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1. Creating a story

1.1 The creation of a story

Stories have traits and elements that allow us to recognise them.

They have a physiognomy that conveys **precise emotional tones**.

There are various types of stories that can be used in storytelling, depending on the context, objectives and target audience.

Here are some of the most common types of stories:

1. **Personal stories**: are based on the personal experience of the narrator or other characters. They can be used to create empathy, share personal challenges and demonstrate how one has overcome an obstacle or achieved a goal.
2. **Success stories**: tell the story of how an individual or company achieved success. They are often used in marketing to demonstrate the positive results achieved by a product or service.
3. **Origin stories**: they tell the roots and origin of a brand, company or organisation. They often reveal the inspiration behind the creation of the company and the core values that guide it.
4. **Customer stories**: involve customers or users who have had a positive experience with a product or service. They can demonstrate the usefulness of the product and influence purchase or membership.
5. **Brand stories:** are focused on the development of the brand, its values and mission. They can help build an emotional connection with the audience and consolidate brand identity.
6. **Cultural or historical stories**: are based on significant cultural or historical events or aspects. They can be used to educate, inspire or create awareness on certain issues.
7. **Stories of transformation**: they tell how a character or organisation has undergone a significant transformation or change over time. They may emphasise growth, improvement or adaptation.

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8. **Humorous stories**: are designed to make the audience laugh. Humour can be a powerful tool to engage people and make them more likely to remember the message.
9. **Stories of suspense**: they create suspense or mystery, keeping the audience waiting to find out what will happen. They are often used to maintain attention and stimulate curiosity. They are similar to **see-saw stories** where defeat and revenge alternate.

   Usually there is a problem to solve and the search for the solution itself generates **suspense**.
10. **Stories of conflict and resolution**: present a conflict or challenge that needs to be overcome. The path to conflict resolution can inspire the audience.
11. **Stories of inspiration**: they narrate stories of courage, resilience and success against adversity. They are designed to inspire audiences and motivate them to pursue their goals.
12. **Educational stories:** used to teach or inform the public about a particular topic or concept. They can make complex topics more accessible.
13. **Surprise stories:** they present a constant growth: one after another difficulties are faced, which are overcome by the protagonist. They convey the feeling of **amazement**.
14. **Stories of fulfilment:** there is an initial violent fall from which, facing difficulties, one rises up more aware and stronger than before. They convey the feeling of **happiness**.

The types of stories used will depend on the objective of the communication and the target audience. The key to effective storytelling is to select the type of story that best fits the situation and tell it in an engaging and authentic way.

In all these stories there is always a common thread.

The common thread in storytelling is the central theme or message that connects and gives coherence to all elements of the story. The common thread is what connects the storyteller to the audience, conveying a deep meaning or specific objective. It is the heart of the narration and guides the audience along the story's path.

Here are some key characteristics of the storytelling thread:

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1. **Theme or message**: the common thread is often a central theme or message that the author or narrator wishes to communicate to the audience. This theme may relate to the importance of values such as hope, resilience, friendship, justice, freedom or any other concept relevant to the story.
2. **Coherence**: the central thread helps to maintain coherence in the story. Every part of the narration, from the characters to the events, should be aligned with the central thread to avoid confusion or disconnection in the story.
3. **Connectivity**: the common thread serves to connect the different aspects of the story in a logical and meaningful way. This connection helps the audience to follow and better understand the meaning and direction of the narrative.
4. **Emotional involvement**: the thread is often based on the emotional involvement of the audience. The story must make the audience feel part of the tale and make them experience the emotions of the characters.
5. **Objective**: the central thread can also represent the objective of the story, e.g. persuade the audience to do something, inspire an emotional reaction or teach a lesson.
6. **Resolution or evolution**: the thread can also reflect the resolution of a conflict or the evolution of the characters or the situation. This adds depth to the story.

In short, the central thread plays a crucial role in storytelling, providing a point of reference for the audience and ensuring that the story is coherent and meaningful. It is the 'why' of the story that makes it a meaningful and memorable experience for the listener or reader.

The central theme, characters and plot work together to create a common thread that gives meaning and direction to the story. Each storytelling story will have its own unique theme, characters and plot, but these core elements help create a coherent and engaging narrative.

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It is crucial to integrate three further elements of equal importance to these already mentioned, which are:

- **CONTEXT:** plays a fundamental role, always outlining an initial situation that can be positive or negative, normal or extraordinary, precisely defined.
- **PROBLEM/SOLUTION**: an exceptional event, trauma or problem to be faced, giving rise to a situation of confrontation with enemies and obstacles.
- **RESULT**: the conclusion of the feat. The change.

1.2 Robert Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions

A story is driven by the intentions behind and within the tale.

Depending on the intention, different emotional tones are chosen.

But what can the emotional tones be?

To answer this question, we are helped by Robert Plutchik's 'wheel of emotions', a model that represents human emotions in a circular diagram, organised according to different categories and intensities. This model can be applied to storytelling to enrich the narrative and create a deeper emotional engagement with the audience.

So, here is how to apply Plutchik's wheel of emotions to storytelling:

1. Choice of emotions: identify the key emotions you want to arouse in your audience. For example, you may want to arouse joy, anger, sadness, fear, disgust or other specific emotions at different points in the story.

2. Character development: create characters that manifest these emotions in believable and authentic ways. Ensure that characters have motivations and backgrounds that justify their emotional reactions.

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3. Narration based on emotion: use narration to show the emotions of the characters in action. Describe characters' facial expressions, body language and emotional reactions so that the audience can connect with them on an emotional level.

4. Emotional tension: play with the wheel of emotions to create emotional tension in the story. For example, you could make opposite emotions clash in two characters or make a character's emotions evolve in the course of the story.

5. Emotional progression: use the wheel of emotions to guide the progression of the story. For example, you can start a story with positive emotions to capture attention, then introduce emotional tension with negative emotions, and then drive the story towards a resolution or emotional change.

6. Emotional balance: make sure to balance the different emotions throughout the story so that the narration appears complex and engaging. An oscillation between different emotions can keep the audience's interest.

7. Revelations and emotional surprises: use emotions to create revelations and surprises in the plot. For example, you can reveal a secret or a change of emotion by a character at a key moment in the story.

8. Call for empathy: show emotions in such a way that the audience can sympathise or empathise with the characters. This fosters a deeper emotional connection between the audience and the story.

Applying Plutchik's wheel of emotions in storytelling can enrich the narrative, make the story more engaging and allow the audience to experience a wider range of emotions while following the plot.

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The wheel of emotions by
Robert Plutchik

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2. The construction of a story

The narrative outline, also known as 'narrative arc' or 'narrative structure', is a pattern or framework that defines the sequence of events in a story. This structure is commonly used in the creation of stories in fiction, film, theatre and storytelling in general. One of the best known narrative schemes is the 'three-act structure', which consists of:

1. Act 1 (Introduction):
    - Presentation of the context, characters and initial situation.
    - Introduction of the main conflict or challenge that the characters will face.
    - Creation of an emotional bond between the audience and the main characters.
2. Act 2 (Development):
    - Deepening of the conflict and challenges the characters face.
    - Character growth through the experiences and obstacles they encounter.
    - Increased narrative tension as the plot develops.
    - Reaching the climax of the story, often followed by a dramatic turn.
3. Act 3 (Resolution):
    - Resolution of the main conflict and other narrative threads.
    - Unfolding of narrative tensions and conflicts.
    - Leading to an emotional conclusion, often with a moral or key message.

We have already seen what the main factors of the thread are.

Now let us turn to the five fundamental points to be developed to build a convincing story:

1. **Narrative point of view**: decide which narrative point of view will be used in the story. You can choose between first-person (narrated by a character), third-person (an external narrator) or other points of view.

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2. **Theme and plot**: every story needs a central conflict or challenge that the characters have to face. This conflict is what drives the narration and creates tension.
3. **Well-developed characters**: characters are at the centre of the story and should be three-dimensional, with facets, motivations and coherent development. The audience should be able to identify or relate to the characters.
4. **Context and setting**: the story should be placed in a well-defined context and setting. This provides a framework for the narration and helps to create a unique atmosphere.
5. **Message or resolution**: identify the key message or theme you want to convey through the story. This should be the focal point of the narration and should be evident in the conflict and resolution of the story.

These elements form the basis for the creation of an engaging and well-structured story.

The narrative structure helps to organise these elements in a logical sequence that guides the audience through the story effectively.

For each point, we must ask ourselves:

1. Narrative point of view: ***Who is the PROTAGONIST? What are his characteristics and experience? What is his or her weakness?***
2. Theme and plot: ***What is the objective of the feats to be undertaken?***
3. Well-developed characters: ***What is the adversity that the protagonist experiences and has to overcome? What violent or shocking event marked the protagonist's life? Who/what does the protagonist have to contend with? Who are the characters who help the protagonist in accomplishing the feat?***
4. Context and setting: **what tools are able to 'save' the hero? What are the space-time coordinates of the story?**
5. Message or resolution: **What is the resolution?**

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2.1 Structure: Before-and-after bridge

We now analyse the 'Before-After-Bridge' structure, a common approach in storytelling that serves to create suspense and maintain the interest of the audience.

The Before-After-Bridge structure is an approach to presentation developed by Nancy Duarte in her book "Resonate: Present Visual Stories that Transform Audiences". This model suggests starting the presentation by showing the current situation (Before), then painting a picture of the desired future (After) and finally presenting the 'bridge' that connects the two.

The idea is to create an emotion in the audience by showing the difference between what is and what could be.

This structure is based on the idea of presenting an initial situation ('Before'), followed by a final situation ('After') and using a 'Bridge' or series of events to connect the two situations. This model is often used to slowly reveal the plot or key message of the story.

This structure works like this:

1. **Before**: the 'Before' phase begins with the introduction of an initial situation. This situation can be quiet, normal or even enigmatic. The audience begins to get to know the characters and the context, but they often do not have clear answers to the initial questions that arise.
2. **Bridge**: the 'Bridge' phase represents the core of the story and presents a series of events or developments that link the 'Before' situation to the 'After' situation. These events may reveal important details, create tension or unravel the main conflict. The suspense is often fuelled by unresolved questions and mysteries that build up during the 'Bridge'.
3. **After**: the 'After' phase represents the final situation or result of the actions that took place during the 'Bridge'. In this phase, the initial questions are often answered, and the story reaches a kind of conclusion. The audience gains a more complete understanding of the story and the characters.

This approach is often used to keep the audience's attention and generate suspense, as the audience is driven to desire the resolution of the questions posed during the 'Before' phase and

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during the 'Bridge'. The 'Before-After-Bridge' structure is widely used in film, literature and storytelling in general to create an engaging and intriguing narrative.

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3. Tips for creating a storytelling

Storytelling is about telling a story or message in an engaging and memorable way using narrative elements. This approach is widely used in marketing, corporate communication and many other contexts to capture the audience's attention, create an emotional connection and convey a message effectively.

Here are some key elements in the creation of storytelling:

1. **Characters:** these characters can be real or imaginary, but they must be well defined so that the audience can identify or relate to them.
2. **Plot**: create a plot or sequence of events that keeps the audience engaged. Make sure the story has a coherent beginning, development and conclusion.
3. **Point of view**: choose a point of view from the perspective of a character or narrator. This point of view will influence the audience's perception of the story.
4. **Context and setting**: set the story in a specific place and time. This can help create a unique atmosphere and provide context to the narrative.
5. **Conflict**: introduce a conflict or challenge that the characters have to face. This creates tension in the story and keeps the audience's attention.
6. **Message or theme**: define the message or theme you wish to convey through the story. This should be the key point you want the audience to understand or remember.
7. **Emotions**: use emotions to engage the audience. Stories that arouse empathy, curiosity, joy, anger or other emotions are more likely to be memorable.
8. **Narrative structure**: follow a traditional narrative structure, which often includes introduction, development, climax and resolution. This structure helps to keep the story well organised.
9. **Language and style**: use an appropriate language and style for your audience and the objective of the story. You can choose to use formal or informal language depending on the context.

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10. **Images**: the use of images and visual details can enrich the story and make it more engaging.
11. **Call to action**: if storytelling is used for commercial or persuasive purposes, it is important to include a clear 'call to action' telling the audience what they should do after hearing the story (e.g. buy a product, support a cause, share the story, etc.).

Therefore, **an effective storytelling is a combination of narrative elements that capture the audience's attention, engage them emotionally and convey the desired message in a memorable way**.

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