

# What's Your Story?

Storytelling Lessons from  
Hollywood, Major League Baseball and  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

Carey Madsen



*Growing the Conversation*

# About me



# What is storytelling?

- Traditionally
- In business



# What is storytelling?

- Traditionally: entertainment
- In business: engagement



*“To hell with facts! We need stories!”*

— Ken Kesey

*“The purpose of a storyteller is not to tell you how to think, but to give you questions to think upon.”*

— Brandon Sanderson, *The Way of Kings*

# Why does storytelling work?

It makes you care.



*(Or at least it stops you from not caring)*

- *When you care, you remember*
- *When you remember, you act*



Lesson  
1

7<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Math

Bring your audience into your story.  
**Co-authorship = Co-ownership**

# When can you tell stories?

*Elevator speech, bio, yoga class, Website, LinkedIn profile, new business pitch, STAR Meetings, print ads, cocktail parties, kids soccer games, staff meetings...even 7<sup>th</sup> grade math class.*



But most people are missing opportunities to tell their story.

Lesson  
2

7<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Math

Be prepared for every opportunity to tell your story.

# What keeps us from telling stories?

- Overly complex visions of what we do
- Inward focus on process vs. outward focus on impact



Unless you are actually a rocket scientist,  
it's really not that complicated.

You want me to read what?



Lesson  
3

Major League  
Baseball

Do the "Live Read" Test  
**15 seconds, 30 words.**

# The Live Read Test

“At Larkspur Strategies we help businesses and executives tell their story.



We maximize marketing effectiveness by delivering the right message at the right time in the right channels.

How can we tell your story?”

# What makes a good story?

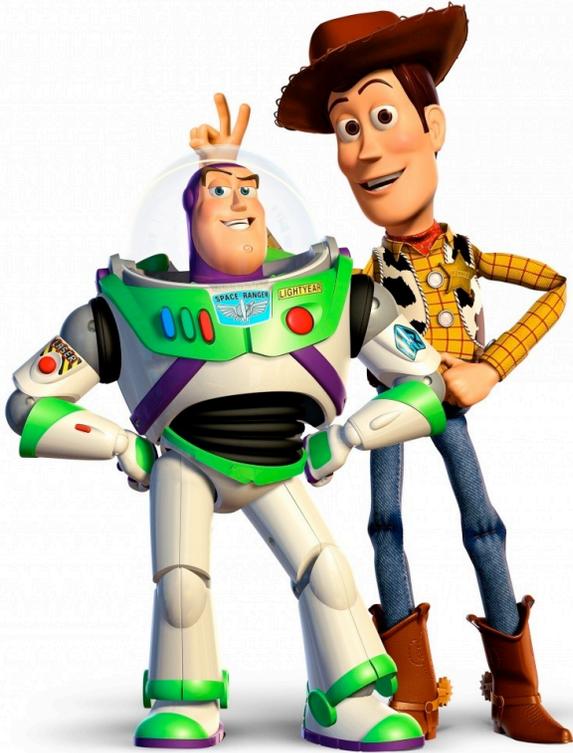
- A theme
- Personal
- Likeable
- Thought provoking
- Evokes visuals
- Contrarian or unexpected



*On the other hand...*

Avoid:

- Too personal
- Too long
- Negative
- Inappropriate



“Don’t give them 4,  
give them 2+2.”

- *Andrew Stanton*

Creator: Toy Story, Finding Nemo

Lesson  
4

Hollywood

Plan for “well organized  
absence of information.”



# How to write your story?

- Start with the end of your story. Why are you here? Why are you meeting with this client? Why are you in business?
- Identify and engage your co-authors: employees, partners, **customers**. Incorporate their elements of the story.
- Find your headline. What makes you different? Special? Why do people choose you or your company?



# Table Exercise

1. Think about your personal or company story. Choose 3-4 elements that make yours a good story.
2. How can you incorporate storytelling into your role or your organization? Share the biggest opportunities you have to share your story.
3. Think about people or brands that tell their story exceptionally well. What elements do they capitalize on the most? Share your examples.



# THE MORAL OF THE STORY...

1. Story telling works because it makes you care.  
(Co-authorship = co-ownership.)
2. Be ready anywhere! Most people are missing opportunities to tell their story well.
3. The Live Broadcast Test: Even complex businesses can be explained with a short, simple story.
4. From Hollywood: Plan for well-organized absence of information.



# Thank You!



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