

Strategic Storytelling:

How the power of narrative drives brand activation.



radius

WHAT

is the big deal
with strategic storytelling?

Stories create a path forward for strategic growth.



There are more sophisticated methods now than ever before for uncovering insights, but discovery is just the first step. Interpreting the meaning behind the insights is what leads to activation.

Brands are under great pressure to make the right strategic decisions so they can get to market first with innovations in products, services, and experiences.

Insights professionals must take an interpretive and consultative role to help stakeholders envision opportunities. Stories provide a framework for distilling complex research down to reveal the most promising paths for brand growth.



5 key elements of a **strategic report story**



It's not enough to deliver the data. To move teams toward activation, a compelling strategic report story must reveal the best options so stakeholders can make the right decisions. Powerful report stories deliver insights, keeping these five elements in mind:

- 1 **A framework** to guide story development throughout the project.
- 2 **Story structure** with a beginning, middle, and end to highlight the essential elements.
- 3 **Audience-focused content** that tailors research insights to specific stakeholder groups.
- 4 **Powerful visuals** that support the story by illustrating the most compelling data points.
- 5 **An Executive Summary** with a crisp, high-level view of insights to inspire activation.

SO WHAT

does the data show, and what's the
best way to communicate it?

YOUR TURN



You are on a brand team launching a new organic cookie for kids.

Imagine you're the insights lead on a cookie brand team for a popular baked goods company. Your team's goal this year is to develop a blockbuster new organic cookie targeted to children.

It's a tough cookie world out there. You need to identify the market opportunity for the cookie and create the right messaging so parents and kids will embrace it.

The results are in from the research work you've implemented. Now, you need a powerfully compelling story report to guide the right strategic decision for your team and key stakeholders in your organization.

What are the critical elements of the strategic story you'll tell?



ELEMENT 1:

Build **a strong framework** to support your project development.

As you begin to develop the report story for the cookie launch, you'll need a tool that keeps the stakeholders focused on core goals and objectives.

The report story framework is the overall project plan that establishes the report creation process to keep the story tight and focused.



The story framework:

- ✓ **Organizes the insights** into the report story's key themes.
- ✓ **Acts as a built-in checklist** to ensure nothing is overlooked.
- ✓ **Serves as a touchstone** to keep focus on hypothesis and key research questions.
- ✓ **Establishes the level of detail** required to clearly communicate your key themes.
- ✓ **Creates efficiency** for creating your final report.

ELEMENT 2:

Create **a narrative** that moves your audiences toward the conclusion.

Your strategic story will have a singular purpose: To deliver insights so your stakeholders can take the best action for a successful launch.

It looks like this:

WHAT?

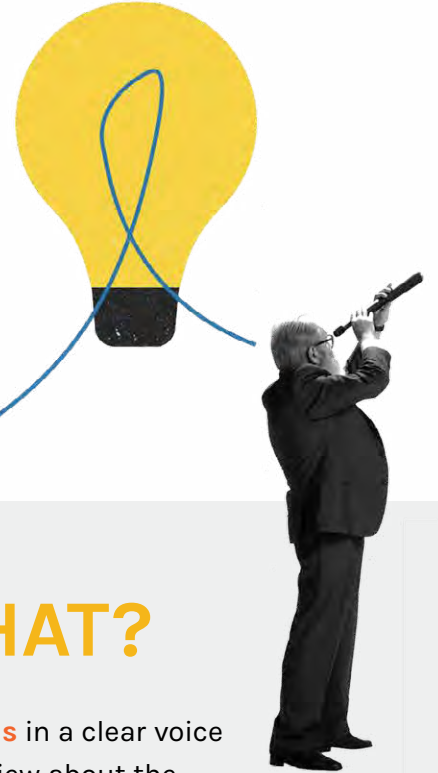
Establish what the business situation is in the baked goods market landscape and how the organic cookie fits in.

SO WHAT?

Share knowledge learned through clear, descriptive headlines, a strong narrative voice, and visuals that support the story.

NOW WHAT?

Deliver key implications in a clear voice and provide a point of view about the direction stakeholders should take for a successful cookie launch.



ELEMENT 3:

Craft the story for different audiences.

Every good recipe leaves room for substitutions depending on who's snacking.

The marketing and product teams are two key audiences invested in the organic cookie launch. To capture and hold their attention, each team needs insights tailored to their area of expertise, delivered in their preferred communication style.

Contextualized report stories crafted for specific audiences clearly link findings to the questions that were originally asked and clarify each team's role in the overall activation strategy.



EXAMPLE:

Crafting audience-specific stories

Key findings from the research



A report story tailored to guide each team toward activation.

MARKETING

Parents want healthy and organic alternatives to sugary snacks.

.....>

Focus on strategic messaging.



Story for Marketing team:

Position the cookie as a natural and organic choice.

- Develop clear messaging about the cookie's ingredients, low sugar profile, and small portions.
- Create value packs to deliver competitive pricing.

PRODUCT

There is an opportunity in the growing organic kid's snacks category.

.....>

Clearly describe the market opportunity.



Story for Product team:

Convey the market opportunity clearly.

- Establish a brand quickly to own market share.
- Advertising and messaging will win kids and parents.
- Packaging must convey healthier benefits and value.

ELEMENT 4:

Support your story with powerful visualizations.

It's hard to look at a cookie and not want to devour it. As the story takes shape, build visual elements that enrich the narrative and communicate complex findings.



Humanize data
with images that represent the cookie's target market.

Avoid cognitive load
Showcase one stat that tells the story.

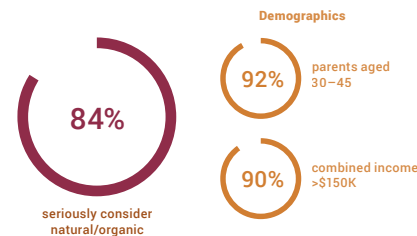
Go bold
A single image sets the scene with a clean look.

Be snackable
Write scannable headlines to give clear points of entry into the data's key findings.

Create mini stories
Each slide should tell a complete story paired with clear graphic images.

84% of parents "seriously consider" natural/organic ingredients when making a purchase.

Capture their attention by clearly showing healthier benefits on product packaging.



Add a little icing
One image or a single stat can stand in for paragraphs of text.

NOW WHAT

should the report do
to influence decisions?

ELEMENT 5:

Inspire action with a compelling **Executive Summary.**

In three to five pages, distill the complex data into a compelling story developed specifically for your stakeholder audiences.

Establish a clear point of view about the findings and include the essential business-building insights your key stakeholders need to take strategic action.

The Executive Summary is the most critical element of the report, and it must accomplish these three things:



- 1 Address the specific audience that's reading it.** Fine-tune the Executive Summary for the needs of each audience.
- 2 Leave an impression.** Mixing the voice of the customer with key data points and compelling imagery to have lasting impact.
- 3 Inspire action.** Use these key pages to move readers from insights to activation.

EXAMPLE:

Organic Cookie Executive Summary slide

Maximizing opportunity for a new organic cookie launch.



Market landscape

The organic kids' snacks category is a strong growth opportunity. Brands with healthier alternatives at the right price point can win loyalty. The right messaging and pricing will help capture market share.

Key findings

Parents and kids responded positively to the cookie's taste. Parents rated healthier ingredients as a top priority in selecting snacks.

Key opportunities

Pair healthier ingredients with value pricing and develop an appealing advertising campaign to drive demand and establish brand firmly in this category.

EXAMPLE:

Organic Cookie Executive Summary slide



90%

of kids and parents
liked the
organic cookie.

“I want to provide healthier
options for the lunch box.
If these cookies hit the
right price point, **I would
definitely buy them.**”

EXAMPLE:

Organic Cookie Executive Summary slide

To appeal to parents, focus on messaging that promotes the cookie's healthier ingredients with value-priced packaging.

77%

of parents rated **organic** ingredients as a high priority for kids' snacks.

73%

felt strongly about providing **healthier** choices for lunch and snacks.

61%

worried about **price** point for repeat purchase.



EXAMPLE:

Organic Cookie Executive Summary slide

Combine elements of **fun, health, and value** to appeal to kids and parents.



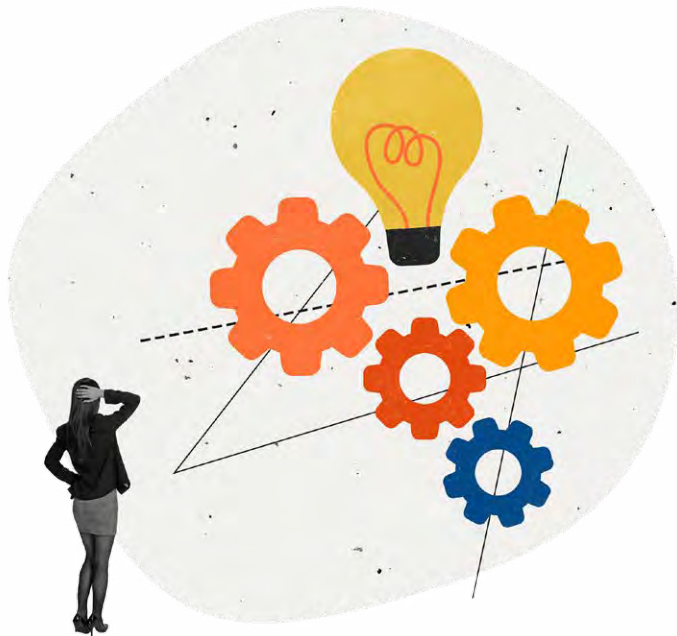
Parents said they would **be most likely to purchase** when messaging combined three key proof points.

- ✓ Emphasize the cookie's fun shapes and great flavor to appeal to kids.
- ✓ For parents, make organic and healthier ingredients visible on packaging.
- ✓ Develop value snack packs and offer them at a competitive price point.

Advertising represents the best opportunity to build brand awareness and **gain market share**.

- ✓ Target ads to kids that feature the cookie's fun shape and great taste.
- ✓ Show parents the cookie's healthier benefits and value options.
- ✓ Develop coupons and introductory offers to establish brand.

As an insights partner, we love telling the story of your data.



If we've done our job as your research partner, we've distilled the data into its essential elements in the final report story, mixing up a rich narrative that will inspire your stakeholders.

We are firm believers that storytelling is an ideal tool for solving problems, discovering new opportunities, launching innovations, and driving activation.

If you'd like to learn more about how we partner with clients to develop compelling story reports, visit our [storytelling hub](#).

[Contact us](#) now to hear about our lunch and learn program or to learn more about our storytelling approach.

We work with top brands to build story reports that inspire teams to action. Watch these videos to hear more strategies from our experts.



Glenn Staada outlines how to use a 3-part narrative to build strategic report stories.

[Watch now](#)



Christine Drummond on the benefits of a well-constructed story framework.

[Watch now](#)



Joanne Suh on how to craft the Executive Summary to drive stakeholder activation.

[Watch now](#)



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