

BUSINESS STORYTELLING

# STORY POWER

Leverage Narrative Structure to Organize Your Ideas and Persuade Your Audience

Workbook Edition



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INSTITUTE

# STORY POWER

**P** = PURPOSE

**O** = ORGANIZE YOUR IDEAS

**W** = WRITE FOR THE EAR, NOT THE EYE

**E** = ENGAGE THE AUDIENCE

**R** = REVISE

NOTES:

# **P** = PURPOSE

## YOUR AUDIENCE

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The most important question you need to ask yourself while preparing for a speaking opportunity is “Who is my audience?”. Until you understand the composition of your audience, how do you know what to say to them?

**What do I know about my audience?**

**What do they know and not know about my topic?**

**What are their pain points/challenges/obstacles?**

# AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

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There are a few more questions you must ask in order to tailor your message to your audience. As you design your speech or presentation, keep your desired outcome in mind with these questions:

**What action do I want my audience to take as a result of my presentation?**

**What do they need to know in order to do what I want them to do?**

**What do they need to feel to do what I want them to do?**

**What do I want them to takeaway from the presentation?**

## CORE MESSAGE

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If you want to encourage an audience to embrace change or take action, what you really need to do in your presentations is to take the audience from one place in their thinking to another. The core message (short and only one sentence) is the answer to the questions:

- **Where do I want to take my audience throughout my presentation?**
- **How do I want them to think/act differently after my presentation?**

**At the end of this presentation, I want the audience to...**

# O = ORGANIZE YOUR IDEAS

## AUDIENCE JOURNEY MAP

Many people resist outlines because they seem old-school and low-tech. However, a simple outline is the foundation of ideas that support your presentation. An outline will give you a simple, clear structure.



NOTES:

# ORGANIZE YOUR IDEAS

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## What > So What > Now What

- ▶ **What:** Breast cancer awareness fundraiser.
- ▶ **So What:** Breast cancer impacts everyone – all ethnicities, demographics, etc.
- ▶ **Now What:** Request to participate in the fundraiser.

## Past > Present > Future

- ▶ **Past:** Last year, our overall retention numbers were down across all departments.
- ▶ **Present:** This year, we are on target to increase retention. This is how we did it...
- ▶ **Future:** If we continue to take the steps outlined, our retention numbers should double next year.

## Problem > Solution > Benefit

- ▶ **Problem:** Most people report poor sleep using other pillows.
- ▶ **Solution:** Our pillow can provide the sleep people lack.
- ▶ **Benefit:** As a result of better sleep, people will experience better health, more productivity at work, etc.

## Problem > Context to the Problem > Your Solution

- ▶ **Problem:** We've experienced a higher cost to print promotional materials this quarter.
- ▶ **Context to the Problem:** Digging into the information, we've found that paper and ink are more expensive. In addition, we lost our partnership with the printing company.
- ▶ **Your Solution:** Propose to partner with a printing company, saving us money and ensuring that our promotional materials look top-notch.

## What > Why > How

- ▶ **What:** Funding increase requested for the remainder of the quarter.
- ▶ **Why:** Based on early projections for marketing spend, we need funding to cover the last quarter ads.
- ▶ **How:** Variety of options – removing spend from TV ads to social media, etc.

## Situation > Opportunity or Complication > Resolution

- ▶ **Situation:** We're experiencing low team member morale – across all departments.
- ▶ **Opportunity or Complication:** Due to the hiring freeze, most team members are working in multiple positions.
- ▶ **Resolution:** Lift the hiring freeze to create additional support for all team members.

## BODY STEPS 1, 2 AND 3

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The body of your talk will include three main sections. Remember, you are taking your audience on a journey. Here are a few different ideas of how to use the three steps to support your message and take your audience on a journey...

### Step 1

### Step 2

### Step 3



# INTRODUCTION

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**Hook:** Audiences retain best what they experience first. Give the audience something interesting and exciting, and they will pay attention and be "primed" for the influence of your words. This is where your hook comes in. Here's how you can add a PUNCH to the opening of your presentation:

- P**ersonal Experience (stories connect and engage the audience)
- U**nexpected Revelation (reveal something unexpected)
- N**ovel Example (show or tell something that's never been heard or shared)
- C**hallenging Example (challenge conventional wisdom or the audience's assumptions)
- H**umorous Perspective (use humor to engage the audience with a shared laugh)

**What's Your Hook?**

**Greeting:** Your greeting is essential to your introduction because it presents you and your topic to the audience. After you've "hooked" the audience, share your name, where you work, and a short bio about why you are an expert on the topic.

**What's Your Greeting?**

**Call To Adventure:** Here, you tell the audience about the journey you'll be taking together and how you'll get there. You may prefer to think of it as a blueprint of the presentation, showing how all the ideas fit together. It's when you share why the topic is important to you, why it should be important to the audience, and the three steps you'll take to get them to the end of the journey.

**What's Your Call To Adventure?**

# CONCLUSION

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**Take it Back to the Beginning:** Return to your original Core Message.

**What's Your Core Message?**

**Brief Recap:** Repetition is important to learning and retention. A quick summary of key concepts has value.

**What's Your Brief Recap?**

**Clincher:** Use a PUNCH technique to clinch the presentation and leave the audience wanting more.

**What's Your Clincher?**

**Call To Action:** Be clear, direct, and specific to inspire the audience. A good Call to Action helps the audience understand how they can be a part of the solution and initiate change. End on a positive note to give people hope and encouragement.

**What's Your Call To Action?**

# SLIDE DECK MAPPING

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If you use slides, now is the time to map the slide deck using the outline you created. In your slide program, note in large text what you plan on putting on each slide: data, a statistic, a big message, a single sentence, an image, etc.

<b>INTRO</b>	<b>STEP 1</b>	<b>STEP 2</b>	<b>STEP 3</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>
Hook Image				Back To The Beginning
Hook Quote				Brief Recap
Greeting Name and Title				Clincher
Call To Adventure Agenda				Call To Action

NOTES:

# **W** = WRITE FOR THE EAR, NOT THE EYE

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In order to keep it simple, you need to speak like you normally do when you speak at your best. The words you add to the outline should sound exactly like your speaking voice. And make sure to keep your audience in mind. Don't use jargon your audience won't understand.

Review your outline and determine what concepts you will need to simplify or jargon that you will need to explain.

NOTES:

# **E** = ENGAGE THE AUDIENCE

You can change how you interact with your audience by asking them questions or allowing them to ask you questions, getting them moving, or otherwise shaking up the rhythm of your presentation.

## TOP 10 TECHNIQUES FOR AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

1. Ask effective questions. Use inclusive framing by asking the audience effective questions during the presentation. Ask your questions in such a way that most audience members would be able to respond. Inclusive questions are great for building a shared identity among the crowd.
2. Allow time for response. Listen to answers. Whether you are communicating one-on-one, in a small group, or with a large audience, look for opportunities to hear from people – and then truly listen to the meaning of what they say.
3. Lead them in a game. Need to keep your attendees focused? Tap into their competitive sides. Puzzles or riddles, crosswords, memory games, and ordering tasks are great ways to keep your attendees engaged and on-task. If you can teach or reinforce a concept through a game or activity, more people will comprehend it and remember it.
4. Group activities. Encouraging your audience to actively participate in a group activity is one effective way to ensure your message gets through. Set up a demonstration that audience members participate in. Ask for volunteers to write on a flip chart, track the time, or record action items. Engage them physically by asking them to stand, raise their hands, clap, etc. Create a “Round Robin” discussion to hear from everyone, especially when brainstorming or seeking opinions.
5. Tell stories or use metaphors. Try to make your material relatable to everyday life by using real examples, case studies, and creative metaphors. Metaphors and stories are central to the way the memory operates. A great story will linger in the minds of your attendees much longer than a chart.
6. Polls and quizzes. You can do a paper or online survey before the presentation to engage your audience in thinking before they arrive. Conduct a poll. Take your questions further by making them multiple choice or true/false and counting up the answers. Or just make an observation based on raised hands. Quiz them. As school kids, most of us were afraid of pop quizzes. But adults love a quiz when it’s just for fun. Nothing engages an audience like a little friendly competition!
7. Remember the KISS your audience rule (“keep it simple, sweetie”). Summarize your idea with a short sentence or slogan. Use a numbered list or a countdown. Channel your inner David Letterman and organize your communication in a way that lets people count the progression. Use an acrostic. It may seem silly or overly simplified, but this technique supports how the brain functions.
8. Provide recognition and reward. If it’s a course that you’ve created, let attendees know they will receive personalized certificates to mark their participation. You could also consider extra incentives such as a competition or small prizes for the best participants. Again, tap into those competitive streaks!

9. Plan the setup. Change the room layout. Meeting rooms are always laid out in the same way – rows of tables and chairs. Challenge the convention and surprise your attendees by perhaps providing beanbags instead of chairs, standing podium tables, or tables with just a few chairs to encourage small groups. Consider playing music to set the mood and get attendees energized before your session and during breaks.
10. Use props. Props can make your presentation even more engaging. These could be practical items that metaphorically represent your subject matter (think scales, an abacus, or a mannequin), or they could be ridiculous (try a rubber chicken or a magic wand). Props liven up your session and will help people remember what they learned.

## PLAN YOUR ENGAGEMENT

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Now that you've created the outline for your presentation, it's time to add audience engagement techniques. Go back to your outline and make a note where you might be able to tell a story, ask a question, poll the audience, or do a group activity.

NOTES:

# R = REVISE

Remove all points that don't directly support your idea or message. Most presentations try to include too much.

## 6 POWER PRINCIPLES FOR EDITING

1. Edit for focus. Edit mercilessly if you have written something in an earlier draft that strays from your core message.
2. Edit for clarity. Ordering your presentation logically is one of the best ways to ensure clarity. Start with one point and build out from there.
3. Edit for concision. Be prepared to cut your presentation down if your core message can be conveyed in a better way. For each element of your presentation, ask yourself, "Is this essential?" If the answer is no, cut it.
4. Edit for continuity. Your aim is to avoid abrupt transitions where you can lose audience members. One point should feed naturally into the next.
5. Edit for variety. Audiences like variety. It makes the presentation more enjoyable and helps you appeal to different types of thinkers.
6. Edit for impact and beauty. Ensure your content stands out by surprising the audience, creating vivid images, appealing to their senses, etc.

**How will you revise your presentation?**

## ACTION PLAN

This section provides a place for you to create an action plan. This plan should include behaviors that you want to stop, start and continue. You can refer back to this to assess your progress.

STOP	START	CONTINUE



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We look forward to supporting you on your journey!



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