

Presentations and Telling the Story

Revenue Estimating Conference
Mission San Luis Retreat

October 30, 2012



Outline

- There is a Story
- The Story Must be Told
- How Best to Tell the Story



There is a Story

- Behind every estimate, there is a story
- *Elements of a Story:*
 - Setting
 - Characters
 - Plot



The Story Must be Told

- Estimating conferences must approve or choose among estimates.
- The *TELLING* of the story behind the estimates is an essential element to this process of choice and approval.
- *IN ADDITION* to informing the decision making process, the telling of the story can improve the story itself.



How Best to Tell the Story

- **Who is your audience?**
- **Be Efficient AND Informative**
- **Be Succinct**



How Best to Tell the Story

- **Who is your audience?**
- The *primary audience* is the conference principals
 - Varying pre-existing knowledge and experience
 - Limited time to develop additional knowledge
- The implication is: Don't assume your audience knows anything in particular...Tell the story in a way that your grandmother could understand it.



How Best to Tell the Story

- **Be Efficient AND Informative**
 - Give your audience what it NEEDS
 - Don't take more time than is necessary
- Your audience needs to know the *most important*:
 - Settings (laws and assumptions)?
 - Characters (explanatory variables)?
 - Plot lines (interactions & dynamics among the above)?



How Best to Tell the Story

- Other helpful information for your audience:
 - Thoughts on why someone else's story (estimate) is different from yours.
 - Historical context of your story
 - Is your forecast breaking new ground compared to previous forecasts?
 - *Data revisions*—note them and their importance to your story.



How Best to Tell the Story

- **Be Succinct**
- “Clear, precise expression in few words”
 - Use some pictures
 - Careful spreadsheet design
 - Careful description of assumptions/methodologies



Closing Thoughts

- It's a learning process
- These are aspirational ideas, events will often conspire against you (such as too few hours in the day)
- There are benefits beyond helping the estimating conference principals make decisions