

# The Power of Effective Storytelling

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What is storytelling?

Why it matters now?

Your storytelling strategy....

## Me & Storytelling?

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- Communications (MA)
- ICD.D (Governance Specialty – Rotman School, University of Toronto)
- Coach (PPCC)
- Story & Pitch Coach, Facilitator



# **What is storytelling?**

Why it matters now

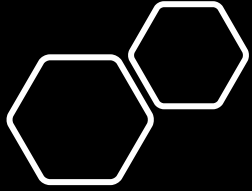
Your storytelling strategy....

**Storytelling:**  
Fact + Experience  
Framed to Connect With  
Your Audience

**Fact**



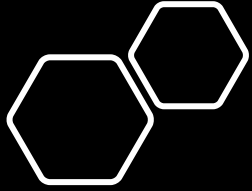
**Experience**



# What is “Experience.....” examples

- “It started with my first chemistry set, a birthday gift from my parents, since then I have never stopped learning about how science shapes us.”
- “Losing my glasses on a European holiday – that’s how it started – I knew there needed to be an easier, cheaper way to create prescription glasses.”
  - (Warby Parker)

*Where: Meetings, interviews, Presentations,  
Pitches, Proposals...*



# Interview example of using a story?

## STAR “Method”

(in response to “Tell Me About Yourself”):

- Situation: What is the story you want to tell?
  - Ambition
  - Resilience
  - Lessons learned
- Task: What was your role in the situation?
  - Hero?
- Action: How did you apply your own skills to the situation?
- Result: What outcome did your actions achieve



What is storytelling?

**Why it matters now?**

Your storytelling strategy....

# Storytelling, everywhere?

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Data Visualization

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Marketing

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Podcasts, Film, Media

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Fundraising

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Personal Branding



# Storytelling & Leadership

STORIES AS A  
MENTAL MAP

(KOUZES AND POSNER, 2012)

MOTIVATE, INSPIRE,  
TRUST BUILDING

(AUVINEN, AALTIO, AND  
BLOMQUIST, 2013)

HELP NAVIGATE  
CHANGE

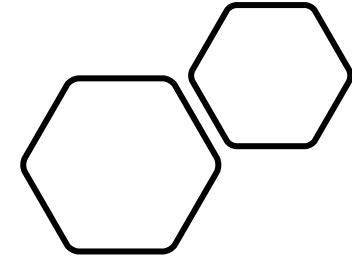
(BOAL & SCULTZ, 2007; GILL  
2011)

CREATING SHARED  
VISION, COMFORT &  
HOPE

(BOLMAN & DEAL, 2013)

SHARE  
ORGANIZATIONAL  
TRADITIONS, TRAIN,  
MENTOR AND  
COACH EMPLOYEES

# Leadership Context



# WHY STORY-TELLING?



Public narrative is a way of

translating values  
into

the motivation for action.

It is one of a  
triad of  
leadership  
skills  
engaging

the hand  
[action]

the head  
[strategy]

the heart  
[narrative]<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Quote from Marshall Ganz, cited on «Story telling & Social Change»(2013), by Paul VanDeCarr, Working Narratives.org  
Graphic by María Cruz, Learning & Evaluation team, Wikimedia Foundation.

# Workplace stories?

- **Who we are....**
  - “Worst flight/job/day/week ever!”
- **Why we are here...**
  - “I just need to get through this day/meeting/week.”
- **About vision....**
  - “Wow, can’t wait for the weekend, vacation, retirement....”

# Better uses of storytelling?

## Common uses

- inspire the organization, team
- set a vision
- teach important lessons
- define culture and values
- who are you & values (what we believe)

## Ideas for stories

- someone who inspired me
- mistakes, failures, risks, rewards
- unexpected opportunities
- lessons learned
- obstacles, wins

BEFORE WE TALK  
STRATEGY

QUESTIONS?





What is storytelling?

Why it matters now?

**Your storytelling  
strategy...**



WHAT'S YOUR  
STORY  
?

# Storytelling Strategy Step 1

Context?	Goal?	Audience?
<p>Interview, elevator pitch, presentation, web content, family dinner?</p> <p>Live audience, big crowd, 1 person, 10 people?</p> <p>Time</p>	<p>Showcase my skills</p> <p>Talk about lessons learned, resilience</p> <p>Pitch an idea</p> <p>Share why I had the best vacation ever</p>	<p>What will matter to them?</p> <p>How will you connect with the audience?</p> <p>Vulnerability, learning, who you are, what you have learned?</p>

# Storytelling Strategy Step 2

## Compose

Presentation, pitch, story, response to interview question

Bullet points or more detailed

## Audience & Goal

What do they need – the essentials to hear your point?

How are you connecting with them?

## Let Go

Edit

- Too much detail?
- Show, don't tell
- Distill to the essentials for impact

# 5

## *tips on the art of storytelling in business*



1

### Uncover your stories

- Look at day-to-day events you take for granted
- Draw on real-life examples

2

### Get your company values across

- Work out how you are least like the competition and tell that story

**Our brains are more engaged when listening to stories**

3

### Make them colourful

- Have a beginning, middle and end
- Provoke an emotional reaction
- Appeal to people's lifestyles, problems, interests & needs



**"65% of convos are made up of personal stories and gossip" Hsu.**

4

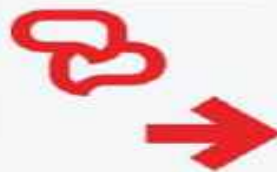
### Use the appropriate format

- Don't just use words
- Make content digestible whatever the format
- Make stories shareable

5

### Leave people wanting more...

- Give people a reason to come back
- Consider teasers
- Give them more content when they return



Uncover stories  
Share values  
Be engaging  
Format  
Create curiosity

# Communication & Storytelling Pitfalls?

- You know too much
- Not everything matters to the audience
- The way you experienced something is not necessarily how they need to hear it....
- Too many facts, too much experience?
- **More connection, less convincing**



# Recap

## **What is storytelling?**

Fact + Experience Reframed For An Audience

## **Why it matters now?**

Connecting with Your Audience - Memorable & Sticks....

## **Your storytelling strategy....**

Audience, Context, Goal  
Compose, Revisit Audience/Goal, EDIT – LET GO

Practice – you have more than one story....



# QUESTIONS?

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Executive Centre

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

 /John Molson Executive Centre

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**Extras**

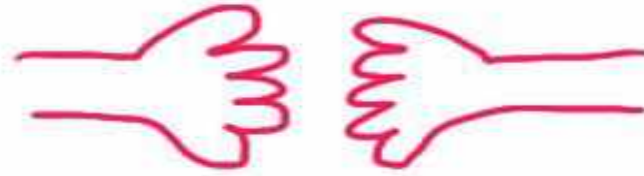


to inspire

to teach

# Why we tell stories

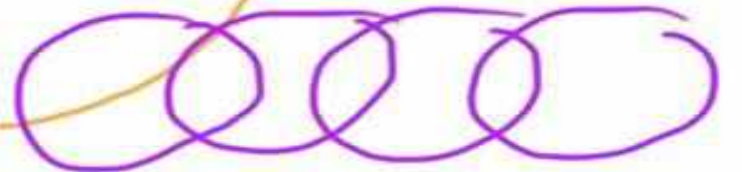
to learn



To connect

To share information

To make things stick



# HOW STORYTELLING AFFECTS THE BRAIN

## NEURAL COUPLING

A story activates parts in the brain that allows the listener to turn the story in to their own ideas and experience thanks to a process called neural coupling.

## MIRRORING

Listeners will not only experience the similar brain activity to each other, but also to the speaker.



## DOPAMINE

The brain releases dopamine into the system when it experiences an emotionally-charged event, making it easier to remember and with greater accuracy.

## CORTEX ACTIVITY

When processing facts, two areas of the brain are activated (Broca's and Wernicke's area). A well-told story can engage many additional areas, including the motor cortex, sensory cortex and frontal cortex.

# Examples of Visual Storytelling



“ I'M A BIG BELIEVER IN PLANNED GIVING AS A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO **GIVE BACK.** IT'S A MEANS OF ALLOCATING FUNDS TO THE CAUSES YOU CARE ABOUT BEYOND YOUR **LIFETIME.** ”

— Christine Lengvari, B.Sc. 72, President and Chief Executive Officer, Lengvari Financial Inc.



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**YOUR LEGACY**  
**YOUR PLAN**

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To learn more about Christine's story, watch the video at: [concordia.ca/plannedgiving](http://concordia.ca/plannedgiving)



If this **bucket** represents all the world's water

then this **cup** represents the amount of potential fresh water



however, just **one teaspoon** of that is available for us to use, via lakes, rivers and underwater reservoirs as groundwater



 **WaterAid**

Beneath the Surface: the State of the World's Water 2019

# Data Visualization

- [Google trends videos](#)
- [Examples of Storytelling & Data Visualization](#)