The Visual Marketing Revolution

26 Rules
to Help
Social Media
Marketers
Connect the Dots

STEPHANIE DIAMOND

FREE SAMPLE CHAPTER

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THE VISUAL MARKETING REVOLUTION

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephanie Diamond is a thought leader and management marketing professional with 20-plus years of experience in building profits in more than 75 different industries. She has worked with solopreneurs, small-business owners, and multibillion-dollar corporations. As a best-selling author, she has written six business books, including *Social Media Marketing for Dummies* and *Social CRM for Dummies*.

She worked for eight years as a Marketing Director at AOL. When she joined, there were fewer than 1 million subscribers. When she left in 2002, there were 36 million. While at AOL, she developed a highly successful line of multimedia products that brought in an annual $40 million in incremental revenue.

In 2002, Stephanie founded Digital Media Works, Inc. (DigMediaWorks.com), an online marketing company that helps business owners discover the hidden profits in their businesses. She is passionate about guiding online companies to successfully generate more revenue and find their real value.

As a strategic thinker, Stephanie uses all the current visual thinking techniques and brain research to help companies get to the essence of their brands. She continues to focus on helping companies understand and communicate their value to customers.

Stephanie received a BA in Psychology from Hofstra University and an MSW and MPH from the University of Hawaii. She lives in New York with her husband and Maltese named Colby.

DEDICATION

To Barry, who makes all things possible.
To my family, for their encouragement and love.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is my great privilege to write a book about visual marketing. I want to offer great thanks to Pearson Publishing, Inc., for letting me present my ideas about why visual marketing is an important concept that will influence marketing for years to come.

The following people were especially important in creating this book, and I offer very sincere thanks:

- To the wonderfully creative Michelle Newcomb at Pearson, who helped me realize my vision for this book.

- To the editors at Pearson—Development Editor Ginny Bess Munroe, Project Editor Andy Beaster, and Copy Editor Cheri Clark for their dedicated work to make this book as clear and useful as possible.

- To Michael Brito for his excellent savvy advice and technical edits.

- To Matt Wagner, my agent at Fresh Books, for his continued support and hard work on my behalf.

- To the very talented and wise thought leaders who influence my ideas on visual thinking including Michael Deutch, Derek Franklin, and Chuck Frey.

Finally, to the smart readers who will take this book and extend it far beyond my thinking to find greater uses for online marketers.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

As the reader of this book, *you* are our most important critic and commentator. We value your opinion and want to know what we're doing right, what we could do better, what areas you'd like to see us publish in, and any other words of wisdom you're willing to pass our way.

We welcome your comments. You can email or write to let us know what you did or didn't like about this book—as well as what we can do to make our books better.

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INTRODUCTION

"The Revolution won't be televised; it will be Instagrammed."
–Steve Rubel, EVP/Global Strategy and Insights for Edelman PR,
Ad Age Digital, 7/24/12

Ref: http://adage.com/article/steve-rubel/
revolution-televised-instagrammed/236266/

The prophetic quote above by Steve Rubel, EVP/Global Strategy and Insights for Edelman, harkens back to a 1970 song by Gil Scott-Heron called "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised." Rubel's article says that unlike in the past, everything we do today (including wars) can be captured by a smartphone or camera and shared online.

With the introduction of the graphical interface by Apple in the 1980s, Internet users began seeing their text information presented in a more visual way. Over time, they became accustomed to seeing information presented this way. In 2012, visual displays reached a tipping point when services like Pinterest, Tumblr, and Instagram became major social media sites in record time.

In this book, we look at some of the physical (brain) and psychological reasons everyone loves visuals. At its most basic level it's the fact that people consume information that's easy to understand. Visuals are novel and can usually be consumed with a glance. In addition, given advances in technology, people can play with those images and make new ones. Tools like Instagram filters make novice photographers feel empowered.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

The purpose of the book is to give you ideas about how you can marry the very best social media methods with the power of visuals to reach your customers and rapidly grow your business. It doesn't cover everything you need to know about this topic, just what you need to know to take meaningful action.

This book focuses on not only things you can do to make visual marketing easier for you, but also your staff and your customers. Included are methods and tools that will help you connect the dots between social media and visuals.

Whenever possible, we leave out long explanations and present a method for you to try. The tools selected were chosen because they are easy. Of course, there are many others you can use—new ones are created every day. The tools in this book were selected to help you get a fast start.

Throughout the book, when I use the word *visuals* I refer to a wide variety of formats that include the following:

- Diagrams
- Templates
- Checklists
- Flowcharts
- Mind maps
- Pie charts
- Storyboards
- Bull's-eye targets
- Hub-and-spoke graphics

I hope you'll explore how to make visuals work for your marketing efforts. It's easy to fall back on using the same two or three formats for everything we do.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The book content is presented in the form of 26 Rules. In each rule you will find a mix of the following topics:

- **Method:** The method refers to the action step you can take using the information in that rule.

- **Tools provided:** These are tools you can try with the method that will make the rule easier to implement.

- **Tools to consider:** This refers to additional tools that are available online, mostly free, that you can also consider as you explore.

- **Ideas to use:** This section summarizes some of the ideas presented in the rule so that you can quickly refer to the main points.

- **Idea map:** At the end of each chapter, there is an idea map (a form of mind map) of the rule. To get the most from it, you can add your own notes and comments. Your own notes are always the most valuable part of any exercise.

To organize the book's content, there are four distinct types of information presented in this order: rules, tools, content, and tactics.

This book is divided into four parts:

- **Part I: Rules for Social Media Marketers**

  This part looks at the process you as a social media marketer can follow to lay the foundation for effective marketing. It includes a discussion of visual persuasion and the use of storytelling.

- **Part II: Tools to Help You Create Your Visual Marketing**

  In this part, we look at readily available visual tools you can use to empower yourself and your team. We include the use of mind maps and graphic organizers.

- **Part III: Content to Get Customer Attention**

  This part looks at the kinds of content you should consider creating for your customers. We look at such things as infographics and eBooks.

- **Part IV: Tactics for Social Media Platforms**

  In this part, we look at the tactics you can use to reach your customers by putting the rules into practice. We cover most of the major social media platforms and demonstrate some ways to build relationships with your customers.

My goal for the book is to equip you with the knowledge you need to tackle visual marketing. I hope I've connected the dots and shown you a roadmap to enhance your own marketing efforts.

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SOCIAL MEDIA IS STORYTELLING, SO TELL STORIES

In Rule 3 we look at how you can combine your personas with your storytelling to create powerful stories for your social media marketing and community engagement. We offer a structure and a way to capture your stories.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Along with our unending thirst for visuals, our brains are hard-wired to pay attention to and enjoy stories. If you can turn raw business information into visual story form, you are helping your message be heard.

There are many reasons why our brains love stories:

- Because we can relate to stories, they often give us ideas about how to handle situations we might face.

- Stories engage our emotions, and therefore they can help us cope with emotions that we are unable to express ourselves.

- Stories give us heroes to emulate.

- Stories often motivate, inspire, or strengthen us.

- Stories can persuade others.

Stories engage both sides of our brain, mixing information with emotion. As we discussed in Rule 1 "Recognize the Power of Visual Persuasion," engaging both sides of the brain is the most powerful way for you to reach your audience.

But, for marketers, the essence of storytelling can be deceptive. A lot of things we call stories are details of larger narratives that relate to branding. If we forget to help the customer link these details up to that larger narrative, we fail to engage the customer in the long term.

For example the brand idea for Apple is that you "Think differently" if you use Mac products. A piece of this narrative might be used in a market campaign introducing a new feature to the iPad. You link the idea that Apple is taking a different approach to this feature because they are the company that causes you to "Think differently."

To understand how our brains receive stories, we need to look briefly at the construction of the brain. Neuroscientists tell us that we've made major breakthroughs in the past 10 years in our quest to understand the brain. They have discovered that our brains have three distinct "brains." They are the cortex, the mid-brain, and what is often called the lizard brain:

- The cortex is where we reason and solve problems.

- The mid-brain is where we deal with our emotions.

- The lizard brain is the one that reacts without thought. It helps you decide whether danger is coming.

As a marketer, you first encounter the lizard brain—the one that reacts with fear to the unknown and threats of harm called the "fight or flight" response. Your first goal in any story you tell is to make sure that the lizard brain does not perceive a threat.

TIP	You might hear the sales refrain "A confused mind always says no." Another variation on this could be "A frightened lizard brain always says no." If the buyer's lizard brain senses harm (in this case, let's say that the beginning of your story stated the high cost of the product), he will try to escape the situation as soon as possible. This explains why many marketers withhold the price until the end of a presentation.

One way to avoid engendering fear in the lizard brain is to slowly present a story with details and visuals so you don't evoke the "fight or flight" response. The visuals help the brain process information ahead of the words.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Customers are thoroughly engaged with companies when they share a context about the brand with others in the community. The rise of customer communities can be explained in part by looking at an article called "In Search of Charisma," by Alexander Haslam and

Stephen D. Reicher, in *Scientific American Mind*. Haslam and Reicher discuss the work of social psychologist John C. Turner, who defined the term "social identity." According to Turner, social identity causes us to act in specific ways when we identify with a group or community.

For example, we exert influence on each another, we define ourselves as having an "us-ness," and we believe that members of the group are more helpful in advancing the group interests than those outside the group.

This is how customer communities play their part in social media. People who are following companies and consider themselves fans are part of the "us."

These customers check in frequently on the company's social channels like Facebook to see what's happening and try to participate. They become part of the community who understands the context for the brand's actions. They relate and share experiences that bring them closer.

TIP Don't forget that part of the story on social media platforms is "we give our loyal customers discounts and extras." You need to make that part of the narrative. Several studies show that one common reason most customers engage on social media platforms is to get discounts.

One of the most obvious examples of an "us" community is the group of Apple fans who support and identify as Mac users.

CUSTOMERS GET SWEPT UP

So what's the real secret to persuasion by story? It's getting the viewer completely caught up in what's going on. In effect, the viewer persuades herself by undergoing the transformation with the protagonist in the story.

This effect can be explained by a psychological construct called "narrative transport." This concept is discussed in a September 18, 2008, article in *Scientific American* by Jeremy Hsu, a science and tech journalist, called "The Secrets of Storytelling: Why We Love a Good Yarn."

As Hsu discusses, narrative transport refers to the state of complete immersion in a story. The reader or viewer is swept away to the point where he is lifted out of reality and into the story itself. In doing so, he can identify with the hero and imagine that he is part of the story.

> Narrative transport refers to the state of complete immersion in a story. The reader or viewer is swept away to the point where he is lifted out of reality and into the story itself.

So what does this mean for your social media marketing? Can you hope to engage your customer to the point where he becomes sold? Perhaps.

Studies have been done that compare different advertisements to determine which one is more effective in creating narrative transport. One study by Jennifer Edson Escalas, Associate Professor of Marketing at Vanderbilt University, shows that creating a narrative for an advertisement for running shoes and adding strong arguments about the value of the product is more effective than the analytical pitches she created.

What worked? Here's some of the copy:

> "Imagine yourself running through this park. Your feet feel remarkably light. You look down and see a pair of Westerly running shoes on your feet. They weigh only 10 oz. You notice a spring in your step. Westerly running shoes provide strong support with their advance stability system. Westerly's cushioning system spreads shock, reducing injury. Imagine yourself in Westerly running shoes to improve the comfort and quality of your morning run…"

You can see what is happening to the readers/viewers as they follow the story. They are imagining themselves running and being delighted with the lightweight shoes on their feet. They feel as though they've experienced something positive and want to repeat that feeling the next time they run. This motivates them to buy the shoes.

TIP   Think about how you can inject this vicarious feeling into the stories you write and send out via social media platforms. Try to develop one by starting with the prompt "Imagine yourself.…"

WHY ARE BUSINESS STORIES DIFFICULT TO GET RIGHT?

Business stories can be powerful. But stories created by companies can miss the big picture.

The key to a good story is to take the protagonist through a "trial by fire" and have her come out the other side a changed individual. The journey of that trip is the story. The problem with ineffective business stories is that companies create stories where nothing transpires and no one is different at the end.

So, what kind of stories are we talking about? One of the reasons it is difficult to create a business story is the fact that people are unclear about what a business story is. You know which stories are "regular" stories to you. You think of your favorite movies or the anecdotes you hear from your family at the dinner table and you're not confused. Those are stories.

But what kind of story would you tell your customers to develop your relationship with them? There are several categories you can mine for these stories:

- **Stories customers tell:** You want to tell stories that reflect the voice of the community. As part of the group that identifies themselves as customers and fans of your company, you want to make sure to reinforce the "us-ness" factor. Stories that customers tell are, of course, the backbone of social media. But you need to take an active role in scooping up those stories and making them part of your brand. You want to make sure that you display and retell their stories because they are the most authentic.

- **Stories about the company:** These stories are a little harder to develop because they aren't about how great you are. Those types of stories are floating around on your website and promotional material and are rarely believed by customers. Those are not the stories you want to tell. The stories you want to capture are those that tell how the company serves the customer.

  For example, tell the story of how the founders overcame great odds to start a company that would make something people really needed. How they struggled to find the right materials to make them environmentally safe.

  Anything that is self-serving is a waste of time. The old-style marketing that includes details about more revenue and higher profits should be saved for the stockholders. You want to let your customer know what you've done for them lately.

- **Stories about the industry and people in it:** Most industries have stories of exciting trends and ideas that explain what they do. It's important to connect with current topics and relate them to what you are doing.

- **Stories from inspirational leaders and mentors:** Sometimes the best stories come from your mentors who inspire you. Write down the stories they've told you and see whether you can apply them to what you are doing. You should also mine for stories from the great leaders of the industry and cite them where appropriate—for example, stories about how Steve Jobs came up with his ideas and developed his products.

TIP   When capturing stories, don't forget to collect metaphors that are used by your staff and customers. When you're telling stories, metaphors can help drive the point home. The great thing about metaphors is that they are visual language. For example, when you say someone is a "writing machine," people understand that you are likening that person to something powerful that runs without stopping. They will also visualize a machine that writes!

THE STORY STRUCTURE

To construct business stories, you will find several variations on the "Hero's Journey" first identified by Joseph Campbell. Campbell documented a narrative that is found in stories throughout history. It consists of several documented steps that the hero goes through in a

typical narrative. I think that's a bit too complicated when you are trying to create business stories that need to be short and to the point.

One excellent structure created by The Actor's Institute Group (TAI Group) (http://theTAIgroup.com) is detailed in an article by Kaihan Krippendorff, innovator and author of "Outthink the Competition." The article in *Fast Company* (March of 2012) is called "Using Great Storytelling to Grow Your Business."

In the article, Krippendorff identifies what the TAI Group calls a story spine as shown in Figure 3.1, which lays out a useful structure to tell a business story:

1. Introduction of the current reality: What is the time, place, and the people in the scene?

2. Conflict arrives: What problem interrupts the calm scene?

3. A struggle ensues: What do the characters do to resolve the problem?

4. The conflict is resolved: How is it resolved?

5. A new reality exists: How have the characters changed as a result of the action?

Story Spine

1. Current reality
2. Conflict arises
3. Struggle ensues
4. Conflict resolved
5. New reality
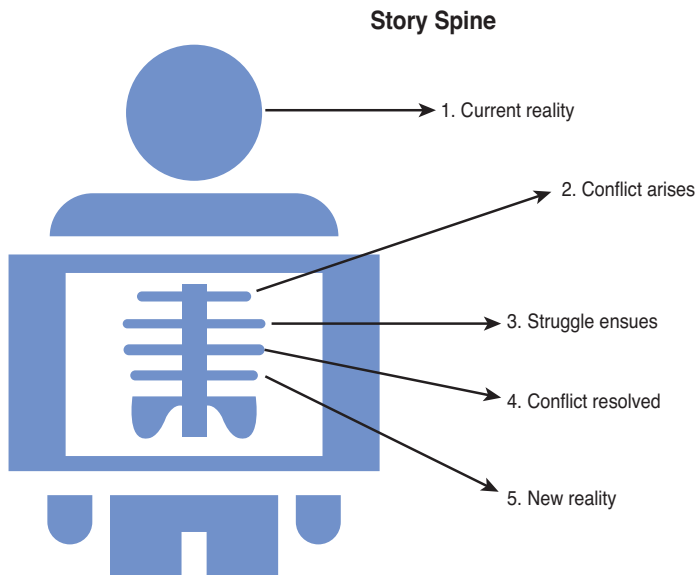
Suggested by the TAI Group Story Spine

FIGURE 3.1
Story spine.

It's important to follow each step in sequence. It takes you from the opening of the story which shows the status quo to the end where a new reality is now in place. It's very

important to have a structure like this to follow when constructing a story. It helps you identify the actions that must take place to move the story along.

One of the big mistakes that people make when creating stories is that they don't show action. It's not enough to show a sequence of details. You have to show that each of the steps leads to changes and problems the hero must solve. The excitement in the story is watching what decisions the hero makes and whether they help him reach his goal or not.

A VISUAL MARKETING METHOD

With the story-spine structure as a backdrop, let's look at a way that can help you start the process.

CAPTURING EXISTING STORIES

There are two important things to do in order to capture good stories. The first is to capture them when they happen, and the second is to extract the most important information so that you can create an engaging story.

The blank worksheet shown in Figure 3.2 can be used to do both.

FIGURE 3.2
Story capture worksheet.

Here are steps to take to capture your story:

1. Make sure that you give the story spine diagram to anyone who will be collecting information, and explain what each section means.

2. Give these people the template and tell them that for some part of a day (this can be repeated in small chunks of time or whole days as feasible) you want them to document the stories that they hear about from customers.

3. Distribute the capture screen template to all appropriate groups, customer service, sales, shipping, bloggers, tweeters, etc. You want a diverse set of information.

After the collection process, do the following:

1. Begin to analyze patterns and develop themes. You'll start to see common items. Collect enough so that you have a good sample.

2. Match the themes to your personas and keywords so that the stories you craft clearly have a real target with actual keywords.

3. After you've created the stories, test each to see whether it resonates on a tool like Storify.com (see "Tools to Consider").

4. If a story tests well, figure out what content you need to create to make the story come to life: visuals, text, video, and so on. Then you can invest in the content knowing that you've got something worth amplifying. Figure 3.3 shows a sample template that has been filled in.

Here is an example of how the most important information is extracted:

1. **Introduction of the current reality:** The company is a high-end housewares store. The customer orders the crystal vase at the last minute for her mother's 80th birthday. She is assured it will arrive on time.

2. **Conflict arrives:** The vase arrives and although it's heavily wrapped inside, she finds it has been cracked. She's in a panic because her mother's birthday party at a hotel ballroom is in two days.

3. **A struggle ensues:** She takes out a trouble ticket but needs to hear back right away. She's not sure what to do and complains to her friend. Her friend, who is more tech savvy, gets on Twitter and tweets about the incident to the company Twitter account asking for immediate help.

4. **The conflict is resolved:** A company rep calls the customer and arranges to have the vase delivered to the party with a big bouquet inside it.

5. **A new reality exists:** The bouquet and vase make a big splash and everyone is pleased with the great service. The rep saves an account.

Story Capture Worksheet

1. Current reality

Customer buys vase for mother's 80th birthday.

4. Conflict resolved

Rep arranges to have vase with beautiful bouquet delivered to the party. Everyone is impressed.

2. Conflict

Vase arrives cracked two days before the party.

Name:
Department:
Date:

3. Struggle

Customer doesn't hear back from trouble ticket. Friend contacts rep on company Twitter account.

5. New reality

Rep saves the account. Customer sends video of her mother thanking company.

FIGURE 3.3

Story capture worksheet in progress.

With this story you have the opportunity to get photos of the birthday girl and her bouquet and the happy customer. Perhaps you can get a video or an audio that you can pair with a photo. You can also get a screenshot of the tweets.

TOOLS TO CONSIDER

Storify.com (http://storify.com) is an interesting tool that enables you to create a story line from your social media. You collect items from places like Facebook, Twitter, and visual sources like YouTube, Flickr, and Instagram to narrate your own story. For an example of how Storify and other social platforms can be used to document a story, look at the section, "A Healthcare Company Educating People Around the World" in Rule 21, "Instagram is Great for Quick Visuals From Your Mobile.

IDEAS TO USE

Try to sweep your readers/viewers into the story so that they become part of the journey. (See the section above on "How customers get swept up" for more on narrative transport.)

Stories are the best way to engage both sides of the brain by mixing information with emotion.

Use a story structure to give your story the best chance at succeeding with an audience.

IDEA MAP
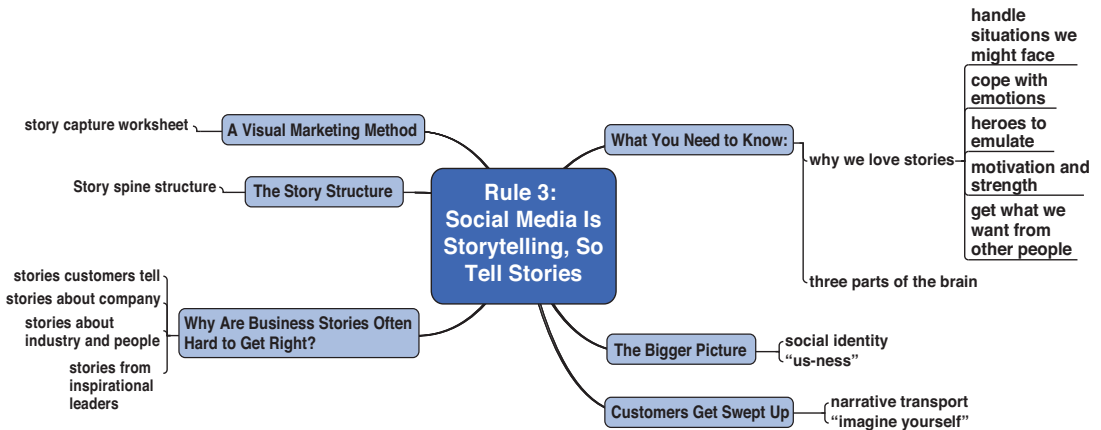
Idea Map for Rule 3

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