

A close-up portrait of a man with short, wavy brown hair and a beard, smiling broadly with his eyes closed. He is wearing a light purple crew-neck sweater. The background is a plain, light grey color. The image is partially obscured by white, rounded rectangular shapes that serve as design elements.

QUO **PEOPLE**

JUSTIFIKATION REPORT FOR  
**Content Creation**

---

Sophia Schulz 5082498  
Master's in Content & Media Strategy

## Introduction

“Building the Future” is a piece of branded content produced by GitHub, a programming resource platform used for code sharing and collaboration (GitHub, 2018). The video was released in 2018 as part of a campaign with the same title that the company launched to highlight the open-source community and how one contribution can have a domino effect of positive changes (Slow Clap, 2019). This message coincides with the motive that quo PEOPLE, as an opinion researcher, wants to pass on to its panelists. In order to understand how the message was conveyed, Taylor's message strategy wheel (1999) is employed to deconstruct the content and identify the underlying creative strategies. The analysis does not consider external factors, since the storyline is detached from a specific moment in time, political issues, or trend, but paints a picture of an inclusive world enjoying the freedom of digitization by highlighting a diverse cast and various work environments. However, is the value of a community best advertised by emphasizing the logical benefits?

## Theoretical framework

Introducing his wheel, Taylor (1999) provided a detailed tool to understand the ever-evolving creative message strategies used in advertising comprehensively by defining two approaches with three segments each:

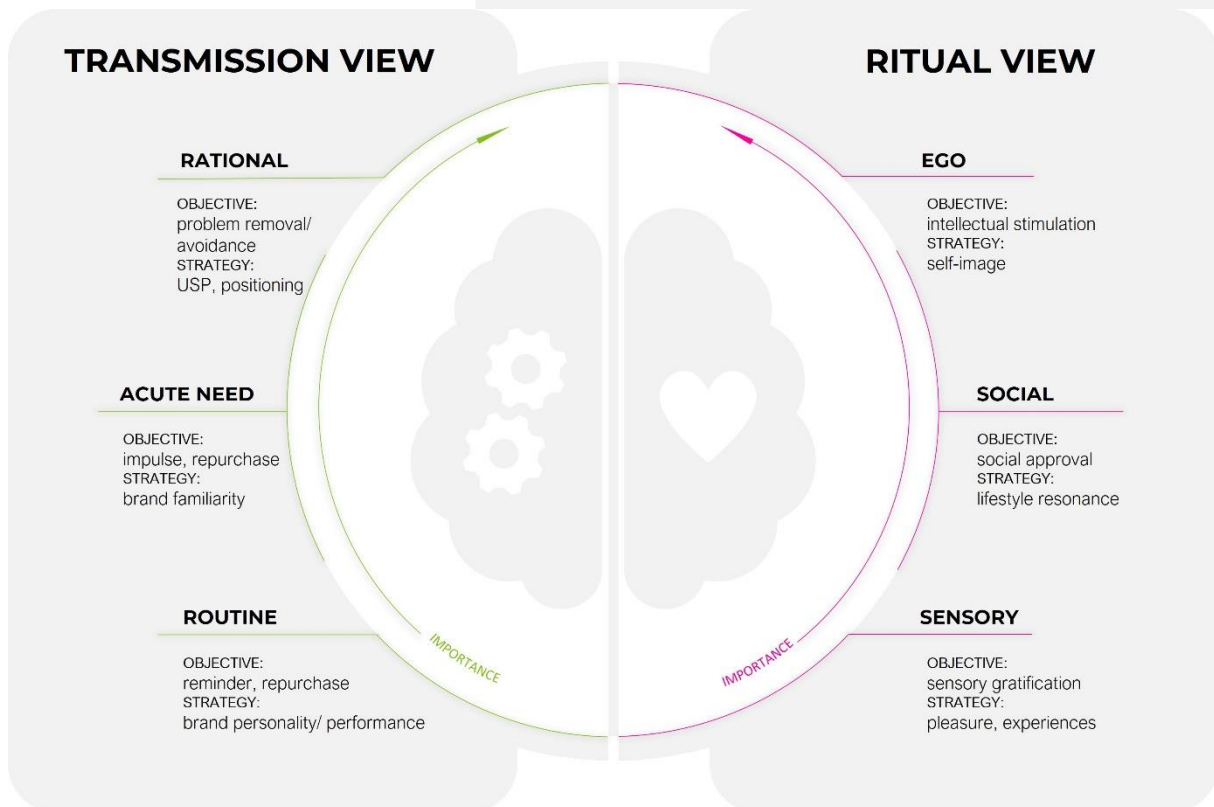


Figure 1 Taylor's six-segment message strategy wheel. Own representation based on Taylor (1999)

First, on the macro level (on the left in the Figure 1) is the transmission view, including all informative messaging directed to cognition or logic (Golan & Zaidner, 2008). The “head” side of the model is further divided into the subcategory “ration”, addressing the consumer's need for information by using education and persuasion based solely on logical reasoning. “Acute need” refers to customers who need immediate answers or solutions, considering the level of awareness and familiarity with the brand. The third dimension in the transmission half is “routine” and describes an advertising approach that emphasizes a product as part of consumption habits by communicating reasons why the product represents a real solution or adds value through repeated purchase. The order of nomination marks the decrease of importance within that half of the model (Jenkins, 2018).

In support of the transmission perspective, all emotional approaches fall under the ritual view (Golan & Zaidner, 2008) completing the “heart-side” of the wheel. The most important dimension here is “Ego” addressing primarily the individual’s need for respect or recognition through the consumption of a product, so a brand positions itself in a way that appeals to a person's ideas about who they are or who they want to be. The “social” segment of Taylor's models uses two or more people interacting to present the brand or product, directing the focus to a collective matter. The least important subcategory, “sensory”, includes all messaging strategies that directly appeal to consumers' senses of smell, touch, hearing, or taste often addressed by showcasing experiences (ibid).

What makes the wheel more holistic is the basic understanding that an advertiser’s strategy can use a single approach to convey its message or combining segments across the wheel. Though the combination of transmission and ritual view is not the most common, it might be the sweet spot for some and can be analyzed and explained all in one model (Lee et al., 2011).

## Application

The first frame of the video indicates a strategy approach on the heart-side of the wheel: A girl sits on the stairs in her home and observes her brother's difficulty playing the piano, caused by his artificial hand (0:12). Thus, the advertiser's intention is partly “ego” and “social”, and this combination proves to be a major motive as the plot progresses, when the girl is seen working on an idea to help her brother by programming an improved version of his prostheses (0:19). Others respond to their efforts online (0:31; 0:37, 0:43), but the resulting collaborations are not just based on a selfless desire to help the initiator succeed and thereby improve someone's quality of life. The contributors also have individual projects in mind, which are shown alongside the co-coder throughout the video, demonstrating the benefits of their work in various industries around the globe (1:04; 1:09; 1:20). This presents the image of an eager, progressive, and supportive mindset with which other like-minded people can identify that is immediately transferred to the platform itself through its central role in each endeavor. At the same time, the focus is on collaborative progress through constant networking, showing GitHub as a provider of a supportive and thriving atmosphere to create successfully. Within the framework of Taylor's wheel, this achieves a balance between the ego and social segments and supports the goal of promoting the community aspect without neglecting individual goals. Regardless of the motivation, the contributions help the girl solve her problems over the course of a few years (0:59; 1:33), which corresponds to the rational segment and a more logical reasoning by showing not only progress, but actual solutions. Even though GitHub merges these approaches to reach their target audience, the focus remains on the social component that also runs through the story in the form of the background music (Slow Clap, 2019). Matching the first scene, the recipient first hears a piano attempt, which develops into a professional

melody and reaches its peak when audio and visual elements unite again in the last frame, showing the brother as a musician in concert with a perfectly functioning prosthesis and his sister in the audience - both now adults ([1:44](#)).

## Conclusion

“The video gained over 250,000(+) views between its launch in September 2018 to the opening of the Universe conference on October 16, 2018. During that same time, GitHub gained nearly 40,000 new followers and had over 45,000 social engagements across all platforms” (Slow Clap, 2019). The success of the campaign is proof of its effective message strategy approach. GitHub managed to communicate a very individual and highly application-oriented task like programming as a team effort from which each contributor can derive their own successes. Emphasis is placed equally on the individual and on the interaction component that supports this story's key takeaway—that constant collaboration in the community is an indispensable part of progress one's own work. The question posed at the beginning can therefore be answered in the negative. The power and value of a community is best advertised by tying a contribution to individual interests through emotional narratives, rather than relying solely on cognitive persuasion techniques.

For quo PEOPLE, this means that messages concerning the community must be formulated in such a way that they appeal to the heart and not to the head. Logical and technical information is still important to understand the field of work. However, the importance of research, and thus the fact that you are heard as part of a collective rather than making a difference on your own, is a message that needs to be communicated emotionally.

It is also advisable to include the interests and problems of the panelists and not just overarching themes. Research is a rather abstract field and therefore difficult to access. Showing recipients their influence in areas that are important to them addresses the ego and creates a touchpoint. Adding a social component by providing a platform for growth and continuous improvement helps communicate a positive lifestyle that invites participation.

## References

- GitHub. (2018). Build software better, together. Retrieved February 20, 2022, from <https://github.com/about>
- Golan, G. J., & Zaidner, L. (2008). Creative Strategies in Viral Advertising: An Application of Taylor's Six-Segment Message Strategy Wheel. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(4), 959–972. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2008.00426.x>
- Jenkins, R. D. (2018, March). How Are U.S. Startups Using Instagram? An Application of Taylor's Six-Segment Message Strategy Wheel and Analysis of Image Features, Functions, and Appeals". Brigham Young University. <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/6721>
- Lee, T. D., Taylor, R. E., & Chung, W. (2011). Changes in Advertising Strategies During an Economic Crisis: An Application of Taylor's Six-Segment Message Strategy Wheel. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 39(1), 75–91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2010.536846>

Slow Clap. (2019, August 30). Building the Future: GitHub. Retrieved February 20, 2022, from <https://slowclap.com/github-building-the-future/>

Taylor, R. E. (1999). A Six-Segment Message Strategy Wheel. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 39(6), 7–17.

<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A60905111/AONE?u=anon~babdd9ba&sid=googleScholar&xid=2026163b>

## Introduction

The branded content used here is from a 2010 image campaign highlighting the importance of craftsmanship to promote the goals of the Deutsche Handwerkskammer (DHKT, 2022), whose purpose is to support and represent all stakeholders in the craft industry. The video targets everyone and addresses the existential role of craftsmanship. Since it is an older production and the DHKT changed the look and feel of the brand, it's no longer visible on their channels or website, but is still accessible through other sources (Handelskammer, 2010). This content has been chosen because it doesn't concern a specific issue or challenge, but reminds its viewers of the overarching significance the industry has for every individual – even if it's not obvious or visible. This approach is in line with the client's objective of promoting the connection between the operative nature of surveys and the goal of consciously shaping the future through research.

As the story of the video is detached from any specific time, it must be viewed in the larger context of megatrends: Connectivity describes not only networking based on digital infrastructures, but also a fundamental change in our lives, work, and economy (Horx, 2021). This also results in a perceived distance between the real and the digital, pushing the importance of manual skills and products out of people's minds. It also touches upon urbanisation and globalisation and how people in highly functional environments don't have to give much thought to the origins and consumption of the basic necessities that create the world around them (ibid). To address these awareness gaps and gain a deeper understanding of the story in relation to its elements, the theory of narrative advertising will be applied to evaluate the hypothesis that showing consequences using narration highlights the significance of a concept.

## Theoretical framework

"We are, as a species, addicted to story," explains Jonathan Gottschall (2012), who refers to humans as *homo fictus*—or storytelling animal. People have always communicated, thought, and learned in stories, and have thus remembered (Schank & Berman, 2002). As a result, new messages, similarly presented, can be more easily absorbed, understood, and processed (Escalas, 2004).

To identify the narrative ad structure, this work uses methods of synthesizing prior literature from Kim, Ratneshwar, and Thorson's into the following elements (2017):

- **Who** looks at the presence of a main protagonist.
- **What** refers to the characters behaviour and the consequences.
- **When** and **where** cover the setting and context of the ad.
- **Why** refers to the motivations behind the happenings.
- **How** is a portrayal of the actions involving the actors.
- **Chronology** refers to the timeframe and sequences of the ad.

Multiple studies have proven that narrative ads have greater persuasive power than non-narrative ads. Deighton, McQueen and Romer (1989, p. 336) declared that the dramatic component of an ad with storytelling convinces the viewer through **empathic processing**: The viewer feels more immersed in the story if the actions in the ad seem authentic and relatable. In addition, Brock and Green (2000, p. 718)

identified a different cause, called **transportation**, which describes the best-case scenario of the viewers state as pleasant or flowing, thereby decreasing negative thoughts and improving the performance of the ad. Escalas (2004) also proposed that **mental simulation** plays an important role in narratives by enabling viewers to visualize handling and benefiting from the advertised product. Furthermore, de Graaf (2012) declared the **viewer's identification** with the protagonists as an important factor for the superiority of narrative ads. Using this knowledge, narrative advertising can communicate effectively by capturing consumers' attention in order to promote advertised products or services, demonstrate appeal, and persuade consumers to consider them (Escalas, 2004).

## Application

The following applies the above factors:

**Who:** The story follows a middle-aged man and woman through the events of the video. It starts and ends with their reaction to the environment. For a short time, other characters also take centre stage to show a particular struggle.

**When & where:** The beginning of the video shows a normal day in a city. Sudden decay progresses quickly and only ends with the complete destruction of the surroundings and all objects, turning the busy streets and houses into a desert with naked, dirty people.

**What:** The behaviours of the main and secondary characters are mainly passive in nature. The world is crumbling around them, and the story places an emphasis on the helplessness and powerlessness experienced in this decay. There are few choices to be made. They can leave the current location after the first signs of deterioration, leading to street meetings (0:48). At the end (1:43), the man decides to make a fire with what he has, leaving him frustrated (2:14). Despite the escalating events, both behave rather calmly throughout the video.

**Chronology & how:** The man is in the workplace and first becomes aware of unusual street-level occurrences (0:08) before the papers he is holding fall apart (0:12), followed by the decay of his ring (0:20). After that, his office begins to crumble, the wallpaper falls off, the table legs give in, and the structure of the building decays. So he leaves (0:36). At the same time the woman is sitting in a cafe and does not notice the changes taking place around her until the bun in her hand turns to dust (0:13) and the letters fall off the newspaper she holds (0:15). In the meantime, another woman's shoes give way, a man's glasses unravel, and confused people can be seen in the background between dissolving cars, buildings, and streets. Clothes are torn open (1:02) and the instruments of an orchestra stop working (1:09), and, as another man gets off the underground, the city has disappeared, and people are barely clothed anymore (1:18). Eventually the main couple find a mirror that hasn't quite disappeared and see how they look, clearly seeming unhappy. Finally, it starts to rain, and they have nothing to protect them from the elements (1:40). A text appears above this last scene and raises the question, "What would life be without crafts?"

**Why:** Everything dissolves progressively, leading to more drastic and visually powerful decay. This narrative arc of everyday situations evokes an end-time scenario through subtle changes and vividly shows what connects everyday objects: crafts. The often unnoticed and unappreciated products and skills of craftsmanship are existential. The ad highlights that.

The analysis must determine whether the viewers are immersed in the video, transported, mentally stimulated, and able to identify with the characters:

As already mentioned, many aspects of craftsmanship go unrecognised and unappreciated. The video visualises through narrative small personal items and existential matters as the result of manual labour,

skill, and knowledge. The variety of objects affected and the drastic difference between the first and the last frame help the viewer understand the implications of the end question. Vivid images and the lack of explanation leave the recipient wondering why this is happening, causing the **mental simulation** that results in less cognitive resources for negative thoughts about the ad (Escalas, 2004).

The vivid images also aid in the process of **transportation**. From the very first frame described in *where & when*, the depicted situations are very realistic. The viewer can immediately relate to the mundane setting and becomes as perplexed with what is about to start. The events proceed in a long, ever-increasing crescendo, grabbing the viewer's attention. The curiosity sparked transports the recipient into the story and helps to change attitudes and behaviours towards the topic as desired (Murphy, Frank, & Chat, 2013).

When the viewer feels immersed in the video, it's also an indicator for **empathetic processing** (Green & Brock, 2000). Although the story is not realistic, empathetic processing is enhanced because the recipient is able to simulate mentally the events portrayed (Escalas, 2004).

It is easy to **identify with the protagonists** with their ordinary lives and witness the crumbling around them in awe. The rather mild reactions of the main characters help the recipient to observe and pay attention to the details, when panic would suggest an immediate threat. The viewer can also relate with the man's frustration in the last scene and can appreciate the fact that craftsmanship prevents enduring the same ordeals.

## Conclusion

After identifying the concrete narrative structure of the video, the key aspects of narrative advertising were outlined. These combined show how the story managed to convey the message of the necessity of craftsmanship.

The broadcast of the video on television in 2010 reached a large audience. The actual success of this large-scale campaign is not apparent, as it is no longer used, and the analysis is retrospective and external. However, the DHKT successfully achieved its goal by depicting a world without crafts. Regarding the thesis of this work, it can be stated that above all the consequences depicted were decisive for the message.

To put these results into perspective for quo PEOPLE, the similarity of communication goals should be mentioned again. As Deutsche Handelskammer, quo PEOPLE provides a service with reach of consequences for everybody. The absence of associated market research will undeniably lead to a world in which the individual will go unheard and eventually be alienated from where society is moving. Therefore, quo PEOPLE can benefit from using big scheme narratives for their content and media strategy, as shown. The importance of market research as a whole can be vehicle to reach quo PEOPLE's content strategy's goals, regardless of specific services, products, or terms.



## References

- de Graaf, A., Hoeken, H., Sanders, J., & Beentjes, J. (2012). Identification as a Mechanism of Narrative Persuasion. *Communication Research, 39* (6), S. 802–823.
- Deighton, J., Romer, D., & McQueen, J. (1989). Using Drama to Persuade. *Journal of Consumer Research, 16* (3), pp. 335–343.
- DHKT. (zuletzt besucht 15.01.2022 2022). *Deutscher Handwerkskammertag*. Von <https://www.zdh.de/ueber-uns/dhkt/> abgerufen
- Escalas, J. E. (2004). Imagine Yourself in the Product. *Journal of Advertising, 33*, S. 37-48.
- Eunjin, K., Ratneshwar, S., & Thorson, E. (17. 1 2017). Why Narrative Ads Work: An Integrated Process. *Journal of advertising, 46*, S. 283-296.
- Gottschall, J. (2012). *The storytelling animal: How stories make us human*. . Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2000). The Role of Transportation in the Persuasiveness of Public Narratives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79* (5), pp. 701–721.
- Handelskammer, D. (2010). *Das Handwerk / Was wäre das Leben ohne das Handwerk HQ / High Quality*. Von YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYrFM55mlDs> abgerufen
- Horx, M. (zuletzt besucht am 15.01.2022 2021). *Zukunftsinstitut*. Von <https://www.zukunftsinstitut.de/dossier/megatrends/> abgerufen
- Murphy, S., Frank, L., & Chat, J. (2013). Narrative versus Non-Narrative: The Role of Identification, Transportation, and Emotion in Reducing Health Disparities. *Journal of Communication, 63* (1), S. 116.137.
- Schank, R., & Berman, T. (2002). The pervasive role of stories in knowledge and action. In *Narrative impact: Social and cognitive foundations* (S. 287–313). Boston: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.