

ABOUT STORYTELLING

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1. What is Storytelling?

The "National Storytelling Network" on its website defines Storytelling as follows: *"Storytelling is the interactive art of using words and actions to reveal the elements and images of a story while encouraging the listener's imagination"* (National Storytelling Network, *n.d.*). Thinking about the role of storytelling, according to Allie Decker (2022), *"Every person has a story, but the art of storytelling can make a story transformative; [...] telling a story is like painting a picture with words"* (Decker, 2020).

A storyteller and one or more listeners engage in a two-way conversation while narrating a narrative. The tale being told is influenced by the listeners' reactions. In actuality, storytelling results from the interaction and mutually beneficial efforts of the storyteller and the audience. Specifically, storytelling avoids creating an artificial wall between the speaker and the audience. Different settings and cultures provide various expectations for the precise roles of the storyteller and listener, such as who talks when and how frequently, and as a result, produce various types of interaction. The immediacy and effect of storytelling are in part due to its participatory character. When done well, storytelling may establish a strong bond between the narrator and the audience (National Storytelling Network, *n.d.*).

Oral storytelling is a type of storytelling that only happens when the story is told. It is non-mediated and requires the co-presence of a teller and a listener. Similarly, as in reading a book, you are invited to participate, free to imagine characters and landscapes, sharing your entertainment with others. Various forms of the oral tradition include epic poetry, chants, rhymes, and songs. It may include beliefs, prayers, proverbs, tales, myths, legends, and directions (National Geographic Society, 2022).

Why are stories so appealing to people? There are several reasons for this, including the fact that telling tales to help us remember things more vividly than repeating dry points. Stories

also give us a sense of control and help us make sense of the events taking place around us (National Geographic Society, 2022).

An interactive performance art form is storytelling. By design, telling a story involves several creators. By its very nature, storytelling is subjective, human, and intimate. An audience can be provided with the substance and meaning of a tale through the method and medium of storytelling (European Commission, 2014).

2. When and where does storytelling appear?

In the effort of answering the question “when did storytelling appear”, we can read a quote from Isak Dinesen: “*Stories have been told as long as speech existed, and sans stories, the human race would have perished, as it would have perished sans water*” (Greene, 1996). The storytelling method is called *the oldest and the newest of the arts*. The human species seems to have an impulse to communicate feelings and experiences through storying.

The Westcar Papyrus, an Egyptian papyrus that was discovered between the years 2000 and 1300 B.C.E., has the earliest known written evidence of a practice that may be referred to as storytelling. This recounts how Cheops' three sons alternated telling their father bizarre tales to amuse him. The Sumerians, who invented writing, first recounted Gilgamesh, the oldest known heroic epic, which was eventually appropriated by the Babylonians after the Sumerian civilization fell. You may find references to Gilgamesh in the Bible as well as in Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*. Researchers believe there is a connection between the bulls discovered in prehistoric caves, the Bull of Heaven in Gilgamesh, Zeus transforming into a white bull to seduce Europa, and Native American tribes' buffalo dance (Greene, 1996).

3. Where is the storytelling used?

There are several contexts in which stories are told, including family gatherings, religious ceremonies, other work settings, and performances for large crowds of paying customers. Some settings for sharing stories call for informality, while others are rather formal. Some require certain subjects, perspectives, and creative stances. The nature of the tale itself and the expectations for audience engagement differ significantly, as was already mentioned. There are many different civilizations on earth, and each includes a wealth of traditions, rituals, and narrative opportunities.

Each of these narrative techniques has value. In the diverse realm of narrative, everyone is treated equally (National Storytelling Network, n.d.).

Storytelling has many benefits for people and children because stories create magic and a sense of wonder in the world. Stories teach us about ourselves, about others, and in general, about life. Using this method it's easier to make people understand, respect, and appreciate other cultures, increasing tolerance, and inclusion of people from different races, religions, and lands. Storytelling it's used around the world in education, business, marketing, and culture. It is still developing and even though it's so old, it is becoming more and more popular. It is a superpower because stories can influence, teach and inspire (Stoyle, n.d.)

If employed in teaching, the narrative may lead to some wonderful opportunities. Children may learn about foreign cultures, explore their cultural roots, get insight into universal life experiences, develop empathy for foreign locations, people, and situations, and learn about global contrasts and similarities via stories. If the professors used this technique in the classroom, they might stimulate active involvement, listening skills, a sense of well-being and relaxation, as well as the application of creativity and imagination. Stories have the astonishing impact of making pupils more inclined to express their views and feelings, which promotes collaboration among youngsters (Stoyle, n.d.).

4. How does it work? The storytelling technique.

The storytelling technique is dynamic, therefore to have a wonderful experience, you must be adaptable and flexible. For preparing and honing this craft, there are certain unique advice and techniques. Before telling the story to the audience, use the following steps to prepare: tell the story to yourself in your own words, come up with your version of the events, be ready to change and improvise, and map the plot as a memory aid, use story keywords or skeletons to help you remember the key moments, and repeat until it feels like a story. Practice makes perfect, so keep in mind to employ your body language (facial, body, gestures), character voices that are exaggerated, charismatic presence to inspire audience belief, concrete attention and concentration, engaging eye contact with listeners, and stillness to add drama (Stoyle, n.d.).

Adding details that bring your tale to life is another technique to attract your audience. This storytelling method is often described as "*Show. Don't tell*" (Decker, 2020).

The listener imagines the tale as it is told. On the other hand, the listener enjoys the illusion that they are watching the character or events portrayed in the tale in most conventional theatre or a typical dramatic film (National Storytelling Network, n.d.). The teller uses this often nonverbal input to modify the tones, language, and pace of the narrative promptly, spontaneously, and improvisedly to better satisfy the demands of the audience (European Commission, 2014). The duty of the storytelling listener is to actively construct the reality of the narrative in his or her mind based on the performance of the teller as well as on the listener's own prior experiences, beliefs, and understandings. The finished narrative is imagined by the listener, a special and distinctive person. As a result, the tale as perceived by the listener is jointly created (National Storytelling Network, n.d.).

It is possible to blend storytelling with other creative genres. The invention of techniques for fusing storytelling with theatre, music, dance, comedy, puppetry, and various other forms of expression is among the important, modern storytelling movement's fruit. Even yet, the core of the narrative is still distinguishable as the point where the five elements listed in the preceding description come together (National Storytelling Network, n.d.).

What is the significance of this process? Because, as an organization, school, or business, you most likely have a plethora of information, numbers, and messages to convey in a single concise tale. The storytelling process supposes to:

- Know your audience
- Define your core message
- Decide what kind of story you're telling
- Establish your call-to-action
- Choose your story medium
- Plan and structure your story
- Write
- Share your story (Decker, 2020).

There is an example of using this technique step by step:

- a) The first step is to build trust.

Place yourself in a ring. It takes you back to an old time when everyone is seen and heard, and no one is more important than the other. Choose a photo that you like and then simply explain why you took it and why you like it. This practice catalyzes participants' thoughts to be opened.

b) Body and spirit are the next steps.

Arrange the seats in a circle. One person is in the center, asking questions. People who are involved in the solution must stand up and assume a new position. Another practice is to look at someone and convey claps and noises to them, which they must imitate and exchange with someone else in the ring, and so on. This activity helps individuals relax and forget about their status. Even if we speak different languages, and have different cultures, religions, and sexual orientations, we have so much in common that we are quite similar.

c) Introducing the Narrative

The fighters are still in the ring. A little ball is tossed between the competitors, and with it flies a phrase from the thrower. After receiving the ball, the receiver passes it on with another term that he or she identifies with the prior one. Another experiment might be done between two persons, with the first asking, "What do I have in my pocket?" The second person responds with something incredible/unbelievable (the moon, an airplane, Mount Everest, etc.), and the first person says, "Yes, that's correct," and then tells a brief tale of how this object ended up in the pocket. This practice allows you to utilize your imagination more freely; it can be completely insane, and there is nothing wrong with it.

d) Interested in storytelling - making a tale

Participants in a ring collaborate to create a tale. "Once upon a time it was a" the Storytelling Curator begins... Person A takes over the tale and concludes, "And every day he/she/it..." Person B takes over and continues the tale, concluding with the lines "but one day"... "And today..." says Person C. Person D takes over and brings the tale to a close. Another example: Person A gives Person B a memory tale (on a theme). Person B tells the narrative in which A is the hero. Person A, B, and C write three tales in which they switch tasks (beginning, middle, end). These activities make the participant aware of the structure of a tale, how it is created, and how things might be added to make it more fascinating (European Commission, 2014).

Storytelling Do's and Don'ts	
Don't	Do
Use jargon or business-speak	Use visuals to show your ideas
Focus too much on yourself or your brand	Know your audience
Leave plot holes	Outline your plot and core message
Make your characters too perfect	Be honest
Skim over the details	Go deep
Sell your CTA too hard	Make it useful
Overcomplicate the story	Leave room for imagination

Source: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/storytelling>

5. Complementary applications of storytelling

Stories aid in the consolidation of abstract notions and the simplification of complicated information. One of the greatest assets of corporate storytelling is the ability to relate a lofty, intangible notion using concrete principles. Take, for example, Apple. Computers and cell phones are difficult topics to explain to the average customer. They've been able to illustrate how their goods assist people using real-life examples. Instead of depending on the technical language that few customers understand, they utilize narrative (Great content, n.d.).

Stories make us human, and companies are no exception. When companies become open and honest, they become more approachable to consumers and allow them to connect with them and the people behind them. Stories inspire and encourage people by tapping into their emotions and exposing both the good and the terrible. Stories also help to build brand loyalty. Few firms use inspiration as a marketing strategy, but ModCloth does it very effectively. ModCloth not only makes its brand more relevant and worthwhile to purchase by exposing the true narrative of the company, but it also encourages other entrepreneurs and business owner (Decker, 2020).

Businesses use storytelling to build relationships with their customers and set the groundwork for enduring loyalty. Here are four illustrations of compelling tales that promote brand loyalty and foster partnerships.

a) Just Do It (Nike)

Famous athletes discussed their accomplishments, ambitions, and feelings along the way in Nike's enduring Just Do It campaign, which debuted over thirty years ago. The global sports

community responded strongly to the Just Do It campaign, which motivated both normal customers and celebrities in the sports industry to sacrifice everything for their objectives.

The Nike brand was founded on the idea of conquering challenges and improving oneself. People who aspire to be the best versions of themselves—both physically and mentally—are its customers. Nike uses storytelling in their marketing messages—videos, advertisements, pictures, etc.—to appeal to this market. Nike was able to forge relationships with clients through this tactic that went beyond just selling shoes.

Nike interacts with their audience via using social media sites like Twitter and Instagram. Users can share their personal experiences on these platforms on how Nike products have aided them in achieving their objectives.

b) **Think Different (Apple)**

Apple is a corporation that transformed the marketing sector. One of the best marketing strategies was their "Think Different" initiative. Apple tells intriguing stories and develops a compelling brand narrative. According to Steve Jobs, the idea behind this innovative advertising effort was that "you always have to be a little odd to buy an Apple computer." Albert Einstein and Martin Luther were two of the campaign's icons.

c) **Anyone Can Be a Star (Manchester City)**

Manchester City wants to connect with players and supporters worldwide through the Anyone Can Be a Star campaign so that they could share victories together. Georgia Stanway, the highest female goal scorer, was featured by Manchester City as part of a series highlighting important team members. The narrative conveys a message of how a common young girl rose to stardom around the world in addition to highlighting her most recent accomplishments or gaming statistics.

Readers will identify with Stanway's account of her upbringing and struggle, which supports Manchester City's brand positioning that they are dedicated to women's sport, supportive of young athletes, and working to increase accessibility for all.

d) **What if? (Ikea)**

The fascinating videos that Ikea produces are well-liked by its intended audience. Show, don't tell is reflected in the content approach of the Swedish corporation. The "What If" commercial effectively captures the brand's commitment to eco-friendly and cutting-edge features. In this approach, Ikea offers products that will enable people to live in a better world (Great content, n.d.).

6. International storytellers who act as representatives

According to Erika Giles (2020), there is a list of 10 of the greatest storytellers of all time and what we can learn from their stories: *Anita Roddick, Walt Disney, Richard Branson, Bruce Springsteen, Steve Jobs, Sheryl Sandberg, Tony Robbins, Oprah Winfrey, Elon Musk, Stephen King* (Giles, 2020).

Anita Roddick inspired millions of people with the tales behind her products, the Body Shop's opposition to animal experimentation, and her support for fundamental human rights, ethical business practices, the arts, and the environment. She founded the Body Shop on a compelling narrative (Giles, 2020).

Walt Disney created experiences that engaged people in his fascinating worlds, whether they were watching one of his movies or touring one of his theme parks. Disney realized that paying attention to even the smallest elements and how they affected the overall narrative was necessary to provide a remarkable experience (Giles, 2020).

One of the wealthiest and most influential persons in the world is *Richard Branson*. He became that way by never avoiding a discussion or the chance to share anecdotes about the memorable events in his life and the lives of others. He openly expresses his opinions, observations, and actions. The Virgin brand reflects this openness. He is aware of the importance of nuance, even if it is not perfectly executed, in creating a compelling tale (Giles, 2020).

Throughout *Bruce Springsteen's* songs, "The Boss" has for years produced vivid portraits of the American experience. Great stories have antagonists and heroes, conflict, joyful and tragic resolutions, and occasionally no resolution at all. Bruce Springsteen frequently draws inspiration from other people's tales when telling his narrative. His sister's relationship is credited as being the inspiration for his multi-platinum single "The River" (Giles, 2020).

Steve Jobs's entire professional life was built around tales. He realized that for his products to succeed, they need followers who would share his message as if it were their own. That's what

gave rise to Apple. The finest storytellers use the help of others to convey their tales. The stories must be motivating and collectible to do that (Giles, 2020).

The Facebook COO and author of *Lean In*, **Sheryl Sandberg**, utilizes her position to address current issues that both men and women confront via her tales. All of us may identify with her story. She creates empathy with her audience by drawing on her own experiences, which are occasionally unexpected to hear from someone so influential. This empowers people to achieve new heights (Giles, 2020).

The ability to tell a tale was the foundation of **Tony Robbins'** profession. Nearly all of us can identify with his moving account of his impoverished origins, which included "*...living in a 400-square-foot apartment and washing his dishes in the bathtub.*" Recall your early years living independently after college. Thousands of people from all around the world have been inspired by his motivational narrative of how he grew his business and his life to the point where nothing is impossibly difficult (Giles, 2020).

One of the most popular hosts of talk shows of all time is probably **Oprah**. With her stories and interviews, she has motivated millions of people. Her life had a difficult beginning and low origins. A traditional "*rags to riches*" tale, with plenty of struggles and successes along the way. She is adept at assisting others in speaking their tales and believes in the transformative power of narrative. Her program evolved into a forum for guests from diverse socioeconomic strata and backgrounds to share their tales and address a range of societal causes and problems (Giles, 2020).

Elon Musk, the CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, is a skilled communicator who has influenced and inspired significant change in his sector. He has been successful in persuading investors to commit large sums of money to hazardous ventures. This is a result of his motivation and faith in his business concepts. His ability to concisely and simply convey his high-concept concepts encourages audience participation and imagination. When explaining complicated concepts to your audience, you might take some cues from Elon Musk's simplicity. You can describe something to someone else so they can grasp it if you understand it well yourself (Giles, 2020).

Stephen King is a legendary author and storyteller. He is a master of suspense, and in addition to writing best-selling novels, he also excels in oral storytelling. He emphasizes in his speeches that he needs to write more than anything else and that reading excellent stories is a fantastic place to start if you want to become a good writer. King also recounts his fascinating life narrative, which helped to mold him into the popular novelist he is today. He never allowed

criticism to get to him; instead, he persisted in doing what he loved and spread his enthusiasm for storytelling to others (Giles, 2020).

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Online resources:

1. <https://www.ikea.com/>
2. <https://www.nike.com/ro/>
3. <https://www.apple.com/>
4. <https://www.mancity.com/>
5. https://www.tesla.com/en_eu
6. <https://stephenking.com/>
7. <https://www.oprah.com/index.html>
8. <https://www.tonyrobbins.com/>
9. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Steve-Jobs/Saving-Apple>
10. <https://brucepringsteen.net/>
11. <https://d23.com/about-walt-disney/>