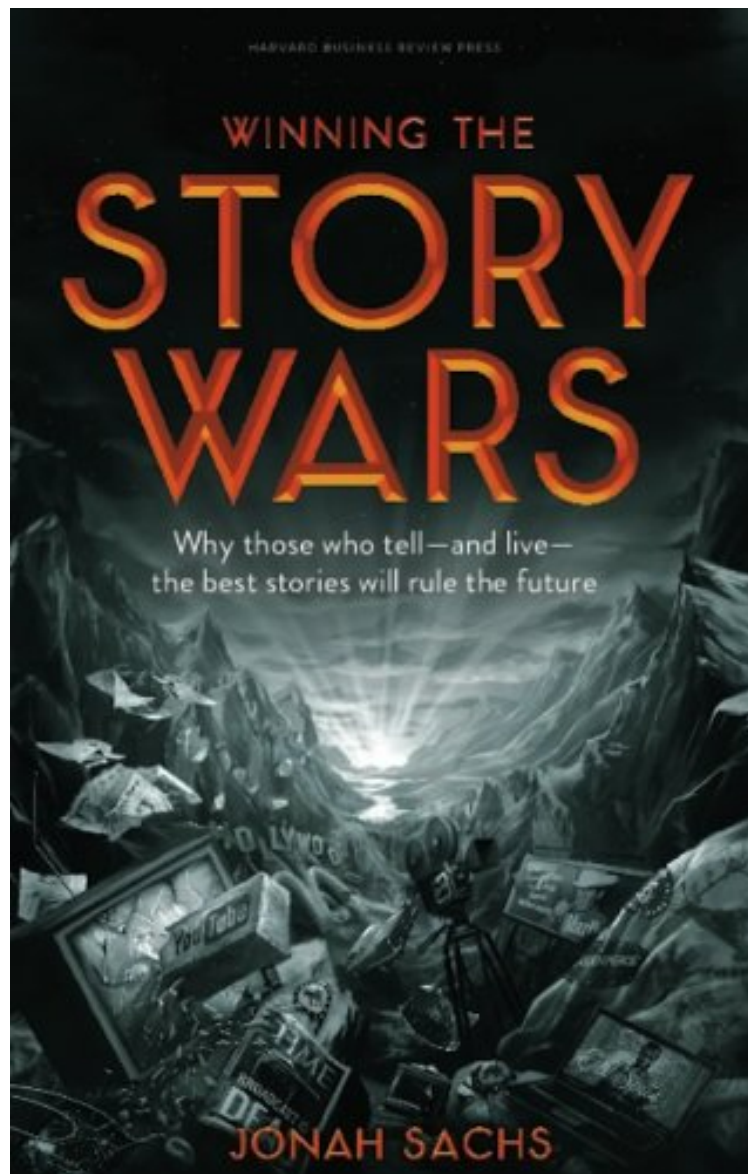


(Mobile book) Winning the Story Wars: Why Those Who Tell (and Live) the Best Stories Will Rule the Future

Winning the Story Wars: Why Those Who Tell (and Live) the Best Stories Will Rule the Future

Jonah Sachs

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Jonah Sachs : Winning the Story Wars: Why Those Who Tell (and Live) the Best Stories Will Rule the Future before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Winning the Story Wars: Why Those Who Tell (and Live) the Best Stories Will Rule the Future:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Sacks: Why Stories Sell; Why We Care By Stephen W. Hiemstra In the online world that surrounds us, we are bombarded with messages from morning to night: email, spam, pop-ups, video, print media, text-ads, robo-calls, and even old-fashioned, telephone solicitors. Because messages bombard us from morning to night, only the most sophisticated ads get and hold our attention. At the heart of these winning ads is usually a mythical story. Against this backdrop, in his book, *Winning the Story Wars*, Jonah Sacks writes: "We live in a world that has lost its connection to its traditional myths, and we are now trying to find new ones—worse people and that's what people without myths do. These myths will shape our future, how we live, what we do, and what we buy. They will touch all of us. But not all of us get to write them. Those that do have tremendous power." (6) Among those competing to gain this power through telling such stories are authors, film-makers, advertisers, religious leaders, and politicians of all stripes. Because it is not clear whose stories will dominate our attention (17), the recent election is a reminder that a lot is at stake. In this environment of competing myth-making, oral tradition has become increasingly important because social media facilitates immediate feedback between story tellers and their audience, reminiscent of a time when story tellers gathered with their audiences primarily around a campfire. Because "all wars are story wars" (29), Sacks sees story telling as critical, not only to marketers who can either lift us up or tear us down, but also to citizens who may find themselves manipulated into fighting real wars. So who is Jonah Sacks? Sack describes himself as a "story expert, filmmaker and entrepreneur". His back cover and website includes this description: "As the co-founder and CEO of Free Range Studios, Jonah has helped hundreds of major brands and causes break through the media din with unforgettable [ad] campaigns. His work on legendary viral videos like *The Meatrix* and *The Story of Stuff* series have brought key social issues to the attention of more than 65 million people online. A constant innovator, his studios' websites and stories have taken top honors three times at the South by Southwest Film Festival." Sacks divides his book into two parts and eight chapters, preceded by a prologue and followed by an epilogue: Part One: The Broken World of Storytelling 1. The Story Wars are All Around Us 2. The Five Deadly Sins 3. The Myth Gap 4. Marketing's Dark Art Part Two: Shaping the Future 5. Tell the Truth, Part I: The Art of Empowerment Marketing 6. Tell the Truth, Part II: The Hero's Journey 7. Be Interesting: Freaks, Cheats, and Familiars 8. Live the Truth. (vii) Once you buy into the idea that stories matter and matter a lot, Sacks starts by instructing us on what not to do—the five deadly sins—which are vanity, authority, insincerity, puffery, and gimmickry (35). Vanity arises as an early problem because "when you love what you're selling... you assume everyone else will too" (36). Sacks uses an unforgettable example when he compares the acceptance speeches of John Kerry and George W. Bush in 2004—Kerry talks mostly about John Kerry, while Bush talks about what "we" can do (37-38). The contrast could not be greater. The other four sins are equally hard to avoid and quick to kill the credibility of a story. Sacks repeatedly returns to myth as an important component in story telling. He describes myth as neither true nor false, but existing in a separate reality (59). He attributes three ingredients in myth: symbolic thinking, having three elements tied together—story, explanation, and meaning, and ritual (59-61). For example, in *Genesis* Sacks sees creation as a myth with these three elements: "STORY: God created the world in seven days and gave man dominion over it. EXPLANATION: This is how everything we see around us came into existence. MEANING: So God deserves our gratitude and obedience." (60) An important observation drives much of Sacks' own storyline: "a myth gap arises when reality changes dramatically and our myths are not resilient enough to continue working in the face of that change." (61) In our "rationalist modern society" (62) where people refuse to think symbolically, the myth gap zaps meaning and leaves people in an intractable state of hopelessness. "Forward-thinking religious leaders, scientists, and entertainers" who attempt to "reunify story, explanation, and meaning in their work" are quickly pushed out of the mainstream (63). Thus, the myth gap remains and people suffer. Jonah Sacks' book *Winning the Story Wars* is a non-fiction, page turner. In part 2 of this review, I will examine in more depth Sacks' exploration of modern advertising and why we care. (T2Pneuma.net) 74 of 79 people found the following review helpful. Good but By Joan Zotti I've now read two important books on the subject of story-based branding: *Story Wars* by Jonah Sachs and *Story Branding* by Jim Signorelli. Both take different paths but have the same moral: successful brands should draw from the way stories can empower audiences. Whereas Sach's book is replete with beautiful air-brushed drawings and is well laid out, Signorelli's book uses whimsical cartoons that can be distracting. Furthermore, the cartoons themselves give one the sense that this book is too simple. Simple yes, but powerful nevertheless. In fact, putting looks aside, I favor *Story Branding* for its approach. Sach's approach is testimony to how verbosity can get in the way of interest and meaning. At times, while reading about the supposed learnings one can glean from religious or well-known tales, I found myself thinking hard to understand the point. At times, I had to let go hoping that things would get clarified with more reading. Signorelli's straight-forward, and sometimes humorous, self-deprecating style is in stark contrast with Sach's. Whereas Sach writes more from the clouds down, Signorelli writes from the ground up. Additionally, at times, I felt that Sach's was also interjecting his liberal political philosophies. Whereas he tries to hide how he feels about Glen Beck in his first chapter, it's an obvious all-too-obvious "get back" for some not-so-flattering comments Beck made about one of his videos. Another interesting contrast is seen in the different ways each author portrays the hero of

a brand's story. Sach's subscribes to the notion that the hero is always the consumer. He sees the role of the brand as more of a mentor or advisor who is interested in showing the consumer how to overcome certain conflicts on route to his or her goal. Signorelli, on the other hand, suggests that the brand is always the hero. He believes that like any story protagonist, brands are judged by their actions and evaluated either positively or negatively on the basis of implied values and beliefs deduced from those actions. Both models are illuminating. But I personally think it is easier to think of the brand as hero, made up of layers, as Signorelli describes. Signorelli asserts that a brand's outer layer consists of its functional attributes and benefits. Its inner layer consists of the values and beliefs the brand implicitly subscribes to and shows how both layers must be interconnected in order to gain consumer credibility. Sach's book over emphasizes the intangible aspects of a brand that are important for the purpose of making an emotional connection. He does very little to recognize that a brand must provide some important functional benefits and these too must be promoted. Additionally, the StoryBranding model focuses on obstacles that the brand must overcome in order to establish a trusted relationship with the consumer. On the other hand, Story Wars does not account for these obstacles. Rather, throughout, it is assumed that the consumer is ready and willing to listen to the whatever the brand proposes as a way to become "empowered" just as long as what the brand represents is a shared belief. There is no accounting for any baggage or bad-feelings residue that might stand in the way of the consumer listening to and/or believing anything the brand has to say. Don't get me wrong, Story Wars is a good book and an enjoyable read. By itself it is a terrific contribution to the burgeoning field of brand storytelling. It also provides some good "how to" advice, which is sorely lacking from many books of this genre. But had I not read Signorelli's book, I might have given Sach's a better rating. For marketers, it is worth noting that StoryBranding is written from the experience of an advertising professional. All of the examples given are from real world marketing situations. StoryWars is written by a highly successful advocate of social issues. Whereas marketing examples are provided, it is clear that Sachs has probably promoted more social causes than consumer brands. I would highly recommend reading both books, but if you're wanting to get to the meat of the matter in a simple, understandable and practical way, I would choose StoryBranding over Story Wars. Just don't pay any attention to the silly drawings.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I have spent the better part of my career working as a designer in ...By Nicholas Pattison I have spent the better part of my career working as a designer in branding and web design. It wasn't until I opened my own design shop in the last few years that I realized that design by itself was only half the battle; most of my clients needed help crafting an authentic story first and foremost (which could then be supported by great design). A friend recommended that I pick up Winning the Story Wars to better understand how to address this client need. Since picking this book up, it has been game-changing for the evolution of my business. Most of all, I'm far better at helping businesses take the first read branding step: how to tell an authentic story that differentiates them in a complex marketplace filled with competitors all vying for space. Since establishing a methodology for branding that first involves establishing a "story" based on Sachs' advice, our job as branding and design specialists has become ten times easier, since we have a foundation to apply to the brand voice across websites, social channels, and other marketing materials. I would highly recommend this book to anyone looking to bolster their understanding of storytelling for brands, no matter what industry you are in.

Trying to get your message heard? Build an iconic brand? Welcome to the battlefield. The story wars are all around us. They are the struggle to be heard in a world of media noise and clamor. Today, most brand messages and mass appeals for causes are drowned out before they even reach us. But a few consistently break through the din, using the only tool that has ever moved minds and changed behavior: great stories. With insights from mythology, advertising history, evolutionary biology, and psychology, viral storyteller and advertising expert Jonah Sachs takes readers into a fascinating world of seemingly insurmountable challenges and enormous opportunity. You'll discover how: Social media tools are driving a return to the oral tradition, in which stories that matter rise above the fray. Marketers have become today's mythmakers, providing society with explanation, meaning, and ritual. Memorable stories based on timeless themes build legions of eager evangelists. Marketers and audiences can work together to create deeper meaning and stronger partnerships in building a better world. Brands like Old Spice, The Story of Stuff, Nike, the Tea Party, and Occupy Wall Street created and sustained massive viral buzz. Winning the Story Wars is a call to arms for business communicators to cast aside broken traditions and join a revolution to build the iconic brands of the future. It puts marketers in the role of heroes with a chance to transform not just their craft but the enterprises they represent. After all, success in the story wars doesn't come just from telling great stories, but from learning to live them.