Story Development Guide

Using stories is a powerful approach to getting your point across to your audience and getting the message to stick.

Good stories have a beginning, middle and end. They begin with setting the context, followed by a challenge that was experienced in the process of achieving a goal or task. The story then includes the actions that were taken (who was involved, rationale for the approach, emotional responses) and the resolution. Lastly, the story needs to tie into your call to action and the overall message by ensuring it is relevant and the connection to the current situation is easily made.

Below are a series of questions that address the logistics of your presentation, the elements of your story, and the potential data elements to support your premise or message.

Planning and Logistics

- Who is your audience? (Demographics, level of experience, familiarity with this topic, etc.)
- How much time have you been allotted?
- What is the presentation format (i.e., formal vs. informal, slide deck, internal vs. external)?
- What do you need them to think, feel, or do differently as a result of this presentation?

Story Elements

- What's the context for your story (who, what, where, when)?
- Who are the key characters?
- What was the goal to be achieved?
- What challenges or incidents were encountered? How did they feel about these?
- What choices did they have? What choice did they make?
    - What was the outcome? How did they feel about it?
    - What lessons were learned from the experience?
- How is this analogous to the current situation in your presentation?
- What is your "call to action" for your listeners?

Support Elements

- What are the key data elements that will support your story?
- What format will you use to present the data?
- Why is this data relevant to your story and call to action?
- Will your audience think it is relevant AND important?
- How can you present the data in a way that the audience can understand?

AEC Business Strategies
Consulting, Coaching & Training
a subsidary of Elevated Training