



**PHILANTHROPY.  
BUSINESS.  
GROWTH.**

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Hotsheet: by Ryan Fletcher  
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## **Happy New Year! – Topic: Why Your *Content Strategy* Needs A Lead Character, With Desirable Character Traits That People Can Truly Connect With, To Reach Max Effectiveness.**

If you haven't read last week's Hotsheet, "*Tune-In Marketing vs. Tune-Out Marketing. A Foundational Shift In The Future of Client Acquisition and Building Loyal And Committed Audiences*," then read that now. This article, ideally, depends on your intimate knowledge of creating content, but more than that, how to market and promote that content. Content is traffic. Content, good content, is what hooks visitors in and compels them to want to learn more about you, your product, your service, your cause, mission or organization.

And here is the mistake most business owners/entrepreneurs make. They have no *backstory* that relays to the website visitor, who they are, beyond their business, or why they think the way they think, believe the way they believe, or do the things they do.

In short, they have no *Lead Character*.

The Lead Character, in any sitcom, movie, etc., is developed by the backstory. So what is yours?

A good friend of mine, Jerry Jones, sent me a Vanity Fair article the other day, on the success of James Patterson, the world's #1 best-selling author. According to Forbes, Patterson makes \$90 million annually, and is a one-man publishing conglomerate. Funny enough, Stephen King has called Patterson "A terrible writer." And, frankly, he is. The prose in his books is terrible. But, and this is the key. Patterson understands story, the power of story, story structure, character development, and human psychology—how the human minds works, and how it connects and resonates with *Characters*.

### **From the Vanity Fair article:**

"His protagonists are all a bit wounded and vulnerable—not just Alex Cross but also Michael Bennett, another widowed detective (this one an Irish-American in New York with 10 adopted children); Rafe Khatchadorian, a hapless discipline case, who is the hero of the "Middle School" series; and Jamie Grimm, a wheelchair-bound middle-schooler, who is the star of the "I Funny" series and who wants to be America's best young stand-up comic but can work only sitting down. Even Patterson's most villainous bad guys tend to have had a painful childhood or some other psychic heartbreak along the way.

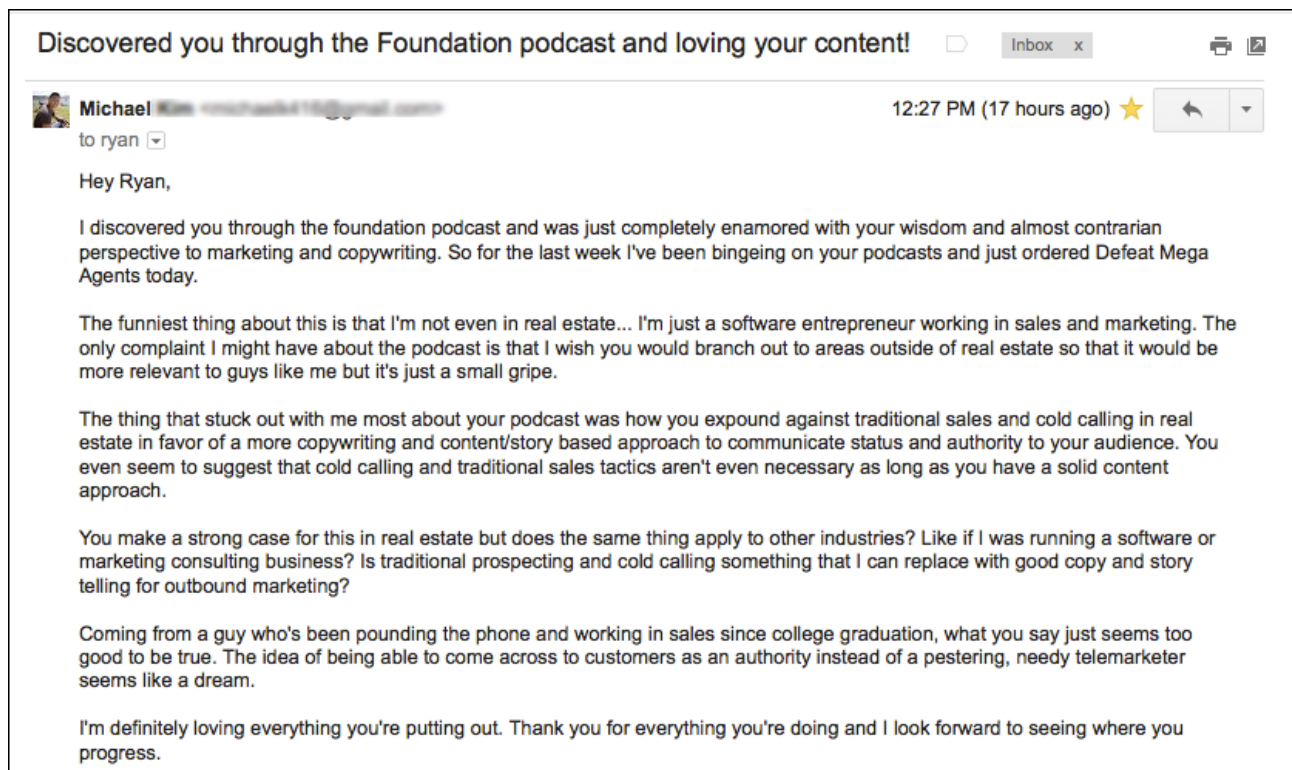
What that paragraphs really says, translated: James Patterson’s characters have carefully crafted backstories, that convey to the reader why they think the way they think, believe the way they believe, and do the things they do. “Even Patterson’s’ most villainous bad guys tend to have had a painful childhood or some other psychic heartbreak along the way.” This is because, for a character to be real and to resonate with the audience, the reader must come to *know* that Character, as if he has lived a real life.

People judge and buy a book by its “cover and title.”

But they stick with the series, because they “love the Character(s).”

In other word, again translated to business, its your promoted *content* that hooks prospects in, but its their connection to your Character that determines their loyalty and devotion, long term, to your company, product, service, and above all, YOU.

This past week, I received this email:



Notice his subject line and first sentence, “I discovered YOU through the Foundation podcast and loving your content... [I] was just completely enamored with your wisdom and almost contrarian perspective to marketing and copywriting.” And this is the important part, “So for the last week I’ve been *bingeing* on your podcasts and just ordered [your book] today.” And the funniest thing about this is that I’m not even in real estate...” as the book Michael mentioned, that he bought, is geared toward real estate agents.

My point is:

My Character and backstory have become the source of his fascination. They explain why I think the way I think, believe the way I believe, and do the things that I do. And now, he’s gone from being a guy who just listened to a podcast, to a person who is “studying” me, ready and willing to *tune-in* to my next release.

As he puts it, “I’m definitely loving everything you’re putting out. Thank you for everything you’re doing and I look forward to seeing where you progress.” Note: the second half of that last sentence is a key phrase.

**“I look forward to seeing where YOU progress.”**

I think, if you asked James Patterson, he'd say this is what you want people saying about your Character. Because this is what leads people to consuming your next content piece, and precisely, this is why James Patterson writes *series* fiction. Fans of Alex Cross, over time, have grown *with* the Character. They want to see “Where he will progress” next.

So what is your backstory? Who are you?

What life events/experiences/tragedies/hardships have shaped you, your thoughts and beliefs?

If you want to listen to that Podcast that Michael listened to, you can listen to it here. In it, I reveal a lot about myself and my Character. I reveal a lot about my backstory too. How I almost got fired, but then became the Chief Marketing Officer of a \$25 million company, including many of the trials and tribulations along the way, that have shaped who I am.

<http://thefoundation.com/episode70/>

It is my contention that people cannot fully trust you, unless they know [truly] who you are. This means, if you don't have a well-crafted and constructed backstory, that you either talk about frequently, or provide to people soon after the first introduction, *you are pissing away trust*.

In my business, I'm currently in the hiring process. I wrote a 6-page WANTED ad that requires interested parties to do several hours of homework. This is so they can get to know my Character, so they can learn my backstory, so they can understand why I think the way I think, believe the way I believe, and do the things that I do. As an employer, I want to know the *same* about my prospective hire.

From that 6-page ad, here is the most important section, telling them what is required to be considered.

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What To Do Next:

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If what I have written [here] has resonated with you in a meaningful way, and you think you would enjoy working with me, then do this: Send me three things \* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* 1) No more than a 1-page resume. Just let me know what your work experience is. Frankly, I don't much care about it. Your past is your past. I've never been one to rest on laurels. But. . .it would be good to know so I can better understand your skills sets.

\* \* \* 2) Write me a letter or shoot a video, it can be as long or as short as it needs to be, but make sure it captures the essence of who you are. I'm not just investing in a "position," I am investing, and putting on my trust in you. So please, be open and honest and share with me "who you are." "What is your story?" Why have you chosen the paths that you have chosen? What drives you? What is your philosophical viewpoint? How do you see the world? Is there a defining moment in your life? Have you experienced tragedy? Adversity? How have you bounced back? When put into a difficult situation, how do you respond? . . .

These are the kinds of questions that can only be answered, by having a conversation with someone. So please, pick up a pen or shoot a video, and have a conversation with me. Tell me your story. Or about a meaningful experience in your life that conveys to me who you are, and why you're interested in this position.

\*\*\* Finally--3) From the homework section, from what you read or watched or listened to, what most resonated with you. Specifically, why did it resonate with you? And what do you feel your greatest strength is, that would be most valuable to me and to the position?

Please, don't just shoot from the hip here. Give it some thought. This will likely dictate whether or not you are considered. And **WARNING**--I only hire A-players. Because A-players never quit, and they never make excuses. And I can't stand people who quit or make excuses. And further, to the A-player, nothing is ever too hard or too challenging. Somehow, these people always rise to the occasion and find a way.

If that's you, then I can't wait to hear from you.

- Ryan Fletcher

\*\*\* Send Materials to: Reply to this post w/Subject-line: "I'm an A-Player". The "reply" button is at the top of the post, above the headline. Or, you can mail items to: 1413 NW Sluman Rd. Vancouver, WA. 98665

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The section that is in **'Bold'** is the part to pay attention to.

By understanding this, the applicant's story, I'm able to see the intangibles that cannot be expressed in a resume, and similarly, what on their resume is bullshit. Incidentally, by reading the stories of these people. The relationship changes. They are no longer just an "applicant for a position." They become compelling Characters. I'm invested in their story. Some convey themselves as underdogs. I find myself rooting for these people. I want to see them succeed. I begin to think, "How can I help this person?" Yes, taking this approach to hiring is dangerous. As the emotions that I experience, through the different stories, put me at risk of making the wrong decision, purely because I have become *emotionally invested* in the person that I am learning about.

**But if I can't root for the person, and if I don't want to see him or her succeed, then really, I would never want to hire them anyway!**

The same decision [unconsciously] is being made, by prospective clients of yours, about you. Thus, the question becomes, how do you get more people to become *emotionally invested* in you, your Character—the leader, owner, and spokesperson for your business?

**Answer:** You craft a compelling *Backstory* that gives your Character, YOU, depth.

If someone is not willing to do this or doesn't see it as necessary—I'm sorry, but he is wrong. And all that money that he pours into marketing his content, Tune-In Marketing, will never be maximized in terms of ROI: return on investment. Because while his content is good, visitors to his website; prospective clients, customers, patients, will never become "enamored" with HIM—the person producing it...

Dave's Killer Bread is an excellent example of a company that has used the *personal story* of its founder, Dave Dahl, to quickly grow an empire.

Yes, a bread company. Yes, using the *back-story* of its founder to become a publicity magnet.

Dave's story is the classic "Redemption" storyline.

Here is the latest version of Dave's Killer Bread story: [www.daveskillerbread.com/our-story](http://www.daveskillerbread.com/our-story)

It's the original [PDF](#), though, that tells the true tale. The moment I saw it, I printed it and saved, because I instantly recognized its power. That was seven years ago. I have been buying Dave's bread ever since. It's good. But I love the story too.

And so does America love the story of Redemption.

### **Hell, look at Michael Vick.**

He kills dogs, goes to prison, two years later he's back in the NFL and receives the "Comeback Player of the Year" award.

From my hiring process, here is the opening paragraph [of a long letter] from one applicant:

Dear Ryan Fletcher,

To begin with my name is Joshua [redacted], I'm an A-player, someone is optimistic, passionate, trustworthy and most of all loyal. I am 24 years old your, job posting resonated deeply with in me and my interest. I have a passion for writing, I write poetry to better understand myself and the surroundings around me. One thing about me I have been through many adversities and tragedies over my life I wouldn't say I have more than anyone we all go through difficult times to grow.

Born in Japan my dad was in the navy in Tokyo. I only have 1 kidney had the other one taken out when I was 9 months old my body wouldn't take a transplant, but I survived without one, from them moment I was born I was a fighter I simply won't give up. Parents divorced when I was four in Bremerton it was a divorce filled with a lot of resentment from my mom and dad. I was raised with mom till I was 13, grew in poverty and took the responsibility to watch my little brother who is two years younger than me.

From high school to elementary I went to a total of 15 different schools. I had to learn and adapt to

"I'm an excellent communicator," every applicant tells me. Oh, really? I say. Then why can't you communicate to me how you are different...than the other 40 applicants that I have here? What makes you special? What makes you the right fit for this position? Joshua can. He did. And Joshua is a fighter! *I like fighters*. So he makes it to the next round of the hiring process.

Another came from Michael, a young man, who had a heart attack at the age of 19, from the stress brought on, from fighting the custody battle for his son and daughter, who were twins. The mother one day packed up and relocated out of the state, never mentioning a word.

Moving on... I have two children, twins, my daughter Ja'Liyah and my son Jahmal. They'll be 6 on January 23rd and their my motivation for life. Unfortunately and fortunately I had to fight to be apart of my children's lives. I fought in a legal custody battle since my kids were 3 months old and finally came to somewhat of an agreement a little over a year ago. That was the roughest 4 years of my life. A lot of highs and definitely a lot of lows, testing my strength and determination. During that process my children have moved back and fourth out of state to multiple states, due to Mom being difficult. Eventually her being difficult broke me down when I was 19 years old and I suffered a heart attack. Now, I know I caught your attention if I haven't already but yes I said a heart attack at 19.

Again, I could tell Michael was a fighter.

*I like fighters! – they don't quit. And they don't make excuses.*

I could go on and on, showing you screenshot after screenshot of the stories, that these [more than] three-dozen applicants have written me, but you get the point. I don't need to.

Your personal backstory is what dictates whether or not someone becomes *emotionally* invested in you. The story you tell, can be a catalyst to trust. A source of differentiation. Etc. A prospective client may have found you because he was searching for a solution to their problem. But he sticks around, explore more of your content, hires you, refer you, to everyone he knows, because he trusts you. Because he is emotionally invest in you. Because he wants to help you succeed.

Having a well-thought out *Backstory* is a shortcut to that end [desired] result.

Please don't take it lightly.

Wishing you luck in 2015. May a *powerful Backstory* be with you, because without a *Lead* Character, you don't stand much of a chance to hold an audience!

-RYAN



**Ryan Fletcher** is a serial entrepreneur, strategic advisor, consultant, direct-response copywriter, and founder of ENG: Entrepreneurs Networking Group™—a by-application-only community for ambitious business owners, sales professional, and entrepreneurs to discuss high-level marketing, positioning and differentiation strategies; currently 28 branch locations exist across the United States and Canada. He directly impacts more than 15,000 business owners every week. He is also the author of 14 *Marketing & Positioning Gamechangers: How Any Business Owner, Sales Professional or Entrepreneur Can Increase Profits & Give More Back!* He can be contacted directly via fax: 800-604-6501 or email: [Ryan@EntrepreneursNetworkingGroup.com](mailto:Ryan@EntrepreneursNetworkingGroup.com)



< Insert Co-Founder's bio, providing URLs to drive traffic back to co-founder's other Platforms >

### 3 Questions You Have To Discuss With Chapter Members:

**Question #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Possible Solution #1: \_\_\_\_\_

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Possible Solution #2: \_\_\_\_\_

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Possible Solution #3: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Possible Solution #1: \_\_\_\_\_

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Possible Solution #2: \_\_\_\_\_

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Possible Solution #3: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Possible Solution #1: \_\_\_\_\_

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Possible Solution #2: \_\_\_\_\_

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Possible Solution #3: \_\_\_\_\_

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**[EXTRA SPACE] FOR MORE QUESTIONS OR POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:**

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