

**STYBEL
PEABODY &
ASSOCIATES, INC.**



Laurence Stybel, Ed.D., and Maryanne Peabody, MBA, founded Stybel Peabody Associates, Inc.

Why You Should Hire Me: I'm a Mitten Finder.

Teaching Our Outplacement Job Candidates how to
Develop Powerful Images to Differentiate
From Competitors.

Guy Kawasaki is a venture capitalist in Silicon Valley, Executive Fellow at the University of California Haas School of Business, and trustee at the Wikimedia Foundation. He writes about the gap between the data that

your cerebral cortex wants versus the powerful images your amygdala demands (2011):

“Millions of people have died in places like Rwanda and Darfur and one has to wonder: Why do people to go extreme lengths to save an individual and yet appear indifferent to genocides and mass murders?”

Kowaski concludes that statistics provide information yet fail to convey true meaning. Numbers fail to spark emotion. And you need emotion to motivate people into action. Indeed, large numbers can cognitively overwhelm.

Trying to sell your ideas to a Board, a boss, a client, or a hiring authority?

Imagery is Critical to Capture Emotions.

1,000 Songs in Your Pocket.

THE classic business example of enchantment using powerful imagery was Steve Jobs' introduction of the Apple's iPod mp3 player. Before viewing the video link below, it is well to understand the history of Apple and the MP3 player market:

Apple was late to the market with its iPod. MP3 technology had been established by 1981. Commercially popular mp3 players were introduced in 1987. Microsoft, Dell, and Sony already were already

established brands in this space. Apple introduced its Ipod in 2001.

Microsoft and Dell were using numbers to appeal to a rational consumer: for a purchase price of X, you get a device with y gigabytes of storage capacity.

Steve Jobs avoided numbers. He went for a simple and powerful image:

Watch how Steve Jobs introduces the Ipod.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SUJNspeux8>

Notice the lack of PowerPoint slides? Notice the lack of technical specifications?

All he does is create one powerful image:

Steve Jobs sliding 1,000 songs into his jeans pocket.

“I’m a Mitten Finder.”

Constance Kane is Executive Director of the Relational Diplomacy Institute. Constance was seeking to hire an operations-oriented director for a previous employer where she worked.

Constance interviewed several qualified candidates. But then she interviewed Bey Woodward. Instead of talking about her job-related qualifications she used a powerful image to describe herself: “I’m a mitten finder.”

When Constance asked Bey to explain what a “mitten finder” is, she described her previous role as having job content that ranged from putting a process together to determine corporate strategy to finding her CEO’s lost mittens when the two of them attended a trade show.

“Mitten Finder” at a trade show created a powerful mental image that stimulated Constance’s amygdala. But in describing the story she was also sending a message to Constance: whether the task is to create a strategy or to find a mitten, I can do the big jobs and will gladly accept the small tasks.

"The Elephant Ear Lady."

Below is an all-too-typical response we see job candidates make in response to classified ads. Perhaps this letter might look familiar to you?

RE: Purchasing Director

I am responding to your ad. The job is very appealing to me because I have many of the skills you are seeking.

For the past seven years, I have been Purchasing Director at ABC company. I have experience in your industry.

Enclosed is my resume.

Sincerely,

As executive outplacement consultants, we helped her change the letter to focus on a powerful image.

RE: Purchasing Director

When you review the attached resume, you will see that I have a technical background appropriate for the position.

Your company might be interested in the following story:

Back in the days when companies stored data on floppy discs, I was Purchasing Director for Floppy Brand Floppy Discs. The company was going to shoot a television commercial showing an elephant with floppy ears charging down Wall Street and the announcer saying, "Wall Street uses Floppy Brand Floppy Discs. You should too."

Wall Street was rented for Sunday morning, the camera crew was ready to go, and the rented elephant was escorted out of the van.

But it was the wrong elephant!

African Elephants have long, floppy ears appropriate for the commercial. Indian Elephants have short ears.

I ordered the wrong elephant!

On Sunday morning in Boston, I got a call from the film crew asking me what they should do.

I replied, “Film it and I’ll solve the problem.”

Operating out of Boston, I tracked down a New York City digital special effects artist who could create elephant ears that would extend the elephant’s real ears.

The commercial was filmed on time. The product went on to be successful.

This story illustrates my ability to creatively, quickly, and effectively respond to the crisis.

Sincerely,

You can guess what happens next. By the time our client got to the employment interview, hiring authorities were calling her “The Elephant Lady” behind her back.

Of course, that is what we wanted to happen.

In a crowded field of competent job candidates, our Elephant Lady was the most memorable.

She got the job despite the story being an example of failure: she had ordered the wrong type of elephant!

What got her the job offer was a dramatic but simple story that showed her reacting decisively and proactively in a crisis.

Elements of a Good Mitten Story.

In this article we have described three stories that are powerful, memorable, and simple.

In a job interview, candidates who describe themselves as “shirt sleeve managers” get nothing more than a polite nod.

Describe yourself as a “Mitten Finder” and you get someone emotionally involved.

Do you have a Good Mitten Story?

Think about your professional life up to this point. What things have you done that you are proud of?

Does the story contain a “Mitten?” We define a “Mitten” as a powerful visual image which will compel someone to say, “Huh??”

Can you see someone carefully walking around a trade convention floor looking for a mitten?

Can you see Steve Jobs sliding 1,000 songs into his jeans pocket?

Can you see an elephant charging up Wall Street with big, floppy ears going up and down?

It would be great if your Mitten Story revolves around work. But good Mitten Stories can take place outside of work.

For example, we recently spoke with a college junior seeking an internship in investment management. His resume and summer job history were unremarkable. But we say he had been an umpire for his town's Little League Championship.

Can he create a Mitten Story around being an Umpire surrounded by players' parents and focusing on being precise, decisive under pressure, and sticking to the rules?

What's your Mitten Story?

References

Kawasaki, Guy. ENCHANCEMENT: The Art of Changing Hearts, Minds, and Actions. New York: Portfolio/Penguin, 2011.

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Stybel Peabody provides companies with “leadership and career success” for valued senior level talent. Core services include retained search (Board members, CEOs, COOs, CFOs), leadership development coaching, and executive-level outplacement.

For a free 30-minute consult, contact:

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