

OPENING KEYNOTE: We Are All Storytellers

Scott Whitehair

International Storyteller, Instructor, and Producer

Session Description:

No one goes to lunch with a colleague and says "I have to tell you this bullet point I heard the other day." A donor has probably never declared "Your data has really moved me emotionally." There is no better way to authentically connect with and relate to another human being than through story. The good news is that we are all natural storytellers, when we allow ourselves to be. In this interactive session, we will explore the neuroscience, philosophies, and techniques of storytelling in donor relations, not only to land the big gift, but to recognize our supporters, demonstrate the impact of donations, represent our mission, and build a culture of empathy and vulnerability within our organizations.

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He is the producer of This Much Is True, one of Chicago's longest running storytelling series, the creator of Story Lab Chicago, which has put over 500 first time performers on stage since 2011, and executive director of Do Not Submit, a grassroots network of open mics across the city with the goal of connecting people through personal narrative. Scott was recently on the board of directors of The National Storytelling Network, the professional association of U.S. storytellers.

His training sessions are in demand, and he has worked with clients such as RW Baird, Loews Hotels, Price Waterhouse Cooper, Blue Cross Blue Shield, R/GA, Zendesk, Johnson & Johnson, Boston Children's Hospital, Chicago Cares, and the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation. In 2016 and 2017, he was a featured presenter at The Woodmark Summit, a symposium of 26 children's hospitals from across North America. Scott's private coaching clients include a Fortune 500 CEO, top leadership training consultants, and professional public speakers, as well as construction workers, high school students, and grandparents.

Scott's monthly personal narrative course has been selling out consistently since 2012, and he has been a frequent guest instructor at DePaul University, Northwestern University, Loyola University, The University of Chicago's Booth School of Business, and Hong Kong University. He was the featured instructor at Hong Kong Story Worthy Week 2014, headlined by David Sedaris, and taught a special elective at All Hallows College in Dublin last year.

As a performer, Scott has been seen on stages across the US and abroad, including Steppenwolf Theater, the historic Green Mill, Woodstock Opera House, NYC's Webster Hall, Park West, and Second City. He is a two-time Moth Slam Champ, runner up at The Windy City All-City Championship, and a WNEP Skald winner. He has been featured at The Fox Valley Folk Festival, The Evanston Public Library Storytelling Festival, Printer's Row Lit Fest, The Chicago Improv Festival, and Fillet of Solo Festival. He has made appearances on TV, radio, and podcasts including WGN-TV, PBS, FOX, NPR, Sirius XM, and the Risk podcast. In October 2017, Scott made his debut at The National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, TN.

Knowledge Domains: Relationship Building, Leadership and Management

Keywords: Storytelling, neuroscience, leadership, mission, culture, communications