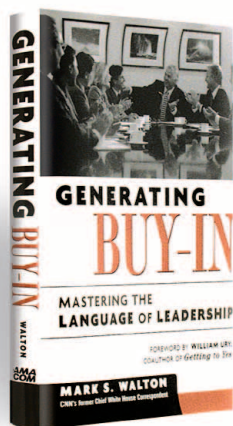


SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: LEADERSHIP



By Mark S. Walton

Mastering the Language of Leadership

GENERATING BUY-IN

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

A former senior correspondent and anchorman at CNN, Mark S. Walton draws on his rich communications background to help leaders master the language of leadership with *Generating Buy-In*.

Walton describes “buy-in” as getting understanding, commitment and action from others in support of a person, idea, proposal, product, service or organization. He explains that buy-in is the essential emotional ingredient needed for any collaborative effort to be successful.

Generating Buy-In shows leaders how they can get buy-in by recognizing situations that call for renewed commitment from others, creating strategic stories that generate enthusiasm, and calling for action to get the job done.

Walton stresses that generating buy-in isn’t done haphazardly, and provides an overall framework and step-by-step procedures for building momentum by getting people on your side.

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What You’ll Learn In This Summary

✓ **The human mind thinks in stories.** Telling strategically created stories that project a positive outcome is essential for generating buy-in.

✓ **Capture people’s emotions, not just their intellects.** Stories that cause an emotional response in others help get buy-in. Simply providing heaps of information won’t do the trick.

✓ **Follow the rules when creating persuasive stories.** Go step-by-step as you determine your objective, establish your story line, target your audience’s agenda, and call your audience to action.

✓ **Follow the Rule of Threes.** “When people ask me about this company, I tell them three things,” says Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft. The mind retains information best when it’s presented in a group of three.

✓ **Use real-life examples.** Vivid, authentic examples influence decision-making more than abstract information, and are more helpful in generating buy-in.

GENERATING BUY-IN

by Mark S. Walton

— THE COMPLETE SUMMARY

UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE OF BUY-IN

What Triggers Buy-In?

The term “buy-in” can be defined as understanding, commitment and action in support of a common goal.

Companies that advertise on television are masterful at generating buy-in for their products: cars, clothes, investments, vacations, you name it. What’s at the heart of their success at generating buy-in? They speak to us in *strategic stories* designed to project a positive future.

To illustrate this, think about this phrase for a moment: a perfect summer afternoon. What does this simple phrase conjure up in your mind? For most people it is a mental story with images of warm weather, bright sunshine, a clear blue sky, and enjoyable activities with friends and family.

We think in stories filled with pictures — images of life — that are the language and currency of our minds.

Aristotle Knew: Stories Trigger Buy-In

In his essay *On Memory and Reflection*, Aristotle said, “It is impossible to even think without a mental picture.”

The human mind is like our own private screening room that continually shows complex mental stories that have the power to soothe, frighten or stimulate us. If it’s

true that the mind thinks this way, the most effective way to stimulate the mind is to communicate with it in its most basic language: a story.

If our goal is to trigger buy-in from people for a creative idea or a new product or business proposal, the story that is most likely to succeed is one that projects a positive future that happens because of that idea, product or proposal. ■

Every Leader Tells a Story

When he was running for president, Ronald Reagan verbally painted a picture of a national renewal, a “Morning in America.” Many voters bought into Reagan’s strategic story and elected him president in a landslide.

In his inaugural address, Reagan made sure that Congress, the next audience whose buy-in he needed, heard his story loud and clear. “It is time to reawaken this industrial giant,” Reagan declared, “to get government back within its means, and to lighten our punitive tax burden. And on these principles, there will be no compromise.”

Reagan’s “Morning in America” story was so compelling and projected such a positive future for the country that it was difficult, even for his political opponents, not to buy into.

From his inauguration to the end of his time as

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The Story of McDonald’s

The McDonald’s hamburger chain had about 700 stores in the mid-1960s, with sales of \$171 million. By 1972, sales totaled more than \$1 billion from the company’s 2,200 outlets. What happened? A national TV advertising campaign that said virtually nothing about food.

Instead, it used music and images, reinforced by a clown named Ronald, to tell a strategic story of a positive future: McDonald’s is “Your Kind of Place” where “You Deserve a Break Today.”

McDonald’s is now the world’s largest fast-food chain, with more than 30,000 restaurants and annual sales of nearly \$4 billion. Despite ongoing refinements, the central story line remains the same.

The author: Mark S. Walton is chairman of the Center for Leadership Communication and a professor of leadership in the U.S. Navy’s Advanced Management Program. He also teaches at the University of North Carolina. Walton is a former correspondent for CNN and the recipient of a Peabody Award.

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CHRIS LAUER – Managing Editor
CHRISTOPHER G. MURRAY – Editor-in-Chief
GEORGE Y. CLEMENT – Publisher

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Every Leader Tells a Story

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President, Reagan literally governed with this story, won re-election with it, and never strayed from its basic structure.

In his farewell address on Jan. 11, 1989, Reagan said, “I won a nickname: ‘The Great Communicator.’ But I never thought it was my style or the words I used that made a difference. It was the content. I wasn’t a great communicator, but I communicated great things.”

In the 1920s, Coca-Cola president Robert Woodruff created a strategic story for the company’s employees. His objective was to increase their commitment and productivity and subsequently increase Coca-Cola’s market share. Woodruff’s storyline was to make sure that Coke is always “Within an Arm’s Reach of Desire.”

Donald Keough, a former president of Coca-Cola, explains why Woodruff’s storyline worked so well: “That story created vending machines. In my day, when we traveled by car, you’d go into a gas station and the first thing you’d do is pull open that box that had ice and cold Coca-Cola in it. That’s one way that they put Coca-Cola within an arm’s reach of desire.”

Over the years, Woodruff’s strategic story passed from employee to employee and nurtured an almost evangelical corporate loyalty. ■

For Additional Information on other leaders who generated buy-in, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

‘Neutron Jack’ Brings Good Things to Life

Jack Welch became CEO of General Electric Corp. at a time when the company was drowning in its own bureaucracy. In order to rekindle the passions of GE’s thousands of workers, Welch had to craft a story they could buy into.

If GE could embrace the massive layoffs and restructuring he recommended, Welch reasoned, it would become number one or number two in all of its businesses.

From the day he started at GE, Welch told his story, which was built around three key messages:

- ✓ **GE is a place where ideas win.**
- ✓ **At GE, people flourish and grow.**
- ✓ **At GE, the excitement of our employees’ work life is transferred to their whole lives.**

Welch made certain his story of the future never changed, regardless of current circumstances. Over the 20 years that Welch was its chairman and CEO, GE’s stock price climbed 2,876 percent.

Strategic Stories Will Get You 21st Century Buy-In

Why is the “language of buy-in” more relevant and powerful today than it has ever been? And how will mastering that language give you a competitive advantage in the marketplace?

The answer is *access* and *impact*. Strategic stories will give you the key to people’s attention, emotions and memories.

In the age of cell phones, cordless phones, telemarketers, pagers, voice mail, e-mail, junk mail, FedEx, faxes, newspapers, 24-hour news networks, newsletters, news magazines and news groups, it is not easy to grab people’s attention. Stories are the key. As Ken Sacharin, media director at Young and Rubicam, explains: “Stories offer fast access. They can get attention any time, any place.”

Why else would tens of millions of overcommunicated, overstressed people glue themselves, night after night, to TV sitcoms, dramas and “reality-based” stories?

You Will Influence People’s Emotions

When strategic stories capture people’s attention, it’s important to capitalize on the situation.

Today, people are deluged with information — statistics, graphs, charts and facts — so giving them more information will not make them notice you. The way to achieve real buy-in — getting people’s understanding, commitment and ultimately, their behavior — is to impact their emotions, not just their thinking.

And that’s exactly what stories do. For example, people in a movie theater will laugh, cry, cringe and cheer, even though they’re only watching a movie. Then, they’ll go out and purchase millions of dollars in merchandise related to the movie.

“This is not a touchy-feely prescription,” says neuroscientist Antonio Damasio. “Emotions are a very intelligent way to drive an organism toward certain outcomes.”

Strategic stories can evoke practically any emotion or feeling. Here are some prime examples:

In 1996, President Bill Clinton’s campaign strategists created a storyline that characterized Clinton as “a bridge to the 21st century.” That story helped to give voters enough confidence in Clinton to get him re-elected by a landslide despite growing evidence of personal misdeeds.

In its advertising, the Motel 6 chain creates an image of friendliness, security and a pleasant experience with its “We’ll leave the lights on for you” campaign. The

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Strategic Stories Will Get You 21st Century Buy-In

(continued from page 3)

chain's success is largely due to the effectiveness of this story.

The U.S. Navy's strategic story reminds prospective recruits that a stint in the Navy is "not just a job, it's an adventure." Every year, this story of an exciting Navy career convinces thousands of volunteers to enlist.

In the 21st century, appealing to people's intellects might pique their interest, but it won't close the deal. To accomplish that, you must appeal to their emotions. "The essential difference," explains neurologist Donald Caine, "is that reason leads to conclusions, while emotion leads to action."

You Will Program People's Memories

The impact of strategic stories never ends. They automatically replay themselves, generating buy-in for days, years and even decades into the future.

Think of how many Bible stories still influence your behavior. How many stories of successful people still

The Coca-Cola Story

In 1886, a chemist named John Styth Pemberton concocted a drink of gooey brown syrup mixed with carbonated water and carried it in jugs to an Atlanta drugstore. This new soft drink, soon to be known as Coca-Cola, became popular in the years to follow. But in 1929, it emerged as a national phenomenon.

As America's economy crashed during the Great Depression, Coke's marketers transformed their product's image from a soda pop into a sunny story, a "Pause That Refreshes" in an otherwise gloomy world. It was a stroke of brilliance that, even now, remains the fundamental story line behind the number-one brand on earth.

affect the daily decisions you make? And how many sports or love stories affect your emotions?

"A story is like mental software," says researcher Annette Simmons, who adds that strategically designing a story "is as close as you can get to programming someone else's brain." ■

SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF BUY-IN

A Framework for Buy-In

Developing strategic stories is not complicated. In our personal lives, maybe without even realizing it, we develop strategic stories all the time. It's our natural way of relating to and getting buy-in from others.

People, all people, are much more likely to do what you want them to do if it leads to a future they want.

The following step-by-step guide illustrates the story development process:

Goal Setting: Determine your buy-in objective.

What action do you want your audience to take regarding your idea, proposal, product, service or organization?

First Step: Establish your strategic storyline. To generate the action you want, what is the "big picture" or vision of a positive future you want your audience to see?

Second Step: Develop your storyline in three chapters that target your audience's agenda. What are this particular audience's needs, wants and future goals? In the future you are projecting, what are the three most important ways in which this audience's agenda will be fulfilled?

Third Step: Call your audience to action. Ask for a commitment or first step toward the action you want. ■

For Additional Information on other leaders who generated buy-in, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Developing Your Strategic Story

Imagine owning the number-one product in your industry — a brand that has earned your company billions of dollars in sales year after year. Then one day, your competitors come along and legally take it away. Not only do they manufacture your product, they sell it for a fraction of the price your company has been charging for it.

It would be like General Motors building Toyota Camrys and selling them for \$5,000 each, or Seven-Up brewing Coke and charging a nickel a bottle.

That's the real-life nightmare the leaders of one of the world's premier pharmaceutical companies lived as they gathered in New York for their annual sales meeting. Months before, their patent on a blockbuster drug had expired and generic, less-expensive copies of the drug were being produced by rival pharmaceutical firms.

The company's revenues were already decreasing because of "generic erosion" as more drug companies rushed to market cheaper versions of the product. Sales projections indicated things would only get worse.

Entering the Buy-In Zone

Many top executives finding themselves in this type of situation would feel demoralized or even devastated,

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Developing Your Strategic Story

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but not this company's newly appointed CEO. As a former pharmaceutical sales rep, he had faced tough audiences before. He saw this challenge as another test — the biggest one he had ever faced — of the buy-in skills he had honed throughout his sales career.

He set the stage for the strategic story he had carefully developed to generate buy-in from the sales executives attending the annual meeting. Here is how the story took shape:

Goal Setting: Determine Your Buy-In Objective

Like any strategic process, developing a story for buy-in starts with goal setting: a beginning with the desired end in mind. Before writing a word of his presentation at the sales meeting, the pharmaceutical CEO addressed a crucial question that anyone seeking buy-in must answer: *What action do you want your audience to take?*

Why should action be the goal when generating buy-in? We can capture people's minds and emotions effectively, but if we don't motivate them to act — to endorse our ideas, to vote for us, to approve our proposals or purchase our products or services — we haven't benefited from all those efforts. Action is the bottom line of buy-in.

In the case of the drug company CEO, generating understanding and goodwill was essential, but it wouldn't be enough to save his job or the organization.

The action the CEO wanted was for his sales force to stay with the company. But that wasn't all. His salespeople couldn't just stay and sell at their usual level — in order for the company to succeed in the new environment, the sales force had to produce sales and income faster and more effectively than the competition.

The CEO gave himself a two-pronged objective: To have his salespeople stay on board, and to have them sell harder and smarter than ever, despite the fact that the company no longer had its patented blockbuster product. With his buy-in strategy in place, the CEO was ready to build a strategic story that would enable him to reach those goals.

First Step: Establish Your Strategic Storyline

Plato said, "The beginning is the most important part of any work, for that is the time at which the character is formed and the desired impression more readily taken."

The first step in developing — and in delivering later — your strategic story is to establish its beginning and basic premise. Writers call this the storyline. The storyline is the strategic story's central message, title and

Well-Known Strategic Storylines

AT&T: "Reach Out and Touch Someone"

Clinton for President: "Bridge to the 21st Century"

Coca-Cola: "The Pause That Refreshes"

Federal Express: "Absolutely, Positively Overnight"

General Electric: "We Bring Good Things to Light"

Microsoft: "Where Do You Want to Go Today?"

Marlboro: "Come to Where the Flavor Is"

Motel Six: "We'll Leave the Lights on for You"

theme. Its purpose is to grab attention and communicate, in "big picture" terms, what the story is all about — a positive future.

How do you develop a strategic storyline? Brainstorming this question is a great way to start. To generate the action you want, ask yourself, "What is the 'big picture' or vision of a positive future that you want your audience to see?"

Beginning his presentation at the sales meeting in New York, the pharmaceutical company CEO established his storyline like this: "I wanted to visit with you personally this morning to share some feelings and thoughts I have about you, us, our company's future and what we will do to assure that future is what we all want it to be."

Note that the CEO started out by focusing on "you, us and a future we all want." The moment the CEO delivered this storyline, the tone of the sales meeting began to change. Hundreds of sales managers and salespeople, who arrived picturing a bleak future for the company, now began to envision a new, positive future.

Second Step: Develop Your Storyline in Three Chapters

Whether you're recruiting, leading, managing, campaigning for political office or marketing, generating buy-in requires that you know how your audience wants the future to be. What are this particular audience's needs, wants and future goals?

Michael Quinlan, CEO of McDonald's Corporation for ten years, sums it up this way: "Unless you can walk in their shoes, unless you're intelligent and sensitive enough to put yourself in their shoes," you won't get their buy-in. "You have to understand their hopes, fears, strengths, weaknesses and frustrations."

Former President of Coca-Cola Donald Keough adds, "When you're ready to communicate with that group or that individual, you know what you're talking about."

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The Pharmaceutical CEO's Strategic Story

Buy-In Objective

- ✓ Have Sales Force Stay and Work Harder

Strategic Story Line

- ✓ You, Us and a Future We All Want

"I wanted to visit with you personally this morning to share some feelings and thoughts I have about you, us, our company's future and what we will do to assure that future is what we all want it to be."

TARGETED CHAPTER 1

- ✓ Targeted Message (Audience's Agenda: New Products)

"This company, based on our pipeline of medicines and your time-tested performance as a sales force, is and will remain the best-positioned pharmaceutical firm in our industry."

Supporting Evidence

"Starting later this year, we will bring to market, each and every year, a minimum of two important new drugs. I define that word 'important' in actual dollar terms, words that you and I as salespeople can connect with. I know what's in our R&D pipeline and I can assure you, having reviewed it thoroughly, that we will deliver on that commitment." (The CEO then describes in detail the types of new drugs under development, their status, and the markets to which they will be targeted.)

TARGETED CHAPTER 2

- ✓ Targeted Message (Audience's Agenda: Comparison and Support)

"We've undertaken a careful review of budgets everywhere in our company. What you need to know is that we will put more money, not less, into things that impact and improve your performance. We will increase our investment in you to make you even more

successful."

Supporting Evidence

"Where will we invest our dollars? In more sales training and development, more people, better sales support and, as you're about to see, much better compensation for performance. We know this makes sense. Together, we will grow our way into the future." (The CEO continues by unveiling a new compensation package which, combined with investments in sales training and support, would enable the sales force to hit new sales targets and earn bigger commissions than ever, despite the loss of their leading product.)

TARGETED CHAPTER 3

- ✓ Targeted Message (Audience's Agenda: Recognition and Pride)

"We will always appreciate you. I'm here today to tell you that there's a clear understanding on the part of senior management that it is you and your performance that have fueled the success of this company."

Supporting Evidence

"This could not have been made clearer than it was last week. I was at a conference in Los Angeles. An old friend introduced me to a hospital administrator I'd never met. And right away that woman said to me, 'I want to tell you that your firm is extraordinary. Why? Because of your salesperson. The level of service she provides our hospital goes way beyond the call of duty. And it has given me a feel for the kind of people and the kind of company you are.'

"What she said brought home to me what I have always known. That you are what makes our company great. And, in this case, I want to say a special thanks to Mary Richardson [gesturing] ... I'm so very proud of her and each and every one of you."

Developing Your Strategic Story

(continued from page 5)

When the pharmaceutical company CEO stood before those salespeople to retain and motivate them, he knew his target audience intimately.

He was a sales rep early in his career, so he personally experienced the needs, wants and goals of people who work on the road, delivering sales pitches and drug samples to physicians. He understood first-hand what a positive future would look like from the salespeople's point of view:

- He knew that the salespeople's most important need, having lost their patented blockbuster drug, was for drugs that sold extremely well.
- He recognized that they would want to be well-compensated and supported during the time it takes for

new products to become popular with physicians and the public.

- He appreciated that, in addition to money, sales people are motivated by personal factors such as recognition and pride.

His challenge was to project his story of "You, Us and a Future We All Want" in a way that would credibly fulfill this target audience's agenda. His story consisted of three specially targeted chapters. A targeted chapter is a projection of a future in which a target audience's specific needs, wants and goals are fulfilled.

The section above, "The Pharmaceutical CEO's Strategic Story," illustrates how the CEO's targeted chapters answer the key question: What are the three most important ways that the action he wants will give

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Developing Your Strategic Story

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the salespeople the kind of bright tomorrow they want?

Third Step: Call Your Audience to Action

Shakespeare said, “It is by entrances and exits shall ye be known.” That is true of every strategic story and storyteller trying to get buy-in.

At the New York meeting, the pharmaceutical CEO took a calculated risk. He let the salespeople know his vulnerabilities and the difficult struggle he and the company were facing.

Despite that perilous situation, he told a strategic story that projected a positive future in which their specific needs, wants and goals would be fulfilled.

Now it was time for him to ask his audience to take the actions he proposed, to call on them to move forward and make the story become a reality.

This was his call to action: “Let’s prove to our industry, to our customers, to ourselves, how truly unstoppable this sales force is. Let’s show them that there isn’t a single target or goal that, together, we can’t attain. Let’s build that future we all want. And I have no doubt that we can, because we’ll provide you everything you need to succeed. Do I have your commitment to go forward?”

The Outcome

The CEO won the salespeople’s commitment and achieved his buy-in objective in a big way. Not only did he retain the sales force, he expanded it significantly in the years following his New York presentation.

Despite the loss of a hugely successful product, the company brought several new, high-selling drugs to the marketplace, and overall sales remained strong. ■

For Additional Information on strategic story lines, go to:
<http://my.summary.com>

The Rule of Threes

“When people ask me about this company, I tell them three things,” says Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft.

The mind receives, retains and recalls information most easily when it is presented in groups of three. How do you feel when you listen to a speech that contains fourteen key points you’re supposed to remember? When a salesperson sells you on eleven important features of a product? When you try to follow a ten-step process?

Overwhelmed, right? It’s very difficult to remember long lists of details; it’s much easier to remember things presented in threes. Notable examples of lists of threes

from the business world come from the Ritz-Carlton Hotel and Ford Motor Company. The Ritz Carlton trains its employees to always provide “three steps of service” when interacting with hotel guests:

1. A warm and sincere greeting.
2. Anticipation and compliance with guest needs.
3. A fond farewell — give guests a warm goodbye and use their names if and when possible.

Ford Motor Co. chairman and CEO William Clay Ford, Jr. announced his company’s strategy for the 21st century was to “build a stronger business” by making its automobiles more affordable in three ways:

- Economically
- Environmentally
- Socially

If people welcome information delivered in groups of three, they’ll react the same way to strategic stories designed with this formula in mind. ■

When Times Get Tough, The Smart Get Buy-In

In mid-1994, a flaw was discovered in millions of Pentium microchips from Intel, the largest manufacturer of personal computer chips in the world, maker of the ubiquitous Pentium processor.

Word of the problem spread fast on the Internet, and concerned customers contacted Intel headquarters in Santa Clara, California. Intel CEO Andy Grove instructed his employees to tell customers that no technology is perfect, that the problem affected only high-level scientific computations, and that, for the average computer user, a problem might occur once in 27,000 years.

For PC owners, that wasn’t good enough. They contacted CNN, the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. The media coverage prompted IBM to stop all shipments of its Pentium processor-based PCs. That triggered a stock slide that cost Intel more than a billion dollars in market value in a few days.

No Excuses

As brilliant as Grove is, he missed a crucial point: Customers didn’t want excuses or a technical analysis of the Pentium chip. They wanted to know that their computing needs would be met, then and in the future.

From the many angry calls Intel received, the company knew what its customers needed and wanted: the option of receiving replacement Pentium chips at no cost or inconvenience, and the assurance that any future problems would be quickly, reliably handled.

Grove took action. He enlisted the help of communi-

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When Times Get Tough, the Smart Get Buy-In

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cations experts to develop a strategic story to regain customer commitment. The main points of his story were presented in a group of three:

- Intel would provide free replacement Pentium chips to anyone who wants them.
- Intel would provide in-home or office service to those who want chips replaced.
- Intel will always stand behind everything it makes and, should anything go wrong with its products, the company will move quickly to make things right.

Once the correct decision was made and the right strategic story was communicated, Intel regained its market value and reputation. In fact, the firm benefited from the publicity the incident received — consumers admired the company's commitment to correcting the problem. ■

The Best Evidence

“Connect with people's gut concerns and they'll go anywhere with you without asking for details,” says

New York Times columnist Thomas L. Friedman. “Don't connect, and you'll never be able to show them enough details to get them to follow.”

The best supporting evidence for a story or message about the future is a credible, real-life example from yesterday or today.

In the mid-1970s, Nobel Prize-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman and fellow researcher Amos Tversky demonstrated this in their research on a brand-new field that would become known as behavioral economics. Kahneman and Tversky found that:

- 1. First impressions shape subsequent decisions.**
- 2. Vivid examples are overwhelmingly more influential in shaping decisions than abstract information, even if the information is more accurate.**

Using real-life examples to shape opinions is a persuasive approach that can be applied to any effort to obtain buy-in.

Advertisers do it all the time. Many of their commercials feature customers and celebrities who have tried their products. Lawyers seek out witnesses who were at the scene of a crime. Reporters look to interview people who are directly involved in a story. So do public relations practitioners and communication strategists. ■

PUTTING THE LANGUAGE TO WORK

Questions Executives Ask About the Language of Buy-In

1. Where is the best place to use the language of strategic stories?

As with any language, this language can be spoken, written, printed or expressed in a variety of media and formats. Great advertising, packaging and promotional materials are perfect examples of strategic storytelling. Through words and images, they promise a positive future if we buy into the products or services involved. The bottom line is: You can speak it, write it, picture it or even act it out before a target audience of any kind.

2. How do you find out what a target audience wants for the future: their needs, desires and goals?

Ask and listen. Carefully asking and listening is an underlying element of all types of successful advertising, marketing and political campaigns. Whether they use simple personal interviews or sophisticated technologies that read a focus group's brain waves, smart companies use the “asking and listening” method to determine what turns people on. The company leverages that information to communicate the right story to a particular target market or demographic group.

3. After you've developed your strategic story, how often should you tell it?

The key to maximizing the impact of any strategic story is to repeat it as often as possible for as long as possible. The longer and more frequently you repeat your strategic story, the more likely you are to be successful.

4. What do you do when there's no good news to deliver and therefore no positive future to include in your strategic story?

You can't sugarcoat bad news and maintain your credibility. You've got to be upfront and honest with people. After acknowledging the current realities, the challenge of leadership is to create a bright tomorrow, to focus on what can and will be done to make the future better. Without denying the downside, you must create and communicate a brighter tomorrow to generate buy-in, even if you have to create that tomorrow yourself.

5. What should you do if your strategic story isn't working as well as you'd like it to?

If your story isn't producing the buy-in you want with a particular target audience, it might need adjustment. Review your strategy, especially your research on the target audience's needs, wants and future goals. Keep in mind that people's needs, wants and goals can and do change quickly. Usually, when a strategic story is producing insufficient results it's because the target audience research is insufficient, faulty or outdated. ■