

Communicating Your Value to Clients

Advisors today face a number of challenges as financial services become more commoditized and competition from robo-advisors, low-fee investing platforms, and even artificial intelligence grows.

To survive and flourish in this environment, as a financial advisor you need to differentiate yourself and the value you bring to clients. This can be achieved through “value narratives”—unique, tailored, jargon-free stories that vividly illustrate the benefits clients can receive from you.

How can advisors develop effective value narratives?

- Focus on your best successes with clients and learn from your experience.
- Analyze the value of those successes from your client’s perspective.
- Turn that analysis into a brief, authentic story.

Steps for Building Your Value Narratives

To help craft your story, we have listed a number of steps you can take to stay focused. Your client is the “hero” meeting a challenge—for example, selling a business, revisiting investment goals, navigating changing family dynamics. You are the “mentor,” offering guidance in light of their new circumstances. You do this by helping them decide on a financial course of action designed with their particular situation in mind.¹

1. **Introduce the client as the protagonist—or “hero.”**
2. **The call to “adventure”:** The client must make an important decision. What is it?
3. **A reluctance to decide:** Given the “shadows” thrown up by a highly uncertain, complex, and abstruse world, the hero is unsure what to do next.
4. **Meeting the “mentor”:** The mentor (advisor) guides the hero through complexity and uncertainty.
5. **Facing the challenges:** In trying to determine the right course of action, the hero and mentor focus on the elements of effective decision-making.
6. **Confronting the hero’s doubts:** The hero should weigh the risks of a poor decision, effectively answering the question, “What if I make a mistake?”
7. **The “Transformation”:** With the help of the mentor, who offers genuine insights, the hero makes an informed decision. Insight, according to Gary Klein in *Seeing What Others Don’t*, is “an unexpected shift to a better story.”

We are committed to helping advisors improve their business and prepare their clients for the future. Please contact your Lazard Regional Consultant or our Sales Desk at 1-800-823-6300 to learn more about our value-add offerings.

Notes

¹ Adapted from Christopher Volger, *A Practical Guide to Joseph Campbell’s The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 1985. Originally published on 18 March 2024. Revised and republished on 16 April 2024.

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