

1 **Building a scalable storytelling program**

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3 **What is this initiative?** This is an initiative designed to expand beyond formal case studies by capturing
4 stories of journeys and success from businesses using *[solution]*. These stories will be used as
5 inspirational hooks to engage more businesses to adopt *[solution]*.

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7 **Who is the audience for these stories?** This initiative is targeted at entrepreneurs, SMB business
8 owners, and enterprise customers. Our specific audience segments are:

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- 11 • **Prospective businesses:** These are businesses that have not yet adopted *[solution]*. We'll use
12 stories of journeys and success to inspire new merchants to *want* to add *[solution]*.
 - 13 • **Existing businesses:** These are businesses that have adopted *[solution]*, but may not be using its
14 full potential for driving growth. We'll showcase the unique ways other founders, owners and
15 teams are using *[solution]* to deepen/expand the way they're using the portfolio of tools.

16 **What's the goal?** Stories will be used to capture and/or progress leads, and deepen usage of *[solution]*
17 to increase unit sales. Additionally, this initiative will help to raise brand awareness and drive interest by
18 showcasing inspirational success stories.

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20 **Why is this a priority now?** As adoption of *[solution]* grows, we are seeing an increase in interest from
21 blog readers, the sales leaders, agency partners and the demand gen team to showcase the brands that
22 are using *[solution]*. Between 11/1/22 and 3/7/23 we've published 16 merchant spotlights/stories on
23 the [Springboard blog](#), representing 3,352 page views (10.5% of total blog views of 31,752). Investing in
24 more journey and success stories from businesses using *[solution]* presents an opportunity to deepen
25 engagement on the blog, while providing compelling content that can be distributed across channels to
26 drive engagement and boost conversions.

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28 **How can these stories be used?** The sales team can use free brand exposure on owned & operated
29 channels as a "hook" to entice merchants to adopt *[solution]* and help close deals. The sales team can
30 also use success stories to encourage existing businesses to use more of the features and services to
31 drive deeper usage and boost unit sales. The partner marketing team can share stories with agency and
32 tech partners to be used as a way to showcase unique use cases to drive demand and adoption with
33 their clients. The marketing team can use the stories as proof points to drive awareness and demand
34 across distribution channels using business success claims.

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36 Additionally, we'll select the best performing stories each quarter to be used as gated ebooks to capture
37 leads and increase brand awareness.

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39 **What are the story topics we'll be creating/publishing?** Based on early inputs from merchants, some
40 key story territories include:

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- 42 • Business growth (conversions, sales)
 - 43 • Streamlining business operations (fulfillment, operations)
 - 44 • Brand building (traffic drivers, UX/checkout)
 - 45 • Shopper engagement (CLTV, customer nurturing)

46 As we work more closely with the sales and partner teams, we'll identify additional success territories
47 merchants are realizing by using *[solution]*.

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What are the categories of stories we’ll be curating and co-creating with businesses? The table below provides a profile of the different types of stories included in this initiative.

Type/definition	Founder stories	Merchant spotlight (qual)	Case studies (quant)	Shopping spotlights / Roundups
Description	Showcase the story of an individual business founder or current leader in the company. A humanistic story that can mention product but doesn’t revolve around it.	Uses narrative structure to outline the day-to-day impact that <i>[solution]</i> is having on a merchant pain points, and business outcomes (e.g., more conversions, attracting traffic)	Provides a specific use case that outlines a merchant pain point, the solution to that pain point, and outcome (e.g., more conversion, attracting traffic)	Showcase merchant products with a brief (1-2 paragraphs) lead in about the merchant to provide context for readers.
What they are	Story about their journey to start business, including quotable insights from the founder. The brand and the personal challenges they faced are the primary focus areas; the <i>[solution]</i> is a secondary/minor focal point. These can include data points provided by founder.	Narrative-driven overviews of how a merchant used <i>[solution]</i> to achieve business outcomes; structured in the founding story info + common problem + solution + outcome framework; should include quotes and general hints of impact (“now shipments are going out faster than ever”) to showcase success; generally, more accessible/fun than traditional case study.	Overviews of how a merchant used <i>[solution]</i> to achieve a desired business outcome; structured in the traditional merchant intro + problem + solution + outcome framework; should include quotes and data points to showcase success; can be standalone article or “teaser” article with CTA to get the full case study (lead gen)	Introduction to a merchant and the availability of their products. As a product showcase, these include links and images to specific products from the vendor for shoppers to purchase.
What they are not	Data-driven articles; product-specific highlights; how-to tips/tricks.	Data-driven, technical articles; deep dive into the founding of the business.	Narrative human-focused stories with deep background on the founder or brand	Deep dive journey-focused stories that showcase the or the overall business.
Goal	Inspire other merchants with stories about the journeys of other founders (put them in their shoes) + explain at a high-level how <i>[solution]</i> impacted their success	Use storytelling to contextualize the day-to-day impact <i>[solution]</i> can bring	Highlight the value prop that <i>[solution]</i> can help drive growth	Drive shopper engagement with merchant products (unit sales)
Business types	Micro/entrepreneurs and small businesses	Micro/entrepreneurs, SMBs and enterprise	Micro, SMBs, Enterprise	Micro, SMBs

Examples	Bossy Cosmetics or SMCC	Racewax (note: we don't currently have enterprise stories)	Epic Water Filters or Great Circle	The Cat Ladies or 12 Black-owned businesses
Distribution channels	Blog, editorial newsletter, organic social media, demand gen (nurture) tactics, PR collateral	Blog, editorial newsletter, promoted social, paid search, demand gen tactics, PR pitches	Blog, editorial newsletter, organic and paid social media, paid search, demand gen (nurture) tactics, PR pitches	Blog, editorial newsletter, organic social media
Story composition ratio	<p>These founder stories lean more heavily into the founder journey than the product.</p> <p>Estimated ratio is 80% founder-focused/20% product-focused</p>	<p>These success stories lean heavily into the nature of the business and how <i>[solution]</i> helped the business succeed.</p> <p>Estimated ratio is 40% business context/background/60% product/success-focused</p>	<p>These repeatable examples of success are data-driven; how <i>[solution]</i> helped solve a problem.</p> <p>Estimated ratio is 20% business context/80% solution/product-focused</p>	<p>These are product showcases to entice shoppers to purchase using <i>[solution]</i>.</p> <p>Estimated ratio is 90% product-focused/10% merchant-focused</p>

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How will this program be operationalized? Stories created to support this initiative will follow a similar process for our editorial content as outlined below:

- **Sourcing:** We'll work with the sales team to identify stories across categories outlined above. We'll identify 1-2 POCs from the sales team to meet monthly to discuss opportunities and needs. We'll also use the editorial submission form as a self-service mechanism for story submissions.
- **Creation:** Once a business has been identified, the sales relationship owner will make an introduction with a member of the content marketing team. The assigned writer will arrange an interview (Chime or email) with the business POC to gather inputs and create a first draft of the story.
- **Reviews:** Once the first draft of the story is created, the writer will share the draft with the business POC, keeping the sales lead included. The writer will also submit an Asana request (ideally in batches with other stories) for copy editing review. Once the story has been edited, if the story includes sensitive information (e.g., claims and data points) the writer will submit a SIM request for legal to review. Finally, the story will be reviewed and approved by director of content marketing. The writer will then publish the story on the blog according to the editorial calendar, and alert channel owners.
- **Distribution:** All stories will be published on the blog. The content marketing team will collaborate on which stories to include in the monthly newsletter as well as which ones to include in demand gen assets (ebooks). Links to the published stories will be added to the editorial publishing schedule for social, sales, partner teams, as well as relevant business partner teams, to source and publish.

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77 **What are the measures of success?** Based on our goals to use these stories to inspire new
78 businesses to adopt *[solution]* and entice existing customers to deepen their usage, we'll track
79 engagement metrics (e.g., page views, clicks, shares, open rates) and the influence the stories
80 have on driving sign up clicks (MALs) on the website. For the blog, we'll use the average page
81 views *[average number]* of the top 10 stories published through *[time period]* as the baseline
82 for measuring performance. We'll partner with the social and newsletter channel leads to
83 establish a baseline for story engagement as we promote more of the existing stories on those
84 channels.

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86 **What are the dependencies to make this initiative successful?** There are two key
87 dependencies to drive success of this storytelling program 1) securing buy-in and ongoing
88 collaboration with the sales team, as they are the owners of the relationship with the
89 businesses, and 2) securing buy-in from channel owners to consistently promote (organic and
90 paid) stories. Additionally, the consistent usage of ref tags and the ability to track them in
91 Adobe Analytics (or channel-specific analytics platforms) will be important for attributing the
92 influence stories have on acquisition (sign ups).

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95 **FAQs**

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97 What are the criteria for stories to be considered?

98 What is the estimated volume of stories to be created and published monthly?

99 What is the ideal length for each story type?

100 Are there opportunities to tell these stories in different formats (e.g., video or audio)?

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