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December 2, 2014 5 min read

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After finally asking the young lady for a date, the nervous young man asked his father how to avoid moments of awkward silence.

His father quickly responded, “Son, when it comes to conversation, all you have to remember are three things: food, family, and philosophy, and you’ll have plenty to talk about”

The night of the date came, and so did the awkward silence. Recalling his father’s advice, he quickly asked about food:

“Mary, do you like asparagus?”

“No,” she replied. “I don’t really care for it.”

Met with more silence, he asked about family:

“Mary, do you have any brothers?”

“No,” she replied. “I don’t have any brothers.”

With no luck, he turned to philosophy:

“Mary...if you had a brother...would he like asparagus?”

And that, my friend, is [philosophy](#).

That simple story is better than any textbook for explaining what is philosophy. Indeed, ancient cave paintings have long affirmed modern [neuroscience](#)—humans learn and communicate best through stories.

People will remember your name when it’s connected with a compelling story; you’ll bore investors with facts and figures but capture them if they’re wrapped in a story.

Related: [How Storytelling Can Create Brand Value for Your Business](#)

Whether it's creating a memorable brand or connecting deeper with customers, here are seven essentials for effective storytelling:

1. Opening and closing the curiosity gap

What if I told you, your income could be tripled in less than one month?

It may be snake oil, but it perked enough of your interest to hear the rest of the story and pitch. Storytellers call it an "[inciting incident](#)." We have curiosity [wired](#) into us, tapping into that through provocative questions opens the window wide for the rest of your elevator pitch.

2. Evoking VAK

[Psychologists](#) and therapists use VAK—visual, audio, and kinesthetic modalities to immerse a person into a desired experience or state.

When the mind begins to imagine and think through emotional and sensory experiences, parts of [the brain](#) light up as if they're actually happening.

Using these cues by describing the adrenaline racing through your body, or the tragedy that brought you to tears, will immerse a person from passively listening to the story, to feeling like an active participant.

3. Conflict and resolution

Whether it's your business proposal or product demo, two traditional storytelling elements you don't want to leave out are conflict and resolution.

Have you identified a problem, and explained how your product brings a resolution? Shawn Coyne from [The Story Grid](#) says a common mistake for entrepreneurs is presenting heavily from a developer's angle and ignoring a consumer's perspective.

Approach conflict and resolution like a consumer, and tell your product's story like a satisfied customer.

4. Appealing to the higher-self

Whether crafting your own personal goals or presenting a vision to a company, we can't fight our survival mechanism's self-interest. So why not leverage selfish motives? Fuel for achieving a future goal comes with presenting a better version of ourselves, or a better version of the customer.

The story of the tortoise and the hare will be more compelling if it ends with you celebrating in your mansion by the beach after signing up to your investment plan. The personal image of being an environmental savior is enough for many to spend extra on a Tesla.

Related: [4 Storytelling Techniques That Can Help You Increase Your Sales](#)

5. Shock and awe

Humans think in [patterns](#). We process the vast exposure to information and try to spit out a logical understanding. A break in that linear pattern is like a splash of icy water on your face. That's why movies like *The Sixth Sense*, *Fight Club*, *Romeo & Juliet* are capturing. The twist endings created a mental pattern break.

It doesn't need to happen at the end. A paradoxical opening statement for a speech is a common attention grabber. Incorporating pattern breaks anywhere within a story increases effectiveness.

6. Build a catalog of illustrations

Everyone knows the story of the Good Samaritan, perhaps even the Prodigal Son. Jesus' teaching are known through his compelling parables.

Use personal experiences to build a catalog of metaphors and illustrations and add more color to your stories. The time you drove past three gas stations and then ended up on the side of the road with an empty tank can later highlight to your staff the importance of checking email notifications or, to your investor, how your new app will save people from disaster.

7. Internal and external components

Just as Stephen King said, “Fiction is a lie, and good fiction is the truth inside the lie.” There are layers. A good story doesn’t just present raw content, but uses vehicles to deliver it. That’s the power in allegories and discovering the moral to a story.

Before crafting your story, decide what elements will be latent and what will be obvious. Facts and figures are best delivered under the surface. Promoting your product’s new features as raw content won’t be as effective as layering them underneath a traveling husband talking ‘face-to-face’ with his daughter.