

## Increase Customer Acquisition By 400% With Storytelling

Consumer behavior has changed dramatically. We now have more interests than ever due to the mobile and social web; you can be engaged and exposed to your areas of interest whenever you want and to whatever depth. It's virtually impossible to keep up with the sheer volume of content being produced around every topic imaginable. People are spending on average [5 hours a day](#) consuming content.

Businesses are struggling to craft authentic and compelling stories and content to engage consumers online and inspire them to act. Yet consumers are far more fascinated by consumer-created content—it's more trustworthy, there is a constant stream of it and it's contextual—it's where the consumer already is.

So how do you shape a story that will move consumers, without coming across as cheesy and salesy? I asked Maria Sipka, CEO of [Lingia](#), a tech company matching social storytellers to brand marketers, to share her tips.

### 3 Steps to a Compelling Story

#### 1 - Find them in their context—and serve up stories there

Where does the recipient of your story spend time? Here's what Maria thinks:

Millennials = Tumblr, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter

Business = LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, About.me

Moms = Blogs, Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter

Personal = Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter

Search for keywords and phrases your customers are talking about and determine what type of social communities and blogs exist (use Google blog search or Bing). Tap into social search functionality within Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Instagram and other social channels. You'll start to see patterns across these communities, which will help you determine the characteristics to search for within more tailored community search tools like Inkybee and Group High or lists like Technorati or bloglovin.

By immersing yourself into at least 20+ communities and blogs, you will sense the types of conversations people are having, the problems they're facing, solutions they are looking for and the tone of the conversation. This is the starting point for your story.

## 2 - Be authentic—told by a trusted person not trying to sell anything

It's key to have your story told by a trusted person who is the voice and heart beat of a social community—it's the most effective way to be introduced to the audience you want to reach. And the last thing community leaders want is to pimp their sponsor's product or service --it would deteriorate the relationship with their tribe. What excites a community leader is to share a story supported by content that educates, informs, inspires or entertains their audience. Providing them full creativity within a set of guidelines enables a story to unfold that is genuine, nuanced to their audience and makes them look good.

## 3 - Track accountability and ROI—close the loop

Accountability and results from social marketing and content programs include:

- A high volume of original content to repurpose and share across your social channels
- Distribution of your story and content across social channels (blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube, etc)
- Amplification of stories and content by the community via re-tweets, shares, pins, focus-group like results that *last and boost your SEO results*
- Insights through 100's or 1,000's of consumer comments within blog stories, social posts and forums
- Search footprint – unlike ads or content partnerships, blogs and social content continue to surface in search results long after they've been posted
- Traffic! When people emotionally connect to stories they are likely to engage, take action and visit your site to learn more
- Leads – consumers register for more information, take pledges, enter competitions, download white papers, register for events, request a call, etc

Now that you know the 3 essential steps to a compelling story, let's dive into the exact details.

## 8 Steps to a Story That Delivers Business Results

1. You've identified the audience and the social channels they exist in
2. You've identified the communities (blogs, forums, groups, communities)

3. You've identified the leader of the community – the “storyteller”
4. The story meets a need or pain point of the audience you are looking to reach
5. The story is aligned with what your business offers or stands for
6. Your story brief is clear to the storyteller and contains the following:
  - a. Your business objectives
  - b. Story theme: what the story is about
  - c. Sample story titles
  - d. Supporting information (about your company, product, experience, initiative)
  - e. Hashtags, your company social handles
  - f. Search terms, keywords and phrases
  - g. What social channels should the storyteller focus on when hosting the story and amplifying it
  - h. Guidance around photography or videos
  - i. Disclosure guidelines
7. You have content assets or information to support the story (infographic, report, event, video, images) and there is a compelling web destination storytellers can guide their audience to
8. Logistics
  - a. When should the story go live
  - b. The storyteller's main point of contact/ contact information

Small businesses to large corporations are activating stories at scale and driving results. Here are some success stories:

- Kimberly Clark's Kleenex was looking to shift the perception of tissues from “snot to style.” They activated hundreds of storytellers reaching a home, interior decorating, fashion audience to own the first 3 pages of Google search results for “Kleenex style” and drive 400% greater engagement on their Kleenex Style web destination. See how [Mother Overloaded](#) shared the story.

- San Francisco's Galileo School Camps inspired dozens of storytellers to talk about summer activities for kids. With a modest budget they achieved 1,000% return on their investment reaching a parenting audience at the right time looking to place their child in a summer camp. See how [Creative Juice](#) shared the story.
- Williams Sonoma wanted brides-to-be to know they could create a wedding registry with an array of gifts under \$100. Storytellers shared stories around all the fabulous gifts they found under \$100 weaving that into their story titles. The stories generated the same volume of wedding registries that their well-optimized (and pricey) search programs delivered. The stories now dominate the first page of Google search results for "williams sonoma wedding registry" like the story from [Green Wedding Shoes](#).

Are you using storytelling yet? If so, how's it going? If not, when will you start?