



# Mark's top tips on getting your story straight

## What's it all about?

It's now commonplace for organisations to have a vision, mission, values, behaviours and a strategic plan. What's often missing though is a compelling and authentic strategic narrative which weaves these together into one simple 'story' of where the organisation has come from, where it's going to and how it's going to get there

## Our philosophy on...

We firmly believe a key driver of employee engagement is that people not only understand the vision and strategy, (and know how their role contributes) but there's also a compelling organisational narrative about the now, the future and what may change, which captures their hearts and minds

## Who will benefit?

Leaders, managers and anyone involved in internal communication or employee engagement

## Books that will help:

**Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone To Take Action** by **Simon Sinek** - this book is for anyone who wants to inspire others, or to be inspired

**The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human** by **Jonathan Gottschall** - the first unified theory of storytelling which explains what it means to be a storytelling animal and explains how stories can change the world for the better

**The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, and Persuasion through the Art of Storytelling** by **Annette Simmons** - teaches you to use the art of storytelling to persuade, motivate and inspire in life and business

## Visit these websites:

[engageforsuccess.org](http://engageforsuccess.org) - a voluntary movement promoting employee engagement as a better way to work that benefits individual employees, teams, and whole organisations

[hbr.org](http://hbr.org) - the Harvard Business review has some great articles about strategic narratives

[ted.com/topics/storytelling](http://ted.com/topics/storytelling) - the ever-reliable TED talks have some great content on storytelling

## Or give us a shout:

+44 (0) 1858 461071 / [hello@rambutan.biz](mailto:hello@rambutan.biz) / [www.rambutan.biz](http://www.rambutan.biz) and we'll give you magic dust ideas to help you create a compelling story

## Pull together what you have

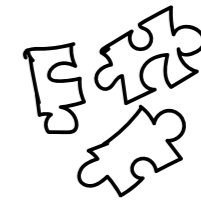
This is what should be on your content checklist: the vision, mission, values, behaviours, strategic plan, change plans, divisional/departmental plans, KPIs, organisational history and any narrative which goes behind each of these

## Identify any gaps in the story

Think of your first story draft as simply putting the pieces of a jigsaw together. Work with the content you've got so far and see if you can answer the following questions:

- can we articulate who we are?
- why do we exist?
- where have we come from?
- where are we heading?
- what will we do to get there?
- what are our priorities?
- how will we treat each other (and customers)?

Questions you can't answer will point to the gaps you need to fill



## Fill those story gaps

This could be the sticking point. If you've got some gaps (e.g. old values, no strategic plan) then the leadership team will need to do some work on creating or refreshing these



Think of this as getting all the recipe ingredients lined up before you start cooking



## Get leaders to tell it

A great starting point is filming or recording leaders telling the organisational story in their own words. They'll each have a different take on the story but should give some really helpful ways of connecting the content, in a coherent way

"Stories constitute the single most powerful weapon in a leader's arsenal" - Dr. Howard Gardner, Harvard University

# Rambu-tips on getting your story straight

Before we start

Collate the content

Craft the story and test it

Keep on learning

Go forth and share

## Check it's compelling and authentic

Ask a few leaders to test the story out with different groups of employees, at all levels, from the frontline upwards. Gain their feedback and keep tweaking. Check how believable, how inspiring and how real people find it. And, more importantly, do they both understand and connect emotionally with it? Remember that every good story has a hero, and in this case, your employees need to feel they're the heroes

## Craft with the right tone of voice

Your organisational story needs to be told in language which will resonate with your people and matches your agreed 'tone of voice'. Plain English will help too - you're not trying to sell this to the stock market, so strip out the management speak, acronyms and jargon. Ensure it is well structured, with a clear beginning, middle and end



## Practice makes perfect

Get leaders to practise delivering the story, ideally without a script and in a way they feel comfortable with. This may change depending on the internal audience they're talking to, as different employee groups might require a different emphasis

## Measure against winning hearts and minds

Using the old adage of 'communication hasn't happened until it's been understood', make sure you find out if you've really captured people's hearts and minds. Talk to your people about what they like about the story, what they connect with, which bits resonate and inspire and what may need to change to make it even more brilliant



## Weave into all communication activities

By now you'll have a story with great soundbites, sentences and phrases which really zing and capture the essence of what you're trying to say. Start using these words in all communication activities from 'town halls' to newsletters and the intranet. Keep using them like a mantra

