

The KLT Story Framework

Know, Like, Trust applied to professional storytelling — used in Strategic Personal Branding

Every professional branding strategy reduces to three things. The right people need to **know** you exist, **like** what you stand for, and **trust** that you can deliver. Most personal brand strategies are awareness strategies — they build Know and stop. This framework covers all three stages: what each one requires, what story types serve each one, and the sequence most people get backwards.

STAGE 01

Know

Visibility. The right people can locate you when searching for what you offer. Know is necessary but not sufficient. Most professionals stop here and wonder why nothing converts.

BUILT BY

Clarity of positioning · Consistent presence · A specific headline that tells people exactly who you help and how

STAGE 02

Like

Alignment. Your values, approach, and perspective resonate with the specific audience you are building for — not everyone. Like is not about being likeable. It is about being legible.

BUILT BY

Genuine perspective · A clear point of view · Content that takes a position your audience can stand behind

STAGE 03

Trust

Evidence. A track record of claims followed by consistent behaviour. Trust is built by what you do, not what you say about yourself. Slowest to build, fastest to lose.

BUILT BY

Competence demonstrated · Reliability over time · Doing what you said when it was inconvenient

STORY TYPES FOR EACH STAGE

STAGE	STORY TYPE	WHAT IT DOES	STRUCTURE
Know	Origin story	Makes your positioning legible and specific	Where I came from → What I noticed → What I decided to do about it
Know	Expertise signal	Demonstrates the category you belong in	Specific problem I solve → For whom → With what result
Like	Values story	Shows what you believe, not just what you do	Situation that revealed a value → What I chose → What it cost or produced
Like	Perspective piece	Takes a position your audience can align with	Conventional wisdom → Why it is wrong or incomplete → My position
Trust	Proof story	Demonstrates competence through specific evidence	Problem → My approach → Specific, measurable result
Trust	Failure story	Shows how you handle difficulty honestly	What went wrong → What I took responsibility for → What changed

STORY STARTER PROMPTS

TYPE	STARTER PROMPT	DEVELOP FROM HERE
Origin	The moment I realised I was going to do this differently was...	What you observed, the decision you made, where it led
Expertise	The specific problem I am built to solve is...	Who faces it, what the wrong approach looks like, what you do instead
Values	The time I had to choose between what was easy and what I believed was...	The situation, the choice, what it cost, what it revealed
Perspective	Everyone in my field says X. I think X is wrong because...	The conventional view, why it fails, your better frame
Proof	The most specific result I have produced for someone like you was...	The problem, your approach, the measurable outcome
Failure	The time I got it completely wrong was... and here is what I learned...	Honest account, genuine accountability, specific change that followed

THE SEQUENCE MOST PEOPLE GET BACKWARDS

Get clear before getting visible

Visibility amplifies legibility — it does not replace it. If your positioning is unclear, more reach means more people who do not understand what you do. Invest in the argument before you invest in the audience.

Take a position before seeking alignment

Generic content reaches everyone and resonates with no one. A clear point of view builds Like among the people who matter. Being less interesting to more people is not a strategy.

Deliver before expecting to be trusted

Trust cannot be built through communication alone. Only behaviour over time proves it. The testimonial, the case study, the referral — these are the outputs of delivery, not of branding.

QUICK DIAGNOSTIC

IF YOUR BRAND HAS THIS PROBLEM	THE GAP IS HERE	WORK ON THIS FIRST
High reach, low engagement	Know without Like	Develop a clearer point of view. Take a position. Stop trying to appeal to everyone.
Strong engagement, low conversion	Like without Trust	Add proof. Specific results, case examples, and client stories.
Low reach across all metrics	Know is underdeveloped	Clarify your positioning before increasing output. More content will not fix an unclear argument.
Strong offline reputation, weak online	Trust not yet visible	Document and share the evidence that exists offline. It is sitting there unused.

Most personal brand strategies are awareness strategies. Getting known is the beginning, not the goal. The goal is trust — and trust is built through a different set of actions than visibility.

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