

## Your Business Has a Great Story. Are You Telling It?

Based on a webinar presented by Leah Sanford from [The Family Knife](#)

You're running a business in a province known for storytelling, be it 'round a campfire or kitchen table, out at sea under the stars, or at the pub over a pint. But not every Nova Scotian is a born storyteller. The good news is, you can learn and grow your storytelling skills at any age or stage!

During this webinar with The Family Knife, we learned how to tell your business's story to better effect, draw your ideal customers in, and share the wonders and delights you have on offer. Looking at your business with an outside perspective is key to unlocking your story and success.

### Number One Take Away for Storytelling

When it comes to marketing messages and telling your story, focus on one thing per message to keep the message strong, compelling and engaging (Read more about the dilution principle "disimprovement" by Howard Gossage at: <https://www.familyknife.com/newsletter/the-danger-of-disimprovement>).

### What Makes a Great Story? 8 Steps:

#### 1. A Central Character

A central character that someone the audience can relate and connect to. A single central character, going about their normal day. They represent your best customer. Importantly, this is not you. You cannot be the central character in your own story until someone else is telling it (that comes later).

#### 2. A Want

They WANT something -- and it's not you, not yet! -- it could be a vacation, an escape, a new experience. This is triggered by something in their environment (like seeing a tourism ad, getting stuck in traffic, scrolling through social media, day-dreaming with a friend, or having a bad day).\*

#### 3. A Need

They FEEL a deeper need -- this is where you shine! -- this is emotional, and not yet fully articulated on their end, but it's important for you to understand. Because your story promises a way to satisfy that need. This is the heart of the story's quest, it's the solution to the problem the previous step uncovered. \*\*

#### 4. Barriers

Barriers! There are 3 types -- social, emotional, and functional\* -- and they are real or perceived by the central character and stand in their way to achieving their goal (the vacation and soulful satisfaction of their need). It's important for you to understand and plan ways around, over, under, or through these. You don't need to clear the path, you want to simply alert your character to the barriers and help them overcome them. Inconveniences are only a problem when they're unexpected.

#### 5. Journey

Journey -- this is the adventure time! The central character is on their way to you. Your job is to smooth the way and make it more fun and help build the anticipation for them!

#### 6. Success

They're here with you, and they're loving it. The ultimate desire uncovered by the initial struggle or trigger is being satisfied by your business.

#### 7. Costs and Tradeoffs

Embrace them! These are the story elements that you gift to your central character, so that when they leave and become the storyteller, they've got the right answers to the questions they're asked. Give them great reasons why anything that's a little out of the ordinary, less than perfectly convenient, or surprising are actually tradeoffs you've made to serve your best customers the best way you know how.

#### 8. New Them!

We wrap our story structure on a happy ending note where you become the central character in their story. All because you allowed someone else to be the central character in yours.

\* **FURTHER READING: *Demand Side Sales***

by Bob Moesta with Greg Engle

\*\* **WATCH: *Jobs to Be Done***

The "Jobs to Be Done" theory developed by Clayton Christensen et al. See: *Competing Against Luck* and this YouTube video for more:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Stc0beAxavY>

## Finding the Details to your Best Story:

Every business has their own story. Look for what it is about you that is unique. You can find this in many ways, and you have much of this information already:

- **Your Data:** Review your website and social media data; what are the analytics telling you? Where are they spending time on your website right now, what content are they engaging with? What are they saying? Create your central character based on this data.
- **Tourism Nova Scotia data:** Tourism Nova Scotia has primary research on what motivates visitors to come to and travel around Nova Scotia. Visit: <https://tourismns.ca/research-reports/visitor-insights>
- **Customer interviews, surveys or conversations:** What does this tell you about their needs?
  - Talk to new guests. What brought them to your business? What else have they experienced in Nova Scotia? Where did they come from before arriving to your business?
  - Talk to returning guests. What motivates them to come back to your business? Why do they prioritize your business?
- **Reviews and testimonials:** Look at reviews with an objective eye and pick out the data that will help you identify functional barriers, what people love or what people may not be vibing on, and to determine customers who are the right fit, so that your story can be crafted best for them.

## Analyze your Tradeoffs:

What is it about your business that makes your story unique and connects with your best customer?

- Are you near the beach?
  - No, because we specialize in giving visitors an experience in the wilderness.
- Are you pet friendly?
  - No, because we specialize in offering hypoallergenic services to guests.
- Can you accommodate big groups?
  - No, because we specialize in offering romantic experiences for couples.

## Writing Your Story:

The more we practice writing things down, the clearer our thinking gets and the clearer our writing gets. This will strengthen your skills, capacity and confidence, which is so important to good storytelling.

### Write your Story

- Compile the details around the 8 steps
- Build the structure
- Craft the story

### Become a Storyteller

- Macro Story (blog, video)
- Micro Story (one element of the story) for promotion across your marketing channels.

## About the Family Knife

The Family Knife works with Entrepreneurs of all shapes and sizes to help them really unlock who their best customers are, by identifying those customers who get them, value them, and connect to the stories behind them as entrepreneurs. They help entrepreneurs craft the stories in a way that feels authentic to them and inspires them to keep providing that joy and service to others.

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