

Steve Bryant – *I run Dicks & Betties, a handsome storytelling agency with a delightful newsletter // Sign up! dicksandbetties.com*

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“People care about what they already care about.” *The importance of being relevant to your audience’s interests*

Clients often ask me how to create their own publications.

How do we choose what to write?

How do we make an editorial calendar?

What do we write about?

This is what I tell them:

It’s easier to care about what you already care about.

Consider the humble magazine.

It is easier to care about a magazine because you already care about celebrities, which is why magazines put celebrities on their covers.

Celebrities are **interesting** to certain people.

Consider local tv news.

It is easier to care about local tv news because you already care about crime, which is why local tv news leads with crime.

Crime is **relevant** to certain people.

Consider annual holidays and occasions.

It is easier to care about [24 Tweets for All The Single People on Valentine’s Day](#) because you already care about tweets, and being single, and Valentine’s Day, which is why publications write about tweets and being single on Valentine’s Day.

Valentine’s Day is **timely** for certain people.

Relevant, timely, interesting.

Every publication works this way.

Whether a magazine, or a web site, or a dependably entertaining tweeter.

Each combines an understanding of their reader's needs (**relevance**) within a particular context (**timeliness**) and with a specific personality (**interestingness**).

What is relevant, timely, and interesting to your reader depends upon who you're talking to.

But most importantly, a publication is not about itself.

The Economist doesn't talk about The Economist; it talks about classic and economic liberalism and its intersection with world events.

The Ringer does not talk about The Ringer. It talks about sports, pop culture, and tech.

A publication gives a reader relevant, timely, and interesting stories.

In return, a reader gives a publication attention.

Attention over time equals power.

The power of a publication doesn't reside in any one single story it may publish.

The power of a publication resides in the collective attention it earns over multiple stories.

Be timely, relevant, and interesting, and do it consistently.

That's all a publication is.

It's easier to care about what you already care about.

Most people care about their own interests.

Find where those interests overlap with yours, and begin.

This post is a part of Story Stories, a totally un-calendared series that's published every other whenever and which explores the ups, downs, and what the actual fucks of creative storytelling. Each post is based on conversations and consultations with some of the world's largest brands and publishers, which work with my agency, Dicks & Betties. More from the series:

1. **“People care about what they already care about.”**
The importance of being relevant to your audience's interests.
2. **“You don't get it. You are not the point.”**
The surprising reason why your brand sucks at storytelling, and what to do about it.
3. **“Try helping people be themselves.”**
How to create inspiring stories for your brand's adjacent possible.
4. **“Write for your audience's audience.”**
Creating things that help themselves get shared.
5. **“There are only two ways to tell a story.”**
A Venn Diagram for brands.
6. **“How little do I need to care about you to make you care about me?”**
Renting attention will only get you so far. Here's how to start to owning it.
7. **“Make relationships, not things.”**
You can't “thing” your way to people caring about you.