Captivating Your Community Through Storytelling
Claire Laughlin, MRG Consultant and Trainer

Welcome!

We are:
Mary Egan, Managing Partner, MRG
Claire Laughlin, Consultant, MRG
Fran Robustelli, Assistant City Manager, Walnut Creek
Tom Chaplin, Police Chief, Walnut Creek

WARM UP
Find 2 partners and share:
• Name, Organization, Role
• Think about the mission of your organization.
• Tell one brief story about how your organization delivers on its mission.
• (8 minutes total)

TODAY...
You’ll be inspired to weave a better storyline, capture the attention of your audience, and make a bigger impact with your communication.

Why a Story?
What do you already know about the power of story?

The “human mind is a story processor, not a logic processor.”
— Jonathan Haidt, social psychologist and Professor of Ethical Leadership at New York University’s Stern School of Business
“Story, as it turns out, was crucial to our evolution — more so than opposable thumbs. Opposable thumbs let us hang on; story told us what to hang on to.”

— Lisa Cron, Wired for Story

Stories...
- Have universal appeal
- Capture the imagination
- Touch our emotions
- Are interesting

When I say, “story…”

Little Stories...
- Anecdotes
- Examples
- Social Media Posts
- Your Newsletter
- Advertising
- Organizational Culture Stories

Bigger Stories...
- Public Relations
- Web Site
- RFPs
- Proposals
- Leadership Communication

“...The goal of reports is to impart information. The goal of stories is to impart experience. Reports use language that points you there. Stories use language that puts you there.”

— Roy Peter Clark, vice president and senior scholar, The Poynter Institute
Elements of Story-Based Communication

1. A Character…
2. Has a problem…
3. And meets a guide…
4. Who gives them a plan…
5. And calls them to action…
6. That helps them avoid failure…
7. And ends in a success…

Source: Donald Miller, Building a Story Brand

Alzheimer’s Association Ad

1. A Character… YOU
2. Has a problem… loved one with Alzheimer’s
3. And meets a guide… The Alzheimer’s Association
4. Who gives them a plan… We will do research and work for policy changes
5. And calls them to action… Contribute!
6. That helps them avoid failure… suffering loved ones
7. And ends in a success… the first survivor

WANT TO CAPTIVATE YOUR AUDIENCE?

• STOP being the HERO, and start being the GUIDE.
• Put your audience’s needs at the CENTER of your communication planning.

Make the Switch…

Instead of…
• Social media posts being about you
• Proposals starting with what you can do
• Your newsletter filled with announcements
• Try…
• Social media posts that celebrate your partners
• Proposals that start with what your reader needs
• Your newsletter filled with stories about you serving your audience

RE-TELL YOUR STORY AS AN ADVERTISEMENT

• First, prepare using the handout… (3 min)
• Then, find your 2 partners and share your story again – but this time as an “advertisement,” weaving in the elements of story.
• (2 min each)

Example

• Character / Audience: Executive in a municipality
• Problem: Low trust environment
• Guide: MRG and our range of services.
• The Plan: Building a High Trust Workplace!
• Action: Train your staff in the skills needed to create trust
• Failure avoided: Risk of lawsuits, stress, over-taxed HR department, in-fighting
• Success: Happiness at work. Ease.
The “Story”

▪ Are you and your organization paying the cost of any of these signs of low trust?
▪ MRG’s full range of services can help you get back on track. From assessments, to mediation, to organization-wide training programs, we can help you re-build trust and establish effective standards before these issues result in severe disciplinary actions or even lawsuits.
▪ Wouldn’t you love to be excited about work again?
▪ Call MRG today!

The “Story”

▪ Unnecessary conflict. In-fighting. Silos. Low productivity. Disrespectful conduct. (Problem / Pain)
▪ Are you and your organization paying the cost of any of these signs of low trust? (Speaking to the Audience)
▪ MRG’s full range of services can help you get back on track. From assessments, to mediation, to organization-wide training programs, we can help you re-build trust and establish effective standards before these issues result in severe disciplinary actions or even lawsuits. (Guide)
▪ Wouldn’t you love to be excited about work again? (Success)
▪ Call MRG Today! (Action)
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• (2 min each)

“Scratch the surface in a typical boardroom and we’re all just cavemen with briefcases, hungry for a wise person to tell us stories.”

— Alan Kay, Hewlett-Packard executive and co-founder of Xerox PARC

Applying the Framework

Pick a Communication - Start with Audience

The most persuasive communication is sculpted around the needs of your specific audience.

Select one small aspect of communication (a social media post, or a leadership communication, for example)

• Who is your audience?
• What is their problem or pain?
• What do they need?
• If you are the guide, what can you offer?
• What failure will they avoid?
• What success will they enjoy?

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Develop Your Leadership!

- You hit the ground running each day - meetings, emails, one-to-ones, and more.
- You KNOW that reading the latest leadership books is important, but with no accountability, months go by without a finished book...
- NO MORE!

Join MRG’s Leadership Book Club!
- It’s FREE! It’s FUN! It’s Supportive!
- And you will learn a lot even if you don’t finish the book.
- Join today!
- www.clairelaughlinonline.com/Claire-loughlins-leadership-book-club

Thank You!