



CREATIVE FORMATS TO ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE

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INTRODUCTION TO ENGAGING FORMATS

WHAT IS A FORMAT?

A format is simply a way in which elements of a story (the rising tension) are structured in order to tell a story. Many creators of content refer to the ingredients of a programme or piece of content as its unique “Format” for instance, the show “Big Brother” has a set number of elements that are replicated throughout the world as the show’s unique ‘Format’ - we will explore this secondary definition of format later. If the definition of story is “Something that happens to someone that teaches us something”, the definition of format would be the “ways in which a story can be told”. It refers more to the mechanics or layout of the story, than the story itself.

The 10 formats are applicable to all communication. They can be done in face-to-face, print, radio, television and online media such as blogs, podcast and video.

In the world of traditional and online media, because it is still relatively new, the language used to describe the ways to tell stories and what makes the various types of formats unique, differs greatly. This is not only true from country to country but also different broadcasters and content creators. There are 10 ways to present story information to an audience. Each of the ten formats uses information or logic of the story in different ways. Some of the formats are good at presenting facts and information and some are poor at holding information. Some of the formats are particularly good at emotion and some are bad at holding emotion. The format that is chosen is specific to what you want the audience to experience.

SINGLE AND WRAPPER FORMATS

Formats can be broken up into SINGLE and WRAPPER formats. Single formats are like primary colours; they exist singularly and can be combined in ways that create new colours. So for example, blue and yellow make green. By combining two different formats, you have a different combination.

When you look at the ten formats, you will notice that there is no listing of words you may have heard before such as “Documentary” or “Feature” or “Reality”. These have been used to describe formats but they are misleading. If we were to ask a group, “What is a documentary?” many people will have different points of view of what a documentary is or examples of ‘documentaries’. This makes the word problematic. Similarly so are the words “Feature” and “Reality”. The word feature may refer to a feature film (a film over 90 minutes), a news feature (meaning a big story usually over many pages in a newspaper) or personality feature (a particular person who features in a story). As you can see from these examples, the words used are unspecific and could be interpreted in different ways.

THE SINGLE FORMATS

Single formats, as mentioned above, are simple, basic formats that can be used alone or in combination. There are 5 single formats. It usually helps to think of these as primary colours (Red, Yellow, Blue).

Format name	Format definition
Drama	Drama is any information or story that is presented to an audience by actors. The audience will know that what they are watching is DRAMA if they are aware that the people they are watching are actors and not real people. Drama is the only psychological format, meaning that it is the one format in which we understand what is in the characters mind. Drama is the most consumed format and uses story to deliver a strong emotion to an audience.
Testimonial	A testimonial or testimony is a person or people who deliver their own story or view points on a certain topic directly to the audience. The way to tell the difference between testimony and interview is that testimony is delivered with the person looking directly to camera giving personal story or views . Testimony can be really powerful if the person who is giving the testimonial can explain their story in a powerful way using rising tension, a symbol and other essential elements of story.
Interview	The way in which interviews are structured is that there is an interviewer who asks questions of an interviewee. A powerful interview uses the questions to tell story that build in tension answering a central question.
Discussion	Discussions are simply a group of people arguing. Discussion uses a group of people 2 or more in which a topic is argued. The story comes from the quality of the arguments .
Demonstration	Demonstration relies on a presenter or host showing us a process or skill in a step-by-step manner. The story comes from the process .

SINGLE FORMAT: DRAMA

Drama is one of the world's oldest formats of entertainment. In ancient Greece Aristotle identified Drama and Comedy as the two central pillars of story. As our definition of drama is "any story that is told by actors", comedy and drama are one format of broadcast.

Drama can be classical forms such as ballet, stage, opera or new styles such as "mock-umentary" in which the audience is lead to believe that the roles in the story are real and not played by actors.



There are many styles and forms that Drama can take. Using the box below try and see how many different forms and styles of drama you can come up with.

Form	Style
Comedy	Slap-stick comedy, dark comedy, satire, cartoons, political satire, stand-up comedy, puppet comedy, comedy variety shows, skit shows.

Horror

Action

Adventure

Romance

Sci-fi

SINGLE FORMAT: TESTIMONY

The testimonial or testimony is a common format in content creation. It is when someone gives their opinion or story directly to the camera (and audience). Most media professionals also hear the term Vox-Pop for testimony. The term "vox pop" comes from the Latin phrase *vox populi*, meaning "voice of the people". In Testimony, the subject or person that you are interviewing looks directly to the camera and gives their opinion/belief/story/view of a subject.




Testimony is commonly used for the following reasons:

1. **to test public opinion and reaction:** to see what the general public feel about a topic (for instance what the average school child feels about the teachers strike).
2. **to influence decision-makers:** by demonstrating the voice of the people, these opinions are presented to decision makers as a cross sampling of opinion.
3. **to forecast** results of events: what a cross section of people think the outcome will be. Like 'who do you think is going to win the soccer match on the week-end'.
4. **to stimulate public debate:** presenting the audience with multiple points of view to get people to take sides in an argument.
5. **to promote something and make it more popular:** by using people to say the product/service is good to get people to support it.
6. **to gather personal stories/accounts of an event:** eye-witness testimony is an example of a personal story.


Asking the right questions

If you want to use testimony as your format first you need to know what you are using it for (as above). Once you have decided what you want to do, the next step is to create a list of questions that will achieve what you set out to do. If you simply want to do a number of yes or no answers to one question to get a forecast of the areas opinion a statistical question will be good enough. If you want a deeper exploration and story, opinion questions that require people to give longer explanations, will be used.

Statistical questions	Opinion questions
Will you vote in the next election?	Who would you like to be the next President and why?
Which political party did you vote for?	What would you most like the next government to do?
Did you vote in the last election?	Why do you think young people are not voting?
Will the ANC stay in power for another term?	Tell me the story of the first time you voted and how it made you feel?

Statistical questions	Opinion questions
<p><i>Will you vote in the next election?</i></p>  <p><i>“Out of the 20 people we asked 70% said they were registered and would vote in the elections“</i></p>	<p><i>Why do you think voting is important?</i></p>  <p><i>“I first voted in 1994, we stood in long lines but it was important to vote because it gave my people a voice, this year I will vote again to continue the struggle for basic rights and freedoms”- Nxolise, 67</i></p>

The Personal Story Testimonial



*POMOZITE MI.
NE ZNAM DA LI CU DOČEKATI SUTRA*

In this frame grab from a video in which a young woman recounts a year of domestic abuse, the unnamed victim holds up a sign that reads: 'Help me. I do not know if I will see tomorrow'

The personal story is a very powerful tool. It gives an audience an emotionally satisfying experience to hear a personal story of someone who is an example of what is being spoken about. In the section on story we looked at the concept of “something happens to someone”. Testimony is a powerful way to tell a personal story and connect with an audience. In many adverts testimony is used to sell products because we as humans like the idea that someone is in a similar position or has similar needs to us and if they recommend it, it is possible that it will work for us. Personal stories are ways in which presidential candidates are often elected: the presidential candidate with the best personal story usually is the one that wins.

A note on Testimony and Balance

“Balance” (also called fairness or objectivity) simply means to present two sides of an argument. Most people have different opinions and beliefs, in order to get balance in a story, it is important not to only collect testimony from one person, but it is good practice to get the testimonies of a

few people who have different points of view, even if those points of view are against our own beliefs.

Tension can be built in a story by contrasting different beliefs and accounts of the testimonies.

SINGLE FORMAT: INTERVIEW

The interview is simply a number of questions that are asked of an interviewee (the person being asked the questions) by and interviewer (the person asking the questions). The questions are the way in which the story is told. Powerful interviews understand the basic structure of story and use these to build tension towards a climax.

It's important that you know exactly why you are conducting an interview and which goal(s) you are aiming for.

- › Obtain the interviewee's knowledge about the topic
- › Obtain the interviewee's opinion and/or feelings about the topic
- › Feature the interviewee as the subject.

A practical example of a great interview is the Oprah Winfrey interview of Lance Armstrong (Oprah Winfrey Network, January 17 and 18, 2013). In this interview, the central question that Oprah explores is "Does Lance Armstrong feel guilty about his use of banned substances to win the Tour de France and lying about it, now that the truth is known?" In each question she asks, Winfrey rises the tension in finding the climax answer. In the interview, Lance Armstrong repeatedly says that he feels a sense of guilt, however "everyone was doing it".



The Oprah Winfrey Show originally started as an interview show only. The power of Oprah is that she is able to tell a story through the questions she asks in such a way that it has a very strong climax through story.

SINGLE FORMAT: DISCUSSION

A discussion is when there are 3 or more people, who are given a topic, and they have different views of the topic. The story of a discussion is created through its arguments. Good discussions usually build in tension through the different points of view of the people taking part. Think about your favourite discussions: these are usually when you have conflicting ideas with someone and want to try and convince them why your point of view is the correct one. Discussions come to a climax when the topic that is being discussed is given a solution.



The discussion programme has become a big part of television programming. With shows like "The View" (ABC, USA) and "The Talk" (HBO, USA) creating a forum in which discussions are lively and engaging. The View was one of the first discussion formats to use women only to talk about issues in modern life. The women in The View all range in ages and social backgrounds and include mothers and grandmothers.

A discussion does not necessarily have to include experts or community leaders, however it is good to have a source of information. Discussion as a format is good at holding lots of information. There are many types of discussion such as political discussion, public debate, male-issues discussion, female-issues discussion, community discussion and discussion can take many styles.

There is also no mention in its definition that a discussion needs an adjudicator or host. The BBC Channel 4 production “After Dark” broadcast between 1987 and 1997 was a ground breaking discussion in which about 6 people were allowed to discuss an issue without a broadcast time limit on late night TV. The show, filmed live, was a combination of experts, people off the street and thought leaders.

SINGLE FORMAT: DEMONSTRATION

A demonstration is a story that is told in a number of steps or stages and it usually involves the teaching of a skill or series of facts. The story is told through the process.

Generally demonstrations are very information heavy and do not really hold a lot of emotion. Typical demonstration shows include cooking programmes, Do It Yourself (DIY) programmes and educational shows. The outcome is usually the climax of the story. In recent years demonstration programmes have been combined with other formats to give them more emotional content. This includes the introduction of game and testimonial. Shows such as “MasterChef” for example are good at demonstration as well as combining the format of testimonial, interview and game shows to create a new and interesting show.



Persuasion and Demonstration

Throughout our lives we are constantly learning. Learning is when we acquire new knowledge, skills or attitudes.

We learn through the following ways:

- › Knowledge: Knowledge is facts, things that we know. This comes to us through information.
- › Skills or Abilities are gained through training and practice. In order to get a skill you must practice it. This is particularly hard in broadcast as many people need to be persuaded to do something. (see below).
- › Attitudes or beliefs are the hardest to learn and change because these are often closely held. In order to change someone's attitude or belief it is necessary to change their minds. This is called persuasion.

Persuasion is the process of learning with an emotional dimension. Most persuasion is often told to us in the form of story. For example: how do we know that taking drugs is dangerous? We are shown stories of people who ruin their lives and suffer the consequences of abusing drugs, these stories have high emotion and we understand that drugs therefore are dangerous.

In broadcasting (traditional media), it is very difficult to teach people something, as we cannot force people to practice. We can give them facts, but this becomes boring and the facts don't necessarily change people's minds. Demonstration usually gives audience sequences of information or facts.

YouTube has become very popular for tutorials online showing “how to” demonstrations. The success of these is linked to people having a real need (to learn quickly how to change a tire of a car, for example) and a person they find relevant (a person who resembles them or is ‘a person like us’). In many YouTube videos the ability to fail is also present. This provides more rising tension for the viewer. The internet platform Netflix launched “Nailed it” (June, 2018 Netflix Originals) which demonstrates the creation of complicated baking projects and getting real people to demonstrate the replication of these recipes. The demonstrations have high comedic

value (emotion) because the bakers fail at their projects and encourage other bakers (viewing online) to try complicated tasks even though the outcome is less than perfect.

Learning and persuasion is not restricted to demonstration, in fact powerful learning can be done in every format. Because demonstration as a format struggles to persuade due to its lack of emotion, it needs to be combined with a format that is good at emotion.

WRAPPER FORMATS

Now that we understand the five single formats (drama, testimonial, interview, discussion and demonstration), let's look at the Wrapper Formats. Wrapper formats are basically a format of television that uses single formats in a combination of ways. A wrapper often will be a way a single format is presented, or it can hold lots of different single formats. The wrapper format is very popular in television and radio, and new and exciting programmes are created by changing the contents of the wrapper formats. A good way to think about these is by thinking about cake. If you have ever baked a cake you know that there are always the same list of basic ingredients: milk, flour, eggs, sugar. By using more of one and less of the other, or by adding new ingredients you get different types of cake: chocolate cake versus vanilla or caramel cake. The wrapper formats of television are the same.

There are 5 types of wrapper formats, they are: Magazine Programme, Report, Actuality, Montage, Game.

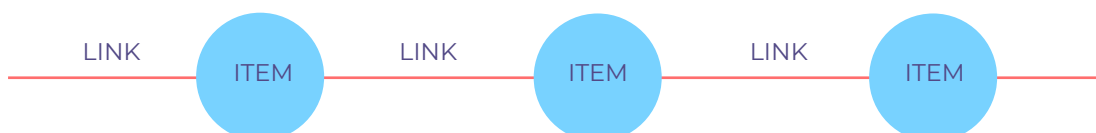
Wrappers can hold single formats and other wrappers within their structure.

Format name	Format definition
Magazine	A magazine format relies on links by a presenter or presenters . The story is told by linking one item to the next. The typical format is link-item-link-item-link. In a magazine the logic of the format comes from the links. Most often these will have a theme or general topic that they cover such as "Sport" or "Lifestyle".
Report	A report is a single subject that is explored by a reporter . The reporter can be seen or can be just a voice that guides our understanding of the content. The report usually has a number of items in it that the reporter will guide us through, most often Interviews, Testimony and Discussion are used however the report can feature others.
Actuality	Actuality means Live, unedited events as they happen. Live events such as sport games or matches or public interest events such as the presidential address or state of the nation address are presented often live and unedited. Actuality wrapper can be applied to any format or a combination of formats.
Montage	Relies on editing to tell a story . Editing is the process of taking different shot footage and putting it together to tell a story. Montage is similar to a report, in that it explored one subject however it does not have a reporter or a voice over explaining it. It relies completely on the editing. Montage has become a very popular format since the rise of MTV – music videos are essentially just editing.
Game	Game format is anything that contains rules. In a game format the rules tell the story . Generally these rules build tension in an audience. Really engaging games have interesting rules that have a pay off in the contestants winning or defeating or overcoming the rules.

WRAPPER FORMAT: THE MAGAZINE

Magazine programmes are very popular forms of television. The format is able to be used in many different ways with items being able to be substituted easily. This format is cost effective as it enables a wide range of content to be created and then links built around it. The whole format is basically links that are done by a presenter to introduce or connect items (single or other wrapper formats).

The format of a magazine programme is:

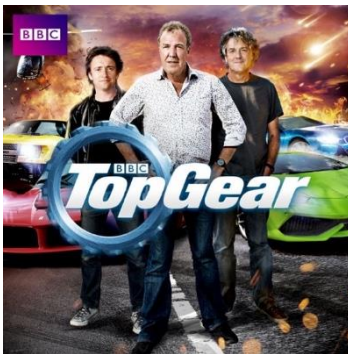


Links

Links can be presenters talking to a camera, a radio presenter or a detached voice. Links can also be thematic and obscure. For instance, it may form the linking text on a blog or the thematic links in a physical magazine like the “National Geographic” – the thematic link is based on geographical and natural world interests.

Items

Items in Magazine can include any of the single formats or any of the wrapper formats. For example you can have a magazine programme that has reports, or the links of the magazine programme are don live in studio and the items are previously shot and edited. You can also have a Magazine programme that links to games.



Top Gear (BBC, 2002- 2015) was a long running Magazine Programme on the BBC that was an international Success. The theme of the magazine was motoring and more specifically, making cars accessible to the 'average BBC viewer' and not only car enthusiasts. The show was hosted by Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammon and James May. In each episode the hosts would link to various items that were all related to cars. There were items based on a formula that was part of the shows programme format.

Themes

Magazines work on broad themes. The Magazine is not specific like a report that investigates or examines a single topic, Magazine programmes are broader. In the above example of Top Gear, the theme that connects the links and item is the theme “Motoring”. Here are some popular Magazine genres ad styles (not a complete list):

Politics Sports Current Affairs Lifestyle Travel Children's Nature Science
 Women's Issues Investigation Fitness and Health Finance News Music Art Fashion
 Architecture Dance Comedy

The Second Definition “Formats”

Formats for our purposes have been used to describe ways to tell a story. In the introduction of the module a second definition was also implied. In the television industry a “format” is used to describe a recipe for a particular programme. Each episode in the series uses the exact same formula from beginning to end, including music and tension creation. Most often what is being explained however is a MAGAZINE FORMAT.

For instance, “Top Gear” has the following formula:

- Link: Host(s) welcome viewer and introduce question of the episode (Actuality)
- Item: Car Review, test lap pre-recorded (Testimony, Montage, Report)
- Link: Studio, (Actuality)
- Item: discussion of the car with co-hosts. (Discussion)
- Link: Studio: Introduction of Celebrity guest. (Actuality)
- Item: Interview with Celebrity Guest. (Interview)
- Link: Introduction of the “Star in a Car” (Actuality)
- Item: Celebrity races a car around the test track to see what best time they can make. (Testimony)

- Link: Studio: Host reveals the stars rating on the “leaderboard” compared to other stars. (Game)
- Item: “The Cool Wall”- the hosts discuss new cars launched in the last weeks and give their opinions on whether they are cool or not (Discussion)

Radio programmes are completely Magazine format as they are simply links from one item to the next. There is no limit on the number of items and links, the importance is however about the creation of a central question, rising tension and climax.

Magazines and story format

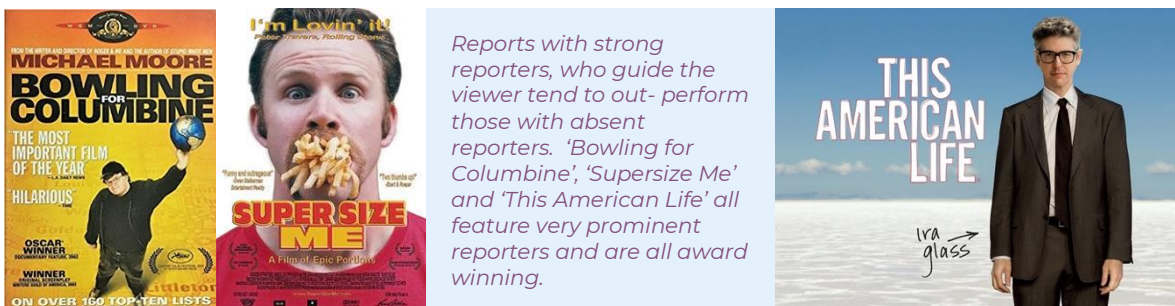
Magazines are typically bad at emotion and holding information. Because the format relies on links to bridge items, the items themselves are the holders of emotion, information and tension. The links serve to build either tension or build a question. Many magazine formats remind the user/viewer/listener of the central question. In radio shows, the host will create suspense by delaying your answer to the question. For instance: will my favourite song be at number 1? With each song, the question is re-enforced or reiterated.

WRAPPER FORMAT: THE REPORT

The Report is a very versatile format. It is much like the magazine in that it has a host or reporter and it can hold many of the single formats or other wrapper formats in it. The difference is that where a magazine is generally themed, the report has one subject that is explored. A report focuses on a topic like teenage pregnancy or school drop outs and is usually guided **by a reporter** who gives us the information or structures it in a way that we can understand and follow as the viewer.

Reports are often called “documentaries” or “features”. This is incorrect as both of those terms are vague and could be any format. The report can use all of the single and wrapper formats in its creation including montage and interview, which are often used to create reports. A report, like all formats, needs to have a very strong story with a central question, rising tension and climax with resolution.

Many journalists fear putting the reporter at the centre of their reports. However the current trend is to have a visible investigator or reporter who takes thee user, viewer and listener on a journey. If one notes the biggest report format winners at Sundance, The Oscars, etc it is immediately clear that the reporter features heavily in the format. Vice, the online ‘documentary’ platform, developed its following on alternate, honest reports featuring reporters who resembled their target audience.



Reports with strong reporters, who guide the viewer tend to out-perform those with absent reporters. 'Bowling for Columbine', 'Supersize Me' and 'This American Life' all feature very prominent reporters and are all award winning.

WRAPPER FORMAT: THE MONTAGE

Montage is a process of putting things together in editing to create meaning. Editing is when shot footage, Recorded voice or still images are re-arranged to tell a story. The way that the footage is re-arranged in editing is specific in telling the story the content creator wants to portray. Like we have seen there are many ways to tell a story. Editing is a choice to tell a story in a certain way.

Montage is a wrapper format, meaning that it can apply to many different formats. A montage is simply a series of things put together. Much like a report, the montage usually explores a single subject but it differs from the report in that it does not use a reporter or a voice over. Most montages use music to help guide the emotion of the story.

In the late 1980's a channel was born to only deliver montages to its audience. The montages were music heavy and were images arranged to musical scores. The fast paced editing often in obscure themes were adored by audiences of young people. The channel was MTV and the music video became the montage that captured audiences. Still popular today, music videos are very good examples of montages.

Montage can be used as a wrapper format to join together interviews, testimony or other formats without giving explanation by a reporter. Montage can also be used as a single format in another wrapper format. For example a montage can be used in a report to demonstrate a simple idea. Montage in a report or magazine is a series of shots that explain the problem and what happened to change the situation. In any movie you will often see the hero of the story undergoing some change. In romance movies this is the part where you see the girl and the guy falling in love or in action movies it is the part where the hero learns a skill that he will use against "the bad guys".



To raise awareness about global warming, the montage above shows how this polar bear is being affected by the problem. Notice that even in this simple montage of three shots we have all the elements of a good story including a symbol and a universal truth.

WRAPPER FORMAT: ACTUALITY

Actuality means that something is happening LIVE. Live means that as something is unfolding in the world, it is being broadcast in an unedited way. The problem with this is that it is often very thrilling to watch something live, however it can be just as uninteresting as there is no way to control the tension of the programme.

Actuality usually is done for sports, live events, important events or broadcasts of breaking news. Actuality as a community journalist usually takes the form of iReports for CNN or other news outlets in time of chaos or upheaval. For instance in Egypt during the civil uprising live reports were filled by people on the streets of Cairo.

Actuality is a wrapper format as LIVE can be applied to all formats: interview, testimonial, game, report, magazine, etc. Social media has live applications on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram that allow actuality combinations.

WRAPPER FORMAT: GAME

The Game is any format that contains rules. The story of the format is based on the rules of the game. Sometimes the story is good and engaging depending on the stakes of the rules. In the last 10 years game has become a really popular format with games such as “Survivor”, “The Weakest Link”, “Deal or no Deal”, “Big Brother”, “Fear Factor” and “Idols” becoming very popular shows.

So where does “reality tv” go as a format? Most often, it is a game. The contestants are given challenges or are made to do something in order to create emotion. In the game show (labelled as Reality TV) Fear Factor, contestants are presented with fears, the person who can overcome their fear in the fastest/most logical way wins. For something to be a game, the typical elements are rules, challenges, contestants and a winner.

The styles of game include Survival games, quiz games, endurance games, cooking games, physical strength games, agility games, talent competitions (dance, song, and ability), celebrity games, dating and matchmaking games, fashion games, ticking clock games, cruelty, elimination and others. All sports fit under the format of Game.

Game is a wrapper format as it often uses other formats in it in order to tell the story. For example, in sports there are often voice-overs of people telling us what is happening or commentating the game, this is a report. In reality TV shows, there are often testimonials or interviews that aid in the understanding or excitement of the game. Game is also the highest growth format of the genres as it has lots of potential for interesting new format combinations. Due to the high emotion of game, it is combined with formats such as demonstration, which are typically low on emotion. Consider the rise of the cooking-based game show: ‘MasterChef’, ‘Come dine with Me’ and ‘The Great British Bake Off’ for instance use game elements to turn information heavy format of cooking demonstrations into fun and exciting game shows.



CONSTRUCTING ENGAGING FORMATS

Now that we understand the 5 single and 5 wrapper formats, it is important to understand that there are some that are good at holding emotion, and some that are good at holding fact. Different formats are used for different things depending on the aims that you set out in the beginning of the story planning phase. When choosing a format, we chose the format that best suits our aims and the learning we want the audience to get from the experience.

	Good at holding information/facts for logic	Good at holding emotion/feelings
Drama	<p>✗</p> <p>Not good at facts, only one or two facts can be retained. No-one likes Dramas that state too many facts and give too much information.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Dramas are great at holding Emotion.</p>
Testimonial	<p>✗</p> <p>Due to Testimony being an opinion, it requires multiple opinions to give it balance. Therefore one can never assume the information contained in it to be correct.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Testimony is good at holding emotions as they usually give personal, first-hand accounts.</p>
Interview	<p>✓</p> <p>Good at information and specifically at getting relevant information on a subject.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Good at emotion. The emotions are first-hand.</p>
Discussion	<p>✓</p> <p>Because discussions involve more than one person, arguing, participants to a discussion will use facts and information to provide arguments. These provide rich facts and information.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>As one argues, emotions tend to flare up and discussion activates good emotion in the audience/user.</p>
Demonstration	<p>✓</p> <p>Demonstration holds many facts and sequences of skills. It is good at relaying information.</p>	<p>✗</p> <p>Demonstration is poor at emotion and should usually be combined with emotional formats to have impact.</p>
Magazine	<p>✗</p> <p>Magazine format is bad at giving facts. If one were to put all the information in the links, there would be no reason to read or view the item.</p>	<p>✗</p> <p>Links should not have too much emotion or they reduce the impact of the items they link to.</p>
Report	<p>✓</p> <p>Report format is great at giving facts.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Reports are good at emotion. When the reporter responds emotionally, audiences demonstrate higher rates of interest.</p>
Montage	<p>✗</p> <p>Montage is bad at giving facts. Due to the nature of the edit and how things are put together, the meaning may be manipulated. Without a guiding voice over or title (testimony) montage is not easy to understand in terms of What, where, why, what, who, how?</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Montages are good at giving emotion.</p>
Game	<p>✗</p>	<p>✓</p>

	Game is typically bad at giving too many facts. They are good at repeating the same small facts continuously.	Game is good at emotion. Consider sports and why its engaging to watch a sport game.
Actuality	✗ Live is bad at giving facts. If one were to turn on a tv and see a live broadcast without the benefit of a reporter, voiceover or titles (just actuality) it would be difficult to understand where, what, who, when, why, how?	✓ Due to the unpredictability of Actuality, it can be quite thrilling and full of suspense. Emotions captured live are first hand.

Because of their abilities and inabilities to hold emotion and information, formats can be chosen to meet your aim. Combinations of formats are also possible to ensure a good balance of information and emotion. In the Persuasive Storytelling Methodology, we have a clear aim that defines if we wish to bring our audience Knowledge, Skills or Attitudes.

For Knowledge, story and information is required. We know that story resonates with an audience and facts and information that accompany emotion (through story) have a better recall rate in the audience.

For Skills, persuasion and information are needed to get people to try out new skills. First they must be persuaded to try the new skill and then follow the steps in the process. A very good example of this is the BBC's Jamie Oliver and Nigella Lawson, two celebrity Chefs. BBC conducted research into the number of people who followed the recipes they saw on BBC cooking shows and found that less than 3% acted on skills they were shown. To improve the rate of practice producers used Nigella and Jamie in a new hybrid format in which they combined Testimony with Cooking. In his show, Jamie Oliver invites a group of people to his home, he then goes to the market and sources food, he then returns home and cooks simple yet delicious meals using simple utensils, the guest arrive and love his food. The persuasion here is "If you cook people will like you", "Cooking is easy" and "you don't need a fancy equipment or difficult ingredients to make a winning meal". From research, these were some of the agreed realities of the target audience in why they did not try the skills they saw on TV. In the case of Nigella Lawson, her cooking show centered on sensuality. In "Domestic Goddess", she would usually cook or bake for her husband or best friends. The cooking process would be eroticized often with shots of the hostess tasting the food seductively. The persuasion, aimed at women, was "Cooking is sexy and not only something for your mother's generation". For persuasion and changing of attitudes, emotion is central the construction of the story and therefore it is essential formats are chosen that support both logic and emotion.

Getting Creative with Formats and DaVinci

"The Ideas Box" was a technique used by Leonardo DaVinci in creative thinking. Leonardo DaVinci was accused very early on in his career of re-using the faces of people he painted in different works. To ensure that he would break patterns he had created, he invented the ideas box. The box listed simple features of the face: mouth, eyes, head shape etc. Once he had the features, he included descriptive words underneath each of the features, variations of the kinds one may find. The result was the "Grotesque Faces" a collection of unusual faces that were unique to DaVinci.



Head	Eyes	Nose	Mouth	Chin	Hair	Ears
Dome-like	bulging	Beak-like	Wafer-thin	sagging	Afro Hair	Huge
Bullet	Google-eyed	Parrot beak	Pinched	Double chin	bald	Tiny
Skeletal	Sunken	Hooked	Hair-lipped	Slack-jaw	Mohican	High
Bell shaped	beady	Cigar-shaped	drooping	angular	Crew-cut	Pointed
Egg shape	slanted	lumpy	beefy	dimpled	Frizzy	long
heart shaped	squint	broad	twisted	projecting	Fly away	Big lobes
round	swollen	fibrous	Bow-like	chunky	Comb-over	pointed

The ideas box can apply to breaking our consistent patterns of thinking when it comes to making format combinations. Often times as content creators, we fall into a pattern in the way we create specific content. In the case of reports, one learns early in their career that a reporter link into a montage, followed by an interview with an expert and interview with a case study and perhaps a montage of testimonies will result in a perfectly adequate report. This becomes dull easily and fails to excite audiences.

By randomly selecting different formats and styles, one can break a pattern of thinking and devise interesting content that is unexpected. The list below is not an exhaustive list and it is recommended that you devise a similar list of your own that you can use to break patterns of thinking. As an activity consider taking two wrapper formats and two single formats and their styles at random (e.g. A Dating Game, a Fly-on-the-wall Montage, Gardening Demonstration and Group Interview) and applying this new format to a topic like “Presidential Elections”. While the randomness of this combination may seem comical at first, this may be a very interesting way to profile presidential candidates and talk about issues of interpersonal relationships and values, a day-in-their-life and explore issues such as global warming or food security (through gardening) and perhaps having the elderly or children interview them on their stance towards these groups. What seems random becomes a very interesting format that provides lots of rich content.



At random, select two wrapper formats, their styles, two single formats, and their styles and combine them to tackle a subject interesting to you. Remember, be random!

Magazine	Lifestyle	Medical	Sport	Historical	Investigative	Gossip
Report	News	Business	Political	Current Affairs	Travel	Fashion
Game	Reality game	Dating game	Quiz Game	Talent competition	Survival	Sports
Actuality	Live Sports	Political Speeches	Breaking news	Events/Riots	Disasters	Hidden Camera
Montage	Fly on the wall	Music Video	Sketch show	Sports Highlights	Wildlife	Title sequences
Drama	Comedy	Horror	Stage play	Action	Reconstructions	Fantasy
Testimonial	Religious	Advertising a product	Eye-witness	Endorsement	Political speech	Weather
Interview	Expert	On the street	Personality Profile	Group	Exploratory	Informative

Discussion	Educational	Political	Women's Views	With Children	Diner Party	Panel
Demonstration	Cooking	Do it Yourself	Dance/ Exercise	Education	Sports	Gardening