

## How to Use Storytelling in Business

Storytelling permeates our lives through music, movies, books and conversations to name a few. Through this series of three position papers, you will learn that the ability to tell the right story at the right time can significantly increase the success rate of your business efforts.

In this first paper we will discuss how to craft a story (communicate a new idea quickly, easily and naturally) and present it in order to win the outcome you seek.

### Crafting a Story

Some people think storytelling is a primitive toy that should be replaced by a sleek, new piece of technology. In fact, storytelling is wired into us at birth and is at the core of most business activities today. In addition, storytelling costs nothing and is very easy and natural once you raise your awareness of it and practice.

Common logic states change can be made just by giving a good reason to do so. While this sounds good to most of us, if we take a few steps back and look at this statement, we know it is not true. Storytelling enables people to make a leap in understanding in order to grasp how a change could occur. A story catalyzes understanding (La Fontaine through Aesop's Fables, Orwell with pigs in Animal Farm and Jesus through parables).

### Nine Steps for Crafting a Story

1. Be clear as to the change you want to make.
2. Identify an incident inside or outside the organization where the change idea was completely or partially implemented successfully.
3. The incident is narrated from the perspective of a single protagonist who is similar to the audience.
4. Specify the time and place where the story happened.
5. Make sure the story embodies the change idea or if it does not, take extra time to explain the idea further outside of the story and then return to the story.
6. When you tell the story, make sure you are clear about what would have happened without the change idea.
7. Avoid including unnecessary detail in the story. No frills.
8. Make sure the story has an authentically happy ending.
9. At the end of the story, link the story to the change idea with phrases such as "what if... or just imagine..."

### Performing the Story

A story is always a choice of events from a larger universe of possibilities. There is no need to acknowledge the selections, exclusions or alternative points of view. The choices are made out of sight of the listener. Once they are made, the choices do not appear as choices at all. When performing, the story appears inevitable.

### Six Steps For Performing The Story

1. The storyteller immerses themselves in the world of the listeners, using their language, habits, concerns, hopes and dreams.

2. The storyteller makes the story fresh by reliving it as it is being told.
3. Focus on perfecting a few stories that make sense for a broad audience rather than trying to manage a large group of stories.
4. You must constantly practice so that the story sounds like spontaneous conversation and therefore makes a much greater impact on the audience.
5. The storyteller may have a wider range of experience than the audience before the story, but the storyteller's goal is to bring the audience to the same conclusion as the storyteller when they are given the same experience. The idea is to achieve experience parity between the storyteller and the audience so that the audience discovers the idea for themselves.
6. In order to get the audience's attention at the beginning, the storyteller can frame the story by talking about problems the audience is currently facing or revealing a vulnerability about themselves.

Finally, a storyteller is not like a chef on television (e.g. Emeril) showing everyone step by step how to make the perfect dish. The hard work of stroytelling is performed out of sight. The storyteller is like the chef whose dishes are presented at the table. The chef does not allow the diners to see the work that went into preparing the dish nor let them share in the work.

What's your story?



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