



Storytelling – The Letter Box

I've been thinking a lot about storytelling lately. It's become one of those buzzwords we hear everywhere—in marketing, branding, business strategies. But to me, storytelling has always been something far more personal. Maybe it's because I've been telling and collecting stories for as long as I can remember, and not in a professional setting, but in the most ordinary of ways: through letters.

So, why am I writing this? Well, I recently unearthed an old, slightly battered moving box full of letters, postcards, and memories. As I started going through them, it hit me—these aren't just pieces of paper; they're pieces of life, full of stories that shaped who I am today. It reminded me that storytelling isn't just a business tool, it's woven into the very fabric of our lives.

Storytelling

At its core, storytelling is about more than selling a product or pitching an idea. It's about human connection. It's how we make our lives relatable, share our experiences, and create lasting memories. Before it became a strategic business tool, it was simply a way for people to make sense of the world and share their journey with others.

So, what is storytelling? There are countless experts out there who can explain it far better than I can. There are endless books on how storytelling can shape your business plan, enhance marketing strategies, identify your target audience, or even help with teaching. These resources will teach you how to structure a story, craft a perfect storytelling script, and target your message. I'm sure there are courses and certifications galore for becoming a "professional storyteller." But guess what? I've done none of that—zero, zip, nada.

Yet, I've always been a storyteller. Long before it became the trendy buzzword it is today, I used storytelling because, simply put, I love a good story—both hearing and telling them. So, if you're looking for another guidebook on storytelling, this isn't it. But if you're curious, like me, perhaps you'll enjoy my story. And here it goes...

The Story of My Letter Box

I have this large, brown moving box. You know the type—slightly worn with age, the kind of box that follows you through countless moves. For years, every time I've moved, this box has followed me. And every time, it goes straight to the basement, tucked away without much thought. Inside are letters, postcards from all over the world, birthday cards, memories, and photos. Every now and then, I open the box, pull out a few letters, and read them. But recently, I've decided it's time to let go. The memories in that box are mine alone, tied to people only I knew, from times long past.

Each letter holds a story. Since I only have the replies sent to me, I don't always remember what I wrote first. These letters trigger memories—not just of my own life but of the broader world at that time. And no, I'm not talking about the Dark Ages or dinosaurs roaming the Earth! These are letters from just before the internet became a household staple, back when it cost 19 SEK per minute to call from Sweden to New Zealand, and a landline was the only phone you had. Back then, letters were everything.

I must have badgered all my friends and family into writing to me, no matter where I was, because the sheer number of letters in this box has taken me weeks, if not months, to sift through. I haven't read every word, but each letter carries a story—a personal story written by someone who took the time to share their life with me. They wanted me to be part of their world, just as they were part of mine. Our stories were intertwined for a time, but as I go through these letters, I realize I've lost contact with most of these people. Some have even passed away. I find myself wondering where they are now and why we drifted apart. It's easy to blame the lack of Skype, Facebook, or smartphones, but in truth, life just got in the way. Writing a letter takes time and personal effort. It's much easier to send a quick text with a smiley face.

Writing a letter means telling a story. It means being a storyteller. The letters in my box are personal, deeply connected to life stories—both mine and the senders'. While I can't read what I wrote in reply, I can tell from their responses that we cared deeply about what the other had to say. Some letters are funny, others are sad, and some are so captivating they feel like small novels. These stories have shaped my life. They've built my knowledge, expanded my experiences, and formed the person I am today.

Conclusion

As I sort through the letters in that old, shabby box, I'm reminded that stories are not just tools for marketing, branding, or business strategy—they are the fabric of our lives. The stories we tell, whether in a letter, a conversation, or a business pitch, shape who we are and how we relate to one another. Storytelling isn't something we learn from a book or a course; it's something we live.

These letters, filled with moments from people who have touched my life, have shaped my story just as much as I've shaped theirs. It's a reminder that the most powerful stories aren't the ones crafted for strategy—they're the ones that come from real human experiences.

In the end, effective storytelling—whether personal or professional—isn't just about crafting a perfect narrative. It's about listening, sharing, and creating connections.

And as I say see-you to my box of letters, I carry those stories with me, knowing that storytelling, in all its forms, is what makes us human. So, whether you're telling a story to a friend, sharing an experience with a colleague, or writing that next business pitch—remember, the real magic of storytelling lies in the connections it creates.

Have an awesome day—and keep telling your stories.