



The Art of Food Waste:

CUTTING THROUGH
THE NOISE OF MARKETING
WHILE CUTTING DOWN
FOOD WASTE.

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Preface

As a dietitian I faced an outdated healthcare system that was more focused on therapy than on initially preventing food-related illnesses. The ignorance of people about a proper diet was mirroring this. I have joined the program of the European Food Business studies at AERES Hogeschool because of my aim to achieve prevention from its origin: The food industry. But the food industry itself needs help, too. During my internship in the third year I got exposed to the unbelievable amounts of food waste that underly our rich supermarket shelves. Here again, I discovered how ignorant society is.

I believe that people who are aware of problem are likely to act. This is why I decided to dedicate my thesis to the creation of awareness for food waste.

I would like to thank my thesis coach Liesbeth Meijer for motivating and helping me to untangle my thoughts and occasionally reminding me of my own curiosity for this research. Additional thanks to Heidi Alemans for sharing her enthusiasm for food waste with me. Also, 'Thank you' Lisa, Irene, Agustina, Eamon and Cayne, for supporting me in this adventure. And particularly Cris: Without him I would still be hitting the Command-F keys.

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Table of Acronyms

CTA	Call-to-action
EU	European Union
CAT	Conceptual Act Theory
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
UN	United Nations
CEC	Commission for Environmental Cooperation
BBD	Best Before Date
SEO	Search Engine Optimization

Summary

The world is wasting food. This is a problem for the environment, for the economy but also for society. While over the past years, there can be a growing interest recognized there is still no significant change in the attitude and behaviour around food waste. From a business perspective, there may be growth in engagement to lessen the amount of food being wasted, it is not yet the normal to avoid food waste by giving it a second life in form of an ingredient for another product. There are a number of food businesses trying to live by this approach, however they are usually small and inferior to the marketing power of larger food corporates. Especially due to the often-compelling story of the otherwise wasted ingredients, storytelling was considered an interesting tool for them, to showcase to the world what they are doing.

This thesis was written with the intention to help small food waste businesses to improve their storytelling. The main focus was therefore on finding an answer to the question “How storytelling can help to reduce the amount of food waste”. Research about recommended storytelling best practices, keywords and food waste business cases was therefore conducted. In order to result with a guideline for storytelling, literature research, applied on real-life cases was the chosen approach.

The main findings of this report are that storytelling indeed seems to be an applicable approach. With a focus on clear, realistic stories, the best results can be achieved. Giving the audience an actionable plan at the end of a story could be the gamechanger for food waste businesses. While it was not possible to identify a clear emotionally keyword, the research yet gave reason to consider the focus on emotionally engaging sentences. And while in the current time most businesses use keywords related to interest, the image of food waste could be improved by a focus onto joy, love and contentment.

A crucial take away of this research, important for everyone interested in the thematic of storytelling, is that the evaluation of real-life cases has shown the author the importance of a logically flowing story. Because after all, it seems that a good story outperforms the use of particular keywords.

Summary (German)

Die Welt verschwendet Lebensmittel. Dies ist ein Problem für die Umwelt, für die Wirtschaft, aber auch für die Gesellschaft. Während in den letzten Jahren ein wachsendes Interesse an Lebensmittelverschwendung festgestellt werden kann, änderte sich an der Einstellung und dem Verhalten wenig. Auch Unternehmen beginnen nach Lösungen für Lebensmittelverschwendung zu suchen. Dennoch ist es noch nicht der Standard, Lebensmittel zu retten indem man ihnen eine zweite Chance als Zutat in anderen Produkten gibt. Es gibt eine Reihe von Lebensmittelproduzenten, die versuchen, nach diesem Ansatz zu arbeiten. Diese sind in der Regel jedoch klein und der Marketingkraft größerer Lebensmittelunternehmen unterlegen. Insbesondere durch die einzigartigen Hintergrundgeschichten der sonst verschwendeten Lebensmittel wird Storytelling als interessantes Marketingwerkzeug für diese Unternehmen angesehen.

Diese Thesis soll besonders kleinen Lebensmittelretter-Unternehmen dabei zu helfen, ihr Storytelling zu verbessern. Das Hauptaugenmerk lag daher darauf, eine Antwort auf die Frage zu finden, wie diese Marketingtaktik dazu beitragen kann, die Menge an Lebensmittelabfällen zu reduzieren. Im Rahmen dieses Forschungsprojektes wurden deshalb Empfehlungen für Storytelling und Stichwörter erforscht. Um eine Richtlinie fürs Storytelling zu erhalten, wurde ein literarischer Forschungsansatz gewählt, der mit realen Fällen geprüft wurde.

Erkenntnisse dieser Arbeit sind, dass das Storytelling tatsächlich ein anwendbarer Ansatz zu sein scheint. Mit klaren und realistischen Geschichten können die besten Ergebnisse erzielt werden. Eine echte Veränderung im Verhalten, könnte durch das Hinzufügen eines umsetzbaren Planes, am Ende einer Geschichte, erzielt werden. Obwohl es nicht möglich war, ein klares emotionales Schlüsselwort zu identifizieren, gab die Untersuchung Anlass, den Fokus auf emotional ansprechende Sätze zu legen. Darüber hinaus könnten sogenannte Keywords, die einen Bezug zu Freude, Liebe und Zufriedenheit haben, das Image von verschwendeten Lebensmitteln verbessern.

Ein entscheidender Aspekt dieser Thesis, der für alle wichtig ist, die sich für das Thema Storytelling interessieren, ist, dass eine logisch fließende Geschichte wohl am wichtigsten ist: Die Wirkung einer guten Geschichte scheint die Verwendung bestimmter Schlüsselwörter zu übertreffen.

1. Introduction

The problems of this century seem controversial. One can find projections for a growing world population, that will reach according to the United Nations (UN) around 9.7 billion people in 2050 (United Nations, 2019) (further referred as UN). In the meantime, diseases like obesity, which can be related to overconsumption, will account for an estimated two-third of the global chronic non-communicable diseases (Chopra, et. al., 2002), but in the same time there are reports about more than 820 million people not having enough to eat (Food and Agriculture Organization, et. al., 2019) (further referred as FAO). Worrying is, that these numbers show an upward trend, after decades of decreasing numbers (FAO, et. al., 2019). Especially in the places of overconsumption, demographic statistics show dropping birth rates and people live in such abundance that food is being wasted. Food waste has been defined by FUSIONS as *“food appropriate for human consumption being discarded, whether or not after it is kept beyond its expiry date or left to spoil. Often this is because food has spoiled but it can be for other reasons such as oversupply due to markets, or individual consumer shopping/eating habits”* (EU FUSIONS, 2016). It is particularly relating to edible food that is consciously not consumed before spoiling (Food and Business Knowledge Platform, n.d.). This is in particular a problem of western developed countries, here food waste numbers are the highest (FAO, 2011). This again displays a controversy: It is the part of the world where the average educational level is high (Roser & Ortiz-Ospina, 2020), where scientists keep promoting that the production of food accounts for 26% of the global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Ritchie, 2019), and it is where people are taught about the effects of emissions on the earth climate (Crosier & Mäki, 2019).

It is proven that food waste leads to environmental, economic, and ethical problems (Mourad, 2016 & Commission for Environmental Cooperation, 2017) (further referred as CEC). This co-occurrence of impacts, leads to experts' warnings about the development of a severe food insecurity in the future (FAO, 2009). It would be impossible to feed all the world's citizens of the next generations if such wasteful consumption pattern becomes the standard (FAO, 2009). Calculations show that increasing the food production alone will not be sufficient to feed the world in 2050 (Keating, et. al., 2014). This increases the pressure on solving the ethical dilemma of the unfair distribution of food resources.

A research from 2016 by order of the EU found out that *“the total amounts of food produced in the EU for 2011 were around 865 kg / person, this would mean that in total [...] 20 % of the total food produced [is wasted]”* (Buksti, et. al., 2016). For 2019, it is projected that around 1/3 of the produced food were not being eaten (FAO, 2019). Certainly, food loss and waste occur at many stages throughout the supply chain, but the highest numbers are found at the consumer level (Van Doreen & Mensink, 2014).

The ‘Global food losses and food waste’ report from the FAO in 2011 collected several reasons for food waste. This report assumes that in the developed countries the leading cause *“for food waste at the consumption level in rich countries is that people simply can afford to waste food”* (FAO, 2011). The numbers of food waste reflect also that the abundance of food creates an attitude of indifference (FAO, 2011) among society. Additionally, the changed lifestyle of modern society, coming with less time for food preparations (Aggarwal, et. al., 2014), promotes the loss of food knowledge (Ng, et. al., 2013; Font, et. al., 2017). These trends eventually lead to a stronger reliance on food label instructions (Bravi, et. al., 2017); something that becomes a problem the moment misleading terminology is used on food products. A study from 2017 indicates that the date marking terminology (i.e. “best before date”, (further referred as BBD)) has a leading impact on people in their discarding behaviour (Bos-Brouwers, et. al., 2017). This study suggests that the BBD, initially introduced to indicate food quality, is confused to indicate food safety. Combined with the indifference about causing food waste, this leads people to ultimately waste food items (Davenport, et. al., 2019; Bravi, et. al., 2017).

While it is an acknowledged problem, there is not yet a common strategy to combat food waste (Davenport, et. al., 2019). However, more and more voices request initiatives to help people in assessing the edibility of a food item (Povich, 2019). Misunderstanding and ignorance, both rooted in the human psychology, are an issue of subjective reality. Psychologists suggest that a successful way to solve misunderstandings is by sharing own experiences and by making the other person felt understood (Key, 2015). In particular ‘storytelling’, a rediscovered marketing tool, that is widely described as engaging, universal and stimulating, could help to achieve this (Decker, 2019). It has been proven that witty and creative marketing strategies can help to change consumer perceptions, also in the field of

food (Gingiss, 2019). A leading food market research firm has ranked storytelling as the number 1 consumer trend for 2020 (Danley, 2019).

Storytelling has been identified as a medium easy to understand for a majority of people. It is described as *“the process of using fact and narrative to communicate something to your audience. Some stories are factual, and some are embellished or improvised in order to better explain the core message”* (Decker, 2019). Experts grant stories the ability to evoke emotions and empathy when a story gets full mental and emotional attention (Firth, 2015).

A famous quote from Maya Angelou states: *“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you make them feel.”* In her understanding it is thanks to the emotions, that humans’ bond and connect with something (Hendrix, 2015). Storytelling has the ability to grab the attention of the audience and triggers their ability to identify themselves with the described situation and show empathy for a character (Zak, 2014). Even more, research in neuroscience has shown that emotions are the determining factors for human’s decisions, rather than plain facts or information (Damasio, 2005). Correspondingly, stories are so popular because it was proven that people can recall information obtained within a story better than as from plain facts (Bower & Clark, 1969; Bonnici, et. al., 2015). This makes storytelling an excellent choice to familiarise society to ideas of reducing food waste. Stories are used as a communication tool that encapsulate the main message in a narrative and paraphrase a moral (O’Hara, 2014). If successfully implemented, a storyteller is not even required to make a statement yet will be able to express the underlying intention anyway (van Edwards, 2020). In a marketing context it is defined as *“using a narrative to connect [...] to customers, with a focus on linking what you stand for to the values you share with your customers”* (Loyal, 2018). Marketers regularly implement storytelling across channels in an omnichannel approach (Brewis, 2018). Used for centuries, storytelling is nowadays present in a variety of circumstances and was identified to successfully nudge and influence people (Archer, et. al., 2018). According to the opinion of storytelling experts a good story is built within a clear structure and *“includes characters, setting, conflict, rising action, climax and denouement”* (Loyal, 2018). More details of the fundamentals of storytelling will be elaborated in the following bachelor thesis. The introduced elements are basis for this.

The evocation of emotions was determined as the crucial success factors of storytelling (Choy, 2020). Experts also state that stories make people feel connected (Rutledge, 2011; Coppola, 2019; and Peterson, 2017). Emotions describe unconjurable states of the mind, feelings, attitudes or responses to a situation or an object (Ackerman, 2020). When storytellers try to describe what stories do to the brain, they use phrases like: *“We can utilize vicarious experience, mentally rehearsing how we might handle a situation before we have to face it”* (Peterson, 2017). Moreover, it was found that emotions lead to actions (Weiss, 2016). It is out of the question that in order to solve the problem of food waste, “acting” is crucial.

The problem of global food waste has a compelling story to tell as well as a great need for more attention. The simplicity of understanding stories makes the long-known marketing tool, a suitable approach for addressing the importance of change to as many people as possible. However, there is little knowledge how storytelling can be used in the particular case of food waste by businesses. Stories can consist out of a sequence of words, and sometimes maybe other media, such as images. Following the results of storytelling research, it can be stated that words have the power to change people’s behaviour by evoking emotions.

The purpose of this thesis is to study and to analyse the fundamentals of storytelling and emotional keywords, in order to recommend storytelling strategies for the marketing communication of reducing food waste.

The central question of this thesis is: **“How can the marketing tool ‘storytelling’ help to reduce the amount of food waste in the western developed world?”**

To answer the main question, the following sub-questions will be answered within the thesis:

- 1) What are the recommendations for successful storytelling?
- 2) What are recommended, positive copywriting keywords for marketing?
- 3) In which way do food waste businesses use the effectiveness of storytelling?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Storytelling

Within a story setting, the plot is the *“sum of the events, told not necessarily in sequential order, but generally consistent with the story [...]”* (Nichol, 2012). A synonym for this is the term narrative. Inspiring stories often make use of the so-called “story arc”, describing the raise of action during which the hero changes (Flangan, 2019). This progress also points out the premise of a story: It is the underlying reason for writing the story (Premise, n.d.). It gives the story its reason for being told. To let a story proceed, a conflict needs to occur. In the Cambridge English Dictionary, a conflict is defined as *“an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles”* (Conflict, n.d.). It describes usually the interplay between protagonist and antagonist is an important aspect of stories, creating the necessary tension (Ramsley, 2016). The characters in a story need to be clearly defined and consistent throughout the story. During the evolution of a story the audience is able to figure out the personality of the characters involved. Characters are closely related to the premise of a story and must be believable in their actions in order to receive the empathy of the audience (Ramsley, 2016).

2.2 Emotions

And as discovered in the previous section, our brain is hardwired to act upon stories, caused by the fact that the human brain copies the emotions introduced in a storyline. Emotions are the underlying cause for the success of a story (Peterson, 2017).

Research of emotions in the context of food waste identified an interesting result: Russel, et. al.’s key finding was that *“habits and emotions are important determinants of food waste behaviour”* (Russel, et.al., 2017). The research concluded that a higher intention to reduce food waste was achieved by triggering negative emotions. However, participants eventually wasted more food when being confronted with negative emotions. The broaden-and-build theory in contrary found that positive emotions lead to “approaching behavior” (Frederickson, 1998).

Preliminary research has disclosed the sheer endless and complex world of emotions. This research is partially connected to this topic, wherefore it was seen appropriate to introduce a basic framework and some related definitions. However, it needs to be acknowledged that the topic emotions are matter of discussion and a variety of partially contradictory theories exist. This bachelor thesis is too limited to do justice to all theories; therefore, the outline will only introduce classical views in a restricted version. It leaves gaps and does not cover the whole topic adequately but will remain with a context to positive emotions.

Encyclopaedia Britannica defines emotions as *“a complex experience of consciousness, bodily sensation, and behaviour that reflects the personal significance of a thing, an event, or a state of affairs”* (Solomon, 2019). There are enduring debates about the definition and scope of emotions (Celeghin, et. al., 2017). A group of emotion researches, including Ekman, Celeghin et. al. suggests a set of so-called primary or basic emotions: Fear, anger, surprise, sadness, joy and disgust. This idea mostly supported by theorists with the Darwinian approach (Scarantino & de Sousa, 2018). The list of basic emotions gets expanded or shortened, depending on the scientist, nonetheless the introduced six are the most often named (Piórkowska & Wrobel, 2017). The supporters of this approach differentiate between unchosen, quick and automatic, (Ekman, 1970) and more conscious and deliberate emotions (LeDoux, 1996). The work from Celeghin, et. al. in 2017 however, points out the limits of this approach and considers the psychological construction theories in their recommendations. Barrett, et. al. developed several papers on this matter. Their work resulted in the Conceptual Act Theory (further referred as CAT), that sees a combination of experienced body sensations with social and linguistic factors as cause of the emergence of emotions (Barrett, et. al., 2015).

The discussion about the occurrence of basic emotions aside, they are seen as the building blocks of other emotions. Plutchik’s “wheel of emotions” (see figure 1) depicts this in a simple manner. To be noted here, is that he is working with a total of eight basic emotions, extending Ekman’s list with the basic emotions ‘anticipation’ and ‘trust’ (Putchlik, 2001).



Figure 1 - Putchlik's Wheel of Emotions (www.positivepsychology.com)

The depicted 'wheel of emotions' tries to illustrate the complexity of emotions, pointing out that basic emotions can differ in depth, occur in combinations and shades. Six emotions by itself would be too rigid and limited to fully describe the complex world of feelings of humans. *"Emotion is a subjective experience that cannot be measured by a machine, because it requires a feeling being to understand what it is to feel"* (Emotional Granularity, 2020). Because of its subjectivity it might be difficult to prove emotional concepts with scientific assurance, nonetheless sources describe the embracing of emotions as necessary to live a rich and experiencing life (Watt Smith, 2016). It is also important to acknowledge that emotions are shaped by culture (Ekman, 1972).

Because research about food waste has identified especially positive emotions as reason that less food is wasted, a few distinctive details of positive emotions will be outlined. One intense positive emotion experience will not result in lasting happiness, but it is the frequency and duration of emotions that brings overall happiness (Diener, et. al., 2009). The "Broaden-and-

Build Theory” sees *“positive emotions broaden an individual’s momentary thought-action repertoire: Joy sparks the urge to play, interest sparks the urge to explore, contentment sparks the urge to savour and integrate, and love sparks a recurring cycle of each of these urges within safe, close relationships”* (Fredrickson, 2014).

Joy is herein defined as *“the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires”* (Merriam-Webster, n. d.). *“The feeling of wanting to give you are attention to something or wanting to be involved with and to discover more about something”* (Cambridge English Dictionary, n. d.) articulates the definition of interest. Contentment can be defined as *“happiness and satisfaction, often because you have everything you need”* (Cambridge English Dictionary, n. d.). And finally, love, with feelings of *“warm attachment, enthusiasm, or devotion”* (Merriam-Webster, n. d.) as definition.

Promising projections for changing food waste behaviour can also be derivative from the following two researches: Wong and his co-researchers found that goal attainment at work can be achieved through the expression and amplification of positive emotions (Wong, et. al, 2013). And, in a research from Youssef & Luthans it was found that positive emotions are improving employee’s attitude towards work, but also improve their performance (Youssef & Luthans, 2007).

Storytelling, if done correctly, has been described as emotionally engaging (McMaster University, 2013). This is directly achieved by the used vocabulary and terminology within the stories. People do not disregard food waste per se, but they have the natural human intention to reduce negative feelings (Graham-Rowe, et. al., 2014). A story that leaves them with a feeling of guilt or shame will consequently not result in the intended action. This determined the second sub-question of this thesis: To find the recommended positive copywriting terms for marketing.

2.3 Food waste businesses

Food waste initiatives are defined as a business or an institution that is proactively pursuing the reduction of global food waste and loss. The definition of food waste has already been introduced in the introduction of this thesis. Moreover, the definition of food loss describes *“food that – during its movement along the food supply chain – is unintentionally spilled,*

spoiled, or is otherwise lost or incurs a reduction in quality before it reaches its final product or retail stage” (Food and Business Knowledge Platform, n.d.).

This includes any food that occurred at some point in the food supply chain in a state to be recovered or disposed (EU FUSIONS, 2016). In this thesis food waste businesses will be synonym for profit-enterprises that use food waste in the context of the just defined status.

The promotion of using food waste is one of the major differentiators and marketing messages from these businesses.

3. Methodology

In order to find an answer to the question “How can the marketing tool storytelling help to reduce the amount of food waste in western developed world” a qualitative research was conducted.

To simplify the translation of data, in this thesis ‘food waste’ will be treated as if it was a brand. Moreover, to simplify wording, this thesis will refer always to ‘listening the story’ no matter if the content refers to a written, audio or cinematic story.

To act upon the problem of food waste it is necessary to get people to change their behaviour. This research aimed to investigate how storytelling can be used to encourage society to engage more upon the problem of food waste. In the introduction the word “empowering” was used in the context of stories and the underlying emotions of storytelling. In this thesis it will be used to express the activation of people. Moreover, it means that an empowering story is able to make the content relevant and intended behaviour interventions will therefore be more successful. The anticipated result of this research was to provide an insight for companies to promote their use of food waste in the most effective way possible. This section will introduce the applied methodology and elaborates the choice of materials that was used.

Because the problem of food waste is ongoing, it is necessary to better understand the possibilities of an intervention. Therefore, this thesis made use of a qualitative research paradigm. After collecting insights into the best practices of ‘storytelling’ for communication purposes, scientific sources were searched for advice on the most successful emotional approach. Based on these findings several food businesses were assessed. The research methodology of each sub-questions will be described individually in the following.

3.1 What are the recommendations for successful storytelling?

Millennials outgrew advertising strategies that were successful in the past. Rather than bragging and claims these customers want to be inspired (Simmons, 2016). The first sub-

question “What are the recommendations for successful storytelling?” researched the best practices of storytelling in order to establish knowledge about the do’s & don’ts of storytelling.

3.1.1 Methodology

During the preliminary research it became clear, that in order to give concise advice, a distinction between the more generic subject ‘storytelling’ and ‘brand storytelling’ can be made. “Storytelling is a form of interactive expression that engages an audience’s imagination. [...] it’s the writing and telling of stories” (Storyteller Agency, n.d.). Brand storytelling is then in particular considering the brand’s audiences opinions, problems and interests. “The ultimate goal is to engage an audience’s interest and imagination” (Storyteller Agency, n.d.). Because of this similarities, also general storytelling sources have been considered, however, sources specifically for brand/business storytelling have been preferred.

The aim of this sub-question was to develop a coding scheme with which stories about food waste could be analysed. Following the general storytelling theory, material about brand storytelling was collected with a deductive approach. Each research of a source followed a five-step plan: 1. Closely reading the source. 2. The storytelling elements were chosen to divide content into topics: ‘prework’, ‘medium’ and ‘storyline’. Storyline was again subdivided into ‘characters’, ‘conflict’, ‘premise’, ‘narrative/plot’ and ‘setting’. Subsequently, the source was marked accordingly. 3. These fragments were then placed in a table; Per topic, divided into columns. 4. Each topic was summarized in a few own words. Each source was worked through in this manner.

Finally, in step 5, all summaries, from different sources, about one topic were combined in a Microsoft Word document and a final summary with all key aspects was developed into one summary.

The chosen categories were established based on the found key elements of stories mentioned in the introduction.

The results were then used to create the themes on the x-axis of a coding scheme. The collection of various sources was considered appropriate, to convey a broad and complex understanding of the topic.

3.1.2 Material

Material for this bachelor thesis were secondary sources, using keywords like “brand storytelling best practices”, “how to brand storytelling” or also just “brand storytelling” and “business storytelling” to find them. Because many sources only covered storytelling in the context of online marketing, the terms “offline” and “product” were used in combination with the previously named keywords, too. The keyword research produced a collection of sources: Blogposts, website articles, whitepapers from large marketing companies and books that discussed this subject.

Additionally, available book summaries via “Blinkist” were used. This app recaps nonfictional books in 15-20-minutes summaries in text and audio format. The collection of now more than 3,000 books (2020), is based on direct collaborations with authors and bestseller lists. The books are summarised by experts from the field and fact-checked by editors before being published, in order to assure quality. This approach helped to remain in the scope of a bachelor thesis while considering more high-quality sources. Relevant book summaries were found with the app search function and the keyword “storytelling”.

A total of eleven sources were researched in the elaborated manner.

All chosen sources are not older than 5 years old. Some articles may have been established longer ago but were updated within the mentioned timeframe.

An example how the quality of sources was determined can be given by the example of ‘The Content Science Review’. The company is an award-winning digital magazine and educational platform for content strategies. This institution provides a statement of guidelines for its authors. According to this, the published articles are based on research papers and provide new insights on content-related topics in an original and relevant way. A full excerpt of their requirements can be found in the appendix. Moreover, their array of articles provides an extensive selection of related marketing topics. This justifies their good overview of the marketing sector with a sense for the importance of the bigger picture.

The results of this section can be found in chapter 4.1. The next chapter introduces the methodology and the material used to identify the emotions that influence humans to waste less food.

3.2 What are recommended, positive copywriting keywords for marketing?

Preliminary research about storytelling has identified emotions as the underlying force of the success of stories and being the cause for actions. The right words in stories are able to create emotions (Lindquist, 2015). Based on the findings of Russel, et. al., described in chapter 2.2, this part of the research was focused on advice for a positive communication language.

3.2.1 Methodology

In order to result with a list of promotional keywords that are acknowledged to lead to a feeling of positivity sources were discovered. This happened with keyword research and a generic search engine, like Google (www.google.com).

Similar to the method of sub-question one, a deductive approach was chosen. Due to the preliminary research the themes for positive keywords were established. To do so, the four categories of positive emotions, identified by Frederickson in the Broaden-and-Build theory (1998), were adopted: Joy, interest, contentment and love.

The sources were then 1. Closely read; 2. Titles and paragraph headers determined if the paragraph would contain keywords of the positive sphere. This determination and the matching to an applicable theme happened with a translation of the authors headers and subtitles, e.g. keywords under the header “Words that make people feel safe” would be placed in the theme contentment, or keywords under a header like “When you want to motivate or inspire” would be placed in the theme interest, etc.; 3. Keywords were highlighted in different colors; 4. The keywords were transferred into a table coherent to their theme; 5. This approach resulted in a comprehensive list, which combined all keywords from all sources, divided into the four themes; 6. Keywords that were named twice were deleted.

The end result was a list of 266 keywords recommended for copywriting. This list was then used as material for the third sub-question in a coding scheme. This approach will be described in the methodology section of sub-question 3.

3.2.2 Material

For this part of the thesis secondary sources were used. They have been discovered by keywords like “positive marketing language”, “copywriting keywords positive emotions” or “powerful marketing words”. This resulted in blog articles and whitepapers from marketing and copywriting companies, who use such content for their own marketing. Therefore, it was found to be an up-to-date and reliable source of information.

One example for an applicable source is “Referral Candy” (www.referralcandy.com), a marketing software company that provides an extensive collection of blog posts surrounding online marketing and in particular word-of-mouth marketing.

The list of words was used for a conclusion of what initiatives handling food waste can do to improve their external communication by the help of storytelling. This will be elaborated in detail in the following sub-chapter.

3.3 In which way do food waste businesses use the effectiveness of storytelling?

The sub-question “In which way do food waste businesses use the effectiveness of storytelling?” investigates the current actions of food waste initiatives in order to establish an understanding of what and how they execute their external communication.

In order to test the assumption that food waste businesses could improve their marketing by using more storytelling best practices four case studies were researched.

Purposive sampling was the chosen approach to business cases. Preselected criteria were, that the assessed businesses were trying to reduce global food waste with their operational activities. Other choosing criteria were that it is an existing business, three years or older, and still active. Furthermore, businesses were chosen only when there was an up-to-date website,

order to access some of their communication content. The data used, appeared in written format.

Only product-based food waste businesses were chosen. This improves the ability to compare businesses and individual approaches. Applicable companies were found within the first article that showed up in the search engine for the keywords “food waste business”. In this case it was an article from Fast Company (www.fastcompany.com) from the year 2019, introducing 20 promising food start-ups and their products. Four companies that matched the requirements were chosen. A description of the company profiles can be found at the end of this chapter.

- The Real Dill
- Rubies in the rubble
- WTRMLN WTR
- Renewal mill

First, website content from these cases was collected in Microsoft Word documents. Next to copy-pasted text from the homepage, content of the “about” sections and further linked websites was collected.

This material was then read closely and searched for the identified recommendations of storytelling. Content that matched the recommendations of the coding scheme, which was a product of the thematic verbal analysis of sub-question one, was highlighted. Within the coding scheme a note with “yes”, “no” or “partially” was made. Following each evaluation, a summary of the findings in own words was created. This approach allowed an overview of which aspects of the recommendations for successful storytelling were applied per business case.

After the research about storytelling best practices, the communication content was furthermore searched for how many of the recommended keywords were used. This was done by 1. preparing the text within a Microsoft Excel sheet; 2. Running a comparison test of the text against the keywords. This was done with a pivot table using the following formula:

<pre>=IF (ISNA (VLOOKUP ([text_word]; [keywords_range]; 2; FALSE)) = TRUE; "Not a Keyword";</pre>

Figure 2 - Microsoft Excel formula to filter keywords

3.3.1 Company Profile: The Real Dill

Founding year: 2012

Country: United States

Website: www.therealdill.com

The Real Dill started out producing pickles. Because of their aim to become a zero-waste company, they tried to find solutions for the by-products of the pickle production, e.g. cucumber-infused water. This resulted in a Bloody Mary mix, for which the company is nowadays even more famous (The Real Dill, 2020).

3.3.2 Company Profile: Rubies in the Rubble

Founding year: 2011

Country: United Kingdom

Website: www.rubiesintherubble.com

Rubies in the Rubble makes condiments from fresh fruits and vegetables that otherwise would have been wasted. Examples for this are bananas, pink onions, and tomatoes. Also, they make vegan mayo from aquafaba, the liquid from chickpea cans (Rubies in the Rubble, 2020).

3.3.3 Company Profile: WTRMLN WTR

Founding year: 2013

Country: United States

Website: www.wtrmlnwtr.com

WTRMLN WTR makes fruit juices from discarded watermelons (WTRMLN WTR, 2020).

3.3.4 Company Profile: Renewal Mill

Founding year: 2015

Country: United States

Website: www.renewalmill.com

Renewal Mill is upcycling by-products of food manufacturing into high-quality ingredients and finished products. The company transforms for example soy pulp (okara), from plant-based drinks, into flour. Their portfolio includes moreover potato peels, juice pulp, and almond pulp (Renewal Mill, 2020).

The results of the complete research will be elaborated in the following chapter.

4. Results

Storytelling was identified by many marketing experts as the most promising tool to receive customers attention – if done correctly. This is particularly the case because of the competition in the crowded media space and the dropping rates of attention spans.

4.1 What are the recommendations for successful storytelling?

First storytelling best practices recommendations were researched. The approach focused on the seven categories: Characters, Conflict, Premise, Plot, Setting, Prewrite and Medium.

The following results portray the opinion of several sources, including blog posts, whitepapers and books of current marketing and storytelling experts. In these sources they described the underlying success factors for storytelling. The summaries depict general recommendations.

4.1.1 Character

With the findings related to the characters of a story the following summary was established:

- 1- Basically, all considered sources agreed on the point that a good story needs a main character who is real and approachable in his behavior and thoughts. This means the character shows flaws, desires, personality traits, problems, goals and values that become apparent within the situations the character is exposed to. This “humanizing” can be supported by giving the character a name. Another approach might be to use a real customer whose story can be adapted.
- 2- If the story is meant to appeal a broad target group, character traits that are not too extreme are considered to work better.
- 3- A good character should throughout the story by facing his/her flaws.
- 4- The sources disagreed on the minimum number of characters. This is either one or two. The introduction of these characters should follow the order of their importance. Speaking for the use of a minimum of two characters is the recommendation of another source that recommends the interplay of pro- and antagonist.

- 5- There was also a disagreement about the hero of a story: While one source recommended to make the benefit the hero, several other sources advice against this approach and recommended to make a target persona the hero.
- 6- Protagonist and antagonist should be equipped with a balanced array of skills. They differ in the extent of introduction of character.

4.1.2 Conflict

With the findings related to the conflict in a story the following summary was established:

- 1- A story needs a conflict. This should be one that seems rational and coherent to the storyline and triggers emotions. E.g. challenging values or beliefs, difference in interests, etc.
- 2- The hero needs to be connected to the conflict for reasonable reasons, e.g. protagonist against antagonist.
- 3- The outcome must be unclear, yet the conflict drives the story towards the eventual obstacle. After the conflict is resolved a change must have happened.
- 4- The conflict is connected to the premise of a story.

4.1.3 Premise

With the findings related to the premise of a story the following summary was established:

- 1- Several sources agreed on the fact that the premise of a story needs to be simple to grasp. Therefore, also logical woven into the story.
- 2- Another aspect several sources mentioned repeatedly was the inclusion of a call-to-action that underlines the premise. This can be linked to the recommendation of writing a story with the premise as reason.

- 3- The story can help to introduce the audience to take a new perspective on the premise.
- 4- The premise should be logical, meaningful and positive: motivation, hope, benefits, etc.

4.1.4 Plot

With the findings related to the plot of a story the following summary was established:

- 1- Should be structured with a classic act structure. Sources disagree in segmenting it into 3 or 5 acts. However, they basically concur about the requirement of a beginning with an introduction into the situation (=context), the most elaborated middle that describes the progress of the conflict and eventually leads into the crisis, and an ending with the changed status.
- 2- The change that is described is a sequence of matching situations, however, was not expected and can be even shocking. This part is related to the premise.
- 3- Every part of the story reveals more information, bit by bit caused by the actions rather than spoken words. The level of details should be limited to the minimum. One source however recommended the use of additional unique details that make a story more memorable.
- 4- The storyline should trigger emotions, e.g. by embracing vulnerability and the human side of the characters.
- 5- Develops in a certain pace that matches the story complexity and level of detail.
- 6- Pessimism, conflicting topics and humor are not recommended to be used by beginning storytellers.

4.1.5 Setting

With the findings related to the setting of a story the following summary was established:

- 1- As mentioned in the plot, also in regard to the description of the setting, sources agreed on keeping the details to a minimum. However, it should not be neglected that the description of a place can say a lot about a character.
- 2- Situations of a story should appear realistic, natural and familiar to appeal a larger target group. E.g. customer's stories, stories from real life are good source for this.
- 3- Situations should be simplified to not distract from the real premise of a story.
- 4- Where, who, what should be introduced in the beginning, to quickly make clear what the quest pro- and antagonist are fighting about and about the non-/fiction of the story.

4.1.6 Prework

With the findings related to the prework for a story the following summary was established:

- 1- Work out target persona
- 2- Work out the brand mission, vision, USP
- 3- Work out the premise
- 4- Focus on a good start
- 5- Collect story worthy ideas
- 6- Rework stories based on the feedback received

4.1.7 Medium

With the findings related to the medium for a story the following summary was established:

1. Written
 - Blog
 - Website
 - Book
 - presentation
2. Audio
 - presentation
3. Visual
 - Image
 - Postcard
 - Presentation
 - Video
 - Game
4. Can support the future business strategy.
5. Digital stories are most expensive but most effective.
6. The promotion of stories is important for their success.
7. Combining media and the depicted story formats, increases the overall effectiveness.
8. Companies should consider story listening as counterapproach for storytelling.
9. Titles with goal-oriented keywords rank higher in lists (SEO).

Each single of these findings was transferred into a single column in a Microsoft Excel sheet in order to simplify the visualization and comparability of the third sub-question.

4.2 What are recommended, positive keywords for marketing?

The second part of the literature research of this thesis was about positive keywords.

The following keywords were found on blog posts of copywriters and marketers. The list is extensive yet does only display a fraction of available material

.

The described research resulted in the following list of 266 keywords. They were found to match the themes joy, interest, contentment and love, introduced in the broaden-and-build theory by Frederickson (1998). The keywords are listed within their identified theme.

4.2.1 Joy

The identified keywords under the theme 'joy' are the following. In sub-question 3 this section will be marked in green.

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| 1) Advanced | 16) invite only | 30) Success |
| 2) Bargain | 17) luxurious | 31) Triumph |
| 3) Better | 18) More | 32) Truth |
| 4) Bonus | 19) Never | 33) Ultra |
| 5) Brand-new | 20) New | 34) Unbelievable |
| 6) Brilliant | 21) now | 35) Unicorn |
| 7) Cosmic | 22) Premium | 36) Wealth |
| 8) Dazzling | 23) Professional | 37) Wealthy |
| 9) Exclusive | 24) Ravishing | 38) Zesty |
| 10) Free | 25) Remarkable | |
| 11) Fresh | 26) shop now | |
| 12) Honeyed | 27) Smashing | |
| 13) Huge | 28) Special | |
| 14) immediately | 29) State-of-the-art | |
| 15) instantly | | |

Figure 3 - List of keywords in the context of 'joy'

4.2.2 Interest

The identified keywords under the theme 'interest' are the following. In sub-question 3 this section will be marked in purple.

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1) Act now | 43) How to | 88) Secret |
| 2) Alternate | 44) Hurry | 89) Select |
| 3) Amazing | 45) Hush-hush | 90) Sensational |
| 4) Announcing | 46) Imagine | 91) Soon |
| 5) Astonishing | 47) Immediately | 92) Start |
| 6) Astounding | 48) Improvement | 93) Startling |
| 7) Authentic | 49) Incredible | 94) Stop |
| 8) Because | 50) Insider | 95) Strange |
| 9) Behind the scenes | 51) Inspire | 96) Suddenly |
| 10) Bold | 52) Instant | 97) Supernova |

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 11) Breakthrough | 53) Instantaneously | 98) Surging |
| 12) Buy one, get one | 54) Instantly | 99) Surprising |
| 13) Caused by | 55) Introducing | 100) Temporary |
| 14) Challenge | 56) Just | 101) Temptation |
| 15) Compare | 57) Last | 102) Tempting |
| 16) Complimentary | 58) Last Chance | 103) this |
| 17) Concealed | 59) learn more | 104) time |
| 18) Confession | 60) Limited | 105) Tried to hide |
| 19) Confidential | 61) Little-known | 106) Unauthorized |
| 20) Controversial | 62) Magic | 107) Unconventional |
| 21) cover-up | 63) Members | 108) Undercover |
| 22) Create | 64) Miracle | 109) Underground |
| 23) Daring | 65) Never again | 110) Unexpected |
| 24) Deadline | 66) New | 111) Unique |
| 25) Direct | 67) Now | 112) Unlock |
| 26) Discover | 68) Obsession | 113) Unspoken |
| 27) Edition | 69) Off the record | 114) Unsurpassed |
| 28) Epic | 70) Off-limits | 115) Unusual |
| 29) Exciting | 71) Offer | 116) Wanted |
| 30) Exclusive | 72) Only | 117) Welcome |
| 31) Exotic | 73) Outlawed | 118) Withheld |
| 32) Expires | 74) Pioneering | |
| 33) Explosive | 75) Polarizing | |
| 34) Extraordinary | 76) Private | |
| 35) Fast | 77) Quick | |
| 36) Few | 78) Rare | |
| 37) Final | 79) Release | |
| 38) Forbidden | 80) Remarkable | |
| 39) Forgotten | 81) Restricted | |
| 40) Free | 82) Results | |
| 41) Going-fast | 83) Revealed | |
| 42) Hidden | 84) Revolutionary | |
| | 85) Running | |
| | 86) Running Out | |
| | 87) Scarce | |

Figure 4 - List of keywords in the context of 'interest'

4.2.3 Contentment

The identified keywords under the theme 'contentment' are the following. In sub-question 3 this section will be marked in turquoise.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1) % | 34) Genuine | 67) Questions |
| 2) \$ | 35) Guarantee | 68) Real results |
| 3) 100% money-back guarantee | 36) Hand-crafted | 69) Reduced |
| 4) Affordable | 37) Highest | 70) Risk-free |
| 5) Anonymous | 38) Immediately | 71) Rock-solid |
| 6) Attached | 39) Impactful | 72) Safe |
| 7) Authentic | 40) Improved | 73) Safety |
| 8) Backed | 41) Increase | 74) Satisfaction |
| 9) Bargain | 42) Ironclad | 75) Save |
| 10) Best-seller | 43) Join | 76) Scientific |
| 11) Bonus | 44) Lifetime | 77) Secure |
| 12) Can | 45) Light | 78) Simple |
| 13) Care | 46) Lowest | 79) Small-batches |
| 14) Certified | 47) Lucrative | 80) Smooth |
| 15) Cheap | 48) Massive | 81) Spick-and-span |
| 16) Cinch | 49) Money | 82) Straight-forward |
| 17) Convenient | 50) Money back | 83) Strings |
| 18) Convert | 51) No | 84) Tested |
| 19) Deal | 52) No obligation | 85) The |
| 20) Dependable | 53) No risk | 86) Unconditional |
| 21) Detailed | 54) No strings attached | 87) Unique |
| 22) Discount | 55) no-fuss | 88) Value |
| 23) Double | 56) Obligation | 89) Verified |
| 24) Easy | 57) Official | 90) Verify |
| 25) Effective | 58) Painless | |
| 26) Elite | 59) Pledge | |
| 27) Endorsed | 60) Powerful | |
| 28) Essential | 61) Premium | |
| 29) Everything included | 62) Pristine | |
| 30) Everything you need | 63) Privacy | |
| 31) Expert | 64) Promise | |
| 32) Forever | 65) Protected | |
| 33) Free | 66) Proven | |

Figure 5 - List of keywords in the context of 'contentment'

4.2.4 Love

The identified keywords under the theme 'love' are the following. In sub-question 3 this section will be marked in red.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1) Ask for an Invitation | 8) Compelling | 14) Love |
| 2) Be one of the few | 9) Dream | 15) Members Only |
| 3) Be the first to hear about | 10) Family | 16) Staggering |
| 4) Become an insider | 11) Health | 17) Thank you |
| 5) Bulletproof | 12) Heaven | 18) Unconditional |
| 6) Children | 13) Limited | 19) You |
| 7) Class full | | |

Figure 6 - List of keywords in the context of 'love'

4.3 In which way do food waste businesses use the effectiveness of storytelling?

The four food waste businesses, introduced in chapter 3.3, were subsequently checked upon the found information. First the storytelling coding schema was placed against the business cases, before their communication content was searched for implemented keywords.

4.3.1 Storytelling coding scheme

The results of implemented storytelling techniques are displayed in figure 3.

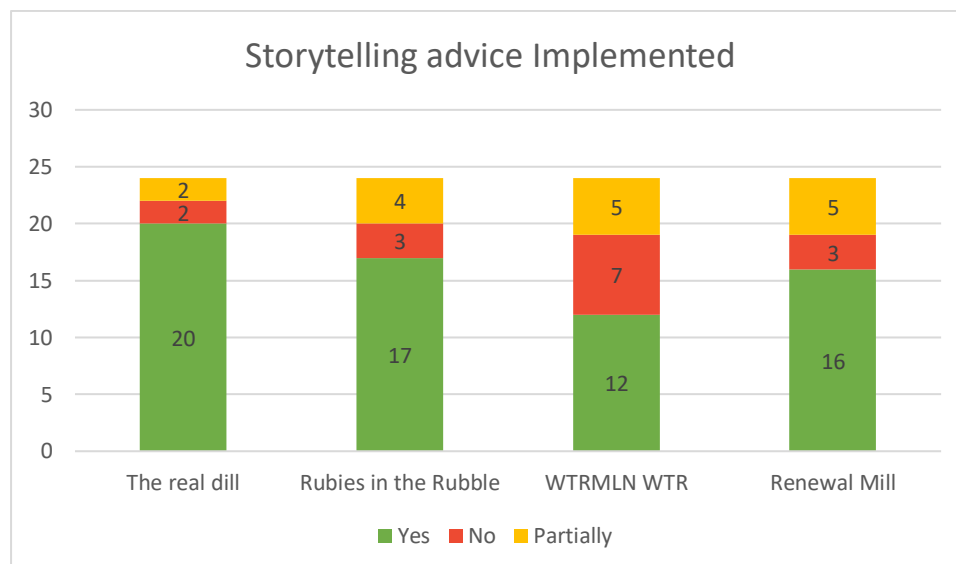


Figure 7 - Overview of implemented storytelling best practices per company

All four compared businesses implemented storytelling techniques. All of them implemented a minimum of half the recommended tasks. Most recommendations were found with 'The

Real Dill', with 20 of the 24 criteria. "WTRMLN WTR" scored the lowest number with 12 out of 24. All cases had recommendations that were not applied or only partially. There numbers of partially implemented and not implemented is nearly equal, differing in only one number. Rubies in the Rubble and Renewal Mill have similar results with around 2/3 storytelling recommendations implemented.

Figure 4 expresses more details about which techniques are implemented. As described in the Methodology section of this paper, storytelling suggestions were divided in the seven themes 'character', 'conflict', 'premise', 'plot', 'setting', 'prework' and 'medium'. Because of the research design only the first five were used to check upon the storytelling efforts of food waste businesses. The results of each section will be described individually.

CHARACTER	real character	"normal" characters	developing character	1-2 characters min.	hero is the target group	pro- & antagonist are similarly equipped
The real dill	yes	yes	yes	yes	partially	no
Rubies in the Rubble	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	partially
WTRMLN WTR	no	partially	partially	yes	no	yes
Renewal Mill	yes	yes	yes	yes	partially	no

Figure 8 - Table with detailed results of implemented storytelling best practices for characters

According to the results, most businesses use realistic characters that developed over the progress of the story. Their actions and reactions are usually understandable and comprehensible. Alone in the story of WTRMLN WTR this was not the case. All cases work with a minimum of 1 character, but in none of the businesses the target group is the hero of the story. The companies use different hero profiles. Also, the skill portfolio and knowledge of pro- and antagonist are not similar.

CONFLICT	rational/coherent conflict	is connected to hero	unclear outcome	connected to the premise
The real dill	yes	yes	yes	yes
Rubies in the Rubble	yes	yes	partially	yes
WTRMLN WTR	yes	yes	yes	yes
Renewal Mill	yes	yes	no	yes

Figure 9 – Table with detailed results of implemented storytelling best practices for the conflict

The recommendations about the conflict of a story received are overall implemented most. The conflict is in all cases connected to the hero and the premise, and the topic of conflict is from rational nature and coherent with the rest of the story. Alone Renewal Mill did not use the potential to create tension by keeping the end unclear throughout the story but revealed it already throughout the narrative.

PREMISE	clear and logical	contains a CTA	may offers a new perspective	meaningful & positive
The Real Dill	partially	no	yes	yes
Rubies in the Rubble	partially	partially	yes	yes
WTRMLN WTR	yes	no	yes	yes
Renewal Mill	yes	no	yes	yes

Figure 10 - Table with detailed results of implemented storytelling best practices for the premise

While all companies implement a meaningful and positive premise in their stories, none of them was able to express a clear call-to-action. They all use a logical premise as well, only The Real Dill and Rubies in the Rubble were struggling with this. Thanks to their work with food waste they are all able to offer a new perspective on the topic.

PLOT	classic act structure	describing a change	reveals information bit by bit	triggers emotions	pace matches story complexity	difficult topics are avoided
The Real Dill	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Rubies in the Rubble	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
WTRMLN WTR	no	yes	yes	partially	partially	yes
Renewal Mill	partially	partially	partially	partially	yes	yes

Figure 11 - Table with detailed results of implemented storytelling best practices of the story plot

Half of the assessed cases implements the classic act structure of Aristoteles, WTRMLN WTR completely neglects this structure. No company uses difficult topics in their stories, and all of them have either implemented or partially implemented the recommendations for the description of a change and the phasal reveal of details and information. With their story The Real Dill and Rubies in the Rubble are able to trigger emotional connection with the audience while this only works partially for WTRMLN WTR and Renewal Mill. Rubies in the Rubble is the only business struggling to match the complexity with the pace of their story.

SETTING	only crucial details	realistic and familiar	simplified world	is established in the beginning
The Real Dill	yes	yes	yes	yes
Rubies in the Rubble	no	yes	yes	yes
WTRMLN WTR	no	no	partially	no
Renewal Mill	yes	yes	yes	yes

Figure 12 - Table with detailed results of implemented storytelling best practices of the story setting

The four food waste businesses all work with a somewhat simplified world in their storyline. With the exception of WTRMLN WTR all of them establish a realistic story world in the first part of the story. More than the crucial details are provided by Rubies in the Rubble and WTRMLN WTR. In general, WTRMLN WTR did not implement any of the recommended storytelling best practices in a proper extent.

4.3.2 Keyword research

The pie chart in figure 13 depicts the choice of keywords throughout all assessed business cases.

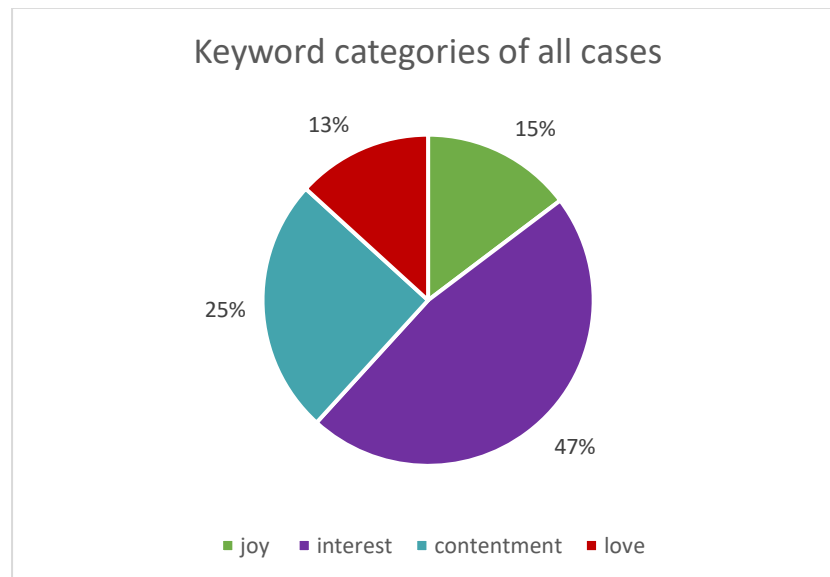


Figure 13 - Keyword category results from all case studies combined

The evaluated food waste businesses used with 47% nearly half of their keywords from the spectrum of 'interest'. One quarter of the positive emotional keywords refers to 'contentment' keywords. 'Joy' and 'love' follow with 15% and 13%.

The Real Dill

Key word found return keyword	COUNTA of Key word found return keyword
Care	1
Dream	1
Easy	1
Family	1
free	1
Incredible	1
Just	3
More	2
New	1
No	1
Obsession	2
Only	1
Results	1
Soon	1
Special	1
Start	1
THE	11
this	4
time	2
Unbelievable	1
You	3
Not a Keyword	384
Grand Total	425
identified keywords	41
	9,6

Figure 14 - Number of keywords used by 'The Real Dill'

The Real Dill has the second highest number of keywords implemented. The text analysed contained in total 425 words, 41 of them were identified from the list of triggering keywords. This results in a keyword frequency of 9.6%. 21 different keywords were identified, “the” was with 11 mentions the most often used of them. 14 keywords were only used once throughout the analysed text, 7 had multiple references.

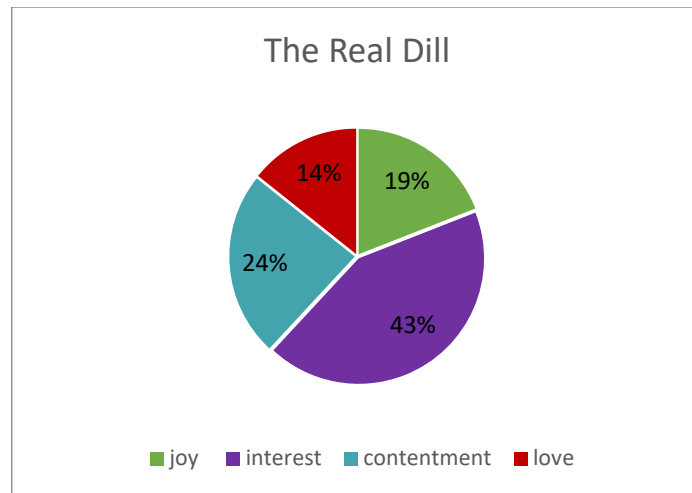


Figure 15 - Keyword category result of 'The Real Dill'

Following the trend of the overall picture, the majority of keywords was from interest-related keywords (47%). Nearly one quarter is contentment keywords (24%), followed by joy (19%) and love (14%).

Rubies in the Rubble

Key word found return keyword	COUNTA of Key word found return keyword
\$	1
Because	6
Can	5
Care	1
Discover	1
Edition	1
Fast	1
Fresh	1
Just	3
Limited	1
More	5
New	1
No	1
Pioneering	1
Stop	1
THE	40
this	9
time	1
Unusual	1
You	2
Not a Keyword	901
Grand Total	984
identified keywords	83
	8,4

Figure 16 - Number of keywords used by 'Rubies in the Rubble'

Rubies in the Rubble implemented 83 keywords in a text of 984 words, resulting in an overall frequency of 8.4%. 20 different keywords were identified, “the” was with 40 mentions outstanding in its frequency, followed by “this” with 9 mentions, and “because” with 6 mentions. 13 keywords were single mentioned, 7 had multiple references.

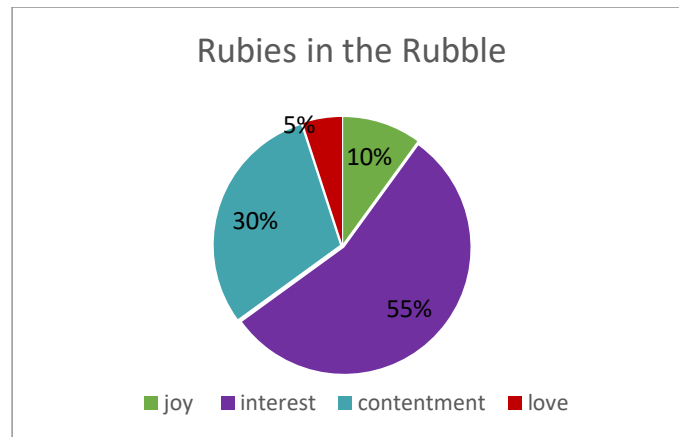


Figure 17 - Keyword category results of "Rubies in the Rubble"

Rubies in the Rubble used a clear majority of interest-triggering positive keywords (55%). Also, the share of contentment keywords is higher than in the remaining cases (30%). Joy (10%) and love (5%) fill the remaining pie chart.

WTRMLN WTR

Key word found return keyword	COUNTA of Key word found return keyword
Because	1
Better	1
Create	1
Dream	1
Exciting	1
Family	1
Highest	2
Magic	2
More	2
New	2
No	1
THE	27
this	1
You	10
Not a Keyword	482
Grand Total	535
identified keywords	53
	9,9

Figure 18 - Number of keywords used by 'WTRMLN WTR'

In a text of 535 words, 53 of them were on the list of established keywords. This makes the case of WTRMLN WTR, with 9.9% keyword frequency, the one with the highest frequency. 6 keywords were used multiple times throughout the text, with "the" and "you" most often named. 8 keywords were only mentioned once.

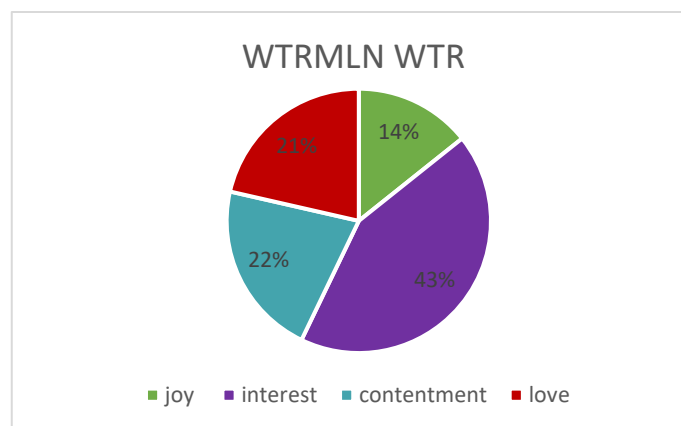


Figure 19 - Keyword category results of "WTRMLN WTR"

The case of WTRMLN WTR was the only case with more keywords in the category love (21%) than joy (14%). This sets this section also closer to contentment, which only scored 1% more than love, resulting in 22%. Highest share is, as in the other cases, interest with 43%.

Renewal Mill

Key word found return keyword	COUNTA of Key word found return keyword
Affordable	1
Better	2
Can	1
Create	1
Family	1
Health	1
Highest	1
Just	4
Last	1
Running	1
Soon	1
THE	35
this	3
Not a Keyword	726
Grand Total	779
identified keywords	53
	6,8

Figure 20 - Number of keywords used by 'Renewal Mill'

Renewal Mill has the lowest frequency of keywords throughout the analysed text. The evaluated content held 779 words of which 726 were not identified keywords from the established list. 4 keywords were mentioned several times, “the” with 35 times.

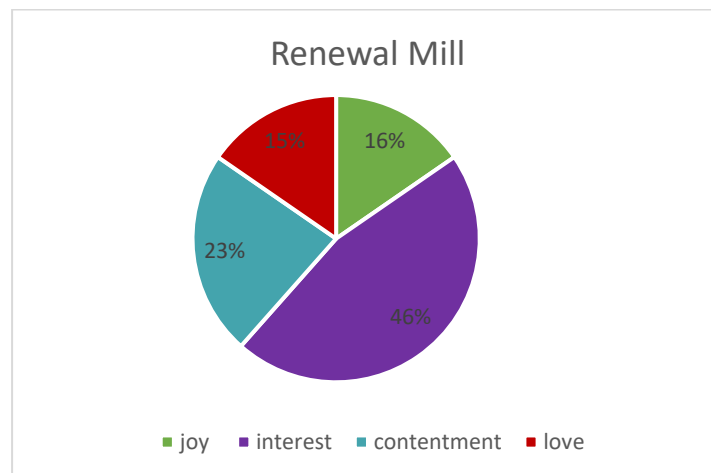


Figure 21 - Keyword category results of 'Renewal Mill'

Also, Renewal Mill made most use of interest-related keywords (46%). In decreasing order follow keywords related to contentment (23%), joy (16%) and love (15%).

The Real Dill has scored in consideration of both researched aspects the highest scores. Most storytelling aspects have been found in this case and the company achieved the second highest number of keywords. While WTRMLN WTR did use in relation to the text most keywords, they adopted only 50% of the storytelling recommendations.

Using the target group as the hero of the story was not used by any of the businesses, neither was a CTA implemented.

5. Discussion of results

A general recommendation for storytelling is the organized, realistic, logic nature, that should be found in all its aspects of a story. Only if the audience understands what, why and how things evolve, the story will become understandable and therefore engaging. While this may sound boring at first, a well-established conflict and premise helps to maintain the tension. A good prework and story preparation will pay off in developing characters, a senseful storyline and clear aim. While sensible topics should be avoided, human traits and shortcomings promote emotional engagement of the audience. Giving the audience an actionable plan at the end of a story could be the gamechanger for food waste businesses. It should be taken into consideration that the here introduced guidelines only cover the basics of storytelling.

In regards of recommended copywriting keywords, the themes joy, interest, contentment and love were chosen based on Frederickson's research (Frederickson, 2014), but are subject of change, because the whole field of emotions is not yet fully discovered. Theories differ according to an individual's beliefs. Similar categories have been found with other theorists, however, depending on the researcher the themes may be subject of change in another, similar research approach. Because of the discovered, sheer endless supply of sources for keywords, the specification of a theme needs to be considered to ensure the quality of implemented keywords. Moreover, while storytelling is writing for people, keywords are often connected to search engine optimization (SEO). Questioning the reliability of single keywords to express the intended emotions.

When keywords and storytelling guidelines were then tested on the real-world cases some additional insights about their effectiveness were made. First of all, the results underly the differing approach and expertise in marketing within the companies, which is understood to have had an impact on the results.

The research about the existence of applied storytelling best practices does not simultaneously express if the businesses made an active choice for storytelling as the marketing approach. It is possible that the implemented storytelling elements were added by

default, and storytelling practices were not actively pursued. However, the results of this part of the research express that businesses naturally implement many aspects.

All businesses seemed to struggle to uncover the similar skill set of pro- and antagonist, which could be related to their choice of hero figure. Most of them placed their company as a hero of the story, with the antagonist 'food waste'. This practice is understandable, because food waste is caused by the whole of society. It is difficult to put this into a polite context that does not express blame or superiority. The missing CTA is a sign that there was no active storytelling approach. In concern for the topic, this would, however, be a useful addition to the stories of food waste businesses.

Also, the results present "the", "this", "you" and "because" as most frequently used keywords. Nevertheless, the significance of this result is questionable. Standing alone, these keywords seem limited in their capacity to be engaging and moving.

It was found that most businesses used a majority of interest triggering keywords. It is assumed that the acknowledgement of food waste being a neglected topic is the reason behind this approach. Therefore, the choice of interest-triggering keywords would be a logical consequence. The research design was not established in a way to identify keywords stated in a particular context only. A good example therefore is "the". While these three letters can point out an underlying extra in the right context, it is also a standard element of sentences. Therefore, the results may be biased. Also, words that are related to the captured keywords were not considered in the performed research methodology and have therefore been potentially neglected in the results.

These results point out that it is difficult to define what an emotional keyword is, and that there might be the need to expand the approach into finding emotionally triggering sentence structures, rather than just single words.

Language needs special attention. The research design relied on subjective opinions about text excerpts. Because the author is not a native speaker the identified paragraphs of proof may be a point for discussion. Language holds another consideration, because emotions are shaped by culture and language. Some languages have a far more extensive vocabulary for emotional keywords than others. The established array of keywords is therefore limited for English-speaking businesses. Depending on the additionally implemented languages also multilingual content may suffer in its emotional engagement for this reason.

This research is grounded on theory-based research, an iterative process that shaped the outline of the research over time. In order to create a coherent research adjustment to the methodology had been made. Findings of emotions, in particular, led to the conclusion that research focused on this thematic would have required more extensive research than possible within the framework of a bachelor thesis. This is why the second sub-question was adapted to this realization. Following, also the third sub-question was impacted by this decision.

During the process of researching case studies about applied storytelling practices, it became clear that the sections prework and medium were difficult to assess in the outline of this research. Therefore, the found recommendations were kept and introduced in sub-question 1, however, the cases were not checked upon these details. It would require direct insights from the businesses; however, this was not part of the methodology of this research design. This points out another aspect for consideration: The cases provided data in a differing level of detail and outline. It is contemplated to have had an impact on the results.

Another point of consideration is the chosen framework of emotion-action approach. As introduced in the theoretical framework, there are different theories about the connection between actions and emotions. The results could look completely different to the ones conducted, if another framework was chosen, wherefore, a different research methodology could occur.

A general point at the end: When establishing the research methodology, the author was subject to basic human error and psychology: Results rely on the accuracy of data entry and formula formatting. Although care has been taken to avoid mistakes, the amount of manual data entry makes the occurrence of errors possible. Also, the influence of media, an established finding in the “agenda-setting theory” (McCombs, et. al., 1997) was considered: This research points out that media influences attitudes, no matter if an opinion was actively issued in words. The author conducted this research with the awareness of this and tried to remain objective. During the preliminary and main research, a general search engine like Google was used. The algorithm of this search engine may have had an influence on the results.

6. Conclusion

There is a wide range of recommendations for storytelling. However, they all agree on understandable, logical and familiar structures throughout the story elements. If the reason for telling the story gets through to the audience, a story will be successful and engaging. A good story is only the end result, and providing only a glimpse, of the hard work that went into it. The guidelines express, that there is a complex and extensive array of items and subjects to be considered, before even picking up a pen and a paper.

The outline of this research was not detailed enough to provide answers to which keywords make a difference to trigger emotions about food waste. As discussed in the previous section, it might also be a whole sentence that makes the emotion flow. However, this was not part of this thesis but could be a starting point for further research. The overall keywords appeared to be very general, therefore, more research about more precise keywords, that work best for food waste, is recommended. Moreover, while this research acknowledged the presence of keywords, it did not provide advice on the quantity.

Food businesses are different in their approach. Some focus more on the waste aspect than others. This naturally changes the content marketing strategy. It means, that storytelling is not the only applicable way to promote food waste businesses. While there were several applied storytelling aspects found throughout the food waste business cases, no story alone could make a business succeed, it is dependent also on the people, the circumstances and the product. The results express that the topic 'food waste' provides a complex theme ground to establish a motivational yet real and confronting set up for a story.

Adopting the guidelines for storytelling is useful as long as the story is not interfering with other objectives of the company. This should be subject to business internal discussion in every individual case. After all, there are several things food businesses can do with storytelling to activate more people to cut down food waste. Putting work and attention to telling a story about food waste will pay off in more awareness about where and when it occurs; eventually making society understand the potential that is wasted day by day.

7. Recommendation

If a food waste business wants to make use of storytelling several things should be considered: Good storytelling practices seem more relevant than many keywords. This is backed by the findings from the case studies. Even though the case of WTRMLN WTR was able to obtain a high keyword frequency, the material only held a limited amount of recommended storytelling practices. The content of this story was rather confusing than emotionally engaging. Leading to the conclusion that the storytelling practices are more important than emotional keywords. This theory gets supported by the findings of The Real Dill: This company reached a slightly lower keyword frequency but had most storytelling best practices (20/24) applied. The content was easier to read, and the information stickier.

Food waste businesses may want to consider the use of keywords related to love, joy and contentment rather than interest. While it is a logical approach, changing the atmosphere around food waste is not only a way to differentiate a business, but may also be more applicable for food waste. After all, these businesses try to sell a safe, lovable and joy-brining product. Solely relying on the interest of people to eat rescued food may not do the trick after all.

In this thesis, alone the business stories were subject of consideration, though, especially rescued ingredients often have a compelling and unique story to tell. Food waste businesses may consider using storytelling best practices in their product section. This could help to educate people about the edibility of their ingredients and ensures, in an entertaining way, that food safety requirements are met.

Implementing best practices for storytelling seems to result in clear stories that are easy to understand. The established coding scheme, and in particular the underlying research summary, can be a basic guideline for everyone who wants to tell a story. Missing in almost all cases was the call-to-action because it was pointed out to be an important aspect of stories. The lack of active prevention of food waste, however, would require this though. Food businesses are advised to implement a CTA in order to improve their brand stories.

Also, the application of story listening, meaning engaging customers to tell their stories can not only result in higher brand loyalty but is also a great source for business marketers for new stories. The research necessary for telling good stories, about the correct target group, the right medium, realistic conflicts, can also help businesses to better understand their own position and can be source for strategic planning. This makes storytelling an even more interesting tool.

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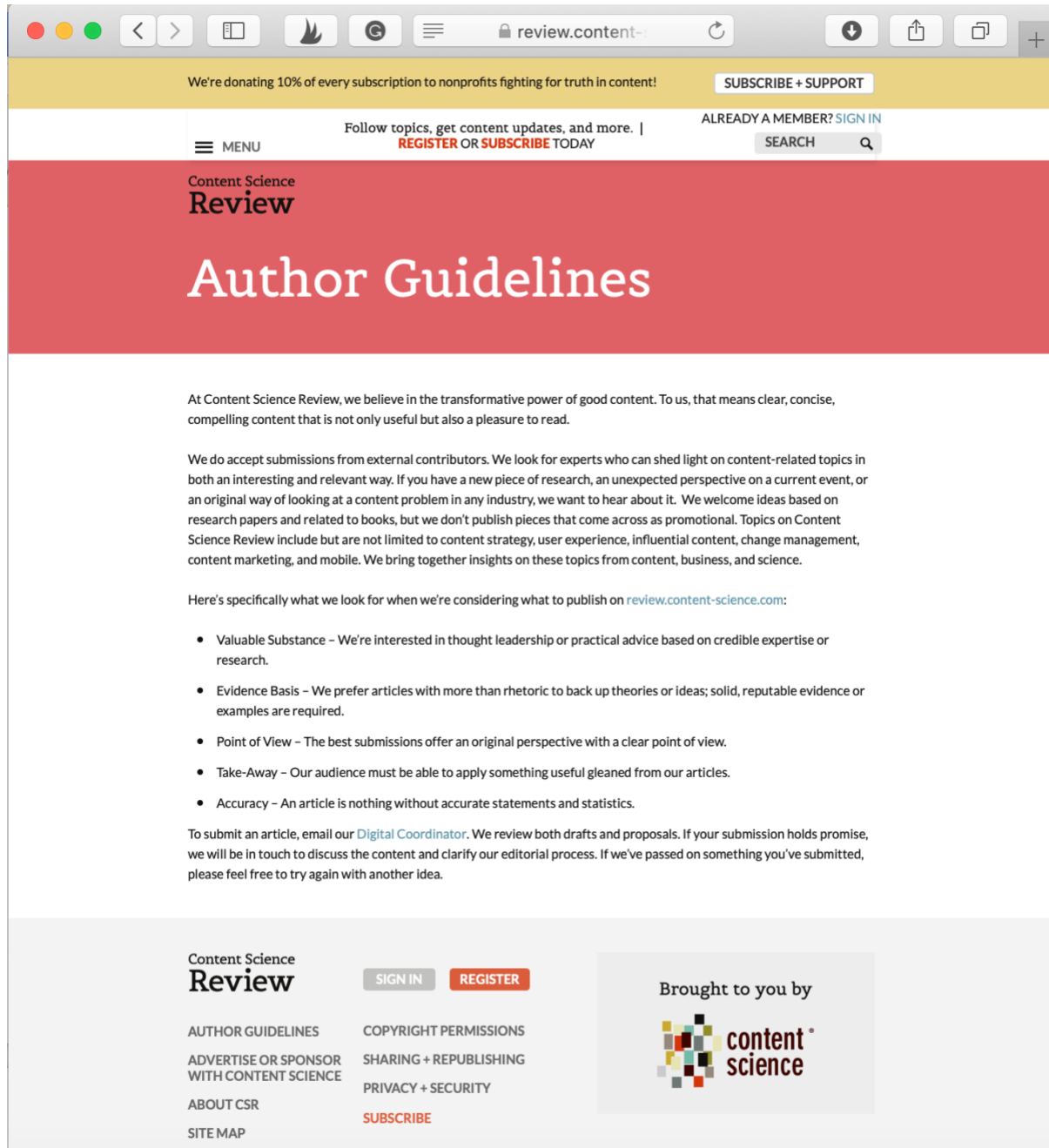
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Appendices

Appendix 1

Screenshot of the “Content Science Review” Author Guidelines. Taken on March, 24, 2020 from <https://review.content-science.com/author-guidelines/>



Appendix 2

Research approach for the storytelling guidelines in its sub-establishment.

After reading the content closely, excerpts of the text were highlighted in colours. These excerpts were then copy-pasted into a table. In the last column of this table a summary was made of the information obtained. The following is an example of such table.

Storyline	Character ...	-	-
	Conflict ...	-	-
	Premise ...	worth a million slogans like, "We value our employees." It shows people a company's true values with actions, not just words triumphs in the battle the moral of your story follow precautionary	Premise should be found back in the real actions of a company.
	Plot ...	: context, action and a result a beginning, middle and end the action hero battles against her enemies don't overburden your audience with details good mixture of success and failure for your hero result the conclusion to your story bit of surprise adding surprise to the end. Retain their memory of the story.	Build up with a beginning, that gives the context, a middle that develops the action, and an end that gives the result of the action. The context should be precise and not too detailed. The action equals a battle of the hero against the enemy. Along the battle, a balance between success and failure, can be shocking. The result equals the conclusion of the story, that holds a bit of surprise

	Setting ...	<p>these stories are a great way for consumers to share insights</p> <p>know what's going</p> <p>where and when</p> <p>discern whether the story is true or hypothetical</p> <p>protagonist</p> <p>antagonist</p> <p>ensure that your audience can relate to your story as much as possible.</p> <p>shocking action</p> <p>into the beginning</p>	<p>Consumer-centric stories are great, e.g. their experiences/their life, where they can find themselves. A setting consists of knowing who does what, where and when. Allowing a conclusion if it's fiction or reality. Introduce pro- and antagonist. The setting should be established in the beginning of a story,</p>
Pework	Pework ...	<p>you could create a "story box" on your website</p> <p>encourage them to share their stories</p> <p>which emotional connections to make from customer feedback,</p> <p>detailing people's fears</p>	<p>To collect consumer stories, use a story box, review fields etc., these tools should be promoted.</p>
Medium	Medium ...	<p>anyone can tell and learn from a story</p> <p>transfix anyone, regardless of age or education.</p> <p>appeal to every</p> <p>type of learner</p> <p>understand what is really expected of them</p> <p>shares stories on their websites</p> <p>bonding session</p>	<p>Can be used on websites, in group discussions, presentations.</p>

After all sources were summarized in this way, the category summaries were brought together in a new document. From these individual summaries an overall summary was established.

The following displays this approach for the category 'characters.

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Characters need to act "normal"/with a good reasoning

When they are real and believable the audience feels along and roots with them. It is not necessary that audience likes the character.

Audience tends to bond with the underdogs that they root for to level up.

Real persons score different levels of a mix of conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and extraversion. Considering these traits allows a marketer to create realistic choices and reactions of the character when it is exposed to sudden changes that challenge their beliefs

Audience tries to see the character as one of our own. By mentally connecting to a personality we care more about their fate.

A story needs a minimum of one character, who's the direct link to the audience. A universal character allows more people to find themselves in there (universal human traits, behaviours) Giving characters names makes them more human.

In order to cast the audience into a position where they take the view of the story hero, a story must be formed in a way that it gives the opportunity to follow the train of thought. The character should be one the audience can look up to because the character is facing their flaws.

Their past is the driver for using the brands products – showcasing their problems and pain points that (→ matching shoes) are the same as the ones of the audience.

Considering a backstory of the character makes their present actions more believable. They must have their own goals to be considered.

These believes should be revealed in actions not in a monologue, and always act accordingly in order to not confuse.

The main character needs to be committed to do something outstanding. Something that is yet in human reach, flaws can help to humanize him/her.

The flaws of a person are hindering the reach of a goal.

Characters should appear, depending on how important they are for the premise, because many details about an unimportant character confuse/distract/bore the storyline.

There's a hero, that's not the brand but a character in whose shoes the audience can tap.

The hero should be the benefit of the brand.

Min. two characters: protagonist and antagonist (not necessarily human) who stand in each other's way. The underlying abilities of them are similar. While the protagonist is elaborated in his character the antagonist is not a fully expressed character.

Could be actual customers telling their story. Envisioned characters should at least have the same problems/needs and be relatable.

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This eventually resulted in the bullet point summary presented within the results section of this thesis.