

# STORYTELLING: It's How We Communicate

*To engage patients and HCPs, we must focus on the customer journey, not the brand journey.*

**S**torytelling is an interesting concept. Think about the last time you were out with friends — every conversation was punctuated by “stories” of our different experiences. It’s how we help people understand the points we’re trying to make, how we “illustrate” examples, how we communicate. It’s how we share, laugh, and bond — we tell stories.

Stories are what we typically remember from conversations. They make us laugh, cry, and experience the wide range of human emotions.

In today’s informational age — better yet, sharing age — one-way communications that “broadcast” a product’s features and benefits just don’t make sense. This traditional thinking misses several key opportunities to engage patients and healthcare professionals (HCPs). It places the brand (i.e., the Rx product or device) at the center of the communication strategy. That assumes HCPs and patients are paying attention to the brands and prepared to engage with them in a linear fashion.

## No One Wants to Take Our Products

As pharmaceutical and device marketers, we can’t forget that no one typically “wants” to take our products — they do so only because they feel they “have” to. In fact, most patients perceive our products to be a “necessary evil,” which is why our industry struggles with such poor patient adherence. To engage patients and HCPs, we must focus on the customer journey, not the brand journey.

There’s no better way than storytelling to deliver the customer experience that taps into the emotional elements of the customer journey. Communicated at the right time, and in the right place, stories help people relate to what we’re trying to say as marketers. Our audiences see themselves in our stories and “get” our messages. The more powerful the stories,

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the more potential they have to change attitudes and behavior.

## How to Create a Great Story

To craft a great story, we need to understand our customers’ experiences, and that begins with listening to them. Once we understand their experiences, we can then communicate our brand messages from “their” perspectives and help these messages become part of their stories. This type of “iterative messaging” that evolves throughout their experiences/stories is at the heart of all good storytelling, and the secret to its success lies in the Three Ps:

- 1. Personalization**
- 2. Personification**
- 3. Projection**

For personalization, think of Bill Clinton. He could present to 10 million people, but make it feel like he is talking directly to you. Personification gets people to look in the mirror and say, “I never realized that, but wow, that’s me.” Finally, projection allows people to see the future and find the next actionable foothold — as opposed to the entire mountain, so they don’t get overwhelmed.

There are times when each audience is more receptive to one style of communication or another, and we should never assume they are sequential. The take-away for marketers is

that great storytelling effectively revolves around moments, conversations, and points of engagement. Audiences will choose their moments, and marketers must deliver the kind of experience that builds trust and makes it simple and easy for them to take away what they want and decide what their actions should be. By understanding their frame of mind, we can create key points of interaction in appropriate context, and customers can then tap into those experiences when and how they’re right for them.

## We Share Stories Everyday

Consider Facebook — a great example of the power of storytelling. It’s the “stories” people post on Facebook that drive repeat visits, and Facebook constantly learns from how people engage with these stories. They see what stories people or brands create, and which ones users enjoy and share. Then Facebook adapts their platform to enable more of the same. Creating a portfolio of stories is something that prompts those experiential connection points, and the users are in control.

As marketers, we can never underestimate that in today’s “informational” age, we no longer own the brands — our customers do. We can make suggestions. We can influence. But the stakeholders own them. We’re just participants. As a result, communications can no longer just be “informational.” The message, tone, and offer must be relevant and engaging, first and foremost. By creating “stories” that build trust and create relationships, we not only effectively deliver our brand messages, but get our customers to engage with them and take the actions we desire. **PV**

**PulseCX** is a healthcare marketing services company that specializes in optimizing the customer experience for pharmaceutical, medical device, and OTC brands.

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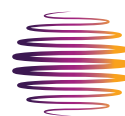


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**you need a partner with the experience  
to get them there.**

At PulseCX, we believe the customer experience is everything. That's why we're so passionate about understanding the world your customers live in—and then creating a strategic, multichannel roadmap with impactful touchpoints

that are real and relevant to their journey. It's all about connecting healthcare professionals and consumers to your brand in ways that are memorable and measurable. And isn't that the experience you've wanted all along?

To move the needle by improving customer experiences (CX), contact David Zaritsky now at [dzaritsky@pulsecx.com](mailto:dzaritsky@pulsecx.com).



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