

A collection of tips, tricks and traps
for sales professionals sharing
stories that persuade

STORYTELLING SELLING SECRETS

How stories turn
prospects into clients

BY PATRICK HELMERS

"The charm of storytelling selling is the
charming of the imagination" - Pat Helmers



Sales Babble €2013 by Patrick Helmers

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For information address Big Rock Creek Publishers

13725 E. Main Street, Plano IL 60545

Phone 1.630.768.3134

Storytelling Selling Secrets

By the Selling Secrets Strategist Pat Helmers

Stories have always existed to entertain, teach, pass on wisdom and build community. It only makes sense that they are the foundation of great sales.

I remember one sunny morning I was in a secretaries office in Oklahoma. I was demonstrating some software but instead of walking her through the user interface I asked

“Have you ever been busy working on your computer when out of the blue someone calls you on the phone and immediately demands that you pull up 10 bits of information on one of the students?”

The secretary leaned in and said,

“Yeah, that happens all the time and it takes forever to yank it out of the system!”

That’s right, she said “yank”. Knowingly I nodded and said

“Watch this!”

and with click and click I had all the fields she needed.

“WOW!” she gasped.

And so did every other secretary I told the same story.

What did I do? I clearly described a situation she often experiences. In my little story she was able to self identify and envision herself being the savior of the day by getting the data to the right person, right now. All she needed was my software and soon she could be the hero.

The charm of storytelling selling is the charming of the imagination. When buyers listen to stories it gives them the opportunity to create their own images, their own personal blend of imagined sights, sounds, feelings, and much more. **When they imagine they buy.**

This tale and others like it helped me secure new business over and over again. It’s easy for me to tell the stories and it can be easy for you too.

The STORY model

The way I teach storytelling selling is through the **STORY** model. **STORY** is an acronym that describes a framework to model your own personal stories. The goal of the story in this model

is to make the protagonist (your prospect) the hero of the day. Secondly the goal of this model is to make the story interesting.

Your prospect is having a tough day. They've been beaten down all week. Your sales call is an opportunity for them to find relief. A story will peak their interest.

This is the framework I use for my stories:

- **Setting** – Once upon a time ...
- **Trouble** – A problem or issue the Protagonist is facing.
- **Opportunity** – Do they overcome the trouble?
- **Results** – They take action and choose you thus becoming the Hero.
- **Yes** – The Hero lives happily ever after.

Now you might be telling yourself *"I don't have any stories!"*. Yes you do! Think about your existing customers. Think about the bad situation they experienced before becoming customers. What were the challenges they faced? What were their problems or unmet desires? Think about how you helped them. Reflect on how they overcome those issues because of your companies intervention.

Let's narrow it down further. Think of one customer, one client and how they personally experienced success. That's the story we want to tell.

A Storytelling Example

Let's look at the story I just told and break it down within the this STORY model.

The SETTING:

I remember one sunny morning I was in a secretaries (the protagonist) office in Oklahoma. I was demonstrating my software but instead of walking her through the user interface I asked *"Have you ever been busy working on your computer when out of the blue someone calls you on the phone and immediately demands that you pull up 10 bits of information on one of the students?"*

The TROUBLE:

The secretary leaned in and said *"Yeah, that happens all the time and it takes forever to yank it out of the system!"*. That's right, she said "yank".

The OPPORTUNITY:

Knowingly I nodded and said “*Watch this!*” and with click and click I had all the fields she needed.

The RESULTS:

“*WOW!*” she gasped. And so did every other secretary I told the same story. This tale and others like it helped me secure new business over and over again.

The YES:

It’s easy for me to tell the stories and it can be easy for you too.

Story Analysis

Do you see how I took the story at the top of the article and designed it using the STORY model? Furthermore did you notice how I told a story wrapped around the story I told the secretaries? That was the story on how I told stories. You can too.

You too can be the hero.

- Tell a story while prospecting: *Just last week I was talking to one of my clients.....*
- Tell a story while networking: *Just last week I was talking to one of my clients.....*
- Tell a story on a sales call: *Just last week I was talking to one of my clients.....*
- Tell a story to close: *Just last week I was talking to one of my clients.....*

Where would you use your story?

Complete the Script

Review the following worksheet. It contains a complete framework for authoring your own business story. Tell us about the life of one of your clients. What was the setting? How did trouble arrive one day? And how did that trouble manifest and what were the opportunities? Then share how you came to the rescue. What happened when they became the hero?

Tell us that story.

Build Your STORY worksheet

Take the STORY model and author your business story. Use the following script as a guide.

- Setting – Once upon a time ...
- Trouble – A problem or issue the Protagonist is facing.
- Opportunity – Do they overcome the trouble?
- Redemption – They take action to choose you and become the Hero.
- Yes – The Hero lives happily ever after.

Build Your STORY

This is a complete framework for authoring your own business story. Tell us about the life of one of your clients. What was the setting? How did trouble arrive one day? And how did that trouble manifest and what were the opportunities? Then share how you came to the rescue. What happened when they became the hero? **Tell us that story**

Once upon a time (the Protagonist/Your Customer)
..... was at a (SETTING):

One day there was TROUBLE!

They realized they had a choice (OPPORTUNITY). They could choose your solution versus do nothing.

They chose to buy and made the right choice (RESULTS):

They are extremely pleased with their decision and YES you can meet them:

The Author

Pat Helmers is an international business consultant and technology startup coach. He is the author of the Selling With Confidence sales system and host of the [award winning](#) Sales Babble podcast.

Pat has been in the tech world his entire professional career. Pat started his career as a software engineer for Bell Laboratories. It was there he became an inventor in GSM wireless technologies, earning two patents. He leveraged his expertise and became a trainer for emerging software Object Oriented methodologies, training 1000s of engineers in the USA and Europe. He was promoted and managed various training groups and a technology adoption organization promoting technology transfer.

He then entered the software startup arena, pursuing a career in business development for software startups, enrolling and selling early adopters on new technologies. Eventually Pat was promoted to the Vice President of Sales for an enterprise SaaS startup, building from scratch an inside and outside sales team that generated 8 figure revenues.

Still having the start-up bug, Pat created the *Sales Babble* brand with the [Sales Babble Podcast](#). Sales Babble was created to stop the babble and myth that only pushy salespeople are successful in sales. He believes **anyone** can become skilled in sales. All it takes is an attitude of “helping” clients and adding “value” to their lives and businesses. From the podcast sprung his consulting and coaching practice as well as authoring the [Selling With Confidence](#) sales system.

When he’s not podcasting, Pat is a startup business consultant. He helps businesses find prospects that ache for their products, convert those prospects into clients, then scale up that process for phenomenal growth.

Pat enjoys golf, bicycling, history, and world travel. He is an avid father, husband and loyal friend.