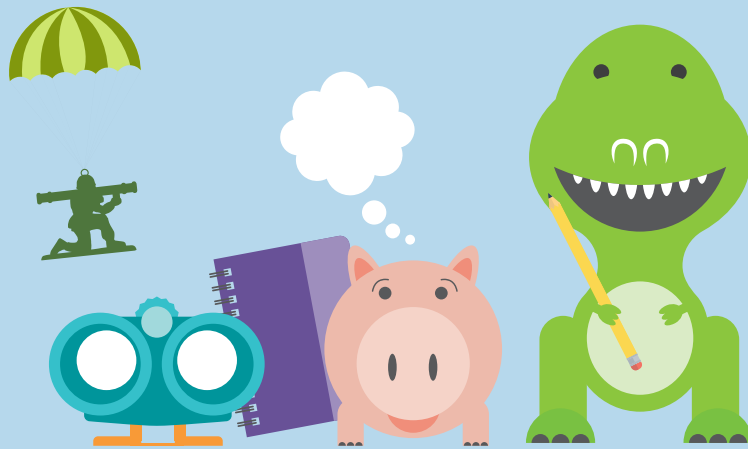


You GOT A STORY IN YOU



Inspired by Pixar's 22 golden rules of storytelling, here are some of our top tips to creating a strategic narrative for your business.

1

People admire a brand for its honesty and ambition more than its success.



2

Your audience has a limited attention span. Keep it simple, well-ordered and plain-speaking.



3

Metaphors can really help explain a situation, but they can overcomplicate things. Only use a metaphor if it fits seamlessly and doesn't require explanation.

4

Our business has a heritage of _____. But the world and our customers are changing. If we want to be _____ we need to _____. That's why we're _____. And because of that we need you to _____.

5

Simplify. Write a version that's ten pages long, at first, if you need to. Edit, simplify and sub-edit again. Be ruthless, can you get it down to one or two pages of A4?

6

Celebrate your strengths and acknowledge your weaknesses. This helps set an authentic context for change.



7

What's your desired, well-formed outcome? What do you want people to do as a result of reading your narrative? Be clear about this and make sure every sentence contributes to this outcome.

8

Seek feedback, but don't let too many opinions muddy the clarity for which you aim. Additional context belongs in the supporting communications.

9

If you get stuck, change your lens. Try focusing on the risks of not changing, as opposed to the potential benefits of changing.

10

Reach out to your network; find examples of other narratives. Look for patterns in the storytelling and think about which parts have the greatest emotional impact on you as a reader. Steal with pride!

11

Get words down on paper, just make a start! Copy and paste from emails, from your corporate website, from notes from conversations with leaders. Even if it's scrappy, the longest journey starts with a first step.

12

V17, v24, even v30 might top your narrative before you get sign off of the final version. Don't worry, first cuts are rarely the last and iteration is to be expected.

13

Borrow the favourite, well-used phrases of your leaders. Speaking in their vernacular (as long as its simple) will help them feel that they own it... and sound authentic to your business.

14

Why this story? Why now? Not every narrative has a 'burning' platform but there's usually something 'smouldering' somewhere, to necessitate doing things differently. Be clear about that.

15

Don't be afraid to be emotional. People like to know what their business has learnt from past mistakes. Address errors head on, learn from them, close the chapter and move on – failure is part of success.

16

What's the political or economic landscape in which you're operating? What are your customers saying? What are your competitors doing? Give people real life, pragmatic reasons to change.

17

No work is ever wasted. Never delete words, always save a new version. A longer, deeper explanation, cut from a previous draft could be gold dust, saving you time later in your communication campaign.

18

Sweat the small stuff. Make sure every word is charged with meaning. Compelling narratives are packed with simple but powerful words.

19

Rose tinting doesn't wash. Every decision communicated must have an honest, transparent and thought-through rationale behind it. Even the best comms people can't 'spin' the business out of a poor decision.

20

Practise. Write yourself a narrative for a project even if it never gets communicated in full to your audience. It will help you get a clear grasp of the priority order of your messages.

21

Avoid any marketing spiel, jargon or acronyms. The ultimate purpose of a narrative is clarity.



22

Half-way through the process, try writing your narrative as 5-6 bullet points. This is the essence of your story.

