



Wednesday, June 6, 2007

Money & Business

Story Hour

Intrigue your audience by marketing with storytelling techniques.

By Nicole L. Torres

Posted 4/26/07

A great film has a talented cast, intriguing characters and a good story. What veteran filmmakers Lara Alameddine and Daniel Dubiecki realized when they launched Beverly Hills, California-based Little Lily, a high-end pet clothing company, was that those same aspects of filmmaking could help them market their brand.

In 2003, Alameddine, 27, and Dubiecki, 29, were walking a 5-pound Yorkie named Lily when she cut her paw on glass. The vet recommended protective doggy footwear, inspiring the pair to create Lilyboots, fashionable leather shoes for paws.

With that, Lily was cast as the star of the Little Lily story. The founders created a cartoon image of Lily to use in all their marketing materials, complete with a bio for the Lily character--a fashion-conscious, socialite pooch with a circle of celebrity friends.

The key to choosing your storytelling strategy is figuring out the personality of the brand. "Think about the brand as a movie star," says Margo Berman, associate professor of advertising at Florida International University and founder of [Creative Catalyst Unlock the Block](#), a creative marketing, advertising and branding company in Miami Beach, Florida. "That will help you understand the character, tone, picture and voice of the product."

You might also want to make your storytelling interactive. "Suddenly, your audience is buying into the brand because they're participating," says Berman. Also, have a consistent tone and message throughout. And though you're using storytelling techniques, be honest in your marketing.

Alameddine and Dubiecki aimed marketing at the rich and famous to cement the trendy, luxurious feel of the brand. Little Lily fans include celebrities such as Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie, both famous for pampering their dogs. Throughout its marketing materials, especially online at www.little-lily.com, the million-dollar company has employed the fictional dog characters. Alameddine and Dubiecki are pitching a series of books and cartoons featuring The Lilygang to studios now. Says Dubiecki, "If you want to stand out above and beyond competitors, make sure you've got a story to tell."

Copyright © 2007 U.S. News & World Report, L.P. All rights reserved.