

Leaders Should Know - and Tell - Their Organization's Creation Story

Will Mancini, founder of [Auxano](#) and [Younique](#), writes about the importance of leadership stories [here](#). He believes that storytelling and understanding the nuances of story will help leaders in the daily ebb and flow of communication. The first, appropriately, is your **organization's creation story**.

As a leader, you should know more about the creation story of your organization than anyone on the planet. **What are the circumstances—passions, problems, and people—surrounding how the organization got started to begin with?**

Mastering the richness of the creation story will help in two major ways. First, it will hold insight into the unique culture of the organization and therefore future decision-making and vision. Second, your mastery of the story itself will bring tremendous credibility with people when initiating change.

With a passion of Disney history, I'm always grateful to visit Disney properties and immerse myself in the stories and culture of Walt Disney and the "kingdom" he began. During a recent multi-day visit to California, I had the opportunity to visit Disneyland several days, experiencing both the familiar and new perspectives.

Take this image, for example:



In talking with current Cast Members, Tour Guides, and former Imagineers, various stories were given as to the origin of Disneyland:

1. It was Walt Disney's fascination with **trains**, beginning as a boy, that led him to first create a scale model railroad in his backyard. Not satisfied, he began to develop an ever-growing park that would include a railroad. When Disneyland opened in 1955, the first object you saw approaching the park was a train station, and a 5/8 scale railroad encircled the park.
2. Saturday's were "Daddy's Day," and Walt often took his daughters to play in nearby parks. While sitting on a **bench** in Griffith Park, Walt imagined what a park would look like that would allow both parents and children to be immersed in a story-rich, safe, clean park.
3. Fascinated by **miniatures**, Walt began a hobby of crafting extremely detailed miniature items, building entire rooms filled with objects that were not only beautiful to look at, but fully functional. He envisioned a place to display these miniatures so that people from all over the country could enjoy them.
4. By the late 1940's-early 1950's, Walt had grown tired of making animated pictures, and even his recent venture into live-action motion pictures left him dissatisfied. He imagined a place where people could actually be a part of a story, **immersed** in all the rich details that a "theme park" could provide.

What is the true origin of Disneyland?

I believe that all of the above contributed to the creation of Disneyland. And the common denominator of all of them?

Passion.

> What about your organization?

ACTION STEP: Write a one-page, 2-minute creation story talk. If you have any gaps in your knowledge, interview people in your organization until you know more than anyone else.

> [Read more by Bob.](#)