

The Page Builder Summit 8.0 was brought to you by our Partner Sponsors:

kinsta

 **GoDaddy**


melapress

 **Blackwall**

[Kinsta](#)

[GoDaddy](#)

[Melapress](#)

[Blackwall](#)

Sarah Guilliot - Storytelling for Success - How Case Studies Elevate Your Web Design Business

[00:01:21.100]

Hey, everyone. Welcome to my presentation. I'm doing this from my car because I value freedom above all things, and I love to work away from my house. Let's dig in. This session is all about Storytelling for Success: How Case Studies Elevate your Webdesign business. Before we get into it, though, I want to introduce myself. My name is Sarah Guilliot. I'm a copywriter and brand strategist. Most people call me Sarah G. You can find me at sarahdesign.com. I'm a copywriter for web designers and coaches, helping with websites, sales pages, emails, content, and more. I like to say that I fix your messaging so dream clients apply, and then I write their copy, too. And I would love to partner with you as you bring in website design clients, so just reach out and we can talk about how we can collaborate.

[00:02:14.030]

I used to be a designer. You can see a little arrow pointing at me, at myself here. I've been involved in all aspects of websites for many, many years and would love to help you out with yours and your clients. While in corporate, I worked on hundreds of campaigns made specifically to sell services and products to website visitors. I got to work at companies like Microsoft, Amazon, T-Mobile, and GoDaddy. And then I brought that experience into my own business, helping web designers, devs, and entrepreneurs like you. Gotten to work with some really cool people since striking out on my own, like MemberVault, Shannon Mattern. You'll

see her here at this event. Paige Brunton, Claire Pelletreau, and Josh Hall, who is also here, I believe. You're here today because you want to book dream clients, charge what you're worth, and stand out in the AI infested waters of 2025 and beyond. I see that tongue in cheek. AI is not out to eat you alive, but it is here and it does affect us. We got to work a little harder in figuring out how we want to stand out. For today's agenda, I'll share my step-by-step approach to turning projects into personality-packed case studies stories that connect with your readers and sell your services even when you're not in the room.

[00:03:41.000]

So today I want to talk to you about case studies and how a case study generated \$700,000 plus in income for my family. But first, who doesn't love a cliphanger? Case studies versus portfolios. What exactly This is the difference. Right now, your portfolio probably looks a little bit like this. You got your typical mockup of a site that you worked on, then the name of the client, and then some button, probably linking over to their site, which may or may not look anything like it was when you created it for them. The problem here is that you don't control the narrative. When clients click over, they make their own assumptions about what you did, what results you brought that client. Everything about the project. They have no idea what the story is. Case studies help you tell that story. They help you tell the story of each project that you work on. When you can tell that whole story, you take back control of what you want them to see and know so that you only attract your perfect fit clients. Now, what formats do case studies come in? I've seen them as PDF documents or little books, web pages, blogs, video, audio.

[00:05:03.970]

Those are all the usual suspects. My preferred format, though, is a dedicated landing page. However, my biggest winning case study was actually a humble PDF, which brings us back to that \$700,000. You can see below on this page what that PDF looked like. Thanks to a simple case study PDF, I was able to land a full-time role at GoDaddy generated over \$700,000 of income. This was over five years of employment. You might be wondering, how did a case study portfolio PDF win the day? What makes it so special? How was it able to do that for me? Well, when I was interviewing for jobs years ago, when all this was happening, I

noticed their questions were changing. They would ask, What's your biggest weakness and strength? Okay, we're used to that one. How do you deal with conflict? Yep, heard that before. And a new question started cropping up, which was, What's your process? They wanted to picture what it was like to work with me. So what they're wondering here when they ask, What's your process? Is, what's your style and personality? How do you think? Are you strategic? What's it like from start to finish?

[00:06:24.510]

Maybe they might be asking, When do you come into a project? And are you collaborative? Or how long What does it take? And what results do you get? I realised that my website portfolio wasn't answering those questions, and I needed a way to tell the story of each project in more detail. I needed a case study. So I created one, the one you see below. And then after I created this powerful asset, I discovered a hidden benefit. Case studies enable you to answer those questions for them that they were asking before, and in turn, qualify them for you. It goes both ways. When you write an effective case study, you'll naturally attract the right clients and repel the wrong ones. So I want you to think about what you love and what you want more of, and that's how you're going to frame the case studies that you write and that you choose to display on your website. So a few examples. Here's one. If you love to collaborate, you love to collaborate closely with your clients on your website designs, you enjoy by working back and forth and getting lots of input, you might want to share your process with sketches and steps and all the back and forth that you had with them.

[00:07:41.030]

That's going to naturally attract other people who want to do that with you. They'll be like, Oh, she's so collaborative. I love this. I want to get sketches. I want to chat back and forth. However, if you prefer a hands-off client who trusts you to decide on the website design, you just want to step in and do what you are expert at and have them stay away until the end. Maybe you want to share about how they barely had to talk to you, and yet they loved the results. That's the opposite client, and it all depends on how you frame and message your case studies to attract or repel those people. Another example. If you love to dig deep

and create a strategy to help clients succeed in their business, then in your case study, you want to share about this process in detail and really lean on your expertise part of all of that. However, if you prefer clients to just come to you with a punch list of tasks that you can knock out while you watch TV, then you're going to want to focus on the speed and accuracy instead. So how do you get started?

[00:08:50.460]

What I want you to do is gather your stories and write them using the par or pass structure. The PAR structure stands for problem, action, resolution. The PAS structure is problem, action, solution. So I learned about the PAR structure years and years and years ago when I got laid off from a job and they gave us training on how to get another job. And they talked about this PAR statement that you would put together that would answer for any particular job that you had, what the problem was that they had, what action you took, and how you resolved it. So I always in my head think PAR, but actually PAS, problem, action, solution, tends to work better for most people that I talk to, or they think in terms of solution instead of resolution. So I'm just sharing this because I might skip back and forth between saying PAR and PAS. And just know that they mean basically the same thing. So here's an example of problem, action, solution. So we got three boxes here. This might be for a client. The problem they had, they were growing fast and needed a Trust Building website.

[00:10:01.490]

They needed a logo for offline merch at conferences, and they didn't have a way to attract new leads. So they came to you. And what actions did you take? Well, you wrote a compelling website copy with social proof. That's for the Trust Building website piece. You created an expansive and flexible brand plus logo suite. That helps for this needing a logo for things. And you built a lead-generating website with integrations so that they can connect with their email service, for example. The solution is that they were confidently able to share their site and be more visible. You designed a high-quality logo that they now have printed on their water bottles for those events. And maybe you created content marketing for newsletters and social. And these are the ways that you took someone through the process with you and how you

got them the results that they wanted. This can be shortened to just problem and solution if needed. A lot of people prefer this. It might feel a little bit like you're repeating yourself in that action step when it's really like, growing fast, need a trust building website? Solution. Now they're confidently able to share their site.

[00:11:14.830]

You need a logo, got a logo. Didn't have a way to attract leads, have a way to attract leads. It's pretty simple. So once you've gathered up your PAS or your PAR statement, then sprinkle in the rest of the details. This includes basics of who this client was, which should reflect your ideal client. Don't do a case study about a client that you do not want more of with pretty pictures and testimonials. Make sure you centre this story on what your ideal client wants to hear. They want to know you work with people just like them, people with the same issues and needs. You want a case study on your website to be sitting there waiting for a person to come in and be like, That person sounds just like me, and she or he got them the results that I want to get, so I know that they can help me as well. And then add dashes of your personality everywhere. This is your chance to let them know what you are like to work with on a human connection level. So drop in your jokes or your animations or your gifs or your gifs, however you pronounce that, and let them see who you are.

[00:12:31.550]

So here's an example of how you might set up a page with that par structure or that par structure and all of those details included. So this is my case study page for work that I did for Paige Brunton. You can see we have a descriptive title over here on the left. In the descriptive title, it says her name and her information. We've got faces, we've got fun pictures everywhere. We've got stars, five stars showing how happy she was above her testimonials. And I included this fun accordion module here so that I could pack in a lot of information but not make the page too long so people can open and close the parts and pieces of this case study wherever they want. So if they want to know more about what the problem was or what the handoff was like, they could just open and close that piece to learn more about it. And yeah, those testimonials just sprinkled everywhere along with visuals and other fun stuff. Okay, so with your case studies, you can make a short version, which is like the

MVP minimal version for when you have just a short story to share about each project, and it might look something like this.

[00:13:50.980]

This is from that PDF that I shared earlier. So this was work I did while I was working at Microsoft Advertising. As an advertising I'm an advertising solutions designer, I would create visuals to go into the sales decks that the salespeople would take to potential advertisers. So I broke it out with nice colourful imagery, with lots of clues as to the work I was doing here, and then added those details, like brand names. So the client here was Target. This is another thing, another subtle cue that is good to include in your case studies. If you have well-known name brands or well-known people, that can go a long way in your case studies for showing that you are trustworthy and you know what you're talking about. So people have heard of Target, right? And then I had the revenue opportunity here, which was \$750,000. The results, it was a win. We made \$340,000 off of this win. I mentioned the speed. This was a very quick-paced job I had over there. It was a turnaround time of two days to come up with these mockups. And then the deliverables, which I talked through down here, as well as I mentioned a little bit more here about how I collaborate with developers to make sure that I'm not designing anything that a developer can't build inside of their platform.

[00:15:22.490]

Now, if you have a little bit more information, you can make a longer version. This allows you to say a little more plus add more subtle design cues like this. So here is a longer story introducing your role, your process, the solution, and more visuals. So one of the fun One of the most subtle things that I did here was I created this document, specifically so that I could share it at the interview for this job at GoDaddy. It was a job where I was going to be designer for the homepage, and they wanted someone who had experience doing something called visual merchandising, which is like these flags and things that you see in here. So I didn't want to just show pictures of visual merchandising I had done for clients, although that was included in this case study. I actually folded it into the way that I laid out every case study in this portfolio. So they can see in lots of spots how I am showing fun visual ways to merchandise the sections of my case study.

So that was a subtle thing happening. They may or may not notice, but I think subconsciously they did.

[00:16:41.610]

And then there's room to really go into the project in detail, talking through all the many parts and pieces of how I was involved, the challenges I had to face, and if there was some a win or data that I could share, then that's included as well, which for this one was a \$500,000 win. Big numbers here. Now, what if you don't have big numbers? Then what do you do, right? Well, what I like to do here is use big number potential plus testimonials. So what do I mean by that? Well, here's an example. This was a page where I was showing that I had designed this for the client that they were reaching out to as ABC, And there was a revenue opportunity here of \$5 million. I remember the director reaching out to me and be like, This is a huge opportunity. It's \$5 million. We need this turned around ASAP. It needs to look really good. We did not win this opportunity. We did not make \$5 million. We made \$0 as far as I know. But the fact that this was a \$5 million opportunity is still really important to share in this case study to show that I am the a designer that can create something for your sales deck on projects that are worth a tonne of money, even if it isn't a win.

[00:18:09.340]

And I threw in the testimonial here because everybody was just so grateful about the work that I did on this, especially last minute. If you have lots of testimonials, you're going to want to use the heck out of those. So gather those up, keep them stored somewhere. I'll tell you a little trick for how I keep track of testimonials. Anytime someone sends me a note or a message or anything, I take a screenshot of it with my phone. So that's always real skinny like these, like these images right here, because those are really easy to incorporate into emails and landing pages much better than if you take a screenshot of your email on your laptop, but it's all super wide. It just doesn't work when you want to use it as a visual on a landing page or something. So I take those screenshots and then I email it to myself to a Trello board that I have where I store all of those things. So I can email it directly to the Trello board and it just throws it in there. And then I know I will never lose it. So that's how I keep track, but there's lots of ways.

[00:19:10.860]

So my point is, if you have testimonials, you want to use them. Now, getting testimonials can be a little tricky. So I included this slide with some suggestions about what you can ask when you want some testimony, and I took these directly from Jonathan Stark. He has shared about I have these on his podcast that he used to run called The Business of Authority, and I have used them for many years. I've used some others, too, but I thought these were really good and that you might like them as well. Since he shares them openly. Here they are. They are what obstacle would have prevented you from buying this service? You might also say, what were you going through before you hired me? Or what is the before and after? Describe how it was before we worked together and after we worked together. What What did you find as a result of working with me? That's the after we worked together. What specific feature did you like most about this service or working with me? This can be really helpful just for you. What would be three other benefits of this service and working with me?

[00:20:14.030]

Would you recommend my service? If so, why? And is there anything you'd like to add? I love that one because people, the talkative ones, they'll tell you a lot of cool stuff in there. You might get a big old paragraph out of that one. So you can take a screenshot of these or grab the slides later and use those when you're reaching out to your clients. All right, so let's review case study formats. I mentioned a few at the beginning, and I've given a couple of examples, but let's break them down further. We've got a PDF or a printout of some kind, maybe a little booklet. Got blog posts, video and audio, a portfolio page with small summary or a landing page for one big project, or a landing page for multiple projects. Let me show you what each of these could look like. So the PDF printed version booklet, you've been seeing pictures of that as we go along. That was what I created, and I took to that interview at GoDaddy. Blog post. I created a blog post for Josh Hall, doing a case study for him, where I actually went and interviewed his client, and asked her a bunch of questions, got some quotes from her, and then turned that around into a compelling story of why people should join his

programmes, and put that together in a blog post for him, which he has on his website.

[00:21:44.560]

So That's a really easy way to do case studies. If you don't want to create a new page every single time, you can just put it into your blog. And also, while we're on the subject of Josh... Hey, Josh, if you're listening, if you're watching this, hey. I have Josh listed on my website as one of my case studies, but I have not had time to write up a full case study for him. So what I did was I have featured him on my site because he's a well-known person. I picked the three most well-known people that I have worked with, which were Shannon, Josh, and Paige Brunton, and I have those highlighted on my site. But for his section, rather than going to a page where I'm describing everything since I haven't had time to do it, I just am linking straight to his video that he recorded very kindly for me, which honestly, since Josh is so talented, it's like a commercial for case studies and for working with me. So it's still super effective, even though I haven't had a chance to write up the story, he tells the story really, really well in there.

[00:22:49.200]

I may not ever have to make a special case study for him because this works really great. You can also have the portfolio page with small summary. So how that could work is in the beginning when I said, what's the difference between a portfolio and a case study? And I just showed the little mockups. So if you expand that just slightly so that you have the mockup and you have some description, that can do a lot. That can be a really, really helpful step toward extensive case studies. You may never need to go any further than that. And that can just look something like this where you have your mockup and then you explain what the problem was and what the solution was that you provided or the results that they got. So here's another example of how you might lay that out on a page, and it just lets you tell the story from your perspective. And this is really, really helpful if they haven't given you any testimonials. Just because someone hasn't given you a testimonial, it doesn't mean you can't share them as a case study or as a portfolio piece.

[00:23:51.140]

It just becomes the burden that lands on you of describing exactly what happened. So this can be super effective even without any quote from them. Afterwards. Now, when you have lots of content and story and testimony to share, then in comes the dedicated page for your case study. So that's what I did for Paige Brunton, who I mentioned earlier. I created one landing page for her project because it was just one single project, and I wanted her to describe the process and everything that went into that and the results that I got for her. And it's a beautiful page with lots of pretty pictures, And you can interact with the little carousels and accordion modules and whatnot. And it's just a fun and engaging way to read through a case study. And it has plenty of quotes from her, plenty of testimonials. When you have a client you've done multiple projects with, then what do you do? So I ran into that this year where I was going to make case studies for lots of different projects that I did with Shannon, and I thought, this is going to get overwhelming for people. It would probably make more sense if I gathered those all into one page, and this would work with ongoing work clients as well.

[00:25:07.520]

So you can combine those multiple projects into one page, and then it tells an even bigger story of your authority and your a liability in addition to the actual work that you did. So you can see some screenshots here of this. My picture over. So this is basically my case study running I've heard for multiple projects that I've done with Shannon, and I continue to add to it as we do more work together. So that was a lot. I don't want you to feel overwhelmed, so let's simplify a little bit here for a sec. You might be wondering, how many case study examples should I have? I would say three to six. You can go more if you want. But one is a total win. If you can only do one right now, you should do it. It's going to be amazing. And it's inspiring. Once you get going, the momentum takes over, and then you want to do two, and you want to do three. So get started with one. Which clients do I pick? Pick the clients that you want to clone. It's the same idea as your portfolio. You don't want to be putting pictures in your portfolio of a bunch of dental websites you did.

[00:26:24.420]

If you're actually wanting to work on cartoon company websites, it's going to be very, very different. You want to see what clients that you just loved working with or have projects that you're so proud of and you want to do more of. And that's what you're going to want to feature here. And then how do I display them? You can put them on your website. You can put them in a PDF. Basically, whatever is easiest for you, that's what you should do, and that's where you should start. You only need one to get started. Try it out and see how much easier it is to book clients that you actually want to work with.

[00:27:07.500]

If you make your first case study and share it to Instagram, tag me so I could cheer you on. You could find me at SarahDesignAgency over there. And if you're ready to finally mail your website copy and the case studies that go on it so you can attract and book your dream clients, I am here for you. Just head to sarahdesign.com to learn about my copy services for you and your clients. If you want to collaborate, reach out.

[00:27:35.210]

We can talk about how that can work. And let's connect. Let's not let this be the last we see of each other. Connect with me on my website, sarahdesign.com, on Instagram, @sarahdesignagency. And, hey, head over to my freebies page because there's several freebies on there and other cool things that maybe aren't free. And I want you to see what those are and just take your pick. There's some good stuff. I think you're going to love it. And that is it for today. Thank you so much for being here. This has been really fun. I hope you can see the value that case studies can bring to your business and how powerful they can be in generating revenue. And that's what we want to do here, right? So happy selling. I hope to see you over on Instagram. Send me a message and I'll message you back. Bye-bye..