



## **How do you help exceptional people tell exceptional stories? Here comes the science bit...**

24<sup>th</sup> May, 2019

It's odd. Three times in the last month, with three different clients, I've been asked the same question: "Our experts keep confusing their audiences with technical talk. How can we get them to use stories to explain our products better?"

Whether it was engineers or directors writing new business proposals, the people who knew their company's products best were the absolute worst at writing and talking about them. Even though the CMO and comms teams found the classic narrative arc easy to use.

Or that's what I was being told.

There was an undercurrent of something else: it was assumed that because those people were exceptionally technically-minded, they couldn't be expected to be natural story tellers.

I don't buy it.

At worst, deep experts can sometimes be a bit 'audience blind'.

But very few of us are natural born TED speakers. Not even TED speakers. (If you want to find out how much prep they go through to get that slick, there are even TED talks about it.)

And the TED talk format, or even the 3 Act Narrative that Hollywood likes, aren't the right frameworks for every occasion.

They work well on conveying emotion.

They're less good at communicating facts.

And I think the technical experts have intuitively understood that - perhaps quicker than some of the comms teams.

At Verbal Identity, over years of working with different groups of people to help them shape their brand and product's narrative, we've helped people think clearly, write clearly, and persuade their audiences. With half the effort they're used to.

It's just that exceptional technical people need their own way to convey information.

Luckily, there's a framework that's suited to doing just that.

It was on TV last night.

And it'll be on TV tonight.

It's the P & G commercial.

Ready for the details?

The classic P & G TV commercial draws you in by portraying someone in a real situation, struggling with a problem that's both familiar and observable.

Perhaps their long hair is so tangled they can't pull a brush through it.

It's followed by a Voice Over telling you the benefit of using their product.

But then, there's a crucial segment: they cut away to show you the Reasons to Believe – the RTBs - a clear technical demonstration of their product which proves its superiority.

L'Oreal did something similar. They needed to include a heavily technical bit in the middle and they didn't want people without a degree in chemical engineering to switch off. So they signalled a change of tone by saying: Here comes the science bit.

In both cases, the deeply technical message isn't afraid of being technical.

It's just sandwiched between two non-technical bits AND, importantly, its arrival is signalled clearly to the audience.

Technical experts love talking about their area of deep technical expertise. And they're actually very passionate about it.

All they have to do for the audience though, is be clear about what problem they're solving, what benefit they're offering and clearly signalling when they're going to start talking about the deeply technical stuff.

If you'd like to help some of your exceptional people tell exceptional stories, I've prepared a workshop sheet to talk you through how to do it. To get a copy, please [email me](#).

And if you'd like to find out more about how we've helped create verbal brand guidelines, tone of voice workshops, and training for writers and non-writers in some of the best and most interesting companies in the world, get in touch and I'd be happy to answer your questions.

At Verbal Identity, we help business leaders define, align and grow their companies. A critical part of that is helping all kinds of people, all over the world, write in a consistent way that adds value to your brand, win more business and win audience's hearts and minds.

To find out more just get in touch.

A handwritten signature in a dark grey, cursive font that reads "Chris".

Watch the video [here](#), along with [more content on Strategic Vision](#).

To find out more or have a quick chat, just email Chris West: [chris@verbalidentity.com](mailto:chris@verbalidentity.com)