

ENERGIZE AND PROTECT YOUR BRAND WITH PROTAGONIST

HELPING MARKETERS RE-SHAPE
BELIEFS ABOUT THEIR BRAND



UNDERSTANDING BELIEFS ABOUT YOUR BRAND THROUGH NARRATIVES

Running a brand that people trust, even love, is incredibly complex. Brand perception is an increasingly dynamic and unforgiving equation. Every organization is influenced by Narratives, the deeply held beliefs that motivate and drive behavior in the world around them. The Digital Age continues to open new doors to engage with our customers, but these advantages have an equally daunting potential to create and propagate negativity.

Every new communication, product iteration, and corporate policy change is a new unknown variable that marketers have to manage for positive outcomes. Brand-level mistakes can be massive, expensive setbacks, yet many companies still rely heavily on intuition to develop strategy. The internet has amplified our customer's voice, the stakes have been raised. Shouldn't we rise to the playing field? Understanding people's beliefs about you accurately and then influencing them effectively is the difference between winning and losing, being the hero, or the villain.

“As marketers, we have an easy time coming up with ideas, but Protagonist's analytics provide us with a clear sense of direction while helping us unlock new and surprising ways to connect with tactics and great content. Best of all, this analysis gives us the quantitative data to validate our approach.”

- Rosemary Shader, Director of Market Development, American National

TRADITIONAL MARKET RESEARCH METHODS ARE NO LONGER ENOUGH

Good marketing is the constant pursuit of better human understanding. And that understanding can't be achieved without evolving your tactics. People aren't dumb. If you're lazy, they see you coming a mile away. Marketers have had ways to analyze and measure public perception for decades, but these methods alone don't give us the insight we need to be effective in the ever-changing Digital Age.

Traditional market research through polling and focus groups relies on data collection methodology, looks at small segments of the population and is often misinterpreted by human bias. Using marketing automation tools, we can test things like promotion, message and subject line, but there are deep dynamics behind campaign success not visible through simplistic response traffic and sales numbers. Listening tools and AI allow us to guess at keywords, sentiment, and basic topics in social conversation, but they can't interpret the cognitive argument, the fully articulated belief that you can action on.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR BRAND WITH PROTAGONIST

Brands are at their most resilient when they tap into powerful Narratives that are larger than the brand itself. Protagonist helps marketers find and leverage Narratives, the beliefs that have the most influence on customer behavior. We've developed technology over the past eight years to isolate the most important Narrative patterns across billions of structured and unstructured data points in public discourse. Through a data science we call Narrative Analytics, we look at the entire digital landscape (media, blogs, social commentary, forums) to surface, quantify, and market around the most impactful Narratives guaranteed to engage customers, build loyalty and strengthen your brand position.

“People used to say that reputation is what other people say about you and brand is what you say about yourself. That just isn't true anymore. Your brand is how people feel about you. It is a mixture of people trusting you to do the right thing, to handle doing the wrong thing honestly, to create a product that lives up to expectations, and to align with who you say you are. Every person has their own set of criteria for what's important to you. Brands that match those criteria are more emotionally rewarding to buy from and easier to forgive.”

- Ryan Smith, VP Insights and Analytics at FleishmanHillard

THE REVELATION THAT CHANGED THE WAY A LEADING CONSUMER BANK GOES TO MARKET

Before they used Narrative Analytics, marketers at a leading consumer bank thought that most people wanted ownership of their personal finances, and that meant ability to actively manage their portfolios. They spent millions of dollars advertising a suite of wealth management products that highlighted how easy it would be for consumers to control every aspect of their financial portfolios. After some initial traction, sales and customer activity began to stagnate. They turned to Protagonist to figure out why their messaging was no longer resonating with the market.

Protagonist was able to see what the focus groups and polling just couldn't. It turned out that for nearly 75% of their target market, the burden of actively making personal finance decisions was terrifying. The messaging around unlimited flexibility had hit a nerve of fear that was completely counter to the empowerment narratives that the bank intended to play up. Protagonist found that "ownership over finances" meant a lot of other things to people, among them the belief that handing over the keys to your portfolio manager lifts the burden to focus on life's other complexities. The bank revamped their go-to-market strategy to align with consumer beliefs and they achieved measurable improvements in acquisition, retention and portfolio growth.

“We completely changed our go-to-market strategy because of Narrative Analytics.”

- VP of Marketing, Leading Consumer Bank

HELPING A LEADING MARKETING TECHNOLOGY COMPANY SELL TO THE C SUITE

A Marketing Technology company had dominated the campaign automation market, but competitor acquisitions and commoditization of their offering were indicators they needed to strengthen their position. They were seen as a must-have tool for operational marketing practitioners, but they wanted to find a way to sell to buyer personas that were higher in the food chain. It was critical to understand C Level beliefs in order to shift their image from a tactical tool to a strategic offering. Getting a candid point of view from the C suite on any topic was challenging, even more so at a large scale, until they engaged Protagonist.

The theme of 'enabling customer centricity' had gained momentum in the marketing industry, and our client needed to establish themselves as the leading provider. Protagonist looked at all of the relevant executive discourse and analyzed the messaging of the firm's competitors to help understand the range of value proposed, themes, tonality, and how it had driven the conversation to date. We uncovered that the most widespread and impactful narratives about customer centricity were not associated with any one competitor brand, exposing an opportunity to carve out a differentiated position in the white space. Protagonist developed a new brand strategy to position around these key executive narratives, and the resulting market traction propelled our client into a sizable acquisition. Their tech dream was realized.



“Your brand is what other people say about you when you’re not in the room.”

- Jeff Bezos, Amazon

HELPING A MAJOR WALL STREET FIRM DIFFERENTIATE THEIR BRAND AND REGAIN MARKET CONTROL

A major Wall Street firm approached Protagonist with a big challenge. They had revolutionized the banking industry with a category-creating investment product that lead the market for decades, but in the past few years they had fallen behind two larger firms. They wanted to understand Broker and Advisor perceptions around their brand, offering, and competitors so they could create a new position in the market that would carry them into the future.

HOW PROTAGONIST HELPED
REPOSITION THE WALL
STREET COMPANY

1 *Uncover What People Believe Today*

CURATING YOUR DATA SET

Every engagement begins by gathering data. Protagonist data scientists curate a custom data set by selecting the relevant sources that contain issues impactful to you. We collect data wherever people express beliefs. And, we do so passively. That means the narratives you get include the real words, the emphases and context around the issues you care about.

WHAT THIS MEANT FOR THE WALL STREET FIRM

The firm had been struggling to find a large-scale understanding of market perceptions and how they had changed since the introduction of their product. Protagonist helped them isolate conversations and bucket them into key segments: consumers, financiers, and political discourse around the finance industry.

► THE PROTAGONIST ADVANTAGE

Unlike traditional market research methods like polls or surveys, we can go beyond small sample sizes and pre-defined questions. We access the entire digital landscape and filter out noise, paid content and surface-level chatter to isolate only the content bearing rich Narrative structure.



SURFACING YOUR NARRATIVE LANDSCAPE

Protagonist algorithms then surface a set of Narratives based on predictable structures, emotionally loaded words, arguments, grammatical phrases and linguistic patterns.

WHAT THIS MEANT FOR THE WALL STREET FIRM

The firm learned that there were a wide range of fairly evenly spread Narratives with varied viewpoints on the Finance industry. The negative side featured themes of distrust, gender inequality and confusing investment products. On the positive side, the discourse focused on the transparency, flexibility and value of their product category. A product that they first invented.

▶ *THE PROTAGONIST ADVANTAGE*

Our platform has the unique ability to determine the full cognitive argument wherever one exists regardless of location, length or format. The Narrative Landscape shows you the full range of beliefs that matter to your priorities. These are the chess pieces you need to drive strategy.



2

Know how beliefs are associated with your brand, competitor brands, and key issues

DECIPHERING THE CAUSE AND EFFECT OF KEY NARRATIVES

Protagonist technology isolates the most impactful Narratives affecting you by scoring each on its reach, engagement, and consistency. You see both positive and negative Narratives in the debate, highlighting the highest volume, fastest rising or most polarizing presence to help you prioritize.

We also show you how competitor actions are reaching your audience, the measured contribution of their language and actions to the beliefs against you.

WHAT THIS MEANT FOR THE WALL STREET FIRM

Our algorithms reveal your Brand Signature, which is a statistical measure of Narratives in association with your brand. The firm had a strong signature with some key favorable narratives, beliefs that weren't associated with their competitors, which created opportunities for brand positioning. Protagonist also helped showed their competitor signatures on a few Narratives they couldn't own, like the reputation for being a 'low cost value buy'. This knowledge would be vital to the Narrative Strategy.

THE PROTAGONIST ADVANTAGE

We not only tell you why your brand is favorable, but the stories that people are connecting with it. This is a unique look at: What's working against you? Is it strong? Polarizing? Fleeting? Changeable? Worth spending dollars to fight?

3

Know how to work with beliefs to win

NARRATIVE STRATEGY

Once Narratives are deciphered, we create a strategy that tells you which Narratives to amplify, reframe, counter, or avoid based on the Landscape, available resources and alignment with your overall strategic objectives. We also find the “white space” areas in the public discourse aligned to your goals, those that have no clear owner and allow to you to carve out a winning position.

WHAT THIS MEANT FOR THE WALL STREET FIRM

Protagonist determined the firm needed to focus on attaching to a Narrative that had long since quieted: the firm’s reputation as an innovator who enables new investment opportunities to a broader constituency. This was a Narrative that still resonated, they had owned and could own again. In addition, the white space revealed they could create and own a new Narrative, a counter to a negative reputation their competitors had around gender equality.

▶ THE PROTAGONIST ADVANTAGE

Unlike traditional market research or automated testing, Narrative Analytics taps into the sentiment behind expressed beliefs, navigating the complexity of human dialogue on a mass scale. Your resulting Narrative Strategy is a data-driven way to change the overall conversation, an approach that drives the entire discourse affecting your business.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY VIA MESSAGING ARCHITECTURE

Protagonist's Messaging Architecture becomes the basis for the strategy used by teams in communications, creative, product and others across the organization. We provide recommendations on how to alter messaging, syntax, voice, leverage influencers, media channels or other factors significant in managing the Landscape.

WHAT THIS MEANT FOR THE WALL STREET FIRM

Protagonist determined the firm needed to focus on attaching to a Narrative that had long since quieted: the firm's reputation as an innovator who enables new investment opportunities to a broader constituency. This was a Narrative that still resonated, they had owned and could own again. In addition, the white space revealed they could create and own a new Narrative, a counter to a negative reputation their competitors had around gender equality.

► *THE PROTAGONIST ADVANTAGE*

We reveal which media channels to activate, which stakeholders to address, how to leverage partners, and which messaging will strengthen your target Narratives to affect the behavior you want. This is a strategic approach only made possible by social scientists and advances in modern machine learning. It's a way to validate what Marketers could only intuit until now.



4

Win and keep on winning

CONTINUOUS CONTROL WITH NARRATIVE SUBSCRIPTION

Many factors can sway public perception at the drop of a dime. Narrative Subscription helps you stay in the driver's seat by tracking changes in your Narrative Landscape and signature over time so you can continue to proactively maneuver the dialogue. As new data emerges, it is mapped against benchmarks and measured to identify new Narratives. Real-time tracking and correlation show impact to your campaigns and actions against competitors.



























It's the ultimate way of evaluating the effectiveness of a campaign, with closed feedback loops to improve marketing decision-making. Finally, your Narrative Subscription provides access to Narrative Experts who provide strategic guidance on a monthly or quarterly basis to help you maintain control.

WHAT THIS MEANT FOR THE WALL STREET FIRM

The revelations about the market and competition lead the firm to position itself as a socially responsible innovator, seizing control of important Narratives in the space. They also launched new investment products focused around promotion of gender equality in the workplace. This campaign was so successful, their biggest competitor followed, pursuing positioning around being a responsible innovator. This validated the firm's strategy as they continue to monitor beliefs and build on first-mover advantage with new positioning.

Using the messaging Protagonist suggested, the firm boosted their Brand Signature with target Narratives to 4x that of competitors, successfully carving out a new market position.

HERE ARE SOME OF OUR WINNERS

TECHNOLOGY	RETAIL & ENTERTAINMENT	FINANCIAL SERVICES
    	  	 
PHARMA & HEALTHCARE		
 	 	
FOUNDATIONS		
 	 	
ENERGY	GOVERNMENT	CPG
 	  	 

Check out our other use cases here:



Winning a
Narrative Battle



Understanding and Activating
a Target Audience

Contact us at info@protagonist.io to get started



PROTAGONIST

The Global Leader in Narrative Analytics

San Francisco & Washington DC

www.protagonist.io

847.334.0692

