



## 10 STORYTELLING TIPS TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS, PROJECT OR CAUSE

*"People will forget what you tell them, but will never forget how you make them feel." —  
Maya Angelou*

### Introduction: Why storytelling?

Throughout history, storytelling has been used to share knowledge, wisdom, and values. Stories have taken many different forms. Stories have been adapted to each successive medium that has emerged, from the circle of the campfire to the silver screen, and now the computer screen." *Leslie Rule, Digital Storytelling Association*

No matter what stage of development you are at with your business or what form your story takes, stories are important -Your story, your product's story(s), your client's story. Stories are a cornerstone of building trust and relationships. The more authentic and ironically narrow it's voice that speaks to "your truest audience" and how it benefits them, the more effective. Likewise, the more it makes others FEEL that their life (or business) would improve in some way by learning more, furthering their connection with you, or better yet purchasing your services or funding your project, the better.

Contrary to what you may think, communicating in person and building relationships is not a dying art, nor is it an outdated means to share stories. Storytelling is however (as the opening quote suggests) evolving new forms, in parallel with the growth of the online world.

To align with the evolution of these trends and leverage the power of story to grow from where you are to where you want to be, below are some time tested and innovative tips to consider.

### 1. Different Forms Your Story Takes

Stories are a central part of your message and can be repurposed for the many different forms that your message takes, whether on your website, brochure, video, photo slideshow, elevator speech, press packet, formal presentation or casual conversation. Below are some questions to ask yourself:

- a. Who are you authentically? And, what is your authentic story?
- b. Who specifically are you speaking to? Imagine them in front of you if not already, and speak to them...their pain, their hopes, their desires. People buy outcomes, what are the outcomes?
- c. What are some of *your* words? What words do you resonate with? Are they soft (pathways) or hard (frontiers) or a combination of both?



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- d. What are your key communication points that you can use in any form your message takes?
- e. What story fits for the stage of development you are at? Is it time to evolve your story because you've evolved?

## 2. "The Heroes Journey" is a key ingredient to Storytelling.

According to folklorists and other narrative scholars, the hero's journey forms the basic template for all great stories. Described at length in Joseph Campbell's "The Hero with a Thousand Faces", the hero's journey serves as the tale every culture tells. The journey's path is described in various ways, but in general it includes the call to adventure, a supernatural aide or mentor, initiation by trials and adventures, victory, and return.

### Three key elements:

Whether you are telling your story or someone else's...

- a. **Pit:** The more you go into your vulnerability / authenticity, the more strength and trust you give others. Truth inspires people.
- b. **Search:** In the search you meet the dragon, what is the story of your search for clarity, belief, commitment, health, love...whatever is relevant to your audience. What parts of your search are most relevant to your audience and true to you?
- c. **Breakthrough.** What is the moment of breakthrough, what are the details of this moment? Take people into the moment.

## 3. Speaking your Story: Commonly known as Elevator Pitch now also known as 10 x Story

**10x story** is how you serve "in person", and "on line" so people are clear about how what you do helps them. Within 7 seconds you've captured their attention. For example;

(I help people do\_\_\_\_\_ so they can\_\_\_\_\_ have more\_\_\_\_\_)

It is helping people do something so they can have something. For example;

"What I offer you can help you do what you love, improve your lifestyle, have more money, time, feel better, be something better."



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#### 4. Reading Your Story

Having written forms of your story is also a key ingredient for reaching people. This may be on a brochure, website, contact letter, social media, promotional packet. Look at what key communication points you have developed and craft them into your written materials.

If copywriting is not your strong point, consider hiring someone to do this for you and/or hire a copy editor to provide editing feedback on what you have written. Remember to pay attention to having a consistent theme in all forms of your story. Below are also some copywriting tips from Entrepreneur Magazine;

- a. No matter what form your story or message takes, **know your audience.** Who are you speaking to? What's important to them? Be true to you and make the copy relevant to your audience.
- b. **What is your unique "selling proposition"?** What are the benefits of what you offering to your audience? And how is it different or unique from what others are offering?
- c. **What is your objective?** What action are you trying to get your reader to take?
- d. **Use strong words.** Use words like will and can versus may, maybe, hope, wish, try, but, could, perhaps & strive.
- e. **Write in the present tense** For example; "We created three new programs" versus "Three new programs were created."
- f. **Keep your copy clean and concise.** When you are done, read it aloud. Also, ask someone else to do the same and see if they understand the message. Cut unnecessary words. Use bullet points & subtitles to make it easier to scan.

#### 5. Viewing Video 10 x Story

Every day, people watch hundreds of millions of videos and generate billions of views. According to recent studies, 90% of these people find video helpful in making buying decisions, 82% confirmed that video had a positive impact on their business. In terms of engagement, a more accurate measure of effectiveness, length matters. Videos under 1 minute enjoy 80% retention versus videos 2-3 minutes, which have 60% retention.

With or without statistics, people are more likely to view, then to read your message. Coupled with statistics, video is an increasingly powerful communication vehicle to reach *your* people. -to educate, inspire and attract more of those who are soulfully right for you.



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When creating your **video story**, again draw on visual images and words that your audience will FEEL. Selectively include your consistent communication points and themes and visually speak to the benefits and outcomes for your specific, truest niche.

As appropriate to what you are creating, include your “why, how, what”\*, experience, and knowledge. The shorter, the better. The more you let your audience draw their own conclusions (Seth Godin), the better.” And, plan, plan, plan. Think ahead and apply the concepts about storytelling that you are learning to create a more effective **video story**.

*“As for the future, your task is not to foresee it, but to enable it.”*

*Antoine de Saint Exupery*

Lastly, there is a time to hire a professional and a time to do it yourself (or hire someone to teach you how to do it yourself). As you grow and are ready, consider video marketing on your blog or social media. Creating regular informational video snippets that are of interest to your ideal audience is a growing trend that can offer viral growth to spreading your message and growing your visibility. \*see Tip #10 *Why, How, What*

## **6. Healing Stories / Testimonials:**

“Word of mouth” is one of the most common answers to the question, “How have you gotten your business thus far?” With that said, it simply makes sense to gather spoken, written and video testimonials and stories from happy clients that can be added to your website, brochures, videos and other marketing tools. Hearing and seeing people with results that potential clients are seeking is an important part of your allure to others. It is also key to your relationship and trust building toolkit.

For those testimonials you collect on your own, it is helpful to provide specific questions or an outline of what you are looking for. Again, shorter is sweeter. For video testimonials, although it is possible to create this on your own using your smart phone or simple video camera, for best results in the long run, it may prove more time/cost effective to hire a professional to do it for you.

## **7. Referral Partner Stories:**

Trust and relationship building to grow your client base works, but not just with potential clients. Building a collaborative network of synergistic colleagues and referral partners that know each other’s business’s and stories; care about each other’s work and can effectively communicate the key messages to potential clients is a worthy investment of time in building your business.



To make this more effective, rather than just supplying business cards to each other, take the time to “really know” each other’s work, create a simplified referral partner message that they can share or perhaps even a kit that can make it easier for referral partners to refer business.

Taking it a step further, if you haven’t already, you may want to consider formally building collaborative partnerships and projects where you actively promoting each others work and develop some kind of system for sharing each others work.

## **8. Stories and intentional words that “inspire” versus sales.**

The concept of sales has a not so positive legacy from those “salesy” ones who have tainted its’ name and concept. Reframed however, from selling your product or service, to storytelling or inspiring others to take action on their vision, need, or hope, it takes on a whole new meaning. And, to not “throw the baby out with the bath water” there are some concepts within the traditional sales model that work and are essential to motivate others to “taking action for themselves” through purchasing your services. For example:

- Be clear and direct
- Know your client
- Prepare and continually improve your presentation
- Be passionate and excited
- Guide your clients to decisions
- Know you can always be better

In terms of inspiring others to take action on *their* needs, hopes and goals, some questions to ask yourself and those you are trying to reach are:

- a. What’s your need? Your vision? Your hope? What are you looking for? What would you like?
- b. What’s important to you?
- c. What’s stopping you from taking action?
- d. What is it costing you?
- e. On a scale of 1-10, how committed are you to resolving this?



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## **9. What story from your past are you telling yourself?**

Not only do we all have a story to tell, we get to choose what story from our past, our present and our future that we are telling ourselves that directly impacts the story that will unfold in our lives and businesses. This is not necessarily easy or perhaps even a new concept to you.

However, based on my own experience as I've spiraled through layers of self awareness and transformation over time, I've observed a direct correlation between what is happening in my inner world to what is showing up in my outer world. And, I am 100% convinced that becoming aware of the story(s) we are telling ourselves no matter whence they have come (family of origin, culture, gender, race, age, country, era etc...) is one of the most important storytelling tips that can change the trajectory of your life and business. So, I ask you,

- a. What story(s) are you telling yourself that is working?
- b. What story(s) are you telling yourself that are holding you back from your own potential?
- c. What new story(s) would you like to tell?
- d. And, what support, knowledge or skills do you need in order to do so?



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## 10. Why, How, What?

*“People don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it.”*

*Simon Sinek*

<https://youtu.be/IPYeClTXpxw>



Simon Sinek says it best in this abbreviated YouTube clip about his “Why, How, What concept” also known as “the golden circle.” In short, he offers the proposition that in order to inspire others as leaders of organizations, businesses, causes, whatever it may be, we must communicate from the “inside out.” By starting with the central why, then how, then what.

- **Why:** What is the purpose, cause, or belief? Why should anyone care?
- **How:** How you do it
- **What:** What you do

For example:

### **Outside / In Marketing**

*“We make great computers, they are beautifully designed, simple to use and user friendly, want to buy one?”*

*Typical Marketing Message*

### **Inside / Out Marketing**

*“Everything we do, we believe in challenging the status quo. We believe in thinking differently. (Why) The way we challenge the status quo is by making our products beautifully designed, simple to use and user friendly. (How) We just happen to make great computers, want to buy one?” (What)*

*Apple*

Which version is more inspiring for you?