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Strategic Storytelling: How To Create Persuasive Business Presentations

STRATEGIC STORYTELLING

HOW TO CREATE PERSUASIVE
BUSINESS PRESENTATIONS



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Synopsis

Strategic Storytelling is a complete guide to creating persuasive business presentations. Based on intensive study of presentations developed by leading management consulting firms, this step-by-step playbook shows you how to craft stories using proven narrative frameworks, design data-driven slides, and master your verbal and non-verbal delivery.

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Customer Reviews

Where do the most compelling strategy presentations come from? The answer, of course, is from top tier management consulting firms, according to Dave McKinsey in this book. So the author uses slide decks prepared by McKinsey & Company, Boston Consulting Group and Accenture to demonstrate his principles, bearing in mind that strategic storytelling is mostly about what you do before you actually speak to a group. On reading the book, two things become very plain: the author uses the word "story" to describe a strategy presentation, rather than to describe something you might read in a storybook or see in a movie; and the author's concept of a good presentation slide has a whole lot more words on it than the maximum of six recommended by Seth Godin and other visual presentation authorities. Perhaps the strategy presentations are intended

primarily as printed documents, rather than to support a speech; this theory seems to be supported by the way the author provides a complete analysis of the presentations without having to consider any words which might have been spoken. The three presentations analysed in the book are presentations made by consulting firms to the US Postal Service, relating to the very difficult strategic challenges faced by the USPS. The presentations give some interesting insight into the advice you are likely to get when you engage expensive consultants, and the author provides a very useful commentary on structure and content for such presentations and the best ways to provide visual representations of information.

I have several issues with "Strategic Storytelling" by Dave McKinsey, paperback edition 2014. It's an attempt to use three related PowerPoint presentations to the United States Postal Service as examples of presentation structure and design. First, there isn't enough content to make an entire book. There is some good material, but in trying to exhaustively cover each presentation, the contents and details of the actual presentations often obscure the lessons. There are "tips" called out in bold type throughout each chapter, but most of them are so obvious that they dilute the impact of those ideas that are worthwhile. They also don't seem to follow any sort of underlying organization, or method for comprehension. If you missed any throughout the chapters, you can find them collected at the end of the book; all 87 of them in one long list. Second, the book layout doesn't match the slide on each page with the text on that page, so there is constant confusion as to which slide is being discussed. Also, the slide references contain both the book Figure number and the presentation slide number (which are duplicated across all three decks); it's too many numbers and too much flipping back and forth. Third, this book needed at least one more round of proof-reading. I found three really glaring errors: Page 34 has a Figure placeholder "x" instead of the actual reference to Figure 3-3; Page 71 says "cumulative loss through 2020" with a small letter "o" instead of a zero as the final digit; and Page 242 says "Finally, one particularly important but often forgotten practice by all levels of people is to verbally acknowledging others within the organization." Shouldn't the word "acknowledging" be merely "acknowledge"? Overall, it's a disappointment.

This is a great book for professionals who look for how to create business presentations rather than keynote(ballroom) presentations. The whole book is a case study how McKinsey, BCG and Accenture delivered presentation for USPS.

This is not a "presentation" book a la Nancy Duarte, or others of that genre who focus on building PPT decks that will be shown on a screen, with you standing in front of an audience hoping to engage them with your idea/product etc. Instead, this excellent work focuses on the much more common scenario of using PPT in a smallish (5-10 person) setting where you are hoping to get more senior leaders to adopt the course of action you and your team have developed. The author says as much in the introduction, so anyone looking for "presentation" content is better off with Nancy's fantastic works. This is also not a graphing / charting "how to", as that is also better left for other books. Frankly, most of the graphs from the three consulting firms featured in the book are custom made and therefore do not lend themselves to the "here's how to make that using Excel" format. For the audience this was intended for, the book does a great job in breaking down the story structure into its three acts, and how to build a deck that follows along a path leading your readers to the place where they will hopefully reach the same conclusions that you did. The author adds many tips actually enhancing the consultants' work. Highly recommended.

The most effective business presenters know how to tell a compelling story... but not just any story. They rely on strategic stories that connect and compel their audiences. Dave McKinsey expertly reveals the tried and true story structures these master business presenters use. Regardless of if you are a presenter in need of help with your next big talk or you're someone desiring to hone your storytelling ability, this book has the tools, examples, and specific guidance to help. This book should not be on your bookshelf, it should be open on your desk as you craft your next talk.

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