

NationalJournalLeadershipCouncil



**Building a Best-in-Class Storytelling
Capability for Your Organization**

NationalJournalLeadershipCouncil

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Spoiler Alert...

Hollywood's Storytelling Formula

The Hero's Journey

THE STAGES OF THE HERO'S JOURNEY

The hero is introduced in his ORDINARY WORLD where he receives the CALL TO ADVENTURE. He is RELUCTANT at first to CROSS THE FIRST THRESHOLD where he eventually encounters TESTS, ALLIES and ENEMIES. He reaches the INNERMOST CAVE where he endures the SUPREME ORDEAL. He SEIZES THE SWORD or the treasure and is pursued on the ROAD BACK to his world. He is RESURRECTED and transformed by his experience. He RETURNS to his ordinary world with a treasure, boon, or ELIXIR to benefit his world.

Replaceable Parts

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone.
Star Wars: A New Hope; synopsis

Harry Potter

~~Luke Skywalker~~ is an orphan living with his uncle and aunt on the remote wilderness of ~~Tatooine~~;

He is rescued from ~~aliens~~ by wise, bearded ~~Ben Kenobi~~, who turns out to be a ~~Jedi Knight~~;

~~Ben~~ reveals to ~~Luke~~ that ~~Luke's~~ father was also a ~~Jedi Knight~~, and was the best pilot he had ever seen.

~~Luke~~ is also instructed in how to use the ~~Jedi light sabre~~ as he too trains to become a ~~Jedi~~.

~~Luke~~ has many adventures in the ~~galaxy~~ and makes new friends such as ~~Han Solo~~ and ~~Princess Leia~~.

In the course of these adventures he distinguishes himself as a top ~~X-wing pilot~~ in the battle of the ~~Death Star~~, making the ~~direct hit~~ that secures the ~~Rebels~~ victory against the forces of evil, ~~Slytherin~~.

~~Luke~~ also sees off the threat of ~~Darth Vader~~, who we know murdered his ~~uncle and aunt~~.

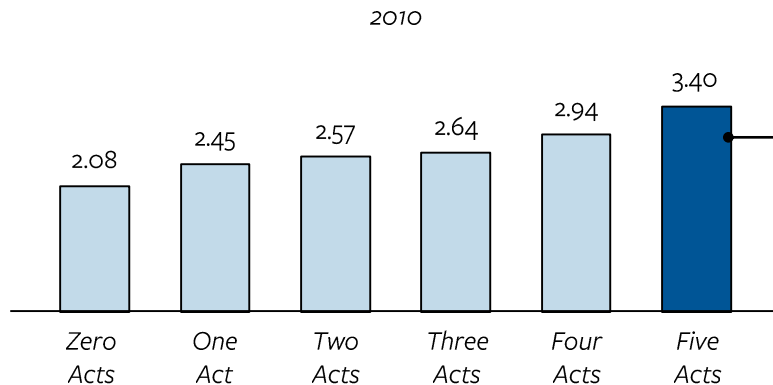
In the finale, ~~Luke~~ and his new friends receive medals of ~~valour~~.

All of this will be set to an orchestral score composed by John Williams.

Unpacking Storytelling's Appeal

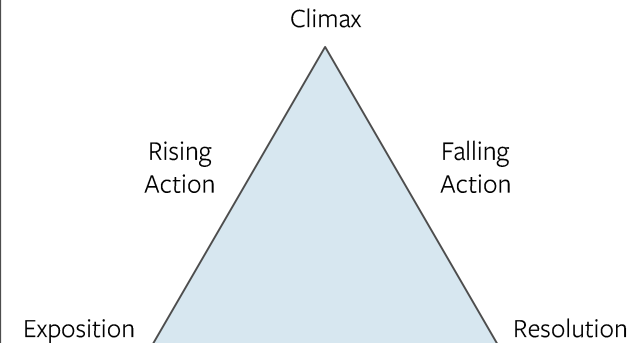
Audiences Rewarding More Developed Story Structure

2010 Spotbowl.com Mean Ad Favorability Rating Increased as the Number of Acts Present in the Ad Increased¹



Conventional Five-Part Dramatic Structure Still Most Effective Model

"Freytag's Pyramid"



Study in Brief



"What Makes a Super Bowl Ad Super?"

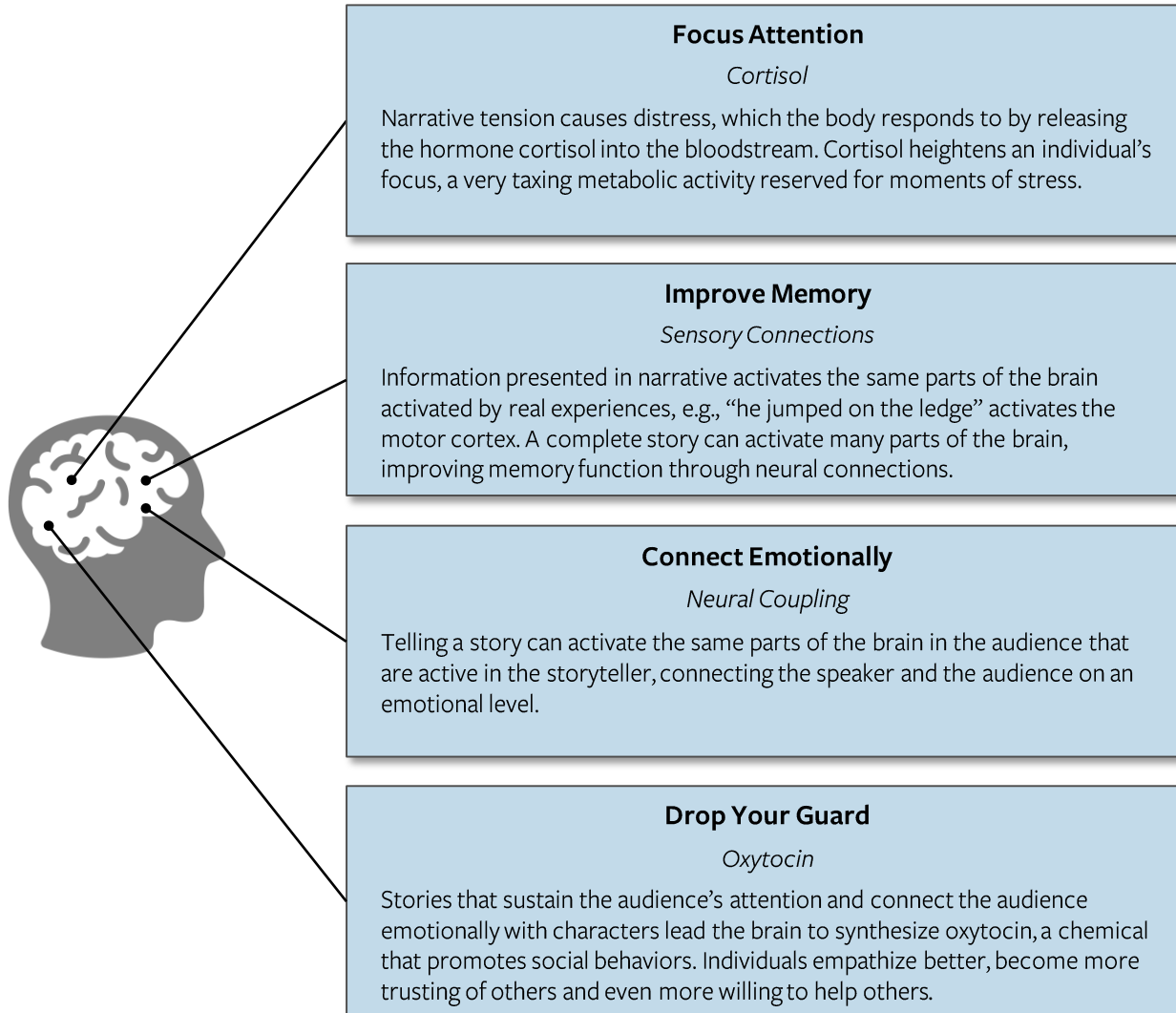
Five-Act Dramatic Form Affects Consumer Super Bowl Advertising Ratings¹

- Marketing researchers measured 100+ Super Bowl ads in 2010, 2011 for number of narrative acts and presence of humor, sex appeal, emotion, animals
- Higher number of acts correlated with higher ratings in SpotBowl.com and *USA Today* Ad Meter national ratings polls; other factors exhibited no discernable pattern

¹ "What Makes a Super Bowl Ad Super? Five-Act Dramatic Form Affects Consumer Super Bowl Advertising Ratings," Keith Quesenberry and Michael Coolen, 2014.

Brains Primed for Story

Neuro-Economists Uncovering Story's Physiological Power



Bullet Points Beware



Audiences are not well-suited to remember information presented outside of a structured story narrative; they instead tend to remember just the first and last pieces of information.

Extracting the Bare Essentials

What Makes a Story a Story?

Built Out of These Key Components...

Story Component		Translation
<i>(Human) Context</i>	➡	A person or community
<i>Goal</i>	➡	What they want to achieve
<i>Conflict</i>	➡	What is stopping them from achieving it
<i>Plot</i>	➡	How they tried another way to achieve it
<i>Resolution</i>	➡	How they changed (for better or for worse)

Longer stories compile many smaller stories, building up to a grand resolution of the story's central conflict

And Not to Be Confused with...

Narrative Account of a series of events; a category above story	Rhetoric Persuasive speech or effective use of language
Recap Description of recent events	Argument Series of logical reasons, evidence intended to persuade
Profile Informational piece describing person or organization	Testimonial Statement attesting to individual, organization accomplishment, impact

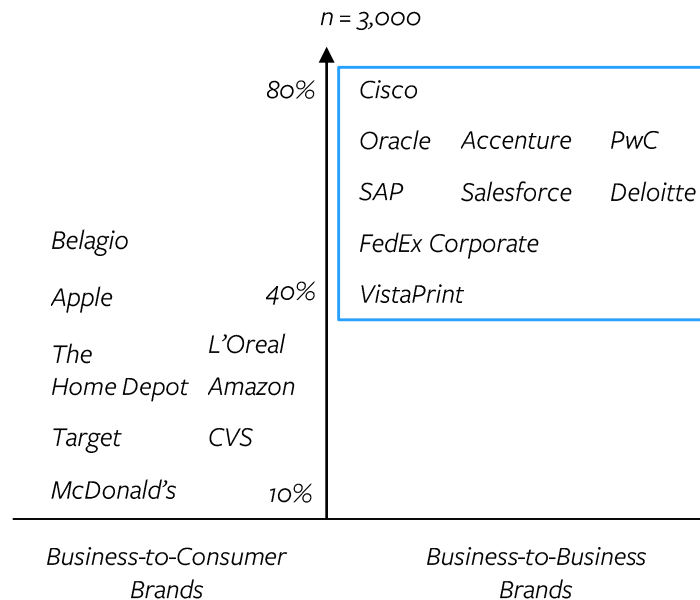
Story often serves as a component piece of different forms of discourse

Emotion Drives Toughest Workplace Decisions

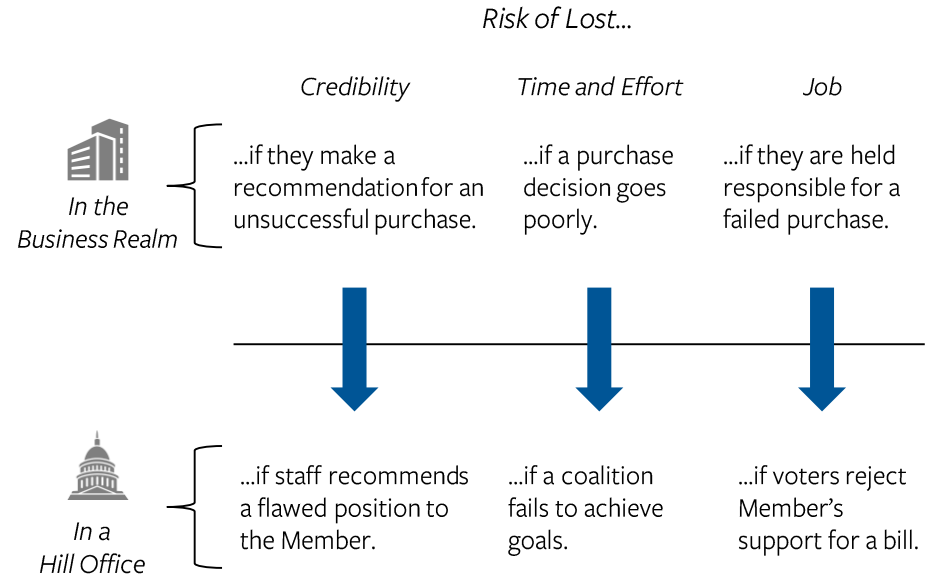
An Opportunity to Shape Difficult Hill Decisions with Stories

Winning B2B¹ Sellers Forge Emotional Connections with Buyers Making Large, Risky Business Purchases

Percentage of Customers Who Feel Emotionally Connected



Decisions at the Office Entail Greater Personal Risk



Study in Brief



CEB



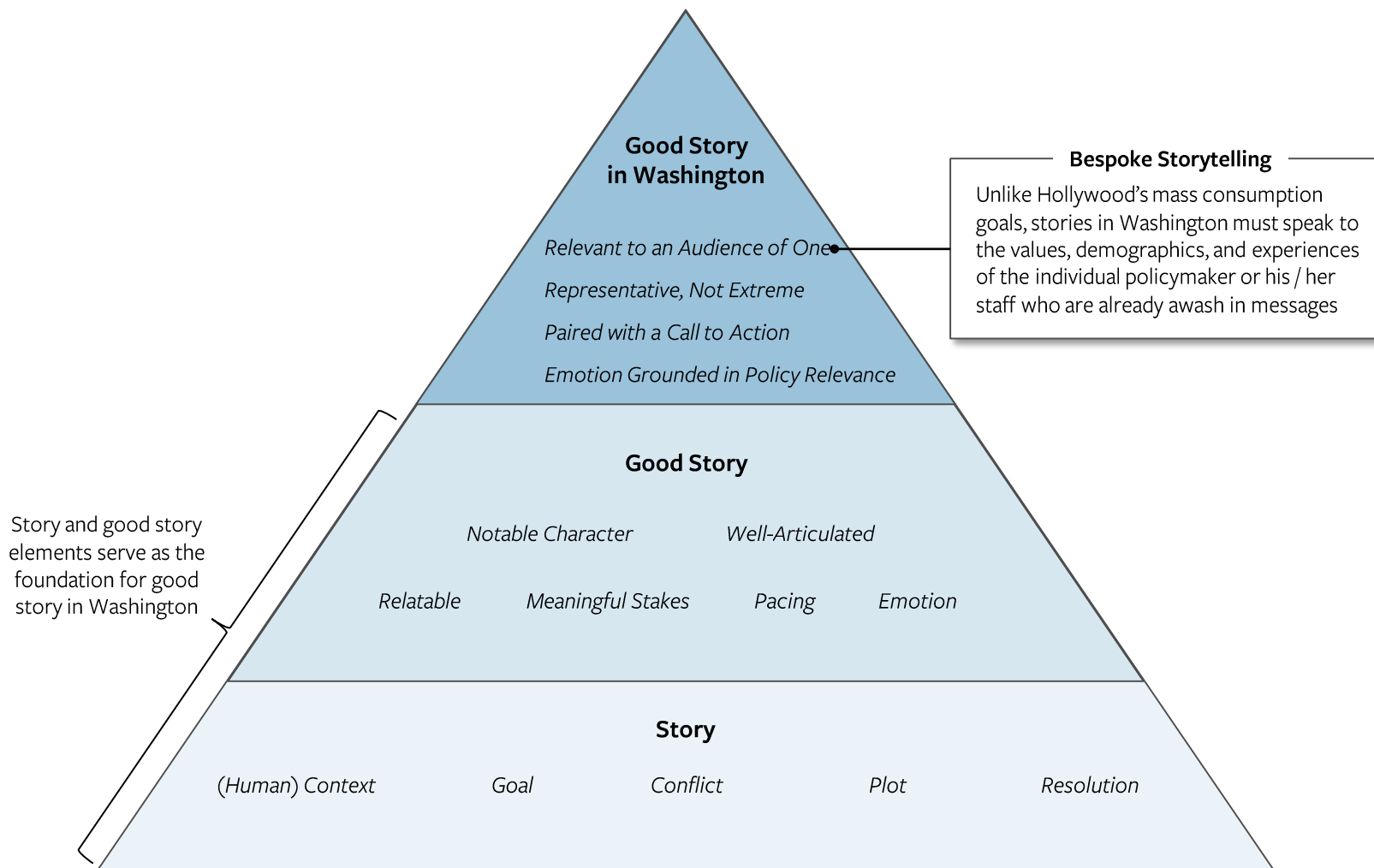
"From Promotion to Emotion: Connecting B2B Customers to Brands"

- 2013 study examines influence of brand on B2B sales preference, purchase, and premium pricing at large corporations
- Surveyed 3,000 B2B purchasers at 36 brands and 7 industry categories
- Brands successfully communicating business value to purchasers but fail to differentiate, creating difficult decisions for purchasers

¹ Business-to-business.

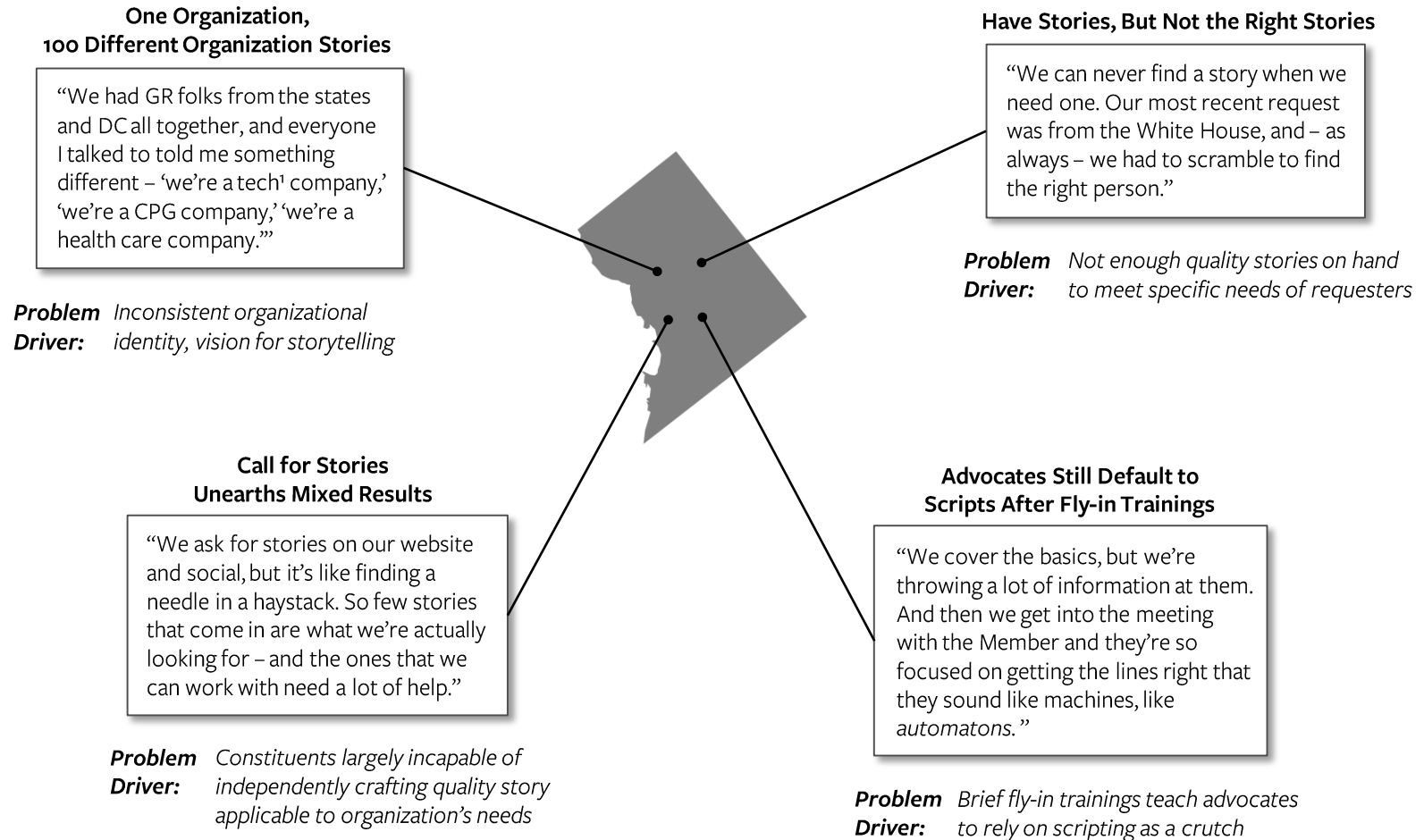
Facing Washington's High Standards...

Story Hierarchy in Washington



...And Tripping Up

Commonly Reported Challenges



Today's Discussion

Building a Best-in-Class Storytelling Capability for Your Organization

Establishing a Framework



#1 Master Story

Matching Stories to Audiences



#2 Storyteller Talent Agency

#3 Story-Powered Community

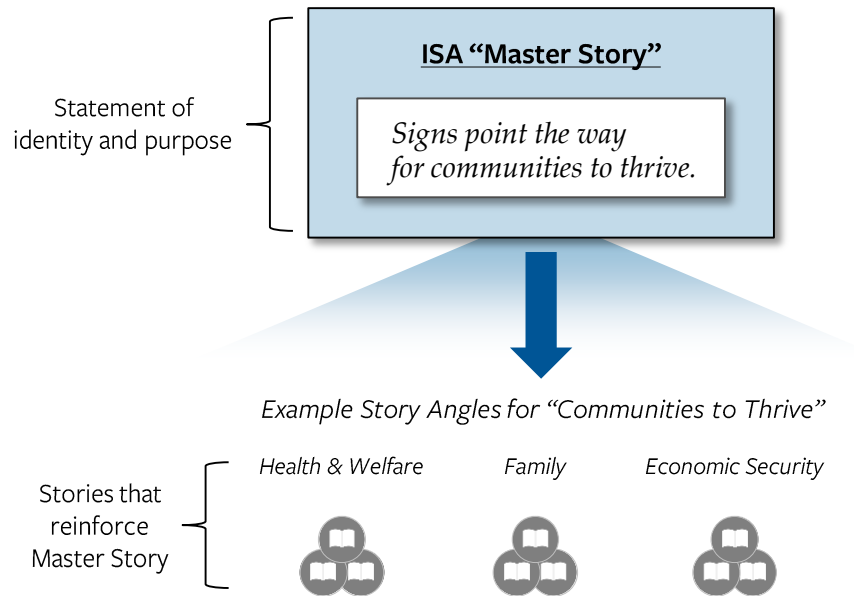
Investing in Elite Messengers



#4 Advocate Storyteller Corps

A Flexible Framework for Storytelling

Master Story Frames Storytelling Vision



Key Characteristics of a Master Story

- ✓ Organizational DNA
Articulates who the organization is and what it does – the organization’s essential ethos that changes rarely, if ever
- ✓ Vision for Partnership
Describes a shared vision for how the organization will work with partners to achieve a mutually desired goal
- ✓ Minimalist
Easy to remember, simple to articulate – reduced to the core elements of the organization’s story
- ✓ Adaptable to Many Story Angles
Variety of emotional story topics able to connect master story’s core message to audiences

Case in Brief



Profiled Organization: International Sign Association
Organization Type: Association



Partner Organization: Visionary Leadership

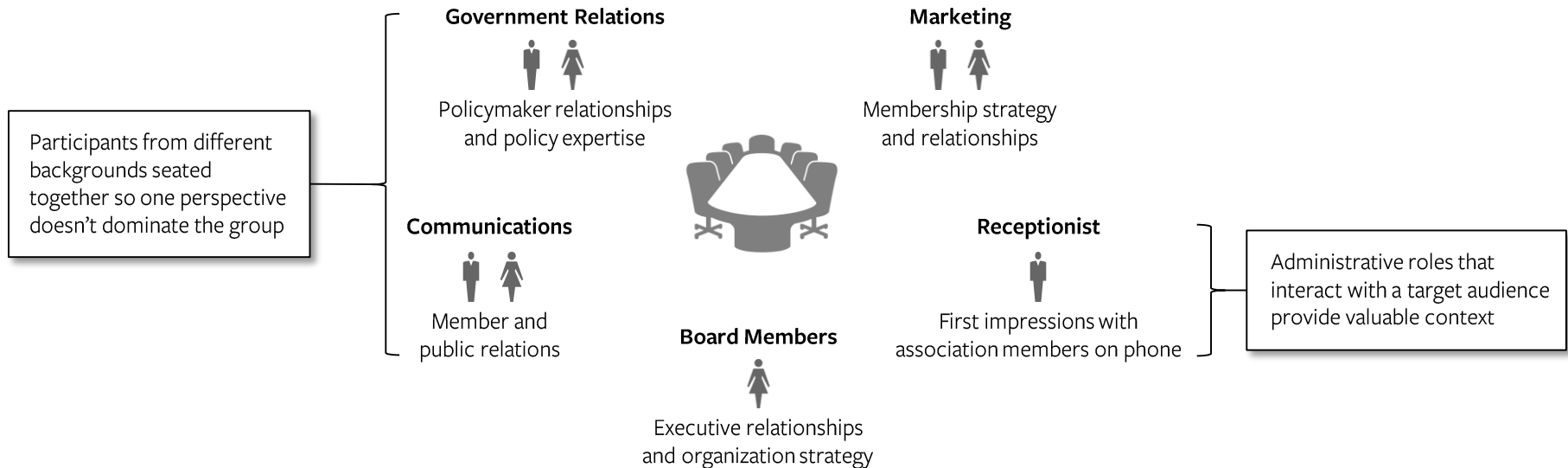
- Organization develops a specific but flexible story framework using story of its identity to frame, scope how it works and communicates with its three primary audiences (end-users, policymakers, influencers)
- “Master Story” concisely articulates who the organization is, what it does, and its vision for how it will work with policymakers and other influencers; story developed in 2 day-long workshops facilitated by Visionary Leadership
- Organization identifies, collects, writes specific stories of its membership that reflect Master Story’s essence

Tailoring for Organization-Wide Adoption

Diverse Voices Inform Master Story with Perceptions from Around the Organization

Workshop Small Group Composition and Perspectives

Illustrative



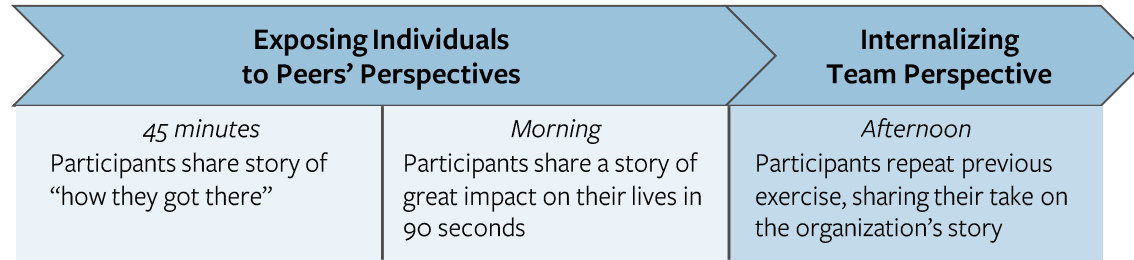
Workshops in Brief

- 2 workshops held at retreats in spring of 2015, facilitated by Seth Kahan of Visionary Leadership
- 1st workshop attended by all 22 staff; 2nd workshop attended by board members, member steering committee, and senior staff
- Retreat objectives were to build a Master Story for the organization, engage and earn buy-in from stakeholders, define audiences, and develop storytelling skills

Building Consensus

Workshop Participants Tell Stories to Build Rapport, Find Common Ground

“JumpStart Storytelling” Workshop Agenda



Master Story Development Exercise

Telling stories surfaces different ways of understanding organization

Storytelling Round 1

Participants in groups of 6-8 take turns telling story in 90 seconds

Storytelling Round 2

Participants move to a new group, re-tell their story

Voting and Story-Dissection

Participants vote for favorite stories, break down why they worked

Storytelling Outcomes



- Articulating one’s own values, experiences to the group
- Practice creating narrative arcs, story structure

- Words change – participants experience how delivery is more important than words, scripting

- All voices heard, given a chance to succeed

Winning story reflects values, experiences of most (or all) participants

Power of story directed at participants

Story Listening Outcomes



- Contextualizes others’ values, perspectives
- Drops participants’ guard, builds rapport

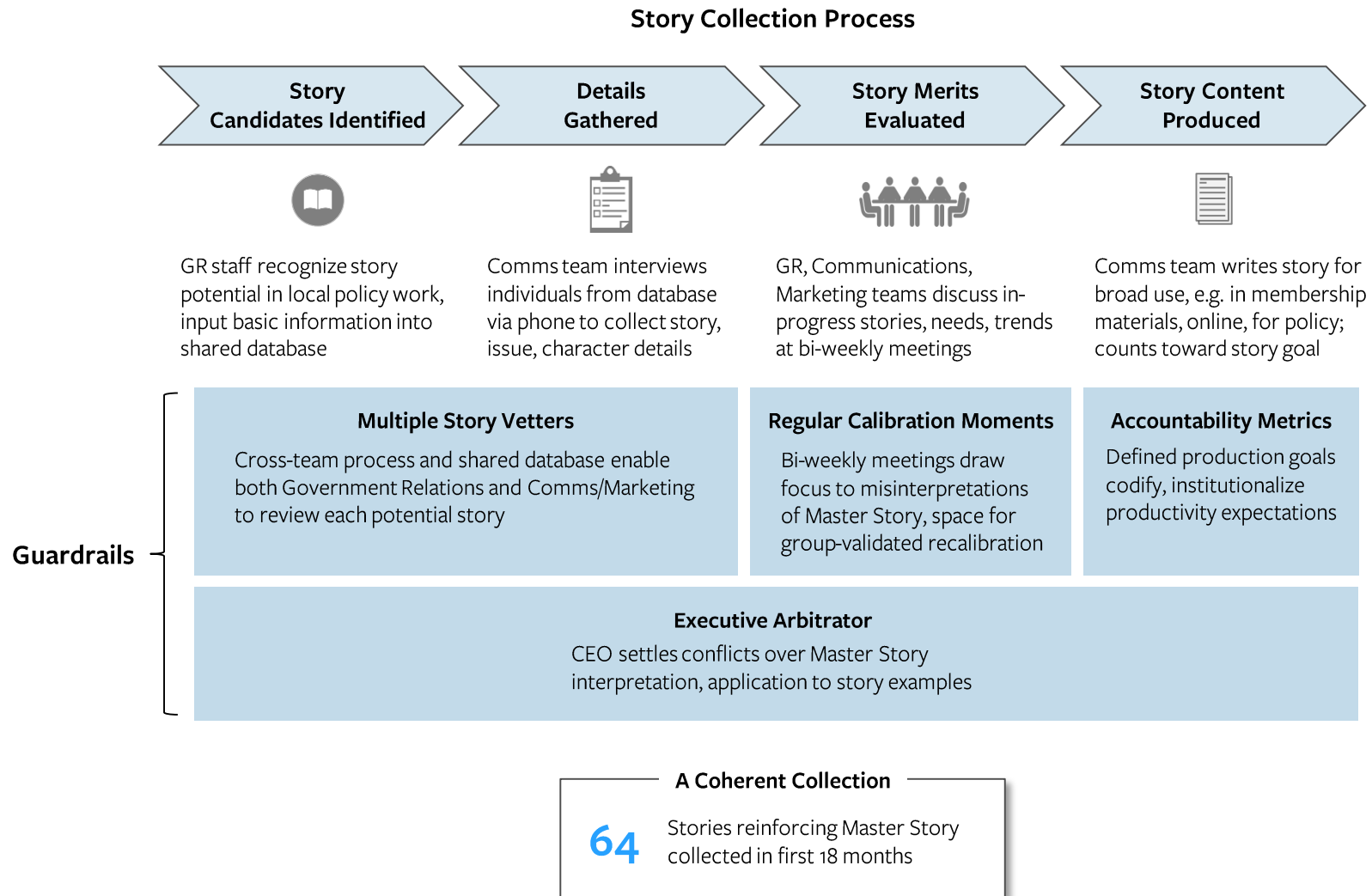
- Appreciate different story delivery styles
- Exposes participants to more perspectives

- First-hand recognition of which stories were most impactful and why

Listening to stories allows best stories to win over other participants

Shoring Up Compliance

Guardrails Embedded in Collection Process to Preserve Master Story



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#3 Story-Powered Community

Investing in Elite Messengers

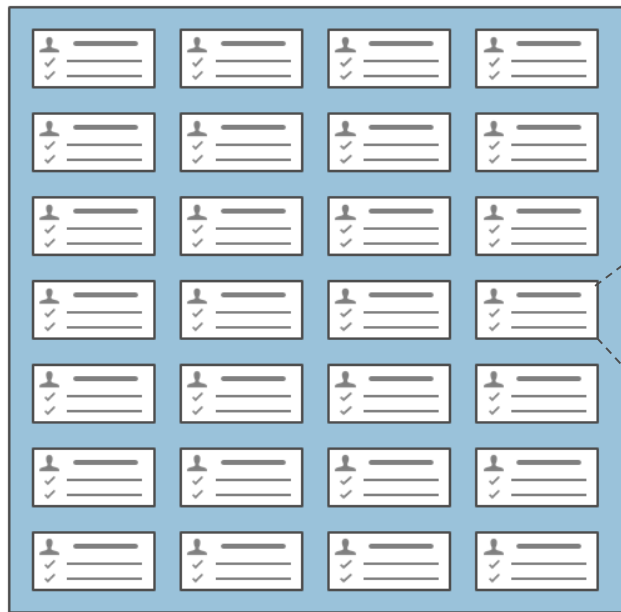


#4 Advocate Storyteller Corps


Tapping a Deep Talent Roster

Storytelling Needs Matched to Storyteller Strengths

A “Roster” of Vetted Storytellers...



...for matching
qualified storytellers...

 **Sophia Garner¹**

- ☒ \$1,000,000+ annual sales
- ☒ Brick & mortar facility
- ☒ Strong conversationalist

Strengths
documented for
each storyteller

...with detailed requests

Requester: Govt. Rel.

Need: Annual fly-in

Preferred Characteristics:

1.	7-figure seller
2.	Physical storefront
3.	Easy to talk with

Case in Brief



Profiled Organization: eBay Inc.
Organization Type: Corporation

- Grassroots director develops internal storyteller “talent agency” to meet rising demand of unique story requests emerging on the Hill; director takes inbound requests for storytellers from lobbyists, internal organizations
- 4-FTE Grassroots team builds storytelling talent roster through 4-month interview campaign of 1,000 individuals filtered out of company’s database of sellers; interviews surface issue-related stories (e.g., international trade), gauge candidates’ storytelling strengths

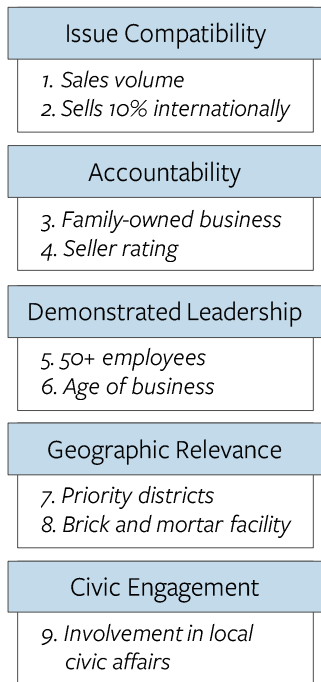
Narrowing the Field

Filtering Interview Candidates to a More Manageable (and Relevant) Group

Initial Interview Candidate List Development

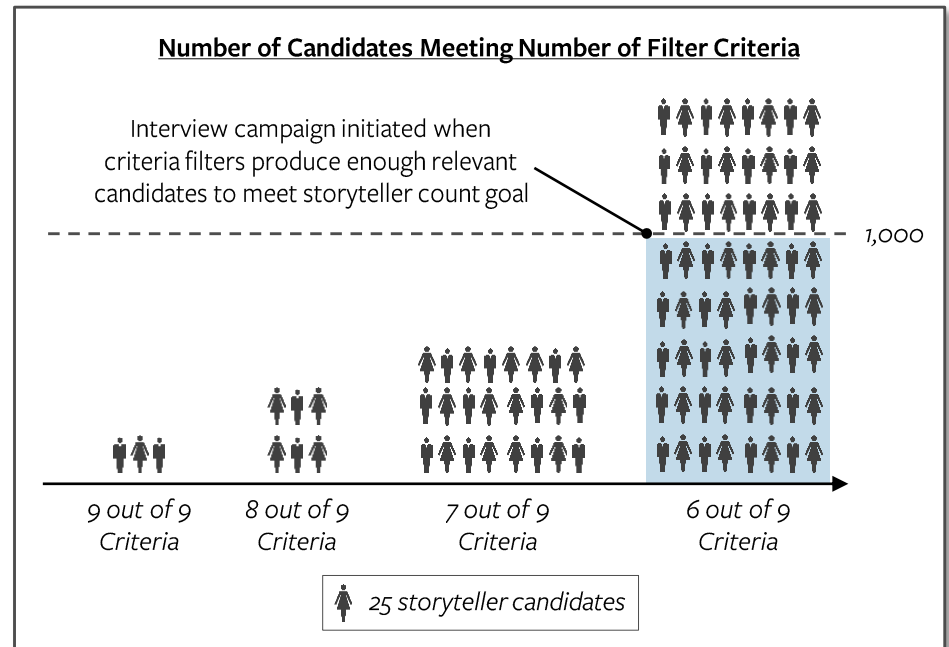
Seller Database Filtered for Indicators of Government Affairs Relevance

Illustrative



Number of indicators large enough to eliminate bad fits, small enough to surface enough viable candidates


Filter Criteria Ratio Reduced to Surface Sufficient Quantity of Candidates



Surfacing Strengths

Interview Questions Prompt Stories to Reveal Abilities

Interview Questionnaire

Government Relations

eBay Marketplaces Interview Questionnaire

This questionnaire should be used when interviewing eBay sellers.

Background/General Info:

1. Please tell me a little bit about yourself and your background?
2. How do you support your local community through your business?
3. Looking back 5 years, could you have imagined your business being where it is today?
4. What makes you energized/motivated to come to work every day?

Connected Commerce:

1. Can you think of an example or two of where, through your business, you have been able to connect meaningfully with people that you otherwise might not have connected with (i.e. customers, suppliers, other entrepreneurs, employees, etc.)?

Cross Border Trade:


1. What challenges have you faced with cross-border trade (shipping, customs, etc.)?
2. Can you remember any compelling trade stories (you sold a product to a country you weren't expecting, you found it ironic you sold a specific product to a specific country).
3. Have you formed any meaningful connections with customers around the world because of your ability to sell internationally?

Questions framed to prompt story answers, unearth storytelling strengths

Open-ended questions reveal connections to other relevant issues

Storyteller Profile

Illustrative

**Tina Johnson**
Sparta, Tennessee – TN-6
Rep. Diane Black; Sens. Alexander & Corker

☐ **Live Media Comments**
Comments: *Tina seems less comfortable speaking before a crowd.*

☒ **Written Media**
Comments: *Well-spoken, good voice for Op-Ed on trade issues.*

☒ **In-District, In-Person Meeting**
Comments: *Good journey story, early eBay user with growing business.*

☒ **Fly-In**
Comments: *Could handle pressure but don't need her district this year.*

☒ **Case Study**
Comments: *Top-tier candidate, good for 1-pager. Highlight int'l sales.*

Issue Relevance

☒ Global Trade

☐ Net Neutrality

☐ Cybercrime

☒ Internet Sales Tax

☒ Postal Reform

☐ _____

Top Storytellers Sell Themselves

“You can tell when an interview is going to go well because the advocate sells his or her own story. Good storytellers think their stories are cool and tell them in a way that makes me think so too.”

Federica Rabiolo
Manager, Global Government Relations

Elevating Storytelling's Impact

The Company's Best Storytelling Asset

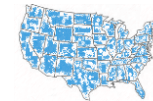
A Robust Storytelling Enterprise

520 Vetted storytellers in roster

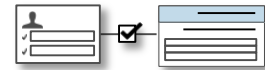
*Better
Targeted Coverage*

Elevating the Role, Stature of Storytelling

A Storyteller for
Nearly Every District



Story Requests Matched
to Storyteller Strengths



5-8 Annual storytelling moments
for each storyteller

*Proactive Storytelling for
Higher Profile Uses*

Example Uses



Panel Discussions



TV Interviews



Member Tours



Letter Campaigns

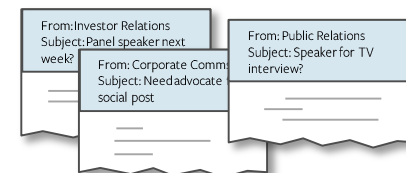


Town Halls

1-3 Weekly requests from
other departments

*Adding Business Value
for the Entire Organization*

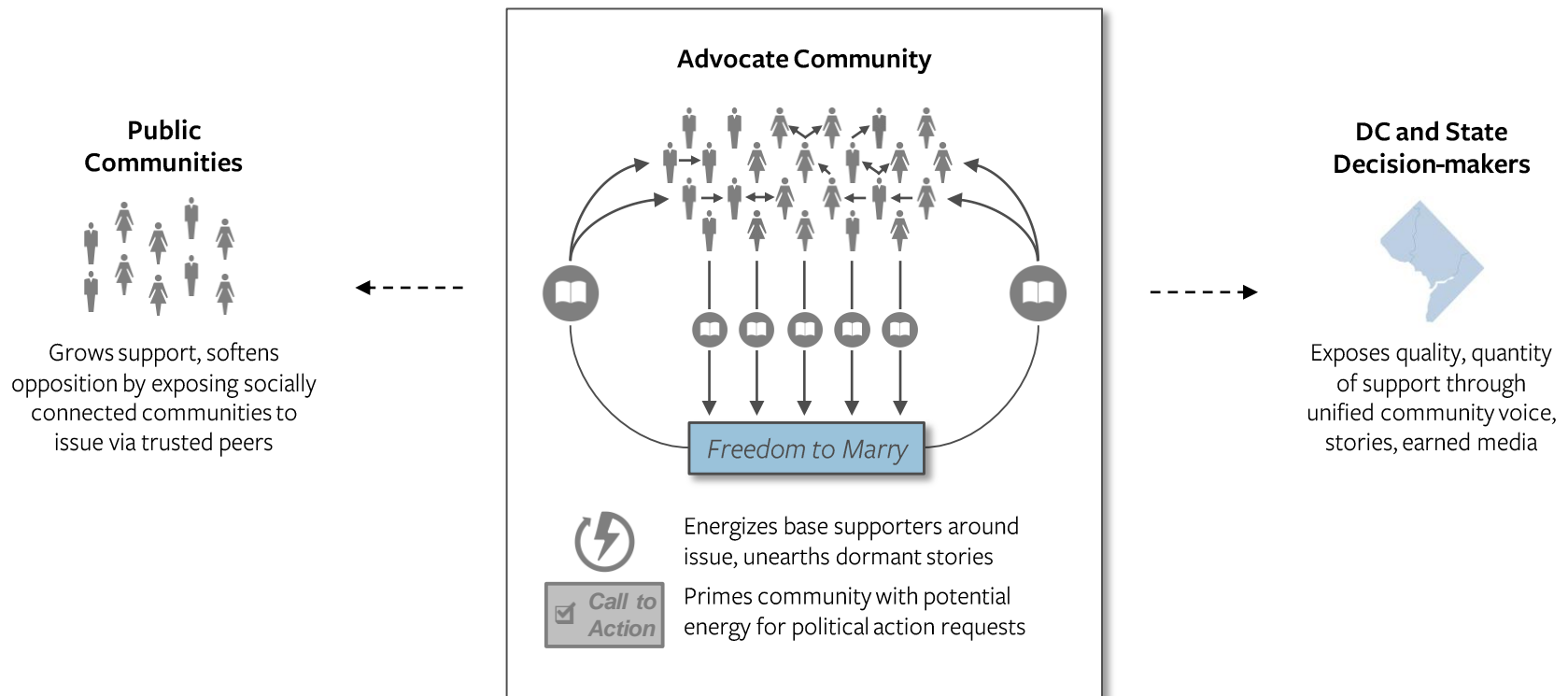
Departments Seeking
Advocate Storytellers



Charging a Community with Its Own Stories

Projecting Strength at Key Audiences

Story Journeys at Freedom to Marry



Case in Brief



Profiled Organization: Freedom to Marry

Organization Type: Advocacy

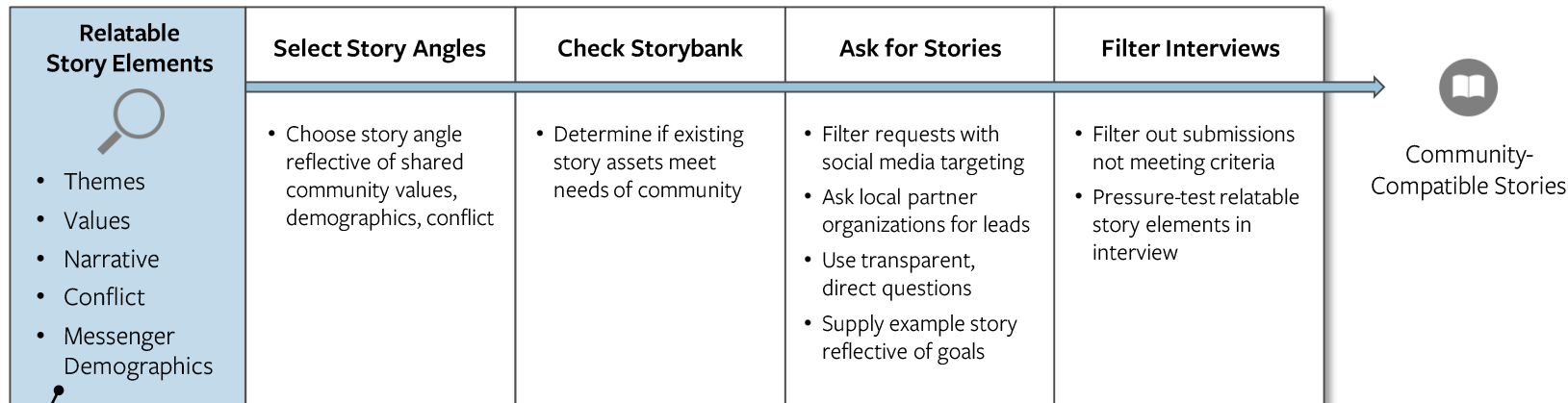
Partner Organization: Blue State Digital

- Organization collects, packages, distributes stories from advocate community back into community through social media, allies
- Community members identify with stories and share with others, building community energy around single issue
- Stories selected for shareability, relatability, relevance to political goals

Matching the Right Story to the Right Community

Story Collection Process Surfaces Relatable Stories

Story Collection Process



Relatable story elements informed by campaign goal, issue, community characteristics

Tagging System Surfaces Missing Relatable Elements in Storybank

- Community Story Needs**
- Female
 - Military
 - Southerner
 - Family
 - Narrative centered on love and commitment

Storybank
Illustrative

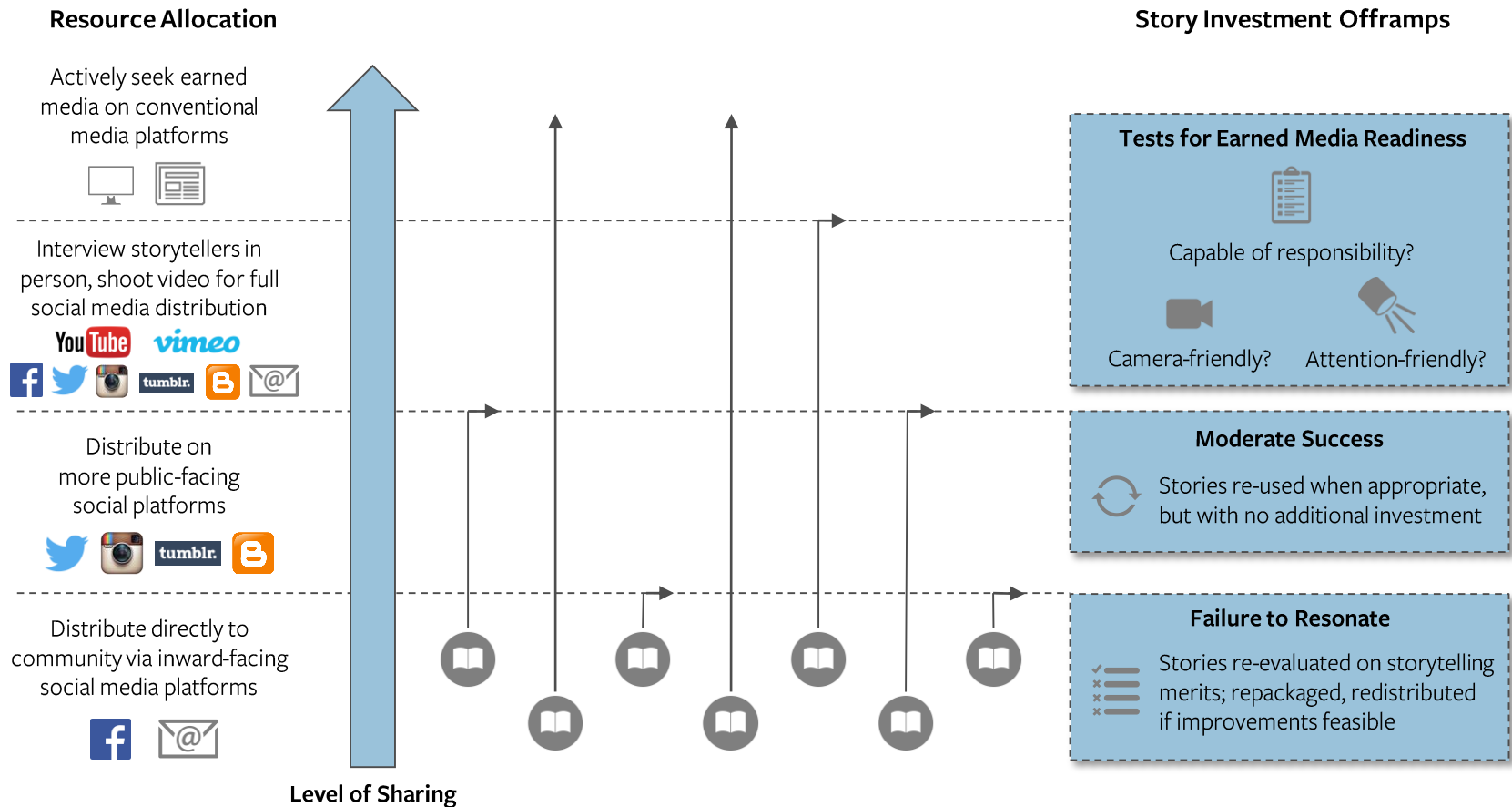
Story #47:	Female	Military	Michigan
Story #48:	Female	Military	California
Story #49:	Male	Military	Alabama

Tagging system tailored to relatable story elements to simplify searching process

Letting the Community Pick Winning Stories

Most-Shared Stories Earn Additional Resource Investment

Investment in Stories Based on Level of Sharing



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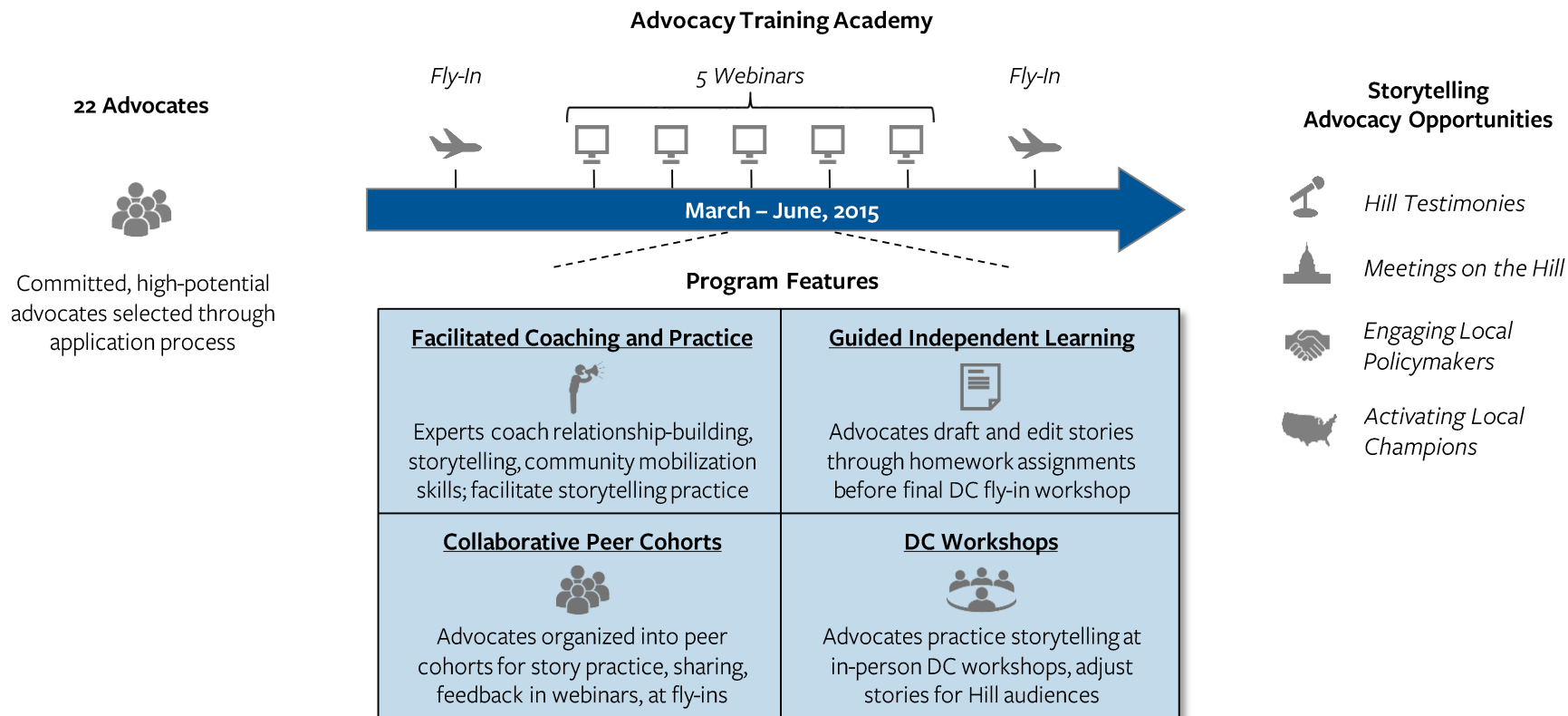
Investing in Elite Messengers



#4 Advocate Storyteller Corps

Developing an Elite Team

Deeper Training Prepares Select Advocates for Larger Advocacy Role



Case in Brief



Profiled Organization: Feeding America

Organization Type: Non-Profit

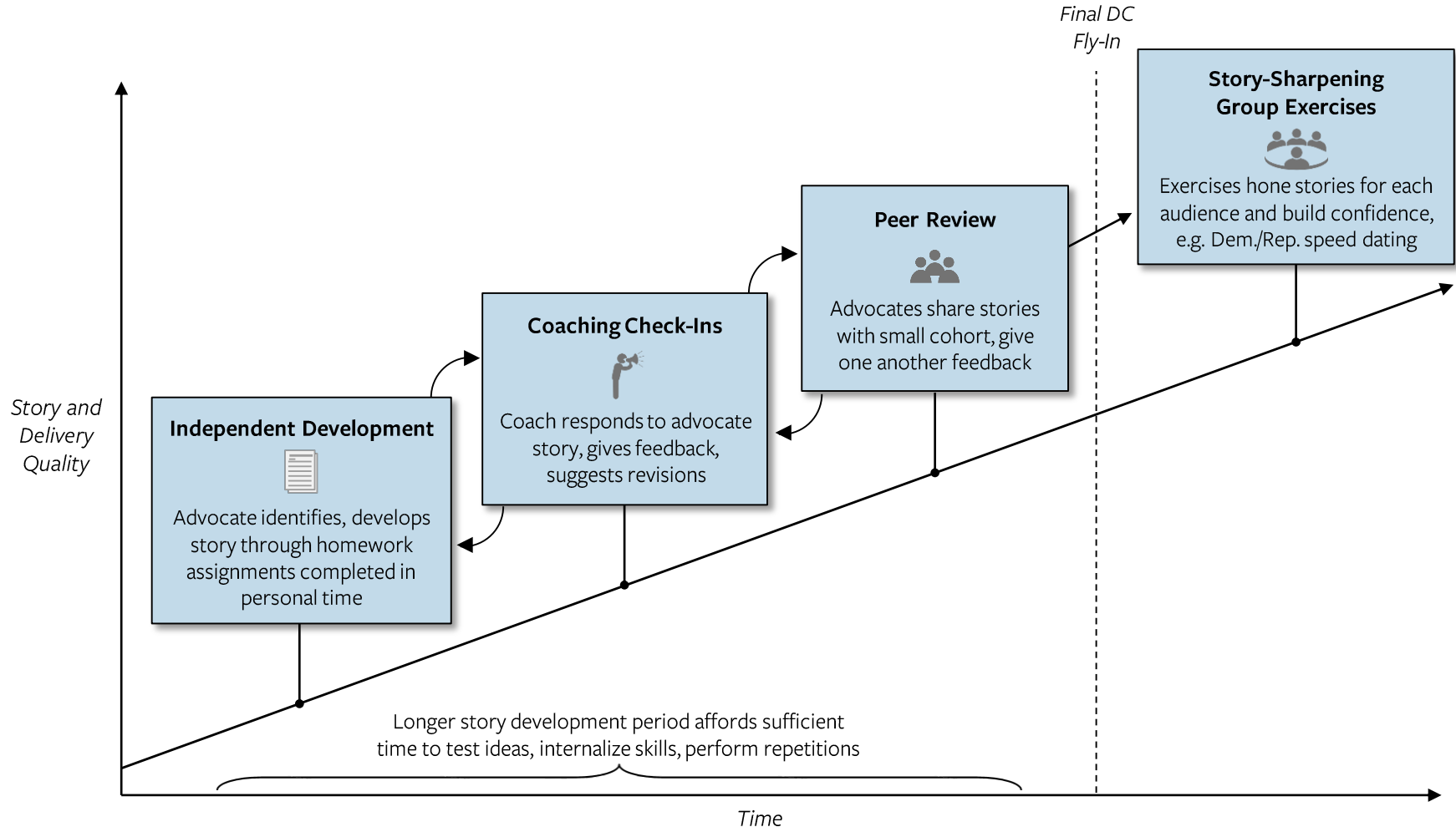
Partner Organization: Congressional Management Foundation

- Organization invests in small group of advocates with coordinated, long-term training and development program to build skills in storytelling, relationship building, and community mobilization; group serves as trusted, go-to advocates for storytelling opportunities
- Participants develop stories and boost confidence through 2 fly-in workshops, 5 hour-long webinars, and homework assignments between meetings; expert advocacy coaches facilitate storytelling practice exercises and regularly check-in with advocates

Giving Stories Room to Grow

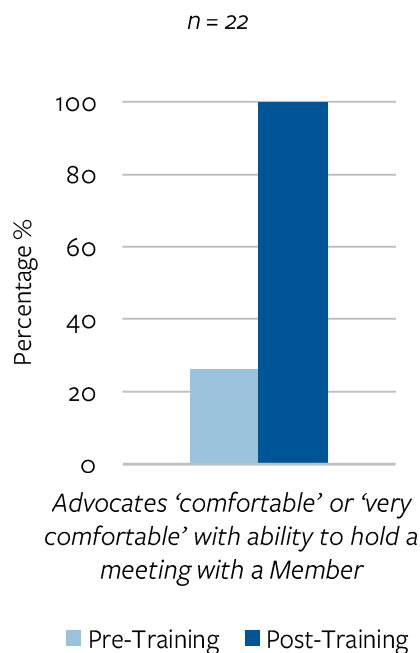
Regular Feedback Loops Elevate Story, Delivery Authenticity

Storytelling Quality Over Time

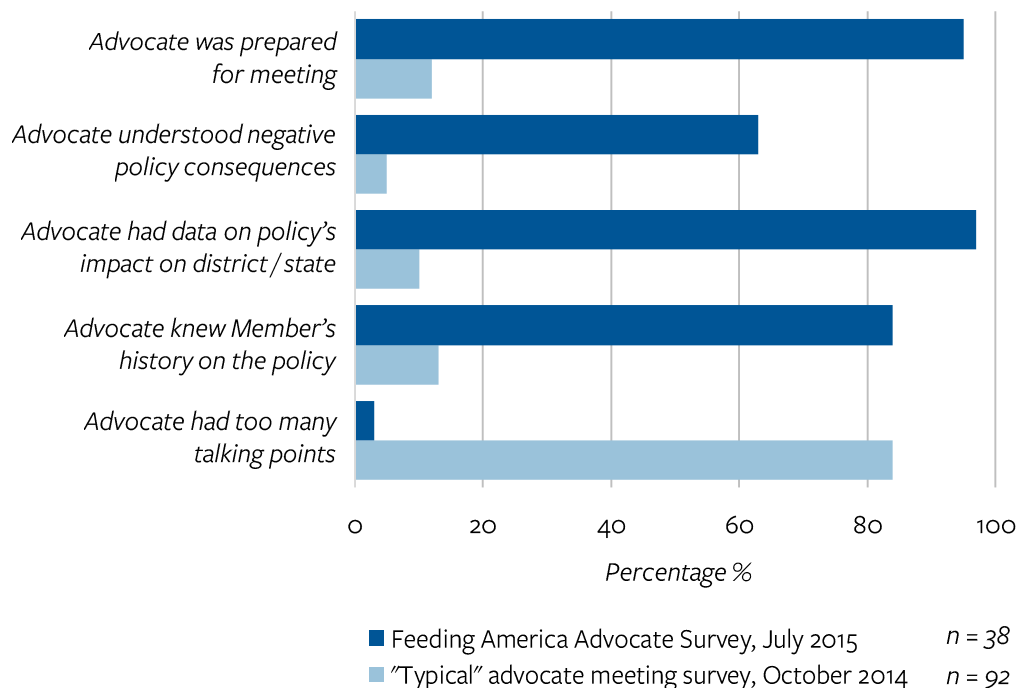


Outperforming the “Typical” Advocate in Hill Meetings

Advocates More Self-Assured



Hill Staff Taking Notice



CMF Survey Methodology

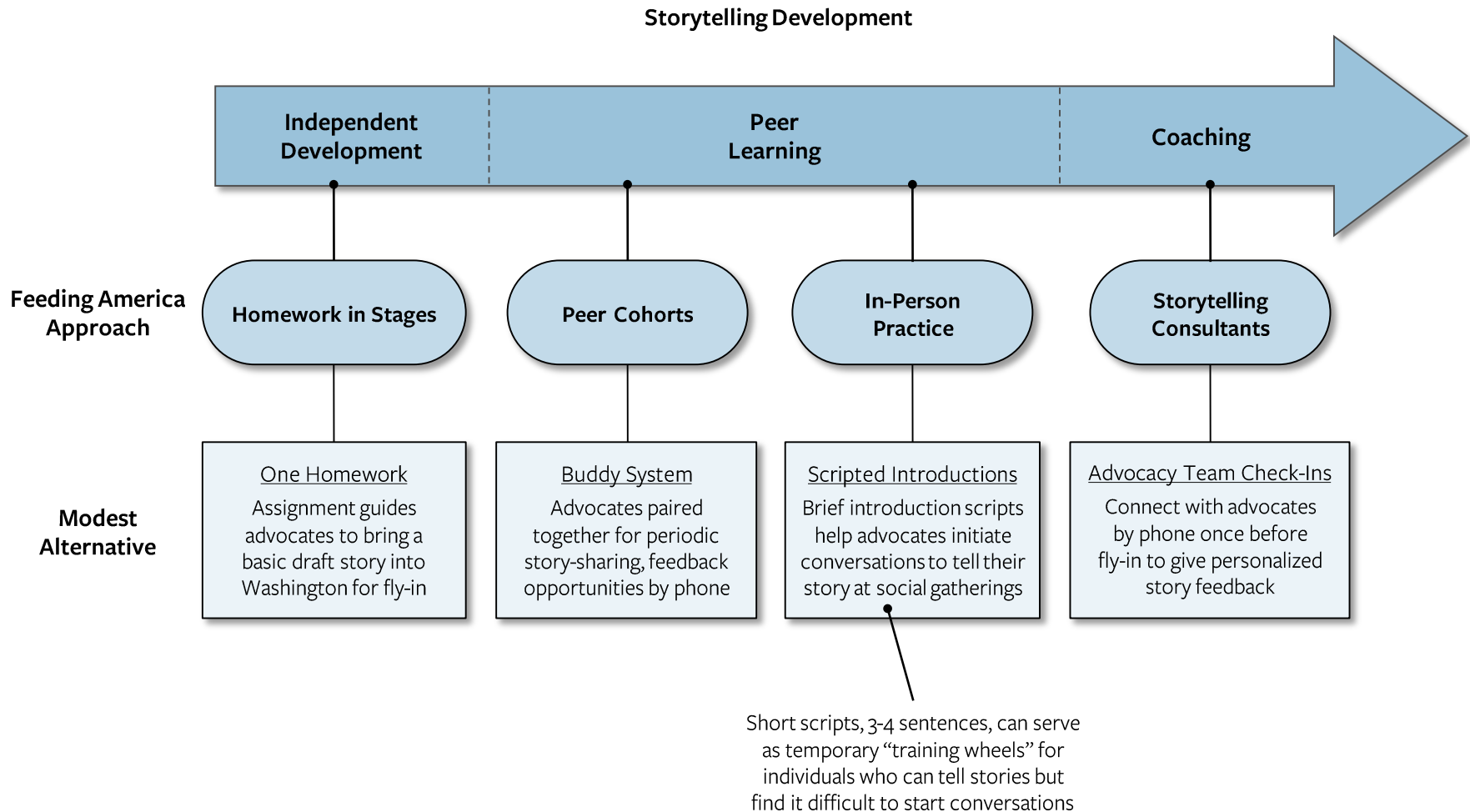
CMF facilitated pre and post-program surveys for Feeding America training participants to measure personal growth

CMF Survey Methodology

- October 2014 CMF survey asked Hill staffers about typical meetings with advocates from all organizations; data served as control for second survey
- July 2015 CMF survey asked same questions to staffers who met with Feeding America advocates

Scaling Down

More Modest Story Development Tactics



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