

The Brand's
Pocket Guide
to Insight Storytelling

Skopos.
LONDON

skopos.london

Insight storytelling

- 01 Why tell stories?**
It's the audience, stupid 
- 02 Appliance of science**
Tricks from our trade 
- 03 The three act play**
Beginning, middle & end 
- 04 Plotting the story**
Small details & the big picture 
- 05 Story structure**
The prologue, epilogue & dialogue 
- 06 Bringing the story to life**
Embracing different media & formats 
- 07 Lights, camera, action!**
Adding panache and pzazz 
- 08 Follow the stars**
Learn from the experts 

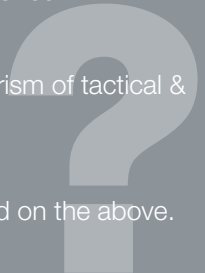
Why tell stories?

Once upon a time, not so long ago, market research was dull... Correction, quite often the way it was delivered was tedious, for example the 100 slide presentation or 'data download'. The hours of our lives we won't get back! However, if key storytelling principles are observed, research presentations can become an illuminating and empowering experience.

So, what are these storytelling 'principles'? Well they aren't magic. They are techniques and methods that we use daily in our conversations and communications. The key points are:

- Knowing your audience's needs, traits, preferences and expectations – base the story around them.
- Nailing the structure: Delivering a logical & engaging story arc
- Providing context: Interweaving relevant, insight and/or cross-vertical learnings
- Employing visual aids: Being impactful in the use of appropriate rich media or artwork, for instance
- Communicating effectively/ emotionally
- Being commercial: Viewing through the prism of tactical & strategic business impact
- Delivering with authority and authenticity

Then tailor (and repeat) key messages based on the above.



Appliance of science

02

As researchers and scientists we have a few tricks up our sleeves, let's use our strengths in the Science AND Arts. We need to balance being:

Methodical and Moving
Persuasive and Playful
Narrator and Curator

From our experience, we have learnt to always seek to balance information with entertainment when delivering project stories. This is because:

- 'Likeability' is considered the key criteria of good communication
- The brain favours rich and emotive language, demonstrative actions and performances
- Time is perceived to pass more slowly in times of boredom or stress/danger

On this very last point, it can be worth communicating bad news in advance!

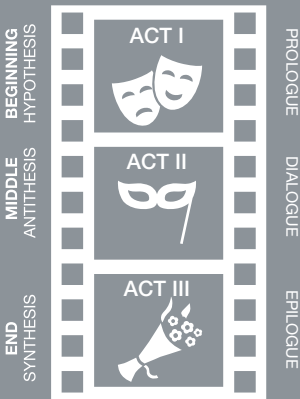


The three act play

Let's be guided by the great storytellers of the past. It may seem a truism, but every great story has to have a beginning, a middle and an end. Shakespeare and Dickens knew this, so if we follow their example, we won't go far wrong.

Whilst Shakespeare did not necessarily welcome the input of groundlings we should encourage contributions from the floor. As in the great oral tradition of storytelling, research narratives should carry the potential for interaction.

The 3 act play for insight storytelling



Setting the scene

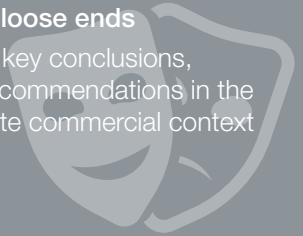
The programme objectives & method in a 'punchy' fashion

The detail

What are the key arguments & how do our findings support or challenge them?

Tying up loose ends

Draw out key conclusions, routing recommendations in the appropriate commercial context



Plotting the story

So, how do we go about 'finding' the story? The core narrative that threads its way through our report, presentation, talk, video or book?

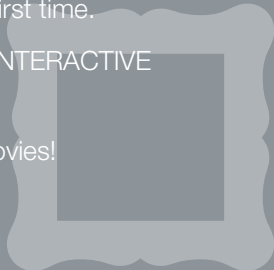
Firstly, think 'big picture'. Don't dive straight into the minutiae of the data breaks and/or the transcripts. Certainly, sub-plot elements will contribute to the success of the whole, but the principal narrative is derived from overview thinking.

Our story must grab attention and reward its listeners with an exciting and thrill-packed narrative. Our aims should be memorability and a ready call-to-action. In practical terms, this means:

Punchiness - If our story outlives its welcome for reason of length, poor focus or too much detail, it will have failed in its principal objective - communications effectiveness. The audience should get the message the first time.

It needs to be ACTION ORIENTATED, INTERACTIVE and FOCUSED.

Remember, this is business, not the movies!



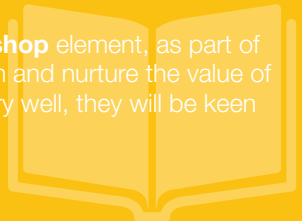
Story structure

Prologue - Context is everything. This is the backdrop against which your characters will play out their roles. Imagine Oliver twist without the backstreets of London. Understanding of what will come later is enhanced by a clear exposition of our environment and its history. Through effective scene-setting we can move from two into three dimensions, breathing life and understanding into the findings – the principal plot. This analogy maps completely across into the market research world. However, be wary of audience knowledge. Old news is rarely good news.

Dialogue – Quite simply, we encourage interaction with the audience at all stages. Heckling will require handling, questions will require answering and requests will require responses. But that's part and parcel of good storytelling for stakeholders.

Epilogue - Like any compelling film franchise, the story doesn't end at the conclusion of the initial cinematic epic, there will very probably be a sequel. Certainly it is in your best interests to position your story-telling to allow for the possibility of a next step. What are we..., more importantly, what are they, to do with the knowledge they have gained through our storytelling?

Incorporating an '**activation**' workshop element, as part of an insight programme helps maintain and nurture the value of the narrative. If we have told our story well, they will be keen for more.



Bringing the story to life

So, now we have our full story ready to share. Next question, how best to present the output in a way that is both engaging and informative?

Firstly, ensure the cast and crew are a good fit with the audience.

The **visualisation** strategy that delivers your story depends on a few factors i.e. What suits your audience? - slick and well-designed Prezi presentation? Or clear & simple infographics (to quickly gauge key take-outs)?

The output format can also be shaped by the method of research capture employed. For example, qualitative in-depth interviews will lend themselves to a **video** vox-pop showreel; whereas heaps of statistics can (and should) be distilled into an **infographic** - a visual snapshot of the story & '**killer insights**', fully leveraging maps, charts and iconic visuals.

Don't be tempted to dilute the force of our story by adopting a kitchen sink inclusion strategy! Distil the data and key messages, then summarise and exemplify through **engaging charts & images**. When designing, remember to optimise the use of colour to make key points stand out and present your data as beautifully as possible. One word of caution with imagery, avoid too much cheese!

Lights, camera, action! 07

So, if a picture paints a thousand words, what tools should be utilised to help create rich media outputs, which have impact and audience cut-through?

Below are a few digital software tools and resources of which Skopos London makes use to enhance our storytelling effectiveness.

Vennage is an online infographic creator which is free to use, with hundreds of templates to choose from. The tool includes a large collection of charts, icons, maps, images & text options to create visually appealing and engaging one-page summaries of your research story.

Prezi was designed to replace traditional slide based presentations, with a zooming user interface allowing more engaging movement through sections of the presentation. The online tool has various templates with predetermined paths for the slides (or you can create your own).

Video Scribe is an animated whiteboard video software. An image can be inserted within the package and it will create the video as though the image is being hand drawn. Images can also be made to morph into one another. This delivers a really creative, engaging and high definition video output.

Of course, many other low/no cost tools and resources are available, but those listed represent great value (for any visualisation activity) and work!



