



# Effective Storytelling

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*Great stories happen to those who can tell them.*

—Ira Glass

Stories are powerful communication tools and can be used to motivate and inspire others. In the corporate environment, leaders and executives need to be able to utilize the power of storytelling to persuade their peers and communicate their ideas more effectively. Good stories can entertain, instruct, engage and enrich.



According to experts, an audience is \_\_\_\_\_ times more likely to remember a fact when included as part of a story.

## Seven tips for effective storytelling:

1. **Only tell stories you like telling.** Chances are that if you like telling the story, we will like hearing it.
2. **Start strong.** Good, effective stories lead off with a surprise, a mystery or a challenge. Take us on a journey.
3. **Use descriptive words.** When listening to a good story we like sensory descriptions of how things looked, smelled, felt, sounded, etc.
4. **Generate emotion.** Identify and utilize the appropriate intentions required so you can make your audience members feel a specific way.
5. **Play with pace and pauses.** By using pacing and silence, you can create drama and build the suspense of your story.
6. **Utilize the element of surprise.** Withhold certain information until the very last moment that you need to reveal it.
7. **Stick the ending.** End the story solidly and tie it up with a nice moral or message for the audience to take away.



## Story Structure

As you begin to outline your individual story, it is helpful to understand the distinctive elements that must be in place to create a compelling and dramatic narrative. This is called *dramatic structure*. First developed by Gustav Freytag, a German dramatist and novelist, the concept of dramatic structure concluded that for a story to be solid and compelling, it had to contain six distinct elements.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ This is the start of the story containing the introduction of the setting, characters, and conflict, as well as any background information needed to understand the plot.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ This is the initial event that sparks the action of the story and sends the plot moving forward, without which there would be no story.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Here the conflict of the story is activated and the wheels are set in motion. The plot starts to build as forces clash in opposition.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ This is the highest point of tension in any story. It could also be a turning point where everything suddenly changes.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ After the climax has been reached, this element starts to tie up loose ends as the story begins to wind down.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ As the story reaches its conclusion, the main conflict gets resolved and a final outcome is reached.



## EXERCISE: Effective Storytelling