



## Once Upon A Time

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And so we begin. The familiar and much loved phrase "once upon a time" signals the beginning of a story. And who doesn't love stories? "Once upon a time" finds its origins in the late 1300s, but was more often used by Charles Perrault, Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm to begin our most memorable fairy tales.

Storytelling is not new. From cave painting to Homer, Shakespeare, Dickens, Orwell, Kipling, Tolkien and many, many more, great storytellers leave their mark on history, weaving tales that come alive, drawing us in to their fabric.

Good stories trigger imaginations and connect with people on an emotional level. They hold us captive and inspire, make us laugh, cry, fear, rejoice and journey into hidden places that exist only in the mind. Stories are versatile. They teach, they inspire, they entertain, they change lives and some even change the world.

Storytelling is a powerful communication process. Stories personify the heart of strategic communication based on a simple principle: If the audience doesn't get the message in a way that causes them to think, feel or do something, everything else is academic.

This month we look at the strength of storytelling in business to demonstrate its crucial ability to engage audiences to business results, and look

at stories that teach, inspire and change the world.

### Stories That Teach

"When the Star Belly Sneetches had frankfurter roasts, or picnics or parties or marshmallow toasts, They never invited the Plain-Belly Sneetches They left them out cold, in the dark of the beaches. They kept them away. Never let them come near. And that's how they treated them year after year."

The grand storyteller, Theodore Geisel, better known as Dr Seuss, told his most famous tale, Cat in the Hat in 236 words and Green Eggs and Ham in just 50 words. Dr Seuss not only entertained generations of children and their parents, his work always communicated important life lessons.

Read [10 Writing Lessons From Dr Seuss](#).

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### Stories That Inspire

Just how effective is storytelling to inspire success? Writing for HubSpot, [Shane Snow](#) shares a compelling rags-to-riches story.

"In 2012, a pale woman with crazy eyebrows and

a keytar strapped to her back made a video of herself, wearing a kimono and holding up hand-Sharpied signs on a street in Melbourne. One by one, the signs flipped. She had spent the last 4 years writing songs. She was a musician, and had parted ways with her record label, which had said the cost of her next album would be a whopping \$500,000. She and her band . . . had worked hard to create some great new music and art. But they couldn't finish producing the record on their own.

Little wonder that organizations are waking up to the impact of effective communication, harnessing their brand stories in engaging ways, and sharing with customers, stakeholder and employees.

And then she posted the video on Kickstarter. In 30 days, it raised \$1.2 million dollars. 24,883 people pre-ordered the album, bought artwork, or simply donated money. The album and tour became a huge success. The woman in the kimono was Amanda Palmer, and she went on to give a massively popular [TED talk](#) about the whole affair.

### Stories That Change the World

*"To all the girls that have faced injustice and have been silenced. Together we will be heard."*

Best-selling author, blogger for the BBC, champion for women's rights and education, co-recipient of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate in history. [Malala Yousafzai's](#) book, I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban created global awareness of the discrimination and violence faced by Pakistani women.

Malala's fearless ability to tell her story has won the hearts and minds of people worldwide. Her work is a testimony to her courage and the power of authentic storytelling to change the world.



### Claire Watson MC, ABC, APR

Vice-president, Strategic Communication Management  
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Claire Watson consults to global, provincial and national companies on their communication needs. Her expertise encompasses research and measurement, internal and change communication, branding, marketing, public and community relations, advocacy and corporate social responsibility. She has taught extension classes for the University of Regina and developed unique training courses for the Centre for Strategic Communication Excellence. She holds 33 international and 150+ national and provincial Awards of Excellence. In addition, she has received a Lifetime Achievement Award from IABC Regina, Master Communicator designation from IABC Canada and the IABC Chairman's Award for leadership in the profession.