

# ***What's Your Story?***

## **I. Story Topics That Give Insight Into You, Your Customers, and Values**

How have you helped clients overcome challenges and succeed (not just statistical facts)?

What are your challenges, goals, failures, and why did you start your business in the first place?

What gets you excited about your business? How do you delight your customer?

What was the big idea, or a-ha, behind your business?

What gets you motivated? What lessons have you learned?

What was it like when you were first getting the business off the ground?

What traits that serve you know did you exhibit as a child?

Turn your resume into a story? Why did you make the choices you made? What does it say about you? What do you value?

*You are conversing; you are NOT selling services, jargon, or statistical facts. Show a personality.*

## **II. Things to Consider in / About Your Story**

Key things to your story success: brevity, simplicity, authenticity, Bit T (universal truth!), and the unexpected (surprise!)

Truth and authenticity: Big "T" (universal truths) and small "t" (facts). You must go beyond small "t."

Make the common uncommon: can you find a universal issue and provide an interesting spin?

Go bold, or go home! (Be contrarian if that's who you are)

Be pithy (hey, people are already deluged with too much!)

Make your story easy to share and easy for others to forward

*If you need help, ask your best customers why they stay with you – this is your 'enthusiast' base*

*Don't obsess over having a perfect story; obsess on having fun and on connecting*

## **III. Leverage and Honor Your Story: Go "Big" and Delight Your Customer**

Scrap your bio / company history & put in a fun "startup" story

Have a fun section on your website, invite others to tell their stories there – especially customer case studies, but make them stories that connect (beyond small "t")

Create your own cards for holidays that have your story/personality

Write for someone else's blog if you don't have time to do your own. Have fun and be conversational.

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Create an illustrated ebook with cartoons or comic book

Apply for an award in your industry or create one (ex: best copywriting, best corporate use of fun)

Use Slideshare (**slideshare.net**) to post your slides and share your genius with the world

Use social media - LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, podcasts – to tell stories, invite others to share theirs and to do market research (ask your customers for feedback)

Barter with an organization or support a cause that showcases your talents

Join / form a NING group (**ning.com**) linked to what you do (create book / write chapter / post!)

Use humor (ex: Shmaltz brewing company created hebrew'ed, a Jewish celebration beer)

Hold weekly humorous captions contests on Facebook (ex: Sanuk's "Who gives a shirt?")

Use fun, low-cost giveaways that remind people of what you do (ex: sanitizer for your business taxes) and target key decision-makers directly

Use HARO to get out subject matter expertise but to solicit story ideas for your book (if you use them, you have to quote them, but it gives you access to content to write a book)

Ask clients for joint marketing, or put in their contracts so they buy into it early on

*There are lots of ways to go big! The meek might inherit the earth, but not in business, so have fun.*

#### **IV. Cool Resources (\* my faves, although they are all awesome!)**

Astoriedcareer.com blog\*

Stoytellingcenter.org\*

Themoleskin.com\*

Guy Kawasaki's blog\*

Danpink.com, author of *Whole New Mind*\*

*Twitterville* by Shel Israel (stories on getting info out using Twitter)

*Made to Stick* by Dan and Chip Heath\*

*The New Rules of Viral Marketing & New Rules of Marketing and PR* by David Meerman Scott\*

*Word of-Mouth Marketing* by Andy Sernovitz

*Story, Substance and Structure* by Robert McKee (also an HBR article based on his work)

*The Leader's Guide to Storytelling* by Stephen Denning (mainly internal company stories)\*

*The Story Factor* by Annette Simmons\*

Slide: ology by Nancy Duarte – how to make your PowerPoint tell visual stories\*

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**Thank you. You can link to me online. I'd love to hear what you think. Let's chat!**

*Ebook project on fun and customer delight – let me know if you have a great story.*

## **ABOUT**

Kathy Klotz-Guest, MA, MBA, MLA helps companies use fun and levity to innovate and to tell the market their company and product stories. In her 18-year strategic marketing high-tech career, Kathy led successful product development, marketing strategy, and communications teams and projects. A Rec League improvisation member at ComedySportz San Jose, she also speaks and writes extensively on the fun-creativity-innovation connection, and on fun as a customer delight strategy. She has an MLA from Stanford University and an MBA from UC Berkeley. Kathy is also a founding fellow and CFO for the Society for the New Communications Research (<http://www.sncr.org>) new media think tank.

Kathy left corporate America in order to help it! By starting her own business, she has been able to help companies “find” their best stories. If you are not having fun, neither is your audience. It doesn't hurt that she's also doing what she loves and gets to use both her improvisation background and her marketing “instincts” (honed after 14 years in corporate jobs). You can catch one of her ComedySportz shows if you love improvisation (and who doesn't!). Her 1-year-old Evan thinks she's hilarious, but then he doesn't get out much!

Contact her at 408.578.8040 or at [Kathy@powerfullyfunny.com](mailto:Kathy@powerfullyfunny.com). Find your story!