

STORIFYING EVENTS

IN-PERSON
AND VIRTUAL

CHRIS SEAN NOLAN
SHAWN CALLAHAN
DOUG KEELEY

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Table Of Contents

Part One: Necessity is the Mother of Invention	7
So, Why Are Virtual Events Outperforming Live Events?	10
What Can Events Learn from Netflix?	11
Video is King. And It Has Rules.	13
Why Every Event Should Tell A Story:	14
From Theater to a TV Show	15
Raiders of the Lost Art	16
Key Benefits of a Storified Event:	17
Three Levels of Storified Events:	19
#1. The Indie	20
#2. The Documentary	22
#3. The Blockbuster	24
Google "Adapt or Die" Events	25
Pop Up Magazine "Graphic Novel" Case Study Story	26
Mastering The Momentum	27
Part 2: Story. Speaker. Show.	28
The Story	29
Pre-Event Creative Story Strategy	29
Tell the Story of Your Strategy	30
Strategic Goals and Themes:	31
StorySpotting & Story Content Mapping.	33
StorySpotting Steps:	34
Types of Produced Video Stories and Narrative Elements	35
Interactive Elements	36
Earning Attention Every 10 Minutes	37
Designing the Show: Story Content Mapping.	38

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

The Speaker	39
Big Choices on Small Screens:	40
The Eyes	41
The Face	42
Vocal Contrast	43
Camera Fright	44
Telling The Story	45
The Show:	46
Event Execution: Promotion, Broadcast and Technical Considerations	46
Broadcast and Technical Considerations	47
Sets in a Box	48
Virtual Direction	48
Post Event Execution	49
Types of Storified events	49
Reinventing the Classroom:	50
Ready to Storify Your Event?	51

Part One: Necessity is the Mother of Invention



"In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity." – Albert Einstein

The world has changed. The "new" normal, post COVID, will impact society in perhaps the most powerful ways in centuries. And few social traditions have been impacted as fully as events. Digital disruption has turned the event world upside down. Change is no longer an option. It's survival.


And yet, throughout these most challenging times, innovation is thriving in the experiential marketplace.

Corporate summits, industry conferences, product launches, trade shows, expos and university courses have pivoted to virtual faster than ever before: Google Cloud Next 2020 was live-streamed to more than 30,000 people. IBM's Think conference went digital. Music venues and film festivals are converted their onsite plans into virtual events. And, universities are adapting in-person to virtual classes.

Once upon a time, digital events were anomalies. Sort of like the underdog of the industry. Well, as this ebook will show, the underdog has quickly become a superhero. COVID-19 has greatly accelerated the digital revolution. The lockdown has modified the way audience's experience events and there will be no going back to the status quo.

Event creators, and their sponsors, have discovered that broadcast events deliver more value, global audiences and greater profits than in-person events. They have seen the virtual event gravy train and are proactively looking to understand how prosper in this digital revolution.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual



CHRIS NOLAN
chris@90000Feet.com
90,000 Feet Studios

SHAWN CALLAHAN
shawn@anecdote.com
Anecdote

DOUG KEELEY
doug@storiesrule.ca
Stories Rule!

TOP STORY EXPERTS

The three authors of this book, Chris Nolan, Shawn Callahan and Doug Keeley, have spent a life time creating stories for the brands, organizations, associations, C-suite executives, event creators and thought-leaders. There's perhaps no team on the planet that knows more about putting stories to work.

And, we have joined forces to help you embrace the new realities of the event world and seize the extraordinary opportunities and possibilities at hand.

This shift from traditional events to broadcast is not without demands. It calls for a re-imagining of events' structures and story strategies. For instance, there are more narrative expectations for a broadcast. So events should be structured more like a TV program.

As we'll learn in this ebook, live experiences can't simply be repackaged for a broadcast medium. And a homemade webinar may be acceptable experience for now, but not the future.

We are also living in a defining moment for brands, business, events and the world. A time of radical change, disruption, organizational and economic shifts, and social movement.

There never been a more important time to communicate "where we are" and "where we need to go". There's no question that these unpredictable times call for more strategic story thinking.

Amidst uncertainty, storytelling is invaluable to leadership to boost morale, transcend doubt and despair, rally confidence and courage, and jumpstart optimism and action.

And our team has a proven track record for finding exactly the right stories for the right situation for thousands of organizations and individuals. And our intention is to kick start your event with story strategies that give your event vision and impact. And make it more motivating and memorable.

To that effect, we'll help you create an overall story strategy, a narrative arc and video content for your event (what we call big "S" stories) and also help your speakers tell stories (what we call small "s" stories).

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

And, we also offer scalable storified event approaches from simple, easy-to-apply frameworks to more sophisticated broadcast models with cinematic content.

But, no matter what the scope or platform of your event, in-person or digital broadcast, this ebook is a toolbox to infinitely more powerful, engaging, valuable, influential and persuasive communication that boosts revenue as well as performance.

We believe this new normal for events is about bigger opportunities and possibilities: Bigger stories, goals, audiences and success. And to help you with that quest, we offer a collective 70 years of business storytelling know-how, working with enterprises and events of all sizes and all industries.

Chris is the CEO of the 90,000 Feet content studios and a multiple Emmy-winning writer-director with decades of brand marketing and storytelling experience, event expertise and award-winning production know-how.

Shawn is a best-selling author on Business Storytelling and CEO of Anecdote, the world leader in Business Storytelling training.

Doug is CEO & Chief Storyteller of Stories Rule! and the creator, producer, host, or storyteller at thousands of conferences.

On this short storified journey, we share key strategies, structures, insights, tactics, tips and secrets to make event creators think like storytellers and act like TV producers.

Okay, let's see how storifying events creates a must-attend, must-see broadcast experience.



Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

So, Why Are Virtual Events Outperforming Live Events?

Tech publisher VentureBeat's annual GameBeat Summit accounts for 50% of its revenue.

So a lot was riding on the digital broadcast of GameBeat Summit 2020. But it proved that a virtual event can be more effective, valuable and profitable than its in-person version.

VentureBeat also found a virtual format has more ways to track the impressions that sponsors made on the audience. At in-person events, it's hard to estimate the number of people who saw a sponsor's banner.

The event was so successful that GameBeat decided to expand the virtual summit into a series.

Events everywhere are rapidly embracing how successful, valuable and profitable virtual events are.

They accommodate more attendees: Virtual events significantly reduce barriers to entry, eliminating travel expenses and time restrictions, greatly expanding reach, lead generation, marketing exposure, income and Evergreen assets.

Lower overhead costs: There's no on-site staging or planing costs or big hotel, food or beverages contracts or large staff expenditures. Some events are increasing profits 30-50%.

Virtual is not just the current new normal, It's the new business opportunity.

What this newfound digital success means is — the future event world is going to be more digitally driven. More events will be digital-first, or go hybrid, becoming both in-person and virtual.

As we combine the reach of digital with the engagement of the live stage, events will need to make the on-location and on-computer experience work better together.

To create better on-line experiences, events need to re-examine their programs for a broadcast audience.

That means rethinking how events can be delivered for maximized engagement, attention and retention on streaming and video platforms.

And that means identifying what techniques, elements and processes are necessary to create TV quality programming in the Netflix era.

So why not find out how Netflix can help us.

BENEFITS OF VIRTUAL

THERE ARE MANY ADVANTAGES TO AN ONLINE EVENT

- GREATER PROFITABILITY**
No on-site planning costs, hotel event rooms, meals, flights, etc.
- ON DEMAND VIEWING**
Reach a much wider audience with Evergreen content and greater viewing convenience.
- GLOBAL REACH**
Less costly barriers to entry for attendees, more flexibility and lead generation.

What Can Events Learn from Netflix?



One of the main takeaways in the Netflix Era is: It's not about short attention spans or the shortest content, it's about innovative storytelling strategies. So, how can events take a page from the Netflix playbook?

#1. Storytelling: Why do we consume stories or shows? You might say it's to escape life. But actually, we are watching shows to understand life. We watch for stories that are relevant to us. Netflix is a master at understanding audiences and individualizing stories just for you. So we can't wait for what will come next.

That's what stories have done ever since humankind painted tales of epic hunts on cave walls 17,000 years ago. Stories were the torches in the dark places that lit the way to a better future for our ancestors. We are hardwired for stories. Humans created to make sense of the world around us. To organize information. And to pass that information on to others.

Stories give us resilience and show us how to face the worst circumstances and the greatest hardships. How to survive and thrive. Stories show us how to be a hero. A hero to ourselves and the world.

#2. Deeper Themes: Netflix stories tackle large universal themes. Themes that get beneath the surface, explore human truths and ask big, essential questions. Big themes grab attention and have bigger impact.

#3. Highly Emotional Experiences: Highly emotional content evokes empathy, compassion and creates deeper human connection. Through mirror neurons in the brain, we actually identify with the main character and even the message of the story. We can't get enough of this narrative.

Stories are the most powerful vehicles to persuade an audience. Because they identify with your story.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

**It don't mean a thing,
if it ain't got that feelin'**



Whether you want to transform an industry, launch a product, train new employees or present a new vision in a speech, you need to take your audience on an emotional journey from **"what is"** to **"what could be."**

And the best way to convince people to move from their current situation to "what could be", to adopt or adapt to your theme/product/brand or to change their behavior or mind, is to sway emotions with stories.

A story that resonates with us releases hormones called oxytocin (also known as a "love hormone") that evokes feelings of trust, compassion, and empathy. The human brain processes facts and stories differently. Stories engage the entire brain and all five senses. Facts engage two areas.

As marketing guru Seth Godin says, *"People do not buy goods and services. They buy relations, stories and magic."*

#4. Vulnerability and Bravery: Don't be afraid to be real. Real people have real problems. The deepest, most honest, revealing stories about real life, both the good and the bad, are the most powerful. They show real authentic emotions. Netflix tells brave, real world stories that used to be off-limits.

Yet many organizations forget about the power of stories. Somehow thinking they are too "woo woo" or perhaps too Hollywood. But what makes people stand around around the water cooler — virtual or otherwise — and share what they've seen or heard, isn't the latest spreadsheet. It's always a story.

Netflix reminds us if we present an audience with great stories, they stop checking their text messages and email. We lock in their long-attention spans. That's right, stories expand attention spans.

Of course, bottom line, whether it's Netflix, a YouTube video or an event, in order for us to watch broadcast content, it must be well done, and follow certain storytelling rules that continuously engage our attention.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Video is King. And It Has Rules.



With smartphones now in the hands of nearly everyone in the United States and 5.5 billion people globally, video is making digital consumption more and more dominant every day.

Video now rules as the planet's most influential and effective communications tool.

The average person spends 100 minutes every day watching online videos. And video conveys even complex information quickly: 1 minute of video equals 1.8 million words.

And even though stories expand attention spans — there are rules to video storytelling.

Cognitive scientists tells us that to hold attention in a video presentation, you need to continually earn or re-set engagement, attention and participation.

Which again is why storytelling is so important.

Because that's exactly what stories are designed to do – continually earn or re-set engagement, attention and participation.

But as we move from theater to digital, we can't ignore that virtual is a video. And, no matter the medium, platform or genre, the expectations for a video are ruthless.

You can't just take a live format and record it and think that you have a program worth watching.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Why Every Event Should Tell A Story:



Today, experience is the new economy. For brands, on-line publishers, and event creators, digital events are no longer a second cousin.

And as the battlefield for attendees rapidly shifts to the digital platform and broadcast-style programs for hybrid events — winning will be based on the quality of people's digital experience.

Which means events need to hyper-accelerate innovation.

Actually, many in-person conferences can be really more big screens than big ideas.

A ballroom stage filled with snazzy set-dressing, jumbotron monitors, moody lighting, flashing lasers, and blasting music can be a physical rush. But the glossy exterior may not have a mentally stimulating core. The spectacle lacks a cohesive theme or message. And the experience is all meringue and no pie.

Plus, all that theatrical staging is wasted on a computer screen. We can't see the knock-out decorations in the lobby or the glittering balls hanging from the ceiling or be immersed in the booming sound system.

Truth is, most events sorely underutilize the power of storytelling. You may sit patiently through an in-person event that's as boring as high school science class. After all, you travelled to get there. And maybe they have really great snacks. But a digital event is a whole other story.

And, as events become hybrid, we need to consider how to keep both live and virtual audiences engaged on two different mediums without it feeling like two separate events. So how do we that?

Focus on more storytelling and switch from Theater to a TV Show.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

From Theater to a TV Show



Today, people experience broadcast events in a myriad of places and multiple devices. Smartphones on the sidewalk, tablets on trains, and laptops in bedrooms.

But no matter how or where they watch, their expectations have been shaped by entertainment.

And, obviously, a broadcast virtual event that's just an extended webinar of talking heads droning on and on while switch back and forth to a powerpoint is not exactly Netflix!

For a viewer, it's life-sucking monotony and an invitation to either jump out a window or tune out. Just drift away from the computer screen, check email, texts, social feeds, pet the dog, feed the fish, or maybe click the channel to Netflix. At home, there are a zillion distractions.

Statistics show that 65% of the on-line audience is multitasking.

As Marshall McLuhan, the father of modern communication said, "the medium is the message". And the message here is — it's a broadcast. Online you don't have the same captive audience sitting in a theater. Bore people online for a New York minute and they're gone in a nano-second.

So, how do you keep an audience viewing a digital event as engaged as a Netflix show – for an hour or ninety minutes or a full day or binge watch three to four days on a small screen?

Well, aspiring to create programming as compelling as a TV show requires some know how. First, it takes understanding how to discover and develop stories. And also mastering storytelling skills to hold, sustain and expand attention spans. And, since master storytelling is what we do, let's get to it.

Raiders of the Lost Art



Most speakers, at most conferences, share opinions, viewpoints, arguments, and data but no stories.

Sadly, these speakers are mostly forgettable and miss the opportunity to engage and inspire their audience.

We attended a big conference recently. The first speaker had the all the glitz and glam and gave a 30-minute opener.

He was followed by Simon Sinek who told a simple story about a barista. That night at the conference dinner the first speaker was forgotten. Simon's story was retold and discussed.

Why let storytelling be a lost art or opportunity. We can help you or your speakers find stories that audiences will treasure. We'll coach you or them how to tell them with confidence and impact.

Some of the stories may even be about data. We'll help transform dashboards and charts into riveting insights and anecdotes. We'll turn geek into human-speak.

These stories will help you or your speakers connect with audiences to inspire action, explain a new strategy or show why change is happening. They'll identify their character and passion.

Once your speakers have right stories in their pocket, you ensure that the audience understands and feels what they are talking about, so their message sticks and supports your theme or goals.

Finding and telling stories is like unearthing pure gold for your event.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Key Benefits of a Storified Event:

Okay, so let's look at the long list of reasons why every event should tell a story.

1. LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGIC STORYTELLING

To illuminate the path forward or influence change or get people to take a leap with you, you need to turn your idea into action, galvanize audiences and create a movement. And harnessing the power of story at every stage of your event is the most, powerful, persuasive communication tool to do just that.

- Storified Events engage our senses, emotionally charge ideas, themes, speeches, insights and messaging to accelerate understanding, vision, motivation, decision-making and action.
- They bridge now and the future, opening minds and hearts to see new possibilities.
- Make human connections: Build loyalty, trust and deeper relationship with audiences.
- Provide strategic narratives that keep your message on target and goals on track.
- They communicate identity and true character, allowing leaders to be more convincing, persuasive and authentic.
- Find meaning in dense subject matter, or geeky technology, communicate complex concepts and data. Stories signal problems with opportunities and solutions
- They reinforce your or your organization's "why", purpose, mission, values and messages.

Whether it's a big "S" story that shows us the big picture or small "s" personal story, nothing moves your business, your industry or the world forward more effectively than the right story.

2. STRUCTURAL STICKINESS

Narrative structure is a simple framework that dramatically elevates your desires and goals. By wrapping an event in an emotionally charged narrative, a package of stories, the entire event, as well as the stories within it, are more likely to be remembered, talked about, gain traction or action for your objectives.

- Storified Events make messages stick. You remember what you see or hear.
- Give your venue and messaging structure, consistency and cohesiveness, so you avoid people's trying to piece together "what you're trying to say"
- It clearly articulates the event's strategic goals, both big "S" and small "s" stories, at every stage of the venue to maximize engagement, attention and recall.
- Storified Events differentiate your brand and make you stand out in a sea of events,

3. DIGITAL BROADCASTING

Much of this ebook is dedicated to discussing the advantages and opportunities of live events becoming more like TV shows. Even after the pandemic, the future of events is on-demand and broadcast.

As brands truly embrace broadcasting events, they will become hybrid, both in-person and broadcast. and benefit from the advantages of digital reach and on-demand, worldwide engagement.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

But as we've discussed, to create these experiences, brands will need to re-examine their event executions and content and ensure that it fits with the audience and the medium.

One of the key benefits of digital is rich data and analytics that it can provide. enhance the customer journey and overall experience.

And you can expect new innovative executions that kluge live and pre-recorded sessions. And more storified narratives and content segments that engage audiences on-stage and on-screen

Here's a recap of the benefits a Storified digital broadcast.

- On demand access to a worldwide audiences, increasing branding, marketing and message exposure to a variety of audience demographics
- Story-driven content and speeches go beyond a single live moment and can be re-broadcast on-demand, across social channels and other platforms, creating a library of content.
- Storified events, both in-person and virtual. add value and better audiences experiences.
- Storified Events create event differentiation.
- Attendees can watch at lower barriers to entrance at their convenience.
- Stand-alone digital events are more profitable than in-person counterparts.
- Digital events are rich in data and analytics. Sponsors and brands can track impressions, optimizing sponsorship or branding opportunities.
- Hybrid executions allow simultaneous engagement with audiences on-location and on-line.

Okay, so now let's look at a range of Storified Events and some examples of the opportunities.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Three Levels of Storified Events:

At this point, you might be wondering, exactly how can you leverage the power of storytelling in your events?

The good news is, no matter what the scope or size of your event, there's a scalable option for you.

There's actually a smorgasbord of possibilities for Storifying Events. From a simple storified options to more robust opportunities and executions. It all depends on your goals. Do you just need help with overall event story strategy and adding more speaker stories? Or do you have bigger marketing or branding needs or objectives. Are you interested in broadcasting "Evergreen" programming?

So the three tiers presented here are just a jumping off point. Examples and best practices of the range of event possibilities. It also give you an idea of the range of Storified services that we can provide,

Of course, the basic approach is simpler and easier to execute because it has fewer elements that contribute to the higher levels of engagement that make a broadcast event really stand out or significantly improve your audience's attention, retention and experience.

The higher tiers are conceived much more like TV shows. They have blocks of video content, incorporate a greater variety of types of Big "s" and small "s" stories and higher production values that allow them to be re-broadcast as on-demand programming. And give your event more of the gotta-watch Netflix touch

Of course, a big factor is budget. But, the good new is a digital event is not only less expensive than in-person but provides access to more attendees. Allowing smaller organizations to get into event game, achieve a worldwide presence and revenues.

Another consideration is branding. In today's competitive event climate, every enterprise needs to think of itself as a brand. And storytelling is vital for powerful branding and experiential marketing.

The more robust approaches differentiate your brand and make you stand out in a sea of events. They make all the difference between just a meeting that meets expectations – and one that exceeds them.

Beyond COVID, as more brands, companies, industries embrace the idea of digital events, and the benefits of global reach and profits, expect to see more versions of storified events.

What's more, emerging technology will enable events to innovate and create even more and more, mind-blowing storified executions and experiences.

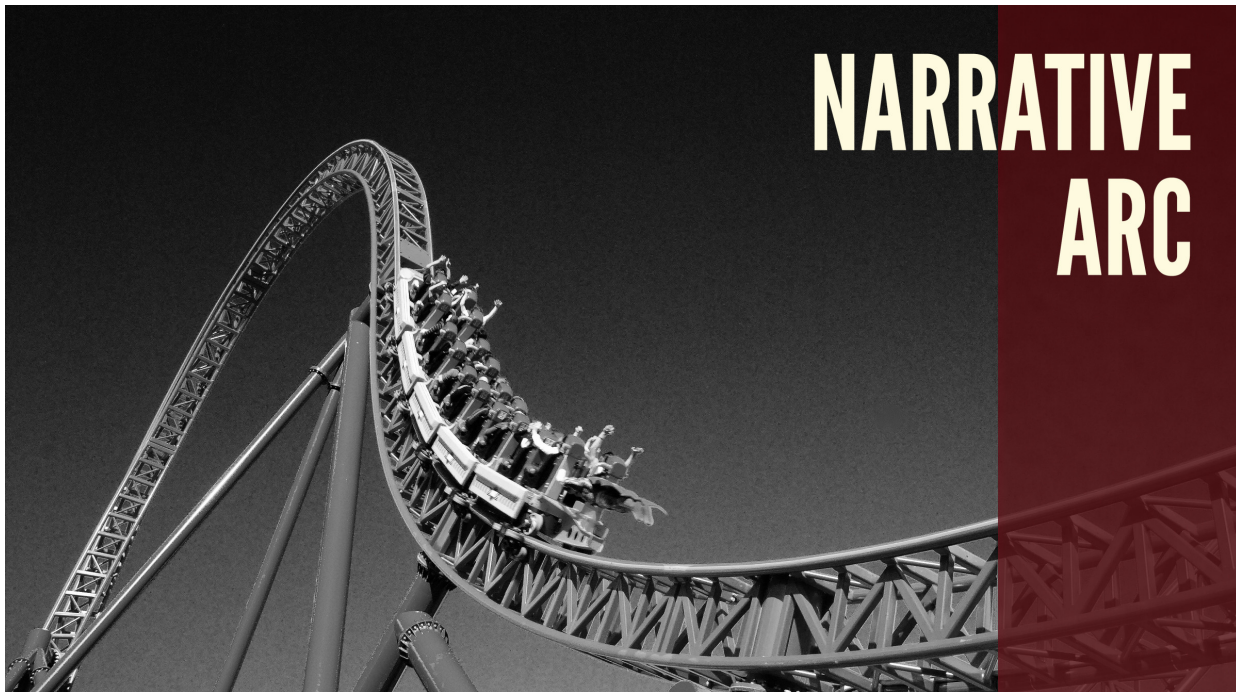
So next let's look at our step by step processes that you can use to innovate and pivot any event, even a Zoom webinar, from boring, cookie-cutter virtual meeting to an edge of your seat, unforgettable experience.

We've divided these steps into three levels: Indie, Documentary and Blockbuster

But first, let's start with the basics.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

#1. The Indie



Let's say you have an existing agenda for your event, a line-up of speakers, break-out sessions, workshops, yet you want to amplify the performance of your event, build more emotional connection or trust or bonds with your audience. You want a more memorable, unforgettable experience!

Well, the single most important thing to help achieve that is: storifying your existing format.

How do you do that?

The Pauley Pavilion fundraising campaign was the largest in history of the University of California, Los Angeles. The world-famous arena was almost 50 years old and sorely in need of a face-lift.

The goal was to raise 250 million. In this case, various types events would be a cornerstone of the effort, as well as broadcast TV, interstitials played at UCLA games, content marketing and direct sales

There were a long list of reasons why the venue desperately needed an upgrade. And, a long list of incredible civic leaders, and UCLA players that could endorse why it was a necessary cause.

But, instead of just lists and endorsements, we suggested a story strategy that included a big "S" story and small "s" stories that created a deeper, emotional connection to Pauley. **In essence, this was an Indie strategy that could storify any existing event, with different speakers, no matter what the agenda.**

The storified strategy gave each event a narrative thread. It was a "change story" narrative supported by a big "S" story, a seven minute homage to Pauley, John Wooden and the legendary players that played there, as well as, eight three minute individual small "s" stories told by UCLA sports icons

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

We captured and craft these personal stories, and then turn them into pre-recorded video content.

We worked with the players as they told their first encounters with Pauley, some reflected on their favorite moments. Others told of their experiences with Coach Wooden. Some of them teared up as they spoke.

Coach Wooden said, " I had many fine things happen in my life, but when I saw Pauley, it was manna from heaven."

The result of all these stories was phenomenal. The UCLA Associate Athletic director told us that many donors cried after viewing the stories, and immediately took out their checkbooks. The storified approach was directly attributed to raising more than 80 million dollars for the pavilion.

Whether it's helping you craft big "S" stories or helping speakers find and tell small "s" personal stories, there are many ways to give your event a basic Indie storified narrative. And when we talk about a narrative, we're referring to the classic definition of the word: A collection stories with a unified theme.

Without a narrative, you can skip the necessary steps for people to agree with what you say. With a narrative, you guide people to know exactly what you want them to do, feel and act. And, you strategically address or counter any conflict, doubt or resistance.

By storifying an event, you hack an audience's decision making process. Science tells us stories make people identify with the story's point. So they make messages memorable, engaging and inspire action

The powerful, transformative process is driven by a narrative arc with a beginning, middle and an end.

1. **BEGINNING:** Introduce the characters, current situation, the future desire and goal
2. **MIDDLE:** The tension between obstacles and the goal. The middle grapples with doubt and resistance. This is where you attack the challenges from multiple vantage points
3. **END:** The obstacles are overcome and the audience is changed and transformed.

So if you want to simply give your event and all your speakers more focus – with a simple narrative arc, a unified theme, plus speaker stories – the Indie approach is an easy way to give any event more impact!

In addition, the Indie approach can be tailored for galvanizing internal motivation or external branding experiences. This may involve some pre-event creative story strategies. It could be charting a new course forward, driving change or offered a vision of the future and how to defeat the obstacles, etc. We highlight a full list in the pages ahead.

And it's all supported by personal stories. Such as when Howard Schultz tells the stories of his life to communicate the values of the company.

The next Storified tiers build on the foundational elements of this basic Indie approach — a narrative arc, theme, and story strategies — but add much more big "S" and small "s" storytelling horsepower.

Let's take a look.

#2. The Documentary



Like most live event organizers, the creators of the Vision 2020 Veteran's Conference perceived virtual events as mostly low-quality Zoom meetings with talking heads and threads of chat feeds.

But, given the social distancing circumstances of 2020, the Vision 2020 in-person conference in a large ballroom with 1000 attendees needed a new virtual vision. They turned to us for help.

The Vision 2020 team was aware of our storytelling capabilities as we had created successful brand storytelling films for a Veteran start-up in partnership with Walmart. It featured powerful veteran stories.

How could they create a virtual event that had high-quality production, powerful storytelling and delivered real value and impact for their attendees while attracting a wider, digital audience?

To accomplish their goal, they needed a broadcast quality program. We told them about the documentary approach. Documentaries are classic examples of narratives: A collection of all types of various stories united by an over-arching theme and a narrator.

The documentary approach boost interests in almost any subject matter. It allows Ken Burns to turn 14-hours of dense history into a gripping, binge-able TV experience with fifteen million viewers.

We took them through the narrative process: Since documentaries have sequences and varied blocks of content, we showed them inspiring, exciting examples of types of possible video executions that add variety and keep engagement and attention peaked. We provide a list of these options on page 28.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

One of the hallmarks of a Ken Burns documentary is how almost every speaker has a memorable story. These stories keep the audience wanting more stories.

So we showed them how we could work with their existing line up of speakers and magnify their impact and emotional connection by helping them find and tell stories that supported the theme and narrative.

We explain how a narrator is key elements of a documentary. A narrator connects the dots, clarifies the storyline and underscores the messaging. They also add stories, insights and perspective.

The result of our work was a phenomenal "90-minute" program that would blow away their live event.

There would be a mix of several types of pre-recorded story-driven videos broken into story segments, a live narrator, pre-recorded broadcast content along with some interactive segments. And more small "s" speaker stories and anecdotes interspersed throughout the broadcast.

It's also important to note that we consulted on the overall story strategy for this event, not just the individual components.

Story Strategy in Uncertain Times

Given that the coronavirus pandemic is a crisis unlike any other in recent times, perhaps the greatest challenge that the United States has faced since World War II, we also looked at Vision 2020's overall story strategy. The original narrative and theme was "Living on Purpose".

And, we determined that this time of VUCA, Vision 2020 needed a different vision.

What's VUCA? V.U.C.A. is a military term, short for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity. VUCA has also become a leadership and managerial term used in business, education, government and individually.

So the new story strategy and narrative became: **VUCA: How military strategy gives us a vision for America in crisis, chaos and confusion**. This also expanded our audience beyond just Veterans.

During times of crisis, chaos and confusion, leadership, management and all communication with audiences is even more difficult. Making a case for change or a way forward can meet with even more doubt or resistance. So relevant narratives and themes, as well as deft storytelling, are crucial for success.

It's another benefit to strategically storifying your event.

A narrative gives you a forward-leaning framework that provides the antithesis to VUCA: Vision, Understanding, Clarity, and Adaptability.

A story gives us a road map for change, even when there are no roads.

Stories counter resistance and empower action. They create scenarios for change, transformation and positive future outcomes.

We'll talk more about how we provide overall story strategy consultation in the pages ahead, as well as the many types of story strategy goals and planning.

#3. The Blockbuster



Stories take you on an adventure. Why not get creative and apply a storytelling journey to your event? And, let your participants discover themselves in your story and become part of your bigger story.

The way you tell your story energizes your participants; so why not have fun with it! And let them have fun as your showcase your event, product or brand in a unique, cool, exciting way.

Like in all great stories and great branding to do something outstanding, differentiate yourself from the pack and make an impact, you have to go out of your comfort zone and push the envelope.

In place of its in-person event, IMEX Group launched PlanetIMEX an eye-catching virtual world, which featured a series of 3-D "islands" built by Storyscape 3D, a 3d storyteller that brings complex brand stories to life. Adam Sloyer, CEO of Sequence Events in New York, said "Attendees need to see a value prop to attend a virtual event, and then also be compelled to stay". How did they do that?

By raising the virtual bar to a big picture Storified Event, you create an exceptional experiences that blow away attendee expectations, increase engagement, attention, social buzz and industry PR.

This big picture approach employs all the elements of the first two tiers, but turbocharges the big "S" and small "s" content, and weaves the super power of storytelling into every component of your event.

Many times, it's a more filmic, even cinematic approach with long form content that can rival film or TV show concepts and executions. It delivers epic experiences and the utmost messaging impact and memorability as well as extending an event's on-demand shelf life. It's events meet Netflix.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Google "Adapt or Die" Events

Application Programming Interface is a software intermediary that allows applications to talk to each other

API's, for short, are not exactly a sexy or cool topic.

"We needed to take geeky technology like APIs and turn it into a compelling story. Not the easiest task. But Chris and go,000 Feet uses storytelling to make even the most complicated subject accessible. Chris combines storytelling, content marketing, film production, and storifying events into a complete package. He helped us with all aspects of story generation, creation and execution."

– Anurag Wadehra, Director, Global Marketing for Industries, Google

Cloud

The little known fact is: API's are the secret engine of apps and one of the main drivers of digital disruption. With ever present disruption, you can either "Adapt or Die".

Hmmm, "Adapt or Die" sounds like the title to a Bond movie. Right? And, the perfect theme for an event focused on disruption.

The event's goal was to get a non-technical audience to relate to API's and understand in these rapidly changing times that playing it safe in business is the riskiest game of all.

What if we made a female API's engineer the hero of a "Bond-like" spy thriller and turned geeky API technology into a romantic adventure movie that takes place on the exotic beaches and jungles of Tulum, Mexico? That's sexy and cool. Right?

What better way to make technical subject matter relatable to a non-technical audience and give the peril and promise of digital disruption intrigue and suspense. While we reveal the unknown premise that everyday we are living with API's that are changing our lives — and we don't even realize it.

And the reality is, in this low touch, high tech, data-dump world, only a story has the unique ability to engage, entertain and enthrall while weaving in complex terminology. Stories give real world, emotional, human connections to factoids and information.

And that's exactly what we did for Google's API division's worldwide summit. We storified it.

And we anchored the narrative with the tentpole centerpiece films. 10 minute spy thrillers about characters in mysterious, suspenseful, action-packed adventures.



Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

The films and Storified Summits were such a hit and so popular globally with API engineers and audiences, they became a film franchise called "The Adapt or Die Files".

The tent pole "Adapt or Die" films perfectly set up the theme and central question of the summit and told the story behind API's and disruption in a highly entertaining, world-class, cinematic fashion. Pre-event trailers and movie posters for film created intrigue and anticipation for the summits.

Through storytelling, the audience understood why API's mattered to them. Why the status quo needs to change. The conflicts, challenges, as well as the dire consequences of not adapting to API's. All told through an empathetic main character who represented the audience. They were rooting for her and API's.

We continued to bring the story to life throughout the event by creating a variety of content.

In all, we created over 20 story-driven videos from executive stories to case study stories to employee stories, music videos and behind the scenes movies.



Everything was aligned with the "Adapt or Die" narrative, including small "s" personal stories, panels, even interactive workshops.

The "Adapt or Die" events showcased leading-edge technology and delivered unprecedented levels of content-rich, narrative storytelling on how businesses can leverage APIs to adapt and thrive in today's rapidly evolving digital world.

The films had red carpet premiers and

were shown in movie theaters.

If you'd like to know more about this big picture event or how one can work for you, let us know.

Pop Up Magazine "Graphic Novel" Case Study Story

Pop-Up Magazine's live tours cross major North American cities are a curated performance of comedians, filmmakers, dancers and artists telling 10 different stories, all while feeding off the energy of the crowd.

But, when the plug was pulled on the Pop-Up On-Line Magazine live tour, their standard live event playbook of the past 11 years was thrown out the window.

To keep their storytelling front and center, when Pop-Up launched its first digital broadcast, they decided to create a storified video edition. A fifty-minute program of pre-recorded, edited content.

The publisher and president Chas Edwards, calls it a "video graphic novel." The narrative featured several story segments told by individual authors. The concept was to create a movie-experience.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Edward added" The digital broadcast "allowed us to do some things that we can't do in a live show," Unlike our live shows, which take place in large cities, the video can be watched nearly anywhere.

Edwards said that the larger audience, on-demand aspect of video provided opportunities for membership and merchandise, which he said will help to diversify away from a complete dependence on sponsorship and ticket revenue.

And while the entrance fees for Pop-Up's broadcast issue were lower, the margins were higher without having to pay for the large theater venue and those associated costs.

Pop's Up's goal is also to get people who have never interacted with the brand to watch this virtual Storified Event and then ultimately buy a ticket to the live shows once those are back up and running.

Mastering The Momentum

Many events, in-person or virtual, have a gonzo opening video and then the creativity sort of dries up and disappears and so does the theme and storytelling – and most likely so does the audience's attention.



A top tier Storified Event keeps reinforcing the narrative by weaving in big "S" and small "s" stories.

It keeps the momentum going and the theme and message moving forward.

It keeps the message on track with narrator/moderator who becomes a consistent thread, always letting the audience know where they are in the story.

And, it uses a variety of story-driven content to modulate the emotional ups and downs in the narrative.

Variety is something every great dramatist, filmmaker, actor or speaker masters to keep the audience engaged. Without contrast, your content falls flat.

At this point, if your creative wheels are spinning and you're anxious to explore more groundbreaking, unique ways to weave the power of both big "S" and small "s" storytelling into every component of your event to create maximum impact and recall, we'd love to talk.

Together we'll and close the gap between your current reality and your event's utmost potential.

Okay, so now that we've looked at the strategic overview of Storified Events, let's jump into part 2 of this ebook, get tactical, and put these concepts into action.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Part 2: Story. Speaker. Show.

In part 2, we dive into some of our tactical processes, and share practical tips, tools and "how-to's" that contribute to a more impactful, memorable, successful in-person or virtual event.



Part 2 is divided into three sections: Where we take you through the creative journey of unlocking opportunity, putting ideas into motion and achieving event goals beyond your wildest imagination.

The path toward a Storified Event, and in-person or virtual success, requires not just a higher level of engagement, but new skill-sets, knowledge, technical solutions and tools to get your story right.

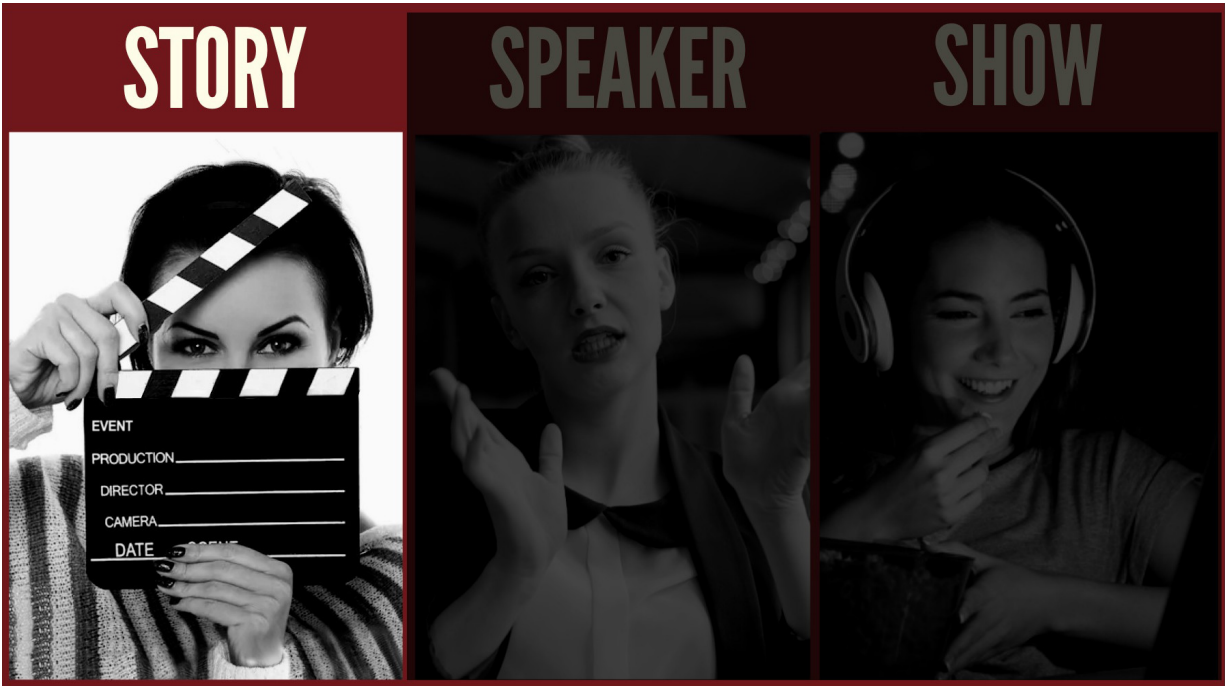
To that effect, we plug you into our Storifying methodology and provide answers, insights and knowledge.

- **Step 1 'STORY':** We nail down how to create and tell your story: Planning story strategies, goal-setting, themes, content mapping and Storyspotting, both big "S" and small "s", stories. Plus, we review types of video stories and creating blocks of content.
- **Step 2 'SPEAKER':** Speakers are the cornerstone of your event. We give some tips and techniques for super-charging on-camera delivery and contrast in their presentations.
- **Step 3 'SHOW':** Tips and technical considerations, tools, equipment suggestions for executing and broadcasting a seamless, powerful digital event.

Okay, let's roll up our sleeves and dive in. And see how being surrounded by storytelling experts and an Emmy Award winning content production studio can help you bring breakthrough events to life.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

The Story



Pre-Event Creative Story Strategy

Creating an event is a highly collaborative process. It calls for the strengths and talents of a unified team to build on ideas and bring to the project to life. Here's the initial creative process behind a Storified Event:

STORY STRATEGY AND RELEVANCE

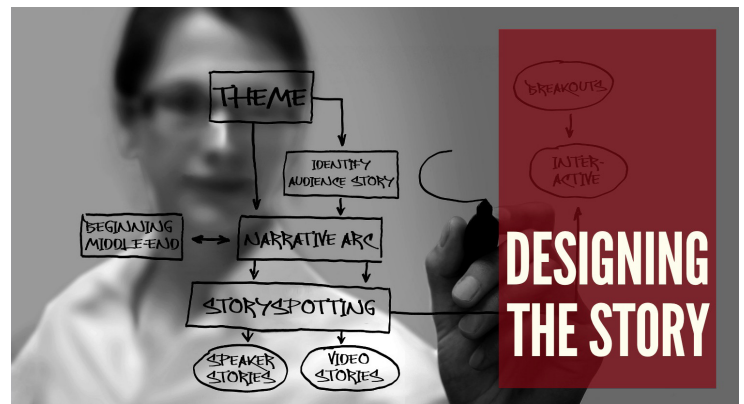
Discover what type of story is most appropriate to achieve your goals with your target audience

GOALS AND THEMES: Determine your goals and create a theme that .

STORY EVENT MODEL: Determine what narrative level, from basic to epic, accomplishes your goals.

CONTENT STORYSPOTTING: Assess storytelling assets. Existing stories and stories to be sourced.

CONTENT MAPPING: Map out how the story assets, various video content, speaker segments and interactive elements, build the narrative storyline.



Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Tell the Story of Your Strategy

Many people are unaware that there are many, many different types of types of organizational stories. They may be familiar with the founding story, vision story, value story, brand overview, customer stories, testimonials and various sales strategy stories.

As we mentioned, during times of significant chaos, crisis, uncertainty, challenges and risk, as well as fear, hardship and threats, specific types transformational stories need to be "storyspotted", designed and tailored for specific audiences and goals. Of course, every organization has different needs and goals.

So these stories could be to restore faith in the business or industry amidst a climate of fear. Or to seize the opportunity within change and disruption. Or clarify the road ahead?. Or remind people of your values and commitment to perseverance. Or to instill confidence in the company's ability to recover from difficulties.

These are some of the story choices that can take you from where you are to where you want to go.

VISION STORY: A great vision story is like lightning in a bottle. It can be the most important story you ever create. Vision stories create movements and can lift people off the floor of despair to standing ovations.

CHANGE STORY: This is a realization that there is a Next Normal. There are obstacles and challenges, but if they are overcome, there is a promised land. There is opportunity in change. Embrace it.

CLARITY STORY: This may be a more pragmatic storyline. It recognizes that some hardships and threats still exist. We are still in the downturn and clarifies what the path to success is.

FUTURE STORY: This story focuses more of long term ideas. It paints a picture of the future and lays out the roadmap to getting there.. It contrasts the benefits of this future world against consequences staying in the status quo. of Our "Adapt or Die" storyline was a future story.

RESPONSE STORY: This is more specific than the clarity story. It is usually directed at employees who need to understand specific decisions that the organization made or will be making.

STRATEGY STORY This is an omnibus story category that is usually designed around a project, product launch, sales pitch, marketing promotion or organizational initiative

VALUES STORY In times of uncertainty, reflecting on your core values is essential. Your "why" or purpose or human-oriented mission may be exactly the story that you need to revisit to reset optimism in your goals.

BARRIER STORY If you, your company or industry has overcome or persevere through barriers before, then this could be your theme or storyline.

DREAM STORY This is a version of the vision story. It is not based on future trends or market conditions, as much as a personal or collective consciousness. For instance. Martine Luther Kings "I have a dream" story. .

INSPIRATION STORY In times of uncertainty. you have to be aware not to be too kumbaya. But there may be a case, when resetting hope and human optimism is necessary. i.e. Barack Obama's "Hope" campaign.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Strategic Goals and Themes:



It's easy to get so focused on the onslaught of details on an event to-do list that you lose sight of the big picture: Your goal for hosting the event. The desired takeaway for your attendees. What do you stand for? What kind of future could your event help create? What kind of world do you want to build? What's stopping you from building it? What's your event's strategy, theme or message? What's its story?

And, no matter what your event, you have a story to tell.

Even in an in-person event, the downfall can be focusing on showmanship and fancy decorations to the detriment of a strong story strategy. Leaving the attendees literally wondering "What's the point here?" Others won't know if you don't.

Of course, we're referring to themes in terms of storytelling, not decor or setting. A theme is the spine of your event's narrative. It's the elevator pitch for your event.

Themes helps people instantly understand what your event is about and what you want to say.

Determining Your Goals and Theme

We approach event strategies, themes and messaging with the same focus as a marketing or branding campaign. The story strategy, theme and messaging is our promise to new prospects.

We ask key questions to get to the core of what your event story is all about.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

What do you want your audience to think, feel or do? What's the emotional takeaway? What value propositions do you want to instill with attendees? What do you hope they learn?

What's the purpose? Leadership? Sales? Marketing? Education?

And, then we brainstorm with you to create a core big "S" story strategy that encompasses your event's overall goals and objectives. We distill your goals or purpose into a unified, umbrella theme that becomes the connective thread that ties your event together.

If you're a brand, association, on-line publisher or industry event, the theme could be a reflection of an existing campaign, tagline, mission or positioning statement.

Or, perhaps, you have plans to create a stand alone theme for your event. Like, SXSW, Comic-Con, Salesforce's Dreamforce or Hubspot's INBOUND that have transcending their organizations and become brands with universal appeal.

In essence, the event story strategy, theme and messaging are how an event will be perceived by attendees and potential attendees. It's your WHY? Your purpose. And when done right, it's WHY people attend and WHY remember your event and share the content.

Inconsistency is the hobgoblin of small minds. And events.

Nothing undermines an event's goals, purpose, position, point or message like inconsistency. You don't want your event to be a patchwork of topics and unrelated speaker stories that don't relate to the larger purpose of the event. Not if you're trying to convince or convert an audience.

Whether you have a big idea that you want your audience to buy into, a behavior or mindset that you want to change or way of seeing the world differently, storytelling structure brings your goals to life.

A storified event helps your keynote participants and audience understand your objectives. It gives your story strategy, ideas, messaging and themes more focus, context, emotional impact and stickiness.

It helps you drive more powerful goals, themes and stories that can truly make a difference.

As we mentioned, much of Netflix's success is focusing on deeper, more universal, social and cultural themes. These themes attract larger audiences and provide a narrative for their emotional journey.

These are themes that connect to the audience and relate to their story. They address their goals, issues and challenges? They answer why your event matters to them.

What would Apple be without powerful themes? Or Nike. Or the Tesla, without Elon Musk's promises of a better, sustainable world?

Does your theme inform new ways of thinking, behaving? Or give your audience guidance, perspective, purpose or value? Does it add growth, success, or wisdom to their lives?

If it does, then your audience will participate as the main characters in your storyline.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

StorySpotting & Story Content Mapping.



Now, despite what some may say— storytelling isn't magic.

And when you want to find stories and themes, you don't need a luck or a genie's lamp? Because you already have more stories than you can imagine, You just to need to be shown where to look and how to shape stories to get powerful results!

So spotting powerful stories for an organization, individual or event is 100% possible for everyone.

So how do you find those really great stories. The ones that can make the difference between an event or speech that falls flat and one that soars. The ones that can transform your business or change the world.

The answer to that question is: **StorySpotting**.

StorySpotting is your secret weapon for storifying events. It's what we do for organizations like Disney, Google, Microsoft and IBM as well as thousands of B2B's, start-ups, small businesses and non-profits as well as individuals.

We spot both big "S" stories for brand storytelling, content marketing and event creation and small "s" stories for organizations, executives, thought leaders and speakers.

For events, it begins with a creative strategy planning: Spotting your ideal audience, spotting available story content and sourcing powerful story opportunities, as well as spotting what speaker or video stories are most relevant in each act of the narrative to move your audience emotionally.

Once you nail the StorySpotting, it allows you to map powerful content across your event's storyline.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

StorySpotting Steps:

The tactics and methods for discovering and developing stories vary for each organization and individual



Many of these steps apply to both Big "S" and small "s" storyspotting. With the exception that, Big "S" stories require extracting stories from within the event community, brand or enterprise. Small "s" stories mostly call for extracting and activating stories from personal experiences.

1. **StorySpotting Goals: StorySpotting Audience Audit:** Spot who you're telling the stories for? Spotlight their goals, desires, challenges (pain points, fears, obstacles, issues,) Influences, and questions. Their likes and dislikes. What's the emotional tone of your theme or event? What emotions do you want them to feel? Empowered, motivated, informed, happy, excited, supported? What would they find moving or funny. These insights help you source what types of stories would be more relevant and impactful to your audience.:
2. **StorySpotting Goals:** What's the emotional objective of the story. To make a point; build rapport and connection; explain a decision, change, or strategy; change a mind; and explain the value of what you do:
3. **StorySpotting Assets Audit:** Review your existing story content assets: For Big 'S' stories create a bank of type of stories you have (See story types below) Such as: Brand Videos, Case Study Stories, CEO stories, customer, testimonials, Look at any video content as possible stock footage or visual source material (b-roll, graphics, sound bites, music). Can you access other content rich videos? Do speaker have video footage for profile videos? For small "s" stories, ask your executives or speakers to check their personal story bank. Do they have a story that makes a point that's relevant to your event?
4. **StorySpotting Discovery and Development:** For big "S" stories. we source new story content and assets by digging into story leads. We reach out to internal and external story opportunities: sales teams, customers, prospects, your community, social media, etc. For small "s" personal stories we work directly with executives or speakers to prompt and extract relevant experiences, then we craft these stories or anecdotes and put them to work.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Types of Produced Video Stories and Narrative Elements

Remember, video has the highest response, engagement, and retention rates of all communication forms. So it's important to use a mix of different types of video assets to trigger attention and give your broadcast variety and contrast. Video production costs can also be minimal if you have existing assets or use stock footage, after effects or slide templates.

- 1. Teaser/Trailer (Story) Intro Video lists** This is one of the most important video assets. An opening video works just like a movie trailer to compress the theme and storyline into a condensed teaser that evokes curiosity, intrigue, anticipation, emotion, concern and tension. As psychologists tell us: Tension sustains attention. It sucks people in. It's also most likely going to be used in promotion and marketing. The trailer has a three-act structure. Start with a beginning (act 1) that lays out a human problem, a dilemma, an emotional hook. An empathic question to be answered. The middle (act 2) focuses on conflict, obstacles, a dark moment/climax. Act 3 teases the promise of your thematic premise and makes the audience wonder what happens.. The role of your event is to solve that problem.
- 2. Main Event Films** Tentpole Short films. Mini documentaries or featured narrative series
- 3 CEO/Executive Team Video** Premiering a video that shares the personal journey of your CEO or a event leader forms a stronger bonds with your audience
- 4. Speaker Intro Stories** Stir up excitement and add authority to your keynote speakers with background footage that tells a story.
- 5. Keynote speaker stories** Small "s" stories help executives and speakers connect with audiences to inspire action, explain a new strategy or show why change is happening.
- 6. Inspirational Videos** Videos stories that dramatize the theme and emotionally connect to your audience. They can be third party stories or even historical. Video based on stories from your community or employees. Great for recruitment. Team support. Boosts involvement for internal corporate employee events, as well as social media and marketing. Companies like Patagonia, REI, AirBnB. Marriott and Yeto Coolers have turned these stories into main event films.
- 8. Credibility stories** Case Study Stories, Real People Stories: Stories of people who have benefitted from from your offering. Or people who create or work on the product
- 9. Audience Stories** New item description
- 10. Brand Videos** Brand Overview Story, usually a combination of 3-4 storie
- 11. Product and Service Stories:** Great for trade shows and expos. From 3D virtual tours to product demonstrations and Back Stories.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

- 12. **Behind the Scenes** These videos pull back the curtain on your organization and your staff.
- 13. **Mission Statement Stories** Perfect wrap up stories. They emphasize your social leadership, the impact you're making on world and makes the audience care. These stories build love for your company.
- 14. **Live Stories** (Journalistic):Someone reporting on an event topic in real time
- 15. **Honoree Stories** Honors a thought leader or benefactor.

Some other suggestions are a "**Thank You/Closing Video**". A short clip from the event's founder or show-runner thanking attendees, and sponsors and exhibitors for attending and for their support.

Highlight or Recap Video: If it's an in-person or hybrid event, post-event footage that can shared with attendees via email or social media to keep the buzz going. It can also include user generated content showing an attendee's transformation by the event.

Interactive Elements

If it's a hybrid or live (real time) broadcast event add **INTERACTIVE VARIETY AND CONTRAST**

Get them involved with various types of participation. and keep the narrative thread going, align your interactive session with the storyline. And don't forget networking, even a pre-recorded event can feature interactive session through community sites like a Facebook Group.

Here's a look at interactive opportunities:

- 1. **Q&A Sessions, Polls, Surveys, Prizes** These segments provide valuable feedback.Video or animated slide transitions that set up sessions add interest and keep the narrative moving.
- 2. **Breakout sessions/ Workshops** Split a attendees into smaller groups and create focused discussions or hands-on activities around the central theme an narrative
- 3. **Panels/ Virtual Roundtables** Discussion led expertise that delivers different perspectives on the narrative
- 4. **Office Hours** Especially beneficial for virtual classroom and training, Helps attendees fully digest event content, eliminates feeling overwhelmed from a distance
- 5. **Networking** There are many opportunities for networking in a digital event to make meaningful connection with like-minded individuals, discuss topics and keep in touch post-event: Set up a private Facebook Group with social hashtags,, organize 1:1 virtual lunches, virtual cocktail hours and meet ups.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Earning Attention Every 10 Minutes



Cognitive scientists tell us audiences get bored after approximately ten minutes. In fact, at this point they actually stop listening to a presentation.

If the audience is online, that means they'll switch off the show or, if it's a recorded broadcast, they'll skim past uninteresting material or speakers and only watch interesting segments.

To counter this ten minute drop-off, again think like a TV producer. What does a TV Show do?

It hooks people on the whole program right off the bat and creates blocks of programming with a variety of content from start to finish. So this ten minute mark is a good guideline for Storified Events. Don't keep doing the same thing for more than 10 minutes. Shift gears. Give people variety and the unexpected.

That means breaking up the storyline with segments of programming. Developing different types of content and various types of story-driven videos. And waking people up with various types of story-driven videos, teasers, visual transitions, animation sequences, motion graphic slides, involving them in interactive 'Q & A's. Visually break up all the talking heads.

It also means "programming your speakers presentations" adding more stories that add variety and different perspectives. Keep the audience anticipating "what's next."

A recent example of content blocks is the GMS 1 World Summit's "Un-Summit". It went from live event to a full-on TV experience with two days-worth of programming. Featuring 17 TV segments — all scripted, filmed, edited content, produced and packaged into 7 programming episode blocks which were released in a series, allowing attendees to watch as soon as an episode aired, or later on-demand.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Designing the Show: Story Content Mapping.

Through StorySpotting, the narrative process becomes clearer. You have a game plan.

Now you've got an original show theme and spotted existing story assets and story content, so it's time to start designing a show and programming for your event..

Again, the approach this more like a TV producer than an event producer, creating blocks of programming with unique segment or episodes.

Next, you map how your story content work into the beginning, middle and end narrative structure.

Be sure to break up your event and give structural variety and emotional contrast to all your elements: Speakers, narrator, various types of videos and visual content, animations, visual effects and interactive sessions. Much of this material will go into trailers and coming-soon teasers and promo materials.

There's a whole range of digital graphic assets for a broadcast event that you may not have needed for an in-person event. And, once you've mapped story assets into your narrative and your event is on its feet, the really fun part begins – you can get creative and start to put your show on its feet.



- Develop a rough narrator script, outline, write in scene descriptions or create storyboards.
- Start development on various types of pre-recorded videos for each stage of three act narrative. (If you can't shoot material, research stock footage libraries. They are a great resource not just for clips, but sound effects, music tracks and After Effects templates.
- Design graphics elements for title cards, transitions, lower thirds. All the visual guideposts that'll make it easier for audiences to follow the storyline and digest and retain material
- Develop your branding themes, event name graphics and music stings. These will be used as corner bugs, headers or tails to visual elements.
- Determine what visual elements will support keynote speakers: Intercuts such as videos, motion graphic slides, title cards backgrounds, overlays, cutaways, lower thirds names and titles, etc.)

You'll be continually tightening the through-line of your event and filling in gaps.

The creative concept here is to create an aggregate effect that when you add up all the story elements, together they create story journey that *moves audience* and changes how people think, feel and act.

The Speaker



Again, it a TV Show, Not theater.

When we talk about storytelling at events, we mostly think of keynote speakers.

And, when storytelling is used across an entire event, from start to finish, it inspires speakers to participate more in the storytelling and incorporate more stories throughout the event.

Storified Events set speakers up for success by making sure their stories aren't tangential or unrelated to the theme. They understand how their stories relate back to the overall event message and make a point. Likewise, attendees understand how the story fits into the program. They get more meaning out of it.

Which is why great movies, TV shows and documentaries are irresistible. The storylines and themes are clear. You don't get lost or confused. There's no divergent or unrelated stories. Everything supports the narrative or theme. And one story builds on another.

The combination of a speakers, narrator/host, and an experienced director who all understand the overall storytelling vision and event's narrative creates a much richer experience for audiences.

Of course, a big shift for speakers in a broadcast is the way they deliver stories. It's not the same as theater where you use the stage and body language for emphasis. Moving right or left, up stage and down stage, pausing for dramatic effect. But, as well see, speakers can still make a big impact on a small screen,

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Big Choices on Small Screens:

They say body language is 55% of a speech.

Whew, so what does that mean if you're in a virtual broadcast literally locked into a chair?

You can barely move your head. You can't physically move your body, except for small hand gestures. Compared to speaking on a huge stage in a grand ballroom, it can feel very limiting to say the least.

However, in a broadcast, you can still make big choices.

As an experienced film director, Chris has worked with both professional actors, broadcasters, as well as corporate execs and real people on their on camera skills for over 20 years.

Most people, including keynoters, are not trained for on-camera delivery. It feels awkward and isolated.

They can't gauge, respond or feed off the energy in the room. In fact, there's zero feedback.

Studies on attention spans during speeches show the first lapses in audience attention happen within the first minute.

And that's when a speaker is on stage as massive jumbotron screens magnify their every move and booming PS systems amplify their every word.

Obviously, a broadcast calls for different storytelling skill-sets, techniques, and specific coaching and guidance and delivery tools.



Speaking directing to camera is even different from an interview where you're usually still talking to someone, many times off camera.

Layers of performance are different when you're are sitting.

You're more like a broadcaster.

You need to internally "feel" your material more, you need more internal energy, and different approaches to be persuasive, dramatize your story beats, make a point and deliver maximum impact

On camera, our eyes, and face, as well as voice, are where people tune into our emotions.

So let's take a quick look at how we look and sound on video.

The Eyes



In a close-up, we are drawn to the eyes. Which is why, when you're on computer or ipad, look at the green light, the camera. If you don't your eye-line is off. People can't see into your eyes. They can't read you.

What's the importance of being aware your eyes on a screen? As they say the eyes are the window to the soul. And, your eyes are always commenting on what your saying and feeling.

So, be aware of your emotions. Your Passion. Intensity .Enthusiasm. Smile with your eyes. But, again, keep it natural. People read micro eye-movement and reactions.

Be sure to make constant eye contact. Looking away from the camera is not just distracting, it can look like your disinterested. And, be wary of blinking too much, your eyes meandering to your desktop or drifting away as you talk. it weakens your delivery and persuasion.

So be aware of how your eyes look. Are they are too blasé or too heightened. You don't want to look bored or have crazy, Kramer-eyes like in a Seinfeld episode.

In video content, editorial cutaways to footage or motion graphics give impact to a close-up. Picture how Ken Burns intercuts within the storyteller's yarn to a wide shot or a medium shot. It provides variety, and contrast and breaks up the monotony of a talking head. Which is why, in a broadcast, you may need three times more cutaways than a stage presentation. .

If you are tell a story on camera, you are you making choices with both your eyes and facial expressions, so next let's take a look at our face.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

The Face



The smallest physically helps give emotional context to your storytelling. We can use our face to punctuate words in the same way we might use our hands.

Facial movements also comment on what you're saying. They can add a question mark, exclamation point, quotation marks, or a period to our speech. For instance, if your upper eyelids look droopy, it can send a message of fatigue or even sadness.

Lifting your brow or widening your eyes can bring focus to a point you're making. And raising your eyebrows too much, over-punctuates your words.

And telling a story with an unconscious unemotional face or slight grimace sends a message of boredom or inauthenticity. So you don't want "emotional leakage" in your face.

Again, the point here is to understand facial signals are culturally recognized. And any one of the seven universal emotions (anger, contempt, happy, sad, fear, surprise, disgust) will trigger changes in your appearance — in your eyes and all over your face.

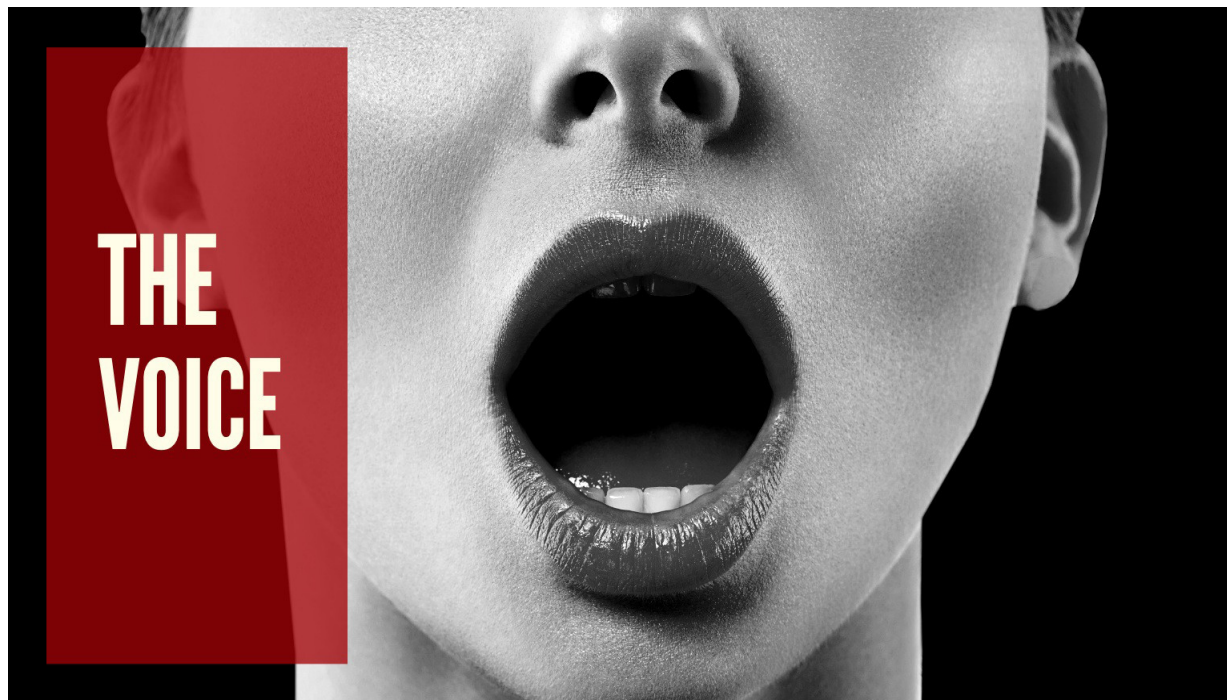
You can even minimize movement and relax your face so we are drawn to your eyes.

Look in a mirror or video tape yourself telling your stories. Perhaps you press your lips together or jut your jaw out slightly at the wrong moment. How do you look when you laugh or look sad?

Or better yet hire us.

Our team has both an experience film director and world-class speaker coaches to guide you.

Vocal Contrast



The best way to put your audience to sleep is to use the same cadence, vocal rhythm, pitch, tone, and gestures throughout your presentation.

People want deliberate contrast when you speak. So be conscious of your vocal pitch, tone, timing, transitions and inflections. Vocal contrast is a classic presentation tool of actors and keynote speakers

But you don't have to be a performer or entertainer.

Just speak passionately. Be energetic, conversational and be yourself. But make a transitions in your voice. This is especially true on camera when you are in a static situation. You can't move so you need to add as much vocal interest, energy and contrast to your speech.

A simple way to do this is to highlight areas in you speech for different emphasis. Where you can change your voice or tone. Speak softer or wit greater intensity. Slow down so people digest your words. Or speed up for action. You can add interior monologue, where we hear your hushed inner feeling during a scene. Or dialogue where you change your voice for different characters.

The more deliberate choices you make give a sense of drama to the story. So add pacing, pauses, change pitch, tone, intensity, projection, inflection, and tone. Go from laughter to conspiratorial whispers. Fierce to melodious. Staccato to measured.

Again, the key is not to over do-it, these are simply guidelines for breaking-up the monotone and look for contrast that keeps the excitement flowing and the story moving forward.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Camera Fright



The experience of staring straight at a camera, at that ominous tiny green light on your computer, can be nerve-wracking and anxiety provoking.

For some, even the thought of being on camera makes them freeze-up. Get flustered. And lose focus.

Even professional keynote speakers who rock 10,000 people in massive auditoriums can look stiff and unpolished on camera.

After all, on camera, there's no audience. No feedback. No applause. Just text messages and emojis.

Being on stage doesn't prepare you to know how to "play" to camera or understand the subtleties of relaxing on camera. So how do you relax and put energy and contrast into your eyes, face and voice?

Well, there are some tricks. If you're talking to a web camera, a good tip is to setup a picture of someone that you feel comfortable presenting to just above your webcam. Make sure it's in your eye-line,

Also, before you are on camera, yawn or shake yourself before you start your presentation. It relaxes your body, and your vocal chords. It can also make you talk lower so your sound is less hyped up.

Another tip is use your hands more and with purpose. When you're talking about "thinking" point to your head. When you say "from the heart" touch your heart.

The idea here is to get out of your head and into the moment. But if being on camera still freaks you out, we're here to help.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Telling The Story



The eyes, the face and vocal contrast all improve when you are telling a story. That's because when you share a story the speaker relives the experience and all the feeling they had during the original experience surges through them again in the retelling.

But there are some traps to avoid. The first is to avoid using the word 'story'.

Don't start by saying, "I would like to tell you a story." This put your audience off. They think it's made up or it's not business-like. Instead just launch into the story

"Three months ago ..." Be careful not to perform your story. Business people are not actors and any attempt to perform a story is guaranteed to flop. Instead recount the experience conversationally like you would in the workplace or down the pub.

Make your story visual. Zoom into specific scenes so your audience can see what's happening. Instead of just staying, for example, "we travelled to London and pitched the deal to their board". Zoom-in so we can see and feel it, "it was pouring rain as we landed in London. We pulled up to the Gherkin in our Black Cab and in 20 minutes we were on the 44th floor presenting to a very formal and grumpy-looking board."

Know your business point for each story you tell and preface your story with the point. Without knowing the point your story can easily go off the rails. So work out the point, which might be, "Small things can make a big difference" and say that before starting your story.

So you would say, "In my experience small things can make a big difference. Two years ago while in London..."

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

The Show:



Event Execution: Promotion, Broadcast and Technical Considerations

A Storified Event is especially beneficial to marketing as it gives you an array of video assets and materials for promotional to target potential attendees, create awareness and generate contact information event top of mind.

These can be used in a sequence of several follow up emails or text reminders or as content on your private Facebook group or networking community.

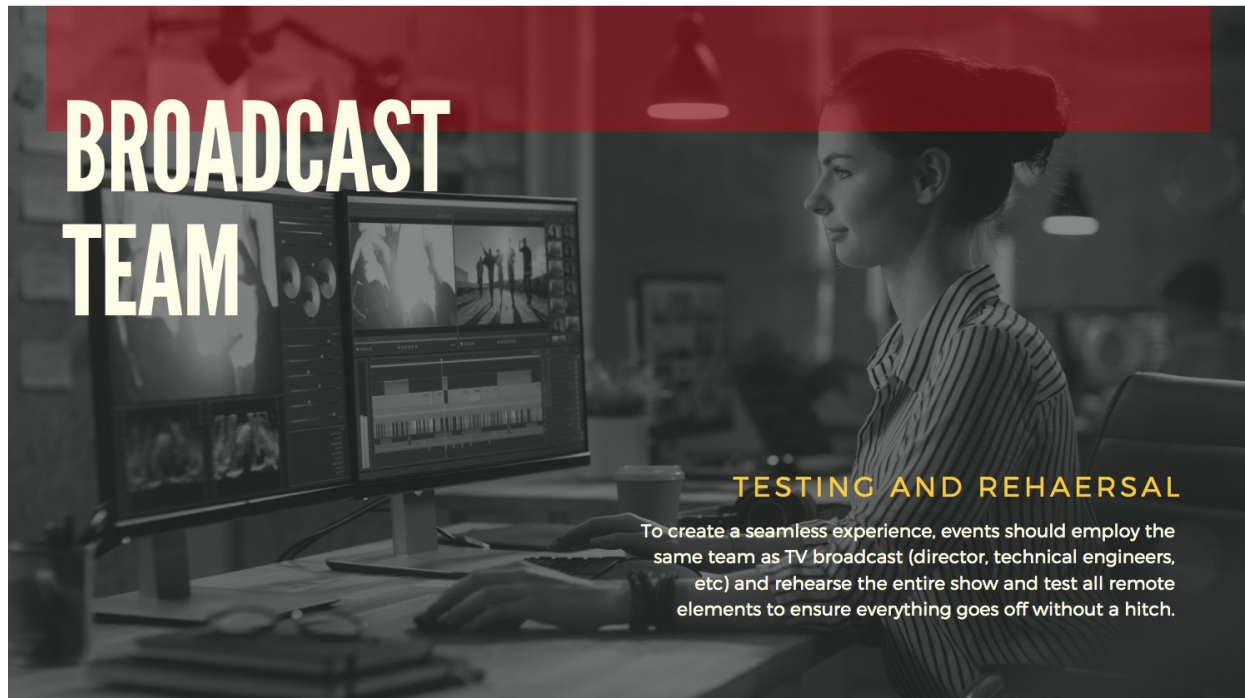
Of course, marketing and promotions strategies could fill another e-book, so next we'll focus on how to put a broadcast show on its feet and answer some of the execution questions that clients asks us.

Many are technical questions about platforms and equipment. How to shoot speakers virtually, amidst social distancing and health concerns.



Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Broadcast and Technical Considerations



**BROADCAST
TEAM**

TESTING AND REHAERSAL

To create a seamless experience, events should employ the same team as TV broadcast (director, technical engineers, etc) and rehearse the entire show and test all remote elements to ensure everything goes off without a hitch.

There is always going to be a new platform or technology, but the ways stories are told remain the same.

The difference between a high-production value event and a low quality virtual production, no matter what the restrictions, is an experienced storytelling broadcast team and quality equipment.

Each step of a project should be planned by a dedicated event team: A producer, a production manager and digital technical producer to make sure that everything runs smoothly, on time and on budget.

Set-Up, Connections, Equipment & Video Production Support

There are a full suite of broadcast technologies for broadcasting events from inexpensive remote set-ups to sophisticated engineering and presentation support, depending on the scope of your production.

Both in-person and virtual events share certain technical and logistical considerations: Cameras, lighting, audio, switching equipment and various live streaming platforms.

Virtual events require more remote planning and considerations for internet connections, live streaming formats, different on-site (in home) webcam and audio equipment, art direction and staging.

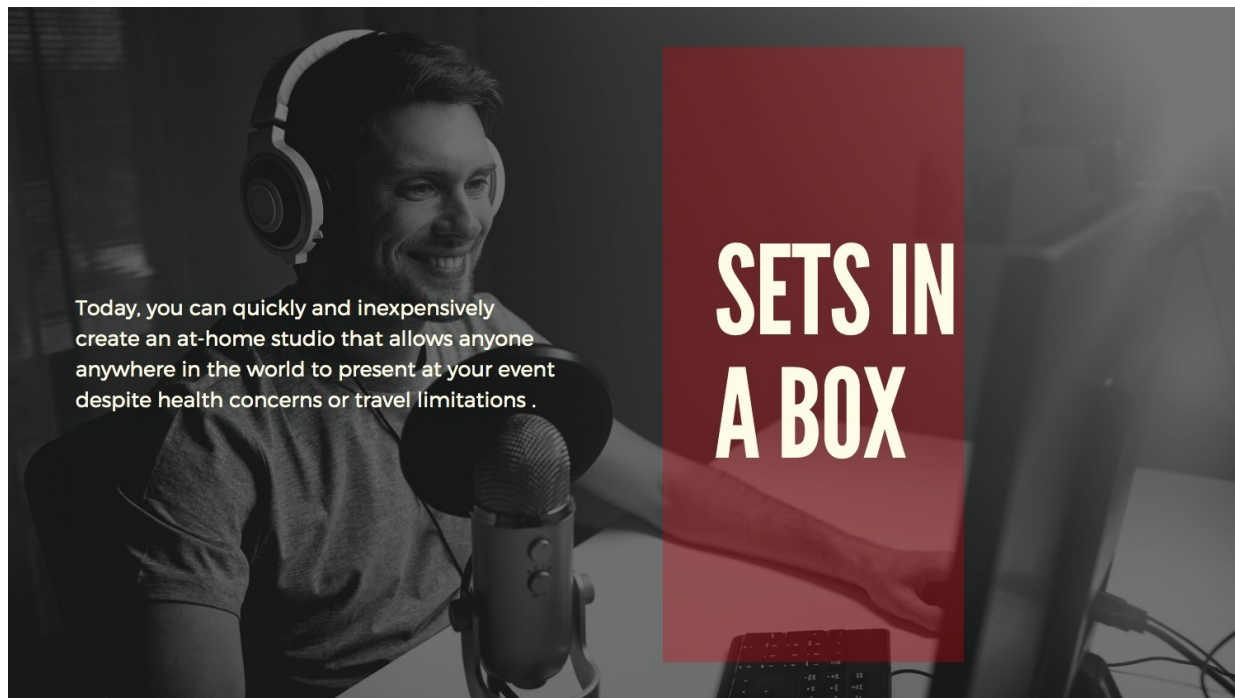
They both require rehearsal and testing.

You work-out the timing of the show to ensure there are no technical issues and everything flows seamlessly. Practice the transitions so there are no stop and start mix-ups or confusion.

So you don't have to deal with nerves and it's an unforgettable experience that all goes off without a hitch.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Sets in a Box



A real-life, poorly-lit, scratchy audio webcasts look amateurish in an event.

But, any remote-shooting issue is easily resolved with inexpensive camera and audio equipment that allows you to tape professional-looking segments from anywhere in the world despite health concerns or travel limitations.

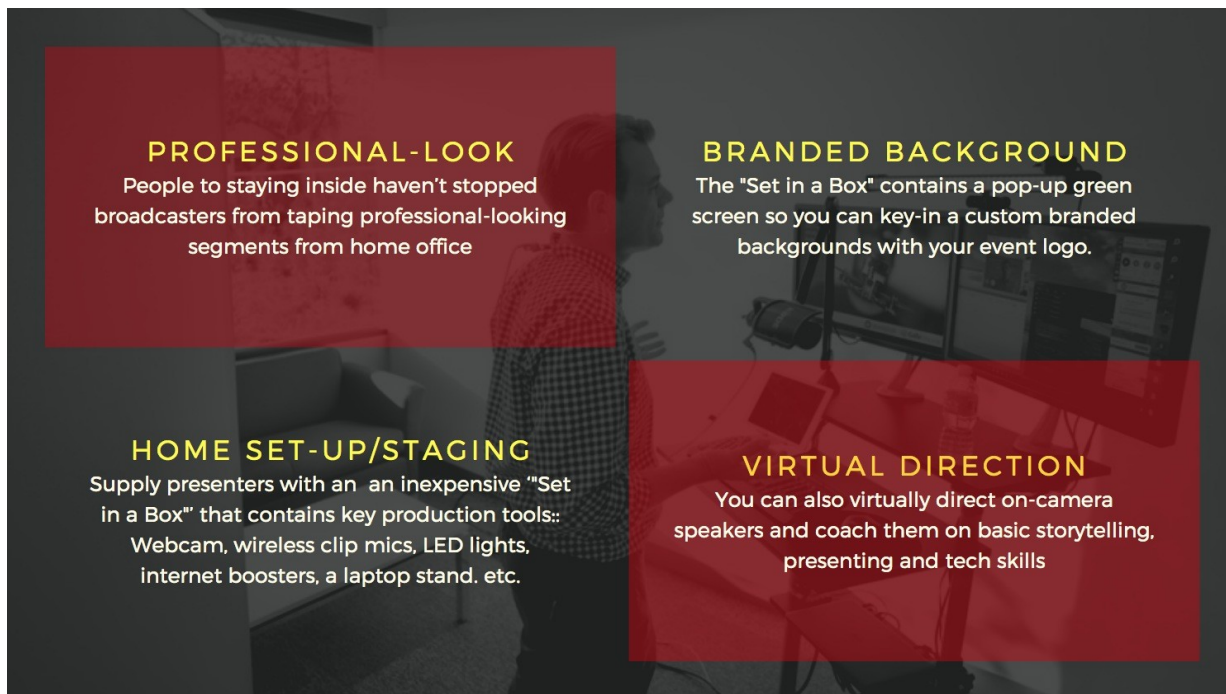
For instance, you can send "Sets in a Box" to keynote speakers to upgrade the production value of the broadcast: These kit contains higher broadcast tools such as an with iphone with lenses, 4K Webcam, umbrella lights or internet boosters, laptop stands, or a pop-up green screen so you can key-in a custom branded backgrounds with your event logo.

Companies like Movo offer total compact packages for under 100 dollars that transform iPhones into remote cameras with wireless clip mics and LED lights.

Virtual Direction

These broadcasts can also be directed from any locations. The camera image is broadcast over a video platform such as Zoom, Vimeo or Adobe. And live camera directions are relayed over Zoom or Facebook. A simple headset ear-piece for the speaker allows you to virtually direct on-camera speakers and coach them, even while they are presenting.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual



Post Event Execution

Video recordings of events are an essential digital asset. They can be repurposed and redistributed as Evergreen digital content,

Sections of these recordings can also be shared with audiences on social media, in sales or digital marketing campaigns, on your website's home page or to promote future events.

Types of Storified events

You can Storify any event: in-person, online/virtual, and hybrid events.

1. Live in-person summits, conferences, events with or without live streaming, trade shows, expos, presentations, employee meetings
2. Virtual conferences and summits, trade shows (sponsors and exhibitors broadcast with multimedia files), expos (exposition hall and booths that you visit using arrow keys on keyboard; and click on booth to chat with the exhibitor)
3. Virtual meetings (live presentations or even host in a virtual conference center)
4. Online courses and training (Businesses and Universities)
5. Webcasts and Webinars (live audio and visual)
6. On-demand content: Evergreen recorded media that can be released at any time.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Reinventing the Classroom:

Marketing Reinvented: A Google project in partnership with UCLA Anderson School of Business



The Google Classroom is another type of innovative “virtual event” that we produced in conjuncture with Google's Marketing Team and UCLA's Anderson's School of Business.

The event was called “Marketing Reinvented” but we were also Reinventing the Classroom. It was a twelve-week, 36 hour, hybrid project, we shout both live in-class and was streamed globally.

It was not your typical on-line learning experience.

It was structured around storytelling, story-driven videos and creating more innovative learning experiences.

The class provided students with a close-up look at how Google approaches digital marketing strategy.

More than a dozen Google executives from around the world came to Anderson to teach, including the Chief Marketing Officer, the head of Google Chrome, the head of brand Google and the head of international marketing.

We have since created similar classes and on-line module for UCLA and other educational clients.

We recently completed a 12-hour hour line course for UCLA that integrated a documentary format into much of the content and curriculum.

If you're a higher-earning institution and you'd like more information about this approach, let us know.

Storifying Events: In-Person and Virtual

Ready to Storify Your Event?

Free Advice, Insight, Planning, Resources, and Support.

Hopefully by now, you're bursting with inspiration to storify your next event. Our mission was to fuel your passion and demonstrate how Storified Events give you unexpected advantages and opportunities even during these uncertain, challenging times.

Whether it's in-person or virtual, a storified event can raise your venue to rockstar status, uncover hidden story potential within your brand, deepen emotional connections with your audience, boost long-term assets, add more value, performance and profit, and give you a competitive edge in the marketplace.

And whether it's a full-blown broadcast-style event or you just need storytelling consulting or coaching, our world-class storytelling team and Emmy Award winning content studio can help you.

We're standing by to make your Storified Event a reality and tailor a storified option that meets your objectives or budget. We look forward to talking.

Just hit the button below to sign up for a **FREE VIRTUAL CONSULTATION** or reach us by **email**.

[Click Here: To Get in Touch and Sign Up for a Free Consultation](#)



CHRIS NOLAN
chris@90000Feet.com
90,000 Feet Studios



SHAWN CALLAHAN
shawn@anecdote.com
Anecdote



DOUG KEELEY
doug@storiesrule.ca
Stories Rule!

CONTACT