



Business Narratives

Narratives are essentially stories, either fiction or nonfiction, that are told for the purpose of emphasizing a specific lesson. Narratives are particularly effective forms of business communication, because they help listeners retain information, stay engaged, and practically apply difficult concepts to their work environment.

1. Workplace Narratives:

- A. Connect diverse groups through relatable experiences.
- B. Keep audiences engaged during presentations.
- C. Help audiences retain information and understand difficult concepts.
- D. Are most effective for evoking emotion, teaching lessons, giving credit, and showcasing processes or life-cycles.

2. Crafting Appropriate Narratives:

- A. Create or select a narrative appropriate to the audience, the situation, and the organization.
 - I. What is the culture?
 - II. What relationships are in the room?
 - III. What are the organization's long-term goals?
 - IV. What are the organization's values?
- B. Create a parallel between the context of the situation and the content of the narrative.
 - I. If you cannot find a narrative that speaks to the specific situation, create one.
- C. Keep the narrative engaging, relevant, and timely.
 - I. Avoid unnecessary detail and tangential information, because it may obscure your point and cause your audience to become disengaged.
- D. Match the narrative intensity to the situational intensity.
 - I. If you are using a narrative to describe a low-intensity situation (such as employee gossip), choose a narrative of similar intensity. If you are using a narrative to describe illegal or unethical behavior, use multiple narratives of similar intensity.

3. Common Workplace Narratives:

- A. Narratives about companies that have had ethical problems in the past are used to showcase the importance of ethical culture and stakeholder trust.
- B. In an educational context, business narratives can be used as case studies to help students understand business concepts.
- C. Orientation and training programs often use narratives to explain company values and procedures.