

# SURRENDER *to* LEAD

## Focused Storytelling® Guide

### HOW TO GET RESULTS

Organizations that intentionally integrate their Cultural Beliefs® into daily experiences make those beliefs **sticky**. This leads to a more engaged, aligned, and productive workforce, which in turn helps an organization achieve its Key Results. This guide provides practical tips and best practices for Focused Storytelling, a model that highlights cultural beliefs in action, enabling you to accelerate the shifts needed to achieve your Key Results.

**Focused Storytelling:** Purposeful and structured storytelling that illustrates what a specific Cultural Belief looks like by describing how an action someone took exemplifies that Cultural Belief and impacts a Key Result or R2.

#### WHAT SETS FOCUSED STORYTELLING APART?

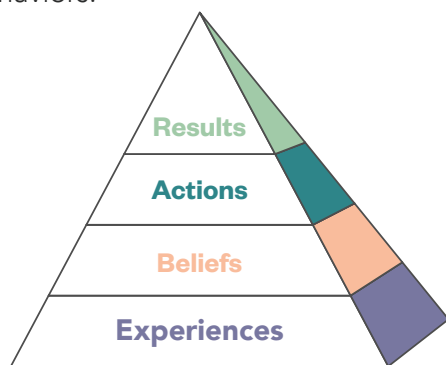
There is considerable empirical research that affirms the impact of stories on organizational culture. The stories we share—whether about colleagues, our organization, or from our clients—are all based on direct and indirect experiences.

These stories contribute to the organizational narrative and impact the way we interact with one another. Focused Storytelling is a powerful tool to shine a spotlight on what the desired culture looks like, accelerating the shift to C2 behaviors.

"Here's what  
(Cultural Belief)  
looks like to  
me."

Tell the story in 45 seconds.  
Include the impact on  
R2 and/or Key Results!

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If you look at The Results Pyramid, where do you think storytelling falls? If you said Experiences, you're right!

The stories we tell become evidence of C2. What makes storytelling so powerful is that you don't have to be the one that had an experience to be impacted by it. Hearing someone else's story can shape your beliefs just as significantly, which impacts how you think and act.

## HOW TO ENGAGE IN FOCUSED STORYTELLING

While storytelling is often intuitive (and somewhat creative), the transformational power of Focused Storytelling rests in its straightforward, structured approach, as illustrated in the model.

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### GUIDELINES TO KEEP IN MIND

- 1. Start with a Cultural Belief:** Open with a statement introducing a specific Cultural Belief, and make sure that the example you've identified connects to and clearly illustrates that belief.
- 2. Be brief:** When someone starts telling a story, does your mind ever trail off—wondering how long it will take? Brevity is your ally. To maintain your audience's interest, keep your story concise and focused. It should take 45 seconds or less.
- 3. Connect your story to Key Results:** Be sure to also connect the story to the impact on your R2 Vision or Key Results. The most powerful stories motivate others by clearly illustrating how embodying a particular Cultural Belief directly accelerated your organization's desired results.
- 4. Conclude by linking back to the Cultural Belief:** Restating the relevant Cultural Belief at the end of your story reinforces the connection between the example you shared and the belief everyone desires to emulate. In a C1 culture, shifting people's focus toward C2 actions that reflect the new Cultural Beliefs is crucial. That's why Focused Storytelling uses "looks like to me" instead of "means to me." This language encourages looking for change, so always conclude with, "That's what (Cultural Belief) looks like to me," and provide evidence that the change is occurring.

### FOCUSED STORYTELLING

#### Do...

- Look for opportunities to integrate Focused Storytelling into your everyday workflow.
- Use recent Focused Recognition or Focused Feedback sessions as inspiration for a Focused Story.
- Role play using the tool, even if it feels robotic at first.

#### Don't...

- Use the phrase "means to me." Instead, say "looks like to me" to emphasize visible evidence of C2 behaviors.
- Tell stories that shine a light on C1 behavior.
- Forget to tie the story to the impact on the R2 Vision or Key Results.

## PRO TIPS

## FOCUSED STORYTELLING

✓ **Do it in meetings**

- Carve out time to review your Purpose, R2/Vision, Key Results, and Cultural Beliefs, and share a Focused Story spotlighting C2 behaviors in any meeting.
- Start every 1: 1 with a Focused Story.
- *Best Practice: Pick a different team member each meeting and ask them to be prepared to present the Focused Story at the next meeting.*

✓ **Make it visible and rewarding**

- Create a digital space like a Slack or a Teams channel to share Focused Stories.
- Share stories on social with hashtags like #FocusedStorytellingMatters.
- Establish a space in your office or facility for team members to post Focused Stories.
- *Best Practice: Make it fun by removing stories every week or two to refresh the space and keep new stories coming.*
- Randomly select a few shared Focused Stories and award the storyteller with corporate swag.

✓ **Find creative ways to be accountable**

- Find an accountability partner to discuss and hone your Focused Storytelling skills.
- *Best Practice: Make it quick and consistent; don't cancel the check-ins unless absolutely necessary.*
- Capture elements of a story you want to share in the moment you see a team or team member demonstrating a Cultural Belief.
- Include Focused Storytelling on a Leadership or Operations "timeline" or task list. This timeline could be daily or weekly. We've seen this done and it's very effective!

Spend 30 minutes with our subject-matter expert senior partners to discuss and address your organization's challenges through specific culture recommendations to change the entire trajectory of your organization.

Speak With an Expert

[surrendertolead.com/consultation](https://surrendertolead.com/consultation)