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.
      1. What is the culture?
      2. What relationships are in the room?
      3. What are the organization’s long-term goals?
      4. What are the organization’s values?
   B. Create a parallel between the context of the situation and the content of the narrative.
      1. If you cannot find a narrative that speaks to the specific situation, create one.
   C. Keep the narrative engaging, relevant, and timely.
      1. 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.
      1. 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.