

TELL TO WIN

Connect, Persuade and Triumph with the Hidden Power of Story

PETER GUBER

PETER GUBER is chairman and CEO of Mandalay Entertainment. He has been the producer or executive producer of films which have collectively grossed more than \$3 billion worldwide including *The Color Purple*, *Batman*, *Midnight Express* and *Flashdance*. Peter Guber is a professor at UCLA and is the owner and co-executive chairman of the NBA team the Golden State Warriors. He is also a media and entertainment analyst with Fox Business News. He previously worked as chairman and CEO of Sony Pictures Entertainment, as chairman and CEO of Polygram and as president of Columbia Pictures. Peter Guber is a graduate of the New York University School of Business and Syracuse University.

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MAIN IDEA

Stories

Even today when people are awash in new state-of-the-art presentation technologies and copious amounts of data, the very best way to connect with anyone and influence them is still to tell them an engaging story which appeals to their emotions. To win more people over to your way of thinking, become a great storyteller.

More specifically, get good at crafting and then delivering “purposeful stories” – stories which are created with a specific mission in mind. If you can learn how to prepare and then deliver purposeful stories well, you’ll have no problems persuading others to support what you’re trying to do.

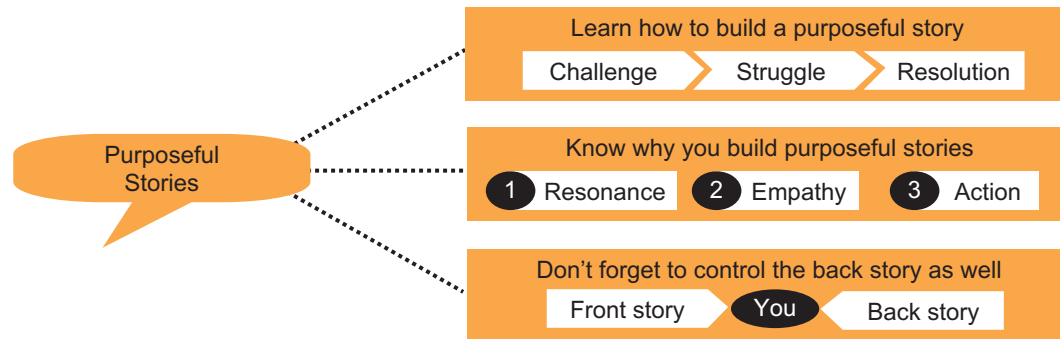
Whether you realize it or not, you’re in the emotional transportation business. To stand out and get noticed, embed your ideas inside memorable stories which engage the emotions,

“For too long the business world has ignored or belittled the power of oral narrative, preferring soulless PowerPoint slides, facts, figures and data. But as the noise level of modern life has become a cacophony, the ability to tell a purposeful story that can truly be heard is increasing in demand. Moreover, in this age of acute economic uncertainty and rapid technological change, it’s not the 0’s and 1’s of the digital revolution, but rather the oohs and aahs of telling to win that offers the best chance of overcoming fear or compelling listeners to act on behalf of a worthy goal. As I look back on my four decades in business, I see that persuading customers, employees, shareholders, media, and partners through telling to win has been my single biggest competitive advantage. Don’t rely on state-of-the-art technologies to connect. It’s the state-of-the-heart technology that’s the game changer when you tell your story in the room, face-to-face.”

– Peter Guber

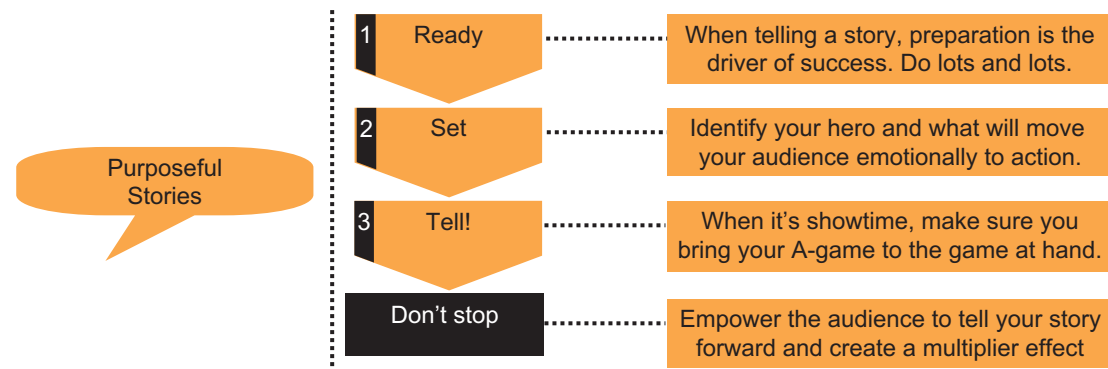
1. Why tell stories? Pages 2 - 4

Data and information are fine in and of themselves but to move people’s hearts, minds and ultimately their wallets, you need to tell stories that appeal to their emotions. Powerful stories work because they reach the listener’s heart as well as their mind. Purposeful story telling is a game changer without equal.



2. The art of telling stories well Pages 5 - 8

Once you understand how to put together engaging and memorable purposeful stories, it’s then time to put them to work. To turn purposeful stories into genuine game changers and success tools, all you have to do is get ready, get set and get telling. Stories which engage the emotions go beyond state-of-the-art technology – they are genuine state-of-the-heart offerings. Tell to win by using memorable stories to maximum effect.



1. Why tell stories?

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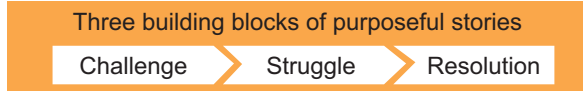


To succeed in any type of business, you've got to engage your customers, inspire your shareholders, win over investors and motivate employees. The best way to do all these things is to tell stories because storytelling reaches hearts as well as minds. Stories work because when you move your listener's hearts, their feet and pocketbooks will automatically follow.

"Stories put all the key facts into an emotional context. The information in a story doesn't just sit there as it would in a logical proposition. Instead, it's built to create suspense."

– Robert Rosen, former dean,
 UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television

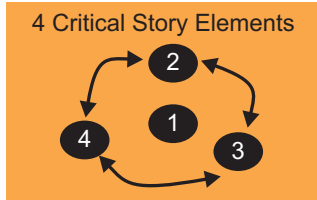
If you analyze your personal favorite compelling and engaging stories, you'll find they all are built around three essential elements:



1. **Challenge** – you get your listener's attention by first describing an unexpected question or a challenge facing a key character in the narrative. Listeners will only become hooked if they can sense some titanic struggle is about to descend on a character in your story they like and identify with. Great stories involve your hero embarking on a noble quest to do something which is difficult.

2. **Struggle** – you then describe in emotional terms the efforts your hero went to in order to overcome that challenge or to find the answer to the opening question. The struggle will become engaging and intoxicating if you couch everything that happens in emotive terminology.
3. **Resolution** – you galvanize your listeners to do something important by including a bold, eye-opening call to action at the end of the story aimed fair and square at your listeners. Great stories motivate people to act differently in the future.

Great stories lead from the heart, not the mind. They transport people emotionally to a different place. This kind of emotional transportation requires four critical elements to be embedded into your story:



1. Your story must have likeable and recognizable characters that your listener will identify with or empathize with.
2. There must be some drama, some uncertainty and some anticipation involved. Every day living can be tedious. Something out of the ordinary needs to happen to create tension and uncertainty about the outcome. You wonder what will happen next or how things will turn out.
3. You need a eureka moment where the central character breaks through and does something great. Your story has to deliver its payload.
4. You need a "me-to-we" factor – where the listener realizes that story is in the process of being played out in their own lives as well. As the listener makes that emotional connection, they will suddenly realize they too share that same frustration and this story encapsulates a way to move forward. A purposeful story always tells listeners what's in it for them and what they need to do differently to move forward in the future.

On to Aqaba!

In the early 1990s, Peter Guber was named CEO of Columbia Pictures Entertainment when it was acquired by Sony. To inspire his people, Guber related to them the story behind one of Columbia's most cherished pictures *Lawrence of Arabia*.

The story is based on the experiences of T.E. Lawrence who was a British military officer during the early 1900s. In those days, the Turkish Ottoman Empire ruled Arabia. Lawrence realized the only way to expel the Turks would be if all the Arab tribes united against them but this was unlikely since they had different cultures, values and beliefs. As Lawrence studied the problem, he had an epiphany: "Aqaba!"

Aqaba was a heavily fortified city held by the Turks at the tip of the Arabian Peninsula. The Turks assumed the city could not be attacked from the desert to the north so they had all their gun emplacements facing the Red Sea. Lawrence suggested if the Arabs could come together and do the impossible by marching across the desert and surprising the Turks at Aqaba from the rear, they would be able to defeat them. The Arabs responded and the trials of making this dangerous march and then forcing the Turks from Aqaba were sufficient to galvanize the Arabs and turn them into the world power they remain to this day.

Guber suggested to Columbia's employees they too were facing their own Lawrence of Arabia moment. They were a disparate group of companies which needed to be molded into one tribe and then a serious attempt had to be made to make the impossible possible.

Inspired by its own "On to Aqaba!" warcry, Columbia spent \$100 million of Sony's money building a state-of-the-art headquarters in Culver City which showcased Sony's technological prowess. Columbia was renamed Sony Pictures Entertainment and impressive things happened as everyone pulled together. New multiplexes were built incorporating cutting-edge technology. Sony released a string of solid box office hits and significantly increased its domestic box office share. Today, Sony Pictures Entertainment is a \$7 billion company and its motion picture library of more than 3,500 films continues to grow. The company has gone on to accomplish many Aqaba-like victories because everyone is on the same page.

Of course, from a business perspective, there are stories (which mainly entertain) and then there are STORIES (which do something productive.) Purposeful stories are great because they take information and make it accessible. They are also concrete, active and highly visual – all of which make them digestible and memorable for listeners.

The undeniable fact is the human race is genetically hardwired to respond to stories. Your listeners just won't be able to help themselves getting caught up in the drama. The marketplace wants and craves stories – your job is to profit by giving people what they want.

Know why you build purposeful stories

- 1
 Resonance
 - 2
 Empathy
 - 3
 Action

Purposeful stories make raw facts and figures become memorable, resonant and actionable. Oral stories are interactive because you can add more detail as you go along if necessary. Stories are also accessible and memorable. A well told story will linger in the memory long after it's told because people are just intrinsically drawn to wanting to find out what happens to the central characters. Stories can make facts come to life.

"I used to team up the data guys with good story tellers. That's how we got many things done."

– Michael Milken, Wall Street financier

"Humans are meaning-seeking creatures. It's not just about taking in information. We can't remember anything without giving meaning to it."

– Michael Wesch, cultural anthropologist

"Evolution shaped our brains to learn through narrative. Our gestures, facial expressions, and body postures are social signals. When I see you smiling, my mirror neurons for smiling fire up too, initiating a cascade of neural activity. I experience immediately and effortlessly what you are experiencing."

– Marco Iacoboni, UCLA professor of psychiatry

"Story isn't the icing on the cake, it is the cake. Don't leave home without it ...your story, that is."

– Peter Guber

Twenty minutes – \$580 million sale

At the age of thirty, Richard Rosenblatt had sold his startup iMall to Excite@Home for \$565 million. Seven years later, he now wanted to sell his latest company Intermix Media, the parent of MySpace.com to Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. Rosenblatt managed to wangle a face-to-face meeting with Rupert Murdoch.

"I said, 'Mr. Murdoch, with all due respect, you are the biggest guy in media on the entire planet. It doesn't make any sense that you've been completely forward-thinking in everything, whether it was DirecTV or newspapers, and you're nowhere when it comes to the Internet."

In response, Murdoch listed all the problems other companies were having with the Web – the expense of creating content, the need for constant innovation and the complexity of online distribution. Listening to the litany of problems, it suddenly occurred to Richard it might be feasible for Rupert Murdoch to turn these problems into profit if he would dare to take a risk.

"I said, 'Mr. Murdoch, Intermix is the perfect media company. You don't have to spend \$1 million an episode; you spend nothing because the users create all the content. You don't have to pay for distribution because the users invite their friends and drive traffic. All you have to do is sell ads."

Well, selling ads was something Rupert Murdoch knew all about and did exceptionally well so in just twenty minutes, he decided to take the plunge and buy Intermix so he could harness the power of happy users who would function as both his creative team and his distribution force.

Rosenblatt then painted a vivid picture of success for Rupert Murdoch. "I told him, "One year from today, you will be on the cover of *Wired* magazine."

On the basis of that twenty minute interview, News Corp. ultimately went on to buy Intermix Media for \$580 million. And yes, one year later, Rupert Murdoch's picture was on the cover of *Wired* magazine just like Richard Rosenblatt had predicted. Mr. Murdoch was kind enough to send Richard an autographed copy of the issue.

Different-but-equal

Norma Kamali is a high fashion designer whose beautiful boutique creations retail for tens of thousands of dollars each. Therefore, everyone in the industry was astonished when she announced in 2008 she would be doing a clothing line for Walmart with price points of \$20 and under.

"I never felt that I was pretty or attractive," she later said. "I discovered through fashion, I could play up my naturally quirky style and feel different but equal to more conventionally pretty girls. I use fashion to help women gain self-esteem."

The challenge facing her was how she could design for the Walmart price point without alienating her high-end customers and retailers. Admittedly, the materials were less expensive but she had to do more. Norma decided to use the power of a story to get the message across she was trying to do something which made women feel like they lived her credo – "Different, but equal."

Norma started telling stories about low-income mothers at a public high school in Manhattan she had met who were so ashamed of their clothes they would never come in for school conferences or for parent-teacher interviews. That memory resonated with her and Norma Kamali wanted to team up with Walmart to come up with a range of different-but-equal designs which would change these women's lives in a meaningful way. As she told this story to her suppliers, vendors, sales force and the media, she made everyone who supported this new brand feel like they were a hero who was dedicated to righting a great wrong in society.

She knew that story had hit home when the Walmart suppliers she used reported back their workers who were used to producing clothes as cheaply and quickly as possible were applying more care and attention to her clothes. Without cutting corners, that greater attention on the part of the people who actually cut and sowed the garments resulted in what turned out to be low-cost products with high-end quality. Norma Kamali's line ended up being a real success story for both Wal-Mart and for Norma's high-end products as well.

It just goes to show what a story based on your own life or career experiences can do.

Although few people ever take the time to rigorously analyze it, every time a story is told there are in fact two stories which are coming into play:

- *The front story* – the story you are actively telling to try and influence someone or entertain them.
- *A second unstated “back story”* – a past memory embedded in the memory of the listener which influences how they react to your front story.

Don't forget to control the back story as well

Front story You Back story

These back stories can be immensely influential. To illustrate, best-selling author Deepak Chopra was told by his mother when he was a child: “There’s this goddess of wisdom. And there’s a goddess of wealth. If you pursue the goddess of wisdom, then the goddess of wealth will become jealous and pursue you.” As a result, Chopra dedicated himself so passionately to attaining wisdom that he ultimately became wealthy by sharing what he learns along the way in his books and other products. Deepak Chopra’s back story is so powerful his wisdom has filled his wallet many times over.

Another good example was rock legend Gene Simmons, otherwise known as “The Demon” of the band KISS. For all his success with the band, Simmons had a series of product flops which were part and parcel of his offstage career as an entrepreneur. Yet despite these setbacks, Simmons never gave up. Why? It all went back to his mother.

“My mother was born in Hungary, and at fourteen years of age, she was in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. She told me how she watched her entire family be wiped out, how at age fourteen she was doing the hair of the commandant’s wife to survive.”

– Gene Simmons

While that had the potential to be an intensely negative back story, Simmons chose instead to turn it into the basis of his own personal vow of determination. His personal mantra became: “I, too, will survive, whatever it takes – even if I have to be a chameleon.” Armed with that, Simmons learned not to keep all his business eggs in one basket. Whenever he starts a new project, he

refuses to cross-collateralize or in any other way “bet the farm”. Every project has to stand on its own two feet so if it doesn’t work out, it won’t affect his other business interests. His policy doesn’t preclude failures along the way but it does contain losses while recognizing the necessity of taking risk. Gene Simmons uses his back story to rebound from failure instead of crumbling underneath it.

“If the lion does not tell his story, the hunter will.”

– African proverb

The back stories told by others also have the potential to sabotage. In late 2009, bloggers were starting to suggest Demand Media (run by founder Rich Rosenblatt) was a “content mill.” The mainstream media noted Demand generated more than four thousand items of original content every day on the strength of a network of ten thousand freelance contributors and likened this to an assembly line approach.

Rather than let this misinformation fester, Rosenblatt went on the attack. He explained Demand generated more than three billion conversations every month and that thousands of Demand’s content creators consider Demand Media to be a hero, not a villain. Rosenblatt also went on to generate a manifesto which reflected the story Demand wanted to tell, not the whispered rumors of a sweat shop style article assembly line. The manifesto also reflects the full breadth and depth of Demand Media’s business model.

“Those who do not have power over the story that dominates their lives, the power to retell it, rethink it, reconstruct it, joke about it, and change as the times change, truly are powerless, because they cannot think new thoughts.”

– Salman Rushdie, author

“Leverage the back story that rules your listener; it can be a powerful ally.”

– Peter Guber

“Thanks to their magical construction and appeal, stories emotionally transport the audience so they don’t even realize they’re receiving a hidden message. They only know after the story is told that they’ve heard and felt the teller’s call to action.”

– Peter Guber

The Power of a Dime

When serial entrepreneur John Paul Dejoria was six years old, he and his brother were living with their Greek immigrant solo mother in Echo Park near downtown Los Angeles. Their mother didn’t have any money for Christmas presents so instead they’d simply go to look at the mechanical puppets in the storefront Christmas window displays.

On one of these trips when John Paul was five, his mother said, “Boys, I’m giving you a dime. See that lady ringing a bell. Go over there and put it in her bucket.” John Paul couldn’t believe his ears. A dime was a lot of money. Why did he have to give it away? His mother replied, “That’s the Salvation Army. They need it more than we do. In life, you’ll always run across people who need it more than you do. Always try and share. I know it’s a lot for us but it means even more for them.” John Paul still remembers what a thrill he felt as he put that dime in the bucket.

Years later, Dejoria teamed up with hairstylist Paul Mitchell to develop a new line of hair care products which they launched on a loan of just \$700. “I slept in my car for the first two weeks and we started with one product line and a story that captures the stylists’ interest.” Their new product was a leave-in conditioner that the beauty industry had needed for years. To convince skeptical salon owners, the partners guaranteed to buy back their inventory if it didn’t sell so the salon owners would never lose money – an idea inspired by the story of the dime.

Today, that single line of products has grown into an entire product line which is acknowledged as a market leader. Dejoria’s mantra that success unshared is failure has influenced every product he develops. For example Patron tequila products are packaged in recycled materials and provides work for artisan craftsmen in Mexico. John Paul Pet products are tested by and for animals, not on them. And the list goes on and on.

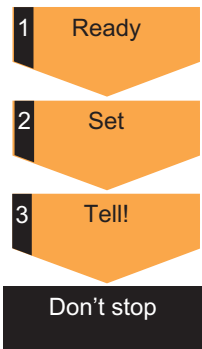
And financially, things have worked out fine. After being penniless and homeless in his early thirties, *Forbes* magazine now reports John Paul Dejoria has a net worth of \$4 billion. That may well have turned out to be the greatest gain inspired by a one dime donation in the history of the world.

2. The art of telling stories well

Once you understand how to put together engaging and memorable purposeful stories, it's then time to put them to work. To turn purposeful stories into genuine game changers and success tools, all you have to do is get ready, get set and get telling. Stories which engage the emotions go beyond state-of-the-art technology – they are genuine state-of-the-heart offerings. Tell to win by using memorable stories to maximum effect.



You may assume either you're naturally a good story teller or you're not. Wrong. Anyone and everyone can turn purposeful stories into game changers in their career. All you have to do is follow this template:



To take each of these elements in turn:



To tell a great story, you've got to make preparation your partner. You have to anticipate the preferences and prejudices of your audience and their probable back stories. You've got to do your homework beforehand rather than winging it.

People are far more likely to respond positively to what you're proposing if you can demonstrate three factors within the story or stories you tell:

- *You are authentic* – your story is congruent and aligns with the things you've experienced in your life and your personal value system.
- *You have some skin in the game* – you've already moved to invest resources in advance of asking them to do likewise.
- *You're genuinely interested in your listeners* – so interested in fact that you've gone to the trouble of becoming familiar with their prejudices, the demands they are facing, the context within which they operate and so forth.

In other words, to tell a purposeful story you must become interested in what interests your listeners. That's the only way you can hit the bulls-eye with a story that they find intensely engaging and compelling. Once you know what your listeners like and crave, you can mold a story which aims for their hearts by encasing some emotion around meeting that aim.

Getting to know your audience also means figuring out the place they are most likely to be receptive to your story. If you locate their comfort zone and make your pitch there, they will be most receptive to the story you're telling. The context in which someone hears your story can make a huge difference in their perceptions. The trick is to get to know them well enough that you can use this to your advantage.

A good example of this is Jason Binn, CEO and founder of Niche Media which publishes ten upscale luxury magazines which target areas like the Hamptons, Manhattan, Los Angeles, Boston and Las Vegas. "Before I launch a magazine, I live there." He said. "Whether it's six months straight or every other week, I make sure I'm ingrained in that community. There are ten markets in the United States that really move the needle for any lifestyle or luxury brand of product or service, and in each of those markets there are four hundred people that inspire and motivate others through the way they dress, the way they act." Jason keys into those market makers through his local magazines in what he terms an "insiders ro insiders" business strategy. As these insiders tell their own stories, he attracts readers and national advertisers alike.

The Starbucks Saga

In 2003, Peter Guber teamed up with Bruce Stein, a successful merchandiser, to come up with what they believed was a slam dunk winning proposal for Starbucks. Armed with enthusiasm, they flew up to Seattle to meet with Starbucks chairman and CEO Howard Schultz who received them warmly.

"Respecting his valuable time, we immediately began telling him our business proposition. Our idea was to install, at no cost to Starbucks, one large plasma screen per store, in the open space above each customer reach, thereby using real estate that was currently going unused. Content would be programmed from a central source but be specifically targeted for the location and time of day at each shop so the nature of the programs would be different in the morning and the evening. Schultz wouldn't have to pay for content and there'd be no interference with the barista or other employees, since everything would be controlled from a central site. And after hours, regional store managers could use the screens for training purposes. And further down the road, Schultz could launch a 'Starbucks Live' network for cable broadcast," said Peter Guber.

Schultz listened appreciatively but a few days later said, "No thanks. I'm in the business of selling coffee." Shocked by being rebuffed, the two partners finally did what they should have done in the first place. They put themselves in the shoes of Howard Schultz who started Starbucks to provide customers with a "third place" – a home away from home and an office where they can relax. In Schultz's mind, the customer is the hero. He or she decides what beverage to drink, how long to stay and what to do while there. Starbucks provides choices but the customer owns his or her own experience.

Belatedly, Peter Guber and Bruce Stein realized Schultz was never going to go for their proposal because in effect they were treating Starbucks customers as prisoners or a passive audience to be exploited. Instead of taking that approach, Starbucks was interested in any ideas which would more actively engage customers in the Starbucks story. All too late the two would-be partners realized instead of preparing by focusing on what they found to be interesting, they should have zeroed in on what their intended audience was trying to achieve and align with that.

2 Set

In putting together a purposeful story, content is the Holy Grail. Everyone carries within their head a virtual treasure trove of stories which get embedded there over a lifetime of seeing movies, reading books and watching television. Sometimes the key to telling a purposeful story is to figure out which of these stories will be the most applicable to link to – and that may be as simple as answering the question: “Who’s the hero here?”

“All the passion in the world won’t do any good unless you have some place to put it. That’s where the hero comes in. By hero, I don’t necessarily mean Superman or a grandmother who rushes into a burning building to save a baby, but the character in the story who gives the audience a point of view. The hero’s both our surrogate and our guide.”

– Bob Dickman, communications specialist

The hero of any story is the character your listeners will identify with. As he or she undergoes challenges and fights through to a resolution, listeners will empathize and feel their struggle as well. The hero is the person who makes the difference between success and failure.

Stories can be structured in a variety of ways:

- *The story teller can be the hero* – as in where you’re forced to step up to the mark and pull out a performance you didn’t know you had in yourself.
- *The listener can be the hero* – where you hunker down and endure short-term difficulties in order to secure a long-term benefit.
- *The customer can be the hero* – where you support a great cause by buying one product instead of another.
- *The product itself can be the hero* – such as where it helps people fight the outbreak of a disease or some other looming problem.
- *The location can be the hero* – where the operators go above and beyond what’s expected to provide a superb customer experience.
- *A tribe or group of people can be the hero* – where people collectively do something great.

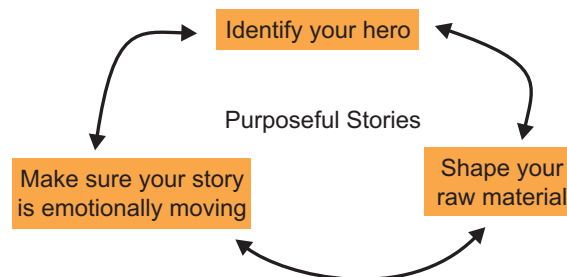
In putting together a purposeful story, you start with your goal and then figure out who would be the right hero for the story you have in mind. Once you’ve chosen the hero that fits your goal, you then look for the raw material for your story. Generally speaking, firsthand or experiences you have witnessed personally work best. Whether you realize it or not, you’re instinctively stockpiling content for good stories every day. Sometimes it’s just a matter of becoming more aware of what’s already there.

Metaphors and analogies can also fire up the listener’s imagination and provide illumination. When you talk about a David-versus-Goliath struggle or getting the right people in the canoe before it hits the rapids, everyone knows what you’re talking about immediately. No user manuals are required – people will get the message you’re trying to get across quickly and instinctively.

Other great sources for worthwhile content for a purposeful story are:

- Movies and television shows which are widely known and revered.
- Books, particularly the classics.
- History’s rich and vast treasure trove of legends, myths and great adventures

Once you identify your hero and come up with the content you want to use, you then figure out how to move your audience emotionally to take action. Put another way, you then decide on your emotional transportation mechanism. Purposeful stories are not told merely to entertain – although good stories will certainly do that – but you also want people to get into action. The only way to do that is to embed powerful emotional elements into your story. You have to make sure your story is emotionally moving.



Stories in Theme Parks

When Mark Shapiro became CEO of Six Flags in 2006, it was already one of the largest chains of amusement and theme parks in the world. The company was also staggering under \$2 billion in debt and a reputation for poor maintenance practices. To build the business, Shapiro thought back to his own childhood: “When I was a kid, I saw Six Flags as a Disneyland in my backyard. It was a place where you could get caught up in the theater and majesty and the imagination of Bugs Bunny, and yet have all the drama and tension of thrill rides. Good theme parks take you back to a time and place in your life where you had the ability to wonder.”

The immediate problem Shapiro identified at Six Flags circa 2006 was customers walked from ride to ride with nothing in between. He decided the solution was to inject story telling into the Six Flags experience so customers would become immersed in the story while they waited their turn for a ride. Shapiro realized the key to doing this was to get his employees involved and to also enlist his customers as active participants.

To get employees on board, Shapiro put together a reel of clips from some of the most moving films of all time. By the end of the reel, employees realized they had been on a roller coaster ride of emotions. Shapiro told them this was what every guest at Six Flags should feel each time they came. Every attraction had to deliver an emotional experience as well as a physical thrill.

Inspired by that change of direction, the Six Flags employees responded magnificently. Ways and means were developed to wrap a moving story around every ride. This even extended to the onsite vendors who did things which enveloped guests in an engaging story of fun at Six Flags.

Within two years, Six Flags customers were staying longer and spending more – 2008 revenues were up 21 percent as Six Flags enjoyed its best year ever in 2008. Unfortunately, the economic downturn combined with rising gas prices and unexpected problems like the swine flu outbreak forced Six Flags to go through a bankruptcy reorganization to relieve the burden of debt Shapiro had inherited. However, Six Flags has shown people will pay extra, stay longer and spend more when they’re moved emotionally by what they are experiencing even at a theme park.

3 Tell!

When it's Showtime, make sure you bring your A-game to bear. People will usually respond more positively to the story you're trying to tell if you integrate these elements into your story:

✔ Bring high energy to your presentation

Authenticity and energy can't be faked. Tell a story you believe in and people will respect your passion. Focus on whatever aspect of your story genuinely excites you and the listener will pick up on your enthusiasm.

✔ Demonstrate vulnerability – a great asset

People will love it if your emotions shine through and overwhelm you. Use this to your advantage. By all means be genuine but also be willing to show your vulnerabilities. This will humanize your message.

✔ Persist until you turn “no” into “on”

Great leaders are a little bit dyslexic. They interpret “no” as “on.” Perseverance is as essential to using purposeful stories well as it is to leadership. Use your fear to ramp up your energy level and heighten your performance intensity.

✔ Be interactive

Involve the person you're presenting to in your unfolding story. Let them get some physical interaction going and make them feel like they have a stake in the outcome. Use your posture, smiles and gestures to get them to take the emotional journey you're describing.

✔ Arouse curiosity

Ask a leading question which invites the listener to engage their minds and think expansively. Then let them ask questions and use them to reinforce your main points. Be so interesting people just can't help themselves getting caught up in your story and active participants.

✔ Engage the senses

Get people out of their chairs and doing physical things as part of your presentation. This will significantly enhance the memorability of what you say.

✔ Listen actively

Purposeful stories in business are always dialogues, not monologues. It's vital that you listen as much as you present – and listen with all your senses so you can gauge what's going on in the listener's mind and heart. The more time you can get them talking, the more material they will give you to reshape your story to address their specific challenges.

✔ Be willing to drop your script

People love it when a speaker throws away their prepared notes and instead decides to speak from their heart. This can be quite absorbing and engaging for the listeners. You can do the same when delivering a purposeful story. Make it clear you're dropping your script and responding to their concerns and you'll have their rapt attention. Whether you realize it or not, to close the deal you'll always have to depart from the script at some point.

✔ Surrender control

Sooner or later, you have to let go of your story and allow your listener to assume ownership. This is good. When your story becomes their story, amazing things can happen which you never anticipated. You have no control over where things move from there but that's alright because collaborations can produce some impressive results. Let your audience own the story and tell it forward any way they choose.

“Research has shown most of us make decisions in an emotional manner and then find an intellectual alibi to justify them. If we don't feel that emotional what's-in-it-for-me, we're unlikely to go to the next step. That's why, if you want your audience to make the decision to listen, your body has to promise from the moment you enter the room what will be in the tell.”

– Peter Guber

The Challenge of the Small Diamonds

In 2005, the diamond industry faced a formidable challenge. Industry leader De Beers approached its advertising agency J. Walter Thompson seeking help on how to sell very small diamonds which the traditional diamond business basically wrote off as worthless.

The JWT team spread out and started talking to couples trying to identify how and why they would consider buying a small diamond. They found new couples were often optimistic their love would grow in the future and that sparked an idea. They thought of putting together bangles and pendants which had seven rough diamonds in them going from small to large. The growing size of the diamonds represented how each partner's love for the other was growing over time as they went through life together. The catchline for their idea was: “With every step, love grows.”

JWT pitched the idea to De Beers who loved it and in 2006, Journey Diamond Jewelry was launched through a public relations, print, television and online blitz. An integral part of the launch was to train the in-store salespeople to say to browsers: “Journey Diamond Jewelry represents how your love for her grows over time. The graduated diamonds represent how your love keeps getting stronger through all your experiences, good and bad, and how you'll keep loving each other more as time goes by.”

The great thing about the new line was the design of Journey Jewelry pieces had to come in a variety of shapes which could represent the couple's journey through life: an S-curve, a circle, a heart, a zigzag. Each design used non-keystone carat weight diamonds that were so difficult for retailers to sell as standalone items. It also meant retailers could produce their own custom collections for their particular customer bases.

In its first sales season, Journey Jewelry helped ramp up sales of diamond jewelry by 9.4 percent. By the end of 2007, Journey Diamond Jewelry had generated more than \$2 billion in retail sales. By letting the customer take the product concept and then encouraging them to use it to tell their own stories about their optimism for the future, De Beers and JWT achieved two aims. They created a strong and viable business plus they helped the diamond industry solve one of its most vexing long-term problems.

Don't stop

Once you've told your story, if you empower your audience to tell the story forward, you can create a multiplier effect that will be great. Your audience will in effect become apostles for your message and this will give your story staying power.

The key to achieving this is to activate your story so that it benefits others as they retell it. You want a constant stream of people who will take the essential elements of your original story and add their own little tweaks and embellishments. If you can provide that framework, you will end up with a never-ending story that will almost take on a life of its own.

The simple fact is humans love stories. You're already addicted to story telling whether you realize it or not – it's in your genes. To win, you've got to learn how to tell engaging stories. State-of-the-art communication technologies of the future will enable you to tell your stories to wider audiences but the undeniable fact is nothing will ever beat face-to-face meetings where stories get told.

"The more time we spend in front of screens, the more we crave human contact. I believe that intimate in-person interactions where we tell stories to realize our ambitions, goals and dreams will only intensify as technology expands. It doesn't mean we must be face-to-face to make all our decisions, but if there's something incredibly important on which everything depends, you always want to be in the room."

– Arianna Huffington, editor in chief,
The Huffington Post

"I've often had to tell my business stories through Skype, voice mails, e-mails, text messages, blogs, and UPS overnight deck deliveries when I couldn't be in the room and face-to-face with my audience, and I've always found the tools in telling to be win invaluable, whatever the media. But I know that distance inevitably puts me at a disadvantage. That's why, when it really matters, I will

walk, drive, or fly if necessary, to be in the same room with my employees, shareholders, investors, customers and business partners. You want your audience to feel 'I want to invest in you. I get your story.' How do you make them feel good about you? By tapping into their empathy and engaging their interest. The best possible way to do that is in person."

– Peter Guber

"The Internet represents the greatest story telling technology since the development of language. It will be far more important than reading and writing as a purposeful tool. Everything that is enabled by story telling will be enabled by the Internet. We're only at the dawn of the digital era. When it comes to how we'll communicate in the future, we're all dummies just learning to walk. It's far too early to predict exactly where this revolution will lead. However, just as writing did, it's bound to affect every aspect of human endeavor; including the way we tell and receive stories."

– Brian Ferren, CEO, Applied Minds

Today, online engagement in the blogosphere and social networks can and will bolster your credibility and authenticity. Even before you meet in person, your audience can get to know what you stand for and become connected to you. It's folly to ignore those tools of influence but at the same time, don't fall into the trap of thinking they are all you need. You still must become skilled at telling stories to win.

"The social capital earned online is now migrating into the offline world, affecting how tellers and listeners interact and respond to one another. There are bound to be many more examples of such blurring at the intersection of the real and the virtual. As technology brings us closer together, our online experiences will increasingly impact our offline lives. The best strategy is to be ambidextrous, employing telling to win to live, play, learn and succeed in both worlds. If history is a trustworthy guide, state-of-the-art technology won't ever replace state-of-the-heart technology. Simply put, telling to win is forever."

– Peter Guber

The Never Ending Story

When Tom Warner and his partners bought the Boston Red Sox for \$380 million in 2002, they were immediately faced with a key decision. Should they tear down the legendary Fenway Park and build a new stadium that could hold tens of thousands more paying customers?

This was a hard call because the Boston Celtics had just demolished their antiquated stadium, the Boston Gardens, and replaced it with the Fleet Center which was hugely successful. Warner decided to do some emotional due diligence before making a decision.

He spoke with people who could still recount having seen Babe Ruth pitching in Fenway before his legendary sale to the Yankees triggered the mystical Curse of the Bambino. He also found even people who had moved away from Boston still considered Fenway to be their home field. Warner found this was not a case of *Build it and they will come*. Rather, it was a case of *Tear it down and they will stop coming*.

Eventually, Warner realized the way forward was not to demolish Fenway but to come up with fresh ways to venerate the traditions. Fans were invited to come to Fenway on Father's Day to throw catch and 25,000 people did exactly that. New seats were added above Fenway's legendary wall dubbed the Green Monster which provided a new and unique vantage point of the action on field. Seats were also created in right field where people could come and party before the game.

The new owners also worked hard to enhance the Fenway experience for fans. The street in front of the ballpark was closed off for two hours before each game to create a carnival atmosphere. They also introduced a new T-shirt which made fun of the team's legendary lack of success which read: *Everyone can have a bad century*.

Of course, that T-shirt had to be retired when the Red Sox won the World Series in 2004 for the first time since 1918 and repeated it again in 2007. Oh, and by the way, Fenway had by 2008 been sold out for 388 consecutive home games – the second longest streak in baseball history. Tear Fenway down? You must be kidding.