



Storytelling in communicating university messages

Dr. Shadi Hijazi

Over **20,000** universities and
tertiary education institutions
worldwide (UNESCO)

Global Higher Education
Database: **15,000** Universities



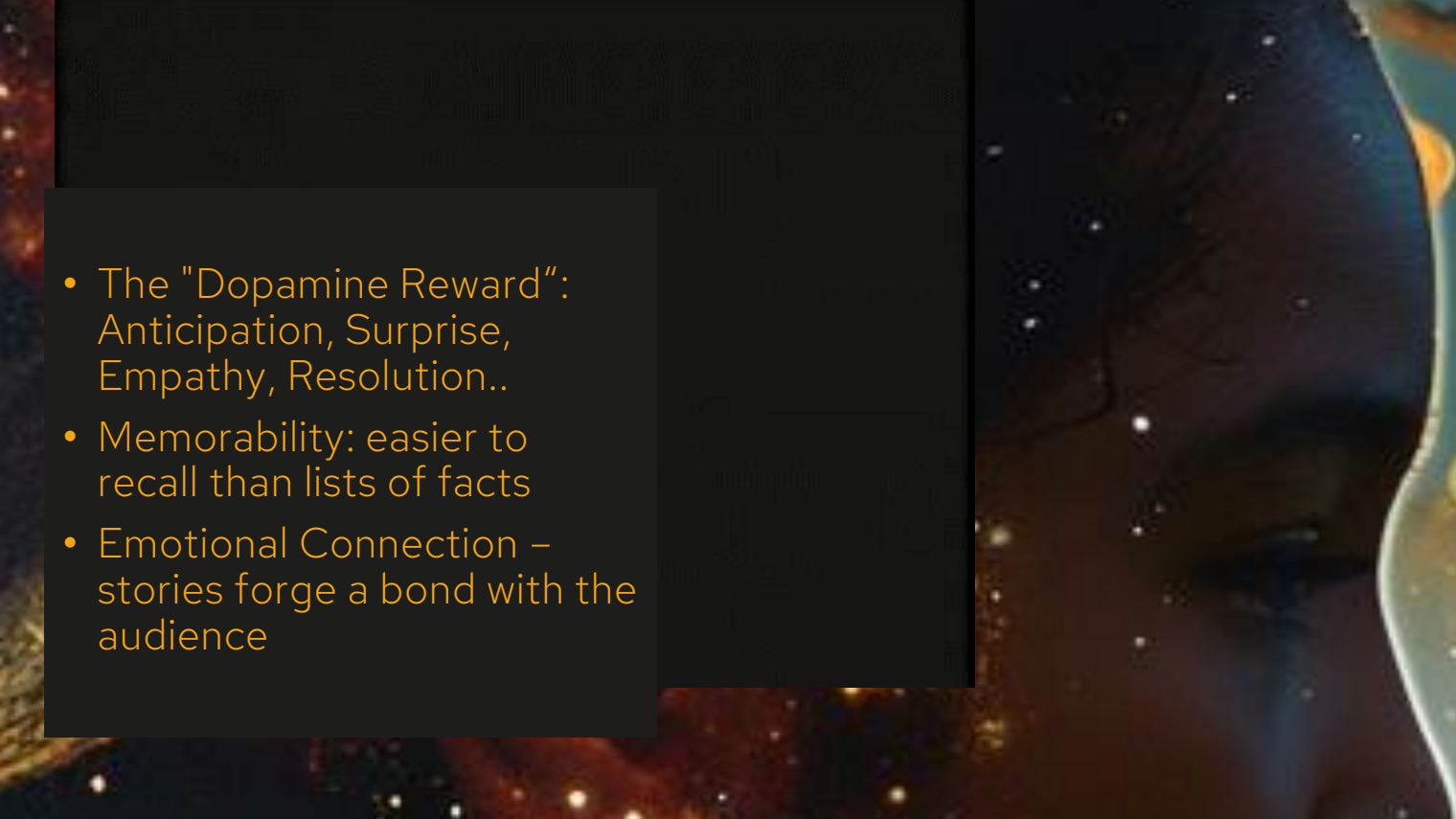
Storytelling



Why Do Stories Stick?



- The "Dopamine Reward": Anticipation, Surprise, Empathy, Resolution..
- Memorability: easier to recall than lists of facts
- Emotional Connection – stories forge a bond with the audience

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Our Unique Challenge

Overload of
information
(programs,
research,
etc.)

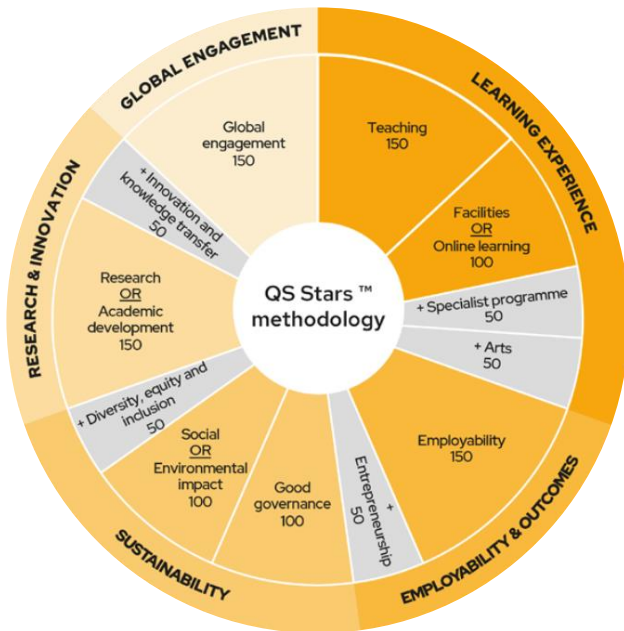


The "Ivory
Tower"
stereotype

Stories cut
through the
noise & build
human
connection



QS Stars: Your Data-Driven Roadmap



Focus on the key categories (Learning Experience, Research and Innovation, etc.) as they reflect areas where a university can tell powerful stories

Categories suggest areas to explore (Employability & Outcomes = alumni stories, etc.)

They help narrow our focus, give us a starting place

QS Stars: Your Data-Driven Roadmap

High "Employability" rating doesn't mean just saying "Our grads get jobs".

Think: Who are these successful alumni? What path did they take? This becomes your story outline.

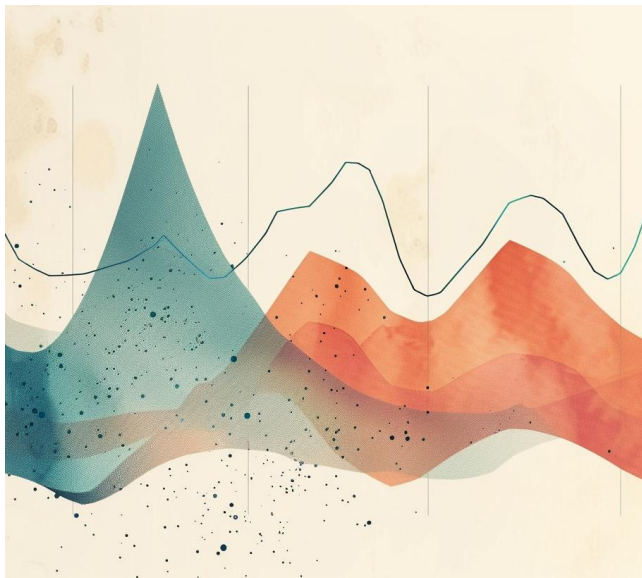
High "Employability" rating

Increased scores in "Inclusiveness"

New state-of-the-art Sports facilities

Your Narrative toolkit

1- Story Structure



The classic 3-acts are powerful.

- Setup (introducing the student/professor)
- Conflict (the challenge they face),
- Resolution (how they overcome it, the impact of their work).

However, especially for marketing, keep in mind shorter formats are also great – even something like a student testimonial has story elements built-in.

Emphasis on Struggle: Remember, a story isn't just listing accomplishments. What obstacles were faced? Was there self-doubt? Lack of resources? Overcoming those makes the success even sweeter.

Your Narrative toolkit

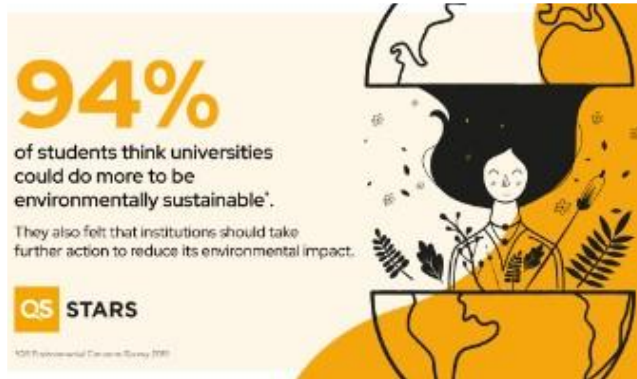
2- Human Angle



- Showcase People: Students, alumni, professors – their experiences give the data meaning! Interviews, spotlights, testimonials – these bring the story alive.
- Connect to Feelings: "Employability" isn't just about the first job, it's relief, pride after the long search. "Teaching" isn't just grades, it's the "aha!" moment of understanding. We're trying to paint a picture that resonates emotionally.

Your Narrative toolkit

3- Emotional Trigger



Or 2 of



Don't be afraid to evoke deeper emotions. But, a word of caution for universities, we need to strike a balance.

Avoid Manipulation: Sentimentality needs to feel earned. That's where your strong QS data comes in. It gives your stories credibility.

It's more powerful to show successful alumni alongside the employability score, rather than an emotional story without those numbers backing it up.

Storytelling examples for QS Stars categories

Learning Experience



The "Aha!" Moment: Many universities feature student testimonials about a transformative professor. But, showcasing those alongside rising "Teaching" scores makes it even more impactful.

Example: An interview with a student hesitant about their field, followed by a clip of them excitedly explaining a concept clicked during a specific professor's lecture.

Beyond Academics: Strong teaching can be about mentorship. This resonates with parents especially.

Example: A series of short alumni profiles where they credit their career success not just to course content, but a professor who helped them find internships/networking opportunities.

Storytelling examples

Learning Experience: University of Melbourne: Students as partners program



"I have definitely gained skills in organisation and time management, as well as the ability to reflect on my own academic experience and then utilise those reflections to assist other students. I have also benefitted from the various professional training sessions that I have been able to attend, which have been very useful and informative. Thank you for facilitating this program" **Stella, Bachelor of Arts**

What do Student Partners do?

Drawing on your own experiences of studying at university, you will have the opportunity to:

- Provide a student perspective on current and future activities
- Participate in team decision making
- Review, design and develop engaging services and resources
- Co-deliver workshops and presentations

Learn more about the different types of projects you could be involved in as a Student Partner.

Storytelling examples

Learning Experience: University of Queensland: Leading learning beyond the classroom

Leading learning beyond the classroom

4 November 2022

Goat yoga, field trips, scavenger hunts and the 'sparking joy' approach to possessions are just some of the ways a University of Queensland senior lecturer captivates his students.

[Dr Ryan Williams](#) from UQ's [School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry](#) thinks outside the box to foster curiosity in his Studies in Religion students while showing how the subject relates to their lives.

His approach has been recognised with a Commendation for Teaching Excellence as part of [Teaching and Learning \(T&L\) Week](#).

Dr Williams said visits to prisons, places of worship, and public spaces, along with immersive, 360° degree religious site virtual tours developed in collaboration with local faith communities all help prepare students for careers in diverse workplaces.

"I'm trying to impart the type of knowledge that you can only get when you're doing something," Dr Williams said.



UQ students visit places of worship as part of the Studies in Religion course.

Storytelling examples for QS Stars categories

Research & Innovation



Real-World Impact: "Lab breakthroughs" are abstract to outsiders. Tie them to tangible results!

Example: A medical researcher's work on a medical disease, with a patient testimonial about how the university-developed treatment changed their life.

Student as Researcher: Undergrads intimidated by research should see it's accessible.

Example: Profile of a student who started as a lab assistant and ended up co-authoring on a paper, highlighting faculty mentorship along the way.

Storytelling examples

Research & Innovation: Imperial College, London

Soft prosthetics startup Koalaa raises nearly £1 million from investors

by Ian Mundell

16 February 2024



Joanie serving with her Koalaa prosthetic

The Imperial College Enterprise Fund joins investors backing Koalaa's innovative prosthetic limbs, which are helping people worldwide.

Koalaa, a startup with its roots at Imperial, has closed a £925,000 investment round that will help drive the international expansion of its business. The company has developed a range of soft prosthetic limbs that are light, comfortable, and suitable even for very young children.



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Imperial makes new Enterprise



Nate Macabuag, founder of Koalaa

The idea took hold while Mr Macabuag was studying for a Master's degree in the [Department of Mechanical Engineering](#), and was developed with the support of Imperial's entrepreneurship resources and programmes.

Unlike traditional prosthetics, which are made from rigid materials, Koalaa uses fabric that is breathable and fits snugly against the arm. Interchangeable tools, whose design is driven by user feedback and need, can be attached to the end of the sleeve and swapped in and out depending on the task the user would like to carry out.

Storytelling examples for QS Stars categories

Employability & Outcomes



The Winding Path: "95% of our grads are employed!" is good, but a story makes it stick. Focus on those who changed majors, overcame setbacks.

Example: Student spotlight on someone who started pre-med, struggled, but found their passion elsewhere, with the university's career services helping pivot.

Employer Feedback: Great employability data likely means strong ties to industries. Showcase this!

Example: Short video featuring a local business owner praising the caliber of interns from the university, highlighting specific skills they consistently have.

Storytelling examples

Employability & Outcomes: University of Toronto



Everton Gooden

University of Toronto Scarborough |
Temerty Faculty of Medicine

When outsiders shudder over the extensive training required for a physician to become a specialist, there's one key factor they...



Jesse Wente

Innis College | Faculty of Arts &
Science

When the federal government established the Indigenous Screen Office last year, it was the culmination of years of...



Rachel Sklar

Faculty of Law

"Life is a cabaret, old chum," the lyrics to the 1966 musical suggest, and Rachel Sklar (Law, 1998) has enjoyed a number of...



Tasha Schumann

Victoria College | Faculty of Arts &
Science

Tasha Schumann's successful career as rap artist Tasha the Amazon comes as no surprise to her. After all, she has planned...



A. Ka Tat Tsang

Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social
Work | School of Graduate Studies

Through his work with the China Project, professor A. Ka Tat Tsang has spread his valuable knowledge of social work...



Adrienne Clarkson

Trinity College | Faculty of Arts &
Science | School of Graduate Studies

Adrienne Clarkson has written about immigrants who struggled and thrived. An immigrant herself, she's helped transform...



Alexander Levy

University College | Faculty of Arts &
Science

The apps built by Alexander Levy's company MyVoice literally give a voice to thousands of people with profound speech...



Allen Lau

Faculty of Applied Science &
Engineering | School of Graduate
Studies

When a headline asks whether your company can "save reading", you know you've got it made. Allen Lau's Wattpad is...

Storytelling examples

Employability & Outcomes: Ritsumeikan University



Aigawa Dam, Ibaraki city



With his classmates



Field research at Aigawa Dam

After six months in Japan, he found a part-time job at a fast-food restaurant in Kyoto. It was difficult at first, but he got used to it. He still works in the same restaurant, and the job has taught him a lot about Japanese language, culture, and society, as well as how to foster teamwork and many other things.



3. Student life of an international alumni

<A case of Sempai from
Global Studies Major>



Storytelling examples for QS Stars categories

Global Engagement



Cross-Cultural Collaboration: More than just numbers of foreign students. Show what they create together!

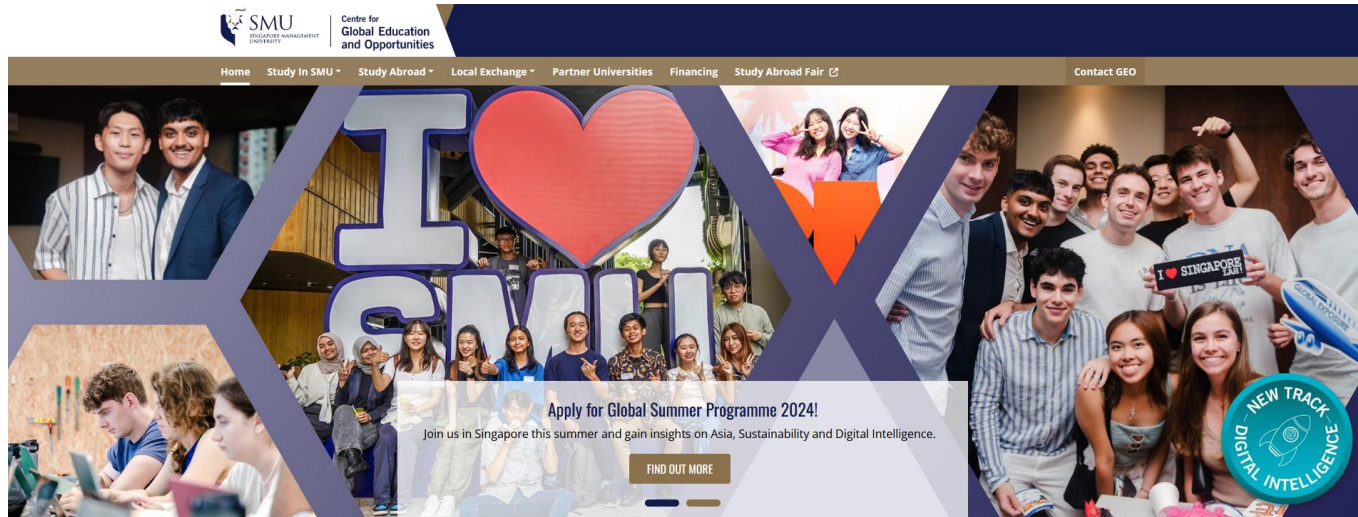
Example: Video showcasing a project where international teams had to solve a real-world problem, emphasizing the unique perspectives they brought.

Global Impact: Did a student/faculty exchange program lead to something that benefits a wider community? Tell that story!

Example: Photo essay following alumni who did a study-abroad stint focused on sustainability, showing how they now implement those techniques back home.

Storytelling examples

Global Engagement: Singapore Management University



Visualisation Matters

Complements Text:

Our brains process images way faster than text. A well-placed visual alongside your story hits home faster and helps keep your audience engaged.

Simplifying Complex Data:

Think about those QS Stars categories. A graph or chart showing progress over time is way more impactful than just a list of numbers!

Canva, Piktochart and Generative AI!



Visualisation Matters

Clear Hierarchy:

Guide the eye – what's the most important info?

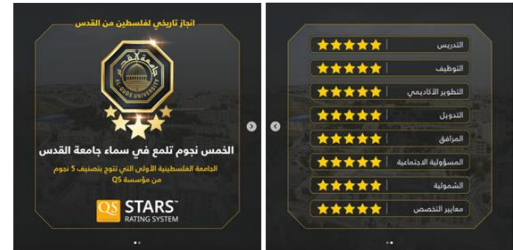
Use size and placement to show that.

Color Matters:

Stick to a palette. Too many colors get overwhelming. Use color to highlight key data points.

Don't Overcrowd:

White space is your friend, lets the information breathe!



Key Takeaways



SUNWAY STRATEGIC ALLIANCE SCHOLARSHIP +

A strategic collaboration between Sunway Education and industry partners to provide joint scholarship to deserving individuals during economic uncertainty.

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[FIND OUT MORE](#)

ACTUARIAL-LY, FIVE-STAR!

In the recently released QS Stars Rating System, Sunway University's BSc (Hons) Actuarial Studies (BAS) programme, offered by the university's School of Mathematical Sciences, achieved QS 5 Stars rating under the programme strength category. The 5 Stars rating is the highest that can be attained in the "Specialist Criteria".

[READ MORE](#)

SUNWAY UNIVERSITY
School of MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES

★★★★★
Bachelor of Science (Honours)
Actuarial Studies

QS

student **LIFE**

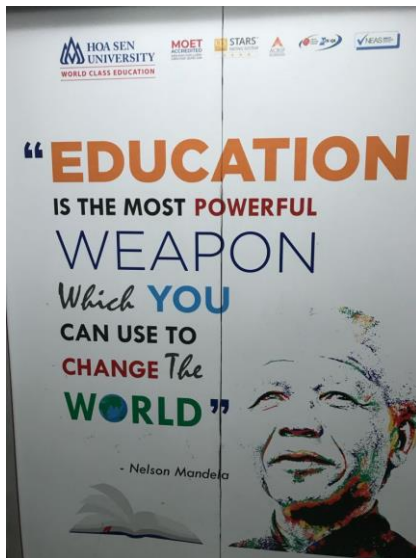
SUNWAY CAREER SERVICES

Created and governed by the
Jeffrey Cheah Foundation
Honouring the Spirit of Values

Data + Narrative = Powerful Marketing

- QS Stars give you focus and direction, not the whole story.
- Use the QS categories as inspiration for impactful narratives.
- Start small, build on successes by tracking which stories resonate with your target audience.

Key Takeaways



QS Stars brings academic evidence to your unique story...

