



How to Create a Success Story Marketing Program

Create Compelling Case Studies that Make Customers Want to Do Business with You

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Why Your Company Needs a Success Story Marketing Program.



What Makes Something a "Success Story"?



How to Create a Success Story.



Your Interview Questions.



How to Write Your Story.



How to Get a Testimonial Statement.



Creating Your Success Story Template.



How to Use Your Success Stories.



Managing Your Success Story Marketing Program.



Why Your Company Needs a Success Story Marketing Program.

Approach a business prospect and you will likely be greeted with skepticism. Even when you represent a well-known, established company, prospects want to know why they should trust you. And perhaps even more importantly, they want to know what you can do for them.

Success Stories allow you to overcome this reticence and quickly establish your bona fides.

By sharing the success you've brought to previous customers and like-minded challenges, you immediately:

- Document your company's range of experience.
- Demonstrate your company's ability to address customer challenges.
- Establish your record of delivering customer satisfaction.



Who Are You - and Why Should I Trust You?

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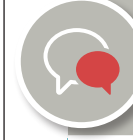
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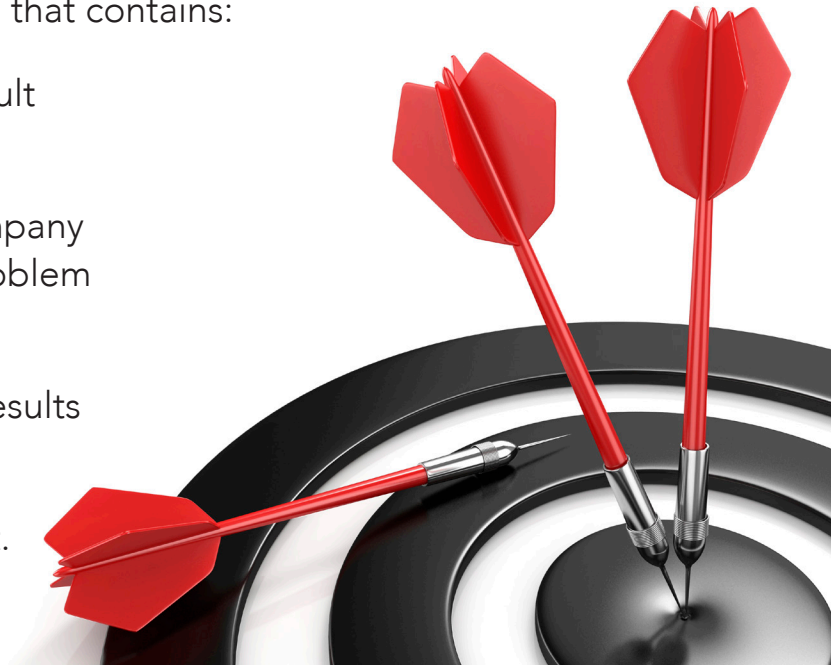
Success Stories say, "We did it for them. We can do it for you."



What Makes Something a "Success Story?"

The ideal Success Story is one that contains:

- A customer who had a difficult problem or challenge.
- A creative solution your company provided to address that problem or challenge.
- Positive results, preferably results that can be quantified!
- A testimonial from the client.



A Success Story is **NOT:**

- A "How I Made the Sale" story.
- A story that focuses on the accomplishments of a particular individual.
- A story that boasts how your company benefitted from the transaction.

Effective Success Stories are always about the **CUSTOMERS** and how they benefitted from doing business with you.

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How to Create a Success Story.

Follow these 10 steps to create your Success Story:

1 Poll your sales staff to identify the most impressive solutions you have provided customers over the past year. What were the most difficult challenges your customers have faced? What were the most creative solutions you devised to meet these challenges?

2 Interview the salespeople responsible for your most impressive solutions to understand their stories in full. (A list of key questions appears in the next section.)

3 Write a draft story using the standard format provided in this guide.

4 Send the story to the originating salesperson to confirm its accuracy and make any necessary modifications.

5 Contact a customer spokesperson, if available, to secure a short testimonial statement.

6 Lay the final story out in the template you have created for this program. (See “Creating Your Success Story Template” section.)

7 Choose a photograph, stock or custom, to illustrate the story.

8 Review and proofread the final piece.

9 Convert the final document to high-resolution and low-resolution PDFs.

10 Give your sales team access to the finished piece is to use in their sales activities.

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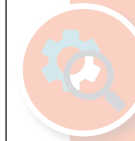
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Your Interview Questions.

When conducting your Success Story interviews, ask the following questions:

1. Who is the customer?	
2. Where is the customer located?	
3. What is the customer's line-of-business?	
4. When did this story take place?	
5. What was the customer's challenge/ problem prior to your company's involvement? How was the customer suffering?	
6. How did your company get involved? Was this a new business relationship or an existing one? If existing, for how long?	
7. What did your company do to assess the situation?	
8. What creative solution did you provide?	
9. How/when was the solution implemented?	
10. What have been the results? Are there quantifiable improvements to report?	
11. Is the customer amenable to providing a testimonial statement? If so, who should be contacted?	

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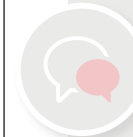
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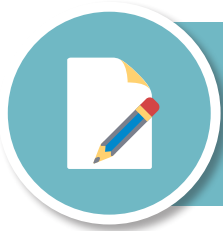
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How to Write Your Story.

The most effective Success Stories are short, easy to read, and have an engaging narrative. Based on the answers you received to the questions above, write your story in the following format:

- Begin by providing an overall theme. Ideally, your story is a specific example of how to solve a problem common within a particular industry.
- Introduce the customer and describe its line of business.
- Describe the problem the customer was having and how that problem was manifested.
- Discuss how your company got involved and what it did to assess the situation.

- Describe the solution your company provided and how you implemented it.
- Describe the improvements your solution provided, including any figures or other statistics to support your claims.
- End with an implied call-to-action or claim of expertise, i.e. "To learn how we can provide a similar solution for your company, call us."



A Success Story should be short and easy to read. The ideal length is between 250 and 300 words.

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How to Get a Testimonial Statement.

Some customers may be reluctant to provide testimonial statements. Even those who are amenable may not have time to fashion one of their own.

A Best Practice is to “ghost” a short statement that you then offer to a company spokesperson for approval and attribution. If the spokesperson chooses to revise the statement, so much the better.

While not essential, a customer testimonial is still the most powerful element a Success Story can include.



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Creating Your Success Story Template.

Create a template to standardize the look and feel of every piece you create for your Success Story Marketing Program. Your template should include the following elements.

- 1 A company or Success Story program logo
- 2 An eye-catching headline
- 3 A place for your customer's name
- 4 Between 250 and 300 words of narrative copy
- 5 An attractive photograph, either stock or custom, that supports the story content
- 6 A call-out box containing a short customer testimonial quote (if one is available)
- 7 A benefit statement, your clever summary of the success
- 8 Company contact information



Have your Success Stories available in both print- and lores-PDFs.

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How to Use Your Success Stories.

Use your Success Stories in any situation that calls for you to establish credibility or otherwise demonstrate your company value proposition.

Include them in:

Introductory Letters



Sales Proposals



Request for Proposal (RFP) Responses



Request for Quote (RFQ) Responses



Request for Bid (RFB) Responses



Communications with Existing Customers



Using Success Stories with current customers with a great way to maintain contact and drive future sales.

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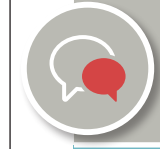
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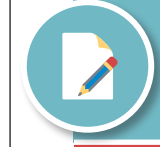
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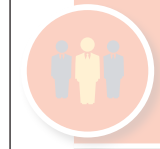
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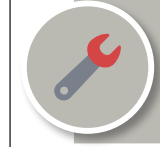
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Creating Success Stories should be an ongoing project. To maximize the program's effectiveness:

- Create at least one story to cover each of your customer verticals and lines of business.
- Create at least one story to cover your company's top value propositions, e.g. Service, Safety, Creative Solutions, Responsiveness, etc.
- Create an online, searchable repository your sales team can access to find and download finished stories.
- A company intranet is a perfect portal on which to house your Success Story inventory.
- Keep your inventory current.
- Retire stories that are more than three years old or feature companies that are no longer customers.
- Actively encourage your sales-people to create new Success Stories and use them to support all their sales activities.

For More Information

The Peterson Group (TPG) has created an online, automated and systemized program for creating, housing and distributing Success Stories. Our programs have supported national and global companies such as Waste Management, Xerox Corporation, Volvo, County of Los Angeles, Southern California Edison and others.

For information about how TPG can implement a customized Success Story Marketing Program and other sales force optimization programs for you, contact TPG at (949) 752-8686 or sales@go4tpg.com.

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