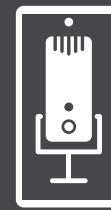


Episode: 64

Tyler Campbell



THE
**MOBILE
WORKFORCE**
PODCAST

Mike Merrill:

Hello, and welcome to the Mobile Workforce Podcast. I'm your host, Mike Merrill. Today we are sitting down with my friend, Tyler Campbell. And Tyler is the chief storyteller at Storybuilder, a marketing firm that helps contractors create and tell their story with creative content.

He also hosts the Construction Brothers Podcast with his brother who also has been a guest on the Mobile Workforce Podcast and we're excited to have him on today. So today, we're going to talk about storytelling and how it can be a priority for construction business and how it's good for your business to get that creative content out there to help build your brand and also to grow your business. Tyler, thanks for joining us today.

Tyler Campbell:

Thanks for having me, Mike. Appreciate it.

Mike Merrill:

You bet. Looking forward to this discussion. So, what is storytelling and why is it so important for a construction business today?

Tyler Campbell:

This is something that I have to point another finger or point a finger at somebody else. Because I was inspired by somebody else in this direction, and his name is Donald Miller. He wrote a book called Building a StoryBrand and it's definitely worth your time if you haven't read it yet.

It was eye opening to me how effective storytelling and framing your business' marketing efforts around a story, how effective that can be. And so, best breakdown that I can give of an example of storytelling in the industry or for a business, just a business in general is, I'm going to point back to him just to kick

this off because I feel like he put it in a really good way and I'm not going to try to screw with it, right?

So essentially, he's got this diagram of a character who then has a problem, right? And they go searching for a solution and then they meet a guide who gives them a plan that then gives them a call to action and it helps them achieve what they're looking for. Right? And helps them avoid failure.

And so, whenever I heard it put like that, I was like, "Wow, this is something we need to work on in the industry in a big way." Because you start looking at websites and I challenge any one of you to go out on your website and look. Do you have on your front page a, we have been in business 50 years and we are experts in our field. And we, we, we, we, we, and I, I, I, I, and that's pretty much the summary of what most websites most copy looks like in the industry.

So, what the story branding process and what I'm advocating here and what I've decided, I've fallen in love with really is coming back and pointing at the person that you're trying to serve, your client. And saying, "I'm trying to help you," right? "It's you that is the hero of this story. And I'm just simply going to be the guide. I'm going to try to help you out."

So, it doesn't matter if you are a steel fabricator, or an elevator manufacturer, or a welder, or a general contractor, or an engineer, or an architect, you're trying to help somebody. Right? So, if you're an architect, you're trying to help the owner. If you're a fabricator, you're probably trying to help the GC, or if you're a steel detailer in the case of like my family business, like we're trying to help the fabricator.

So, the best thing that we can do is talk to that target audience and say, "Here is how this story goes. We come in and we help you. We try to help you find success." And so, in summary there, that's the story branding process and that's the thing that really

spurred on the Storybuilder, the company that I created, obviously.

And I've just been able to take my talents in marketing and my talents in construction and merge them together and help companies try to tell their stories better. That's the whole heart behind it.

Mike Merrill:

That's awesome. So, you mentioned websites. What are some other tools that companies can use to tell their story?

Tyler Campbell:

Ooh, man. All right. So websites, social media of all forms and fashions. Honestly, I think social media is probably one of the most untapped resources by construction companies right now. Funny enough, we're not tapping into it enough. And we're doing a bad job of representing ourselves on there.

I think it's in part due to a level of laziness. I'm going to call us out because I've been victim to this too. Okay. That's the only reason I'm able to call us out is because I've been a victim of this is when I was leading the team here at ABSI, I had a VA and I would say, "Hey, Leslie, we need to create some more content for social media."

But Leslie, she didn't have an understanding of the construction industry and what resonates with the construction industry. But me who is busy in my day-to-day job trying to lead a team, actually make money, I told her to go create content. And anytime I got that content back, I would have to tweak it to death. And it's not because she's bad at making content, it's because she didn't have the intricate understanding of the construction industry like I did.

So, the best thing that people can do, at least from using the tool like social media or a website, is start creating the content for themselves, right? It's to start getting their feet wet in the production process and learning more about how to shoot a video or how to talk on a camera or getting used to that fact and putting that stuff out on social media.

And so, that's one of the, I feel like the biggest tool that we have at our disposal right now is definitely social media.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. I like that. And I think maybe lumped into that somewhere would be like what we're doing today here on this podcast. Right? We've had customers on this, we have other construction companies. I know there are construction companies out there that host podcasts on safety, on culture, or other things as well. Where do you see that playing a role in your business today and what you recommend to companies?

Tyler Campbell:

So, the podcast in general, how it all rolls together? Well, it's funny. I was talking to somebody today that I was actually, I'm getting ready to send a proposal to. And he's been a listener probably for the better part of the year. And he's at a large company. And recently, he was like, "Hey, I'd love to do some advertising on your podcast because now I'm in a place where actually the company I'm working for would really benefit from that."

So, we're talking to him and I started going, "Hey, what if I came on and I helped you guys out strategize? Let me help you strategically hit your target market because I've been talking to them for a long time now. I've learned a lot and I know I can help you guys out."

And so, podcasting or any other content creation, it feels weird because it takes a long time. You don't see that initial hit of revenue come in immediately. You just don't see it. And that's why most people give up. They're like, "Well, I didn't see any benefit out of doing it because I didn't make \$100,000 like I had planned on."

Well, that's because it takes you five, six, seven, eight years of pressure in order to reap that benefit. So, pretty much what I'm getting at here is that with the podcast, the benefits that I have seen directly out of it is that I've been able to build relationships with potential customers. Right? And I have not approached them and said, "Hey, I'm going to try to sell you something." Right?

Mike Merrill:

Right.

Tyler Campbell:

Eddie and I both have been very, very guarded about even talking about ABSI, which is the parent company that helps construction brothers stay afloat. We don't even advertise for ABSI. Now, we told that to my dad and he about threw a fit. He's like-

Mike Merrill:

He's like, "Wait a minute."

Tyler Campbell:

... "I'm paying for this and I'm not even getting a shout out." Right?

Mike Merrill:

Right.

Tyler Campbell:

And so, what we knew is that it's going to take time. And if we start cashing in those chips too early, then it's not really going to benefit us. So, the best thing that we can do is we can start serving. We can look at the servant leadership model and we can just start serving people who are in our target market and anybody else surrounding that too. And let come what may come. We're going to serve, we're going to try to be transparent, we're going to try to have fun, we're going to entertain, we're going to educate, we're going to share ideas and encouragement, our mantra. And we'll worry about it later.

But when I started this new company, Storybuilder, is when I really started seeing the benefits of it. That's when I really started seeing, whoa, because I didn't directly go out to any of those people and say, "Hey, I've got a new thing and you need to know about it and I really want to sell you something." I did not have to do that because I've already built up a relationship with them.

And so, they ended up coming to me and saying, "Hey, I've seen what you've done here and I really think there can be benefits out of it if you came and worked with us and helped us out clarify our messaging and build our brand." And so, that's one benefit that I am currently in the middle of right now.

And so, don't take that as me bragging like, "Oh, clients." It was me. The thing I'm saying is that you won't see the return on investment for a long time. And I feel like most people don't get that. They don't understand that it's just going to be a long term investment and you're going to need to hold your breath and you're going to need to wait. And it isn't going to be comfortable, but you got to do it because it's so worth it. It's so, so worth it.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. I would completely agree. And I love the term servant leadership that you brought up. I think that's an important part of not only the approach to something like this, but I also think that it lets you have those more authentic conversations. You have that, like you said, relationship for the sake of the relationship, not because of the business side of it. And then that will allow naturally for those opportunities for business and transactions to come about when they naturally would, as opposed to something that you're trying to "sell somebody."

Tyler Campbell:

It's been a great icebreaker too. Like for Eddie and I both, back to our family company, ABSI, it's still a great icebreaker for Eddie because he'll talk to somebody and he'll say, "I've got a podcast with my brother and you can listen to it here." And then they'll come and they'll listen to the show. And it's hilarious because they'll start building a relationship with us to where next time we talk to them, they feel like they're one of the family. They feel like they're in on the joke. Right? And so, that's a great position from a business development standpoint.

And you got to be careful not to treat it very sleazy. You want to try to respect the fact that they've built that relationship with you and not take advantage of that. You have to be genuine in everything you do. But for Eddie, he shot out a message, I think, basically saying,

“Hey, love to connect. Here’s a podcast me and my brother put on.”

And ultimately, that ended up in developing a relationship with a general contractor. That general contractor is now feeding ABSI business.

Mike Merrill:

Awesome.

Tyler Campbell:

And a big business too for that company. And so, it’s been a great icebreaker because when they got that, they were able to go listen to it. They engaged it, they liked it, they shared it. And then we continued the conversation, we continued the rapport building and now we’re able to actually make a living off of that relationship too.

And they’re happy and we’re happy and everybody’s happy. And it’s actually been very beneficial, but it took us two years to get to that point.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. That’s great. Well, and you mentioned two years. I mean, yeah, your podcast, the Construction Brothers Podcast has been around a couple of years, so you’re already bearing some fruit from that, which is-

Tyler Campbell:

Yeah.

Mike Merrill:

... pretty cool. Really.

Tyler Campbell:

Yeah. It’s been 100 episodes. I think we’re getting ready to release episode 100, not this week but next. Depending on the release schedule of this podcast, it might already be out, but it’s been hard. It’s hard to create content like this. And that’s the reason that most people don’t stick with it. It’s a marathon, it’s not a sprint. Keep that in mind. It is definitely a marathon

when you’re producing stuff like this. So, we have plans for five years, not two years, but five years.

Mike Merrill:

There you go. That’s cool. That’s good. So today, obviously we’re on a podcast. This is one of the forms. What are some things that construction companies, what stories should they be telling or what are worthy stories that you think would be applicable to help them grow their business?

Tyler Campbell:

I’m blown away at how many people don’t realize what stories they have just all around them, what stories they could tell all around them. And what excites me right now is the concept of telling your people story, the concept of highlighting the people of the job site, going out, getting your boots dirty and taking photos, taking videos, interviewing people and highlighting those people on your social media channels. That is the thing that is exciting me so much right now.

And it’s an untapped resource of content for me. Like how often do you see people going out and doing that? It’s not really that common, but there’s this feel of like, what we do every day is... I mean, I think we know it’s cool, but we just shrug at it. Like, “Eh, it’s construction.”

Mike Merrill:

Right.

Tyler Campbell:

What we do-

Mike Merrill:

We’re used to it.

Tyler Campbell:

Yeah. We’re used to it. What we do is incredible. And my daughter is a perfect example of this. This kid sees an excavator and she’s immediately like excavator, “Hey dad, it’s an excavator. Look at that. Look at that. Look at that.”

I'm like, "We're all kids at heart." And so, I think that even just going out and taking a photo of an excavator doing a dig or taking a video of just like, "Hey, this is Anne out there doing work on the job site." Or, "This is Tom. He's over here. He's tying rebar." Just telling those stories, there's a level of authenticity behind that, that people engage with, people really like, people cheer-lead.

And also beyond that, you can get younger kids engaged in your content and excited about potentially joining the construction industry one day. I think this is a solution for us with our labor shortages to basically stand out as a company and say, we are proud of our people who are out in the field. We're proud of our people who are in the office. We're proud of our people that are doing admin work behind the scenes.

Highlight the ever loving crap out of those people. They deserve it. They're the ones that built your company, not you. Right? Highlight them, praise them and talk about them like they hang the moon. And that's one thing I just don't see us doing. So, there's just an untapped resource in that.

And anytime I get a soapbox now, I'm talking about like, it is just, you have so much content all around you. And I just have made it my own mission to point that out to people and just say, "Did you think about this?" Because you have so much. I went to a prefab shop a couple of weeks ago and got to visit them.

And it's hilarious because some of the team they're walking through there and they've been through the facility several times and you can see they are just like, shrug. It's another day. Another day in the shop.

Me, I'm walking around with my camera. I'm making photos, I'm making videos, I am losing my mind in that place because it's incredible. Everything's moving. There are people working all over the place. I have drywall dust up to my eyeballs and I'm happy as could be because I get to tell the story, the people in there doing that work.

And so, just open your eyes to the fact that you have so much stuff that you can share on social media, and your website, and on your proposals to get new work right now, right now. You just need to take the time to go out there and capture it.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. It's funny you bring this up. We were at a trade show, actually a user conference for an accounting software that we partner with last week in Down Las Vegas. And we were driving the rental car back to the hotel and we were turning by MGM and I noticed this huge statue of a lion, this huge golden lion. I mean, it's massive. I mean, it's probably like 150 feet tall.

And I joked with the team that was with me and said, "I remember when that lion was first built and created. I remember taking all these pictures in front of it and everybody was taking pictures with the lion and now we just drive past it just passively like it's not even there, like it's no big deal. Like it's Vegas, we're used to things being audacious and massive and overdone. And so, we barely even pay attention to the thing."

And so, upon me making that comment, then everybody in the vehicle said, "Actually, that is really cool. That thing's huge." And all of a sudden, there was all this conversation about this massive lion that I've passed probably 100 times since I took pictures of it but then I just happened to rediscover how amazing it was at that moment because I was stuck in a traffic light.

So, I think what I'm hearing you say is that we almost need to be tourists within our own business-

Tyler Campbell:

Yes.

Mike Merrill:

... every day in looking for content because content abounds. There's a story to tell every single day with whatever the crew's working on and it is fascinating. It is amazing. It's interesting.

Tyler Campbell:

It's so amazing.

Mike Merrill:

It's really cool what we do in construction, right?

Tyler Campbell:

Yeah. We need to highlight it and think about, like backing to the lion, let's talk about that for a second. The reason you were taking photos of it is because it was new. Because it had like-

Mike Merrill:

There you go.

Tyler Campbell:

There is probably scaffolding on it. It's probably rough right now. That's all we deal with. And so, everything we get to touch most days is new and exciting and maybe something that not everybody has seen before. And so, similar to you going over and trying to take a picture of yourself in front of that lion, this is your building.

Think of the lion as your building. You need to highlight it and you need to highlight the people in it, and you need to highlight all the just particles of dust in that thing that you possibly can. There's a story there and that's why I named it what I did with my company. It's that there are stories and I want to help those builders find it.

It's good to have an extra set of eyes there that hasn't been calloused and hasn't walked by it 50,000 times to come in and just say, "Hey, here's what you can do." And so, that's the niche that I've started to find myself in.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. I really like that. And I like you keep highlighting and talking about, there's a story to tell. There's a story to tell. There's a story to tell. And I think the big thing that most people are probably thinking that are listening, "I don't really have time right now to go create this content." What do you tell somebody that thinks they don't have time to tap into this?

Tyler Campbell:

I'm going to go Gary V. on this one, Gary Vaynerchuk.

Mike Merrill:

Okay. No f-bombs, right?

Tyler Campbell:

No, I'm not going to curse at you, but there's this amazing technology that exists in the palm of our hand right now. It has a camera function and you can turn it on, and it has a video function too and you can hit record and you can talk at it. It's this little box. I don't know if you've heard of it. It's called cell phone. Steve Jobs invented it, I think, or something like that. I don't know.

But we have these amazing tools in our hands, and I'm telling you, the quality of these cameras is so stinking good right now. It's crazy. Pick it up and film yourself talking about what you know and get over the fact that somebody may already know it. Right? Most of the time, we don't talk about the things we know because we feel like we're not sharing anything interesting.

It's like, people know that, people understand that, they don't. There are a lot of bits and bobs in this industry that have no idea, a lot of different sectors in this industry that have no idea how your specific thing works.

Talk about it. Get passionate about it. And so, use your dang phone. That's a great place to start. Flip it around. Keep it to around a minute. It doesn't need to drone on, but just make a point like, "Hey, I saw this happen on the job site today." Great example of the type of content that you can create. I found a gecko in our office the other day. It was a Mediterranean gecko, random. We live in Georgia. I don't know how it got here. Right?

Mike Merrill:

Right.

Tyler Campbell:

And so, I go and I capture the little guy and I keep him on our conference table. Well, I got distracted and he ended up escaping. That story was the intro to our podcast this week.

Mike Merrill:

Nice.

Tyler Campbell:

So, it doesn't necessarily need to be about construction, but just talk about what's happening. And so, once you start getting into that mindset, you start identifying things that could work. You just have to start creating, you have to be okay with it not being perfect. You just got to start.

And the sooner you start, the better off you're going to be. If you wait two years and you keep putting it off, you're going to have a lot of competition that's going to be blowing by you. So, get on it now. It's the time and you've got to go.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. And one of the things that I think I'm hearing you say too is that raw and rough is maybe even better than produced and clean, right?

Tyler Campbell:

It is. It is. It's hilarious to me. There are some times where I'll go out and I'll do a polish video with my DSLR and I will post another video... Okay. So, I'll post a photo that I took with my DSLR, I edited in light room, did all these funny things to, and it looks great. I post it and people don't like it because it looks like an advertising image.

Whereas if I were to take my phone out and snap a shot of it, people would blow it up. They would love it. So, raw and unfiltered is probably the best thing that you can do right now from an engagement rate. Because most of the time, they see that polish product and they're just thinking, "Eh, somebody's trying to sell me something."

So, you have to be careful. You have to weigh what you're doing and mix it up. You got to do a little bit of both. You got to do a little bit of the raw and you got to do a little bit of the polish and continue telling that story. But it all works together and helps you build your brand overall.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. This is a great, similar thought to one of the guests that we had in the past, Dylan Hollis with Yeti welding. It's probably about 20 episodes ago. I don't know if you had a chance to check that out, but-

Tyler Campbell:

I haven't yet.

Mike Merrill:

... it's a fantastic episode. And he's just a small shop welder. He happens to be a customer of WorkMax, but really what we talk about is his use of those phones and that just day-to-day storytelling. And they've got about 25,000 followers on Instagram now. And they get jobs because of this. Their customers send them referrals all the time because they're sharing their content.

And I think that no matter what business that you are with and you're listening to this podcast, the opportunity for referrals abounds because of creating content. Would you agree?

Tyler Campbell:

It really is. Yes. Yeah. Referrals is everything. And on that same topic, I've got a buddy who's a woodworker. He makes tables and he makes American flags, which is really cool. He's a veteran.

Mike Merrill:

Cool.

Tyler Campbell:

And so, he makes these American flags. You can look him up, he's 135 custom furniture. He lives in our town and the guy has 350,000 followers on TikTok.

Mike Merrill:

Wow.

Tyler Campbell:

And that whole push on TikTok, it blew his business up. The guy is having to crank out American flags at a rate that is just insane. He had to bring on people to help him keep up with the orders.

And so, that's just a case of like, yeah, he's a woodworker and he did something really cool and interesting. And all he does, I've watched him. The guy doesn't even have a nice tripod. It's something that I'm pretty sure he got out of a bin at a thrift store. I think if you breathe on it, it will collapse. But the dude's got 350,000 followers on TikTok.

Mike Merrill:

Wow.

Tyler Campbell:

It is unreal. And so, there are so many opportunities out there. So just, don't be scared to highlight what you're good at, especially for the specialty contractors out there listening. Oh, you have got a story to tell. You have got something that it's just so awesome. And I just wish I could express enough how excited I get about people sharing that stuff. It's so important and I think it's important for the next generation to see it. I think it's important for your business overall to share it, but it's a service to the entire industry to show off what you're capable of and let's get craftsmanship back on the map. Let's show that off and encourage it.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. I love that. I know I built a new home a couple of years ago and I used to be a builder and I grew up in construction. So, just on my personal Instagram and social media stuff, I shared building a rock fire pit outside of my house. I documented and used time lapse and just showed the process of putting that together. I'd never done it before, pretty savvy with woodwork and carpentry, and I've done a lot of different construction. But I did like anybody, I watched YouTube and order parts off Amazon.

But I documented that and no matter what else I was sharing or doing at the time, those were some of the highest engagement rates and the most interests and

the most views and the most watches and the most comments of anything that I did.

And it was because, hey, this is cool. People could envision themselves doing a project like this or they maybe want to one day. And so, they were plugged into it. So, I know, to your point, us in the trades, especially those that are in specialty trades or do something a little bit unique, like fixing a leak, or soldering a pipe, or things that we take for granted every day. There is a story in there.

And I think there's an opportunity there to shine a brighter light on what you do by plugging people into that, by just sharing it.

Tyler Campbell:

There's a simple question that you can ask yourself. And I think with that post, I can point at it and say, "Well, you answered this question and that's the reason that it performed well." And I told this to a client yesterday when I was looking at their tagline. I read their tagline and I said, "Yeah, okay. But what's in it for me? I'm your client, what's in it for me?"

And so, when you posted that video of you building a fire pit and you're talking about, or just showing how you did it, that answered the question, what's in it for me? What's in it for me is that I'm going to learn how to build a fire pit. Even if I'm not actually going to go build a fire pit, I'm going to learn how to do it. So maybe one day I could.

So, the reason it performed well is because you answered the what's in it for me? I'm going to learn something. There's education in it for me. And so, I can point at that as, ask yourself that question. If you're looking at a tagline on your website right now, go to your website, look at it, ask yourself, from a client's perspective, what's in it for me? And if it doesn't answer that question, then maybe, just maybe, you're not converting as much as you could be.

If you're not answering that question, your conversion rates are probably down. And there's something that you can pull out of it just by changing a little bit of wording or even reframing what type of content. Just anytime you make content, ask yourself, what's in it for me and think of your target, or think of the client,

or think of who you try to serve asking that question and try to answer it every single time. And you'll see growth.

Mike Merrill:

Love that. So, one other quick thing. So, 2022 is upon us. What can a company today that's listening do immediately and a takeaway from this conversation be to actually improve their storytelling and actually have an impact on their business?

Tyler Campbell:

Go out on a job site and take a picture of a person working right now. Or if you work in an office, I want you to highlight a person that is in your office doing work, right? And/or show off the work that you just did. So, for our, I'll give you an example for our BIM company here which my family owns. We would take a picture of a model that we're working on, of a 3D model, and we'll post that online. Take that, post it and you're done.

Say something cute like, "Wow, that's really a nice stairway," and post it. Just start, I guess, is really what I'm looking for you to do. Just start somewhere. You can adapt it over time, find out what works and steer into it.

Mike Merrill:

Love that. Awesome. All right. Well, shifting gears here, just a couple of quick personal questions before we wrap up today.

Tyler Campbell:

Oh boy, I love these.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah, there you go. Here we go. Right. I'm not going to go Gary V. on you.

Tyler Campbell:

I don't want to share my blood type. I don't want to share my social either.

Mike Merrill:

All right. Well, Tyler, so what's one thing that you are grateful for in your professional life?

Tyler Campbell:

Professional life, I know I'm grateful for my family because they've all worked together professionally as well. My family business is something that I'm grateful for because it's been a way for me to learn, it's been a way for me to grow and just it's gotten me where I'm at today. So, I'm grateful for family. That's not business, but it is for me. It's family.

Mike Merrill:

Yeah. That's great. No, that's a good answer. So, with that, what is your superpower?

Tyler Campbell:

Ideas. Ideas. I am an idea machine. I don't know why I'm not great on acting on those ideas though. I'm going to call myself out for that. The follow through for a long period of time is something that I am not good at. For instance, I came up with the idea for a podcast and had I been responsible for carrying out that idea for the last two years, I would not have realized the benefits of it.

Eddie is the yang to my yin, if we want to put it like that, right? He is a long-term, consistency, over a long period of time. He's the one that taught me that. And so, I would say superpower is ideas and my weakness is probably the follow-through long term year, after year, after year on those ideas. So, calling myself out there a little bit.

Mike Merrill:

Well, everything starts with an idea, right?

Tyler Campbell:

Right.

Mike Merrill:

There's no execution without something to work on.

Tyler Campbell:

Exactly.

Mike Merrill:

Love it. Well, thank you for joining today. Really enjoyed the conversation. We'll have to catch up and check in again down the road.

Tyler Campbell:

Sounds good. Thanks for having me, Mike.