



CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER
CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY FOR EXECUTIVES

Caterpillar and Intel Show
How to Craft Stories.

ALSO:
The Future of Big Data
is Sentiment Analysis.

Content Discovery at
Bank of America.

STORY TELLING

WHAT'S YOUR ANGLE?

.....



SPEAKING HUMAN

IN THE TRANSITION AWAY FROM BULLHORN MARKETING, BRANDS STILL STRUGGLE TO FIND THEIR STORY AND VOICE. DESPITE KNOWING BETTER, MARKETERS SLAP BRAND MESSAGES ACROSS SOCIAL-MEDIA PLATFORMS INSTEAD OF CREATING REAL CONVERSATION AND MEANINGFUL BRAND NARRATIVES. CONSIDER

**A FEW TIPS ON HOW TO
"SPEAK HUMAN."**

Kevin Lund & Eileen Sutton

SPEAKING HUMAN STARTS WITH...

A handshake moment. If you're working to humanize content, brand voice is a good starting point. Consider a few basic rules of engagement.

BE CLEAR. Develop content at eye-level and in plain English. Less jargon, more heart. No marketing speak.

BE HELPFUL. Keep the focus on clients to captivate and be memorable. Help audiences think about how you add value to their lives.

BE CONCISE. Lean the copy. Then lean again. No frivolous words. Make each idea count.

BE CONSISTENT. One voice. One tone. Across all channels.

Maybe this is a familiar scenario. You've launched your content marketing strategy but it's not working—few fans, even fewer followers, some light traffic to your blog and a few lonely clicks from various calls to action. When you listen for the response, you hear nothing but crickets. Why? Perhaps you forgot to leave your bullhorn at the door.

The world over, clients and customers today are demanding more heart. In response, a lot of brands have leapt on the "human" bandwagon. Yet some companies think simply publishing content and proclaiming to customers "you come first" is enough to humanize the brand. Launching an owned-media site or supporting a visually rich Pinterest channel does not make your brand instantly accessible and trustworthy. In too many cases, companies are just wallpapering social-media channels with old brand messages hidden behind the language of "You."

In an age when social media has given audiences so much say about your brand, what does human really mean?

YOUR HANDSHAKE MOMENT

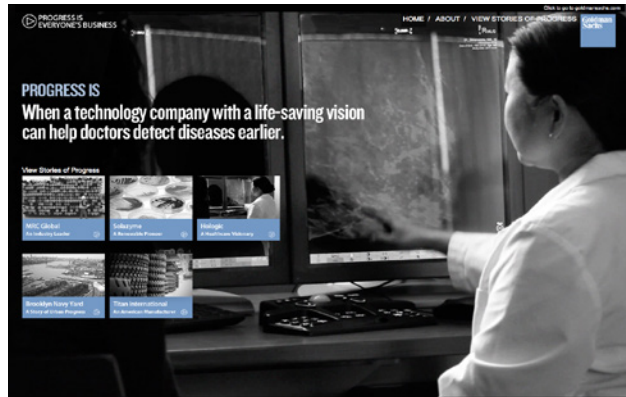
Let's assume folks know what you do. But do they know who you are?

We typically size someone up in the first 30 seconds. We ask ourselves, "Can I trust this person?" "Do I relate?" We look for visual and audio cues—clothes, body language, manner of speaking and more—with the goal of connecting. The same goes for your content marketing goals. What impression do you make when a person first meets your brand through screens, a retail store or in a magazine? Like a face-to-face encounter, each of your channels is a potential handshake moment. Except you don't have 30 seconds to make a first impression. You have maybe three seconds. How do you want to come across?

In today's world, we talk about products before we buy. Are your clients and customers gossiping about you in the best sense? If not, why not? **Liberty Mutual's** Responsibility Project is a gorgeous eye-level example of how a dry insurance company brought its values to life and gave countless readers a chance to find themselves in stories that are changing the



Liberty Mutual's Responsibility Project shows how a dry insurance company brings values to life.



Goldman Sachs' Progress videos share stories of rebuilding and revitalizing businesses and communities.

world.

Change must start deep. Brands must tell an authentic story based on corporate DNA. Fake friendly (overseas customer-service reps with dreadful scripts take note) won't pass. Trying to be eye level with your customers—but doing so without a sense of your company's true identity—will ultimately read as cynical and false to a customer base willing to tune out in a heartbeat. Hiding old brand-centric behaviors will flop.

Let's ditch the metrics for a minute. Consider an easy three-step process to get on the "speak-human" bandwagon in a way that resonates with audiences.

HOW TO SPEAK HUMAN

Today the goal is not bullying but inviting. Not grabbing attention, but earning and holding attention. Naturally you want audiences to take action. But it's the rare brand that understands how content and story must interact to add real value versus merely sell a product or service.

Be storied. Storytelling is an essential human activity and must be the cornerstone of any meaningful content strategy. If story is the nest, content becomes the baby starlings that grow strong and fly off carrying compelling messages. Story instantly communicates your history, values, beliefs and more. Unless you have a real story, loyalty is out the window.

Chipotle's remarkable Scarecrow video may not be the happiest tale but as pure, storied content marketing it effectively conveys brand values regarding nutrition, animal rights and corporate ethics. To date, the video has received more than 12 million YouTube hits while its game app is a huge success.

Be humble. In a word, kill the id and step back. Don't sell products. Sell information, education and inspiration. Don't sell me a camera. Teach me how to take a great picture. You say your brand is great? No one's listening. **Goldman Sachs** got out of the way in its Progress video campaign. As opposed to a dry talking-heads discourse on investment banking,

it profiled the companies in which it has invested, and the positive changes those companies made in the world.

Be relevant. Mass marketing is last century. Cast too wide a net, and the meaning of your content marketing is lost. If you publish a newsletter for neurosurgeons, don't blog about breakthroughs in orthopedics just because it's also in the medical field.

SPEAK HUMAN, BE HUMAN

When creating a content marketing strategy, remember what it felt like when someone last held the door for you. We're all loyal to countless brands. And there's a reason why. Above all, consider how you can be genuinely useful to clients and make their days and lives better. The most well-intentioned strategy is only as good as your last tweet. Remember President Kennedy's famous quote? Let's spin that: ask not what your clients can do for you, but what you can do for your clients.



Kevin Lund is CEO and founder of T3 Custom.

Find him at [linkedin.com/in/KevinLund](https://www.linkedin.com/in/KevinLund).

Eileen Sutton is principal of Sutton Creative. Find her at

[linkedin.com/in/eileensutton](https://www.linkedin.com/in/eileensutton).

