



STORYTELLING CRIBSHEET

1

STORY SELECTION

1. What do you want the audience to think, feel, or do after the story? What's your objective?
2. Think of a relevant success, failure, or moment of clarity around that objective
3. If you don't have a story from your own experience, create a story "wish list", use water cooler conversations, stories heard during meetings or conferences, or read on magazines or social media; capture stories that happen around you, recall stories you hear others tell, search your past, interview colleagues: share your wish list and ask open-ended questions about specific moments.

2

STORY ARCHITYPES

DEPENDING ON THE OBJECTIVE...	...CHOOSE AN ARCHITYPE STRUCTURE
Show experience and strength	Coming of Age
Demonstrate resilience	Overcoming Obstacles
Demonstrate adaptability	Constant Evolution
Reinforce the audience's trust	True as it Ever Was
Explain a new direction	Rebirth
Recommit or demonstrate dedication	Quest

3

BASIC STORY ELEMENTS

Basics: Relatable hero, relevant challenge, honest struggle, worthy lesson

Emotion: Identify relevant emotions. Use "tell me," "show me," "make me feel," and dialog techniques to develop the most important. Avoid unwelcome emotional manipulation

Surprise: At beginning to get attention; at end to seal it in memory. Lead with an unusual event, use flashback, skip one element in the context, or hide a critical fact until the end

Dialog: Replace scenes where you describe what characters meant with what they actually said (outer) or thought (inner)

Details: Replace generalities with specifics. Show, don't tell. Pick one important scene and describe it in vivid detail. Use metaphors

Length: 3-5 minutes to tell (450-750 words)

Accuracy: Set expectations about accuracy of story. Would someone who was there be offended at your version?

Delivery:

Oral: focus on the story, not physical performance. 5 or 6 filler words a minute is okay. Conversational tone.

Written: write the way you'd like to speak - 15 words per sentence, small words, active voice, Flesch-Kincaid of 7-8

Practice and Save: Stories should be unscripted and extemporaneous, not memorised. Walk and talk with an imaginary friend to practice. Save your story in outline form.

4

STORY STRUCTURE

STEP	ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS	SOUNDS LIKE...
HOOK	1. Why should your audience listen to this story? You can start with a question, or by presenting the problem or a statement that will be explained later.	"A great example of this was when..." "Have you ever found yourself...?" "I have a dream..."
CONTEXT	2. Where and when did it take place? 3. Who is the hero and what do they want? What other background needed to understand character motivations?	"Back in __, at __, there was __, and they were trying to..."
CHALLENGE	4. What was the problem/opportunity?	"Then, one day..." "But, out of the blue..."
CONFLICT	5. What did they do about it? Show the honest struggle between hero and villain, even if internal.	"So they __, and then they __, and so they __."
RESOLUTION	6. How did it turn out (for everyone)? How are things/characters changed as a result?	"Eventually..."
LESSON	7. What did you learn?	"That's when I realised..."
ACTION	8. What do you think I should do?	"And that's why I think you should..."