



A Change Agency

# StoryBrand for *Nonprofits*





# Introduction to StoryBrand

## WHAT IS STORYBRAND?

StoryBrand is a marketing framework that utilizes the powerful elements of storytelling to clarify a brand's message -- and therefore get better results. In marketing, the clearest message always wins.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Positioning the target audience as the "hero" of the story rather than the brand, the framework walks a customer through the basic building blocks of a story -- the hero's journey: the character, the problem he faces, the guide he meets along the way, the plan the guide gives him to solve his problem, the call to action and the ultimate success or failure of the character to overcome the problem. If successful, the character experiences a transformation over the course of the journey. By positioning the brand as the "guide" instead of the "hero" of the story, the brand is able to come alongside the customer and equip them to "save the day."

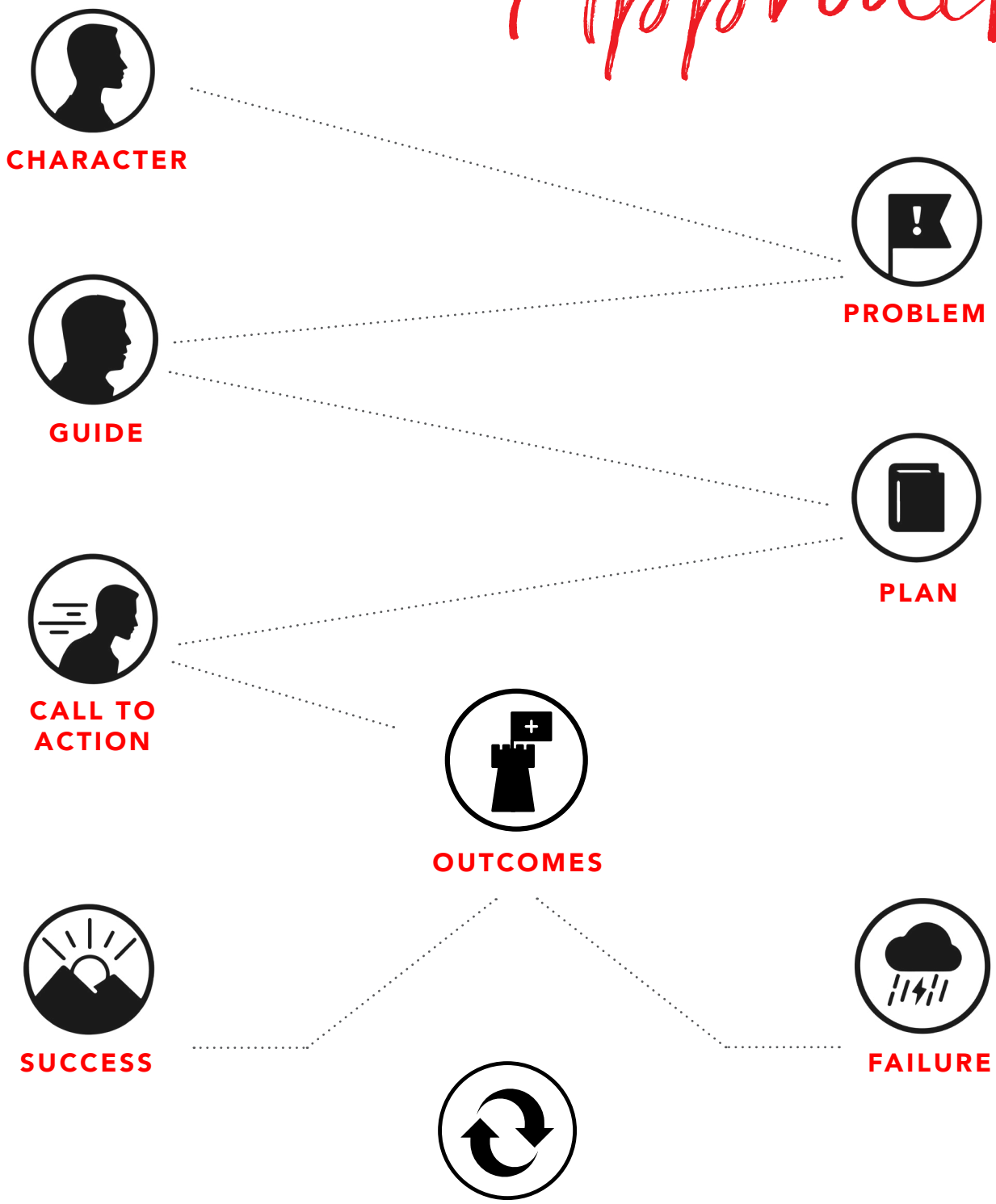
## HOW NONPROFIT APPLICATION IS UNIQUE:

The StoryBrand framework can sometimes feel murky when applied to a nonprofit, but it is still very applicable when you understand the primary difference is simply that there are two audiences a nonprofit addresses:

- The mission itself (or its beneficiaries)
- The donors

When understood in this way, it becomes clear that nonprofits can certainly capitalize on the StoryBrand approach, but two separate "stories" -- or "BrandScripts" -- must be developed, one for each audience. The questions we ask ourselves when applying StoryBrand to nonprofits, therefore, differ slightly from the original StoryBrand model.

# Framework with a Nonprofit *Approach*



**FROM** ..... **TO**



## CHARACTER

### MISSION

- What do the people we're trying to help want? What change do they seek?
- How do the people we're trying to help want to be perceived by others as it relates to our brand? (i.e. dignity, valued, respected, part of the solution)

### DONORS

- What do our target/ideal donors want as it relates to our work? What change do they seek?
- How do our target/ideal donors want to be perceived by others as it relates to our brand? (i.e. generous, relevant, part of a community)



## PROBLEM

### MISSION

External:

- The external problem we want to clarify is the surface-level problem our nonprofit is working to solve (i.e. hunger, slavery, medical care).
- Clarifying our mission's HOW

Internal:

- The internal problem we want to clarify is a deeper problem (emotional, mental or spiritual) the external problem creates. (i.e. hopelessness, broken relationships, lack of security)
- Clarifying our mission's WHY

Philosophical:

- The philosophical problem we want to clarify is the frustration we share with our donors -- why is the issue we're addressing "just plain wrong"? (i.e. 'everyone should have access to clean water,' 'there's no good reason why this injustice should be happening')
- Connecting our mission's WHY to our donor's WHY (their sense of what is right/just/moral)

### DONORS

External:

- What stands in the way of what our target/ideal donors want?

Internal:

- How does that make our target/ideal donors feel?

Philosophical:

- Philosophically, how does this relate to our target/ideal donors' sense of their purpose in life? (i.e. "people shouldn't have to suffer or worry where their next meal will come from")



## GUIDE

### MISSION

Empathy:

- How can we express empathy and understanding for the people we're trying to help? How do we uniquely understand the problem?

Authority:

- How can we demonstrate competency in solving these external, internal and philosophical problems? What qualifies us to help?

### DONORS

Empathy:

- How can we express empathy and understanding for how our target/ideal donor feels? How do we uniquely understand their problem or share their philosophical understanding of the problem?

Authority:

- How can we demonstrate competency in addressing these problems and working with the people we're trying to help? (Pivot to mission)



## PLAN

### MISSION

Process:

- What steps can our target/ideal donors take that would lead them to donate? (Use 3 steps whenever possible, even if they are not specifically actionable, i.e. "1. Download the ebook 2. Get educated 3. Change lives (CTA).") The brain processes sets of three steps most effectively.)
- Explain how their contribution will impact the problem and create change.

Agreements:

- What agreements can we make with our target/ideal donors to alleviate their fears of partnering with us? (i.e. all our proceeds go to the cause)

### DONORS

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## CALL TO ACTION

### MISSION

Direct:

- What is our direct call to action to donors? (i.e. "donate")

Transitional:

- What transitional calls to action will we use to on-ramp our donors? (i.e. "download e-book")

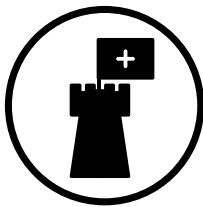
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## OUTCOMES

### MISSION

Success:

- List the positive ways our mission will be fulfilled if we (our nonprofit and our donors) take action.

Failure:

- List the negative ways our mission will be impacted if we (our nonprofit and our donors) don't act.

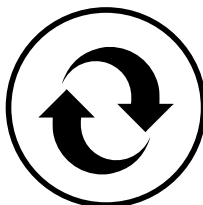
### DONORS

Success:

- List the positive changes our target/ideal donors will experience if they get involved.

Failure:

- List the negative consequences our target/ideal donors will/could experience if they don't get involved (or what they will miss out on).



## TRANSFORMATION

### MISSION

From:

- How did the people we're helping feel before?
- How does the world/society need to change?

To:

- What is the aspirational identity of the people we're trying to help?
- What will the world/society look like when we (our nonprofit and our donors) fulfill our mission?

### DONORS

From:

- How was your donor feeling about themselves before they decided to donate?

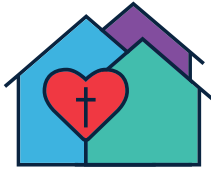
To:

- How was your donor feeling about themselves before they decided to donate?

# StoryBrand at Work for Nonprofits

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Once your StoryBrand BrandScript is established, you can use it to inform all your messaging, including website copy, brochures, taglines, campaigns and more. While you may not use the language verbatim every time, it's important to keep the structure in mind when drafting messaging: the audience member is the hero, your brand is the guide, and you are here to help them "save the day" or solve their problem. Everything should emerge from this perspective, considering what the audience member wants, what stands in the way and how you are going to help them overcome it. The following examples are live, external messages for nonprofit organizations that went through the StoryBrand process. You will notice the empathy, authority and statements of the problem throughout.



## Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes

### OPENING PARAGRAPH

Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes believes every child should experience the stable, nurturing love of a family. We also believe the most crucial thing we can share with a child is the love and hope of Christ. Holding these two convictions, we provide Christ-centered homes for children in crisis — children whose families are not currently able to provide the level of care they need. We train and develop evangelical Christians to be houseparents and foster parents with the mission of not only providing safety and stability but showing Christ's love to each child who comes into our care. Whether children are in foster care or have been voluntarily placed in one of our on-campus homes by families seeking help, we are committed to helping children and families thrive.



### OPENING PARAGRAPH

Orphanhood is a complex global issue not easily solved with a simple answer. ceri knows the first and best option is a loving family for every child, but to do that, deeper systemic issues must be addressed in a holistic way. In addition to providing for orphaned children's immediate needs, ceri invests in their futures through foster care and adoption, knowing that food and shelter are not ends in themselves. By supporting ceri, you work toward generational change by leveraging community resources and advocating at the government level to create more support for families and prevent orphanhood. We know keeping families intact is always the better option for at-risk children, so your support also protects and uplifts families to help them heal and stay together. Our mission is only possible through relationships, but with compassionate supporters like you, we can help every child experience the love of God through a loving family.



# Closing thoughts...

Whether you're selling a product or providing education to children in need, you're telling a story about your brand and how the target audience fits into the narrative. Taking into account the two general audiences of nonprofits, your brand can utilize the StoryBrand framework, make the audience the "hero" and clarify your message.

## HOW PARTNERING WITH 5BY5 CAN HELP YOU GET RESULTS

At 5by5, we know even the clearest message cannot win if it never reaches an audience. At the same time, a large advertising budget can get a brand in front of a lot of eyeballs, but without a clear message, it is wasted money. To get true results, you need both: a clear message and an effective strategy for reaching your audience. Our team has developed an acute expertise for creating verbal and visual brand strategies that

leverage StoryBrand as a valuable tool in achieving message clarity. Our marketing strategists are skilled in pinpointing and reaching the right target audiences, building trust and relationships through campaigns that prompt action and advocacy. We believe clear plans win, research is power, execution is everything, effective creative moves and ultimately,

*clarity x reach = results.*



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