



STORIES THAT WORK[®]
Better stories for better results

GERRY LANTZ
www.storiesthatwork.com

**Do you struggle or
would you like to . . .**

Set clear

strategic direction

collaboratively,

with buy-in by everyone,
that gets action and
results?



**Do you struggle or
would you like to . . .**

**Glue your
team together**

to achieve more,
feel good about it,

Or, simply lift the
malaise over an organization?



**Do you struggle or
would you like to . . .**

Lead others

who believe in,
trust,
value,



and commit to the
same things you do?

STORIES THAT WORK®

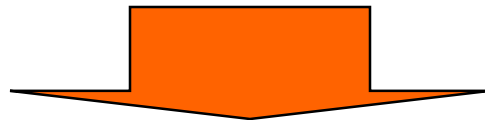
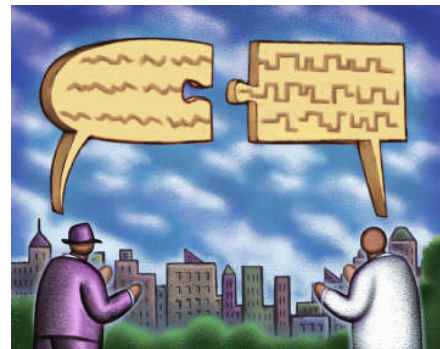
Better stories for better results

strategic STORY™



+

culture STORY™



leadership STORY™



Yes, stories in the workplace.



*“For many of us who work, there exists an exasperating **discontinuity** between how we see ourselves as persons and how we see ourselves as workers. We need to eliminate that sense of discontinuity and to **restore a sense of coherence** in our lives.”*

*“Work should be and can be productive and rewarding, meaningful and maturing, enriching and fulfilling, healing and joyful. Work is one of our greatest privileges. **Work can even be poetic.**”*

Max DePree, *Leadership is an Art.*

“Storytelling doesn’t replace analytical thinking. It enables us to imagine new perspectives and new worlds . . . to communicate change and stimulate innovation.” *

Information

Analysis
Interpretation
Evaluation
Plans

Stories

Accessible
Involving
Evocative
Value-laden

**Rational
Left Brain**



**Creative
Right Brain**



Insight & Action & Results

Stephen Denning, *The Springboard, How Storytelling Ignites Action in Knowledge-Era Organizations

How to get people to tell stories . . .

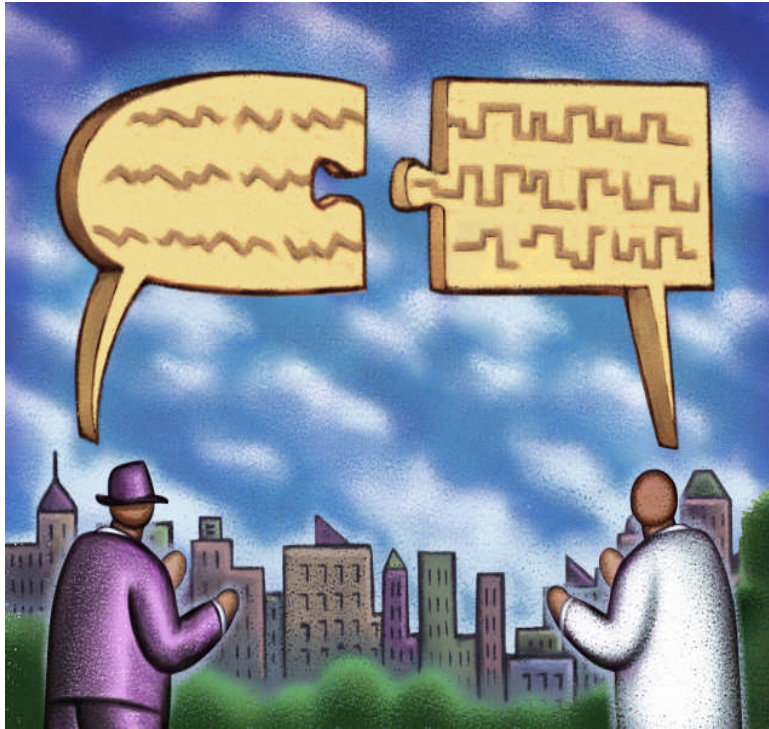
- **Triggers or prompts**

“Tell me a story about when you were most successful.”

- **Narrative formats**

Release us from the tyranny of the bullet point.

You are not a bullet point!



culture STORY™

creates bonds

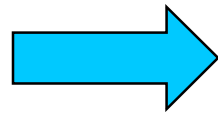
Perspectives, tribal lore, history and credentials that define an organization's

- **culture**
- **character (how it regards itself)**
- **aspirations**
- **values**
- **core competencies.**

Stories promote culture

The work-a-day world has . . .

conflicts
struggles
drama
motivations
climaxes
completion
learning



Stories

“Think of an organization as a big conversation. People are conversing all day long. An organization is an ongoing storytelling event.”

David Boje, Editor, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, as quoted in *The Power of Personal Storytelling*, Jack Maguire.

Corporate culture is bigger than the building

Corporations are sentient beings with

collective intelligence

organizational memory

feelings

learned behaviors

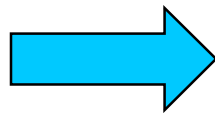
espoused and endorsed values

perspectives

tribal lore

history

heritage



Stories

that define a company's

culture

character (how it regards itself)

core competencies

credentials

culture STORY™

Challenge

**Describe a pivotal event
in the life of your organization.**

- A merger, acquisition, new CEO, large scale product introduction, a layoff, whatever
- A new program or initiative
- Any problem or opportunity, large or small

Crises in Action

**What went right,
not so well, wrong?**

- Often the best stories come from negatives
- What were the risks?
- Was the outcome in doubt?

culture STORY™

Climax

Who were the heroes?

What did they do, achieve?

- **People drive stories;** not process. Who took the lead? Who supported the effort amazingly? What did they do?
- **Consider the “Frodo Factor”**— Extra effort against the odds. Hero is transformed and returns to tell the tale.

Lessons

Why is this story important?

How can it help now?

- What did you/the company learn about its strengths, weaknesses, values, character traits?

Your CultureStory™

✓ **Challenge**

✓ **Crises in Action**

✓ **Climax**

✓ **Lessons**

Ex. 2

Culture Story Audit

- What are the extraordinary events and who are the exceptional people in this organization? Why?
- When is the organization at its best? its worst?
- Founder's or founding stories
- How we grew stories
- Hero and Anti-Hero stories
- “How we do things around here” stories

“The really good strategic planners I know always do it around telling stories. And the ones that I am highly suspicious of are the ones who have the strategy emerge purely from the analytics.”

John Seely Brown, Xerox, Palo Alto
as quoted in *Simplicity*, Bill Jensen

strategic STORY™ simplifies plans



Strategies and their language are far simpler than the analysis it took to get to them.

When strategy is told as a ***story in the marketplace***, the direction and actions a company must take are clearer.

strategic STORY™

✓ **Crisis or Opportunity**

✓ **Back Story**

✓ **Climax Told in Action**

✓ **Resolution**

strategic STORY™

Story Element

Your Story

**Crisis Or
Opportunity:**

What's the pickle or the carrot?
What's at stake?
What do you want?
The obstacles?

Backstory

Why is it like this?
What's the situation?

**Climax Told
in Action**

What do we have to do ?
What does success look like?
Results?

Resolution

Lessons learned?
Where do we go from here?

4-8,3

3 X 3 Plots

Pied Piper

Piper rids rats.

Parents won't pay.

Piper takes children.

3 X 3 Strategy

IBM

IBM loses leadership.

Gerstner redefines roots.

Integrated “solutions” succeed.

Narrative Scenario Planning

<u>Narrative Element:</u> <u>Scenario:</u>	<u>Backstory</u> Market Conditions? Situation Analysis Threat or Opportunity.	<u>Action</u> What will you do?	<u>Complications</u> Market, competitors, user responses? Internal resources?	<u>Endings</u> Outcome?
A				
B				
C				

How leaders combine strategy and culture

By telling stories of personal or corporate intention

Positive

Present tense

First person

Then the story must be . . .

1. Told and repeated
2. Visualized—as a story
3. Felt by all—commitment

“Companies will thrive on the basis of their stories and myths. Companies will need to understand that their products are less important than their stories.”

Rolf Jensen, Copenhagen Institute for Future Studies as quoted by Tom Peters

Why stories?

Translate universally

- a common denominator we all understand.

Put flesh on the bones

- of corporate strategies and to-do lists.

Add passion, personality, meaning to the day-to-day

- a glue that binds us to our work.

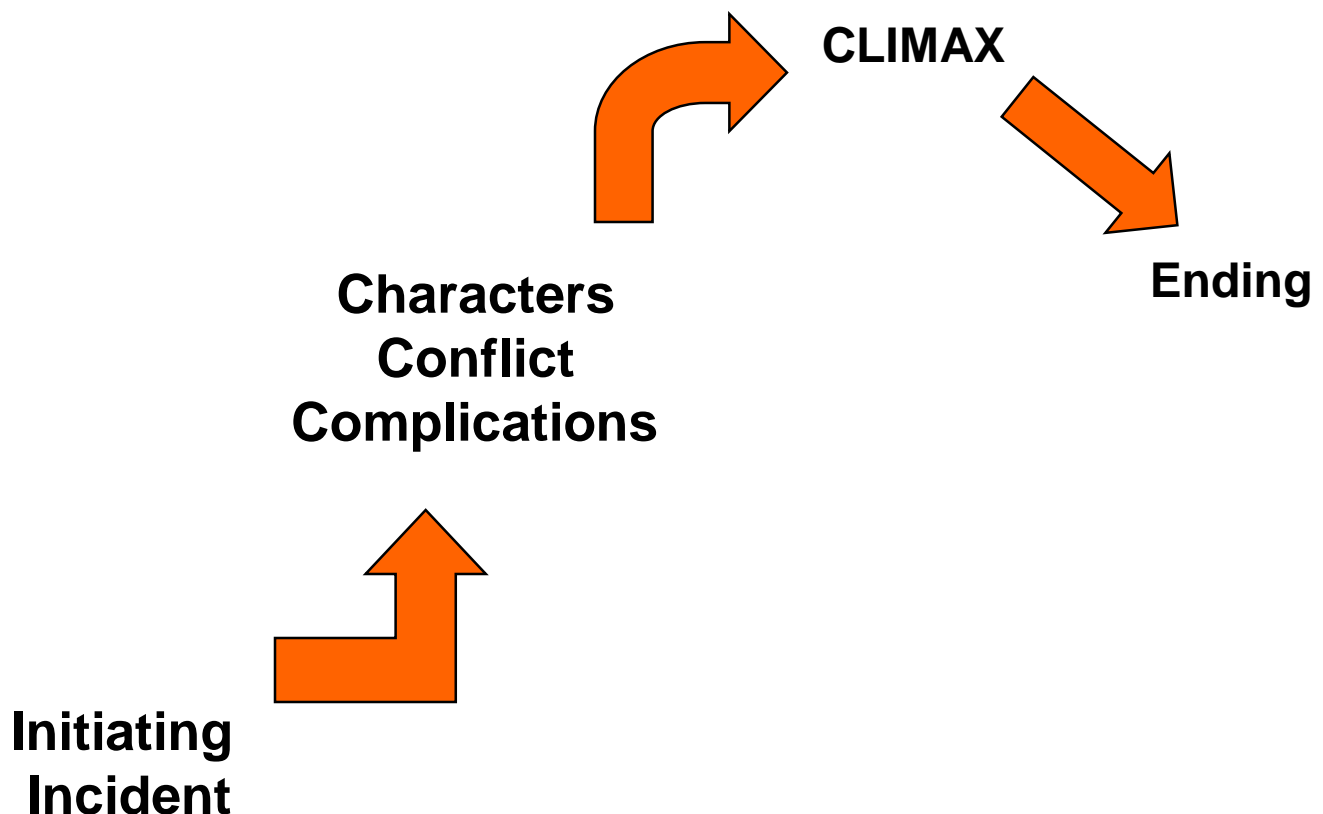
Easy to “get,”

recall,

re-tell.

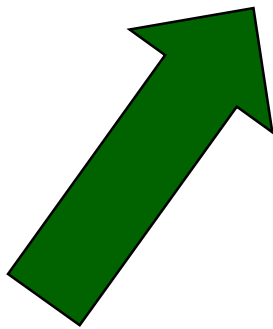
Narrative secret #1

The Arc of a Story



Narrative secret #2

Expected Outcome



Incident

Narrative secret #2

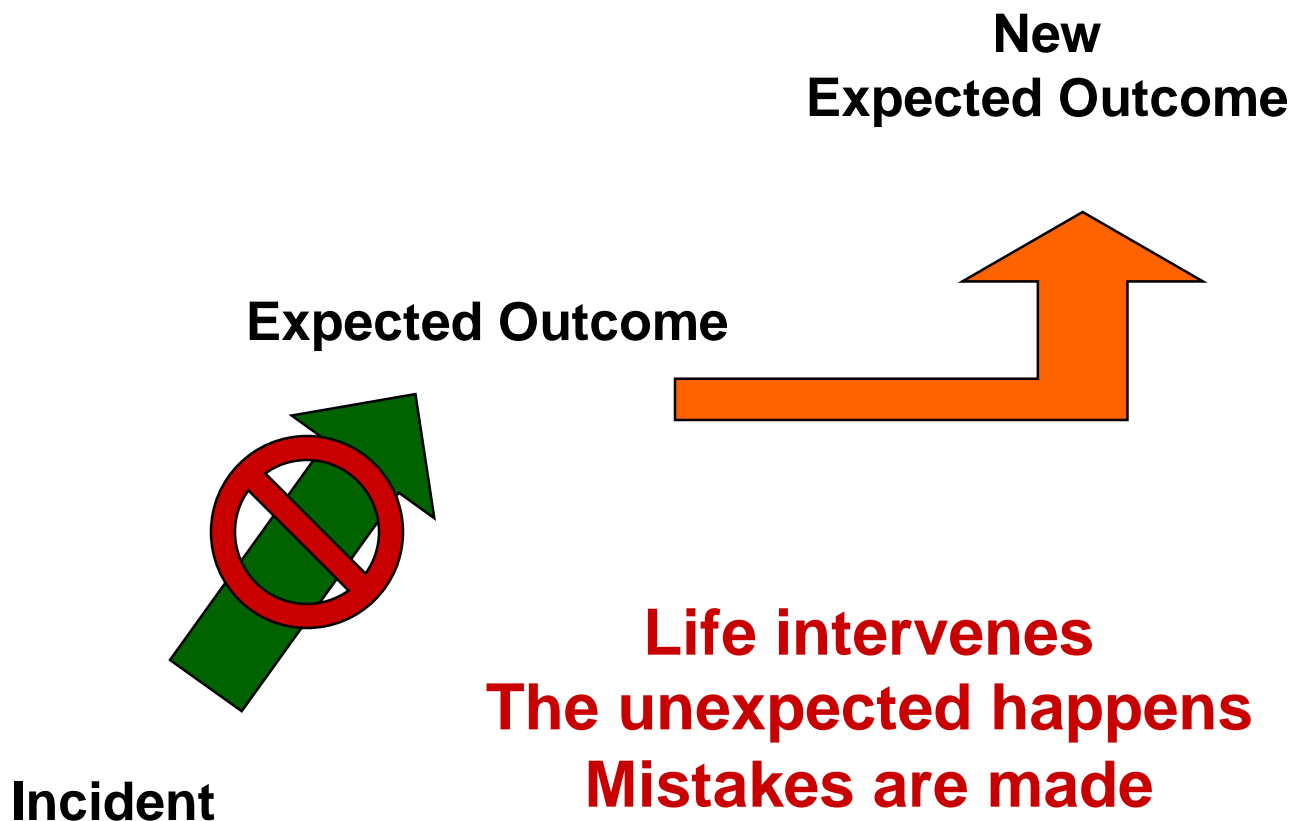
Expected Outcome



Incident

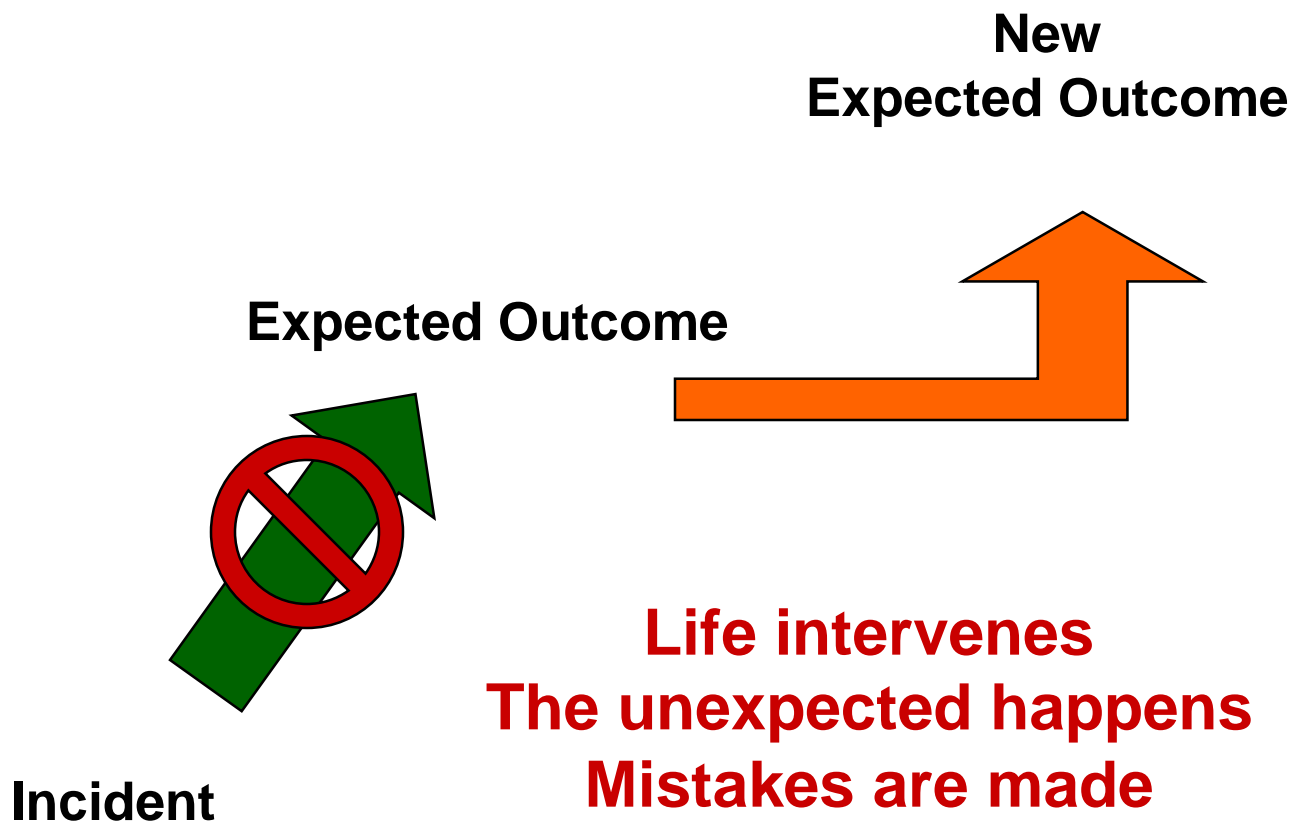
**Life intervenes
The unexpected happens
Mistakes are made**

Narrative secret #2



Narrative secret #2

**Don't tell the ending—that's biz talk.
Undercut expectation. Use suspense**



STORIES THAT WORK®

You need it when...		delivers . . .
Your Brand's sales, franchise, perceptions, are declining.	BrandStory™	Consistent branded experience and marketing messages that sell.
Extraordinary people aren't achieving extraordinary results.	LeadershipStory™	Belief, trust, aspirations, and action.
The strategic planning process becomes an end in itself.	StrategicStory™	Simplified plans that inspire action, change and results.
Your closing rate is poor.	SellingStory™	Pitches with more persuasive power to sell.
The company lacks cohesion about who we are, what we do, and how we do it.	CultureStory™	Common cause, enduring values, commitment and belonging.
Your company repeats mistakes.	SuccessStory™	"What works" gets remembered, and acted upon.
The numbers have to make sense.	FinancialStory™	The compelling narrative behind the numbers.



**Want better
results? Tell a
better story.**

Contact:

Gerry Lantz

Stories that Work[®]

**Telling better stories for better
bottom-line results**

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