

The "Heart" of Every Company

By Megan Tyson

Christmas has passed us by, but I have one question for you as you put away your wreath and dive into the New Year ... are you a fan of holiday movies?

You know the kind — the ones where everyone wears scarves and mittens, zany events occur, and in the end, the holiday spirit brings joy and merriment to all?

Even if you don't celebrate Christmas, you may have heard of some of the big holiday favorites like *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Elf*, or *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*.

I'm a huge fan of these films and try to watch them every December. While watching this season, it occurred to me all three of these films have one glaring theme in common: the evil characters represent the corporate world.

There's Mr. Potter in *It's a Wonderful Life* ... he tries to put George Bailey out of business and control the whole town. In *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*, Mr. Shirley cuts the yearly bonus for all employees. And in *Elf*, Walter Hobbs is a workaholic executive who puts work before family and has distaste for holiday cheer.

Corporations aren't all that bad, are they?

Whether it's movies, TV shows, or books, corporations are often labeled as "the bad guy" in a storyline. They're viewed as these money-hungry giants that can't relate to everyday people.

It's this kind of story that makes people doubt the motives of big, wealthy companies. That, and the occasional real-life news story of a corrupt business.

Nevertheless, many big businesses actually do a whole lot of good. And that's where you come in.

As a web writer, you have the ability to sweep in and help a company with its reputation. Building and maintaining a positive corporate image is no small feat, so that creates many opportunities to help.

Cause marketing is the fastest growing way to boost a company's reputation. When businesses support a cause customers believe in, customers are given the chance to help support that cause too — often just by buying something they'd probably buy anyway, like dish soap or yogurt. Customers like this opportunity, and companies like anything that gets customers to buy.

What companies need now is someone with a strong sense of how to write cause marketing copy that gets the word out — someone who can help the company look good, and tap into the customer's need to give and make a difference.

And for those who can write that special kind of copy — companies are willing to pay big bucks. In fact, corporate cause sponsorship is projected to total \$1.72 *billion* in the 2012 final tally.

Do you want a piece of that pie?

Seeking the heart

If you're looking for new ways to promote your corporate clients — or especially if you're looking for new clients — I highly recommend writing about the bright side of every business. It's helpful for business and enjoyable to write (hooray for positive topics!).

This ties in with cause marketing, and also with highlighting any good-natured aspect of a company with the goal of giving its reputation a boost.

Now, if you're writing for a company that is so large it seems impersonal, or if it's in an industry that drives skepticism (investment bankers, law firms, other types of jobs likely to be a movie villain ... you know the drill), then here's what you can focus on:

Every company has a heart. Find it.

Guaranteed, every company cares deeply about *something*. That's because every company is made of people. And every person, from the CEO on down to the mailroom clerk, has hopes, dreams, fears, sympathy, and compassion. Even if the CEO seems like the greedy Mr. Potter ... there's always a do-gooder in there somewhere (just like holiday films will show you).

Adding heart to your story

Once you've done some research and rounded up some quality details on the heart of a business, delve into writing a story that will help customers relate to the people who make up that company.

Lisa Cron, author of *Wired for Story*, shares these top tips on sharing the heart of every story.

1.

Know your point

When sharing the heart of a company, ask yourself: *How do I want to change the way my reader sees the world?*

Remember, your goal is to help the audience see a company as a good-hearted brand that does noble things for society.

Write something that will make readers think, "Wow, I didn't realize kids in Zambia are more susceptible to disease by going barefoot, and that this company is making a huge impact by donating so many shoes ..." Or something along those lines.

2. **Nail your plot**

The plot of your story is not what the story is about. Rather, the story is about how the plot affects the hero. So whatever happens in your story, it should affect a real person.

Let's say the big boss of a business was an orphan. If she's willing to share her experience and talk about the hardships of her underfunded orphanage, then by Jove, you'll be able to write powerful copy on how to donate pajamas to orphans currently in group homes and shelters.

3. **Have a big theme but a small scale**

People relate to stories on a small, one-on-one basis. If something seems too large, it's too distant for the audience to relate. Even though many things affect us universally, our emotions are best stirred when the story is small.

For instance, most everyone can relate to losing someone to cancer, but the real heartstrings are pulled when writing of just one person affected. Thousands of women are breast cancer survivors, but if a company shares the story of just one or two women who fought and won the battle, that'll make a stronger message. Better yet, relate it to women who are employees or are related to employees of the company.

Cause and Effect

Recent psychology studies have revealed that the first instinct of humans is to contribute to the greater good. People like giving because it provides meaning and makes them happy. Cause marketing gives them an opportunity to contribute.

And when you write about a cause, the effect of taking part is joy. You get to write about heartwarming topics, and you can share the good news of how many businesses are making a difference for good in the world.

In Hollywood film terms, that's how you'll conclude a story and bring merriment to all.

And in real-life terms, the story never ends, because writing jobs about the heart of companies will continue on and on.

Best yet, company budgets to promote causes are projected to keep rising, so that means more money on the table for Wealthy Web Writers like you.

[**Editor's Note:** Want to join the ranks of cause marketing copywriters? Check out the program [here](#).]

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