



Expert Summit

MASTERCLASS TRANSCRIPT



From Browser to Buyer - How To Infuse Your e-Commerce Site With Story To Enthuse Your Customer And Create More Sales

Hi, welcome. My name's Ruth Douglas. I run Imp Ideas. It's a marketing company based in the Southwest of England and we help small businesses with e-commerce site get more sales.

Today's session is called From Browser to Buyer, how to infuse your e-commerce site with story to inspire your customer and get more sales. What we're looking at is how you can take the knowledge that you have about your business and turn that into really compelling copy and how to create a sense of story on your site that communicates to the customer that they're in the right place, that you have what they need, and that your products will fit into their life.

Okay, all of this will work together to inspire confidence in your customer in getting them hitting the Buy Now button. The first thing I'm going to do is to take you to a screencap of a really popular shopping site in the UK and look at what they do really really well. Then we're going to look at three other live websites who've all volunteered to be included and look at what's working and perhaps some things that aren't working so well and talk you through some ideas. At the end of this, I want you to feel more confident about using your knowledge to create story and to inspire sales.

Let's get started. Here we are looking at Not On The High Street's front page. This screencap was taken earlier in the year in March, and I want to show it to you because it shows really well how to use words to start to tell the story and the images and how it all works together to convey what the business is, who the customers are, and that relationship. And says you're in the right place, we've got what you want, let's go shopping.

Let's start with the logo. So immediately the logo is a gift tag. It's telling you that it's a gift shop, Not On The High Street, the website name, the business name, it's telling you that these are the things that you will find in a gift shop on your high street or in your local town. These are unusual gifts. This is not run of the mill, we're unusual, we're select. "The home of thoughtful gifts," so really carefully chosen words. This isn't the website for wacky gifts. It's not the marketplace for handmade gifts. It's the home, you know, a home is where we feel safe and comfortable and relaxed. So this is the home of thoughtful gifts. Thoughtful speaks to who the customer thinks they are, someone that makes, puts a lot of care and effort into buying a gift, choosing the right gift for the right person. So the home of thoughtful gifts, they're putting into the hands of the customer.

Here, this area here, I love this area. "Made by creatives from the UK's best small businesses," and there's hands making something. So not just made by local craftspeople. It's made by creatives and we value creativity. It's something kind of special that, oh, I'm not creative, so-and-so is creative. You know, we value that as a trait in people. From the UK's best small businesses. Not any old small businesses, not just small businesses, but the best ones. There's a mark of quality. UK, it's UK-based, so geographically it's saying we're part of this community. If you want to support your UK business community, if you want to support, you know, buy British, it's speaking to that. And small businesses, not the Amazons of the world, not, you know, a national chain. This is a small business that, the inference is that shopping from them will make a big you know, supporting a small local business has a bigger impact than buying something off of Amazon.

The next little bit, "Chosen by us, all carefully curated "to save you time." There's a little hand picking a flower, literally saying they're hand-picked. These products are hand-picked. Chosen by us, so we're doing a job for you, so that's a feature and the benefit to me is to save you time.

Okay, so we're into features and benefits. An attribute of the business or of the product and the benefit to me, the customer, the outcome for me. How does it improve my life? So the fact that this is a marketplace that has a, you know, an application, it's not just anyone can join. It's selected, people have to have, be approved, that's creating, that's going to save me time 'ecause I don't have to search the whole internet. I know I can come here. I'm likely to find something. That I'm going to like for somebody. Now, it's speaking to the problems that I have, which are; I'm busy, I'm a mum, I work I've got people to buy gift for, I didn't have much time, I want to be, I want to know that these are going to be of a high standard and the best. So that's beginning talk about features and benefits to the customer.

And again, here; all carefully curated, really, really interesting choice of words. You know carefully they're not just curated, they are carefully curated. So, it's adding that that quality of we're looking after things for you, and curation, you know, it's not just selected and chosen is curated which you know is active. We are gate-keeping, we are managing we are you know, we are guardians of this site, you know, we're looking after and maintaining. That's very active. And you know curation put to your mind of museums and art galleries and this kind of again, a sense of a value of cultural value.

The last one. Loved by you, more than 1 million positive reviews? Heart hands. This is the social proof, this is Not on the High Street saying, don't take our word for it. You know, people like you love it. We've got over a million positive reviews, so in just this section this sits on the front page of the website, doesn't click it doesn't go anywhere. It's all about positioning the business and starting to tell the story, of the relationship with the customer. Telling people they are in the right place.

Let me scroll a bit more. Here we are, let's look at the picture section. This section is image navigation. This is usually seasonal so it was before Easter. So, in a couple of days. This would have had an Easter image, and this banner would have had a bit about Easter in the call to action to Shop Easter. This is very interesting I think, we've got two types of fonts they're both in the logo, Remember. This is the voice of the business send a wildly original gift that says, "I love you a whole bunch" and the handwritten script is the voice of the customer. We've also got some puns; wild bunch this lovely bunch of wild flowers. This is the business saying, we know what you want, we can speak for you. Really clever.

And this navigation section, is all about the business saying, we know, we understand what you're looking for. And we know why you're here. We've got what you want, we've got gifts for her, gifts For him, we know who you're shopping for hers and hims. We know why you're shopping, it's Easter again that seasonality, Easter Bunny, in case we didn't get it from the word. And this last one is saying, we know what you worry about, This screen probably was taken just as the UK moved into COVID lockdown. So, obviously people coming into contact with each other, especially if it's elderly relative or someone that's at risk, you're thinking, I want to send them a gift 'because it's their birthday, and I can't see them in person. I want them to be safe. Gift can go through the letterbox so no one has to open the door and be in contact with anybody else. So this is very clever, without using any of those words, it's just saying this is a gift that will fit through the letterbox, and it's answering all those worries you have answering that problem of how do I get a birthday gift to somebody that needs to be isolated.

Okay, so we can see just on this page that there's a huge amount of thought, gone into how the business talks about itself, and how it presents this page is saying you are in the right place, if this is you, this is who we think you are, this is how we know you are. We know why you're shopping you're shopping for him and hers and Easter treats and gifts for a relative that needs to you know, that you want to send something to. So, it's all in that scene setting it's really effective. And you can see, it's not loads and loads and loads of copy, it's less than, less than 50 words fewer than 50 words it is really clever, and just some lovely simple imagery that goes with that.

Okay, let's look at some live websites.

This is Whiza Kid toys. It's a business that's local to me in Devon and they sell adventure outdoors adventure toys. Now, I want to show you this site and show you how good they are at doing features and benefits. So a feature, again that's an attribute of the product or the business and the benefit is the outcome for the customer why you know what value does it add to my life? Why it's important to write that and have that thought. And in your copy and have that as part of your storytelling is to help the customer imagine the product in their lives, it's so the customer can understand that your products answer their questions, and solve their problems without them having to ask.

Okay, so let's look immediately we've got I mean let's talk about the images really bright active images this fantastic smile that this boy's got. You know this is little girl off on a quest beginning her adventure and learning to ride a bike. And here we are, give your child a brain boost. Developing motor skills in the early years, they're telling you what the products will do for you, well for your child. And then here, Come Explore the language that they use here, come explore. That's the language that you use to our children. Let's go exploring, life's an adventure, lets go exploring so its mirroring the language that the customers use to their kids.

Let's have a look so with the images. We've got detailed images clear images of the product. Great, I can see what I'm buying got some detailed images here, see it up close, another image of the child using it, and would be even better to have out in the wild the kid in the park or something. And then down here, moving to features and benefits and you know it's exactly the language the features of this balance bike, "the wishbone balance bike cruises a balanced bike mashup designed for styling preschoolers who are ready to ride" a really fun sentence just full of personality and tells you that this is a fun business. You know they're selling toys that's got to be fun. And it's beginning to tell you who the product is for "preschoolers who are ready to ride" That's reinforced in the next sentence which says. "This is a uniquely styled first ride for children aged, two years and up" so it's the first ride. It's not for a child that's already confident on their wheels, it's a first, you know it's good for someone first bike. And what age, not for someone that's 18 months, maybe a little bit wobbly be on their feet a two year old and upwards. And that's answering my questions as a parent as to which you know what age is this for? which child is it for? Is it right for me. And the features that go on to explain what it's made of some of the style, a style elements, and so on.

And then down here play benefits, okay how does that improve my child's life? "Allows your child to develop that sense of balance. A key motor skill and have bucket loads of fun at the same time." You see bucket loads of fun not just fun bucket loads you know it's really colourful language. "The transition to a pedal bike, when they are four to six years old is a breeze without the need the stabilisers." So you're making their life easier, improving their sense of their body and all of this stuff so when they're older it can be even easier to go up to pedal bike. "Encourages outdoor play which enhances mood" which is a really useful word here, if you're struggling if you've got the features of your product. And you can't really work

out what the benefit is say it's feature for instance if it was to coat with it has a hood, its a coat that has a hood which means that ..., which means that you can then get to the benefit which means that your hair will be dry in the rain, the hood has a fleecy lining, which means that your ears will be warm in winter you know it's telling me how I can use a product, telling me how I'll feel using the product, and that's what these benefits do. They help to explain the outcomes they how to explain how the product will enhance your life. How you can imagine it in your world. Okay so that's features and benefits.

And then one last thing, as I said about answering the customers questions what we've got here is FREE SHIPPING and 60 day return guarantee. So they're saying, I know when I look at the price. That's it I don't have to think about what the shipping fees are. Because they tell me, even if it's not free shipping if you've got that the shipping information right now on the page on the product page, I know what to expect. There's no nasty surprises further down the line about how much it will cost, and the 60 day return guarantee. That means that I know if I buy it as a gift, for my niece or nephew. If it's not quite right, then we can return it and there's not going to be any fuss or bother. And that builds trust and we've got the same information on the static bar that's there throughout the site. So we've seen how Whizz Kids Toys use features and benefits and to help us imagine the products in our lives and imagine you know understand how it's going to help a child, and we've seen how they build trust with having really clear shipping information, and that return guarantee.

So let's move on to another website. This is the recycled Candle Company. Now, this is quite different, very different products. These guys they collect together, all the odds and ends of candles from all over, Devon where we live and use those to make new candles, lovely what I mean what a simple and effective idea that tagline here is Reclaim Luxury. Now the problem is this to me doesn't look very luxurious it's quite plain and simple. And that's not a bad aesthetic. It's just not very luxurious. They're not communicating the luxury of the product if they're saying they're a luxury product it needs to look more, and especially with scent, scent is such a sensuous evocative sense, I'm getting my senses and scents muddled up! Smell is such an evocative sense that actually, they need to show that they need to show the feeling of the product.

As we scroll down, they've got a bit about this is a lovely image, they've got a bit about the recycled wax and then they've got a piece about fragrances and they're working with a 200 year old French perfumery. So that kind of. That's really luxurious, that's really exciting. You know, they've got signature scents, you're not going to get these fragrances anywhere else. And it's from a French perfumery I mean that's like poetic that needs to be up here they need to be telling the story this doesn't tell the story enough. They need to do more that's how we look at the shop again this the shop page, its quite plain, it's not telling me it's luxurious.

So the candles this one is quite a few clicks to get to the candles isn't it? Right, we can see the product and the packaging, that's good. The packaging is communicating recycled, because for some reason we're conditioned to think that brown kind of brown packaging is more eco friendly than coloured packaging white packaging or glossy packaging. Even if the eco-credentials are exactly the same we're still conditioned to think that kind of brown, paper packages tied up with string, are more eco friendly. So that's great we can see the product. We can see the product again open and that's it. There's no scene setting, what's this, this is that little image which I guess is an illustration of the ingredients. That's not enough story, this needs to have, you know, this needs to have a setting maybe a plant. Maybe a luxurious velvet cushion with tasselled corners. I'm committed to these tassels now you know needs to tell the story. It needs to be much better than what I've just drawn. So it needs to tell me, it needs to evoke a sense.

I need to imagine it in my house. Another thing is, I don't know how big this is so to here. This is 30 centilitres. Now I think 30 centilitres is 300 mill, which I think is about the size of the mug in my house. If you drink out of espresso cups it's bigger than that, if you drink out of those kind of giant mugs. It's smaller than that. So you can see we don't know how big this is, which means I can't, I don't know where it will fit in my, you know, will I need a big space a small space? They can have another picture with the measurements. But again, even if they put it into a styled shoot around it and put something in but I could tell the scale. And that would really help too.

The images don't tell enough of the story. They don't tell me luxury.

Here's the copy, "A convergence of the oils of the bitter orange tree, ylang ylang and so sorry if I said that wrong, cedarwood, patchouli create this dark and creamy while woody and soft fragrance. Doesn't go far enough. You know, like, a wet stick is woody and soft. It doesn't evoke anything really I mean I think ylang ylang is quite sweet fragrance cedarwood and patchouli, yes woody, earthy, patchouli's got kind of sweet notes as well it needs to talk more about what these scents combine to create what's the mood that they create. And, you know, how can we use the candle? Can we do use it for you know you could talk about using it for a moment of relaxation or a moment of, you know, a moment of luxury at the end of a long day, or by your bath or something like this. If and again if you've got these ingredients these wonderful essential oil ingredients. If you're selling skincare, or maybe you're selling soaps or fragrances, if you've got things ingredients, or other attributes that have an impact. So, if this was a lavender and lavender candle and lavender is known for it's relaxing properties, or if you're using skincare lavender is known as a great healing properties.

Talk about properties and what they mean. Features benefits, you know, they've got some copy here from F Scott Fitzgerald, quote, talking about a party, you know, and that's lovely. I don't feel that I feel it doesn't fit. Because they're relying on these words, but then nothing kind of don't relate to anything really. And kind of talking about the louche times of New Yorkers. Scott Fitzgerald 100 years ago. It's not where we are. I don't think it's quite working well enough. So for this page, I'd say you want to basically you want to style this you want to do some beautiful product shots, and you want to improve this copy, I didn't mean to scribble through it.

Let's move on The Tartan Blanket Company. These guys in contrast, use words in a way they evoke mood really well. And they don't use many words, but they managed it really well. So the thing we notice, is we're not looking at the product we're looking at the person sending a product in a box. And I happen to know that the company, when the UK went into lockdown they pivoted parts of their business, developed a gifting range, so they're promoting sending their products as a gift, because that's what we can do, we can't hand them over in person. So look "be together even apart". Its really simple isn't it?

They send out blankets, if you send them to somebody, our products if you send them someone that will make you feel close to them. Hey we are, "send a gift of comfort." Yes, I want to be comforted by a woolly blanket please. "Now offering free UK shipping" answering my worry about oh is this going to be expensive to ship? No it's going to be free. Excellent and covering international duties. So, I'm going to send, I want to send this to my friend in France. Is it going to cost me anything, or my friends in the US, or is it going to be expensive with the customs and excise duties? No because they're covering it. "Shop gifts of comfort" that's the call to action. The call to action is the thing you want your customers to do Buy stuff so you're saying shop gifts of comforts. Go shopping, It's ooh sending that comforts sending that hug in the box basically.

We scroll down, here we have "cossie - origin old Scots word for cosy" So they're taking a traditional word, and then making it. They're saying we're claiming this word for us Tartan's a traditional Scottish fabric. So their claiming the Scots-ness, and I think the company's based up towards Edinburgh somewhere. So they're in Scotland, they're using a traditional product. And they're taking the heritage and they're using that as part of their marketing.

Here it says "the act of slow living making time for the things that sooth our souls." And this concept of slow living, slow cooking, slow shopping slowing ... the concept of slowing down and making time and not rushing headlong into life, They're speaking to that they're speaking to people that want to feel that even if they can't always be that. Things that soothe souls huh I mean it's so evocative you know it makes you want to curl up with a book doesn't it?.

Here we are family blanket. They're telling you who's using them Lambswool blanket, that quality. All these pictures are kind of in muted to tones that set a really warm feeling. Picnic blankets this is for picnics care packages look at, you know, this is the gift that makes people happy and hey little ones you know blankets for everybody. And further down here "stay home a safe space for community thinking rest and inspiration for turning isolation into hibernation" Isolation and hibernation. I mean, they've taken the fact that we will have to stay in, and made, made it seem quite nice I mean hibernation and winter and cosy and bears and squirrels and nuts you know, I'm off on a tangent, but you get it, it's evocative. That's what I'm saying. Think to the candles, it wasn't very evocative.

Let's go shopping. Let's look at recycled wool blankets Okay. We're going here, right, So remember when I said I couldn't tell how big the candle was, we can tell how big this blanket is with the picture such a simple thing. Just holding the blanket up and covers all of this I'm guessing average size human. We know how big it is, we've got all these colours that we can choose from here. Look they've got a Douglas tartan for my surname, good to know. I'll come back and shop another day.

Let's look at the pictures Oh, we can go. We can be cosy when we go piggybacking in the highlands. Fantastic, and you know these muted tones they pick up the colours in the blanket, you know, this very classic kind of country living muted natural look to the photograph. No that's not likely that, let's look at this one Oh, we can keep the children warm in the snow if you have snow. What's this one, that's showing the embroidery that you can have on it. This one is showing rolled up with the carry strap, these straps are beautiful as well aren't they? I am a fan.

Let's have a look at the words, right. "A traditional tartan with a modern twist" so tartan's a traditional fabric is speaking to heritage, modern twist they're saying we're up to date, we are not stuck in the past. Woven in a dense twill weave and brushed for texture, so they are telling you about the qualities of the product there and how it's going to feel, it's brushed for texture. Then they're giving you a sense of what it will feel like "recycled wool gives you all the benefits of wool," wool is warm and in a sustainable blanket, because it's recycled wool its sustainable speaking to those of its customers that want to feel they're doing something for the environment but still having this wonderful product.

What's more? They're even machine washable! Now this is a big sell to me I don't want to buy something I never invest so much of my enthusiasm and money into buying something which if I put in a washing machine would shrink to the size of a Barbie picnic blanket. Knowing that it's machine washable is a huge win. Answered my question how do I look after it can I put it in the washing machine? It reassures me, it means I know I can look after it, it means if the cat's sick on it or if I spill some tea on it I can just throw it in the washing

machine and not worry it's not going to be ruined because it has to be dry cleaned, or you know scrubbed by elves or something. They are warm and durable. Durable! Long lasting you know it's saying you are investing and your money is well spent. This will last a long time, and it won't get holes in the first time you sit on it. That kind of a thing. Durable because of their tight weave, that's telling you the benefit and the reason the perfect colsie companion so the colsie the word the heritage word that they've got there. Colsie companion for camping. I go camping, I need one of these oh I will they're beautiful or for curling up with your favourite book and a cuppa you know.

They're literally illustrating how to use a blanket with words and that down here we've got someone's curled up with a cuppa and a book. Also available in small and wee sizes. And they're are saying okay, you don't need to feel warm if you're looking for something a bit smaller, same thing for smaller, you've got one over here.

Want to make it extra personal? Find out more about embroidery here. Okay you can personalise it make an extra special if this is a gift for instance, and here we have the features. Fibre, recycled wool, 30% mixed fibres saved from landfill. So this is like you know, we're saving the world here. Saving the world from blanket at a time. Touch, smooth, and durable touch is really important to a lot of people. How's it going to feel? Some people don't like woolly blankets. Some people want a smooth blanket, size, how big it is, in Imperial in inches and in metric and centimetres so you know that's often you know an age thing. Older people tend to prefer imperial or even you know geographic thing. Americans use Imperial a lot, inches centimetres, it's making people understand no matter what. It's understanding our customer and providing that resource, where it's made.

And again the care and machine wash on the wool cycle, making it really easy, lay flat to dry. Told me how to wash it, and it's told me how to dry it. Brilliant. Easy. Our recycled wool blankets contain pre-loved. Not used, pre-loved, okay it's a nicer way of saying used. It sounds better. Pre-loved fibres that may differ slightly in colour and design. So it's just managing your expectations. And down here this bottom section is images of you know, this beautiful images and are doing shop this look, so you can get this, buy this blanket so you buy that particular design or this particular design which is a gift basket. So this one you know have it on your reading nook. Go out on the mountains and with a man in a kilt. Yes Okay I will Can you send me the man in the quilt? Quilt Kilt! This is you know read with your country magazine and your coffee.

And down here is your social proof all the wonderful reviews and again these you know you shopped here go and buy these. They're showing me how the product can fit into my life. They're telling me how I can look after it. They're using their words really really well. You know this isn't a very big product description, maybe a hundred words maybe a few more? it's not lots and lots and lots but it's answered questions. It's helped me imagine using it It's told me how I feel I'm going to feel warm in this blanket. And these beautiful pictures that are consistent with a sense of business of cosiness and warmth.

So, I hope you can see how the story is developed through product pages through the front page and how you can sell and tell to people, You're in the right place. We've got what you need, we understand you, and how you can start doing that in small ways. You don't need lots of copy you need the right one, the right words. And you have all this information you know your customers you know your products and trust me you can do this.

Okay, I hope you can see now how you can use your knowledge to demonstrate to your customers that they're in the right place when they visit your website. You understand who they are. You understand why they're shopping. What they're shopping for, and what their

problems are, and you're able to demonstrate, how your product solves those problems, and how the products fit into their lives; Okay giving them those examples making your products irresistible to them Okay.

If you're not so sure how to do this from now, one of the things I'd like you to do is to think about all of your customer correspondence. Use it as a research tool think about the conversations that you have the questions that your customers ask, what are the things they tell you in order notes?. People quite often say I'm buying this for, and explain who they're buying for or the occasion that they need it for. Or the room or the house the thing is to go in. They also ask you things about is this product suitable for? How can I use it? How do I look after it? Use the information your customers tell you in their order notes or in conversation. Use the questions they ask when they phone up to inquire about your services, or your products. The questions they ask on your chat on messenger on DMs in Instagram. Look at the conversations you have with your customers, and that will give you a resource to start answering these questions and turning those questions and those custom conversations into copy into the words on your website. And look at your reviews, if you've got reviews, use the language of your customers. If your customer tells you the dress felt amazing it was so soft to get to my skin and easy to wear and it made me feel like a million dollars, use that in your copy. This dress is made of a soft flowing fabric and it will make you feel a million dollars. And if you don't have your own reviews yet, go and do the research on your competitors, that are selling the same things as you. Go to people write about those products, we're going to question what they ask, go and look on Amazon, if you're selling branded products go and look at Amazon at the questions, and the reviews. What are people asking about how are they talking about using the product? Use the customer conversations you have and also go and do that other bigger research about your product to bring in the knowledge of those people the experience and put that onto your website. Rephrase that, reword it onto your website.

I hope you've enjoyed today's session. I hope it's given you some ideas, and some confidence to go out and look at how you can bring story into your website. Good luck.