A woman with blonde hair in a braid, wearing a blue t-shirt and khaki pants, is climbing a vertical rock face. She is wearing a climbing harness with various tools and a red bag. She is looking back over her shoulder with a smile. The background is a blurred forest.

**IT'S  
ABOUT  
THE  
WHY.**

**AND NOT  
THE WHAT.**

# WHY, NOT WHAT.



We have written extensively about developing a market thesis that emphasizes "why" your prospects would want to buy your product or service and moves away from the "what" your product or service does.

The objective is to get companies to focus less on their features and functions and more on how their product or service will help their prospects increase revenue, reduce cost, improve their customer experience and create outcomes that serve to advance your customers' state of well-being.

Both professionally and personally

We speak about brand DNA and brand personality and we often use Nike as a living example. That swoosh has nothing to do with running shoes and everything to do with the spirit of competition, determination and triumph.

Nike customers buy running shoes from Nike not because they make the best shoe, but because the customer relates to the spirit of the brand. The swoosh provides an emotional connection that becomes almost impossible to break.

If you study Nike's branding, you will notice that the emphasis is always on story. Nike focuses on individual sports and athletes and the stories underneath their achievements.

Almost never do they mention the product.

And Nike is far from alone. If you look at brands like Trader Joe's, TOMS, Ben & Jerry, Whole Foods, Patagonia, Burt's Bees and Seventh Generation just to name a few, you will find brands that express themselves through stories which in turn create a specific brand personality.

The ways in which those stories are communicated become the brand's DNA and these companies make sure that their DNA is deeply embedded into everything they do.

If you go to Burt's Bees website, and you click on their 'About' page, you will find nothing about skin care. Instead, you will discover that Burt's has created a nature laboratory inside a beehive. Burt's Bees is in fact in the natural skin care business, and they are hugely successful even though they are surrounded by a hundred other similar skin care product companies.

To the tune of around \$250MM in revenue.



Their 'About' page leads with the story line, "We champion the benefits of nature in our lives and work to protect its beauty and diversity". The elements of the story follow:

- they use 100% natural ingredients,
- they don't do any animal testing,
- they do responsible sourcing, supporting the communities in which they operate, and
- they use recyclable packaging, to protect the environment.

The story ends around their philanthropic activities. This story creates their unique brand personality and provides the emotional connection their buyers seek to support their purchase decision. It provides the "WHY".



# ZERO WASTE JOURNEY

Seventh Generation is another example of brand personality in action. Their 'About' page tells you nothing about household cleaning products, though they sell about \$250 million worth of them a year. Their story tells the tale of their mission to make natural household cleaners that will impact the planet.

It focuses on building communities, nurturing nature, and changing how commerce is done. All lofty, heroic and transformative business drivers that offer an emotional connection to anyone concerned about the health of our environment.



The subtle yet enormous difference here is that instead of describing what natural ingredients go into their products, they instead describe their stewardship for improving living conditions on earth.

In so doing, Seventh Generation positions itself as a conscious corporation which opens a whole corridor through which today's social-good conscious buyers can connect.

Now, we frequently run into business leaders who argue that this approach works for DTC and B2C markets but B2B buyers are different. There are more people involved in the journey. The products are more complex. The buying cycle is longer. Decision makers need features and functions so they can analyze, compare and contrast.

We get all that.

## **BUT, HERE'S THE PROBLEM:**

Every executive decision maker I know gets 400+ emails a day, dozens of unsolicited phone calls and voicemails, loads of connection requests on LinkedIn and is flooded by digital content through a bunch of social media channels.

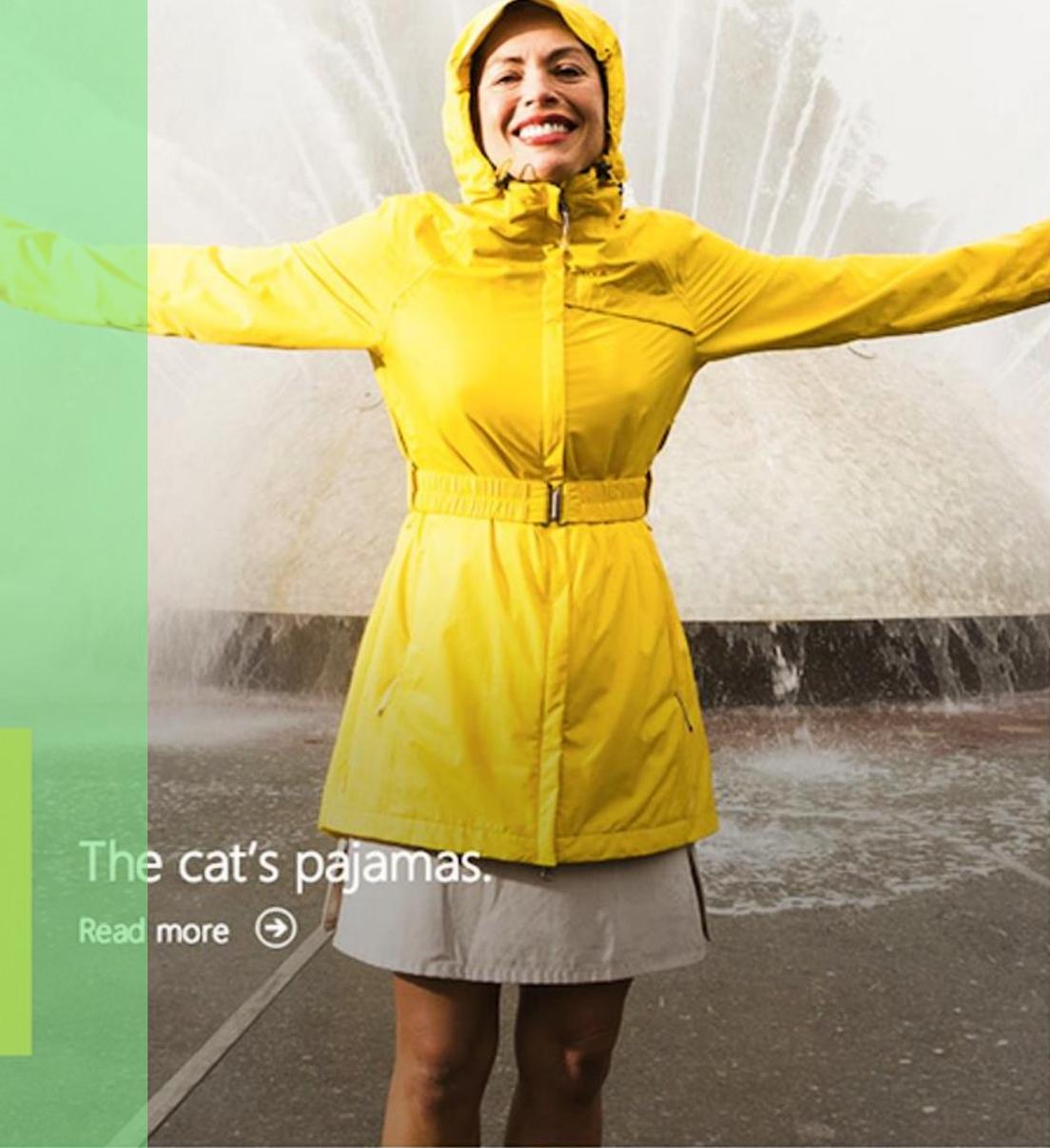
Without the ability to offer an emotional connection, your Cybersecurity business will look just like everyone else's in your space, and the last time I checked, there were a lot in your space.

## **LET'S LOOK AT SOME EXAMPLES IN VARIOUS B2B MARKETS:**

One of the largest companies in the world, Microsoft, is also one of the biggest advocates of storytelling as a brand-building tactic.

Their Microsoft Stories platform highlights employees from every department within their company, from researchers to artists to video game developers. These in-depth profiles illustrate that Microsoft is not just a massive software corporation, but a collection of unique and gifted individuals.





The cat's pajamas.

Read more →



Stevie Bathiche

Re: Inventing the wheel.



Steve Gleason

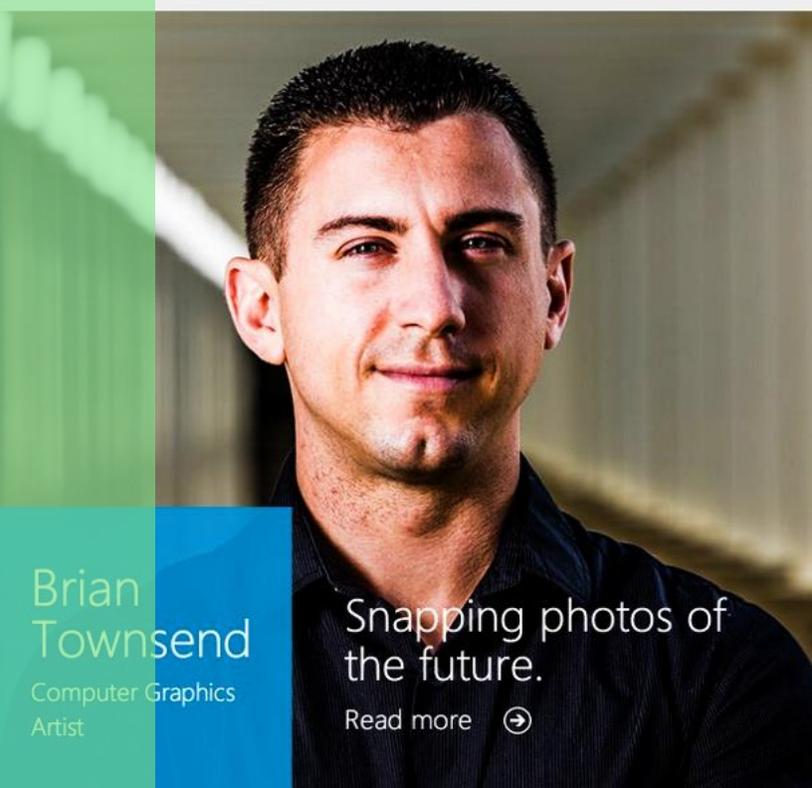
Eyes on the prize



### Stories

Get an inside look at the people, places and ideas that move us.

News Center



Brian Townsend

Computer Graphics Artist

Snapping photos of the future.

Read more →



Daniel Jeremiah  
Running the numbers.



Independence Day

Helping people with sight loss navigate cities like never before.

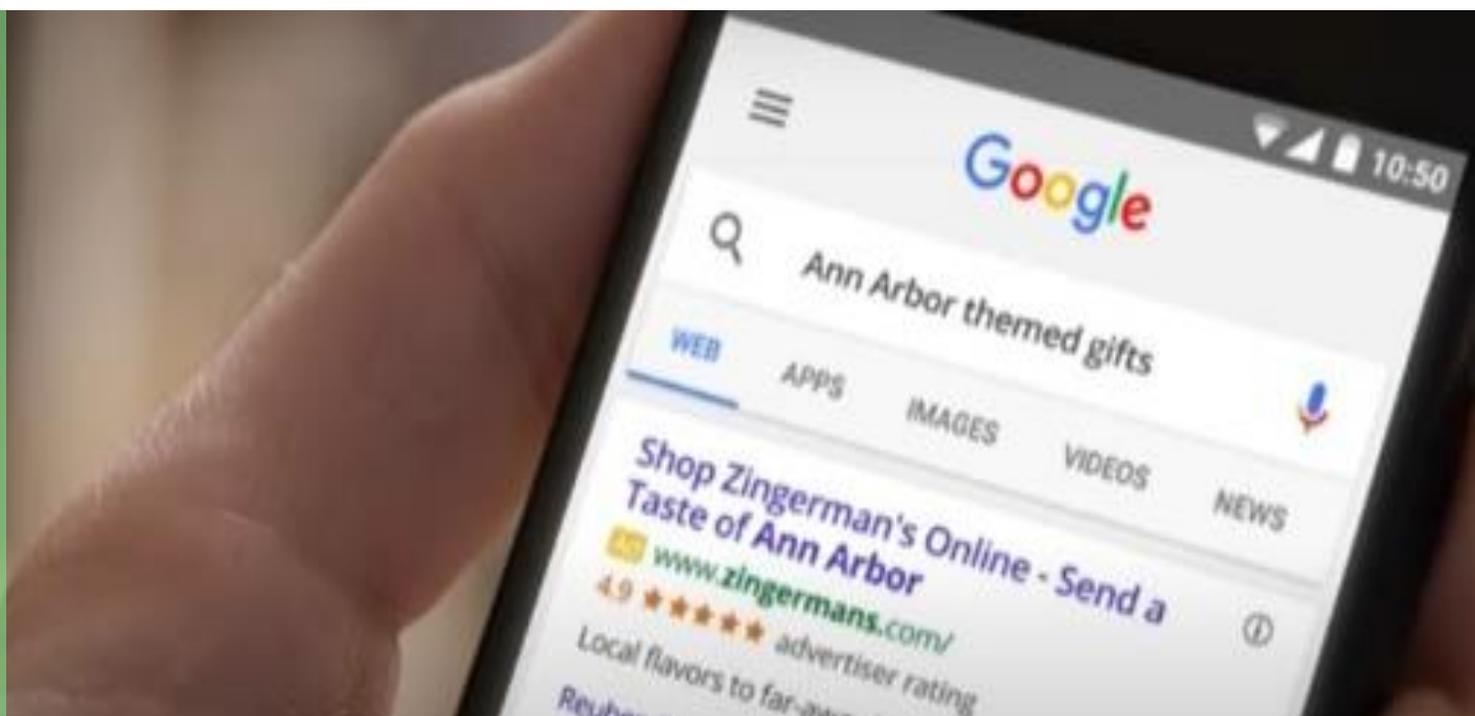


## GOOGLE

Google AdWords is a web advertising service that all B2B marketers understand.

Google created their “AdWords Stories” in a video series that highlights small business successes to convey the life-changing impact that AdWords can have on a company.

In one two-minute video, Google tells the heartwarming story of a local restaurant that used AdWords to become a \$14 million, national mail-order business. Nothing about AdWords per se, yet everything about the success they created.



## IBM

IBM has used storytelling to humanize their company for decades.

As one example, they have created brilliant TV spots highlighting the struggles within the American education system and IBM’s efforts to improve schools across the country. The ad has nothing to do with IBM’s products and everything to do with what the company wants you to believe can be found in its core DNA.

# Any child can **access** a first-class education.

IBM helped rural schools in Pike County, Kentucky access the same lessons as high-profile schools, cutting costs by 62%. [ibm.com/smarterplanet](https://www.ibm.com/smarterplanet)



## SALESFORCE

Salesforce specializes in a particular kind of brand storytelling, in which they allow their customers to tell their story for them.

Their “Success Stories” page follows clients who have used Salesforce through the growth of their businesses. This is a tactic that can be easily replicated for any business, but remarkably, most businesses don’t do so.

Simply reaching out to top customers and asking if they would be willing to talk about their success with your product is not hard. According to FeaturedCustomers research, 90% of buyers who read positive customer success content claim it influenced their purchasing decision.



## HP

HP’s video “The Wolf” frames the boring commodity product problem of printer security in an entertaining way and pushes HP to top of mind against a sea of look-alike competitors.

The video is incredibly engaging, as it creates a menacing character to represent the threats companies face if their printer security isn’t up to snuff. The story is about overcoming threats and not about HP’s printer security.

## CISCO

Cisco created a whole campaign called Sea Change, which is a story told in pictures, video, and written narrative about a racing yacht that gains a competitive advantage using Cisco Powered technologies. The story focuses on the yacht and not on Cisco products.

# THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME

*to get clean water to everyone*

**THERE ARE COUNTLESS OTHER EXAMPLES, BUT YOU GET THE POINT BY NOW.**

And in case you're wondering whether or not you can trust our advice, take it instead from a guy who has a fairly amazing career following exactly this approach to growing businesses.

**Marketing is no longer about the stuff you make, but about the stories you tell.**

SETH GODIN

## **JOHN REPLOGLE**

John Replogle is the former CEO at Burt's Bees and Seventh Generation and is currently a venture capitalist at Raleigh-based One Better Ventures. He sold Burt's Bees to Clorox for \$925 million, and he sold Seventh Generation to Unilever for \$650 million 9 years later.

One Better Ventures specializes in helping growth-stage companies expand their markets and their portfolio includes many early successes like Leesa, the online mattress startup, who has built up over \$100 million in revenues in less than three years.

Based on his track record alone it is safe to say that he is one of the most successful entrepreneurs and marketers in business today.

When asked in a recent interview about how, with the sea of competition that was in his products space (largely using the same ingredients), he was able to break out from the clutter and get mass adoption, his answer was:

it's all about "telling the right story".

*Whether marketing consumer products or cybersecurity software, the problem and the solution for differentiation in a sea of competition are exactly the same.*



# ABOUT US

## **Cybersecurity Marketing is all we do.**

CyberTheory is a full-service cybersecurity digital marketing advisory firm, providing advertising, marketing, content, digital strategy, messaging, positioning, event management, lead generation and media publishing.

Our sister firm, ISMG, has 20+ editors and 33 news, education and information desks around the world producing relevant and timely content 24/7 for its 985,000 subscriber network.

In addition to our resident CISO team and 40 member CISO Customer Advisory Board, our extensive knowledge and exclusive access to the largest Cybersecurity membership network in the world with rich first-party data, allows us to personalize the targeting of each and every Cybersecurity buyer.

With strategic insights from our global education services, media providers, intelligence analysts, journalists and executive leaders, we're always aligned with the latest industry direction and demands.

More information at [www.cybertheory.io](http://www.cybertheory.io)