

Business of Story Podcast with Bryan Adams - Goosebumps and Business Storytelling

Park: Welcome to The Business of Story. I'm Park Howell and I'm so excited about this show today, I've got a peer, a colleague, a stranger, only in that we have never really met other than Skype - Bryan Adams, a phenomenal creative over across the pond in London with Ph. Creative. They have a firm in London and Liverpool and I think they are soon to be expanding in to US.

What I love about Bryan's work is he's all about business storytelling as well. He has a book out, incredible piece called Getting Goosebumps, all about how businesses kind of applies story in their world, and he has a marvelous podcast which we are doing a simulcast here. We recorded this session. He's going to have me on his, I'm going to have him here of course today, but check out his wonderful podcast at Getting Goosebumps on iTunes. I have been listening to it a lot the last couple of weeks and really, really phenomenon guests.

So I'm excited to have with us today Bryan Adams from Ph. Creative and his book podcast Getting Goosebumps. Welcome, Bryan.

Park: Hey, Bryan, Park here.

Bryan: It's good to talk to you, Park. How are you doing?

Park: I'm doing great. This is very cool because it's the first time I have done a simulcast podcast, if you could even do that, because I know they are going to be airing at different times, but I'm so excited to have you on our show, Business Of Story, and I'm so excited to be on your show, Giving You Goosebumps.

Bryan: Well, I am getting goose bumps as we speak, Park. I've never done this either but I'm really excited to get both perspectives. Yeah, I've never actually heard of anyone throwing out one episode on two podcasts. So maybe do you think this is a first?

Park: I think it's going to be fun. I started our podcast, Business of Story, July 1 and I can't believe how quickly our tribe around this has grown and you are one of them, and it's so great to meet you. We haven't met in person. I know you're in LA right now, but you hail out of London with an agency in London and Liverpool, and you've been doing this business of story storytelling podcast a little bit longer than I have. What is the background with you and your agency?

Bryan: Well, Park, we have been a digital agency for about 12 years just like any other digital agency, I guess really. What we've noticed in Europe with our clients is more and more brands are focusing on the tactics of digital marketing, and we found a real fundamental need to go back to basics and work out what's the story, what is the message? Who is the audience? Who we are catering for?

I've had a passion for storytelling for many years and it's like two worlds collide where I get to work on the passion and give value to the customers. It's been really an interesting journey but finding your own podcast, absolutely, I absolutely love your work and . . .

Park: Thank you.

Bryan: You're going to start to go weekly soon is that right?

Park: We are now, yeah, in October. The sponsors have been loving it, the listeners have been loving it so I guess we distribute every Wednesday now. It's great because it opens it up to a lot more guests on the show and I've got a list as you do I'm sure, as long as your arm of guests that want to talk about storytelling, content marketing, digital media, sustainability, whatever it takes to move the mission forward.

Bryan: Well, it's good to hear because I've been listening to your podcast and every two weeks, it just wasn't enough because some of the guests you've had are absolutely fascinating. I think we come it from a slightly different angles, would you agree with that, Park?

Park: Absolutely mine is very much coming at it from the story artist approach and over the last seven, eight years I've been doing a lot of studying in Hollywood and with screen writers and authors about what do they know that makes a really great story that we in the marketing world and those whose job is persuasion should be using. So what I try to do to find that intersection of the story artists and the marketer brand strategist, content marketers, sustainability executive, anybody that needs to be way more persuasive to move people forward faster.

What is the bewitchery of story how does it work and how can we apply it? Just as if we we're trying to sell a screenplay, but our sweat and tears goes into creating that perfect tweet, that blog post, that infographics, but it's all the same principles we're finding. So that is what we do, we try to connect the story artists with the marketer out there so that we can understand their worlds.

In contrast, I have been listening to your podcast and you've some really amazing guests marketer-wise with very much of a focus on storytelling. I listened to Seth Godin today, and by the way I love your story about how you got him on your podcast. I hope you can share that with our audience, but I thought he was fantastic. Teddy Reuben, the other day I was listening to, he gave out his phone number and I called him. I called him three days ago, I haven't heard back from him yet so we'll see if he's true to his word.

Bryan: I'm sure you will. He gives his phone number out on stage you have to call 300 people in four days so it's a dangerous game. It's just brilliant to speak to so many people who recognize the power of story. It's almost a grassroots, it's the essence of marketing and I think it's being overlooked, certainly on this side of the pond, which is why we are starting to focus on it.

I just love the depth that you've gone into in your angle definitely from a Hollywood point of view. I know you are speaking to Robert McKee. I'm actually meeting Robert McKee in a couple weeks and I first heard of his work on your show, an absolute godfather of story in Hollywood. I love your angle looking at how Hollywood has been telling great stories and bringing it into the business world, and so I've got to thank you for that, Park. I can't wait to meet Robert McKee in a couple of weeks.

You've also spoken to Jonah Sachs. He articulates a great brand story, how it maps to Hollywood really well. You must have found it so fascinating speaking to him as well, right?

Park: Absolutely. He wrote Winning the Story Wars and those who tell and live the best stories will, I think, rule the world is what it is, and his is very much focused on sustainability and environmental work. He's done some really great work in that area, but actually my exploration in Hollywood started even before that, and my listeners know this quite well.

Our middle son went to film school and I said, "Hey, since we're buying the textbooks, send them to me when you're done. I want to know what Hollywood knows," and of course learned of Joseph Campbell and The Hero's Journey there. But one of the other books that was really fantastic Blake Snyder's Save the Cat, and it's about taking the hero's journey and molding it into the family genre. He sold more screen plays to Disney in the 1980s than anyone else and I really connected with that. I've used that in a number of different projects from events to TV spots to radio and so forth, and then when Jonah's book came out I saw kind of that marriage of it even evolving more into advertising marketing world.

Bryan: It's just so fascinating and interesting but so many guests I've approached to talk about this aren't necessarily known first and foremost for storytelling. However, when you look at the work, and the success, and the traction they get online with their audience, quite quickly it's very easy is very easy to agree that it's because they're great story tellers. So I've been fascinated to talk to whole [inaudible 00:09:05] of people, but very quickly it's a sort of centrifugal point where the art of story, it's definitely been lost. Do you find it in marketing with your clients or the brands that you see, is that the missing piece and that's why it seems to be in vogue right now?

Park: No, I think it's in vogue right now because all of us agencies who truly are professional story tellers and we're supposed to do that, have permission to be storytellers, but I think the challenge is too many agencies are trying to use that as a differentiator and it's so ubiquitous in what we all do, it's not a differentiator as an agency goes. But what I think what you guys do over at Ph.Creative that we do here at Park&Co as well is we really educate our clients on how to become story tellers themselves, and give them permission.

I do a workshop, the Business of Story workshop, where I show these folks that they are at the tops of their storytelling games in kindergarten, and it's just been coached and educated and MBA'ed out of them. Yet that storyteller still sits within them and wants to be released to the world. So I just show them this very intentional approach to storytelling that they can apply to their leadership to their employee engagement, PowerPoint and actually put power and have points in their presentations that make points.

Park: Through the advertising marketing side, yeah.

Bryan: We do something similar and usually magic happens in those workshops where the penny drops and light bulbs go on, and they say, "God, if we can tell an effective stories to our audience, but not just the whole audience, breaking it down into what we call personas, we can really reach the audience and get a hell of a lot more traction." A really interesting thing we do is we look at the different context of an audience, so telling different types of stories to get a different type of response depending on where they are in the marketing and sales cycle. Do you do something similar, Park?

Park: Yeah, that's so smart because you have to put the audience, your customer, at the center of the story and in doing that, you have to understand the story that they are living or at least the story they are telling themselves about your brand. That story is going to completely change from first awareness, who are these people and what's this story I'm initially going to tell myself to that first purchase and interaction with your product or service.

That journey then expands and now they've got a whole new perception of you and your brand and that story will evolve with that perception. The brand needs to be there along the way to make sure that they're, A, delivering on the story promises that they are making and, B, that they are making sure that their customer is having the proper story in their own minds about what's happening. Of course the whole goal is to build brand ritual or to continue that franchise.

Hollywood knows this better than anybody else. I think they are just about ready to roll out the 24th episode of the franchise of the brand James Bond movie. They can keep changing the main character, but they know their audience so well in a godlike way that McKee talks about in screen writing. Brands need to do that and one thing we found with our story cycle process is they apply it not only to themselves as the business leader within the brand, they apply the exact same process to understanding the brand story, and then they apply the exact same process to understanding their customer story.

Once you have those three stories side by side you then weave them together to try to understand where are the gaps in the story that we're telling and living, and what the customer thinks and believes. Where are we not delivering where we need to be, and how do we fill in those gaps, and even more importantly, how do we take advantage of the opportunities that we see created when we weave these three stories together. That's how we go about it.

Bryan: It's just brilliant is it? Once you do that tough work and it is tough work because it's not easy to get all of those ducks in a row, as we say. Once you do that and you really get to understanding your audience and your customer, it does become fairly simple to work out what those stories need to be. But there's so many brands out there just getting it wrong, isn't there? Do you think it's still an element of mindset of we broadcast a story one way rather than listening and engaging?

Park: Yeah, I would say we broadcast the story from our brand's perspective, the brand does, without taking in a lot of consideration for the audience. I think the other thing is I think the other brands are fearful of telling that "authentic story", and they don't turn their agencies loose to let them really do what they do best. I put out a blog post today. Every Friday I do the best five stories on business story for the week that I have come across, and there's one in there from Canva the new design app and it's 71 of the best visually storytelling print ads. I don't have the headline right in my head.

But anyway, suffice it to say they cover 71 unbelievable ads when you look at them, and it's beautiful visual, quite often just a logo and it completes this amazing story and it brings the customer, or the reader, consumer along with the ride. My creative directors and I were just heading over to a logo presentation earlier today and I was mentioning that article to him and I said, "These are beautiful ads and they look great in blog posts and in design annuals, but how come we never see them anywhere in real life?" He said, "Yeah, it's like his ad theater that is unicorn. We all love it, we all aspire to do it, we see it in this awards journals, but nobody has the clients with the guts to actually to do it."

To me, it's fabulous storytelling but I think to answer your question, Bryan, it's just that clients so often are fearful of telling a story that really get's the attention they are looking for.

Bryan: Yeah, we ask our clients how brave you are. "How brave are you?"

Park: That's a great question.

Bryan: We are in a fortunate position now where we know who a good customer is, we know who we want to work with. I'm not as stuck. That is our first test and it's so frustrating for a team when you come up with a great authentic story and the client isn't brave enough to put it out there or dilutes it until it loses its magic. It's painful.

I think for the first time, Park, we are definitely seeing more internal communication with brands. So the marketing departments are actually talking to HR and actually talking to customer service. To me, that's the only way you can get a real authentic story across a brand and it also negates the need to synthetically create stories in the marketing department that's trying to get across a points or explain the value of a brand.

There's so much magic usually within an organization you. How do you go about pulling those stories out of a company that's already there? Do you do a lot of that, just articulating things that have already happened and stories that other departments have.

Park: What we find worked very, very well is when we are asked to come in on engagement, we just get the client to get to the real root of the problem, and what they will always say is, "We just don't have our brand stories straight." As soon as they admit to what the problem is, it's like quitting smoking, that's the first step to fixing it. If they will not admit that, if they are hemming and hawing, "No, we think it's okay," blah, blah, then there is no reason for us to be in the room with it. We are there really as story doctors to help them with that brand messaging, but they have to admit that there's a problem and really is not that hard to get to.

Sometimes you also have to bring that chief marketing officer or along and say, "It's okay. It's not your fault you were trying to herd cats in the brand story world. We're going to help bring you the cavalry in or the pen in to bring this all together, so that you are all speaking from the same page." That's pretty much how we go about it.

Now, Bryan, I need to make a break right here, so you'll have to figure out I guess how this edits into your show, but I would like to talk to you more about Getting Goosebumps, your book, and talk a little bit more about your podcast when we come back to Business of Story right after these stories from our sponsors.

Park: Welcome back to Business of Story with my amazing guest. Bryan Adams from across the pond has an incredible agency Ph.Creative in London and Liverpool and I think I've heard some rumors that maybe opening up an office in New York, or I don't know. We'll find out more from Bryan.

Bryan, so we've been talking about my podcast and I appreciate that I want to know, you've been in this business for quite a while, what got you really involved in storytelling? Why did you follow that path? You've got a terrific book out called Getting Goosebumps and that all lead to your podcast can you kind of bring that whole story together for us.

Bryan: Yes, sure. I started the agency and there was always a big vision, I always decided I'm going to build an agency, I'm going to sell it for lots of money, and I'm going to make a movie. It was just pipe dream if I'm really honest, it's just a passion a labor of love, something I do in my spare time. I just do some writing and I just love film and I love story.

But over the years I saw this two worlds collide and I got really, really excited. As content marketing moved to the fore with social media, I saw a real need for brands to go back to the basics of storytelling, and from an inbound marketing perspective, getting that right is essential.

I've seen a trend of going into our clients, and just having to go through the same process time and time again where we really break down starting with brand values, looking at business objectives, then going through strategy tactics, implementation, and having to pull all this together in that way, because lots of our clients will just jump straight into the tactics and not getting any traction no matter how much content they were producing. So the inspiration for the book really was to educate my customers first and we've been overwhelmed by the response we've had by getting it out there.

Park: And then how did that kind of give you the impetus for the podcast? Or was the vice versa? Which was first?

Bryan: Well, the book came first, and in the book we look at who were some of the best storytellers [inaudible 00:21:22]. Obviously we looked at Hollywood one of my favorite books as well is Save the Cat by the way. It's absolutely incredible, so looking at that framework. We looked at comedians and even great political leaders just to find what's the essence of their magic.

Also many years ago I had a fear of public speaking - absolute terror. I was terrified to the point where it was affecting my business. So rather than go on presentations skills training, I did a standup comedy course. It was the most terrifying six weeks of my life. I actually lost a stone and a half in weight through shit . . .

Park: Did you say a stone and a half in weight?

Bryan: Yeah.

Park: For us Americans, what in the world does that mean?

Bryan: That's about . . . I'm going to get this wrong I think, but it's probably about . . . I'll have to Google it. Let me Google it just real quick pounds.

Park: A stone and a half a stone, a pound. I'm figuring a stone must be about 20 pounds and they used it to hold up a fence post for the dairy cattle in the shire somewhere or I'm I in the wrong country at this point? There's got to be a story to that.

Bryan: It's 10 kilograms, 10 kilos. So that's a lot of weight in six weeks when you are not trying to lose weight [inaudible 00:22:56]. I had to write 15 minutes of my own material. I was being coached on delivery, and timing, and the content, and then to graduate from this horrendous experience, I have to perform 15 minutes of my own material to a paying audience of 300 strangers at comedy festival. Which was just terrifying but it was life changing as well and that stuck with me.

So some of the stuff I was taught in that six weeks is in the book and also I guess that was part of the inspiration for just looking at who are the best storytellers in the world, and who else can we learn from outside of marketing. That put me on a very, very interesting path. Yeah, that kind of reminds me why I was writing the book and I just decided to keep that going and speak to the best storytellers in the world, and that's what I have been doing with the podcast.

Park: It's great fun. When did you launch the podcast?

Bryan: It's only three months.

Park: So about the same time. So this simultaneous podcast is probably simultaneous launch of two different podcasts about storytelling in business that never knew each other. Is that the universe working? "Designed serendipity" I think they call that.

Bryan: I think planets are aligning, Park, absolutely.

Park: So I want to hear the story, you shared with me, if you are comfortable sharing it with the audience. I loved how you tracked down Seth Godin, and I think it's so smart, that little personal touch. Would you mind sharing that story with the gang because you have an amazing, amazing people on your podcast, and I need to borrow some of this tactics on my own, so I can bring more quality like that.

Bryan: Yeah, sure. I guess if there is any remote chance that Seth Godin is listening to this, the first thing is absolute, sincere, my approach, I really meant this, it started out reaching out to Seth Godin. He was top of my list. In terms of marketing, I would say he is literally a marketing god. Definitely the first marketing book I ever read was Purple Cow, so I have held this guy in high esteem, just like the rest of us, for a very long time.

So I decided after I got the courage to try and just reach [inaudible 00:25:25] the first email started with the subject line, "This feels like emailing God," and then I wrote, "Dear Mr. Godin, I guess you get contacted all the time, people ask you for things. I want to start a relationship by giving you something first. What can I do for you? What would you like me to send you from the UK to the US to put a smile on your face, add some value?" It came back fairly quickly which surprised me, I've got to say, with a very polite way of brushing me off and saying, "I'm in a good place right now. I don't need anything. I really appreciate it but I haven't got the time to keep up any correspondence. So kind regards, take care, Seth."

What do I do now? So I emailed him back quickly and said, "Well, I appreciate that, Seth, but I'm going to send you something anyway," and I had no idea what I was going to send him, but now I'm in dialogue with Seth Godin and I had a gift send from friend who's living in Japan and there staring right behind me was two toy cars, weirdest packaging from Japan as you can imagine. One of them was a really small toy truck with a giant handbagger on the back it's just the oddest, and I thought, "I'm going to send this to Seth Godin and I'm going to write a hand written note, and I'm going to say, 'Look, this put a smile on my face when my friend sent it to me. Hopefully it put a smile on your face too.'"

Park: So you sent him the gift and what did you hear back?

Bryan: So I decide to send this to Seth Godin with a handwritten note that said "Dear Seth, a friend of mine sent this to me. It put a smile on my face. Hopefully it's put a smile on your face." Again, about nine days went by because it had to be shipped over from the UK to the US. But he came back with just a one liner. "Bryan, thanks for the little truck. Keep making your ruckus. Kind regards, Seth."

So I was like, "Cool, okay, got it. He's answered me back. I'm still in an email dialogue with Seth Godin. This is incredible but what on earth do I do now?" I literally didn't have the courage really. I was literally scared to email it back and ask for something. A few

days went by and I thought, "Screw it. I'm just going to send him an email. What's the worst that can happen?"

Park: Reasonable.

Bryan: Yeah. So because he put on the email "keep making your ruckus", I thought, right, here we go. "Dear Seth, I found my ruckus. My ruckus is interviewing the world's best marketers and storytellers. Would you consider being on my podcast. Now everyone I've reached out to to this point, they usually call back and they say, "Yeah, absolutely. That's great. Let's set something up for two months time." Not Seth. He comes back and says, "Sure. How's tomorrow morning?"

I was like, "Oh my god!" Stayed up all night, I read his books again and that was it. It happened just like that. It was incredible, but afterwards the lesson for me . . . I asked him, "How many of these do you do?" He said, "About eight a year." I said, "How many times do you get asked?" He said, "Bryan, I get asked three times a day everyday without fail even Christmas or holidays." I was like, "Oh my god, that's incredible."

But what I learned from it is the number one reason people don't interview Seth Godin is they haven't got the courage to ask. One thing I've learned by doing this - I don't know whether you share this, Park - is people are generally really nice if you reach out to them. You might have to do a little bit of work but people are generally really nice. But I think starting off by trying give Seth Godin some value first was probably in retrospect the smartest to do. And do you know what? I genuinely meant that. It wasn't about the end game of getting him on the show. I wanted to reach out and give him some value first, so I don't know where the lesson is in that but that's how it happened.

Park: Well, it's beautiful and because you were authentic about it ,and I know he kind of made fun of that word "authentic" on the podcast, and by the way folks, listen to the podcast over at Getting Goose bumps because it's really good. I think he even closed with the ruckus line so that must be kind of his mantra to date. But it's that old thing of reciprocity. You reached out, he said, "Thanks but no thanks."

Something fun came in your door, you sent it to him, again, with all the best intent, and there's something about us as in all of us humans we have to reciprocate. So it was kind of his way of saying, "Hey, this is cool. This guy went the extra distance to get me on a show. He's obviously a great storyteller because look at this little fun story that I am now involved with with Bryan. So yeah, what are you doing tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.? I'm ready for my interview." And I think you ended up staying up all night reading his books. Did you get caught back up again?

Bryan: Yeah, absolutely. He actually offered to do a video interview and I said, "No, no, sir just audio because I had notes everywhere and all the rest of it and that would have.

Park: That's awesome.

Bryan: Yeah. It's just a lot of fun it really is. Ryan Hanley, he does a podcast called Content Warfare and his approach is he's made a big list of everybody he would like free consultancy from and that's who he reaches out to. He writes the questions down he'd like the answers to and that's what he goes back to, which I also think is really smart.

Park: It's great. Hey, need to take a quick break here for again our wonderful sponsors of Business of Story, and when we come back, let's talk about this universal application of story, that it don't matter if you are in America, if you are in London, if you are in Asia,

it all is the same story and we're all hard wired exactly the same way. So let's cover that a little bit when we come back if that's good with you.

Park: Welcome back to the Business of Story and my fantastic guest today, Bryan Adams from Ph.Creative in London although Bryan is in LA, because I think you are out there working with one of your clients this week, and now you are driving up to Malibu to meet one of my favorite people, Randy Olson, who has been on our show, Business of Story. I'm hoping you are going to go up to record the Business of Story. I hope you're going to record him because he's coming out with that amazing new book "Houston, We Have a Narrative."

Bryan: Yeah, I can't wait to meet him because anybody who can turn scientists into a good storyteller must be an absolute genius, or he must be crazy. One of the two. So I'm expecting to have a really good conversation and it will be a great episode for the show, so thanks for the introduction, Park.

Park: Absolutely, and what I love so much about Randy story is here's this guy who's a Harvard PhD, oceanographer, scientist, then he goes to USC film school, becomes a grad there, he goes into making documentaries and sustainability in the sciences and now he's written his third book. And his whole mission in life and all his brilliance is to get scientists to be able to connect with the regular folk out there through the power of story and who is Randy's number one influence on this? Eric Cartman from South Park. So you have to ask him about that. Eric Cartman from South Park drives this PhD brilliant mind around story. I love it. It's fantastic

Bryan: I'll be sure to ask him about that. That's cool.

Park: But I think that whole idea about the science of story, what I tell our folks too is story is as critical to our survival as air is to our lungs, as food is to our survival. We can weeks without eating, we can go days without drinking water, but we can only go about 35 seconds without creating meaning out of something in our environment, and that's where stories come in and it's this universal thing.

I was in Washington, DC in 2011 and did this storytelling workshop for 3,800 executives from around the world, and it was translated in real time in 10 languages and I didn't lose anybody in the crowd. It's not because I'm was an amazing presenter, but I think the content of showing them how story works on all of us and then they would get up and they would tell their stories, and it underscored to me this universal nature that we are all connected by the stories we tell, and we share. I would love to hear do you think there is a different approach over there in Europe than there is here in America or what do you see, because I know you work in both continents?

Bryan: I think you nailed it, Park. I think right at the center, we're all hardwired to tell stories and that's how we make sense of the world. If you can articulate a good story, you can achieve anything in marketing terms really. So I think the similarities and correlations are right there. I don't think there is too much difference. Maybe there's a difference in the application afterwards, but you just enter the nuances of the audience again and it's just knowing the audience the tone of voice and positioning of the story to resonate with who you are trying to communicate with. So I think underlying it's exactly the same actually.

Park: I agree. When you are working and coaching your clients in story, what are the biggest hurdles you have to get them to overcome to open them to your process?

Bryan: I think the number one is, "We're not the hero? Are you kidding me? Really?" It's funny, isn't it, because you studied storytelling for a while and it's just obvious that, no, your customer is the hero, it's their story. But actually the number of times I've seen some magic happen by just explaining that one principle.

But also I think because as humans we are hardwired to tell stories, when you pass over the basic tools so they can independently tell their own story with clarity, in a very concise, easy, simple way, satisfaction of seeing the sheer delight of customers achieve that is just phenomenal. Sometimes the simplest things create the biggest, biggest difference right, so seeing that transformation is absolutely fantastic. It's incredible.

Park: Yeah, when we are doing this I come across three kinds of customers, I guess, even within the same brand. You're going to have that typically older guy who's got his arms crossed, and he's looking down his nose at you thinking that this is just a gimmick and there's no way in hell in his 35-year career are you going to convince him otherwise that story is going to make a difference inside and outside of his organization or brand.

Then you've got, I suppose, that middle bell curve folks where if you've got 10 people in the room, 6 of them are sitting in this area and they're like, "I'm intrigued. I'm not sure that I completely bought into it but I'm open, take me down this path." And usually when you do, you end up at the end of that storytelling path and you have devoted followers. They are like, "Wow! I don't completely get it but I know there is something here that I have to dive deeply into."

Then of course you've got those that immediately get it and they might even be people that haven't studied story or Joseph Campbell mythology or whatever, but for whatever reason are really in tune with their world and the journey they are on, and they can understand what you are talking about within the first one minute. It's just amazing.

I had lunch earlier this week with an executive director of a very large foundation here in town, and she had heard about our process and sat down and when I was talking her through the story cycle process, and I'm telling you within one minute she got it. And she was just completely engaged and we are looking for ways to now to use that with her brand story and in her organization.

So when I'm in working with these managers and saying, "We've got to relook how you do this and kind of reinvent how you're going to market and telling your stories" that I want to first find that evangelist in the room and get that connection going, but then immediately get that bell curve group in the middle and that typically takes 20 minutes to half hour into the presentation. Then you can bring the old guys along. But once the old guys start seeing what's happening around them, you see story start to really affect their lives. It's pretty amazing.

Bryan: Yeah, it really is, and usually the value you're looking for out of the workshop, usually there's extra value that comes out as well we always find. But we have these giant silhouettes of people in the room. We use sticky notes and we write down from a persona and empathy marketing point of view. So when you get those, the old guys with their arms crossed, get them out writing on sticky notes and sticking them on and all the rest of it, get them on their feet, we find that gets them engaged.

But you are right, there's a period there you have to convince them of the value and have got to work hard in the first 20 minutes, I guess. But you do find the evangelist in the room, absolute magic happens.

We had a situation recently where we worked for a client which I can't name. We had to go through three levels of security clearance just to go in there at their office and do this workshop. We were actually helping them with some recruitment. So we said, "Let's start off. We need to look at the personas. What's the position we are going to be recruiting for?" And they said, "We can't tell you that, Bryan. We can't tell you that." Right.

"So what will they be doing?" "We can't you tell you that." Really, this is going to be tough. So we said, "Okay, give us some of the characteristics and the traits and some of the skills. Can you share anything about what they are going to be doing?" "No. We can't tell you that for security reasons." It was really, really tough.

So we spoke to this one guy in the room. He said, "Come on. Somebody must have some stories or insights here," because we were faced with hiring 150 people for this one position that we weren't allowed to know what it was, and we weren't allowed to say who they were, so just kind of like storytelling with duck tape over your mouth.

And finally digging around, this one young kid put his hand up and says, "Well, I can tell this one story," and it kind of works. So everybody leans in and this guy he says -- and he was a guy who speaks to perspective candidates to join this organization. The other thing is if you join this organization not knowing who it is or what you are going to do, you've got to wait nine months to get security clearance to even find out. So it's a really difficult process, as you can understand.

But he says to the candidate or the prospect, he says, "When I was just five or six years old I used to play with an old computer, a Spectrum 264," or whatever it is, and the candidate would say, "Yeah, I used to do that. I had a [inaudible 00:42:51]." "I used to write up codes from the back of the magazine and make my own games. Did you ever do that?" "Yeah, I use to-do that as well that's brilliant and in used to take computer apart and build them back up and make my own stuff." The candidate would say, "Yeah, I did that as well," because this is the type of sort of mentality of this guy's persona.

He said, "When I got a little but older, I started to make slightly more complex games and do this that and the other. When I got to the type of age where I'd start to consider what I wanted to do with the rest of my life, that question of what do you want to be when you grow up, the job that I had in my mind's eye at the age of 16, I am now doing that job." So this guy tells that story. He really resonates and connects with the candidate and inspires them, and sparks something off in their imagination and says, "We love games, we love coding, and we love this, we love that. When you were young, what was that job you wanted to do when you were growing up? I now do that job," and that's the story he tells to get people on board.

Everybody was in the room just leaned in like, "Oh my god, why have you never shared that story with anybody else in this room?" It was literally magic happened and that sparked off the whole campaign and was the inspiration for how we hired 150 people to this organization that we couldn't say who it was and what they're going to be doing. So the power of story is just incredible.

Park:

So, Bryan, to wrap up here, what would be your top three tips to share with our listeners, the content marketers brand raconteurs out there, business leaders, that they could use to start creating their stories?

Bryan: That's a tough one to throw at me, Park, but I think the first one is subscribe to your podcast definitely.

Park: Thank you very much.

Bryan: Second one has got to be buy our books and go through the process in there. But I guess if there is one additional thing it would be take the time to intimately understand and care about your audience. Really go through the idea of empathy mapping and connecting, understand how they think, how they feel, how you can make your brand experience easy, and how you can make it memorable. If you just start off with those basics then you've got the foundation to move forward and start to craft a story that actually resonates and means something.

Park: Brilliant, and I'm surprised that I'm the first one to say "brilliant" because you say it often in your podcast.

Bryan: That's right so come on, Park, I'm going to put you on the spot as well. What's your top?

Park: Brilliant. Well, number one, absolutely to tune into Getting Goosebumps and read the book. It's great, great stuff. No, really, you have top notch guests on there, and you give really terrific content. And number two, I will agree with you first and foremost, know your audience.

Then I would challenge that business leader out there while you are listening to our wonderful podcast and reading the information, first sit down and write your story, why do you do what you do, and don't over intellectualize it. Write from your gut. Don't even give yourself a lot of time to do it. Give yourself an hour or less to write why you do what you do.

Then set that aside, grab another glass of wine or beer, then write your brand story in an hour or less from your gut. Don't over intellectualize it, and then write your customer story. Put those three stories together and see if you can find where the opportunities are to connect to your shared values from what you individually share through your business with your customers and understand then the gaps in that relationship on either the purchase process, the follow up, the customer service. There are always going to be gaps in that but try to understand what that is.

Both of our firms, Ph.Creative and Park&Company, we offer services in those areas across the pond. But that's what I've found is when people get real with their own stuff, what they really stand for, and what their brand stands for, then that whole customer story interaction gets real, and I think that's where I would ask people to start.

Bryan: Well, I think that's great advice and perfect place to end on there, Park, brilliant.

Park: All right, Bryan, thank you so much for being a part of Business of Story and thank you for inviting me to be a part of Getting Goosebumps. This has been a really cool interaction. And for everyone out there, we first met on Skype I think on Monday this week, so I'm looking forward to getting acquainted with you at some point here in the not too distant future.

Bryan: Absolutely, Park. It's been a pleasure and I'll just continue to be a big fan of your show as well, so thanks for coming on Getting Goosebumps.

Park: Thank you very much, Bryan. Have a great trip up to Malibu and say hello to Randy for me.

Bryan: I will be sure to do that. Thanks, Park.

Park: All right. Well, thank you for listening to another edition of Business of Story. We're so happy that you take the time to be here with us. If you like what you're hearing, please go on iTunes give us your ranking, give us your rating, give us your ideas on how I can make it even better.

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Thank you again for listening. Share it with your friends and we will be back next week with another great guest at Business of Story. Thank you. All right.