

Successful leaders are game changers; they change minds, feelings and actions with a story

The principle vehicle of leadership is the story: The leader affects individuals and organisations with the stories they tell.

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LEADER AS STORYTELLER

CONNECTING WITH AUDIENCES THROUGH THE POWER OF STORIES

Before there was written language, there were stories. Human interactions centre on stories; we buy products, choose friends, rally behind leaders, and express our core values with stories. Telling a story that exemplifies an essential message is a far more effective communication tool than supporting a message with facts, charts, graphs and any material that lacks emotion and fails to connect on a human level.

“NEVER HAS THERE BEEN A TIME WHEN BUSINESS HAS BEEN SO HUNGRY FOR STORYTELLING THAN TODAY”

Employees remember stories long after they've forgotten statistics. Stories are memorable because they reflect life, are composed of images rather than ideas, emotions rather than facts, and principles rather than cliché business phrases.

Great business leaders understand the power of a great story

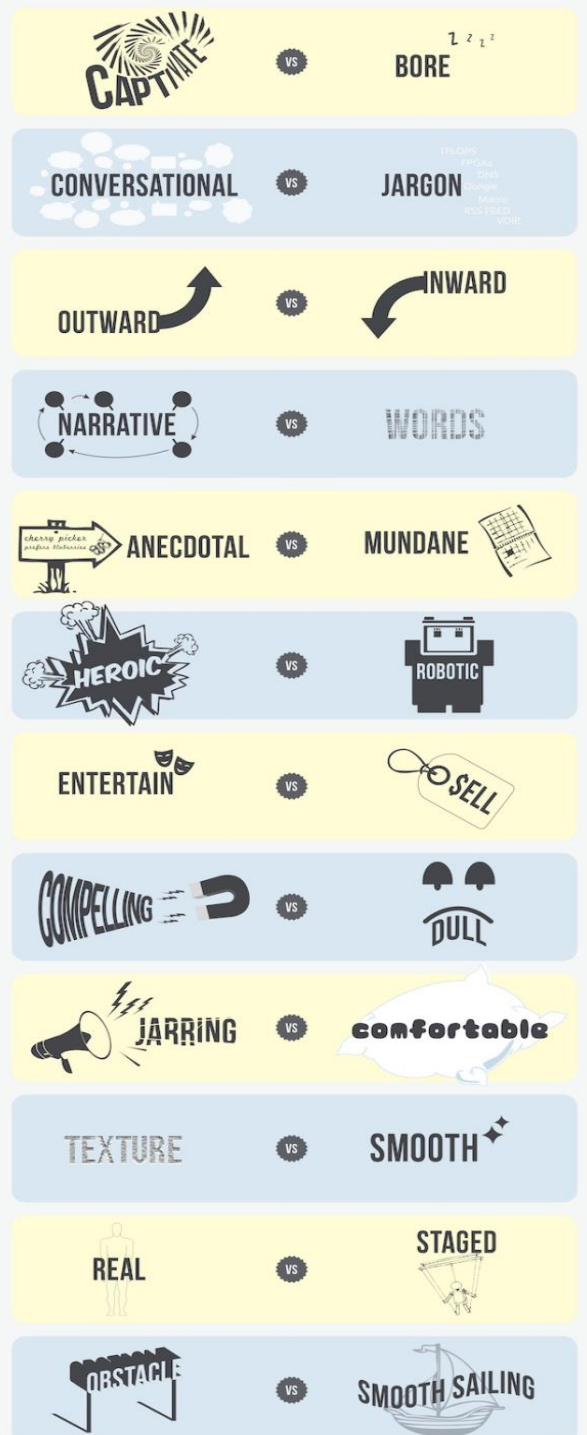
A story can motivate, inspire, change our thinking and, most importantly, rally employees and teams to action. Being a great storyteller also means being an astute listener, able to read an audience and speak directly to them, with confidence, charisma and depth of character.

A good leader is a good Storyteller

Storytelling is at the heart of every business success. It is the stories that are told around the board table that define the quality of leadership in the executive team. It is the executives that connect the story of the 'bigger picture', the vision to their teams that shape company morale and it is the kind of stories told to clients and stakeholders that determine the deals that are made and delivered on.

It has always been the case that a good leader is a good storyteller. The art has a significant profile in companies wanting to raise the bar in raising staff commitment and energising business focus.

STORYTELLING VS CORPORATE SPEAK



What's in a story?

We aim to deliver on three levels when we tell a story. We aspire to:

- 1. Inform:** share intellectually what we know
- 2. Engage:** to communicate in a way that captures the attention of the audience
- 3. Inspire:** to stimulate imaginative curiosity and motivate

These three words point to three different faculties of communication and three different states of mind. When we are communicating well we move seamlessly between the three states naturally.

Unfortunately all too often in a business environment we find ourselves landlocked in the first, the kingdom of information.

No story worth its salt would survive a single telling if all the storyteller did was remember the story. That is only step one. Once learned the storyteller must learn the art of engagement which is the language of the heart. A good story leaves the listener inhabiting a place of imaginative curiosity. It is no different for an excellent communicator and an influential leader.

The leader must know the difference between what information to share with whom, which relationships to bring emotional leverage to, and to inhabit a vision of the future that is compelling to be in the presence of.

What kind of development is this?

Learning to inform, engage and inspire is a holistic style of learning that draws upon three dimensions of human functioning:

- 1. Thinking** – the home ground of informative learning
- 2. Feeling** – the home ground of emotional intelligence
- 3. Action** – making things happen

Storytelling, when linked directly to a company's strategic & cultural context is a powerful means to build strategic competence and organisational character.

How it works

Leaders consider their own stories and experiences to understand the core beliefs that guide their lives. This set of values become the leadership pinnacles that are communicated to others. Each participant will examine and share transformational moments from their lives, moments of incredible impact and learning, success and failure, that have shaped who they are as leaders.

Participants will be given a storytelling toolkit to help with both the form and content of what makes for a great story. Considerable attention will be paid to a story's use and place in a business context.

Beyond storytelling that conveys one's core values, how might a specific story expand and enhance a business meeting or presentation to bring a concept or important point to life?



Everything I Know about Leadership, I Learned From the Movies



By Ian Moore MSc Dip Psych Couns BPSSGCP
(Leadership, Coaching, Change Consultant)

After 10 years working in the film and video industry, Ian retrained in psychology and behavioural sciences, specialising in individual, group and organisational change and transformation. Subsequently he has worked as a performance consultant, coach and facilitator, with organisations across a wide variety of sectors including; finance, manufacturing, hi-tech, advertising, communications, public sector and not-for-profit.

"People would often ask me why I left the film industry to pursue the second career I've chosen. Reflecting on it I concluded I haven't really changed what I do but rather the context in which I do it.

When you assemble a team to produce something for the screen, whether a theatrical release, a television documentary or a 30 second commercial, you are asking them to do more than buy into your vision.

To get the very best of others, they must find their own purpose and meaning within it. This may be found in the process of achieving it, the finished product itself, the message it delivers, the impact it has or, most powerfully, the shared purpose it serves. I have learnt the secret of great, sustainable, performance is in making connections, helping everyone involved find individual, personal meaning in that shared purpose.

In my film directing career I often felt as if we were battling against the odds but in finding personal and collective meaning in what we were all doing, we fought on and, despite the shoestring budgets, won industry awards for quality, innovation and impact.

I've had so many similar experiences in the many initiatives I've since been involved in as a leadership consultant and they've led me to hold firmly with the belief that organisations could do well to manage people a little less and instead encourage them to articulate and share their personal sense of purpose in the collective 'cause' – do that, sit back and prepare to be amazed at what they will deliver!"

Engaging With Purpose

Leader As Storyteller

