In *Building a StoryBrand*, marketing expert Donald Miller explains how to create effective marketing messages and materials. He covers:

- What doesn't work—marketing that's confusing, overwhelming, narcissistic, or that takes too much energy to understand.
- What does work—framing your message as a story using a method called the StoryBrand 7-Part Framework (SB7).
- How to implement your SB7 story into a variety of marketing materials.
- How to leverage the power of story to create company culture and increase employee engagement.

### Why Most Marketing Doesn't Work

The only thing customers care about is how your brand can solve their problems. As a result, marketing that's unclear or confusing, doesn't explain how your product solves problems, or that is self-centered and obsesses about the company's image, is doomed to fail.

For example, a beautiful website with pictures of your office building that doesn't explain that you sell life-saving medicine isn't going to win you any business. Even if your competitor's medicines aren't as good as yours, if their communication is better, they'll win the customers.

### How the Brain Works

Many marketing messages are unclear or confusing because they don't accommodate the way the human brain works. *Subconsciously and by nature, the human brain is interested in things that will help us survive.* This results in two behaviors:

**Behavior #1:** The brain focuses on things that will help it meet survival needs. According to Abraham Maslow, the brain prioritizes needs in this order, most important first: nourishment, security, relationships (a tribe of people who will help keep us safe), and meaning (spiritual, physiological, and psychological needs.)

**Behavior #2:** The brain ignores anything that's complicated because parsing complexity uses up energy and calories. Those calories could be better spent on something that will help with survival, such as finding food or a mate.

### Attracting the Brain's Attention

To catch the brain's attention, your marketing needs to cater to how it works. First, your marketing needs to frame the message as survival-related. Show your customers that your product or service will help them:

- **Save or acquire money and resources.** Money helps us survive because we use it to buy resources such as nourishment.
- **Save time.** Time helps us survive because, like money, we use it to acquire other resources.
- **Build community.** Community helps us survive because: 1) being part of a tribe gives us automatic allies and 2) being nurtured and nurturing meets the need for meaning—nurturing gives our lives purpose.
- **Acquire status.** Status helps us survive because it scares off enemies and attracts allies and mates.
- **Create opportunities to be generous.** Being generous helps us survive because: 1) it makes us more likable, which increases our ability to form relationships, and 2) helping others gives our lives meaning.
- **Find meaning.** Meaning is one of our fundamental survival needs and a brand can offer it directly by giving customers the opportunity to make the world a better place.
  - (Shortform example: Buying a product from a company that gives 1% of its profits to environmental causes makes us feel like we're helping the world.)

The second thing your marketing needs to do is tell a story. *Story is one of the most simple and digestible ways to transmit information* because it organizes information into a predictable, formulaic format that takes little energy to understand and holds an audience's attention.

### How to Make Marketing Work: Write Your Story

The author, who founded a company called StoryBrand, has streamlined storytelling into a process called the StoryBrand 7-Part Framework (SB7). Using this framework, you'll follow a step-by-step process to create a BrandScript, which is a document similar to the grids or storyboards that storytellers use to create movies or books. Once you've created your BrandScript, you'll be able to draw on its ideas to write copy and create content you can use in your marketing materials.

There are seven elements to the SB7 formula: The hero (customer) wants something (1) and encounters a problem (2) that stops her from getting it. She needs the help of a guide (your brand) (3) who has a plan (4) to help her solve the problem. The guide (brand) must call on her to act (5). The stakes must be clear—what does she stand to lose if she doesn't act (6) and what she might
Here's an example of how the formula looks for a brand: (Shortform example: A college student wants study snacks (1) but doesn't have any free time in which to cook (2). SnackCrate (3) is a company that mails crates of snacks to subscribers once a month (4). The “Subscribe” button on the SnackCrate website calls the student to sign up (5). If the student doesn't order the snacks, she'll be hungry (6). If she does, she'll feel full and she'll have more free brainpower to put towards studying (7).)

This seven-part story arc is common and popular because it captures the human condition so well. Everyone doubts themselves and wants to save the day and be a hero.

Now, we'll look at each element or the story arc in more detail and discuss why each element is important.

**Element 1: The Customer (Hero) Wants Something**
The human brain craves resolution. Therefore, the distance between the customer and what she wants—known as a story gap—is inherently interesting. The customer will only be able to close the gap by learning more about your product.

It's important to establish what a customer wants early, before her brain has a chance to wander from your story. What the customer wants should be obvious after five seconds on your website.

**Element 2: A Problem**
A problem is something that frustrates a customer that your product or service can fix. Problems are important to maintaining the customer's interest in your BrandScript—without conflict, stories are boring.

A villain is the clearest way to personify and focus conflict. To harness the power of the villain for your brand, you need to cast your product or service as a tool the customer can use to take down the bad guy. For example, if you're selling toothbrushes, the villain is plaque, and you might show a commercial in which plaque is an animated, talking blob that lives between your teeth. A villain needs to be obviously negative, legitimate (no fearmongering), and the source of the problem (plaque rather than fear of the dentist).

The villain causes up to three kinds of problems all at the same time:

**Problem Type #1: External.** An external problem is a physical barrier between the customer and what she wants. These problems are the most straightforward to identify and solve.

- Not having a computer when you need one is an external problem. Apple can solve this problem by selling you a Mac.

**Problem Type #2: Internal.** Internal problems are emotions, especially frustration, created by an external problem.

- Perhaps you don't have a computer because you're struggling with the internal problem of being intimidated by technology. Apple's computers are user-friendly, simple, and non-intimidating.

**Problem Type #3: Philosophical.** Philosophical problems are universal problems that are represented in a particular story but have worldwide applications.

- A philosophical problem might be the idea that everyone should have the right to express themselves and communicate with others. An Apple computer can help them do this.

Most companies are good at solving external problems, but customers are most interested in purchasing fixes for internal problems. Customers buy things because an external problem is creating an internal problem and they don't want to feel stressed, annoyed, or frustrated anymore. The best brands fix both types of problems at once.

Some brands can address philosophical problems too. For example, by buying an electric car from Tesla, you can solve the external problem of lacking a vehicle. Additionally, you can solve the internal problem of needing status by becoming one of the first to adopt new technology. Finally, you can address the philosophical problem of climate change because an electric car is easier on the environment than a gas one.

**Element 3: Your Brand (The Guide)**
Your brand will act as a guide to help the customer solve her problems and get what she wants. Guides are critical to storytelling because if heroes could fix their own problems by themselves, then there wouldn't be a story.

Guides need to be both:

- **Empathetic.** Guides must understand a customer's problem and then communicate to the customer that they care and
want to help.

- **Competent.** Guides must be capable of helping customers solve their problems and demonstrate their authority.

**There’s a fine line between demonstrating competence and bragging.** You can hit the balance by sparingly and subtly displaying evidence of your competence on your marketing material. Here are four suggestions:

1. **Post testimonials on your website.** Testimonials show that your brand has a proven track record helping people. Post only three and choose ones that are brief.
2. **Use statistics.** Statistics also show that your brand has a proven track record. They can be stated simply and sparingly (14,000 copies sold!) and appeal to people who like facts and numbers.
3. **Mention awards.** Put award seals at the bottom of your webpage, not front and center. Even if a customer doesn’t know what an award is, having an outside organization vouch for your brand gives you authority.
4. **Display logos.** If your brand works with other companies, put their logos in your marketing materials to show that other well-known companies have worked with you.

**Element 4: The Plan**

The plan is step-by-step instructions that the brand gives the customer. The plan should have a title to make it look more official and increase its apparent value.

There are two types of plans you can share with a customer:

- **Type #1: Process plans** clarify how a customer can do business with you and/or how they're supposed to use your product. StoryBrand recommends everyone create a process plan, clearly articulate it to the customer, and display it on your website.
  
  - *(Shortform example: If you’re selling hiking boots online, the plan could be: 1) find your size using the online size guide, 2) add the appropriate size to your online cart, 3) click checkout.)*

- **Type #2: Agreement plans** alleviate customer fears with the goal of making customers confident enough to buy from you. They either reduce risk or demonstrate to customers that a brand has something in common with them, which creates trust.
  
  - *(Shortform example: Many electronics companies certify that their refurbished products have been tested and passed a quality control standard.)*

**Element 5: Call to Action**

The call to action is a button on your website that allows the customer to buy your product or get more information about your brand. **Calls to action are critical because 1) people don’t act unless something forces them to and 2) customers may not realize what we want them to do (buy) unless we’re explicit.**

Most brands severely underuse calls to action. **Weak, or non-existent, calls imply that you don’t believe in your product.** Customers don’t want debatably useful products sold by brands that doubt themselves. They do want valuable products sold by brands that know their worth and believe they can change lives.

There are two types of calls to action:

- **Type #1: Direct calls to action** prompt a customer to take the first step towards buying a product.
  
  - For example, a button on your website that says “Get a quote” is a direct call to action.

**Type #2: Transitional...**

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Here’s a preview of the rest of Shortform’s Building a Storybrand summary:

**Building a Storybrand Summary Part 1: Clarify Your Message | Chapter 1: Why**
Most Marketing Doesn’t Work

In Building a StoryBrand, marketing expert Donald Miller explains how to create effective marketing messages and materials:

- He first covers what doesn’t work—marketing that’s confusing, overwhelming, narcissistic, or takes too much energy to understand.
- Next, he covers what does work—framing your message as a story using a method called the StoryBrand 7-Part Framework (SB7).
- Finally, he covers: 1) how to implement your SB7 story into a variety of marketing materials and 2) how to leverage the power of story to create company culture and increase employee engagement.

Why Most Marketing Doesn’t Work

If you find that your brand is stagnant, it probably isn’t because your product is flawed. It probably is because there’s a problem with the message you’re sending out in your marketing. The only thing customers care about is how your brand can solve their problems. As a result, marketing that’s unclear or confusing, that doesn’t explain how your product solves problems, or that is self-centered and obsesses about the company’s image, is doomed to fail.

Noise

Noise is the massive amount of distracting, confusing information that permeates the world. An example of noise is the 3,000 marketing messages the average person is exposed to every day. While outside noise is something your brand will have to compete with, your biggest enemy is actually the noise your brand creates itself.

Brands often don’t realize they’re creating noise. They think that customers like hearing about their backstory, the non-profits they support, the eco-friendly features of their office building, and so on. But customers don’t care about any of these things. They just want to know how your brand will help them solve their problems.

For example, one StoryBrand client ran an industrial painting company that painted cars, concrete, and hospitals. The website was crowded with text that tried to explain all three arms of the businesses but ultimately just created noise. The author suggested starting over. The new website would have only a few...

Why Most Marketing Doesn’t Work

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Building a Storybrand Summary Part 2: Create Your BrandScript | Chapters 2-4: The Hero

In Part 1, we learned that the best way to transmit a message is via story. There are many different ways to write stories—just think about how many books and movies there are out there—but there’s one tried-and-true formula that’s been tested throughout thousands of years of human history.

The author, who founded a company called StoryBrand, has streamlined this formula into a process called the StoryBrand 7-Part Framework (SB7). Using this framework, you’ll follow a step-by-step process to create a BrandScript, which is a document similar to the grids or storyboards that storytellers use to create movies or books. Once you’ve created your BrandScript, you’ll be able to draw on its ideas to write copy and create content you can use in your marketing materials.

The BrandScript is universal and will work for any size of company anywhere in the world. For example, after implementing the framework, in just four years, the author’s company doubled its revenue.

You can create multiple BrandScripts for your company at the overall, divisional, and product levels, and/or for different customer segments.

SB7

There are seven elements to the SB7 formula:

1. The hero (customer) wants something and
2. Encounters a problem that stops her from getting it.
3. She needs the help of a guide (your brand) who has
4. A plan to help her solve the problem.
5. The guide (brand) must call on her to act.
6. The stakes must be clear—what does she stand to lose if she doesn't act and
7. What she might gain if she does act?

Here's an example of how the formula looks in a story: In Star Wars: A New Hope, hero Luke Skywalker wants the Rebellion to defeat the Empire and restore peace in the universe (1). His problem is that the Empire is very powerful (2). Guide Obi-Wan Kenobi (3) trains Luke to use a lightsaber and trust in the Force (4) and then pushes him to go help the Rebellion take on the Empire (5). If Luke fails, the Rebellion will be destroyed and the Empire will maintain power (6). If Luke succeeds, the Rebellion will avoid defeat...

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**Building a Storybrand Summary Chapter 5: Element #2—A Problem**

The second of the seven story elements is the problem. In narrative, a problem is something that stands in the way of the hero getting what she wants. Problems engage the audience, maintain interest in the story, and make the audience more likely to trust the storyteller because they feel understood. (Shortform example: In the book The Paper Bag Princess, the dragon is the problem—the dragon burns all the princess's possessions and kidnaps the prince she wants to marry.)

In branding, a problem is something the customer is frustrated by that your product or service can fix. (Shortform example: If you sell hand soap, the customer's problem is that her hands are dirty, which creates a feeling of disgust.)

Problems are important to maintaining interest—without conflict, stories are boring. No one would keep watching. (Shortform example: Imagine that in the movie The Wizard of Oz, the wicked witch offered to give Dorothy a ride home after the first half-hour.)

First, we'll explore how to create a villain strong enough to mobilize customers. Then, we'll discuss the three problems your product or service should address, and how to write these problems (and their solutions) into your BrandScript.

**Create a Villain**

A villain is the clearest way to focus conflict. The scarier and more powerful the villain, the more the audience wants to see them defeated. The villain doesn't have to be a criminal mastermind in a mob boss chair stroking a cat, but human or not, villains need to be personified. For example, if you're selling toothbrushes, the villain is plaque, and you might show a commercial in which plaque is an animated, talking blob that lives between your teeth. This makes a customer's frustrations more concrete and calls on her imagination.

To harness the power of the villain for your brand, you need to cast your product or service as a tool the customer can use to take down the bad guy.

A villain needs to be:

- The source of the problem.
  - For example, the feeling of exhaustion isn't a villain—your loud neighbors...

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**Building a Storybrand Summary Chapter 6: Element #3—The Guide (Your Brand)**

The third of the seven story elements is the guide. In a narrative, the guide is a character who helps the hero solve her problem. (Shortform example: In The Karate Kid, the guide is Mr. Miyagi, a karate master who teaches hero Daniel how to fight.)

In branding, the guide is your brand, which will help the customer solve her problems and get what she wants. (Shortform example: if you sell hand soap, your brand offers customers the tools to get their hands clean.)

First, we'll discuss the dynamic between the hero and guide. Then, we'll discuss the two characteristics you should demonstrate as a guide, and how to write evidence of these characteristics into your BrandScript.
Heroes vs. Guides

You might be wondering why the brand is the guide rather than the hero—after all, heroes get things done and the story revolves around them. However, in stories, the hero is never the most capable character—heroes are self-doubting, reluctant, and inexperienced. Additionally, heroes are never capable of solving their own problems. If they could fix their own problems, there wouldn't be a story. (Shortform example: At the beginning of the Disney movie Hercules, Hercules can't do anything right—he has super strength, but all he manages to do with it is accidentally destroy things.)

The guide, on the other hand, is the most authoritative, qualified character. The guide has already done whatever the hero needs to do and can help her achieve it herself. Therefore, if you position your brand as a guide rather than a hero, you'll demonstrate an air of authority and competence which will appeal to customers.

Tidal, a music streaming service, is an example of a brand that failed because it miscast itself as the hero. Tidal was owned by musicians and aimed to solve musicians' problems (whoever's problems are being solved is the hero).

Tidal was supposed to both: 1) do away with middlemen who take a huge cut from the artists, and 2) discourage people from illegally downloading music. However, Tidal's customers were listeners (artists weren't going...

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Building a Storybrand Summary Chapter 7: Element #4—The Plan

The fourth of the seven story elements is the plan. In a narrative, the plan is a method the guide gives the hero to alleviate her fears, help her get what she wants, and solve her problems. For example, in Moneyball, guide Peter Brand tells hero Billy Beane (general manager of a baseball team) to use algorithms instead of anecdotes to choose this players. (Shortform note: To see the seven story elements of Moneyball in action, read our summary of the book.)

In branding, the plan is step-by-step instructions that the brand gives the customer. The instructions explain how to buy or use the product or service, or alleviate fears about spending money on the product or service. (Shortform example: If you sell hand soap, you might assure customers that your salespeople don't work on commission—no one will pressure them to buy a scent they're not sure about.)

The first three steps of the SB7 Framework were primarily about establishing characters and setting the scene. Step four is the first in which the customer has to start doing something. She's unlikely to do so unless you tell her exactly what to do next and how it's going to play out.

First, we'll look at two different types of plans. Then, we'll discuss how to write and title them, and how to add them to your BrandScript.

Two Types of Plans

There are two types of plans you can share with a customer: process plans and agreement plans.

Process Plans

Process plans clarify how a customer can do business with you and/or how they're supposed to use your product. StoryBrand recommends everyone create a process plan, clearly articulate it to the customer, and display it on their website.

There are three types of process plans:

- **Pre-purchase plan.** Pre-purchase plans tell a customer how to buy the product. (Shortform example: If you're selling hiking
boots online, the plan could be:

- Find your size using the online size guide
- Add the appropriate size to your online cart.
- Click checkout.

...  

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Building a Storybrand Summary Chapter 8: Element #5—Call to Action

The fifth of the seven story elements is to act. In a narrative, the guide pushes the hero to act. (Shortform example: In Lord of the Rings, Gandalf tells Frodo to take the ring to Mordor to destroy it.)

In branding, the brand calls the customer to action by providing a button on their website that allows the customer to buy or get more information about the brand's products or services. (Shortform example: if you sell hand soap, you might create a button linking to a document called “How to Wash Your Hands Properly” that customers can download from your website for free.)

First, we’ll discuss the importance of using calls to action and learn about the two different types. Then, we’ll discuss how to employ them, and how to add them to your BrandScript.

The Importance of Calls to Action

Calls to action are critical because people don’t act unless something forces them to. For example, in Legally Blonde, Elle Woods decides to follow her boyfriend to law school only after he dumps her because he thinks she's not “serious” enough to be his partner. If you want a customer to buy something, you need to take the initiative and push them to do so.

Additionally, what might seem obvious to a business owner isn’t necessarily clear to a customer. If we don’t clearly tell customers we want them to buy a product so it can solve their problem, they may not realize that’s what they’re supposed to do. It’s like asking a woman out by saying like “Do you like tea?” instead of “Will you go on a date with me to a teashop?”

Two Types of Calls

There are two types of calls to action: direct and transitional.

Direct

Direct calls to action prompt a customer to take the first step towards buying a product.

- Example #1: A button on your website that says “Get a quote” is a direct call to action.
- Example #2: The phrase “Call XXX-XXXX to buy today” on a print ad is a direct call to action.

Transitional

**Transitional calls to action don’t ask your customers for a sale right away; instead, they interest a customer in...**

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Building a Storybrand Summary Chapter 9: Element #6—Negative Stakes

There are only two motivations in life: 1) get something good or 2) avoid something bad, and the last two elements of the SB7 Framework address these motivations.

The sixth of the seven story elements is the negative stakes—what happens if the character fails to act, fails to solve the problem, and fails to get what she wants? In narrative, the possibility of loss—and the terrible consequences loss comes with—creates suspense and motivates the audience to stay engaged with the story. (Shortform example: In Harry Potter, if hero Harry doesn’t defeat villain Voldemort, Voldemort will take over the wizarding world and torture or murder people.)
In branding, the possibility of loss—the bad things that will happen to your customer if she doesn't buy your product—motivates your customer to continue looking for a solution to the problem and a happy ending to her story. (Shortform example: if you sell hand soap and your customer doesn't buy it, her hands will be filthy and could infect her with diseases.)

Stakes are important because every moviegoer and customer, when confronted with a story, is always subconsciously asking, "Why should I care?" and "Where can this take me?" If there's nothing at stake, the story is boring, and people tune out.

First, we'll discuss the power of negative stakes. Then, we'll discuss how to employ them, and how to add them to your BrandScript.

Loss Aversion

Interestingly, people aren't proportionally affected by gains and losses—people dislike losing more than they like winning. For example, a person will be happy if they win $200, but much more unhappy if they lose $200. As a result, negative stakes are a stronger motivator than positive ones, and in some cases, people are two or three times more driven by loss than gain.

For example, for a long time, George Wallace, the governor of Alabama, resisted the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Lyndon Baines Johnson was able to convince him to stop opposing it by laying out the negative stakes of doing so: If Wallace kept up resistance, he'd go down in history as...

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Building a Storybrand Summary Chapter 10: Element #7—Positive Stakes

The last of the seven story elements is positive stakes—what happens if the character successfully acts, solves the problem, and gets what she wants? In narrative, the possibility of gain—and the happy ending it comes with—motivates the audience to stay invested in the story. (Shortform example: In Harry Potter, if hero Harry does defeat villain Voldemort, the wizarding world will be safe, and Harry can have a normal life and start a family, something he's wanted since Voldemort killed his parents.)

In branding, the possibility of gain—and the positive stakes it comes with—motivates the customer to buy your product. (Shortform example: if you sell hand soap, and people buy it and use it, they'll be clean and healthy.)

The goal of this element is to close the gap between the hero/customer and what she wants. First, we'll discuss the requirements of happy endings and three popular story endings that we can draw inspiration from. Then, we'll discuss how to share the happy endings with customers, and how to add them to your BrandScript.

The Happy Ending Must Be Specific

The most successful brands show customers exactly how a product will change their lives for the better. Many brands are too vague, and it's hard to get excited about vagueness. (Shortform example: If you sell gym equipment, promising a "you'll be happy with your purchase" isn't as compelling as "you will be as strong as an Olympian.")

To come up with a specific positive outcome, consider how your product or service will solve all three types of problems from Chapter 3: external (what their life will look like), internal (how they will feel once the problem is solved), and philosophical (why the world is a better place now that the problem is solved).

Alternatively, marketer Ryan Deiss created a before-and-after grid exercise that will help you determine how your product will change your customer's lives:

Before a customer buys your product After a customer buys your product

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Building a Storybrand Summary Chapter 11: Transformation

The previous chapters in Part 2 have each addressed one of the seven elements of the SB7 story arc. Chapter 9 will address one more facet of story: a hero's longing to transform. While people are motivated by the possibility of success and failure, the number one thing that motivates humans is the desire to change—to become more self-accepting, different, or better.

In narrative, transformation refers to the new skills the hero learns from the guide and facing the conflict. By the end of the book, after she defeats the villain, she's a different person than she was at the beginning. (Shortform example: In the Disney movie Mulan, at the beginning of the movie, Mulan doesn't know how to hold a sword. By the end, she's saved China from an invading army.)

In branding, transformation refers to the potential to take on a new, aspirational identity. The best brands think hard about what kind of people their customers want to be and then show that ownership of their products is a distinguishing characteristic of that identity. (Shortform example: If you sell hand soap, you can show potential customers that your existing customers are clean, healthy people.) Brands that prioritize changing lives tend to sell a lot of products because customers love brands that help them transform. Likewise, transformation is the key to creating brand evangelists: people who swear by your brand and enthusiastically promote it to others.

Selling More Than a Product

When you make use of aspirational identities, you’re not just selling a product—you’re also selling personal improvements. This adds value to your brand.

For example, Gerber Knives advertises their knives being used by adventurous, tough, fearless people—the kind of people who perform rescues and face down wild animals. This advertising suggests that if you buy a knife, you will become an adventurous, tough, fearless person. Even though the author was well aware of this technique, when he came across a display of Gerber Knives in a Home Depot, he still wanted one.

The author later received a...

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Shortform Exercise: Who Is Your Aspirational Identity?

An aspirational identity is the type of person you would become if you owned a certain product.

How would you want your friends to describe you? Why?
Building a Storybrand Summary Part 3: Implementing Your BrandScript | Chapter 12: Overhauling Your Website

In Part 2, you created a BrandScript. Now, it's time to transfer the ideas and content in that script to your marketing materials. **The more you can implement your BrandScript into your marketing materials, the more customers will sign up to star in your story.** Chapter 10 covers how to use your BrandScript on your website, and subsequent chapters cover how to use it elsewhere.

**Overhauling Your Website**

You don't need a million-dollar advertising budget to implement your BrandScript. **Shoring up your digital presence, particularly your website, can substantially increase your customer engagement.** No matter how someone hears about your brand, they're going to end up on your website at some point to discover more.

**The number-one mistake brands make with their websites is including too much noise.** In earlier times, it was okay to give a lot of detail about a company on a website. These days, a website should be brief. The only two pieces of information a customer needs to get from your website are:

1. Your brand offers something they want.
2. You can help them get what they want.

**Five Ways to Improve Your Website**

There are many ways to cut down on noise and improve your website, but there are five ways that will get you more results than any of the others combined. As you read through the recommendations, keep in mind that every single image, idea, and word on your website should be inspired by your BrandScript.

1. **Immediately make it clear what you can offer the customer.** Place a short phrase and image that explain what your brand does on the top part of your website before a visitor has to scroll. (The part that's viewable without scrolling is referred to as “above the fold.”) Don't bury your explanation inside a paragraph.

The text and images above the fold must do at least one of the following:

- **Showcase an aspirational identity.**
  - *(Shortform example: A cooking school might promise to make a customer a grillmaster.)*

- **Fix a problem.**
  - *(Shortform example: Your bug spray might prevent a customer...)*

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**Shortform Exercise: Overhaul Your Website**

There are five effective ways to improve your website.

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Picture (or navigate to) your current website. What's currently above the fold? How could you bolster the content in that area?

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**Building a Storybrand Summary Five More Steps of Implementation**

Fixing up your website was the first step to implementing your BrandScript. Now, it's time to look at five further steps. **These five steps are appropriate for any size or type of business and are almost free.**
It may take up to a year to implement all five steps, but you'll start seeing growth right after implementing the first one. You can hire a StoryBrand guide to help you with these steps if you like. (StoryBrand doesn't take a percentage from guides or any other certified agents.)

**Step 1: Write a Brand Logline**

*A logline is a short, often one-sentence description of a movie that summarizes the story and hooks in a potential viewer.* (Shortform example: The logline for *The Hunger Games* could be: “To save her sister, a girl enters a life-or-death competition in her place.”) A brand logline does the same thing—it summarizes your brand's story and invites customers to star as the hero.

Loglines are important because *most people who work at a company, even the senior leaders, can't succinctly explain what the brand does, and they lose people's interest the moment they try.* If everyone memorizes the logline, there's a go-to, standardized, intriguing answer. Everyone who works at the company becomes a salesperson, and customers who are given an easy-to-remember line repeat it to others.

**Create Your Logline**

To create your logline (which can be longer than a single line), you'll use four of the elements from your BrandScript:

- **Hero (customer).** The goal is to make members of your target demographic think, “That describes me.”
  - (Shortform example: If your customers are students and you sell exam prep courses, your line might start with: “We help students...”)

- **Problem.** The goal is to make customers think, “Yes, that's a problem I have—maybe this brand can help solve it.”
  - (“We help students who are confronted with tough exams ..”)

- **Plan.** Loglines are short, so you can't go into detail about your plan, but you need to imply there is one. The goal is to make...

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**Shortform Exercise: Implement Your Story**

There are five ways to implement your story into your marketing materials.

Brainstorm some possible loglines for your company. Remember that loglines should include the hero (customer), problem, plan, and positive stakes.

**What Our Readers Say**

This is the best summary of How to Win Friends and Influence People I've ever read. I learned all the main points in just 20 minutes.

Learn more about our summaries ➔

**Building a Storybrand Summary Chapter 14: Story and Company Culture**

As you've seen in previous chapters, you can use stories to clearly communicate with and engage your customers. You can also use stories to communicate and engage with your *employees*.

First, we'll look at storyless workplaces with weak culture. Then, we'll look at storied workplaces with strong culture.

**Narrative Void**

The “narrative void” describes a plotless, empty expanse within an organization. When there's no story, people don't know what roles they play, what they're supposed to do, or why they should care.

If your company has a narrative void, all the different divisions and departments are disconnected. Only people within a department understand what that department does, and everyone's making decisions from their own point of view. No matter how much people think their decisions affect only their departments, they do affect the rest of the organization. As a result, corporate communication becomes internal noise, social media shares confusing messaging, and local marketing descends into frantic discounting.
Culture at Void Workplaces

If a company is plagued by a narrative void, disengagement often starts straight from onboarding. At a plotless workplace:

- On an employee's first day, she meets someone in HR for an hour who gives her keys, has her watch a video or skim a manual about the company, and goes over the mission statement.
- Over the next few years, the employee meets the status quo. She hits performance management metrics, gets promoted, and learns how to interact with others in the company.
- One day, a headhunter offers her a job. Her current company suffers from disengagement and weak culture stemming from a narrative void, so she leaves, hoping things will be better elsewhere.

Gallup Polls

Gallup polls, which measure employee engagement, give some insight into both the presence of a narrative void and employee effort. Disengagement is a symptom of narrative void, and when employees are disengaged, they don't work as hard and they're less productive.

When Gallup started collecting data in...

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