

happydance

Sell The Truth

T.R.U.T.H. storytelling workshop worksheet

Turning truth into your employer brand advantage



Why truth matters now

Truth has always mattered. What has changed is its value. AI has levelled the surface. CVs are sharper. Applications are smarter. Experience is easier to frame. Confidence is easier to simulate. On paper, candidates look more similar than ever.

At the same time, employer branding has matured. It is no longer a communications exercise. It is a capability strategy. Executive teams are no longer asking who can do the job, but who can adapt, learn, recover, and lead as the organization changes.

This creates a gap.

Skills are visible.

Capabilities are not.

Capabilities only reveal themselves through struggle, decision-making, and consequence. If your employer brand does not tell those stories, candidates fill in the gaps themselves.

Truth-based storytelling closes that gap. Not by making your organization sound better, but by making it sound clearer.

Slide references: 1-11

Notes

The T.R.U.T.H. Framework

The T.R.U.T.H. Framework is a five part structure that turns real experience into stories people recognize and believe.

Trigger

The moment a problem, pressure, or reality becomes impossible to ignore.

Reveal

The insight or truth that reframes how the situation is understood.

Unlock

The conscious decision to act differently.

Tension

The struggle, resistance, or emotional cost of change.

Harvest

What changed and why it mattered.

Stories told this way feel human because they mirror how growth actually happens.

Slide reference: 12

Notes

The default problem

Before we begin, it helps to recognize the default.
An average employer brand story.

"At our company, we believe in growth, collaboration, and innovation. We empower our people to take ownership of their careers, work with talented teams, and make a real impact in a fast-paced, inclusive environment."

This story is not false.
It is incomplete.
There is no moment.
No cost.
No pressure.
No choice.
Everything that follows in this worksheet exists to close that gap.

Slide references: 13-14

Notes

Section 1

What it really takes to thrive here

Before writing stories, we need honesty.

Not values on the wall.

Not competencies in a framework.

The lived human capabilities people must bring to survive, grow, and feel successful here over time.

Answer individually first. Write what is true, not what is flattering.

Notes

Slide reference: 16

1. How do resilience, learning agility, and adaptability actually show up in your organization?

Think about real situations.

Where do people need to recover quickly from setbacks?

Where are they expected to learn fast without formal structure?

Where do priorities or expectations change suddenly?

Your answer:

Notes

Example

Resilience shows up when priorities change late and people need to stay constructive rather than frustrated. Learning agility matters because roles evolve faster than job descriptions. Adaptability is essential during growth when processes are still forming.

Slide reference: 16

2. What other human or soft capabilities are non-negotiable to thrive here?

Avoid generic language unless you can describe what it looks like in practice.

Consider emotional self-control, curiosity, comfort with ambiguity, political awareness, courage to challenge, commercial judgment, or stamina.

Your answer:

Notes

Example

Comfort with ambiguity is essential. Emotional self-control matters because feedback is direct and pressure is high. Curiosity is valued more than expertise because the organization is evolving.

Slide reference: 16

3. Where do people struggle if they do not have these capabilities?

Think about talented people who did not succeed.

Where did things start to break down?

What surprised them?

Your answer:

Notes

Example

Strong specialists struggle because they expect clarity early. Others burn out because they underestimate the emotional load of constant change.

Slide reference: 16

4. What capabilities are required to thrive across all employer brand pillars or themes?

Look at your EVP, culture themes, or employer brand promises. For each one, ask what someone must tolerate, practice, or become to genuinely thrive.

Your answer:

Notes

Example

Ownership requires accountability without direction. Collaboration requires influencing without authority. Growth requires repeated discomfort. Pace requires emotional resilience.

Slide reference: 16

5. Which of these capabilities are visible before joining and which are only discovered later?

What do candidates clearly see today?

What do they only learn through experience?

Your answer:

Notes

Example

Candidates see ambition and opportunity. They do not always see how self-directed or emotionally demanding the environment is.

The gap you have just identified is not a weakness.
It is where your most powerful stories live.

Slide reference: 16

Section 2

The brutal truth

Every organization has demanding truths.

The problem is not that they exist.

The problem is that they are softened, delayed, or avoided.

Notes

Slide reference: 19-21

1. What is the hardest truth about working here that people usually discover too late?

What do candidates clearly see today?

What do they only learn through experience?

Your answer:

Notes

Example

This is not a place where you can coast. The expectation to improve never really switches off.

Slide reference: 21

2. What pressure does your culture apply that some people will not want?

Your answer:

Notes

Example

This is not a place where you can coast. The expectation to improve never really switches off.

Slide reference: 21

3. Who struggles here, even if they are talented?

Your answer:

Notes

Example

This is not a place where you can coast. The expectation to improve never really switches off.

Choose one truth.

This will become your story.

Slide reference: 21

Section 3

Create your T.R.U.T.H. story

Use the framework below to shape your story.

Avoid polish.

Do not rush to the positive.

Let the tension do its work.

Notes

Slide reference: 23-24

Story title

Give it a working title that reflects the truth, not the outcome.

Your title:

Slide reference: 24

Notes

Example

Learning to lead without certainty.

Trigger

What moment made this truth impossible to ignore?

Your answer:

Notes

Example

When the team doubled in size, several high performers started to struggle unexpectedly.

Slide reference: 24

Reveal

What truth changed how you understood the situation?

Your answer:

Notes

Example

We realized success here depended less on experience and more on comfort with ambiguity.

Slide reference: 24

Unlock

What decision or action did you take once you understood that truth?

Your answer:

Slide reference: 24

Notes

Example

We changed how we hired and onboarded, prioritizing learning agility over experience.

Tension

What made this difficult, uncomfortable, or risky?

Your answer:

Notes

Example

It meant turning down impressive candidates and challenging long-held assumptions about talent.

Slide reference: 24

Harvest

What changed as a result and why did it matter?

Your answer:

Notes

Example

Retention improved and new hires adapted faster because expectations were clearer.

Slide reference: 24

Section 4

What this story usually sounds like without TRUTH

Rewrite your story as it would normally appear in employer brand content.

Your average version:

Notice what disappeared.

No moment.

No pressure.

No cost.

Slide reference: 25

Notes

Example

We value growth, ownership, and adaptability. Our people are trusted to develop quickly in a fast-paced environment.

Section 5

Your story in three lines

Distil your story into its essence.

If it still feels true when simplified, you have found the signal.

Your three lines:

Slide reference: 27

Notes

Example

Growth here requires comfort with uncertainty.

Hiring for adaptability changed everything.

The work did not get easier, but people became more resilient.

Section 6

Where this story belongs

Truth only creates value when it is placed intentionally.

Where could this story live?

Careers site, interviews, onboarding, leadership messaging.

Your answer:

Notes

Slide references: 28-29

Who should hear or tell this story?

Your answer:

Notes

Slide references: 28-29

What would change if candidates heard this story earlier?

Your answer:

Slide references: 28-29

Notes

Example

This story belongs on our careers site and in interviews. It would attract people who enjoy challenge and deter those seeking predictability.

Closing reflection

Truth is not a branding risk.

It is the mechanism that makes trust possible.

If you tell truer stories, fewer people may apply.

More of the right people will stay.

That is not a trade-off.

That is the advantage.

Notes

Slide references: 30–32