

Turn storytelling into story-selling

by **Connie Brubaker**

Do you ever find yourself thinking about *Joe Millionaire*? *American Idol*? *Fear Factor*? *The Bachelor*? Ever wonder why so-called reality shows have become so popular? I think it boils down to this: 1) We're all interested in other people; 2) We're even more interested in juicy details; 3) We're all pursuing the same things: love, success and money; 4) We all also share similar fears: small spaces, heights, bugs, animals.



Connie's Comments

Understanding those principles can not only make us more discriminating TV viewers—it can also give us a powerful sales tool. Stories sell.

Storytelling doubles the impact of your presentation by engaging both the right and left sides of the brain. As we listen to a story, we visualize what we're hearing and try to emotionally connect with aspects of the story we relate to. We love to hear stories about how others have succeeded, but we also want to hear how they have failed.

Here are some tips:

Humor — Laughter and stress can't occupy the same space at the same time. Start by smiling. Laugh easily. People will relate to you—especially if your humor is self-deprecating. I remember a prospect that I had been working with, a VP of

Sales of a software company. On my first visit, he teased me about using the "assumed close" to get the appointment. It was true and we laughed, and went on to have a pleasant personal conversation about unpleasant household chores. In following up, I left a voice mail where I jokingly said that this time I was using the "either / or close"—he could either give me a yes to seeing my training presentation or he could come over and do some yard work. Moments later, my phone rang. It was the laughing VP agreeing to see

Storytelling doubles the impact of your presentation by engaging the right and left sides of the brain.

me again. Before this, by the way, my past two phone calls had gone unreturned. Humor works.

Emotional Affirmation — Choices are based on about 80 emotion and 20 percent logic. People feel first and rationalize later. When my financial advisor sold me a group fund of stocks, I was unhappy to see Texaco on the list. He asked if it was because of bad PR or their infamous glass ceiling. I said, "No, it's because the bathrooms are dirty and the pay-at-the-pump system always seems to be broken." Then I rationalized my emotional reaction by saying that if the company didn't care about their clients at the pump, they

continued on next page

Business Spotlight

Pamela S. Postel is President/CEO of Web-Jump, which measures clients' web site performance. Web-Jump specializes in turning web browsers into web buyers, helping clients better market their products and services, and increasing web traffic.

Solutions: How do you relay technical expertise to clients on a sales call?

Pam: We do a lot of listening—focused listening—as to what they want to achieve. When we do start talking, we do so in terms that the average person can understand and keep the "geek speak" to a minimum. We ask permission to take notes and ask questions—sometimes lots of questions. We like to know that at each step of the way our clients understand the process, so we constantly reinforce what we do.

S: How important are people skills?

P: Highly important. Integrity Training was just the beginning because we utilize the skills learned there in both the "dirt world"—nose to nose meetings—as well as in the "web world"—the point and click.

S: What is the most important value you bring to your client?

P: We bring to the table a plan to get their web site found and ranked, a plan that will convert traffic into buyers, and a plan that will measure the performance of the site. We also truly become a partner to our clients. We do not accept every job and we do not accept competing companies as it would be unfair to promise both of them high rankings. We understand that our clients' success is our success.

For more information, call (512)707-7217 or visit www.web-jump.com.

Put story-selling to work

continued from page 1

were going to lose business—which meant lower profits. But we both knew my dislike was based on emotion, not logic.

Metaphors — Metaphors give language power by engaging our other senses. Warren Buffet once said this about investing in a bull market: “A rising tide lifts all boats. It’s not until the tide goes out that you realize who is swimming naked.” That’s a very visual, memorable attention-getter—and one that gets your point across in less time and with more impact than a whole folder of facts and figures. A metaphor like that primes your audience for more left-brain oriented details.

So the next time you’re out on a sales call, integrate some story-telling elements into your presentation. I think you’ll be pleasantly surprised by the reaction. Who says TV can’t be educational?

Don’t be fooled: education isn’t training

by Ron Willingham

The 90’s saw a gradual redefinition of training. Propelled by organizations’ need to get results from training dollars, a very simple response emerged: “We can’t afford so-called training that doesn’t work. If we spend money, it must get results!”

Likewise, traditional “event training” came under scrutiny. Did an exciting seminar have any lasting effects on actual behavior? Too often, the answer was no.

The problem is we have long confused *education* with *training*.

Education is the dispensing of information. It’s teaching people knowledge and then testing them to see how much they retain. Knowledge isn’t power, after all, until it’s applied, and most people forget 95% of what they hear within

three weeks. It’s like carrying water in a bucket full of holes.

Training, on the other hand, is a process that forms new habits, skills, attitudes or behaviors. Getting people to automatically respond is the objective of training.

Effective training involves:

- Education about what appropriate skill models look like.
- Practicing specific action guides on a focused, weekly basis.
- Reporting of practice and results, with accountability.
- Rewards and encouragement for effective practice.
- Time lapse for the gestation of new behaviors to be born.
- Manager coaching.

Ron Willingham is the founder of Integrity Systems.® For training information, contact Connie Brubaker at (512)346-7270.

Connie E. Brubaker
Business Consultant

8125 Gutherie Drive
Austin, TX 78750

(512) 346-7270

CBrubaker@integritytrainingsolution.com

www.integritytrainingsolution.com