out how to establish an emotional connection with their audience (unless that’s not their intention).

**Purchase decisions are always based on knowledge and attitudes towards a category, brand, product, or service.** That’s why it’s important to invest in this area. After all, unfamiliarity leads to a lack of interest. However, when you invest in awareness, it’s also efficient and effective to simultaneously try to create a positive attitude, preference, and fondness. Just being known doesn’t necessarily mean being loved! And that’s where storytelling comes in. It creates that emotional connection. Fame can be bought. Simply invest a lot of money in expanding your reach through paid media, owned media, or earned media (free publicity). But being loved and gaining preference has to be earned. And that’s the hardest part. Because how do you, as an entrepreneur, exactly create an emotional connection with your target audience?

# CONNECTING ON AN EMOTIONAL LEVEL WITH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE?

## 1. HUMANS ARE NOT RATIONAL

Customers, suppliers, or consumers, they are all people. And it may be sobering to read, but people are not rational beings. If you want to get something done and influence their behavior, you need to know how to communicate with them to influence their knowledge and attitude. Communicating rationally with them is usually not the smartest way.

The part in our brain that influences our decisions, the reptilian brain, also known as the primitive brain, is centuries old. Our (buying) behavior is determined by this unconscious emotional primitive brain for 95%. Only 5% of our behavior is determined by our conscious rational modern brain. So, if you want to get something from your target audience (customers, suppliers, or consumers), it's best to communicate with the primitive brain!

## 2. HUMANS ARE DRIVEN BY DESIRE

The Dutch philosopher Frans Jacobs wrote a book about desires and emotions in 2008. In our desires, we reveal what we like and want deeply. But why, when, and what we want is not always clear. Because it all takes place in our subconscious in the primitive brain. The extent to which we satisfy our desires is reflected in our emotions.

The American Edward Bernays was one of the pioneers of the advertising profession. He introduced manipulating the primitive brain, the subconscious of people, with marketing. He taught companies how to make people desire products they didn't really need. "To desire products and services they wanted instead of needed."

The American bestselling author and marketing guru Seth Godin took it a step further in 2005 with his book "All Marketers are Liars." He described that as a marketer, you should just tell people what they desire. In other words, tell people what they want to hear. Give people a story they want to believe. The truth doesn't always matter, and facts are less relevant. After all, humans are not rational beings. Connect with the primitive brain. With their subconscious. And tap into their desires. This way, you gain preference and fondness for your company, brand, product, or service!

### Lucht verkopen met het inspelen op verlangens

We all remember that AXE commercial, right? Spray more! The young man who sprayed AXE deodorant under his armpit on the beach, and all the women chased after him. They are literally selling air. But the advertisers knew their craft. The commercial was not only very entertaining but also manipulated the subconscious of the target audience. The insight was that boys going through puberty are preoccupied with their changing bodies and sexual development. They are unconsciously seeking their first kiss or more. Of course, the primitive brain of these young men went wild when they saw this ad. The primitive brain signaled that this was the deodorant they needed to satisfy their desires. These boys wanted to hear and believe that with this deodorant, women would chase after them! AXE, that was the deodorant they had to have!



### 3. POSITIONING IS OBTAINING A BRAIN POSITION

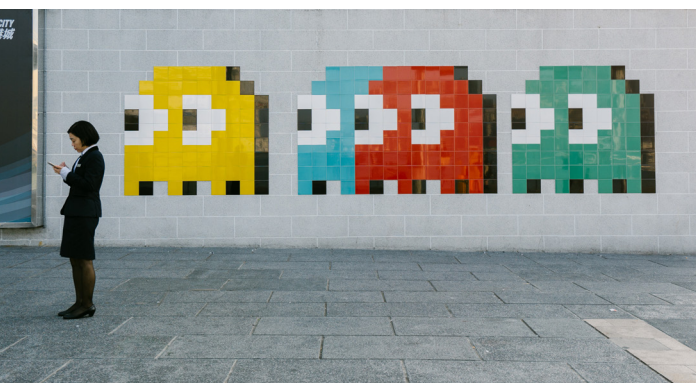
Making an emotional connection essentially means creating a brain position. Claiming a positive spot in the minds of your target audience. You want someone to choose your company, brand, product, or service because:

1. **They know or have heard about your company, product, or service.**
2. **They have preference and fondness for it, which you create by positioning a positive place in their brain.**

When I say “Milka,” you might think of the purple Milka cow, the Alps, fresh milk, and delicious chocolate. But when I say “Verkade chocolate,” what comes to mind? When I mention “Ben & Jerry’s,” you probably think of Ben & Jerry, hippies, and “peace love & ice cream.” Now, what about “Harley Davidson”? You likely associate it instantly with motorcycles, Route 66, and freedom. In fact, many men experiencing a midlife crisis think of Harley Davidson because they long for freedom. So, Harley Davidson represents freedom in our minds, while rationally, it’s just a motorbike with two wheels, a seat, and handlebars. Harley Davidson had it figured out. They linked their brand to the desire for freedom. The cosmetics brand La Mer linked their brand to the desire for beauty, and Coca-Cola to happiness. Marlboro to cowboys and, consequently, freedom. Volvo to safety and Apple to “standing out of the crowd,” while Ikea is a brand for everyone, focusing on the desire for togetherness. As a company with your brand, product, or service, you can choose a desire that best suits you. There are various options, such as safety, beauty, happiness, love, freedom, health, etc. Often, desires can be traced back to ancient times when survival and reproduction were crucial. This survival and reproduction influenced our behavior and still play a decisive role in our ancient primitive brain.

### 4. AUTHENTICITY AND CREDIBILITY ARE CRUCIAL

The manipulation of the subconscious, by tapping into people’s primitive brain, began after the war with Bernays to revitalize the American economy. By making people desire products, they started consuming more. The human became a consumer. Until the 1990s, large companies mostly thrived on their desire-driven marketing approach. The heyday of multinational corporations. Think of companies like Unilever, where I worked. However, in the early ‘90s, the concept of authenticity emerged, along with the rise of the internet and a focus on sustainability. The world became more transparent, people became more critical, and companies could no longer get away with merely linking desires to a brand, product, or service. People wanted more stories about the people and the stories behind the brand, product, or service. They questioned its credibility. Credibility and authenticity became important factors. This posed challenges for large multinational corporations but offered opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses!



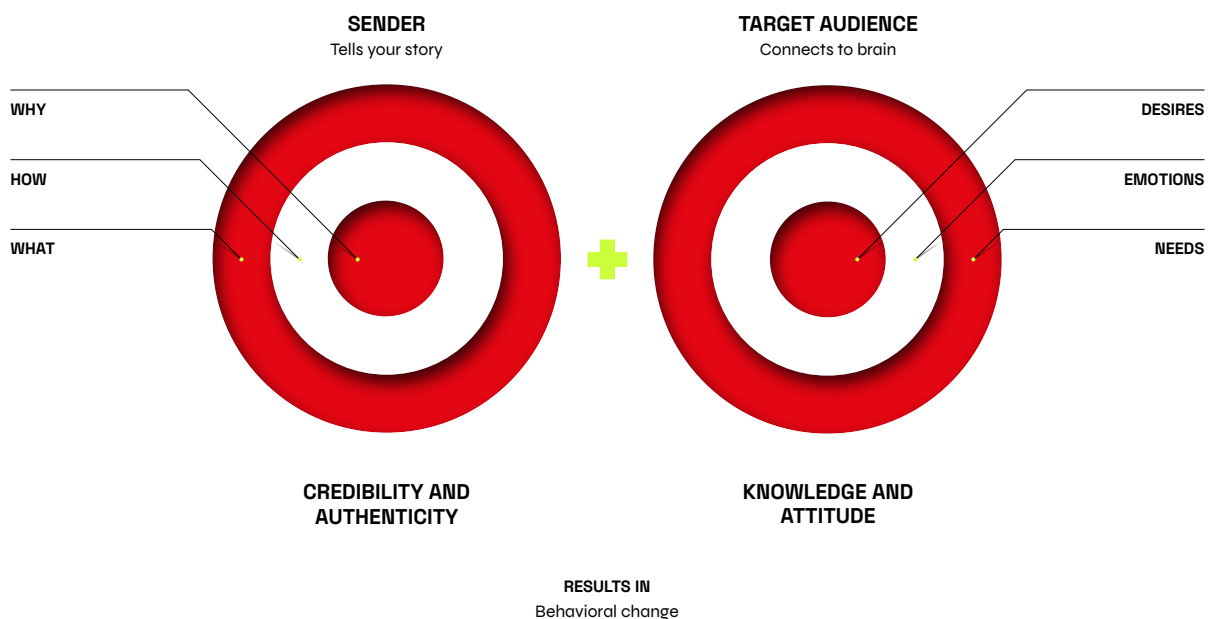
Claiming a positive spot in the minds of your target audience.

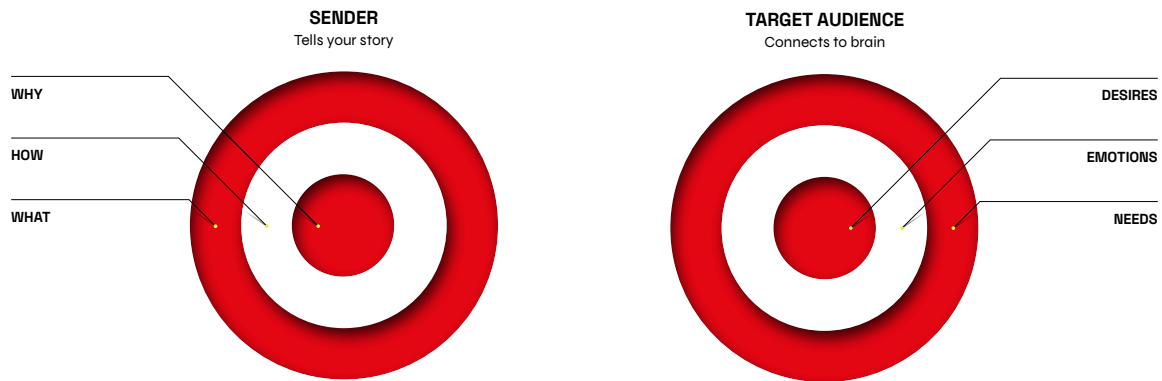
# EVERYTHING COMES TOGETHER IN 1 PRACTICAL MODEL



## The power of simplicity.

As an entrepreneur, you can position yourself distinctly with your unique story, creating a connection with your target audience. A story that tells your entrepreneurial journey, revealing who you are, what drives you, your beliefs, how you operate, and what you offer, all combined with desires, emotions, and product needs. I have developed a method with a simple model consisting of 2 circles. On the left side are the circles that ensure credibility and authenticity, while on the right side are circles that influence the knowledge and attitude of the target audience. It's a practical and accessible model that works for both B2B and B2C. After all, our goal is to connect with people's minds, regardless of whether it's B2B or B2C. The challenge, of course, is to bring everything together based on a thorough analysis into a concise and compelling story, accessible and inspiring for internal and external use, with short sentences that convey a lot of energy. If you, as an entrepreneur, want to connect with your target audience, you must ensure that you are credible and authentic, while also tapping into their deeper desires. It's the combination of both aspects that increases the chances of success!





## THE LEFT CIRCLE: DON'T BE TOO MODEST. TELL ABOUT YOURSELF!

If you, as an entrepreneur, want to position your company, product, or service effectively with a compelling story, your narrative must be authentic and credible while also connected to your target audience's desires. Authenticity and credibility are achieved by being transparent and communicating honestly about your motives, drivers, values, and principles. Simon Sinek sparked a revolution in modern marketing thinking with his "why" theory, offering a different perspective on why some businesses and brands are inspiring and distinctive while others are not.

To be authentic and credible, you must be transparent with your employees, customers, suppliers, and stakeholders and communicate personally, as people identify with other people. Share the reasons behind your actions, your driving forces, and your beliefs. This is the spirit of the times we live in—people want to know the backgrounds and noble motives. However, transparency should also extend to how you work, your values, and principles. Explain your "way of working" and your "how." Of course, you should also talk about your products or services and their unique selling points (USPs), which are essential but not always as inspiring and effective because they appeal to the rational part of the brain. As humans, we make 95% of our decisions using the other part of our brain: the primitive brain.

## THE RIGHT CIRCLE: CONNECT WITH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE. WITH THEIR BRAINS!

In your story, you must not only tell about yourself but also connect with your target audience. Making this connection involves tapping into their desires and emotions. You can link desires to your proposition, while emotions can be categorized into six basic emotions: joy, anger, sadness, fear, disgust, and surprise, which can further be divided into 26 other derived emotions.

Ultimately, your story should clearly illustrate which needs of your target audience you are addressing - the proposition you are offering - the very purpose of your company, product, or service. What problem do you solve for your target audience, and what evidence do you have to support it?

Do good  
and tell  
about it!

# BRINGING THE STORY TO LIFE THROUGH VISUALS



Every great design begins with an even better story.

## STAND OUT WITH BRANDING

Visual language, as the name suggests, is about conveying the story through images—both still and moving. From advertisements and social media posts to videos, it's the combination of words and visuals that completes the narrative. Often, discussions arise in communication efforts about what is beautiful and what is not. Everyone has an opinion, but tastes differ. To avoid such debates and minimize subjectivity, it is valuable to develop a consistent and distinctive communication grid based on a recognizable theme.

## THE COMMUNICATION GRID

This is a structured approach for all future communication efforts. By working with a design grid that aligns with the story, entrepreneurs can communicate coherently. After all, repetition is a powerful advertising tool. The grid is a graphical layout filled with chosen colors, fonts, images, lines, patterns, etc. Thus, the message can be adapted with different photos or text each time, while still maintaining a consistent brand identity. This elevates communication to a more professional and distinctive level. Once the overarching story is crafted, you'll notice there are various sub-stories that can be communicated to achieve marketing objectives. These might include talking about your company/brand, your product, ambassadors, lifestyle, events, or creating timely hooks. Having a flexible and recognizable grid is crucial for accommodating all these sub-stories, resulting in cohesive and recognizable marketing efforts. And that aids in building that positive brand position in the target audience's mind! At the end of this document, you'll find the Big Green Egg case, which demonstrates how storytelling and a communication grid can build a successful brand.

## DESIGNING A GRID IS AN ART IN ITSELF

It requires the ability to align it with the story the entrepreneur wants to tell, while also having the necessary communicative power and flexibility to be applied in various formats. Whether it's videos, advertisements, social media posts, or display ads, a well-designed grid ensures that all communications across channels maintain a recognizable appearance and have the power to entice the target audience to take action. After all, that's what it ultimately comes down to. Visual language is not about creating art pieces; it's about producing effective communications. Ones that resonate and move the audience to action. We call it spot-on communication. Effectiveness is what truly matters!

# CAMPAIGNING WITH A BRAND STORY & VISUAL LANGUAGE

## **CONTENT IS KING. AND THE STORY TO TELL IS THE QUEEN.**

Once you've formulated the story to tell and designed the visual language with the communication grid, the next step is to approach marketing communication with a calendar strategy: determining which message, through which channel, in which period, and to which target audience you want to communicate. This can be done with an intermediate step where you map out the customer journey of your target audience.

Tailor the message for each audience and period. Translate the "story to tell" into various sub-stories with campaigns that are occasionally adjusted and refined. This keeps you refreshing, surprising, and inspiring for your target audience while building a consistent and strong brand presence. Becoming known and beloved. Consider a brand campaign specifically intended to tell the overarching story, or a product campaign that focuses on the rational aspects and highlights the unique selling points of your product or service. You might also have a campaign geared towards a lifestyle approach, or one that emphasizes the sustainable nature of your product or service. Whether you operate in a B2C or B2B market, the underlying strategy and approach remain the same. So, it's all possible. But it's also a matter of choices, depending on budgets and growth priorities.

## **CASE: THE BIG GREEN EGG**

### **The magic of the Big Green Egg.**

In 2010, entrepreneur Wessel Budding asked for our help in growing his brand, the Big Green Egg. He was a small player competing against Weber, the dominant market leader in barbecues, with large budgets and strong brand recognition. Weber positioned itself as the tough brand for the rugged man who loved grilling meat over an open fire!

So, we got to work, following our method. Together with Wessel, we translated his entrepreneurial vision into the story of the Big Green Egg, positioning it sharply and making it distinctive in the market. The story was built on credibility, authenticity, and tapped into the desires and emotions of the target audience, whom we referred to as the 'foodies.'

We chose the domain of taste, appealing to the desire for sensory pleasure. A stimulating trigger for the brain, much like Axe's approach! We aimed to create a strong brand presence with the color green, making the Big Green Egg the ultimate symbol of taste and status, so that anyone with a Big Green Egg in their garden would be seen as a true foodie and even considered a real (amateur) chef!

Within the content domain of taste, there were various sub-stories communicated through a distinct visual language with a specific grid. Stories about chef ambassadors like Jonnie Boer from the Librije emphasized the taste story. We also created stories about recipes, natural and fresh ingredients, and highlighted the unique selling points of the Big Green Egg. In short, we connected with the target audience through events, the website, social media, and various other media channels. Despite a limited budget, the sharp positioning and distinctive story and visual language had a significant impact! The Big Green Egg became known and beloved, it was pure magic. It gained magnetism, and pull instead of push. In fact, the green eggs became so popular that they were stolen from people's gardens. An efficient and effective marketing approach resulted in growth and success.



# BIG GREEN EGG

## THE STORY WE CREATED FOR BIG GREEN EGG.

### WE ARE THE BIG GREEN EGG

Call us foodies, food freaks or culinary hedonists. We just believe that life tastes good, that our senses are a gift to enjoy life to the fullest.

Inspiring people all over the world and making them happy, by enjoying the finest & honest flavours nature has to offer, is what drives us.

We developed a contemporary cooking device based on old Japanese 'kamado' traditions, to bring out the most refined flavours of natural food. In a healthy and sustainable way. We named it what it looks like: a Big Green Egg!

By using ceramic technology, advanced by NASA, we create a unique heating system that brings out the unrivalled mouthwatering flavours while cooking, baking, grilling, stewing and smoking your favorite recipes.

Enjoy the Big Green Egg and open your world of culinary possibilities. Let your creativity run wild, but most of all, let life taste good!

**Big Green Egg**  
**Open flavour**



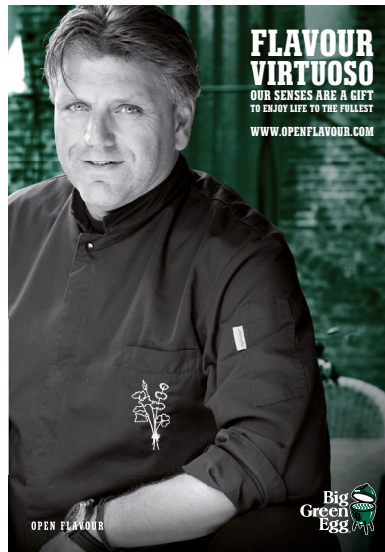
# BIG GREEN EGG

## BELOW ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THE VISUAL LANGUAGE WITH CAMPAIGNS WE CREATED FOR BIG GREEN EGG.

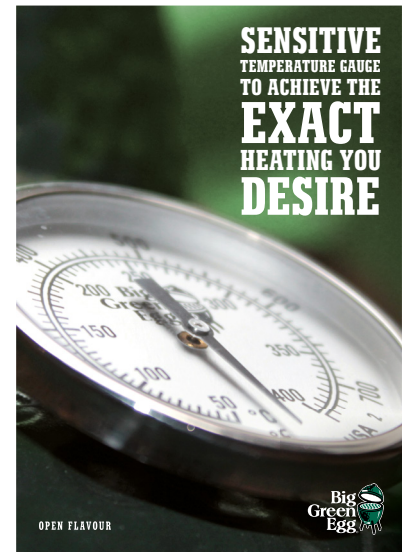
There is a clearly recognizable grid. There is structure in the layout of the elements, the color usage, the font choices, logo placement, and website communication. These are examples of various campaigns. Each representation tells a part of the overarching brand story of Big Green Egg.



Brand Campaign



Ambassadors Campaign



Product Campaign



Recipes Campaign



Ingredient Campaign



Lifestyle Campaign



# CONCLUSION OF THIS INSPIRATION PAPER

## INVEST IN YOUR DISTINCTIVENESS WITH THE STORYTELLING METHOD FOR ENTREPRENEURS.

If you, as an entrepreneur, want to reach and entice your target audience in a cost-effective and efficient way to gain preference for your company, brand, product, or service, this method is a valuable investment. Especially when competing against entities with larger media budgets. The method is practical, accessible, and effective for both B2B and B2C businesses, as well as for engaging and connecting with employees and attracting new talent. Our advice is to focus on distinctiveness, authenticity, credibility, and the desires of your target audience. Embrace your own entrepreneurial vision and craft your own story, supported by a unique visual language. This investment will yield quick returns!

However, being loved and gaining preference is something that must be earned, and it's the most challenging aspect. So, how exactly can an entrepreneur create an emotional connection with their target audience?



Those who  
tell the stories  
rule the world.

If you're interested in our approach and would like more information or to meet us for an informal conversation, please contact us at [wolff@redkiwi.com](mailto:wolff@redkiwi.com) or call **06-34440573**.

You can also visit our website and explore the cases we've created for other entrepreneurs at [www.redkiwi.com](http://www.redkiwi.com)



REDKIWI  
DUNANTSTRAAT 8  
3024 BC ROTTERDAM  
INFO@REDKIWI.COM

REDKIWI.COM