

The Best Way to Tell a Success Story

We believe this is the most effective format ever devised for telling a success story, relating a testimonial, or presenting a case study to an audience of clients and prospects.

Every story has 4 elements—whether it's 4 sentences in a really short story, or 4 paragraphs in a one-page presentation, or 4 sections in a lengthy case study.

The 4 elements are:

PROBLEM

The need, challenge, or opportunity that prompted the purchase.

PROCESS

How the parties collaborated, sharing capabilities, resources, ideas, and people.

PLAN

What the tailored solution consisted of and how it was implemented.

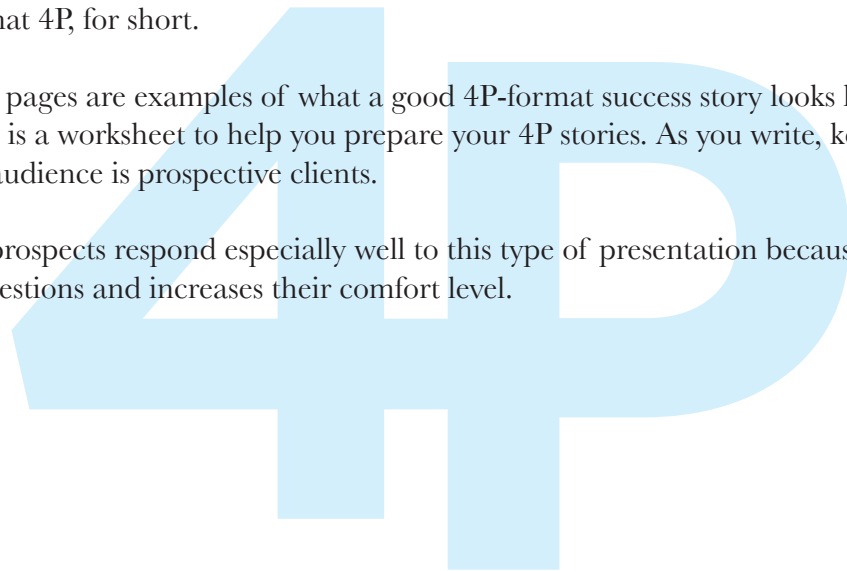
PERFORMANCE

How the solution paid off, the results and ROI delivered.

We call this format 4P, for short.

On the next two pages are examples of what a good 4P-format success story looks like. On the last page is a worksheet to help you prepare your 4P stories. As you write, keep in mind that your audience is prospective clients.

You'll find that prospects respond especially well to this type of presentation because it answers their questions and increases their comfort level.





**“Our actual customer count is down a little bit...
[but] our gross revenue is up—a lot. That’s
how much of an improvement we’ve had
to our average ticket per customer!”**

Sheila Greene, Marketing Director

FX Furniture
Effects

PROBLEM

With consolidation among furniture brands, it has been increasingly difficult for Furniture Effects (FX) to maintain their position through inventory selection alone. With little perceived difference in the caliber of products being sold, Furniture Effects’ identity—and customer count—were beginning to erode. With most competitors focused almost purely on low price, owner Pat Johnson and Marketing Director Sheila Greene chose to focus on customer service, through the use of an in-house design staff at all three of their locations. The store had offered such design services for years, and had done a robust business among local architects and interior designers... but now they were looking for a way to maximize retail revenue from this unique selling proposition.

PROCESS

After participating in a key strategy meeting with Pat and her advertising agency, account manager David Dolan and the RiverMedia team knew that Furniture Effects needed to target consumers who were more style-conscious than price-sensitive. So, using RiverMedia’s research resources, they studied the characteristics of upscale furniture buyers, and learned that they were both time starved and technologically savvy. Equipped with this “picture” of the upscale furniture consumer, Pat, Sheila, David and the agency were able to brainstorm a number of possible digital media approaches that would appeal to precisely this group of people. After vetting several, they settled on two of them.

PLAN

The two-pronged approach started with adding “virtual store tours” to the Furniture Effects website; a video walkthrough of key living room, dining room, and bedroom gallery displays. In a sense, this allowed a busy customer to “preview” the store’s selection; the consumer could even book an in-home appointment right at the Furniture Effects website. The second element of the campaign invited customers to take digital photos of the room(s) they were hoping to “make over,” and share those pictures with the FX design team by email, on a thumb drive, or simply by printing them out before heading to the store. This part of the plan made it easy for customers to explain what they were hoping to accomplish with the furniture piece or ensemble they were hoping to buy, facilitating the assistance of the Furniture Effects design team (and without requiring the “down time” of driving to a customer’s home!).

PERFORMANCE

Sheila Greene summed it up best. “Our actual customer count is down a little bit these days, as it is for almost every furniture store in town. But despite that slip in the number of people coming through the door... our gross revenue is up—a lot. That’s how much of an improvement we’ve had to our average ticket per customer!” Pat Johnson added, “Some days, as many as every third customer coming in the door is now coming in with a digital photo... just like we taught them to do. It has made buying furniture easier for the customer, because they have a better idea of how to explain what they’re trying to accomplish. And that makes selling furniture—more furniture—easier for us.”



When it comes to moving the market, we help you go with the flow.



"...the product flew out of the stores. We had to go on double shifts at the plant..."

Jim Hilton
District Sales Manager
Hometown Foods, Inc.



"We don't have the kind of resources the big guys have. The national brands were getting more shelf space, better positioning, and more frequent off-shelf displays. Hometown Potato Chips was coming into the key summer season with a marketing challenge that had to come way before any consideration of advertising. We had to find a way to play in the big leagues.

"Jane Doe and her crew at City Tribune had the marketing smarts, the imagination, and the contacts to really come through for us. What a difference between these folks and other media reps! Instead of the bragging you always hear from media reps, these people listened to us. It was obvious they cared. They brought ideas and concepts that zeroed right in on our problems. They had their people working right alongside ours... putting together plans and working through the inevitable problems. My secretary soon learned to put Jane's calls right through to me.

"It was so simple, it was brilliant! Here we were, trying to look big-time—and there was Coca-Cola, always looking for local angles and community involvement and extra exposure. Jane Doe knew to put us together in a summer-long promotion. We got to share endcaps with Coke in all Superchow Stores and to be part of every ad they ran online and in The City Tribune. There was more—we did delivery trucks and radio ads, and polished up our old 10K race. Talk about a marketing plan!

"Well, with shoppers able to pick up a bag of Hometown Potato Chips in five different places in each Superchow instead of just one, you can imagine how the product flew out of the stores. We had to go on double shifts at the plant. After years of nearly flat sales, we moved 28% more cases during the promotion. More importantly, we converted a lot of families to Hometown. It was a modern-day David and Goliath. Thanks to Jane and the City Tribune."

The City Tribune

WE WON'T ASK FOR YOUR BUSINESS UNLESS WE CAN HELP IMPROVE IT.



4P Template

☐ Testimonial directly from the customer. Use first person.

☐ Success story from the company. Use third person.

Write an attention-grabbing headline here—after you’ve written “the story” in the boxes below.

1 The Problem

The Assignment the parties agreed upon through the Needs Analysis process.

3 The Plan

The Bright Idea and the tailored solution the parties implemented.

2 The Process

How the parties worked together, sharing capabilities, resources, people, and ideas.

4 The Performance

How the Plan paid off for all the parties involved.