



What's the Story?

MARCH 2017

The Naval Story

We sent the Naval story to a friend last month who was looking for something they could use to illustrate lessons relating to negotiations.

Allegedly, this story is the transcript of an actual radio conversation between a US naval ship and Canadian maritime contact off the coast of Newfoundland in October 1995.

Americans: Please divert your course 15 degrees North to avoid a collision.

Canadians: Recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees South to avoid collision.

Americans: This is the captain of a US navy ship; I say again divert your course.

Canadians: No. I say again, you divert YOUR course.

Americans: THIS IS THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER USS LINCOLN, THE SECOND LARGEST SHIP IN THE UNITED STATES' ATLANTIC FLEET. WE ARE ACCOMPANIED BY THREE DESTROYERS, THREE CRUISERS AND NUMEROUS SUPPORT VESSELS. I DEMAND THAT YOU CHANGE YOUR COURSE 15 DEGREES NORTH, THAT'S ONE FIVE DEGREES NORTH, OR COUNTER-MEASURES WILL BE UNDERTAKEN TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THIS SHIP

Canadians: This is the Newfoundland lighthouse. Your call.

Our friend who was working with a group of MBAs and other corporate players said the story worked perfectly to clarify the picture of understanding the other party's position better. Things aren't always what they appear and you need to look for alternative negotiating angles.

If you're looking for stories to make your point or raise a discussion topic why not look in our storybook we might have the perfect story for you. <http://www.speakersco.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Speakers-corner-ebook-2.pdf>

Unilever a great client

We were delighted to see Kraft withdraw their offer to take over Unilever - because we have a rather personal attachment to Unilever for what it had given us early in our careers.

Sally had been a Unilever trainee and her first brand experience was on Domestos and Barry had been an account man on Sure deodorant, Pears soap, Signal Toothpaste.

There was something very special about Unilever. It looked after its people, it produced world class brands, it believed in great advertising. Dove is an excellent current example.

To achieve that it produced its own principles of good advertising. i.e.: What's the consumer benefit? What's the substantiation for that benefit? Who is your target market? What's your tone of voice?

Unilever judged ideas based on these principles and created billion pound international brands like Persil, Sure, Magnum and many more.

The financial media said: "Unilever have learnt a lesson from this unwanted approach – not to be too complacent and to maximise their value in all ways"

It made us think about our worth and perceived value to our clients.

“Do you understand what you’re worth and how you can maximise your value?”

The value of a story

We went from our usual 8 delegate workshop to an 80 delegate conference last month in Scotland. We had only two and half hours to inspire our large audience to want to tell their stories so that they could better communicate and sell their ideas to prospects and clients.

To illustrate how stories can add significant value we told them about some work carried out and documented in the USA.

An American sociological company <http://significantobjects.com> actually tested and measured the value of stories in increasing the value of objects.

They bought 100 low cost items – on average US\$ 1.25 – and gave each item to a professional writer to write a story about each one. These stories brought the items alive so they had backgrounds, identities and personalities.

They then put the 100 items plus their individual stories on ebay and proceeded to sell them - with incredible success.

The items had cost them US\$ 125. They sold them for just under US\$ 8,000. An amazing 2,700% increase!

Just imagine if you could increase the perceived value of an idea you were selling by using a good story?

“Somebody’s going to reply.”

The emails we send don’t always get replies. People are busy – we get this.

When we met her recently, a new business contact said either to send her a letter or if we insisted on sending her an email, to be sure to make the subject matter STAND OUT.

Busy people are often overloaded with email, of which very little is 'mission critical'.

It helps if you are recognised immediately by the intended recipient.

**As Moonlight's Oscar winning director, Barry Jenkins said on Sunday night. When asked what difference Best Film would make to his career: “I write an email? Somebody’s going to reply.”
Here’s wishing you success with your stories, presentations and pitches in 2017.**

Barry Graham & Sally Clare

