



## Why "Infotainment" Creates Binge-Consumption in Readers and Listeners

### Three Month Vacation Podcast

Sean D'Souza: I'm Sean D'Souza. Every morning when I go for my walk I listen to podcasts and I listen to audiobooks. As you know, I also learn a language, but whenever I'm headed out towards the café, it's always podcasts or audiobooks. I started to analyze. I started to think about what is it that I really like to listen to.

Now obviously you get a lot of speakers and a lot of different topics, so you can't just boil it down to one thing, but you can. The one thing that I like to listen to, and I find that a lot of people like to listen to, is something called infotainment. That's information and entertainment. People like to learn stuff, become more intelligent, but they don't want to be bored along the way. It's not just a matter of presenting the information in a good way. You literally have to provide entertainment, so how you provide entertainment. As part of my analysis I started reading a lot of articles and books. I started listening to more audiobooks, and then listened to some presentations as well, and I figured out the difference. The difference is a story well told.

I like to split up stories well told into three categories. The first is the analogy, the second is the case study, and the third are history lessons. How do we use these concepts to make our information more interesting, to make our articles more interesting, and especially to make our presentations more interesting? More importantly, why would analogies, case studies, and history lesson be so important. The reason is very simple. Information is tiring.

That's it. Whenever you give someone information, if they already know the information, [inaudible 00:02:06] just revising the information. If you give them new information, some new concept, so new methods, it starts to seem very nice and very interesting, but as you go past five, ten, 15 minutes, the brain is trying to work out not only what you're saying but also how to apply it, so it gets extremely tiring. That's when the brain needs a break. The brain not only needs a break but it could also do with an example. That's where analogies, case studies, and history lessons come into play.

Let's start off with the first one, which is the analogy. In this episode we'll do something slightly different. I'll talk about good analogies and bad analogies, and good case studies and bad case studies, and so on. Let's start off with the good analogy. What is a good analogy? Well, let's start off with what is a bad analogy. I'm sitting there with this photographer and I've been trying to get in touch with him for quite a while, and he's been fobbing me off. Then eventually we sit at this café. It's about an hour and he's going on into this bad analogy after bad analogy after bad analogy. What is this bad analogy?

He's explaining to me how photography should have strong foundations. He talks about a house that's built on sand vs. on rock. The point is, has he given me any new information? Is the analogy any different from something I know before. When he's using that analogy it's very boring. I've already heard the story of the house built on sand vs. rock. Then he goes on to even more analogies. I can't tell you what those analogies are because I was completely bored out of my skull. The whole one hour that I was there, he went into analogy after analogy, and then talked about photography in the middle.

But I was fast asleep. This is what happens. Your customers are going to be fast asleep because your analogies are not interesting. What makes interesting analogies? You can get interesting analogies from day to day life. I just told you an interesting analogy. I told you about boring, but I didn't tell you about boredom in a way that you probably heard before. I told you a story about the photographer and how he was boring me to death.

In The Brain Audit we talk about the seven red bags. You probably heard the story but you might as well hear it again. It's about how seven red bags are put on the flight and then the person gets off at the other end and they're waiting at the conveyor belt or the carousel to pick up their seven red bags. Then one bag comes out, and second red bag comes out, and third red bag comes out. It builds up to the fifth red bag and the sixth red bag, and then the seventh red bag doesn't show up.

The difference between this analogy and that boring house on the sand analogy is the fact that you know 90% of the analogy but you don't know how 10% is going to roll out. You stood there waiting for your bags at the airport. You've done that; I've done that; everyone has done that, mostly. We can relate to that concept, but the story slightly changes. That's the beauty of the analogy. The analogy that is powerful is not an analogy that you know 100% in advance, because that is boring. The analogy is taken from a situation that we're aware of, that we are probably 90% aware of, but that has that little 10% twist. In this case, the red bags have the twist, and the fact that the seventh red bag didn't show up.

When you're building your analogies, you want to build it in this kind of concept that we already know but there is a little shift in the concept, like the time I was trying to explain how I got stuck. Instead of just saying I got stuck at this conference and I couldn't get out, you shift it just a little bit. I had gone to a yoga class, and after the yoga class it was raining, pelting down. I came out and I was trying to get into my car. Actually, it was my wife's car because, well ... it's a long story.

Anyway, I was trying to get into the car and trying to shove that key in, try and get it open because I didn't have an umbrella and it's raining. The door wouldn't open. I'm looking at the car. I parked it right there and it wouldn't open, and I'm going crazy. Some of the people came up from the yoga class, said, "Why don't you try to get in from the boot?" I tried that and almost twisted the key. I couldn't get in. Just as I was trying to get in, from the corner of my eye I saw another car that looked identical to the one I was trying to get in. The car, the identical one, that was my car, or rather, my wife's car.

I was stuck because I was trying to get into the wrong car. That makes an interesting analogy. Personal stories make for better analogies because they have this natural flow of something happening, then something else happening, and then something else happening. You can encapsulate all of the something else in either a couple of paragraphs ...

Well, you don't want to do more than a couple of paragraphs when you're writing an article, but if you're doing a podcast, it could go on for two, three minutes and people would still follow along because there is this sequence. This makes an analogy interesting, instead of the house on sand vs. the house on rock.

I want you to notice something even as you're listening to this podcast or probably reading the transcript. The stories are getting you interested. Your brain is trying to wrap around how am I going to do this analogy bit. But even as you're listening, the story is helping you relax a bit and it's also giving you an example of possibly how you could attack this problem.

Analogies are not the only way to go, obviously. You can also have case studies. How do you handle case studies, and what are good case studies, and what are bad case studies?

The thing about case studies is they're called case studies because they have a before and after, and usually they have an in between as well, so they make for a great story rollout. In the book that I recently wrote, called Dartboard Pricing, it started out with a few case studies. One of the case studies was about this guy called Iggy Ignatius, and how he started up an Indian village in the middle of Florida and called it ShantiNiketan, which really means a peaceful place. You can see how he went about generating revenue and then how he built ShantiNiketan. Then just as he was about to sell ShantiNiketan, the real estate market just died.

All the stuff that was selling on his side was more expensive than across the road, and he was destroyed. He didn't know what to do. What happens to this case study? You want to know, don't you? Well, as it turned out, he was oversubscribed. All of the people who bought his condominiums, they were excited to be there. They were willing to spend more to have less just so that they could experience the whole lifestyle of ShantiNiketan.

This is a case study. The case study started out with someone with a plan, rolled out that plan, got stuck along the way, and then came out a winner. This is a beautiful case study. When you look at businesses, you look at Apple for instance ... I hate to say Apple again, but Apple did really well in 1984. Then by the year 2000 they were ready to die. Nothing was working for them. Then they rose from those ashes like a Phoenix, and today they're the most valuable company in the world.

This is a case study. You don't have to take Apple, and that's why I said I don't want to bring up Apple, because everyone knows this case study. But there are thousands of case studies online, and the only factor that you have to consider is one of contrast. Supposing Apple was winning, then they were losing, then they were winning. Or they were losing, then they were winning, but then they lost. Eventually, there has to be that contrast. That makes for a great case study.

Now you can go from the company was losing out and then they won, or the company was winning, then they lost. But that in between, that contrast, that little bounce, that makes a huge difference. When you want to create that example, that entertainment, you want to look for that little bounce, or at least create that little bounce. Then you have a great case study.

What we've covered so far is the analogy and the case study. Let's look at history lessons. History lessons sound really boring, don't they? It's not necessarily boring. History doesn't have to go back thousands of years, anyway. A couple of episodes ago I talked about the Stockdale paradox, about how James Stockdale was at the Hanoi Hilton in Vietnam and how he was tortured. The topic was about anti-fragility, so the Stockdale paradox fit completely into anti-fragility.

You don't have to stick to war games. You can go to the Olympics or you can go to carrot land. Did you know what happened in 1942 with carrots in Great Britain? Should I tell you? Of course I will. In 1942 there was a carrot surplus. There was 10,000 tons of carrots. They were no onions and no potatoes and no meat, and there were lots of shortages, but carrots? There were lots of carrots.

A guy who called himself Dr. Carrot, he reinforced the belief that carrots help you to see in the dark and that the RAF fighter pilots, they also had greater night vision simply because they ate carrots. As you've realized, that story is not true. The reason why the pilots got so good with their accuracy is because of airborne radar. The British government was very keen that the Nazis don't find out about this airborne radar.

What happened to the carrots? The carrot consumption increased dramatically. Even so, people drew the line at carrot flan or carrot jam or carrot fudge or [carolade 13:30]. They were a lot of carrot drinks and carrot food, and carrots were everywhere. You see how that history lesson could be so instructive, so interesting? It doesn't have to be boring.

Yet, you see speaker after speaker stand up on stage and give you this boring information and more information and more stats and more information. You think, why doesn't he eat carrots? The question is where do you get all these stories and case studies and analogies from? They're all around you. As you're reading a book, as I'm reading a book, what I do is I'll take a snapshot on my iPad, or if it's out in a newspaper I'll take a photograph with the phone. Then I'll store it in Evernote. We'll cover this about Evernote and how magnificent it is in another episode, but I'll keep all this and I'll file this as stories.

Then I'll probably put in a little tag as well so that I know what the story's about, but I don't have to. Then later when I'm doing my presentation, or my podcast, or writing an article, there it is. The story is waiting for me and I just have to put it in, and it becomes infotainment.

Today you got information. You got the fact that analogies help. You got a good analogy, a bad analogy. You got case studies, good case study, bad case study. Then we went onto this whole carrot thing with a history lesson. What happened was you were entertained the whole way. That makes you more eager to listen to future podcasts or read more articles or come to the next presentation. Boredom is a terrible thing, and information can be extremely boring. It can be as if you're being forced to eat carrot fudge.

On that repetitive carrot note, let's move to the summary. What did we cover today? We covered analogies, we covered case studies, and we covered stories from history. What we found was that it was important to have this little bounce. You can have a before and after, but the in-between bounce, that's really interesting. Most of all, we found that we can't always get these stories at the last minute so we've got to file them away in places like Evernote. As I said, we'll cover that in a future episode.

**By the way, that's your action plan as well.**

You're going to read several stories, case studies. You're going to talk about how something happened to you, and it's going to happen today. It's going to happen tomorrow. It's going to happen the day after. Get Evernote. Start saving the stories. That's what you can do today. I do it every day; so should you.

If you want to get more on [storytelling](#), at Psychotactics we have a series on storytelling. You might want to pick that up. There is also the information products course. Now this is more expensive; it's over \$1,000.

But the reason you should consider it is because it shows you how to construct an information product like a presentation or a book or a booklet. It's very easy to just stack information together and not realize that there are different elements that help the reader to learn as well as get entertained. The information products, over \$1,000, worth your money.

Finally, the [Dartboard Pricing](#) book, you want to check that out if you want to increase your prices and not lose customers. Even Starbucks increases prices every two or three years, and they've increased their prices about 13 times in the last 20 years. When was the last time you increased your prices?

[Read Dartboard Pricing](#), and yes, increase your prices, and don't lose customers. I'm on Twitter at Sean D'Souza. I'm on Facebook at Sean D'Souza and at email at [sean@psychotactics.com](mailto:sean@psychotactics.com). If you don't want to type so much, it's [sean@5000bc.com](mailto:sean@5000bc.com). All of the resources for this episode can be found at [psychotactics.com/39](http://psychotactics.com/39). By the time this episode gets to you, I'll be in Sardinia, Italy, eating, drinking, and having a great time. No work. Bye for now.

## **Useful Resources**

(click on the links below)

**Dart Board Pricing:** [How To Increase Prices \(Without Losing Customers\)](#)

**The Brain Audit:** [Why Customers Buy \(And Why They Don't\)](#)

**Get all the earlier episodes of [The Three Month Vacation \(Audio and transcript\)](#)**

**Story Telling:** [How to suck your audience right in, in a matter of seconds.](#)

**Chaos Planning:** [How 'Irregular' Folks Get Things Done](#)