

AWCBC GOVERNANCE SUMMIT 2022
PROPOSED REMARKS – STUART MACLEAN

INTRODUCTION – PART 1

3 mins

- **[[INTRO SLIDE]]**
- Thanks for that introduction, Cheryl. And hello everyone!
- I am happy to be here among colleagues coast to coast to coast, to share a few thoughts about leadership in the business of workers' compensation.
- I've been doing this more than a little while and so much has changed over the past 35 years or more – but what I want to talk about today is something that has been consistent for all of those years, from my very first day in the business until this very moment.
- Now, you all also have your own experiences and perspectives, and that's why it's so important to me that I don't do all the talking.
- I truly want this to be as a conversation – I am hoping that we can leverage the chat function and hear from each other today.
- I believe in the value of conversation and in learning from one another, especially with a call full of so many brilliant people as this one is.

- I want to share some experiences on a personal personal level, about some things that I have found helpful over the years in this business, when it comes to the building blocks of leadership and governance, especially in times of change.
- They're simple principles but they apply in almost any level of human interaction, and especially in the boardroom.
- Sometimes, in our organizations, our meetings, the haste of the day to day and all these meetings looking at a piece of plastic, it's often the seemingly simple basics that can get taken for granted.
- The structure of bureaucracy which is our reality can often take away the power of a simple truth, well told.
- I really do think there is one basic truth that unites everyone on this call, that brings us together, that has the potential to create cooperation and a common voice across this nation, as one thing that we all have in common.
- And that is the simple, powerful, basic human nature of what we do. All of us.
- We are in the business of helping people – keeping them safe, or, supporting their recovery when injury does happen.
- That simple truth has incredible potential to influence, to inspire, and to move people to change.

- When applied in the right way, it can be powerful. For us, we've tried to do so, and we have seen powerful results, and we've seen real progress in our safety culture. I'll share some of those examples later today.
- It all stems from an incredibly simple truth staring all of us in the face, every single day.
- **[[SLIDE: Workers' compensation is about human stories.]]**
- Our business is a business of stories, and storytelling. And of human, real connection.

- So... time to use the chat function. This is the participatory part I mentioned.

[[SLIDE: WHAT IS A STORY?]]

[[SLIDE: WHAT IS A STORY? – Put some of your favourites in the chat.]]

- Without thinking about it too much, put some of your favourite stories in the chat.

[[HAVE FUN WITH THIS... INTERACT A LITTLE. LIKELY RESPONSES ARE BROAD, FROM FAIRY TALES TO CURRENT TV SHOWS]]

[[FOCUS ON ONE OR TWO THAT HAVE A STRONG HUMAN ANGLE / FIT, BOILED DOWN TO ITS MOST BASIC FACTORS]]

- The idea of story is ancient. Storytelling is how people connect. How culture is built and passed on. How meaning is made.
- These are not my ideas – this is history we're talking about and obviously a well-established leadership, marketing and communications principle.
- When you look at all those stories you mentioned, there's one thing in common.
- They are all, at their root, about a simple human truth.

- Whether it's fear, or love, or the joy of laughter, that's what stories are about. Simple human truths.
- It's why they connect, it's why they inspire, it's why we all suddenly have recurring subscriptions for way too many streaming services.
- Stories are powerful. And they don't have to be just on Netflix.
- They happen every day in the workplaces and communities we serve.
- And we should tell those stories more often.



- So how might we do that?
- We deal in the most basic, taken for granted, baked-in reality of life for the people we serve.
- That simple truth of getting up in the morning, going to work, coming home, watching the playoffs without the Maple Leafs in them (at least not very long), getting up in the morning, and doing it all again.
- It's taken for granted part of our society.
- Of our cultures.
- But when something disrupts it, it can be challenging. For some, devastating. For all, a change to the regular elements that make your life run smoothly. And this is the story we help complete, and make whole.

We can use the power of the story to remind us why those moments matter – to help prioritize workplace safety in the first place, to provide support if there is an injury.

- That is the simple truth we can sometimes forget in our calendars, our meetings, our speaking notes, our emails, our zoom calls.
- What we do is about – and will always be about - the people of our provinces or our territories, like this person you see here - getting up in the morning, going through their morning routine, going to work, and coming home.
- That is what we do.
- At the most basic, level, this simple narrative that plays out every day can make good advertising.
- A simple example like this one above – the quiet moment of a mom braiding her little girl’s hair – is a human truth that we leveraged in one of our first ever awareness advertisements.
- We wouldn’t advertise in this way today – but at the time, the goal was shock, to get the issue of workplace safety on the radar screen at all.
- Here’s the story we told. A quick trigger warning – this ad depicts a graphic injury so if you are concerned about that, you should minimize this window or join us again in about 45 seconds.

- **[[PLAY SMALL THINGS]]**



[[THIS AD CLOSES WITH “ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT IS BRAIDING MY LITTLE GIRL’S HAIR IN THE MORNING.]]

- Feel free to put some reactions in the chat.

[[READ CHAT ITEMS – REACT AND DISCUSS]]

- That ad is a number of years old – but it was effective.
- It helped us begin a new conversation about workplace safety back in the mid 2000s. And it’s one that has continued to this day, with injuries down by more than 40 per cent since those days.
- It’s also an example of what we call the Atlantic Canadian Social Marketing Partnership. All jurisdictions in Atlantic Canada take part – cost-sharing ads like that one.
- We’ve done this for more than 15 years. It’s saved probably millions of dollars compared to if we were all to do that same work on our own. It’s a great example of the power of collaboration and cooperation across AWCBC.

- And why does it work?
- I suggest that it works because we all agree on the power of story, and a simple human truth well told.

- **[[SLIDE: STORIES CONNECT]].**

SECTION 3: YOUR PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS LISTENING **8 mins / 20**

- Now. How does that apply to the boardroom?
- I think it applies because human truth can support us in becoming authentic leaders.
- Stories help us connect to and with others.

[[SLIDE: People are always listening for stories.]]

- The understanding of that basic premise – that we listen to and connect with what matters, putting people at the centre – can be a powerful leadership tool.
- I've always believed, in my work, that leadership is what you do when people aren't watching.
- Sometimes, in fact, human truth and the power of stories can be so powerful, you may not even know you are conveying it. They are so powerful that people are hard wired to listen for them.



[[TELL GOOD APPLE STORY]]

- This conversation came months after that chat about the apple.
- After so many coaching conversations, so many team huddles, so many plays mapped out, so much feedback.
- But what that young man remembered, what inspired him the most, wasn't about any of that at all.
- It was a simple, human, eternal truth that connected with him and that inspired him to be his best.
- I would submit to you, as leaders, that's the kind of tone you can set.
- Of course the details and statistics and performance metrics matter, but it's the "why" they matter that can be incredibly powerful.
- Those truths – and the power of a story that conveys them - can cause you to have influence, even when you might not think someone is listening.

- So how, as leaders, do we make what we do real for those we serve?
- How can we leverage that human truth, to connect at a different kind of level?
- One month ago tomorrow, we experienced just such a connection in Nova Scotia.
- The Westray mining disaster is probably known to all of you.
- It was one of the highest profile failures of workplace safety in our country – and the basis for the Westray Bill, which allows criminal prosecution for deaths at a workplace.



- Westray is known across Canada, for all the wrong reasons.
- It wasn't the first mining tragedy in our province, by any stretch. Hundreds of Nova Scotians have died in an industry with a tragic legacy.
- But what was different? Westray happened on TV, in the age of satellite and cable news.
- Plus, as it played out, the story had all the elements – good, evil, deceit, tragedy.



- So those images, that story, it's all seared into our minds. Many of you may remember that image, and the news coverage that followed.
- And, at the heart of it – people, whose lives were forever impacted. When you move beyond numbers to see the people directly impacted by action – or inaction – it's hard to forget that.
- We recently gathered in Pictou County, marking this dark anniversary, this regrettable chapter in our workplace safety story.
- We have worked with the families of survivors to tell stories of loss, in the hope of inspiring change – and some of you may have seen these over the years.
- But this year, I was struck by a detail I noticed, which was such a simple act.
- At the recent memorial event, our Chair, Saeed El-Darahali, took time to personally attend.
- He took the time to visit, to talk with families.
- But the detail I noticed was that when he laid our wreath at that monument, he touched the names upon it.



Later, when I reviewed his draft message in the Annual Report, he referenced this.

- *“Placing my hand and praying for each miner sent shivers down my spine, and I promised myself that we would do everything to support that such tragedy would never happen again,” he wrote.*
- As he touched those names, he was praying for those workers, and for their families.
- It’s the ability to connect to other people’s experiences, understand them, see them, and stand in witness with them, that build those powerful connections for action and change.
- With a few simple words, in the opening message, our Chair brings readers into this story, in a way that is very personal for him.
- And that personal connection – that link to your own emotions as a leader, that’s what makes it work.

[[SLIDE: MAKE IT PERSONAL.]]

- It's not only authentic leadership - but it grounds us as human beings, in the worlds of our audiences – because it is something that everyone can relate to.
- Now mining is unfortunately not the only industry in our province with a tragic legacy.
- My own personal journey as a leader is intertwined with the story of fishing in our province.
- All of you know the passion I have for a safer fishing sector. This industry isn't unique to Nova Scotia but we certainly have seen our share of tragedy in this province.
- And for me, a new personal journey started with this picture.



- That young man is Michael Doucette.
- In January 2013, he was swept off the back of a fishing boat, overnight.
- He died alone, in the cold North Atlantic.
- For me, there's something about that face that makes me think of my own sons. To this day I find this story incredibly powerful and heartbreaking.
- One month later, we saw the Miss Ally tragedy when five young fishermen were lost at sea.
- I've had the honour to meet with those families, and too many others, over the years.

- For all the wrong reasons, it is a powerful story of loss that is motivating to others, because it is so visceral, and so real.
- Here is how we tell this story – and the approach that motivated a sector to change.

[[PLAY VIDEO]]



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bL5IBvt0a_4&list=PLZMntaHj803qQR-8wobgNMVszBh7HHHhT&index=1

- “All I got were his rubber boots.”
- **[[PAUSE]]**
- Human truth does not get any truer than that.
- That video, and the courage of the people in it, has been at the foundation of sustained change in the fishing sector in our province.

- In the face of challenge, authentic leaders stand in the face of what's right, not what's easy. The ability to stand together with communities, with other leaders, families, fishers, and say no more – and to take steps for a safety industry, are because of stories like this.
- Injuries have declined significantly, as has the industry's rate.
- And yet, we know we have much to do.
- And we know that authentic leadership, based in the human truth that someone should get up in the morning, go to work and come home to greet their kids on the wharf, will continue to be part of our journey forward.

SECTION 6 – STORYTELLING IN CHANGE AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

12 mins / 42

- Many of us on this call today are in the prevention business, and some of us are not.
- But all of us are in the business of supporting people after injury happens.
- But there's so much more that unites us than that.
- We're all leaders.
- But not only that, we're leaders in organizations that are finding a way forward in a post-pandemic world.

[[SLIDE: STORIES CAN BE ANCHORS IN TIMES OF CHANGE.]]

- Many of us are in some version of a hybrid workplace – we're leveraging technology to work differently.
- We need to find ways to keep our leaders, and our people, inspired and focused, and to connect differently.
- I believe that as complex as our worlds get, it's all the more important that we keep it simple.

- In board rooms, in stakeholder meetings, in all we do, we can all ground our messages in the simple human truth that we all stand for – protecting those we serve from the impact of workplace injury.
- In Nova Scotia, our business transformation, for example, was something that needed to be set up for success with workers, employers and our own people.
- Many of you know the scope of a transformation like this, or you're in the midst of one yourselves.
- This video goes back a few years – we were all a little younger then – but here's how we told that story in 2016, when we were building support for the conversation.

[[PLAY MODERNIZATION VIDEO]]



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESTPbM2QoEE&t=228s>

- Every time we got the chance, throughout the transformation, we kept telling the story in human terms.
- We focused on why it mattered, what the story was that it would complete for the workers and employers we serve.
- I think that simple truth is a big part of the reason we're where we are today, having implemented Guidewire, and service measures among employers, workers, and employees that remain high.

As I said at the outset of my talk, storytelling – and the power of human truths – can unite, inspire and creation action. The elements are simple, but it can be surprisingly challenging for people to do it...

- Leadership, whether you're a board member or an executive team member or a CEO, is often about connecting with things that matter in people, to inspire them to better outcomes.
- It is about helping them be successful, for their own reasons, and to complete their own stories.
- When you can do that, it can be incredibly inspiring.
- You saw in that previous video a couple of our own employees who were worried about what the changes might mean for them in our transformation.

- Throughout the transformation – and especially throughout the last two years as we worked remotely, it’s been important to keep our people engaged – and we have done that through story.
- We have continually reminded our people about the reasons their work matters – that the technology, the systems, the tools we use, those all help us prevent injury, support workers and employers after injury happens, or families over the longer term.
- Here’s that story looks like, in the words of the people we serve.

[[PLAY WHO WE ARE VIDEO]]



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZe9nKGoBzw>

- I have really appreciated this space to talk about a topic so important to me, and that has guided my own career and our journey as an organization.
- It is a simple principle but so incredibly powerful.



- It's one that I try to uphold myself in my new podcast, which I hope you'll add to your library. It's only a couple of episodes in – our debut was about Westray and the next one is about psychological injuries, which we just recorded last week.
- We are having some wonderful conversations, and I hope that some of you will be guests on it someday soon.
- We will put a link in the chat, and you can see what you think. I will truly look forward to your feedback and comments.

- **[[LINK FOR COMMENTS:**

- Apple: <https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/workshift/id1619095158>
- Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/3zpePxUXSy4PosLeOdsDce?si=fQSgJJUTQBW-7WCXIB9cAg&nd=1>]]

[[SLIDE: THANK YOU]]

- I know the idea of corporate storytelling is not new, but I hope today you may have gained a couple of ideas about how it can apply in workers' compensation
- And equally important, how the basis of human truths – those fundamentals that unite and connect us – are also critical building blocks in leadership.
- All that we do, every day, is about helping people.
- We help them stay safe at work, but when injury happens, we are there for them, and their families.
- That basic principle is at the foundation of the Meredith principles that guide all of what we do – it's about helping people.
- As governors of our systems, we're well served to remember that. To remember that at the end of the day, we don't deal in claims – we deal in people.
- We are in the people business, we always will be. And people respond, and relate, to stories based in human truth.
- Thank you again for this time. I look forward to any questions you may have.