

CASE STUDY

MCCLINTOCK & ASSOCIATES

STORYCRAFTING



SITUATION ANALYSIS

For providers of complex services, an effective marketing strategy that delivers measurable business results requires more effort than a new consumer product launch or the creation of a catchy jingle. Businesses in this space with a specific niche and a highly defined target audience can't articulate their value proposition in a tagline or on a billboard alone.

McClintock & Associates, a public accounting firm specializing in providing audits and guidance on Title IV compliance primarily in the for-profit postsecondary education sector, has painstakingly built a reputation among its clients as a trusted advisor. However, being a part of a fragmented market featuring many similarly sized firms — in addition to the accounting industry's "Big Four" — challenged McClintock to stand out and truly understand its place among peers and competitors. At the same time, McClintock realized its marketing efforts were disjointed and lacked an overall strategy and message.

McClintock's leadership realized the firm needed more than a slogan and new logo. It needed a story — one that it already had but needed to uncover, develop and share.



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I feel like momentum continues to build about our reputation as THE CPA firm in post-secondary. That wouldn't have happened without our work with you.

Dave McClintock, Managing Director and President, McClintock & Associates

INTRODUCING STORYCRAFTING

For providers of complex services to reach their ideal clients or customers, the key is sharing an authentic business story that moves hearts and minds, inspires action and delivers measurable results. For McClintock, this story would connect the firm to the leaders and decision makers who might ultimately hire it for highly specialized accounting services.

McClintock needed the story above all others, the one that explains why someone should buy from you, work for you, invest in you or partner with you. It's what we call your Capital S Story.

WordWrite's trademarked StoryCrafting® service is guaranteed to uncover an organization's Capital S Story and put it on the right path to share it with the right audiences, at the right time and in the right spaces where clients and customers make decisions.

With the aim to achieve these goals, McClintock engaged WordWrite for StoryCrafting in 2017.

PHASE 1 – STORYPLOTING

As part of an initial deep dive with the McClintock team, we met with leaders and staff involved in the current marketing efforts to collect key information and marketing resources, schedule one-on-one interviews and solidify the plan for the coming engagement.

We challenged McClintock's key internal and external stakeholders to answer critical questions that would illuminate the firm's business purpose, its distinctive characteristics, the market need for its services and current marketing efforts. In combination with third party market research, the answers to these questions built the fundamentals of McClintock's Capital S Story.

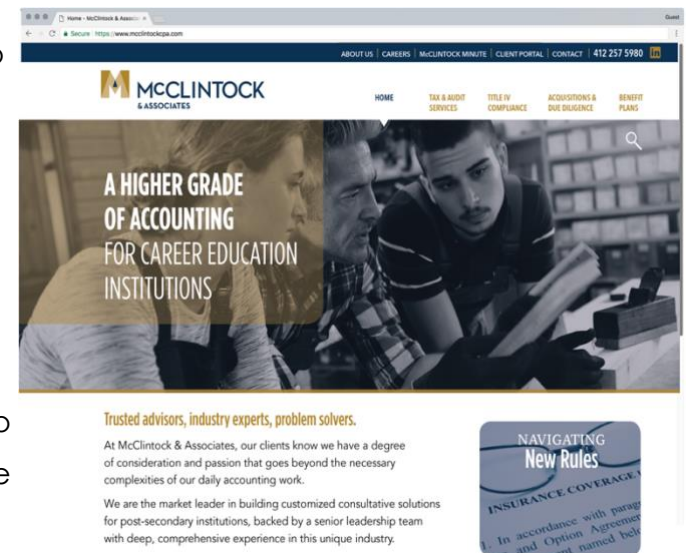
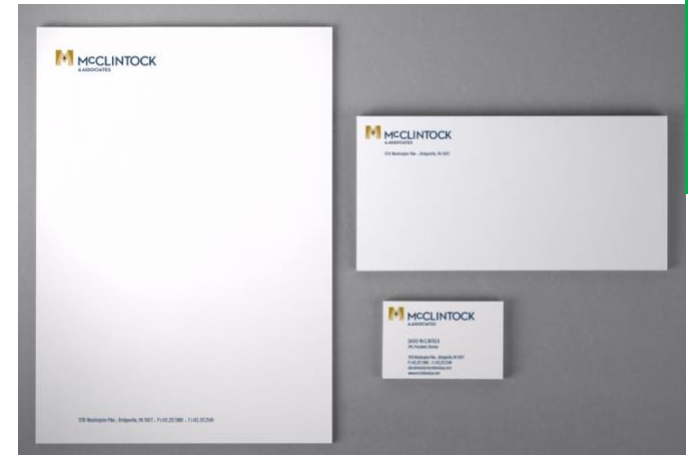
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These story fundamentals help us identify an organization's story "archetype." Think of this as a synaptic shortcut that allows your target audiences to more clearly understand the definition of the Capital S Story your business is sharing. In McClintock's case, we collaboratively landed upon an archetype positioning the firm as having the wisdom and experience to solve complex client problems confidently and consistently – a Sage firm.

As a next step, we crafted a series of story "anchors" that translated McClintock's Capital S Story into practical messaging and highlighted the firm as thought leaders, thanks in large part to the volume, quality, cadence and relevance of the guidance it provides for clients.

Any story is only as good as its "fluent" storytellers. In many cases, these people are NOT the CEO but internal experts and thought leaders who deeply understand the value of what you provide. We identified those within McClintock who were best positioned to share the story and what made the firm stand out. To close out the initial phase of our work, we presented our findings and a set of initial recommendations that ensured McClintock was ready to fully engage with its target audiences.



PHASE 2 – STORYSHARING

The StorySharing phase typically centers on developing key messages, a marketing plan and recommended tactics derived from the Phase 1 StoryPlotting final report.

Originally, these efforts were intended to connect the firm to the conferences where McClintock subject matter experts were frequent participants. They later evolved to a broader digital and content marketing strategy that would share the firm's story and thought leadership beyond the bounds of a single event. Our efforts included developing an integrated marketing plan, devising a paid digital marketing strategy and revising existing brand assets.



RESULTS

McClintock was already a respected name among peers and prospects, but once it uncovered and developed its Capital S Story and had a plan to share it, the firm's marketing efforts took off. Just 53 days into the digital campaign, web traffic surpassed the previous year, social media click-through rates doubled past the industry standard and LinkedIn engagements tripled – with the majority of this activity overwhelmingly generated from prospective clients.

In the months and years that followed, McClintock's reputation continued to rise, with its thought leaders appearing in industry publications regularly, as well as in regional and national news outlets. During the COVID-19 pandemic (when in-person conferences were canceled), the firm's subject matter experts remained a beacon for clients and prospects, with a new webinar series drawing hundreds of visitors to each session and creating several additional avenues for new client work.

Today, McClintock & Associates continues to grow its leadership as it provides complex services in a complex industry, with a Capital S Story that is clear and delivers even greater results.

524%
WEB TRAFFIC
GROWTH

100%
OF LINKEDIN
ENGAGEMENT FROM
PROSPECTS

5,000
VISITORS FROM
FACEBOOK, LINKEDIN
AND GOOGLE ADS