

Fables

Barfly

Brand Story, Strategic Copywriting
UX Storytelling

The Brief

A ten-year anniversary. Time to step into their courage.

Barfly was founded to connect boardrooms with the living, breathing, bustle and opinions of the world's bars, pubs and restaurants. To capture the reality of bartender's knowledge and experience, share with drinks decision-makers and so shape the drinks culture.

In their ten years of business, Barfly has grown from two UK-based founders to a global team. With networks across 59 countries and over 100 cities, and a central team of 11, Barfly works with tens of thousands of smart, curious, committed drinks experts.

At meetings, clients and leads would express their surprise: they didn't know the Barfly's scope or reach. Despite long-term relationships, Barfly's suite of services and capabilities were hidden behind a densely-worded, dark, website. This was leaving money on the table.

At a time of management and ownership change, it was time to ask: who is Barfly, what do we do, and why do we exist?

Friction

Relying on "a little bit of street". Leaning on the past. Not stepping into their ambition.

"A little bit of street in the boardroom": Barfly's tagline had supported their success and growth. But, this sentiment wasn't capturing the depth of their skill. It was underplaying their depth of expertise, their global reach, and their joy in building global brands.

New MD, Lizzie Carr, had lead successful workshops with the team, uncovering some key insights into their 'what, how and why'. But, being close to the daily activities of the brand, Lizzie saw the need for an external storyteller. Someone to listen, learn, and direct.

Talking with Lizzie and CEO Nick Dudley-Williams, and bringing knowledge of hospitality and drinks, I refined their position and created a story that communicated their purpose: growing drinks brands.

Resolution

It's not the street. It's about people.

Building on workshop findings, I lead the delivery of a new What, How, Why framework.

Barfly isn't about "the street". Barfly cares about people. It's people's reactions. It's the videos that Barfly create, capturing the nuance of people's reactions. It's their thrill in connecting the dots between a new question and their deep domain expertise.

I articulated this rhythm, vitality, and reason into a succinct, evocative, brand story. With this more assertive, creative, and nuanced story, I sourced designers to both lead on the visual brand and build their new website. Briefing the new designer on the outlook and purpose of the site, together we created a site that communicates Barfly's energy, spirit and intention.

Conversations with Lizzie uncovered the desire for a new audience. I spoke with audience members, allowing our messaging, layouts, and words, to speak to a new, untapped audience for Barfly's growth.

Process

Uncovering

- Interviews with senior leadership
- Desk research

Reflecting

- Locating what/how/why
- Land concepts and copy with senior leadership

Storytelling

- Uncovering Barfly's story
- Articulating their purpose
- Landing the story with senior leadership

Researching

- Finding design talent
- Briefing and steering design talent
- Learning audience needs (interviews)
- Finding best-in-class examples of agency sites

Writing

- Consulting on UX
- Strategic copy consultancy
- Workshopping layouts
- Writing and delivering copy
- Landing copy with senior leadership



Key Copy

From lacquered bars and supermarket shelves,
To cocktail trollies and social feeds.
We get to the bottom of, “Why that drink?”

Story

You need to experience their reactions in high definition.
Pauses. A frown. Wide eyes. A smile that reaches the corners of your eyes.

Copy, "what we do"

Learning from people who are choosing
their drink, in their place, for their moment.

Story

Brand activation.

Complexity, simplified.

One key message was sharing Barfly's evolution from 'the bartender boys', to a diverse, curious team who bring expertise to trade and consumer drink trends.

Lizzie and Nick knew the value of their conversational, affable tone of voice. My copy built on their genial yet expert tonality.

Communicating Barfly's expertise in both consumer and trade, I kept copy nice and simple: this copy highlights Barfly's connections and expertise across trade and consumer.

The home-page copy takes phrases, words, and the rhythm of the brand story, evoking the action of the Barfly team.

Stephen Duffy's expert design used my brand story as his stimulus for discovery, and captures the fresh future of Barfly.



Show, don't tell.

Sometimes, the most powerful responses might be watching someone's eyes widen when they hear your intended price point, or seeing their smile when they talk about your product.

Barfly are proud to call themselves the world's best drinks ethnographers. They deliver valuable, nuanced, intelligent ethnographic videos that deliver results for clients today, and into the future.

After watching Barfly interviews, the human value became apparent: they don't simply capture people's words. The skilled interviewers help interviewees relax, they build repartee. People share their candid reactions.

My copy and direction captures this power, helping the audience to understand Barfly's expertise and ability to deliver beyond the brief.

BARFLY

WHAT WE DO
TEAM BARFLY
CASE STUDIES
INSIGHTS
CONTACT

FIRST IMPRESSIONS,
IN HIGH DEFINITION.

You don't need more words on a long strategy deck
- *old words* that have been pulled from last year's trend reports.

You need to know how your innovation makes people *feel*.

You need to experience their reactions in high definition.
Pauses. A frown. *Wide eyes*.

A smile that reaches the corners of your eyes.

You need to know the thoughts and reactions of candid, committed thinkers.
Our films are captured and compiled to answer your questions.

Replayable. *shareable*. Ownable.

Ready for your next board meeting.

Uncovering the lede

B2B buyers research deeply and widely; case studies need to help people understand what they can buy, and what impacts they can expect.

Barfly's case studies held great stories, but weren't telling their stories.

Take their Grand Marnier story: on the page, it was a dark, dense block of copy. Digging deeper, I learned that Barfly

commissioned expert mixologists to compete in a cocktail creation competition. The winning serve would be recreated globally, leading the revamp of GM's global reputation.

By learning what Barfly's audience wanted to learn, I redesigned the page layout, allowing running readers to triage information. And, by uncovering the lede, Barfly expertise, creativity and expertise can take centre stage and grow their business.



THE QUESTIONS

How do we modernise our brand through a dynamic new serve strategy?

WHERE

London, UK
Paris, France
Ghent, Belgium
New York, USA
San Francisco, USA
Atlanta, USA
Toronto, CA

HOW

Signature serve development
Qualitative testing via Barfly's network
Actionable consultancy



Key Results

When they saw and explored the new site, they knew Barfly was the right agency to explore a significant new project in a global market. It is a large piece of work, needing new staff to be hired.

The client can't be named right now, but let's say, Don Draper chased this client throughout all seven seasons of 'Mad Men', you've definitely enjoyed a few of their drinks - hard or soft - and it's a global icon in soft drinks. Talk about ROI.

The Review

Working with Ann was a game-changer for Barfly. She not only helped us refine our core message but also translated this into a compelling and inspiring narrative that truly reflects who we are and who we want to be as we grow up. Ann took what we knew about our agency and transformed it into a story that is approachable, contemporary, and highly relevant.

We were particularly impressed by how Ann managed to shed the big, corporate jargon and replace it with language that resonates with our audience. Her creativity and insight were instrumental in making our message clear and engaging. It is almost as if Ann spread fairy-dust, retelling us what we told her but in a much better and more engaging way.

Ann's personality and energy were a breath of fresh air throughout the project. Her enthusiasm was contagious, and she brought a level of dedication and passion that exceeded our expectations. We loved having Ann on board, and we are thrilled with the results of her work.

Thank you, Ann, for helping us find our voice and making it shine!

Lizzie Carr, Managing Director,
Barfly

Thank you for reading!

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