

HOW YOU SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT YOUR BRAND STORY

0 COMMENTS



What's your brand's story?

It's a question that any brand or business have (or should have) asked themselves. It's an important question to answer, because a quick, solid story is the first thing potential customers encounter and it is the thing that keeps these customers returning to find out about the other great things about your brand. While a strong story still remains important, more and more of today's customers want to be able to see themselves in it. People are interested in brands that are both aspirational and accessible.

Storytelling was one of the major topics being discussed during the episode of *Fashion Is Your Business Podcast* with [Nikunj Marvania](#) and [Mario Lanzarotti](#) of [Awl & Sundry](#). Awl & Sundry is a handmade shoe brand that allows customers to design their own personalized pair of shoes. (They are also one of the first clients of our OSF Connects business consulting service.)



The brand's idea is solid; their current customers can attest to that. Awl & Sundry is about making well-crafted men's shoes more affordable and democratic without sacrificing the luxury elements or quality. However, during the discussion it becomes clear that their main message was getting a bit muddled. This might have been a road-block in their initial attempts to grow and other brands can have similar problems.

One impulse of business owners is to share all the great things about your brand all at once. It's understandable why one would want to trumpet these things, especially the **charity part**, but they are not all things to lead with. One reason is that multiple messages can overwhelm a consumer, so you need to narrow it down in a simple sentence or two. Also, while it is good that your company wants to do charitable work, making it a center piece of your brand can occasionally make it feel inauthentic or it will cause some consumers devalue the quality of the brand. Let it be something you and your customer, if their purchase contributes to something, are *also* doing. This turns the act into a retention tool instead of a main feature.



PABLO



MARIO



MARCEL

What makes Awl & Sundry unique is that their product is already very accessible and makes it easy to convert customers into brand ambassadors with very little effort. Wearing customized items of clothing makes them very personal parts of your wardrobe. The company goes the extra step, so to speak, by naming your design after you and letting other people buy it or be inspired by it.

Right off the bat, it's easy to see the social aspects of wearing a personalized pair of shoes. Social media savvy people would want to share their design on various channels. Even in person, it's easy to imagine person A asking person B asking where they got their shoe. Person A can easily explain that it's Awl & Sundry shoe of their own design. Person A can even look up the "Person B" style on Awl & Sundry.

The above might seem simple. However, there are two light-bulb moments in the podcast. The first is that company name is pun on "all and sundry" (another way to say "everyone") and **an awl**. The second comes when Mario explains that when he met Nik, he designed his own pair of shoes (see above) and liked them and the brand enough to work with him. The story in those specific pairs of shoes is something that everyone in the episode believes should be highlighted on the website.

The stories don't have to stop at The Mario. This is where Awl & Sundry can partner with influencers and create content for the brand. Along with giving them space to tell their story and Awl & Sundry helped them make their footprint on the world and then even perhaps discount said influencer's style while they are being featured. These don't always have to be existing social media influencers; they can highlight people's who styles are trending.

This all sounds great for Awl & Sundry—be on the look out for The Alex, real soon—but what about brands that *aren't* selling customizable items? It is up to brands to have a solid story that customers can find themselves in. Then they have to figure how to showcase customers themselves as part of the brand. Your customers can help continue telling your brand's story.