**stories for work**

**the essential guide to business storytelling**

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Stories build trust and credibility.

Remember when ...

* Emotionally charged events are remembered better
* Pleasant emotions are usually remembered better than unpleasant ones
* Positive memories contain more contextual details (which, in turn, helps memory)
* Strong emotion can impair memory for less emotional events and information experienced at the same time
* Emotional arousal, not the importance of the information, helps memory

Make your stories work.

* provoke emotions in our brain and body
* stimulate the release of the love hormone oxytocin
* make us feel something towards the person telling the story
* help build trust and credibility
* influence our audience into making a decision
* aid in focusing listeners on key messages
* help us to remember details rather than just facts and logic alone

Stories that work

1. authenticity
2. purpose

four types of stories you need in business.

Stories of:

1. triumph: moments that you are proud of, including when you've helped others or your community
2. tragedy: circumstances you regret that may have been caused by you or happened to you
3. tension: events that compromised your values, loyalties or obligations
4. transition: times of significant change where you may have faced a choice, or that may have been instigated by you or forced upon you

We also clarified that each and every story in your personal Story Wheel must be based on two things:

1. authenticity: they must be true
2. purpose: they must be linked to a business outcome

**Work-related Stories**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Job** | e.g. 2011 – 2014  Operations Manager, Technology ANZ |
| **Story Type** | Specific Events |
| **Triunf** | * After a very challenging 6 months and a terrible review, I changed my approach to this leadership role dramatically * I started opening up to my team about my personal life to create better * More importantly I started checking in on each team member by asking questions about how things were going for them, both professionally and personally * I forced myself to be a better listener and also encouraged greater collaboration * My next review improved dramatically with excellent feedback about my leadership and creating a cohesive team environment |
| **Tragedy** | * Within the first year of working in this job, my sister, Ellen, was diagnosed with breast cancer * This was very challenging, as I couldn't visit easily as we lived in another state * I felt like I was not able to support her like I would have if I were still back in Adelaide * There were many times when I questioned if I had made the right decision in relocating away from our extended family * It felt like a very long year both professionally and personally * To help me through this guilt, I used to Skype Ellen on a regular basis * Thankfully she has been in remission now for 3 years |
| **Tension** | * When I started the job, I tried to match my leadership style with what I thought it was to be a leader * I thought I needed to show everyone who was boss by being authoritative and I didn't show any emotion * This made some working relationships very difficult and I was devastated when I received terrible feedback from my team after a few months * I also felt like a fraud because it wasn't my natural personality * It wasn't until I received such negative feedback from my team that I realised I needed help and approached a colleague for mentoring and support with my leadership style |
| **Transition** | * This job required my family and I to relocate from Adelaide to Melbourne * It was a big step-up as it was my first real leadership role * I felt out of my depth at first and I was also trying to get my head around living in a new city * My children had to start over at a new school and we no longer had the support of family who were back in Adelaide * I left my old job as I felt I had accomplished everything I could, and I wanted a challenge * Not knowing many Melbournian people in the workplace and also in my personal life made me feel quite isolated at times |

The beginning

The middle

* + Be disciplined with the detail
  + ⁠Name the main characters
  + ⁠Keep your language real
  + ⁠The end

A successful story ending consists of three parts:

1. bridge: to bring your audience's attention back to business
2. link: to transfer your message
3. pause: to let the message sink in
   * The bridge
   * ⁠The link
   * ⁠The pause: The final part of your story is the pause at the end. You need to stop talking and pause for effect

Several business contexts:

* presentations
* organizational change
* sales
* company values and vision
* personal brand
* coaching
* job interviews
* newsletters and blogs

Three ways to identify stories for sales:

1. show how others have benefited from your product or service
2. demonstrate your values
3. address any potential concerns the client may have

The 2011 Harvard Business Review article 'The business of communicating values stated, “If a company doesn't take the time and effort to communicate its values in a meaningful way, then it's like the old tree-falling-in-the-forest cliché: It makes a big splash, but no one is around to appreciate its impact.”

Vision and values are worthless unless they are understood by everyone in the workplace and evident within your organizational culture. Be an afterthought; instead, they should drive decisions and behavious across the business. The very essence of values' is that they must connect with everyone on a personal level.

**Where's the value?**

In my work, I have found that when leaders take the time to identify what their company values mean to them, on both a professional and a personal. level, they are in a better position to communicate these standards to others.

**SEA your brand**

1. strategy
2. evolution
3. authenticity

**STORIES THAT WORK FOR COACHING**

* Fortune favours the brave
* Strike three, you're out!
* Seize the moment and cherish it
* The cost of trust

**STORIES THAT WORK FOR JOB INTERVIEWS**

* Speak up
* Up for the challenge
* Let's dance

**STORIES THAT WORK FOR NEWSLETTERS AND BLOGS**

* Reframe
* Authentic leadership

**AUSTRALIA POST CASE STUDY**

The five Australia Post values to be communicated were:

1. Being safe everywhere
2. Respecting everyone
3. Helping each other
4. Improving every day
5. Delighting our customers