Getting Started with

Data Storytelling

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What is Data Storytelling?

Data storytelling is the art of unifying data and objectives into a *cohesive narrative.*

Separate from one another, data can be dry and a story can lack statistical support, but when bridged together, the two can coalesce into an incredibly powerful method of influencing decisions and inspiring action.

Data Storytelling *Possibilities*

Foster Customer Connections

Resonating on an emotional level with your customers becomes far easier when you've got a compelling story on your side.

Improve Your Audience's Engagement

Tap into your creative strengths, and supplement your story with visually captivating designs.

Inspire Action

Simplify complex data into clear, actionable insights by maintaining focus on a few select points that really move the needle.

Data Storytelling
Best Practices

Avoid Making the Simple More Complex

MORE DATA ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER.

Too much can become overwhelming and detract from your core focus. Some believe that the more information they provide, the smarter they sound. However, that couldn't be further from the truth. There is so much value in making the complex simple in order to make dynamic concepts more accessible and actionable.

To embrace this concept in your storytelling, identify the precise message you want to convey and the action you want your audience to take as a result. Focus on the data that best supports these objectives, and resist the temptation to include extraneous information. Leveraging a few key statistics — the ones most pivotal to your story — will help ensure you maintain the attention of your audience.

Personalization

IMPACTFUL STORIES RESONATE WITH READERS.

And what makes a story impactful, of course, is in the eye of the reader. For storytelling optimized for your target audience, develop a game plan for personalization. In practice, this means utilizing what you know about your audience's attributes and tailoring your content and campaigns to their unique interests and motivations.

Consider the following questions about your customers and prospects:

- **What keeps them up at night?**
  e.g., Stress, finances, the future

- **What are their professional and personal aspirations?**
  e.g., Status, recognition, being the first to know trends

- **What inspires them to act?**
  e.g., exclusive offers, access to content, financial incentives, social causes

- **What preferences do they have?**
  e.g., favorite products/services, communication channels, communication frequency

Collecting data is about more than gathering demographic information. It's about identifying what truly motivates individuals through their behavior and leveraging those findings to create experiences that lead to action. This is why a dedicated zero-party data acquisition solution, like **Marigold Grow**, is such a huge advantage for brands.

Data Integrity

The data you use should be able to survive scrutiny from readers. Ensure you can explain its origin and methodology for collection.

If you don't own the data, be certain to provide a citation — and always ensure it's the original source rather than a secondary source that referenced the data for the purpose of supporting their own points.

Visualization

The visualization component is likely the first thing that comes to mind when you hear "data storytelling." And for good reason. Effective data visualization enables you to simplify complex topics while commanding your audience's attention.

Visual representations take just a fraction of the time for the human brain to process when compared to plain text. But with our brains processing images in as few as 13 milliseconds, positive first impressions are key.[1]

[1] Trafton, A. (2014, January 16). *In the blink of an Eye*. MIT News | Massachusetts Institute of Technology. https://news.mit.edu/2014/in-the-blink-of-an-eye-0116

Tell a Story

Data visualization should always tell a story

This story can be used to spark new ideas, support an existing idea, and communicate simplified models of complex data.

One data set can tell multiple stories to multiple audiences — but realistically, it can only tell one "story" at a time. So, determine what is most helpful to the audience you're speaking to and tailor your story accordingly.

THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED BY:

Quantifying the value of your brand's offerings.

Ex: How your brand enables customers to drive efficiencies and improve performance.
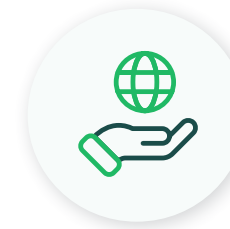
Evoking the emotions of your audience.

Ex: How the business from your customers directly impacts your charitable initiatives.

Demonstrating your brand's commitment to its clients.

Ex: Case study highlighting how your brand worked alongside a client to reach a measurable goal.

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Choose the Right Visual

There are a million ways to display data, but each type of visual communicates something different. Resist defaulting to bar charts and pie charts — they are a good fit for some datasets, but certainly not all. Choose a visual that provides the most clarity to ensure that your visualization truly assists your audience in understanding the data.
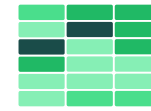
Examples of
DATA FUNCTIONS AND VISUALS

Accessibility note

Some visual impairments can make colors difficult to differentiate. Using colors distinct from one another, shading important areas, and including patterns to differentiate data points are all methods to help preserve accessibility.

Comparison
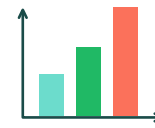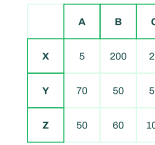
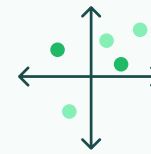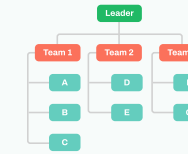|				
Bar Chart	Heat Map	Table Chart	Grouped or Stacked Bar Chart	Donut Chart
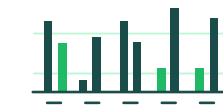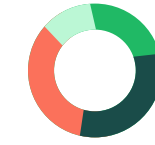
Concept visualization

Network Visualization	Opposite Diagram	Organization Chart

Correlation
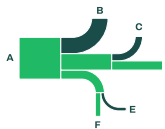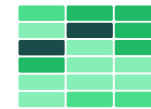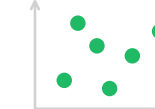
Flow Map	Heat Map	Scatter Plot	Mind Map

Distribution
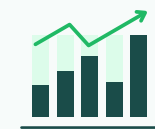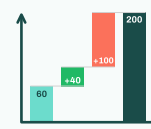
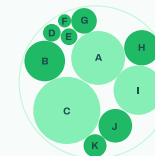|					
Histogram	Waterfall Chart	Scatter Plot	Jitter Plot	Packed Circle Chart	Tree Map

Part to whole
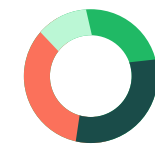
Donut Chart	Pie Chart	Gauge Chart	Stacked Bar Chart	Progress Bar
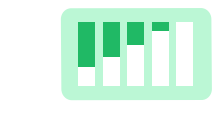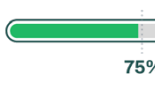
Trend over time

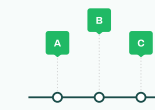|		
Line Graph	Bubble Chart	Timeline

Using Data Storytelling *in* Marketing Campaigns

Once you've become well-versed in data storytelling best practices, it's time to implement your content into your marketing campaigns.

And let's face it: your recipients' inboxes are already full of marketing content. But, with our research showing that a whopping 82% of consumers say their favorite brand strives to develop a relationship with them, and a further 56% citing a brand's relationship-building efforts as important or critically important to maintaining their loyalty, you have a golden opportunity to leverage quality data storytelling content to truly connect with customers.[2]

This leads us to the ultimate benefit of effective data storytelling: **increased conversions**. When you've cultivated the skillset of producing engaging, appealing data storytelling content, it's time to utilize advanced marketing tech that will guide customers along unique journeys that improve over time as you learn more about them.

[2] Marigold. *Global Consumer Trends Index 2024.*

85 %

of consumers say that their favorite brands treat them *like an individual*

Consider the following tech, tailor-made by brands like Marigold, to inspire action and drive conversions:

MARKETING AUTOMATION

Perhaps the most directly relevant to your data storytelling objectives, marketing automation ensures the right content goes to the right audience at the right time. It enables you to nudge your customers along through the various stages of their journey, and prevents a lot of manual work.

REAL-TIME DATA

Ideally, the data storytelling content you've created is already relevant to your target audience. **Marigold LiveContent by Liveclicker** takes this a step further with next-level personalization. Advanced tech makes it easier than ever before to integrate third-party APIs, send out recipient-unique campaign materials, and account for their real-time data points, like location, weather conditions, operating system and device type.

Leveraged in combination, these personalized touches come together to produce truly individualized experiences — precisely what you need in an era where 85% of consumers say that their favorite brands treat them like an individual, and six in ten say they'll pay more to shop with the brands who've won their loyalty.[3]

[3] Marigold. *Global Consumer Trends Index 2024.*
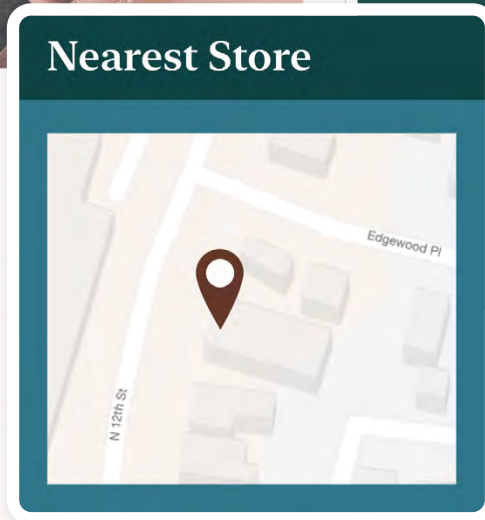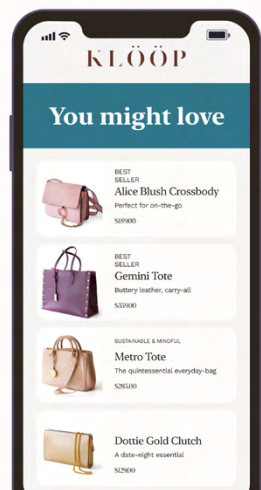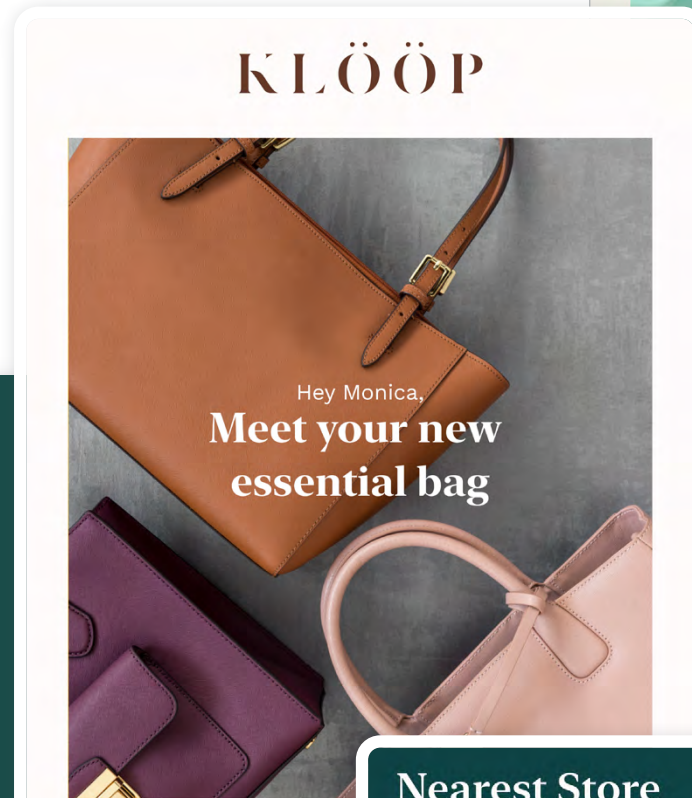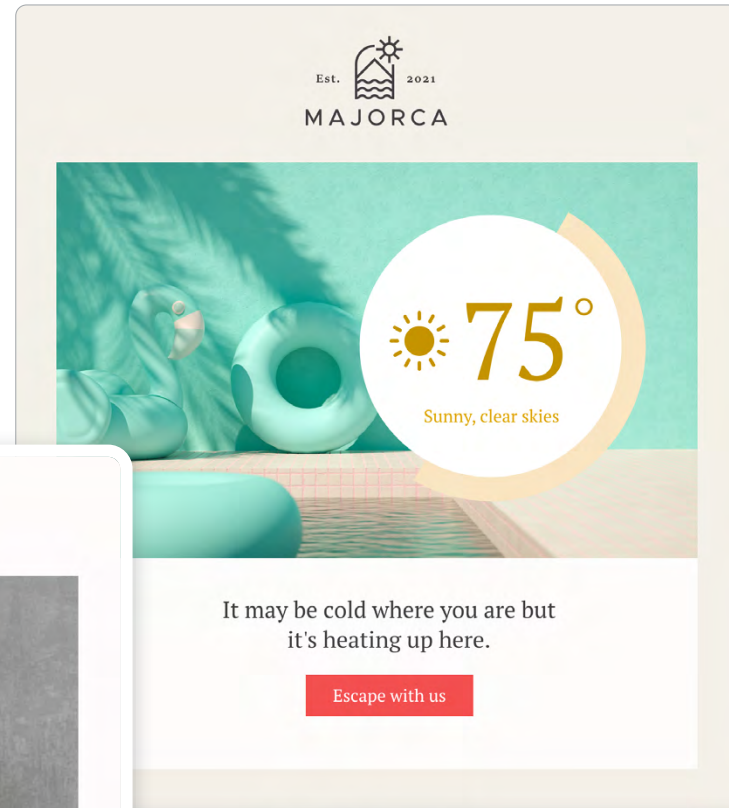
Wrap Up

Your opportunity to build a compelling narrative with your data is well within reach.

KEEP THESE PRIORITIES TOP OF MIND:

- Always strive to learn more about your audience.

- Follow best practices to ensure your visuals communicate the story you want to tell.

When you're ready to integrate your story's content into your campaign, **consider Marigold** — from relationship marketing, to real-time personalization, to industry-specific expertise, and all of the strategic necessities in between.

REQUEST A DEMO TODAY

Where *relationships* take root.

Marigold's approach to Relationship Marketing stands alone in a world of one-size-fits-all marketing technology companies. Our solutions are designed for your specific size, industry, and maturity, giving you the technology and expertise you need to grow the relationships that grow your business, from customer acquisition to engagement to loyalty. And, with a team of strategists that provide insights into what's working, what's not, and what's changing in your industry, you're able to maximize ROI every step of the way.

Great marketing isn't just about conversion, but true connection. Learn why 40,000 businesses around the world trust Marigold to be the firm foundation they need to help relationships take root.

Find out more at **MeetMarigold.com**

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