**[StorySelling “How to Write Mini User Stories”](http://insightdemand.com/sales-messaging/storyselling-%e2%80%9chow-to-write-mini-user-stories%e2%80%9d/" \o "Permanent Link: StorySelling \“How to Write Mini User Stories\”)**

**Why:** Use mini user stories, with the right sales message, so that your salespeople are able to sell value and differentiate your offering instead of pitching product and reducing price.

**Mini User Stories:** Make the stories short. Use only one constraint per story otherwise you risk flooding the Buyer with too much information.

**Make the Buyer the Hero of the Story:** Many Customer Stories make the company out to be the hero who rode in on their white shinny horse to save the Buyer.

But do potential Buyer’s want to see themselves as losers in your story? No, so change the story. Make it a story that attracts rather than repels the Buyer: A story the Buyer actually wants to see themselves in it. How? Make the Buyer the hero.

Joseph Campbell’s “Hero Story” is hardwired into our heads through movies and stories. He travelled to over 100 countries and documented Myths & Hero stories in his book “The Hero with 1000 faces.” ([Click Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hero_with_a_Thousand_Faces)) It’s required reading for screenwriters. George Lucas, for instance, reread it before making Star Wars. In this book, Joseph showed how all Hero Stories follow a similar pattern of five steps: 1) The world is normal; 2) Something changes; 3) The hero pushes back; 4) The mentor guides the hero to victory; 5) The hero saves the day.

So, following this process, guess what role the Salesperson plays? That’s right, not the hero but the mentor. The customer is the hero.

How do you do that? Every story needs conflict to be interesting and a villain makes it even better. How many movies, for instance, do you see about a happily married couple? None. Why? Because it’s dull.

However, never make the Customer or their employees out to be the villain. Prospective Buyer’s don’t want to see themselves in that story. Instead, describe how the customer was smart at the time to buy your competitor’s product and that they have good employees. The problem is that with time, through no fault of the Buyer, the landscape changed and they now need to change. Hence, make the villain external (changing time, government regulation, new market conditions, changes competitive landscape or changes in technology).

So, the simple story is 1) Challenge; 2) Struggle and; 3) Resolution.

**Delta:** Make sure you create contrast between where the customer is and where they need to be so that the cost of the problem is greater than the cost of your offering plus the risk of change.

When the Buyer is in denial that they have a problem, asking them questions about their problem will get you nowhere because they don’t see themselves as having a problem. They are like the frog in water that doesn’t notice as the water gradually gets hot, until it’s too late. For example, asking the frog if he finds the water hot doesn’t work. This represents the status quo bias that every Enterprise Salesperson is up against and it manifests itself as resistance to change. And no change means no sale.

A story, however, is a soft way to help the Buyer see themselves in your story. With a story, hopefully they may gain sufficient insight that their problem is bigger than they thought, and maybe, they may consider changing. Like the frog in the pot who suddenly realizes that the water is about to boil.

**Emotion:** Someone once described a story as a fact wrapped in emotion. Try to let your imagination wander and build up a story in your mind with emotional words like frustrated, desired, exasperated etc. so that it reads like a story instead of a string of boring facts. Make it memorable by making it real: About real people facing real problems. Talk about how people were affected by the before and after of your offering. Remember, with StorySelling, you are in the emotional transportation business.

**Quantify:** Try to quantify the cost of the status quo. One way is to following –up on the Buyer’s story with quantification questions.

**Metaphors:** If you can add a metaphor or an analogy, your story will be greatly improved. It will help make the abstract concrete. It will make your story memorable. The only problem is that I only come up with a metaphor for 1 in 10 stories. Maybe you will have a higher success rate.

**Showtime:** Before a client meeting, tear up your story and be in the moment with the Customer.

**Acid Test:** How do you know if it’s a story and not a collection of facts? Tell it to a colleague and see if they can tell it back to you. If they can’t, rework it.

How do you improve a story? Tell it to a customer, gauge their response, refine the story, tell it again etc. That’s how you naturally improve your story about your vacation, how you met your partner etc.

**My Story for your Story:** I try to end each story with ‘that’s Paul’s story, what’s yours?’ I then add quantification questions just in case the Buyer needs help to quantify the cost of the status quo for their story.

**Writing Stories is Easy:** You know how to tell a story. And with these guidelines, you’ll be even better. But StorySelling requires that you must first create the right argument for your offering, before you wrap it in a story, otherwise your stories will be off target and pointless.

Good luck.

Michael

## Michael Harris, CxO, Insight Demand

As CxO of Insight Demand, I enjoy showing companies how to tell a better story so their Salespeople can sell value and differentiate their offering.

Because stories present a scenario that allows my Customers to draw their own conclusions, they can now relax and listen  because they no longer feel painted into a corner.

With a graduate degree in Finance and 12-years on Wall Street, I have learned how to build business value. I then ran a finance company that grew to 125 employees and 250MM sales and it was here I learned the power of loading the lips of your salespeople with the right messages. I then worked as a Business Partner at a Solution Selling Sales Training company and, after 5-years, I refined the totality of my many years of experience and formed Insight Demand.

I have lived & worked in NYC, London and Buenos Aires. Today, I live on an Island with no cars that is only 10-minutes by ferry to my hometown, Toronto. I still travel to the big cities on business but I am also able to enjoy Kite Surfing, Kayaking and Hockey 20-meters from my home. I enjoy these simple pleasures with my wife and two children.

Please email [mharris@InsightDemand.com](mailto:mharris@InsightDemand.com) to discuss how I can help your Salespeople sell more.