



**BUSINESS STORYTELLING:
THE MISSING INGREDIENT IN COMMUNICATING
YOUR VALUE**

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OVERVIEW OF THE WORKSHOP

INTRODUCTION

- Activity: What do you see?

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF STORY

- What makes a story memorable?
- Why story? There are five sides to every story
- What makes a story a story: Definition, characteristics, structure
- Activity: Assess Sharon's story
- Activity: What type of narrative is this?
- Evoking stories: Crafting story prompts
- Activity: Listening to a story
- After you hear a story ... what to do!

CONNECTING STORIES TO VALUE CREATION

- Activity: Prompting stories that communicate value
- Tips for capturing stories and polishing someone else's story
- Which of your own personal stories and organizational stories create value
- Activity: Placing stories
- Activity: Touch points in the certificant lifecycle
- Digging into stories to reveal sources of value

CLOSING

- Activity: what will you do?

APPENDIX

- Resources
- Ten narrative forms
- Article: Let It Grow, Let It Grow, Let It Grow: Gaining Members Through Telling Stories

ACTIVITY: WHAT DO YOU SEE?

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this activity is for you to find a way to put a jockey on each horse as quickly as you can.

DIRECTIONS

Who	Done?	Task
Individual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Find a partner.
Partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	Put the jockeys on the horses. Confirm your answer with the instructor.
Partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	Once you have arrived at the answer, answer the questions.

HOW DID YOU FEEL BEFORE YOU FOUND THE SOLUTION?

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HOW DID YOU FEEL AFTER YOU FOUND THE SOLUTION?

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WHAT DID YOU HAVE TO SHIFT IN YOUR THINKING OR YOUR BEHAVIOR TO FIND THE SOLUTION?

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ACTIVITY: WHAT MAKES A STORY MEMORABLE

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this activity is for you to identify the reasons why people remember stories. You have 5 minutes for this activity.

DIRECTIONS

Who	Task
Partners	Share the 60-second Reader’s Digest version of a memorable story you heard sometime during your career that you clearly recall to this day.
Partners	Write down the reasons you believe the stories you told each other are memorable to this day.

STORIES ARE MEMORABLE BECAUSE

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WHY STORY?

THE POWER OF STORY

- Touches the physical, the mental, the emotional and the human spirit
- Captivates people's interest and makes them more attentive listeners.
- Communicates information faster and makes it more believable and memorable
- Helps build rapport and establishes your credibility (expertise and trust)
- Reveals how people construct their personal world and uncover expectations and needs that might not otherwise be communicated

HOW STORYTELLING AFFECTS THE BRAIN

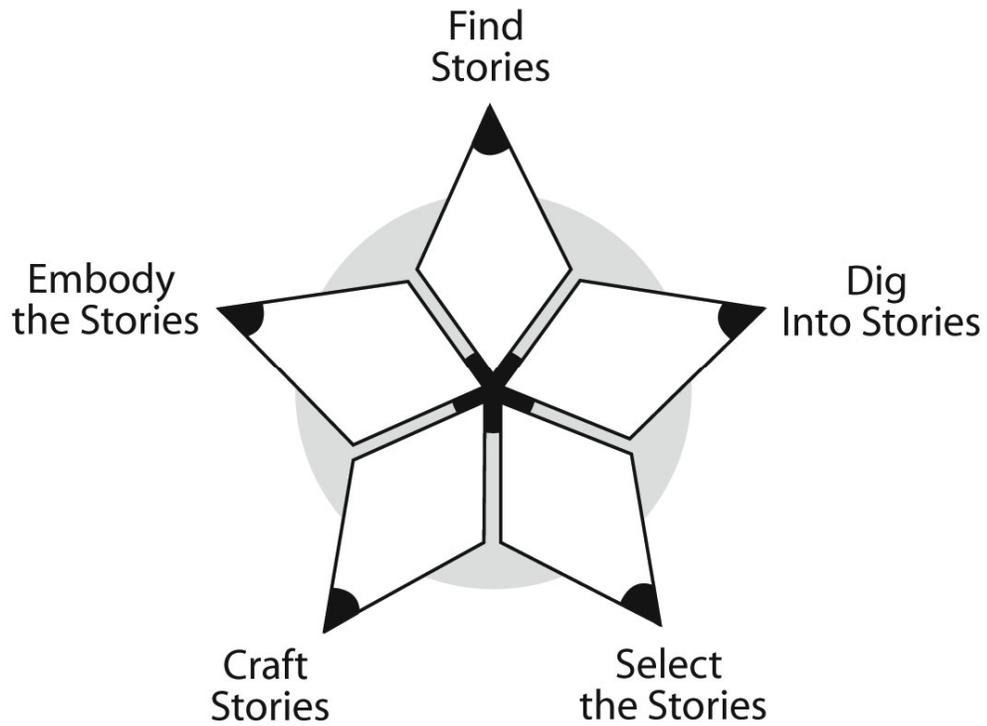


Infographic highlighting the effectiveness of using 'Whiteboard Animation' for storytelling @stayingaliveuk · www.stayingaliveuk.com

PRIMARY REASON TO USE STORIES

- Move people to take some sort of action — change in behavior, thinking, attitude, feeling

THERE ARE FIVE SIDES TO EVERY STORY



WHAT MAKES A STORY A STORY**DEFINITION**

“A story provides packets of sensory language presented in a particular way that allows the listener to quickly and easily internalize the information, comprehend it and create meaning from it.”

- - Karen Dietz and Lori Silverman, as cited in *Business Storytelling for Dummies* (2013, Wiley)

Story includes these characteristics...

- Conflict
- Characters (must have a main character)
- Dialogue, (outer and inner reflection)
- Contrast (good/bad, black/white, right/wrong, etc)
- Drama or intrigue
- Sensory information
- Layers of meaning
- A “universal” lesson: Key point (related to the main character)

KEEP IN MIND

- All conversation is narrative; not all narrative is a story
- “Describing” a situation is not the same as telling a story
- People create their own meaning that may differ from what was intended
- A story’s key point, not its topic, is the deciding factor in story selection
- Compassion fatigue confirms main character needs to be a single person

WHAT MAKES A STORY A STORY (CONTINUED)

STORY STRUCTURE: THE STORY ARC

- Paint the picture
 - Introduce the cast of characters
 - Set the stage with important details (location, weather, timeframe, etc.)
 - Tell what is going on (context)
- Present the plot
 - Outline the obstacle, challenge, issues, problem, or conflict; build to a climax
- Resolve the situation and move people to meaning
 - Finish the story—how does it end?
 - Provide a short, positive, memorable “What’s the point?”
 - State the “call to action”

ACTIVITY: ASSESS SHARON’S STORY**OVERVIEW**

The purpose of this activity is to identify the elements and structure of a well-constructed story.

DIRECTIONS

Who	Done?	Task
Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assign a leader.
Individual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read through the story.
Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify the story elements. Delineate the structure.

STORY ELEMENTS

- The conflict: problem, issue, dilemma, challenge, obstacle
- Characters
- Dialogue (including inner reflections)
- Contrast (good/bad, appropriate/inappropriate)
- Drama or intrigue
- Sensory information
- Layers of meaning
- A “universal” lesson/key point

STRUCTURE: Draw a line between the beginning and middle of the story and another between the middle and the end of the story

ACTIVITY: WHAT TYPE OF NARRATIVE IS THIS?**OVERVIEW**

Identify the specific type of narrative used in these three media.

DIRECTIONS

Who	Done?	Task
Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assign a leader and a spokesperson.
Individual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scan each situation provided by the instructor.
Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Answer the questions for all three situations using the information on pages 24-30 in this manual.
Spokesperson	<input type="checkbox"/>	Be prepared to share comments.

SITUATION 1: TRANSCRIPT OF DIANE OTTE'S VIDEO ON CERTIFIEDNURSES.ORG FROM ONCC

"I've been an oncology certified nurse for many, many years and got started with certification in the very beginning stages and now I'm very proud that the nurses who work in our cancer center are all oncology certified. This is a very important thing for our patients and families and they really appreciate knowing an oncology certified nurse is taking care of them."

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=10&v=ShKXx3mTzRQ

1. Type of Narrative (circle one)

Story	News report	Anecdote	
Profile	Case study	Scenario	
Description	Testimonial	Example	Vignette

2. One reason that you believe it is this type of narrative:

3.

ACTIVITY: WHAT TYPE OF NARRATIVE IS THIS? (CONTINUED)

SITUATION 2: CBN SPOTLIGHT — NICOLE FORRYAN

1. Type of Narrative (circle one)

Story	News report	Anecdote	
Profile	Case study	Scenario	
Description	Testimonial	Example	Vignette

2. One reason that you believe it is this type of narrative:

3.

SITUATION 3: TRANSCRIPT OF VIDEO ON CERTIFICATION FROM INFUSION NURSES CERTIFICATION CORPORATION

1. Type of Narrative (circle one)

Story	News report	Anecdote	
Profile	Case study	Scenario	
Description	Testimonial	Example	Vignette

2. One reason that you believe it is this type of narrative:

3.

Afterward, watch the video on your phone, iPad, or laptop:

CRNI website: <http://www.ins1.org/CRNI@Certification.aspx>

YouTube (CRNI): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCA3a7qsb4>

EVOKING STORIES: CRAFTING STORY PROMPTS

MOVE FROM SENSE MAKING TO MEANING MAKING

- Reasons why questions tend not to work in grasping the whole of a situation

STRUCTURE OF PROMPTS

- Basic structure
 - Beginning of statement: “Tell me *about* ...” or “Tell me a *story about* ...”
 - End of phrase needs to be specific. Example: “Tell me about your day” is not as effective as “Tell me about the most memorable part of your day.”
- Reversing the structure
 - Include a sentence at the front end of the statement (rather than the back end of it) that lends specificity. “I heard you just had a bad experience on the phone with _____. Tell me about it.”

FRONT-END WORDING OF PROMPTS

Variations on “Tell Me About ...”	Avoid These Statements
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enlighten me about a time when• Build me a story about ...• Paint the full picture for me about ...• Share with me a memory about ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe for me ...• Explain to me ...• Clarify ...• Give me the details ...• Help me to understand why ...

Question	Possible Story Prompt
What motivated you to become a Certified Bariatric Nurse?	
How does your workplace support specialty certification?	

ACTIVITY: LISTENING TO A STORY**OVERVIEW**

This activity is for you to practice telling a story that follows the story arc.

DIRECTIONS

Who	Done?	Task
Individual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outline your story.
Individual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wait for further instructions.

STORY PROMPT

- Tell me about a time in your life when your efforts made a significant difference.

AFTER YOU HEAR A STORY ... WHAT TO DO!**LISTEN _____ *: BEHAVIORS TO EXHIBIT**

*A special thanks to Doug Lipman for this method of listening

BEST WAYS TO RESPOND AFTER HEARING A STORY

- Express appreciation
- Ask reflective questions
 - What do you like about that story (or the experience)?
 - Share with me what you liked about how you told that story to me.
 - Tell me what meaning that experience holds for you.
 - What did you learn from that experience?
 - Tell me what you will take away from the experience.
- Share your perspective
 - Tell the person what you liked about the story and /or parts that stood out.
 - Tell the person what you liked about how the story was told.
 - Tell the person the meaning the story held for you.
 - Ask clarifying/ information questions. (Optional)
- Thank the person again.
- Share your own story only if appropriate.

DO NOT ...

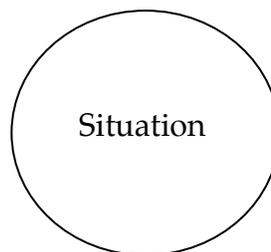
- Do not immediately launch into your own story.
- Do not saying, "I understand what happened. If I was in your shoes, I would have done it this way ..."
- Do not offer advice on what to do next.

ACTIVITY: PROMPTING STORIES THAT COMMUNICATE VALUE**OVERVIEW**

Brainstorm story prompts that help capture the value of certification and the logistics around capturing them.

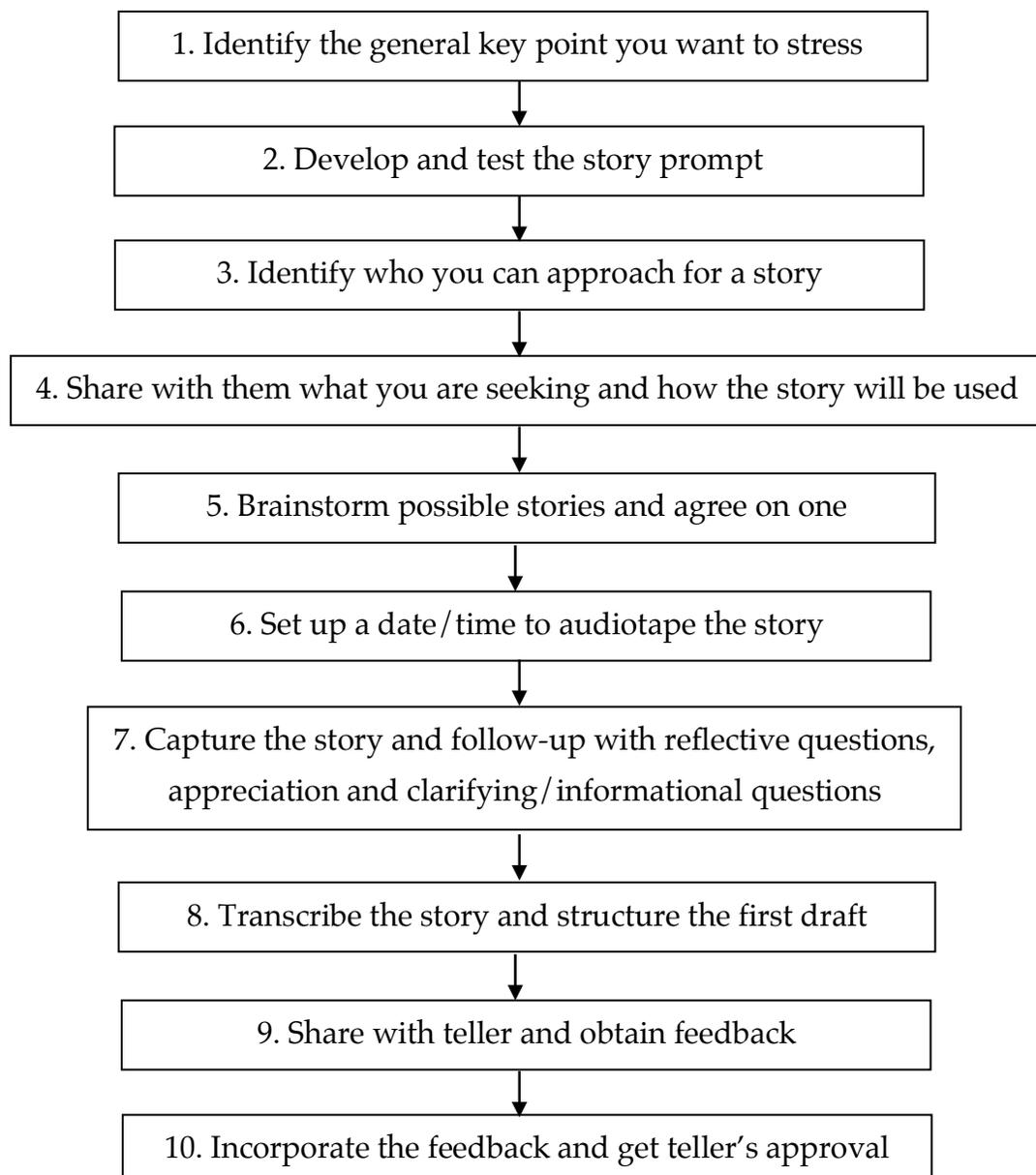
DIRECTIONS

Who	Done?	Task
Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assign a leader and a spokesperson.
Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fill out the worksheet. Note: It may be useful to think of a specific certification/certifying body as you complete it.
Spokesperson	<input type="checkbox"/>	Be prepared to share results.

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

TIPS FOR CAPTURING STORIES

- Audiotope the story: Captures the “spoken” word and specific vernacular
- Use story “originator” to aid in identifying the universal lesson of the story; use this to focus the story’s content and flow
- Have a system for organizing and locating stories; create a story library
- Obtain permission in advance to use stories in all media forms
- An organization that’s done this well: NY Presbyterian Hospital patient stories (example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y180OgCFb3s>)



POLISHING SOMEONE ELSE'S STORY

LENGTH OF STORY

- What the research demonstrates
- How to shorten and lengthen a raw story
- Does everything in a story need to be true? No. Here are some guidelines from Doug Stevenson (Story Theatre)
 - Stick to the facts: Essence of the story, the event or situation. People in the story. Obstacle and overall process used to overcome it. Resolution of the story. The overall lesson that was learned.
 - Embellish or re-write history: Timelines and locations that are irrelevant. Character names and descriptions. Exaggerate obstacle for dramatic impact. Specific steps to overcome obstacle. Alternate true lesson learned.

ELEMENTS THAT MAKE STORIES POP (DIETZ & SILVERMAN, 2013)

- **Analogy** – A comparison between two things that are similar in some respects, often used to explain something or make it easier to understand
Bob's story: *Bob's story is like doing an end run around the defensive end.*
- **Aphorism** – A concise statement of a principle; a terse formulation of a truth or sentiment. For example: *It takes a whole village to raise a child.* Bob's story: *When all else fails, assert yourself.*
- **Metaphor** – A figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used non-literally in place of another to suggest a likeness between them (the ship plows the sea) Bob's story: *There's more than one way to skin a cat.*

COMMON QUESTIONS

1. Can you go directly into the conflict and allow the context, characters and details unfold from there? Yes.
2. Can the story be a composite one? Be careful. These are very difficult to craft well and may not resonate with others.

WHICH OF YOUR OWN PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL STORIES CREATE VALUE?

WHAT'S UNIQUE? TO ENTICE? TO MAKE STICKY? TO PROMULGATE WORD-OF-MOUTH?

- About your staff?
- About how you do things or approach certification?
- About the add-on's you receive once you're certified that you cannot get elsewhere — that one would sorely miss if they didn't recertify?
- About other certificants that one has access to after receiving your certification?
- About what your organization is striving for in the future?
- About your organization as a whole or its connections to bigger causes?

TYPES OF STORIES

- See the article at the end of this workbook: "Let It Grow, Let It Grow, Let It Grow: Gaining members Through Telling Stories"

USING DATA IN A STORY

- Here's what the research suggests

Group One Group Two Group 3

- When contrast is needed (e.g., small, big, gigantic) and nothing else works; otherwise use metaphors, analogies, or other visual language
- Moving from Data to Sense Making to Meaning Making
 - Data: "Oh, I see."
 - Sense making comments: "I understand." "That's interesting."
 - Meaning making comments: "I get it! This is how this data relates to me. I now know what to do."

ACTIVITY: PLACING STORIES

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this activity is for you to identify the stories that would be of value to use in certification-related print material and/or on web/social media.

DIRECTIONS

Who	Done?	Task
Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assign a leader and a spokesperson.
Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Review each item. Find at least one topic where a story (or linking to a story) would strengthen the message.
Spokesperson	<input type="checkbox"/>	Be prepared to share results.

HPCC CERTIFICATION NEWSLETTER

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INCC: AN EMPLOYER’S GUIDE TO INFUSION NURSING CERTIFICATION BROCHURE

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INCC: CRNI®S MARKET YOURSELF BROCHURE

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GROUP DISCUSSION: STORY USE ON WEBSITES AND OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

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ACTIVITY: TOUCH POINTS IN THE CERTIFICANT LIFECYCLE**OVERVIEW**

The purpose of this activity is for you to sketch out an overview of the certificant lifecycle and pinpoint touch points within it where a storied approach could identify, communicate, or strengthen value.

DIRECTIONS

Who	Done?	Task
Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assign a leader and a spokesperson.
Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Using the Post-it Notes, sketch out a general lifecycle at a high level.
Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pinpoint touch points within the lifecycle where a storied approach could identify, communicate, or strengthen value.
Individual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take a photo of your group's work!

DIGGING INTO STORIES TO REVEAL SOURCES OF VALUE



SETTING

- One-on-one depth interviews
- Focus groups
- Formal story circles

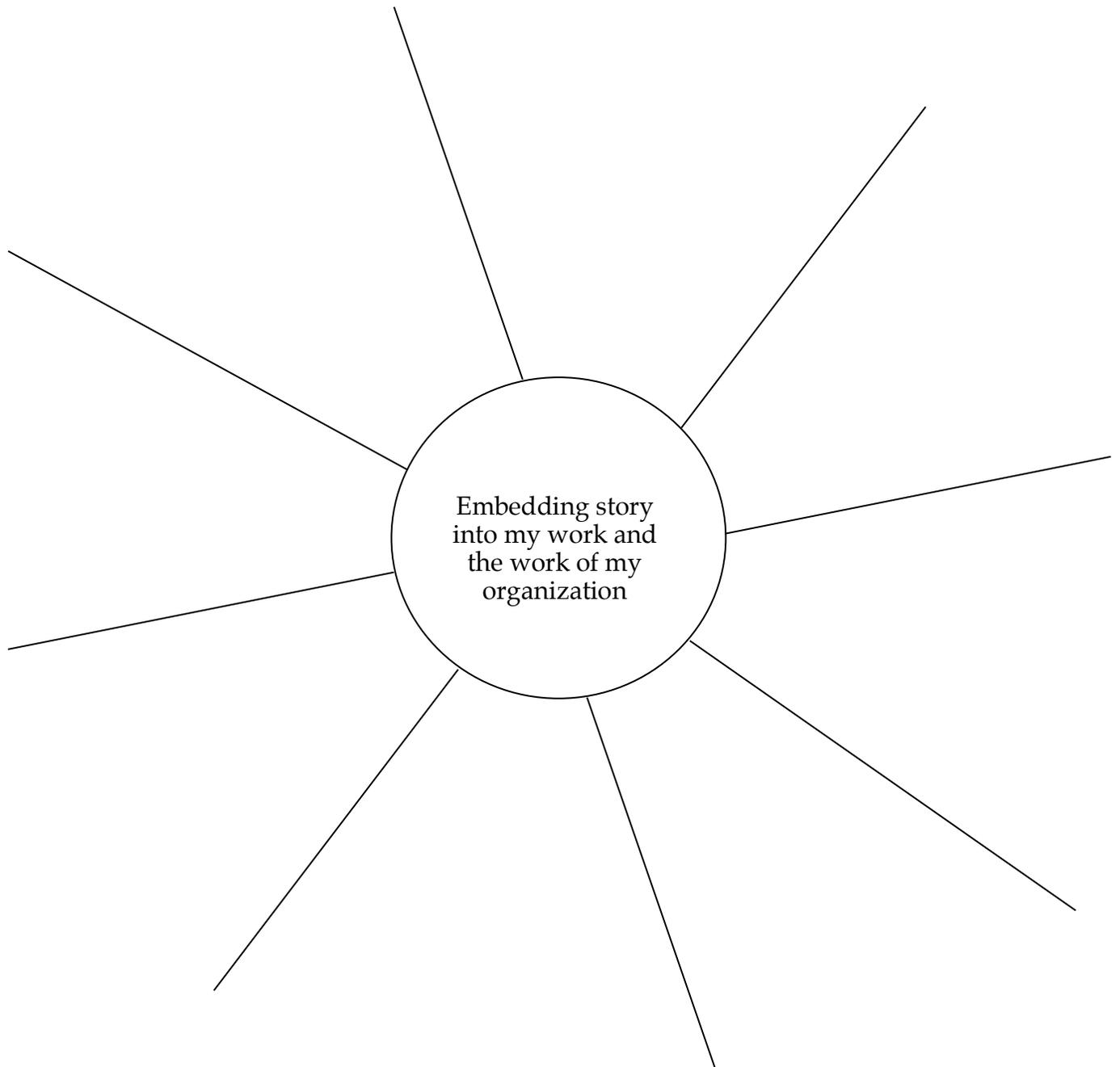
WHAT DO YOU NEED?

- A way to approach collecting the stories
- Methods for digging into stories for hidden treasures — metaphors that are being used, insights that can be gleaned (note: the most valuable insights aren't usually themes or patterns)
- Mechanisms for translating results into actions that drive value
- Support from others in your organization

ACTIVITY: WHAT WILL YOU DO?

DIRECTIONS

Put the name of a person, group or project at the end of each line. Then, draw lines off the main line that indicate all the activities you need to do with that person/group to implement what you have learned here.



SELECT BOOKS AND ARTICLES ON SOME ASPECT OF STORY OR ITS USE IN BUSINESS

- Bystedt, J., et al (2003). *Moderating to the max*. NY: Paramount Market Publishing, Inc.
- Clark, E. (2004). *Around the corporate campfire*. Sevierville, TN: Insight Publishing Co.
- Clarke, C. (2009). *Storytelling for grantseekers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Dietz, K. and L. Silverman (2013). *Business storytelling for dummies*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Denning, S. (2005). *The leader's guide to storytelling*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Denning, S. (2001) *The springboard*. Boston: Butterworth Heinemann.
- Gabriel, Y. (2000). *Storytelling in organizations*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Gargiulo, T. (2002). *Making stories: A practical guide for organizational leaders and human resource specialists*. Westport, CN: Quorum Books.
- Gargiulo, T. (2005). *The strategic use of stories in organizational communication and learning*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Haven, K. (2007). *Story proof: The science behind the startling power of story*. Westport, CN: Libraries Unlimited.
- Hutchens, D. (2015). *Circle of the 9 muses: A storytelling field guide for innovators and meaning makers*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Kress, N. (1998). *Dynamic characters: How to create personalities that keep readers captivated*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books.
- Lipman, D. (1999). *Improving your storytelling*. Little Rock, AK: August House.
- Niemi, L. (2006). *The book of plots*. Coral Springs, FL: Llumina Press.
- Silverman, L. (Winter 2006). "How do you keep the right people on the bus? Try stories." *The Journal for Quality & Participation*, pp. 11-15. Available at www.business-storytelling.com.
- Silverman, L. (November 2004). "Strategic storytelling." *Association Management*, pp. 40-48. Available at www.business-storytelling.com.
- Silverman, L., ed. (2006). *Wake me up when the data is over: How organizations use stories to drive results*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Simmons, A. (2001, 2006). *The story factor*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing.
- Simmons, A. (2007, 2015). *Whoever tells the best story wins*. New York: American Management Association.

SELECT BOOKS AND ARTICLES ON SOME ASPECT OF STORY OR ITS USE IN BUSINESS (CONTINUED)

Stevenson, D. (2008). *Doug Stevenson's Story Theatre Method*. Colorado Springs, CO: Cornelia Press.

Vincent, L. (2002). *Legendary brands: Unleashing the power of storytelling to create a winning market strategy*. NY: Kaplan Business.

Wacker, M. B. & L. Silverman. (2003). *Stories trainers tell: 55 ready-to-use stories to make training stick*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

RELATED BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Heath, C. and D. Heath. (2007). *Made to stick: Why some ideas survive and others die*. NY: Random House.

Howard, P. J. (2006). *The owner's manual for the brain: Everyday applications from mind-brain research*. Austin, TX: Bard Press.

Medina, J. (2008). *Brain rules*. Seattle, WA: Pear Press.

Pink, D. (2005). *A whole new mind*. NY: Riverhead Books, The Penguin Group.

Zaltman, G. (2003). *How customers think*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Zaltman, G. (2008). *Marketing metaphoria: What deep metaphors reveal about the minds of consumers*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

More story resources and free articles available at www.business-storytelling.com

Regularly curated articles available at www.scoop.it/t/just-story-it

TEN NARRATIVE FORMS: THE PRICE WE PAY TO GET RESULTS**STORY (CONTRIBUTED BY ROBERT MCILREE)**

I received a call from the support staff in the information systems area. A customized software application that I'd developed as a consultant to a federal government agency had stopped functioning. This particular application makes extensive use of internal databases and is very useful and popular with agency staff charged with controlling budget dollars. Lots of money is lost if this application is shut down for long periods of time.

Now, I'm properly and officially credentialed with this agency. I have a badge to enter their facilities, complete access to the computer systems that I support, and a small office where I'm required to work onsite due to federal computer security restrictions. When I began to work the problem, I kept getting error messages that said I didn't have permission to view the databases. Somehow my security level had been altered. The only way this could've happened was if the database administrator had removed my clearance. This didn't surprise me. He was known to have an insatiable thirst for power and control over his domain.

I immediately placed a call to him. "Jim, "I'm having trouble looking at a couple of databases. I keep getting error messages that tell me I don't have access." He replied, "Oh. We've just implemented our new "cyber security" scheme. It's a requirement of Homeland Security. I barked, "Well I have a problem—a real live support issue that needs to be addressed right now." He quickly countered with, "You'll have to get me some sort of documentation for the permission. Then it'll have go through the proper channels and be approved by a committee. You know, I really don't have the time to deal with this right now. I said, "Thanks." And hung up. Right then and there I knew I'd have to go around him. All he'd given me were excuses. As far as I was concerned, he'd arbitrarily and without notice removed permission for me to access the databases.

It didn't take me more than five seconds to call the government manager in charge of my activity. She also happened to be Jim's boss. I told her what had just taken place. All she said was, "Thank you. I'll take care of it." She didn't need to say any more. Her words were as good as gold. Within minutes she called me back to say she'd directed Jim to restore my access even though he'd claimed to her as well that he and his staff were "too busy" to immediately respond. She was under the impression I'd get my access within 24 hours.

I waited out the day. No access. One day turned into two days. Still no access. Then it became three. After 72 hours, I still couldn't access the databases. My manager was now out on vacation. And Jim was ignoring my ongoing request for a

TEN NARRATIVE FORMS: THE PRICE WE PAY TO GET RESULTS (CONT')

completion date. I'd been stonewalled. What was I to say to the support staff? They were furious. I couldn't fix their pressing production problem.

Not one to give up, I started mulling over strategies to work around, through, or over the problem. I quickly hit upon an idea. While risky and long-winded in process, it would send a clear message that something was seriously amiss. I had decided to file a claim to access the data under the Freedom of Information Act—what we folks in government affectionately call FOIA. This meant working through the “front door” of the agency—the one the general public must use to get information. By law, the agency must allow or deny the request within a limited period of time. I figured none of the data I needed was sensitive or secret. And even if it were, the FOIA request would be routed to the proper department and eventually to my manager for decision and disposition.

From the agency's internal web site I printed out what needed to be included in such a request. I wrote up a couple of pages including my name, who I was, and what I specifically needed. Then I took it downstairs to the public affairs people. They accepted it and I got a receipt from the office. Word of what I'd done leaked out faster than a broken water main. People either laughed hysterically or shook their heads wondering why it took a stunt like this to point out a glaring deficiency in the organization.

The next week my request landed like an F-16 fighter jet on my manager's desk. Which prompted her of course to come and see me in my cubicle. “I got this FOIA request. What's going on?” I replied, “Jim's group never responded. I still don't have access. They basically blew me off and they blew you off too.” Without saying a word, she picked up my phone. “I asked you a couple weeks ago to give Bob access to these databases and he never got it. What's the deal?” I could hear Jim stuttering on the other end of the line. When she hung she looked straight at me and politely asked, “Why did you do this?” “Because I wasn't getting any results. I came to you and you also tried getting results. They don't seem to care. They want to be masters of the universe and control everything. I did it kind of as a gag and to bring attention to the fact that things needed to change around here. I can't do my job and neither can others.”

With a twinkle in her eye, she replied, “I understand your point completely. But, please don't do this again. I asked, “How do you want to bring this to closure? Do you want to deny my request and fire it back at me or do you want me to go down and close it?” She answered, “I want you to close it.” The next day I went downstairs and withdrew the request. She quickly corrected the problem and I was able to proceed with my work.

TEN NARRATIVE FORMS: THE PRICE WE PAY TO GET RESULTS (CONT')

When you can't get what you need to do your job or solve a problem, "assert yourself." Be vocal. Be creative. Follow-up with people who can make things happen. Persist until you're satisfied you have exactly what you need. Assert yourself even if it means seeking forgiveness rather than asking for permission. If I can do it, so can you.

ANECDOTE

A short personal account (your personal take on a situation).

One time I had this experience of being denied viewing access to several databases so I could fix a customized software application. In asking for permissions, I couldn't get anywhere. As a last resort, I filed a Freedom of Information Act in order to get my access reinstated. That got my boss' attention. The database administrator and I both got chewed out and I got my access.

CASE STUDY

An analysis of a particular event or situation that can be used as a basis for drawing conclusions in similar situations or a record of somebody's problems and how they were dealt with. It is usually presented in sections: situation, solution, result, and analysis.

BOB'S SITUATION

Bob received a call from the support staff in the information systems area. A customized software application that he'd developed as a consultant to a federal government agency had stopped functioning. This application makes extensive use of internal data-bases and is very useful and popular with agency staff charged with controlling budget dollars. Lots of money is lost if this application is shut down for long periods of time.

Bob is properly and officially credentialed with this agency. He has a badge to enter their facilities, complete access to the computer systems that he supports, and a small office where he's required to work onsite due to federal computer security restrictions. When Bob began to work the problem, he kept getting error messages that said he didn't have permission to view the databases. Somehow his security level had been altered. The only way this could've happened was if the database administrator had removed his clearance. The person who could give him access gave him the runaround. Bob called his boss. Even though she said she'd take care of it, nothing happened. He was stuck.

TEN NARRATIVE FORMS: THE PRICE WE PAY TO GET RESULTS (CONT’)**BOB’S SOLUTION**

Not one to give up, Bob started mulling over strategies to work around, through, or over the problem. He quickly hit upon an idea. Though risky and long-winded in process, it would send a clear message that something was seriously amiss. He decided to file a request to access the data under the Freedom of Information Act—what government employees affectionately call FOIA. This meant working through the “front door” of the agency—the one the general public must use to get information. By law, the agency must allow or deny the request within a limited period of time. He figured none of the data he needed was sensitive or secret. Even if it were, the FOIA request would be routed to the proper department and eventually to his manager for decision and disposition.

THE RESULT

The next week Bob’s request landed like an F-16 fighter jet on his manager’s desk—which prompted her to come and see him. She asked what was going on. Bob replied that the database administrator had ignored his request and basically blown him off. Without saying a word, she picked up his phone and called the database administrator, and told him to fix the problem. As she hung up, she looked straight at Bob and politely asked him not to do that again. They agreed that to bring closure to the situation, he would withdraw his request. The next day, Bob did so. The database administrator quickly corrected the situation and Bob was able to proceed with his work.

ANALYSIS:

1. What lesson or meaning do you take away from this story?
2. How does what Bob experience apply to what you do in your work?
3. What causes situations like this to take place in an organization?

DESCRIPTION

A brief explanation of a situation. It’s a simple, high-level narration of events that uses a brief timeline to represent what was experienced instead of conveying the totality of the experience. This form is similar to “examples” in that descriptions are often used when “talking about” a story instead of telling one.

Bob, an IT consultant, was denied access to a critical database he had been hired to work on. He repeatedly asked various managers and supervisors for the access but was denied. So Bob bent the rules and found a way around the denied requests so he could complete his work.

TEN NARRATIVE FORMS: THE PRICE WE PAY TO GET RESULTS (CONT')**EXAMPLE**

A particular single item, fact, incident or aspect that serves to illustrate an opinion, theory, principle, rule, guideline, or concept. Examples are similar to “descriptions” in that they’re often used when “talking about” a story instead of telling one.

Sometimes in organizations, following traditional protocol does not work. One day, Bob learned this as an IT consultant when his viewing access was denied to critical databases so he could repair a customized software application. Even though Bob’s boss asked Bob’s coworker to grant him access, he could not get the approvals. So Bob found a creative way to gain approval access that still fit the rules but was outside of the normal flow of events.

NEWS REPORT

An accounting of recent events or developments. It telegraphs the end of the story at the very beginning of it.

For fourteen days, tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars were at risk through several critical federal government databases, which deal with a key agency’s budgeting process. It took the filing of a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to get enterprise architecture consultant Robert McIlree the right to use and repair them. Previously McIlree, an expert in repairing the databases, always had access. Significant amounts of money are lost if the application McIlree was hired to repair is shut down for long periods of time. But new homeland security rules and bureaucratic turf wars made the database inaccessible to him. Two weeks after McIlree’s filing of the FOIA, it got the agency’s attention. He was finally granted access and could repair the databases. In an interview, McIlree and an agency representative reported all was fine and back in top working order without harm to the agency. *For the full story, see our on-line version.*

PROFILE

A concise biographical sketch.

Bob has been working as an enterprise data architect in the information technology industry since the early 1990s. His claim to fame is the ability to come into organizations and tackle tough problems quickly. His work is widely known in the

TEN NARRATIVE FORMS: THE PRICE WE PAY TO GET RESULTS (CONT')

financial services, insurance, consumer products, energy/utilities, telecommunications and transportation industries where he is valued as a provider of innovative solutions.

Bob started working for a federal government agency as a consultant in 2002. He encountered some initial hiccups but was eventually able to smooth things out with some original thinking, successfully resolving the issues. Today he continues to go beyond his current client's expectations as he did at this agency.

SCENARIO

An imagined sequence of possible events designed to help people consider its implications or generate new ideas.

Imagine you've received a call from the support staff in the information systems area. A customized software application that you developed as a consultant to a federal government agency had stopped functioning. This particular application makes extensive use of internal databases and is very useful and popular with agency staff charged with controlling budget dollars. Lots of money is lost if this application is shut down for long periods of time.

Now, you're properly and officially credentialed with this agency. You have a badge to enter their facilities, complete access to the computer systems that you support, and a small office where you're required to work onsite due to federal computer security restrictions. When you began to work the problem, you keep getting error messages that say you don't have permission to view the databases. Somehow your security level had been altered. The only way this could've happened was if Jim, the database administrator had removed your clearance. This doesn't surprise you. Jim is known to have an insatiable thirst for power and control over his domain.

You immediately place a call to him. "Jim, "I'm having trouble looking at a couple of databases. I keep getting error messages that tell me I don't have access." He replied, "Oh. We've just implemented our new "cyber security" scheme. It's a requirement of Homeland Security. You say, "Well I have a problem—a real live support issue that needs to be addressed right now." Jim counters with, "You'll have to get me some sort of documentation for the permission. Then it'll have go through the proper channels and be approved by a committee. You know, I really don't have the time to deal with this right now. You say, "Thanks." And hang up.

TEN NARRATIVE FORMS: THE PRICE WE PAY TO GET RESULTS (CONT’)

Right then and there you know you’ll have to go around Jim. All you’ve been given by him are excuses. As far as you’re concerned, Jim has arbitrarily and without notice removed permission for me to access the databases.

If you were Bob, what would you do? Provide three different options.

TESTIMONIAL

A favorable report or statement about the qualities or virtues of somebody or something; an expression of appreciation; a statement testifying to benefits; a character reference or letter of recommendation

VERSION 1

I loved Bob’s story. It really helped me get unstuck about my own problem with my needs being met.

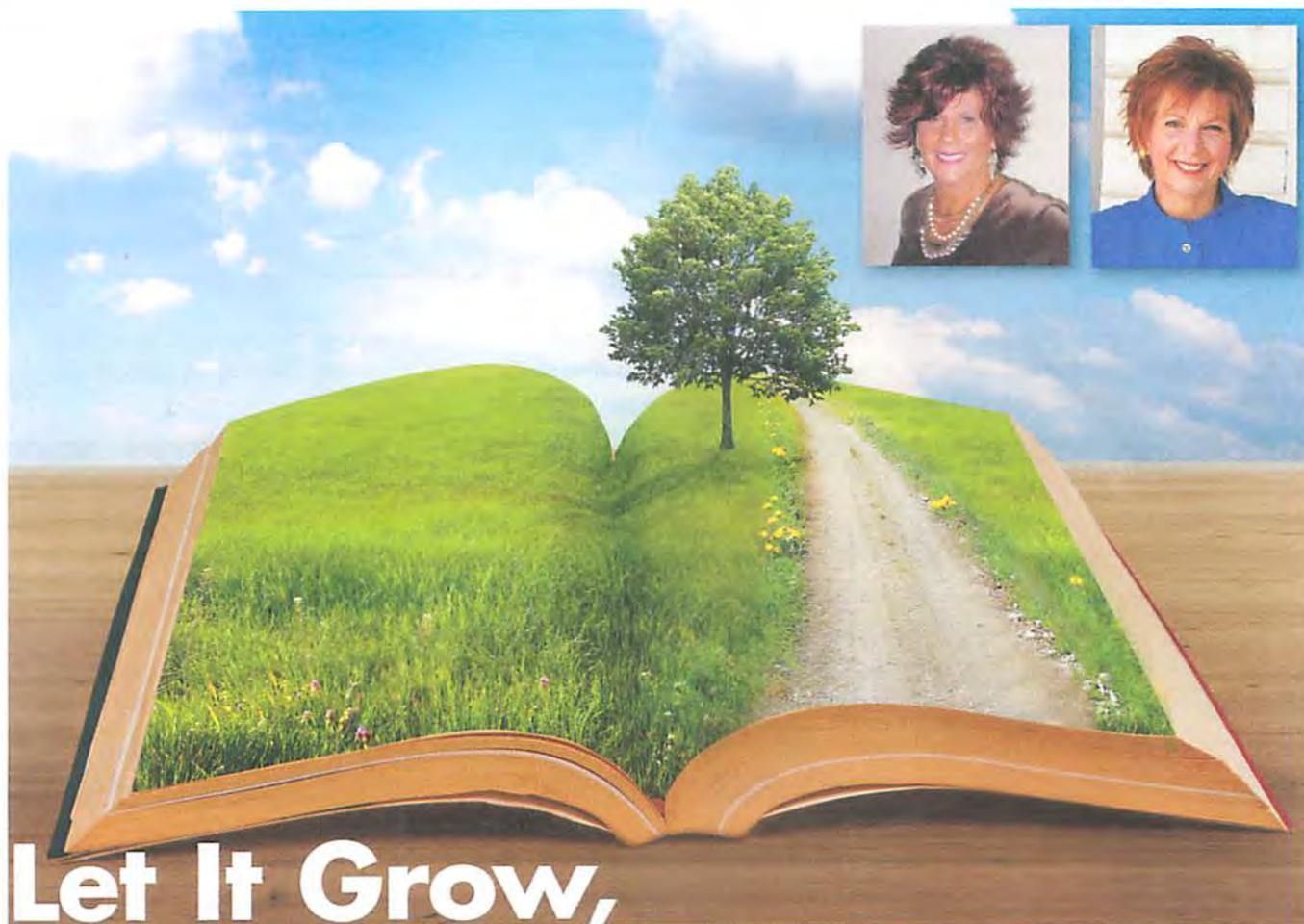
VERSION 2

For the last 18 months I’ve been having a lot of problems with one of my coworkers who appears to continually undermine my efforts. I’ve bought a number of books, talked to some people, but nothing has worked. In a workshop I had the opportunity to read your story and in 30 minutes of discussion about it, I realized that the reason my actions weren’t working is because I was misinterpreting my coworkers’ behavior. He was just abiding by the mandatory rules. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to have this insight and to craft different action steps.

VIGNETTE

A brief, often elegant incident or scene, depicted as in a play or movie, or a short descriptive piece (rendered in third person).

“Jim, I’m having trouble looking at a couple of databases. I keep getting messages that tell me I don’t have access.” Jim replies, “Oh, we’ve just implemented our new cyber security scheme. It’s a requirement of Homeland Security. I say, “Well, I have a problem—a real live support issue that needs to be addressed right now.” Jim counters with, “You’ll have to get me some sort of documentation for the permission. Then it’ll have to go through the proper channels and be approved by a committee. You know, I really don’t have time to deal with this right now.” I say, “thanks.” And hang up. Right then and there I know I’ll have to go around Jim.



Let It Grow, Let It Grow, Let It Grow

Gaining Members Through Telling Stories

Stories are the most effective and powerful form of narrative structure (other “forms” include examples, anecdotes, case studies, and the like). Why? Our brains are hard-wired to collect, store and recall situations in story form.

Imagine you are part of one of four field experiments*. The experiments are not important. What matters is the envelope you are given afterward. In each envelope are five, \$1 bills and a letter from a charity requesting an anonymous donation. The first letter highlights the organization and data surrounding its relief programs. The second letter is only a story about the plight of a young girl and the difference the organization’s services made in her

life. The third letter combines the story with the data.

Which letter triggered the most monies? If you answered the second, you are correct. People gave more than twice as much as the other experiment participants. This study reinforced what Kendall Haven demonstrates though 350 research studies in his book, *Story Proof* (2007, Libraries Unlimited): Stories are the most effective and powerful form of narrative structure (other “forms” include examples,

anecdotes, case studies, and the like). Why? Our brains are hard-wired to collect, store and recall situations in story form.

Now, which letter garnered the most monies after this? The answer: Neither. Statistically the first and third letters sparked the same small amount. How did this happen? The researchers concluded that data diminishes the emotional impact of a story. Why? While in thinking/analytic mode, people could not emotionally connect or sympathize with the child's plight. Additionally, people connect best with an "identifiable" person, not a group.

What Does This Mean To You?

Every association seeks the secret sauce — how to create the right conditions so current and prospective members open their wallets and hand over monies for membership dues. Sending e-mails touting the association's benefits and services is not going to do it. Neither are traditional member endorsements. Telling prospects they are going to miss a future opportunity will not either. Forget data and facts; even in the shortest of short-term memory, they are not remembered.

To get people to take action, you need to engage them beyond their intellect. You need to pull at their hearts and spirits to get them to want what you offer. The only way to do this is through story. Especially in today's world when keeping members is more critical than ever.

EXAMPLE: Our Association's Memorable "Member" Experience Stories (Kentucky League of Cities)

Several years ago, Glenn Caldwell, mayor of Williamstown, Ky., casually told his son, Brent, a police officer in another town, about a safety grant he had received through the Kentucky League of Cities (KLC) that underwrote most of the cost of ballistic vests for his town's police officers. Little did he know that eight months later his son would be shot in the line of duty — and survive — because Brent had told his own police chief

Types of Stories

Associations are best served by harnessing two categories of stories: individual stories from their members and stories that highlight various aspects of

the association. Imagine having an easily searchable database of these stories at your disposal to use in a variety of membership media (print, web, social media, presentations, etc.).

Individual	Association
Where I Came From Stories: Specific stories about milestone events in your life that made a difference in who you are today.	Founding Story: The story about that moment when the founder(s) knew unequivocally that the association needed to be started.
What I Value and Prize Stories: Experiences depicting specific core values and guiding principles that define what is important to you.	What We Stand for Stories: Experiences depicting specific core values, guiding principles and brand themes that define the overall association.
What I Do Stories: Memorable moments in your work life that define how you spend your time.	What We Do Stories: Memorable moments that highlight facets of your association's products and services.
Future Story: What you believe the future holds for you based on your own personal vision. It is the future you are creating for yourself.	Future Story: A future state of being, told as though fully realized. It could be the association's vision, a breakthrough strategy, or a project vision. It is the future you and your members are co-creating.
My Personal Success Stories: Your experiences over the years that have resulted in favorable outcomes.	Our Internal Success Stories: Group and individual experiences resulting in favorable association outcomes (not all may be sharable externally).
Overcoming Barriers Stories: Experiences throughout life where you have successfully surmounted fears or obstacles.	Overcoming Barriers Stories: Experiences where groups or individuals have successfully surmounted fears or obstacles inside or outside the association.
My Memorable "Member" Experiences Stories: Noteworthy situations you had as an association member, and those you heard about through others.	Our Association's Memorable "Member" Experiences Stories: Noteworthy situations with members that illuminate a specific message.

about what his father had secured for his town's officers. The police chief pursued and received his own safety grant through KLC to purchase the same vests; a vest Brent wore on the day he was shot.

A shortened version of the story has been used in a variety of KLC advertisements. Longer versions exist for internal member communications, public presentations and for other membership and branding ("what we stand for"

stories) media. As well, KLC honored Brent with a newly created award, called "Hometown Hero," honoring outstanding public service. About 1,100 local and state government leaders, business people, and community leaders in Kentucky attended the awards luncheon. This garnered KLC significant media attention for its efforts, thus reinforcing the organization's role and importance with existing city members and other non-member cities.

EXAMPLE: What We Do Stories (National Storytelling Network)

Within two days of the 2004 mega earthquake and tsunami hitting Southeast Asia, National Storytelling Network (NSN) members were planning public Story Tsunami storytelling concerts around the US to raise money for relief efforts. Emails flew around the nation at lightning speed among members and other storytellers, enlisting their help, while modeling the values of healing, compassion, inclusion, resiliency, hope,

and reciprocity that storytellers hold so dear.

The concerts included professional and amateur storytellers telling stories from Sumatra, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, the Maldives, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Somalia. Bethlehem, PA even held a 12-hour Story Tsunami marathon. All of the concerts were based on the Tellabration model (i.e., a night, or about the Saturday before Thanksgiving,

to celebrate the art of storytelling held in cities and towns world-wide).

The Story Tsunami concerts were the brainchild of NSN member Lee-Ellen Marvin. With the help of NSN and many storytellers, the events raised \$56,460, an amazing volunteer effort. Today, the Story Tsunami story is periodically shared to point out to current and potential NSN members the difference that NSN and storytellers make in the world.

EXAMPLE: Future Story (American Legion Auxiliary)

After the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) crafted a five-year strategic plan, the Oversight Committee held a Real-Time Strategic Change Event in April 2008 for several hundred leaders and volunteers to embrace its new mission, vision and breakthrough strategies. In the vision portion of the event, story was used in several ways.

First, the current president told a personal story based on the prompt: Tell me about a time in your life when you greatly resisted a change, and when you came to embrace it, you found there were many benefits

for yourself. Her main message was, “stretch beyond your comfort zone.” After individual table groups processed the story’s meaning for themselves, three incoming presidents shared a single future story they had written together titled, “We Have a Dream.” This story solidified a common vision for the upcoming years.

To introduce the three breakthrough strategies, the teams that fleshed out project plans for them presented individual eight-minute skits illuminating how the future would look when their breakthrough was

fully implemented five years later. These were followed by an “envisioning the future” activity—the creation of collages by each table group, depicting their views on the organization’s future given what they heard. These collages were placed around the room for everyone to view the next morning.

The formal stories were captured on videotape so they could be communicated to others throughout ALA as a means of inspiring members to continue with the organization and to recruit others to join based on what the future held.

In Closing

Tracking membership growth data on individual story examples like these three is difficult at best. With a coordinated strategy and plan for capturing stories and using them, success can be measured over time. Keep in mind:

1. You need to ask the right story prompts to get the right stories.
2. Not all stories are worth capturing. Take time to learn how to identify which stories are the most

compelling and have memorable key points.

3. Story is a science as much as it is an art form. Just because we talk in story does not mean we have the requisite skills to capture, craft and relay them properly. Organizations that have been most successful in this arena have secured training in a variety of story techniques (story prompts, story listening, story triggers, story selection, story crafting, story delivery, and so on).

As the old saying goes, “Whoever tells the best story wins.” What are you going to do today to ensure prospects and current members send membership dollars to your association versus the one down the street?

*Small, D., G. Loewenstein, and P. Slovic. “Sympathy and callousness: The impact of deliberative thought on

donations to identifiable and statistical victims.” *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 102 (2007) 143–153. © Copyright 2011 Lori L. Silverman and Karen Dietz.

Lori Silverman is a strategist and keynote speaker. Check out her books, *Stories Trainers Tell* and *Wake Me Up When the Data Is Over: How Organizations Use Stories to Drive Results* available at www.wakeupmycompany.com. She can be reached at www.partnersforprogress.com.

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