



## Video 1 Information Sheet:

### How to craft your story with human flair

Presenting well is basically telling a story but not just any story. It's yours or that of your business. Why not make it remarkable and memorable? With content marketing front and centre for almost everything you do online, it's a communications tool you can apply broadly.

After working on, delivering and watching plenty of public talks, I know the most effective presenters use the same techniques as great storytellers. If we break that down, that is:

1. Reminding your audience of the status quo
2. Creating the path to a more effective or inspirational way and;
3. Setting up a tension or issue that needs to be resolved.

That tension helps them persuade the audience to adopt a new mindset or behave differently — to move from what is to what could be. And by following the Greek philosopher and scientist Aristotle's three-part story structure we all learnt back in school (a beginning, middle, end), you then create a message that's easy to digest, remember, and retell.

In all your presentations here is how you succeed in this process.

### Nail that Beginning

The hook or opening should describe life as the audience knows it or provide an interesting fact or even a case study (hopefully a personal one). In a live setting, your audience should be nodding their heads in recognition because you're articulating what they already understand and essentially creating rapport. Research shows we have under one minute to create a bond between you and them, and this opens them up to hear your ideas in the rest of your presentation.

Once you establish what that starting point is, introduce your vision of what could be. The gap between the two will likely throw the audience off kilter but that is where you can then begin to generate influence.

Let me explain further in an example.

**What is:** *We didn't meet the company's 2015 financial goals in part because clearly we're understaffed and everyone's spread too thin. It's been a challenging time for the company. I am sure you all can agree.*

**What could be:** *What if we could solve the financial and resourcing problems by bringing in a couple of large retainer clients and added some more senior staff to our team? Well, we can. Wouldn't that be a win-win?*

(Once you establish that gap, then use the rest of the presentation to bridge it).

## **Navigate the Middle**

Now your audience realise their world is a-miss, your role is to keep playing up the contrast between what is and what could be.

Let's go back to that end of financial year update. Revenues are down, but you want to motivate employees to make up for it. Here's one way you could structure the middle of your presentation:

**What is:** *We missed our fourth quarter forecast by 15%.*

**What could be:** *Next year's numbers must be strong so we can all receive some well-earned bonuses.*

**What is:** *We have four new clients on our sales funnel that are warm to hot leads.*

**What could be:** *Two of them have the potential to bring in more revenue per month than our all of our clients do now.*

**What is:** *The new clients will require extensive expertise in crisis media management with a focus on social media.*

**What could be:** *We'll be bringing in three new senior freelancers to work with our team, part time for three days a week to win the pitches and come on board more to help us all.*

As you move back and forth between what is and what could be, the audience will become more engaged and see "ah-ha" moments that build a real connection between you and them.

## **Powerful Endings**

Avoid ending your talk, even a pragmatic one on say financial goals, with an endless list of "to do" items. You most definitely include a call to action — but make it inspiring so people will want to act now. Describe a new nirvana that sums up how much better their world will be when they follow your ideas and make the commitment you are asking for. Everyone wins!

If you are wrapping up that financial year update from above, you might say:

**Call to action:** *It will take some changes and maybe extra work from every staff member to achieve these ambitious numbers, but we can do this, I know we can.*

**New bliss:** *I know everyone's feeling that end of year fatigue, including me. Yet we know we need to reach these goals and get that new revenue in. This is our chance to pull together like the winning team that I know we are. Then, things will get easier if we make this happen. The reward if we meet our next year's targets? Not just your bonuses, plus five extra paid holidays days too. So let's get started and show everyone what this company can achieve.*

By planting the seed of tangible future rewards, you show the audience that getting on board will be worth their effort. That is what being a great storyteller all is about.