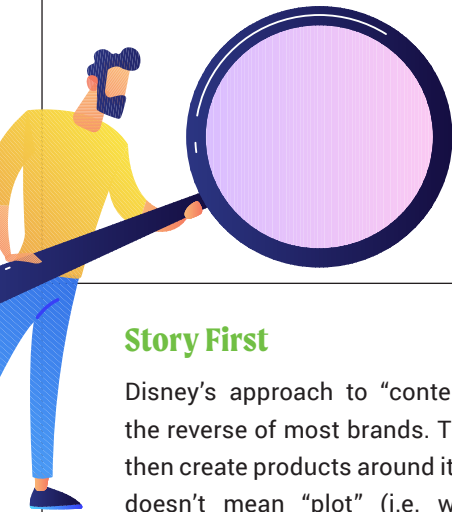




Tell Me a Story: The Key to Unlocking Content Marketing

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When it comes to ad campaigns, the term “content marketing” is becoming increasingly common. But what is “content marketing”? And what makes it effective? According to brand consultant Will Burns, we should look no further than Disney. Whenever Disney premieres a new movie, the marketing is overwhelming: toys, books, clothing, snacks, etc. How does Disney make it look so easy?

Story First

Disney’s approach to “content marketing” is actually the reverse of most brands. They start with a story and then create products around it. Keep in mind that “story” doesn’t mean “plot” (i.e. what happens onscreen). Rather, it’s about the audience’s *emotional* experience. Conversely, other brands usually start with a product and then use “content” as part of their marketing strategy.¹

Just Another Spoke

There’s nothing wrong with the product coming first. Unfortunately, it could result in content marketing being treated as just another spoke in the branding wheel. And this means that the content will be very narrow and limited.¹ It might be successful, but not on the same level as Disney.



The Big Picture

Because branding is comprehensive, it’s futile to measure it by a single piece of data. For Disney, content is not just a spoke in the branding wheel. It’s the *expression of a brand’s worldview*. Content involves the entire brand story – not just individual, unrelated segments.

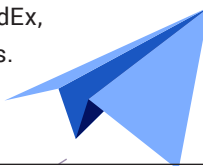


Brand Story

Because Disney starts with a movie, the *brand story* is already clearly established. And that makes it easier to integrate content marketing into their brand.¹ Think of your favorite ad campaigns, and you’ll surely find a story that effectively encompasses those brands: Peloton, FedEx, Jaguar, Louis Vuitton, Lucky Charms, and many others.

Product First

If you’re an established business, you can’t just start with the story. But you can “reverse engineer” your content marketing.¹ This involves taking a hard look at your business identity and *building a story around that*. While you can’t completely overhaul your brand’s direction, finding your story might help you refine and focus that direction.



Businesses of all sizes can take a cue from Disney. Emotions tie consumers to brands and build loyalty. By connecting your products to a story, you imbue them with emotional significance. After that, they’re no longer just products; they’re symbols. As Disney proves, with the right story, a brand has the power to build a market, not just zero in on one.

¹ Burns, Will. “Disney Proves That Profitable Marketing Is About Brand Stories.” *Forbes*. 9 Jun 2015.