

Brand Storytelling: The Danger of a Single Story

Novelist and storyteller Chimamanda Adichie, a native of eastern Nigeria, has learned firsthand how listening to only one story can lead to critical misunderstandings. She tells of how her U.S. professor felt that her portrayal of Africans in a novel wasn't authentic, because they were well-fed and driving cars; and of her own guilt when on a visit to Mexico, she realized that her belief in the story of Mexicans sneaking across the border and fleecing the U.S. health-care system was far from accurate. Stories are powerful, but they can create untruths when they become the only story.



What brands can learn from this talk

[Stories can and often will define a brand](#), for better or worse. While it is important for a brand to unearth its story platform—the story at the heart of the brand—and tell it in ways that inform and excite, hearing only one such story can cause misunderstanding—even if it's a good story. Audiences hearing a single negative story can receive an even more destructive message.

If you believed the single story of energy drinks as a category, you'd believe that all brands are selling a glorified concoction of caffeine and sugar. But Red Bull has a vise-like grip on its brand story—about living life to the fullest—thus [propelling them to social success](#) and incredible brand affinity.

As a brand marketer, you must ensure that your audience hears a variety of relevant stories and forming ideas and opinions about those that come from the brand itself. That means you'll have to not only create content but [actively engage with audiences](#), particularly negative ones, to steer all conversations toward the truth.

Read more from Jon [here](#).