

## HOW TO: COMMUNICATE COMPLEX TOPICS

JAMES WILLCOX  
HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY  
INSPIRED VILLAGES



## Who

Determine who your audience is.



## Why

Consider what is on their minds. Why do they need to listen?



## What

Think about what you need them to know.



## Want

Think about what you want from them.



## How



VERBAL



NON-VERBAL



VISUAL



WRITTEN

LUCKY TO GET 2 MINS OF  
ATTENTION WITH  
INCREASING SENSORY &  
EMOTIONAL  
DISTRACTIONS

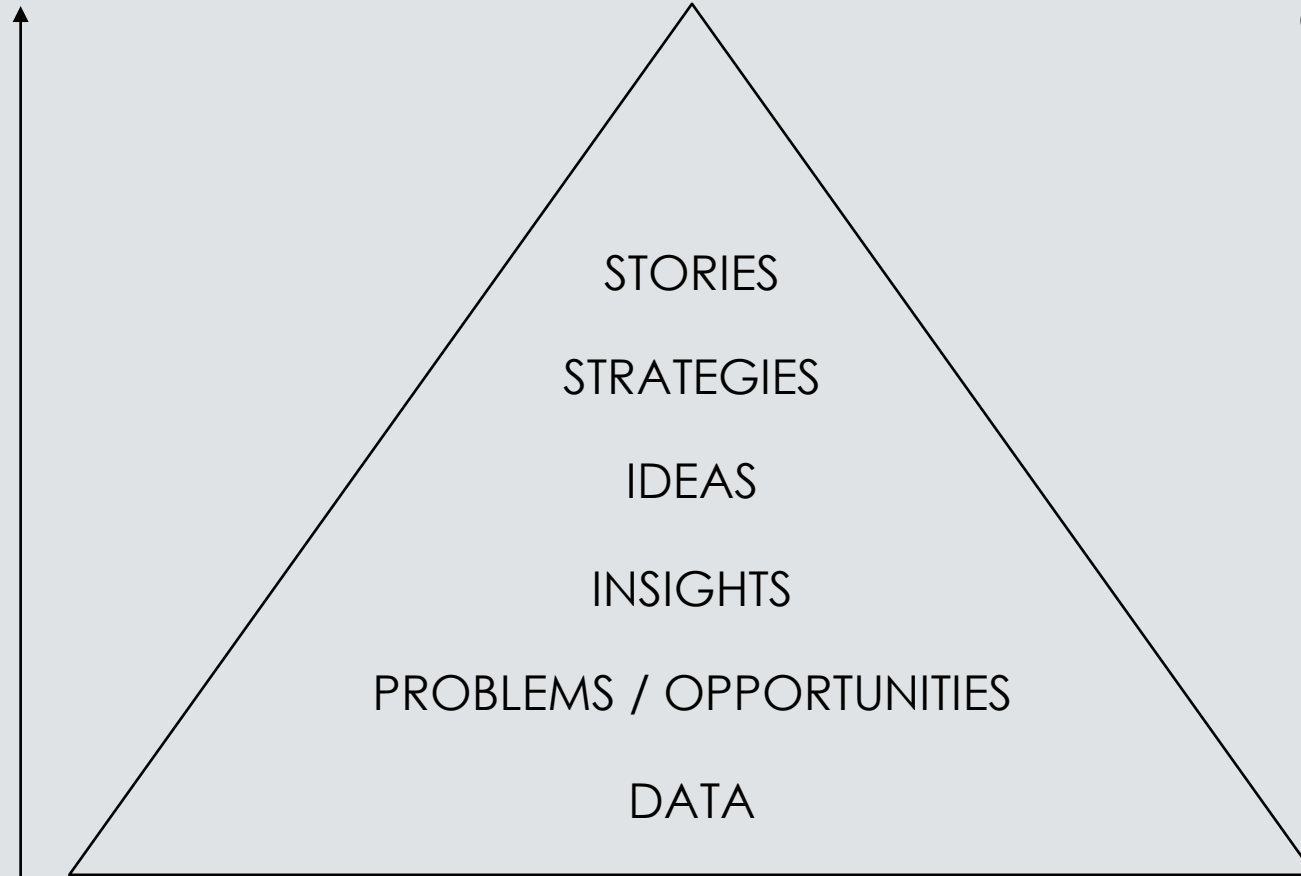


WE HAVE TO GET  
ATTENTION AND HELP  
OTHERS MAKE DECISIONS  
WITH MINIMAL COGNITIVE  
LOAD

CEOs spend most of  
their time telling  
stories and are paid  
1000x

Interns spend  
most of  
their time  
dealing with  
data and are  
paid x

INCREASING  
VALUE



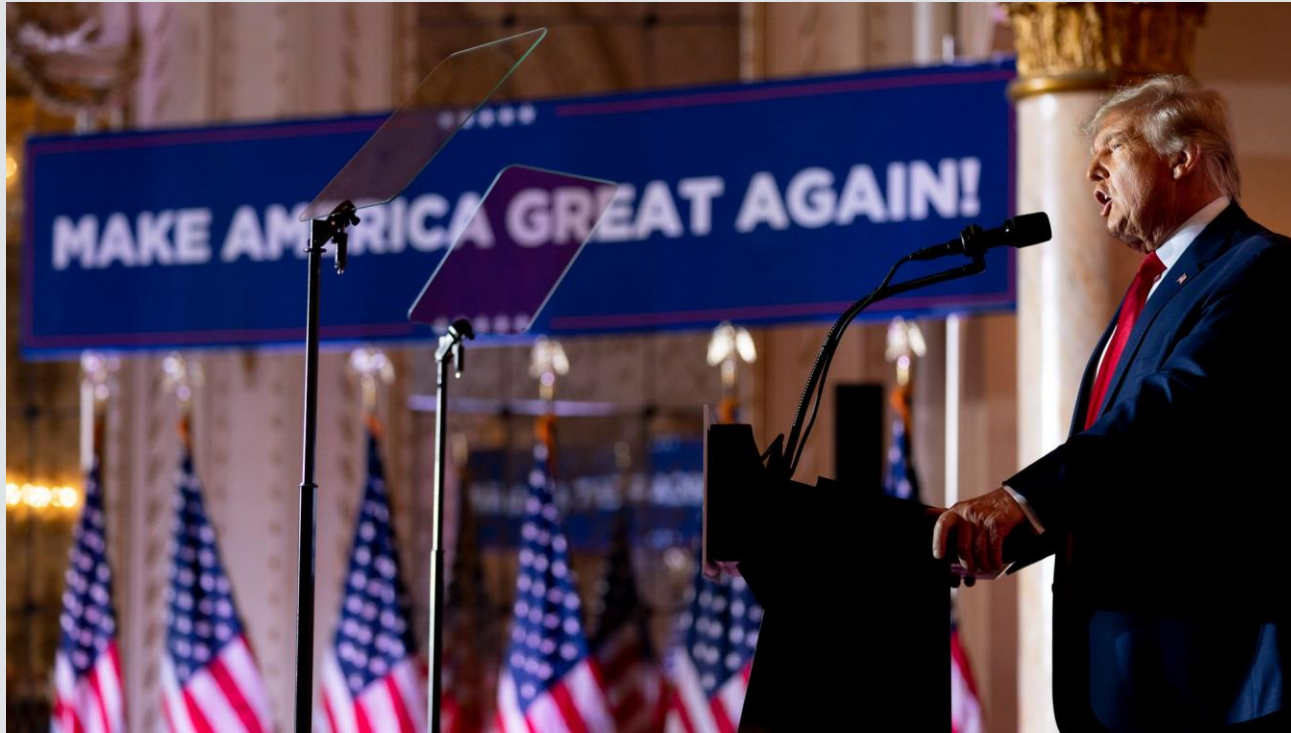
“WE WERE NEVER DESIGNED TO LISTEN TO REASON.  
WHEN YOU ASK PEOPLE MORAL QUESTIONS, TIME  
THEIR RESPONSES AND SCAN THEIR BRAINS, THEIR  
ANSWERS AND BRAIN ACTIVATION PATTERNS INDICATE  
THAT THEY REACH CONCLUSIONS QUICKLY AND  
PRODUCE REASONS LATER ONLY TO JUSTIFY WHAT  
THEY’VE DECIDED.”

**Jonathan Haidt, Social Psychologist**

WHOEVER TELLS THE BEST STORY WINS.

**John Quincy Adams, Amistad**





# Connections.....

A relevant problem / opportunity...

Shocking facts and figures...

Exciting facts and figures...

A great question...

A conflicting idea that must be resolved...

Emotive anecdote about the pain / gain...

A vision of the future...

At stake is...

A rich sensory experience is...

A rich metaphor is...

## CONTEXT

What is wrong and  
how to fix it

Fatigue & negativity

## CONTENT

What is possible and  
how to realize it

Energy & positivity

# Storytelling

1. Get their attention!
2. Help them to feel safe
3. Explain your idea/the subject
4. Connect
5. Ensure they know “What Is In It For Me?”
6. Explain how to get there
7. Be clear on how they must change to contribute best and deliver

.....IN TWO MINUTES, IN TODAY'S ATTENTION ECONOMY.

**Make a connection\***. Explain the **problem/issue** that is causing **pain**. Explain your **breakthrough**, the **change required**, and the **value/positive impact created**.

Give your audience their **call to action** to support the change.

\* Shocking facts and figures... an emotive anecdote from your journey that brings to life the theme... a vision of the future... a relevant factoid that connects to the audience in this moment.

QUESTIONS.