

Storytelling for technical products

4 PRACTICAL TOOLS

If you're a technical founder, chances are you tell stories about your product on a daily basis — whether you realize it or not. Many technical founders have little experience in branding, marketing, and storytelling, limited resources for outside hiring, and a pressing need to raise funds and gain traction — both of which require storytelling. The goal of this guide is to give you effective tools to build stories around your product — whatever your current goals.



STORYTELLING CAN

- Make complex products more understandable and appealing
- Create emotional connections to engage audiences
- Add an extra layer of differentiation from your competitors
- Shape the product's identity
- Simplify the user experience

Tool 1: Defining your target audience

Use this when...

- You're building your website
- You're planning any sort of outreach: a marketing campaign, a partnership pipeline, etc.
- You're creating your product story

→ Step 1: Create a target audience hypothesis

Determine the group of people or businesses that are most likely to benefit from and engage with your product.

→ Step 2: Conduct research

Use polls, interviews, or browse industry community hubs to gather information about your target audience's needs, preferences, and pain points.

→ Step 3: Apply the jobs-to-be-done (JTBD) principle

Identify the problems your target audience faces and the solutions your product provides.

→ Step 4: Map out the user journey

Outline the steps your customers go through when interacting with your brand, from discovering it to making a purchase and beyond.

THE RESULT

By knowing your target audience and mapping out their exact touch-points, you can build in elements of narrative that entice them to continue interacting with your brand throughout their journey.



Tool 2: Building a story arc

Use this when...

- You're putting together a presentation about your product
- You need to explain your product in a clear and concise way
- You're looking for content ideas to share



Step 1: Define beginning, middle, and end

The beginning should introduce the problem or challenge your target audience faces, the middle should present your product as the solution, and the end should showcase the positive outcome or transformation.



Step 2: Outline your story arc

Create a detailed outline of your story arc, listing the main points and subpoints you want to cover in each section.



Step 3: Connect the key benefits and features

Within your story arc, highlight the essential features and benefits of your product. Structure your story in a way that blends these elements with the story arc.



Step 4: Focus on emotional and experiential aspects

Incorporate the emotional and experiential aspects of your product into your story arc, such as testimonials, case studies, or quotes.

THE RESULT

Humans love stories with conflict and resolution. By following this simple template, you will keep your audience engaged throughout your presentation, explanation, or content piece.



Tool 3: Going from features to benefits

Use this when...

- Drafting content for your product website
- Refining your presentation for prospects or investors
- Preparing marketing materials for a trade show or conference



Step 1: Identify your product's key features

List the main features of your product that contribute to its functionality and problem-solving capabilities.



Step 2: Determine the benefits of each feature

For each feature, list the specific benefit(s) it provides to users. Consider how the feature solves a problem, saves time or money, or offers other tangible and measurable advantages.



Step 3: Create context for each benefit

Explain how each benefit relates to the problems or challenges faced by your target audience. It's helpful to match these against the JTBD outlined in Tool 1.



Step 4: Provide examples and scenarios

Develop simple examples and real-life scenarios to demonstrate how users can take advantage of each feature to obtain the associated benefits.



Step 5: Organize the benefits in a logical sequence

Arrange the benefits in a logical order, either by importance, relevance to your audience, or the user journey. Group benefits that sound similar together.

THE RESULT

Benefits are clear and require no interpretation, unlike features. By keeping things relevant and real for the audience, you will effectively demonstrate how your product will improve their lives.



Tool 4: Going from data to stories

Use this when...

- *Deciding which data points to use*
- *Creating sales pitches or presentations*
- *Demonstrating the effectiveness of your product*

→ Step 1: Identify the data points that matter

Determine which metrics or data points are most valuable and relevant to your target audience and why, based on the information you gathered by using Tool 1.

→ Step 2: Name the key benefits that apply to the data points

Determine the main benefits or big ideas you can convey through the key data points you identified in the Step 1.

→ Step 3: Apply inductive reasoning

Start with the benefits or big ideas, and then use the chosen data points to support and validate these claims. This approach helps your audience grasp the significance of the data in the context of the product's value.

→ Step 4: Identify stories behind the data

Find the human stories, customer testimonials, or real-world examples that are connected to the data points.

THE RESULT

Different people can interpret the same data points differently. By taking the guesswork out of interpreting data you can effectively showcase the value and effectiveness of your product. It will also help your audience remember and retain the information better since people connect with stories better than with numbers.

Putting it all together

Storytelling is not a one-and-done process; you can use its principles across your whole product lifecycle: from creating user stories to developing effective pitch decks, writing compelling website content to putting together reports – you can apply the tools above to any touchpoint for any of your audiences.

