

Storykit_

Storytelling in a social world_

*Use video and data
to tell your stories_*

Who is a storyteller, really?

Telling stories is fundamental to human communication. But really, who is confident enough to call themselves a “storyteller”?

The unfortunate answer to this question is that few people view themselves as storytellers. The title feels like an epithet reserved for authors, Oscar-winning scriptwriters, or praised journalists.

At Storykit, we believe the opposite. **We believe that everyone is a storyteller, simply because everyone has stories to tell.** But for many, it can be hard to understand what stories we have, either as an individual or as a company, and to know how to tell these stories.

In this e-book, we want to help you with both of these problems.

Stories = power

In 1994, Steve Jobs entered a break room and asked “who is the most powerful person in the world?”. When Tomas Higbey, who has recounted this story on the question-and-answer website Quora, answered “Nelson Mandela”, Jobs reacted with a resolute “NO! The most powerful person in the world is the storyteller. The storyteller sets the vision, values, and agenda of an entire generation that is to come.”

Jobs, who at this time was CEO at a Pixar that yet was not very successful, continued: “Disney has a monopoly on the storyteller business. You know what? I am tired of that bullshit.” “I am going to be the next storyteller”, he concluded and left the room with his bagel.

“The most powerful person in the world is the storyteller.”

Steve Jobs

Today, we know how those events played out. Pixar released Toy Story and changed both storytelling and movie animation forever, whereafter Steve Jobs returned to Apple, whose products time and time again have continued to surprise the world.

The phrase “content marketing” was coined by the publicist John F. Opendahl during a conference for journalists. This was in 1996, but stories have been used in marketing since way earlier. And that’s not at all surprising.

Stories evoke emotion, stick to our memories, put things in context, and create relationships in a way that no other information can. We can use stories for our own entertainment, and we can use stories to understand the world and go beyond where we are here and now.

We dream, learn and grow through stories.

This is important in marketing, simply because we base our purchase decisions on emotion much more often than on reason, even though we certainly would like to believe otherwise.

It doesn’t matter if the purchase decision is about a pair of shoes, an apartment, or a software program for your company; these emotions are always there to influence your choice— and the brand that has managed to connect with you emotionally will have an enormous advantage.

**“We dream,
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stories.”**

What is a story?

One reason why so few people view themselves as storytellers is that people think of “a story” as something very specific. It is, for example, difficult for many to imagine a ten-second video on social media as a type of story. And this is the wrong way of thinking. Because, if there is anything that should be called a story, it’s a ten-second Facebook video.

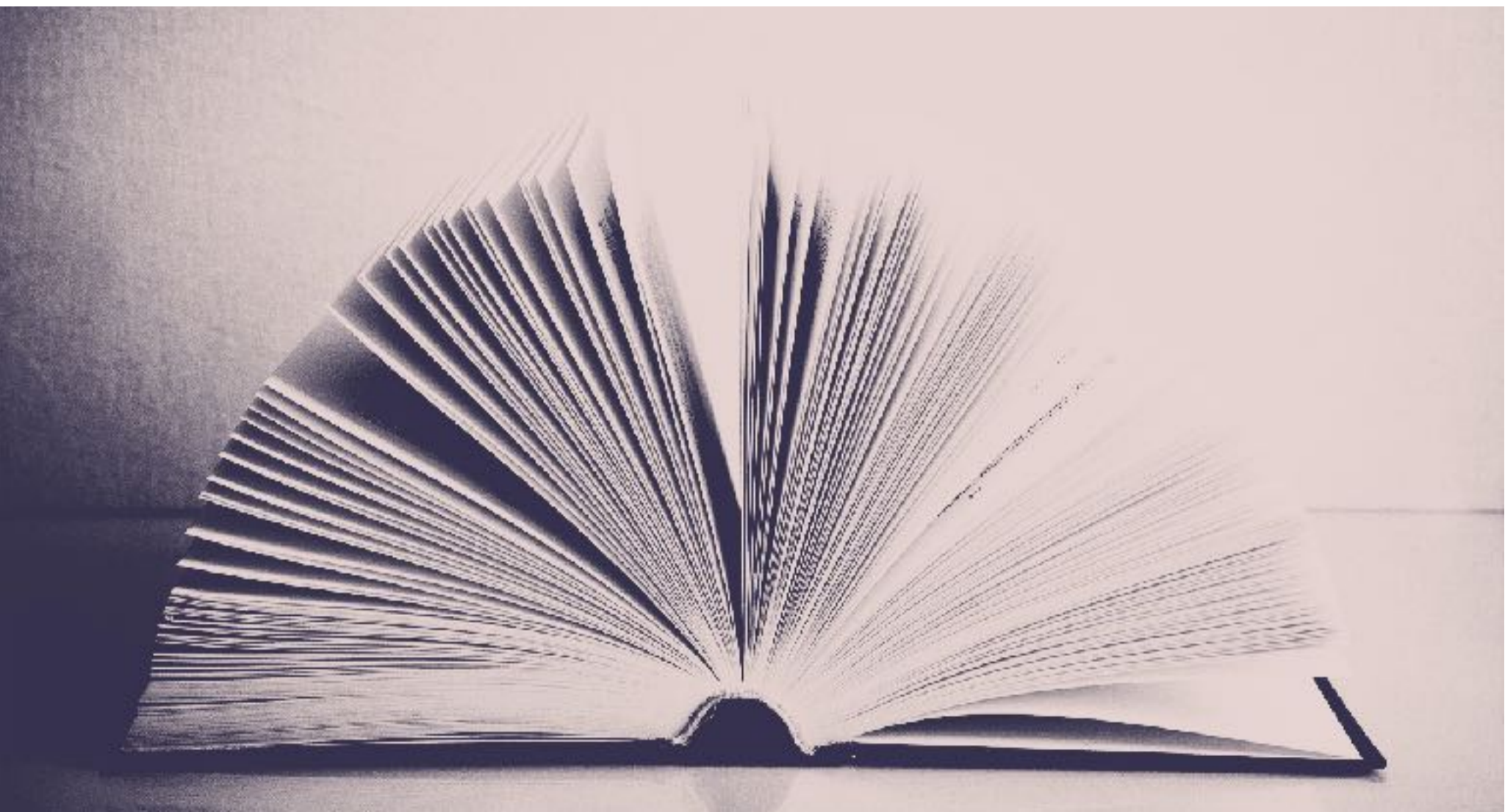
It is often said that the world’s shortest story goes like this:

“For sale: baby shoes, never worn.”

This quote is often attributed to Ernest Hemingway, but the truth is that we don’t really know if that’s true. It doesn’t actually matter, the point is that if an entire story can fit into six tiny words, anything can be a story.

The question is rather: what makes a good story? The answer is, of course:

It depends on who’s listening.



Knowing your audience

The most important thing you can do for your storytelling is to get to know your audience.

All successful stories have one thing in common: they are based on a deep understanding of the audience. Whether you are a comedian who has to get up on a stand-up stage, a parent who has to explain to their kids why it's bad to punch someone or a marketer who has to explain why the company's product is the very best on the market, you must first get to know your audience well. You need to know who they are, how they think, and what they care about.

One mistake that marketers often make is to think that you can simply look inward to understand the audience. They mistakenly believe that they are like their audience. The

truth is that it's quite unusual for the audience and the marketer to resemble each other very much, and the result is often that you become uninteresting and that it sounds as if you're just talking about and to yourself.

As a marketer, the best way to get to know the audience is to speak directly with them. Conducting interviews, listening to sales calls, assisting in support, talking to the customer as often as possible. It's always a good idea to also use second-hand sources to find out what the customers are talking about, but nothing beats direct contact and the insights you gain through such contact.

GOOD QUESTIONS GET GOOD ANSWERS

What questions should you ask to get these amazing answers that really help you understand the audience?

One way is to think like a journalist. They often start with a couple of fundamental questions:

- **What?**
- **When?**
- **Who?**
- **Where?**
- **How?**
- **Why?**

These questions might seem specific and “news-related”, but it's really the opposite: these questions are truly broad and applicable to any context.

They can make up the foundation of a good case or a press release – or they can work as a structure that helps you gain insights into the minds of your audience.



Storytelling in a world of bite-sized communication

Social media has changed the way we communicate. Due to the quick pace where the public's need for fast, effective, and constant stories is almost endless, we can no longer rely on old rules.

Welcome to a world where you have to be everywhere, all the time.

Communicating in the new world

When we communicate on social media platforms, we only have seconds to catch the attention of the audience, and this puts extreme pressure on our stories. We must simply be effective.

Already at the beginning of the 2000s, a large part of our lives was dominated by the growth of social media platforms, and our way of communication changed rapidly. The sudden ability to communicate with people and organizations across the world has greatly increased the need for quick, accessible messages.

In a crowded feed, we only have seconds to catch the public's attention and we also have to fight every second to keep their attention.

This is not only about how we communicate on social media. In

a time that is characterized by "information overload", where our brain must filter through tens of thousands of messages every day, the information that we absorb must be served to us in small pieces. Companies cannot expect their customers or employees to read through endless instructions. Instead, the information needs to be broken down.

This, of course, puts enormous pressure on storytellers. We need to be able to prioritize our messages and reformulate, shorten, and simplify them.

6 THINGS TO THINK ABOUT IN YOUR SOCIAL STORYTELLING

1. EVERY POST MUST BE A COMPLETE STORY

One mistake many people make on social channels is to believe that the audience will see what you publish in the order you publish, at the time you publish it.

This way of thinking is really not that strange. Traditionally, content producers have had a high degree of control over how the content is consumed: in a movie, book, newspaper, or theater, you can decide in which order every scene, chapter, or act reaches the audience.

But on social channels, this is impossible. You cannot control when your audience sees your message; your posts are controlled by algorithms.

This means that you can never publish a story in several pieces and believe that the pieces will reach your audience in the correct order, at the right time, or even at all. On the contrary: some pieces will never reach the

audience while other pieces show up in someone's feed several days later. You just never know.

That's why every story you publish on social media must be a consumable whole. Otherwise, they won't make sense to the audience. Naturally, your social media posts might be part of a bigger whole, if you for instance link to a series of articles or a landing page with many videos, but the post itself, the post that your audience sees on social media – that post must be a comprehensible whole.

However, you might be thinking, what if I publish them on my Facebook page? Isn't that a good place for my audience to consume my content in the right order, with the right timing? The answer is brutal: unfortunately, no one visits your Facebook page. And: if anyone actually were to visit the company page, they're still unlikely to scroll through your feed in the order that you'd want them to.

2. BRING OUT THE BIG GUNS EARLY

We know that we only have a fraction of a second to catch the audience's attention in the feed, and that's why your story must have an eye-catching start.

Never forget your distribution post or title when you're working with text, and put a lot of effort into the intro when you're working with video. It's always better to get straight to the point when it comes to social media, like asking a thought-provoking question.

Other examples of powerful beginnings are a strong angle, an inspiring quote, or an immediate presentation of the problem.

3. OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND

Very few individuals and companies have managed to grow on social media by telling one single good story, or by occasionally telling a couple of stories.

It's simply a must to constantly update, post new things, and tell

new stories. Why? Once again, it's all about the algorithm.

Every time you go on Facebook, for instance, the algorithm chooses random posts among thousands of candidates to show on your news feed. The probability that a post from my brand is among the chosen ones is slim, no matter how much time and money I have spent on my story.

But if you publish often, you'll reach more people. After a while, your stories will find their audience, and time will make this clear.

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4. NEVER FORGET THE CONTEXT

No matter how great your stories are, you always have to remember that no social channel uses one-way communication. On the contrary, whenever you post something on social media, you're always entering an existing conversation, and if you don't know what your audience is talking about, you won't get your message across.

Imagine yourself at a party and you'd like to tell something to a group of people. If you interrupt them in the middle of a different conversation, your story is not going to be appreciated. It might even cause some frustration. However, if you're perceptive enough, you'll be able to listen and adjust your story according to the current subject of discussion. The same applies to social channels: if you have the right timing and enter the conversation in the right way, the audience is going to be more receptive to your stories.

5. THE ONLY WAY TO LEARN IS BY TRYING

The audience on social channels is generally capricious, disloyal, and

elusive. The hard truth is that few individuals would suddenly decide to listen to your stories just because they come from you, no matter what brand you represent.

Another thing is also important to keep in mind: understanding what a good story means to you, to your company, and especially to your audience, is not something you can figure out at your desk. Finding out which subjects, angles, and formats will have the biggest effect is something you're going to learn, and the important thing is to start experimenting.

You must simply publish

something to find out what the response is. You can read endless guides, talk to hundreds of customers about their opinions, and spend the majority of your time planning what you should be doing, but it's only after you have

clicked the publish button that you'll find out if your timing is good.

On social channels, the golden rule is “learning by doing”. It doesn't matter how many courses, articles, or guides you have read: you're not going to get better at it if you don't do it. And you have to do it often.

The great thing about social media is that it's easy to try. Post a tweet and look at the response you get. If the tweet gets a couple of reactions, you might try publishing a longer post on LinkedIn. If that gets some traction, it might be time to make a video... and so on.

And if your post doesn't work? Well, at least you have learned what you shouldn't do.

6. DARE TO REPEAT YOURSELF

In a world of bite-sized communication, you should never be afraid of saying the same thing several times.

On the contrary, you *should* repeat your message to give your viewers another chance to see what they have missed since the algorithm doesn't show your content to everybody who follows you.

As a company, communication is often about repeating things in different ways to really get the message to stick, and social media is the best place to try to tell a story in a thousand different ways.

That's why you should create a new post, a new picture, a new video for an old story. Dust off, update, freshen up, and you'll easily be able to tell the same story many times over.

Tell your stories with video

It's a fact: video is more or less unbeatable in the world of storytelling. Especially due to the fragmentary, fast storytelling that we need today.

It's not unusual for research to show that a viewer remembers 95% of the content, and that a one-minute video can contain as much information as a text of 1800 words, or that our brains can process visual communication up to 60,000 times faster than written communication.

We also know:

- Video evokes emotion
- Video is easy to remember
- Video is easy to consume
- Video is perfect for social channels because you consume the video in

its entirety, directly on the platform, and it's easy to share

- Video is good for accessibility

Video is also the perfect format for telling one story at a time. An article with only 3-4 sentences can of course feel somewhat insubstantial, while a video with the same amount of text can feel both informative and ample.

The video format also forces you to focus really hard on your storytelling since you can't fit everything you want to say in a 60-second video, and this can be hard – but it works wonders when it comes to reaching out to your audience.

Where to find your stories

Okay, so we know we should tell stories. But what should we say? What videos are we going to make? Do we even have something to say? Yes, you have!

We often meet organizations that struggle with what stories to tell. “Everything feels so boring”, they sigh and look at other companies with super sexy products and services.

Do you feel that way too? If so, we can happily tell you that you are wrong! All companies have lots of interesting stories to tell if you just know where to look.

Here are 6 good places:

1. AMONG THE CONTENT YOU’RE ALREADY PUBLISHING

Do you have a blog? Do you write press releases? Do you create informative texts? Manuals? All of these can be made into videos.

Generally, every company already publishes lots of things in text form. At Storykit, we sometimes do an exercise with our customers where they go to some other company's website, preferably one that they perceive as “boring”, and then they have to come up with five video ideas for that company.

And the video ideas are usually fantastic! It’s that easy to see the story content of other companies.

That’s why you should look at your own website, blog, or press releases, and imagine that you are looking at a gold mine. Then you’re ready to go!

2. AMONG YOUR COLLEAGUES AND STUFF HAPPENING AT THE COMPANY

Looking inward can always turn out badly. You might even begin to wonder: is anyone even interested in us? With that in mind, we must remember that everyone loves when you get to step behind the scenes of a company. You want to hear about the people, the problems, the solutions, the benefits.

Here is a tip if you want to try making a video about the employees of the company: don't start with the most obvious individuals – they're the ones who are always visible anyway.

Many times, the most interesting stories come from people who work behind the scenes.

3. AMONG YOUR CUSTOMERS

Making a customer case is naturally a given for most people. However, have you thought about the fact that your customers also have many of their own interesting stories that can make them connect with what you are talking about?

Showing off your customers is also one of the best advertising tricks you can use for your products and services, so whenever there is the slightest reason to show off customers and tell their stories – do it.



4. BEHIND YOUR “WHY” AND THE FEELING YOU WANT YOUR AUDIENCE TO HAVE

When it comes to the company vision and mission, you often talk about the feeling you want your audience to have. What subjects could you discuss that reinforce this?

5. AMONG WHAT THE COMPETITION IS TALKING ABOUT

Copying the message of the competition straight off is never a good idea. But letting yourself become inspired by the stories they tell can give you great ideas.

What do they see that you have missed? Which subjects does their audience love? How do they formulate their problems and solutions?

6. AMONG WHAT YOUR AUDIENCE IS TALKING ABOUT

If you only want to follow one piece of advice, follow this one because it's the most important.

Posting things on social media without knowing what your audience is talking about is like pushing water uphill with a rake. What are the audience's biggest challenges right now? What keeps them awake at night? What are they dreaming of? What else are they interested in, besides your product?

That's where you'll find your stories.

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Use data to tell better stories

Do you believe that listening to your gut is the best way to tell a story? You are going to be surprised when you look at your data.

Telling something in a short video on a social feed, where you only have a moment to catch the viewer's attention, is a difficult challenge. That's why it's easy for content creators to think that you should—or even must—use the simplest tricks in the book to make your content pop on social media.

You work with strong emotions, provocative subjects, cute animals, or other forms of clickbait to get people to listen to what you have to say.

The problem is, of course, that not every story can be told with the help of strong emotions or cute animals. Does that mean you're done? Should you even consider doing something else, or doing it differently, and then hope

that it will have the intended effect on social channels?

This is the very essence of the problem we wanted to solve when we started Storykit: we wanted to thoroughly understand how to tell stories so that they have the intended effect, and that's why we built a platform with functionality to classify and measure the effectiveness of the content that is produced more meticulously.

We have done this on a larger scale with various publicists throughout the years, publicists that have wanted to understand which stories and storytelling techniques have the biggest effect on their audience.

One of those was **The Times** and **The Sunday Times** in the UK.

Case study:

How The Times and The Sunday Times increased their digital subscribers with the help of content data.

Challenge: Understanding what type of content converts readers to subscribers.

Solution: Tag 15,000 articles with Storykit's data and measure it against 10 different conversion goals.



“There are broad-brush strokes – like ‘features do well’ – that don’t do anything for the newsroom. This was our attempt to get actual data and findings for people who are doing the job and the wider company.”

Taneth Evans, Head of Audience

Results: The number of digital subscribers **increased by 19%**, even though they cut approximately 15% of their production.

“Overwhelmingly, things that we produce that no one else can do in the same way help us to acquire new readers and lead to high engagement with our current subscribers.”

Taneth Evans, Head of Audience

[Read more about this!](#)

Two important insights regarding social storytelling

We have collected data from many large organizations while also using our own material to complement thousands of data points.

What have we learned?

Above all else, there are two things.

1. Focus on your target audience

It sounds obvious, and we have already discussed this in our e-book. But the problem with saying that we should “focus on the target audience” is that no one knows what that means.

It’s a classic, vague phrase that people post on LinkedIn, but when it’s time to make your video or text, it’s incredibly hard to actually apply the concept.

Thanks to all of these data points, we can see a clearer pattern.

GET TO KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE FOR REAL

Focusing on the target audience means putting the life of the audience in the center. The audience wants to read about things that align with their lifestyle, daily life, and view on things.

As we have already mentioned, you really need to know your recipients:

what do they think about, what are they worried about, what makes them happy or sad, how do they spend their time?

UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY’RE DREAMING OF

Your audience doesn’t only want to know about the present, they also love content that shows them who they can become, what choices they can make, and what dreams they can have.

It’s not strange at all: we all want to be better, we all want to dream – no matter if our dream is about work-related success or private goals. And remember, all these dreams don’t have to become true, sometimes the audience just wants to know about what could be.

DARE TO CHALLENGE

One of the biggest myths about social content is that the audience just wants a load of brainless rubbish. This is not true, according to the data we have collected over the years. Of course, the audience does sometimes want to consume rubbish, but if you are the one serving it, you will not build a sustainable relationship with your audience.

On the contrary, you should be the one to make sure the audience is challenged, they want to consume content that challenges norms, myths, and opinions.

The cool thing is that we can see that this type of content leads to two things: When you dare to challenge your audience, you not only become better at capturing the target group, you also make the audience stay

longer. They are simply more likely to consume thoughtful content.

This is not about provoking for the sake of provocation, though. It's about you as a storyteller having a huge advantage if you can sometimes tell your stories from a different point of view, have a different perspective, and be a little daring. But how do you do that? Here are two tips:

- **Find the standard** you want to challenge. What does your company, product, or service really want to change? Dare to dig deep here, find the opposites that exist, and dare to clarify them.
- **Stand in the shoes** of your readers. Play the devil's advocate through the content, ask all the stupid questions so that the audience doesn't have to, help the audience question the status quo.

LET THE AUDIENCE RELATE TO THEMSELVES

Focusing on the target audience also means that you should always look for opportunities where you can get the audience to identify with your content.

One way to do this is to include someone they relate to: it could be, for example, an interview with a person with a similar role that your audience usually holds, someone who has the same problem, or an expert who has had similar problems and solved them.

It's even better if you can interview someone from your actual audience, for example, one of your customers,

because they will automatically become ambassadors for you.

Another way to include the audience is to use their wording. What words do they use when they contact you, when they praise you, or when they review your products? Can they even tell you the entire or part of the story?

A simple tweet, a post a customer wrote on LinkedIn, or a question someone asked in a question-and-answer forum on Facebook can be just as valuable.

Remember: if you want to use a screenshot of what the person said, or post the quote verbatim, you should ask permission first.



DARE TO GO CLOSE

There's a reason why newspapers love to make local leaflets where the narrowest local angle is trumpeted. They know that the principle of subsidiarity makes a big difference in the consumption of content. If the story concerns a place near me, I will simply be more interested in it than if it takes place far away.

If journalists are good at working according to the principle of subsidiarity, then marketers are traditionally quite bad at it. Often, you would like to think that your stories are so universal that they are interesting everywhere. But if you think like that, you miss a real chance to get close to the audience.

Adapting your stories locally can feel overwhelming, but many times it might be enough to exchange a few pictures, perhaps replace a local spokesperson, or adjust the language or tonality, to be closer to your audience than before.

Tip: Read about how the industry giant SKF [works in Storykit to adapt their video locally to over 130 markets \(!\)](#)

“Localizing content is not just about language, it’s also about representation and recognition.”

Sarah Larsson Bernhardt,
Global Head of Social at SKF

2. Do “good stuff” – not “bad stuff”

This might also sound like a completely mundane and silly insight. Of course, everyone wants to do good instead of bad stuff. But the truth is that large amounts of bad stories are still published out there, stories that do not reach their audience and have no effect whatsoever. And it's not that you're planning to make bad content, you just don't know what “good” is. We know what “good” is.

DARE TO BE ON BRAND

Many brands still believe that you should be discreet with your brand in your storytelling. This is not true on social channels. On the contrary, the audience wants and needs clarity to be able to make the lightning-fast

decision about whether this content is worth spending time on or not.

Being “on brand” in your storytelling is also about building a brand for real. Finding the stories where your company is completely unique. What story can you tell that no one else can?

It's not uncommon for marketers to skip these types of stories, either because they are too obsessed with what “everyone else is doing”, or because they're afraid to think outside the box. The truth is that if your content is the result of an active choice you have made, rather than a reaction or a repetition of what someone else has done, it will have a much greater effect.

BE AUTHENTIC

Many people say that companies must be “authentic” and “personal” to stand out in today's fragmented world, and this is true to some extent. It does not have to involve doing a dance video for TikTok, disclosing personal details on LinkedIn, or making jokes on Twitter, which unfortunately many people believe.

Authenticity is not about clowning around or showing too much; authenticity is about being true to oneself.

Is your company smart? Be smart! Are you funny? Have fun! Are you engaging? Be engaging!

But if you are instead quiet and thoughtful, then you don't need to try anything other than being quiet and thoughtful, because it's likely that you will excel at it and make the audience feel safe.

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Tell stories with structure

It's been several thousand years since the philosopher Aristotle stated that a story should consist of three parts: a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Basically, telling a story is not harder than that but you can get extra help along the way.

6 efficient storytelling techniques

Since Aristotle, a lot has changed concerning how we define stories and how we tell our stories. Today there are a plethora of other classic storytelling structures that can help you along the way.

But, you might be thinking, isn't it cheating to start from an existing structure? Or do I not compromise my creativity if I use a template? Naturally, the answer to both of these questions is no.

Apart from the simple fact that many of the best storytellers of all time adhere to clear narrative structures, there are many benefits to following narrative templates:

- They save time
- They are proven and you can safely assume their efficiency if done right
- A given structure can, on the contrary, evoke creativity rather than kill it
- They let you add everything that's important
- They help you remove the stuff that's not important

Let's list some storytelling techniques that work just as well for a lecture as for a video or a Facebook post.

THREE ACTS, OR “TELL IT LIKE STEVE JOBS”

As we have already mentioned, Steve Jobs was one of the most successful commercial storytellers of his time, and looking at the lectures he gave in connection with Apple's product release are still true crash courses in storytelling. He also applied one of the most classic storytelling structures, borrowed directly from Hollywood.

He divided his stories into three acts: “Setup”, “Confrontation”, and “Resolution”

1. Setup: Here we're introduced to the existing world and why there's a problem with the status quo. We also meet some kind of hero.

2. Confrontation: in act two, challenges arise and an event forces our hero to solve a number of problems or to overcome an obstacle to reach his goal.

3. Resolution: in the last act, the hero finally defeats the antagonist or solves the problem, which ultimately makes the world a better place.



STEVE JOBS ACCORDING TO DAVE GERHARDT

The marketer Dave Gerhardt at Drift sat down and studied lots of lectures by Steve Jobs, and he then created his own version of Jobs' narrative structure, which might feel clearer to some:

1. Tell a story: start with a story or a hook to engage the audience. This can be something personal, like “this morning, when my daughter spilled milk, I realized that...”

2. Pose a problem: clarify the problem. If you're a marketer, you should keep this short and simple by focusing on one single problem.

3. State the solution: the obvious order is to state the solution to the problem.

4. Proof: proving that you're telling the truth is important at this stage. You might use the voice of a customer or use some other method to get the audience to trust your solution.

5. CTA: what is the viewer supposed to do with this information? What does it lead to? Be clear.

Example:

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Seeing ads in your language is often crucial for making a buying decision. But translating and localizing videos can be a hustle. Using Storykit, Dominika at Dun & Bradstreet could create and localize 119 videos in 17 different languages last year. "We saved over 1,2 million EUR by using Storykit for this".

STORYKIT.IO
See how you can save money with Storykit
Storykit is a video creation tool with an AI that an... [Learn More](#)

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SIMON SINEK'S GOLDEN CIRCLE

If you haven't seen Simon Sinek's TED Talk "[How Great Leaders Inspire Action](#)" then it's really time for you to do so. With his framework, you can quickly tell a story that goes deep:

1. Why: Think like Sinek "start with why". Why are you there? What do you want the audience to feel?

2. How: How do you fulfill your why?

3. What: What do you do to fulfill your why (it's here you mention your products and services).

Example:

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At Storykit we believe that telling stories is important, because we know that stories can change the world. Still, the knowledge of how a powerful story is told is limited to the few. We want to change that. So we built Storykit, giving businesses the tools, the insights and the community to tell their stories.

STORYKIT.IO
See how your organization can tell every story with a video [Learn More](#)

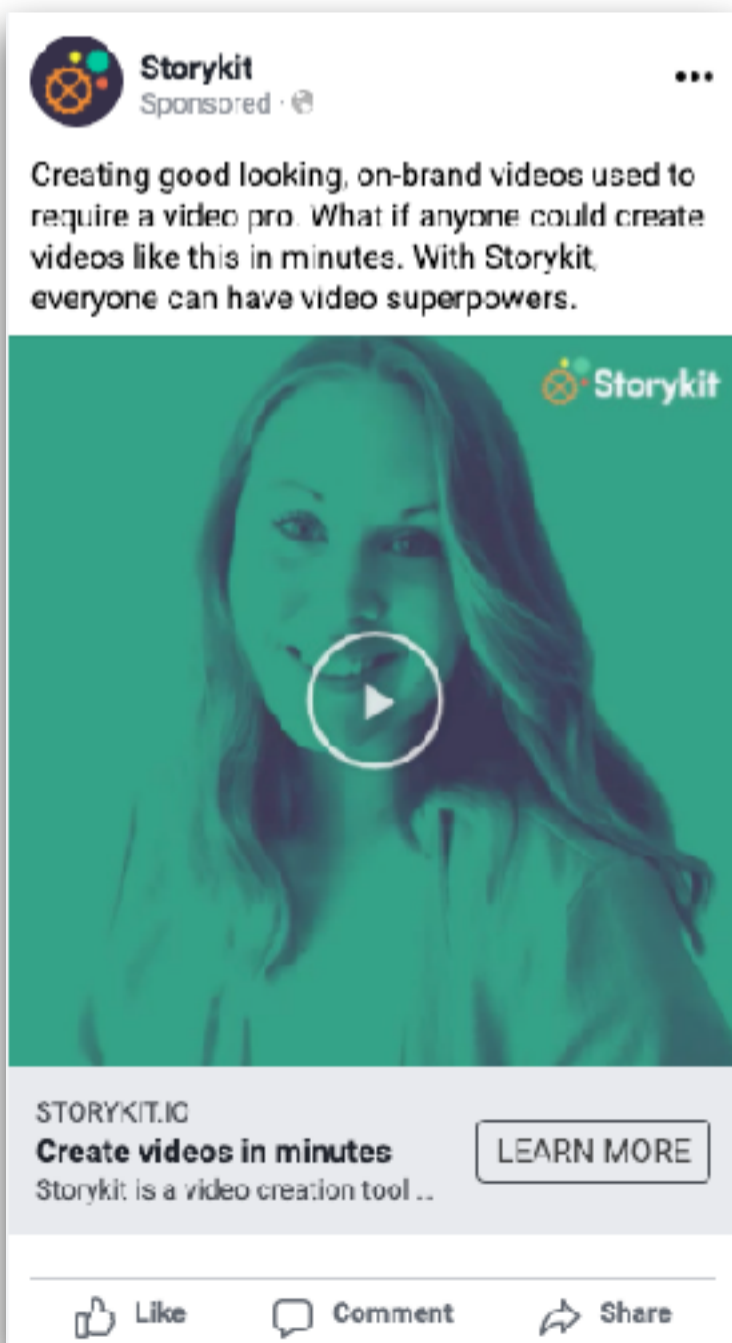
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BAB, OR BEFORE - AFTER - BRIDGE

This is a classic copywriter trick that's easy to use in any type of storytelling:

- 1. Before:** describe your current world and its problems.
- 2. After:** describe what your world would look like if the problem was solved.
- 3. Bridge:** this is how you get there.

Example:



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Creating good looking, on-brand videos used to require a video pro. What if anyone could create videos like this in minutes. With Storykit, everyone can have video superpowers.

STORYKIT.IO
Create videos in minutes
Storykit is a video creation tool ...

LEARN MORE

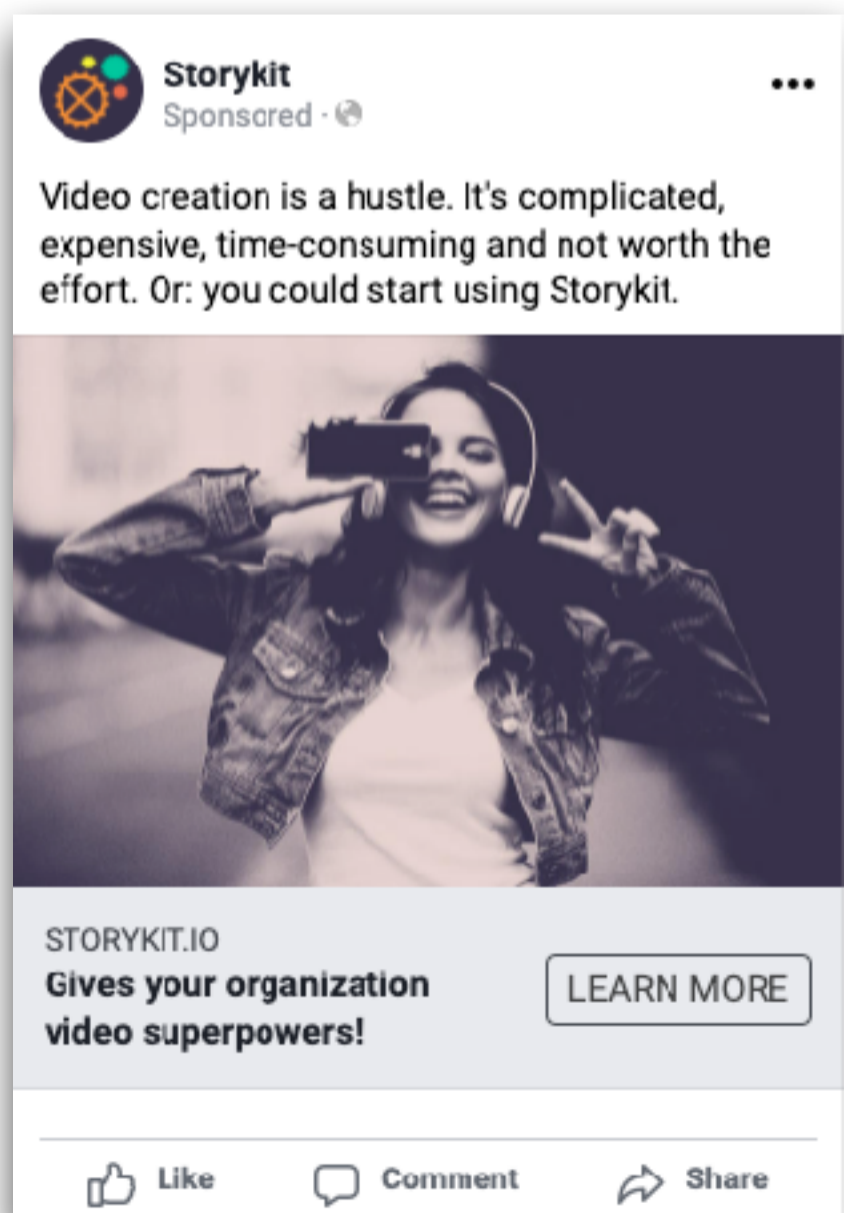
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PAS, OR PROBLEM - AGITATE - SOLVE

This is another excellent trick borrowed directly from the copywriter world to quickly paint a picture in your story:

- 1. Problem:** identify the problem
- 2. Agitate:** amplify the problem until you make it uncomfortable.
- 3. Solve:** solve the problem.

Example:



Storykit
Sponsored · 🌐

Video creation is a hustle. It's complicated, expensive, time-consuming and not worth the effort. Or: you could start using Storykit.

STORYKIT.IO
Gives your organization video superpowers!

LEARN MORE

Like Comment Share

STAR – CHAIN – HOOK

This model is great simply because it's so easy to remember. Imagine a star, a chain, and a hook—and you're set.

1. Star: open with something that catches your viewer's attention, something positive.

2. Chain: the chain is a series of compelling facts, advantages, sources, or evidence proving that your introductory "star" is trustworthy.

3. Hook: the hook is your powerful Call To Action. What should the viewer do next?

Another way of looking at this structure is that the Star catches the audience's attention, the Chain creates their need for the solution and the hook shows what they should do to get their hands on the solution.

Example:

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How long should a video be?

We know that video is the most efficient way to tell stories on social media. But how long should a video be?

The most common question we get at Storykit is, “how long should my video be?”, and we understand why you ask this question. The format is new and the platform is fast. Naturally, it’s nice to have some guidelines to rely on.

One problem, however, is that there are so many myths about how long a video should be on social media. Some have heard that a video should be no longer than 5-15 seconds while someone else has read that Facebook recommends videos over 3 minutes long. Even Facebook denies this:

- The recommendation we give is that your video should be as long as it needs to be if you just manage to keep it interesting, says Josefine Billström, Creative Strategist at Facebook.

At Storykit, we usually give the same recommendation and have enough data on our own material to be able to conclude that there is no strong correlation between the length of your video and how long the audience watches it.

So: dare to tell stories, and use the retention curve (which we return to on the next page) to determine whether your story works or not.

Test your story structure using retention

After we have posted our video to social channels, we naturally want to know the results from it. We then proceed to focus on our most common goals: views, clicks, and perhaps conversions.

But for the storyteller, there is only one kpi that actually says something about whether your video was “good” or not: **retention**.

What is retention?

If you truly want to understand how well your storytelling on social media is working, there is an outstanding tool for this: Audience Retention.

(You can find retention graphs on many social platforms, but in this e-book we will be focusing on Facebook Audience Retention, since it's one of the easiest to use and understand.)

Audience Retention (sometimes referred to as “Viewer Retention”, or in this e-book – simply “retention”) measures the proportion of viewers of a video who watches the video through to the end.

At Storykit we believe that retention is the single most important metric for every video producer who wants to tell stories in social.

There are, of course, loads of metrics that can be important for

you to know if your work is having any effect.

But retention is the only metric that will tell you anything about the actual quality of your video. It's also a truth-teller regarding what your viewers genuinely think about your video.

So if you haven't paid any attention to your retention graphs, it's about time.

Why retention matters

In the last couple of years, the retention graph has been the primary way to interpret the quality of your storytelling in social video. Retention graphs display the proportion of viewers of a video who watches the video through to the end. It is thus, to some extent, normalized for the size of the audience as well as for subject matter and length. An example:

A video on a huge subject (say, a famous soccer player changing teams) can still have a really poor performing retention (because it is poorly told and no-one wants to watch it to the end) where a

long, narrow story (like a story on Polish poetry) can have great retention because the (relatively few) people who do watch it want to see it all.

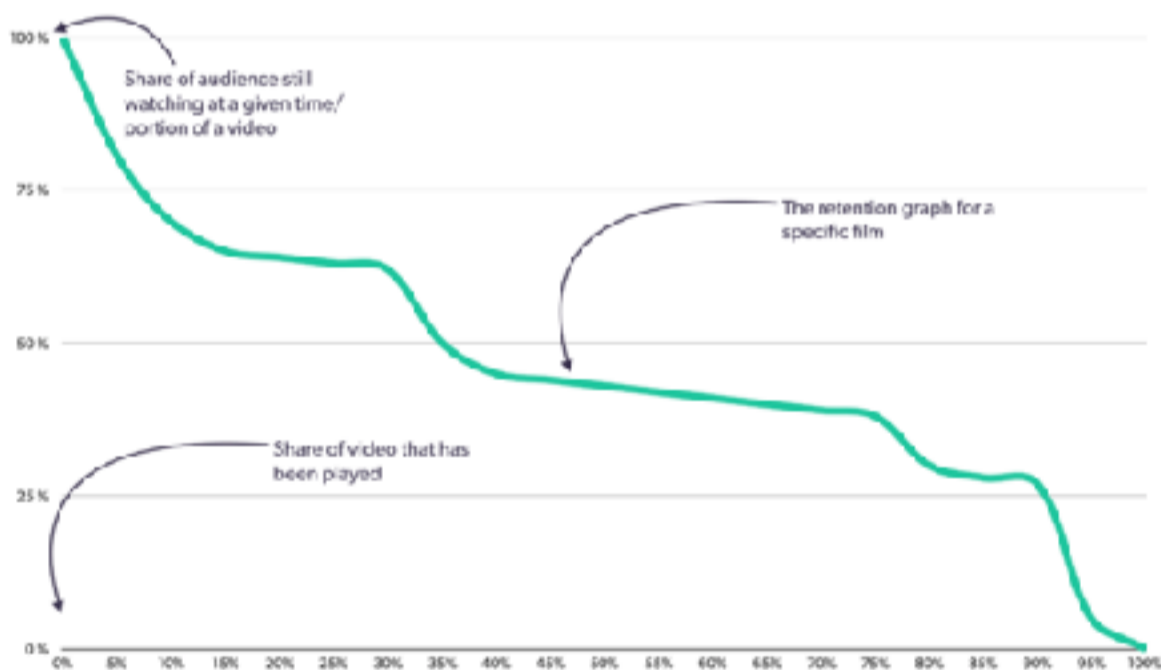
Social media has made retention especially essential to keep an eye on because so much of the distribution of video is done algorithmically, implying that the initial intent for a

viewer to watch a video is low. Catching the viewers' attention is important, and can be done in several ways, but even more important is keeping the viewers' attention once "caught".

Understanding the retention graph

To understand how to interpret retention, we have to examine the full retention graph. What we should do is to divide the graph into three separate parts with fundamentally different “meaning”. A drop in retention at the start or towards the end of a video simply does not mean the same thing as a drop in retention right in the middle.

A typical retention curve from the Facebook newsfeed looks something like this:



In this fictional video 5% of the initial audience stays until the video is finished. Not great, right? But is it really so terrible? And more interesting yet — what could have been done to improve it?

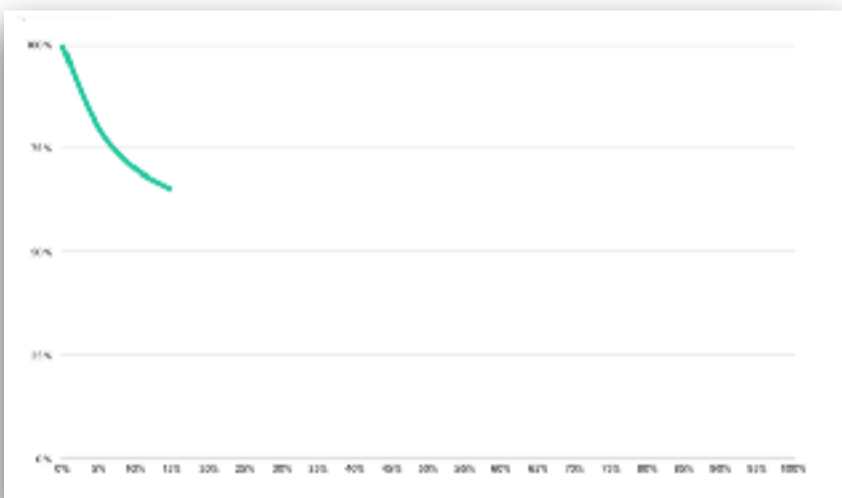
To determine, we have to break this retention curve down further.

1. THE TARGETING DROP

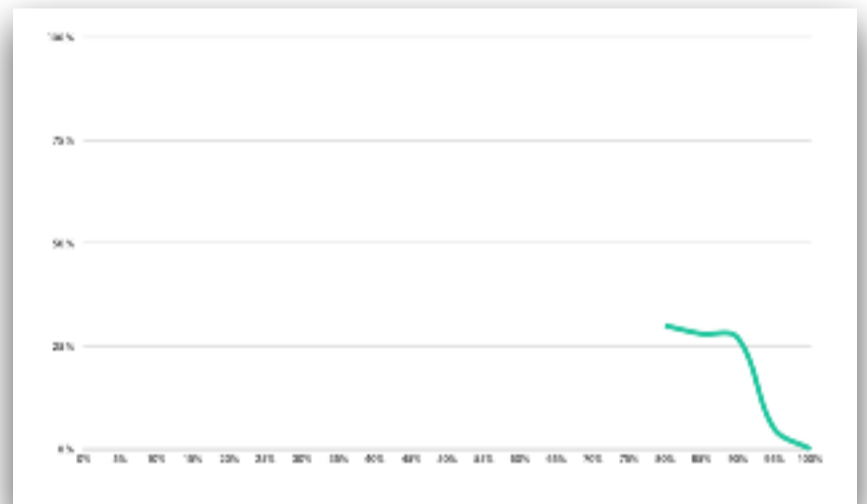
Independent on how great your film is, a lot of people will drop out during the first 10 % of playtime because of targeting — the film is simply not relevant for them. This is primarily due to the nature of distribution which — in the case of the Facebook newsfeed — relies on "auto-play". The viewer has not chosen to see this film — it has simply appeared in their feed.

2. THE OUTRO DROP

Let's be honest: People do not stay to watch your great-looking outro. The story is finished, so they move on. If you have your most important information in the outro, you should probably rethink your script. If not — you should not worry about this drop too much. But this is also why you shouldn't focus on how many viewers you still have left at 95% of the video.



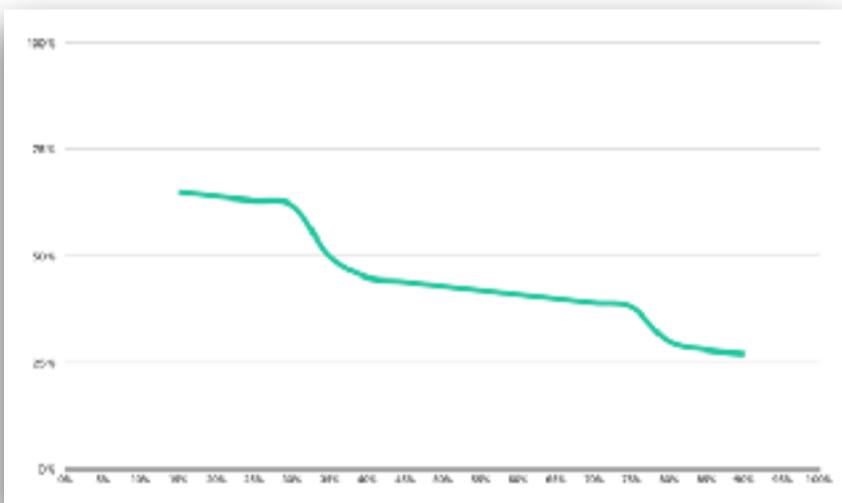
There are ways of reducing the targeting drop, but we don't think you should worry about this too much. There is natural selection of audience in this drop that can be productive for the rest of your film. One could even argue that if there is no targeting drop, the video has been under-distributed, because everyone it reaches want to **actually watch it.**



*You **will** be losing viewers in the beginning and the end of your video. Don't worry too much about it.*

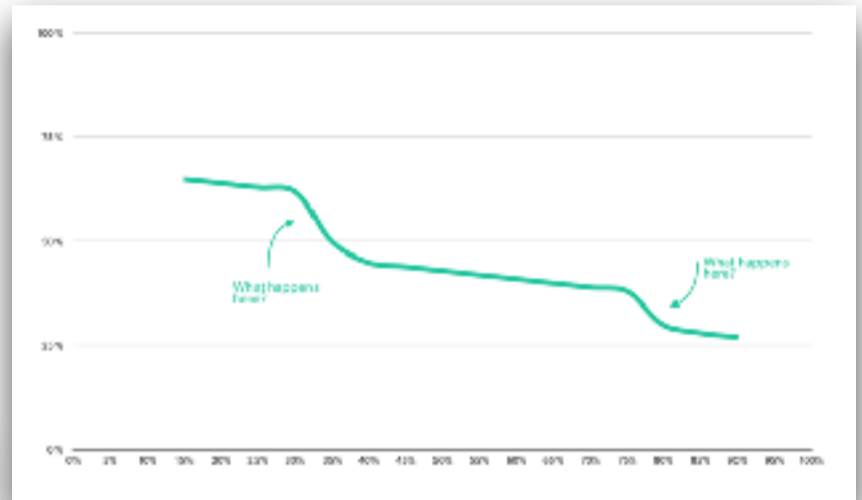
3. THE ZONE OF PRODUCTIVITY

Between the “Targeting drop” and “The Outro drop” is “The Zone of Productivity”. This is the part of the video that you should really evaluate. These are viewers that have chosen to watch your film, who have decided to consume it, and who have not yet watched it to its actual finish (before the “Outro drop”).



This part of the curve, obviously, should be as flat as possible. In this hypothetical film, we lose 1/3 of the viewers in the area of productivity. Maybe not great, but way better than 95%.

But most importantly: we now have a real foundation for analyzing our video. It is obvious that we are losing viewers at two specific points in the video:



In this example we have identified two parts of our video and our script that we need to examine closer to create a perfect video. Luckily, in Facebook it is extremely easy to scroll the retention graph and get a clear idea of where in your video the audience is dropping off.

And if we use [Storykit Intention Data](#) we will also have data that can help us make good decisions on our storytelling.

Storykit_

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