

# Session 4: Storytelling to create emotional value

Deep Dive 1 – Sustainability and storytelling as differentiators in international business



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## About me

### **Marijke Nijdam**

Content Marketing and Communication Adviser

## GloballyCool

- ▶ Specialized in:
  - ▶ Content marketing
  - ▶ Social media
- ▶ 18+ Years experience
- ▶ 33+ Countries



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# Agenda



**01** The importance of authenticity, origin and storytelling

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**02** Methods of storytelling

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**03** Integrate storytelling into your marketing strategies

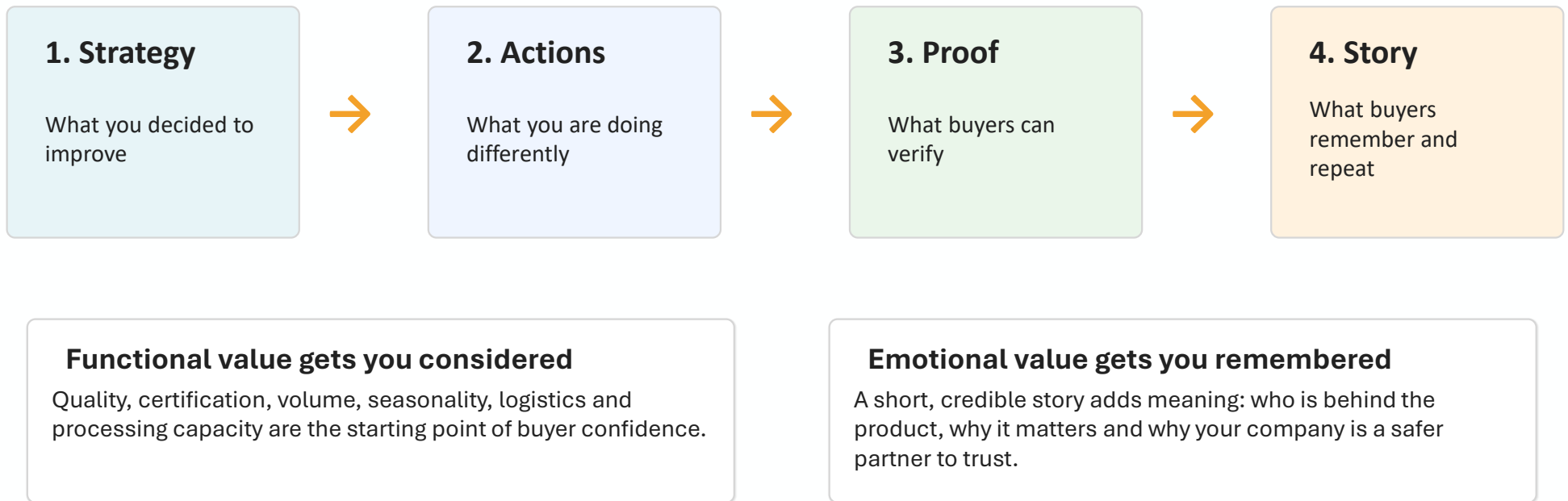
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**04** Assignment: What's your story? And how will you create authentic narratives to create emotional value?

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**05** Lessons learned

# Bridge from ESG work to buyer storytelling



**Storytelling is not extra decoration. It is how you turn ESG work into buyer-facing value.**



**Place yourself as a  
buyer...  
what stories would  
convince you?**

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# Why success stories matter for your brand / product

1

## **Build buyer confidence**

Success stories show real results

2

## **Prove market potential**

Demonstrate that these products can succeed in target markets

3

## **Showcase quality and reliability**

Stories highlight good production, consistent supply, and compliance with standards, which are important in trade.

4

## **Promote local producers**

Stories give visibility to local producers/farmers and suppliers, showing the human and business value behind the products.

5

## **Strengthen marketing and advocacy**

Success stories provide strong evidence for campaigns, trade fairs, and policy discussions, making promotion more persuasive.



Let's have a look at this picture of a bracelet....

- ▶ What's your first impression?
- ▶ Is it a unique product?
- ▶ Does it tell any story?

**Materials**  
2,7 grams of glass beads are used to make this bracelet. The glass beads we use are REACH certified.

**Made by**  
This bracelet is made by Anju, one of our talented artisans.

**37 minutes**

**Creating jobs**  
It takes 37 minutes to make this bracelet.

**Gemstone**  
We use only natural gemstones. Carnelian is courageous and creative.

**Handcrafted**  
This charm is made with a traditional sandcasting technique.



## The power of storytelling!

- ▶ What is the story?
- ▶ What emotion is triggered?
- ▶ Why it works?

Image source: <https://www.abeautifulstory.eu/pages/our-story>

# Consistent storytelling for each product!

## The story of the Generous Earrings

**Made by**  
These earrings are made by Amar, one of our talented artisans

107 work minutes

**Creating jobs**  
It takes 107 minutes to make these earrings

**Crab Symbol**  
With this crab symbol you trust your intuition and feel protected along the way

**Handmade**  
These earrings are made with a traditional sandcasting technique

## The story of the Shimmering Earrings

**A mix of gemstones**  
Peach Moonstone and Labradorite: for loving energy, positivity, soothing, intuition, reflection and attracting success

70 work minutes

**Creating jobs**  
It takes 70 minutes to make these earrings

**Handmade**  
Carefully handcrafted in Jaipur, India's Capital of Gemstones

## The story of the Delightful Necklace

**Handmade**  
Carefully handcrafted in Jaipur, India's Capital of Gemstones

60 work minutes

**Creating jobs**  
It takes 60 minutes to make this necklace

**Green Onyx**  
Green Onyx keeps you focused from the start. And when you know that Green Onyx is not only strong but also harmonious, you will want to keep it by your side forever

# The power of authenticity and origin

How real stories create emotional connection



## What is Authenticity?

Authenticity = Being real, honest, and human

- Show your true story
- Be transparent, not perfect
- Share values, not just products

👉 *People trust what feels real*



## What is Origin?

Origin = Where your story begins

- Why you started
- Where you come from
- What shaped your journey

👉 *People connect to your "why"*



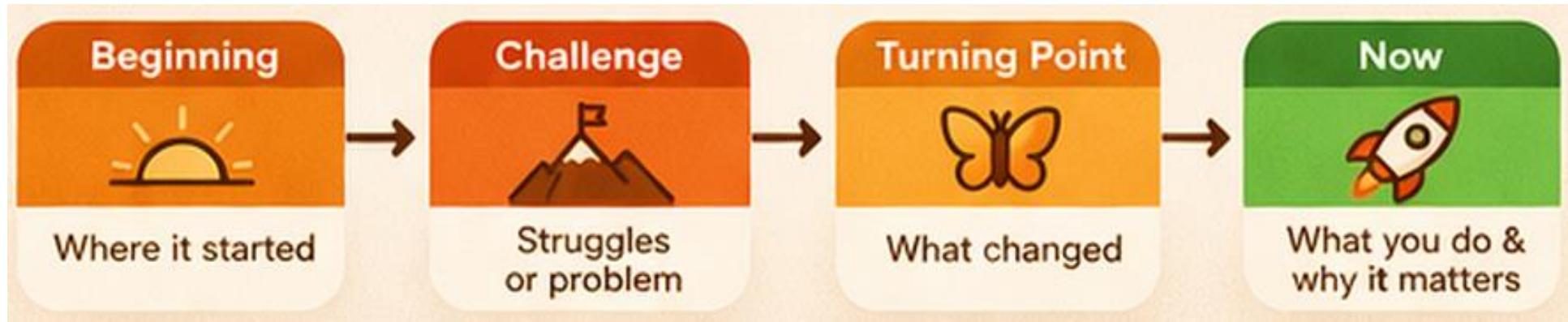
## Why It Matters

Authentic stories create:

- 🛡️ Trust
- ❤️ Emotional connection
- 🔄 Brand loyalty

👉 *Emotion > Features*

# Simple story framework



**KEY MESSAGE**

“People don’t connect with perfect brands.  
*They connect with real stories.*”

## Core concept: Emotional vs Functional value

Functional value	Emotional value
What it does	How it makes you feel
Features	Meaning
Rational	Personal connection
<i>Example: Coffee</i> “High-quality coffee beans”	“Coffee you can feel good about— from the way it’s grown to who it supports.”

# What buyers want: proof + story

## Functional buyer questions

Can you deliver volume and quality?

Do you meet standards or buyer requirements?

Is your origin relevant?

Can we work with you long term?

Will this fit our customers?

## Story / value questions

What makes your company reliable under pressure?

Why did you invest in these improvements?

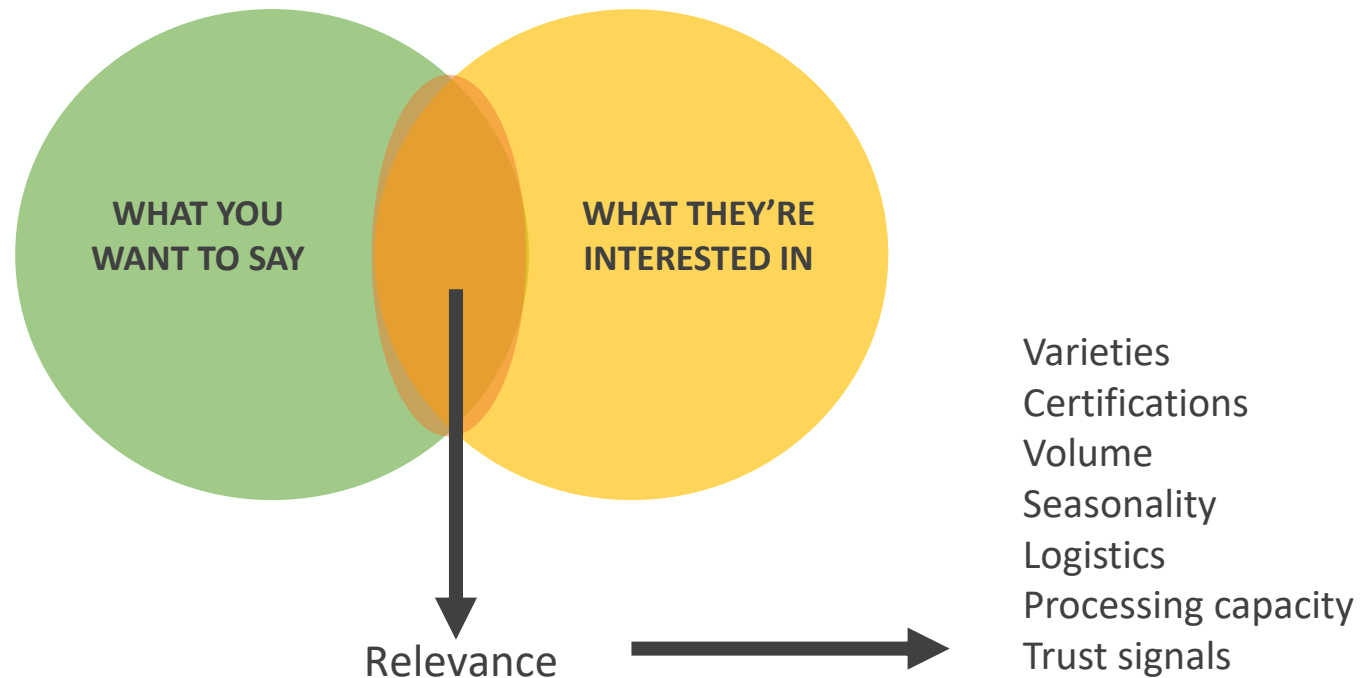
What is special about your place, people or process?

What proof shows consistency, transparency and trust?

What human or sustainability angle makes the product memorable?

# Place yourself in your client's position

What is interesting for buyers?



# Storytelling methods

## Written Storytelling

- Website “About Us”
- Captions
- Blogs



## Photo Storytelling

- Behind-the-scenes
- Before/After
- Human moments



## Video Storytelling

- Founder story
- Day-in-the-life
- Customer stories



## Social Media Storytelling

- Instagram Stories
- Reels / TikTok
- Series-based storytelling



Which format best fits your story? Why?

# One story, many channels

## Same core story

### Website

Add a short origin story and one proof point on the product or about page.

### LinkedIn

Turn the same story into a short post with one photo and one business takeaway.

### Buyer email

Use two lines that connect reliability + impact. Keep it practical.

### Product sheet

Add 1–2 bullets on origin, people, process or certification.

### Trade fair pitch

Say it in 20 seconds: product, people, proof, value.

## Weak story vs strong story

### 1. Plain product description

“We export roasted coffee beans from Uganda.”

Clear, but it is only functional. It does not help a buyer remember you or understand your added value.

### 2. Weak sustainability claim

“We sell sustainable coffee that helps communities.”

This sounds positive, but it is generic. There is no proof, no people and no concrete outcome.

### 3. Strong buyer-facing story

“We export roasted Arabica coffee from western Uganda, sourced through smallholder farmers we train on better farming practices and quality control. For buyers, this means dependable quality with a story of farmer livelihood improvement that can be communicated with confidence.”

Avoid vague words like “ethical”, “responsible” or “sustainable” unless you can show what they mean in practice.

# 5 ingredients of a credible sustainability story

- 1** **Specific people or place** Name the origin, community, team or production context.
- 2** **Concrete action** Explain what you actually do, not just what you believe.
- 3** **Proof point** Use one fact, number, certification or process check.
- 4** **Buyer relevance** Translate into reliability, quality, differentiation or trust.
- 5** **Honest next step** Show balance: what is already there and what still be improved.

A good story is short and human, but it is still grounded in evidence.

Case Study: <https://www.mrapple.com/en>

**MrAPPLE<sup>NZ</sup>**

[Our 5 Point Promise](#)

[Our Apples](#)

[Our Story](#) ▾

[Work With Us](#) ▾

[News](#)



# Pure Perfection

by *Mr Apple.*

From the orchards of New Zealand.  
Sweet, juicy, crunchy and delicious.

What is the story?

What made it authentic?

What emotion is triggered?

Why it works?

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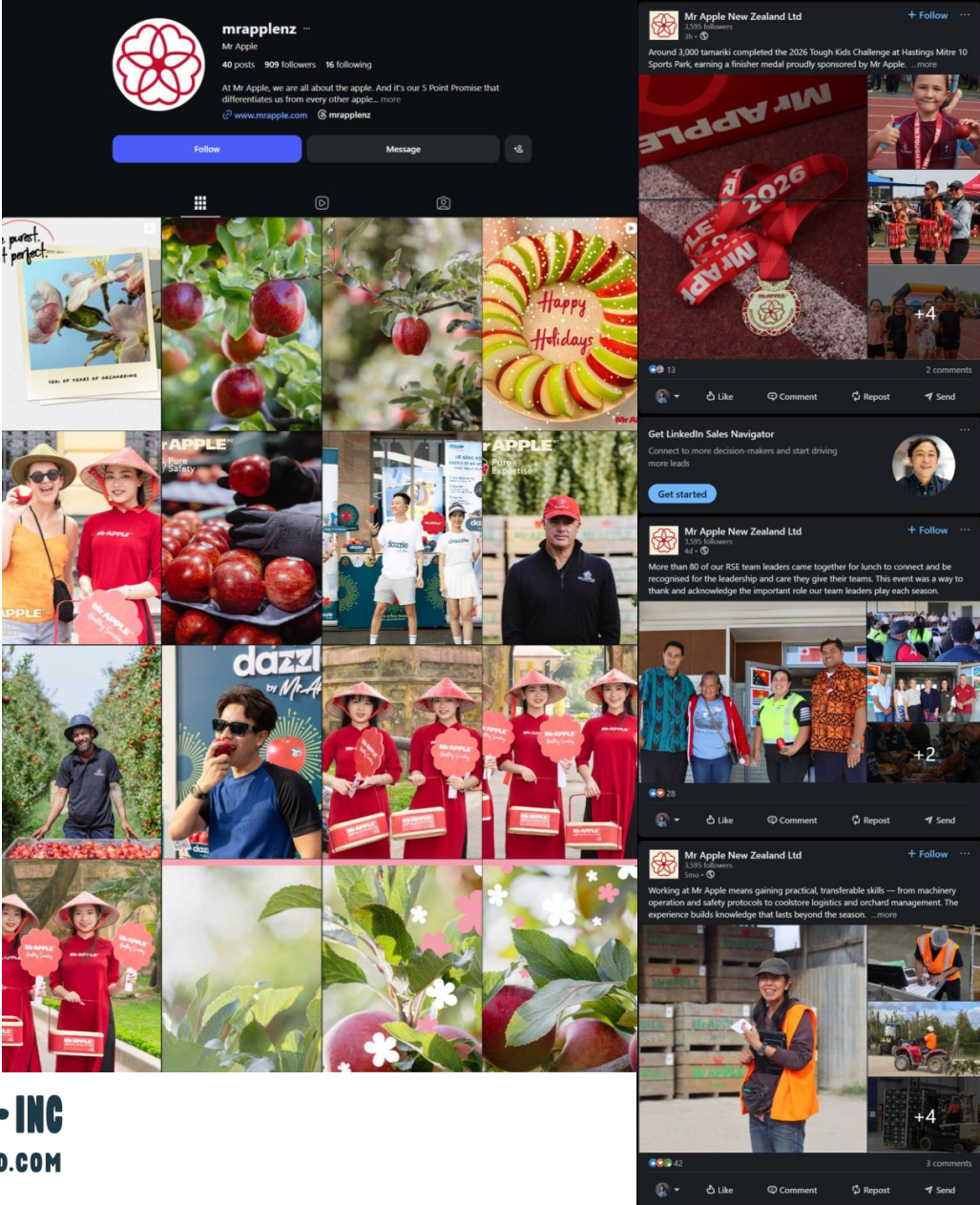
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# Continuous and consistent storytelling on their social media

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/mr-apple-new-zealand-ltd/>

<https://www.instagram.com/mrapplenz/>



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## 💡 Storytelling tips

KISS = Keep It Short and Simple

Feature examples	The "Complex" Way (Avoid) ⚡	The "KISS" Way (Do This) ✓
Quality	<i>Detailed breakdown of sugar-to-acid ratios.</i>	"Sweet, consistent, and export-grade."
Logistics	<i>Complex explanation of shipping routes.</i>	"Guaranteed 48-hour farm-to-port cold chain."
Sustainability	<i>A long essay on corporate philosophy.</i>	"Zero-waste processing & Fair Trade certified."

# Common mistakes to avoid

<b>Too generic</b>	<i>"We care about sustainability."</i>	<b>Fix: Say what you do and for whom.</b>
<b>Too long</b>	<i>A paragraph before the key message appears.</i>	<b>Fix: Lead with one sentence buyers can repeat.</b>
<b>Too emotional</b>	<i>Heartwarming story but no evidence.</i>	<b>Fix: Add one fact, practice or proof point.</b>
<b>Too technical</b>	<i>Only standards, jargon and process terms.</i>	<b>Fix: Translate technical work into clear value.</b>
<b>Only about us</b>	<i>The story never connects to buyer needs.</i>	<b>Fix: Link your story to trust, quality or differentiation.</b>

# Assignment 📌 - Turn your product or service into a story

## Step 1 - ❓ What do you sell?

(1 simple sentence, for example: "I sell coffee beans")

📌

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(for example: people, farmers, family, team)

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(impact, community, sustainability, for example: helps farmers earn a fair living)

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📝 \_\_\_\_\_

## Final Step - Build your story

### 🤖 Put it together:

"I sell \_\_\_\_\_, but really it's about \_\_\_\_\_.  
It matters because \_\_\_\_\_."

*Final result example:*

*"I sell 100% Arabica coffee beans, but really it's about supporting local farmers. It matters because it helps them earn a fair living."*

# Build your buyer-facing story

## Step A — Raw story

Complete the sentence:

“We sell \_\_\_\_\_, made by/with \_\_\_\_\_,  
and it matters because \_\_\_\_\_.”

Aim for one short and honest sentence.

## Step B — Buyer-ready version


Now improve it by adding four things:

- audience or use case
- one proof point
- one concrete impact
- one reason to trust you

Template: “We supply \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_,  
backed by \_\_\_\_\_, while creating  
\_\_\_\_\_.”

## Test your story in 4 questions

- 1 Is the product and buyer use clear in the first sentence?
- 2 Is there a real human, origin or process element?
- 3 Is there at least one proof point or credible signal?
- 4 Does the story show why a buyer should trust or remember this supplier?



My Main Learnings