



Course Description

Storytelling Compact Course



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Storytelling Compact Course

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Abstract

The storytelling compact course is a half-day long (or even shorter) intense online workshop on the art of marketing storytelling. It starts from the very basics of storytelling, introducing the simple hero-goal-conflict structure, introduces the idea of a core story that can be extended towards multiple platforms and encourages to find applications for storytelling in companies. The workshop is fast-paced with step-by-step exercises.

Course Description

This workshop aims to enable the participants to identify powerful core stories in companies and other organisations. The participants are introduced to the Cross Media Story Canvas as a tool for drafting cross-media storytelling strategies in a guided hands-on process.

At the end of the workshop the participants will be able to:

- Recognise and value potential stories in their own company/organisation
- Develop short, channel-agnostic core stories
- Formulate goals for cross media communication strategies
- Draft a media mix using the activation matrix

The presentation part of the course will talk about:

- Creating cross media stories with the Cross Media Story Canvas
- Areas of application for marketing storytelling
- Examples of successful storytelling
- Hero-Goal-Conflict as basic elements of a story
- Types of heroes





- Types of social media users
- Goals in social media communication
- Finding the right content for the right channel with the Activation Matrix

In principle there is no limitation to the number of participants, it's a matter of how much attention you want to give to the individual. Ideal are 5 groups with 3 persons each. You can scale up the number of people in the groups to 5. I would not recommend more than 5 groups, because otherwise jumping between groups for consultation during breakout sessions gets difficult. That makes the course suitable for 15-25 participants.

The course is recommended for following student groups:

- Students in marketing, PR and media study programmes
- Students in interaction design/digital design
- Students in journalism programmes
- Professionals in marketing & PR
- Professionals in media & journalism
- Professionals in interaction design/digital design

Collaboration Mode

Synchronous collaboration: Collaboration using live tools like chat, google docs live editing and online conferencing software - this course solely relied on Adobe Connect.

Duration, Intensity & ECTS

The course is intended to last between 2 to 4 hours, but can be held as an extended seminar of 8-16h when the exercises are not just used to work on small examples, but to develop real stories. The shorter the course, the more intense and fast-paced it has to be.

The course was not awarded with ECTS by itself, but added as a special session into courses on marketing and branding.

Platforms

The course was solely run on Adobe Connect, but can be realized as well on any other online meeting platform that offers breakout rooms/sessions, e.g. WebEx or BigBlueButton.





Methods

- Breakout-Sessions in Live-Meetings
- Collaboration on canvas templates
- Pecha-Kucha presentations

Curriculum

The workshop can be implemented online via Adobe Connect and will make use of break-out rooms and whiteboard features or google docs collaboration. Rather than a curriculum, we present a tentative, dense schedule of exercises and impulse presentations on storytelling:

Time	Task / Content
15 minutes	Introduction of Teachers and Participants
10 minutes	Pecha-Kucha-Style Introduction of storytelling, break-out group work
5 minutes	Individual identification of possible heroes that embody the relation between a particular lapland enterprise and lapland environment, tradition and values
10 minutes	Introduction of those heroes
5 minutes	Agree on a hero per group
	Short break — 10 minutes
5 minutes	Formulate a matrix of potential goals and conflicts
5 minutes	Agree on goal and conflict
10 minutes	Write core story
10 minutes	Present core stories in plenary
	<i>(90 minutes to this point)</i>
	<i>Break or end of session 1</i>
10 minutes	Pecha-Kucha-Style Introduction into digital channels for storytelling, break-out group work
10 minutes	Formulate communication goals
10 minutes	Choose channel(s)
30 minutes	Work out channel concept, adapt/spread story over chosen channel(s) to create transmedia experience
30 minutes	Reflexion in plenary
	<i>(180 minutes to this point)</i>
	Time permitting:
30 minutes	Improvement of concept
15 minutes	Introduction of final concepts
10 minutes	Outlook on concept implementation





Experience Report This course initially had been devised as a compact onsite experience, helping marketers to create their first own story in not more than 90 minutes. It is fast-paced and very much hands-on, relying on keeping the timing strictly to the minute using a timer or even better a second instructor who keeps the time.

When we adapted the course for online learning, the first assumption was that the exercises would take a whole lot longer, so we doubled the required workshop duration. The presentations were intended to be held in Pecha-Kucha style (20 slides à 20 seconds, total duration 6:40), but without a direct audience feedback the risk to “out-pace” the audiences’ attentiveness was simply too high, so we extended to 10 Minutes each and ended up with 15 minutes each in the actual implementation. It also turned out that it was necessary to clarify questions of understanding after the presentations, more than in an onsite workshop, to be sure everyone is on the same page.

In order to save some time in the initial ideation, we decided to work on stories the students had already begun in earlier sessions of the course the workshop was embedded in. However, it turned out that the stories were by and large not present in a way that was useful to the exercises. It took about 20 minutes to get the stories in shape, so I recommend to stick with ad hoc ideation in the course unless you developed the initial story ideas with the students yourself before the workshop.

The students were unusually shy and hesitated to start working. The feedback showed that they were somewhat intimidated by being taught by an external professor who is a “storytelling expert” (not entirely true, there truly are better ones around) and feared to make mistakes. Also, the group seemed not too familiar with intensive online collaboration. Facilitating the processes in the groups by jumping between the breakout rooms was a strenuous and time consuming exercise and it took about 10 additional minutes to get everyone started. Some of that hassle could be probably alleviated if the students got a better briefing about the nature of the workshop. Having an assessment of the online collaboration experience of the students would have helped as well.





The usage of canvas templates for the whiteboards helped to focus the students on the task and give them orientation. However, as breakout rooms settings in most tools cannot just be replicated by copy and paste, they have to be prepared with the same content one by one. Within the breakout rooms some participants had the problem that they had no microphone. Conversation via text chat took off only slowly, in one team there was a non-responsive member. The group was still able to work, but in similar but larger course settings we have already experienced more than one non-responsive member in a group, effectively keeping the remaining member from participating in the course. It is important to re-sort these users quickly to other groups.

All in all, our recommendation for the next iteration of the workshop is to split it into two sessions with one week in between, so students have the possibility to work on the core story in between.

Material & Links

Slide templates about storytelling are available on the oncreate website.

