

Storytelling Presentation

SLIDE: Chief Storytelling slide.

MAREN

Welcome to the Leadership Summit! If you're here for the Chief Storyteller session, you're in the right place.

TOMMY

And if you're here for our personal stories, you won't be disappointed. We've also got a few surprises in here, too.

MAREN

So, let's dive right in. Before you get too comfortable, everyone needs to stand up and move to a table or a chair where you're not seated at a table with anyone you already know.

SLIDE (CHAIRS): The AUDIENCE shifts seats.

MAREN

Now, we have a real opportunity to learn each other's story!

SLIDE (GIRL READING): Since I was a little girl, I've thoroughly enjoyed reading, learning, and experiencing stories – through conversations, books, and movies -- fiction and non-fiction. Stories helped provide context to my world as a young girl and even now into adulthood. They introduced me to the big world beyond Maren – different cultures, our rich history, and even a glimpse into the world we live in today.

TOMMY

SLIDE (WORDS ON PAGE): Without stories – and storytellers – our lives would be mere shells of what they are. The old adage, *If it's not written down, it must not have happened*, comes into play. Each one of us relies on stories to inspire, motivate, inform, educate, document, share, and empower one another. Like Maren, I immersed myself into all types of stories throughout my life – from comics to stories passed from generation to generation. Still today, I lean on stories to sell – both real estate and me, personally, as the REALTOR® of choice to potential clients.

MAREN

SLIDE (FOREST): That's one thing I loved learning about Tommy – how storytelling is a major part of his success and personal brand. It's one thing to read about a person on a website or in print; it's an entirely different experience to learn about someone in-person. Suddenly, the protagonist jumps off the page and is luring you inside the next chapter of their personal story. Let's see Tommy in action.

Tommy's VIDEO plays.

MAREN

And if anyone knows Tommy, you know this video doesn't do his story justice. He is truly a larger-than-life character that sucks you in until the last page is turned. His motivation for success and hard work come from a foundation of family that I find so relatable. Most of you in here know the shoe story he mentioned in the video. It's only a shame we didn't have enough time to tell it. He wanted a pair of 120 sneakers so bad when he was a young boy (my oldest son's age as a matter of fact), begged for them. His father said no, and that it would buy a month's worth of groceries for the whole family. But lo and behold, come Christmas morning, of course there they were. Under the tree. His father wanted to fulfill his son's dream, no matter the cost. Tommy, out of an outpouring of love and respect for his family, realized then and there they needed to go back, and he would never ask his family to choose between a luxury and food again.

I grew up much the same way. Through his family's hard work and sheer determination, he was raised to be just who you find standing in front of you today. His passion for the great American dream of homeownership is so deeply personal. It is moving and motivating in every way. Tommy truly inspires me, as he does everyone he meets. And you all inspire others, too. Every day. With YOUR own stories.

TOMMY

Wow, thanks Maren. But I have to respectfully disagree.

Because for those of us who know Maren knows that she commands any room and any stage. Her passion for – well – everything exudes from her entire being. She believes in living and giving to the fullest as every day could be your last. And she would know, having survived two cardiac arrests throughout her life and literally almost dying four years ago. You never have to wonder where Maren stands on an issue or whether she stands with you or respectfully against you. One thing's for sure, she stands here today for you.

SLIDE (OLD CAR): Maren's story is one of a small-town country girl gone big city, who grew up with a ton of love, support, sports (ask her how many catching masks she went through over the years) and amazing examples of the entrepreneurial spirit through her parents. Having overcome more challenges than we could have ever delved into here; she has never shied away from a challenge or hard work, and her personal brand tells one heck of a story with authenticity and humanism.

Let's take a look at Maren's epic story.

Maren's VIDEO plays.

TOMMY

Inspiring, right? If you weren't a REALTOR® or a part of the REALTOR® family, Maren's story would certainly motivate you to run out and get your real estate license right now.

MAREN

SLIDE (FRAME): Each one of you have your own unique stories. You're all storytellers – some of us just may be better at identifying them, framing them, and sharing them than others.

TOMMY

SLIDE (EMPTY BOOK): Stories help us to connect to one another. They humanize us as people, as consumers, as REALTORS®, as employees, as...*humans*. Without stories, the world around us is simply a collection of blank pages.

MAREN

Let's look at some of your personal stories – and the stories of other REALTORS® from across the country that were submitted to the Chief Storyteller website, as we prepared for this session.

SLIDE: The Chief Storyteller WEBSITE is shown.

MAREN (cont'd)

We didn't want to only celebrate our own stories. We want to celebrate you and your stories.

TOMMY

By sharing each other's stories, we can learn from one another. We relate. We empathize. We sympathize.

MAREN

SLIDE (words): We inspire. We celebrate. We *empower*.

The STORY is shown on the screen.

MAREN

SLIDE (Pakistan): Introducing Tricia Thomas – a Bay East Association of REALTORS® member.

You will not believe what you're about to hear. At the age of five, Tricia's life was changed forever.

Tricia says she may not be epic, but she admits to being a good storyteller!

Why? Because she's lived in so many different countries and had so many unusual experiences, she can paint a picture that may be new, unusual and even exotic to most people.

Born in Pakistan in the late 1950's when it was a young nation, having gained its independence from both India and British Colonial rule a decade earlier, she lived in Karachi where its streets were largely unpaved. Cars and camels shared the same transportation routes. The sound of drivers blasting horns clashed with the yells of pedestrians and market vendors. Everywhere you turned, there was noise, but everyone had a voice. This concert of sound was very normal to her until the day she met the man with no tongue.

She was only five years old, and her ayah (her maid/nurse) took her to the marketplace. She was misbehaving, which annoyed her ayah who took her into a small tobacco stall where her ayah demanded the man speak to Tricia. She yelled "Speak to the girl," but he couldn't. He opened his mouth and she saw he had no tongue. Her ayah told Tricia that the man lost his power -- his tongue was cut out and his voice taken away as punishment. That's when Tricia decided to never be powerless and to use her voice.

Find out how Tricia uses her voice to help others at ncrealtors.org/chiefstoryteller.

The STORY is shown on the screen.

MAREN

SLIDE (pageant): Introducing Becky Karpe – an Oklahoma City Metropolitan Association of REALTORS® member. You will not believe what you're about to hear. Becky Karpe slit her wrist at the Miss Oklahoma Pageant.

I repeat – she slit her wrist at the pageant.

That's the same reaction I had when she submitted the story to us with that as her subject line. Talking about grabbing the audience by the horns! Who wouldn't want to read that story? And yes, it's true! I had the same initial reaction as you! But it's not what you think; the devil's in the details. And you'll need to read her story on the website to see what really happened, but as Becky says, "A scar is only as good as the story that goes along with it. And this was one hell of a story."

Find out how a beauty pageant saved Becky's life at ncrealtors.org/chiefstoryteller.

The STORY is shown on the screen.

TOMMY

SLIDE (senior lady): Meet Berni Johnson Clark -a St. Paul Area Association of REALTORS® member.

Berni had the pleasure of working with a client, Joanne, who lived in her home for 30 years. Joanne raised a family, built a career, created a life, and wrote many chapters of her story in their Big Lake, Minnesota family home. She also buried her husband. It was time to sell, and Berni found the perfect buyer in a 26-year-old man who loved the home as-is and was excited to start a new story of his own.

MAREN

When one door closes, another one opens. Right, Tommy?

TOMMY

Exactly. Similarly, when one chapter ends in a book, another chapter begins. Just turn the page.

The STORY is shown on the screen.

MAREN

SLIDE (cat): Meet Debbie Leber with the Mid-Shore Board of REALTORS®. She shares the story of one of their newer members. We'll call her Kate. A cat wrangler, she is not! But one listing put her to task. She was asked to be especially careful to not let the owner's beloved black cat out of the house. When she entered the house, there was no cat in sight. When noticing the front door was partially ajar, she panicked. But there, right outside the door on the porch, was a black cat. She tried to persuade the cat inside then picked up the cat and proceeded to walk inside, just for the cat to panic and flee from her arms. A foot pursuit ensued, and Kate was traipsing across a field in a suit skirt, heels, and hose, yelling, "Here kitty, kitty!" This was not the way she envisioned her real estate career starting!

Did Kate ever find the cat? Was her real estate career forever cursed by the black cat? Read the entire captivating story at ncrealtors.org/chiefstoryteller.

The STORY is shown on the screen.

TOMMY

SLIDE (rabbit): Meet DeAnn Golden, an Atlanta REALTORS® Association member.

Ask DeAnn Golden what her favorite book is, and she'll answer The Velveteen Rabbit.

DeAnn says this story reminds us that being real is one of the most important characteristics one can possess. While telling her story hasn't always been easy, she hopes it has inspired others to carry on and follow their dreams, rise up after setbacks and strive to move forward when sadness comes and loved ones lost.

DeAnn says that storytelling reminds us that you can still make a "happily ever after" happen. It may not be the ending you envisioned, but for her, she surrounds herself with her REALTOR® family – a network of strength, support and love.

Find out how DeAnn draws on her skills, education and hard knock experiences to inspire others like the Velveteen Rabbit at ncrealtors.org/chiefstoryteller.

MAREN

It's important to remember how stories from your childhood keep you grounded. Right, Tommy?

TOMMY

Exactly. Those stories continue to inspire us and give us inspiration.

The STORY is shown on the screen.

MAREN

SLIDE (book): Meet Robert Contreras, a Kitsep County Association of REALTORS® member.

As a manager, Robert tries to tell stories that ignite other agents by helping them illuminate "why I'm a Realtor®" to begin to tell their own story. Telling a story goes from the mere conveyance of information to an art form when the storyteller realized that the story is not about them, even when they are the subject or hero of the story.

Learning to connect with the listener and give them what they need at the right time is the goal. Learning how to do this has made Robert a better leader. He says, by matching his story to someone else's experience helps create deeper connections personally and professionally.

So, how can you, REALTORS®, embrace storytelling as a true art form and make heroes out of your clients and consumers? I'm glad you asked!

TOMMY

SLIDE: If you're a leader, you're a storyteller.

As leaders we need to acknowledge that storytelling is both an art and science. Let's look at the facts and enjoy the fiction.

SLIDE: Fact or fiction?

The word "story" originated in the 14th century and referred to an account to be true. The earliest use of it to reference a fictional anecdote was in 1425.

SLIDE: 65% of daily conversations involve storytelling – American Scientific

SLIDE: 17 films with the word "Story" in the title have won Oscars (West Side Story, Toy Story) These films – epic blockbuster films – were created by some pretty amazing storytellers. Who's your favorite storyteller?

MAREN

Now for the interactive part of our program! Are you ready?

SLIDE: Who is your favorite storyteller?

SLIDE: Show picture of a popular epic storyteller (Walt Whitman)

SLIDE: Walt Whitman poem excerpt
Why do you think Walt Whitman is a great storyteller?

SLIDE: Show picture of a popular epic storyteller (Walt Disney)

SLIDE: Show Walt Disney clip
Why do you think Walt Disney is a great storyteller?

SLIDE: Show picture of a popular epic storyteller (Bob Dylan)

SLIDE: Show Bob Dylan lyrics
Why do you think Bob Dylan is a great storyteller?

So, what makes a great storyteller so great, anyway?

TOMMY

There are characteristics of great storytellers. Think about which ones you might exemplify.

SLIDE: Characteristics of great storytellers

- Empower others
- Generous in spirit
- Vulnerable
- Truthful
- Trustworthy

- Strategic

SLIDE:

Benefits:

Why should leaders want to become better storytellers?

- Recruit better
- Raise awareness
- Succeed in business
- Build deeper relationships
- Create amazing business partnerships
- Create strong and cohesive work environments
- Represent yourself in the best light
- Serve as an ambassador for your company/association

MAREN

Hopefully, though my story, Tommy's story and the others you heard today, you know why storytelling is useful from building you brand to pulling out people's passion.

SLIDE:

Why storytelling is useful?

- Builds your personal brand
- Increases your sphere of influence
- Steers growth
- Fosters creativity
- Draws passion out of people
- Uses patterns

MAREN

SLIDE:

Advice:

5 questions that can help you hone your story and become a better leader:

- Whose lives, primarily, are you out to change?
- What's at stake if you succeed or fail?
- What does success look like?
- What are the obstacles to reaching success, and how will you overcome them?
- What proof points can you offer to make the story believable/come true?
- Who is the hero of your story? (it's not your brand or product)

TOMMY

SLIDE:

Who's the real hero of your story?

Is it the customer or the consumer? By having the hero be the consumer, instead of the REALTOR®, this makes it easier for the consumer to relate to the story. Have the brand/customer serve as the mentor. The brand or product is then the magical gift the hero will need to defeat the enemy.

SLIDE:

7 elements to turn a good story into a great story

1. *Start with the context.*

Ever heard someone excitedly launch into a story and soon the listeners are scratching their heads? The teller stops and says something like, “Oh, wait, I guess I should back up a bit and explain why all this happened. You see, my boss had just gotten fired, and so . . .”. That’s the sign that the storyteller skipped the context. If they’re lucky, the confused look on their audience’s faces will remind them to go back and tell the context. If they’re not lucky enough to notice, their story is doomed to mediocrity.

2. *Use metaphors and analogies.*

A well-chosen metaphor can add to the impact of a story, or replace a story entirely, because there are already entire stories attached to those few words in your audience’s brain, waiting for you to tap into.

3. *Appeal to emotion.*

Studies show people make decisions largely based on emotional reasons, and then rationalize them afterwards so they feel logical. Great leaders know this intuitively and aren’t afraid to lead with both sides of their brain.

4. *Keep it tangible and concrete.*

Avoid mind-numbing vague generalities and weasel words typical of management speak today. Keep stories specific and concrete and they’ll be more engaging and memorable.

5. *Include a surprise.*

Surprises not only get your audience to sit up and pay attention, they make your story more memorable. Studies show surprise triggers the release of adrenaline in the brain that heightens memory formation.

6. *Use a narrative style appropriate for business.*

Be concise and to the point. Business narratives should be 3-5 minutes long. Leave the long soliloquy for your first screenplay.

7. *Move beyond telling your audience a story to creating a scene or event for them to participate in.*

While a good story is a close second, experience has always been the best teacher. If you can turn your story into an event that your audience takes part in, it will be even more effective.

(Source: Andy Smith, author of Lead with a Story: A Guide to Crafting Business Narratives That Captivate, Convince, and Inspire)

SLIDE: Q & A

MAREN

So, we challenge you to tell your story – at every opportunity. The story of your association, of your brokerage, of your team – even your personal story. And tell it with enthusiasm. Own your story.

Your story, Your Year. Own it!

SLIDE:

Chief Storyteller branding

ncrealtors.org/chiefstoryteller

#chiefstoryteller

TOMMY

Be vulnerable. Be epic. Because without our stories, our pages and our lives are just blank paper.

SLIDE:

Branding

NC REALTORS®, CRRA branding, Chicago Association branding