

Using Social Media to Tell Stories That Connect with Travellers

By Kellsey Popowich (Growth Media Strategy Ltd.)

Great businesses often struggle to communicate what makes them special. They don't need fluff. They need clarity. And that's exactly what StoryBrand offers. I chose to build this guide around the StoryBrand method because I've seen firsthand how it helps small-town operators and experience-based businesses tell their stories

more effectively—without needing a full-time marketing team. This resource isn't about theory—it's about helping you connect with travelers in a way that feels true to your brand, speaks to their hearts, and makes it easy for them to say: "This is the place for me."

Book Summary

Building a StoryBrand is a practical marketing book that teaches businesses how to clarify their message using the timeless art of storytelling. Donald Miller explains that customers don't buy the best products; they buy the products they understand the fastest.

Through his 7-part StoryBrand Framework, Miller shows how to position your brand as the guide, make your customer the hero, and communicate your offer clearly so people listen. The book is filled with examples, simple explanations, and actionable frameworks, making it an excellent read for anyone who wants to make their marketing more effective without complex jargon.

Why Read It?

If you've ever struggled to explain what makes your business special or wondered why your marketing isn't connecting, this book will change how you communicate forever.

Overview

Storytelling is at the heart of effective marketing. The StoryBrand Framework helps you connect with travelers by showing them how your business fits into their journey and how you can guide them towards the experiences they desire.

7-Part StoryBrand Framework

1. Character (Hero)

Who is your traveler, and what do they want?

- Example: "Our guests are busy couples looking for a peaceful weekend escape to recharge and reconnect."

2. Problem

What problem are they facing?

- *External:* Finding a quiet, comfortable place away from the city.
 - Example: "They're tired of noisy hotels with no personal touch."
- *Internal:* Wanting to feel relaxed and reconnected with their partner.
 - Example: "They feel disconnected after busy work weeks and crave quality time."
- *Philosophical:* Couples deserve meaningful time together without distractions.
 - Example: "Every couple deserves a place to reconnect and feel refreshed."

3. Guide

How can you show empathy and authority?

- Example: "We know how hard it is to find a place

that feels like home. Over the past 5 years, we've hosted hundreds of couples seeking peace and comfort, and we're here to make your stay effortless."

4. Plan

Give them a simple plan to follow.

- Choose your dates
- Book your cabin stay
- Arrive and unwind

- Example:
 - "Booking your perfect getaway is easy – select your weekend, reserve online, and arrive to freshly brewed coffee waiting for you."

5. Call to Action

Invite them clearly to act.

- Example:
 - "Ready to reconnect? Book your peaceful cabin weekend today."

6. Success

Show what life looks like after they choose you.

- Example:
 - "Imagine waking up to birdsong, sipping coffee on your private deck, and spending evenings by the fire with your favourite person."

7. Failure

Show what happens if they don't act.

- Example:
 - "Don't let another weekend pass by feeling drained and disconnected. Choose rest and connection instead."

Actionable Points for Your Social Media Storytelling

If you've ever struggled to explain what makes your business special or wondered why your marketing isn't connecting, this book will change how you communicate forever.

Shift Perspective:

Always make your traveler the hero.

- Example: "Tired of crowded beaches? Find your private sunset spot with us."

Address Problems:

Go beyond features – speak to their needs.

- Example: Instead of "We offer guided hiking tours," say "Experience the forest through the eyes of a local – your adventure awaits."

Guide with Empathy:

Show you understand their challenges.

- Example: "We know finding family-friendly dining can be hard while travelling. Here are our top local favourites."

Simplify Booking:

Use clear steps to reduce hesitation.

- Example: "Book your room in just 2 minutes – select your dates, confirm, and pack your bags."

Highlight Transformations:

Share guest experiences.

- Example: "Emma said, 'I came here stressed and left feeling lighter and happier than I have in months.'"

Create FOMO:

Remind them what they will miss.

- Example: "Only 2 cabins left for the fall season. Don't miss the golden forest views."

Final Thought

From Page to Post: Apply What You've Learned

If you've just finished a storytelling book, you're likely brimming with ideas about the hero's journey, emotional resonance, and clear messaging. Now is the time to put that knowledge to use. The travelers you're speaking to aren't looking for a sales pitch—they're looking for a story they can see themselves in. Think of your content not as announcements, but as scenes in a larger narrative where your guest is the lead character.

Social Media Is Where Stories Come to Life

Your social media is not just a place to share updates—it's your most powerful storytelling tool. Reels, captions, carousels, and Stories are where travelers quickly decide whether your business feels aligned with their dreams. Use what you've learned about setting, conflict, transformation, and resolution to craft each post. It could be a transformation story of a guest, a behind-the-scenes "day in the life," or a simple moment of beauty that evokes emotion.

Turn Insight Into Action

Don't let those lessons stay on the bookshelf. Build story-driven content into your strategy: structure your next caption with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Use "you" more than "we." And ask: what change happens for the traveler because of us? Whether it's feeling at peace in nature or discovering something new about themselves, that's the moment to highlight. Stories make people care—and that's what leads to bookings.

Content Planner Framework

1. Break down your business into services or experiences

- List your key offerings.
- Think like your guests.
- Don't overlook the ordinary.
- E.g., guided hikes, cabin rentals, stargazing walks, community events.

2. Create and use content buckets for tourism storytelling

- Content buckets are categories derived from small chunks of your business to organize your social media posts.
- Rotating through different buckets helps ensure that your content stays varied, purposeful, and aligned with your brand goals.
- Rotate through 4-6 buckets per week to stay dynamic without being scattered.
- Combine formats + buckets + platforms to guide storytelling.
- Use guest photos or voice whenever possible to increase relatability.

Content Bucket	Theme Description	Examples
Emotional Benefits	What your guest feels	"Wake up without an alarm. Breathe in silence. Feel new again."
Behind-the-Scenes	Daily operations, prep, real moments	"5 AM start: Fresh coffee brewed before guests wake up ☕"
Heritage & History	Cultural background of place	"This path was once a trading route between First Nations communities."

3. Match the content to the platform

- Choose the best formats based on platform behaviour and storytelling style.

Platform	Best For	Format Options	Content Ideas
Instagram	Visual storytelling & guest connection	Photo grid posts, Reels, Carousels, Stories, Highlights	Emotional guest stories, transformation moments, trends
Facebook	Community, family-focused engagement	Albums, long-form captions, shared links, Live video	Behind-the-scenes, family reunions, group travel stories
TikTok	Short-form, trend-driven, casual content	POV videos, trending sounds, voiceovers, raw moments	First-time guest reactions, local humour, "before/after"
LinkedIn	Professional storytelling, team highlights, partnerships	Text posts, articles, photo + caption, polls, PDFs	Staff stories, milestones, sustainability, industry events, community impact

4. Posting frequency

- Posting regularly helps build trust and shows your business is active.
- Consistency improves visibility on social media algorithms.
- Instagram: 3-4x/week, Facebook and TikTok: 2-3x/week, LinkedIn 1-2x/week.

5. Tie every story to a clear offer

- Match the story to a guest desire using 4-Core Components (inspired by Acquisition.com):
 - Dream Outcome - The result they want.
 - Perceived Likelihood of Success - Social proof or testimonials.
 - Time Delay - How fast they'll experience it.
 - Effort & Sacrifice - Make it easy to say yes.

6. Create a monthly content calendar to plan content ahead of time

- Tools you can use include: Google Sheets, Trello, and Notion.

7. Track what resonates with your audience online

- Engagement (comments, shares, saves), direct messages or inquiries, and bookings tied to specific calls-to-action or codes.
- Analytics help you understand your audience's behaviour, identify top-performing posts, and spot patterns that lead to engagement and bookings.

Bonus Top 20 Social Media Analytics Tools Meta Business Suite, Instagram Insights, TikTok Analytics, LinkedIn Analytics, Hootsuite, Later, Buffer, Prout Social, SocialPilot, Metricool, Iconosquare, Agorapulse , CoSchedule, Zoho Social, HubSpot Social, Brandwatch, Google Analytics, Sendible, Tailwind, Quintly

CTA Hook Compilation

- Engagement Boosters (likes, comments, saves)
- Conversations Starters
- Reels and Videos
- Lead Capture (DMs, freebies, offers)
- Conversion and Sales
- Story
- Growth and Retention

12-Point Instagram Optimization

- Profile photo is clear, professional, and on-brand.
- Username and handle are simple and searchable.
- Bio clearly states who you help and how.
- Link in bio leads to key offer or website (use Linktree, etc.).
- Key info (FAQ, Services, Testimonials) pinned in Highlights.
- 3 pinned posts that show your best content or offers.
- Set Up Auto-Replies for lead capture.
- Set Keyword Tags in Bio and Captions.
- Add Alt Text to posts.
- Add Polls and Question Stickers in stories to collect warm leads.
- Constantly use latest features & updates to favor the algorithm.
- Automate Follow-Up Sequences.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kellsey Popowich is a digital strategist, tourism marketer, and founder of Growth Media Strategy Ltd., a boutique agency specializing in content that connects. With over a decade of experience helping small businesses tell meaningful stories online, Kellsey brings a passion for authentic marketing that drives results.

Her background blends branding, social media strategy, and business development—having worked with local operators, destination marketing organizations, and hospitality professionals across Canada. Kellsey is known for her approachable teaching style and her ability to turn big-picture marketing concepts into practical, story-driven tactics that small teams can actually use.

Through her workshops and consulting, she helps businesses move beyond generic posts and into powerful narratives that reflect their people, places, and purpose.