

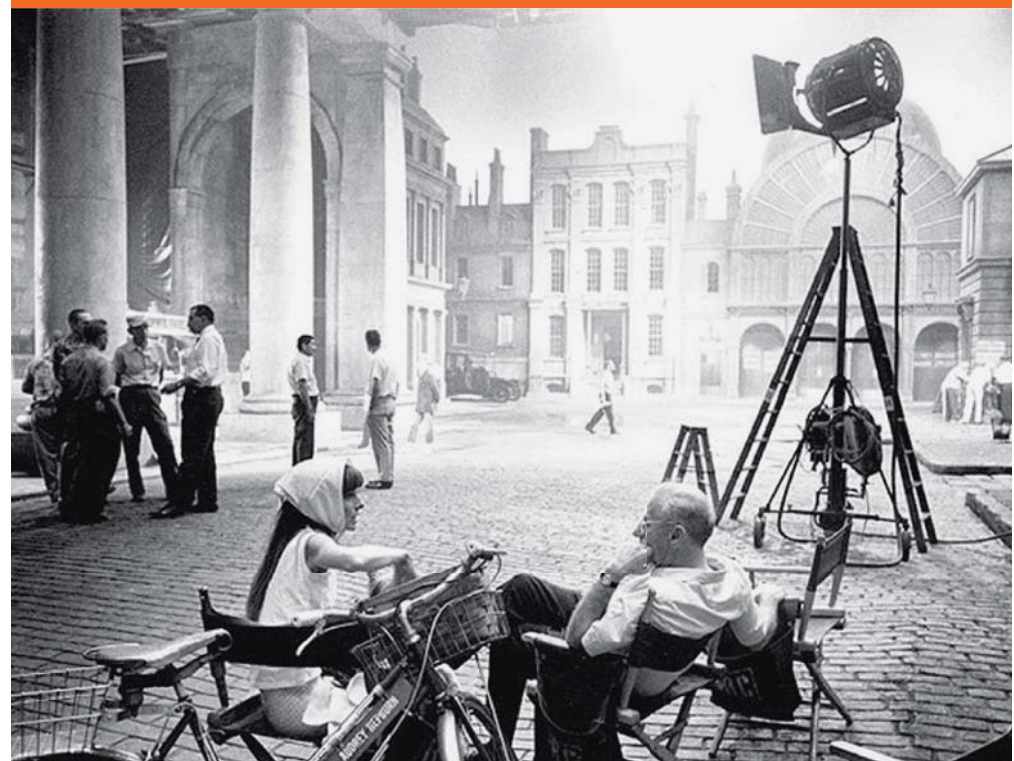


GSBGEN 542

Spring 2014

The Power of Stories in Business

Jennifer Aaker
General Atlantic Professor of Marketing





**Great stories
happen to
those who can
tell them.**

- Ira Glass



The Scoop

| Theme | Storyteller | Readings | Assignment Due |
|---|---|---|---|
| Why Story: In the Beginning... (Tu 5/6) | You! | How to Tell a Story (A and B)* How to Harness Stories in Business* The Dragonfly Effect | A 6-word story about you (to share in class) |
| How to Use Story as a Design Process (Th 5/8) | Nicole Kahn & Leslie Witt (IDEO) | User Stories: A Strategic Design Tool* The Rise of Storytelling as the New Marketing Strategic Stories: How 3M is Rewriting Planning How to Build Creative Confidence (TED, Dave Kelley) | (none) |
| How to Use Story to Build Brand (Tu 5/13) | Mindy Grossman (Home Shopping Network) | How Story Drives Growth: Skype, HSN, Brit.com* Kiva and Power of Story How Great Leaders Inspire Action (TED, Simon Sinek) | (none) |
| How to Tell a Story with Data (Th 5/15) | Jeff Jordan (Andreessen Horowitz) | Tell a Meaningful Story with Data* Do the Stories They Tell Get Them the Money They Need? | Team Exercise Using Data to Tell a Story (due 5/14 5pm via CourseWork) |
| How to Create a Visual Story (Tu 5/20) | Christian Roman & Purin Phanichphant (Pixar and IDEO) | How Pixar Fosters Collective Creativity* Storyboarding the Simpsons' Way | (none) |
| How to Respond To a Story (Th 5/22) | James Buckhouse (Twitter) | Your Job is Story* Telling Tales Be Suspicious of Stories (TED talk, Tyler Cowen) OPTIONAL WORKSHOP M104 @ 12-1pm: Edelman How To Make Your Story Heard in a Digital World | Midterm (done online, due by 5pm 5/22) |
| How to Tell a Global Story (Tu 5/27) | Christiana Shi (Nike) | Nike's Story: Just Tell It* | (none) |
| How to Harness Story to Lead (Th 5/29) | Nancy Duarte (Duarte) | Resonate Chapters 1 and 2* What's your Story? The Story is the Message: Shaping Corporate Culture? The Four Truths of the Storyteller | (none) |
| The End (Tu 6/3) | You! | Steve Jobs Commencement Speech* Business Case for Happiness | Story-Off Finale (due 6/2 5pm via CourseWork, plus optional extra credit) |

*Most important readings.

At a Glance

Instructor

Jennifer Aaker
(jaaker@stanford.edu)



A social psychologist and marketer, Jennifer Aaker is the General Atlantic Professor of Marketing at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business. Her research focuses on time, money and happiness, and how small acts create significant change --fueled by social media. She loves a good story.

Support

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When

Spring 2014 (5/6-6/3)
T/Th, 8-9:40 AM or 10-11:40 AM

Where


CoLab (@ the GSB)
aka McClelland 101

Office Hours (in CoLab)

Jennifer Aaker T/Th before class at 7:30am
TA office hours T/Th after each class

Reading

The Dragonfly Effect



**Stories are
the creative
conversion of
life itself into a
more powerful,
clearer, more
meaningful
experience.**

- Robert McKee



An Overview

Stories can be a powerful tool for persuasion, useful in the context of understanding customers, building brands and leading teams. Often, business people persuade using only the left side of the brain, or reason. However, persuasion occurs, just as much (if not more) through emotion. A critical tool is storytelling. And you are no strangers to storytelling – your application required you to write essays, which in essence are stories about yourself. On a daily basis you read and hear stories via the news media and blogs. And you share stories when you get together with friends. Stories can be evocative. Stories have impact. Through this course, you'll learn different frameworks and approaches in storytelling to refine your ability to construct and deliver stories that move people to action. In the end, we hope that you understand what it means to be in the story mindset and how you can harness the power of stories to further you and your organization's goals.

By the end of the class, you should:

- Gain insight into what makes for a good (and bad) story in business, how to complement words with visuals, and how to use stories for strategic advantage to further business objectives.
- Acquire concrete tools focused on how to listen, engage, tell stories, and teach others to tell stories.
- Practice using data to tell a story, and craft your own story.

Class Description

Introduction

In this class, we will illuminate the power of story in business by revealing the key elements of storytelling, discussing the power of the verbal as well as the visual, and uncovering how storytelling helps build brands and organizations that align their brand value proposition with their internal culture. This skill is important if you are a new venture trying to build a reputation, or you are an established company trying to grow and innovate.



Growth or innovation requires not only a big idea, but also stakeholder buy-in and action. Story can fuel this buy-in by creating a clear picture of what is and what could be for everyone from employees, to customers, to investors and the media. When the stakeholder becomes part of the story, they are more likely to act. To involve stakeholders in a brand's story, that brand must create participatory environments. Finally, we'll explore how you can begin to understand whether your campaign had impact and how you can determine its ROI.

Get ready to tell stories and move people to action in nine short sessions. For the class, we drew selectively from companies who lead in the domain of story (such as Pixar, Duarte, Nike), but are using it as an asset in very different ways.

We will cover a broad swath of companies, from venture capital (Andreessen Horowitz) to e-commerce (HSN), from digital (Twitter) to design (IDEO), and from products (Nike) to services (Duarte). However, because the class is only five weeks long, there are many gaps in the space (e.g., B2B, nonprofit); the role of the readings is to cover some of the gaps and complement in-class content (rather than be discussed in class). By design, the class will be focused and not broad. Like a good story...

Story Arc

In the beginning, we start the class by looking at the importance of story (**day 1**) and at the different ways you can use story as a design process (**day 2**), illustrating why it's important to think with a "story mindset." Next, we'll analyze how story can be used as an accelerant or as an engine for growth. We'll focus on how you can harness story to build brands and drive revenue (**day 3**) and the ways you can tell stories with data (**day 4**) to fuel growth and innovation for your company. Then, we delve into how to create a visual story (**day 5**) to amplify your message and reach different audiences while also analyzing ways to respond to positive and negative stories (**day 6**) that inevitably develop in any customer-centric business. Finally, we reveal how story can be used as a process or an operations toolkit to help you tell a global story (**day 7**) and allow you to harness story to lead your organization (**day 8**). In the end, stories can also help us define the different chapters in our lives, a starting point to finding meaning over the course of time and in the everyday (**day 9**).
The End.

Class Requirements

This course requires work in and out of class. Specifically, you will be graded on:

1. Class contribution (see **Grading**)
 2. Telling Stories with Data. Due 5pm 5/14 via CourseWork
 3. Midterm (online, outside class). Due 5pm 5/22 via CourseWork
 4. Commencement Speech Story. Due 5pm on 6/2 via CourseWork
- Note: An ungraded Workbook will assist with the above projects and be turned in on the last day of class in hard copy form

Telling Stories With Data (Team Project)

Your assignment is to tell a global growth story for a specific brand, harnessing data. This assignment is designed to help you (1) curate and explore user stories, both individually and collectively, and (2) use those stories to craft a global growth story for a brand of your choice. On Day 1, you will be assigned in a team of 4 students. As a team pick one of the following brands: Apple, Patagonia, Nike, Tory Burch, Jawbone, Pinterest, Blue Bottle Coffee, GoPro, Golden State Warriors, and Julep to focus on for your team project. Use the Workbook (Chapters 1 and 2) to help your team build this project. As you will not have much time, your team should feel free to create separate roles -- e.g., one social media data expert (using tools from the Pixlee platform to get data from a host of social media platforms including Instagram and Twitter) and gathering data from general market research or open archival data (Activity 1 in Chapter 1 of Workbook), an ethnographer who would run at least 3 interviews of

extreme users and creates Empathy Maps (Activity 2 in Chapter 1), a visual designer who would create a visual collage of the user experience (Activity 3 in Chapter 1). The fourth member of your team should do a brand story audit (Activity 1-3 of Chapter 2 of Workbook to the best of your ability based on open archival data, the brands website, or any other public materials or press), so as to take inventory of the stories of the brand that exist, and ensure the growth story you communicate is grounded in what the brand has focused on in the past.

Your deliverable will be an annual report that tells the global growth story of the brand, integrating in data, visuals, infographics, data charts and/or an assortment of photos that effectively and creatively tells the brand's global growth story. A model example is AirBnb's annual report which tells a story with data (and integrates both data and stories into the annual report): <https://www.airbnb.com/annual/>.

Note, you may not include all completed activities from the workbook in your annual report, but feel free to include them in an Appendix if they are relevant. Feel at liberty to use creative license! If you want to do this in normal powerpoint, that is also fine (and here is a role model you could use: www.bit.ly/airbnbprototype). Also, each team will verbally pitch their team's global growth story in **2 minutes** (very short, consider what your brief verbal pitch would be) in class for brief feedback -- so design to captivate and inspire. To make your annual reports more relevant or for any advise on how to use data to tell a story in a compelling way, we have a team advisor – Ellen Levy who will be open to meeting with you if your team wants to iterate on its team story before your presentation as an additional resource (ellen@siliconvaaleyconnect.com).

Commencement Speech Story (Individual Final Project)

At the end of a prosperous career, we will hopefully each look back and be able to connect the dots that led us to where we stand. For the final project of the class, The Commencement Speech Story, we will imagine that point in the future during a Stanford commencement speech 10 years down the road (yes, I know 10 years is ridiculously ambitious. Roll with it) - reflect on what made it possible and express to others how we lived lives of impact and meaning.

So on the last class day, we want you to imagine coming back to Stanford to give a commencement speech. You will write out the story and turn that written document into CourseWork before the last day of class (under 3 pages, single spaced). Then, in **3 minutes** during class, you will share that commencement speech story from a point of reflection – you could focus on a personal discovery story, a comeback story, or a professional development story, whatever you want. The goal is to let you leverage the tools you have learned in class to craft and share a personal story without any visual aids during the presentation. We encourage you to meet with each other outside of class individually to provide constructive feedback as you build upon your story.

We will complement this assignment with a “Story-Off” on the last day of class. You will deliver your 3 minute speech in small groups, vote on the most engaging, inspirational stories in groups, and based

on your peer reviews, a small set of students will deliver their speech in front of the entire class. Chapter 3 of the workbook was designed to help you craft your ideal commencement speech story. Lastly, please turn in your workbook on the last day of class in hard copy form.

Finally, as extra credit for your final project (up to 5 points on the overall assignment of 100 points), feel free to turn other mediums of sharing a story from what you have learned in class – e.g., using digital content, pictures, a video or a script of your commencement speech, or even a written letter to yourself. Note, if you write a letter, we will send these letters back to each of you in one year’s time, as a keep-sake of your time at Stanford and to spark a moment of reflection as you continue to build your personal story.



Grading

| | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|-----|---------------------------|
| 25% | class contribution | 25% | midterm |
| 25% | telling stories with data | 25% | commencement speech story |

Class Contribution: Evaluated on 2 Components

Showing up. We want to make sure this class has value and is important to you. However, for the class to have value and importance, you need to devote considerable attention and effort. Participation is a good proxy for attention and effort. Thus, my interest in attendance. Please notify me by email of any absences. If you have to be absent, please know that your participation grade will be lowered (emergencies will be excused). Absences will affect your grade in a nonlinear fashion (i.e., second misses cost more than the first and so on). Please also be on time. Lateness will impact your participation grade. Lastly, the use of laptops and tablets is prohibited because it distracts and undermines the culture of collaborative learning in the class.

Quality of comments. For every class, my personal goal is to get everyone to contribute once. Thus, quality, not quantity, is the focus. To help me keep track of attendance and so we can get to know each



Stories are a communal currency of humanity.

- Tahir Shah



of you individually, please use your name card and retain your seat once the seating chart has been passed around.

Midterm Quiz

The midterm will be an open note test that is a series of multiple-choice questions, pulled from the lectures and readings before the midterm takes place. It will be given via CourseWork Assignments at 8AM on 5/22. Once you begin the assignment, you will have one hour to complete it; just finish before 5pm on 5/22. (Tip: use a hard wired connection to the internet so you don't lose data if you lose network connectivity. Also before you begin, start a fresh WebAuth session. Log out, quit and restart your browser. If your WebAuth session times out before your CourseWork session does, you will experience strange display behavior).

Project Evaluation (Individual and Team)

Good stories have clear goals which are easy to identify; they provoke, forcing the audience or stakeholder to pause and think; they create emotional connection through story; and they drive action. Consequently both the team project (Telling Stories with Data) and final project (Commencement Speech Story) will be graded on quality and creativity of work. As you design your projects consider the following factors:

- Do you have a goal: Is your goal clear?
- Did you grab our attention: Have you thought innovatively, designing to capture attention?
- Did you tell a compelling story: Does it move stakeholders to where they need to go?
- Did you enable action: Does the audience know what to do, think or feel after the story? Note, you don't need to get people to act, but the insight on what the audience should think or feel after the story is shared, should be clear.
- The team project will also have a peer-review component so you can provide insight on each team members contribution at the end of the class.

On CourseWork, save both your team project and individual project as PDFs titled, "Telling Story with Data" – Team Member Last Name 1, 2, 3, 4 (Class Section)" (i.e. if your team is in the first 8AM session your file name might be "Telling Story with Data - Doe, Smith, Brown (S1)"). For your final project, you will send in a PDF titled, "Commencement Speech Story" Last Name–Class Section (e.g., "Commencement Speech Story–Doe (S1)").

Power of Story: A Workbook

Storytelling takes practice. We've created a workbook to help you get this practice, and to help you complete the work for your team project and your individual project. The workbook has three main parts: Chapter 1: cultivating user stories; Chapter 2: developing brand stories and Chapter 3: crafting personal stories. You will turn this in on the last day of class as part of the final grade in hard copy form. It will not be graded or returned, so feel free to make a copy for your own records. The workbook will be integral to your completion of the projects, and we will suggest which activities should be completed before each one is due. Be sure to also bring these workbooks to class for possible breakout sessions.

Suggested Readings

There are required readings embedded in each days assignment; these are a few more suggested readings if you want to dive deeper into the class material:

- Story by Robert McKee
- We Feel Fine by Sep Kamvar and Jonathan Harris
- Feltron Reports by Nick Felton
- Made to Stick by Chip and Dan Heath
- The Art of Storytelling: Easy Steps to Presenting an Unforgettable Story by John Walsh
- The Story Factor by Annette Simmons
- The Power of Personal Storytelling by Jack Maguire
- Leader's Guide to Storytelling by Stephen Denning
- Improving Your Storytelling by Doug Lipman
- Slide:ology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations by Nancy Duarte
- Storytelling as Best Practice by Andy Goodman
- Stein on Writing by Sol Stein
- The Story is the Culture

Day 1: Why Story?



Growth or innovation requires not only a big idea, but also stakeholder buy-in and action. Story can fuel this buy-in by creating a clear picture of what is and what could be for everyone from employees, to customers, to investors and the media. When the stakeholder becomes part of the story, they are more likely to act. In this intro class, we focus on the four critical components of story. First, focus on one clear goal that is actionable and measurable. Second, grab attention to your campaign by doing the unexpected, triggering a visceral response, or providing a visual hook. Third, develop a compelling story that makes an emotional connection with stakeholders, and which can be shared across media channels. Fourth, enable others to take action toward your goal by creating ways that enable stakeholders to act, co-create the story in ways that are easy and fun. This course will set the agenda for the 9 short sessions.

Reading

How to Tell a Story (A and B)*
How to Harness Stories in Business*
The Dragonfly Effect

Due

Write a 6-word story about yourself
and be ready to share it

Notes

*Most important readings.

Notes

// Story is what separates noise from signal. **//**

Notes



**Sometimes reality
is too complex.
Stories give it form.**

- Jean-Luc Godard



Notes



**Trust the story...
the storyteller
may dissemble and
deceive, the story
can't: the story
can only ever be
itself.**

-James Robertson



Notes



Storytelling is that moment in time when we are not alone.

- Louise Gilbert



Notes



The difference between real life and a story is that life has significance, while a story must have meaning. The former is not always apparent, while the latter always has to be, before the end.

- Vera Nazarian



Notes

