

Templar Business Brain: Storytelling in the digital age



Our first **Business Brain event** of 2017 looked at the essential ingredients needed for telling great stories the digital age. Our guest speaker gave expert insight into how the way people consume news and information has changed and what can be done to keep readers engaged. The talk also highlighted the importance of brand integrity in the current climate of fake news and how we need to adapt the way we communicate.

How do you tell a good story? You put someone's life in that story - you make it emotional, you make it human, you relate it to people. The art of good story telling is about people. It's about relationships with other people lives. - Belinda Goldsmith, Editor-in-Chief at the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

CONSUMPTION AND ENGAGEMENT

- According to Facebook, about **1.18-billion people** log onto the social network platform

daily.

- Research company Dscout reports that heaviest smartphone users click, tap or swipe on their phone **5,427 times a day**.
- The website Statista reports Twitter as having **305 million monthly** active users.
- **510,000 comments** are posted and **293,000 statuses** are updated on Facebook **every 60 seconds**, according to The Social Skinny.

With these numbers in mind, it's easy to understand how a myriad of factors including dwindling attention spans, tweets limited to 140-characters and an utter bombardment of information and media from the time we wake up till we sleep, has completely changed the information landscape.

These changes have been challenge for multimedia and news organizations - information overload is everywhere, constantly bombarding us, feeding our appetite for always wanting things now.

In order to get attention and keep readers engaged, journalists are now incorporating a more focused multi-media approach to crafting stories by using images, videos and making sure that it's platform and audience appropriate. But the key to telling good stories is still all about people and their lives.

Even though the fundamental role of journalists have not changed, a magnifying glass has been cast on finding the right audience and providing them with a multi-media approach with the most important qualification being stories that are about people and lives. - Belinda Goldsmith

Brand integrity

We've seen politicians use social network platforms to send out their own messages. We've seen the US presidential race marred with 140-character accusations published every other day. And many of us are guilty about sharing a piece of information on a social network site without checking the validity of the source. Press conferences are no longer called. Journalists are no longer filling rooms eagerly waiting to cross-question.



Social networking giant Facebook, who we under heavy criticism for allowing the spread of fake news during the US presidential election last year, has this week announced changes to its algorithm according. Vice president of product management Will Cathcart said in a post that it was done to “help prevent hoaxes and fake news from appearing in Trending.”

Being able to have trusted, reliable, well sourced news from organisations like Thomson Reuters, the BBC or the Financial Times is still important to many people. Fake news, that which appears on Twitter and other social media, emphasize the importance of having dependable news sources. - Belinda Goldsmith

Digital era is driving innovation

The change in the way we consume information has always been a catalyst for change. Journalists armed with great stories and engaging multi-media in their stories are now able to drive innovation and solutions on a much larger scale than before. Journalists are effectively using the power of the photo to inspire and motivate.

A picture says a thousand words: it has the ability to evoke strong emotions, can sum up a story

in one shot and also brings a reader's attention to the related content. An example of the power of strong imagery was the photo of the three year old Syrian boy washed up dead on a beach in Turkey in September 2015 that went viral and created a movement that influenced changes in policies and got the public to take action.

The younger generation, in particular, are very focused on innovation and solution driven journalism and that's changed the way that stories are approached. The sorts of storytelling done in the digital age has to change. - Belinda Goldsmith

Off the back of another well researched story, the cosmetic company Lush stopped using mica, a mineral used in some make-up, due to child labour issues that were uncovered.