TeamWherx™

GUIDE:
How to
Capture & Cascade
Customer Success Stories

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Why Customer Success Stories Are Critical

Your prospective customers want to quickly and easily know the value and impact your product or service will deliver, rather than having to peruse a long list of your features and services that may be cumbersome to review.

One highly effective way to spread your organization's message is through "storyselling." Telling stories about your company's impact on customers enables prospects to easily make mental connections between what they're hearing/reading about and how their situation can also benefit from your offering.

Sharing stories (or case studies) based off your customers' experiences will help your prospects visualize how your company can potentially deliver similar results. These stories helps prospects understand how you can address needs that are similar to theirs and can serve as a powerful motivator to get them to do business with your company.

However, a portfolio of customer stories is of little use if your team doesn't know how to use them. Team members need to know when, why and how to bring in customer stories to their conversations with prospects. To be effective, your team members need to be able to put your offering into context in the right way and at the right time by:

- Internalizing the stories.
- Understanding the objections.
- Matching stories to objections, lookalike personas and situations during the conversation.

> "Research shows our brains are not hard-wired to understand logic or retain facts for very long. Our brains are wired to understand and retain stories. A story is a journey that moves the listener, and when the listener goes on that journey, they feel different. The result is persuasion and sometimes action."
>
> Dr. Jennifer Aaker, Professor at Stanford Graduate School of Business

How to Create Dynamic Success Stories

Creating customer success stories requires a disciplined approach to capturing and documenting the solution, impact, and ROI. Using the outline below, you can interview internal (e.g., marketing, sales, product development, customer experience) and external (satisfied current customers, selling partners) stakeholders in order to develop each success story:

1. **Challenge:** Document the situation a customer was facing prior to using your offering. What specifically was affecting them negatively? How were these issues causing problems? Be specific when describing the challenges your customer faced to help paint a vivid picture of the scenario, prior to your offering "saving the day" for them.
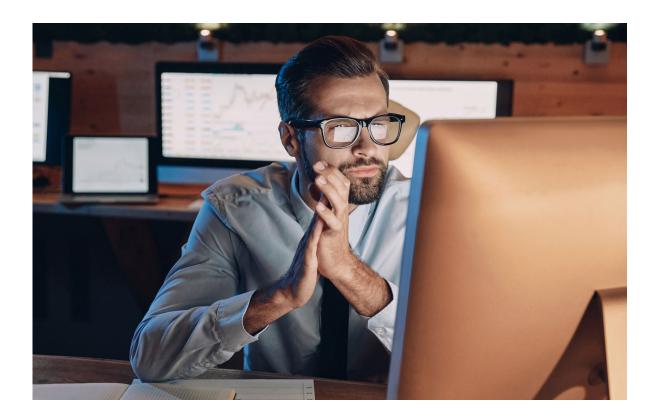
2. **Solution:** In this section of your success story, only describe how your product or service was used by the customer, without getting too much into the benefits (yet). However, make sure that you answer how you addressed each pain point you outlined in the Challenge section of your piece, to ensure no problems for the customer were left unanswered.

3. **Results:** Now it's time to call out the measurable impact and benefits your product or service provided. Are there any specific quantitative or qualitative results that were or are being attained? How were the customer's expectations addressed or exceeded? Mention these benefits directly after the Solution section to maintain a flow that's logical and easy to follow.

4. **Highlight:** Lastly, it's important to complete your success story by providing a direct quote from the customer, if possible. This adds another powerful element to your story that truly puts in their own words the level of satisfaction and happiness they've received from doing business with your company.

How to Use Your Success Stories

Your customer success stories are not useful if they aren't leveraged or promoted effectively. Here are several ways to "get the word out" above and beyond team members conveying the stories during conversations:

- **Case Studies** – A case study is simply a longer form version of the success story you're telling. You can expand further on the details of your success story and provide more quotes from the customer in this content format, then post it on your corporate website or release it through social media channels.

- **Press Releases** – Advertising your success story as a press release can be worth the investment, as it can reach an audience you might not typically reach.

- **Corporate Website Updates** – Implementing buttons or a banner on your homepage makes it easy for regular visitors to see the latest success stories you've created.

- **Digital Marketing** – Promoting your success stories through digital marketing can be an effective way to position stories about your offering with prospects who are looking for products or services similar to yours.

- **Email Marketing** – Using customer success stories in email marketing (by either linking to them or including snippets of them within your messaging) can enlighten and engage prospects in a cost-effective manner.

- **Social Media Posts** – Promoting your success stories via social media platforms like Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook helps them gain traction outside of your website and email or digital marketing campaigns.

The call-to-action on many of these initiatives can drive readers to a simple, yet compelling landing page to learn more about your offering's value proposition.

Use this valuable information to create robust stories that inspire your prospects to buy, as well as to craft effective strategies to promote them. In doing so, you can leverage the power of "storyselling" to drive more business for your organization and foster greater engagement among your current customer base.