

Miller, DonaldBuilding a StoryBrand 2.0

9. The Simple SB7 Framework

This chapter gives a bird's-eye view of the seven-part StoryBrand (SB7) messaging framework before the later chapters unpack each part in depth. The core idea: brands should frame their marketing like a story, with the customer as the hero and the brand as the guide. The chapter walks through all seven elements and urges the reader to actually do the work rather than skim.

Key takeaways

- The seven elements form a story: (1) a Character (customer) who (2) has a Problem, (3) meets a Guide (your brand), (4) who gives them a Plan, (5) calls them to Action, (6) that helps them avoid Failure, and (7) ends in Success.
- Principle 1 — the customer is the hero, not your brand. Position yourself as the guide (Yoda), not the hero (Luke). Bragging about your brand is a turnoff.
- Principle 2 — people only buy solutions to problems. Customers face three levels of problems (external, internal, philosophical); the inner frustration motivates them most.

- Principle 3 — customers want a guide, not another hero. A guide (like Lionel in The King's Speech) offers empathy and a way out.
- Principle 4 — give a clear, simple plan; and Principle 5 — issue a direct call to action. Vague prompts like 'learn more' fail; 'buy now' or 'schedule a call' work.
- Principle 6 — show what's at stake (failure to avoid); Principle 7 — paint a clear vision of success. Never assume people see how you'll improve their life — tell them.
- The free StoryBrand BrandScript tool (at StoryBrand.AI, now with AI prompts) turns these seven elements into repeatable sound bites. Doing the work carefully beats competitors who skim the book.

Passages worth keeping

“The customer is the hero, not your brand.”

The framework's central paradigm shift — the mistake most marketing makes.

“The only things people buy are solutions to problems.”

Why identifying and naming the customer's problem is essential to selling anything.

How it connects

The guide-and-hero pattern echoes how Scripture often frames God or mentors as the one who equips people to overcome — the wise helper who provides a plan, not a rival, so the hero can win.