

Business Storytelling: Crafting Messages that Inspire, Influence & Connect



Objectives of the Session

1. Understand the Role of Storytelling in Business

Gain clarity on why storytelling matters in corporate contexts, explore powerful real-world examples, and learn the psychology behind why stories connect, inspire, and influence decisions.

2. Master the Craft of Business Storytelling

Learn the essential elements of a compelling story, discover proven structures such as SCQA, ABT, and WHY-WHAT-WOW, and understand what makes stories memorable and impactful.

3. Deliver Stories that Drive Action

Develop techniques to tell stories with emotion, presence, and clarity so they not only engage your audience but also inspire action and create lasting business impact.



1

Understanding the importance of Storytelling in Business



**Watch the video shown in
next slide, observe the
art of storytelling**



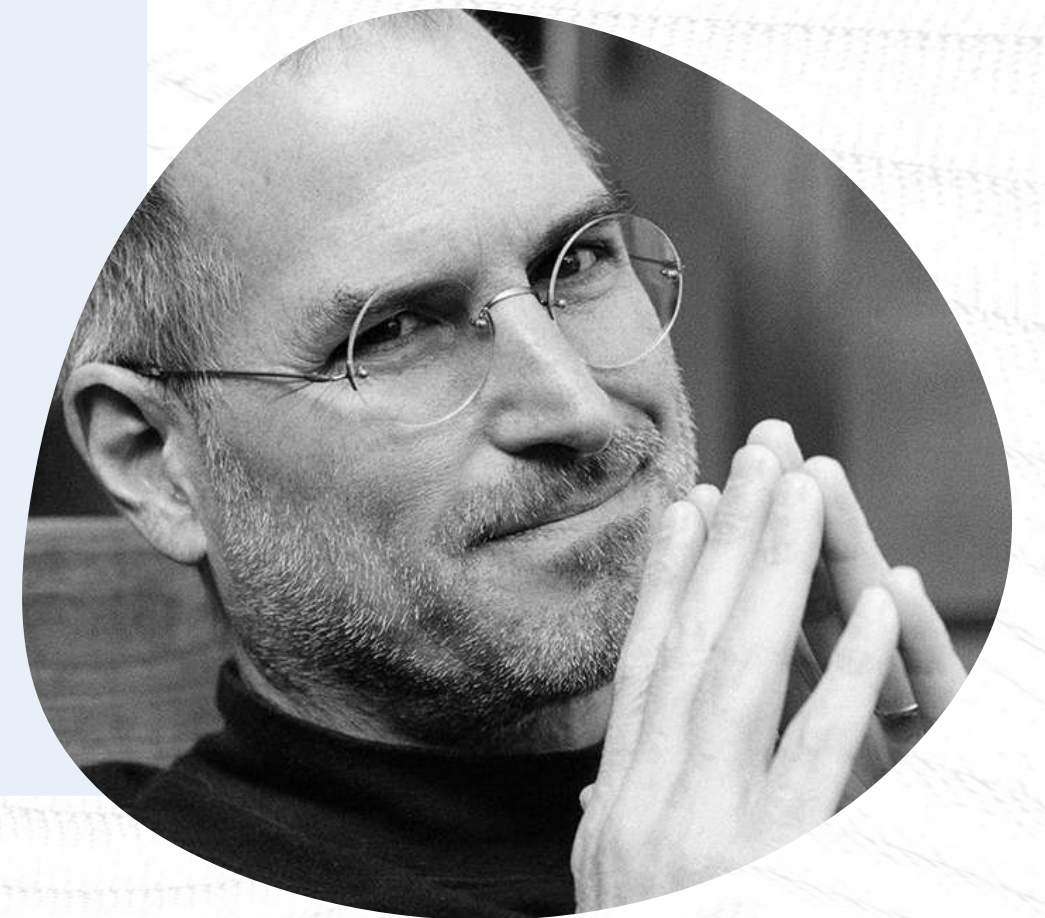


**"THE ONLY WAY TO DO
GREAT WORK IS TO LOVE
WHAT YOU DO.
IF YOU HAVEN'T FOUND IT YET,
KEEP LOOKING.
DON'T SETTLE."**

Let's reflect

After listening to this story

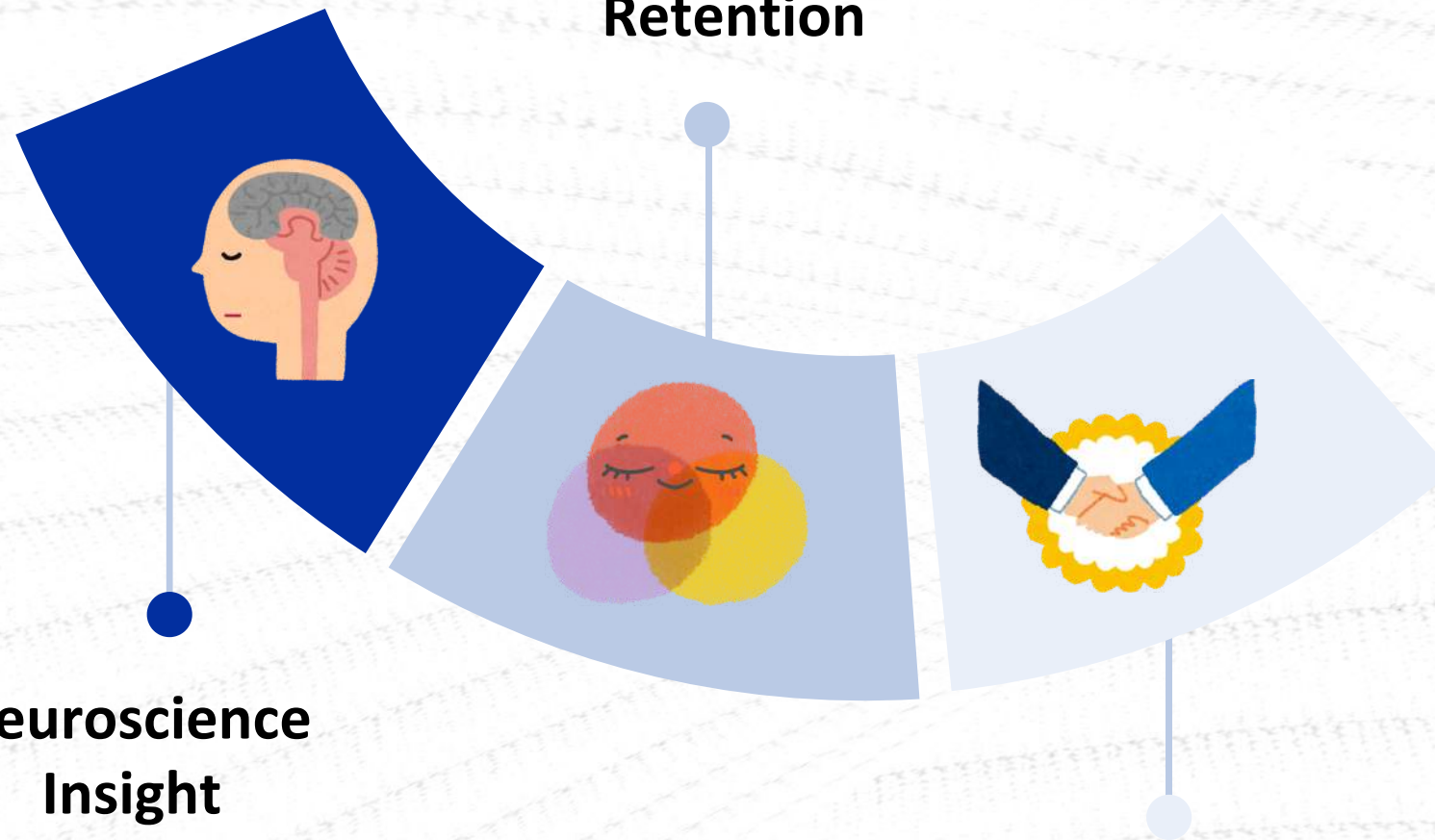
- What do you think about **Apple as a brand**?
- What **emotions** did this story trigger for you? How can emotions influence a buying decision, even in B2B contexts?
- Apple has competitors with similar technology, how does storytelling make their message **stand out** in a crowded market?
- How did his personal experiences make him more **credible as a leader**? How could credibility like this impact a sales conversation?
- If you were a **potential investor or customer**, what about this story would make you want to say “yes” to Apple?



Why Storytelling Works in Business

We forget numbers, we
remember feelings.

**Emotions =
Retention**



Neuroscience Insight

Stories activate more
brain regions (empathy,
memory, processing)
than data alone.

Trust Building

Stories make us
relatable, not robotic.



Insights

"Messages delivered as stories are **22x** more memorable than just facts."

Harvard Business
Review (2022)

"Stories are remembered up to **7 times more than** facts alone."

Stanford Graduate
School of Business

"Stories cause the brain to release **oxytocin**, increasing empathy and cooperation."

Paul Zak, Claremont
Graduate University

Storytelling creates brand identity, builds trust, and increases internal alignment



2

How to create a great story for your business



Key Components of Business Storytelling

Clear Purpose

Define why you're telling the story — to inspire, influence, teach, or persuade.

Align the story with the business objective (e.g., pitching a product, motivating a team, driving change).

Structured Narrative Arc

Beginning (Setup) – Establish context, background, and stakes.

Middle (Conflict/Challenge) – Present the problem, obstacle, or tension.

End (Resolution/Outcome) – Show how the problem was solved and the transformation that occurred.

Emotional Connection

Go beyond data; connect with emotions like hope, urgency, pride, or empathy.

Use sensory details, metaphors, and authentic tone to evoke feelings.

Audience Relevance

Tailor the story to the values, needs, and experiences of your listeners.

Show “what’s in it for them” and why they should care.

Authenticity

Share genuine experiences and avoid over-polishing.

Audiences resonate more with sincerity than with a perfectly scripted but impersonal

Relatable Characters

Introduce a central character or characters (real or composite) that the audience can identify with. In a business context, this could be a customer, employee, leader, or even the audience themselves.

Conflict or Tension

Stories without challenges feel flat. Introduce a struggle, risk, or uncertainty that engages curiosity.

In business, this could be a market challenge, a customer pain point, or an operational obstacle.

Evidence & Credibility

Support the narrative with facts, data, testimonials, or case studies.

The blend of logic (logos) and emotion (pathos) makes the story persuasive.

Simplicity & Clarity

Avoid jargon; use concise, vivid language.

Focus on one core message the audience should remember.

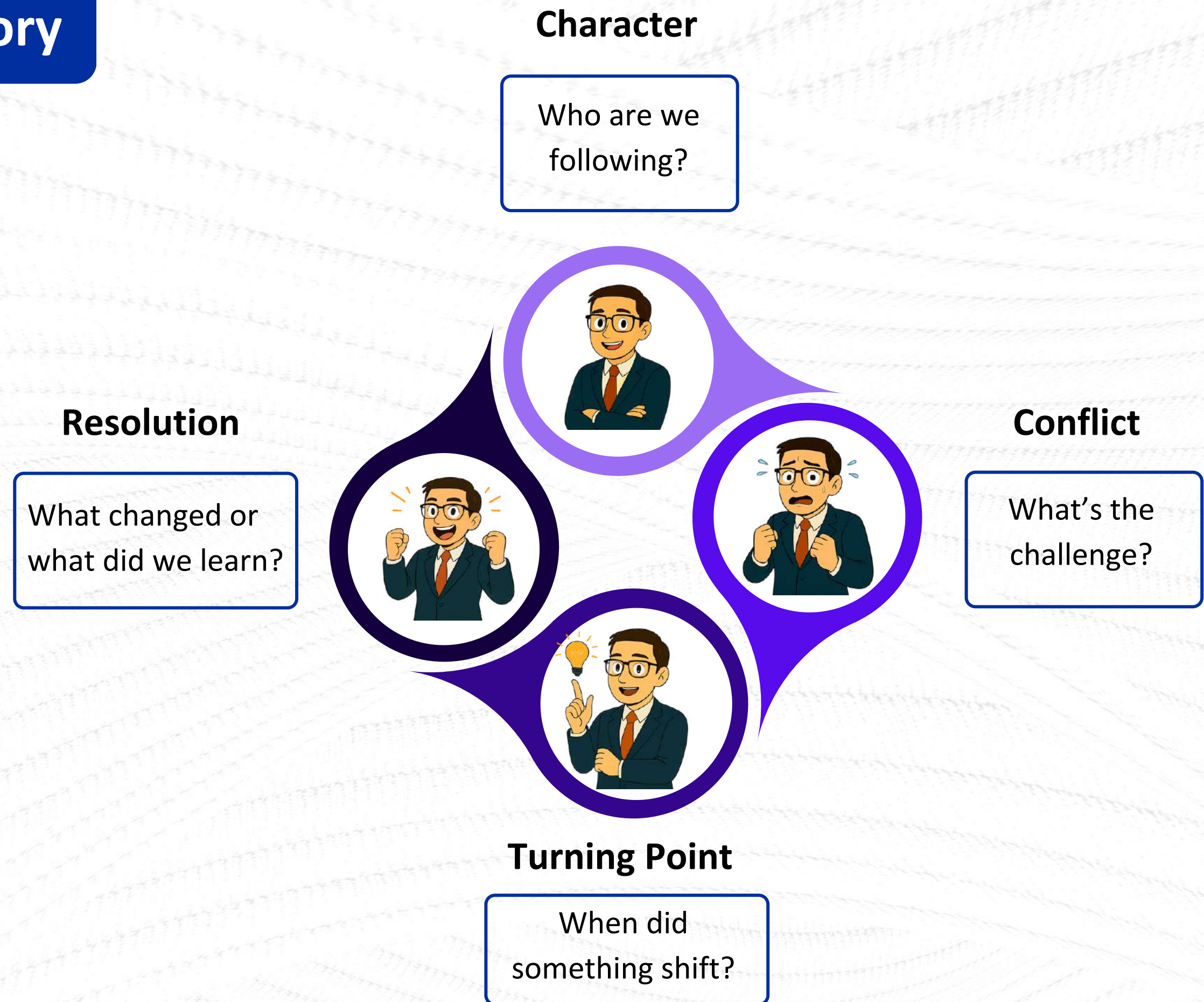
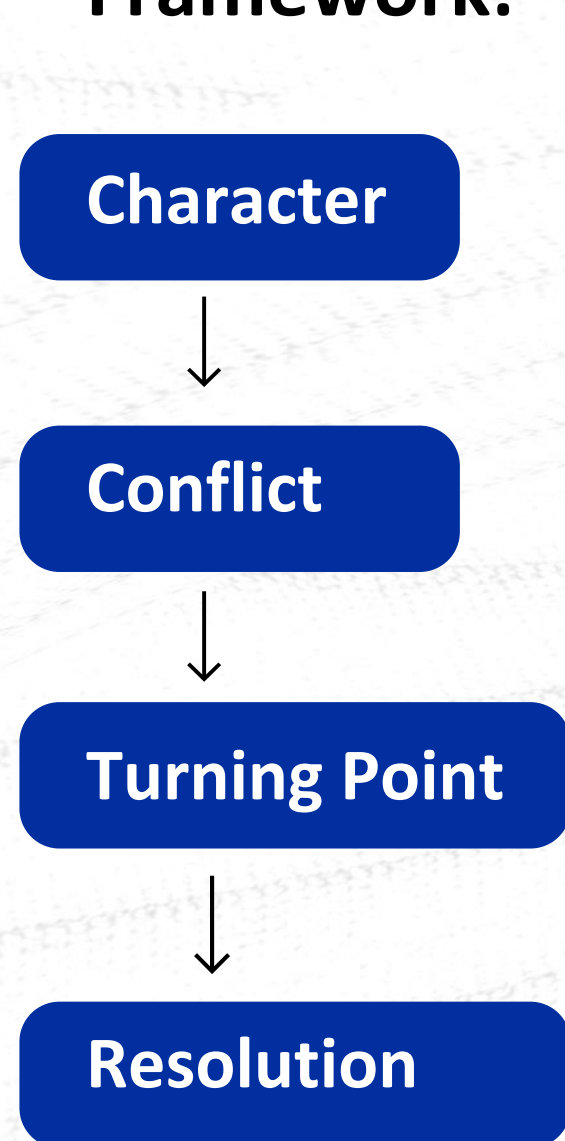
Call to Action (CTA)

End with a specific takeaway or next step.

In business storytelling, clarity on desired action is as important as the story itself.

Elements of a Powerful Story

Framework:



Mini Activity – Business Conflict Story (5 min)

Framework:

Character



Conflict



Turning Point



Resolution

Think of a real business challenge

(client issue, delivery delay, launch under pressure).

Fill in:

Character | Conflict | Turning Point | Resolution

Reflection:

How could this story build trust with a client?

How could it inspire your team?

How could it influence a buying decision?



Secret to telling a great story

**Many great stories start
with a question**

**Great stories should be told
in less than 60 seconds.**



**build tension by making the
answer feel uncertain to
make a satisfying ending.**



What Makes a Story Stick?

Microsoft – Growth Mindset Culture (Satya Nadella Era)

Story:

When Satya Nadella became CEO, he asked leaders to read *“Mindset” by Carol Dweck*. He then shared his own personal learning story, including how he changed his parenting approach after his son’s diagnosis. This vulnerability kickstarted a cultural transformation—shifting from a “know-it-all” to “learn-it-all” culture.

Takeaway:

Storytelling **from the top down** can reshape company values and open space for learning and innovation.



What Makes a Story Stick?

Patagonia – “Don’t Buy This Jacket” (Updated Values Storytelling)

Story:

Patagonia ran an ad that said, “Don’t Buy This Jacket.” It wasn’t reverse psychology—it was a call for conscious consumption. Their founder told personal stories of environmental activism, helping frame the brand as mission-driven rather than product-driven.

Takeaway:

Values-based storytelling can inspire loyalty even if it challenges short-term profits.



“We are all storytellers. We all live in a network of stories. There isn’t a stronger connection between people than storytelling.”



3

Story Structures and techniques that work



SCQA – Situation, Complication, Question, Answer

Situation



Complication



Question



Answer



Best for:



Emails



Presentations



Reports



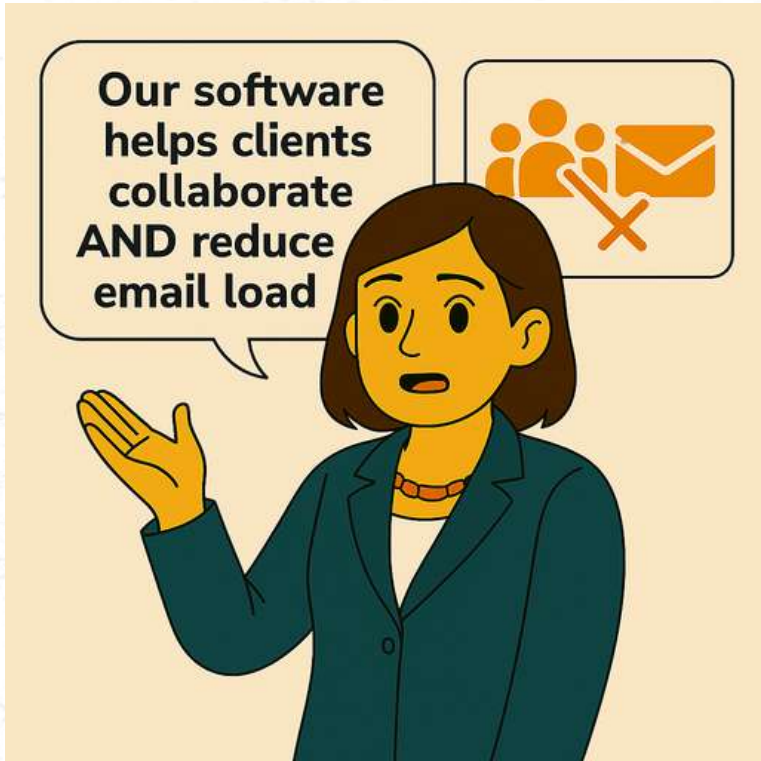
Client calls

Why it works

Logical and structured, great for analytical minds and business reports. It creates clarity and flow.

ABT – And, But, Therefore

AND



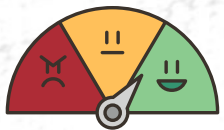
BUT



THEREFORE



Best for:



sprint reviews



Quick pitches



conversations

Why it works

Short, punchy, and captures problem-solution dynamics in seconds.

“WHY → WHAT → WOW”



This framework draws from Simon Sinek’s “Start With Why” and storytelling models from IDEO and Stanford’s d.school. It simplifies complex communication by anchoring it in **purpose (WHY)**, **clarifying the event or insight (WHAT)**, and **closing with a takeaway or transformation (WOW)**.

Used widely in product storytelling, leadership messaging, and organizational change.



Delivery Techniques

Use **pauses** for emphasis.



Match tone with emotion.



Practice presence –
camera on, eye contact



Mini activity: Say the same line in 3 tones – nervous, proud, casual.

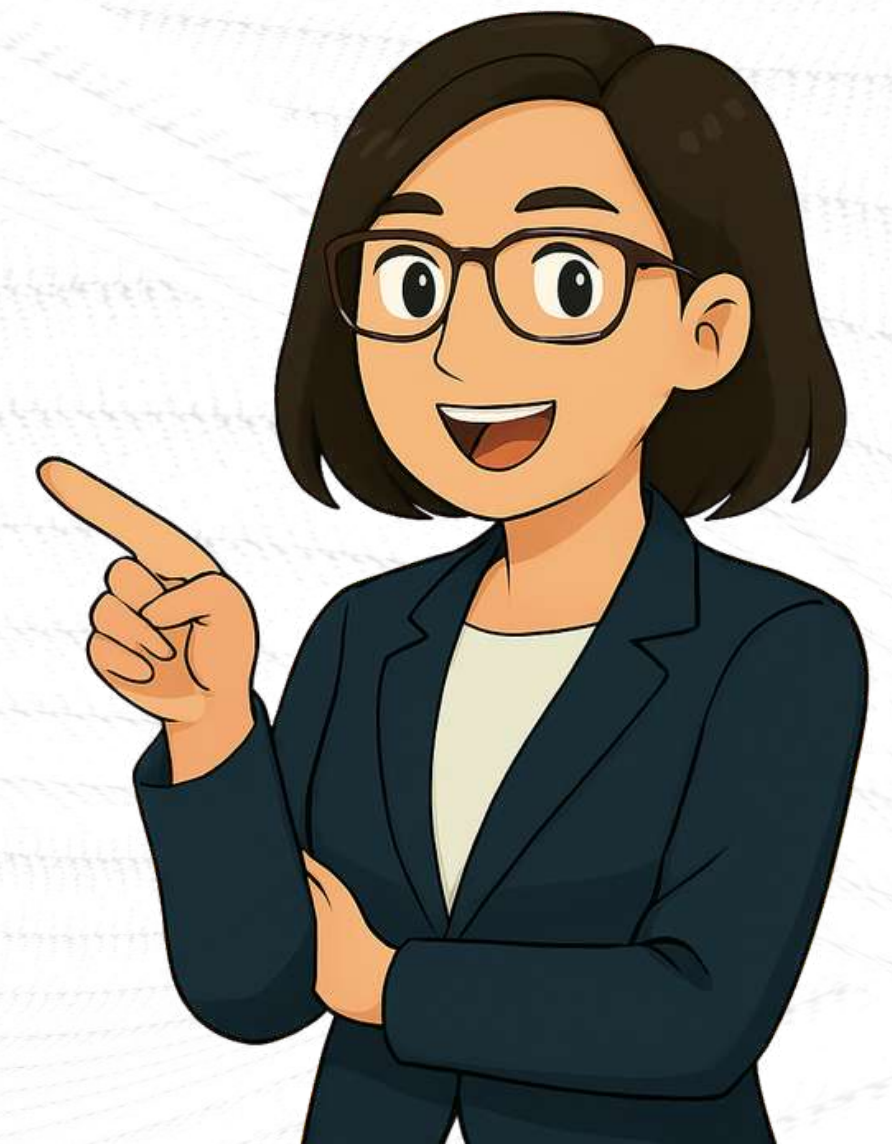
Emotions Drives Action

Why stories work → because they follow emotional arcs:

- Rise
- Fall
- Triumph



Watch the video in the next slide and observe the concept of “**Emotions drives action**”





Emotions Drives Action

What did you learn from this video?

Does being authentic and true to your emotions help?

Let's watch the second half





Emotions Drives Action

Yes, Chris got the internship.

Due to the principle of “Emotions drives Action”

- This principle is supported by neuroscience and behavioral research. Studies by Harvard Business School and Paul Zak (neuroeconomist) show that **emotionally charged stories stimulate oxytocin release, which enhances empathy, memory, and decision-making.**
- Business leaders increasingly use emotional arcs in communication to improve team engagement, persuasion, and clarity of purpose.



*“Stories with a clear emotional trajectory
are retained 2–3x more than facts alone.”*

HBR Insight



Summary



Why you should start using stories now

It creates structure

Clarity in your message means less misunderstanding, especially in cross-cultural or remote teams.

It activates emotion

Emotions drive memory, attention, and action. People remember how you made them feel more than what you said.

It reduces noise

Templates like SCQA or ABT help eliminate fluff and make communication sharper.

It humanizes the message

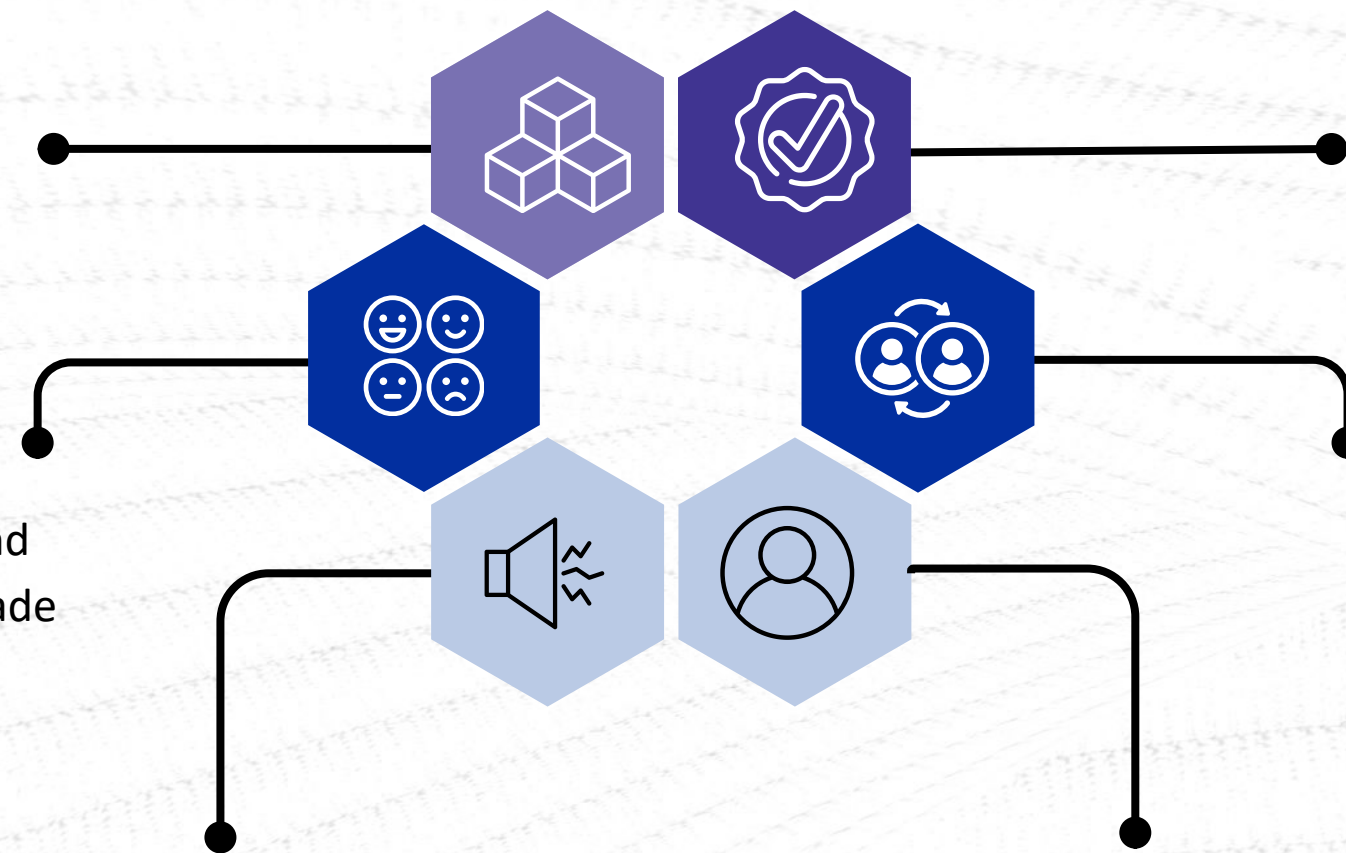
Even technical or status updates become relatable when tied to real characters, conflict, or purpose.

It builds credibility

A clear, well-told story gives the impression of clarity of thought and authenticity of purpose.

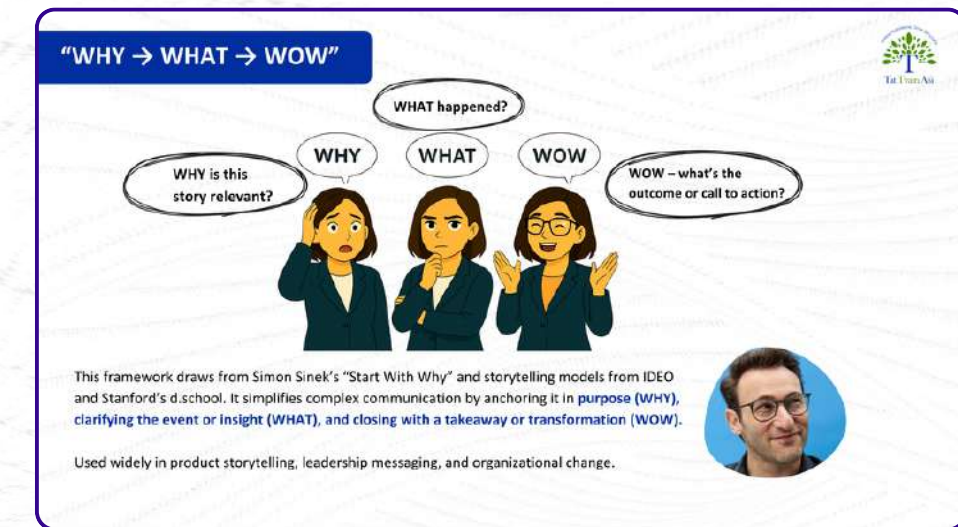
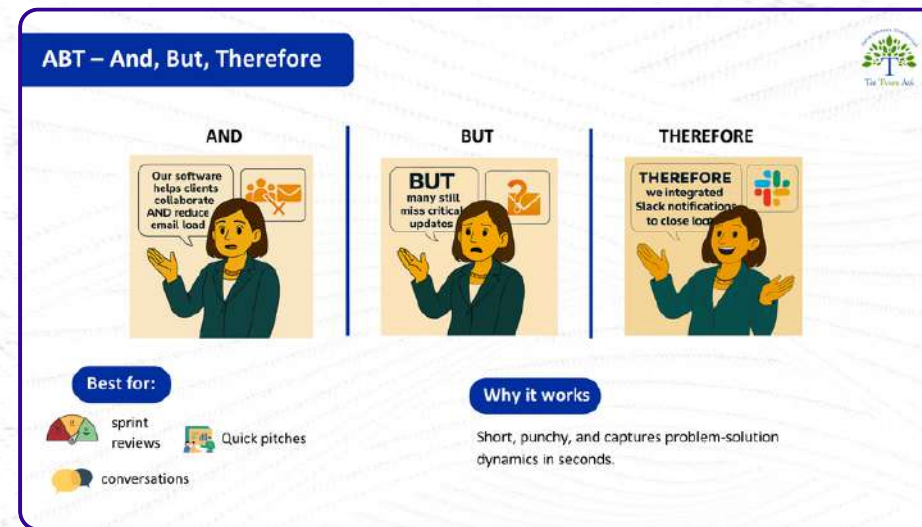
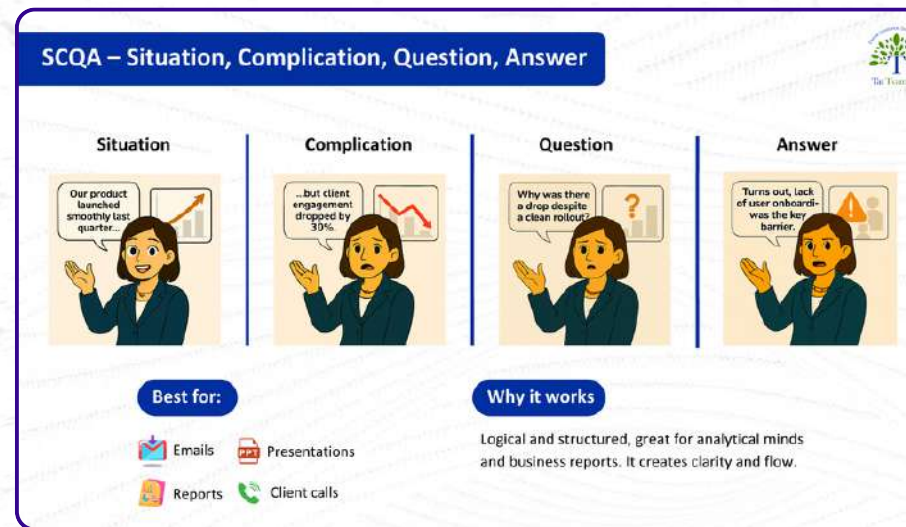
It invites connection

Clients and teams relate more when they see themselves in the narrative.



Your Next Conversation Can Be a Story

Pick any one storytelling framework from today: **SCQA**, **ABT** Or **WHY-WHAT-WOW**



Write down:



One everyday conversation this week where you will *consciously* use it.

What happens when you do?

- Were you able to convey more in fewer words?
- Did it help the listener understand or engage better?



“The more you use these frameworks in small, everyday exchanges, the more natural they’ll feel.

Soon, you’ll find yourself shaping stories intuitively, influencing decisions, building rapport and getting more done with clarity and impact.”

| *Storytelling helps you speak less, say more,
and be remembered.*





Let's Stay Connected

