



Business Relationship Management STORYBOOK

The following stories were captured during BRM Connect September 2026 and a BRM event in June 2026.



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Leadership Coaching and Education

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The BRM Storybook

Stories, captured live, in the room.

How These Were Captured

These stories were gathered during a BRM event in Calgary in June 2026 and during the BRMConnect conference in September 2026 in Denver, Colorado. Rather than talk about story collection as a concept, the sessions put it into practice. Participants were asked to write their own relationship building story on a one-page capture form, choosing the Story Factor type that fit what they wanted to say, then writing one or two sentences by hand.

No prompts were scripted beyond the six story types themselves. No editing happened in the room. What follows is a direct transcription of what people wrote, lightly cleaned up for spelling and punctuation only. The words, the categories, and the imperfect, unrehearsed quality of each story are theirs.

Why These Stories Matter

An article can describe what a Values in Action story sounds like. It cannot prove that people in the BRM field are actually living the relationships the discipline talks about. These stories do that work. They are small, specific, and often unpolished, and that is exactly why they carry weight. Nobody in that room was performing for an audience. They were answering a simple question: what is a moment when you built, or nearly lost, a relationship that mattered?

Collected together, they are early evidence for the kind of Storybook the related article argues every organization needs, a living record of culture told through the people who build it, not the walls it gets written on.

A story told without a genuine relationship behind it is content. A story told within a relationship, with honesty and care, becomes culture.

The stories are categorized as follows (Based on The Story Factor by Annette Simmons):

- “Who I Am” Building Personal Credibility
- “Why I Am Here” Establishing Purpose and Commitment
- “Teaching” Transferring Wisdom Without Hierarchy
- “Vision” Co-Creating a Shared Future
- “Values in Action” Demonstrating That Culture Is Real
- “I Know What You’re Thinking” Building Trust Through Honesty

I would like to thank everyone who submitted their stories

Peter Lijnse
September 2026

Download the full article [here](#)



1. “Who I Am”

Building Personal Credibility

These stories reveal the person behind the role: what formed them, their beliefs, and their experiences. They set the conditions for trust by making the leader human before they are authoritative. The most powerful stories are not ones of triumph. They are stories of the moment a leader didn’t know what to do, and what they did anyway.

Relationship lens: Every relationship begins with an unasked question: can I trust this person? A “Who I Am” story answers that question before it is posed. It closes the distance between role and person faster than any introduction or credentials can. A leader who shares a genuine “Who I Am” story signals that the relationship they are offering is authentic.

Example story: “The moment I understood what kind of relationships I wanted to build was the day a neglected relationship told me, very clearly, exactly what that neglect had cost.”





Who I am 1

The day I discovered what kind of relationship I wanted to build was dealing with a difficult and untrusted client, who hides from me what projects or initiatives they are working on. It was then very clear to me exactly how I needed to deal with the client, to avoid the potential “future surprises” that neglect had cost in the past.

Who I am 2

When I worked on a sales team, I felt that thinking about “Who I Am” is very important to build a relationship between myself and stakeholders. Sales’ main purpose is to sell our company’s solutions and solve stakeholders’ business requirements. But if a stakeholder doesn’t know my background, for example why I’m working at this company, they are not interested in me or our company. So sharing who I am is very important.

Who I am 3

I am an IT professional with over thirty years of IT experience in both large and small companies. I enjoy helping the business resolve issues and achieve better business results. I do this by helping both the business and IT understand the root cause of the issue, and jointly coming up with a plan to resolve them.

Who I am 4

I remember a story when I first transitioned to IT from the business side of my company. I was with my boss, VP of IT. People from the business invited me to meetings and not him. I asked why, they told me you’re approachable and you care. This taught me that how you treat people is bigger than your title. It taught me the type of leader I wanted to be. I told my VP and he incorporated my feedback. Smile, be inviting, listen, and learn.

Who I am 5

When I was working on a XXX implementation project with three other teams, we did not have clear alignment between the teams. The program manager took us to WhirlyBall, a fast paced team sport combining bumper cars, basketball, hockey, and lacrosse. The teams came away from that exercise with smashed fingers, new cuts, and more laughter than ever. I learned that relationships are built through a common problem, belief, or understanding. We built that relationship with a common belief of alignment and togetherness.

**Who I am 6**

When I was much younger, I brought home an unsatisfactory test or assignment grade. My father told me that if I did not get 100%, I had not given my best. This taught me to always show up and give my all. Sometimes that is the best grade or outcome, but sometimes my best differs from my expectations. Regardless, I approach situations, challenges, and relationships with my authentic best self.

Who I am 7

From a tender age of about thirteen years old, I always knew I wanted to be a narrative storyteller who impacts lives with soul truth. My hope was that by narrating stories through the eyes of my environment, someone somewhere would connect and be able to take a step further. Today the narratives I tell have been able to transcend from ink on paper to making impactful changes in organizations for better business outcomes.

Who I am 8

Are you truly authentic at work, or do you wear a mask? Do you thrive, or just survive? I'm excited to talk with you more and build our relationship further. Being someone other than myself cost me greatly, or so I thought. I realized that I didn't even recognize myself.



2. “Why I Am Here”

Establishing Purpose and Commitment

People want to know whether a leader is genuinely committed to something larger than their own advancement. These stories trace the connection between personal values and professional commitment. They answer skepticism not by arguing against it but by making it unnecessary. These stories are most powerful at the beginning of relationships, when a new leader joins a team or when an organization asks people to commit to a direction they didn't choose.

Relationship lens: Skepticism is the default position in any new or strained relationship. People withhold their full engagement until they are confident the person asking for it is worth the investment. A “Why I Am Here” story helps dissolve that skepticism by making intent visible and personal. It answers the question that underlies every partnership: Are you here for yourself or for me?

Example story: “I’m not here because of the role. I’m here because I’ve seen what becomes possible when people stop being transactional and start genuinely collaborating. I’ve also seen how quickly trust disappears when they don’t.”



**Why am I here 1**

I have worked in multiple world class IT teams and noticed a theme. IT delivers products and systems thinking they know everything. The business partners don't share their needs and vision well, and expect the world or have unrealistic expectations. Both teams are stressed or underwhelmed when the product or system is delivered because of lack of communication and a trusted, transparent relationship. I'm here to help fix that and build trust, culture, and respect.

Why am I here 2

When my partner groups describe how difficult it is to navigate IT processes and work with all the cross functional teams within IT, it helps me answer with a quick "that's why I'm here." This answer quickly helps build trust during the engagement as they realize they can trust me to help navigate various teams and process steps. They have a problem they need a solution to, and in summary: talk to one person instead of talking to fifteen people. Be who they need, so you can build trust, not who you want them to think or know you are. Once trust is built, it creates the opportunity for me to teach them about the individual processes and teams in a progressive manner.

Why am I here 3

The matrixed org structures and complexity of the IT function. I believe as your BRM, I can help create transparency and coordinate with relevant teams to push things forward. I'm here because I have seen and gone through those pain points your business has experienced in the past two years. I wanted to be your trusted digital transformation BRM partner, to overcome some of the hurdles together.

Why am I here 4

I came to talk with X in order to build a strategy for the YYY domain. I previously led the DX strategy for research, but through this planning process, we shaped the content together in a way everyone could understand, and this allowed the strategy's priority to be raised. I want to initiate YYY's DX strategy together with you. Through this, I hope to deepen understanding of the DX strategy and build a partnership that elevates your priorities to a more important position.

Why am I here 5

I am here to make sure the right people are included. I've seen what can happen when we focus too closely on the task and not enough on the people it's for.

**Why am I here 6**

I am here to help you achieve your goals and be successful. My experience has taught me that shared purpose is a powerful way to “move the needle” closer to what matters.

Why am I here 7

Influence can be obtained even when you don’t have perceived authority. Sometimes it just takes patience and persistence to support a person through a change. The “valley of despair” is real, but you can help people reach their own “ah-ha” moments.

Why am I here 8

Week one as a BRM in a new organization, I was meeting with a business partner that was labelled “difficult.” After thirty minutes he decided to trust me and unload. After listening, my response was: “This is a commitment to you. I will not lie. I will be as straightforward and transparent as I can be. There will be a day when I show up and you will not like what you hear. However, together we will work through it.” That set a foundation for building our relationship.

Why am I here 9

I’m here because I believe the role of the business relationship manager is just as critical to how NASA completes its mission as connecting over 60,000 NASA team members, resulting in a single extraordinary moment every time we launch a rocket.

Why I am here 10

My purpose is to help people better understand what happens between us — especially when relationships are under pressure. Through the Resonance Project, I’m exploring how greater awareness of ourselves, one another, and the space we create together can help us navigate dissonance, deepen connection, and build healthier relationships at work and in life.



3. “Teaching”

Transferring Wisdom Without Hierarchy

Teaching stories transfer hard-won wisdom without lecturing. Through the account of a real situation, they demonstrate what good judgment looks like in practice. Unlike a lecture, a teaching story does not create defensiveness because it doesn't implicate the storyteller rather than the listener. This makes these stories especially effective for building psychological safety and developing leadership judgment.

Relationship lens: Sharing what you learned from failure is one of the most significant acts of relationship investment a leader can make. It gives the other person something of value without asking for anything in return. That asymmetry—offering before receiving—deepens relationships quickly and creates the psychological safety in which the other person can admit their own uncertainty. That is where genuine collaboration begins.

Example story: The hardest thing I ever had to learn was that I had been measuring my effectiveness by the quality of my outputs, while the person across the table was measuring it by the quality of our relationship. We were both right; here's why.





Teaching 1

A few years ago, I was asked to support a manufacturing site that wanted to introduce a new system. At first, I focused on requirements, functions, and technical solutions. However, after spending time with the people on the shop floor, I realized the real challenge was not the system itself. Different teams were following slightly different processes. What I learned is to understand the process before choosing the system.

Teaching 2

Those moments when my identity gets wrapped in the next achievement seem too close together. Experiences without relationships, to share the journey, to share the win, to share the pain, are hollow.

Teaching 3

I lived the last twenty-five years of my life tackling, architecting, building, and operationalizing the challenges you are encountering for your initiatives. I would like to share my wisdom and help you pave your path with my experiences, my mistakes, and some of the wisdom I gained along my journey.

Teaching 4

The best leadership credibility I ever gained was by showing I could also do the work of my team. Once they understood I knew their scope, responsibility, and effort, they trusted my vision and plan for the team.

Teaching 5

In one of the first meetings with a partner, they valued rapid answers, but trust was built by listening to their question and returning a more thoughtful and responsive answer.

Teaching 6

In 2012, I was put on a PIP, much to my surprise at the time. Little did I know the lessons it would teach me about bringing my best, resiliency, and leaning in, in terms of how I would respond to it and the outcome I could control by learning from it. I modified my communication style, summarizing messages to leadership in a clear, executive style. I learned about my customers proactively, anticipating their needs or questions before they asked, and focused on being a partner in my relationships. This experience shaped me into my future self, and was a tough but needed experience.



Teaching 7

We've had a number of physicians who have continually struggled with the technology for our enterprise clinical communication tool. The physicians stopped using it or didn't use it properly. I reached out to a colleague to ask some basic technology questions about ways we could simplify the process and make it more intuitive. Eventually I was able to bring IT and clinical teams together to simplify the process, and to collaborate on ways we can continually improve

Teaching 8

In IT we take your tickets and let the requestor know when it has been done. We often don't know anything about how the ticket relates to the business unit's mission. I became frustrated, so I started scheduling time with the requestors afterwards to see if it fulfilled their needs. This allowed me to gain some insight into the person, and offered a chance to ask about how this task played into the business unit's goals.



4. “Vision”

Co-Creating a Shared Future

Most vision statements leave people cold, not because the future they describe is undesirable, but because they offer people no role in it. Vision stories make the future vivid, connect it to values people already share, and leave genuine space for people to see themselves in it. When people can see themselves in a story about the future, they stop being recipients of a strategy and become participants in one.

Relationship lens: A shared vision is one of the strongest bonds in a professional relationship. Vision stories create that bond, not by announcing a destination, but by painting a picture vivid enough that others can place themselves inside the journey. In BRM terms, this story type deepens alignment across relationships, giving teams and stakeholders a common frame of reference that survives disagreements because it was imagined together, not handed down.

Example story: The relationships that worked best were never just about getting things done together. They were built around a shared picture of where we were going and why it mattered.





Vision 1

Imagine a soccer field. Each member of the team stands right where they need to be. They know their role on the field and their purpose. The communication and collaboration between them is critical to have the ball, pass to each other, and get results. The other team in this scenario is complexity: constraints, decisions, and so on. When a scientist has access to the tools to create and share data, and stays assured their IP is protected, and when they don't have to think about IT-specific areas, then we know we achieved success. Back to the soccer field: for players to play the game, they don't have to think about logistics, ball design and production, or selling tickets. BRM to IT is that moment where people in specialized roles can focus on what they do best.

Vision 2

Our shared commitment to and passion for our organization's mission provides us with a strong foundation, not just for our relationship, but also for alignment of our goals and values.

Vision 3

Working with the business to create a single source of truth around business priorities, define the impact, and then map that impact back to how it will drive the priorities. Creates a clear vision of "what" and "why" to anchor on as noise enters everyday work.

Vision 4

We completed the project and later found, six months later, we had totally missed the mark. We took time to start again, this time with a process map using a common picture, to have shared understanding of current state and pain points. This shift built trust and allowed us to have a foundation for success on our second try. We now start all efforts with a process map.

Vision 5

The relationships that worked best were built around a shared picture of where we were going. In this relationship we have the pleasure of creating the image of success together.

Vision 6

I have been in many situations and conversations where it is unclear what the goal we are expected to achieve is. I would like to offer a strong partner and collaborator to help guide us all to ensure we are getting what we need from the objective. Guide me through your journey and tell me what success looks like to you.

**Vision 7**

In order to get to your end goal, we need to better understand where we're going. In the past, we have had the best results when we are all focused on the same purpose and fully understand what problem we are trying to solve. At the end of the day, we are all working toward the same goal, serving our members, so how can we get there together?

Vision 8

I know how end users can feel fearful of change and using technology, like they aren't capable, that crippling intimidation. And I address it. I show users how to adopt what we put in place and can share how it adds value, because I know why we chose the tool and the problems it was meant to address. If you share with me what barriers you are experiencing, I can work with you to not simply create a solution, but to help your team adjust to the change and feel empowered by how they can leverage a new skill. Can we work together on developing a solution your team will thank you for?

Vision 9

Very smart people were earnestly working together to deliver the right solution to a multitude of different problems. An eagerness to get to the solution and avoid dwelling on the problems sabotaged success from the start. Let's first work together to courageously discuss the problems and chart a path toward success.



5. “Values in Action”

Demonstrating That Culture Is Real

These are the stories that prove, not assert, that the culture an organization describes is the culture it lives. They are born in moments of genuine choice, where doing the right thing costs something real. The power of these stories is proportional to the difficulty of the moment they describe. They send a clear signal: the values you signed up for are real. You can rely on them.

Relationship lens: Trust in a relationship is built on predictability: the confidence that a person will behave consistently with their values, even when it is inconvenient. Every relationship carries an implicit question: when it is difficult, who will you be? “Values in Action” stories answer that question with evidence. For any stakeholder deciding how much to invest in a relationship, that evidence is worth more than any amount of declared commitment.

Example story: There was a moment where protecting a relationship meant saying something that complicated my position. What surprised me was how much that one choice changed what the other person was willing to share with me from that point on.





Values in Action 1

With values such as “People are our Foundation,” and engagement survey results showing low inter-departmental communication, setting goals in my performance to increase relationships with my business partners has become important to me. I want to see an increase in collaboration and trust by pushing the challenge as an IT leader.

Values in Action 2

We had a business partner who felt IT never had time for them, and was known as the dept of “No.” Knowing they had a big project coming up that would need IT support, I started meeting with them regularly to ensure IT had completed what they needed when they needed it by. At one point there was a possibility IT wouldn’t meet a target. By being up front and transparent, it shifted the relationship going forward, as trust was built. The business partner was able to trust that IT would collaborate with them and keep the conversation open as each stage progressed.

Values in Action 3

I know that this organization has grown fast. In different areas, direction and priorities have moved apart from the organization’s goals and purpose. We need to find our way back to the central values, goals, and priorities that made us a growing organization. We will work together to achieve this.



6. “I Know What You’re Thinking” Building Trust Through Honesty

Every leader faces an undercurrent of mistrust in their audience. These stories address it directly by naming the doubt in the room. When a leader says I know this is not easy to hear, and I know there is a version of this story where you have been here before, and it didn’t go well, it helps people stop spending their energy managing that doubt and begin listening. These are the repair stories of relationship communication, most needed in moments of change, difficult news, or when trust has been strained.

Relationship lens: Unspoken doubt sits between what is being said and what is actually being thought, and as long as it goes unacknowledged, it prevents real communication. When a leader names it, they signal something powerful: I am more interested in the truth of this relationship than in protecting my own position. In relationship management terms, this story type is most critical when the trust account is low, and the risk of misreading is high. Naming the unspoken is an act of relationship courage, and people remember it.

Story: I know there have been times when people here invested in relationships that weren’t honoured in return. That history is in the room with us right now, and it deserves to be named before we talk about anything else.



**I know what you are thinking 1**

I know historically you haven't felt heard, supported, or prioritized by your business partner for many reasons that made you hesitant to attend today. I wanted to acknowledge the validity in that sentiment and address it before we begin what I hope is a progressively improved partnership.

I know what you are thinking 2

A lot of "IT" people have sat in front of you, and you are probably thinking that you will waste your time and nothing will happen. I don't have all the answers, and I can't promise you everything, but I am here to listen, understand, and most importantly advocate for you. That is why I am here, that is why I travelled to you, just like I've done for other businesses. This is how I can help.

I know what you are thinking 3

The elephant in the room: a failed WMS implementation. What was learned was the value of business engagement, and not assuming it will all work itself out. Let's address concerns and fears up front, work on solving issues and what could happen, and cross the finish line together.

I know what you are thinking 4

I know my communication style can be curt, but I want to assure you I'm here to listen.





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