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# **Selling Digital Transformation: A CIO's Guide to Crafting Better Stories**

Refreshed 19 February 2020

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Refreshed 19 February 2020, Published 24 September 2018 - ID G00346260 - 27 min read

FOUNDATIONAL This research is reviewed periodically for accuracy.

By Analyst [Ed Gabrys](#)

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Initiatives: [CIO Leadership](#), [Culture and People](#)

Digital transformation is a topic that can be hard to sell, as it can be confusing, complex and politically charged. This research is the first of two notes that present a practicable approach to storytelling to help CIOs sell digital.

## More on This Topic

This is part of two in-depth collections of research. See the collections:

- [Scaling Digital Leadership – Keep the Momentum Going](#)
- [The Leadership Compass for CIOs](#)

## Overview

### Key Challenges

- As CIOs try to persuade the enterprise about the importance of digital transformation, they resort to technical, complex communications, leaving people confused and disconnected.
- Digital business communications regularly:
  - Lack a clear customer- or citizen-driven outcome, making them unrelatable and uninteresting.
  - Cover an overwhelming array of options, diluting the opportunity to highlight business understanding and insights.
  - Have limited persuasive potential because the structure lacks credibility, inspiration or both.

### Recommendations

CIOs working to master culture and leadership dynamics by crafting better stories should:

- Create a relatable, engaging and memorable story by improving listening skills.
- Develop empathy by casting customers or citizens as the main characters of the story.
- Gain engagement by focusing on one big idea to be clear on the story's promise.

- Organize the story by using storytelling techniques like the three-act structure.

## Introduction

Up until the 1980s, storytelling was just something people did. <sup>1</sup> You were either good at it or you weren't. It wasn't popular or trendy. TED Talks were not yet available, and public speaking was a footnote on a resume rather than a career choice.

Today, a glut of storytelling options abounds. A wealth of academic studies, online videos and modish business books has created a robust interest in public speaking and persuasive business communications. Yet, many people still struggle to embrace the role of storyteller. They may feel it is frivolous. They may think it is unlearnable. Maybe, the idea of getting up in front of people to tell stories and to persuade is terrifying. For those of you who relate to these sentiments, don't worry – this research will help. For those of you who relish the opportunity to get in front of an audience, don't worry – this research can help you, too.

Many executives, entrepreneurs and other successful business types are regularly coached and practice storytelling. It helps them to deliver clear and simple messages, and to overcome the anxiety of public speaking.

**The goal of this research is to encourage you to embrace storytelling as a persuasive approach to communications; to help you create a better story; and to enhance your delivery so that you can be your most persuasive self.**

## Analysis

### Embrace the Role of Storyteller

Storytelling predates historical record. It has been the primary method for educating, preserving culture, instilling values, imparting an understanding of how the world works and entertaining. We are “hardwired” for stories. <sup>2</sup> In his book, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman tells us that people remember information through stories, and that we ourselves are storytellers.

In this new, highly digitalized era in which most of us work, play and live, it can be difficult to get a simple understanding of what digital is and how it is impacting us. A search of the internet for the phrase “digital business” presents an overwhelming array of confusing praise, extraordinary predictions and unpleasant perspectives. Think of your own attempts to describe the intricacies of digital business and its supporting technologies. Even the most technology-minded can be befuddled.

Gartner defines digital business as an organization or a unit within an organization whose product set and business model are only made possible using information and digital technology.

That is a clear and concise description, but it is hardly complete. When you dig deeper and describe what digital business looks like and how it is created, things can get thorny. Descriptions can become entangled in senseless business-speak and trivial technical jargon that is unclear and wordy (see [“Four Definitions Make a Digital Business Strategy Process More Effective”](#)).

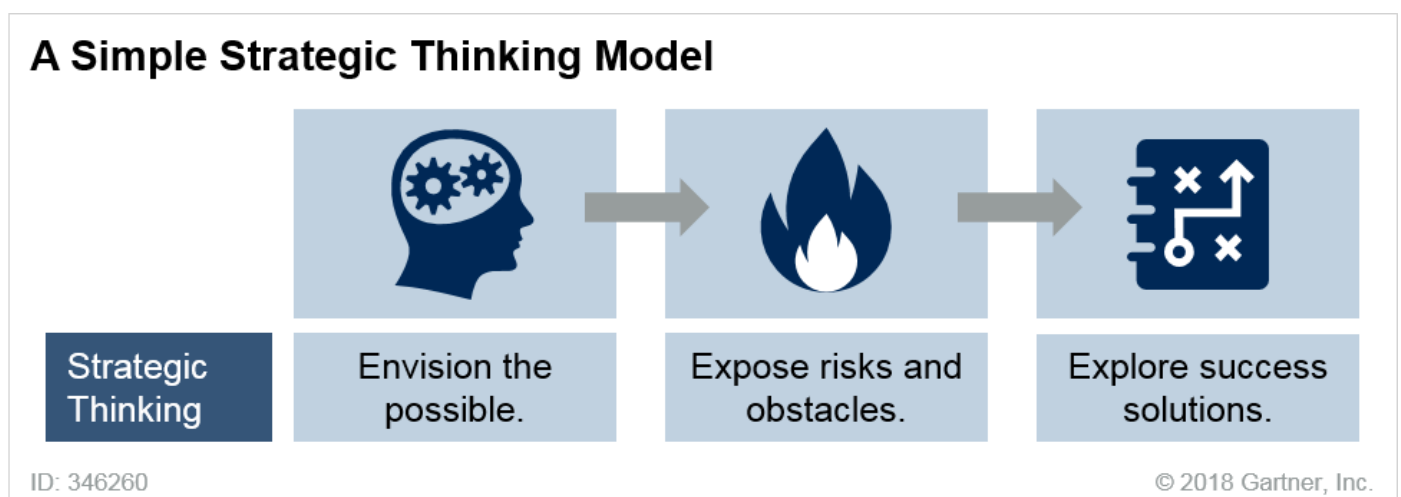
### It Is Getting Harder to Break Through

Despite the volume and velocity of promising opportunities, or the gravity of industry disruption, not everyone is listening. Getting attention is tough, and it might be getting worse. Multiple studies have shown that the use of technology has shortened attention spans. <sup>3</sup> Be assured that during your next meeting, presentation or status update, someone will be staring into their phone, probing the depths of the internet or angling for “likes.” They’ll be multitasking. What they won’t be doing is paying attention to you. The technological advancements that you promote just might be your biggest competitor for everyone’s attention.

### Crafting Stories Is an Act of Strategic Thinking

Success in digital business requires an updated approach to strategy. It demands strategic thinking that includes questioning existing best practices and de facto approaches. As the saying goes, “Best practices aren’t.” Strategic thinking should encourage unique perspectives and approaches to reach unexpected and unique solutions. One approach to strategic thinking is to envision possible and desirable outcomes; expose related opportunities, risks and obstacles; and devise solutions and an approach to achieve success (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. A Simple Strategic Thinking Model



As you will see in the section, Use a Storytelling Structure, crafting a story requires the development of a mental model that provides insights by:

- Focusing on the desires, goals and ambitions of a central character (or persona)
- Exploring the obstacles that stand in their way
- Illustrating solutions and an approach for them to be successful (or fail)

## Stories Increase Value

Stories have a direct effect on how we assess value — its importance, worth and usefulness. Simply by attaching a story to an object or an idea, its perceived value can increase. This was a premise that the journalist Rob Walker put to the test with the Significant Objects project. <sup>4</sup> He and his team bought objects from thrift stores and garage sales for no more than a few dollars each. In total, they bought \$128.74 worth of “junk.” They then recruited 100 creative writers to write a fictitious story for each object. Those objects were then posted to eBay along with their new fictional story and were resold for an impressive \$3,612.51. Rob Walker concluded, “Stories are such a powerful driver of emotional value that their effect on any given object’s subjective value can actually be measured objectively.”

Let’s build a better story.

## Create Better Stories

Ernest Hemingway wrote, *“There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed.”* Screenwriter Sydney Sheldon wrote, *“Death is the number two fear that people have and public speaking is the first!”*

If you wince at the idea of writing and presenting, you are not alone. Both are notoriously difficult. But storytelling does not have to be. As already noted, we are hardwired for stories. Telling stories comes naturally to us all, and we are exposed to stories continuously. Whether they are the books we read, the television shows we watch or the stories we hear, good, funny, memorable stories are readily available for us to learn from and borrow.

It’s simple — just take the following steps:

1. Know your audience.
2. Focus on one big idea.
3. Use a relatable storytelling structure.

Next, we break down each of these steps.

## Step No. 1: Know Your Audience or Lose Your Audience

To craft a compelling story, you must first identify the audience for your story. As an example, if you want to communicate a digital strategy, you must decide if it is intended for your top executive team, the IT team, the digital program team, your customers or citizens, or all of the above. If you want to put yourself forward as a candidate for a higher position or increased responsibility, such as an open board position, you want to construct a story for the CEO and the chairman. If your aim is to inspire the adoption of a new work culture, then you need to speak directly to the hearts and minds of your team. Once you know who you are preparing your story for, you need to get to know them better than you think you already do.

### Listen to Understand

Good listening is an essential aspect of empathy, <sup>5</sup> and empathy has been found to be a “critical driver of overall performance for management.” <sup>6</sup> As a persuasive storyteller, your goal is to listen and understand your audience so that you can craft a relatable, engaging and memorable story. Studies show that two months after listening to a talk, the average listener remembers only about 25% of what was said. <sup>7</sup> That means the average person is a pretty bad listener, and statistically that includes you. Management guru Stephen Covey describes listening as the psychological equivalent of air. <sup>8</sup> The good news is that bad listening is completely curable.

There are many approaches to become a better listener. Techniques such as “active listening” have gained a lot of attention with salespeople and those wanting to become more influential and persuasive. If “active listening” feels phony or “salesy,” it may help to try the approach we call “probe, paraphrase and provoke” (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Probe, Paraphrase and Provoke**

Stage ↓	What They Hear ↓	What They Start Thinking About ↓ You	What You Achieve ↓
Probe	“I would like to know what you think.”	“They care.”	A better understanding of their goals, drivers and ambitions.
Paraphrase	“I want to make sure I heard you correctly.”	“They understand.”	They self-edit.
Provoke	“What if ...?”	“They collaborate.”	You edit for impact.

Source: Gartner (September 2018)

### Probe

During the probe phase, you ask open-ended questions, which can limit unintended bias and manipulation. Open questions discourage others from responding with a simple “yes” or “no,” or

mirror responses like, “Good. How are you?” To gather understanding and craft a persuasive story, open-ended questions like these will elicit descriptive perspectives:

- “What does good look like?”
- “What measurement would you use to validate success?”
- “If you could change one thing in the way we work now, what would it be?”
- “I’m not sure I understand. Can you describe that in a different way?”
- “Can you help me understand what leads you to believe that’s true?”

## **Paraphrase**

Effective listeners validate and ask clarifying questions, avoiding assumptions and verifying what they have heard. Try to draw out implied understandings and unspoken perspectives. Your questions should not influence anyone’s views. Notice that the examples below are closed questions with simple restatements that encourage “yes” or “no” clarity.

- “If I’m hearing you right, you said ...”
- “So, what you are saying is ...”
- “Are you saying ...?”
- “Here’s what I think you said ... Is that correct?”

By restating what you heard, you are demonstrating that you are interested and engaged, making people feel respected and heard. You are also verifying that you have interpreted their messages correctly. Equally important, you are giving them a chance to reflect on their own words. When they hear their own words repeated back, it gives them a chance to correct or revise anything that may have been misspoken or misunderstood. In other words, it gives them a chance to edit their ideas. It is often much easier to edit than it is to accurately communicate new or detailed ideas and concepts.

**During the paraphrase part of your conversation, you are clarifying another person’s language and anything that you may still find vague or confusing.**

## **Provoke**

You may find that your conversation moves smoothly between probe (open questions) and paraphrase (closed and clarifying questions), and you are able to gather all the insight you need to craft your story. If so, you can save the next phase for another day. But don't wait too long. The provoke phase is a powerful persuasion and partnering technique.

In the provoke stage, you get the opportunity to add your own insights and ideas. Up until now in the conversation, you have demonstrated that you are an engaged listener. You may even be the best listener that person has encountered in a very long time. As a result, the person may be eager and excited to continue speaking with you and not especially willing to stop talking. In that case, you are doing great work, so congratulations. However, if all you ever do is listen and take notes, you are missing an important opportunity to share and demonstrate your own knowledge and insights.

**In the provoke phase, you are back to asking open questions, but they are “what if” questions intended to provoke a new way of thinking.**

When responding to questions, people often resort to simple, quick and predictable responses they have used repeatedly. “What if” questions encourage reflection and imagining anew. They urge people to move past conditioned responses to a place of imagination and feeling. The “what if” question also gives you the space to make suggestions and influence outcomes based on them. You may find it opportune to ask a more durable question like, “What are you willing to do (or pay) to achieve that outcome?”

As you are asking questions and listening, be aware of your nonverbal behaviors, such as body language and facial expressions, and ensure that they illustrate your continued engagement. No one will believe you are an engaged listener if you are watching the clock or glancing at your phone. See [“To Improve Stakeholder Engagement, CIOs Must Balance Advocacy and Inquiry in Conversation,”](#) for further insight into conducting balanced conversations.

In addition, you may wish to use this approach in other situations. Another example is when working with the executive team to discuss possibilities and define the enterprise's digital ambition (see [“Propose a Digital Ambition Workshop to Jump-Start Your Digital Journey”](#)).

### **Craft Your Story for Your Audience**

Once you have listened to and understand your target audience, it's time to craft a story. Most “business stories” include a heavy load of data points, corporate speak, technical jargon and supporting vendor citations. Although the results sound technical and smart, most people will not take the time or effort to read or listen to them.

Here is a simple exercise you can try if you are not convinced. Ask a trusted colleague, friend or family member to listen to your next business proposal, strategy document, or whatever new idea or concept you want to communicate. Before you begin, ask the listener to pay close attention to their state of mind and how it responds once you start to read. Start reading, but stop after about a minute or two, and ask them at what point their mind wandered. If you were speaking in business speak and technical jargon, don't be surprised if they stopped listening before you were 30 seconds into your talk. If you were telling a story, they probably wondered why you stopped so soon and were eager for you to continue.

A good story starts with a character we can empathize with. Studies led by Paul Zak, an author and professor at the Claremont Graduate School, have shown the positive effects of stories. Zak found that character-driven stories cause a shift in a person's biological chemistry. A storytelling cocktail of cortisol, dopamine and oxytocin is released into the body, creating prosocial behaviors including a boost in engagement, cooperation and generosity. <sup>9</sup>

**“Character-driven stories with emotional content result in a better understanding of the key points a speaker wishes to make and enable better recall of the stories of these points weeks later,” Zak explains. <sup>10</sup>**

The simplest way to develop characters that your audience can empathize with is to cast your customers or citizens as the main characters of your story. If that is not possible, you can write the story from your listeners' point of view, put them at the center of the story and make them the heroes. Give the characters a desire or ambition, and then set obstacles in their way to achieving it. Finally, set the story in a world that feels authentic and realistic.

When Lowe's, the U.S.-based home improvement retailer, wanted to drive innovation, it turned to storytelling to describe and promote a digital future for the company. Kyle Nel, executive director of Lowe's Innovation Labs, hired science fiction writers to portray the company's interactions with its customers, creating characters, conflict and a narrative arc in a comic book format. The stories worked. Lowe's is now using in-store robots to assist customers and virtual reality for design, and has 3D-printed tools on the International Space Station. <sup>11</sup>

If you are familiar with design thinking, try using the first three steps — empathize, define and ideate — to help you understand your users, customers or citizens. Uncover their desires and obstacles, and develop a few creative and unpredictable concepts for how to solve their issues (see [“Enterprise Architects Combine Design Thinking, Lean Startup and Agile to Drive Digital Innovation”](#)). To go even further, you can develop personas as the key characters of multiple stories and then customer journeys as the story arc.

Be sure that your story includes:

- An empathetic and relatable character
- Dealing with obstacles and ambitions that your audience values
- An authentic world

## Step No. 2: Focus on One Big Idea

### Be Clear on Your Promise

When crafting stories, don't overbuild them or try to pack in too many ideas. Being clear on your promise — what your audience should expect to learn, understand or take away — is crucial. Listeners need to feel that the story is leading somewhere, and that it is worth their time and attention. At a minimum, let them know how the presentation is pertinent for them (why) and the expected outcome (what). The outcome should reflect a changed state. There should be a clear understanding of how things are today and how things will change to create a future state (see [“Compose the From/To/Because Story to Convey a Behavior Change Journey”](#)).

Be prepared to make a firm promise right from the beginning. With adequate groundwork, you should be able to make a declarative statement like, “By the end of this presentation, you will understand how artificial intelligence will allow us to increase sales by at least 20%.”

### Give Your Audience a Reason to Care

Once you have made the promise, your aim is to “hook” the audience into your story. For example, if you use the promise above, the hook could be something like, “80% of a salesperson’s effort is wasted on interactions that will not result in an effective sale transaction.” A statement like this will drive the audience to want to know more.

**Your goal in storytelling is to get your audience to ask, “What happens next,” not to simply transmit a bundle of information into their heads and expect knowledge, insight and action to result.**

As a business leader, your job is to motivate and persuade people to reach specific goals and outcomes. This happens when the other person understands why they should care about what you care about, and how it impacts the enterprise and them personally. The typical and familiar approach is to use logic and reason supported by statistics, facts and quotes, hoping that they are relatable and relevant. Unfortunately, most decision making is emotional. <sup>12</sup> Neuroscientist Antonio

Damasio studied the role of emotions on decision making and found that, without the biological ability to feel emotion, people's decision-making ability is crippled. <sup>13</sup>

In 2008, Kempinski Hotels aimed to double its portfolio of hotels under management and increase the number of employees fivefold while simultaneously encouraging innovation. Success required that it engage and inspire staff to identify with the company culture. Storytelling was chosen as the best approach to reach across its multicultural environment. Leaders encouraged staff members to talk about their personal experiences and how their behavior was guided by Kempinski's core values. They used storytelling to encourage the company values and inspire employees to solve challenges, collaborate with colleagues and serve their guests. They created a portal to collect and recognize new stories. Stories were used for training, shared online and used in staff communications. Mia Norcaro, VP Corporate Communications, reported that, "Storytelling has now become part of daily hotel life ... I'm amazed to see how much we've accomplished with a relatively small budget but using a powerful storytelling approach to propagate our core values."

### **Make the Idea Worth Sharing**

Finally, the idea must be worth sharing. The ultimate persuasion exists only after you've finished communicating your story and delivering on your promise. To be persuasive at scale, your message must be something that takes advantage of the "network effect." The value and strength of your message increases with each new person telling it. In his popular TED Talk, "How to Get Your Ideas to Spread," author Seth Godin describes the need to be remarkable. <sup>14</sup> The best way to be remarkable is to be different and create something unexpected.

The luxury hotel chain, The Ritz-Carlton, encourages staff to create what they call "wow" moments for their customers, which are shared as part of a structured storytelling tradition. <sup>15</sup> These "wow" stories exemplify what it means to be remarkable as Ritz-Carlton staff members and as an organization. Each week, two "wow" stories are communicated during a daily meeting attended by all the employees around the world. The employees sharing the "wow" stories are motivated by the internal appreciation they get from all the members. You can find examples of these "wow" stories on [The Ritz-Carlton Leadership Center blog](#).

### **Step No. 3: Use a Storytelling Structure**

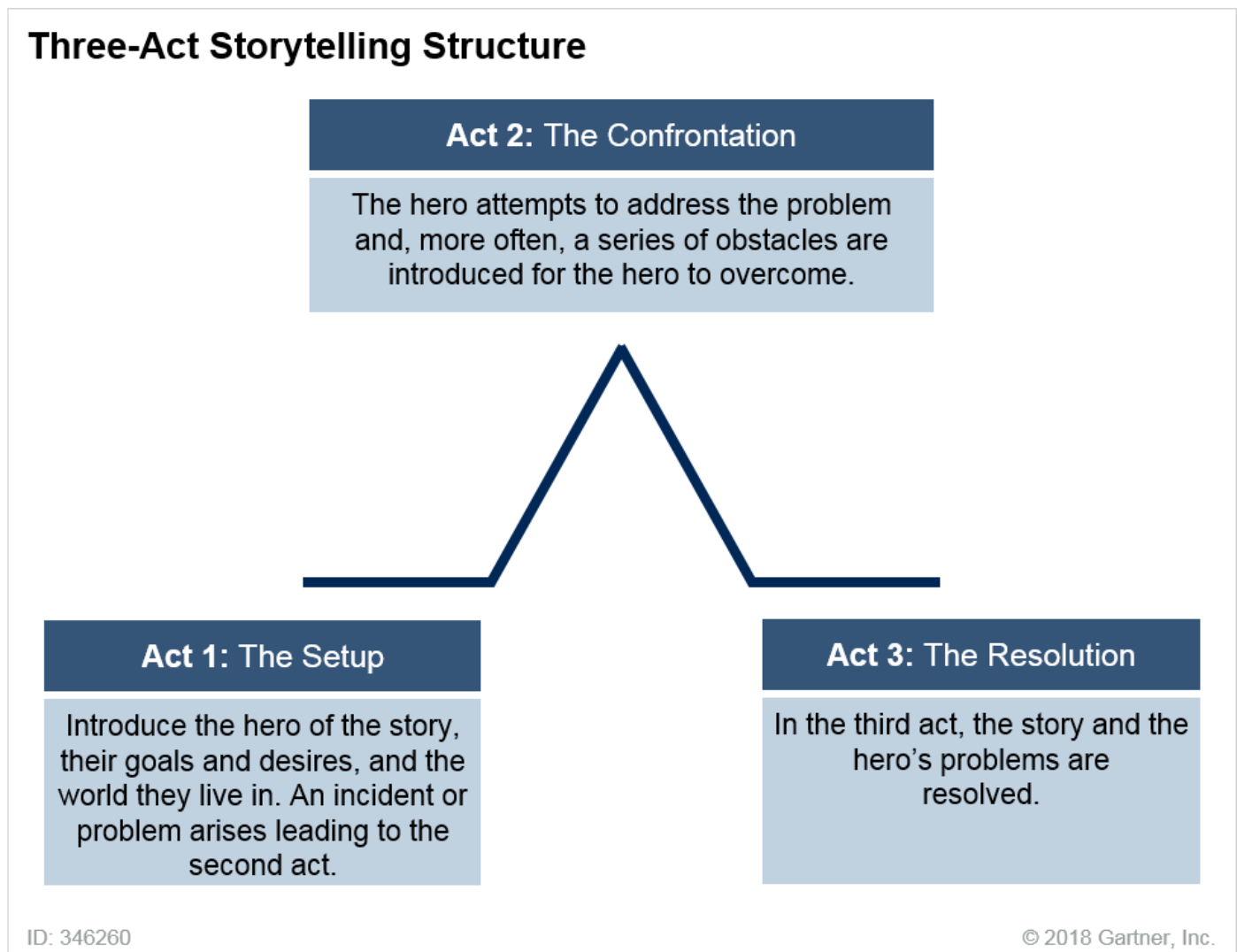
Business communications done well are clear and precise. Done poorly, they are vague and generic. Regardless, they are both typically dull and tedious. However, we communicate to inform and persuade, so why not aim for something compelling and engaging? Use the simple structure of three acts that storytellers use.

The three-act structure is quite simple (see Figure 2):

- **In Act 1, the Setup**, the hero of the story and the hero's mission (i.e., goal, desire or objective) are introduced.

- In Act 2, the Confrontation, the stakes for the hero are raised through a series of obstacles that prevent the hero from completing the mission.
- In Act 3, the Resolution, the hero either finds a way to succeed at the mission or fails.

Figure 2. Three-Act Storytelling Structure



Source: Gartner (September 2018)

American film director, screenwriter and producer, Billy Wilder, described the three acts in a more colorful and memorable way: <sup>16</sup>

- **Act 1:** You get your character (i.e., protagonist) up a tree.
- **Act 2:** You set fire to the tree.
- **Act 3:** You get him down from the tree.

Before we apply the three-act storytelling structure to the world of business and technology, let's look at how it works. As you review the following acts, imagine how the three-act structure works

for your favorite stories, whether they are the latest Hollywood or Bollywood blockbuster, literary classic, historical myth or children's fairytale.

**Act 1 – The Setup:** In the setup, you introduce the central character and, in the words of Billy Wilder, “get him up a tree.” Act 1 is where empathy and engagement are created by introducing someone that the audience cares about. As you put your character “up in a tree,” you introduce him or her and the character's central desire or goal. Whenever possible, you should make that character the enterprise's customer or citizen. This is someone who your audience can and should care about, and from whom the enterprise benefits. If that is too cumbersome or not relevant, then make the central character a business line employee, a partner or an executive, or another person you wish to persuade. Most importantly, this is a story about solving others' problems, not about IT solutions.

Here is a very simple example of how a financial services CIO could use the three-act structure. Let's assume that the bank is targeting the 18-to-25-year-old demographic as part of its growth strategy.

A recent graduate just moved into the city and is sitting at the kitchen table in her new apartment. She gathers up the trash from her breakfast, which was delivered by an online food delivery service. She checks the online ride-sharing app on her phone for the estimated time of arrival of the car she ordered. She flicks and pokes at the screen checking her friends' latest photos and then opens a matchmaking app to check on her date planned for that night. She places the phone on the table, reaches into her purse and pulls out a handwritten, paper check.

The central character, or “hero,” of this story is the new graduate. She lives in a world where her basic needs are conveniently accessible through her mobile device. Her desire is to cash a handwritten check. For an older generation, this may not seem like a concern but for one that has grown comfortable with anywhere and anytime access to a broad range of services, this is a serious problem.

**Act 2 – The Confrontation:** Act 2 is where audience engagement is created by adding obstacles to the character's desired goal. This act constitutes the bulk of the story and is where the audience gets further engaged, attached and invested in the character and the outcome of the story. Describe the hero's problem in human and business terms, but not technology terms.

The hero of our story stares at the check and sighs, worried that if she asks the ride-share driver to pull over and wait for her while she goes to an ATM, the driver will give her a low rating in the app. She could walk over to the bank after work, but fears it will be too crowded and she doesn't want to be late for her date.

In this example, the bank's target demographic of young people has a unique set of expectations for the way they interact with other people and companies. Convenience and social status take on a different perspective when compared to older generations and affect the relationships in which young people engage. In this example, the story highlights the relative concerns and obstacles for

a typical millennial — a potentially degraded social ranking and the missing convenience of being able to complete a check deposit transaction by mobile device.

**Act 3 — The Resolution:** As you approach the third act, your audience is engaged and eager to find out how your solution will help the character of your story achieve his or her goal. But this does not mean you get to describe a solution that is complex or technical.

Instead of starting your story with a technical solution, as most technology professionals are quick to do, wait until Act 3 when your audience is genuinely interested in understanding the value of your proposal. Once the character's problem is solved or opportunity achieved (the outcome) — rather than just how the needed technology will work — you will have created the insight necessary to persuade your audience to support you. At this point, they may even lean in and ask, "How can we do that?" It's then that you may share some of your more business, and even technical, descriptions, because they will be welcomed.

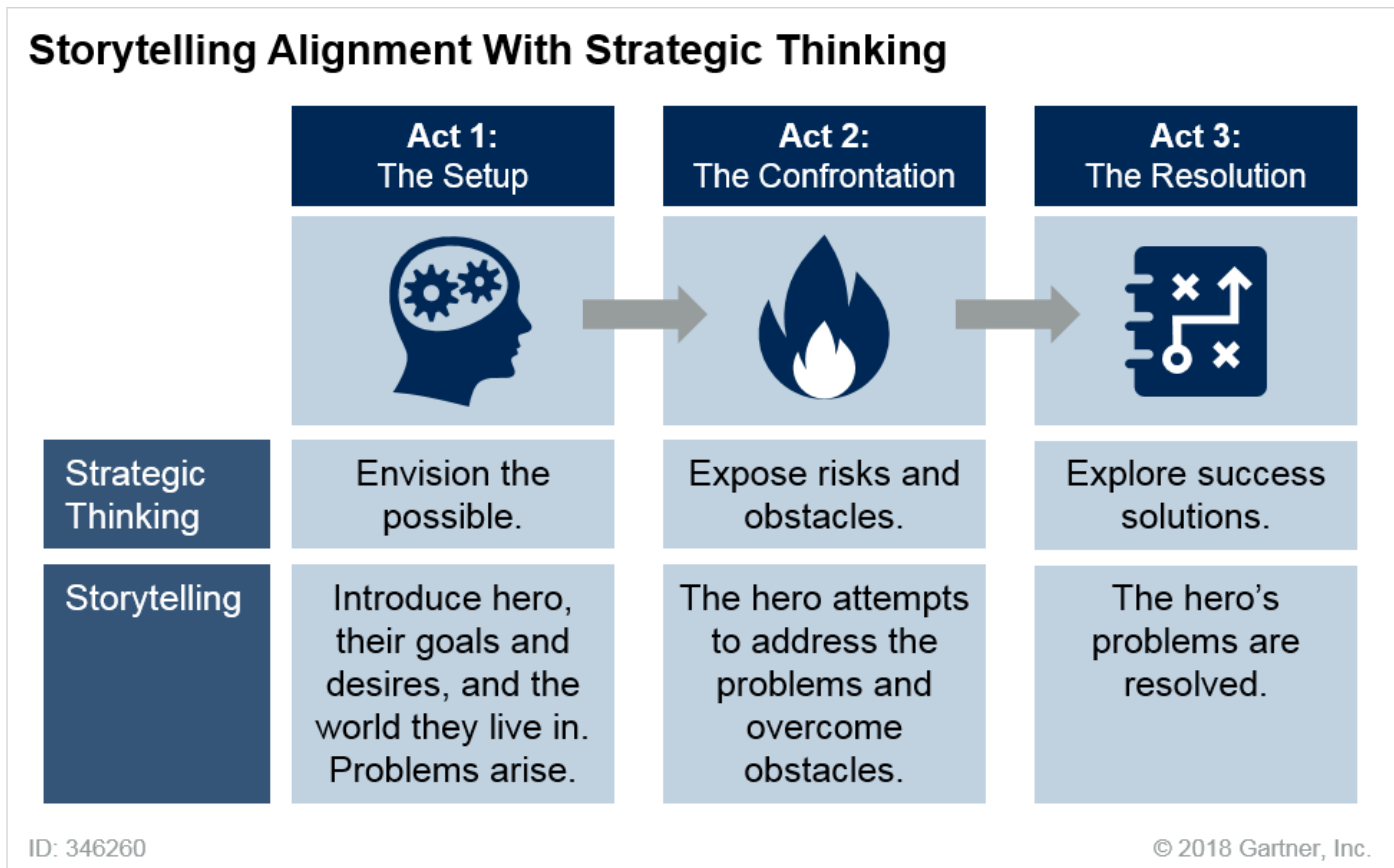
Back to our hero. She gets a message on her phone that her driver is two minutes away. She goes into the phone's app store and searches for the name of her bank. She finds the bank's official app, downloads it and signs in. She pokes, swipes and indulges a biometric security scan. Our hero then places the check on the table, snaps a picture of it and the check is electronically deposited into her bank account. She poses for a selfie and posts it to her favorite social media site with the caption, "I love the convenience of banking with [bank name]."

In this story, our hero cashes her handwritten check in a way that fits her lifestyle. There was no overt discussion of cloud computing or mobile banking apps. However, a very clear message was created about how mobile banking could help the company meet its goal of attracting a younger demographic. Although this is a very simple example, it illustrates how the CIO could bypass technical jargon and business speak, steering the message through logic straight into emotion. The CIO can continue the conversation and describe how that could be made possible. The CIO could take it a step further by demonstrating a clickable prototype of that very same app.

These techniques are a simple form of larger-scale work that can include the creation of customer journeys, empathy maps and persona development. Design thinking advocates also suggest creating videos and other human views of the intended outcome or solution for the audience to experience.

As was indicated earlier and is illustrated in Figure 3, crafting a story requires the development of a mental model that provides insights and a vehicle for communicating strategic thinking.

Figure 3. Storytelling Alignment With Strategic Thinking



Source: Gartner (September 2018)

### Stories Are the Ultimate Means of Persuasion

The inevitable impact of emerging technologies is palpable, if not predictable. As a digital leader, you must create insight and understanding – even in uncertainty. You must simplify baffling technologies and demystify unfamiliar business concepts. In short, you need to illuminate and persuade. Lucky for you, stories can be your ultimate persuasion.

Stories are persuasive because they:

- **Communicate authentic human experiences** and allow us to share universal emotions. We can create familiar environments and understandings that cross divides in culture, knowledge and experiences.
- **Transport our minds** to places and situations that allow us to “experience” an idea, rather than just logically inspect it. Stories move us from our heads into our hearts. When we are emotionally invested, we are cognitively disarmed and far less judgmental.
- **Provide us with behaviors to model.** Change is easier when there is an example of the desired transformation. When a story is told, people naturally place themselves in it, reimagining and experiencing the change for themselves.

- **Are memorable.** In this fast-changing, amnesic world, stories allow us to recall, repeat and reflect on what has been shared.

If you are not yet convinced of the power of storytelling, a 2016 study published in the Journal of Personal Responsibility and detailed in the Wall Street Journal may move you to your tipping point. The journal reported that storytellers were “more attractive in business,” “more effective in engaging teams” and “building brands,” and “more attractive to the opposite sex.” If you want to be happier in business, life and love, you may want to try storytelling.

## Evidence

R. McKee, “Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting,” Methuen Film, 2014.

J. Truby, “The Anatomy of Story: 22 Steps to Becoming a Master Storyteller,” Faber & Faber, 2007.

P. Zak, [“Why Inspiring Stories Make Us React: The Neuroscience of Narrative,”](#) U.S. National Library of Medicine, 2015.

Google Ngram shows a dramatic increase in the use of “storytelling” after 1980.

<sup>2</sup> J. Hsu, [“The Secrets Of Storytelling: Why We Love a Good Yarn,”](#) Scientific American.

<sup>3</sup> L. Borreli, [“Human Attention Span Shortens to 8 Seconds Due to Digital Technology: 3 Ways to Stay Focused,”](#) Medical Daily.

<sup>4</sup> [“... and How They Got That Way,”](#) Significant Objects.

<sup>5</sup> [“Empathy Is a Key to Successful Management,”](#) Psychology Today.

<sup>6</sup> V. Lipman, [“How Important Is Empathy to Successful Management?”](#) Forbes.

<sup>7</sup> R. Nichols and L. Stevens, [“Listening to People,”](#) Harvard Business Review.

<sup>8</sup> S. Covey, “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change,” p. 253, Simon & Schuster.

<sup>9</sup> P. Zak, [“Why Inspiring Stories Make Us React: The Neuroscience of Narrative,”](#) U.S. National Library of Medicine, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> P. Zak, [“Why Your Brain Loves Good Storytelling,”](#) Harvard Business Review.

<sup>11</sup> C. Boulton, [“How Storytelling Ignites IT Innovation at Lowe’s,”](#) CIO.

<sup>12</sup> B. Fryer, [“Storytelling That Moves People,”](#) Harvard Business Review.

<sup>13</sup> A. Damasio, “Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain,” Random House.

<sup>14</sup> S. Godin, [“How to Get Your Ideas to Spread,”](#) TED.

<sup>15</sup> [“The Ritz-Carlton: A Tradition of Storytelling”](#)

<sup>16</sup> [“Three Act Structure,”](#) TV Tropes.

## Recommended by the Author

[Storytelling for Enterprise Architecture: How to Influence and Persuade Leaders of EA Value in Decision Making](#)

[The CIO's Trusted Advisor Playbook: Selling and Persuasion](#)

[Effective Communications: Lead Through Storytelling](#)

[Compose the From/To/Because Story to Convey a Behavior Change Journey](#)

[Enterprise Architects Combine Design Thinking, Lean Startup and Agile to Drive Digital Innovation](#)

## Recommended For You

[How CIOs Can Influence Effectively in the Digital Age](#)

[A CIO's Guide to Better Storytelling and Presentations](#)

[Combat Digital Transformation Fatigue by Applying a Neuroscience Finding](#)

[Five Tactics for CIOs to Build Leaders' Digital Ambition](#)

[The CIO's Guide to Preparing for Workforce Reductions in IT](#)

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