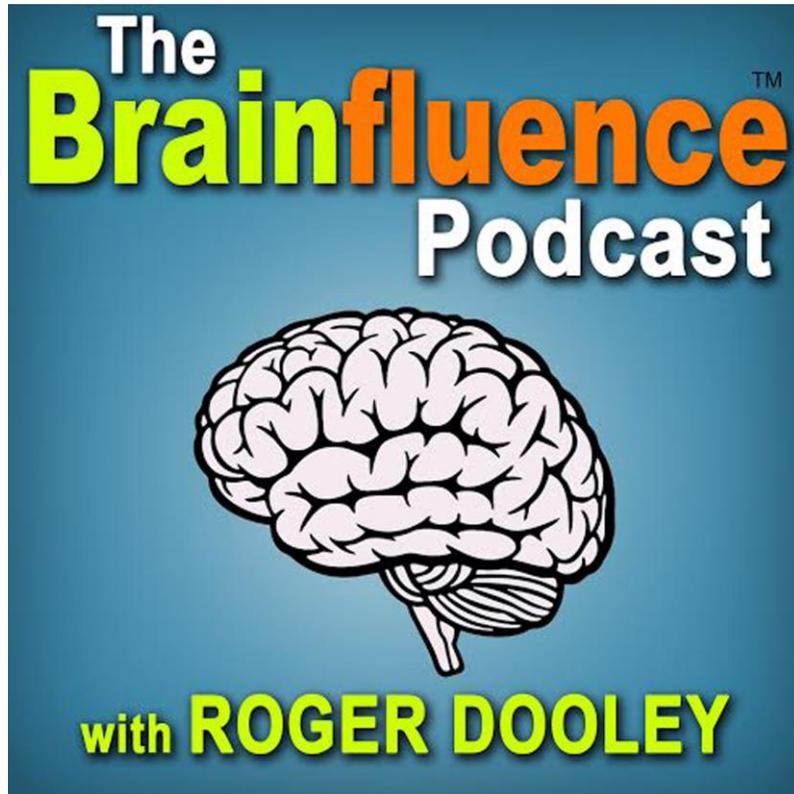


Ep #136: The Science of Compelling Stories with Paul  
Smith



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**Roger Dooley**

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## Ep #136: The Science of Compelling Stories with Paul Smith

Welcome to the Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley, author, speaker and educator on neuromarketing and the psychology of persuasion. Every week, we talk with thought leaders that will help you improve your influence with factual evidence and concrete research. Introducing your host, Roger Dooley.

Roger: Welcome to the Brainfluence Podcast, I'm Roger Dooley. Our guest this week is Paul Smith, a former Proctor and Gamble executive who's worked with huge clients like Walmart, Progressive Insurance, and Hewlett Packard. He's an expert in business story telling techniques and is the author of the new book *Sell With a Story, How to Capture Attention, Build Trust and Close the Sale*. Paul, what's your story?

Paul: Hey Roger, that's suppose a fair question to ask me. I've got about 315 I could tell you, where would you like me to start?

Roger: Just go with your favorite one perhaps.

Paul: My favorite story, well since you asked about my story as opposed to just a favorite story I've heard I'll tell you the story that kind of got me into what I do today and that was actually a story that my father told me. After I'd written my first book I had this crisis of conscience where I had to figure out what it is I wanted to do with my life. Did I want to keep my day job at P&G or did I want to pursue a full-time career in writing books, and teaching courses, and being a leadership coach and executive coach, and things like that?

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I wrote my dad a letter and asked him what I should do because there's obviously no job security in becoming a full-time author and speaker and I've got a couple of kids to put through college and a little bit too young for retirement and all that kind of thing. I asked my 80 year old father what to do.

Roger: I totally get that Paul.

Paul: Yes exactly, I think I was 45 or 46 years old at the time. It might have been a lot easier if it was 10 or 15 years later, but anyway he told me a story that absolutely made the decision making easy for me. It was a story I'd never heard before about him and neither had any of my siblings. He said that he knew exactly what he wanted to do with his life when he was five years old. He said, "The first day of kindergarten the teacher asked him and the other students if any of them had any special talent", and he raised his hand and he said, "Yes I do." She said, "What is it?" He said, "Well I can sing." Of course he'd never sung in front of anybody but his mom in the kitchen but said I'm a singer. Well of course what do you think she asked him to do?

Roger: Obviously sing.

Paul: Yes, well Bobby stand up and sing us a song. Little five year old Bobby stood up and he belted out his favorite song right there. He said, "I nailed it, I got all the words and all the melody right,

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and he was so proud of himself." He said, "The other students actually stood up and applauded me at the end of the song." He said, "I was so proud and that's the moment that I really knew that's what I was destined to be in life." Unfortunately that turned out not to just to be the first time but the last time that I ever sang in front of an audience. He said, "Life just got in the way, and the truth is son, I just never had the courage to go through with it." As if that wasn't enough, and it was by the way, he closed the letter to me by saying I'd love to see you achieve your dream, but that doesn't mean in your lifetime son, that means in mine. I mean tick tock, he's 83 now and so literally two days later I walked into my boss's office and I quit my 20 year career to pursue this for a living.

That is my favorite story because it's the one that literally motivated me to quit a job after 20 years and too young for retirement to do what I absolutely love to do and probably wouldn't have had the courage to do at that point in time.

Roger: Great, well that's a great illustration of what you talk about in the book Paul. I don't think we have to sell our listeners on the idea that stories, particularly in marketing and sales, are really useful tools. It's kind of common wisdom these days, everybody knows you're supposed to sell stories and there's a lot of psychology and neuroscience that I know I've written about and spoken about that underlie storytelling. Most of my speeches have some kind of a brief story component, not so much ... I have a story or two of my own, but also explaining the importance of stories, the evolutionary psychologist say that we evolve to pay attention to stories and that's one reason why they're so effective. If you look at fMRI studies they show that

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stories light up our brain in special ways. You've got a bunch of good research in the book too, some of which I wasn't familiar with. Maybe you could explain that one about stories increasing the value of a product.

Paul: Yes, that was a fascinating study, I think it was done in 2009 by a couple of guys named Rob Walker and Josh Glenn. They went around to flea markets and garage sales and bought I guess I'd call it junk, the kind of things that you'd buy at flea markets and garage sales. A spoon, a tea cup, a piggy bank, that kind of thing. They bought 100 items and they spent a total of \$129, so an average of \$1.29 per item. Then they sold, over the course of a year or two, every one of those items on eBay, and if you know how eBay works there's a picture of the product and a description.

Of course they had a picture of the product but where the description went, instead of putting a description of it like pink piggy bank, they wrote a story or they had somebody write a story for it. There was no description of it but this fictitious story. It was obvious that the stories were fictitious and then they sold all those items. The total sales value of all 100 items was \$3,600 on \$129 worth of stuff. I'm sure some of that increases because it was being sold on eBay and not just at a corner garage sale, but I'm convinced that at least a large part of that is because of the story that whoever was buying it, they weren't just buying the product, they were buying a story that had a product attached to it, or at a minimum a product that had a story attached to it. The stories literally can make the product or service you're selling more valuable, that's the conclusion that the experimenters came to.

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Roger: That reminds me a little bit about the J. Peterman catalog that sells nice products, typically apparel and accessories, things like briefcases and such. Instead of a product description that you might find at Amazon or any other online seller, they always tell a great story about the product and they're clearly made up, they aren't saying that this trench coat or this briefcase actually came from some World War II spy novel, but they really add value and they add mystique and their prices are, typically for the products relatively high. I think that's exactly what you're talking about that by attaching a story and the romance and the mystique to these fairly pedestrian products that they're really adding value.

Paul: Yes, and I don't even think that it's a gimmick because I know some people hear that and they think that's kind of gimmicky and you're not really giving them anything of value. I totally disagree, the people that are buying that trench coat in your case or that piggy bank in the example I gave, now they have a story to tell somebody else and they probably enjoy telling that story, and because they have that piggy bank or that trench coat, when somebody remarks on it or notices it or says something about it brings to mind this interesting story that they can tell and it's become a conversation piece and they've become a conversation starter. It literally adds some joy to their world and the people that are with them just because there was a story attached to that product. I don't think it's a gimmick at all, I think it's a very legitimate value adding thing to do to your product.

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Roger: Even if it doesn't involve retelling the story I think there's a value add that I reach into the closet and slip that coat on, I'm reminded of the background and maybe a little bit of that emotion follows it as I walk around in it.

Paul: Yes.

Roger: The real challenge that probably most of us have is coming up with a relevant and compelling stories. To start with Paul, what are the elements of a good story?

Paul: I think any story, not just business stories or sales stories that we're talking about like great novels and movies probably have three things at the heart of them. One is a hero we care about, two is a villain we're afraid of, and then three is some kind of an epic battle between them and I think of the quintessential Star Wars with the Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker and the battle between them. I admit that's sounds rather Hollywood, so if you translate that into business language, that hero that you care about becomes a relatable hero, a relatable protagonist in the story and that villain you're afraid of just becomes a relevant challenge. Then that epic battle between them really just becomes an honest struggle.

To convert it from Hollywood ease into a normal business language, so as long as you've got a story that's about somebody that your audience can relate to, who's confronting a challenge that is relevant to them, and that they see an honest struggle between that hero and that challenge it will result in

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some worthy lesson being learned, and then therefore a worthy story for them to listen to. There's a lot more that makes for a great story but that's at the heart of it, and if you got those you've got really good content to work with.

Roger: I have to imagine a lot of people that you work with start off by saying but I just don't have a good story like that. I've thought about it, I've wracked my brain and really all my stories are really boring. How do you coax out the good story?

Paul: I hear that a lot, by the way, and in fact the people that I interview for stories that's a typical response is oh I'd be happy to interview with you for the book but I don't have any good stories. Then two hours later I've got a half dozen good stories from them and they're just shocked that those things came out of their mouths.

It starts with asking the right question. If you ask somebody tell me your best story it's not often that you're going to get a good one. That's actually the question you asked me at the beginning of this podcast and I hope I gave you a good one, but that's kind of cheating because you're asking a guy who tells stories for a living so of course I've got a lot of them on the tip of my tongue.

Roger: Right, I figured it was safe to ask you, if anybody Paul. Another guest I would not hit with that question right off the bat.

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Paul: Right and you know that because you know you probably would not get much out of that question and that's true of most people, they'll just be stymied at that question. What you do is you ask a more specific question like tell me the moment you realized your biggest problem was your biggest problem, or tell me about the most unexpected lesson you learned at work in the last year, or what was the biggest mistake you've ever made in your career? Those kind of very specific questions will make somebody think of a pivotal moment in their life and working career. There's clearly going to be a great story around that, so it really is about asking the right question, and not only of yourself to come up with your own stories but of other people. If you're serious about having a repertoire of stories on the tip of your tongue to use at the appropriate time you need to collect stories, which means you need to ask these kind of questions a lot.

There's a whole section in one chapter of the book, in fact a couple of chapters on how to get other people to tell you great stories and how to get great stories out of yourself by asking these kind of questions.

Roger: That sort of segues into another [inaudible] in the sales process we really think about telling our story or our stories, our company's story, our founding story, stories about how our customers saved the day with our products and so on. You make the point that it's important to get the buyer, the person on the other side of the transaction to open up and tell his or her story or stories. Why is that important and then how do you do that? Because I'm sort of visualizing a typical say purchasing agent of VP, or whoever you're dealing with, whatever level of

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person, they've got a lot of things on their agenda, they are looking perhaps to purchase something or at least to hear why they should purchase whatever you've got and they're going to try and keep the information that they're providing to sort of the minimum needed for the salesperson to explain why their product will work. They're not necessarily going into that meeting thinking gee, I think I'd like to probably talk for 10 or 15 minutes myself.

Paul: Right, I think any experienced salesperson will tell you, a successful and experienced salesperson, and that's probably an oxymoron, you don't get to be an experienced salesperson without being successful, will tell you that selling is a lot about listening. If you're not very good at listening and not very good at getting your prospect or buyer to open up and tell you really what it is they need, if you can't do that it'll be difficult for you to meet those needs. That's the reason why is if you don't hear their stories it'll be difficult for you to know which of your stories to tell, and which of your products to sell to them, and which solutions to sell to them, etc.

For example, if you just ask people what's your biggest problem? They're going to tell you something like oh warehousing or delivery or something. Now you've got a one word answer but you don't know what that means really. If you ask the question that I mentioned earlier, tell me about the moment that you knew your biggest problem was your biggest problem and then they'll go oh, well that would have been that day that our biggest customer called us on a Saturday in a panic because our product hadn't showed up on time and we checked the production schedule and it turns out that we

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couldn't even find the right product and so we had to go do a custom production run and it was really expensive to make, and then we had to expedite the shipment to them, and it barely got there on time and we almost lost the customer. When we looked into it we found the right product sitting in the warehouse exactly where it was supposed to be all along, that's my problem. Now you know what he means by a warehouse problem.

Getting them to tell you a story is more important than getting them to just talk and give you short answers, so that asking open-ended questions is one of the ways to do that. There's a couple other ways too. The main one is just shut up and listen, I mean literally if you can avoid filling the air time with your voice you'll have a much better chance of getting them to open up. That's a difficult thing for most of us to do is to just shut up for a while and let the other person talk. The third one that I would mention is and this is kind of the oldest one in the book is when you ask about something in the buyer's office, if you're in there anyway surely you're going to notice the pictures on the desk or the diplomas on the wall or the whatever, so establishing some kind of connection to the person you're talking to. People have things on display that they're proud of and that they want to talk about, so just notice it and that will give them an opportunity to talk about themselves a little bit and you'll learn a lot more than you starting into your sales pitch.

Roger: Yes it seems like if you can get them to tell a story about their problem or their need as opposed to just sort of reciting a few facts about it that'll make it more vivid for them too and probably increase the importance of finding a solution. Just by recalling

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that situation where they almost really messed up their biggest customer because they didn't know where the product was in their warehouse.

Paul: Yes, that's another reason, I hadn't thought about that one but that also makes it important for you to get the buyer to tell you stories, not just tell them stories.

Roger: Of course the looking around the office thing gives you a chance to establish what Robert Cialdini would call liking to where you can find, not just ask the about that diploma or that football trophy or whatever, but if you can find something that you have in common with them and say oh I see you're a football fan or I see you also went to the University of Tennessee or whatever that you can not only generate the story but you can also generate that liking effect.

Paul: Right.

Roger: One suggestion I found a little bit counterintuitive at first was that it might be a good idea to tell a story about how you couldn't help the buyer, or a buyer, or maybe describe a situation where you failed in some way. Why would you want to do that? Because again I think our first instinct is to just recite success stories as long as the buyer will listen.

Paul: Yes, so I learned a lot of unexpected things doing the research for this book. I ended up interviewing professional salespeople

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at 50 or 60 some odd companies around the world and also professional buyers, professional procurement people at companies like that as well. Part of what I was looking for is what kind of stories are great salespeople telling, in what situations? I ended up documenting 25 different types of stories that great salespeople tell. One of them is, in fact number seven, is telling them a story about when you can't help them. The reason for that one is I learned from buyers that there are two things that salespeople can do that will immediately build their credibility with the buyer. One of them is if you tell them when you made a mistake, so that they don't find out about it from somebody else, like they found out about it from you that you or your company made a mistake on something, you're going to tell them right away so they can fix it right away.

The second way is if you tell them honestly when you or your company are not the best solution for them, when you can't help them or you're not the best provider in this case. That one I think is kind of obvious, if I tell you every need you've got I'm the best solution, well I'm not as likely to believe you as if you tell me look, you've got seven needs, four of them I'm the best solution on the market for you. Three of them I'm good but I'm not great, you might have better luck elsewhere, but there's absolutely nobody you should be buying those four from than me. I'm so much more likely to believe that because you're being honest with me about the three that I'm not the best so I'll believe you on the four.

You can't just walk in to a buyer and say look Roger, I'll always tell you when I make a mistake and if I ever can't help you, if I'm not the best solution I'll tell you that. That's not believable, you

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can't just tell somebody you're going to do that. If you tell them a story about the last time that you did it, about the last customer whom you told here are the two situations where I'm not going to be your best solution but all these others I'm absolutely the best solution for you, and what the ramifications of that were or tell them a story about the last time you made a mistake or your company made a mistake with some other client and what happened as a result. Did you lose the account? Did you not? Did it improve your trust with you that you owned up to it? Telling a story about when you did that in the past will absolutely help them understand that you would do it again with them in the future. You can't just tell them I'll do it with you in the future because that's not believable.

Roger: Of course we've all met the salespeople who will never say that, they will be the ones who will always say yes we can handle all your needs, whatever situation you raise oh yes we can do that, and they're really destroying their own credibility. I guess that sort of goes back, there's a broader psychological principle of influence that if you are advancing a series of positive arguments, that if you include a negative argument with those your credibility will increase just because it gives at least the impression of honesty, the fact that you are admitting that your product is not the best for some application or saying something that is not just another great selling point.

Paul: Right, and that's the kind of thing that I would not have learned if I'd only interviewed salespeople. I'll admit that I originally planned to only interview salespeople for this book and then once I started interviewing buyers I ended up coming to the conclusion that I was probably learning more from interviewing

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buyers than interviewing salespeople. I guess that makes sense in hindsight, I mean who better to tell you which sales stories work and which ones don't than professional procurement people that listen to them all day long and make the decision. Those are definitely two of the lessons that I probably wouldn't have learned otherwise.

Roger: Did these buyers indicate that they actually liked stories or because again you would get that impression that you just give me the facts, I don't need stories. Did you find that they actually A enjoyed and B you sought out these stories?

Paul: Yes they do, and in fact there were some types of stories ... I asked and one of the questions I asked was what stories do you want to hear from your salespeople? I got some very specific answers like stories about the founding of your company, like they want to know who founded your company and why did they found it? That lets them know so much more about what you're all about. Stories that help them see the values that you and your company have, stories about how your product is made, stories that would help them understand the integrity that you and your company kind of deal with and traffic in and represent. Now you notice what's not in that list is stories about the products, success stories, etc., and I don't think that's because they don't want to hear those stories. I think that's because they already hear those stories from salespeople.

Roger: They know they're going to get those.

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Paul: Yes they know they're going to get that anyway, so when I ask them the question they very quickly came to mind the stories they're not hearing enough of that they want to hear. There's a list of those, like I just gave you in the book, here are the stories your buyers want to hear. In fact there was some more quantitative research other than my qualitative stuff with these buyers, forster research, I can't remember the year that it was done but they essentially asked thousands of professional buyers what type of information are salespeople that call on you do they have ample supply of when they come on the sales call? Some of it is information about their own product they're selling and the answer there was 90%, of course salespeople are going to come prepared knowing about the product that they're selling. How well do they know their own industry, how well did they know my industry, how well did they know my company? The lowest rated thing was essentially stories, it was stories, antidotes, or examples of their product being used as opposed to just a price list, order guide, feature and benefit list, but stories about the product.

I think it was 22% of the time buyers think salespeople come adequately prepared with those things, so the biggest area of improvement opportunity I think for most is to tell more stories.

Roger: Interesting, how do you fix a bad story? You talk about a founder story, I'm sure that there's some really great founder stories, Federal Express story of how the company almost went bankrupt and was saved by a trip to Las Vegas and all the sort of great storytelling. For a lot of businesses it's a pretty prosaic story. Is there a way you found to add some juice to these that

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makes them more interesting?

Paul: Yes and in fact two-thirds of the book is dedicated to that and we could probably spend the rest of our time here talking about nothing else than that. It starts with, I'll kind of give you an overview and you can decide if any of these areas you want to go deeper on, but it starts with knowing what a story is and what it is not. A lot of companies and people if I ask them for their founding story what they give me is something that's not even a story. They'll just say oh our company was founded in this year, by this person, on this date, and our goal is to become the best in the industry or whatever. That's not a story, that's the title and the date and your goal, that's not a story. You got to know what a story is.

A story is a narrative about something that happened to somebody, so it's not just a mission statement or a vision statement or something like that. Then once you've got that, obviously those three things I mentioned earlier, relatable hero, relevant challenge, and honest struggle. That's the foundation, if you don't have that you don't really have an interesting story. To continue to build on it, having the right story structure is important and that structure that I found that works the best is context, challenge, conflict, and resolution. Those are the four main parts of a story and need to be told in that order and there's a set of questions that fulfills each of those parts of a story that I lay out in the book that your story needs to answer these eight questions in this order in order for it to be a really interesting and effective story.

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Then once you've got those eight questions answered then you can start really adding some juice to it, as you said, by adding the element of emotion, and surprise, and the right amount of dialog, and details, so some of the kind of things you might learn if you were to study screenwriting or something like that but not in so much detail because you're not crafting a two-hour movie or a 250 page novel, you're crafting a two minute story. Some of those things can really make a difference in an interesting story and a ho-hum story.

Roger: I think the context piece, certainly I've seen sort of stories that fail because the person telling them was, well I knew a guy who did this and it just doesn't seem ... You don't really suspect that the person is lying but it just isn't interesting or believable. Where if he would have said gee, when I was a grad student in Columbus I had this really strange professor who did this and suddenly now you're sort of hooked into this story a lot more than if it's just sort of very non-specific.

Paul: Yes exactly, you're right and that is the context and belongs at the beginning. The things that you just said answer the first three questions that you have to answer in a story, well questions number two through four. Where and when did it take place, who's the hero, and what did they want? If you just say hey I knew a guy once who did this, well you've skipped the where and the when, you haven't really told me who he was, just some guy that you knew, and you didn't tell me what he wanted, you just told me what he did. You really haven't even answered those three questions, so those are the first three and believability I think is the word you said that really nails it. That's what the context does for you. When you answer those

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questions it communicates to the listener that this really happened. If I open up a story, once upon a time there was, well you know that I'm making up a story. If I open it up last year at the University of Cincinnati, in May when I was there with my wife, blah, blah, blah. Now you assume that it's true because I've given you a specific date and a time, person, place.

If I don't tell you either, if I don't say once upon a time or give you a specific date now you don't really know is this made up, is it true, is it something just getting fabricated as you go because you don't really know all the details? Taking that question off the table by answering it right up front, or those three questions where and when, who's the hero, what did they want, really makes your story believable.

Roger: If you're dealing with multiple salespeople or multiple folks who are interfacing with the customers, do you try and craft a single story that they all can use or do you rely on their individual stories? How do you do that? How would you keep it from sounding scripted too or if you distribute here's the story to a group of salespeople, have them deliver it in really a sort of believable and personable way?

Paul: Yes, so I hear a couple of questions in there. One is about one story for a bunch of salespeople to then go off and use, and the other one is about not sounded scripted. Let me answer the second one first because it's easier. One of the things that the buyers told me when I asked them, I said what is it that makes a sales pitch sound like a sales pitch? I got some really

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interesting answers to that question and a lot of people, after they gave me the answer said yes, that makes the hair on the back of my neck stand up or that makes me want to vomit. I had a lot of grotesque responses to that.

Roger: That'd be a bad sales call.

Paul: Yes it would be, and some of the things they said, in fact the most common answer to that was when the tone of the conversation shifts from conversational to something that sounded memorized and scripted. They said that's the moment I knew that the conversation was over and the sales pitch had started, and it just made me cringe. You obviously do not want that kind of reaction to your sales pitch. The best way to not have your sales pitch, or in the case I'm talking about your sales stories, sound memorized and scripted is to not memorize and script them. In fact the best way to not memorize them is to not script them to begin with. I suggest to people you need to craft out your sales stories but don't write them out word for word, just use bullet points.

You keep a database of stories and just in bullet points that go chronologically through the order of things that happened in the story, and you can memorize the bullet points but don't memorize every word of the story. That way every time you tell the story it will sound a little bit different because you're extemporaneously making it up on the spot. You've got all the facts right because you've memorized your list of facts but when you put it into a story with full sentences you haven't memorized it because you never typed it out or wrote it out

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longhand that way to begin with. That's the first thing is never write your stories out unless you have to publish them online, or in an email, or a memo or something, then of course you have to.

To your other question about if I've got a story that I want the entire sales force to have yes, you might want to script it out or you may want to videotape or record yourself giving it. Recognize that that's just one story out of dozens of stories that a good salesperson will use throughout the entire sales process. In fact that's one of the things that I learned in doing this research is great salespeople are telling stories from as early as introducing themselves to the buyer, to preparing for the sales call, to building rapport with the buyer, to making the actual sales pitch itself, to handling objections, to closing the sale, and even managing customer relationships after the sale. There are in fact 25 different types of stories they're telling and the story you're talking about is probably in that main sales pitch and it's probably the problem story or one of the customer's success stories that is the heart and the soul of that main sales pitch.

That one it would be certainly okay for that one story to be the same essentially across all of your salespeople, because most of those other stories are going to be different. Almost all of the building rapport stories are going to be unique to the salesperson, except maybe the company's founding story where they all should have your company was only founded once and that story should be the same essentially from everybody, but all those other stories about I'll tell you when I made a mistake or when I can't help you, why I do what I do for

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a living, those are going to be very unique to each individual. It's certainly okay for one of your stories, your corporate stories to be the same across everybody.

Roger: One of the things that's great about stories I think is that these can be used by any size enterprise. Sometimes a lot of the advice we get on the show seems to be better suited for big companies, big brands that can invest in various kinds of marketing activities and whatnot, but even a solopreneur, a freelancer, or somebody like that undoubtedly has stories. It might even be tougher for a company like a Walmart or some really large company to come up with those stories. Have you found that to be the case?

Paul: You know I hadn't thought about it until you just said it but I think I agree with you that it's harder for big companies. The first part of it absolutely anybody can do this, no size company is too big or small to be able to tell stories, but now that you mention it I think you're probably right that the really big companies will have a more difficult time with it simply because just about anything anybody's saying outside the company, for a large company, needs to get approved by so many levels of management and through the external relations department and the HR group, whatever that it makes it difficult sometimes for people to just go out and have conversations with people that are not scripted and memorized because there's so much corporate hierarchy.

It's for a legitimate reason, there's so much corporate equity at stake and shareholder value at stake. If somebody says

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something really stupid it could cost the company billions I suppose, whereas if it's a solopreneurship it's not going to cost you that much if you make a little mistake and lie to one client. I think it might be easier for the smaller ones to do it.

Roger: I suppose in a large organization it could almost turn into a game of telephone too by the time it gets retold across various levels of management. Paul you mentioned a database of stories, now were you speaking figuratively or literally there? Should a salesperson actually have some kind of an organized collection of stories as opposed to just sort of having these things tucked in the back of his or her head?

Paul: Yes, I absolutely meant that literally. I suppose you could have that database in the back of your head, it would still be a real database, that you should have a whole collection of stories.

Roger: In my head it would be an imperfect database.

Paul: Certainly and mine as well, which is why mine isn't just in my head. I literally write them down or in my case I type them up into a computer program, I happen to use Evernote, but you use whatever you want. Again, they should be captured just in bullet point form in the structure, and I actually have a Microsoft Word database that comes with Sell With a Story. It's on my website, you can download it, and it's already got places in this template for that context challenge, conflict resolution, and even has places before and after that for the hook that how are you going to get the audience interested in this story, and then at

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the end of the story what is the lesson that you want the audience to learn, and then what is the recommended action you want them to take? It's got this database for you to capture all of your stories in, and you can have as many stories in your database as possible. I now have over 300 stories in my personal database, but absolutely everybody should have one of these so that you're not just relying on your brain to remember it.

The more I think about it, the more obvious it seems to me that everybody should have this because all of your financial data is in a database somewhere isn't it? All of your sales pitches are on some computer hard drive somewhere aren't they? All your price lists are in some binder somewhere aren't they? Just about everything that is of value to a salesperson is captured in some database or computer storage device or file cabinet somewhere, why shouldn't one of the most valuable assets that they have, their stories, why would those be any different? They absolutely should be captured somewhere.

Roger: Great, well that seems like a good place to break Paul. Let me remind our listeners that we're speaking with Paul Smith, author of *Sell With a Story*, *How to Capture Attention*, *Build Trust*, and *Close the Sale*. Paul, how can our listeners find you, your content, and perhaps that download that you just mentioned online?

Paul: Absolutely thank you, so if they go just to my website's a good place to find all of that stuff, my books and training courses and that resource guide, which is [leadwithastory.com](http://leadwithastory.com) and then that

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downloadable file is at /resources and you can find all kinds of stuff there that you can download for free.

Roger: Great, well we will link to that place as well as any other resources we talked about during the show on the show notes pages at [rogerdooley.com/podcast](http://rogerdooley.com/podcast). Paul thanks so much for being on the show, great story.

Paul: Yes, you're very welcome Roger. Thanks for having me on.

Thank you for joining me for this episode of the Brainfluence Podcast. To continue the discussion and to find your own path to brainy success, please visit us at [RogerDooley.com](http://RogerDooley.com).