

Sarah C.: Looks like here we're at the top of the hour, Terrence, so we should get ourselves started. Welcome everybody. It's very nice to work with you today, Terrence. Today's webinar is on *Storied Learning: strategies, examples and tools to put the power of stories to work*. Hosted by HRDQ-U and presented by Terrence Gargiulo. My name is Sarah and I will moderate today's webinar. The webinar will last around one hour. If you have any questions, please type them into the question area on your GoTo webinar control panel and we'll answer them as we can or after the session by email.

Sarah C.: So today let's keep the story going guys on Twitter. You can find both my HRDQ-U's Twitter and Terrence's story, Terrence's Twitter at making stories at HRDQ-U, so give us a tweet. Let's keep this conversation going and use the hashtag #StoriedLearning.

Sarah C.: Our presenter today is Terrence Gargiulo. Terrence leads the global storytelling consultancy, makingstories.net. He is the former chief storyteller of Accenture and the author of eight books. His article, *The Power of Stories, Personalizing and Learning Connection*, was awarded the 2018 Editor's Choice Award from the Training Industry Magazine. For his creative use of narrative, Ink Magazine awarded Terrence with their Marketing Master Award. His work as an internationally recognized organizational development consultant earned him the 2008 HR Leadership Award from the Asia Pacific HRM Congress for his groundbreaking research on story-based communication skills. It's an honor to have you speaking with us today, Terrence.

Terrence G.: It's great to be here, and HRDQ is really not only a hoster, but really a keeper of wonderful learning. So it's a joy to be with you guys today. And you know, as a storyteller, you know Sarah, the most important thing in our world and I call out another wonderful colleague who I think is on this call, Graham Williams and others, what we care about is the recognition that we make the meaning around us. We are a part of the meeting. We are participating in the meeting and in this way the whole universe is made of stories. So how we come about and learn and develop our insights based upon our observation, our sharing, our constructing of narratives and stories really is at the heart of being human. So what we're talking about here today is not just something that is strictly utilitarian, but something that at its core, for lack of a

better word, and I say it respectfully without any agenda of any specific ideology, but at its core is truly spiritual.

Terrence G.: So you know, this opening visual of this idea of being on a journey. We're talking a lot these days, Sarah and everyone that's here, about journey. We talk about customer journeys. We now have been speaking for a while about learner journeys and it, the idea that we're on, we have to craft a road that as we're on this road, we are crafting and it is unfolding and emerging in front of us. And when we think of learning as a journey, then we'll better be able to understand the different hats that storytelling can play as being our companion on this journey. So just like this learner's just standing above there looking at herself further down on the road, we're going to look at stories in some different ways today. So what are we going to do? I put together kind of a basic agenda.

Terrence G.: And by the way, I'm going to ask a lot of questions, and I do hope that people will use the question box. Some of you have already been sharing a little bit about where you're sitting. We've got people all over the place from Baltimore and Kansas and different places dealing with the cold. I'm sitting in Monterey, California where it's not cold, but it's dreary today. But what are we going to try to tackle in this short time together? Well, really as learning professionals, we deal with those four boxes on the right side that you're looking at, right? We're looking at how do we design things that truly solve the challenges that our stakeholders are bringing to us? What are we trying to address from a performance and behavioral standpoint through learning? How do we develop it, and how we deliver it, and how we measure it.

Terrence G.: So what I'd like to do is say, how can story touch upon all of those things? Because at the core, those are the four basic things that we're all involved in as learning professionals. You know, and we sit in different, we sit in with different focuses across those four domains, but that's really kind of what we do. So we'll start here in the front after I kind of ask a couple of questions of you.

Terrence G.: I'd like to then offer you six ideas about different hats that storytelling enables us to wear as learning professionals. And then I'm going to take a moment to give you the backstory of storytelling. And what I mean to say is that many of you probably know quite a bit about storytelling and have been using it in different ways. A lot that we deal with storytelling tends to be a little bit superficial.

Terrence G.: It's can I give you the moral in a story? Can I engage you? Can I turn you into a really good communicator? Can I craft a story that has a clean beginning, middle and end that follows the hero's journey that's going to wow or zow or influence or these sorts of things? I really want to take

you to some different notions of storytelling that I think will enrich our conversation and then we'll support what we're going to do in the core part of this presentation, which is look at two examples.

Terrence G.: When I say case studies, this is not a Harvard Business School case study. It's really talking about kind of the work that I've done with some organizations, Accenture, as their chief storyteller, and then one of my clients we'll talk about, Princess Cruise. And we'll look across these different dimensions, these four areas, and see how we kind of tackle that.

Terrence G.: Last, I'll leave you with kind of five ideas about how, depending on where you are in your own journey of employing storytelling, how you might go about that. So Sarah, I think this would be a perfect time for us to put up the first poll to kind of just get a quick gauge of what people are doing here with stories. So if you want to launch that poll, we'll see how people come in on that.

Sarah C.: Sounds great. Let's give people a couple of minutes to answer.

Terrence G.: I'm just expanding my poll. Looks like there's some good answers coming in.

Sarah C.: All righty.

Terrence G.: That's great. So the results, I don't know if that surprised you, Sarah? Did that surprise you, kind of where that came out?

Sarah C.: Yeah, it did.

Terrence G.: Yeah, I think that's a great surprise, and I think it says a lot about sort of the maturity of our learning professionals who continue to kind of push themselves, who avail themselves of what are the trends, what can we do effectively. So about 67% of you said that right now you're aware of storytelling. You're using consciously and deliberately story-based learning strategies in the work that you're doing today. That's great.

Terrence G.: So that takes us then really to our first open ended question, Sarah, which is then tell me a little bit about how you think storytelling might help you more in your role as a learning professional. So where are the pockets that you would like to use storytelling more in your learning function, but perhaps for whatever reason it's not happening, or you have a curiosity, or what you think storytelling might be able to do for you? So go ahead and just type in a few of your answers.

Terrence G.: We'll see what people come up with. All right, we got to see a few.

Make sure you're using your question box. You cannot sit idly in this webinar. We're, Sarah and I are going to ask you to you think, and reflect, and be present with your great ideas. Leadership development? Great. Yes, Ann, definitely. To bring, Kara says, to bring content to life. Another comment here, storytelling. Let's see. Storytelling makes learning more relevant and memorable. We have storytelling in our course design, but it's more than that. To set context, relay how things worked and didn't work and provide reality to theory. I love that reality to theory, and this whole idea of relevance and memorability. Enable me as a trainer to show success and what it looks like. Ah, that's wonderful, because it's not enough to say, "Hey everyone, when you follow these processes or these procedures, we've figured out that that's going to lead to great performance." But when you can talk about John or Jill and how in their recent work doing X, Y, and Z, so that specificity brings stickiness to what you're sharing. That's great.

- Terrence G.: Enables me to show success. I use stories to help empower employees about policies. Very good. And case situations, and just to make the story learning and more engaging. So that's wonderful. Thank you. Thank you for all those thoughts and ideas.
- Terrence G.: Okay, so where do stories fit into the learning function? Clearly some of you are using them, they're perhaps in your facilitator guides or you recognize that if you can elicit a story in the classroom that makes for greater context. So I'm going to get, I'm just going to start with two basic things. This is a quiz question, so you're going to have to give an answer here too as well.
- Sarah C.: Terrence, we're still seeing your screen with the poll that's up. Can you try and hide that?
- Terrence G.: Oh, I think you, you launched the poll. I think you're going to have to do that on your end.
- Sarah C.: Yeah, I hit it on my end, but it's still showing on your screen.
- Terrence G.: Ah, okay. How, let's see. Let me, let me stop my screen and then I'll restart it. Tell me when you see me again.
- Sarah C.: Yes. Now we're seeing a picture is worth a thousand words.
- Terrence G.: Thank you for the patience and thanks for queuing me on that. So if a picture is worth a thousand words, this is a math question, and I know we're probably more learning and soft folks, most of us here, but what is a story then? If a picture's worth a thousand words, what's a story worth?

Terrence G.: I'll queue you up a little bit visually here without giving the answer. It's worth a thousand pictures, right? Yeah. Hundreds and thousands. That's why ... So the first thing that we know is that when we have learners and we use stories, there's an immediate richness. It's like being able to go to your Comcast, Xfinity, whoever your provider is, and you'd started just with three basic channels and suddenly in the classroom, you have now thousands of channels, different ways. Where channels is really a metaphor for talking about how you reach that, how you reach a person, and how you open up a richness for them. So that's really kind of the first thing to understand is that we recognize that stories have that power. The second thing is that the shortest distance between two people as a story.

Terrence G.: Now think about it. You may have been on, stuck on a bus, or on a plane, and you're sitting next to someone, and how does that conversation really get started? Well, probably you break the ice in some fashion or another by sharing little tidbits and little stories that then lead to connection with one another. This is actually a picture of my wife and there's a whole background story that I won't share now, but my wife, who was relatively shy and who was working as a clinical social worker and in a, basically with suicidal teens and whatnot in a hospital setting. I mean she was really tired from the work that she was doing. So the shortest distance between us was a story and really was helped us to create a connection. So if you realize that in the classroom you have a treasure chest of people, each person is really precious, and they've got so much knowledge in that room that you sit. And we say this all the time. I've heard lots of trainers begin with that kind of opening.

Terrence G.: There's so much experience in this room, how are we going to tap into that? Well, the shortest distance to tap into all of that is, is a story. The other thing to think about is that we move in and out of having to be somewhat didactic. I mean, think about this format itself, there's minimal opportunity to be engaging. You know, I try to throw out rhetorical questions. You've got video, I've got some visuals. I'm trying to use metaphors. We try to ask questions. But by and large, there are times in learning where there's certainly just information that has to be imparted.

Terrence G.: Well, how do we build a bridge? Now to use this metaphor of this picture, behind on this beach is water and underneath the water, if you think of people being below the water as being treasure chests and they're bubbling up with possibilities, with all of, again, their experiences, then really what the stories can do, when I elicit stories, and I elicit people's experiences, when I get people to think about other

people's stories, then I'm able to bridge and create a bridge for people that breaks up the didactic and turns that information into something more, into something written, into something richer.

Terrence G.: So it's really critical that I'm employing stories because that's where the imagination sits. That's where people are going to get these leaps and get these insights. And so here's another metaphor just to play with this idea. If we think of the genome and we think of four amino acids that make up a DNA, the blueprint of life itself, then these combinations of how the DNA unzips and rezip, and recombines itself through those bonds of knowledge, and of experience, and how those are unbroken and reattached, insights emerge. So really our job in designing, delivering, and developing really even in measuring training is all about how can we surface those insights.

Terrence G.: And it turns out that stories are a very effective way of speeding our way and finding some of those insights. So I'm going to use another analogy, but let, before I even use this analogy of the pitchforks, let's talk about a little neuroscience that many of you may be familiar with. But we've learned a lot about the brain in the last 15, 20 years. And one of the things that has been most fascinating to me as a storyteller is that the brain looks different when we're doing storytelling.

Terrence G.: So when I'm in a didactic mode of information, if we were looking at two scans of a brain, the listener and the teller, what we would see is that the listener, one area of their brain is lit up and it's different than the area of the brain that's lit up from the person who is the teller, the person who was giving the information. So coder and communicator, only one areas of their brain, different areas of their brain are lit up. Something very interesting called neural coupling happens when people share a story, our brains shift. And in fact the two brains look very, very similar and more areas of the brain are lit up when you do these scans of the brain when people are listening to storied information.

Terrence G.: So do you think that would interest us as learning professionals? Of course, it's absolutely essential that we're accessing as much of people's brains so that it does lead to behavior. So the analogy, the visual analogy here on this slide is one of a pitchfork. So if you imagine, I take a pitchfork, what happens when I strike the pitchfork and I bring another pitchfork in proximity to the one that's vibrating? Any, any guess there, Sarah, are you a science person?

Sarah C.: I'm not a science person, but it would make the other one make a sound, right? Possibly?

Terrence G.: Yeah. Not only sound, but it starts vibrating at the same frequency. So

when we talk about empathy and compassion, those of you who might do diversity and inclusion, for example, and you're eliciting people's experiences and you want people to see the world from different vantage points, for example, perhaps as an a ... then stories allow me to stand in someone else's shoes. So go back to this idea of neural coupling. If both brains are lit up and they're using the richness of what our brains can do, then you get this idea. You get this notion of the two pitchforks coming in synchronicity with one another. So it's how we can more deeply be present to each other. And that becomes very, very critical to the success of learning. Learning that leads to performance, not just learning. That again is about a didactic movement of information from one place to another.

Terrence G.: So what then are these storied hats? I said I would offer you kind of six ideas about these storied hats. Well, the first going back to our very first picture, which was the woman standing on top of the hill and looking at herself as she's on this journey in the road stretching out before her. If we start thinking from a design perspective of story as a journey, as what is unfolding that's leading to performance in the organization, that then begins to change us from a transactional. Sometimes I know I am guilty when I get pigeonholed and I'm like trying to solve a particular learning problem by a quote unquote training, whether it be instructor led or virtual or whatever it is. I sometimes forget about the person and the journey that they're on and the journey that all of us might be needing to take that performer, that person that sits in the organization and whatever role. So start there.

Terrence G.: Really start by thinking about learning as an unfolding story. Some of you familiar with design thinking and how we've done some of that, that's really that discipline of really trying to put ourselves empathetically and those who we are trying to reach and what they may need. Focus on how people craft a story to make sense of what they're learning. So if you're a facilitator or even a designer, you need to be thinking in a, I use this word lovingly, but in a paranoid way, every moment. What sense are people making of what you are giving them? How might they be making it? Where might they be exploring and perhaps getting a little askance? Where might you need to provide more constraints to if you have a very focused goal of the training, whether it be compliance or technical training, because they're all different forms of learning that we do here, right?

Terrence G.: How might you need to kind of put those guard rails up, and be mindful of how they are making sense of what's happening, and always be checking into that. So always be eliciting that experience and give them an opportunity to narrate the sense-making that they're doing as they're going through the learning experience. So in this way, stories are at the

intersection and really are the currency of our learning, because they allow people to access their experiences. Our experiences are stored in our mind as what? As stories. And so it's they become like freeze dried food that you pour water on, they reconstitute and that's where the richness sits.

Terrence G.: I'm going to talk, number four and six here are very closely related. And in a moment I'm going to talk a little bit more as tools for thinking. But here's a simple example. I think it was someone earlier on asking about leadership development. They mentioned leadership development as being an area. So imagine if you were leading a leadership workshop and you wanted to get people to think about some ideas. What if I asked a question, how many of you have seen Lord of the Rings? Or how many of you have seen Wizard of Oz?

Terrence G.: Now, if most people have seen Wizard of Oz, for example, I could then ask the next question and say, how do you think in any way given the characters and situations that that movie is exemplary of leadership principles? Well, oh my gosh, the story now has become a virtual reality simulator. Going to point number six here on the slide, right? For helping people to think actually quicker, more insightfully and more abstractly.

Terrence G.: So it's interesting the story allows for a deeper analysis. Then if I said, well, let's all go to a flip chart and write down the seven, at least seven principles of leadership that you think are important in our organization. I'm not saying that's a bad question, but I'm saying a richer question might be how are any of the characters in the Wizard of Oz exemplary of leadership? Talk me through that. Okay?

Terrence G.: So, and lastly, number five is this idea that if you pepper your learning events or your learning journey with lots of stories, you can break them up into smaller pieces. And you know, we all are, I'm probably guilty of doing our binge watching of whatever TV series, or movie, or whatnot, you know, captures our imagination. So leverage that kind of energy. You can actually break up stories and kind of build them throughout your learning journey or your learning event. And that becomes a very rich way because people become hungry. They want to know how that story is going to go.

Terrence G.: So lastly, to kind of finish up this opening section on stories, learning hats, let's just recognize that stories are the currency of our experiences that fuels performance. So we want not the Jenga blocks all disrupted, which is just knowledge. It's great to have knowledge, but we want to be able to stack up people's experiences because experiences mined and experiences connected to one another, lead to insight, which leads

to changes in behavior and performance. Okay. How about a little of a backstory? Any comments kind of on that? Anybody have any sort of comments or even questions? Ask your questions throughout. I'm highly interruptible.

Terrence G.: Okay. I'm going to keep on rolling. So I promised you that before I got into the case studies I wanted to spend a moment giving you a little different perspective ... "Are you going to be providing the PowerPoint after the presentation?" I'll defer that to Sarah. She'll answer you on the back end. I'm not sure if they provide the deck or not, but certainly a recording will be made available. Anybody have any guesses as to who this person is? See if we have any takers here that want to hazard a guess? Well, this, "I'll say it in Italian. This is ... Houdini," I love it. Well, in fact, in a very powerful way, Neil Padre, this is my father, is in fact a magician, and I'm going to start as I said, just to give you a few brief little personal tidbits about where I came into storytelling and why I think of storytelling very different in the ways that many of you may have encountered storytelling up to date, and in terms of even what's out there from a populous kind of learning perspective.

Terrence G.: So my dad was a conductor and composer, and a conductor can stand in front of an orchestra and just with their eyes, they can communicate and create this tripartite network of communication whereby they go from the abstraction on a page written by a composer to motivating and inspiring, facilitating the musicians who have to then take those dynamics and use their gifts and their talents just like employees need to do. They need to use their gifts, their perspectives, their talents to bring to life the objectives and the roles that they fill. And lastly, that third tribe, part of the tripartite network, is that music that reaches every person sitting in the seat who has a completely different experience of that music on an emotional level, each of them coming up with their own story. So I marveled at my father's ability to bring alive that kind of connection and communication.

Terrence G.: Likewise, if that was my father, then this must be ... Someone type in, you need to stay engaged with me. Type in. This must of course be, my mother. Very good, Cheryl, Cheryl and Juan. You, you get the box of Snickers or whatever prize HRDQ is providing. Yes. This is my beautiful mother and she had the same gift as a performer, as a singer. I really marveled at how she could take text and story is text, right? Story allows us to get at context. That was one of the comments made by someone right in the beginning of our session, is that oh, stories are really good in learning to help set context. Absolutely. Stories allow us to get to subtext. Stories work across all these. So my mother took the text of songs and she would bring those alive as an artist, as a performer, as a singer. And then when she would lead choruses, for example, I would

marvel at her ability to help others connect to those texts in their own way to bring it alive with such heart and with such spirit.

Terrence G.: So she inspired me to ask questions about what is this connecting that's going on, that allows for such a richness of imagination and creativity, that makes a difference in people's lives? Well, any guesses on this little kid over here on the right hand side of your picture? Go ahead. You can all type in. Who's going to get the box of Snickers here? "Must be you." Yes, Tamika, you are right. That is me. Yes, John. Thank you. You've got it. You guys have got it. And when I was just a boy, of course, coming from a performing family, I was inspired to take the role of Amahl. And this is in the opera, Amahl and the Night Visitors by the American composer John Carlo Menotti. And in the opera, this crippled boy Amahl lives with his widowed mother who has nothing. And in fact the next day they're going to have to go out begging.

Terrence G.: So this poor little crippled boy with this wild imagination, you can see how that probably was a good fit for me, huh? And the Three Kings are on their way to go find the Holy Child, this Christ child that they're looking for. And they stop in Amahl's village. And during the night after the villagers have brought simple gifts, the mother, the Kings are sleeping and there sits all this gold, and the mother just says, "Oh, if I just, if I could just take one piece of gold for my child. My child, my child, my child." She reaches in and takes the piece of gold. Thief. She's caught in the act of stealing gold for her child.

Terrence G.: Now the Kings assure her that this child they're going to see doesn't need this gold, but the mother feels so horrible when she says, "Oh, how I wish I had a gift of my own to give to such a child." She's so moved by what they say about this child. And then Amahl, the crippled boy with a crutch that he made with his own hands, his wooden crutch underneath his armpit. You know, says, "But mother, let me give him my crutch. Who knows, he made need one." And then he reaches underneath his arm and he begins, "And this I made myself," and he begins to hand the crutch to the Kings and is healed in that moment on the stage, "I walk mother." So every night on that stage I became Amahl, I entered into that story in a profound way and that made me question that peak experience.

Terrence G.: As a fencer, I was ... Sarah and I were talking about sports and the things that we did and I said, "Oh, I was a klutz as a kid, but I really got into fencing," and as a fencer I had peak experiences. And those peak experiences were other things that made me question in this very wild, roundabout way, how do we connect and how do we become our fullest selves, within ourselves and between ourselves and others. So that brought me to university and this will bring us to the close of this story,

this background story, and to a definition, a richer definition of story that I'll briefly offer you here before we go to our case studies. But the experience at university in a large lecture hall, I go in, first day I had to take this required class and this really quirky professor walks in.

Terrence G.: He's got rainbow suspenders on, his hair is wild and all over the place, and without saying a word, he goes down to the front of the stage. And I'm sitting in the back, all I want to do is get out of there and he starts reading us this story, *The Giving Tree*. I don't know how many of you remember that story, but it's a very sweet story, isn't it? About a tree and a boy, and how the tree keeps giving things to the boy. He drops apples into the boy's hand. He lets the boy play. He provides shade. Even when the boy becomes married, he says, "Take my branches and build a house," and even when the boy's an old man, he says, "Here's my stump. Sit upon my stump now." So the boy just keeps receiving all these wonderful gifts from the tree. So we all sighed sentimentally, and then Professor Iglesias without saying a word, opened the book up and read it again, except this time with a different inflection in his voice and a twinkle in his eye.

Terrence G.: And suddenly we all had this aha moment. Remember I said, stories are about insights. And we realized that the story could equally be what? Not just this lovely tree and boy in this beautiful relationship, ah sentimental, it could also be what? Take, take, take, take, take, narcissism, abusive nature. The list goes on. And what Professor Iglesias was doing that day was awakening our imaginations to say, stories are how we imagine who and how we are. And that was what brought all those experiences from a dad who communicated with his baton as Houdini, to a mother with her artistry, to my experiences as a peak performance in both athletics and on the stage. All of that kind of came rushing forward. And that second picture is Luis Iglesias after a brain aneurysm and strokes, four months later, at my wedding sharing a poem by Walt Whitman.

Terrence G.: Oh, thank you. I really appreciate that comment Tamika. You're very sweet. So let's just take a moment and let's just walk through. This is how I think about stories, you know differently. And I'm going to vent for a second. You know there's a lot of snake oil out there, because the easiest thing to sell about storytelling is presentation and communication skills. Hey, you need executive presence. Let me show you how to craft a story. Let me show you how to perform that story. Let me show you how to engage an audience with that story. And that stuff is really important, and a very, a very rich part of what storytelling can do. But let's look at, again, through this definition, kind of a synthesis of how I look at stories and then how it guides the work that I do across organizational development learning, and learning, and

communication.

Terrence G.: So storytelling is a safe space for creative thinking, negotiating differences. So we go back to that idea of empathy and compassion and how right now we're living, come on folks. Wherever you sit and whatever you feel, we're not going to get into ideologies or politics. But wherever we sit, we're feeling this tension of differences. So how can we listen deeply with one another, and how can we establish commonality? Storyteller empowers the speaker. Sure I can stand up, and I can help lots of people, whether it be sales or others, how to command attention and how to engage an audience, but it improves communication fundamentally through listening, because the power of storytelling is the listening and the eliciting. What we're doing within ourself and what we're doing as we take in and as we embrace the otherness of someone else's experience.

Terrence G.: Stories, like our example through the leadership and the Wizard of Oz, compact and code tremendous amount of information and allow us to work more quickly in an abstract way. It's interesting to look at even people who are doing machine learning and artificial, different aspects of artificial intelligence, are understanding that you can't build detailed algorithms. You actually have to build in the capacity to work and abstract from something that's rich. And like we said, stories are very, very rich. Because stories require active participation on the part of listener, stories are the most important thing that we do in terms of communication. And stories can be very fragmented. A story does not have to go on for five minutes, or even necessarily have a hero, or even have necessarily a clean beginning, middle and end. Those are very, very good stories and we learn a lot from the Pixars and from Hollywood and from writers who work in the craft of storytelling about certain forms of storytelling. But storytelling's art is also very fragmented.

Terrence G.: Okay. Let's now go into our case studies. And the first one I want to share with you is Accenture. And this was a really fascinating journey. I went to Accenture because I really wanted to scale the work that I've been doing for 20 plus years within my own boutique. And at first the Accenture, for those of you who aren't familiar, is a 450,000 global information company. A lot of what they deal with, they do lots of different things, but they do a lot of system integration and a lot of digital transformation. So not just necessarily putting in information systems, doing updates to enterprise resource planning systems, but literally looking at the whole ecosystem of technology and of human interaction in business, and bringing very, very powerful solutions to the marketplace. And so when I went to them, they were interested in storytelling in terms of culture.

- Terrence G.: So a lot of the change management, the work they were doing, had been more focused on putting in ERP systems and not necessarily how when you disrupt a way an organization functions, how does that change its culture and how can we effectively help organizations move and grow into those new cultures? Now that didn't last long before actually the sales organization found out about my work and wanted to solve the problem that their managing directors and others were going in to sell these 100 million dollar type deals, and they were going in with a PowerPoint deck, and they were going in as the expert and they didn't really know how to engage and how to have a meaningful conversation. I said, "Well, I could help you with that."
- Terrence G.: And I realized, actually, I could prove the value of storytelling if, of course, if stories could help the business prosper in terms of its bottom line, in terms of you know, selling more engagements and getting better connection between the managing directors and the teams of people solving issues in the organization, then I would be able to make a case actually for building out that practice for storytelling at Accenture.
- Terrence G.: So that was the first nut we saw. And when I went in there I realized you got to start simple with people. And so when I began working with managing directors, and my task was to step in anywhere along the sales pipeline and to basically coach them and how to go in and have originating conversations, how to actually imagine the art of the possible. How to cocreate. I know these are buzzwords, but you know, again, we're kind of limited here in time today, but the idea was how could you engage with customers either at the beginning of the process or maybe it was at the end when they were doing a final presentation to try to make the final pitch and sell a solution.
- Terrence G.: I realized I needed to come with them with something simple. So I took something from my bag of tricks from long ago, which is I needed them to understand that as they communicated they needed to see that stories did three things in breaking the ice with those relationships that they were trying to build. The shortest distance between two people is a story. So stories melt the ice, and this was something simple. A very, very simple framework that they could wrap their hands around immediately.
- Terrence G.: So stories could inform, they could connect and emote. Now, the next thing I did, and in working with the sales organization in doing this enablement piece, I was sitting with teams and I was quickly figuring out, well let's take this, and the whole reason that you want to use stories again is not as another form of pushing communication at people, but as a way of eliciting and getting shared sense making,

cocreation, and getting people to have a story to tell about the solution that we want it to be able to bring them.

Terrence G.:

So we had to be able to stand in their shoes. And so as we thought about informing, connecting and emoting, just look at the top. We're not going to go and dive into the fullness of this graphic that I'm sharing with you, but we needed to be able to first and foremost have our people show up, not as experts, but as humans, which meant that their stories matter. And I'll give you a really simple example of that. It was literally one of the first days I was sitting in this role as chief storyteller, and I had been asked to come in and listen to a pitch that was going to be given to a pharmaceutical company and they were pitching a digital solution that was basically oncology. So it was dealing with cancer and it was a portal without, you know, giving away intellectual property here, but basically it was like offering a portal that would allow multiple people to find and interact to help the person who had cancer. That's it in a simple nutshell.

Terrence G.:

And I'm listening to these men and women and I go, "You guys are killing me. You're absolutely killing me." I asked them, "How many of you have known someone with cancer?" They all raised their hand. I said, "I want to hear that story and I want you to relate that story in a realistic, truthful way to the solution that you're talking about." So for example, one of the things you always deal with with cancer patients, right, is you worry if you want to bring a meal to someone and help them out, you're kind of like on pins and needles because you don't know what food is acceptable or not. And so this person talked about their experience of the next door neighbor and wanting to cook a meal, and they told that story, and then they related it to the fact that yes, and this solution is an example of how we might be able to help that person. So right. You could call these user stories, or personas, or whatnot, but they brought it alive in a personal way.

Terrence G.:

They got so into it, they all showed up wearing pink shirts on the day of the presentation. It was such a simple thing. But so as we stand in people's shoes, we want to know first the stories that connect us emotionally with the people that we're dealing with. We wanted to have them be able to tell stories that brought alive the technical things without diving into the details all the time of the technical things, so that the people we were working with would elicit those details as opposed to us pushing those details. We wanted to be able to share case studies, but translate those case studies in terms that made sense to a client. So I can't tell you how many presentations, even in that first week that I started in this role, they would be talking to a pharmaceutical company and they would be using examples from oil and gas.

Terrence G.: Like that's great, but if you can't relate that to what it means to be a grocer, and to the types of challenges and what that world looks like and stand in their shoes, it's not going to relate. And lastly, if you can't have stories that are from the client's voice ... I said this is where data storytelling becomes really important because one of the things we quickly addressed is how to elicit stories from the field, from the people, from the clients that brought alive on both the pain as well as the possibility of what the future could do, a.k.a. a solution and the trust that then Accenture would be the right partner to bring that solution to bear.

Terrence G.: So the next thing we did is this became really, really popular and people wanted more than just a chief storyteller. They said, how do you scale this? And so immediately I created this learning journey to look at the different way, how we would begin to scale globally because they wanted all managing directors and above. So I had senior managing directors, managing directors, and even some senior managers to suddenly get into the storytelling. They realized that they all needed these skills. So we built out this journey and included an assessment that I'll, you certainly can find that out on my website, makingstories.net. I've got a short version of that and self scoring that is, you know, so that you can kind of see what that is and what we use. And I'll talk a little bit more about that in a second. We built a master class and I'll kind of show you what we basically put into that master class. We had challenges that related to the job.

Terrence G.: So these were basically creating portfolio. People would create a breadcrumb of evidence of doing some of the things. So if it was, I'm going to have a personal story to tell when I go in and introduce myself when I'm giving a pitch, that would be a very simple example. That's a deliberate practice. We actually had people do those, we collected them, they got pure feedback on that. And then the last thing we did is of course we did a post assessment to see where and how people's skills and behaviors changed. We had a learning library and we also were collecting people's stories.

Terrence G.: So we were eliciting them, because as a sales organization it was really important that some of those more effective stories were getting shared again. And we talked about how do you reshare those stories? How do you make that story your own in an authentic way and how can those be effective in different settings? And the last thing was that we developed a cadre of coaches globally who could do what I was doing, which was sitting with deal teams and sitting and coaching people in real time to actually put the work of storytelling to work.

Terrence G.: So the next simple framework I brought to them is that if you think about show business, we talk about the triple threat, and what's the triple threat and show business? Singing, dancing and acting. Well, there is a triple threat to storytelling and the triple threat is storytelling, story listening and story thinking. So Sarah was ultra gracious in saying more alphabet soup than I would have liked, but thank you. It's great to get credibility established. But research that I did, that I published, and that I did receive an award from the Asia Pacific Congress which is based on the assessment that I use and that you too can actually go out and get from my website at makingstories.net is based on those three pillars of storytelling; story listening, storytelling and story thinking, and those breakout into basically nine skills.

Terrence G.: So again, if we think of what everyone thinks about storytelling, we want to know how to select a story. We want to be able to perform a story effectively and modeling is, kind of one example of what modeling is, is what I've done even in this very didactic presentation, which is have as many visual metaphors. Being able to model either with behavior or with language that is rich, that gets that story thinking, that gets that neural coupling going, that people's richness happens. Really what you care about as learning professionals or what's on either end. Yes, maybe as a facilitator you want to make sure that your platform skills and your storytelling skills are strong and you can do that. But also as designers, what we really care about is that story thinking and that story listening. And again, it's a little bit more than we can go into right now, but I'm just going to put your focus for a second on story thinking because we've touched upon it already with our example of the Wizard of Oz.

Terrence G.: If you think about the fact that in our brain are all these experiences, but our experiences are indexed differently. Here's a really simple example. If I said to you, "What's your favorite movie?" Well, some of you might have an answer right off the head. "Oh it's Citizen Kane. It's the best movie ever made." Others of you might scratch your head and say, "Well Terrence, do you mean comedy, or drama, or sci fi, help me out. So this is the idea that each of us index information differently, and the richer our index is, the quicker we can find experiences to share. And this goes back to actually work that Roger Schank did at the Institute of Learning at Northwestern. And his first book called Tell Me a Story, where when they were looking at artificial intelligence, they realized that our brain works in terms of patterns. And actually he posited that intelligence might be defined as having a very, very rich index and being able to take something from one domain and apply it to another.

Terrence G.: A very quick, simple example of that would be if I had never been to an

airport and I'd never gone and flown on a flight, but I had been to train stations. When I step into an airport, I understand what the terminals that are showing me flights and gates are because I've been to tracks and trains. So it's elasticity of our brain of being able to take things from different domains. And so that's what we need to be able to do, is synthesize our experiences and reflect on them. So this model became really critical to the leadership behaviors that we developed at Accenture that led for them to amazing performance.

Terrence G.: And lastly, just to give you a peak, here were the key things that we were dealing with in our master class. So people got a chance to get feedback through what I have out on my website at makingstories.net is a 30 question self scoring within how to interpret the scores and all of that. And more about that model that I just shared with you on story-based communication skills, we used a 80 item, which goes into a little bit more depth and also can be done as a 360, and is also used as a coaching tool too with the people who are going through these masterclasses.

Terrence G.: We helped people to harvest their stories. They got real time coaching in the class. So it's really important that whatever learning solution you develop for storytelling, there's got to be some personal. So I've certainly, I've created instructor led and I even mean, excuse me, a virtual led and asynchronous training, bite-size learning for storytelling, their videos. All of that is can get you going, but when you really need to take people to the level of depth, you're going to have to get people to people, because it's human interaction that we're doing. So this is one of the really important times where instructor led becomes critical to the success of really building these skills. Okay. So that's Accenture. I want to get onto our second case study.

Terrence G.: So Princess Cruise was at an interesting point. They had just put out on their website the branding effort to bring stories of people who worked at Princess Cruise. Like it could be, it could have been a captain, or a navigator, or a steward, any person that worked on the boats. And they were starting to bring those stories and their customer stories onto, on the website as a way of engaging. And they turned to me and said, "You know, we're realizing that there's richness here. What, you know, what can we do, and what can we do to collect more stories?" I say, "Well, what you really ought to think about is how we create ambassadors. Because every single person, from the person who cleans the cabins to the person who drives the boat, there's the possibility of them acting as ambassadors to collect the stories."

Terrence G.: So I don't want to, I'm conscious of the time, so I don't want to drain this particular slide, but I want to go back. Because at the beginning I said

story learning strategies touch design and development, delivery, and measurement. And so I'm going to talk a little bit about the delivery here as an example. I want to maybe just focus for a moment, again, we did use a story based communication assessment. We built a custom workshop. We collected a way that they could collect the stories that included different modalities from text to just sending a picture.

Terrence G.: This is even before really Instagram and all of this, and we built out all these capabilities to people being able to just speak and share the story, to, again, we had a bunch of different techniques, but what we also did is we made sure that we had some measurements in place. And I think it's really important because we do get asked for a quantitative. And certainly with storytelling there's lots of qualitative measures that we can bring, but we want to build in those quantitative. So I'm sure you've had a chance to look at the things on the right hand side that we came up with as a team as we architected this solution.

Terrence G.: So this is the one, by the way, you have, this is the tool that we're sharing with you. It's called a story collage. It's a very simple tool. It's basically a brainstorming tool for storytelling that works in two directions at the same time. And so this is actually a good tool for facilitating conversations. And so what we did, and in fact I think I'm just going to bring it up here, Sarah, for a second. I think I've got it up here on my browser. We've given you this tool. And in fact, if you want more details about this tool, again, there's a full facilitator guide that you can get for purchase, but you can get out on my website at makingstories.net, but we've given you pretty much everything that you need right here and given you an example of a story collage. So you'll see a link to this document that I just bring up. And I think it's also going to be emailed to all participants that signed up today. Let me go back to our presentation.

Terrence G.: So we got people to actually use this tool. And the idea is that remember we wanted people to realize that they were ambassadors. If you may recall on, when we looked at the model, one of the skills in listening is observation. So one of the key things that we wanted people to do is to realize that as ambassadors they were watching stories unfold around them all the time. So the first thing that we did, and you know, one of the things we did in the workshop is as a conversation, we knew if we could get people to start sharing stories, they'd realize that they were seeing stories around them all the time, that they would become story noticers. And at stories we get stories like dominoes falling from one another.

Terrence G.: And so we looked at their mission statement and we turned their mission statement. I said, "Now, just put those things down in the

middle." So in this little tool, that middle is the index of key words. So again, to go back, we knew we could pull some very obvious key words, indexes, right? Just like a book has an index. These were things that were important to the value of what Princess Cruise was trying to deliver to its internal and external customers. And so we started there and said, let those be triggers to story. So this tool, the story collage is about working with stories in multiple directions at the same time. I can start with a keyword, say, tell me about a time when you, we did it right.

Terrence G.: And so someone for example, shared the story of, and you've heard these stories where a person became ill, they were cruising, they were between ports, they were cruising, they stopped the ship, they got a helicopter to come out, or they went into port and how they cared for that person. And they did it. You know, that was an example of doing it right. And then they took care of other customers by whether it was giving them 50% off on their next cruise, or giving them VIP status, whatever. Right? And so they have those stories to tell. So and we asked them, "What experiences have you had or observed that remind you of any of these principles?" And that was a good way to get people to realize they had a lot of stories and they had a lot of experiences.

Terrence G.: The next thing that we did, and this activity is also out on my website at makingstories.net, and that is that we had them do a study tour. So across the street from where we were holding the session was a big mall. It was actually the Westfield Mall and they had a task, and this is all described in the facilitator guide for study tour, about working as a group to go back and observe and collect those stories. And then we came back as a group and mined them, and shared them, and talked about what we could do with those stories. Because remember, one of the measurements here about storytelling was how those stories were prompting further research and discovery or how those stories might be used to innovate or change something about an existing set of protocols, or processes, or policies, or customer interactions.

Terrence G.: So we tracked that, and the stories that had a traceability around that, which really made a lot of business sense to the people who are looking at the value of the learning solution. Okay, so lots of ways to collect stories. Again, some of these you can find more information about these, but we need to be really mindful about how we are going about collecting stories even before we do a learning solution. A lot of learning solutions, even for leadership, for example, the research that I do is about eliciting and mining those stories so that when we bring leaders into the room, they hear the voice of people, they hear the people that they're leading in stories.

Terrence G.: So I'll have collected a bunch of stories and people will put on

headphones and they'll listen. They'll close their eyes and actually listen to people share some of their experiences. That's a way of awakening people to stand, neural coupling again, like that pitchfork resonating, vibrating with others and stand in their shoes.

Terrence G.: So I think we're getting really close. I think we're doing okay. Sarah, I'm going to wrap up here with the five strategies that people can use to get started. So number one, look for unstructured and orchestrated unstructured opportunities for people to share. So learning occurs as we know informally as well as informally, but you can be strategic about those and create opportunities for those. Create spaces. You know, we've gotten really creative in organizations about creating those spaces where people do their design thinking and you know, we've got the couches in the rooms and the boards and whatnot, but you can also do that with storytelling and you want to be able to promote that extemporaneous sharing because that incites the learning for others.

Terrence G.: Make the development of ongoing relationship and communication competencies a top learning priority. So it keeps coming out, and Josh Burshwin and all these people that are our industry leaders that track what's going to be critical for the success in organization, and communication, continues to be on the top and storytelling. What we got to people, please, we've got to move beyond performing and being a TEDx speaker. We've got to move beyond the surface of storytelling to the other two pillars of storytelling, story thinking and story listening. Lastly, you can get really creative. You don't even have to change the design of your session in order to build storytelling into it, so orient your instructional designers. And last you need to develop and coach your facilitators on advanced techniques with stories. And at that, I'm going to hand it back to Sarah, being respectful of our time.

Sarah C.: Thank you, Terrence. That was great. We appreciate you looking to HRDQ for your training needs. We publish researched based experiential learning products that you can deliver in your organization. Check out our online print self-assessments, our up out of your seat games, our reproducible workshops you can customize and more, either at our website or give our customer service team a call. And if you need help learning a training program or you want one of our expert trainers to deliver it for you, we also provide those services. We look forward to being your soft skills training resource.

Sarah C.: That's all the time that we have for today. If you have any questions, please send them to us and we'll answer them after the session via email. Thank you so much Terrence, and thank you all for participating in today's webinar. Happy Training.

Terrence G.: Thank you. Many blessings.