



## Connect and Influence

### How to Tell Your Story with Confidence and Authenticity

By Ty Bennett

You have a company you believe in and products you love. You've made your contact list and you're ready to start making calls. But what are you going to say?

I started network marketing when I was just twenty-one. I was talking to people every day, but none of them were joining my business, and neither were they buying my products. Turned out it wasn't just a numbers game, like I'd heard; I was doing the numbers and it still wasn't working. Why not? Because I wasn't able to communicate in a way that *moved* people.

The turning point came when I recognized that the most important skill for success in network marketing is learning how to tell your story with authenticity and confidence.

Instead of quitting, I decided to buckle down and learn how to tell my story in a compelling way. Over the next several years, I continued to improve my storytelling—with ever-increasing results.

Here are three keys to help you tell your story with confidence and authenticity.

#### **1) Create a Struggle-to-Solution Story**

Just as a well-built house needs a blueprint before construction begins, a great story needs one, too. One powerful blueprint is "struggle to solution." Think about any popular fairy tale; they all fall into this pattern. The hero must overcome a struggle or conflict, and in the process he or she learns lessons and becomes victorious.

The struggle is the "hook" with which you capture your listeners. Without the struggle, the solution isn't nearly as powerful.

To find your struggle, ask yourself, "When I joined the business, what was I attempting to relieve or fix in my life?"

Perhaps you wanted to make more money, have more time, lose weight, or create your own schedule. Pain is what leads us to change, and pain was probably what led you to consider network marketing as a side business or career.

Imagine John just joined a network marketing company and is calling his best friend, Matt, to introduce him to the business.

*John:* "Hey Matt, do you have a minute to talk?"

*Matt:* "Sure, what's up?"

*John:* "You know me pretty well, right? Over the last couple of years, I've had different jobs and I've hated most of them. They weren't taking me anywhere; they were just paying the bills. I want more than just getting by! Do you ever feel like that?"

*Matt:* "Sure I do."

*John:* "Well, I found a business I'm going to start on the side. I really think it has a lot of potential and wanted to share this with you because I'd love you to be a part of it. What would you say we get together so I can show it to you and get your opinion?"

*Matt:* "Sounds good. I'm open this afternoon, does that work?"

The key to John's story was that he matched his struggle to Matt's pain. When John offered his solution, it made sense to Matt and he wanted to learn more.

## **2) Make It Conversational**

When you're sharing your story with prospects, your purpose is to engage them. Without engagement, there is no influence.

To engage people more powerfully, we must move from giving sales presentations to having sales conversations. A sales presentation, by definition, is a monologue, while a sales conversation is a dialogue. If you want to make it about *them*, then you have to include them.

We've all done this: we give a presentation (a monologue) and at the end we ask, "Do you have any questions?" There is nothing engaging about that model, because *you* are doing all the talking. There needs to be interaction, questions, talking and listening. A great storyteller is first a great story listener.

The way we do sales has changed. Arm-twisting and high-pressure approaches no longer work. In today's world, selling is about influencing and moving people.

*Push* strategies turn people off and drive them away, and they are the exact opposite of engagement: grabbing their attention and getting them involved.

The reason stories are an influencer's best friend is that they are the ultimate *pull* strategy. A pull strategy is about attraction, and stories naturally draw people in, causing them to listen, learn, and respond.

### **3) Balance Being Credible and Relatable**

To engage your listener, you need to be both credible and relatable. If your prospect doesn't believe you, she won't care. If she can't relate to you, she won't respond.

As a young entrepreneur I often sat in front of people who seemed to enjoy talking to me but would never follow my lead or buy my products. I had to face the fact that I wasn't credible in their eyes, so my message didn't carry any weight.

Once I overcame this, I started to have success and I encountered the opposite problem: people would listen to my presentation and say, "I can tell you are going to do great things, I just can't see myself doing this."

I had become credible—but now people couldn't relate to my story.

It's a balance. You need to be relatable so you connect, but at the same time be credible so your message has clout.

Credibility is something you build through who you are, what you know, what you have accomplished, and how you communicate. When you share your story with confidence, you build credibility with your prospects.

Being relatable comes from being real and authentic. Speaking in a conversational tone will make you more relatable than presenting yourself as an expert.

No one wants to feel they're being talked *to*; people want you to talk *with* them. *Communication* shares a linguistic root with the word *common*. A great communicator establishes common ground with others so that they make a connection.

When you learn how to share your story with confidence and authenticity, you will connect *and* influence, and your message will become magnetic.

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