

What is a story?

setting

believably sets up the conflict

In business terms:
Market landscape
today

conflict

keeps the reader's interest

In business terms:
Obstacles to
creating change

resolution

credibly addresses the conflict

In business terms:
How your company
addresses them

outcome

something must be different

In business terms:
The ultimate benefit

Why use stories:

- To break barriers
- To put information into context
- To be persuasive
- To make an emotional connection
- To enliven a presentation of facts and figures
- To keep you foremost in people's minds
- To give you control of the spotlight

How to use stories:

- Spark transformations
- Build community
- Ignite innovation
- Learn (and unlearn) from experiences
- Share values
- Create and promote culture
- Build organizational capacity
- Shape and speed action

Where to use stories:

- Corporate histories
- Business plans and proposals
- Product development and launches
- Product messaging
- Case studies and success stories
- Customer and employee profiles
- Executive profiles
- Sales and training materials
- Newsletters
- Magazine articles
- Advertising copy

Qualities of a story:

- Narrative—a beginning, middle and end
- Suspense—something that holds our interest and makes us want to find out what happens next
- Visual details—we can picture what takes place
- Emotional content—such as fear, greed, anger, happiness and love
- Credibility—a trustworthy voice or narrator
- Optimism—faith in the ability to triumph over obstacles

Some kinds of stories:

- Legend
- Fable
- News
- Humorous
- Anecdote
- History

Corporate Storytelling

Recommended Reading

Strategic Stories: How 3M is Rewriting Business Planning, by Gordon Shaw, Robert Brown and Phillip Bromiley, Harvard Business Review, May-June 1998 issue, Reprint 98310

Why Every Company Needs A Story, Edward O. Welles, Inc. Magazine, May 1996, pp. 69

The Story Factor, Annette Simmons, 2000, Perseus Publishing

The Power of Stories When Cultures Merge, Johnny Harben, Journal of Strategic Communications Management, issue 10, pp. 16-26

The Cluetrain Manifesto: The End of Business as Usual, Rick Levine, Christopher Locke, Doc Searls and David Weinberger, 2001, Perseus Publishing.

Telling Stories, Beth Ann Holden, New Age's Body & Soul, 1999, pp. 31-36

Tell Me a Story, Beth Ann Holden, Incentive, Feb. 1999, pp. 65-66

Storytelling in Organization: Facts, Fictions and Fantasie, Yiannis Gabriel, 2000, Oxford University Press

Managing by Storying Around: A New Method of Leadership, David Armstrong, 1992, Doubleday Dell Publishing

The Leadership Engine: How Winning Companies Build Leaders At Every Level, Noel M. Tichy, 1997, Harper Business

Corporate Legends and Lore: The Power of Storytelling as a Management Tool, Peg C. Neuhauser, 1993, PCN Associates

The Springboard: How Storytelling Ignites Action in Knowledge-Era Organizations, Stephen Denning, 2000, Butterworth-Heinemann

The Dream Society, Rolf Jensen, The Futurist, May-June 1996 issue

The Nike Story? Just Tell It!, Eric Ransdell, Fast Company, Issue 31, p. 44

Recommended Web Sites

www.aha-writers.com

www.storywork.com

www.groupjazz.com

www.stevedenning.com

www.sparknow.com

www.cluetrain.com

www.storytellingfoundation.net