



Advertise with Stories



According to the GEM Marketing firm which works with OEEC, many companies are beginning to take more of a storytelling approach to advertising. They recommend this tactic since it can be “a more effective way to advertise your product” and can help set you apart from your competitors.

Consumers find this type of ad to be more relatable, genuine, and often heartwarming, and it helps them form a relationship with the brand, which is always desirable. To put it in a nutshell, it is more beneficial to *“advertise an experience rather than the product’s features.”*

This approach works beautifully for Catholic schools, especially since we have such wonderful stories to tell about our students, our strong, family-centered communities, the exciting things happening in our classrooms, and the outstanding faculty who guide those activities. School stories can be told actively in a TV commercial, audibly in a radio ad, visually in the photos and text of a print ad, and literally in the content of a brochure. Most effectively, they can be shared verbally from one parent to the next in the form of word of mouth marketing, which encourages prospective families to explore the school. GEM uses the three following examples to illustrate how the storytelling approach can be used creatively to market a product. Think about how this strategy could be used to benefit your school.

A Soft Spot

This ad for Angel Soft toilet paper follows a single dad and his daughter as she grows up: <https://youtu.be/WBpTAKveaOA>. As you can see, it shows that toilet paper has many uses, including cleaning cuts and wiping teenage tears. Consumers can see their own history in the commercial’s vignettes, all of which elicit a heartwarming response. In addition, by featuring a single dad and his daughter, Angel Soft is reaching out to a whole new demographic while illustrating the changing family dynamic in today’s world. These video Angel Soft “stories” simply make a greater impact than relating details about its multiple layers or durability. They advertise an *experience* rather than the product’s features, and for a much better effect.



Dads: In a Barbie World

In its new ads, Mattel also reaches out to a new audience by making the iconic Barbie doll more relevant to our current culture. First they changed the features of the doll to reflect the different shapes, sizes and races of today's real women, and then they ran a series of ads in which girls are playing with Barbie – and with their Dads! <https://youtu.be/PGPbKS8XUMY>, https://youtu.be/O_YadX9JF48, <https://youtu.be/YuV8xjsvK5s>. The ads are authentic – the dads and daughters are real people, not actors, and the scenes were unscripted with things happening naturally. The results are realistic and relatable ads that first appeared during a Sunday NFL playoff game, clearly appealing to a new target market. Again, these storytelling ads not only feel genuine, but promote the product effectively with their heartwarming approach.

Dish-connected

This final ad, from Canada's food brand *President's Choice*, focuses on how the experience of sitting around a table eating dinner can connect people. <https://youtu.be/vDuA9OPyp6I>. A millennial woman is on a mission to break the habit of phone obsession. In the past, dinnertime was quality time to spend with family and friends, talking about the day with each other, and having conversations about news, events, and life. However, technology has disconnected us. This ad reminds us of how things used to be and how we should make an effort to get it back. Eating together can bring us together. Two additional elements make this ad particularly appealing and more relatable – the diversity around the table (gender, age, and race) which reflects the real world, and the song which we all know, “What the World Needs Now is Love.”

This type of innovative marketing is extremely appropriate for Catholic schools. Parents who are shopping for a school can relate to an ad which tells a school's story and shows its human side. If the ad includes happy, smiling children, a parent can visualize their own child in that setting. Facebook is a priceless resource for this purpose, since it is so easy to post photos and videos that portray the experience of school life for prospective families. At no expense, the students, parents, and teachers can easily illustrate what's happening in the classrooms and beyond while building a relationship with the target audience. Think about how you can tell the story of your school by advertising the *experience* rather than just the school's features.