

StorySelling

JACK: You're in for a treat today. This is the first time we've done this. It was interesting yesterday, on my flight. I'm sure a lot of you either snooze, or read, or do something; I always read, and I usually pull out one of the classics from my library. I have a very large library on marketing and business and so on.

And I pulled one out called *Positioning*, by Jack Trout. I don't know if anyone's ever read it; it came out first in '86; that's my edition, back in '86. There's now a new edition and I highly recommend it. We're going to talk about that sometime at another event.

But what they talked about, of course, is positioning, and the very importance as they were going through what, at the time, they were calling "The Attention Age."

And they said a big problem—this was in '86—a big problem that we have now is the bombardment of information, and being able to get through to people to tell our story, and how to do that. And that was in '86, and they were talking about the bombardment of television, on all three channels.

And they did say, "Well, someday, we'll probably have something like a cable network to tie things together; you'll probably have somewhere between 50-100 channels."

Kind of. And they didn't even know about the Internet!

So you talk about the Attention Age then and the Attention Age now, and there is no comparison. Nick tells me he has four to five thousand emails a day. How do you do that? How do you keep up with that?

So the interesting thing that they talked about even back then, was of course the history of telling stories. The one way to break through is to

tell a story, just like I told a story. Because you get people's attention when you tell a story, rather than just stand up and start talking.

Nick has masterfully put together this concept called StorySelling, and you are in for a real treat, because with Nick's attention deficit going 90 miles an hour, and emails all the time—I mean, he spent hours and hours and hours and hours putting this together for you, and lots of clips, and it is an exciting, moving piece.

So, profit by it, and understand the concept of selling stories, because it will truly begin to change the way you connect with your audience, and that's what it's all about.

Join me if you will, and let's welcome to the stage Nick Nanton.

NICK: Thank you, thank you. The good news is I have no idea how long this is going to take. The other good news is this is everything I know on this topic, 290 slides' worth, so it was quite a task to get it the way I wanted it, with all the clips and everything else.

So let's dig in.

StorySelling to Success. The most effective medium of getting anything across is by telling stories. And, just to frame this: from doing a lot of the documentaries that I've been doing—you'll see a lot of footage from those today—we have tried to really hone in on what makes a story really successful.

And so, basically, anything we could find. I've been reading storytelling and movie-making textbooks, all the way to sales books, and kind of combining everything, mish-mashing it. I have never given this presentation before, so there may be a few train wrecks, but the content is solid; I promise you that.

StorySelling is an incredible branding tool—why? It’s obviously based on the power of stories, and it allows you to “sell without selling.”

One of the things that I find, dealing with people—it’s so funny, because I know the lifecycle of the typical client with me, and it’s an 80-20 rule.

I’ve got 20% of them who actually do something with it once they get it. They’ll go through everything; they’ll be in TV, they’ll be in the book, and then, I had one client who’s done everything I have, practically, and he called me one day.

He said, “Nick, you know, man, I’ve done everything you’ve got, and I’m not sure what to do next.”

So we start talking, blah blah blah, and he’s like, “You know what I need? I need more exposure.”

I’m like, “No, that’s not what you need! You’re about to go blow another 5 grand a month on a PR firm? You need to go sell. So if we need to do some sales training, let’s do that.”

People are afraid of selling, but with StorySelling, particularly, you’re basically telling a story that has an obvious end result. So it’s kind of like playing to win.

With a story, you know what story you’re going to tell, and you’re going to walk through that entire story so that, at the end of the story, there’s only one logical conclusion.

And for those of you who have been in our teleseminars—we have quite a few—we use the StorySelling strategy. I’ve actually been able to hone it a lot using some of this stuff; I got sick of telling my story, and Jack was like, “What are you doing, man, you’re not telling your story anymore!”

And I was like, “Well, everybody’s heard it.”

Jack was like, “Even if they had, they won’t remember it; and if they have heard it, they don’t mind hearing it again, because they’re not on every teleseminar you do, and those who don’t know it, it doesn’t make any damn sense what you’re doing unless you tell your story. You’re a lawyer, but you do all this as a best-selling author; it’s just weird, right?”

So the story kind of connects all the dots. The next time you hear one of the teleseminars, you’ll hear me tell my origin story all the way through to how I became a best-selling author, how it changed my life, and how I can help other people do it, too.

Particularly on the book calls; I have a slightly different strategy for how to do the TV and the prints.

But this is an interesting concept, too: every story I tell is true, but I choose to tell the story I want to tell, based on the audience. When I go to a real estate convention, I’m not going to talk a whole lot about the dental stuff I’ve done, or whatever.

Same concept. It’s really funny; people will say, “I thought you said this.” Well, that’s true. “But you didn’t say...”

So you tell the story in such a way that it’s relevant, because we all have millions of moments in our life, but you have to pare down to the ones that make the most sense for what you’re talking about.

Alright, cool.

So, throughout history, stories have united communities, communicated important ideas, and created a shared history for all of us. Stories have been a critical part of the human experience since the dawn of man, right?

I mean, since cavemen started telling stories through cave drawings, whether it was through their desire to—I don't know how they communicated, I don't do history and all that stuff; I don't know if they talked much, I hear that they grunted, maybe—but I don't know if it was to communicate the story while they were doing it, or if it was because all of us have this innate concern with archiving what we do.

Right? It's a big part of our family trees, our family history, or our personal history; one reason why we write books is because it's all stuck in our heads, and we have to get it out some way. Some of us choose to get it out through video, or books, or whatever, but we've got to get it out.

And so storytelling's been around forever, obviously.

You know, the great books of religion, they're collections of the great stories passed down until someone figured out how to write it down, and that took, an awfully long time to do that, but thankfully now we've got the written word, which makes life a lot easier.

So think about fairy tales. I mean, they've been around for hundreds of years, and they're still told today...and told, and told, and told, and told again.

So this is how powerful stories are: Snow White is over 200 years old, and in 2012 alone, in this year—and we're only 9 months in right now—there have been two major motion pictures and one primetime network series on the same exact story.

And it goes back to my point that you can tell the same story over and over and over again, retelling the exact same story in a multitude of different ways.

Why are stories so powerful? Why do certain ones, like Snow White, stand the test of time? Why are they able to affect how we think about things? What does all of this have to do with my business?

Which is, of course, what you're all here for, so we're going to talk about that.

So let's dig in. You guys have all heard about the left brain and the right brain. The left brain is where the logical, sequential, rational, analytical, objective is; it looks at parts, so this is like your deep thinking brain.

Right brain is known as more the creative side: random, intuitive, holistic, synthesizing, subjective and it looks at wholes; it looks at whole parts and tries to make sense of it.

So stories appeal to—which side would you think? Would they appeal more to our creative or our analytic side? Creative side, so creative side would be the right brain; I've always heard it said that only left-handed people are in their right mind, and I'm left-handed, so that works.

Right side—and that's actually wrong, which is what's cool about it. Scientists say that stories appeal to our left side, because they help us process information in a way we can actually understand. So you want to process the whole.

When you start telling a story—there's a strategy in seminars called loops, basically—and so if I were to tell you, right now, there are three things you're going to learn today, and I went through two of them, and intentionally left out the third one, by the end of the day, at least probably half of you would be going “What's the third one?”

Because I set you up with knowing that there's three, right? The left side of your brain wants to know what's going on and to make it all make sense, right? And so it helps you process information in a way you can understand.

In a way you can better enjoy, too, by the way. Which is interesting, because of the enjoyment; it's actually the joy part of it that makes us remember it, makes you want to hear it, sort of like Jack telling a story. A story actively engages you.

And I need to do better on this in my speaking engagements, as well. It's really easy just to rifle into some content, and just blow people away, but one single story will get people just hanging on your tongue. My pastor does it spectacularly well; I don't even know how he relates the stuff he relates, but it works every week, you know?

By the way, I always tell people that being a pastor is the toughest job in the world, because you've got to get people to come every week for something they won't know if they're going to get until they die, and you've got to pay for it, every week. So I respect pastors: pastors are the best salespeople in the world.

Think about this: which would you rather do? Would you rather read *A History of Scotland*, or watch *Braveheart* whoop ass? I'm going to guess *Braveheart*.

So, the human brain loves a well-told story; it actually is a chemical thing, and we'll get into that.

Pages and pages of facts? Not so much; it'll just put you straight to sleep. You know, if you can't sleep at night, read *A History of Scotland*.

Stories make information instantly relevant because they involve us. We instantly—we'll talk a little bit about empathy here, but empathy is the ability to understand how people are feeling. We instantly go to that mode when a story is told, because you are trying to gauge, "Where do I fit into this story?"

Every time you see a movie, you know, the moral dilemma, “What would I have done?”

I have this thing where I feel bad for anyone who made a bad choice at some point, because I think anyone can make that choice! I think there’s definitely right and wrong, but a path can get crooked at some point; thankfully, I’ve never been down a crooked path too much, but you know we all get to these points where, one wrong turn...

So I was watching the movie *Arbitrage* the other day—has anyone seen that, with Richard Gere? It’s actually a really good movie. It’ll screw with your mind.

It screwed with my mind for a week or two, because you really want to love the guy. It starts out with this guy, and he’s a billionaire. He’s flying, and he comes home; he’s got this big family, throwing this big birthday party for him. He tells his wife he’s going to work, and within 10 minutes, he’s at his mistress’s house.

So it’s like, “Wait a minute, I really liked this guy!” But it just wraps you up, so your whole mind is going, “Well, what would I do? How did this guy get in this situation? What would I do?”

So they involve us, right? And the reason is scientific. Oxytocin. This is not what Rush Limbaugh got busted for, that’s Oxycontin; this is all legal, and it’s in your body.

Oxytocin is the “love hormone,” is what it’s called, and it’s in all of our bodies, and it enables romance, parental bonding, and trust, and most important for us today is building trust.

I’m actually going to do another presentation on building trust tomorrow; how I built trust with used car dealers. It’s a case study I did in Tracy Myers’; some of you have seen some of it for Dan Candy on private

presentation. It was \$10,000 for 2 days, and I did a bit of it; I have more here.

But trust is actually the most important thing we're building here today.

People love to buy; hate to be sold, we know that. But it's not that they don't want what you have, it's that they don't trust you because of the fact that they basically have to go home. They want to buy, but Michelle, being a good buyer, you've got to go home and convince someone why you bought, and why what you bought this time is different, right?

It's not that they don't want the Soloflex, or the Bowflex, or whatever; it's not that they don't want to come work out with you, Doug, it's the fact that they have told their family 100 times why they're losing this 150 pounds, and it ain't happening.

And so it's the fact that their family's beating on them, and then they've got to trust you enough to go back and fight with somebody else. I mean, that is the bottom line; it's a primal thing: they've got to trust you enough to fight someone else on why you're right.

It's actually why all exercise equipment that's on the market right now does not make it to the market unless you can hang clothes on it. It will not last in the bedroom long if you cannot hang clothes on it.

Scientific studies show that stories directly trigger Oxytocin; that's what the key is for us, is that it directly triggers the stuff. (Should probably have the psychiatrist come up; you probably know more about this stuff than me, but we'll get past this stuff quick.) This is why stories are such a powerful tool for any kind of persuasion.

The goal of selling is to persuade someone to do what they need to do, right? If all of us didn't believe that we have the best solution in the world for what people actually need, then we wouldn't be able to sell like we do.

But I fundamentally understand, when I get on the phone with someone, or when I'm teaching at a seminar, I know that there are people in the room who, if they don't spend their money on me with something valuable, they're going to go spend it on something invaluable.

So my only objective for that period of time is to get them to make the right decision. If you have a hard time selling, think about it that way: your job is to help people make the right decision, because left to our own devices, what do we do? The wrong thing, right? Over and over and over again. It's our job to make them make the right decision.

So, persuasion is your friend, as long as you're doing something logical, rational, legal, and that you actually believe in. You need persuasion, especially since they're working on the logical side of our brain.

We thought stories catered to the creative side of our brain, but they're really catering to the logical side of our brain. That's the side that decides what's real what's not.

You'll notice—actually, our bodies have lots of sensors—that you can just smell BS; you can just tell. You know, you've seen enough speakers; you can tell the guy who's just not genuine, authentic, all that stuff, and you're trying to just not—you want to like the guy, but you just can't, because your body's just saying this doesn't make sense, right? And all of your sensors are just not making sense.

So the logical side of the brain, the left side, is helping us make sense of what's real and what's not; persuasion, trust, all this stuff is on the side that processes stories. That's why we want to go to this mode.

Stories equal empathy plus interest. So, obviously, you've got to get people's interest, but with empathy, you help drag people into the scenario. The best selling you'll ever do is helping people realize; you'll have people do it all the time: "Here's what it'll be 12 months from now,

when you've been using my product for the last 12 months. You'll be sitting on the beach, drinking 87 margaritas, because you've lost 1,000 pounds on the margarita diet," or whatever it is, right?

And so people can see it, right? I can actually tell, sometimes, from the stage, when I'm speaking. I'll say "Just imagine how your clients and prospects will look at you in the eye when you put your best-selling book on the table."

And you actually see people's eyes start to twitch sometimes, or roll back a little bit, like they're having a movie in their head.

And they're having a movie for that wife or that husband who's been putting them down all the time, or their best friend from college who is a Harvard-trained physician, and they're a salesperson. I mean, they're seeing it in their head, what this moment is going to be like.

And once you get people to taste that moment, it is all over, my friend. Because they want it way worse than you could ever make them want it, because they saw it, and they saw exactly that sour face on that other person, or whatever.

It's actually interesting, one thing that Dan Kenyon was telling me about, was about when people do territory-exclusive engagements, and stuff.

When people do, like, franchises are usually territory-exclusive, so you can be the only McDonalds in this area; or, a lot of times, there are coaching programs that we have helped roll out, or other people have helped roll out, where it's only one dentist, only one dentist can have it.

A lot of people actually buy it just so the guy they hate down the street can't have it. They don't even want it. It is, "That guy is not going to get this thing." We all have people like that.

The bottom line is that whatever facts, whatever message, or whatever values you want to convey are best delivered by stories. Just, bottom line, every time, best delivered by stories.

Your brand, your story. A successful brand is really nothing more than a story that the public likes to hear. So, once people have decided they like something, you can tell it over and over and over and over again; they love to hear it again and again and again.

I mean, certainly, it goes to the extremes of, you know those people who watch the same movie every couple of months? My wife likes to watch our wedding video every year on our anniversary; I'm like "It's not going to change! The outcome is exactly the same!"

But she doesn't appreciate that. I guess she does appreciate that the outcome doesn't change; she doesn't appreciate my humor in that moment.

It's something they like to hear again and again; certainly, it's something we start to do as kids. I probably know every word to most of the *Dora the Explorer* shows; they just like to watch it over and over and over again, and they never get tired of it. Apparently, it's something that is drilled into our heads from the time we're young.

So don't be afraid to tell your story over and over again, even to the same people, because, again, they likely will want to hear it again. It makes more sense. The more they hear it, the more you get it right. If you're experimenting with your story, you need to get it fairly close before you start to tell it; don't tell it to the same people differently, a lot.

Here's the proof: Donald Trump. How long has Donald Trump been perceived as the rich high-roller who says exactly what he thinks? How long is it, 20, 30 years? A long time.

How long has Richard Branson been perceived as the business CEO that's also an explorer and adventurer?

Shouldn't everyone be tired of these guys? But we're not. Brand stories make both of these gentlemen exciting and kind of fun, no matter what they're doing. They make us care about it, man.

I mean, if Richard Branson's doing something, I pay attention! What is he doing now? There this mystique, and he's built this brand that is intriguing, and we all want to hear what's going on, even though we don't know the guy.

As a matter of fact, we look forward to hearing what they're doing next. We're always looking for what they're going to do next; part of this is because they've branded themselves in the culture, and we're business people, so we know they're on the bleeding edge, usually, so we can usually get something out of what they're doing.

Because these brands are stories, they aren't just planted in people's heads, they're planted in their hearts. And obviously that is a huge thing.

I talk a lot now with storytelling, and just the things we've been doing lately; I talk a lot about how I think we've moved out of the age of the hard sell into the age of the heart sell, as I call it.

I think if you can just grab people, make them see it, make them visualize it, and you can make it connect with their hearts, the brand stories, that's why this all works, and that's why it's so relevant and timely.

There's probably no better time in history to be able to understand something like this, because it'll work for you the rest of your life, because this science ain't changing.

And with the bombardment, like Jack talked about, all the messages we're getting every day, this is the secret weapon that most people don't understand. So you can cut through all the logical decision-making and get straight to the heart with this sort of thing.

It may sound weird, but there's an actual emotional attachment to these brands. There's an actual emotional attachment to Richard Branson and Donald Trump.

I mean, you will actually notice, if you see one of these guys—depending on what your opinion of them is, if you like them or you're intrigued by one of them; I think Trump's probably more polarizing than Branson—but if Richard Branson got cancer and you found out about it, you'd probably be pretty sad.

You'd be like, “Man, well that kind of sucks. He can't go skydiving anymore, or he can't go on transatlantic balloon flights, or whatever.” A little part of your heart would die for him, because you've got the empathy because you've been watching him tell his brand story for so many years, now.

So, actually, when someone violates their personal brand story, the fallout can be incredible. We've seen this several times. Without getting political, this was a nightmare for Clint Eastwood and for many people around him.

The video went viral; social media went crazy, and everyone was talking about it. Why? Eastwood has been telling his “story” on screen for 50 years. That's a long time for people to get emotionally attached to you. He's likely the biggest movie legend alive.

But Clint's brand story is that he's a man of few words; that's what he is known for. He's a man of action, a no-nonsense kind of guy, and he takes care of business. When he does have something to say, he says it succinctly and he gets to the point. That's what he's known for.

This is how we think Clint Eastwood handles a situation. This is what everybody knows; that's Eastwood, right?

[movie clip with Clint Eastwood saying, "Go ahead, make my day."]

That's how Clint handles the situation, right? I mean, like 8 words, and lots of guns, right? So, not like this; that was the big dilemma.

[clip from Republican National Convention 2012, empty chair speech]

It's just painful. When Eastwood did that, people felt betrayed, they didn't know how to process it, and the whole world kind of freaked out over some guy you likely don't know, but you kind of are pulling for him, just because you've been watching him for a long time.

This wasn't the Clint Eastwood story that everybody knew and loved, so it backfired on his brand because it wasn't the brand he's built over a period of time. We'll get into some better things about him.

And, to be fair to Clint, it could happen to anyone like him. What if Richard Branson suddenly said he was afraid of heights? It wouldn't work out so well. What if Trump suddenly were totally broke? It would definitely freak us all out.

Their followers wouldn't know what to make of it, and a lot of this is making sense: the mind is trying to make sense of something, and if it doesn't make sense, it doesn't work.

And a lot of times, when we do our photo shoots, our TV shows, we tell people, "Dress the way people are going to see you."

A lot of people come in; the first thing they do is they take their glasses off, and we'll ask them—Jack's first point is, "Do you wear your glasses when people come to see you?"

“Well, yeah, I’ve got to use them to see.”

“OK, well here’s the thing: if you take all your pictures like this, and people see all of your pictures like this, when they come in, and you’ve got these on, for some reason, they’re not going to trust you, and they won’t even know why, and they won’t even know that they don’t trust you. They just, subconsciously, have no idea why there’s something weird going on.”

And that is not a place you want to be in a selling environment, right? I mean, if you could set up a selling environment for someone, you’d want it to be in their most comfortable chair, with their most favorite drink, with their most favorite person. I mean, you want to set it up where it’s all familiarity, because it’s actually—affinity, familiarity, all of these things actually build trust, because it’s more like us, and we’re more used to it.

We trust people who are more like us and who we’re more used to. It’s just how it works. I mean I actually—it’s kind of weird, or not weird, but a really enlightening moment for me; it was really interesting—my main co-director, the one I have with me, he does everything with me, his father was murdered in the temple shootings a few months ago in Wisconsin. He was in the temple.

So I went up for the funeral. And it was really interesting, because they made everyone put turbans on their heads at the funeral, and it was in the high school gym, tons of people, and for the first time in my life—I just don’t know anything about that culture; I didn’t even know he was part of that culture, I just didn’t know.

And so for the first time in my life, I was in a place where everybody’s head was covered, so I saw everybody for who they were, instead of “Oh, there’s that guy with a turban and I don’t understand; I’m just going to

go this way.” Because I just didn’t get it, it didn’t make sense to me, I didn’t understand it; it wasn’t like me.

So, not intentionally, I’m a very tolerant person, but my body would just—fight or flight, right? You just don’t know, so you go this way.

But for the first time ever, because I was like everyone and everyone was like me, it all just made sense, you know? It all kind of—I could see the people for who they are, the point being that we like people who are like us; it’s just what it is.

So, a lot of times, when I speak from the stage, I’ll teach the concept of personal hooks. I try to tell people as much about me as succinctly as possible; I’ll talk about my kids, I’ll talk about my background, I’ll talk about where I’m from, I’ll talk about music, I’ll talk about whatever it is, because I want as many people in the audience as possible to say, “That guy is just like me. I like that TV show too,” or “I’ve got kids, too,” or “I’ve got...”

You know, you’re not going to get everybody, but you want to try to get as many people as possible to feel like they have as many things in common with you as possible, because affinity is what builds trust.

If you have a boat, too, and I have a boat, then you like me, because I approve of you having a boat. Right? Because you have a boat, too. You’re pouring money in the water, too.

So their followers wouldn’t know what to make of it.

Let’s do a case study. Burger King. You can actually violate your own brand story and turn it into your own advantage. Burger King did this well—and this is if your objective is to remind people how much they love your story.

If your objective is to remind people how much they love your story, you can actually violate it in order to catch them off-guard.

Burger King's brand story is what? It's "the home of the Whopper"; that's been Burger King forever. But they purposely killed that brand story in one restaurant and filmed it just to prove how powerful it really is—and it resulted in an award-winning ad campaign.

[Burger King ad]

"Get me a Whopper."

So these are real people; notice how emotional people got about a freaking hamburger. So you can imagine with something that makes sense. You can tell, some of these people have some of their weight—they've been going every day for 30 years to get a Whopper, right?

"What are you going to call it now? The home of whatever we got?"

So this is about a hamburger, so a pretty funny example, but you can see, they violated their brand just in this one location, just to get that reaction to show people: "No, you really do love the Whopper."

That'd be like me, with Chick-Fil-A breakfast sandwich. I have an emotional—I think maybe a sexual attachment to the Chick-Fil-A chicken biscuit.

I actually, one of my business ideas, because they're closed on Sundays, (which is a good thing), is that I want to start a stand called "Chicken on Sundays," because I want to buy all the leftover Chick-Fil-A on Saturdays and put it in a cart in the parking lot. I think we could kill this. If anyone wants the early exclusive, let me know.

These were real people filmed with a hidden camera, and the extreme reactions were genuine. Of course, they picked through lots of them to

get to them, but they're extreme reactions, and they tell the story that people would miss the damn Whopper if it were gone. I have no idea whether they actually let people have Whoppers or not after that; I don't know. Kind of cruel, if they didn't.

But they want the story they love to continue to be told. This story has become part of their lives, and again, they want that story to be told over and over and over again every day, even though they're not really paying attention to the commercials that say "home of the Whopper"; even though they're not paying attention to every Burger King they drive by, it's part of their life, and they want it to continue. If you take it away from them, it's going to be a big problem.

That's where we all want to get to, right? We want to make it so that if our story were taken out of the equation, people would be pissed. They'd be upset, because we are that valuable to them; they are that emotionally attached to us.

So we're going to do an exercise; this is called "Kill Your Brand." Your brand died October 2012; somebody hopefully will miss it. This is just an exercise; don't worry, no actual harm will come to your brand.

I want you to imagine that your brand "died," as if it were a person and it had a funeral. How would it be remembered? How would it be written up?

What this tells you is is your story effective? Would your obituary be like this?

[News clip of Steve Jobs's obituary]

Or would it be like this?

[News clip of Blockbuster stock drop and bankruptcy]

Yeah, brutal, huh? And I think, for most of us, this news report didn't cross our paths, because no one gives a damn about Blockbuster at all. I mean, it's so irrelevant to the conversation, completely irrelevant, that no one cares.

I want you to go ahead and write your brand obituary right now. What would your customers say? Would they really miss your brand? Would they feel positively about your brand, or would it not really make them blink?

What would your competitors say? Would they be relieved? "Thank God, that's the guy who was killing me." Or would they just shrug because your brand wasn't really a threat to theirs?

This is an important exercise because it forces you to look at what your brand story is at this minute. If it's not powerful, if it doesn't trigger anyone's "love hormone," then your brand has a big problem.

So, I'm going to give you 5 minutes to try to write the literal obituary: if you were going out of business tomorrow, what would it say in the newspaper? We'll take 5 minutes to do that.

Hopefully you guys are wrapping up here. Does anyone have one they want to share? You don't have to, but they're usually kind of funny. Anyone, anyone? Bueller, Bueller? Nobody? Come on, one of you should share. Alright, Forrest, come on.

FORREST: Today, Universal Coin and Bullion closed its doors, leaving hundreds of thousands of happy customers asking, "What am I going to do? Where am I going to go? My Universal Coin consultants helped me to plan, to protect and to profit when others didn't. Now what do I do?"

NICK: That's awesome. Perfect. Anybody else have one they want to share?

MICHAEL: “ProStatus Consultants died today, and the death has left hundreds of families without financial direction at the most important time of their lives. Over the years, hundreds have come to rely on the advice that ProStatus provides. Certainly difficult in these difficult economic times, ProStatus has spent the last 15 years guiding clients into retirement and beyond by providing unique approaches to financial planning, a more holistic approach than they could receive otherwise.”

That’s kind of where I left it.

NICK: That’s cool. Pass it up to Darren, here?

DARREN: Bear with me on this.

“Is the party over? Thirty year corporate producer Darren Johnson has moved on to the big party in the sky. He leaves behind a wife and four daughters. Which one of the five will re-light the tiki torch and refill the margarita machine? Will the music even stop?”

NICK: I love it. That is solid. Anyone else, one more?

ELENA: “Today, Elena McKinney closed the doors on B&I Chicago Land. Members were interviewed for their reaction. Jackie Ferret: ‘I’m a Mary Kay director, and I have a down line. I have many women who have had their first businesses, and B&I trained them in business strategies.’”

Then, the last part is “Elena’s competition was interviewed, and they said ‘I’m glad she won’t be producing any more of those damn books.’”

NICK: I love it. Very nice; cool.

It’s an interesting exercise, but it really gets you thinking about what would it really be like? Would it matter; am I relevant in my

marketplace? And I think that if you can figure out—if you just think about that, it'll make your brand stronger no matter what you do.

So what's different? To generate your core story, you have to ask yourself one key question: What about my brand is different?

So, you know, Darren throws the best parties, man, so people know they can trust him with anything. Who's even going to refill the margarita machine? That's a valid question. And that's a good question!

Michael, even, that's great that you actually give them good, sound financial advice in a really difficult time in their lives. One of the cool things about working with guys like you as financial advisors, with guys who really specialize in retirement and distribution—it's funny, my mom has been working for the county, and the school board, for years and years, and so she was talking to me the other day; she said, "Hey, I've got my 403(b); I'm going to go see a financial advisor."

I was like, "Wait, wait, wait a minute. Does this person specialize in accumulation or distribution?"

She was like, "I don't know."

I was like, "See, you've got to know this stuff!"

But it's totally true, because I can't imagine how many people are being taken, not intentionally, by people who have no freaking clue what they're doing, because they have helped you accumulate wealth, but they have no freaking clue how to distribute it. And so that's what's different.

I think, again, most consumers don't know the stuff we know, and we often do what your spouse—you know, you'll say to your spouse, "You didn't tell me that." "Yeah, I did!" And so, our customers are saying the same question. "You didn't tell me that; I didn't know; I didn't hear that."

Whether or not you've said it a million times, it doesn't matter. It's so funny to me because I love coming to events like this because I see 200 of my clients and they all have no idea what's going on.

And it's like didn't you read the email? Didn't you read the postcard? Didn't you listen to the CD? Didn't you watch the DVD?

And they're like "I didn't see any of that stuff."

Why am I doing this?

No, but there's a certain percentage that, it doesn't matter what I do, trying to shove the message out; people are busy, they're out doing certain things, and they might say, "Hey I heard something about this web service; could you tell me more?"

And so it's interesting. We've got to tell these stories and differentiate: what is different? Not just the traditional USP; great to know the unique selling position, but beyond that, it's more of an intangible that we're looking for, here.

And we're talking about things like "Nike: Just do it"; "Apple: Think different"; "FedEx: When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight," because UPS screwed me and I don't have my stuff today.

Brand stories. These companies have captured the essence of their brand stories with a few words that speak volumes. That's a huge thing if you can figure it out, if you can pare it down to a few words that speak volumes. Those words resonate with their customers as well as with their employees, and put everyone on the same page.

This is a really huge piece of brand stories. There have been IBM and several other really major brands have caught on to storytelling, and there's been, in a lot of companies—usually, the longer a company's

been around, the bigger it is, and the more folklore; there really are a lot of stories.

But, in your story, there's got to be some story that you don't even really know, but your assistant loves to tell everyone, you know?

“Let me tell you what I love about Darren. Darren, his wife was sick, daughter was sick, but damn, that margarita machine was full.” You know, but just some story that they like to tell, some legend of you that tells what the character is.

So the more you can figure this out; I mean IBM has a whole story database, and now, when their salespeople are going out, they can search by keyword and they can find out ‘the founder did this,’ or whatever the deal was.

And it actually helps put the staff on the same page as the consumer, which—I don't know if y'all noticed this, but that's pretty damn hard. These people are in your office buzzing around every day, and you think that they get the big picture. They absolutely do not.

I got that clearer than ever when I heard a person who's been with us a long time trying to explain to someone who was calling in because they wanted to do one of our TV shows, but they didn't catch everything on our teleseminar, because I spoke a little too quickly—I've never heard that before—and so I was like, “You have been here for how long, and that's what you say?” Like, we're going to start having sales training, right now!

“So yeah, you get some photos, and a really cool video, it's about 3 minutes, and...” What?

Anyway. Having stories: they make sense, and people connect with them, so you tell the story. “Well, let me tell you about the last time I went to San Diego, and here's what happened, and here's who I hung

out with, and here's how the business changed..." So if you can get them to tell stories, it actually gets them aligned in the same place you want them to be, too.

That's what a successful brand story does: it expresses your difference in a compelling way that externally and internally unites your enterprise. I think, for most of us, unless you have a pretty good-sized company, internal communication probably sucks. Because you figure everyone knows what's going on, because you see them all.

But they don't know what you're thinking about all the time, they don't know what you're going through, they don't—they don't probably understand. Maybe your salespeople do, but they are just trying to sell; they don't care about the difference you are trying to make in your clients' lives.

And so, if you can externally and internally unite, then, obviously, it's much easier to tell that story.

And, it makes the difference the hero of your brand story. Like the FedEx deal, "When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight." You know, Apple, they think differently; Nike is absolutely going to help you accomplish things, or whatever.

Nike helps you get stuff done; Apple helps you think outside of the box; FedEx makes sure something gets where you want it to go, when you want it there.

The "happy endings" of their core stories are implied in their slogans. That's a really interesting concept. People know what's going to happen before they start because of those three or four core words that are in your brand story or your slogan.

That's our slogan: Media, Market, & PR: Guaranteed. It ain't flashy, but people know from the time they start that this is how it's going to be.

That's what we build our reputation on: if I say it's going to get done, it's going to get done. So just think about that; how you can get that across.

We're going to talk specifically about how to tell your brand story in a few minutes, but first, I want you to understand how powerful establishing a successful story can be to selling what you want to sell.

So, think about someone like Dan Kennedy. Who in here doesn't know who Dan Kennedy is? Nobody? OK, cool. Good crowd for the example.

Dan's "No B.S." brand story is bullet-proof, and because it is, he can easily and successfully leverage it everywhere. You know there's going to be no B.S.; he's going to tell you the truth, and he's going to make it happen for you.

On websites, in social media, in his books, at his events, in his products, and throughout his Glazer-Kennedy chapters all across the world: his "No B.S." brand story of being the cranky old guy who cuts through the usual slick marketing to teach you how to sell is continually reinforced through all the above channels, and now Dan Kennedy's name, in his specific universe, in his niche, is as potent as the brand of McDonalds or Pepsi.

Because when people think about marketing and selling, that's their guy. They want to know, "What's Dan Kennedy doing?"

So, Kennedy, Trump, and Branson: interesting comparisons here, but all of their brand stories have become like snowballs rolling downhill, because they have so much momentum that there has to be a pretty solid run off-course in order for something drastically bad to happen. It can happen, but they're rolling downhill.

And the more weight they gather, the more unstoppable they become, and the more they sell. And that's just the way it works: it's just inertia, momentum; the more they go, the more they build, the more they sell.

So, brand stories work. Science and the marketplace prove it, and when you use stories to sell yourself and build your brand, storytelling, the results can be incredible.

So, StorySelling. It engages on a human level; it helps people lower their guard, because again, people want to like you, but again, they've got to go home and argue with someone else to buy your product, most likely. You've got to lower their guard first and get them to like you, so they can put their guard back up and go fight.

"We're both fighting the same fight here; I get it." You ever say that to a client? "We're both fighting the same fight here." And you've actually got to equip them with what they're going to tell their people.

And it evokes positive emotions, because their whole brain's making sense of things. And it can change perceptions; a story can absolutely change your perceptions on lots of things.

It's a secret big companies have known for years, and you see them use it every day.

So, let's have a little commercial break

[ads for Chevron; ExxonMobil]

Alright, so Chevron and Exxon, two of the biggest oil companies in the world, both spending millions of dollars on TV advertising time to tell stories about teachers.

What the hell, right? Shouldn't they be selling oil and gas? Yes, but instead, they're selling stories that have almost nothing to do with their product. Why?

Anyone, why?

Trust, emotion, yeah. Because they want you to like them. They don't want to be the big, scary oil company; they want to be the lovable, down-to-earth science-loving guys they are, right? For you to get a big, happy feeling when you drive by one of their gas stations. That's what they want you to have, instead of this; not this:

[picture of gas price sign with "LOL" "OMG" and "WTF" given as prices]

I thought that was pretty funny. So, instead of thinking about that, they want you to think about what great people they are, and how they're doing educational stuff and everything like that. Those are heartwarming stories; that's cool that they actually give a damn, right?

That's what they're doing. Now, take a look at this:

[Coca-Cola ad featuring polar bears; "Follow your dreams"]

Cutest damn bears on Earth, right? I mean, I'm surprised they're not using those bears to sell cigarettes or something.

So, Coca-Cola. One of the biggest corporations in the world; really savvy marketers, I mean, in history, they're the savviest marketing powerhouses. Usually the top brand in the world every year, that everyone can recognize.

They spend their ad dollars on the adventures of a polar bear family? This does not seem to make sense. They don't tell you how wonderful their soft drink is; they tell you a story that the whole family loves. I

mean, it just makes you want some hot chocolate and to sit down with your kids; it's just what it does.

And the moral: Coke is awesome. That's the moral of that story.

And by the way, this is where the polar bear series came from: Coke hired the largest Hollywood agency at the time, CAA, still here, to help them make a movie, because Hollywood knows how to tell a story better than anybody.

They didn't want another commercial from an ad agency; that's not what they wanted. Everybody's pitching the same old stuff. They wanted a movie that told a story, and so they hired the biggest Hollywood agency to get them a movie about Coca-Cola.

So, some Coca-Cola trivia.

How many bottles and cans of Coke have those polar bears sold? Millions and millions; that's an accurate fact.

How much of a connection do polar bears have with soft drinks? Zero.

The moral of the story? Nobody's left brain figured that out when they were putting it in their shopping cart. You love to buy you some Coca-Cola, especially around Christmastime, and you probably don't realize how much more you're buying. Not only because you have parties and stuff; you're buying it because you can't stop thinking about the bears.

That's just, again, two strategies that companies are using totally out-of-left-field marketing to capture your heart, because trying to capture your mind, telling you how they have better, cleaner oil, is doing nothing.

Trying to capture your heart and mind and telling you why you're getting fat because you're drinking too much Coke—that's not going to work, either. Polar bears are supposed to be fat—it works, right?

So, again, Coke, Chevron, and other corporations know that the most powerful long-term branding is done through StorySelling. That's just the way it is.

And it's not just them. In case you didn't know, it's an election year. Did anybody notice?

[Mitt Romney Ann Romney with MS ad]

Paid for by Mitt Romney for president. In that ink, as small as possible.

Really effective video, right? I mean, if you don't think the guy has a heart now, you lose, right? But, interestingly, as great as she is, Ann isn't the one running for president. This whole ad is about her, and really about his reaction to what happened, which tells you a lot about somebody.

However, to people who view Mitt as less sympathetic than a robot, telling his wife's story in this emotional way makes him seem more human and likeable, and it will much more likely help him get elected than something else of him talking about policy, because it's just the way it is.

But, by the way, both political parties understand this concept. According to the president himself, the biggest mistake of his first term—this is really interesting—the biggest mistake of his first term was not telling a good enough story to the American people.

That's a really telling statement. And I don't even mean in a conspiratorial way, or story, but just not telling the story well enough, that's happening.

I know, I should have had a clip: this guy is a machine at media. I mean, he ran an infomercial to get elected the first time, for God's sake; I mean,

he was on every major channel every hour, or something like that, a million bucks a buy, but people knew his story, right? And if he's using it, you know it's going to work.

And then, also, he had a movie done that I think just came out, but for this election campaign, and he has a trailer; just look it up, I think "Obama 2012 trailer," or something like that.

And it's done by some Oscar award-winning director, and it's got just mostly photos, and other people talking about him, about how, from the moment he walked in, it was just a nightmare. Everything had been left in shambles, the economy was falling apart, housing was about to crumble, and so, you know, it was a miracle that the whole world didn't fall apart. And so, he's done such an amazing job of keeping us on track.

And it totally zeroes you in on things you were not thinking about at all, right? All a lot of people saw was that he didn't do anything, and they focus you on 'this is all the stuff he did behind the scenes to really keep your country alive.' And it's really, really well done.

When the president admits that storytelling is a huge priority, well, we're onto something very, very powerful, aren't we? Because a lot of people who get a lot higher pay grade than me are figuring out what's going to work in that setting.

Which is why Arianna Huffington herself said that "Storytelling is the secret weapon of the 2012 race." So, again, you are in good company.

All of this is why we're big on StorySelling. It's a high-level strategy that not only delivers high-level results for big companies, but also our clients. I'll show you some examples; we've been doing a lot of it.

And it wasn't until last year that we really found the most powerful way of StorySelling, and that was from *Jacob's Turn*, and that was because I got sold on a story.

For those of you who don't know the story, I was in Chicago, in Midway Airport and I was going somewhere, and there was another guy going somewhere else—and that's what happens at airports, I guess—but neither of us at our final destinations.

I sit next to a guy, and he flips open his laptop and starts working. I was going to do some work, too, and he had a little picture of a little boy, smiling and holding a baseball bat.

I said, "Is that your son?"

He said, "Yes, it is."

I said, "He's a beautiful kid."

He said, "Thanks so much; he has Down's syndrome."

I said, "Well, yeah, I figured. I have a couple of family members with Down's syndrome; I can kind of tell the characteristics."

We started talking; he said, "Yeah, he's such a blessing to our family." You know, he's his youngest kid; his wife had a baby after 40, you know, kind of the typical scenario for that.

We got talking, and he found out kind of what I did, and he said, "Hey, would you mind"—and the guy's name is Jim Tyson; Jim Tyson never met someone who wasn't instantly a friend; this guy can connect fast, and he's from Floyds Knobs, Indiana—"We have a Down's Syndrome society gala here, and we have a charity auction with celebrity memorabilia; you said you had a celebrity connection; could you get me some stuff?"

"Yeah, sure, man, here's my email; email me." Because I don't ever mind trying to do that stuff. It's funny, charity auctions usually go

horribly wrong, or not well, because people don't usually value the things you value, and they're really hard to get. And there's not usually enough people in a room who want something so that they're going to fight for it.

But anyway, I don't mind doing it, but most people never will email you back, or call you, or whatever. So I get my stuff, and he emailed back, sure enough, and I got him some Rascal Flatts stuff, and I got him some stuff and sent it on.

And then, like 6 months later, he's like, "Hey, my wife just wrote this story. It hasn't been published in the paper yet; don't share it with anyone."

Well I didn't—I wasn't going to share it with anyone, so I read it and I started crying. Man, this is a good story. So I shared it with Jack and with my dad, just saying, "Hey, this is a good story. Check it out."

And then, they don't even know 100 people each, and they, I swear, each forwarded it to 200 people each. I said, "You...I didn't tell you not to share because you don't have a bunch of friends."

But I tell you, this story is viral. I get it instantly; this story has got to be told more than in the *Floyds Knobs Gazette*, or whatever it's got going. It's got some local newspaper.

So, what happens is we have a mastermind meeting; it was actually in this hotel, for the Grammys three years ago, now. We had a great room, with Allie Brown and Mark Schmidt, and Bette Davis; a lot of really smart people, and I sat in the front of the room and said, "Hey, for my mastermind time, I'm just going to read this story."

I read the story; everyone's crying. Not a damn one of them is not crying; don't let them tell you they weren't. All the guys, all the women; everyone's crying.

So here's the deal. I want to go tell this story. I want to go make a little movie on it. I've never done that before; you've just got to trust me. So I need to go raise the money. Here's what I'm going to do: I'm going to give you value, make you a producer, make you an executive producer, based on the amount you donate, and I'm going to go tell this story.

And so, we got enough commitments, we went off and did it; ended up getting an Emmy off of it, which was pretty cool. And, if you haven't seen it, this is a short clip, or preview of the clip:

[clip of *Jacob's Turn*]

So that was just a little trailer we put together for that, and it just ended up changing a bit part of what I was doing in life; I started making movies and stuff.

And it was an incredible way to bring his story to life, and the effect it had on viewers was equally incredible. It changed a lot of people's hearts, and that's when we saw how awesome the power of a film could be. So that's when we really focused on—I had always knew, we had done some infomercial work in the past—I knew that moving pictures and music and stories were the most manipulative form of media on Earth.

We could not know anything about someone, watch a movie like *Fried Green Tomatoes*, or *Beaches*, or something—I've never seen that one, but I heard you cry—and so, you could cry for people who do not exist and who you do not know. I mean, that is powerful.

So, imagine what you can do with that with a purpose to sell. Actually, my main goal, as Jack and I were brainstorming, was to build the first movie studio for marketers, and that's really kind of what we're working on.

Just like Fox has reality shows, they do commercials, they do infomercials, they do feature films, they do sitcoms—I want to do the same exact thing, but I want to do it all with the purpose of pushing product. And, obviously, only with good product, and good things people sell, because you can use that manipulation for good or for evil; I like to use it for good.

And that inspired another big idea: what if film could be used to bring brand stories of our clients to life?

What if we could involve their customers in those stories, and hit that “love hormone” and really showcase what was special about them?

So we began making branded business films last year, and we’ve all been blown away by the results.

But let’s get back to you and your business. You’ve seen how and why stories work the way they do, so why this works; a lot of this has been psychology of why this works; to convince you over and over and over and over again that this does work, and to show you that you could use it. Your business is not different; this could work.

And, with your own “obituary,” you’ve taken a look at your own brand story and how it stands today. How can you StorySell yourself? That’s really the crux of this whole deal.

If you don’t have an answer, you’re really denying yourself the single most powerful way to make your brand memorable and powerful, and many of you probably don’t think that you have a great story. You’re wrong. That says you’re wrong.

There’s something in your life or business that makes you unique, that makes you stand out, that differentiates you from the rest of the pack.

And this is where I like to do what I call “the \$10,000 test.” So, everybody’s going to write this question down, and if you win, I’m going to give you \$10,000. This is true, so pay attention.

I want you to write down the name of the city and state you were born in. Write down your favorite teacher in high school; for some of you this is a little longer than others. Write down the name of the person you shared your first kiss with, and write if your first kiss was standing up or lying down. And then, last thing, write down the name of the last movie you saw that you loved, that you actually would tell people to go watch.

Alright, so here’s the \$10,000 test. If any of those match; if any two people in the room match, I’ll give you 10 grand. Right? They don’t match at all, because we all have unique circumstances that brought us to where we are in our life.

Now, I could have done it business-wise, but it’s much more fun to do the kissing standing up or lying down deal. I won’t make you share those; you can do whatever you like. Cross them out, burn them, but the whole point is that you have a story that’s interesting to people.

Because, interestingly, by doing the movies right now that we’re doing, the documentaries, I’ve done three of them on tax lawyers. And I love them to death, but tax law is not the most interesting thing on Earth.

And they’re actually really interesting, and they’ll make you cry. These movies will make you cry, because of some of the stories of clients who lost their house in a tornado and they owed tax money. There’s a story in everything; you just ain’t digging deep enough, if you don’t know what it is.

The secret Hollywood formula to make sure your story resonates with people, this is the deal: it’s the most important thing. It’s the formula behind it all: to create the right plot for your brand, and to frame it in the most impactful way possible.

There are some common narratives that all effective stories share, and they are all based off of this book; this guy probably does it all most succinctly: *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*, by Christopher Booker.

The good news is I'm not going to make you labor through this. We're going to take a break right now; we're going to spend the second half of this morning going through the seven major plot lines, and how you can integrate them in your business.

So, we're good? Alright, perfect, cool. Let's take a 15 minute break, and we'll come back. So let's go 10:45, cool?

Hello. Alright, so we are going to get cranking here again. We're about to get into the seven basic plots, which is what's really going to break things down for you and make things make more sense.

These are the plots that repeat time and time again throughout human history; there are something like 60-something subplots, major subplots, but the seven major plots are really all you need to focus on, because they best represent human experience, and at the end of the day, common experience is what bonds people.

Audiences are constantly drawn to these seven plots, over and over and over and over again. That's just what it is.

You've got to apply these proven plotlines to your branding, so you hit a primal nerve that will get you the response you're looking for. So it's all about striking the nerve; making it happen.

Let's start with the first basic plot. Frankenstein, the alien from *Alien*, Darth Vader from *Star Wars*—all three of these figures feature prominently in our first basic plot, which is Overcoming the Monster.

Now, those are some pretty obvious monsters, but there are lots of other monsters that aren't as obvious. Plot #1 is Overcoming the Monster; let's take a look at this clip from a recent movie:

[clip from *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps*]

That's from the remake of *Wall Street*; the shock of that moment is just as scary as the alien coming out of the guy's stomach, right? Or worse; financially, it may be much worse.

And, in this case, the 2008 economic meltdown was the monster that had to be overcome, along, of course, with Gordon Gekko. Great movie, if you haven't seen it; very well done.

Everyone has a personal monster—everyone. We all have monsters we have to overcome in our lives; by portraying that battle, and showing how we courageously stopped that monster, we create a memorable branding scenario, which is very important. By showing how we overcame that monster, it creates a memorable scenario for those we are working with.

Some common monsters are poverty, a brutal competitor, drug addiction, debt—all very common monsters that many people have fought. These are just a few examples of the kind of monsters that people have to battle in order to succeed.

I'm going to show you a clip from one of our clients, Bart Queen. This was one of the first movies; I think it was the first movie we ever shot. He battled for years with a very real monster, which was his own fear.

[Bart Queen movie clip]

So, that's Bart's story. Bart's a great guy from North Carolina, and Bart's gay. He didn't let anybody know for years and years and years

and years and years, and his whole business is about helping people live their life purposefully, really. So that's a big part of his story.

I always tell people it's interesting, too, because I really kind of realized when I was working on Bart's story, we all have these stories in our past, these things that have just haunted us. That failure we had, that miserable, dismal failure that we want to just shut the door on, right?

And then we go and we've got another thing that we don't manage; rejection, we just want to shut the door on that, and so we end up with these skeletons in our closet that are deep, right? It's a deep closet with lots of doors, and I think it's not actually until you're willing to open every one of those doors that your life actually flows effortlessly, as everything's coming through those doors.

It's all those skeletons, all those lessons; that's what people actually connect with the most, and the less you try to hide them, the more you can be who you are, because those moments are why you are who you are. Like we did with that \$10,000 challenge, those moments add up to who you are today, and they are what make you a multi-dimensional person.

But it's just an interesting way that it all kind of shakes you.

You know, the viewer can't help but get caught up in an "overcoming the monster" plot. Particularly in this one, the stakes are high, the outcome is uncertain, and the conflict is epic; we're talking about an internal conflict, a "do not pass go; do not collect \$200."

Bart, he was teaching people how to live their life's purpose, and he was lying to everyone and, more importantly, to himself about who he was. That's an interesting conflict, right? And he has 13 Clydesdale horses, which makes for beautiful footage.

Let's move on to our second basic plot. So, Overcoming the Monster, everyone get that one? Makes sense? OK, cool.

Scarface, *Rocky*, and, apropos for the day, *Pretty Woman*, with Julia Roberts. What could these three movies possibly have in common? *Scarface*, *Rocky*, and *Pretty Woman*?

They're all prime examples of plot #2, which is Rags to Riches. Very common plot: Rags to Riches.

Al Pacino was a broke Cuban immigrant who became a criminal; Rocky was a guy breaking the thumbs of deadbeats who owed mobsters when he got a shot at fighting the heavyweight champ; and Julia Roberts was a woman of the evening who suddenly became the toast of the town, thanks to Richard Gere.

Everyone loves a great success story; sometimes, they even win Oscars.

[clip from *Slumdog Millionaire*]

Great movie, if you guys haven't seen that, *Slumdog Millionaire*; I believe it was made for like a million bucks or something like that. It was made for really cheap and won a lot of awards.

The appeal of the Rags to Riches plot is pretty obvious, right? It's the story of the American Dream. Really, the bottom line of what that story is that you can come from absolutely nothing and get to the top. Who does not like hearing that?

We've all felt, no matter where we came from, that we were nowhere at some point in our life, right? And if you're feeling that way, particularly, at the moment, it's very apropos.

If that success is earned, people applaud you for it. So if you found your way out, that's what they want to hear, especially if the audience feels

that you've overcome incredible odds. They then begin rooting for you, like in that movie. You don't even know this guy; he's a fake guy, but you're rooting for that guy, right? And you would cry if something bad happened to him.

They'll be in your corner forever, like *Slumdog Millionaire*, and if you have this rags-to-riches component in your career, it's awesome to use it. Use it! I mean, with all of these things, you've got to be tasteful, tactful, and all these things, but there's a way to use that stuff.

Here's one with a familiar face:

[Nick Nanton movie clip]

So that's from our movie, and we're almost done with it; it's actually being finished right now, so that's part of my story.

Many entrepreneurs and professionals come from humble beginnings; a lot of people do in life. Most people are not born with silver spoons in their mouths, and it's not something to be ashamed of.

It's who you are; it makes you who you are, and an awful lot of people connect with you, particularly if they know who you are, and especially if you're trying to lead people along that path, with any sort of "I can take you there, too." The more you show them that you're just like them, the more it works.

The typical story, origin story for like an infomercial is this; we use a weight-loss example:

I'm Nick Nanton; I weigh 90 pounds soaking wet—not true, but this is all fictionalized, alright? I weigh 90 pounds soaking wet, but it wasn't always this way. I used to weigh 1,800 pounds; they had to use a crane to get me out of the house every day, knock down the wall, blah blah

blah, until I discovered this new margarita shake, and now I weigh 90 pounds, and I can show you how, too.

So it's, here's who I am today, and I am the pinnacle of what you want to be, but it wasn't always that way. I used to be just like you. And the self-help and the speaking business are the only businesses that you have in which the more screwed up you had it in the past, the more you're going to make. That's just how it works.

So, I wasn't always this way; I was just like you until I discovered: I met the wizard, I found the secret potion, I discovered the secret formula, and now I can show you how, too. It's every infomercial on TV.

Not something to be ashamed of.

WOMAN: I noticed, when you didn't have your glasses on, I didn't feel like I knew you, and then you put the glasses back on and I felt like I did again.

NICK: It's interesting, isn't it? In some of those pictures I didn't have glasses! That was a long time ago, right?

You can't control where you come from; just where you go.

The interesting thing about me getting glasses was that my vision was like borderline glasses, but I wanted to start speaking from the stage, and Jack's nephew was like, "You're way too young for this."

So I grew a goatee and got glasses. He still doesn't like me to speak onstage, but I looked older. So people are always like, "Why don't you get Lasik, man?"

And I'm like, "No way, these are part of my brand, man! It's way more interesting!"

And if you went far, it's impressive to a wide audience. So, use it to tell your story in the most effective way possible.

Let's move on to plot #3. So, Rags to Riches is #2.

Lord of the Rings and all the sequels, *Indiana Jones* and all the sequels, *Harry Potter* and all the sequels—if you notice, I just gave you three examples that turned out to be 15 movies. So, this plotline really lends itself to sequels, if you couldn't tell.

So, plot #3, the Quest. Obviously, it really lends itself to sequels. The Quest is all about the hero leaving behind his ordinary life to go out and seek something. So the hero's going to go out, leave his everyday life, and seek something.

Whatever the hero's looking for, it's really really really important, at least to the story. Really important, what the hero's looking for.

The hero could be looking for anything: a person, a place, a magical object, and the thing doesn't have to be something fantastical at all. It could be something totally related to a business, which is what we want to use, and it could be finding a whole new, revolutionary way of success.

Check this clip out.

[clip from *Moneyball*]

Great clip. So, that's from *Moneyball*; if you haven't seen *Moneyball*, it's a great movie.

So, in this, Brad Pitt's on a quest for something that seems magical, right? A totally new way of crunching the numbers in baseball, that's his quest. The familiar way he leaves is the old way of doing business, so

everybody's against him at first, but he prevails. This is a quest; he's out for a new way to do things.

Quests are compelling to people because they always seem insanely difficult, if not impossible, which explains the success of this huge film franchise, *Mission: Impossible*, and then there's also *Car Men*.

Tracy Myers, who a lot of you will meet this weekend, was on his own kind of *Moneyball* quest when he took over his dad's dealership. The car lot had way too much turnover in the sales department, which is typical in a car dealership, and so Tracy had to find a way to fix the situation.

So I'll show you a clip from his movie, here.

[Tracy Myers movie clip]

Cool, there's that clip there. So, interestingly, this is a story about a used car dealer, right? Which is interesting, intriguing, and the other one is about a speaking coach, and we're in the running for four Emmys this year with this stuff.

This is just to tell you that stories that you wouldn't know are there, you can uncover them. They are there.

So maybe finding a more effective way of paying salespeople isn't on quite the level of finding the lost Ark of the Covenant; however, you can probably see that it's a lot more relatable to your business, so it actually will work for you to your business audience.

Everyone is looking for new paths to success, and a quest can add a new dramatic hook to any story. So, what's the quest? What are you trying to do? What are you trying to change about the industry? It's seemingly insurmountable, impossible, but, damn it, you're going to do it.

Basic plot #4: Dorothy goes to Oz, DiCaprio dares to dream, and Keanu enters *The Matrix*. The Voyage, not to be confused with the Quest.

In the Voyage, the hero finds himself suddenly placed in a new and magical land. He actually finds himself in a new place that has a whole new set of rules that he or she must learn to survive. The trip may seem like a fun vacation at first—until the hero discovers whatever darkness is lurking around the corner.

OK, so, suddenly placed in a new and magical land, has a whole new set of rules he's got to learn to live by to survive. The trip might seem fun at first, like *Wizard of Oz*, or *Alice in Wonderland*, until the hero discovers what darkness is lurking around the corner.

And then the hero has to overcome some external threat that forces him to overcome some personal weakness. That is the key: he has to overcome what's inside of him or her before he can actually conquer the beast.

Like the Quest, you might think this kind of plot can't possibly have anything to do with business, or real life success. Well, take a look at this clip.

[clip from *The Devil Wears Prada*]

OK, so *The Devil Wears Prada*: innocent Anne Hathaway suddenly is thrust into the ruthless world of high fashion, a magical land with its own set of rules. Unless she wizens up and toughens up fast, that land (with the help of Meryl Streep), is going to bring her down.

So that actually is a voyage, right?

Most of us, when we started out in our ventures, suddenly found ourselves in a place we didn't understand, which had rules we didn't

know. Almost everyone has found themselves in an unfamiliar place that scares the crap out of them. I mean, everyone gets that.

That's why it's another relatable situation that's perfect for StorySelling.

Here's another one from a financial advisor we did; this is Rob Russell, a piece of his.

[Rob Russell movie clip]

So, what "voyage" have you taken in your business life? What new venture placed you in a strange place you didn't initially understand? Key in on that time period, and you create a story with impact.

So, just in there, Rob had to learn a whole new field; he didn't study it, it was unfamiliar, and it made people trust him. He wasn't born with this knowledge; he had to figure it out, but he just took the time to do it, and his clients didn't have to do that.

Plot #5. The Peter Sellers classic, *Dr. Strangelove*; "I'm serious...and don't call me Shirley," *Airplane*; and the first movie from these brilliant Brits (*Monty Python and the Holy Grail*). In case you haven't guessed, our category is comedy.

I picked these three particular comedies for a reason. All three of them follow dead-serious plotlines, and throw in jokes along the way. So, dead-serious plotlines, and throw in jokes along the way.

Dr. Strangelove deals with the ultimate nuclear showdown; *Airplane* is a spoof of the traditional disaster movie, and is actually based on the 1950s dramatic film; and *The Holy Grail* is obviously based on the King Arthur legend.

When you're using comedy, it's really crucial that you have to make sure you have a strong and serious story that you can play with, because silly on top of silly is just more silly.

I heard a writer who's a big TV writer out there who said you've got to have a crazy person in a straight world or a straight person in a crazy world. That's the only way, really, it'll work. You can't have a crazy person in a crazy world, or it becomes a new normal, and it's just boring.

Another reason comedy can be tricky for branding purposes is you don't want the joke to be too much on you. It's great if people laugh with you; it's not so great if people laugh at you. So, we've got to be very conscious of that.

But then again, think about the business greats who do outrageous things in the world of comedy: Donald Trump allowed himself to be roasted on Comedy Central; Richard Branson's no Virgin at getting laughs with Stephen Colbert; and let's not forget this commercial:

[Microsoft ad with Bill Gates and Jerry Seinfeld]

Comedy can be an effective branding tool when done properly. People like to see big shots who dare to poke fun at themselves, which is that, you know, and those who approach business with a sense of humor. I mean, Bill Gates doing the robot's pretty funny; I don't care who you are.

Another reason why Tracy Myers has made his dealership a solid #1:

[Tracy Myers movie clip featuring advertising and "Everybody rides"]

That's Tracy.

So, let's be honest: business can be boring, right? Using comedy in your StorySelling brings fun into the equation, which everybody likes; people

really appreciate it. But be careful that the comedy accents your message, and doesn't undermine it. Obviously, that's important.

This is from a movie I just did on a couple guys, Jay ... and Mike Reese; you'll see them here, too, out of Dallas, Texas and Lawton, Oklahoma. They do a lot of real estate coaching and stuff.

Here are a couple comedic clips from their film.

[Jay and Mike Reese movie clips]

They were just a trip. So what happened was we entered a 20-minute version of this to open their conference, and you guys were there just last week, and with 600, 700 people, they don't know a lot of them.

They completely disarmed the whole room, because they saw they're real people, they're funny, they horse around—I mean, these guys, they are a trip, man.

So this is just a little part of it, and the comedy really just brings a little levity. They don't take themselves too seriously; it's a big conference, 600 people, and they all give them standing ovations, and we open with this; bring their family into it, bring humor, and that's it, man.

And “everybody rides,” too, right? I don't care who you are, “everybody rides.” I think my favorite line—I think I could make millions of dollars off of his mom's sayings, on T-shirts—like, she's talking about, “That's just the way it was. If you didn't sell nothin', you didn't get any money!”

Yeah, pretty much!

Moving on to plot #6. *Godfathers* 1, 2, and 3; *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*; and one of the biggest hits of all time, *Titanic*.

Plot #6 is Tragedy. All of these movies end with death and loss, and involve very bad things happening to the heroes. Marlon Brando and Al Pacino both end up dead in the *Godfather* saga, Jack Nicholson gets a lobotomy in *Cuckoo's Nest*, and Leo DiCaprio freezes to death in the ocean.

Tragedy, of all of our plots, evokes the most powerful emotional reaction of any one of them. You might recognize this clip:

[clip from *It's a Wonderful Life*]

Alright, so *It's a Wonderful Life*; in this particular scene, it's not such a wonderful life. Jimmy Stewart's business has just crashed, thanks to an absent-minded uncle and a ruthless banker, so he starts thinking suicide is the only way out.

Sounds like some fun branding, right? Well, it can be.

Think about the celebrities who open up to Barbara Walters and *People* magazine about their horrible pasts, drug addiction and alcohol abuse, horrible relationships, and so on and so on. Think about how many times, in those cases, that has revitalized their entire career.

It just allowed people to connect with them again.

Tragedy in any story creates sympathy and emotional bonding. That's what tragedy creates: sympathy and emotional bonding, two essential elements of StorySelling.

Here's another clip from Rob Russell's movie where we used tragedy:

[Rob Russell movie clip]

Everyone experiences loss, and everyone has very unhappy periods in their life, right? We've all been there. Using tragedy in your story makes

you more sympathetic and relatable. Again, building trust through sympathy, but being relatable: you're a real person, just like them; you put on your pants one leg at a time, just like them—it's another extension of that, right?

If everything goes great, there's no real conflict, and there's nothing interesting to focus on. The first thing we try to do, every time we do any sort of film, documentary on anybody, is try to focus on, figure out what went wrong somewhere.

Usually. Yours is a little different, but we try to find some sort of tragedy, or what didn't work out, or whatever. But yours is about having a party.

When you talk about tragedy, the audience wants to know how you dealt with it, and they want to compare notes. That's it: at the end of the day, how did they deal with that? Because I know that's going to hit me at some point.

I'm always intrigued by how someone deals with a spouse or themselves getting cancer; it's just a reality in the life we live in now that somebody close to you is going to get cancer, right? I mean, it just is what it is.

Now, drum roll please: let's move on to our seventh and final basic plot. That was tragedy.

A Christmas Carol, *Batman Begins*, *Lion King*: Rebirth. Plot #7: Rebirth.

Rebirth is our seventh and final basic plotline; think of Scrooge buying the Cratchits that turkey at the end of *A Christmas Carol*; Bruce Wayne losing his parents, traveling to Asia, and being trained to be reborn as Batman; Simba losing his father and finally regaining his rightful place as the king of the Pride Lands.

Rebirth is about overcoming tragedy in a powerful way that inspires the audience and gives them hope. If you can inspire them and give them hope, you're in a pretty good spot, right?

Here's another clip:

[clip from *It's a Wonderful Life*]

I'm sure you noticed that's the exact same movie that we used to illustrate our last plotline, Tragedy, right? For Rebirth to really work in the StorySelling, tragedy has to come first. So you have to have tragedy in order to have a rebirth.

Everybody loves a comeback because it makes them feel that, no matter what happens, you can still end up a winner. And that's just, again, a common theme in life; we all want to experience and root for.

Which is why this ad I'm about to show you, which aired only once during the 2012 Superbowl, had so much impact:

[Clint Eastwood's "Halftime in America" ad for Detroit car companies]

Now, this is how you want to see Clint Eastwood, right? That's the Clint you wanted to see.

Seriously, though, Detroit had to almost go bankrupt for this commercial to be effective. Had it not, it would not have had that tragedy; the rebirth wouldn't have worked. Again, genuine rebirth requires prior tragedy.

Now, that might leave you a little confused. Does something like *It's a Wonderful Life* fall into the category of tragedy or rebirth? After all, it needs one to achieve the other.

Well, here's a little surprise for you: I've added my own eighth basic plot to the seven we've already discussed, and that's all of the other seven, together.

The most effective StorySelling uses elements of all of the other seven plotlines we've discussed.

We've already discussed how *It's a Wonderful Life* has Tragedy and Rebirth, but hey, it's got the other five, too!

Here's plot #1: Overcoming the Monster, who happens to be Old Man Potter, the greedy banker.

Here's plot #2: Rags to Riches, where Jimmy Stewart helps poor people buy their own homes.

Plot #3: the Quest. Clarence the angel has to return to Earth to help Jimmy Stewart and to earn his wings; and, frankly, he has no idea what he's doing.

Which means he has to accomplish plot #4: the Voyage. He has to leave Heaven, come to Earth, and fix things.

And we certainly have plot #5: Comedy. Everyone who loves this movie loves the scene where they're at the high school dance, the floor opens, and everyone falls in the swimming pool.

A little trivia for you: the director, Frank Capra, thought that up on the spot when he found out that the school where he was filming had a floor that did that. So he just figured, why not?

Most of the biggest movies of all time contain elements of all seven plots. Everything from *Gone with the Wind* to *The Avengers* features these storylines to ensure that audience interest is high, and all of the

movies that we've talked about in this presentation have several of these plots present.

Scarface isn't just Rags to Riches; he's also a monster who has to be overcome. He made a voyage into the drug trade in Miami and he ends up creating incredible tragedy.

Star Wars isn't just about overcoming a monster; it's also a quest, a voyage, and it has tragedy, comedy, and rebirth.

In our branded films, we also use multiple plot points from the main seven. You've already seen a couple we used in *Car Men*. Well, we do the same thing in our other stories; it's what we try to do.

These are the seven main elements that people respond to; the things that make their love hormones' hearts beat faster. And, again, that's what we're wanting to focus on.

And, now, which of these can you put into your brand story? That's really the question for you.

“StorySelling: the Seven Ways to Break Out Your Brand.”

The great thing about StorySelling is you can keep selling that story over and over again, like we talked about. They're useful over and over again in multiple situations.

Stories never go out of style, and they always attract an audience. That's helpful; you need audiences to sell. And, when you bring your brand story to life, you bring your business to a completely different level.

I'm sure you can see now, even though you haven't met a lot of these people I've talked about, when you see them these next few days, you know them, right? You feel like you know them. You trust them way more, because you know them. It's just what it is, right?

Your customers respond to you on a positive emotional level, and as we all know, most people buy based on emotions, and they buy from people they like. And so the whole point of these is to get them to do what Jack always taught me, which is “know, like, and trust.” If we can accomplish that, you win, right?