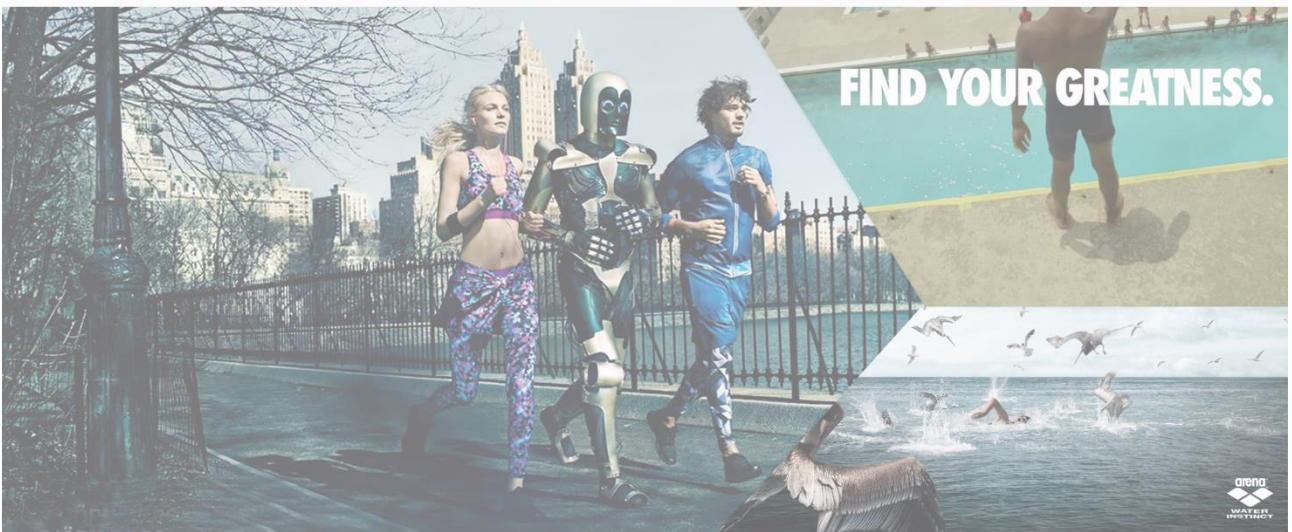




*An Inspirational Story:  
What Marketers can learn from Storytelling by Sports Brands*



## ABSTRACT

Storytelling is frequently used in video advertising, the form as well as the structure. However, it is more of an intuitive tool. This thesis attempts to make storytelling more applicable for video advertising by looking at the story elements and how these can be used to create a good story. There is special interest for the way sports brands applied it in their video advertising, since they frequently and often successfully use it. Therefore, the question answered through research is:

**In what way can marketers learn from the way sports brands apply storytelling in video advertising?**

Research started off by reviewing literature to gather information, theories and existing research results regarding storytelling, the story elements, to what extent storytelling in video advertising is effective and important learnings for applying storytelling in video advertising. Literature is supported by inspiring and successful cases of sports brands.

Finally, quantitative research investigated if sports brands using all story elements in their video advertisements were capable of telling better stories. Survey (N=131) explored if the number of elements incorporated in a video advert influences the audiences understanding of the message, the experienced clarity of an ad, the likeability of an ad and to what extent it has influence on brand image.

Storytelling is the sharing of knowledge and experiences through narrative. It is claimed to help transfer important information in a clear and understandable way, but also to create meaning and evoke emotion. Factors making it useful for advertising.

Literature indicates that every story is different, however all stories have a central message, recognizable conflict, appealing characters, packaged in an understandable plot that makes sense. In video advertising these elements can be supported by sounds and visuals, and also a monologue or dialogue from the character(s) or a voice over.

The elements should be used in an authentic way that fits the brand to have a credible story. The elements should also be ones the audience can relate to and wants to identify with, to increase emotional response.

Sports brands speak to these emotions by telling stories about achieving personal dreams and desires. It puts the consumers personal interest first, inspiring and motivating them to chase those goals. For which they eventually need the brands' products.

Not all sports brands use all elements in their stories. Results from quantitative research gauge that sports brands using all story elements in their video advertising are capable of telling better stories. The message is better understood, the ad is experienced as more clear, the ad is better liked and has more influence on brand image when all elements are incorporated in a video ad.

So it is advisable for marketing communications to use all story elements in video advertising.

Since this is the first statistical research carried out regarding the use of story elements in video advertising, the study has to be repeated with other video advertisements to confirm results; also for other branches. In addition, the effects of story elements should be measured more in depth.