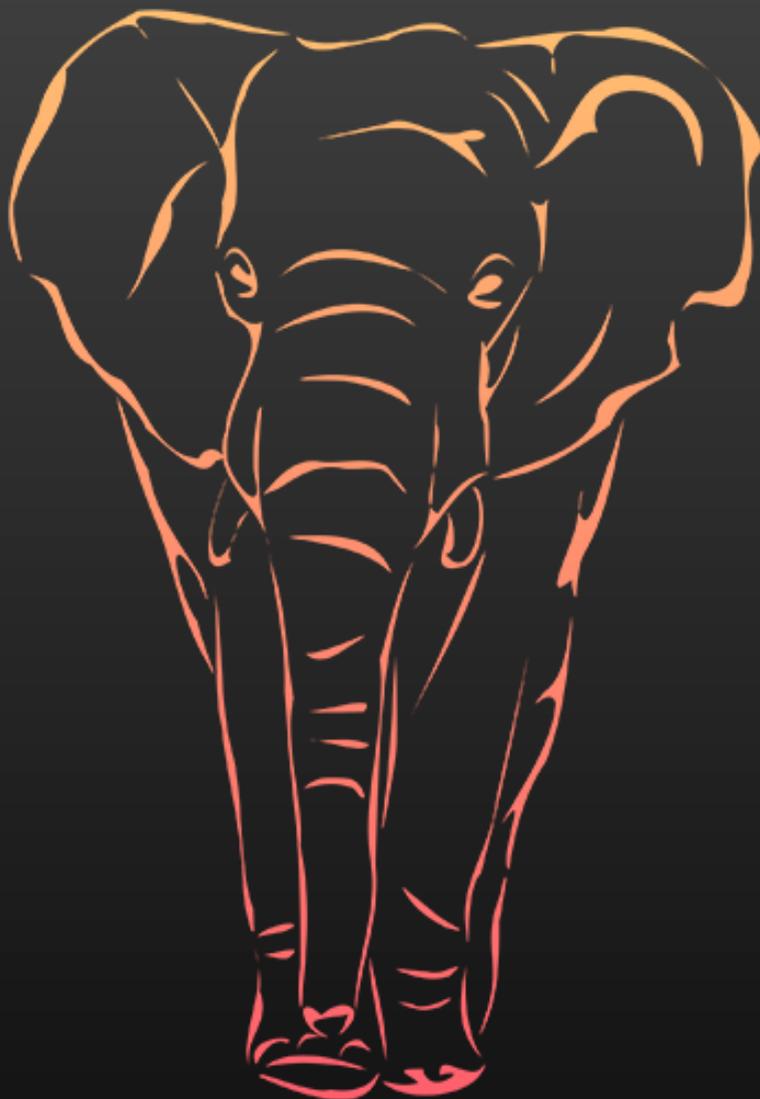


THE 5TH ELEPHANT



THE IMPORTANCE
of STORYTELLING

BY JEREMY THOMAS & TOM MACROKANIS

“THE 5TH ELEPHANT - THE IMPORTANCE OF STORY TELLING

By Jeremy Thomas and The Elephant & Co team.

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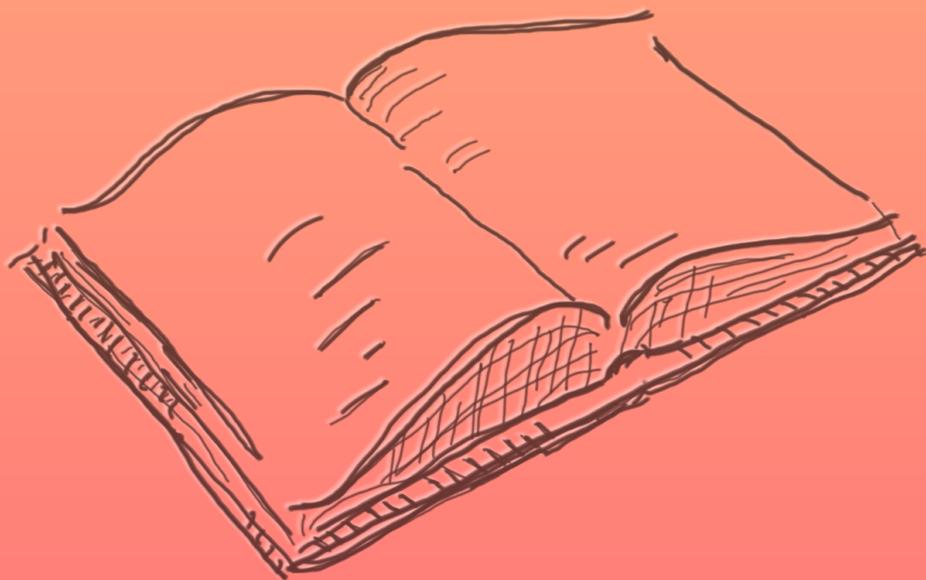
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INTRO- DUCTION



THE 5TH ELEPHANT - *The Importance of Storytelling*

Storytelling or 'the narrative' is something often mentioned in businesses, especially in the marketing department. We are always looking for that 1%er that will give us an edge in capturing our audience's attention and imagination. But the truth is, storytelling has been critical for a long time now. We only need to look at some of the great speakers, thinkers and leaders to understand the success that good story telling can bring. Each of the following leaders had the skill of storytelling and used it in their leadership and with their 'followship'.

- Aristotle- It was through Aristotle's mentoring that Alexander the Great gained his knowledge which he would eventually spread as he conquered villages, towns and countries of the known world. Alexander the Great's dominance across the world helped to shape the western world and Aristotle's teachings became the standardised teachings of the Western World. Aristotle's true storytelling talent came about thanks to his involvement in Plato's academy. It was through his storytelling that Aristotle was able to captivate the imagination of his audience so successfully.
- Jesus Christ - His stories were often told in the form of a parable. These stories he created, built a following that spans across billions of people and has existed for thousands of years. His stories give many people a vision, guidance and direction for their lives. His stories spread valuable life lessons indirectly, instead of just telling people what to do. His stories let people find their own way, this is what makes his stories powerful and why Christianity has such a large following.

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- Winston Churchill- His ability to tell a story changed the world during the second world war. He lead his people to victory through his communicative skills inspiring his soldiers to outlast their opponents.
- Peter J Daniels- Having authored over 20 books, many business education programs and spoken at thousands of venues across the world, Peter Daniels is a master storyteller of the last 50 years. A large amount of his wealth has been built through his ability to tell a story. Dr Norman Vincent Peale has coined Mr Daniels as “the best platform speaker in the world”
- Pixar- Creating box office hits that capture the imaginations of everyone, Pixar make billions of dollars every year out of storytelling. Through using a simple method they have found a new way to build a story and has created the tried and true recipe for all the stories written since Toy Story in 1995. The technique is a ‘fill in the blank’ and goes like this:

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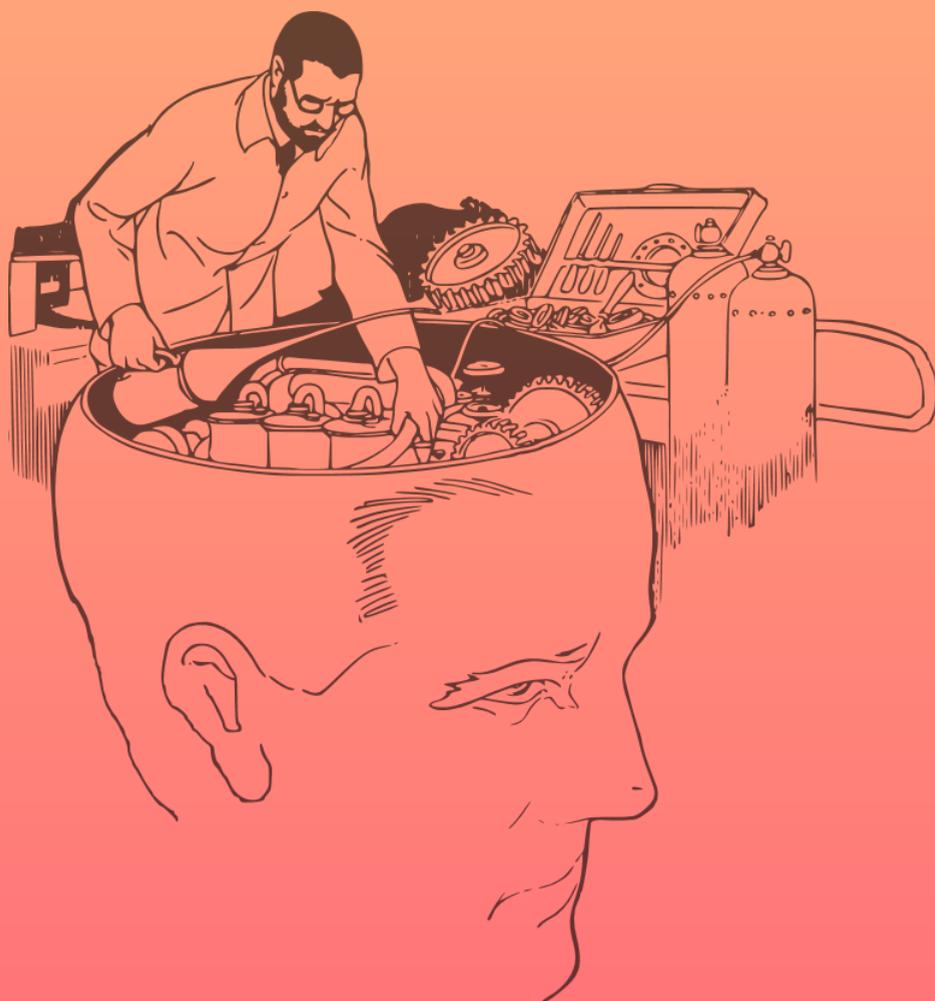
Today, we think we are starting to understand the importance within our organisations of how critical it is to use stories properly. A story gives our 'brand' soul, that helps us reach a multitude of generations and make a company relatable.

A good storyteller is enjoyable to listen to, but will not always build the fire and drive in you to go out and take action. However, a great story or storyteller, motivates people. They compel people to change and help to drive the listener to take action. Stories, in our opinion, are one of the greatest weapons in a leader's arsenal. Used correctly by leaders they might just find themselves having huge impact and influence on the people around them, helping them to succeed personally and professionally.

So the 5th Elephant - storytelling, is a critical skill to have. We believe too many business owners and leaders don't possess the skill of storytelling and ignore the fact they need it. A great storyteller has an unfair advantage over those who do not possess this skill. A storyteller does more than create followers, they create a belief. They are able to communicate clearer and more succinctly about their expectations, their motives and inspire their team to move mountains.

This little book has been penned to give focus to the importance of storytelling for business owners and leaders.

THE SCIENCE



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Storytelling truly is one of the most powerful tools anyone can possess. In 2009 Rob Walker, a Journalist, launched a project called the 'Significant Objects Study'. His aim was to test and see if storytelling was truly the most powerful tool anyone could have. So one night he went to his computer and opened up eBay, where he proceeded to order 200 items, all around the \$1 mark and launched his experiment. He was then able to engage with different individuals, all of which wrote a story for each of the 200 items that were purchased off eBay. The aim of the study was to see if he could make any extra money from the items he had bought, simply by adding a story to them. One of the items he bought was a horse's head, and he bought that for 99 cents. Rob placed the horse figurine back up on eBay, this time with a story attached to it. Guess how much money the horse figurine sold for now? \$62.95! All because it now had a story attached to it. At the end of the study when he finished selling all the items he crunched the numbers. After buying all the items for about \$129, Rob had sold all of his items with a story for a massive \$8000. This simple example illustrates how much value a story can add to your brand or business. By having the right story and communicating it in the right way, you too could see results like this.

But how does storytelling have this much impact on the buyer?

Psychologists and neurologists have found that stories release hormones that stimulate parts of the brain. These hormones become the story tellers' best friends. Dopamine, oxytocin and endorphins are the 3 hormones/chemicals that we will explain to you in this book. To illustrate them to you we are going to write a story and explain to you how the chemical released into your brain.

Firstly, Dopamine

"I received a phone call from a company in the United States, asking us to come out and teach their business our E4 theory. Naturally, we jumped at the opportunity, being able to coach such a big company. So we jumped on a plane and headed for the US. We were greeted at the airport by a driver, dressed in a black dinner suit with a white shirt and perfectly polished shoes. Our driver escorted us to our beautiful, black limousine and he then drove us to the office where we met the owner of the company. Once we had arrived we were able to take in the size of this building, and in turn the business we were about to deal with.

We got out of the limo and were greeted by a lady who led us to the lift and pushed the button for the 60th floor. We didn't know it then, but as those solid steel doors shut on the lift, our lives changed completely.

Normally when you are heading to a pitch you know who you are pitching to and after the correspondence with this lady over email and phone I had assumed that because she was the Managing Director that I would be pitching to her. As the lift continued to take us up to the top floor of the building, the lady mentioned that she was not the person I was presenting to. She mentioned that my business partner and I would be meeting with the owners of the company who had founded the company after serving in the Special Forces together. My heart sunk... I knew that the way I was going to pitch was not setup for people like this.

'Ding', the doors opened to the 60th floor, we stepped out to see a blank blue wall with a single white door in the middle of it. I thanked the lady for accompanying us. As we got half way across the corridor, the lady called my name as if she was going to wish us luck. We turned around to hear what she had to say. It was at this point that we weren't sure if she

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is an idiot or a complete genius because she stared straight at me and said....”

We're not going to tell you what she said because we want you to really feel the dopamine. Take a moment to feel everything going on. You probably felt more focused, you were probably more creative, you pictured the lift, the lady, the door, the building and the driver that we were seeing. So how do you realise this chemical? We build suspense and we work towards something constantly. By default storytelling already does this, so just by telling a story you release dopamine into the listeners brain.

Secondly, oxytocin.

If you have ever had a moving personal experience and told it in the form of a story then you have probably released oxytocin into someone's brain. Oxytocin is a chemical that when released into the brain, helps a person feel more human. They become more generous, feel a trust bond as you share vulnerability and humility.

When you read stories that release oxytocin into the brain, you often feel a little closer to the storyteller, sometimes leaving the listener feeling like they have known you for a long time and can trust you.

Finally, endorphins.

Endorphins are released when you make someone laugh. Endorphins help make you more relaxed and become more creative. You become more focused on what is going on around you, because of the situation. You feel good.

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Techniques to build a great story

Since the times of the ancient Greeks, skilled speakers and orators consciously used an array of rhetorical techniques to amplify the power of their words. Orators understand that you have to keep peoples minds actively engaged and processing what is said to have a real impact on the listener. These skills probably sound like they would be extraordinarily hard to aquire, but once you see them in action that will all change. “Perfect Preparation Prevents Poor Performance”, and this is the same with speaking. In a well-planned story you must factor in how you will persuade the audience and then match that with the right techniques.

The first of the techniques is parallelism, a form of repetition, repeating the structure of successive phrases and sentences in a way that achieves a balance and rhythm to what’s being said. Parallelisms are very effective in pre-planned speeches. An example of a planned speech that used parallelisms was Abraham Lincoln and a speech he made while he was President. It went, “... and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from this earth”. The parallelism in the example gives a rhythm and bounce to this section of the speech. It reinforces that the government is here for the people, is owned by the people and is run by the people. This technique is effective even when the keywords or phrase is not repeated consecutively.

Rule of three is a technique that is used to express concepts more completely, emphasize your point and make your message more memorable. Trios, triplets and triads have been used successfully in storytelling throughout history. The rhythm and drama that triplets produce help to make your speech, music or movie more powerful. Triads can be single words, phrases/clauses or sentences. The end of a triad is

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the point of greatest impact.

To follow on with the rule of three's we have 3 examples for you that demonstrate the rule of three:

1. Veni, vidi, vici (I came, I saw, I conquered)-Julius Caesar
2. "Homes have been lost, jobs shed, businesses shattered"-Barrack Obama
3. "Will you believe with me that Australia can be changed, should be changed, must be changed"-Gough Whitlam

The third technique that we believe makes your stories more insightful and interesting for someone is the technique of using a question. Rhetorical questions are ones that don't actually require an answer but are used to reinforce a point. It allows for the storyteller to gain the attention of the audience and this is due to the nature of a question. When you ask a question you capture the curiosity of the audience as they wait to hear your answer. This technique is very versatile and allows almost any statement to be rephrased in the form of a question. For example, instead of "our strategy for the next year will be to..." it would be more engaging to the audience to say, "You may ask, what is our strategy for the next year? And I will tell you what it could be..."

Contrast is another powerful technique that involves using words, phrases and even sentences that puts one concept, idea or thought against the polar opposite. Hard vs Soft, Weak vs Strong, Hope vs Despair. One form of contrast is the use of antitheses. This involves intentionally delivering one idea or thought followed by a contrasting idea directly after. This technique helps a storyteller to truly drive home the point. Another form of contrast is contradiction and involves using the "not this but that" technique. An example of this is in one of US President John F Kennedy's speeches. He states, "Finally, to those nations who would

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make themselves our adversary, we offer not a pledge but a request-that both sides begin anew the quest for peace.

Finally, metaphors evoke strong mental scenery by using comparisons. Unlike similes, 'like' isn't used when the similarities are emphasised. Metaphors allow a speaker to evoke powerful mental pictures in the minds of the audience and to do so with few words. For example, "He was solid as a rock" says a lot about the strength, size and character of the thing your describing. Metaphors are often used in every-day conversation; without extra effort from the conversationalists and are not given any thought. A metaphor can add far more meaning and clarity to your story. An example is from Martin Luther King Jr., " Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice"

The use of the above techniques in storytelling helps a lot when it comes to the delivery, both verbal and written. Having an understanding of the science and function of hormones in the brain, will make your story come alive in no time at all. All you need is practice.

THE POWER



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The power of storytelling is evident in many successful entrepreneurs, businesses and leaders throughout the world. We've learnt from our research and our own leadership's journey that our ability to be able to articulate our own story, or that of our company, is crucial on every level. It is the difference between clarity and confusion. From the CEO to the salesperson, rallying the troops to achieve extraordinary feats or making a seemingly average product or service look like an absolute winner is the power of storytelling. Well-crafted stories can solve problems, inspire people to take action and in some cases transform, motivate and disrupt an industry.

"Storytelling is 'a tool' that takes on the nature of the hands that it is in. In Lincoln's hands, he used it to build a nation. In Jesus' hands, it built a belief in a controlling power greater than one's self that has lasted thousands of years. In Martin Luther King Jr.'s hands the "I have a dream" speech delivered in 1963 helped build a movement to end racism in the US. At the polar end, Adolf Hitler built a following through his persuasive, controlling way. In your hands, what will storytelling do?"

- Jeremy Thomas

Abe the storyteller?

I love the story of Abraham Lincoln. A man who fought through extraordinary adversity to become known as one of the most influential and inspiring US presidents of all time. Through his ability to execute and communicate a story, Lincoln helped build the movement to end slavery to the point of written legislation. A large man, standing at 6'4", Abraham Lincoln had the ability to capture the minds, move their hearts and inspire

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action in people. This gift that Lincoln possessed was a hard earned skill that he learnt from a young age and without knowing. Lincoln's father was a large influence in his life and during Lincoln's upbringing, his family often hosted travelling personalities that would have a huge affect on his thinking. These guests would stay and Abraham Lincoln would sit with his father and listen whilst they exchanged banter about their experiences and life's journey. Sitting there and observing this interaction, Abe started to pick up the skill of storytelling. When Lincoln became a lawyer, he built his reputation on spending time with people, relating to his clients and sharing stories of the latest courtroom proceedings, which fascinated people and helped his reputation as a lawyer grow through word of mouth. Abraham Lincoln's storytelling skills made him intriguing and it helped him capture the attention of the people he was fighting for. People wanted to talk to him and find out what he was doing. Similar, to watching a great sportsman compete in his chosen sport, listening to a great storyteller is easy and enjoyable and often leaves you wanting more. Abraham Lincoln's experiences helped him to develop a strong character, it helped him become a master communicator, and ultimately helped people to believe in him, all the way to the presidency of the US.

Some people would say that storytelling is part art and part science. The Art is the creativity around relating aspects of a story whether characters, plot or theme to help explain another process, problem or event and is the part that most people can do and understand.

The science of storytelling is the planning, testing and refining to understanding how the execution can release hormones in the brain that triggers behaviours in people.

The mark of a great storyteller is when both the art and science aspects are combined. We would take it a step further and say that it is critical to master and 'a must' for any leader to master. It's not a one size fits all skill

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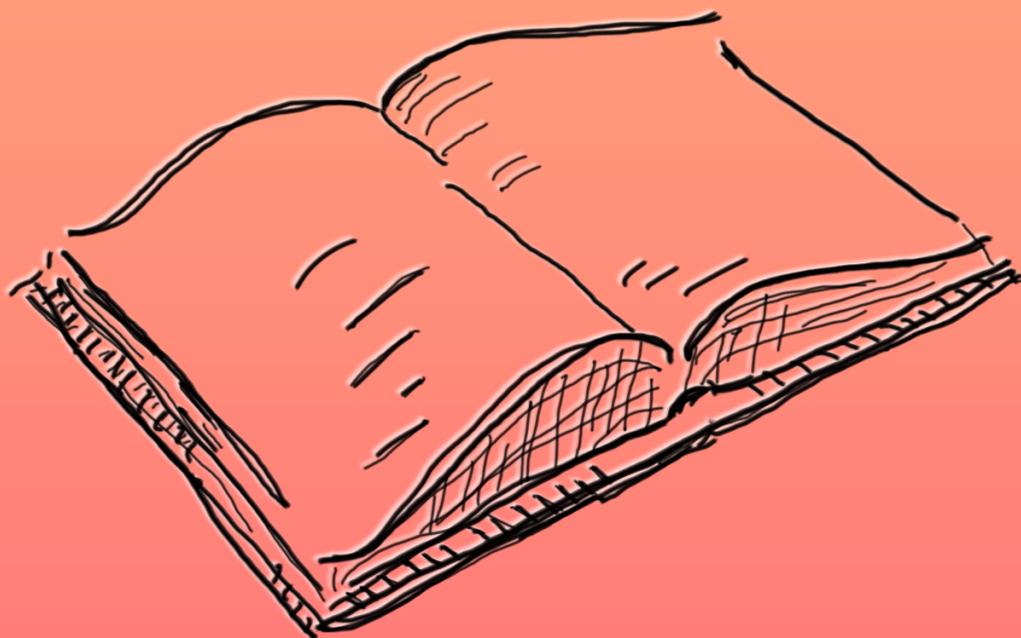
because we are all so different in our skills, abilities and leadership styles because all our journeys are different.

Storytelling requires creativity, imagination, discipline, confidence, authenticity and above all, planning. The difference in your ability as a leader to tell a story well will always be found in your execution. It is said that 45% of the Australian workforce is not engaged meaning they turn up every day and go home; they don't do anything bad but don't do anything overly productive either. Then there is 29% who are actively disengaged, who try to disrupt everything and are what can also be termed a menace. As a leader, when you hear those stats you realise that the odds are well stacked against you. Storytelling becomes a vital tool that the leader needs in their toolkit to turnaround a disengaged team member to an engaged member at the least. Your vision for your business will only be realised if it is owned by your staff and customers. They will own your vision if the story is conveyed well and it resonates with them.

This will only happen through the power of storytelling.

Storytelling

TOOL



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At E&C we have been working tirelessly to build a template that will allow people to rapidly prototype and test their stories, just like we do for products or business ideas and in our coaching. In the same way you wouldn't attempt to build a house, a business or a product without a plan A story is no different. Below is a handy template we have tested, used with clients and is proving to be a helpful tool for leaders and business owners.

How it works?

IDEATE: In this section we plan the story, get a background behind why we are telling it and to who, where we would use it and what it is for. Go through and answer each of the questions to start developing your story.

PROTOTYPE: This is where the magic begins, using the template fill in each part to build the bones of your story.

- Main character - Who is the person that will be referred to? You, your business, the person, a mate, your dad, Scott?
- Attention Grabber -The opening punch line. This is where in one line you summarise the story and provoke curiosity in the person or people your speaking too.
- Why, How, What - We set up the story by speaking directly to the limbic brain first, the area in the brain responsible for decision making. Starting with 'why', will help. In 'why' we want to share a belief and build a vision for the person, not mentioning 'I', the name or anything specific about the business or person we have found to

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be more powerful.

- From 'why' we move to how and what. This is where we start to rationalise the 'why' with 'how' and 'what' we are talking about, see examples below.
- Anecdote - After opening up and setting the scene of the story, we need you to draw on a personal experience that will demonstrate the point you're trying to prove. If this is for a business then the moment you realised the need for your company to exist could be the anecdote. In this section, some key rhetorical techniques will give your story more power. Consider using rhetorical questions, metaphors and contrast.
- Tie to concept -After telling a personal story, if done correctly, the people you have been talking to should be buzzing; having put themselves in your shoes, thanks to dopamine, we need to return them to the reason and logic behind the story. Again, consider using techniques including... Rule of 3, metaphors and contrast.
- Conclusion - Finally we wrap the story up; referring back to the attention grab and reinforcing key points. In this section some key rhetorical techniques which will give your story more power and influence include rhetorical questions, metaphors and contrast

Final tip for writing the prototype

The use of parallelisms throughout the story will help make the story more cohesive and coherent meaning you will have a more succinct, more influential and more inspiring story.

TEST & REVIEW -

Once the story is written you need to actually test your story. As we have mentioned, just writing a story is not actually enough, it needs to be prototyped and tested constantly until you find the magic that connects with the audience. By reading the review questions, take a quick audit of the story after you told it. Finally, make a list of 3 potential changes and then the next day review those changes. Change the story where you need to, and then repeat the testing and review process until you are satisfied with the story. Make sure you include a test audience in this process.

One thing that should be made clear is that you will never end up with the perfect story, the one that you can use in every instance and just relay constantly. Your stories will need to be altered and changed depending on exactly who you are talking to, the setting you are in and what you are trying to tell someone.

IDEATE



Purpose:

Audience:

Setting

Pub/Cafe

Informal but important

Sports Club

Around or with children

Formal event

Other:

Time Restriant

Short-Brief or in passing conervation

Medium-Something the person is interested in

Long-Purpose built conversation for the topic

PROTOTYPE



Main Character

Attention Grabber

Why:

How:

What

Personal Story:

Tie or Conclusion:

TEST & REVIEW



1. Was the setting, audience and length right for the situation?

2. Did the message get across? If no, was it the story or the execution?

Good

Bad

Better

1.

2.

3.

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Changes to be made?

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2.

3.