

Communicate Your Vision: Create Stories that Reflect Experience

There is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile, and achievable vision of the future, widely shared.

- Burt Nanus

The right vision for the future of an organization moves people to action, and because of their action, the organization evolves and makes process. Like a bicycle, an organization must continually move forward, or fall over. The role of vision in driving the organization forward is indispensable.

The vision's power lies in its ability to grab the attention of those both inside and outside the organization and to focus that attention on a common dream – a sense of direction that both makes sense and provides direction.

To that end, your church's vision cannot exist merely as words on a page or website, or in an impressive visual display in your church foyer.

Articulating your vision through consistent and powerful ideas is one of the toughest tasks of leadership.

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins](#), by Annette Simmons

Stories have tremendous power. They can persuade, promote empathy, and provoke action. Better than any other communication tool, stories explain who you are, what you want...and why it matters. In presentations, department meetings, over lunch any place you make a case for new customers, more business, or your next big idea you'll have greater impact if you have a compelling story to relate.

Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins will teach you to narrate personal experiences as well as borrowed stories in a way that demonstrates authenticity, builds emotional connections, inspires perseverance, and stimulates the imagination. Fully updated and more practical than ever, the second edition reveals how to use storytelling to:

- Capture attention
- Motivate listeners
- Gain trust
- Strengthen your argument
- Sway decisions
- Demonstrate authenticity and encourage transparency
- Spark innovation

- Manage uncertainty

Complete with examples, a proven storytelling process and techniques, innovative applications, and a new appendix on teaching storytelling, *Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins* hands you the tools you need to get your message across and connect successfully with any audience.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

Organizations run on numbers, facts, forecasts, and processes. If that sounds dull and unengaging, it's because those factors are not what really drive our passion and desire to excel, to lead, or to sink our hearts and souls into the work we do. Ultimately, the kind of transformative results that can come only from enriched, passionate people depend on a distinctly human element – storytelling.

The power of even a simple story to affirm someone's connection to your organization's people, values, and vision can mean the difference between simple competence and fully realized ownership. Your stories help people feel more engaged and alive.

Story can be defined as a reimagined experience narrated with enough detail and feeling to cause your listener's imaginations to experience it as real.

You are already telling stories about who you are, why you are here, and what you envision, value, teach, and think about. The problem is, you haven't realized how much your stories matter. To help us pay attention, let's look at the six kinds of stories we tell that lead to influence, imagination, and innovation.

Who-I-Am Stories

What qualities earn you the right to influence a particular person? Tell of a time, place, or event that provides evidence you have these qualities.

Why-I-Am-Here Stories

When someone assumes you are there to sell an idea that will cost him or her money, time, or resources, it immediately discredits your "facts" as biased.

Teaching Stories

Certain lessons are best learned from experience, and some lessons are learned over and over again. It's better to tell a story that creates a shared experience.

Vision Stories

A worthy, exciting future story reframes present difficulties as "worth it."

Value-in-Action Stories

Values are subjective. Hypothetical situations sound hypocritical.

I-Know-What-You-Are Thinking Stories

People like to stay safe. It is a trust-building surprise for you to share their secret suspicions in a story that first validates then dispels these objections without sounding defenseless.

When you turn your attention to the six kinds of stories, you will be more intentional in creating the kind of perceptions that achieve goals rather than reinforce problems.

Annette Simmons, [*Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins*](#)

A NEXT STEP

People are starving for meaningful stories, while we are surrounded by impersonal messages dressed in bells and whistles that are story-ish but are not effective. People want to feel a human presence in your messages, to taste a trace of humanity that proves there is a “you” as sender. Learning how to tell personal stories teaches you how to deliver the sense of humanity in the messages you send.

Schedule some time where you can be alone to complete the following exercise.

Imagine you are stranded alone on a desert island. You have six slips of paper, a pencil, and six bottles. If you could communicate one thing by using each of the six story types listed above that would inspire your church for the future, what would it be and how would you say it?

Write each of the six “messages” on a separate sheet of paper, then roll them up to create scrolls. Insert each message in a separate bottle.

At your next team meeting, read each message aloud, and discuss it as a group.

Ask each team member to repeat the process on his or her own over the next month.

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*This is part of a weekly series posting excerpts from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix** book excerpts for church leaders.*

SUMS Remix takes a practical problem in the church and looks at it with three solutions; each solution is taken from a different book. Additionally, a practical action step is included with each

solution.

As a church leader you get to scan relevant books based on practical tools and solutions to real ministry problems, not just by the cover of the book. Each post will have the edition number which shows the year and what number it is in the overall sequence. (SUMS Remix provides 26 issues per year, delivered every other week to your inbox).

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