



Storytelling for your business

A 90-min zoom workshop for small businesses led by Jim Taylor (Assistant Producer ARCADE) as part of the Scarborough Stories project, funded by Yorkshire Coast BID.

Below are the notes from the session:

The focus of the training will be around social media strategy/ communications. We will cover the ideas discussed in the workshops but focused for a business, looking at voice, style, consistency and techniques.

Workshop will be split into:

45 mins on using Storytelling as a business owner, focused on social channels and split equally between using words, images and film

30 mins Q+A

15 mins on why you might want to be a venue/ SS storyteller,

Intro.

My name is Jim Taylor, I have worked in and on public facing businesses here on the Yorkshire Coast for nearly 20 years and I was based in North London prior to that. Most of my experience is within the licensed trade and the entertainment sector, I have run pubs, nightclubs, festivals, function bands, weddings and conferences. I am currently working for ARCADE ARTS as well as continuing to perform myself and develop Headland Festival into a platform for local creatives to kickstart their careers.



Each one of these different roles has required me to advertise myself or my businesses in different manners. However, I am the consistent factor in these and so my pubs reflected my personality and focus at the time, my festival has a different feel to the other events in the area and so on. The next hour or so is going to be about why your business should have an identifiable voice and how to use that voice to tell the story of your business.

I will be compressing the information and ideas we have learned throughout the Storytelling workshops ARCADE have delivered for the Scarborough Stories project and particularly using the excellent work done by Matt Cooper of MSC Photography, who delivered our Storytelling through Photography and Film workshops. Matt is documentary and portrait photographer from Whitby and works here on the Yorkshire Coast for a number of clients, including ARCADE and details of his services will be sent out in the follow up emails to this session.

The outline of the workshop will be 10 - 15 mins spent focusing on the use of words, images and film for your business' social channels followed by a short Q+A session. Please feel free to come in with questions along the way, especially if I haven't been clear enough on a topic. I am also recording this session and this will be made available afterwards along with the other supporting materials I have produced.

We will look at a few key concepts and actions along the way where I think this workshop will be of greatest use to you, namely Voice, Social Strategy, Reviews and Business Analysis. This is NOT a complete guide to photography, creative writing, website design, videography, etc etc. This is designed for you to use the mobile phone or similar device and to give you some questions to ask about you, your business and your customers that will help you move forward.

A starting idea is that there is a difference between working IN your business and working ON your business.

Working IN your business is doing all the things that your business does eg: when I'm booking bands or putting up posters or ordering beer, I'm IN my business.

Working ON your business is where we are thinking about what we're going to do next, how we do what we do, how to do it better, whether to change tack or take on new ideas, pretty much what we're doing now. It is good advice to spend an hour or two working on your business a week. In this area, it might be about a question you



or your staff have to answer all the time that in the end you decide to make a short video about, post it on your socials and point new customers to that for example.

02 Storytelling

When we say the word story, we think about TV shows and films or reading to ourselves or the young people in our lives. We assume a story is a long, winding tale and it can seem odd to think about it from the point of view of a business owner. Who has the time? However you can tell a story very rapidly. The following is a classic example of a short story, in this case only 6 words long:

Eg: For sale, baby shoes, never worn

You also might believe you don't have a story. I am here to say that everyone, and every business, has a story. Name - Eg: I was named after my grandfather, Lovejoy James Taylor, however he used his middle name and so I was named James and, as my Grandfather was called, this was shortened to Jim. When I was younger I was glad I had James, not sure how much worse school would have been in the 1980s for little Lovejoy!, however I have wondered what difference being Lovejoy would make now. Who knows, maybe it's time for a rebrand.

We can use the story of our business to engage our customers, inspire our staff and help us keep true to the core values of our business.

Example questions to help you find the story of your business:

- What is the name of your business
- Who started the business
- How long have you been in business
- Where are you based
- Who do you serve and why
- What do you do and why
- Where are you going and when

We all know that we are interested in the details of other people's stories (otherwise, why are soaps so popular!) but consider our own details to be small and uninteresting. Try to look at you and your business as someone else might, try to see 'the wood and not the trees', try to experience what you do as a total newbie. This is hard however so if you have people you trust, get them to help.



Eg: When we had to think about Headland Festival, following on from a late postponement and dealing with a significant number of customers who were cross about the effect of Govt rules around Covid, I sat down with colleagues, partners and friends and we chatted it all through over coffee, dinner and then wine. That gave me lots of different perspectives to think about how I wanted to move forward.

Website

This is the home of your story, the place where you can use as many words and images as you like to make sure that the story you want to tell is as clear as you can make it.

Social media

Each channel has its own style, pros & cons but in general they are briefer and less formal. This is often where your customers will first encounter you and so making sure that the core messages you wish to convey are there.

Instore

Every part of the customer experience feeds into the story they are being told about your business. Once you've found your voice and your story, keeping those in mind will help with decisions around how to phrase your signage, how to layout your customer's journey through the shop and even how to decorate or dress your staff.

03 Voice

Words - Identifying your business' voice and keeping true to it.

Where do we need a consistent voice?

- On website, socials and in store
- replying to reviews
- In our advertising, naming of products etc

Think about Marks & Spencer and Aldi. Think about their respective advertising campaigns, the words they use and their styles of presentation. This is what we mean when we talk about voice. Customers respond very differently to each one and they're aimed at different audiences.

Follow up Exercises:



Identify your place.

- Who are you aiming your business at
- Who are you NOT aiming at?
- Who do you see as your competitors?
- What do you do that makes you different - USP?

Identify your values/ principles/ style - call it what you want! eg:

- Value for money
- Local
- Exclusive
- Unique/ weird

Use the answers above to think about the typical customers you will attract

Eg - Coffee shops

	Specialty Coffee House	Local Chain/ Trad Cafe
Aimed at	Coffee enthusiasts	Families, Older customers
Competitors	Other specialists	Costa/ etc
USP	their skill, knowledge and unique stock	Consistent experience with a local touch
Values	Unique, everchanging,	Value for money, comfort
Voice style	Earnest, excitable, innovative, reactive to current events, trendy	Calm, relaxed, warm, safe, inviting, gentle.

04 Reviews

We are all now using the power of social media and reviews to check we are spending our money in the wisest way possible. This review culture has its pros and cons but in order to successfully run a public facing business, you cannot afford to ignore it.

Does anyone have any thoughts or experience in this area?

- Fake reviews of Indigo by a competitor.



- Misrepresented band

Things to remember:

1. We are not just replying to the person who has publicly complained but also the untold number of people who will read our replies in the future.
2. This is where remembering your business' voice comes in.
3. Make sure you reply in a manner that is consistent with your brand.
4. It may be a good idea to either leave it until you have calmed down or give the job to a trusted member of staff who may be able to be more objective. I know I have a tendency to shoot my mouth off, especially when I feel like I've been wronged, and so I've had to learn that there are times when I am the absolute worst person to be defending my business.

05 - Film/ Video

Video is growing exponentially as data streaming ability improves and costs reduce. If video is going to be a large part of your business, it might be better to use a professional or take the time to develop someone within the business to have better editing skills and equipment. That said, the current crop of smartphones is more than capable of producing excellent results with some forethought and consistency of approach.

Video types:

- Sales or Promotion of a new service/ product
- Part of your ongoing marketing
- Behind the Scenes
- Live
- Interview
- Meet the Team
- Updates or News
- An ongoing series

Filming will bring together all of the principles we have discussed so far and add a couple more. For the purposes of this workshop, we will again assume that you don't



have anything more than a phone or tablet and that we won't be doing anything more than simple edits as far as trimming the start and end of the footage.

This means that what is shot will be what is seen.

So we need to take a little time to prepare. Some good working practices are:

- Write a script. This can be a bullet point list to remind you or something more tightly worded, depending on the reason for the video (promo, apology, explanation. Behind the scenes etc)
- Remember your business' Voice
- Check the lighting
- Do a test run and watch it back to see if there's anything that leaps out at you. Ask someone else to watch it as well
- Decide where the video will be uploaded and think about how that will affect what/ how you tell the story.

Bear in mind there are some places that restrict video length, style etc. Instagram is looking for under a minute, YouTube doesn't care and Facebook seems to like live videos that are more than 3 mins long.

Appendix 01 Free Cuthbert - an example of controlling the narrative

Free Cuthbert - an example of controlling the narrative

When Marks & Spencer launched legal action against Aldi over a claim it infringed a trademark on its Colin the Caterpillar Cake, Aldi worked quickly to take control of the narrative. Rather than focusing on winning against M&S in the High Court, Aldi wanted to win the court of public opinion.

Sticking to its 'lovable disrupter' brand reputation and deciding to fight back with humour and empathy, Aldi and creative agency partner McCann Manchester launched #freecuthbert – a social media campaign that would not only win the support of the public but also become Aldi's biggest news story to-date, deliver a suite of impressive metrics and win the 2021 Marketing Week Masters award for Social Media.



It started with a tweet harpooning M&S's famous tagline: 'This is not just any court case, this is...#freecuthbert'. Within a few hours, Aldi was trending at number one on Twitter and making headlines.

Over the next 24 hours, #freecuthbert turned from a single tweet into an agile, responsive social campaign. While user-generated videos racked up over 30 million views across social, protests were held outside M&S; Cuthbert appeared on TV comedy panel shows; memes, parodies and memorabilia were made; and brands, charities and celebrities added their voices to the conversation.

According to the supermarket's data, while M&S's news sentiment and purchase consideration scores declined by 134% and 2.72% respectively, Aldi's increased by 8.5% and 6.8% respectively. The German discounter also grew its Twitter following by 30%, reached over 35 million people on Facebook and achieved a 15% engagement rate on social. Organic reach equated to over £5m worth of media spend – despite never spending a penny.

Aldi went on to launch a limited edition Cuthbert cake with all profits going to Teenage Cancer Trust, encouraging other supermarkets to join its #CaterpillarsForCancer campaign.

<https://www.thedrum.com/news/2021/11/12/aldis-freecuthbert-campaign-takes-grand-prix-the-drum-awards-social-media>



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