

7 Powerful Storytelling Formulas



Walter Lim

Chief Content Strategist

Cooler Insights



A long time ago
in a galaxy far, far away....



COOLER INSIGHTS



Brand
Storytelling



Social Media
Marketing



Content
Marketing



PR & Influencer
Marketing



Digital
Campaigns



Training &
Teaching



Start Up
Mentoring



Clients & Partners

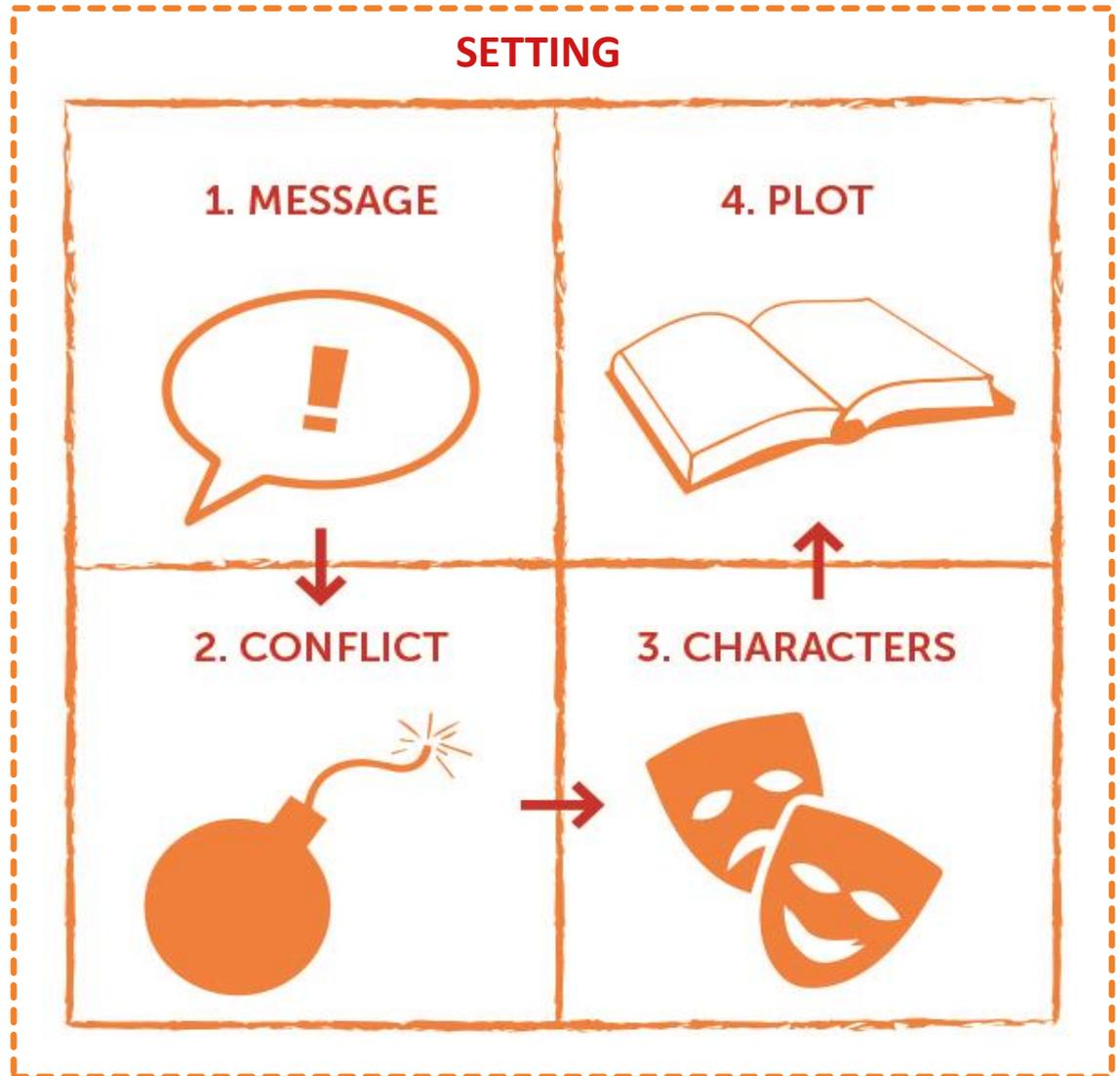


Over 50 Companies and
1,800 trainees in 4 years



The Five Elements of a Story

1. Message
2. Conflict
3. Characters
4. Plot
5. Setting



Establish Your Setting (Context)



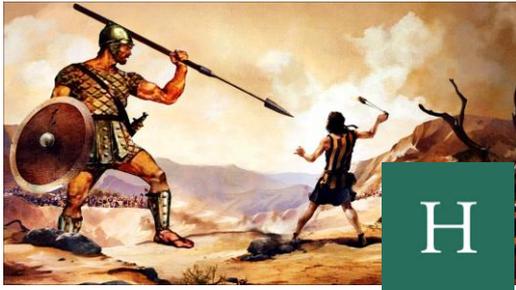
Fiction

VS



Non-fiction

Themes: Story Archetypes



#1 David and Goliath

How a small and delicate enterprise can beat the 800 pound gorilla through sheer ingenuity.



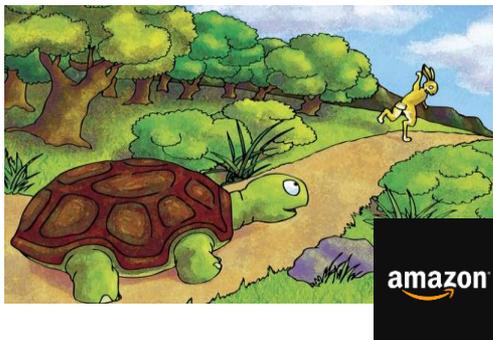
#2 Dennis the Menace

An unconventional and sometimes controversial approach which surprises incumbents and helps to win hearts.



#3 Ugly Duckling

How the “black sheep” which nobody thought would ever be outstanding become a major force to be reckoned with.



#4 Hare and Tortoise

How steadfastness and determination helps a small company like yours to win the race.



#5 Robin Hood

How your company acts as the bastion for all things good, fighting for justice despite its relative obscurity and powerlessness.



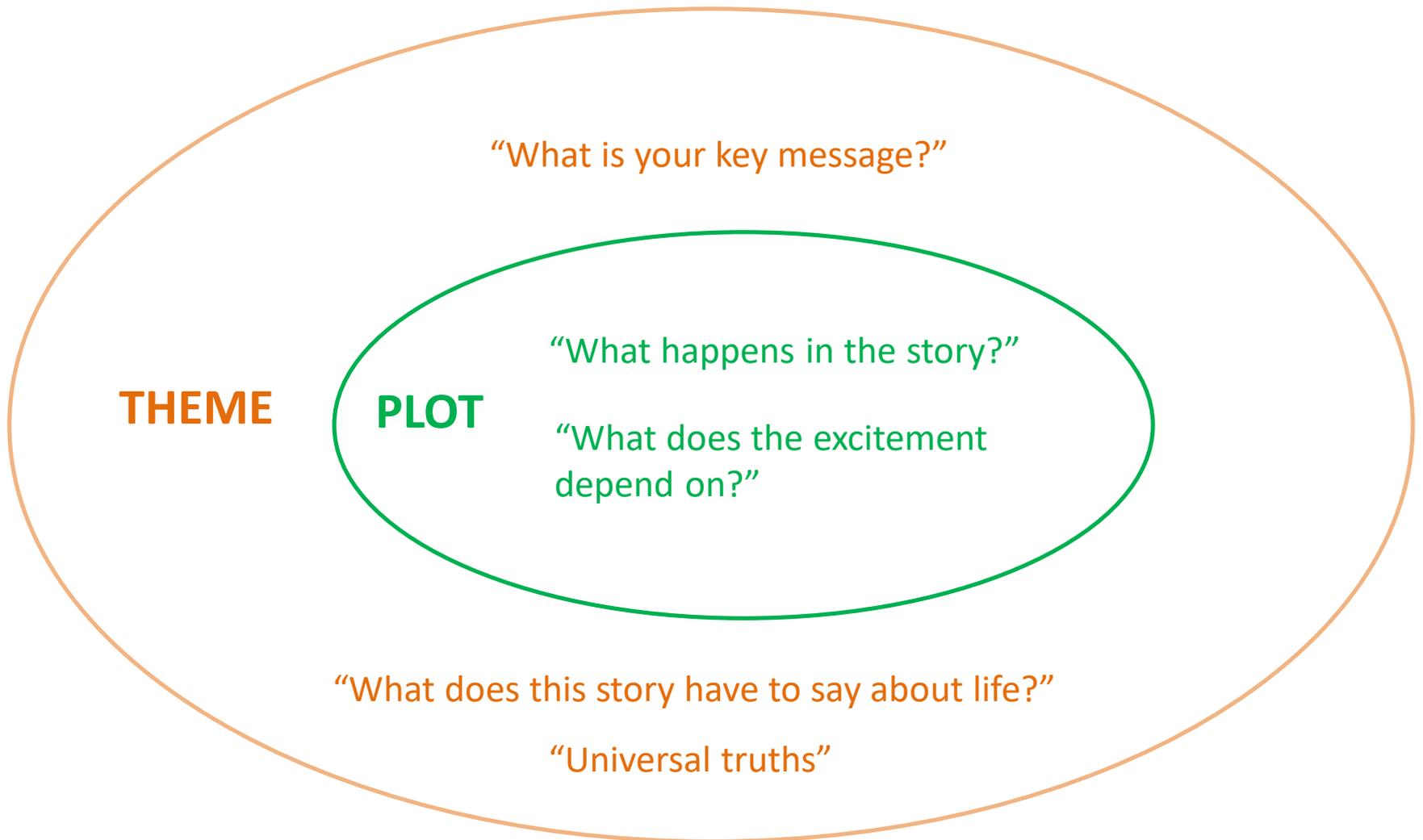
What Is His Theme?



Definition of a Plot

*A **Plot** describes the events that make up a story, with **events** that relate to each other in a **pattern** or a **sequence**.*

Theme vs Plot



7 Storytelling Formulas

- AIDA
- Three-Act Structure
- String of Pearls
- Star-Chain-Hook



**Shorter Social Media
Content Formats**

- Freytag Pyramid
- StoryBrand Plot Structure
- The Hero's Journey
(Monomyth)



**Longer Social Media
Content Formats**

#1 AIDA

- **A**ttention: Attract with attention-grabbing image or headline
- **I**nterest: Stimulate interest by describing **main benefit**
- **D**esire: Deepen desire by providing **further benefits**
- **A**ction: Provide a clear **Call To Action (CTA)**

Learn to break into the world of professional food photography with world-renowned commercial photographer, stylist, and NY Times columnist Andrew Scrivani. Watch Preview.



Food Photography Class

18,400 Students

CREATIVELIVE.COM

Watch More



UOB Cards

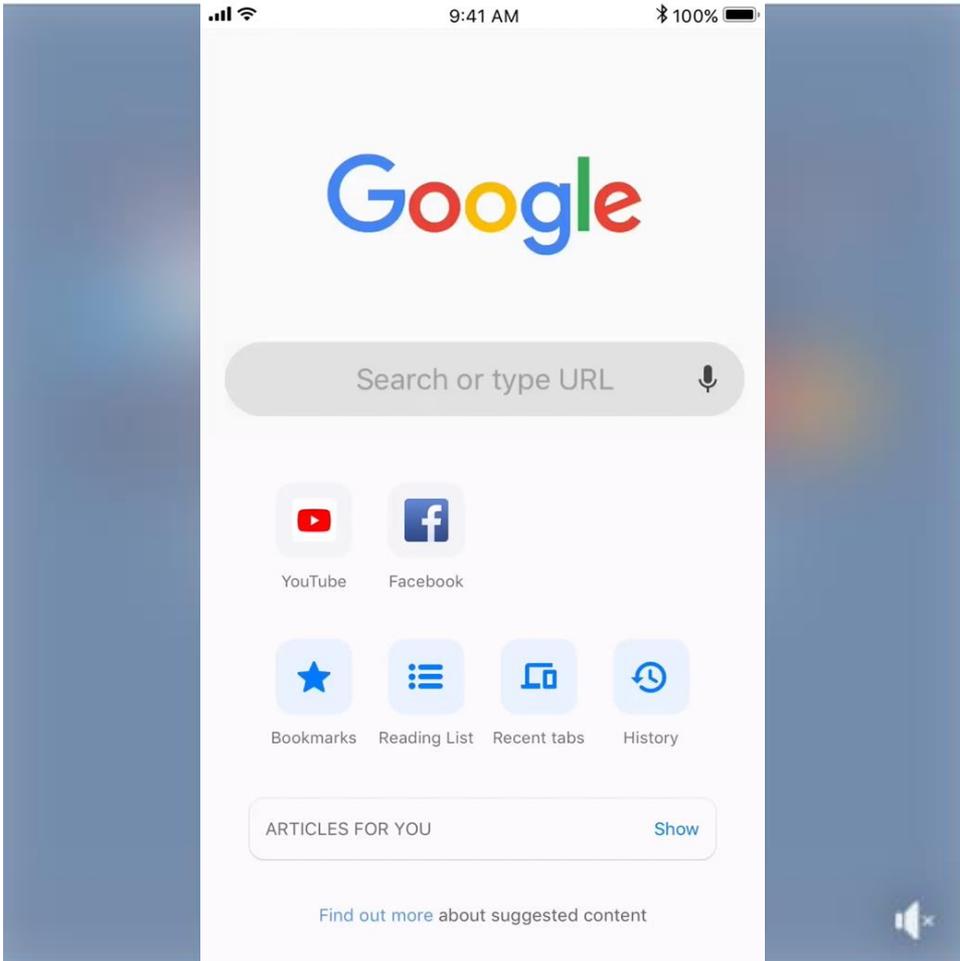
Sponsored · 🌐

You can't find what doesn't exist!

No admin fees when you pay overseas in local currencies with KrisFlyer UOB MightyFX. Plus, earn KrisFlyer miles as you convert and spend.

Sign up now and receive a 28" luggage and up to S\$170. More details at uob.com.sg/krisflyeruob ✓

#KrisFlyerUOB #MightyFX



👍 21

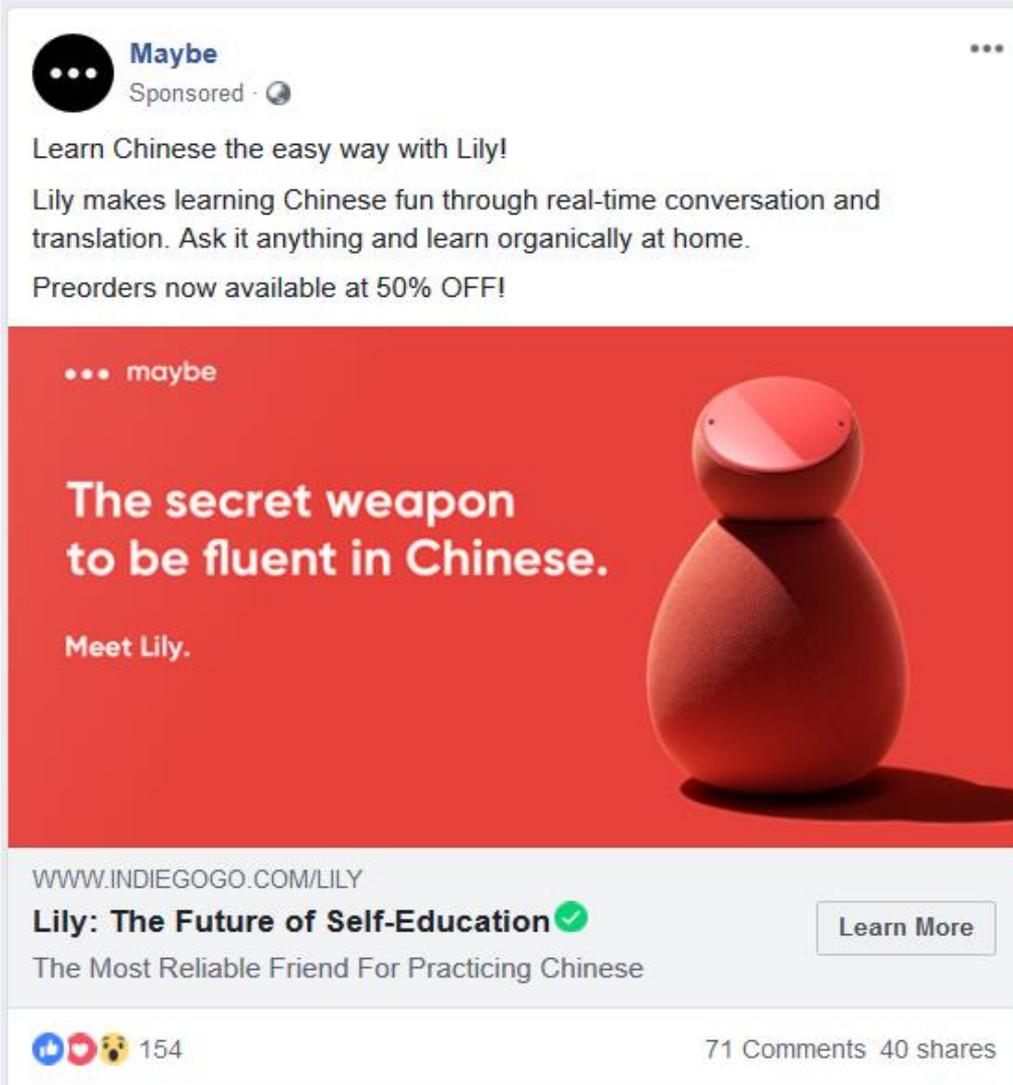
2 Comments 1 share 9.2K views

AIDA Example 1

- **A**ttention: Video of a Google search is eye-catching
- **I**nterest: Stimulate interest with **main benefit** → No admin fees
- **D**esire: Further benefits of earning KrisFlyer miles, 28" luggage, and S\$170.
- **A**ction: Clear sign up details and CTA in link.

AIDA Example 2

- **A**ttention: Red coloured visual with a robot-looking figure
- **I**nterest: Stimulate interest with **main benefit** → being fluent in Chinese
- **D**esire: Further benefits → real-time conversation, ask it anything, learn at home
- **A**ction: Pre-orders at 50% OFF!



The image shows a Facebook advertisement for a product called 'Lily'. The ad is sponsored by 'Maybe' and features a red background with a red robot figure. The text in the ad includes: 'Learn Chinese the easy way with Lily!', 'Lily makes learning Chinese fun through real-time conversation and translation. Ask it anything and learn organically at home.', 'Preorders now available at 50% OFF!', 'The secret weapon to be fluent in Chinese.', and 'Meet Lily.'. At the bottom, there is a link to 'WWW.INDIEGOGO.COM/LILY', the product name 'Lily: The Future of Self-Education' with a verified badge, and the tagline 'The Most Reliable Friend For Practicing Chinese'. There is also a 'Learn More' button and engagement metrics: 154 reactions (likes, loves, wow) and 71 comments and 40 shares.

Maybe
Sponsored · 🌐

Learn Chinese the easy way with Lily!
Lily makes learning Chinese fun through real-time conversation and translation. Ask it anything and learn organically at home.
Preorders now available at 50% OFF!

... maybe

The secret weapon
to be fluent in Chinese.

Meet Lily.

WWW.INDIEGOGO.COM/LILY

Lily: The Future of Self-Education ✓

The Most Reliable Friend For Practicing Chinese

Learn More

👍❤️🤯 154

71 Comments 40 shares

A Different One Minute



Three-Act Structure Example 2



Real Estate Company

Sponsored · 🌐

👍 Like Page

Divorce is difficult enough without stressing about selling your home too. These 5 tips will show you how to sell your home fast so you can move on.



Sell It Faster, Move On Easier

Free Guide shows you the 5 things every divorcing couple must know before selling their home.

REALESTATECOMPANY.COM

Download

- I. **Set-up:**
Divorce and property ownership
- II. **Confrontation:**
Stress of selling home
- III. **Resolution:**
Selling home fast to move on

3-Act Structure Eg. 3

- 1. Act I (Setup):** Company want to branch into take-home soup packs
- 2. Act II (Confrontation):** 14-day shelf life of soup packs too short
- 3. Act III (Resolution):** SPRING's CDG helped them extend shelf life of products to 120 days

When The Soup Spoon decided to branch into take-home soup packs, they faced a problem – the 14-day shelf life of the soup packs was so short that few retailers wanted to carry it. But with help from SPRING's Capability Development Grant (CDG), they became the first in Singapore to adopt the High Pressure Processing (HPP) technology, which extends shelf life of its products to 120 days without the need to use preservatives or additives. Read their full story at <http://bit.ly/SPRINGNewsNov17-8>.

Find out how your business can also benefit from CDG at www.spring.gov.sg/cdg.

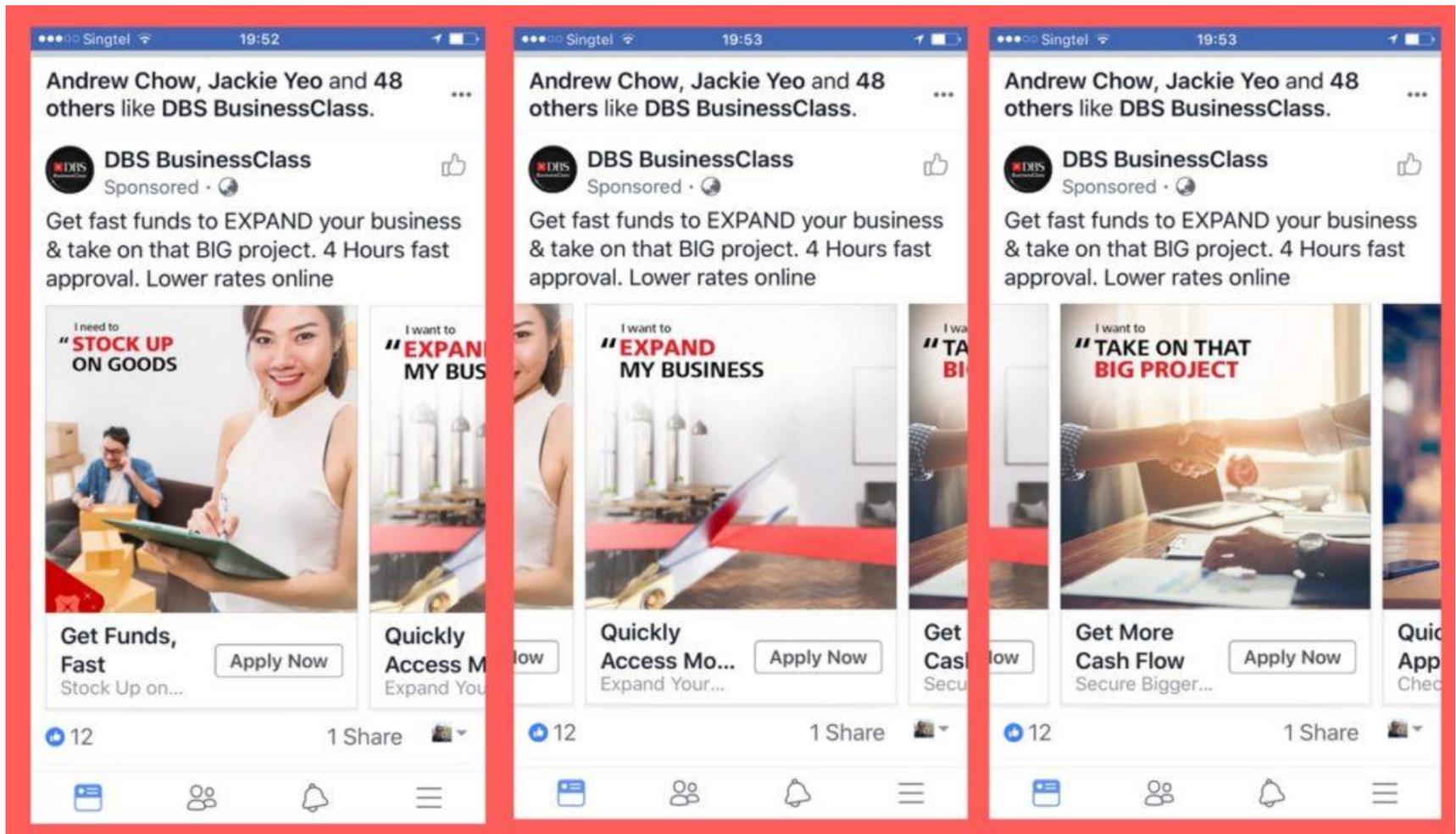


#3 String of Pearls



String together a series of details which act as “selling points” one after another.

String of Pearls Example 1



- DBS Bank's images and benefits to strengthen value proposition to SMEs
- Presented on a Facebook Carousel Ad

String of Pearls Example 2



Singapore Police Force

Sponsored · 🌐

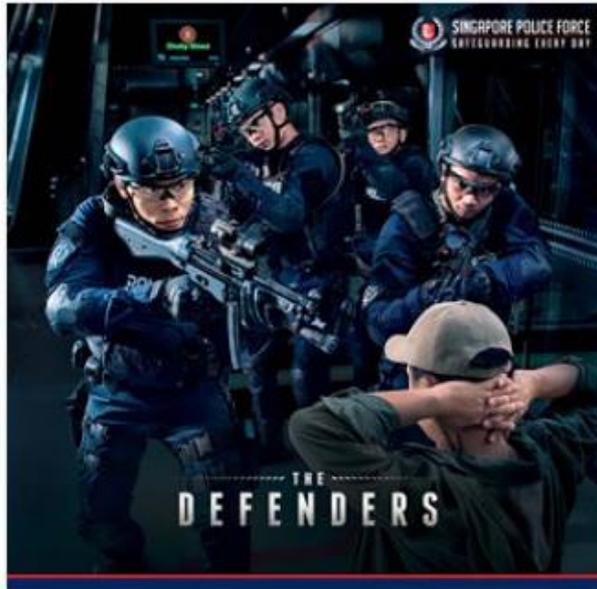
Be a Police Officer.

Join the Singapore Police Force in #safeguardingeveryday



Be a Guardian!

Apply Now



Be a Defender!

Apply Now



Be an Investigator!

Apply Now

👍❤️👍 Yusof Lateef and 2.5k others

164 Comments · 375 Shares

Singapore Police Force highlights heroic attributes of police officers in recruitment ad

4 Star-Chain-Hook

Developed by Frank Dignan, this works on the following basis:

- **Star** – Attention grabbing opening focused on your product idea
- **Chain** – Series of facts, sources, benefits (similar to Chain of Pearls)
- **Hook** – The Call To Action (CTA)



Star-Chain-Hook Example 1



Kevan Lee

@kevanlee

Zero emails. An empty to-do list. Free time.
How the business world's best get things
done: buff.ly/1nnckKj

All in just one Tweet (140 characters or less)

Can You ID the Star-Chain-Hook?

- **Star: Eye-catching visuals and Headline**
- **Chain of benefits:**
 1. Escape heat
 2. Gorgeous markets
 3. No long haul flight
 4. Best picks
- **Hook: From \$24/ night**



Yassssss, don't say we bojio!

Hotels in Tokyo, from \$24/night bit.ly/SIN-TYO



Escape the heat and visit these gorgeous Christmas markets around Asia

You don't have to go all the way to Europe to find a festive Christmas market. Here are the best picks from around the Asia-Pacific region!

KAYAK.SG

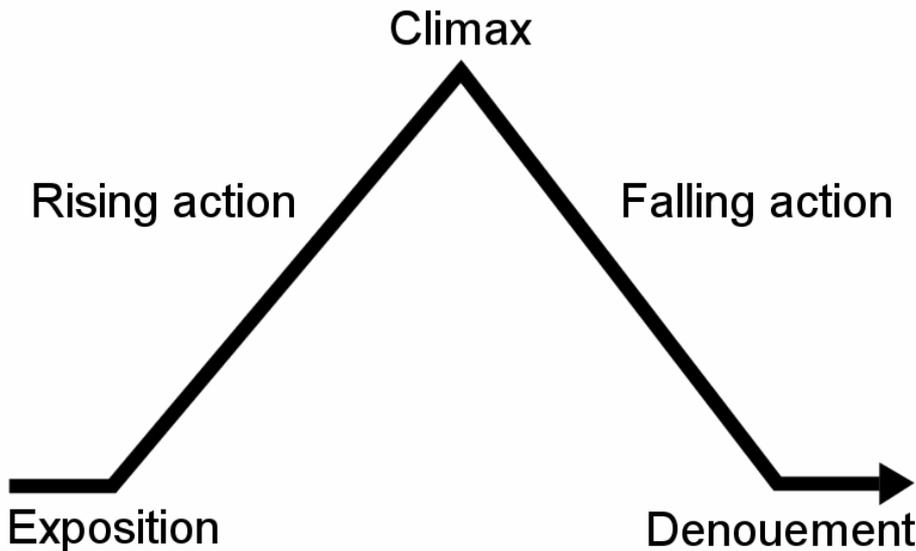


14 Comments 48 Shares



#5 Freytag's Pyramid

Created by Gustav Freytag and comprises 5 parts



1. **Exposition:** Provide background/ context
2. **Rising action:** Build conflicts and challenges leading to...
3. **Climax:** Most exciting 'fight' and turning point
4. **Falling action:** How conflict is resolved
5. **Dénouement:** A happy ending



Oleg Vishnepolsky

Global CTO at DailyMail Online and Metro.Co.Uk

4d · Edited

**Exposition
(Context)**

The INTERVIEW was not going well. The candidate did not answer simple questions.

Rising Action

Then he said, "I am sorry, I understand you will hire someone else. You need the best candidate. I really needed this job. I dont know what I will tell my wife. I have been looking for a long time, I applied to no less than 1,000 jobs. This was my first interview in last 6 months."

**Climax +
Falling Action**

I said "You are the best candidate. Your resume and past track record are spectacular. You passed the technical interview with flying colours. My team would be really thrilled if you join us. And as far as I am concerned, you just passed the personal interview with flying colours too. Honesty, tenacity and modesty... The best qualities in any team but particularly for a QA manager."

Dénouement

He was the best QA manager I ever had.

The best diamonds are found in their rough.

To see the resume we need to use our eyes.

To see the real person we need to use our hearts.

**Example of
Freytag's Pyramid**

--- Spotting good people is easy as this next short post about pizza interview shows: <https://lnkd.in/dFpQgh>

27,539 Likes · 922 Comments

Another Example...



CLIMAX

PLOT
TITLE: _____
AUTHOR: _____

RISING ACTION
(List examples that create complications or suspense)

Three horizontal boxes with arrows pointing towards the rising action line of the plot triangle.

FALLING ACTION

CONFLICT

EXPOSITION
Setting:
Situation/climate:
Characters:

PROTAGONIST vs. ANTAGONIST
_____ vs. _____

RESOLUTION

THEME

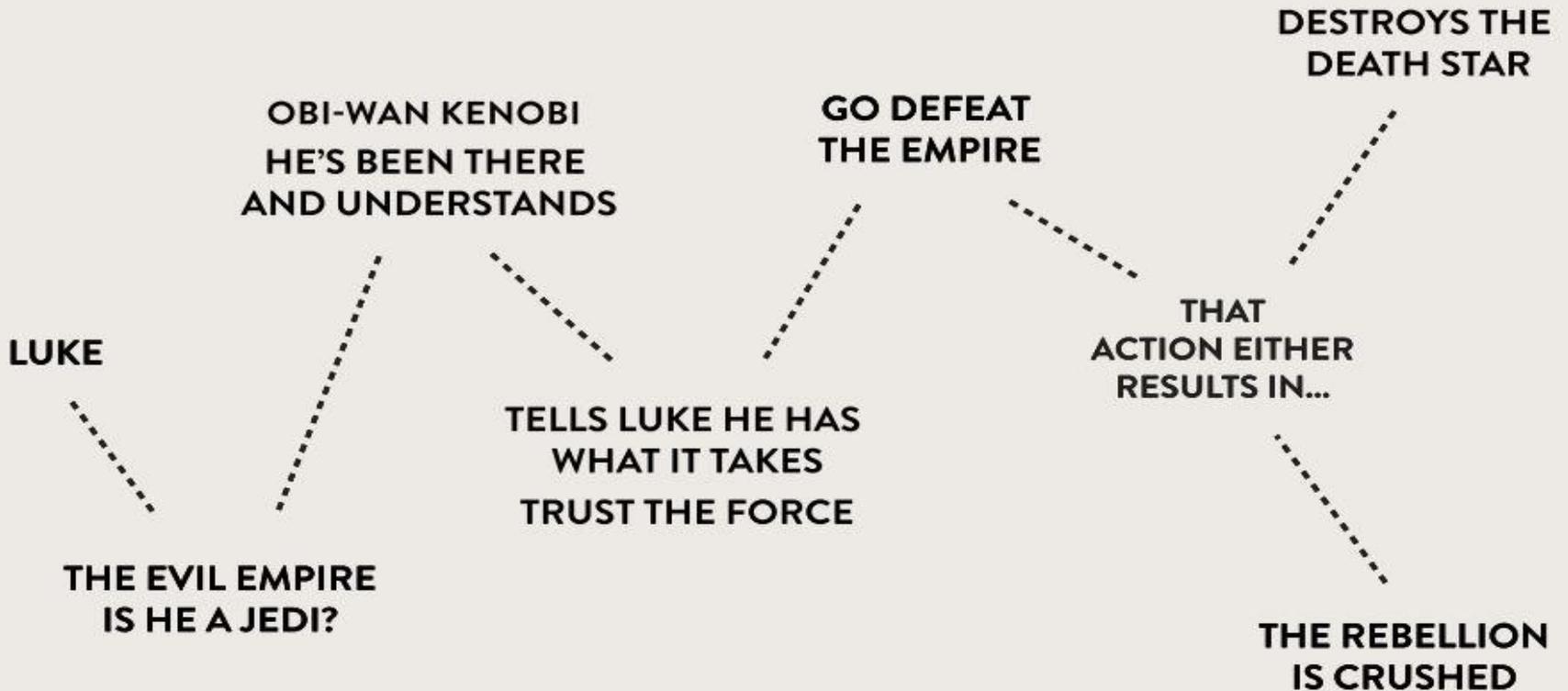
#6 The StoryBrand Plot



Donald Miller

Example: Star Wars Story Plot

STAR WARS



Example: IT Solutions Provider

- **Your Hero:** Owner of small business.
- **Faces Problem:** Spends a lot of time keeping records manually. Loses track of his financial accounts. Stressed!
- **Meets Guide:** Smart Wizard software
- **Who gives a Plan:**
 1. Fill in this assessment form
 2. Use our software FREE
 3. Speak to our friendly consultants
- **Calls hero to Action:** "Try our software FREE now!"
- **With a Happy Ending:** "You can spend more time growing your business. And with your loved ones."
- **Inaction leads to Tragedy:** "Don't Waste Your Precious Years!"





GET COVERED

Insurance companies don't cover identity theft. LibertyID will cover you.



CONTACT US

If something happens, contact us and our army of trained specialists go to work immediately. We'll work around the clock to get everything back.



GET EVERYTHING BACK

Our team restores and recovers everything. You don't have to deal with the hassle. We get everything back.

***GIVE THEM A PLAN
FOR ACTION!***

[GET COVERED](#)

They Steal Your
TIME

They Destroy Your
CREDIT

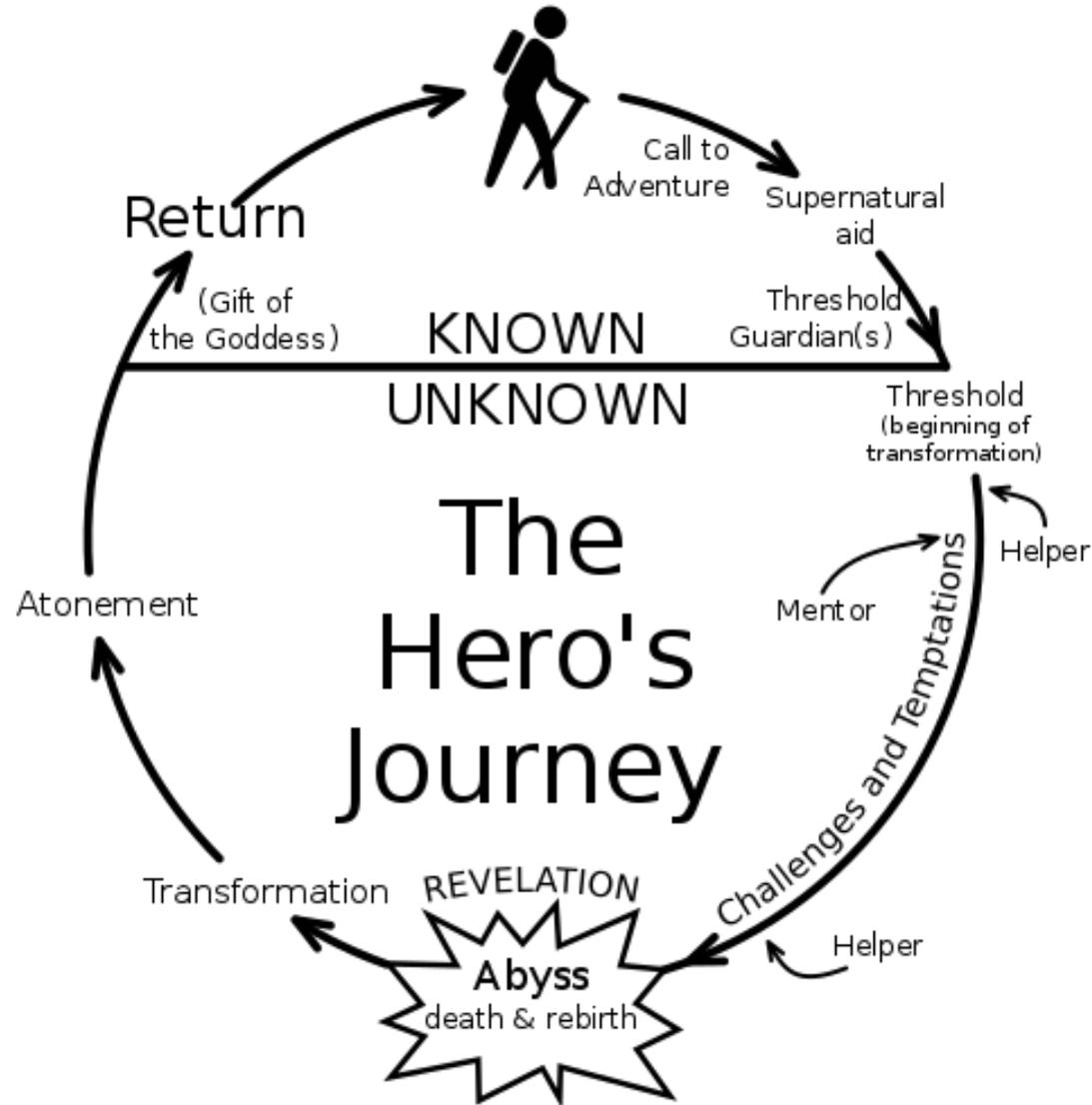
They Ruin Your
LIFE



#7 The Hero's Journey

Created by Joseph Campbell and known as the Monomyth.

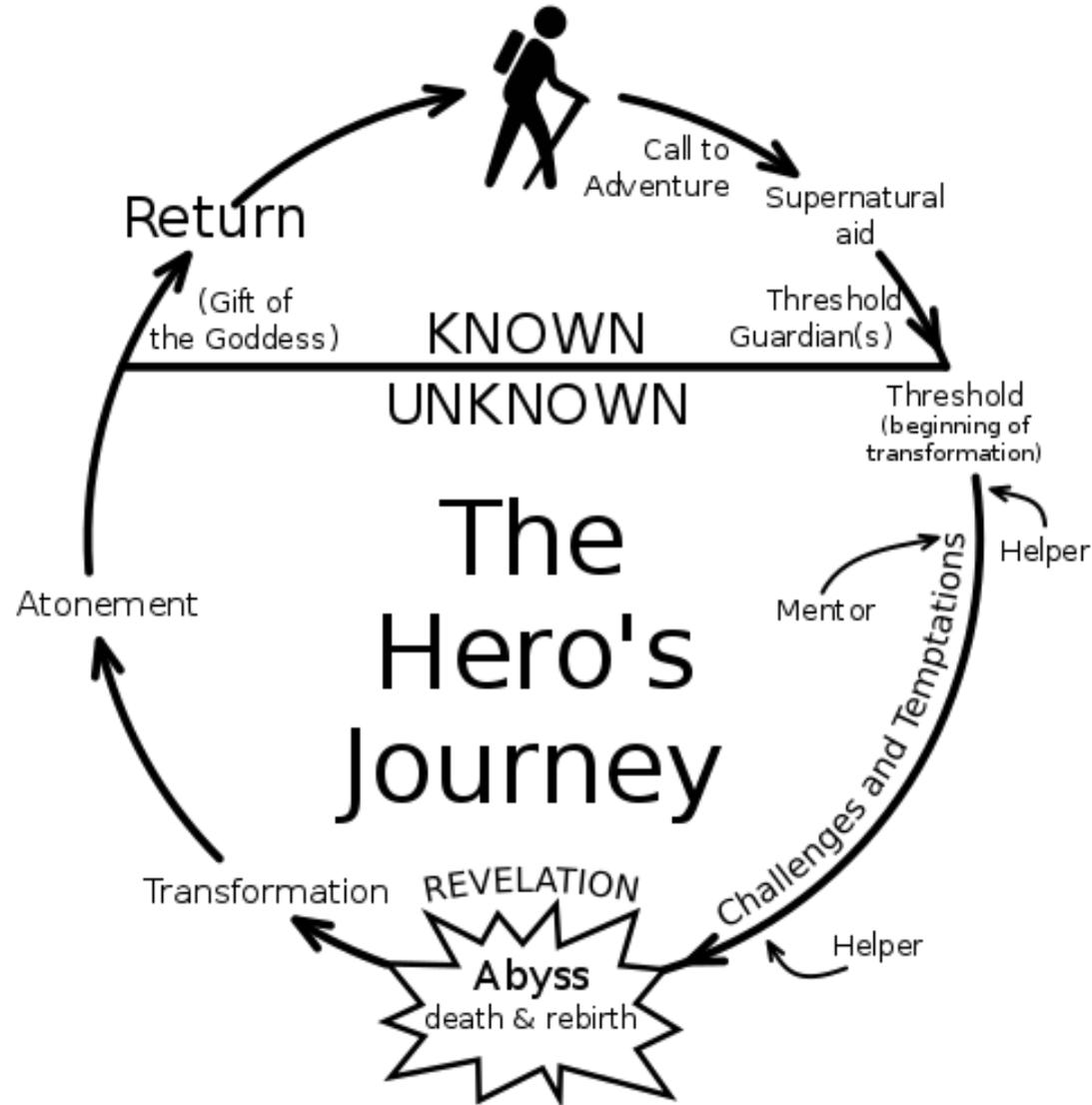
Biblical stories, LOTR, Star Wars, Harry Potter and other many others.



#7 The Hero's Journey

Total of 17 stages,
with 3 main acts:

1. Departure
(Separation)
2. Initiation
(Descent and
Initiation)
3. Return (with
Reward)



Example of Hero's Journey



WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



proudly presents

Title: _____

Hero's Journey Template

ACT ONE				
	Ordinary World Limited awareness of a problem	Call to Adventure Increased awareness	Refusal of the Call Reluctance to change	Meeting with the Mentor Overcoming reluctance
ACT TWO				
	Crossing the Threshold Committing to change	Tests, Allies and Enemies Experimenting with first change	Approach the Inmost Cave Preparing for a big challenge	Ordeal Attempting a big change
ACT THREE				
	Reward (seizing the sword) Consequences of the attempt (improvements and setbacks)	Road Back Rededication to change	Resurrection Final attempt at big change	Return with the Elixir Final mastery of the problem

7 Storytelling Formulas

- AIDA
- Three-Act Structure
- String of Pearls
- Star-Chain-Hook

**Link Posts, Tweets,
Facebook/Instagram
Photo Posts, Infographics,
short videos, Instagram
Stories**

Longer Stories

- Freytag Pyramid
- StoryBrand Plot Structure
- The Hero's Journey
(Monomyth)

**Longer form videos, Blog
articles, LinkedIn posts,
customer stories,
branded series (eg DBS
Sparks), Website Copy
(eg About Us)**

Crafting a Storyboard

Storyboard template
Planning the filming of the promotional film

- Visual sequence of each frame
- Ensure key plot points covered
- Include text overlays

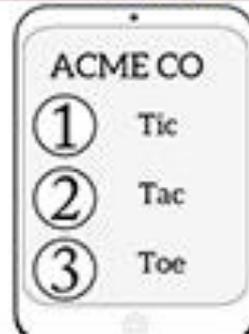
Storyboard Example

ATTENTION



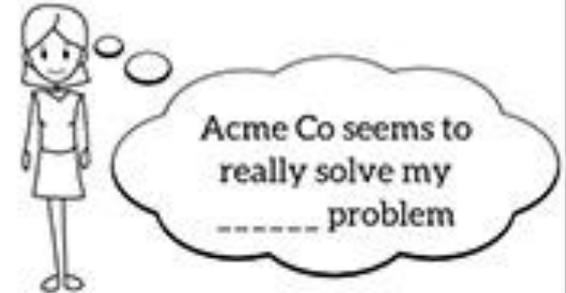
Where are you visible? How do you rise above the noise?

INTEREST



What piques the customer's interest? How? Why?

DESIRE



Are you connecting with an important problem scenario?

ACTION



What do they have to do to buy? Is it as simple as possible?

ONBOARDING



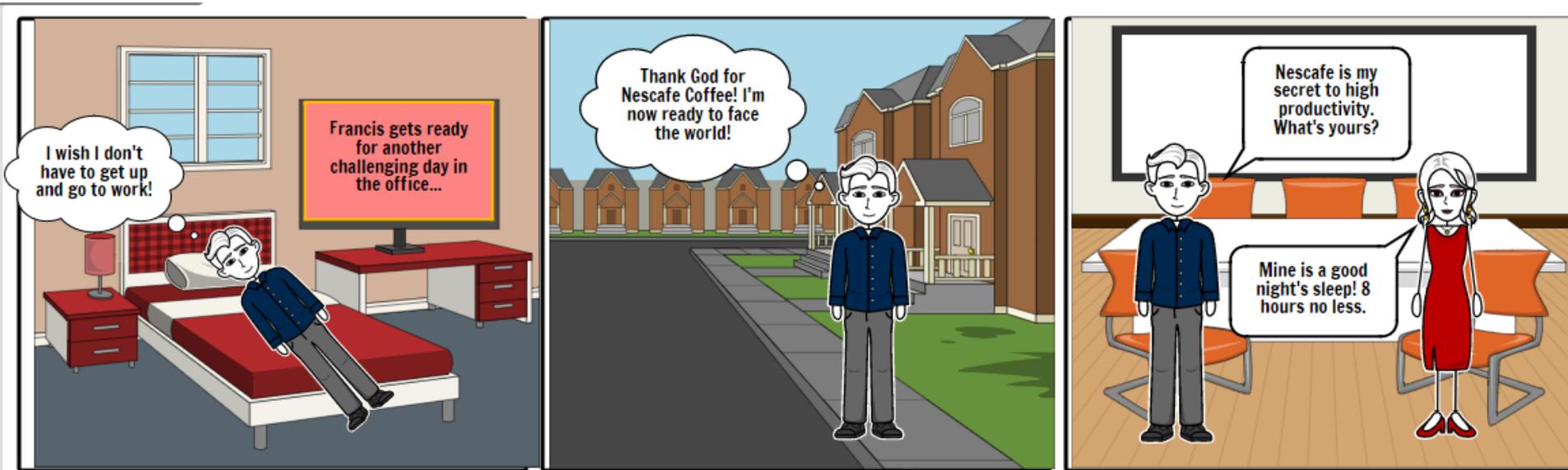
What does the user have to do to get initial reward/gratification?

RETENTION



How do you ensure the user stays happy and active? Shares?

Another Example...



Create your own at [Storyboard That](https://www.storyboardthat.com)

Storyboarding Tools

- [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com)
- Storyboard That
(<https://www.storyboardthat.com/> FREE version has limited functionality)
- Storyboarder
(<https://wonderunit.com/storyboarder/>)



NOW IT'S
YOUR TURN.

Craft Your Stories

1. Create Your **Characters** and their **Contexts**
2. Choose **Storytelling Formula**
3. Craft a **Story Board** for your Story!



Quiz!



Question

What is the correct sequence for this story structure?

A

MEETS A GUIDE WHO UNDERSTANDS THEIR FEAR



C

A CHARACTER



COMEDY



E



TRAGEDY

THAT CALLS THEM TO ACTION



F

B



AND GIVES THEM A PLAN

D



THAT RESULTS IN...

G



WITH A PROBLEM



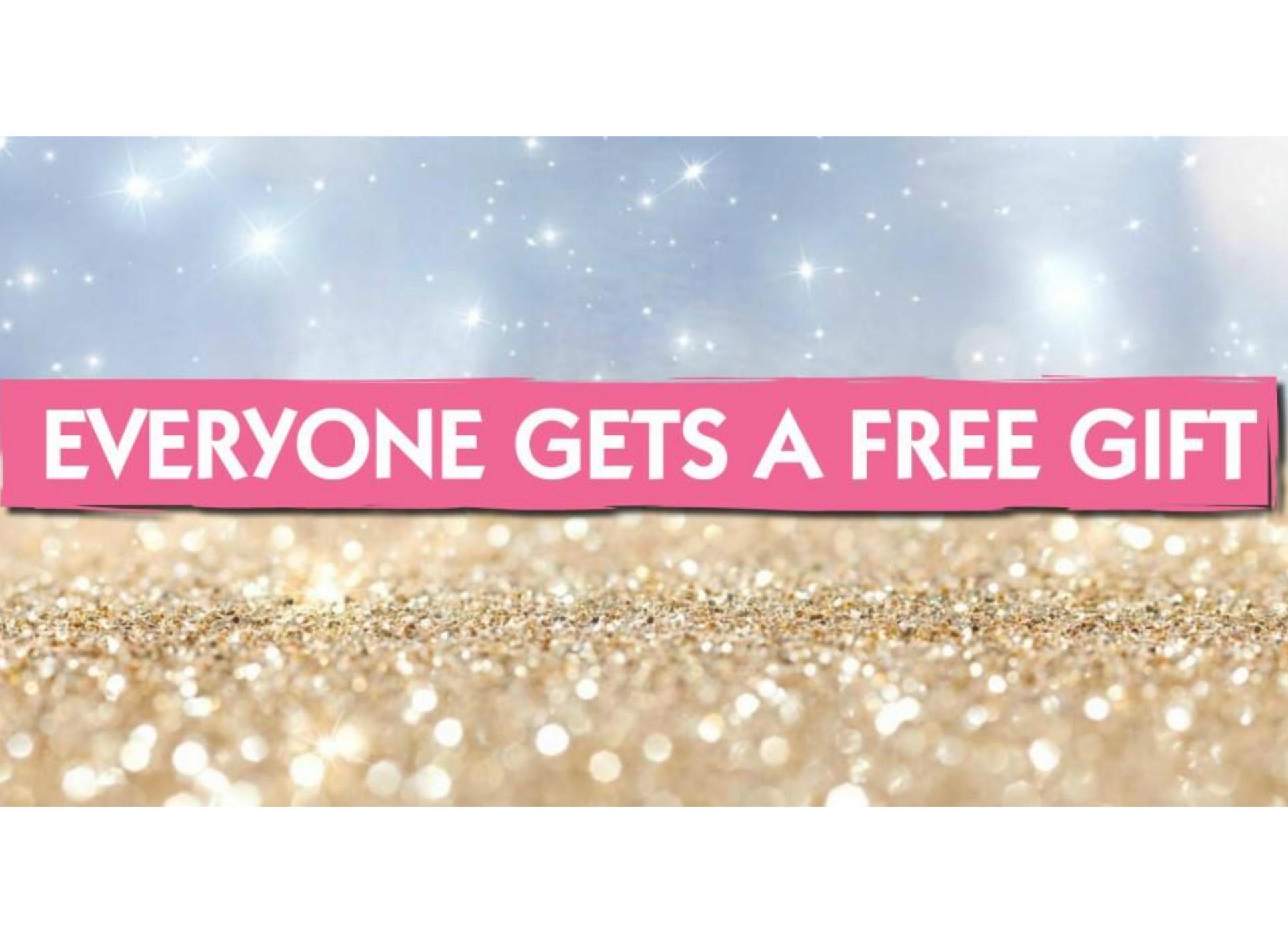
Answer



Your Brand Should Tell a Clear Story.

Answer:

C, G, A, B, F, D, E



EVERYONE GETS A FREE GIFT



Resources



Training Materials

Drop us an email

marketing@coolerinsights.com

for a copy of this presentation slides





BONUS: Free Writing Guide

Download a free guide with 28 writing secrets used by professional writers.

<http://bit.ly/coolwritingguide>



Connect With Me

walter@coolerinsights.com

coolerinsights.com

[Facebook.com/coolinsights](https://www.facebook.com/coolinsights)

[Linkedin.com/in/coolinsights](https://www.linkedin.com/in/coolinsights)





Thank
you!!

**Start with
a Hook;
end with
an Action**

STEP	ANSWERS THE QUESTION	STORY SPINE
Transition In (Hook)	Why should I listen to this?	Have you always wanted _____ and _____?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where did this take place? • When did it take place? • Who is the hero? • What did the heroes want? 	Back in _____, at _____, there was _____, and they were trying to ...
Challenge	What was the problem/ opportunity?	Then, one day _____
Conflict	What did you do about it?	So they _____, and then _____, and so they _____
Resolution	How did it turn out (for everyone)?	Eventually...
Transition Out		
Lesson(s)/ Morals	What did you learn?	What I learned from that was... (That's when I realised ... That explains why ... What I've since come to realize is ...)
Recommended Action (s)	What do you think I should do?	And that's why I think you should...

*From:
Sell With A Story
by Paul Smith*