

Lead with a Story

A Guide to Crafting Business Narratives that Captivate, Convince and Inspire

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SYNOPSIS

Stories. They engage us. They inspire us. They give us examples of how to act and how not to act. The best ones stay with us forever. *Lead with a Story* serves primarily as a reference book that provides the following:

- The reasons storytelling is so important as a business tool
- The various purposes that storytelling can serve
- Some actual stories that leaders can tell and others that serve as inspiration for leaders to create their own stories
- A process for constructing a business story

According to the book, the 10 most compelling reasons to use storytelling are that stories:

- Are simple
- Are timeless
- Cross age, race and gender
- Are contagious
- Are easy to remember
- Inspire
- Appeal to all types of learners
- Support workplace learning
- Put the listener in a learning mode
- Show respect for the audience

The book outlines numerous business uses for stories:

- Establish a vision for the future
- Set goals and build commitment
- Lead change
- Make recommendations that stick
- Define customer service
- Mold culture and values
- Encourage collaboration
- Move people to value diversity
- Set policy without rules
- Help others find passion in work
- Teach important lessons
- Provide coaching and feedback
- Demonstrate problem solving
- Delegate authority and permission
- Encourage innovation
- Earn respect
- Energize, inspire and motivate

The writers of this book submit that if you are a leader and you aren't using storytelling as a method to rally your troops and convince others of your ideas, you're missing out on one of the most powerful tools at your disposal.

Review by Chris Gay, Bridge Consulting

SAMPLE LEARNINGS

A business story should have three parts: Context, Action and Results, or CAR. The following explains a little more about each:

Context is the part of the story that business leaders most underdevelop. It should tell the listener:

- Where and when did the story happen?
- Who is the main character?
- What does the character want?
- Who or what is getting in the way?

Action is where the hero does battle with the villain. There are setbacks, problems are solved and this is where lessons are learned.

Result is where people learn what happens to the hero. This section should tell three things:

- How the story ends—does the hero win or lose?
- The right lesson the listener should have learned. It's okay to spell it out so it doesn't get misconstrued.
- A link back to why you told the story in the first place. This is what you want your audience to go do.

This simple format will ensure that your story is well-organized and impactful.