



## DEADLY SINS OF BUSINESS STORYTELLING

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Increased competition is a key concern for business owners. Stories help your customers remember you and recommend you to others instead of your competitors.

Research tells us people buy for emotional reasons and justify their decisions with logic. Stories appeal to emotion – the heart. Yet many small business owners are unsure of how to tell them well.

The best way to build confidence in storytelling is to be clear about what NOT to do. So here are five storytelling sins; for business success, steer clear of these.

### 1. YOU ARE A STORY-FREE ZONE

Today's sophisticated customers want to know more about your business than just the facts about your products and services. Why did you start, for example?

### 2. YOUR STORIES ARE HIT AND MISS

Business storytelling is different from the barbecue yarn – it's storytelling with a purpose, and for results. Link your story to the point you want to make.

### 3. SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE MEANS NOTHING FOR ANYONE

At a recent networking event, when asked who his target market was, an entrepreneur replied: “Anyone with a pulse”.

Understand who your customers are and what appeals to them, and tailor your stories accordingly. Not identifying your audience leads to storytelling failure, like telling an Irish joke at a Belfast sales conference.

### 4. BUSINESS ONLY

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Here's an example from Naomi Simson, RedBalloon founder: “It was lonely setting up an online business from home. Until RedBalloon generated the revenue to employ people and move into premises, it was Dexter the Spoodle I brainstormed with during our daily walks. Now Dexter is almost as much a part of our brand as the red balloon.”

### 5. YOU FORGET TO MENTION YOUR CUSTOMERS

Stories about your customers are double value: they show you care about them, and show they love you.

Online footwear and clothing retailer Zappos' core objective is to ‘deliver WOW through service’. Zappos overnighted a free pair of shoes to a best man who had arrived at a wedding shoeless. Customers are the simplest source of great stories.