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Inspiration and ideas come from all around us. The ability to integrate new thoughts and make the strategy + communications + leadership link helps companies and executives alike elevate their performance.

Because it's challenging at the top, [The Aerie Company](#) offers you useful and thought provoking ideas to help you soar to new heights. Enjoy these latest insights.



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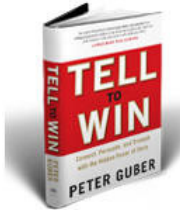


## Everyone Loves a Story

Just because you have the data and can prove that you are right doesn't mean people listen to you. Don't get me wrong, proof is critical but a data dump hardly warms your listeners' hearts, feet and wallets to follow you.

A few years back I recall the frustration of an incredibly smart data analytics executive who'd often fret "if I could only get an hour with the client or the analysts, they would understand!" When he did get up to bat he'd spend hours preparing his slides chock full of stats and graphs and then deliver a dry presentation that typically left his audience glassy-eyed. While he thought the data would give him the homerun, he missed making a connection with audience and thus frequently struck out.

What he needed was a good story to capture his audience. We tell stories everyday about who we are, why we're here, to teach from experience, share our vision, try to show value in action or to let people know we know what they are thinking. Both in business and personal life there is power in a narrative approach that engages people so they pay closer attention, absorb more information and are far more likely to grasp your point. Storytelling builds that audience connection, showing your humanity, helping you gain trust and command attention.



Business executive entertainment mogul and UCLA professor [Peter Guber](#) calls it emotional transportation – the complex system of action and reaction that operates with a story to move your audience emotionally to your call to action. My former colleague and many others could benefit from Guber's insights (his new book is [Tell To Win](#)) on how to transform ideas to action by listening, preparing and using facts to tell the right story to the right audience.

Everyone needs to learn how to tell a good story. Effective advertisers know this and so do successful leaders, but sometimes even they miss the mark. As you continue to refine your market leadership position, consider these tips on how better stories can help you articulate and communicate your value and persuade your audience.

- **Define your goal** – What action(s) are you trying to get your audience to take? Do you want them to rally together to overcome a challenge, follow you through a business transformation, invest in your cause, engage in your community, or buy your product/service? Equally important to your goal is getting the audience to win, act on and tell your story forward.
- **Know your audience** – Demonstrate your interest in their needs rather than just having a desire to be interesting. Consider how their "back" stories (interests, career and personal journeys) may



impact your approach. Celebrated journalist Anderson Cooper has said that even if your only goal is to get the audience to hear you, you have to find ways to move their emotions and connect with them.

- **Shape your pitch** – Telling a story is an interactive process that should benefit both the teller and listener. To ignite your call to action remember that purposeful stories include a challenge, struggle and resolution. Be clear about who's the hero - customer/audience, product, location, you, others. Align interests so you turn *me* into *we*. Avoid "moral of the story" closings and instead ask the audience what they think and you'll get to their "aha" moment.
- **Sources of inspiration** – Ideas can come from anywhere. Consider a variety of rich avenues such as books, movies, myths, popular culture headlines and history. Legacy stories are powerful and enduring, but often your personal experience is the best raw material. Sometimes a single image or word may be all you need to illustrate your point. Never underestimate the pull of a story when it is artfully told.
- **The "Tell"** – An audience of one or many expects an experience so carefully plan your delivery. Emotion is all in the telling (I'm currently a sucker for the [rising from the ashes story](#) that Chrysler is now telling linking the auto giant, Detroit and Eminem). Props, technological tools, music, visuals, and body language support the telling. Ensure it's a dialogue not a monologue and be ready to improvise when the situation calls for it.

So make what you do and say more memorable. Unleash the storyteller within and remember that a story is a living, evolving thing that will and should change depending on the audience. Beyond selling your initial idea, real success is when your audience adopts the story, retells it and continues sharing the experience.

If you need some assistance with your story, we'd be happy to help you identify, articulate and communicate your unique value. Just contact us at [The Aerie Company](#).

## New Links

*Links to help you communicate more effectively.*

Is part of your story about appreciation? Learn more about [The Note Project](#), a global movement to make the world a million times better by inspiring people to share notes of appreciation.

*See our website at [www.aeriecompany.com](http://www.aeriecompany.com) for more links.*

## About The Aerie Company

**Because it's challenging at the top.** The Aerie Company collaborates with organizations and executives to identify, articulate and communicate their value.

For more information on how we can help you build market leadership that demonstrates your distinctive benefits and communications impact, visit our website or contact us at [info@aeriecompany.com](mailto:info@aeriecompany.com).



*Suzanne Starr*

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