Tell Your Story in Seven Sentences (or less)

The 'NO B.S.' Approach to Influence using Seven Sentence Stories

Glenn Hughes
www.SMARTasHell.com

The Seven Sentence Story

FACT: Stories succeed where logic fails

Stories do not replace logic. Stories reinforce logic.
As Joseph Stalin said, "A million deaths is a statistic. One death is a tragedy". Your job is to provide the logic with data, but then leverage emotion with a powerful story.

FACT: Stories get a bad rap in the business world

Executives will tell you they don't want stories. What they mean is they don't want <u>bad</u> stories. You need to tell short, clear, powerful stories.

SOLUTION: Use the 'NO BS' approach

Our approach to storytelling eliminates the clutter, resulting in what I like to call, 'NO BS' – Narrative Only Business Stories. This streamlined seven-sentence story delivers all the meat, with none of the fat. It's easy to write, easy to deliver, and easy to understand.

HOW: The Seven-Sentence Story Approach

a) First, identify the **Most Important Point (MIP)** of your story. Some call this the moral, the call to action, or the thesis statement. It should complete the sentence, "And that's why…" For example, "and that's why everyone should exercise", "and that's why our oceans are important", or "and that's why this product should get $500,000 in funding".

b) Next, write the story by completing the seven-sentence template. **Open** with who, when, and where. Set the **context** with basic background information. Introduce the **conflict**. Share the **proposed resolution**. Introduce a **cliffhanger** (also called a complication or escalation) to increase the stakes. Share the **actual resolution**. Did the proposed resolution succeed or fail? And finally, state your **Most Important Point**.

c) Now, pair your story and emotion with logic and data and you have a recipe for success!

The Seven Sentence Story

1 | **Opening**
When, Where, Who

A few years ago, the sales teams tackled a problem that demonstrates the cross-divisional issues we often see.

2 | **Context**
Important background information

At the time, all the sales groups were independent.

3 | **Conflict**
Man vs. Man?
Man vs. Machine?
Man vs. Nature?
Man vs. Society?

This meant we were confusing the customers with many different rules, processes, and formats. Customers who were buying multiple products were extremely frustrated.

4 | **Proposed Resolution**
What attempt was made to end the conflict?

We decided to create a Sales Steering Committee and define standard processes.

5 | **Cliffhanger**
Tell us how the outcome was at risk.

You can imagine how hard it was to reach agreement on anything. Each group wanted their ideas to be the standard. There were many times that the committee almost dissolved.

6 | **Actual Resolution**
How did the conflict end? Who won?

But we agreed to meet every two weeks to discuss common ground. Over the next year, we standardized all our processes and learned a lot from each other. Our customers are now much happier with our service.

7 | **MIP**
The Most Important Point of the story.

I think every cross-divisional function could benefit from a steering committee

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