



# HELLO



**KH** KARSH HAGAN

# **JEFF MARTIN**

**CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER**





# ABOUT ME



# TRAVEL IS AN EMOTIONAL CHOICE.

PEOPLE DON'T BUY PRODUCTS. THEY BUY MEANING.

THEY CHASE: STORIES CONNECTION WONDER

**MARKETING IS NO  
LONGER ABOUT THE  
STUFF YOU MAKE,  
BUT ABOUT THE  
STORIES YOU TELL.**

**- SETH GODIN**



# *The* MARKETING POWER of **STORYTELLING**

*Bold*

Why the brands that move people win attention, loyalty and growth



STORIES ACTIVATE EMOTION + MEMORY

# BOLD STORYTELLING

IS ROOTED IN WHY YOU EXIST, NOT JUST WHAT YOU SELL

IT MAKES PEOPLE FEEL SOMETHING FIRST

IT TAKES A POINT OF VIEW THAT ENGAGES YOUR AUDIENCE

IT CAN BE MESSY, HONEST & IMPERFECT LIKE LIFE







THE ROLE OF STORYTELLING IN MARKETING TAPS INTO THAT EMOTION

# BOLD STORYTELLING IS NOT DECORATION. IT'S STRATEGY.

DIFFERENTIATES. CREATES EMOTIONAL MEMORY. TRANSFORMATIONAL OVER TRANSACTIONAL.

!!!! PRICE COMPETES. STORIES CONNECT. !!!!

TODAY'S MODERN MARKETING CHALLENGE:

**WE SEE THIS MANY BRAND MESSAGES A DAY.**

**10,000**

**SO HOW DO WE NOT JUST REACH PEOPLE, BUT MOVE THEM?**

**ANSWER: STORYTELLING TURNS MARKETING INTO CULTURE!**

STORIES ACTIVATE EMOTION + MEMORY

# BOLD STORYTELLING DOESN'T JUST SELL, IT TURNS BRANDS INTO CONVERSATIONS.

STORY IS HOW WE MAKE SENSE OF THE WORLD. ALWAYS HAS BEEN. BUT WHY?





← Transit Center  
↙ Westin Hotel  
⬆ Elevators  
⬇ Restaurants





**WHY IS STORYTELLING SO IMPORTANT IN MARKETING?**

**STORYTELLING IS HARDWIRED.**

**35,000**

**YEARS LATER**

**WE STILL LIVE FOR A GOOD STORY**

STORYTELLING WORKS BECAUSE:

**WE REMEMBER STORIES 22X  
MORE THAN FACTS**

STORY IS HOW WE MAKE SENSE OF THE WORLD. ALWAYS HAS BEEN.



STORYTELLING WORKS BECAUSE:

# EMOTIONS DRIVE DECISIONS

## LOGIC FOLLOWS

NOBODY BUYS A PORSCHE FOR LOGICAL REASONS :)



STORYTELLING WORKS BECAUSE:

**STORIES CREATE IDENTITY  
ALIGNMENT (THIS BRAND  
GETS ME)**

MAKING IT RELATABLE AND MEMORABLE.

# DESTINATION

# VS.

# EXPERIENCE

**COME VISIT.  
HERE'S WHAT WE  
HAVE TO SEE ...**

**HERE'S HOW YOU'LL  
FEEL AND WHO  
YOU'LL BECOME...**



**THE STORY TRANSFORMS GEOGRAPHY INTO PERSONAL NARRATIVE.**







# TRAVEL ESSENTIALS INCLUDE LETTING GO.

✦ Lewis and Clark Lake



SO MUCH

*South Dakota*

SO LITTLE TIME

[illegible][illegible][illegible]



KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE!

**NO ONE IS LOOKING TO BE  
SOLD. EVERYONE IS LOOKING  
TO BE UNDERSTOOD.**



# WHAT MAKES A GREAT STORY?

SORRY, IT'S NOT YOUR FUNNY UNCLE AT REUNIONS!

1 + 1 = 3

**IS WHAT MAKES A GREAT STORY**

ACCORDING TO AWARD-WINNING FILMMAKER KEN BURNS:



# THE 5 ELEMENTS OF A GREAT BRAND STORY



MR. ROGER'S APPROVED

1

# A HUMAN TRUTH.

WHAT DOES YOUR CUSTOMER FEEL BEFORE THEY BUY?

FREEDOM

CONNECTION

TRANSFORMATION

BELONGING

CURIOSITY

DEN



# ARE WE CREATING THE WORLD'S GREATEST AIRPORT? OR PREPARING FOR THE END OF THE WORLD?

Learn the truth at [DENFiles.com](https://DENFiles.com)





DEN



# CONSTRUCTION? OR COVER UP?

Learn the truth at [DENFiles.com](https://denfiles.com)










 #DENFILES

# ▶ WHAT'S HAPPENING BEHIND THIS WALL?

-  A GARGOYLE BREEDING GROUNDS
-  B A TOP SECRET FREEMASON MEETING
-  C AN IMPROVED AIRPORT EXPERIENCE

Learn the truth at [DENFiles.com](https://denfiles.com)





THANKS FOR  
BEING PATIENT.  
THE LIZARD PEOPLE  
KEEP STEALING  
OUR TOOLS.



#DENFILES

Learn the truth at [DENFiles.com](http://DENFiles.com)



CAUTION  
DOOR OPENS  
OUT!

←  
Less Wait  
Time



# OVER 1 BILLION IMPRESSIONS. ZERO SPEND ON MEDIA.

Denver's airport pokes fun at conspiracy theories. Walls are hiding construction, not lizard people.

## Trolling Conspiracy Theorists or HIDING ALIENS?

Is it a meeting place for the global elite, who will hole up in tunnels beneath its runways when the world ends, or do they just want you to believe that?



Denver  
**'Remodelling the lizard people's lair': Denver airport trolls conspiracy theorists**

THE IRISH TIMES  
STYLE TRAVEL IRELAND EUROPE LONG-HAUL WALKS

**'Remodelling the lizard people's lair': airport trolls conspiracy theorists**

Denver airport parodies the conspiracy theorists with jokes about its new project

## QUARTZ WAKE UP, SHEEPLE THE DENVER AIRPORT IS LEANING INTO THE CONSPIRACY THEORIES. WHAT IS IT HIDING?

Atlas Obscura

## The Denver Airport Has the Best Public Service Announcements Ever

Conspiracy or construction?

**DIA basically admitted the construction is for Illuminati tunnels (and Blucifer is in on it)**

The Illuminati lizard people in DIA's secret underground tunnels did a great job with their new marketing campaign.

WEIRD  
Denver Airport's New Ad Campaign Embraces the Conspiracy Theories It Has Inspired

FACILITY/EXECUTIVE  
**Friday Funny: Standard Airport Renovation, Or Upgrade For The Lizard People?**  
A 73-year-old airport, known for its...  
...and...  
...and...  
...and...

Denver Airport Is Using Its Conspiracy Theories in the Most Clever Ad Campaign of the Year



Mashable

Denver International Airport ~knows~ about the conspiracy theories and is trolling us all

THRILLIST  
TRAVEL  
ALL SECTIONS OPINIONS VIDEO

**THE DENVER AIRPORT IS PROMOTING ITS OWN CONSPIRACY THEORIES IN THE WEIRDEST ADS EVER**

THE DENVER POST

POLITICS DENVER POLITICS

**Conspiracy "whistle-blower" on Denver airport ads: This is exactly what a conspiracy would do**

"New concessions? Or new conspiracies?" asks one of the posters





## 2

# A CLEAR POINT OF VIEW

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE THAT OTHERS DON'T?

TAKE A STAND  
CHOOSE A SIDE  
SAY NO TO SAMENESS



# GIVE A FL\*KE



Aspen Snowmass decided it's time to stand up, speak out, and Give a Flake about climate change. To help them take a stand, we developed a campaign that invites national conversation and inspires action.

We leveraged video, print and social to spread our message. Giveaflake.com educated people on how to contact local legislators, donate to relevant causes and utilize the platform's Twitter capabilities that let users send viral-worthy, pre-populated Tweets calling out elected officials.

Give a Flake made waves throughout the outdoor industry and the nation. And it created millions of impressions through traditional and social media. If we want to protect our winters, we have to Give a Flake.





3

## A RELATABLE HERO

MAKE YOUR CUSTOMERS FEEL SEEN, NOT SOLD.

YOUR CUSTOMER IS THE HERO  
YOUR BRAND IS THE GUIDE







## 4

**TENSION BEFORE RESOLUTION**

**PERFECT BRANDS ARE BORING BRANDS**

**SHOW THE PROBLEM BEFORE THE SOLUTION  
SHOW ORDINARY BEFORE EXTRAORDINARY  
NO TENSION = NO STORY**



5

## A MEANINGFUL OUTCOME

WHAT CHANGES AFTER ENGAGING WITH YOUR BRAND?

THEY FEEL MORE CONFIDENT  
MORE CURIOUS  
MORE ALIVE

TRANSFORMATION BEATS TRANSACTION!!!









# **GREAT BRANDS DON'T JUST SELL. THEY TELL STORIES THAT BUILD CONNECTIONS.**

## **Patagonia:**

Real stories of adventure, activism and saving the planet.

## **AirBnB:**

Stories of community and belonging, not just lodging.

## **Dove:**

Stories of real beauty and real women that challenged cultural norms.



YOU NEED STORIES THAT ARE:

**SIMPLE+AUTHENTIC+REPEATABLE**

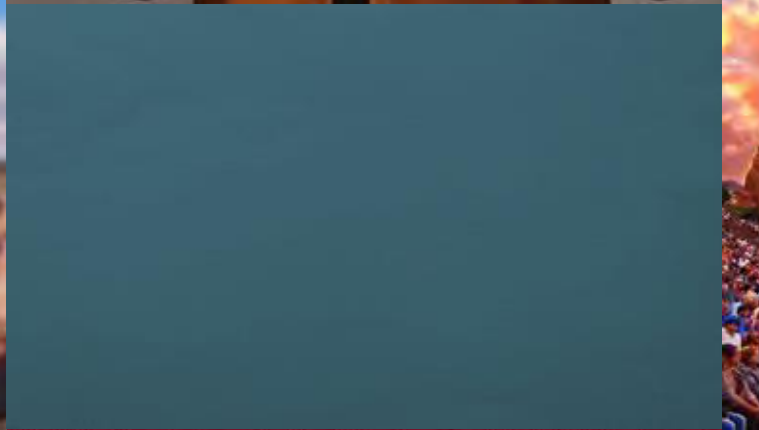
**YOU DON'T NEED: BIG BUDGETS & FANCY PRODUCTION**



# **THE PLATFORMS HAVE CHANGED THE STORY HASN'T**

**YOU STILL NEED A HOOK, A JOURNEY AND A PAYOFF.**







A close-up portrait of Ernest Hemingway, showing his face from the nose up. He has a full, grey beard and mustache. He is wearing a dark green, textured scarf. The background is dark and out of focus. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting his facial features.

HEMINGWAY'S 6 WORD STORY:

**BABY SHOES FOR SALE. NEVER WORN.**

STORIES ACTIVATE EMOTION + MEMORY

**2026 IS THE YEAR  
STORYTELLING BECOMES  
A CMO'S MOST PROFITABLE  
SKILL.** **-FORBES**





**ELEMENTS OF A GREAT BRAND STORY:**

# **HOW TO PUT THEM TO WORK**

**(SOME COST-EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING TACTICS)**





STORYTELLING TACTICS 1:

# FOUNDER & TEAM STORIES

- + WHY YOU STARTED YOUR BUSINESS
- + WHAT ALMOST BROKE YOU
- + WHAT STILL EXCITES YOU
- + WHAT FAMILY TRADITIONS YOU INCORPORATE





A woman with blonde hair in a braid, wearing a blue t-shirt, tan pants, and a climbing harness with a red and yellow bag, is climbing a vertical rock face. She is looking back over her shoulder at the camera with a smile. The background is a lush green forest.

# UNEXPECTED

30 Years of Patagonia Catalog Photography

Edited by JANE SIEVERT & JENNIFER RIDGEWAY :: Foreword by RICK RIDGEWAY

A wide-angle photograph of a rugged mountain landscape. In the foreground, a line of people, possibly a relay team, is visible on a steep, rocky slope. They are wearing colorful gear and appear to be working together. The background shows jagged mountain peaks under a blue sky with some clouds.

# UNEXPECTED

30 Years of Patagonia Catalog Photography

Patagonia early on attracted a network of outdoor photographer friends willing to send in their best random shots, on spec and uncommissioned, of real people doing what they love to do in the natural world. The result was a new – and unexpected – visual style for catalogs, one that still yields fresh surprises every issue, 30 years down the road. To this day no other catalog works the same way. This book is a tribute to the eye, skill and adventurous spirit of those who get the pictures and bring them home.

*Unexpected* also features essays from its photo editors and from both new and seasoned contributors on how they approach their craft – and meet Patagonia's tough, eccentric standards.

*Essays by Jeff Johnson, Cory Richards, Jennifer Ridgeway, Rick Ridgeway, John Shortman, Jane Sievert and Beth Wald*

*Photographers include Paul Dix, Greg Epperson, John Kelly, Marko Prezelj, Barbara Russell, Keman Ward, Uli Wismeyer and many others.*

**patagonia**  
BOOKS



## STORYTELLING TACTICS 2:

# CUSTOMER-AS-HERO STORIES

- + TURN TESTIMONIALS INTO STORIES
- + INSPIRE/ASK CUSTOMERS TO CREATE (UGC)
- + CREATE A CUSTOMER AMBASSADOR PROGRAM





## Powder Too Deep

Our idea of a fun morning did not involve getting escorted down by ski patrol after getting stuck mid-run. They should have warned us before we got on the tram about how deep it was going to be!!

*Isabelle, New York City*



**travelersouthdakota** • Following

American Authors • Go Big Or Go Home

**travelersouthdakota** • 11w  
 We asked and you answered the call!

Created from the videos submitted by lovers of the #605State, here is a compilation of how our communities celebrate South Dakota - Happy #Forever605 Day!

If you submitted video content, be sure to check your email (and spam folder) for a message letting you know what prizes you've won and how to receive them!

#hifromsd #SouthDakota

**getcarriedawayy** • 11w

**2,590 likes**

June 5

Add a comment...





 **DEN** ZEN  
ROOM

**STORYTELLING TACTICS 3:**

# **ONE CORE STORY, MANY EXPRESSIONS**

- + BUILD ONE STRONG NARRATIVE, THEN FLEX IT**
- + WEBSITE**
- + SOCIAL**
- + MERCH**
- + EVENT BOOTH**
- + EMAIL SIGNATURES**





THE BEST STORIES EVOLVE. BUT THE VOICE STAYS TRUE.









FEW BRANDS CAN AFFORD TO BE IGNORED!

PLAYING IT SAFE **IS THE RISKIEST**  
**MOVE YOU CAN MAKE** IN A  
COMPETITIVE MARKET PLACE.

- + SAFE BLENDS IN
- + BOLD STANDS OUT
- + BOLD STORIES CREATE LOYALTY AND CONVERSATION





FINAL THOUGHT:

**MARKETING ISN'T ABOUT  
CONVINCING PEOPLE TO BUY.  
IT'S ABOUT MAKING THEM FEEL  
SOMETHING ENOUGH TO  
WANT TO BUY.**



**THAT'S THE POWER OF BOLD STORYTELLING**



**WHAT'S YOUR STORY?**

**THANK YOU!**





# QUESTIONS



# THE ONE THING TO REMEMBER:

# MODERN TRAVELERS ARE SEEKING:

**MEANING OVER MILEAGE**

**CONNECTION OVER CONSUMPTION**

**TRANSFORMATION OVER TRANSACTION**

PEOPLE DON'T BUY PLACES. THEY BUY MEANING, STORIES, CONNECTION AND WONDER.







*The modern traveler is fleeing the  
'Transactional trip'*



THE DEMAND: ANTI-LUXURY

*The new luxury is  
"time, space, and authenticity."*



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a grey beanie, a red jacket, and tan pants, stands in a snowy landscape. She is smiling and looking down at a black and white dog in the foreground. To her left is the back of a white truck with its tailgate open. A large, treaded tire is visible on the truck. To her right is a teal folding chair. The background shows snow-covered trees under a clear blue sky. The entire image has a semi-transparent dark overlay.

THE INSIGHT:

*The **true value** of a trip isn't the  
experience you have; it's the  
**feeling you keep.***

A couple is walking away from the camera on a snowy path at night. They are wearing winter clothing; the person on the left is in a dark jacket and the person on the right is in a light blue jacket and a white beanie. In the background, a cabin is illuminated with warm yellow lights, and a Christmas tree is visible on the left. The scene is set in a snowy forest with tall trees.

# THE 2026 TRAVELER HAS CHANGED