

GROWTH BY STORY

Christian Riedel

Story Architect, Brand Strategist, Creative Leader

“In a world driven by digital technology, speed and data, I believe in the emotional power of storytelling to envision and build a better future. That is why I have made it my mission to continuously explore new ways of storytelling and to find, build and share stories that inspire growth. For people, brands and organisations.”

My story

Every story needs a good start. Mine starts with Captain Kirk.

In the early nineties, I started a career as an astronaut. At that time, every afternoon, right after school, I launched into space with the crew of the spaceship Enterprise. I was even a founding member of the local *Star Trek* fan club.

But stories have always been more than an escape from the small town where I grew up. I was even more fascinated by their magical power. The power to lead me into infinite spaces and let me experience other people's lives.

Stories have given me the freedom to see the world through different eyes, to learn and to grow with them. I soon realized that I wanted to explore how stories work and how to build them on my own. Stories that make growth possible. That became the mission.

Today, as a story architect and brand strategist, I help founders and marketing decision-makers to use the power of stories for their ideas, their brand and their growth. From the investor pitch to the advertising campaign and the long-term brand strategy, I support them in finding their stories and telling them captivantly.

Until mid-2017, I was Head of Story & Brand at Jimdo.com, where I held creative responsibility for developing the core story, the messaging and storytelling strategy of the brand. Since then, I have been working independently from Hamburg for start-ups, companies and agencies.

I took a degree in media studies at the HBK Braunschweig, completed a masterclass in "Video-Game Studies" and then a screenwriting programme at the University of Tampere and the Filmschool Hamburg respectively. In my spare time, I am engaged in creative writing and won the German Short Crime Story Award in 2013. I also blog at growthbystory.de.



What I can help you with:

Business storytelling

- Storytelling theory, practice and business application for influence, change and branding
- Strategic storytelling consultancy for founders, leaders and brands

Story architecture

- Story & content development
- Transmedia conceptwriting & screenwriting
- Creative direction (storytelling/dramaturgy)

Brand strategy

- Brandstory development
- Brandconcept creation
- Creative & content strategy (longterm and shorterm & digital)

Communication planning

- Audience research & insights
- Message development
- Channel planning

Creative leadership

- Building and leading creative Teams
- Agency management
- Agile projectmanagement
- Workshop facilitation on C-level

Languages

German (native)
Englisch (fluent)

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Work Experience

Mar 2014 – Present

Story Architect, Brand Strategist, Storytelling Consultant
Growth by Story

As a story architect, I empower brands and start-ups in finding and telling the stories that help them grow. How? By approaching communication and branding challenges with empathy, creativity and storytelling techniques from movies, theater and video games, I help my clients to connect with their audience with emotional impact and to build interest and demand in their ideas, products and brands.

Jan 2016 – Apr 2017

Head of Story & Brand
Jimdo GmbH

As Head of Story & Brand, my mission was to find the stories that would help Jimdo grow as a brand and to apply a consistent brand identity across all channels. In this role I led internal and external creative teams and inspired them to explore new paths to create a long term emotional connection with the brand and build demand for the product.

In order to achieve this, I worked cross functionally with the CMO and the marketing management team to determine the best creative way to leverage consumer insight and activate brand messages, utilizing my creativity, leadership, and storytelling skills.

As a member of the marketing management team I have been responsible for the creative strategy, development and production for the brand- and TV-campaigns in 2014, 2015 and 2016 that created double digit growth for the company. I then supervised the development of the 2017 campaign done by FCB Hamburg.

Oct 2014 – Dec 2015

Brand Story Architect (Interim)
Jimdo GmbH

In 2014, the German website-builder Jimdo started to grow their brand communication. The founders asked me to tell their brand story in the most authentic way possible. The mission they entrusted me with was to find the brand's core story and to bring it to life in the market. So I joined forces with an internal creative team and directed them in redefining the Jimdo brand. This process included:

- Defining the brand's core story and emotional positioning, validation through audience and business data;
- Creating a consistent brand concept (visual assets & voice and tone) from the core story;
- Creating an online brand-book website;
- Testing brand assets, both qualitatively and quantitatively;
- Facilitating brand workshops with all product and country teams;
- Planning and directing creative on a brand relaunch in over eight languages in just four weeks;
- Writing and co-directing all TV commercials for an internal creative and production team to test TV advertising with minimum production spend;
- Providing strategic and creative direction for Jimdo's first integrated advertising campaign #builtwithjimdo (produced internally);

Education

2015

Filmhaus Babelsberg
Seminar "Serial Storytelling in TV-Shows"

2012

Good School Hamburg
Seminar on interactive workshop facilitation

2008 – 2009

Filmschule Hamburg Berlin
Masterclass screenwriting

Focus on:

- dramaturgy & plot
- character development
- scene & dialogue
- creative writing

Examination piece: "Graceland", a feature length romantic comedy script

2005 – 2006

Technische Universität Hamburg
Media science (graduate)

Research project on spatial experiences in computer games and theme parks.

2004 – 2005

Technical University of Tampere
Master's course in digital games research and design (online class)

Focus on:

- theory of games
- essentials in game design

1998 – 2004

Hochschule für Bildende Künste Braunschweig
(University of Fine Arts)

Magister Artium (grade: 1.3) in

- media science (focus on marketing)
- media technology
- political science

Graduation thesis on product placement in digital games (grade 1.0)

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2012 – April 2014

Story-Architect, Founder, Managing Director
Three-Headed Monkeys GmbH

In 2012, I co-founded Three-Headed Monkeys—a consultancy for strategic storytelling with the mission of helping companies and executives to tell better stories. I worked on a range of storytelling projects including CEO speeches, change communication, service experience design and advertising. In 2014, my co-founder and I closed the company because we decided to follow different career paths.

Selected clients:

Vodafone, Beiersdorf, EasyCredit, WWF, IQ Media, Fein Tools, DFDS Seaways, Stabilo, Leagas Delany & Google

2010 – Jan 2012

Freelance Planner, Story Architect

As a freelance strategist, I helped my clients develop successful communication strategies in all kinds of media. Generally on very tight deadlines. During this time, I learned how to dive deep into strategic questions as fast as possible to provide meaningful results.

Clients I worked with:

DFDS Seaways
DoubleYUU (enterprise 2.0 consulting)
FAKTOR 3 AG (communication agency)
Neue Digitale (digital agency)
Philipp und Keuntje (advertising agency)
Lemme Film (independent-film production)
Piffel Medien (independent-film distributor)

Oct 2006 – Feb 2010

Strategic Planner
Faktor 3 AG

I was a founding member of the strategic planning team, working cross-functionally with all agency teams to create campaigns, concepts and communication strategies with a special focus on cultural and consumer insights, storytelling and social media. I am still proud of delivering the behavioural insight that made Fanta's first successful German social media campaign "Sagen oder Wagen" possible. Besides campaign strategy, I also developed several C-Level conferences featuring, among others, Microsoft CEO Steve Balmer. As an ambassador for creative innovation at the agency, I facilitated internal and external workshops on creativity, idea development and product innovation.

Selected clients: Fanta, Intercontinental Hotels, Microsoft, Financial Times Deutschland, Lucky Strike, Arcor, StudiVZ, Pizza.de, Floragard, Velux

Jan 2005 – Apr 2005

Junior Projektmanager Online
KMF Online GmbH

I joined the agency on a four month fixed-term contract to support the B2B team both with concept writing and some project management, mostly for their client HP. This included working on e-mail marketing, CRM programs and microsites. During my degree, I had already completed an eight-month internship at the company.