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Storytelling & Business: Rewriting the Narrative

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Storytelling & Business: Rewriting the Narrative

by

Helen Grace Woodham

Advisor: Dr. Jeff Murray

An Honors Thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of

Science in Business Administration in Marketing

Sam M. Walton College of Business

University of Arkansas

Fayetteville, Arkansas

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Abstract

There is a reason that we know what happens to the pumpkin carriage at midnight, a reason we know that Toms donates one pair of shoes for every shoe bought, and that when an underdog commits to early morning practices and perseveres that more often than not, they succeed. The reason we know about the carriage, the shoes, and the underdog's success is because of storytelling. Storytelling is the connective tissue that unites people across culture, language, generations, and so many other factors. The reason why storytelling is so impactful is that it is not merely words on a page or an expertly crafted marketing ruse trying to trick a consumer into a purchase, storytelling is real, raw emotions and experiences that allow individuals to relate through a shared understanding and truly seeing one another.

Throughout the modern era of education, storytelling has been condemned to the English, art, and journalism departments of high education institutions. A quick Google search of "University of Arkansas storytelling" brings up a variety of different websites, all linking back to the Fulbright College of Arts and Science, otherwise known as the overarching college for the departments of English, art, and journalism. Storytelling has all but been told what it is and where it belongs.

As technological advancements have allowed for the more accurate and in-depth capturing of data, storytelling has taken on a new role primarily within the realm of business. Phrases such as "converting analytics into insights" and "visualizing your story through data" have become prevalent within the classrooms of business colleges and boardrooms of companies across the country and globally (Andy Cotgreave). Entire institutions have been built around this idea and the proof can be seen in the existence of websites such as storytellingwithdata.com

The idea that storytelling can exist outside the realm of English, art, and journalism is becoming more accepted, and yet, it is only done so when storytelling is viewed as a science. And there is no doubt that storytelling with data is effective, it is a practice that is being adopted more and more by companies and taught in universities, and yet, there is an argument that something is missing. This thesis will explore this argument.

Storytelling through data takes away the emotion of a story. It takes away the connectivity that comes when an individual sees part of themselves in a story and relates to the message it is trying to convey. Storytelling with data finds a generally understood truth, belief, or way of life within a target demographic and boils the truth, belief, or way of life down to a point in which analysts can look to it and say "this is why consumers who are within the age range 24-30 are millennials and 34% of them have a bachelor's degree, 76% spend money on new tech products, and 30% feel loyal to brands" (Netzer).

While it cannot be measured by a study, there is a reason why business people, engineers, lawyers and other professional industries do not like the emotional side of stories. The reason is because it has too much of what is often referred to by the 5th grade English teacher to her students as "fluff."

Fluff can be defined as the "unnecessary details in a text that are not useful to your audience (Grech). Flowery text, or "the writer's opinion or extra information that prevents the article from coming to the point," is another name by which this text can be defined (Grech). Those professions that focus on data as a means of storytelling argue that the fluff or flowery aspects of the story have no place and that only tangible, measurable information is relevant.

The problem with this thinking is that as consumers are individuals and do not buy solely based on an analysis of our lives in a data driven way, we frequently buy based on emotion; we

buy because we have a personal connection to a product, or an extreme hatred for a brand and thus we buy a competitor's product, or because it's what we watched a loved one buy and now that shopping habit is engrained in us.

For the future of retail, CPG, and business as a whole, to continue to be effective, analysts cannot simply boil down shopping and thinking patterns. These industries must seek to tell stories and connect with people on a personal level rather than because they check four of the five key factors within a target demographic.

Stories must be told. Fluffy, flower stories that to the analyst seem excessive and unnecessary and yet to the 63% of consumers who want companies to stand for a purpose that reflects their values and beliefs, are essential (Adams and Sweeney).

Storytelling is the connective tissue that unites people across culture, language, generations, and so many other factors. And it is needed in order to connect the company's purpose and passions to the consumer who cares as much about the story behind the product as the product itself.

In order to understand how storytelling can be implemented in what will be referred to as its traditional form, those who work within the world of business will need to get back to the basics and understand what makes up a story and how it is effective—and not through the lens of data.

Business must be formed with an emphasis on storytelling. From the initial thought that will eventually be transformed into a company, an understanding of the founder's reason for creating the company as well as the purpose behind the business must be infused at every step of the planning and execution of the business. This process ensures that the business focuses on the values, beliefs, and needs that draw consumers in through the story that the company tells and the emotional connection consumers feel with their brand.

A New Approach to Creating Businesses

The process of using a story to construct a business can be seen in three parts. The first identifying a vision, the second a well-researched and effective strategy, and lastly, unmatched execution. The concept of launching a business for the purpose of this thesis will be identifying a problem and creating a business in response as a solution to the problem. Therefore, the business brings value to the market. Value is thus determined by consumers through their buying habits and interactions with the business.

Phase I

In every sense of the word, motivation is the key to starting off on the right path. A runner begins training for a marathon with the desire to achieve something great, a military general with the desire to protect his family, a mother who dutifully works to serve her family desires that they feel safe and loved.

The same is true for any business. Before the next Apple, Tesla, or Amazon can be built, a concise, well-thought-out motivation must be established. One individual's motivation is not synonymous with another; motivation is the point where life experiences, values, interests, attitudes, goals, and emotions come together. Considering this thought a formula for motivation, no two individuals will share the same motivation. This is especially important later in the strategy phase of infusing a story into a business because the difference in motivation is the value proposition of a company.

Motivation is crucial to a business's success, but so too is its subcomponent, passion. If motivation is the point where life experiences, values, interest, attitudes, goals, and emotions come together, passion is the driving force that takes motivation and compels us to make something of it, to do something with it. Passion causes us to ask, "what am I going to do now?"

With motivation beginning to take shape and with passion begging the question "now what?" the answer to that question is action. Action must be taken to thrust motivation and passion into something usable and tangible. And though appearing in contrast to its often passive perception, the action required next is observation.

Observation plays one of two roles in this process. If an individual has already noticed a situation, problem, or complexity that they are passionate about and therefore motivated to act upon, then this step of observation allows them to further look into their area of interest. However, there are some who find motivation from external instances and passion for solving specific issues, but also those who are internally motivated and are passionate for action for action's sake.

For example, an entrepreneur of the first variety may be living his life and one day notice that while getting ready in the morning, his bathroom does not have the number of electrical outlets he requires to charge his electric toothbrush, power his electric razor, and occasionally a hairdryer. Motivated by this frustration, one which affects him personally, thus providing him with passion to solve his perceived problem, he sets off to take action to solve the problem, observing forms of solutions, and further learning more about his problem. The second entrepreneur is different in where these factors arrive in their innovative process. For her, there is a desire to help others and improve the world and thus she is motivated and passionate and so observation for her is looking for a problem to solve. The first is externally motivated and

responds to a problem and the second internally so and thus is proactive about seeking about a problem.

Regardless of which type of observation is occurring, the purpose of it is the same: to learn what noise is around your area of interest. The questions to ask oneself during observation are what do others think about X? Who are the current leaders in the X industry? What are the barriers to entry? Observation should be a time dedicated to learning as much as possible about not just the primary areas of your interest, but also those surrounding them. The purpose of this is to be as well informed as possible so that when the time comes to launch your business you are knowledgeable about what that will entail. Observations should be high level and require little effort to discover. They will be flushed out and more thoroughly considered later in Phase II during the Industry Research step.

At some point during the Observation step, an idea will spark of what the individual wants to do as a result of their motivation, passion and the observations they have observed. This could be a response to a problem through a product or service, new way of thinking or operation, or the modification of something that already exists in the market. Once this idea has sparked the following steps should be filtered through it and the idea should be modified as future steps reveal places for where improvement is possible or areas of potential pitfalls that should be avoided.

After one observes, the next step is to look at the context surrounding what you have observed. Context roots observations and allows them to be something of substance as you form an understanding and eventually a plan to execute. If you discover during observation that there is a negative connotation with a certain aspect of your area of interest, context allows you to understand why. Perhaps past industry leaders have done a poor job listening to consumers, or supply chain issues have caused consumers to be dissatisfied with delivery times, or legislation has prevented the expansion of certain markets. Wherever the case may be, context allows observations to be useful information. Context should be considered from many different aspects. Initially the modern context is top of mind, but historical context is also important to understand what factors influenced the modern perspective. Context answers the questions why does observation X matter? What came prior to observation X that influenced this observation?

Through the consideration of observations within specific contexts, themes begin to emerge. Themes are the values, truths, and beliefs. Themes exist at three levels: the overarching human themes, societal themes, and specific, individual themes. The first type of theme is one that all humans share. These needs include being seen, known, and loved by another, security and safety, and having a sense of self to name a few. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs summarizes these themes in five levels: physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, self-actualization. Societal themes are those that are shared by a majority of individuals within a society. For example, within southern society, themes within southern hospitality include those of politeness, charmingness, and an emphasis on family, religion, and nationalism. In contrast to the themes that are held by all humans, not every individual recognizes these themes as part of their own set of values and beliefs. Societal themes are shared by enough of the population that the generalization is able to withstand against scrutiny. Individual themes, much like motivation, are contingent upon an individual's specific experiences. For example, an individual that has married parents might view marriage with a positive perspective, while growing up with divorced parents might resulted in a negative view of marriage. Some themes can exist at every level but to varying degrees. For example, the theme of family at a human level fulfills the need to be known and loved, at a societal level in the South family is an individual's support system, but at an

individual level family good be safety and home for someone with a positive family experience, or fear and danger if their experience with family was negative. By identifying these themes at every level, allows them to influence the strategy that will be formed later. These themes are crucial.

After all of these thought processes, the next step is to create research questions. These questions will be used in the next phase to guide planning and eventually execution of the business. Research questions should rely heavily on observations, contexts, and themes to give them shape and direction. Research questions allow future research to be filtered through a lens that will yield usable and accurate results. These questions can include what type of business should be created? What is the scope of the business? How many customers should it serve and in what geographic location? What is the product or service? These questions will allow for further research to be more focused because at the macro level decisions have already been made.

Phase II

Once the steps of motivation, passion, observation, themes, and research questions have been identified and considered, the next step is to consider strategy. Strategy is the phase where a solution is identified and based on what was learned during the initial phase, and a plan is created that can later be executed. This plan consists of choosing a business, identifying the key demographic and audiences, and choosing methods of delivery for communicating. In order to create a strategy that is effective and accurate, research is needed.

Research allows for the creation of tools including industry research, SWOT analysis, customer persona, customer needs, strategic approaches, creative brief, client story, communication methods, the creation of The Story. Once research has been conducted and these tools created a business can be launched and positioned to be most successful because a true understanding of customer needs, the story that inspires them to purchase and engage has been infused into every aspect of the business.

Industry Research: Industry research entails learning about all the relevant components within the industry an individual has discovered their business is within. This includes learning about the competition's brand, placement in the market and target audiences, as well as barriers to entry, legal constraints, permits, licenses, and any other information the individual feels they need to know about the market before they launch.

Customer Persona: To make sure the customer is always considered, customer persona(s) should be created. Customer personas are fictional representations of individuals within the target demographic and contain relevant information about their needs, wants, and desires. This information includes demographics, psychographics, job/career information, goals, fears, desires, technology usage, habits, values, etc. The customer persona should be referenced throughout the rest of the business creation process to ensure customer needs are met. A customer persona should be made for every type of potential customer.

Strategic Approaches: Strategic approaches are the various angles through which a business can be perceived by consumers. Strategic approaches include generic claim, product feature, unique selling proposition, positioning, brand image, lifestyle, attitude. Generic approach is the

position that highlights business attributes or benefits with no claim of superiority. The product feature approach positions the business in a way that customers with shared characteristics or values will be interested in it. Positioning focuses on a specific aspect of the business; customers view it through a specific, intentionally chosen lens. The brand image approach is when a business is associated with brand elements that customers identify with. Lifestyle positions the business in the mind of consumers to have certain ideals, aspirations, and aesthetics that are consistent with the target audience's lifestyle. The approach of attitude is how a customer feels when they interact and consider working with a business and the reasons they do or do not choose to engage. A business can be launched through any of these approaches and it is imperative to choose the one that most effectively connects with the desired target audience.

Communication: As technology continues to become more prevalent in society, choosing the correct communication platform to reach customers is crucial to a business' success. Social media, radio & tv ads, as well as more traditional forms such as print advertising in the form of magazines, billboards, posters, flyers, and merchandise should be considered to make the decision that will be most effective for reaching the desired target audience. Research on the market, competitors, and customer habits, values, and beliefs should inform these communication decisions.

Creative Brief: A creative brief outlines the plan for the business. It includes all creative elements including typography, font, color scheme, font, slogans, logos and other verbal and visual branding elements. These elements make up the identity of the business and the creative brief acts as an all-encompassing creative reference point as the business is being built out and ensures the business' identity is maintained from company creation to launch

SWOT Analysis: Once industry research has been completed, a SWOT analysis needs to be performed on the business in question. Before a business is launched one should consider its potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Completing a SWOT analysis allows for a full understanding of the business and allows for a proactive approach to be taken to both potential growth and hurdles rather than a reactive one

Company Summary: Once everything up to this point has been completed, the last step is to summarize the company identity in a concise write up. This write up pulls from every step prior to creating a one-pager that clients, investors, or any other personal can reference to get an idea of what the company is about.

The Story: The last and most crucial component of Phase II is that the founder uses everything they have learned prior to this point to concisely establish the story of their company. There is no one method that every founder must follow. Instead it is the responsibility of each to construct this story through whatever methods lend themselves to his business. Whether in the form of a written-up story, a visual collage, or other form, to have a concise representation of the story that drives the founder, business, and consumers; one that sums up the interaction between the three is imperative.

Throughout Phase II it is important not to censor or try to create concise thought initially. The Industry Research steps through the Strategic Approaches steps are for internal use only and

thus the individual should not feel pressured to create perfection, instead accurately documenting and creating a reference that can be referenced in later steps of the process take precedence.

Phase III

Once the founder of a business clearly understands their purpose for wanting to start the company which is established in Phase I, and the groundwork to create an effective strategy is laid in Phase II, the business is ready to be launched in Phase III: Execution.

Execution should be relatively easy compared to the work that has come prior because the bulk of this phase is following through with the identity and strategy that has previously been created. The only strenuous work that exists within this phase is the possibility of having to pivot once the business has been launched. This adjustment could be due in part to poor market research in Phase II, or failure to recognize a need or problem that other individuals relate to and see the business created as the solution.

Case Study Commentary

The case study of Uniquely Engaged was designed to show how by following the previously laid out process a company can be founded with a story at its core. The following commentary explains the internal thoughts the founder of Uniquely Engaged had as she created the plan for her business:

Motivation Commentary: The motivation seen in the case study while at first glance appears brief, is a perfect example of verbalizing motivation. An individual's motivation is really just an internally or externally motivated call to action; it is what drives them to want to make a change.

Passion Commentary: The explanation of passion seen in the case study has two key aspects: a personal tie to the business in which the entrepreneur was once a customer and thus understands their customer's needs, and concise goals to help minimize frustrations and maximize the positive experience of choosing an engagement ring.

Observation Commentary: These observations resulted from the individual considering their own engagement experience as well as the experiences of the couples in her life.

Context: Research from diamond, jewelry, and other industry professionals was conducted to gather the information for the historical context. The founder's own experiences heavily influenced the current context information.

Themes: Key themes and ideas of human love emerged after context was given to the phenomenon.

Research Questions: These research questions allowed the founder to consider different aspects of the jewelry and engagement ring business.

Phase 1

Industry Research: For the purpose of this case study, the legality and other logistics that would be considered to create a company were not considered. Instead, a focus on geographic location and competitors was deemed important to show how the process would be executed.

Consumer Personas: These consumer personas were modeled off of a couple the founder was very close to who recently got engaged. Both the male and female of the couple were interviewed in the construction of these personas.

Strategic Approach: Based on the industry research and consumer needs, the strategic approach was created in response to the understanding that clients want a unique symbol of their love.

Communication: The communication approach was selected based on examples that other jewelry stores set in their operations. Additionally, this approach is proactive in reaching customers but not too extensive to be an operational and logistical issue.

Creative Brief: The following considerations went into the creation of the creative brief:

- The words uniquely engaged speak to the human desire to have a unique love and yet it also speaks to the idea that whatever season or stage of life clients are engaged with, it is unique.
- Circles symbolize rings, eternity, forever
- Color as a way to show emphasis and uniqueness
- The black and white color palette is both classy and lets the focus of the love story and ring be the focus
- Wording that communicates personalization and uniqueness is crucial
- Font choices that communicate sophistication, romance, and are modern
- Visual elements that focus on the love aspect of buying a ring; one of a kind
- Storytelling elements that tell the couple's story and mimic the idea that their story is being written

S.W.O.T. Analysis: Without the company being launched this is just a hypothetical S.W.O.T. analysis, but the process anticipates strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that are realistic based on industry research.

The Story: The story is inspired by elements of the founder's experiences as a customer at a jewelry store and figments of her imagination that reflect industry and cultural values and phenomenon.

Conclusion

By turning back to an emotional, experiential based, storytelling approach to creating businesses, companies will be more effective in serving client needs resulting in consumers who feel known, seen, and valued. This paper and case study outline how this approach can be executed but it is up to the future business leaders, founders, and thought leaders to adopt the understanding that this type of business is important for change to occur.

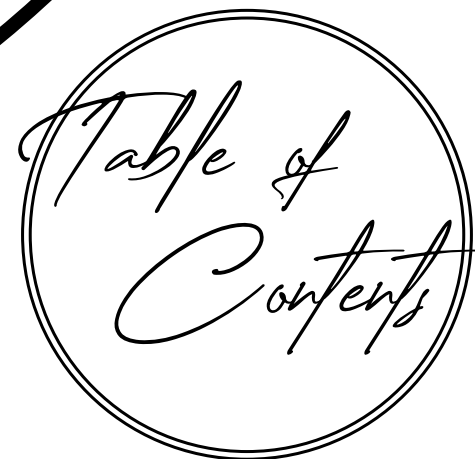
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“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”

-1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-8

*“There is
no charm
equal to
tenderness
of the
heart.”*

-JANE AUSTEN



**MOTIVATION
PASSION
OBSERVATION
CONTEXT
THEMES
RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

“According to Greek mythology, humans were originally created with four arms, four legs and a head with two faces...”

Motivation

I want to help people experience joy and the happiness in life through establishing a business.

Passion

I have experienced love and know the joys of being in a romantic experience, as well as the struggles of navigating the engagement process and I want my business to help consumers minimize frustrations and maximize the positive aspects of being engaged.

Observations

Wedding rings tend to look similar lately: band with a single diamond, some have smaller diamonds on a halo or next to a large diamond

People in the south get married during or right out of college

What an engagement ring looks like is a social status among women

Women dream of getting married from a young age

Women feel like a failure if they do not marry young

Rings have color stones

“Fearing their power, Zeus split them into two separate parts, condemning them to spend their lives in search of their other halves.”

-PLATO

Historical

In the year 850 Pope Nicholas I put forth the idea that an engagement ring symbolized a man's intent to marry. The symbolism of unity and the ring being used as accountability between the bride and groom was established by the Christian church.

Context

Current

- Engagement rings are used to declare intentions to marry and a second band is given during the wedding ceremony.
- Engagement and wedding rings still symbolize unity and accountability.
- Brides desire engagement rings that are unique and personalized.
- Engagement and wedding rings no longer have ties to religion as they did in the past. These rings have become part of the wedding process regardless of religious affiliation.

“The greatest happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved; loved for ourselves, or rather, loved in spite of ourselves.”

—VICTOR HUGO

*“Love is
composed of
a single soul
inhabiting
two bodies.”*

-ARISTOTLE

Themes

- Everyone wants to be loved
- Everyone wants to be accepted for who they are
- Loving someone is a feeling and a choice
- Each love story is unique

Research Questions

- What market do I want to serve?
- What are design/marketing themes jewelry stores use?
- What are the key values that my potential clients need from a jewelry store?
- Can my business focus solely on engagement & wedding rings?



**INDUSTRY RESEARCH
CUSTOMER PERSONA
STRATEGIC APPROACH
COMMUNICATION
CREATIVE BRIEF
SWOT ANALYSIS
CLIENT STORY
THE STORY**

*“Nobody has ever
measured, even
poets, how much a
heart can hold.”*

*–ZELDA
FITZGERALD*

Industry Research

There are a number of other jewelers in NWA that offer engagement and wedding ring services.

Most other jewelery stores offer very similar services and visually are not very unique.

There is little to no distinction between the brand identities of these companies. It is not clear what sets each company apart from its competitors.

Uniquely Engaged needs to have a strong brand identity to break through the noise of homogeny that is the jewelry store market.

REPEATED ELEMENTS:

Rings
Jewels
Serif Fonts
Company Story
One Theme Color
Images of Couples

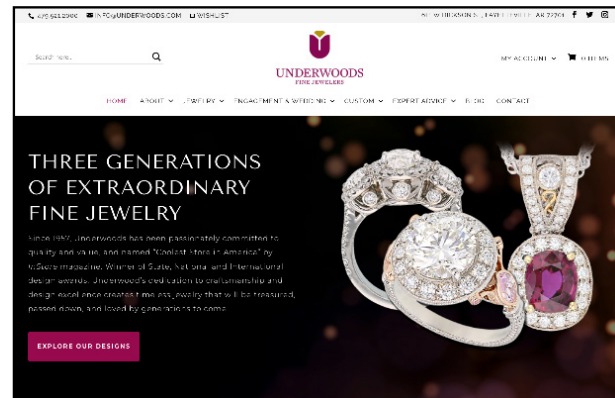
*“Have enough courage
to trust love one more
time and always one
more time.”*

—MAYA ANGELOU

Industry Research: Competition

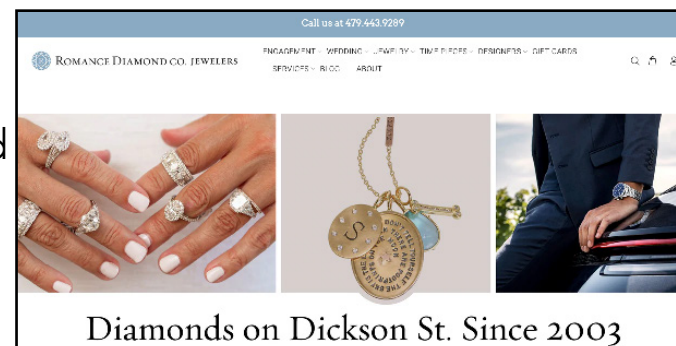
UNDERWOOD'S FINE JEWELRY

- Images of rings
- White/black color palette
- Purple logo (purple used throughout website)
- Serif font for company logo, sans serif throughout website
- Custom process highlighted with pictures of the process
- Expert Advice: resources, diamond guide, birthstone guide, engagement, 4 Cs of diamonds
- Company story
- Other jewelry



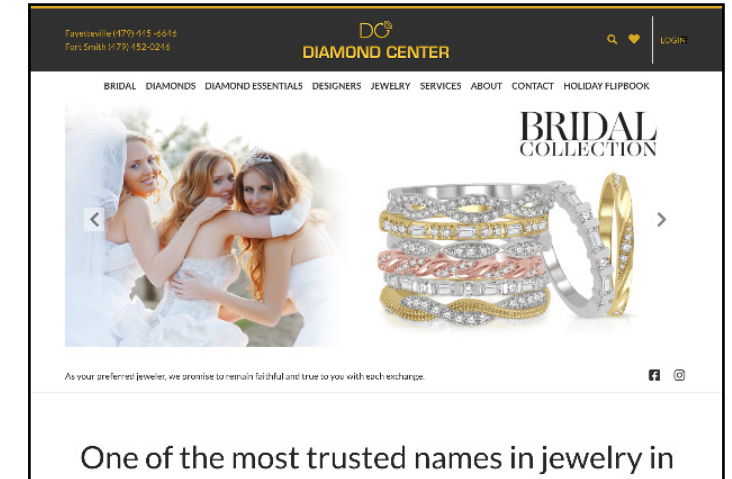
ROMANCE DIAMOND CO. JEWELERS

- Company story
- Other jewelry
- Modern and classy
- Logo aerial view of diamond
- Light blue and white color palette
- Serif font on logo, sans serif on website



DIAMOND CENTER

- Focus on diamond
- DC logo has letter C as a ring
- Yellow and black colors (gold and sophistication)
- First picture seen is a couple kissing, emphasis on love
- Popular engagement products and styles
- "Ready To Go" "Design Your Own" options
- Other jewelry
- Company story, founded in Fort Smith



“Never love anyone who treats you like you’re ordinary.”

—OSCAR WILDE

Consumer Persona

FEMALE PROFILE

Age: 20-35

Geographic

- Lives within Northwest Arkansas
- Fayetteville, Bentonville, Rogers, Springdale, Cave Springs, Farmington, Johnson, etc.

Demographics

- In college or recent college graduate now in the work force
- Has college or is obtaining college education

Values/Goals

- Get married young
- "Ring by spring"
- Desires a career & family
- Believes in love stories
- Wants luxury, class, uniqueness
- Being a good wife and one day mom

Hobbies

- Photography
- Reading
- Working out
- Travel
- Coffee Shops

Brands

- Lululemon
- Target
- H&M
- Free People
- Louis Vuitton

Technology

- Laptop
- Phone
- Instagram
- Snapchat



*“I am just a small girl
in a big world trying to
find someone to love.”*

-MARILYN MONROE

“Love is an irresistible desire to be irresistibly desired.”

-ROBERT FROST

Consumer Persona

MALE PROFILE

Age: 20-35

Geographic

- Lives within Northwest Arkansas
- Fayetteville, Bentonville, Rogers, Springdale, Cave Springs, Farmington, Johnson, etc.

Demographics

- In college or recent college graduate now in the work force
- Has college or is obtaining college education

Values/Goals

- Affordable ring
- Wants to get the ring girlfriend wants
- Assistance from the store employee
- Achievement
- Strength
- Manliness
- Leadership

Hobbies

- Running
- Video games
- Hiking
- Beer tasting

Brands

- Bearded Goat
- Nike
- Polo
- Chick-Fil-A

Technology

- Laptop
- Phone
- Instagram
- Snapchat



“Lots of people want to ride with you in the limo,

Strategic Approach

The jewelry store that helps you find or create a ring that is as unique as your love story.

Uniquely Engaged will focus on selling clients a symbol of their love.

Consumer Needs Met: Individualism

Communication

Primary: Instagram, Website
Secondary: Company Blog

- Will include engagement tips
- Suggested timelines
- Links to wedding vendors

but what you want is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down.”

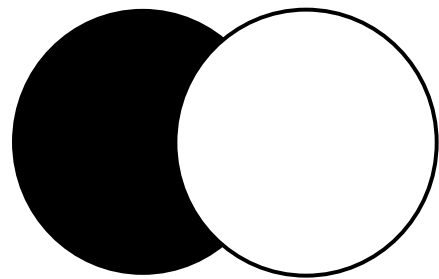
— OPRAH WINFREY

Creative Brief

LOGO



COLOR PALETTE



#000000 #FFFFFF

BRANDING

Content with minimal color to showcase ring and couples' stories as this is the main purpose behind the company.

DESCRIPTIVE WORDS

unique
personal
story
love
specific
forever
eternity
remember
symbolize
preserve
long-lasting
customizable

TYPOGRAPHY SAMPLES

Creation Demo
ABCDEFGHIJKL
MNOPQRSTU
VWXYZ
1234567890!@#%&*()

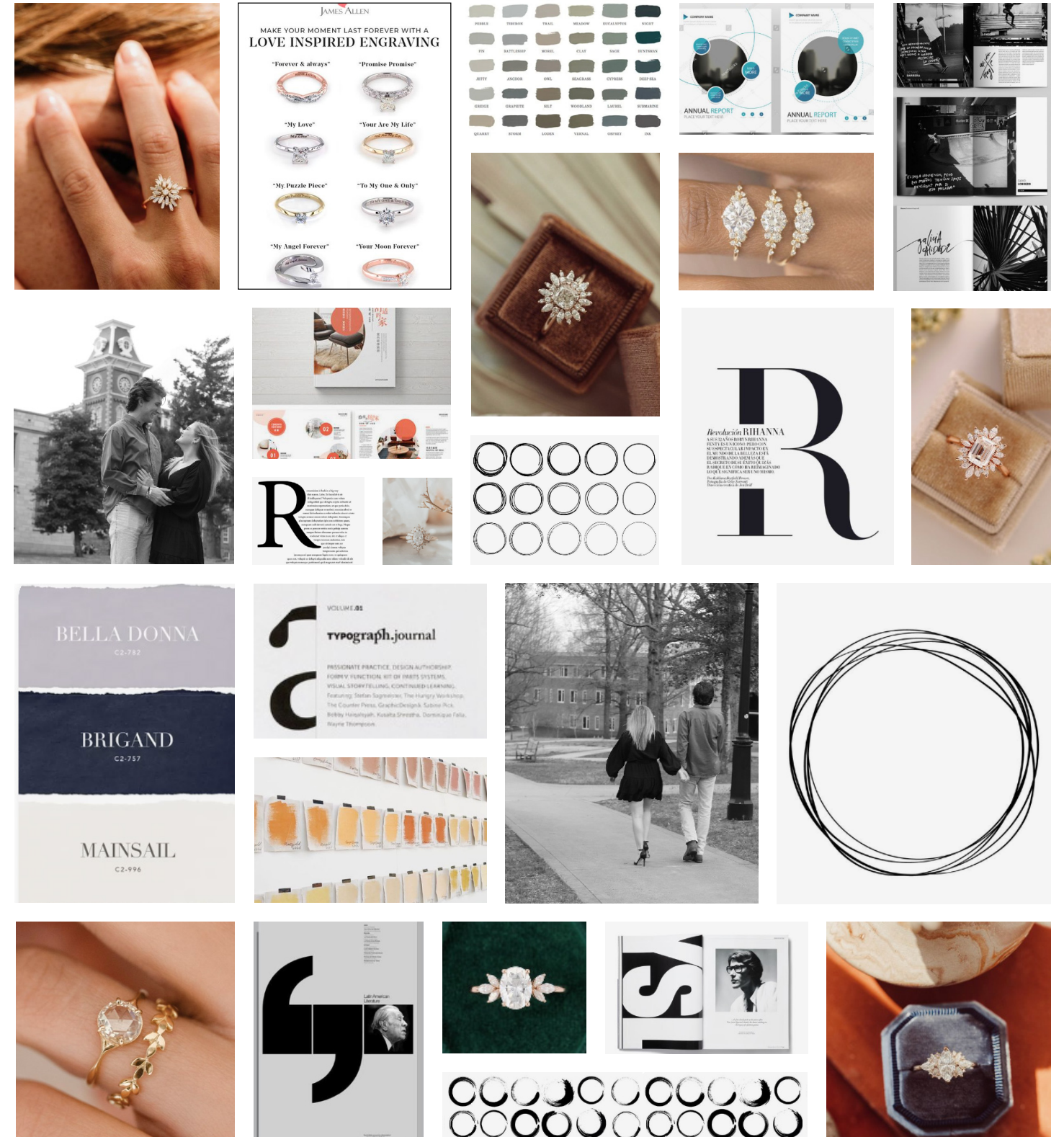
Didot
ABCDEFGHIJKLMN
OPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijkl
mnopqrstuvw
xyz1234567890!@#%&*()

Avenir
ABCDEFGHIJKLMN
OPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijkl
mnopqrstuvw
xyz1234567890!@#%&*()

VISUAL INSPIRATION

FEATURE:

- Close up angles
- Colored related elements (Paint swatches)
- Black & white with bursts of color
- Circular elements
- Storytelling language
- Unique, personalized names



“You know you’re in love when you can’t fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams.”

-DR. SEUSS

S.W.O.T. Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Clear branding
- Emphasis on customer story makes consumers feel a connection with the company
- Modern vision and unique approach to selling love

WEAKNESSES

- Too heavy of a focus on engagements, not sustainable
- Must effectively gain target audience

OPPORTUNITIES

- Expanding into other areas of jewelry (anniversary, everyday wear, birthday gemstones, etc.)

THREATS

- Existing market is very saturated
- Other companies have similar business models/focus

“When Helen and I met and I started courting her, I just fell right in love. She pretty and smart and educated and ambitious and strong-willed – with ideas and plans of her own.”

-SAM WALTON

*“Being deeply loved
by someone gives you
strength, while loving
someone deeply gives
you courage.”*

– LAO TZU

Company Summary

Uniquely Engaged is in the business of love—whatever it looks like to you!

Uniquely Engaged is a Northwest Arkansas based jewelry store that strives to provide consumers with a symbol of their love through engagement rings and other products.

The company recognizes that every love story and relationship is different and the symbol of that love should be too. Uniquely Engaged offers a wide selection of engagement rings, anniversary gifts, and other jewelry for any season you are engaged in because regardless of what the season looks like, it is sure to be unique.

The staff at Uniquely Engaged value getting to know clients and understand their story so that they can assist couples in an easy, hassle-free interaction.

Founded out of her own frustrations with the process to buy an engagement ring, Uniquely Engaged’s founder created the company with the hopes that it will serve clients for years to come and assist them as they step into a new season of life.

With Love,
Uniquely Engaged Founder



The Story

“I feel like I stumbled into forever.” That is what he said to me. Looking back, I can’t quite recall when he said it, maybe our first date? Maybe on one of our road trips we took before we were even dating? Whenever it was, the moment he said it I knew I would marry him. And now, looking down through the spotless glass unto the engagement rings below, I knew he was right. Only it wasn’t just him who had stumbled into forever, but the two of us, together.



The pressure of his hand on my lower back pulled me away from my thoughts and back to reality. “What about this?” he gestured toward a square cut ring on the far left of the case. “It’s nice,” I replied in a way that to the store owner would sound sincere but he knew what I was really saying was “It’s nice, just not my style.” I knew he would know what I meant but the small smile that spread across his lips made me sure and in turn I smiled.

It seems cliché to say, but we’ve always been like this. Before we were dating and were just friends we always just knew what the other was thinking. When his piercing blue eyes looked at me I could tell they saw beyond the surface and could tell what I was thinking, what I was feeling. Something in reciprocity I could do for him.

And because of this connection, I could tell that him asking this question was him poking fun because he knew I didn’t want a ring from the case and moreover that I didn’t want a square cut diamond. Because he knew me so well, he knew that I wanted a ring in a vintage style. One with a larger diamond surrounded by a cluster of smaller ones. One that I designed to perfection to be not only beautiful but a representation of our love every time I glanced at it or felt its constant presence on my left ring finger. And because he knew me so well, he knew this.

And that’s what this ring and promise of the future were; what comes with being truly known and chosen by another: love.

*“I feel like I
stumbled into
forever.”*

-HIM

*“Only it wasn’t
him who had
stumbled into
forever, but
the two of us,
together.”*

-HER



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