



## Traditional PR is dead. Finally!

We receive a lot of messages, but only a few really get in. All the others just do not make it. Too bad, when you have spent your budget as a communication manager on it. ‘Corporate storytelling’ can be the perfect antidotum for meaningless corporate communication. The bankruptcy of traditional PR gives rise to an era of communicating genuinity. It is ‘the art of corporate storytelling’ that will turn the page. But how to walk this new trail?

### THE EMPEROR’S CLOTHES

In a fast-paced information era, traditional PR is bumping into its own limitations. Too bad so little PR-agency realize their bankruptcy is near, if they do not adapt to the new rules of the game. It will not help to spend even more budget and shout your messages even louder than before. It’s like the tale about the emperor’s clothes: we all know how that story ends. More of the same old PR-tricks will only make it worse. Your corporate messages will get lost in a forest of information inflation.

So it’s time to reconsider the whole external communication approach. And look what a paradox: the new way of doing is the old one! Back to the old days: good genuine quality, well developed genuine messages with a genuine soul and a genuine story

will become the new mantra in corporate communication. Read the last sentence again, and count the number of ‘genuines’. Four, right. Genuineness is becoming the new standard. A new need for honesty and purity is here. So it is nothing more but logic that companies will no longer pimp their corporate messages into testosterone tweets or silly oneliners but rather chose for genuine stories, with genuine people telling genuine values and genuine messages.

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## VALUES, MESSAGES, PEOPLE

So, welcome to the new holy grail in the world of communication: (the art of) corporate storytelling. And no, it is not yet another buzzword. At the contrary. It is what it says: telling corporate stories. It is a disruptive way of enabling companies to tell their identity and values. It does so by linking three fundamental value creating elements that together will lead to coherent, genuine stories: values, messages and people.

Companies traditionally spend effort on any of these elements: they have values, they know what messages they want to propagate and they praise the essential quality of their human capital. **But how can these three value creators be put together into relevant external communication?**

## IN FOUR STEPS TOWARDS EXCELLENT CORPORATE STORYTELLING

In BeSpoken's vision, they can lead to a unique communication mix: corporate stories that do create real impact. In order to get to this unique mix, BeSpoken has worked out a methodology that consists of four steps. Step-by-step, companies can develop a plan to bring corporate stories to life.

### 01/ Analysis of the current communication plan

In first instance, the values of the company must be evaluated: what are the values and which messages are distilled out of it? So far, so good. But next, you should link the third value element – the people – to it.

Who are the 'personas' in the company? What kind of typologies are best suited to bring the values and messages? Can these personas be found inside the organization, or should you look at other stakeholders? And next (and foremost): how do we bring values, messages and personas together into real, genuine corporate stories?

### 02/ Develop a corporate story plan

Step 1 was the most difficult one. Now it is time to work out the stories in a concrete Corporate Story Plan (and content calendar). These in turn can be integrated in the existing communication plan or remain a stand-alone story plan.

Which stories do you want to be told to which target audience in which medium?

### 03/ Develop a concrete PR-plan

Back to known territory: the story plan has to be translated into a PR-plan. When to pitch

which story in which medium for which target audience?

### 04/ Tell your story

Time to turn theory into practice. Tell your corporate stories. The output can be a wide variety of options: from press release (no, we are not against them!), an online message on the internal communication platform, an annual report, an article in the client magazine or a 'branded content' feature story in a newspaper weekend edition.

The output can be owned, paid or earned media, in print, online, video.

Is this all rocket science? By far not! The methodology is totally based on known, old skills. Just like our grandparents knew exactly how to tell appealing stories without reading thick academic papers about it, corporations as well must be able to tell stories that do make a real difference in perception. Stories that will be heard, understood and ultimately create lasting impact. Stories that are genuine, told in the right language, in an inspiring way.

## WIN-WIN

Not only will well told corporate stories last longer, the return-on-investment will be better as well. Sure, you will pay to work out the four-step methodology described

above, but the return will quickly be obvious. Not only will the reader prefer good stories, the media as well will be better off. Good story ideas will more easily result in earned media, as opposed to a default press release.

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## SONATA FACILE

Easy, dude? Ehhh, no, not really... There is a reason why we at BeSpoken use the tagline ‘the art of storytelling’. Storytelling indeed is an art. Compare it to playing music or painting. Searching, finding and telling really appealing stories is not something everybody can do. When using storytelling as a communication technique, you must be sure to use the best ‘artists’ for the job. **To make a real difference, you need ‘savoir faire’.** Art, that is.



**So, time to reflect. Be honest when evaluating your current external communication strategy. Look at your values, your messages, your people. Have someone helping you in distilling the best stories to be told. And then, lit the fire and have some strong stories told...**