

A new playbook for the B2B brands driving humanity forward

Whether it's the sleek tactility of Apple, the urban energy of Nike, the familiar fizz of Coke, or any one of countless other consumer campaigns, we're surrounded every minute of every day with brilliantly conceived, executed and delivered marketing work. But as business buyers it's always felt very, very different - until now.

Temps de lecture : minute

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Breakthroughs in areas like artificial intelligence are driving B2B companies to new heights. See Nvidia's transformation from an \$11 billion company to a \$3 trillion one in less than a decade: a dizzying rise for a chip designer with a small consumer-facing footprint.

We have a unique opportunity now to redefine how tech companies go to market. It might not be so easy to add warmth and humanity when relaying services like cloud computing and electronic components, but it's just as important. It's time to shift our focus from the product itself to the mind-blowing innovation and profound human impact of these technologies.

From showcasing solutions to telling stories

That feeling you get when a movie trailer reverberates around the theater, stirs your soul, and stays with you until next week? That's storytelling done right. And it's accessible to any brand that is prepared to unearth its narrative and share it in the right ways.

Take Philips. A health technology giant of this scale could easily fall into

making brand films about how much money its products would save its healthcare provider customers, or how much more efficient their workload could be with Philips tech. Instead, its brand film *'The Longest Night'* focuses on Páll Pálsson, an Icelandic fisherman who needs to stay alert and well to maintain his living. The target might not be the healthcare provider who would ultimately treat Páll, but the insight is that everyone in the field is driven by a desire to help people.



Marketers know that storytelling can help build trust and loyalty by humanising a brand. This is especially important in B2B, where the actual product or service that companies sell is sometimes invisible - and often complicated. Add to that the fact that large tech brands often partner with hundreds of companies across multiple verticals, and it can be hard to pinpoint a singular narrative to take out to the world.

This is the challenge Arrow Electronics faced. Despite providing the technology that enables its partners to create life-impacting products that include prosthetic limbs, Arrow was struggling to truly connect with its audiences. The company needed a new way to present itself to its customers in different sectors.

To nail its story, we helped Arrow create 'Here for the How', a new

positioning that focuses on its role helping partners to understand what's possible and bring that to life. Based on the insight that Arrow is an enabler of possibility, Arrow's brand now conveys its commitment to helping other companies reach their goals. Brand film 'Sasha', for example, tells the moving story of a Ukrainian child whose life was turned around by a prosthetic arm created by Arrow's partnership with Unlimited Tomorrow.

At Arrow, 'Here for the How' has become the language that now helps center everything the organisation does. What started as brand films for individual business units within Arrow, and their sales teams, eventually extended to an external B2C campaign. Taking an elevated, story-driven approach to the original brand films allowed them to seamlessly evolve into commercial pieces.

Add warmth and humanity

Dusty, uninspiring stock imagery doesn't do justice to the behind-the-scenes innovation that's helping advance humanity. Live-action footage shot with care and attention significantly expands the possibilities of storytelling. Adobe and Hewlett Packard Enterprises (HPE) have long understood the importance of year-round premium storytelling to help bring their technology to life. Now, a growing number of B2B brands are discovering the power of emotionally impactful content far beyond standard format customer case studies. Intel's 2024 brand film '*Dreamers*' does an incredible job showcasing how its tech brings society-changing ideas to life.



Even when production is lean, there's always an opportunity to tell stories properly. Branded content can range from fully fleshed out cinematic stories to well shot interviews. When the pandemic forced Hewlett Packard Enterprises (HPE) to shift its global Discover conference to a virtual event, we met the challenge by creating a series of brand films that leaned into the emotional impact of HPE's technology. HPE brought in talent including Captain Sullenberger and Sir Lewis Hamilton to help tell these stories, creating 1:1 engagement with its audience at a time characterised by disconnection.

As long as you stick to clearly defined brand guidelines and narratives, the subject matter and desired response can drive the creative approach and style. Whether it's a finely crafted script; the considered perspective of a shoot; the intimacy of close-up moments; beautifully lit interviews with employees and end customers who use your tech; or high-end stock that connects seamlessly with no drop in quality: all these techniques ladder up to premiumise and humanise brand storytelling.

As we enter a new golden age of B2B, its marketing needs to find more sophisticated ways to create humanity, warmth, and resonance. Although precise tactics at each touchpoint will vary, the core approach doesn't waver. Emotive, beautiful, and cinematically inspired storytelling builds brands that generate excitement and deliver impact.

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