

***The Pen is Mightier
than the Statistic***



Writing Workshop

Book Two

Case Studies from the Real World

*In memory of Carol T. Falkowski
who always reminded me to live out loud.*

The Pen is Mightier than the Statistic—Story-Wheel
Book Two—Case Studies from the Real World

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www.StoryWheel.net



Content Structure

This content is divided into three downloadable books. Each stands alone but gains full momentum when combined with the others. For the best experience, print out *Book One*—it's your hands-on Workbook.

Book One—Spinning Skills into Insight

Workbook. Create your story using prompts and templates. To help you understand the concepts, the Radiant Residence case study example is provided.

Introducing the Story-Wheel Model

How to Create Your Story-Wheel

Radiant Residence Case Study

1. All Good
2. Oh, Shift!
3. Wish-Back
4. Running In Place
5. Eureka!
6. Restorify
7. Wiser

Story-Wheel Generator—*Write it! Tell it!*

Story-Wheel Generator—*Practice Templates*

Certificate of Completion

Personal Mission

Additional Workshops

Let's Chat!

Book Two—Case Studies from the Real World

Reference Guide. Showcases various stories from entertainment, business, and personal experiences.

Radiant Residence (reprise)

The Barbie Movie

The Listerine Legacy #1

Flex Seal

Post-it Notes

Water Alarm

The Listerine Legacy #2

Zoom

Chevrolet

Amazon.com

Novo Nordisk

Groundhog Day Movie

Personal Mission

Additional Workshops & Let's Chat!

Disclaimer. As Case Study examples, I present several fictional stories and marketing campaigns under educational Fair Use guidelines. My views are my own; I do not endorse any brand, nor have the companies had any input. Publicly available marketing materials are shown with the understanding that specific campaigns may change over time. Apply the overall strategies to your own products and services.

Book Three—The Science Behind the Brain

Core Concepts. Academic exploration of the storytelling model as well as thinking processes.

A Story First

Story-Wheel

Storytelling Science

Additional Workshops & Let's Chat

🌀 Book Two—Case Studies from the Real World

Case Study | Radiant Residence

A typical sales pitch for a heating contractor is something like this:



Radiant Residence offers superior radiant floor heating systems for houses. Using the latest technologies, we bring energy efficiency, comfort, and over 25 years of installation experience.

This one-way monologue lists features rather than starts a sales conversation, ends rather than begins. What if a story-based case study were presented instead?



I love the fresh winter snowfall in Minnesota. Playing outdoors on a snowmobile, skiing, skating, or just a walk. It's wonderful until my feet are cold. Then, I can only think of warming my toes. So, I head inside and stamp the snow off my boots, slip them off, and stand fidgeting on the floor's heating vent in wet socks.

That doesn't work so I crowd around the fireplace and hope to find the balance between too cold and too hot. Eventually nature calls so I scamper to the bathroom across a chilly floor and back again. I'm feeling like a caged timber wolf relentlessly pacing in discontent.

Instead of chasing the heat, what if the heat is where I am right now? Radiant floor heat keeps my feet warm anywhere and everywhere in my home. I can finally relax. Radiant Residence. We don't sell heating systems; we sell toasty toes.

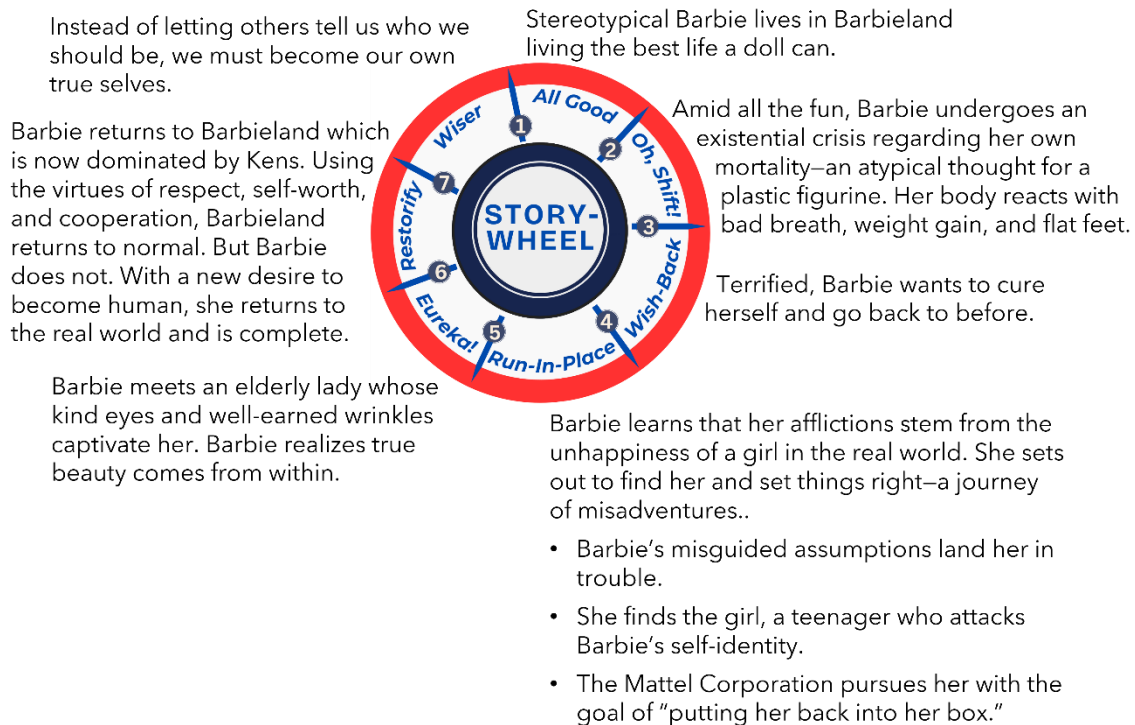
Using the Story-Wheel model, a story-based case study that makes a connection is easily written. Underpinned by the *Wiser* lesson of toasty toes, a conversation can go forward.





It could have been a superficial tale about the adventures of a doll but with some great storytelling, *The Barbie Movie* became a summer blockbuster. How did the writers get there? Let's do a bit of deconstruction. The obvious model is *Hero's Journey* in which Barbie is called to adventure, picks up companions, faces her darker self, and emerges stronger to fix a broken world. Yet, in a great story, other models work just as well. Let's deconstruct it using the Story-Wheel.

From the film's opening moments, Barbieland is established as the perfectly normal realm of Barbie from the colorful colors to her permanently arched heels. It's truly a *All Good...* world. It's *wonderfulness* becomes a character in its own right to be extolled, aspired to, and ultimately rescued. The audience cares about Barbieland.



Case Study | The Listerine Legacy #1

If your customer isn't experiencing an *Oh, Shift!*, you can create a *Complication*.

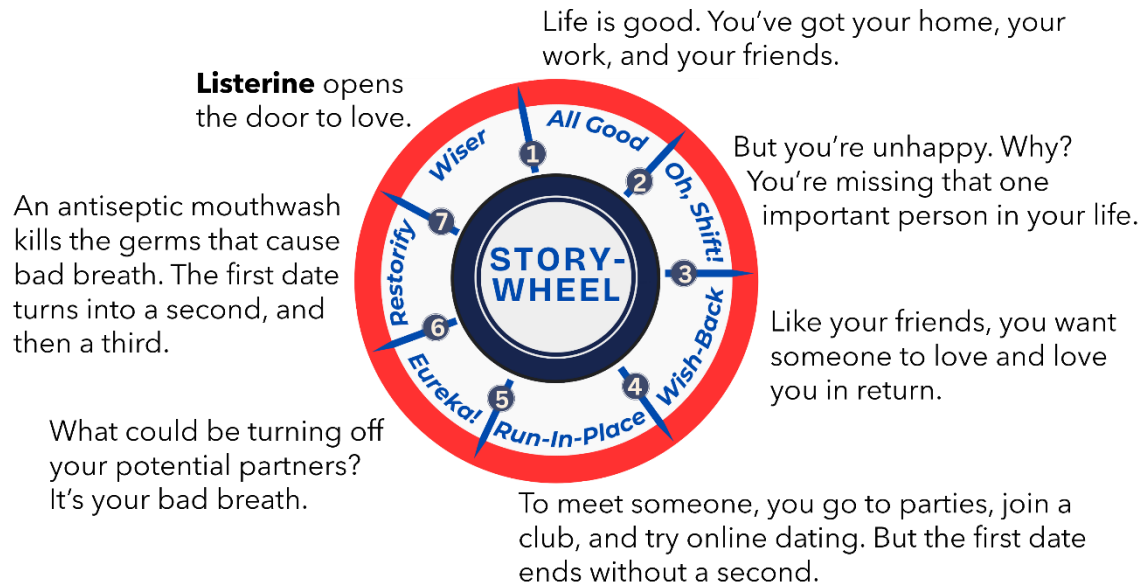


Over one hundred years ago, the natural odor of the mouth was reframed as “Halitosis” and promoted it as a source of social embarrassment. Bad breath was born. Fortunately, Listerine offered the necessary solution. Today, the mouthwash industry is a billion-dollar concern.

Taking a cue from Listerine, many companies intentionally create dissatisfaction in their customer's mind and then introduce their product as the solution. Are you fat? We've got a pill for that. Unattractive? Try our hair product. Don't feel manly? Buy our pickup truck.

It's a tried-and-true method. However, this “trick” is over-used and is instantly recognizable. You run the risk of destroying your credibility if you force a false *Oh, Shift!* onto your customer. Approach it from their point of view and you may find the hidden key.

For instance, a teenager getting ready for a first date will use mouthwash for fresh breath. Hoping for a kiss, using Listerine gives confidence. The *Oh, Shift* isn't bad breath but rather the insecurity of adolescence.





He's loud! He's boisterous! And he's coming to an infomercial near you!

TV pitchman Phil Swift hawks Flex Seal adhesive with the promise to fix anything and everything. Broken pipe? Fixed. Flooding basement? Fixed. Leaky boat? Fixed.

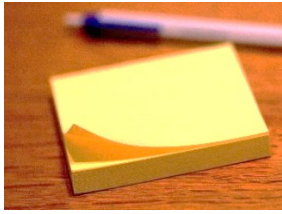
But here's something that might surprise you: Flex Seal is genuinely a superb product that fulfills its brand promise exceedingly well. It creates a flexible, watertight seal that lasts; Do-It-Yourselfers use the product for home repairs as well as fabrication projects.

Phil Swift understands that he's not selling glue but rather the customer's *Desire* to undo the common disasters that come with owning a home. For his high-pitched frenzy, his appeal is the *Desire* to make life calm again. For all the corny antics, he engenders the *Desire* for something they can trust and count on. Or perhaps an aspirational *Desire* to fashion something new and unexpected. Like slicing a boat in two and tapping it back together.



Bon Voyage!



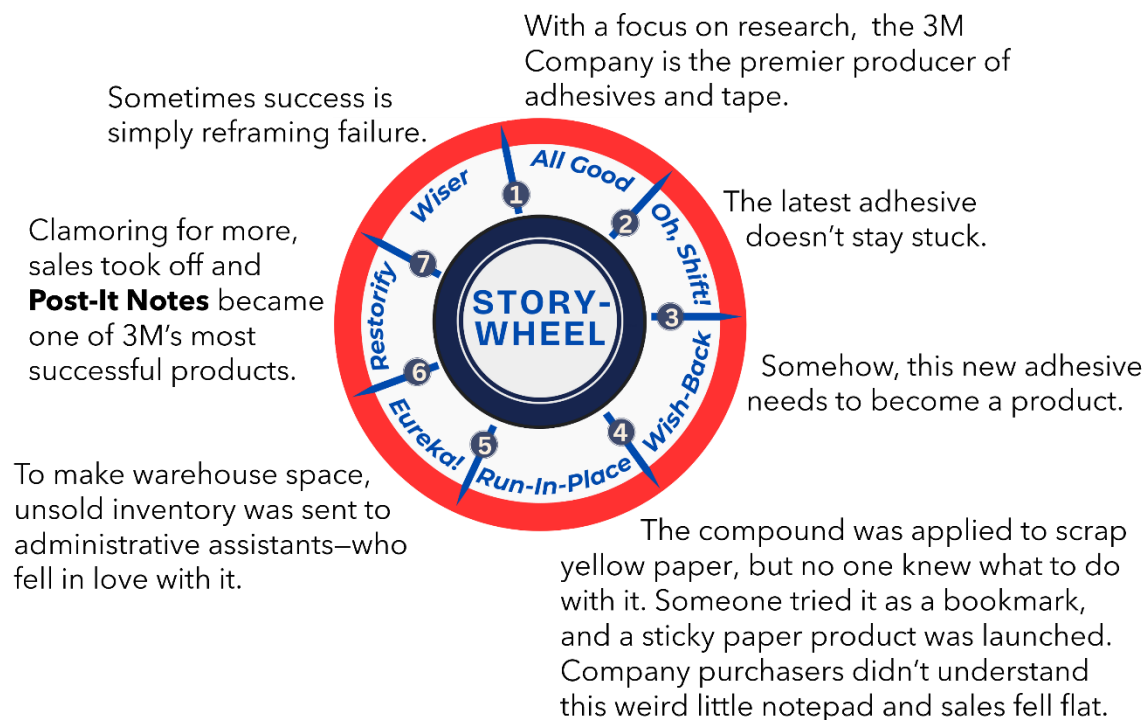


Post-it Notes, the yellow paper pad that sticks, has been called 3M's most successful failure. It began as an adhesive misstep: the glue that didn't stay stuck. Almost as an afterthought, the compound was applied to leftover yellow paper. But that experiment languished as no one knew what to do with it. Then, the idea of a sticky bookmark took hold, and the product was launched. Although corporate purchasing agents understood paper clips, they didn't understand this weird little notepad. Sales fell flat.

It's a tale of tactics, that is, conventional approaches that fail: a weak adhesive, a solution in search of a problem, and moribund sales channels. It's about *Running in Place*

And then, the unexpected insight: With too much inventory, 3M cleared out stocks by giving it away to administrative assistants. *Eureka!* They fell in love with the product and clamored for more. By engaging end-users first, success is achieved.

Today, Post-it notes are one of 3M's most successful products with widespread popularity.



Case Study | Water Alarm

Finding an unexpected insight, the *Eureka!* moment, can be challenging. It's not always apparent and often hidden. Sometimes, it's hiding in plain sight and only needs a small shift in viewpoint to see.

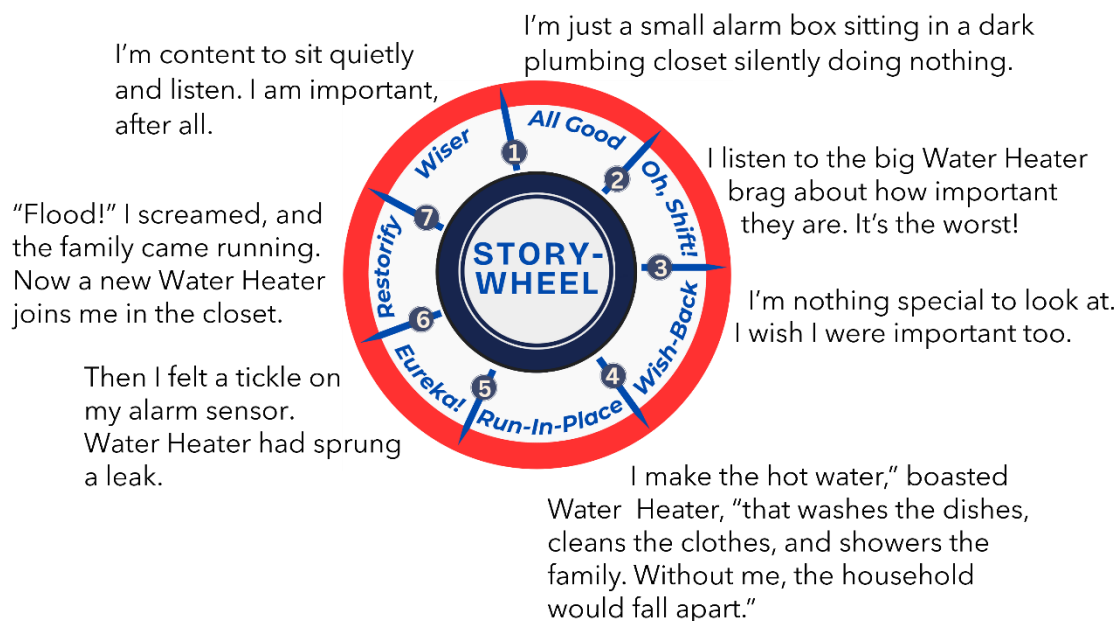
I teach copywriting classes. One morning, a student became stuck on their product story. Why? His product was just a non-descript box that sat in a dark closet next to a water heater. It didn't do anything. That is, unless it detected water. Then, a loud alarm went off. I asked him to write a story from the box's perspective and the resulting story was magical, something like this...

I'm just a small alarm box sitting in a dark plumbing closet silently doing nothing. I listen to the big Water Heater brag about how important they are. It's the worst! I'm nothing special to look at. I wish I were important too.

"I make the hot water," boasted Water Heater, "that washes the dishes, cleans the clothes, and showers the family. Without me, the household would fall apart."

Then I felt a tickle on my alarm sensor. Water Heater had sprung a leak. "Flood!" I screamed, and the family came running. Now a new Water Heater joins me in the closet.

I'm content to sit quietly and listen. I am important, after all.



Case Study | The Listerine Legacy #2

While the success of a product can be told as a marketing case study (Listerine #1), it can also be told as a business case study.



One hundred and thirty years ago, no one had bad breath. It's true. The small chemical company Lambert manufactured Listerine—a cleaning solution that killed bacteria. Doctors disinfected their exam rooms with it. But the market was limited, and no amount of advertising and salesmanship grew profits.

Listerine is a great product containing natural ingredients that's safe to use. In fact, you can drink it without ill effects. (Although it tastes awful). It's especially effective at removing an odor-producing bacterium that thrives in the mouth. In a leap of unexpected insight, Lambert Chemical reframed this natural odor as “Halitosis” and promoted it as a source of social embarrassment. Fortunately, Listerine offered the necessary solution. The awful taste was refocused as a benefit. Today, the mouthwash industry is a billion-dollar concern.

Listerine started as a cleaning solution for doctor offices until the *Eureka!* insight created bad-smelling mouths. Today, Listerine mouthwash fights the scourge of bad breath (thereby solving customers' *Oh, Shift!*).

Listerine creates a billion-dollar mouthwash industry.

Through relentless marketing, “Halitosis”—a medical-sound term—is everyone's problem only solved by Listerine mouthwash.

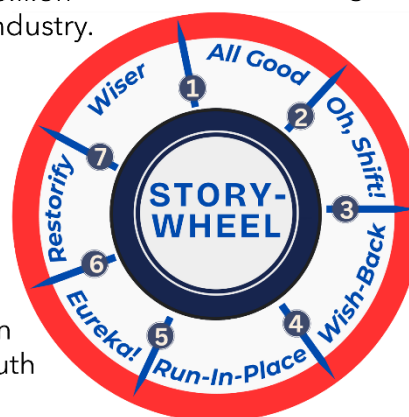
Their antiseptic solution kills bacteria in the mouth that out-gasses. “Bad-breath” is invented along with a ready-made answer.

In 1879, a small chemical company produced a cleaning solution for doctors' offices. Benign, it's safe enough to drink.

But stagnant sales meant the company was in trouble.

It must grow or die.

More salespeople, expanded advertising, and bigger discounts, failed to increase profits.



Case Study | Zoom

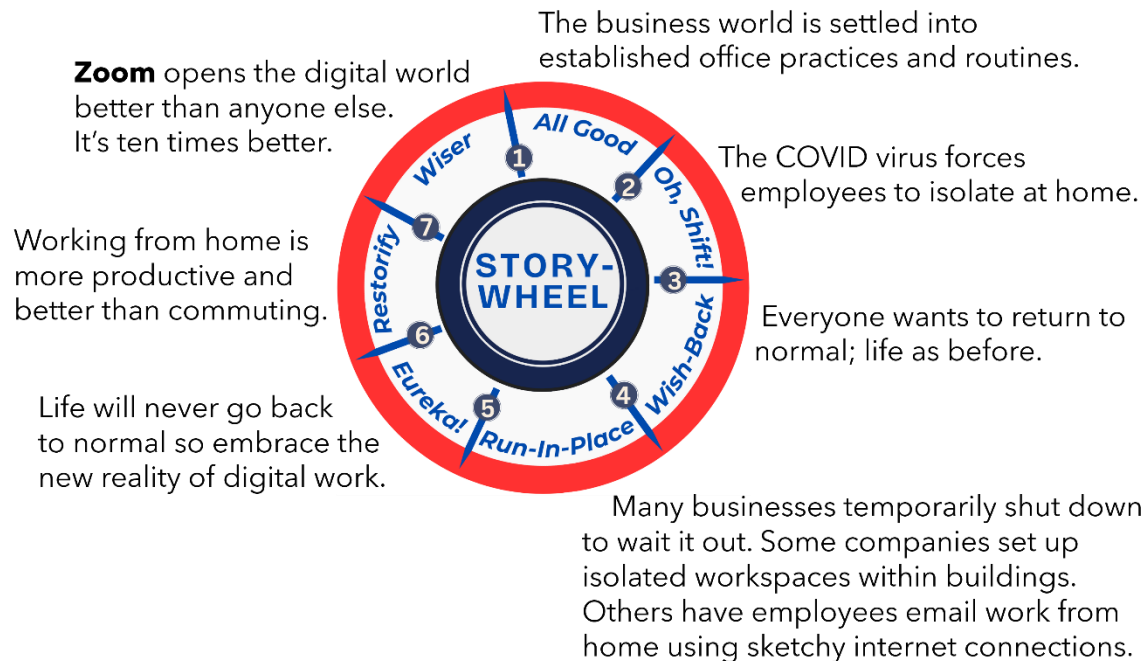


The video conferencing application Zoom has become prominent, popular, and pervasive. In fact, *Zoom* is now a verb meaning to communicate with video online. But it's not the first software to do this and certainly not the last. Why has it taken hold?

It's the first to deliver video conferencing several degrees better than competitors. The platform is stable with crisp video and audio as well as a user-friendly interface. On many levels, Zoom works without the need for a degree in computer science.

When the COVID-19 Pandemic forced people to shelter-in-place, Zoom allowed a path to work from home and stay connected to the outside world. The other platforms struggled to keep up.

There's a concept in marketing called *Ten Times Better*. This means that customers assign a cost to switching to a new product. The benefit of that switch needs to greatly outweigh the cost. As a salesperson, your *Restorify* isn't merely a "good as" your rival, or even "better than," but an ascension to a vastly superior outcome.



Case Study | Chevrolet

Post-War America experienced unbridled optimism and prosperity. Automobiles became a popular *must have* for every family. Roads were built at a breakneck pace in response; paved US Highways crisscrossed the country. However, cars were mainly used for errands around town and sales flattened. Advertising, yearly redesigns, and mechanical improvements did little. In a *Eureka!* breakthrough, automobile manufacturers investigated ways to speed up the purchase cycle, that is, how to make the product wear out faster to sell replacements.



Encourage more driving, as Chevrolet did with “See the U.S.A. ...” It’s an aspirational story in which the audience sees themselves participating. Wouldn’t you want to visit exotic places, leaving your cares behind, in the safety of your own backyard?

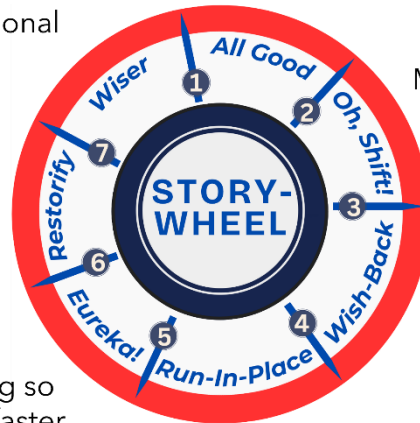
“... in your Chevrolet” is the *Lesson* that puts the customer into the scenario and makes the product essential to the completion of the story. A customer internalizes the *Wiser* belief “I need to see America, so I need this reliable car.”

...In Your Chevrolet means traveling smart in personal comfort that’s reliable.

See the U.S.A. ... advertising campaign encourages exploring by automobile.

Create more driving so that cars wear out faster.

In Post-War America, the buying public embraces the automobile for everyday errands.



Manufacturers experience a major sales slump as those who want a car have a car.

Automakers need to recreate the good times of growth.

Advertising budgets are increased.
Radical design changes are introduced.
Engines get bigger.

The story informs and aligns the additional visual elements such as the binoculars, highway sign, historical marker, and the panorama of the open country and mountains. There’s also a secondary story, “See your local Chevrolet dealer” which inextricably pairs the adventure story with the outfitter who makes it possible. As a final touch, the ad is in the shape of a license plate further reinforcing the story with a tangible automobile.



Whatever you want, you can get it from Amazon. The selection is hugely huge—12 million individual product offering to start. Add in Marketplace sellers and that number expands to more than 353 million. Anything you can imagine and a lot you can't is just one wish away.

Is it easy to buy from Amazon? Too easy, some say. One-click purchasing, fast delivery, and easy returns. Prime introduced 2-Day delivery which soon became Next Day delivery. Now, Same Day delivery is no longer unusual. Watch the skies for Drone delivery—coming soon.

But... Amazon's business is *not* selling products. The business model is really getting you what you want as easily (and quickly) as possible. There's a concept in retailing known as *buying friction*. It means difficulties encountered by the customer while purchasing. It encompasses the process from decision-making to paying to getting to using. Amazon recognizes that removing friction results in a better customer experience. And that translates directly into repeat sales.

According to a recent survey, people trust their money with Amazon more than they trust their bank. Why? The customer experience at a bank can be confusing, overwhelming, and intimidating. The customer experience at Amazon is clear, simple, and dependable. That trust engendered by buying toothbrushes transfers to unrelated areas. In practice, Amazon has become the default habit. That's pure gold to any company.

Remember, we don't sell a product or service; we sell the adoption of an idea. The sale follows as a matter of course. The adopted idea is that you can count on Amazon. Wiser's *Lesson* is trust.





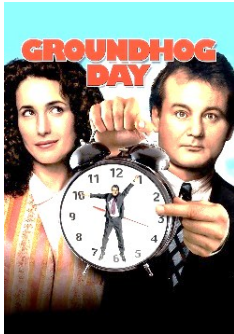
Type 2 Diabetes. Over 38 million people in the U.S. suffer from it. The disease impacts your body's insulin production and causes high blood sugar levels. In response to this epidemic, drug company Novo Nordisk developed semaglutide widely known as Ozempic.

The initial marketing campaign emphasized reduction of a patient's A1C level to under 7%. Game changer, right? Unfortunately, patients had to suffer through the side-effect of significant weight loss. *Wait, what?* In a new, revised campaign, the weight-loss side-effect became the selling point and sales exploded. (The treatment of Type 2 Diabetes is a secondary benefit.) Seeing a good thing, Novo Nordisk introduced a formulation specifically for weight-loss: Wegovy.

A powerful patient story lies within scientific data. It might go something like this:



Case Study | **Groundhog Day Movie**

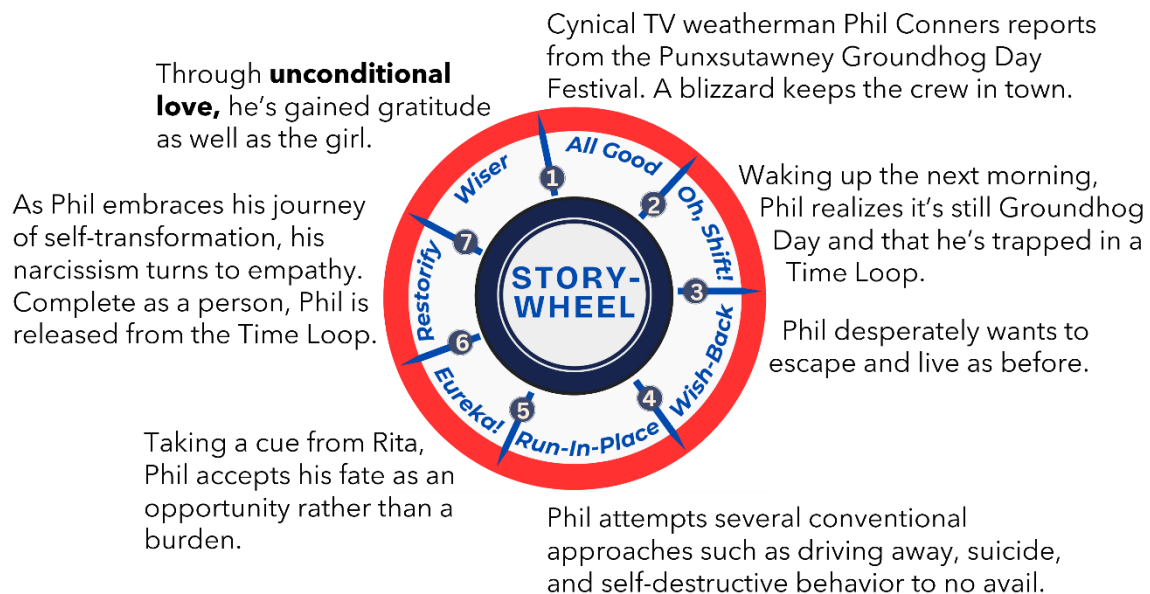


In this classic comedy film, cynical TV weatherman Phil Conners (Bill Murray) reports from the Punxsutawney Groundhog Day Festival. Then, he becomes trapped in a time loop and relives February 2nd over and over again. At first resistant, he eventually accepts his fate and embraces personal growth. Once his self-centeredness transforms into empathy for others, he is freed. The core story is generalized as context—complication—resolution.

However, there's more layers within. The Story-Wheel introduces motivation and transformation. Phil Conner's reporting assignment sets the *All Good...* Context while the time loop is Phil's own personal *Oh, Shift!* complication that changes everything. Phil's *Wish-Back* desire to escape his fate drives the forward momentum of his adventure. He tries several tactics as he attempts conventional approaches that ultimately fail (such as exiting town and suicide) leaving him *Running In Place*.

Then Rita Hanson (Andie McDowell) offers an unexpected insight: "Sometimes I wish I had a thousand lifetimes. I don't know, Phil. Maybe it's *not* a curse. Just depends on how you look at it." *Eureka!*

Phil accepts his lot and engages in a journey of personal growth. Eventually, he *Restorifies* himself by evolving into a complete human being and is released from the time loop. With *Wiser's* attitude of gratitude—and the girl—he's learned the lesson: love unconditionally.



Case Study | My Personal Mission



It's been said that salespeople sell themselves first and the product second. A story that reveals who you are, your values, and commitment to your customer's success goes a long way in establishing trust. This is my story:

In a long career of telling stories, my proudest moment came creating a PBS documentary during the earliest days of the AIDS epidemic. The prevailing view of victims was negative and homophobic. We wanted to change that.

We interviewed researchers, politicians, and doctors. Our show began to look like every other TV news story.

Instead of going big, we went small. By documenting the lives, struggles, and aspirations of Shaun, Bobby, and Cleve, we revealed AIDS/HIV sufferers and caregivers as real people in real pain. We influenced public perception and sparked a change in attitude and media coverage. Those People went on to win an Emmy.

Ever since, my personal mission has been to champion storytelling because of the way it can change how people think, feel, and act.

You'll see versions of this story throughout my marketing content. My personal mission is the guiding principle that informs everything I do. It's honest, authentic, and you know that I'm completely committed to empowering you as a storyteller.

Let's deconstruct my story. Notice that some spokes are condensed while others are expanded. In your own story, exercise your best judgment for flow and balance.

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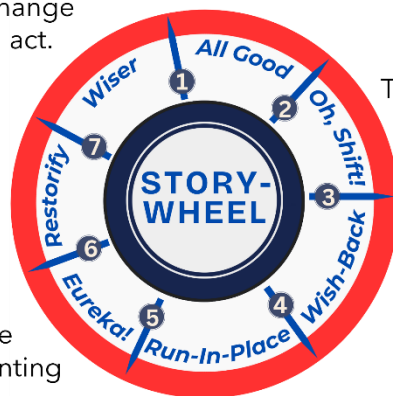
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Let's chat! | Brad Cochran

Changing the conversation through undeniable storytelling. Story Coach, Copywriter, Author, Speaker/Trainer, and Communication Professional.

[LinkedIn/IN/BradCochrane](#). Brad@twominutesale.com www.storyfirstspeaker.com

Workshop | Sell Under Pressure

“They’re ready for you.”

You’ve waited hours, weeks, and even months just for this one appointment; your chance to pitch your product and you’re ready. You stride into their office, desk piled high with paperwork. The prospect looks up and snaps, “Make it quick!” So, you speed through features before being ushered out. The conversation is over before it begins.

How’s that working for you?

Think of your investment in marketing, funneling, and sheer persistence needed just to get one-on-one time with a prospective buyer. And it’s all been wasted. What if you could turn it around so they ask, *can you tell me more?* Instead of racing the countdown clock, you’ve earned more moments for a real sales conversation. It’s about winning the first two minutes—rare and short—that happen quickly and are gone. Saying the right thing at the right time makes the difference between a pass and a purchase. That’s effective selling. That’s performing under pressure.

Curiosity may have killed the cat but for humans it’s an essential survival characteristic; it’s hardwired into us. When entering a new environment, our brain goes on alert looking for danger or opportunity. The moment a customer identifies a sales environment, they subconsciously ask seven questions.

The program is organized around the *ECLIPSE Sales Stratagem*™ which provides those answers before they’re even asked.

Start here at www.TwoMinuteSale.com.

Workshop | Copy Selling Secrets

Is your copywriting a monologue? A one-way dump of product features? Or are you engaging your customer by conveying ideas in unexpected ways that surprise, stimulate, and validate?

If you tell someone a fact, you’ll trigger two parts of their brain. If you engage the brain’s natural processes, you’ll trigger seven. As a professional who wants to influence how people think, feel, and act, would you rather lead facts or something more?

In truth, people make decisions emotionally and then seek out the facts to support their decision. It’s a novel approach that competitors miss.

Writing well is a skill that you can learn. But just as a football player lifts weights to build strength, you’ll need to stretch your creative muscles. Learning how to contour elevates your writing to a whole new level. Release your creativity as you develop writing skills. Follow the path to effective copy selling by enrolling in the exclusive *Copy Selling Secrets Workshop*.

Start here at www.TwoMinuteSale.com.

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