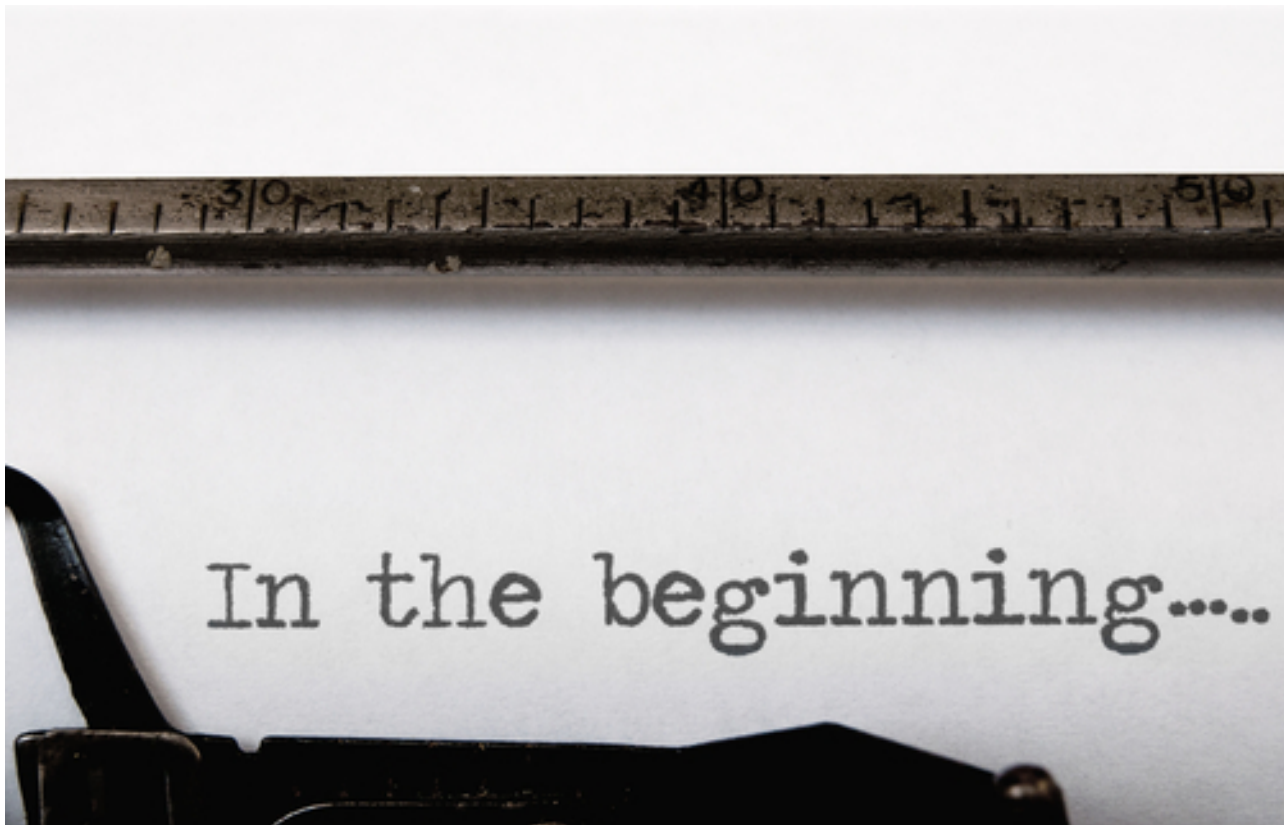
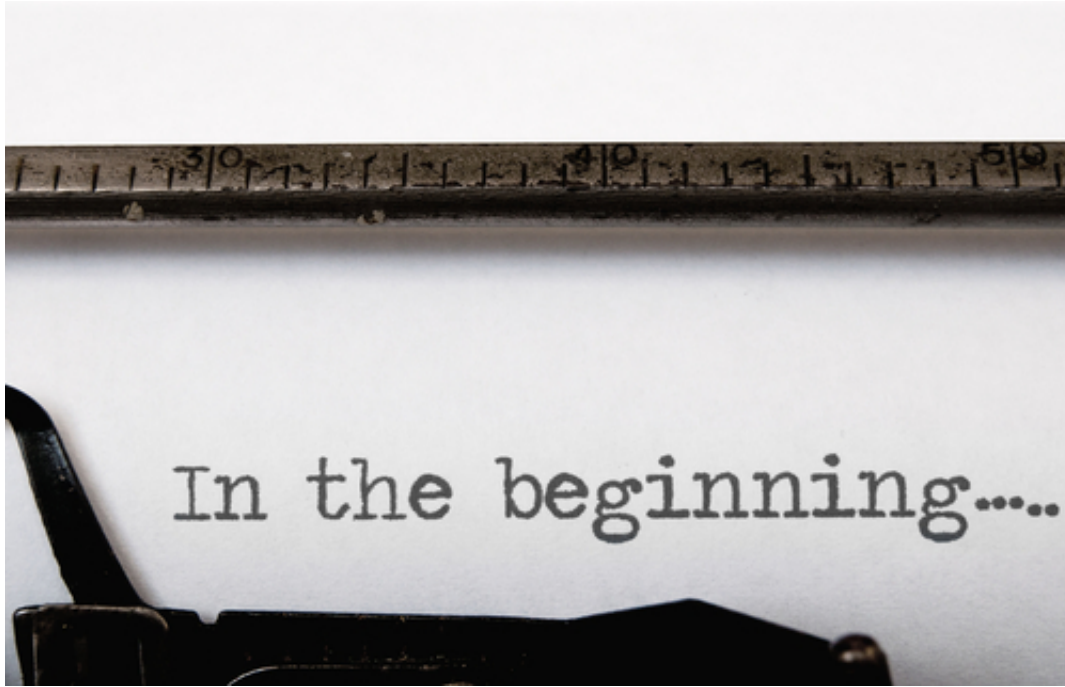


Why storytelling is essential to effective communication



Whether you're [pitching to a client](#) or [presenting at a board meeting](#), you have to engage your audience or else risk a costly 'failure to communicate'.

But [why does engagement matter](#) so much?

Well, your intention in these meetings is to share your experience with someone else in the hope that it will move them to action. And as [Denise Withers](#), an award-winning communicator and professional storytelling strategist, says:

'Engagement matters, because research by academic giants such as Daniel Berlyne, Jerome Bruner, John Dewey, and Jean Piaget shows that we learn, remember and participate better when an activity is engaging.'

The psychology of stories

The [most effective way to engage your audience](#) is with storytelling: human beings are wired for them. [Our brains often don't distinguish between fiction and reality](#), therefore we immerse ourselves in stories as if we were a part of them.

Stories make us experience information, as opposed to just consuming it.

'When we tell stories to others that have really helped us shape our thinking and way of life, we can have the same effect on them too,' [says Buffer co-founder Leo Widrich](#). Communicate your story right and you can get a potential client to believe in your story just as strongly as you do.

Stories are in our nature



If you're not a natural-born novelist how do you come up with a good story? Creating a narrative isn't hard; in fact, you do it everyday. Humans have been telling stories for thousands of years, from ancient cave paintings to trivial stories about our journey to the Post Office.

To start, break a story into three parts:

1. **The problem** – What issues did you identify in your industry? What service or product was there a lack of?
2. **The journey** – How did you go about researching a solution to this problem? How did you develop your product or service?
3. **The solution** – How will your product or service change the industry or solve the problem?

Storytelling in business

Keep the story simple yet relatable. You don't need plot twists and character arcs; you need a story that will resonate with your audience. If you're pitching to a client, align your problem with something they've experienced themselves.

'It seems that we can conclusively say that the human mind is able to relate to and absorb stories much better if there is a "human" element in the story that is easy for the audience to imagine,' [says Gregory Ciotti at Sparring Mind.](#)

Engage the emotions

If you're asking someone to do something, like sign up to your product, then you have to make them care. Unless you're very lucky, your offering won't be the only one on the market. To make yours the one they choose, engage their emotions when you tell your story.

Describe the trials you overcame in building your company so it was ready for sale; or, rather than simply talking about 'clients', describe the people involved your previous deals and the success and personal benefits it's delivered to them.

It's worth it because, [according to Gallup](#), 'consumers will give more money to the businesses they feel emotionally connected to.'

Stories come from the heart

The best communicators today are the ones who engage with their audience on a personal level, inviting them to hear their story and ensuring it lives up to expectations. Master this skill, and you will be well on your way to becoming an effective communicator.

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