Matching Story to Content

Your guide to finding the right medium

FICTION TRIBE

You've heard that good marketing is all about storytelling. Great, but that isn't really the hard part. It's the *how* that gets confusing.

What type of content fits the story you're trying to tell? And when is one way of communicating more effective than another?

This guide attempts to answer those questions. It doesn't cover everything, but it can serve as a foundational reference, offering you a Fiction Tribe perspective on the "what, why, and when" of strong content strategy.

Video

Video is the most accessible form of information today, and arguably the most powerful for increasing awareness of a product or brand— if used properly. Video has a lot of advantages, as it combines a number of disciplines into one. It can be emotional yet cognitive, entertaining and informative, and much more.

Types of videos and how to use them

Anthem

Example →

🕐 01:30—02:30 MIN

A brand-level asset, the "anthem" is so called because it speaks to emotions. It's aspirational. It is not suitable for digging into the details. It sets the stage for what one can expect from the brand or campaign, and evokes the feeling of its broad positioning. It should be thought of like a movie trailer, getting your audience excited, thinking bigger, and leaving them wanting to know more.

Pre-roll

Example →

🕐 00:15—00:30 MIN

Pre-roll is like a good joke: Short, sweet and with a punchline (or, in literal terms, a CTA). It's the perfect opportunity to focus a message to a particular audience, and to convey a specific idea in the least amount of time. If a full video can be thought of as a door into the brand, pre-roll is the doorknob.

Explainer

Example →

🕐 01:30—03:00 MIN

An explainer leaves behind the grandiosity of the anthem and affords a brand the opportunity to illustrate functionality. It assumes a base familiarity with the brand or product, and continues the conversation. It should clearly illustrate what, why, and how without being burdened with context. This type of video is often a vehicle for breaking down a feature or service, but is still high-level compared to a demo.

Demo

A demo is literal and requires very little narrative accompaniment. It's used for illustrative purposes, and serves as the ideal opportunity to get up close and personal with a product or service.

Example →

🕑 3:00—4:00 MIN

Case Study *or* Testimonial

Word of mouth will always be powerful. Similar to a demo, a case study isn't an entry point for your audience, but rather a compliment to the overall story. It also isn't a simple accounting of events ("We needed this, so we used that"). It's about imbuing a brand with humanity. Above all, it's about the customer.

Example →

🕑 01:30—02:00 MIN

Web

With all the ways potential customers can be exposed to your brand, the venerable website is still an important and relevant one. But despite your best intentions, you've probably put creating a more potent site on the back burner due to confusion over what purpose it should serve. Let's clear that up.

Types of web experiences and how to use them

Corporate Site

Example →

A corporate site is the lobby of your business. As visitors enter, they should immediately understand your identity and have an idea or what you do just from the look of the place. More importantly, they should be able to easily navigate to more. Think of the that lobby's directory. Does it have your whole story written on it? No. It gives people just enough information to get to the next destination. It opens up to every function of your business. Think of your corporate site as your headquarters, and a microsite as a branch.

Microsite

Example →

A microsite is different from a landing page. First off, It's purpose-built toward a goal. It likely needs to contain some foundational information about a brand or product, but it serves a more narrow purpose: to focus an audience on the content of a specific campaign and theme, and it's meant to elicit an action directly pertaining to that campaign. It can also be a repository of content that is likewise focused and relevant. Ultimately, its message is clear, its content lightweight, and its CTA direct. It can also potentially serve as a stand-in for a corporate site, while a brand focuses on site wide improvements.

Landing Page

Example →

A landing page is the most functional of web assets. It's typically an extension of Eloqua, Marketo, or other campaign management mechanism. It complements targeted advertising, social, and email activation with personalized content and actions designed to convert visitors tire kicking into prospective customers.

Content

The most important thing to remember about "content" is that it's different from "information." If information is a dictionary, content is a novel. Content is the exploration of information, and it has many vehicles. Each mode has its strengths and weaknesses, not the least of which is when and where you choose to use them.

Types of content and how to use them

✉ Email

Ah, email. The OG of marketing communications. It's an unabashedly functional asset type. But with the rise of real-time content, video pre-roll, and the relentless flow of everyone's social feed, it's been relegated to little more than a delivery method for event invites, demo links, and special offers. But one thing has kept email alive: targeting. It's still a good way to deliver the above-mentioned content in a highly personalized way. In short, email can still be an effective means of lead capture and sales if the content is crafted with intent (directly for you). Brevity is your friend here. It also needs to be focused on and informed by a customer's specific need (supported by data) and always offer a clear step forward.

👍 Social

Example →

Think of social as a living asset, always building on itself—with each post contributing to overall audience perception. It's also an opportunity to relax your tone a bit, be more approachable, and to engage and interact directly with an audience—or better yet, entertain them. It should be timely, share a point of view, and elicit an action (and reaction). It can be a quote, stat, illustration, interview, etc.—as long as it makes your audience feel seen and heard. If you simply talk at them, you relegate them to passive onlookers. When they learn not to expect engagement, you may lose them for good.

Infographic

An infographic is not simply a narrative with the complement of supporting data. It's the asset you build when data is the narrative. It's the story of information spoken in a visual language. If that data is represented in a creative and clear way, you shouldn't need many words. Unlike editorial assets (like an ebook), it should allow the viewer to explore a story in a non-linear way—like one would a map—not necessarily from top to bottom, but rather from the conceptual down to the detailed. The most potent infographics are those that tell a story that needs a visual construct. Time and scale are two good examples of variables that are hard to appreciate when talked about, but immediately impactful when seen.

Ebook

Wouldn't a video be better? Can't we say this is a series of social posts? Maybe. But the case can still be made for longer-form content. An ebook tells a deeper story about a brand or service. Its content is more narrative. It gives audiences more "meat" than shorter-form assets do, and helps them understand the brand or service in context with current trends, data, or in contrast to competitors' products or services. Typically the centerpiece of a campaign, and can often be "parted out" into a variety of other assets and venues. If the question is, "An ebook or a social post?" the answer is, "An ebook, then a social post." That said, an ebook is not a Frankenstein's monster of other assets. While it can be broken into other assets, the opposite isn't true.
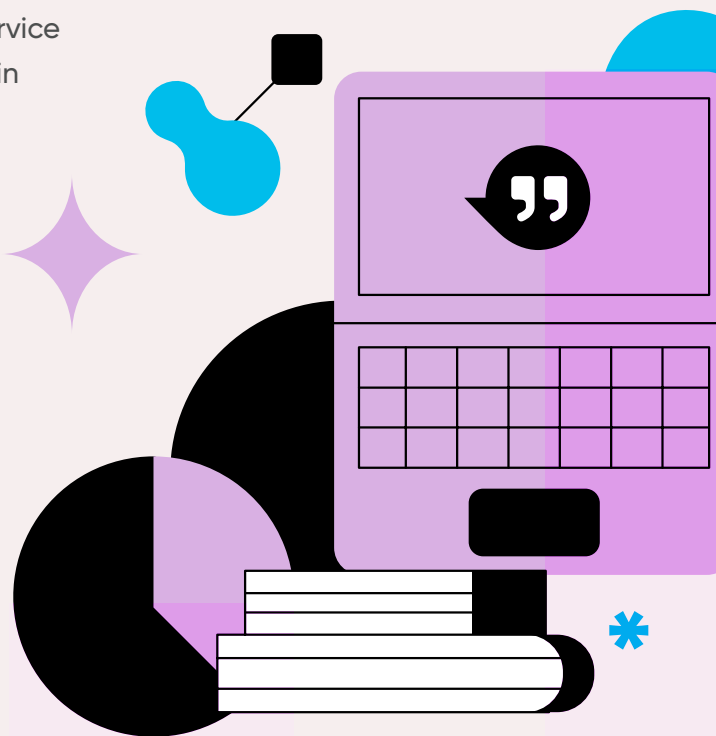
* Conclusion

This list is by no means exhaustive, and there are occasionally exceptions to the rule. But it can serve as a first stop as you formulate your approach to content creation. Still working on your story? We can help. Get in touch, and together you and Fiction Tribe will define it, refine it, and bring it to life in the most potent way possible.

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