

# ACTIVATE 19

The Growth Marketing Conference

## Stat Meets Story

Eric La Brecque

Principal, Applied Storytelling

APPLIED  
STORYTELLING

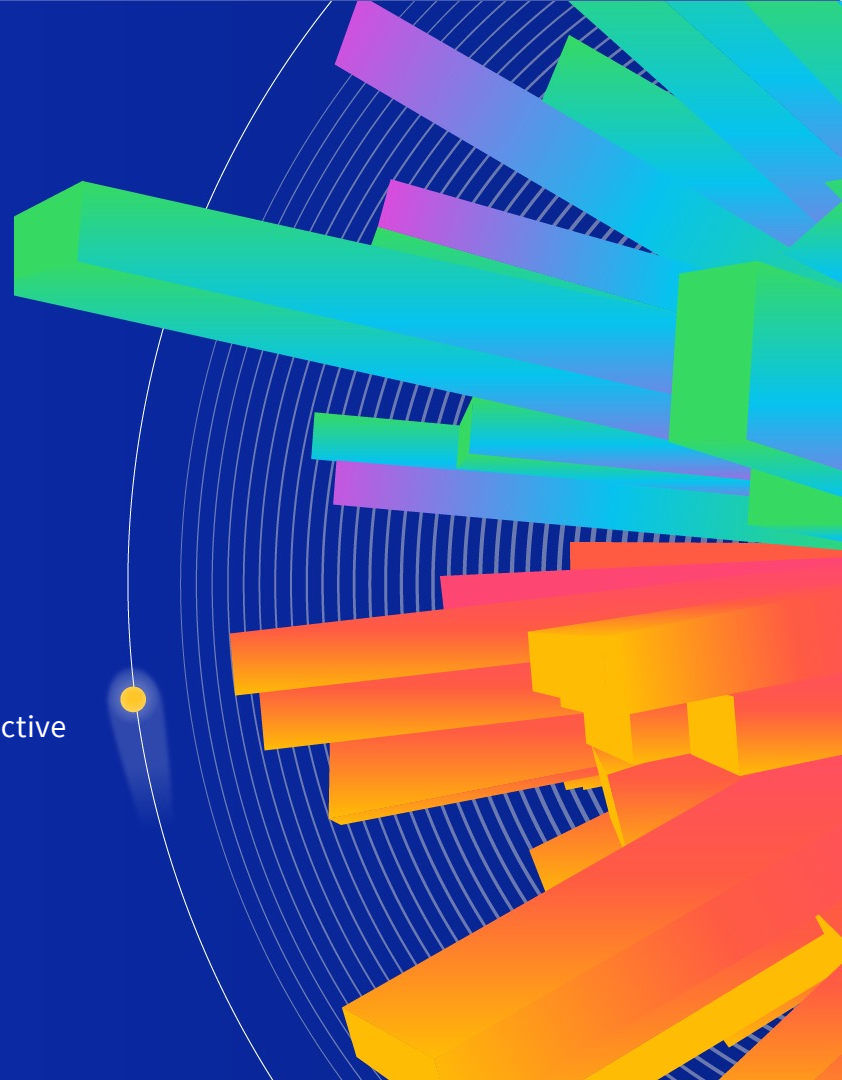
with

Hannah Mans

Director of Marketing, Directive

Directive,

Presented by:  *iterable*

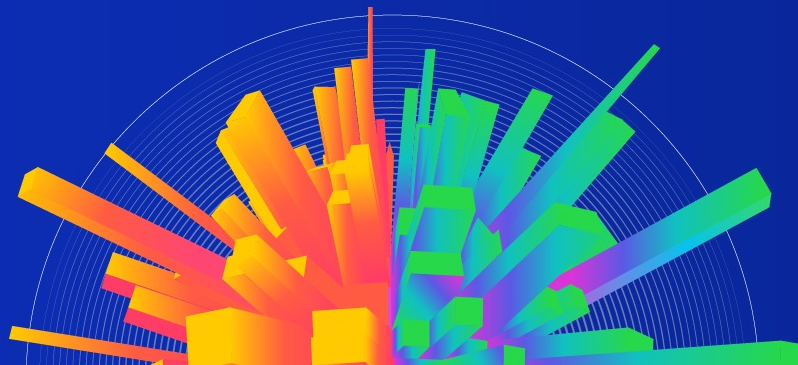


“

“The story is the outward-facing equivalent of a very stable operating platform.”

Andy Noronha

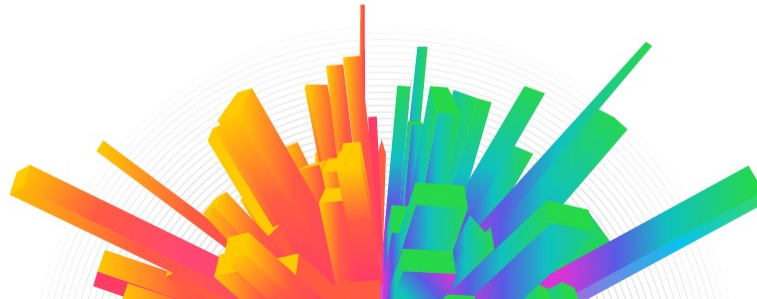
Director of Strategy and Thought Leadership, Office of Inclusion and Collaboration, Cisco  
Co-Author, *Orchestrating Transformation*



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# Our Agenda

1. A Nagging Suspicion
2. Hard Questions (For Me, Anyway)
3. A Brand to Demand Roadmap



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# Acknowledgements

Hannah Mans, Director of Marketing, Directive

Jason Cyr, Director, Design Transformation, Cisco

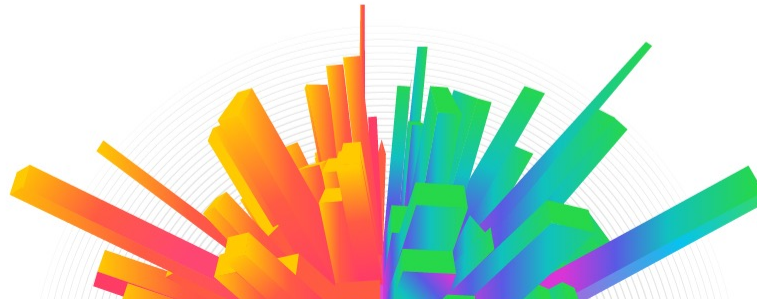
Adam Figueira, VP Marketing, Trilogy Education

Andy Noronha, Director of Thought Leadership, Cisco

Greg Pucko, Consumer Insights Manager, The Henry Ford

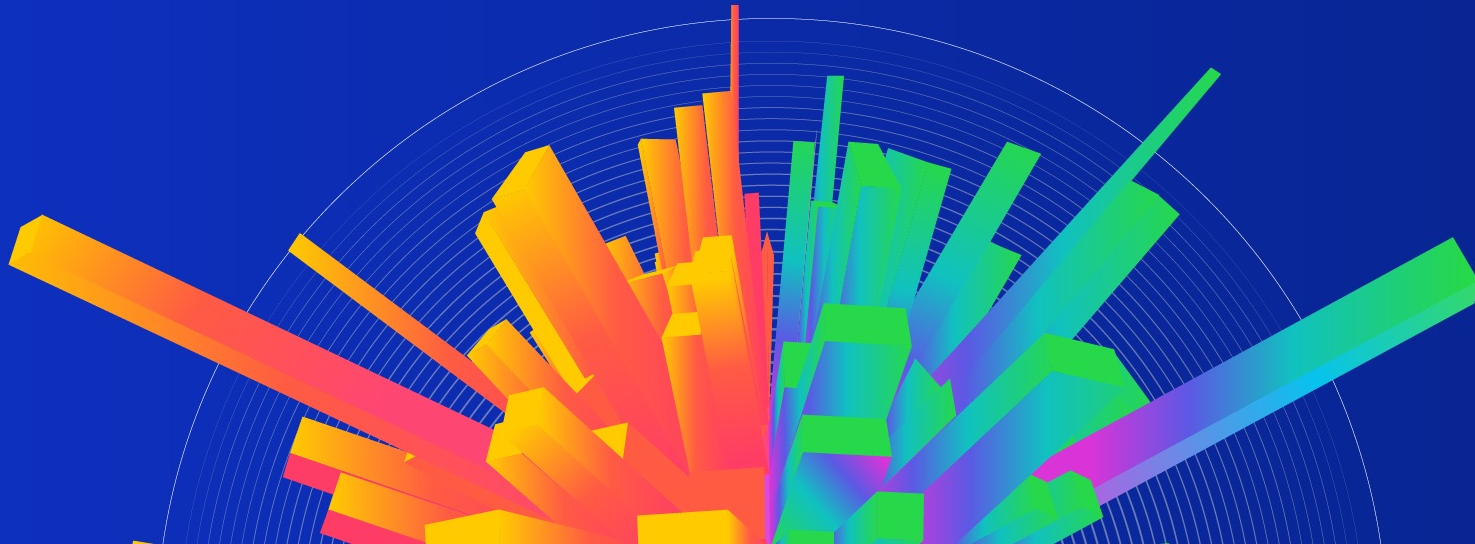
Courtland Smith, VP, Growth Marketing, Fastly

Bruce Wilson, Head of Digital Marketing, The Henry Ford





# A Nagging Suspicion



# Where Do You Sit?

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- How many have played a major role in a strategic brand initiative such as a repositioning or a comprehensive brand refresh?
- How many have used a “strategic brand foundation”—the output of a strategic brand initiative—directly to shape your marketing responsibilities?
- How many are responsible for reporting Marketing ROI?
- How many factor brand value into your success metrics?
- How many of you are storytellers?
- How many of you know your company’s vision statement?

# A Slow-Motion Disruption?

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I am the algorithm, and I know you. I know you better than your friends know you. I know you better than your family knows you. I know things about you that you have yet to acknowledge about yourself. I know you because I am the sum of every move you've ever made online. I know you because I *am* you.

Source: "I Am The Algorithm", Emily Flake, NYT, 6/29/18

In an age of sophisticated behavioral marketing and smart digital tools, why even bother with setting a strategic communications foundation?

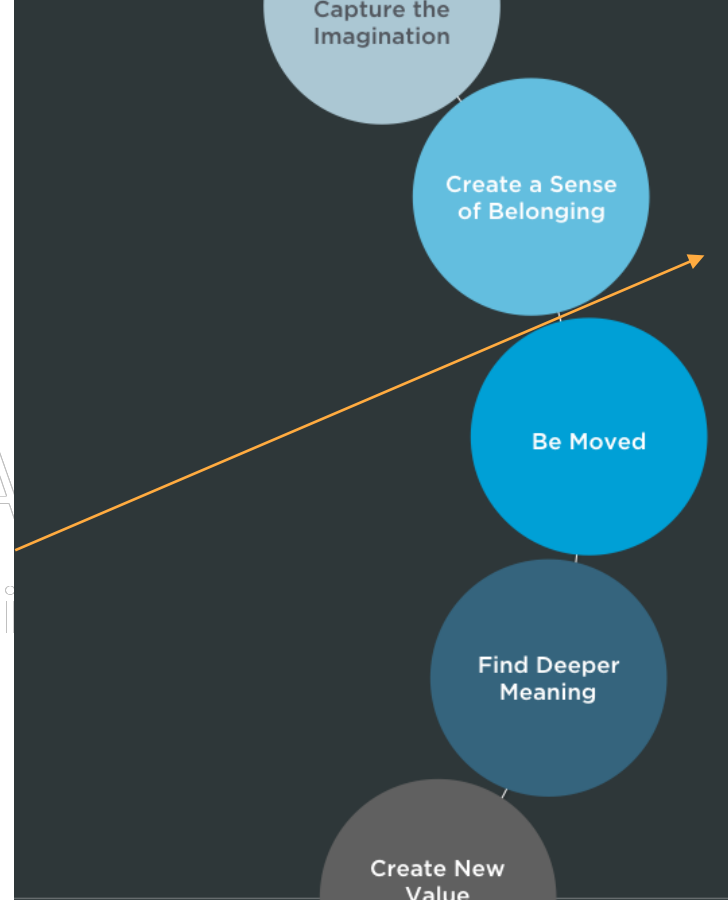
# Why Would We Care?

We solve some of the biggest brand communications challenges companies face.

Are there better ways of solving them?

Are these the only kinds of challenge we can solve for?

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The Growth Market



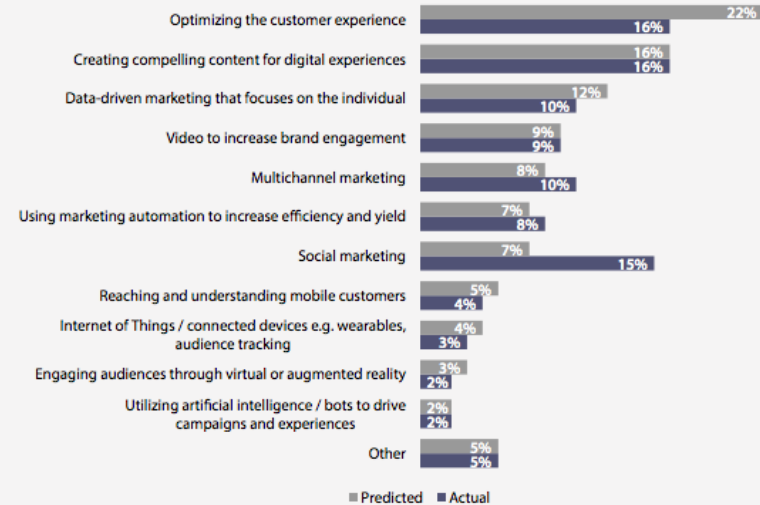
# Why Would We Care?

We use a story-based approach.

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Is this the best approach?

FIGURE 1: LAST YEAR'S MOST EXCITING OPPORTUNITY – PREDICTED VS. ACTUAL



Source: Adobe 2018 Digital Trends

# Why Would We Care?

We regard brands as stories told in the marketplace.

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What if it's more useful to think of brands as something else?

Purchasers of fast-moving consumer goods generally exhibit multiple brand selection behavior, selecting apparently randomly among a small subset or “repertoire” of trusted brands. Their behavior shows both matching and maximizing. It is not clear just what the majority of buyers are maximizing. Each consumer, however, a small percentage of consumers who are 100%-loyal to a particular brand during a period of observation. Some of these are exclusively buyers of particular brands who are presumably maximizing informational reinforcement. The demand for the brand is relatively price-insensitive or inelastic. Some consumers are exclusively the cheapest brands available and can be assumed to be utilitarian reinforcement since their behavior is particularly price-sensitive. Between them are the majority of consumers whose multiple brand selection takes the form of selecting a mixture of economy- and premium brands. Based on the analysis of buying patterns of 80 consumers for 9 months, the paper examines the continuum of consumers so defined and relates their buying behavior to the question of how and what consumers





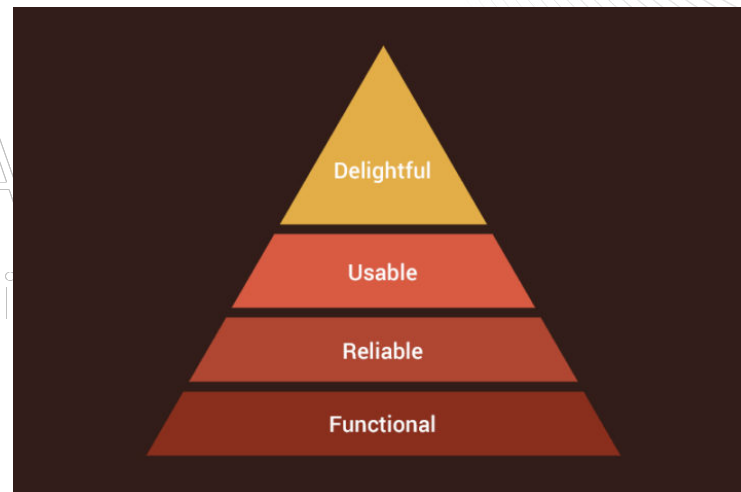
# Why Would We Care?

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We believe in stories because we see them as the most powerful tools ever invented for fusing meaning and emotion.

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Stories, sure but what about other tools?

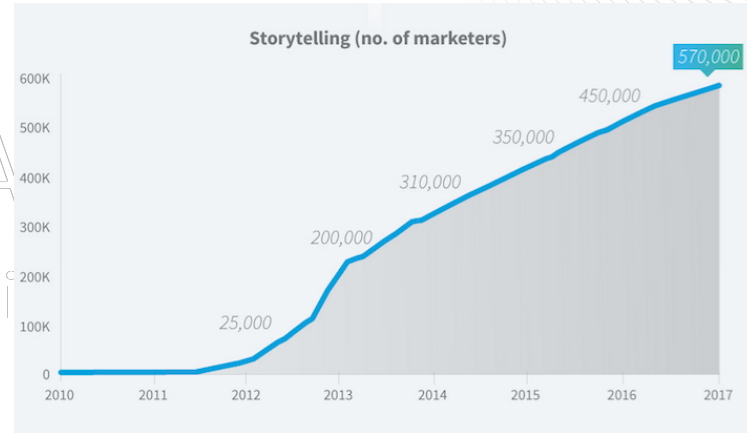


Source: "Preserving Human Touch: Designing With Emotion" Katica Babarczy, UXStudio, 10/3/16

# Storytelling in an Age of Statistics

- In 2010, the number of marketing storytellers” was almost zero.
- In 2019, the number is upwards of 570k.
- For comparison, the total number of “marketing managers” is 240k.\*

\*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018)



Source: LinkedIn Data



# Storytelling in an Age of Statistics

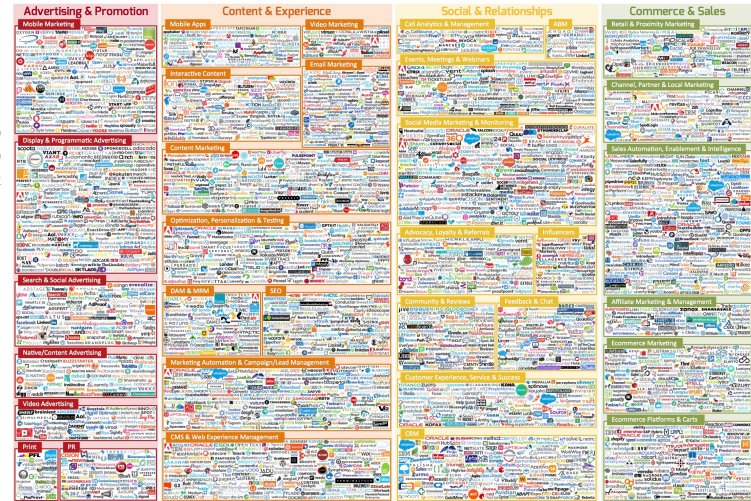
- We're storytellers, but almost nobody hires us to generate traffic and leads or prove ROI.
- Are other storytellers doing something we're not?
- Or is storytelling kind of beside the point when it comes to top marketing challenges?



Source: HubSpot Marketing Statistics 2018

# Storytelling in an Age of Statistics

We're not concerned about the proliferation of tools as such. We're more concerned about how and where brand strategy comes into play to support them. And about stories might serve as a kind of glue to hold them together.



Source: Chiefmartec: Technology Marketing Landscape

# A Few Reassuring Words from our Friends

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“Our brand foundation drives the style and content of our messaging.”

“I take my insights back to the storyteller and then we form a hypothesis about what will be more effective.”

“Companies use storytelling as a way of future-proofing their marketing.”

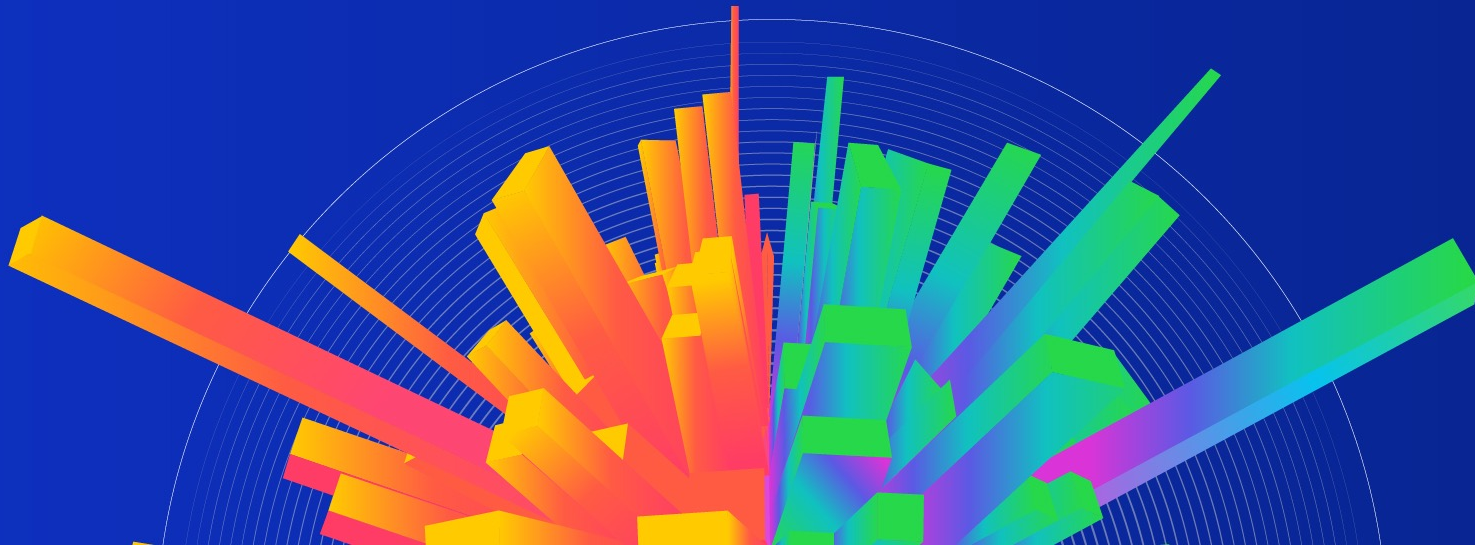
“If you have a strategy, you still might not get there, but if you don't have a strategy, I can guarantee you won't.”

# And Yet, Questions Persist

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- Can we do a better job of tying our work to ROI?
- Can we do a better job of drawing on customer insights?
- How do we make the case for building value over time in a world that wants real-time results today?

# Hard Questions (For Me, Anyway)





# The Adam Figueira Circle of Strategic Value

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“Data is one of the inputs to your strategy but is not a replacement for it.”

# First Hard Question

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“How do I know if the results of our AB testing are supporting or sacrificing brand value building over the long-term?”

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The Bird in the Hand Problem

# Second Hard Question

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“If we want to optimize for the same SEO terms as our competitors—because those are the terms our customers respond to—aren’t we driving our brand towards sameness vs. differentiation?”



The Fall to the Center Problem



# Third Hard Question

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“What kinds of data can I show to demonstrate that customers are connecting with our brand, not just with our campaign messaging?”

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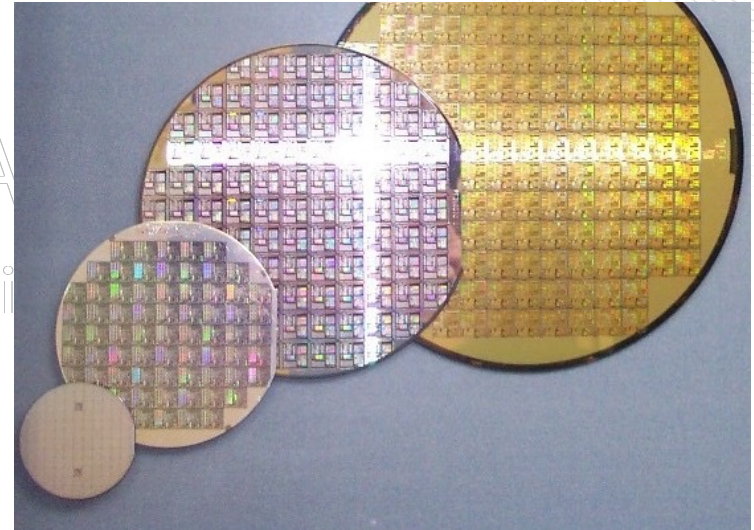
The Million Points of Light Problem

# Fourth Hard Question

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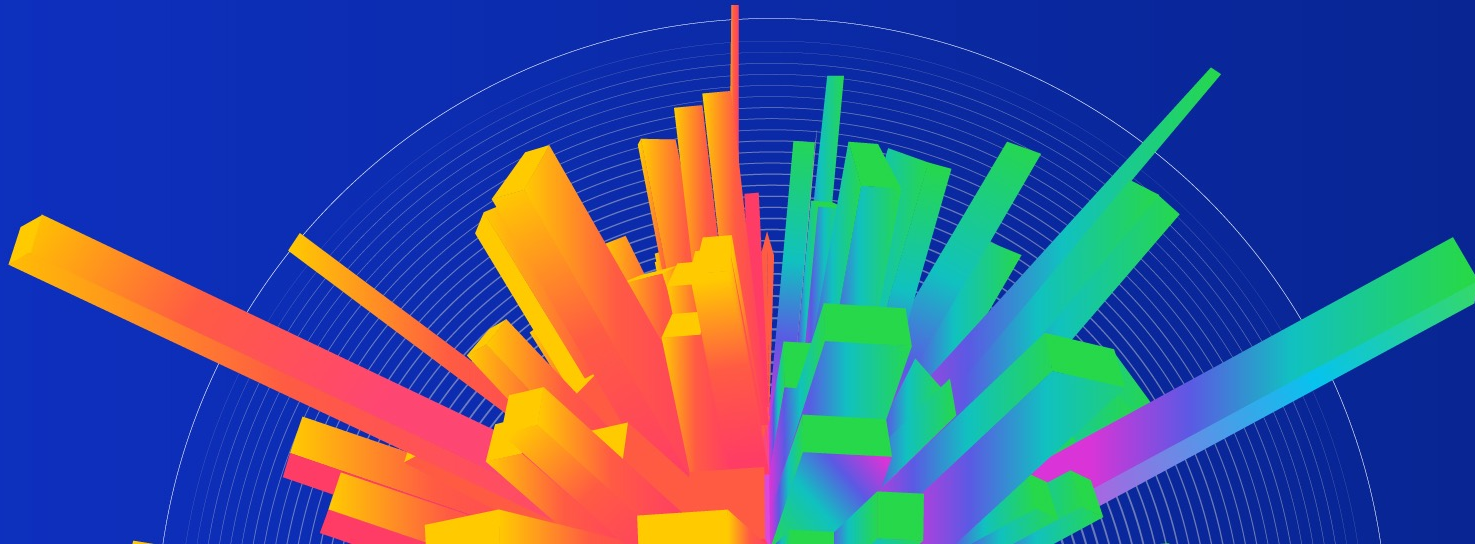
“What is the use of a high-level brand story when I’ve got several distinct customer segments to reach?”

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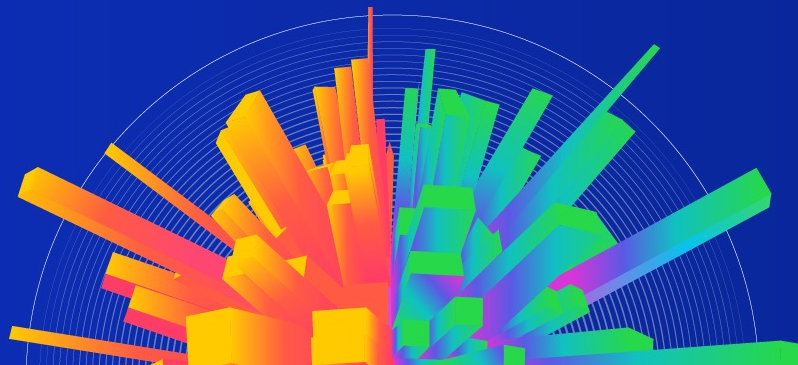
The Thin Slice Problem

# A Brand to Demand Roadmap



“

No matter how many optimizations you make to get people to your site, you're likely to lose out on their business if you don't relate with them.



# Brand Meets Demand

- Your strategic inputs on your tactical outputs to deliver on your marketing and sales objectives through search marketing- PPC, SEO, CRO, Digital PR, and content.





# Positioning & Brand Personality

- Good positioning is one that no other brand can legitimately claim with the same level of credibility and conviction.
- Your personality is the cornerstone for building a clear, well-integrated visual and written identity as well as for shaping the sum of brand experiences.

**Brand Meets Demand**  
The foundation for all strategic marketing and asset creation



SHAPE DIGITAL  
CREATIVE ASSETS



CONTENT  
UNIFORMITY

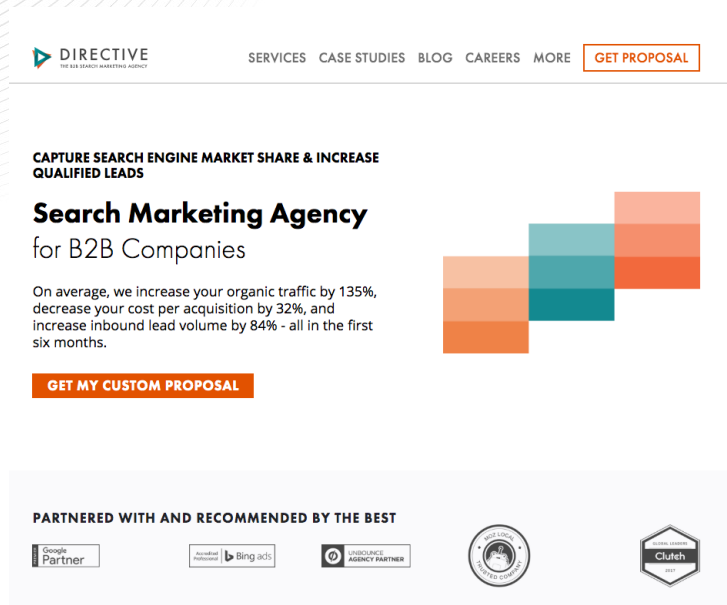


COMPELLING  
LANDING PAGES



STRONG AD  
COPY

# Positioning & Brand Personality in Action



**DIRECTIVE**  
THE B2B SEARCH MARKETING AGENCY

SERVICES CASE STUDIES BLOG CAREERS MORE [GET PROPOSAL](#)

**CAPTURE SEARCH ENGINE MARKET SHARE & INCREASE QUALIFIED LEADS**

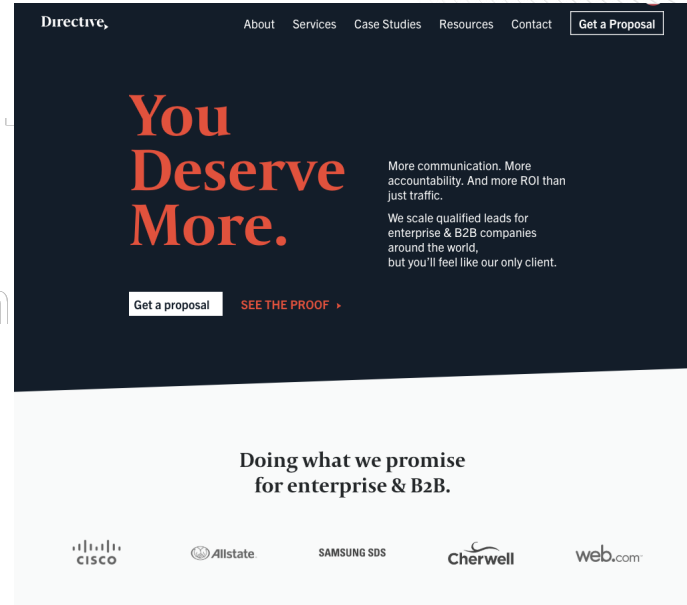
## Search Marketing Agency for B2B Companies

On average, we increase your organic traffic by 135%, decrease your cost per acquisition by 32%, and increase inbound lead volume by 84% - all in the first six months.

[GET MY CUSTOM PROPOSAL](#)

**PARTNERED WITH AND RECOMMENDED BY THE BEST**

Google Partner | Microsoft Advertising | Bing ads | ANDROIDICE AGENCY PARTNER | NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SEARCH ENGINE MARKETERS | Clutch



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# You Deserve More.

More communication. More accountability. And more ROI than just traffic.

We scale qualified leads for enterprise & B2B companies around the world, but you'll feel like our only client.

[Get a proposal](#) [SEE THE PROOF >](#)

**Doing what we promise for enterprise & B2B.**

CISCO | Allstate. | SAMSUNG SDS | Cherwell | web.com

# Ideal Client Persona & Customer Profiles

- Your ICP is the reason your brand exists. Your profiles are pivotal to understand and empathize with them so they can do a better job of acquiring and serving them.

## Brand Meets Demand Informs Strategy at all levels



INFLUENCES WEB  
CREATIVES



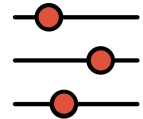
INFLUENCES AD COPY



TARGETS THOUGHT  
LEADERS



GUIDE AN EFFECTIVE  
CONTENT STRATEGY



CREATES PARAMETERS  
FOR PPC



# Ideal Client Persona & Customer Profiles in Action

- Objective- Increase qualified lead volume.
- Strategy- Laser focus on Third-Party Directories

## Results

**39%**

Boost in pre-qualified clicks within Capterra within one month

**336%**

Increase in Capterra conversion volume in one quarter

# Competitor Analysis

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- Reveals the strengths and weaknesses of the competitors within your market.
- Make informed decisions about your own marketing strategies and mitigate any threats and avail any opportunities from the competition.

## Brand Meets Demand

Identify opportunities, threats, and competitor positioning to mitigate risks



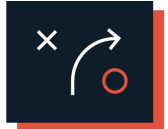
IDENTIFY SERP OPPORTUNITIES



TARGET OPPORTUNITIES FOR LINK BUILDING



DILIGENT KEYWORD RESEARCH FOR SEO



INFORM STRATEGY FOR PPC

# Competitor Analysis in Action

- Objective- Increase Overall Search Visibility
- Strategy- Utilize The Power of Content

## Results

In 5 months, one piece of content

**27**

Demo Requests

**1,902**

referring domains  
(an all-time high)

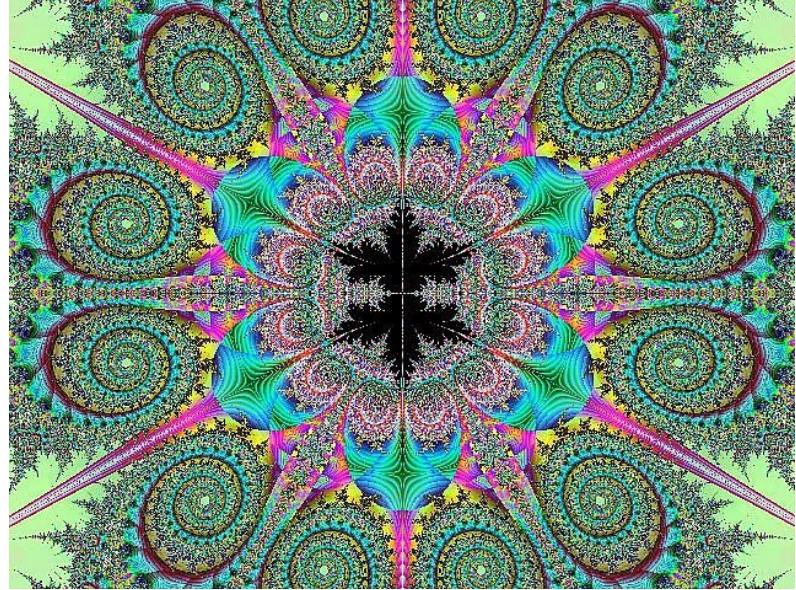
**#1**

in the search engine results page (SERP)

# Where Do We Fit in the Future?

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- Contextual Marketing?
- Purpose-Driven Marketing?
- Customer Participation?
- Marketing Automation?
- Chatbots?

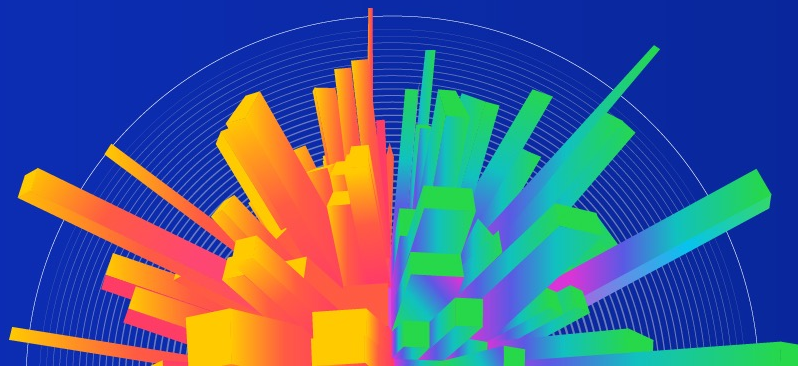


Artist: Ulrike 'Ricky' Martin

“

“If you base your decisions only on what you can measure then you’ve got a pretty large blind spot: All the stuff that you’re not measuring.”

Courtland Smith  
Vice President of Growth Marketing, Fastly



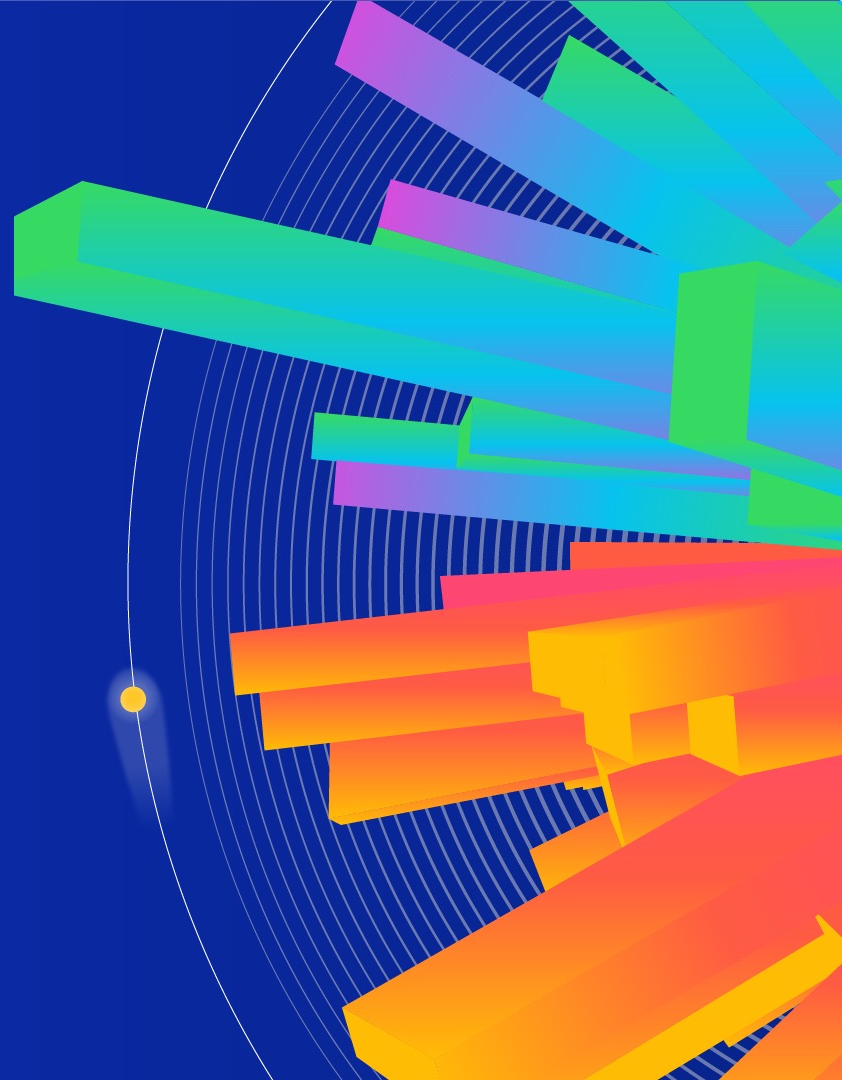


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## Q&A

Presented by:  *iterable*





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