



Personalize

& Differentiate

Your Sales Pitch with Stories

InGo Case Story by

narativ

Craig Eckstrom, Chief Growth Officer of InGo Money, a financial software company, had a huge problem. InGo Money's new B2B product called InGo Push stood to revolutionize FinTech by giving customers instant access to money in the claims or refund process through proprietary software. InGo Push does this without a delay in the approval process and without capping the amount. However, despite their highly detailed sales strategy and a well-trained sales team, the product was not landing with C-suite executives.

Something wasn't clicking. Craig knew he had a great product on his hands; but how do you communicate the human value? Craig reached out to Narativ, a storytelling and communication consultancy, to help train his teams and tap into the heart of InGo Push's value.

When Craig approached Narativ for a workshop, he explained that he needed a communication model that demonstrated InGo Push as a solution to problems C-suite executives were facing with acquisition and customer retention. It needed to be intelligent and nuanced because executives are fast thinkers and smart. Most importantly, it needed to succinctly and compellingly convey the ways InGo Push could create a better customer experience. With this in mind, Narativ worked with InGo to customize a workshop that would address InGo's communication challenges.

HOW NARATIV TRANSFORMS SKEPTICISM INTO CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

At the beginning of Narativ's one-day workshop, nearly everyone said that they

already used storytelling in their sales pitches. Of course, what salesperson does not think of him or herself as a storyteller? The sales team entered the workshop skeptically, after all: they were already doing this, so what more could Narativ add?

It turns out Narativ's workshop was a game changer. Instead of seeing the pitch as a story unto itself, Narativ asked workshop attendees to re-frame how they communicate. Narativ started with the prompt "Why Story, Why Now," and then focused on the reciprocal relationship of listening and telling. This new communication paradigm changed everything. As one sales team member put it,

"I don't even call it a presentation anymore, to me, it's all about connecting with my audience. I'm definitely going to use this training and these tools going forward."

The process shifted everyone's thinking. On the lunch break during the Narativ workshop, another InGo Push team member tweeted:



Narativ's workshop is not just about having fun. Yes, it is engaging, but it also gave the sales team a renewed sense of excitement and a toolkit they could now apply to capture their audience and increase sales. It gave them insight on how human communication works best and how they can hone their skills and their stories to strengthen their client relationships.

Let's compare which method resonates more—the descriptive (or telling) method, or the demonstrating via story (or showing) method:

METHOD 1 (TELLING):

InGo Money, a financial software company, has developed a new B2B product called InGo Push which gives customers instant access to money in the “last mile” of a claim or refund process. Instead of a check that needs to be cleared, people will see a credit on their debit or credit card, or a direct deposit immediately in their bank account.

You understand what the InGo Push Product does, but the description is one-step removed from the customer's experience—it does not show the pressing need, or the relief someone feels when a product can address a pain-point. And that is ultimately what a C-suite executive is seeking: to clearly identify and successfully address customer pain-points in order to increase market share. Now consider the “showing” method.

METHOD 2 (SHOWING):

It was Monday morning, and Lydia, a young mother and full-time college student, walked into the brightly lit grocery store with her sick infant. As Lydia reached up to grab a large package of diapers from the top shelf, her daughter woke up from a fitful nap and began screaming. Startled, Lydia accidentally knocked a whole row of diapers onto the floor. She tried to quickly clean up the mess. This was only her first stop and she was already exhausted.

Even though Lydia got paid on Friday afternoons, since her check didn't clear until Monday, she had no money to go grocery shopping over the weekend. Lydia and her husband, a first year teacher, had run out of money. To make matters worse, they had run out of diapers and formula on Saturday. This was not the first time this had happened to Lydia, but the worry and exhaustion from her sick baby definitely made it the worst.

This story drives home to executives just how profound an impact InGo Push could have on their client's lives. Instead of talking about the ‘last mile’ of a claim, Lydia's story shows it to you. Her story makes you understand how valuable a product like InGo Push can be when money is tight and funds are unavailable.

But, Lydia's story is not fiction, it's not a representative customer journey drawn from market research; Lydia is a valuable member of the InGo sales team. This is her story. By drawing on her own experiences and developing a story using the Narativ method, she brings the product to life. As she describes,

"It's one thing to say customer experience, it's another thing to really give them a customer story that they can relate to."

THE SCIENCE BEHIND NARATIV'S STORY TELLING TECHNIQUE

The Narativ method is not your average storyboarding sales technique. In fact, it's the opposite. Narativ approaches storytelling as a communication process that involves listening, excavating, and refining. Stories must be adaptable, and presenters must be aware of their audiences as listeners, so that they can tailor their stories and think on their feet. Storytellers are confident in their knowledge of the material and can therefore focus their attention on their audience instead of the information found in their sales deck.

As another InGo Push sales team member described,

"We thought successful pitches involved spending time with people and going through the features of the product, but Narativ allowed us to realize that the key was actually personalized stories and narratives."

On a neurological level, when a listener hears a story they can empathize with, their brain releases a chemical called Oxytocin. Dr. Paul Zak, of Claremont College and author of *The Moral Gene*, calls Oxytocin the "trust molecule" because it leads to the listener identifying with the characters in the story and trusting the storyteller. This is not deception; on the contrary, it's about conveying the facts in an empathetic and compelling way. This can make all the difference when you have a short amount of time to explain the value of your product to a high-level client.

THE RESULTS: HOW NARATIV GAVE THE INGO PUSH SALES TEAM THE EDGE THEY NEEDED

Narativ's workshop revealed that stories of pain-points made the product come alive in a way that detailed and technical spec-heavy decks failed to communicate.

By adopting the Narativ method, salespeople discovered that the details finally stuck. As one team member described:

“Every meeting before I learned Narativ’s storytelling method, I had to explain over and over again how our model works and how our solution works. Despite this, someone would always raise their hand and we’d have to go back over something we had already covered. Now, when I explain it through a story, it’s like a light bulb turns on in their brains; they just get it.”

A business-relevant personal story, told in the Narativ method, communicates the immediate need for a product like InGo Push. A story is not about giving better information; it’s about connecting the product to an experience that resonates on an emotional or human level with the listener.

The skills learned through the process of excavating stories and refining them to be dynamic and memorable are essential to InGo Money’s success. By working with Narativ, InGo Push discovered something special.

The team was energized and confident that they had the tools to make a personal connection with C-suite executives. Narativ’s workshop and coaching was so effective that InGo Money asked Narativ to return and expand the training program to include other sales teams.

THE NARATIV ADVANTAGE

With InGo Money, we designed a workshop and personalized coaching sessions for sales teams to excavate their business-relevant personal stories around crucial pain points that InGoPush addresses and resolves. This in turn, energized the team and connected them to their audience—their pitches now had that special ‘x’ factor.

Are you ready to empower teams, increase sales, and connect?

Contact Jerome Deroy, Chief Executive Officer and Head Trainer to learn more.

CONTACT NOW

About Narativ and InGo Money:

Narativ: Narativ is a storytelling company and consultancy that uses the power of story to address business and communication challenges. We use our method to help businesses and organizations develop stories that connect with their audience and change human behavior. For 25 years, the Narativ method of storytelling in business has delivered measurable impact and value—we have transformed teams, cultures, and individuals.

InGo Money: InGo Money is the instant money company. Founded in 2001 with a mission to digitize the paper check, our push payments technology enables businesses and banks to disburse instant, safe-to-spend funds to more than four billion consumer debit, prepaid, credit, private label credit and mobile wallet accounts. This transformation of traditional payments helps businesses reduce cost and delays while dramatically improving the consumer experience.

Author Bio:

Allison Harbin, PhD is a writing consultant and researcher who approaches her career as a business writer and thought leader with the same critical thinking and nuance that allowed her to succeed as a scholar and art historian. She specializes in bringing a humanistic perspective to business communication to help clients communicate effectively and persuasively. Allison earned her PhD in Art History from Rutgers University and her BA from the University of Virginia in Studio Art and Art History.

Sales Training Powered by Storytelling

Most salespeople see selling as a balancing act. They're developing relationships on the one hand while providing product and service details on the other. The goal is to move the sale up the chain of command to the final decision-maker. Storytelling is an asset for both sides of this coin.



BENEFITS OF STORYTELLING FOR SALES

- > Transform dry market insights, complex brand strategies, and data-heavy decks.
- > Tap into the emotional mindset of buyers, clients, and consumers.
- > Connect personally and emotionally to your product/services/brand.

PERSONALIZE AND DIFFERENTIATE WITH STORYTELLING

Telling a personal story about a product or service makes salespeople more relatable. Sales people report that to be seen as “human” by clients is a step toward trust and improved communication. When it comes time to demonstrate the value proposition of your service or product, vividly portraying a need or pain-point with a story communicates value in a way no chart or Powerpoint can. Narativ’s storytelling workshops create a dedicated time and space for salespeople to excavate and craft the stories that connect them to their products and customers to the value proposition.

SERVICE ROADMAP

DISCOVERY

Determine goals and storytelling prompts. Identify customer pain-points. When applicable, recruit storytelling representatives from the team.

WORKSHOP

In-person or online through a live webinar. Participants learn the Narativ method through four modules that include individual and group work. Specific application to upcoming objectives is discussed.

ASSESSMENT

Post-workshop surveys to measure impact: immediately, then 30 and 60 days after the training.

DELIVERABLES

PRESENTATION-READY STORIES

Each participant will leave with a 4-minute business-relevant, personal story around an existing pain point that your product or service addresses. It will have the details that matter, emotional resonance, and end with a call-to-action.

SYNTHESIS AND STRATEGY

Comprehensive assessment of your stories as a whole collection in relation to your sales strategy along with impact measurements

STORY LIBRARY

In some cases, a simple Story Library can be used as a resource or training tool, in which the stories are categorized and tagged, and provided to your company as a searchable, visual archive.

