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# How storytelling drives growth for A/E/C firms

An introduction for  
SMPS Pittsburgh



PRESENTED BY WORDWRITE

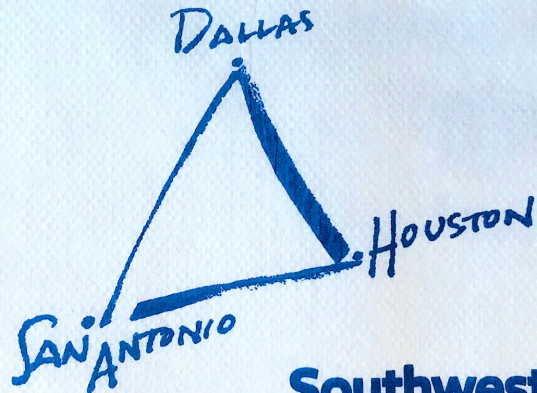
NOVEMBER 17, 2022




# ONCE UPON A TIME...

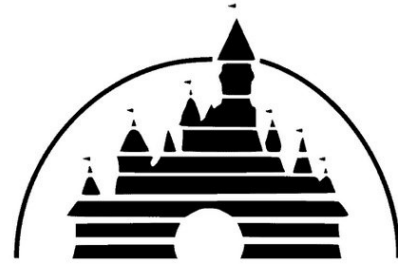
# SURE, B2C COMPANIES TELL GREAT STORIES

Southwest Airlines® was born on a napkin in 1971.

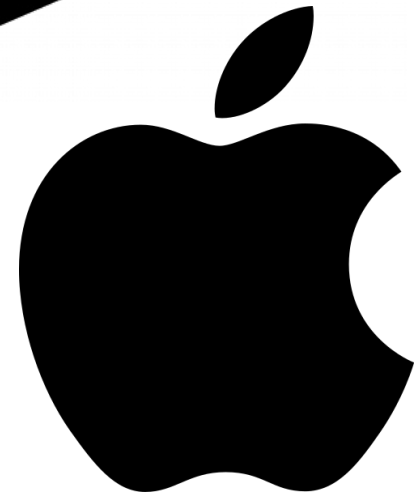


**Southwest** ♥  
50 years. One Heart.

 Made with 100% recycled fiber (May contain incidental [ $<0.5\%$ ] non-recycled fiber)



WALT DISNEY



# BUT WHY DO B2B FIRMS NEED STORIES?

“B2B brands drive more emotional connections than B2C brands ... Of the hundreds of B2C brands that Motista has studied, most have emotional connections with between 10% and 40% of consumers. Meanwhile, of the nine B2B brands we studied, seven surpassed the 50% mark. **On average, B2B customers are significantly more emotionally connected to their vendors and service providers than consumers.**”

— [2013 Google/CEB Marketing Leadership Council Study](#)

“People don’t buy what you do; they buy why you do it. And what you do simply proves what you believe.”

– *Simon Sinek, How Great Leaders Inspire Action*



“The ... greatest story commandment ... is ‘Make me care’ — please, emotionally, intellectually, aesthetically, just make me care.”

– Andrew Stanton, Pixar





# LET'S TALK ABOUT YOU...



# WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU ...

You provide *complex services*:

- Your firm is an expert at what you do (architecture, construction, design, engineering, etc.);
- The ultimate (C suite) decision makers who hire your firm usually don't know as much about your area of expertise as your professional team;
- You **need** to explain your firm's value by sharing your story in a way that is **unique**, **compelling** and **memorable** so that the ultimate decision makers **hire your firm**.



# THIS ESPECIALLY MATTERS TO YOU IF

- Your sales are stuck or growth is inconsistent
- Your messaging (internally and externally) is inconsistent
- Your prospects see little or no difference between you and your competitors
- You're having trouble hiring and retaining talent
- You have a limited (or no) marketing strategy
- Your marketing ROI is unknown or nonexistent

# WHAT'S ESPECIALLY TRUE IN A/E/C

- If you're not licensed, you can't practice
- Certifications get you in the room – they're **table stakes**
- Who wants to do more RFPs??
- Even in an RFP process, **your story matters!**
- “One of things that we talk about all the time in the whole RFP world is you got to tell more stories, you got to tell more stories, You got to tell more stories.”

— Lisa Rehurek, [The RFP Success Company](#)

# WHAT WE WILL TEE UP TODAY:

- Generating ALIGNMENT in how leaders, staff and others talk about your firm
- Creating CLARITY in how your firm is perceived by your most important audiences
- Instilling CONFIDENCE in the marketing spend you are making to drive sales
- Delivering MEASURABLE RESULTS from your marketing because your story is UNIQUE, COMPELLING and MEMORABLE



# LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR STORY

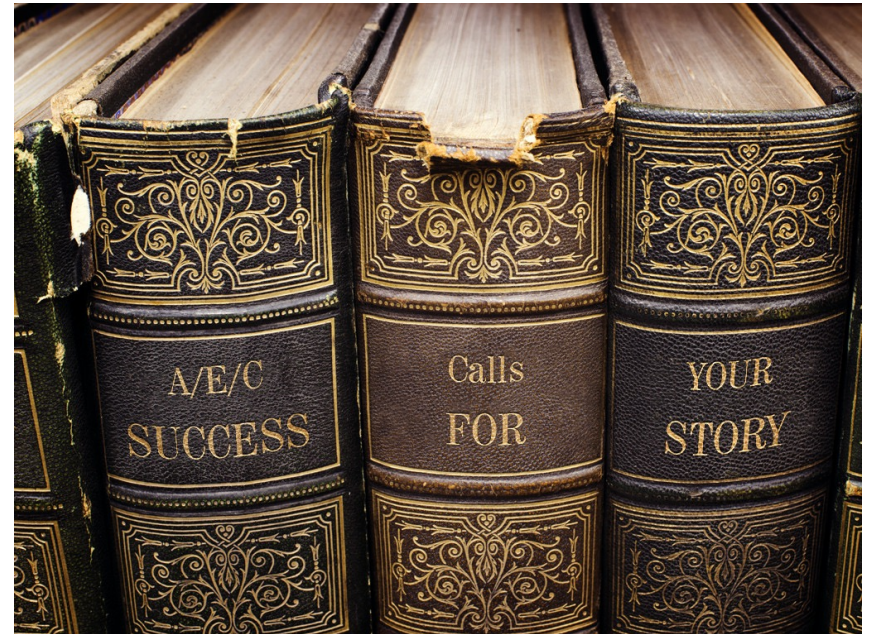


# NOT JUST ANY STORY: YOUR CAPITAL S STORY

It's the one story you share that rises above all the others because it answers these questions:

Why someone would:

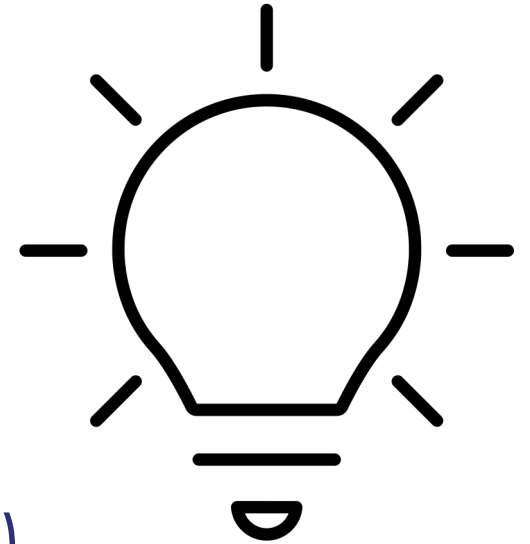
- Buy from you
- Work for you
- Invest in you
- Partner with you



# CATEGORIES OF CAPITAL S STORIES

## Five common examples:

- Your origin, or your founder's journey
- A dream, a vision, a passion
- An innovation ("Greatest thing since sliced bread")
- A coming of age (in product, service, firm, etc.)
- An epiphany ("This changed everything!")



# WHERE YOU NEED YOUR CAPITAL S STORY:

- Website content ESPECIALLY the home page
- The “about” page on your website
- Corporate and leadership LinkedIn profiles
- Press release boilerplate
- Social media profiles
- Sales materials (PDFs, printed, sales scripts)
- Talent communications (current and hiring)

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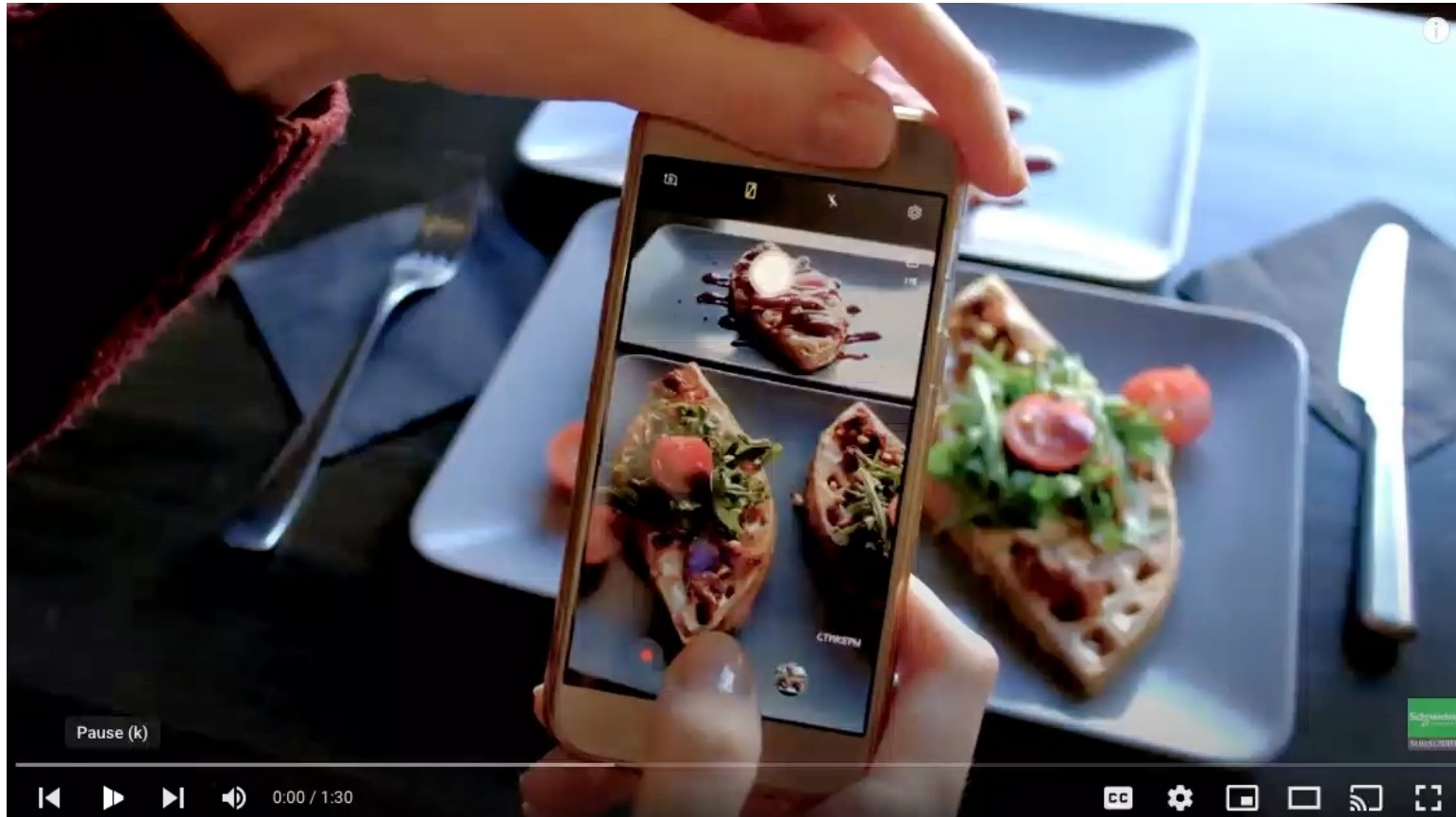
# KEY LEARNINGS FROM THREE A/E/C COMPANIES THAT SHARE THEIR CAPITAL S STORY WELL



# #1: THE STORY IS THEIR INTRODUCTION

- It's OK if no one knows who you are at first – even if your audience is wrong about you, have fun with that
- Sharing your story is how you're remembered compared to your competition
- A good sense of perspective is also helpful
- Let's take a look

# SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC



# #2: THE STORY BRINGS THEM TO LIFE

- In A/E/C, seeing can be believing
- That's in part because many firms engage in activities that are better seen than explained
- Most A/E/C firms are *rarely* seen in action so sharing your Capital S Story can be revealing
- It can be with video, but it doesn't have to be ...

# EAGLE BUILDERS



Eagle Builders [origin story video](#)



# #3: THE STORY EVOLVES TO STAY CURRENT

- Because A/E/C firms are often on the cutting edge of ideas or technology, what they do and their value to their stakeholders evolves
- Their Capital S Stories become critical tools to help stakeholders understand these evolutions

# PRINCE CONCEPTS

OCTOBER 2018

Vision, imagination!, & BELIEF inform our decisions.  
 \*Science manages those decisions.

Our work isn't perfect, we're trying.  
 Our work is expensive.  
 (true, but not relevant here, & not our place to state it.)

We are **TOUGH**  
 We are **sensitive**

Ralph Waldo Emerson  
 Miller Davis  
 Bruce Li  
 Joseph Campbell

Donald Judd

? Art versus Science?

Each of our projects should have enough intrinsic value to be successful on its own, in spite of what happens around it. Surroundings are to be considered, but not relied upon!

Art makes our work interesting!!!

But! But! But!  
 Science makes it real...

Art > Science? X  
 Science > Art? X  
 Science > Art? X

It is not good on its own, it fails! Food example!

Everything is a WORK IN PROGRESS!  
 W.I.P.  
 → Is a completed project ever done???

Here we go:  
 "We employ a maximum dose of Art without belittling Science."

\* We express to attract those who are also truly expressive! We don't build just to attract \$\$\$\$. \*

WE:

1. Experiment
2. Have fun
3. Challenge Consensus → We challenge consensus, not to build new consensus, but to promote individuality, expression (personal), & experimentation
4. Invest in ideas & systems
5. Respect, highly, the few rules that matter, & pay absolutely no mind to the rest.
6. Employ design as a solution to problems & as a tool to open possibilities & minds... Not as a way to serve markets or attract dollars.

7. Plant a ton of trees! 🌳🌳🌳

8. Love what we do!

-PK

2/20/19

On SK, we are not performing cosmetic surgery, we are doing genetic engineering - Changing the Building's DNA!

Our new construction projects are about optimism. We believe in the future. We look to it & see it & believe in it. We offer new solutions & methods & plant trees!

- True North
- CATERPILLAR
- Sugar cubes, AKA ISH objects.

Treats truly communicate a belief in the future. Our optimistic projects should be bright, clean, fresh, airy, optimistic. Uplifting! Future looking.

Renovation projects are about possibility. What's the most we can make w/ what the past has given us? Have a dystopian feel.

- SK
- TAKOI

Making something old, obsolete, abandoned amazing → not about capitalizing it's about communicating possibility. What's possible?! What are we capable of?! Go beyond standard, straightforward Renovation to show people what's possible when you are stuck w/ something you might not want. Possibility!

Architecture is simply a vessel & passageway for Light & air. How do we create space that contains those elements in a productive, inspiring, comfortable, & Beautiful manner? How do we use space & light & air to inspire? That is the task. Architecture is a vessel that we build to contain space, air, & light. Go!



# THREE WAYS TO BEGIN UNCOVERING YOUR CAPITAL S STORY



# TRY OUR CAPITAL S STORY EXERCISE

- Handout (now) download later
- A first step in our trademarked StoryCrafting process
- Helps stir the imagination
- Surfaces ideas
- Puts leadership on the same page

WORKSHEET  
**FINDING YOUR CAPITAL S STORY**

WORD WRITE  
www.wordwriteagency.com

As we've learned thus far in the workshop, in business, there are stories and then there are "Stories," those that stand the test of time, that are repeated and remembered and taught in business schools. We call these Capital S stories. What's your Capital S Story? This worksheet will help you to uncover it by helping you to think more deeply about what makes your organization unique, compelling and memorable to its stakeholders. What can you apply from the "elevator speech" exercise and the workshop? Ideally, your Capital S Story answers these questions: Why would someone ...

WHY SOMEONE WOULD...	YOUR ANSWER
Buy from you?	
Work for you?	
Invest in you?	
Partner with you?	

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**amps**  
Pittsburgh



# IF YOUR COMPANY WERE A PERSON

Ask your leadership: Who are we today, as a person?

- What demographics define us?
- What is our world view?
- How do we like to interact with our clients?

# TRY METAPHORS AND SIMILES

These prompts are meant to start ideas flowing:

- Our firm reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_
- Our company is like \_\_\_\_\_
- If only our firm were more/less \_\_\_\_\_
- Our firm is a (noun) and our competitor is a (another noun)



# WHY WE CARE ABOUT YOUR STORY AND WHAT WE DO



# OUR EXPERTISE AS STORYTELLERS

- We wrote the book
- We developed a trademarked process
- We've worked with many companies to deliver success
- We've been doing this for two decades
- Our core is a team of great storytellers



# HOW WE DELIVER CAPITAL S STORY SUCCESS

## StoryCrafting® is for organizations that are...



HAVING TROUBLE  
ARTICULATING  
THEIR VALUE TO  
TARGET  
AUDIENCES

UNSURE OF THEIR  
RETURN ON  
INVESTMENT FROM  
THEIR MARKETING  
CAMPAIGNS

TARGETING NEW  
MARKET SEGMENTS  
OR WANT TO  
INCREASE CURRENT  
MARKET SHARE

UNCERTAIN ON  
HOW TO ATTRACT  
AND RETAIN NEW  
TALENT

## StoryCrafting® works because...



Studies show how storytellers' and audiences' brainwaves match when an effective story is told. Listeners resonate with relatable, familiar messages and even anticipate what comes next in a storyline.



# THREE THINGS TO THINK ABOUT ...

1

What's your  
Capital S Story?

2

Is your story  
driving your  
brand?

3

Why or why not?

# A TOOL TO GET STARTED...

Check the chat pane and also available later from the downloads page we'll share in a few minutes



**WORD WRITE**

## DOES YOUR MARKETING MEASURE UP?

The below checklist is designed to help you (or your team) better evaluate your marketing efforts, from strategy to execution and results. The more boxes you can check, the closer you are to a complete marketing strategy.

### MARKETING STRATEGY: CHECKLIST

#### STRATEGY

- Clearly and succinctly answer the question, "Why would someone want to buy from (work for, invest in, partner with) you?"
- Know why your company exists.
- Understand what makes you unique to your industry.
- Know who you are trying to reach with your message.
- Have supporting facts that prove your unique story is true.
- Diagnosed your company's main challenges before you prescribed a strategic solution.

#### EXECUTION

- The decision to leverage a new marketing tactic is driven largely by your company's story and strategy.
- Each of your marketing channels and tactics has a clearly defined purpose.
- Each of your marketing assets communicates a unique facet of your company's story.
- Without looking at your logo or branding, your prospects can identify you as the author of a piece of content.
- You've chosen to advertise in / be featured in external channels that reflect your audience's preferences.

#### RESULTS

- You've used your strategic plan to set clearly defined goals.
- Each of your goals has set objectives.
- You can clearly establish a direct route to achieve these goals. (This will help you determine if your goals are strong enough to be measured - for instance, your goal may be "to be known as the best financial firm in New York state" but measuring that could be next to impossible).
- You can prove your marketing efforts are impacting your bottom line.
- Further, you can prove which efforts have the most impact on your bottom line.

Ready to improve your marketing strategy? WordWrite uses your organization's unique story to improve your marketing efforts and drive results. Learn more about our trademarked StoryCrafting process and how to increase sales, generate more leads and measure your marketing ROI at [wordwriteagency.com](http://wordwriteagency.com).

611 William Penn Place, Suite 501, Pittsburgh, PA 15219 • Phone: 412.246.0340  
WORDWRITEAGENCY.COM

# IF YOU AREN'T SURE OF THE ANSWERS ...

Let's connect by phone or video and talk it through...

- No obligation, 30-minute discovery call
- Access to additional resources to help uncover your Capital S Story



# THANK YOU!

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*To learn more:*

- [All about Paul's book](#)
- [All about StoryCrafting](#)
- [Review some case studies](#)
- Downloads for you: <https://www.wordwriteagency.com/smpps>

