

WORKBOOK

Tell Your Story

A stylized speech bubble icon is integrated into the letter 'o' of the word 'Story'. The speech bubble is grey with three white dots inside, and a tail pointing downwards and to the right.

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Welcome!

To help you shape, and re-shape, your story for every situation I've created worksheets for my book *Tell Your Story*. If you haven't gotten your copy of the book yet, you can still use these fill-in-the-blank worksheets. Just by playing with your message using these exercises you'll start to discover the tools that will make it easy to craft a great story and connect with your audience. Of course, you'll be light years ahead working with the book, joining live workshops along with these worksheets. Join me live for online story sessions by signing up at alicefairfax.com and purchase the book wherever you get your books. Let's get to work!

– *Alice*

The Story Formula is found in Chapter 1 of *Tell Your Story*. It is:

Universal so they relate. Specific so they care.

The Story Formula will be your guide for every story.

The Story Formula for multiple audiences

Often we have several audiences that we need to connect with, and they all have different needs. Our donors have a different need than our students, who have a different need than our consumers. Our sponsors need our services in a different way than individual customers. You need to be able to adjust your story to meet the different needs of your audiences. Ask yourself the following questions to discover how to shape your story to connect with each audience you face.

First, look at the story:

Universal: What can everyone relate to in this story?

Specific: What location, event, or personal details happened in this story?

Now, think about your audience:

Need: What issue needs to be solved for this audience? What obstacles do they need to overcome?

Want: Where do they want to be? What do they aspire to? What is the deeper need?

Story: How does your organization solve that problem? What can the audience expect to happen when they use your services or buy your product?

When filling out this worksheet, even though universal is at the top of the list, I start with the other four categories. Take a client, a donor, or your online audience and write out specifics about them, the needs that they have, their wants, their higher aspirations and actions that indicate how your product meets them where they are and takes them higher. A donor's or investor's problem might legitimately be that they have money to give and want to be engaged with something meaningful. You have the solution!

Now that you can see these details, bubble up to the universal theme. Even though I do the Universal part last, I like to keep it at the top of my worksheet. It's the overarching theme that guides all the rest, so I like it to be listed first—but usually I can't figure out the universal until I go through the other steps. Those steps lead me to that universal thing almost anyone can relate to in any situation. Once you've found that theme, go back into the worksheet and add more specifics from the story you're telling.

Once you've gone back over each section, pick two-three specifics that are most interesting to you. Then choose the universal theme that best matches the wants and needs of your audience.

Start Your Story

When I start a story, I often uses these questions to prime the pump. The key here is thinking about those you serve.

How is your organization a survive or thrive brand?

How are the people this business reaches in need of surviving or thriving?

Now think about your secondary audience – your partners. The sponsors, donors, or investors that partner to serve your audience –how does your business help them survive or thrive?

Now pull up to a higher view, get the lay of the land. How does your organization help your community survive or thrive?

Now use this information to discover how to position your story. What universal themes reach your audience based on this information? How will they relate to your organization? What story of yours is the best one to make that connection?

The Five W's.

In *Tell Your Story* Chapter 6 we tackle the hardest storytelling rule: Show, Don't Tell.

One of the ways we explore how to show rather than tell is to use the Five Ws. Think back to High School English and the who, what, why, where, when and how dissections of great stories you were assigned. Use this outline to find the flow or the arc of the story. Fill out these elements and see what you discover about how to see your story.

Where: *setting, time, place*



Who: *characters, personality, motives*



When: *inciting incident, conflict to overcome, challenge that propels the action*



What: *plot points, action, sequence of events*

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How: *resolution, outcome, decision, how did it turn out?*



Why: *universal truth, meaning, the 'so what?'*

Pixar Exercise

In the *Find the Flow* chapter of *Tell. Your Story* we work the classic structure that I call the Pixar Exercise, That a because it was shared on Twitter by Emma Coats as part of her “Pixar’s twenty-two rules of storytelling”. All twenty-two items are gems but this one will help you find the bones, the foundation of your great story. Take your story idea and put it into this format. Notice how you only have room for one or two sentences. That is by design! This should be a SHORT story. This is the skeleton you need, so make it lean.

Once upon a time there was....

Every day,

Once day.....

Because of that....

Until finally,

The End.

Brand Story = Love Story

In the final chapter of *Tell Your Story*, I talk quite a bit about loving your audience. In our life journey we are encouraged to seek our passion, find what we love, and then follow that path. When we tell a great story, we're thinking about the listener, our audience. Our passion must turn toward them. When you think about what you love to do, why you've built your company, think about your love and care for the people you serve. Who are they and why do we love to serve them? If you want to tell a great story, that will come from your love of your audience. You can discover more by going through this worksheet:

1. I love my customer/audience because:

2. Their specific problem is:

3. Their universal need is:

4. I help them meet that need and overcome their specific problem by:

5. I do this because:

As you work these tools you'll discover the best story for the moment. Telling your story isn't a one time thing. As seasons change, as you grow and your audience grows, you'll need to revisit these tools to discover new ways to tell your story. Even as the context around you changes you'll be able to use these worksheets to get to the heart of your story and make that connection with your audience.

Don't have the book yet? You can pick it up at any local bookstore or visit your favorite online book retailer. You can find links at alicefairfax.com

To be part of my live Story Sessions join my newsletter and you'll be the first in line. Sign up at alicefairfax.com

