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# Tell Stories Instead

How to Captivate Prospects with Your Presentation

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MARKETING MOTIVATOR 

# The Power of Story

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Stories remain one of the most powerful forms of communication. They not only are effective in capturing and holding the attention of children, but can mesmerize adults as well.

The purpose of telling stories during your presentations is to engage, to entertain and to teach. All of these attributes make story telling a dynamic technique for professionals who desire to be high engagement presenters.

Mastering the art of story telling can increase your presentation persuasion power and make you a more engaging speaker. Stories are also a sure fire way of opening your presentation.

Stories are also very useful in networking and sales situations when you want to illustrate the value you bring to the table without having to bore them to death with a list of your products and services.

Read what experts have to say about the power of story-telling:

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“Great stories agree with our worldview. The best stories don’t teach people anything new. Instead, the best stories agree with what the audience already believes and makes the members of the audience feel smart and secure when reminded how right they were in the first place.”

- **Seth Godin**, author of *All Marketers Are Liars: the power of telling authentic stories in a low-trust world*
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“Given the tendency of an audience to check out 20 percent of the way into a presentation, I knew I initially had only about 600 seconds to earn the right to be heard – or the next hour would be useless. I needed to do something after the 601<sup>st</sup> second to ‘buy another 10 minutes.’”

- **John Medina**, developmental molecular biologist and author of the book *Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home and School*.
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“Like clever journalists, and great lawyers, marketers who tell true stories make their presentations more interesting, more personal, more credible, and more felt – and more persuasive. Don’t use adjectives. Use stories.”

- **Harry Beckwith**, author of *Selling the Invisible: a field guide to modern marketing*
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“Never make a point without telling a story.

Never tell a story without point.”

- unknown author

# Shaping Your Personal Story

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**What makes for a good story?** The key to effective story telling is to shape your story and tell it with passion and conviction.

**What kinds of stories work best?** There are many ways to tell a story. In presentations, I find the short story format to be particularly effective. The Incident-Point-Bridge technique is useful in shaping your stories into shorter formats.

**Where do you get the content for your stories?** You can pull stories from your own life (childhood right up to today), from your personal life or your professional life. You can tell famous stories or well-known fables. You can even tell stories from other people's lives. And of course, you can make up stories; you just need to be very clear with your audience when you are doing this.

**Protecting privacy.** It is best to mask the names of the people in your stories to protect their privacy, unless you have their written permission to use their real name. You might also want to let your audience know that you using a fictitious name to protect the identity of the real person. This statement can help to build trust with the person hearing your story.

## Here's a Template for Story Telling *Incident-Point-Bridge*

Here is a simple formula that you can practice to tell effective stories as part of your presentation. It's called the *Incident-Point-Bridge* story telling template.

Part	Purpose	Tips for Success
The Incident	What happened?	Make it short & sweet. Describe the main events that happened. Bring the events to life as if they are happening right now.
The Point	What does this story mean?	What meaning should we interrupt from these events? What conclusions can be drawn from this story? Make no more than 2 points from any story.
The Bridge	Why are you telling me this story now?	How is it relevant to the audience and what's happening right now, in this presentation? Why is this story relevant to your audience in this current context? Establishing relevance of your story is key to your success.

# Incident-Point-Bridge Story Template

The great part about this the *Incident-Point-Bridge* story-telling template is that you can create many different points and benefits from the same story, depending upon your audience and what you are trying to achieve. Each time you tell your story, you can draw a different point and different benefit, depending upon what you are trying to achieve in your presentation.

**Caution:** never tell a story that you are still hurting from. If you find yourself feeling angry, bitter, sad to the point of tears, then you are not ready to share this story in a public presentation. Save it for later. Being overly emotional during story telling can negatively affect your audience and alter your outcome.

**What kind of stories can you tell?** *(Here are some ideas to get your juices flowing...)*

- The exact moment that you decided to get commit to your current career/profession.
- A client success story that illustrates the value of your product/service.
- A significant experience with a client/colleague/family that changed the way you look at your job/role.
- Your personal account of how a mentor helped you to redirect your life.
- A moving story that was told to you by a colleague that is worth re-telling
- A motivating “wake-up call” in your life when you realized that everyone has something to give (and everyone has something to learn).
- What other personal stories could you tell that would bring to life your key message in your presentation?*

**Brainstorm a list of possible stories that you could tell:**

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**Next Steps:** now that you have some topic ideas, it’s time to select one and shape it into a personal story using the Incident-Point-Bridge template. Working by yourself, jot down a personal story that connects with your key message. *(see worksheet on next page)*



# Incident-Point-Bridge Story Template

## Worksheet

	Your Personal Story
The Incident	
The Point	
The Bridge	

# Story Telling Practice

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**Partner Exercise (5 minute rounds):** This is an opportunity for you to practice telling your story in a **5 minute slot period** and getting immediate feedback from a partner. You will also have the opportunity to give feedback to others who will be sharing their personal stories with you.

**Instructions:** Here's how the group exercise will work

1. Find a partner; find a quiet place where you can practice your story with him/her;
2. Select one partner to tell their story first; the other person will listen and provide feedback at the end; *(optional: you can refer to your notes, if you need)*
3. You will have 5 minutes to tell your story. The bell will ring when the 3 minutes is up. Please stop talking when you hear the bell;
4. Your partner will then have 2 minutes to give you feedback (e.g., what they liked about your story and how you might improve the story telling);

Your notes:

5. The bell will ring when the feedback time is up;
6. You will then change roles and the other person will get to practice telling their story to you. He/she will have 5 minutes to do so; when the bell rings, stop talking;
7. You will now have 2 minute to provide feedback to your partner (e.g., what they liked about your story and how you might improve the story telling);

Your notes:

# Your New/Improved Story

**Edit/revise your story:** What changes to your story or the way you told it will you make as a result of the feedback that you received? Write out your new/improved personal story below.

	<b>Your Personal Story</b>
The Incident	
The Point	
The Bridge	

# More stories that you could tell

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Now that you are practiced and more inspired, what other stories could you tell?

**Brainstorm other possible story topics:**

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**In what other context/situations might you use these or other stories?**

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**Need more help with your presentation skills and confidence?**



**Stand and Deliver™: YES! You Can Excel at Presentations,** Audio Training program presented by Kathy McAfee. Includes 73-minute audio training program, four downloadable templates and tools and original song *Motivation* by Mark Shepard. You can purchase your copy via digital download at <http://www.motivateddownloads.com/>

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## Professional BIO

# Kathy McAfee

Kathy McAfee is **America's Marketing Motivator**, a national speaker and executive presentation coach whose mission is to help business leaders more effectively use their energy, influence and resources to create positive changes in the world. Her company, Kmc Brand Innovation, LLC, helps motivated executives and ambitious entrepreneurs to become the recognized leaders in their fields by mastering the art of high engagement presentations and more effective networking. She is the author of the book *Networking Ahead for Business* (Kiwi Publishing 2010).

In her role as **Executive Presentation Coach**, she helps her clients increase their confidence, credibility, and influence by going PowerPoint®-FREE, engaging the audience and moving them to action. A certified Master Practitioner of Neuro Linguistic Programming or NLP and certified Blind Spots Profile Coach, Kathy helps her clients to clear their limiting beliefs and install more effective strategies to realize their full leadership potential through executive coaching. She is the co-founder of Power Up Your Professional Image™ a professional development event-based company that helps career-minded women get an edge in the workplace by polishing their image, bolstering their confidence and expanding their network.

Over the past 20 years, Kathy has held numerous corporate leadership positions, bringing marketing success to the likes of Levi Strauss & Co., Maybelline, Southcorp Wines of Australia and ADVO, where she served as Vice President of Marketing Services. Living and working in England for three years, she led European marketing initiatives for an international vision care company.

A graduate of Stanford University in Economics, Kathy is a member of the National Speakers Association, a board member for the YWCA of the Hartford Region and active member of Soroptimist International of the Americas. She is an ovarian cancer survivor and holds a black belt in the martial arts of Tae Kwon Do. Kathy and her husband Byron are proud to be foster/adoptive parents of twin teen boys and they reside in Connecticut.

### **Contact Information**

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