

10 tips for creating a compelling business story

[Business](#)



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This story originally appeared on Entrepreneur.com as part of coverage of Phoenix Startup Week 2016. brings entrepreneurs, local leaders and friends together across the country to build momentum around a community's unique entrepreneurial identity. Chase is proud to be the Founding Partner and U. S. Partner of .

Our brains are hardwired to respond to stories. Park Howell, marketing consultant and head of Phoenix-based advertising agency Park&Co, says the same storytelling principles that make Hollywood movies and best-selling books successful can be applied to any small business.

" We are innate storytellers," he says. " You make a meaningful connection with customers when you speak from the heart and connect with your shared values."

At Phoenix Startup Week, a weeklong event for entrepreneurs that took place on February 22-26, 2016 and sponsored by Chase for Business, Park boiled classic storytelling into ten steps.

You can use this tested formula to help structure your messaging and draw people to your brand:

1. Set the Stage

All epic journeys begin with an interesting setting. Your back story is your brand positioning—where have you been, where are you now, and where are you going? What does your brand do better than anything else?

2. Choose the Right Hero

Lots of businesses put themselves in the center of their story. Your “ hero,” or main character, should be your customer. Communicate your business by looking through their eyes, their challenges, their hopes. Who are your top three target customers and what do they care about?

3. Define What's at Stake

In Hollywood movies, the hero might find true love or save the world.

Consider what's at stake for your customers. What businessgoalsdo they have? What issue does your product or service help the customer overcome?

4. Have a Call to Action

In movies and stories, something propels the hero into action. What has turned your customer's world upside down? What disruption is your brand responding to or causing? Articulate your value proposition.

5. Define the Obstacles

In every story, something stands between the hero and want he wants. For your customer, it might be scarcity of time, money, and energy or insecurities like shame and comparison. What is holding your customer back and how can you help? Approach this as a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis.

6. Be the Mentor

In most stories, the hero is educated by a trusted mentor or accompanied by a sidekick who will be there in thick and thin. That is your company's role.

What is the emotional promise that the customer gets from interacting with your brand?

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7. Join the Customer Journey

Just as the hero is about to cross the finish line, something always goes wrong, like a car chase or explosion. What's your customer's journey? What are their “ false peaks" that keep success elusive, and how can you help them through these hurtles?

8. Achieve Real Victory

Often your customer thinks they want one thing, but they want more. How do you empower them? How do you push them toward a greater vision of themselves? Celebrate their successes along the way to demonstrate progress.

9. Have a Moral to the Story

Boil your brand purpose down to a single sentence that declares what your organization stands for beyond making money. For example, Park&Co exists to “ create abundance for the greater good.“ The universal truth found in your story anchors your audience by connecting with their values.

10. To Be Continued...

The most exciting stories never really end. How do you want your audience to join you in the next virtuous cycle of their journey and yours? How will you be there for them in the future?

As Howell puts it, “ Stories create clarity out of the chaos around us. Story is as important to our brain as oxygen is to our lungs for survival.”

By thinking of your personal founder story, and your marketing material, in terms of the ten classic storytelling elements, you can connect with your customers in a deeper, more emotional way.