



GSBGEN 542

Spring 2014

The Power of Story Workbook

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Story, Defined

Story, (noun)

A causally-linked set of events, that describes a change or development (typically in a person) over time.

A story well told ...

- involves a protagonist (which doesn't always have to be a person but needs to be someone/something that the audience cares about, is rooting on or is interested in).
- feels like roller coaster where there are plot twists and turns.
- has a structure, which connects the audience with the storyteller. Its objective is moving the audience emotionally or to action and deepening our understanding of who we are as humans.

In the context of business, story is linked to the **why**. That is, rather than **what** the business is doing or **how** they are doing it (which is often captured well in data or facts) – story anchors more on **why** the business is doing what it is doing.

Note, though, when you develop stories that are consistent with data and fact (rather than fictitious narratives or stories disconnected from data), the power of story increases as it appeals to the audience both emotionally and intellectually. In this class, we will focus more on these types of stories – where narrative and data resonate. Operationally, you could think of a good story in business as a “fact wrapped in emotion that compels a behavior” (Prophet.com)

How To Use This Workbook

In the Power of Story class, we'll be covering different storytelling frameworks, concepts, and case studies and hope to augment your understanding of storytelling through the assigned readings.

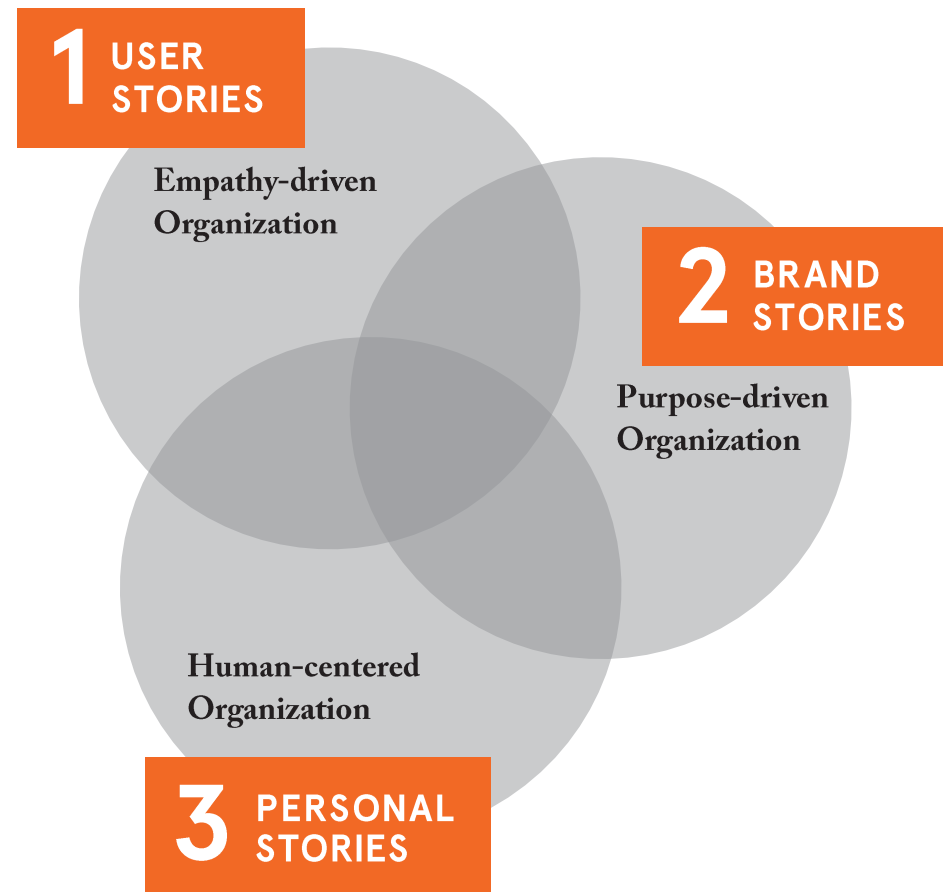
The purpose of this workbook is to give you some time to reflect on this content, and apply it to three types of stories -- user stories, brand stories, and personal stories. Improving your skill at storytelling will help can harness the power of story to shape an empathy-driven, purpose-driven, and human-centered organization.

As writing stories is an iterative process, think of these steps:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| GENERATE | Generate a story bank
Generate stories from users, employees, yourself, and identify themes |
| EDIT | Identify most important stories
And then edit judiciously. |
| MEASURE | Measure reaction to the story
Is the story being heard as you hope? |

Three Types of Stories in Business

The user, brand and you are constantly evolving story lines - these story lines are the backbone of your organizations



Three Types of Stories

STORY TYPE

1 USER

Your users are along a personal journey just like you – aim to know their stories like you know your own. Most brands think they are the hero to their user, but more often than not the user is the hero. The brand is a vehicle to help them. By understanding your user, your brand can help them become a “hero” in their own story.



ACTIVITIES

Social Media: Analyze insights shared users organically (from Pixlee).

Empathy Map: As an ethnographer, run at least 3 interviews to reveal insights on user needs.

User Journey: As a visual designer, create a collage of user journey.

END GOAL

User ‘hero’ story The story of the user; understand needs, desires, and goals of your users. Can you help them become the hero of their own story.

2 BRAND

Successful brands drive meaningful impact and inspire users with their mission and values by sharing stories about their founding, differentiation, and comeback as the brand evolves and grows.



Founding story: Document the story of how and why the brand was created.

Differentiation story: Illustrate brand uniqueness.

Comeback story: All brands eventually make a mistake. This story allows you to re-establish trust.

Growth story The story of the brand; stay true to core beliefs and values but illuminate growth of the brand.

3 PERSONAL

Understand your own stories to inform why and how you do what you do over the course of time. Writing your own narrative will enable you to better understand your motivations and illuminate your dreams to become more persuasive, move people to action, and advance toward your life goals.



Past defining stories: Cultivate a personal story bank.

Present personal brand story: Who you are now and what you stand for.

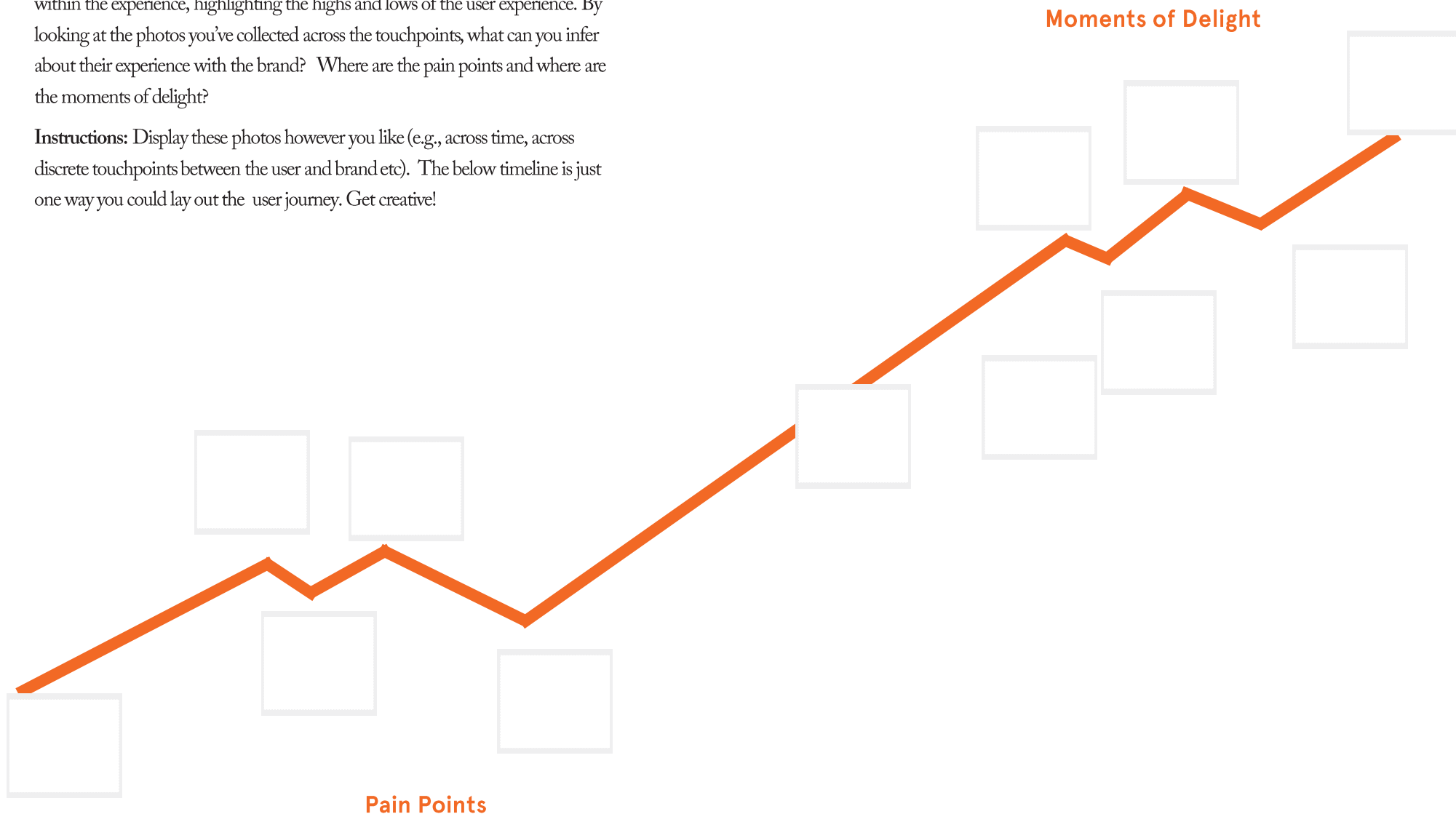
Future stories: Where you are going and why you are going there.

Commencement Speech Story The story of you, imagined.

Activity 3: User Journey

Create a visual montage of the user experience – to see how they interact with the brand across each of the touchpoints – moments where the users interact with the brand, online or off. Take or collect photos of the most important touchpoints within the experience, highlighting the highs and lows of the user experience. By looking at the photos you've collected across the touchpoints, what can you infer about their experience with the brand? Where are the pain points and where are the moments of delight?

Instructions: Display these photos however you like (e.g., across time, across discrete touchpoints between the user and brand etc). The below timeline is just one way you could lay out the user journey. Get creative!



Activity 1: Social Media Insights



Gain a better big-picture understanding of your brand's customer engagement, conversion, and loyalty by analyzing what stories are being shared about your brand in Pixlee's database (<http://pixlee.com/>).

**Note, please feel free to also use open archival data and market research data publically available for your brand to complement the insights that come from Pixlee.*

1 IDENTIFY

Identify your most engaged customers

Utilize Pixlee's interface to sort through content and users. Find customers who consistently interact with your brand in the physical and digital realms. Explore the brand's users, geographical presence, hashtags and captions, and associated emotions and words.

2 DISCERN

Discern key story themes

What are your customers talking about? Are there themes that consistently appear in the most shared stories?

3 FIND

Find the best social platform for your brand

Which social platforms provide the largest customer reach? Harness Pixlee's Widget Performance tools to compare how published content performs on different social platforms.

Activity 2: Empathy Map

Interview at least 3 important users of the brands (e.g., influencers, extreme users such as those who love or hate the brand, etc.) and create an Empathy Map for each of them. The map should reveal insight on the user needs by focusing on what was observed and what can be inferred about different user groups. The point of the exercise is to find the beliefs and emotions of the users and use these to draw out unexpected insights.

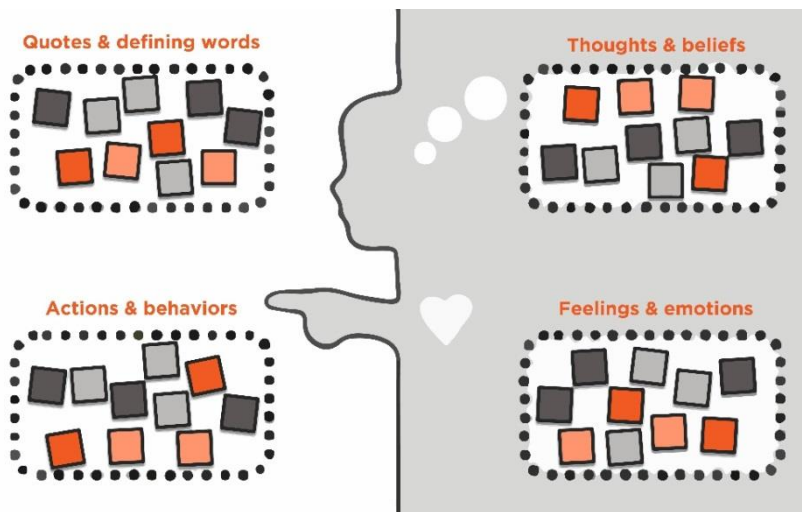
Instructions: Draw a map that displays the quadrants below, populating each section with the following content:

Quotes & defining words – Capture quotes that might contain deeper meanings

Actions & behaviors – Things you see users do. Use diagrams!

Thoughts & beliefs – Phrases that begin with “I think…” or “I believe…”

Feelings & emotions – Both visible and inferred feelings and emotions



SOURCE: Hasso Platner Institute of Design at Stanford

Some Interview Tips

Tips & tricks

Build rapport: Introduce yourself and your project. Build trust by offering something of yourself; then shift focus to your user.

Encourage stories: Use stories to learn about your /she does, think or feel. “What was your best/worst/craziest experience with _____?” “Why do you say that? Tell me more.”

Don't suggest answers to your questions: Even if they pause before answering, don't help them by suggesting an answer. This can unintentionally get people to say things that agree with your expectations. Ask questions neutrally.

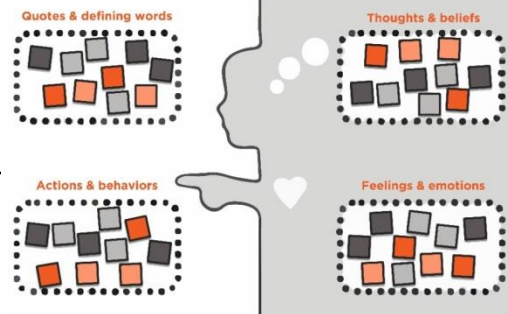
Don't be afraid of silence: Often if you allow there to be silence, a person will reflect on what they've just said and say something deeper.

Look for inconsistencies: Sometimes what people say and what they do (or say later) are different. Gracefully probe these contradictions.

Be aware of nonverbal cues: Be aware of body language and emotions.

Stay on the same path of a question: Respond to what your interviewee offers and follow up to go deeper. Use simple queries to get him to say more: “What were you feeling at that point?” “Oh, why do you say that?”

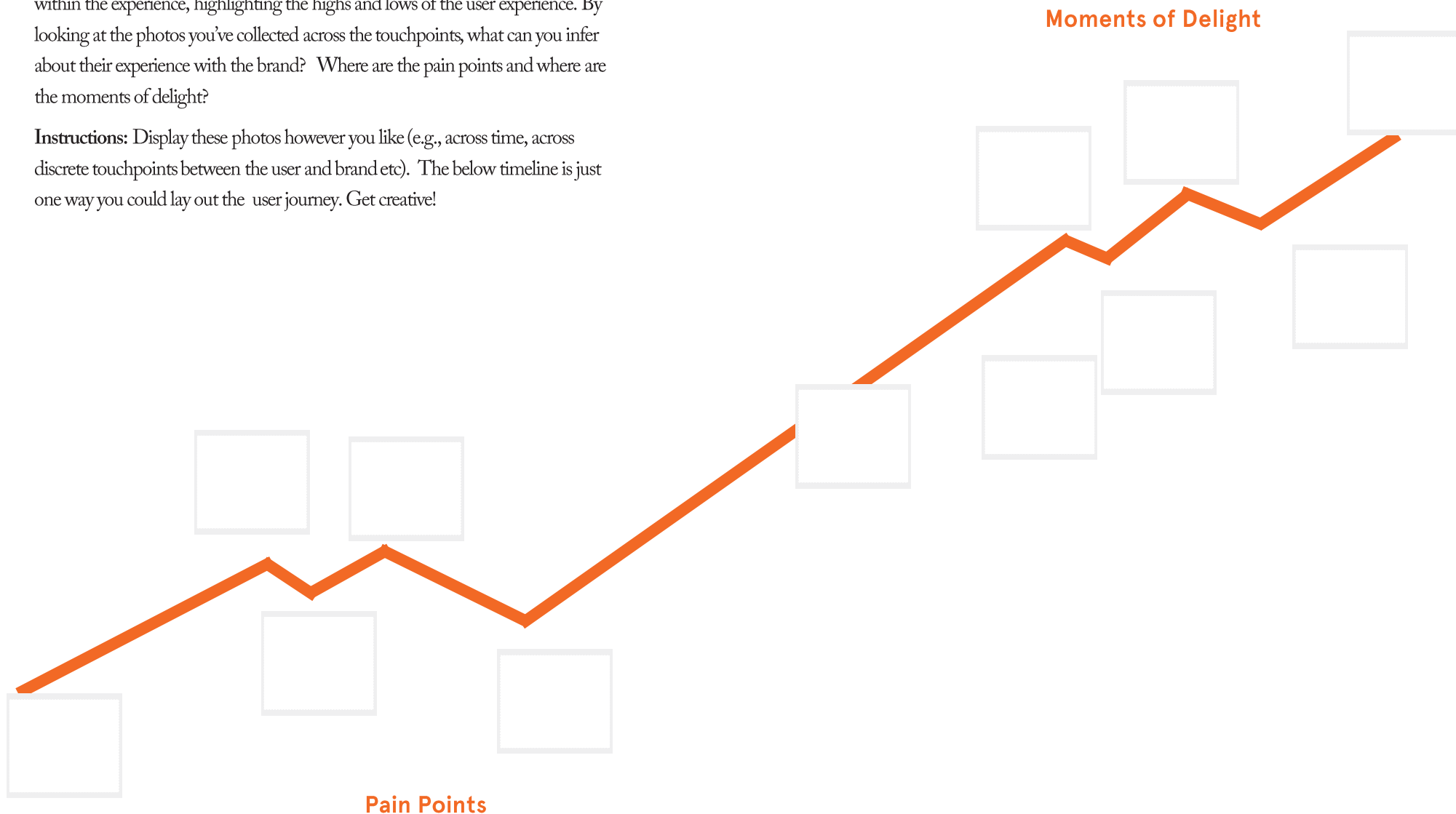
Activity 2: Empathy Map



Activity 3: User Journey

Create a visual montage of the user experience – to see how they interact with the brand across each of the touchpoints – moments where the users interact with the brand, online or off. Take or collect photos of the most important touchpoints within the experience, highlighting the highs and lows of the user experience. By looking at the photos you've collected across the touchpoints, what can you infer about their experience with the brand? Where are the pain points and where are the moments of delight?

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Activity 3: User Journey

End Goal: User as Hero Story

Now use the three activities you just completed to tell a story about your customer as the hero, who is transformed as the story progresses.

Tip: make sure the user is the “hero” of the story who uses your brand as the solution to the conflict they face. Use the prompts below to help you hone your user-as-hero story.

1

GOAL

Where is your user today, and where does s/he want to go?

3

HELP

Describe how your brand helps your user overcome their obstacles. Clarity is golden.

2

OBSTACLE

What external or internal emotional and psychological roadblocks must he overcome?

4

TRUTH

The Truth: A one liner that encapsulates how the user is fundamentally different because of your brand.

Brand Stories Throughline

Understand your brand over the course of time – look back at the history of your brand to uncover its founding story, differentiation story and (potential) comeback story-- all of which will help inform decisions on your brand's growth and evolution. Keep an eye on the throughline and common themes across the stories. For examples of each story below, see appendix.

Differentiation Story

Illuminates brand uniqueness, clarifying how it stands out from competitors

Goal: Differentiate your brand.

Growth Story

Convey how to maintain your brand's beliefs and values as you evolve.

Goal: Stay true to core values & beliefs.

(At Some Point) Comeback Story

Communicate bad news or mistakes to mitigate damage. This can result in growth and future development.

Goal: Re-cultivate trust.

Founding Story

Share the story of your brand and team – how did you get started, what was the core problem you were trying to solve and why is that important

Goal: Share your own source of inspiration.

Write the Founding Story

Founding stories create and maintain a common culture and heritage, a sense of purpose and past. Before a brand has investors, customers, profits, press coverage, or even a perfected product, it has at least one valuable asset: its founding story. So you might want to ask yourself: *Who are you? Where did you come from? What are you striving to achieve? And why?* See the appendix of this workbook for an example of a founding story.

Instructions:

Write the founding story for your brand. Often the founding story is captured in the company's website; other times you may need to search media for insights into founding story – why did the brand start. Here are some prompts to help you write the founding story.

Who are you? _____

Where did you come from? _____

What are you striving to achieve and why? _____

Write the Differentiation Story

A differentiation story is how Starbucks created a whole new coffee category and elevated itself above its competitors. It's how Nordstroms became known for spectacular service (e.g., the tire story). The differentiation story is one that frames your uniqueness. This story, when heard, allows your customers to infer your unique value. Your differentiation story is the foundation of your brand and core to future growth.

Instructions:

Think of a story that illuminates the core point of differentiation of your brand. Such that when the story is heard, the audience infers that you are differentiated. You are trying to give the user 2 + 2 rather than 4. They infer that 2 + 2 is 4. The prompts below should spur inspiration for this story.

What is the unique value of your brand? _____

When (in what contexts) does that unique differentiation come across?

What is your key, repeatable phrase (that illuminates the differentiation)?

Write the Comeback Story

A comeback story communicates bad news or mistakes, and addresses them. It is about the journey of living your brand in difficult times and learning to overcome these obstacles. Sharing your comeback story illuminates your core values and can result in growth and future development.

Instructions:

Imagine you are perusing Twitter and read breaking news reporting a mistake that your brand made – something that goes against the core of what your brand stands for. Imagine the worst case scenario, and write down the headline of that mistake.

Next, to explain and/or apologize for the transgression, write a 140 character tweet in response to the scenario.

Write the headlines you just read on Twitter about your brand:

Now, write the 140 character Tweet in response to the transgression:

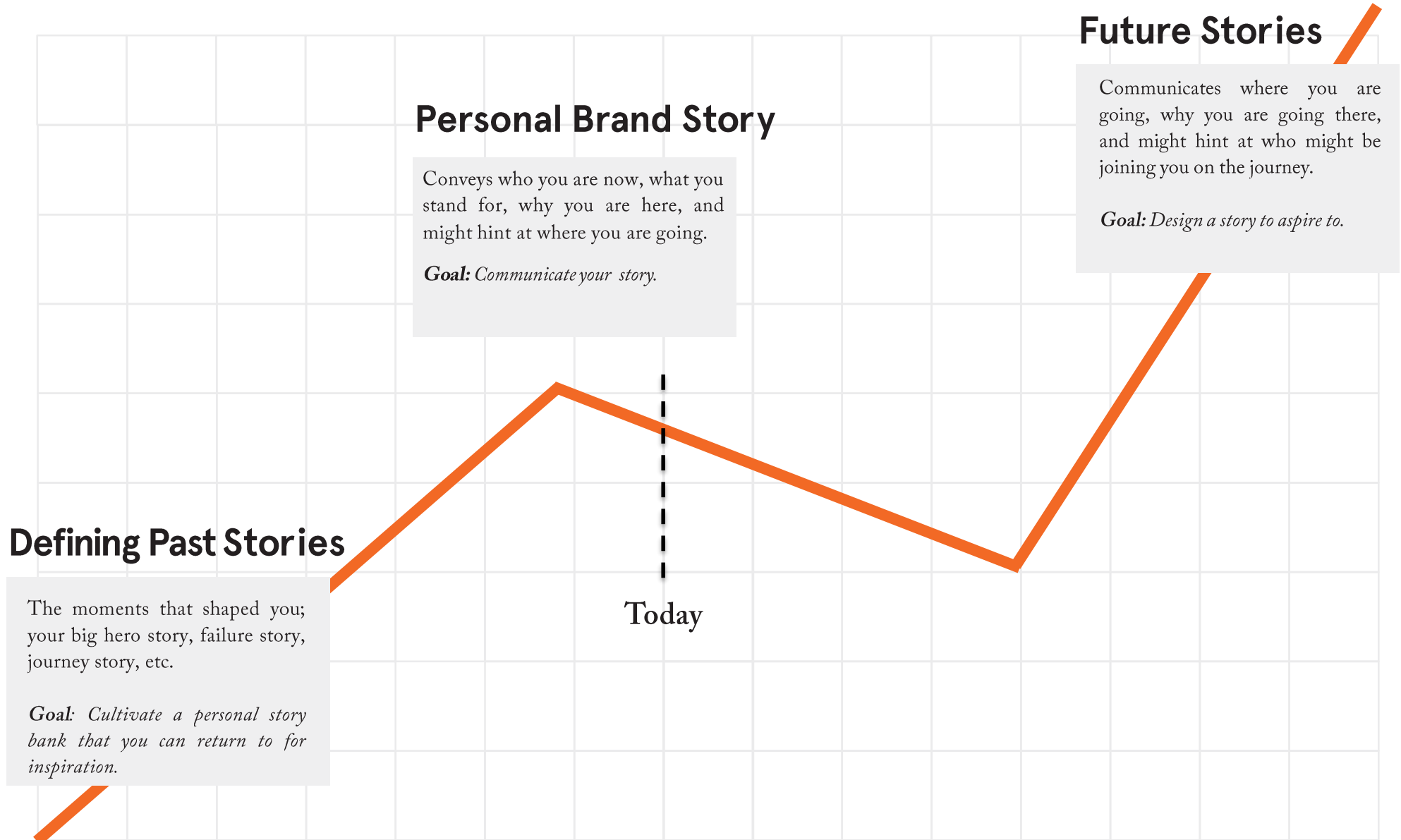
End Goal: Build the Growth Story

Instructions:

Now that you have these three brand stories in mind, develop a story that captures how this brand has maintained the ‘why’ through periods of high growth and illuminate where it will be going in the future. Treat this as a mini-exercise for the final deliverable of your brand’s global growth story told in the form of an annual report – so build your story around your brand’s users, use data to tell your story, and convey visually for the highest impact.

Personal Stories Throughline

Your role as a leader is to not hear stories of others and inspiring more to be generated, but to know your own. One way to do that is to encapsulate your past, present, and future stories into a personal narrative as you navigate challenges and solutions, striving to achieve your goals and dreams for the future. These three stories help you craft that narrative.



6 Word Stories

Stories can be told in short six word form (e.g., For sale: baby shoes, never worn; Ernest Hemingway). Consider for example these different types of six word stories:

Simple description

Smart. Funny. Future-oriented. Always felt different.

Evocative description

Mind of its own. Damn lawnmower.

Shows change

Longed for him. Got him. Shit. (Margaret Atwood)

Sensational

Tick tock tick tock tick tick (Neal Stephenson)

Activity 1: Past Defining Stories

Story Form

Using the previous page as inspiration, create your own story bank by jotting down the titles of stories that you and other people tell about yourself most often. Share in six word form.

Stories you tell most often

Stories my family/friends tell about me most often

Stories my colleagues tell about me most often

Activity 2: Present Personal Brand

Story Form Now let's shift to the present. How do you want to present yourself? Share in 6 word form. Tip: if you don't even know where to begin, consider asking a few friends or colleagues to write six word stories about you. Then step back and write your own. Sometimes you'll need a jumpstart.

Where are you now?

What do you stand for?

Why are you here?

Activity 3: Future Stories

Story Form Craft a vision of your future goals and dreams. Where do you want to go? What do you want to achieve? And who do you want to be? As you write these future stories, consider the throughline (or common themes) you found across the stories you wrote in the last two activities. Still, in 6 word form.

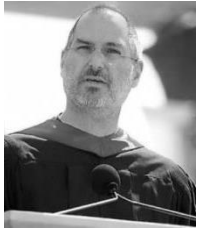
Personal

Professional

Other

End Goal: Commencement Speech

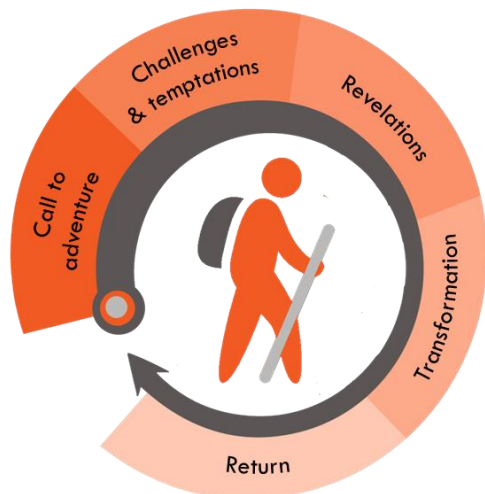
Stay Foolish



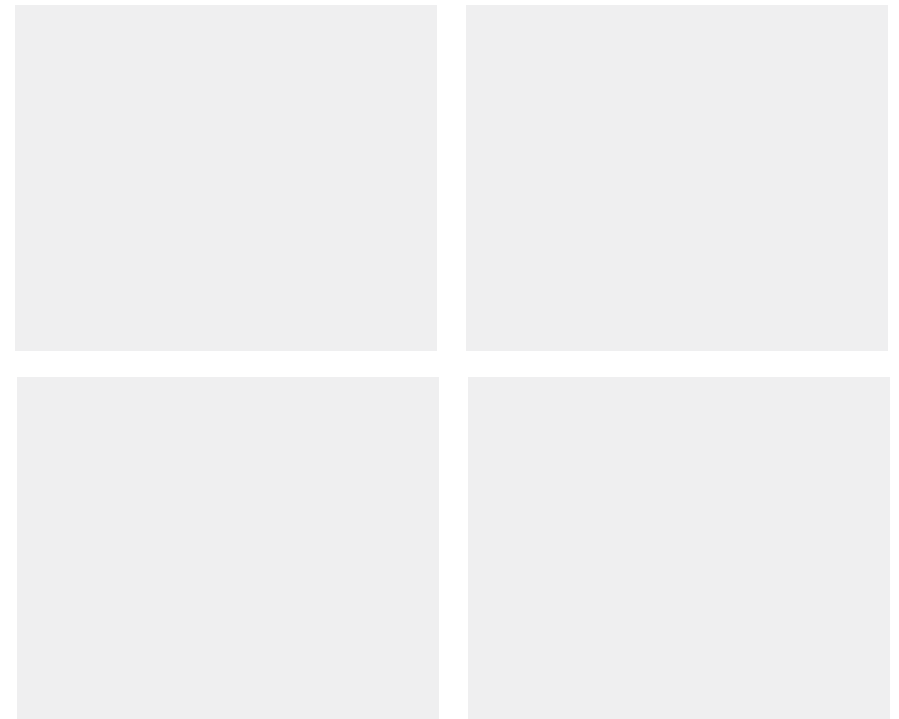
Steve Jobs
Commencement
Speech, 3 stories
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UF8uR6Z6KLC>

Explore your past, present, and future stories to tell a story that you might want to share at a commencement speech. Use your throughline as a starting point to project your journey through the next 10 years of your life. This, I realize, is hard to do. Two tips. First, re-watch Steve Jobs three stories speech. Second, consider imagining your “personal heroic journey” - anticipating potential challenges in your future, as well as possible revelations and transformation. Then reverse-engineer a story that resonates with that future you imagined.

Your personal HEROIC JOURNEY



Below, jot down some ideas for your commencement speech story and then draw out the different parts of your story



Now What?

Synergy

By now, you should have a few User, Brand, and Personal stories in your grasp. Is there synergy between any of the stories? Do you see a pattern in the way you tell/share stories? Do these stories highlight the type of company or brand they are – an empathy driven, purpose driven, or human-centered organization?

Notice whether there are overlaps in the stories as well. For example, some brand stories are rooted in user stories, allowing customers to become the hero of the story (e.g., SKYPE). Other brand stories are resonate with personal stories, such as those of employees or the CEO (e.g., Zappos). There are even cases where there the person, user and brand story all converge (e.g., Brit + Co).

Resonate

Stories show us what we value and look for in life. As you navigate life going forward, pay attention to the stories that resonate with you and jot them down. Leverage these down the road by taking listeners on a journey that changes how they think, feel, or act. The future is unwritten!



For Inspiration



THE STORY FACTOR
Annette Simmons



RESONATE
Nancy Duarte



THE POWER OF PERSONAL
STORYTELLING
Jack Maguire



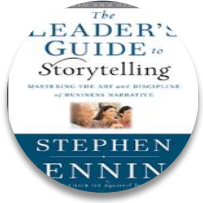
STORY TELLING AS BEST PRACTICE
Andy Goodman



THE ART OF STORYTELLING
John Walsh



IMPROVING YOUR STORYTELLING
Doug Lipman



THE LEADER'S GUIDE TO
STORYTELLING
Stephen Denning



STORY
Robert McKee



THE DRAGONFLY EFFECT
Jennifer Aaker & Andy Smith



MADE TO STICK
Chip & Dan Heath



SLIDE:OLOGY
Nancy Duarte



WE FEEL FINE
Jonathan Harris & Sep Kamvar

Appendix

Example: The Founding Story

TOM'S SHOES

Example: [How TOMS Shoes founder Blake Mycoskie got started](#)

My first venture was a door-to-door laundry business for students that I started while on a partial tennis scholarship at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. I wanted to do something that didn't depend on my hands to create value. My father is a doctor, so when he's playing golf, he's losing money. When I came out of a business class and saw my trucks picking up laundry, I thought, I'm in class and making money at the same time. After we expanded EZ Laundry to four colleges, I sold my share. I moved to Nashville to start an outdoor-media company that Clear Channel scooped up three years later. In 2002 my sister and I teamed up to compete on the CBS reality show The Amazing Race. We didn't win, but my travels during the show led me back to Argentina in 2006. On my visit I saw lots of kids with no shoes who were suffering from injuries to their feet. I decided a business would be the most sustainable way to help, so I founded TOMS [in Santa Monica], which is short for a "better tomorrow." For each pair of shoes sold -- TOMS are based on the classic alpargata style worn in Argentina -- we donate a pair to a child in need. AT&T (T, Fortune 500) found the story so compelling that it decided to feature us in a television campaign last year. Today TOMS can be found online and in stores like Whole Foods (WFMI, Fortune 500) and Nordstrom (JWN, Fortune 500), and on the feet of more than 400,000 kids in countries like Argentina and Ethiopia.

Example: The Differentiation Story

ZAPPOS

Example: [Tony Hsieh and the Pizza Story](#);

I'm reminded of a time when I was in Santa Monica, California, a few years ago at a Skechers sales conference. After a long night of bar-hopping, a small group of us headed up to someone's hotel room to order some food. My friend from Skechers tried to order a pepperoni pizza from the room-service menu, but was disappointed to learn that the hotel we were staying at did not deliver hot food after 11:00pm. We had missed the deadline by several hours. In our inebriated state, a few of us cajoled her into calling Zappos to try to order a pizza. She took us up on our dare, turned on the speakerphone, and explained to the (very) patient Zappos rep that she was staying in a Santa Monica hotel and really craving a pepperoni pizza, that room service was no longer delivering hot food, and that she wanted to know if there was anything Zappos could do to help. The Zappos rep was initially a bit confused by the request, but she quickly recovered and put us on hold. She returned two minutes later, listing the five closest places in the Santa Monica area that were still open and delivering pizzas at that time. Now, truth be told, I was a little hesitant to include this story because I don't actually want everyone who reads this book to start calling Zappos and ordering pizza. But I just think it's a fun story to illustrate the power of not having scripts in your call center and empowering your employees to do what's right for your brand, no matter how unusual or bizarre the situation. As for my friend from Skechers? After that phone call, she's now a customer for life.

Example: The Comeback Story

JOHNSON & JOHNSON

Example: [Tylenol poisoning recovery](#)

Though he never actually said the word "sorry," Johnson & Johnson CEO James Burke's management of the Tylenol poisoning tragedy in 1982, which killed seven people, remains the gold standard in corporate crisis management. When it was discovered that the seven deaths were the result of Tylenol that had been tampered with, Johnson & Johnson issued urgent statements warning people not to consume Tylenol products, and production and advertising were immediately halted. At an estimated cost of \$100 million, all Tylenol already on shelves was recalled, and Burke went on 60 Minutes to further beg all consumers to return their Tylenol. "Our first responsibility is to our customers," he said. "Don't risk it. Take the voucher so that when this crisis is over we can give you a product we both feel is safe." At the time, the response was believed to be extreme and many thought the company would suffer from it, but in the years since, Burke's handling of the incident has been credited with saving the Tylenol brand.

Example: The Growth Story

COCA-COLA

Example: [Wendy Clark: All Marketing Strategies Should Start With 'Why'](#)

In a recent strategy meeting with our team, we watched Simon Sinek's landmark TED talk, "Start with Why." Again. If you haven't watched it, you really should. It's 17 minutes of marketing common sense. Simon lays out a simple, yet powerful, observation that the companies, leaders and brands we hold up as innovative, market-shaping and successful, start with "why" -- why they are in business, not what they are selling. It's obvious when you think about Apple, Nike, Google or any other leading, growing, prospering company. They don't start their planning and strategies with computers, sneakers or search engines, they start with why they make computers, sneakers and search engines.

ELIXER

At Coca-Cola, when we're at our best, we do the same. Coca-Cola was created in 1886 by Dr. John Pemberton, a pharmacist who wanted to create an elixir that would give people a moment of refreshment and uplift, a moment of happiness. And thus our why was evident: to make the world happier. For over 100 years, using the scale and reach of our business, we've championed a world of more happiness. We're clear that the prosperity and viability of our company and bottling system is directly correlated to the prosperity and viability of the communities in which we operate. Our sustainability agenda and our public commitments on water neutrality, carbon-emissions reduction, women's empowerment and active healthy living are focused on impact in these communities.

We take the same approach with our associates, with inclusive and flexible workplace practices that deliver on our why. Our marketing partnerships, programs and ventures, like Spotify and Misfit, are with those who hold a shared ambition in creating a happier world. Across our content and communications from Facebook posts to mobile apps and Super Bowl ads, there's our why. Happiness is our ultimate decision filter and business guide.

PRODUCT

Still, like others, there are times when we wane. For some, happiness can feel amorphous, ethereal, not direct enough of a link to our product (what). As Simon points out, we too can feel the pressure to start with the product ("We sell beverages, not emotion") instead of the why.

Prolonged economic recession in many parts of the world makes us question, "Can we really talk about happiness when so many are not happy?" In these moments, when we lead with the product (what) and not our mission (why), our decisions get smaller, our perspective less brave, our work less memorable, our world impact more limited. In fact, a challenging economy is really the most-critical time for all marketers to even more passionately champion their whys.

The Growth Story (continued)

People are seeking values, leadership, assurance, clarity. As Douglas Holt says in "How Brands Become Icons": "Icons serve as society's foundational compass points -- anchors of meaning." This is never more true than in times of uncertainty. Leading with why doesn't mean there's not a critical need to focus on the what. Of course there is. Our product is the very reason we're in business.

HAPPINESS We relentlessly innovate our product portfolio in terms of beverage launches, packaging, production, equipment, availability. But we never forget why we relentlessly innovate the what ... to give our fans, consumers, employees, partners and communities more happiness.

And this brings me to the single behavior and characteristic that is fundamental for companies that lead with why: belief. If Nike's employees, suppliers, celebrity endorsers, agencies, media partners and salespeople didn't believe that there's an inner athlete in everyone and with the right inspiration (and equipment) anyone can "Just Do It," it really wouldn't matter that Nike leads with their why. Because unless everyone believes, all of our massive ambitions and strategies will simply remain in PowerPoint decks. When we're interviewing people to join our team, the most important characteristic we look for is belief -- do they believe in our company?

Do they believe in our products? Do they believe in this mission, that by joining our team they can be a part of making the world a happier place? As Virgil said, "They succeed because they think they can." Belief in our company, in our mission, in our products, is non-negotiable. As 2013 comes to a close and we gear up for the opportunities of a New Year, let's all resolve to lead with our whys, to believe deeply in these missions and to fuel our teams to create more growth and goodness for our brands, companies and, indeed, the world.