



From Résumé to Real Impact

Storytelling as a Project Leadership Skill

by Abu Sayem
March 2026 PM Buzz
PMI Durham Highlands Chapter

From Résumé to Real Impact

Storytelling as a Project
Leadership Skill



The Power of Your Narrative



Your Résumé

Focuses on credentials, tasks, and past achievements.

Your Story

Reveals your unique journey, impact, and human connection.

Narrative Thinking

Transforming events into meaning and impact



Events

The objective occurrences and factual tasks.



Meaning

Interpreting significance and lessons learned.



Impact

Demonstrating influence and value created.





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Why Storytelling Matters



Build credibility and trust with stakeholders.



Influence decisions and gain support effectively.



Lead teams through complex changes and transitions.

Story 1: "No plan. Just curiosity."

Lesson: Careers are discovered, not
just planned.

Agile mindset
Curiosity
Future relevance



Story 2: "Everything changed before it began."

Lesson: Action creates clarity where planning falters.

Course correction

Courage

Strategic realignment



Story 3: "Wrong job. Right lesson."

Lesson: Nothing is wasted; every experience builds resilience.

Adaptability
Resilience
Value



Story 4: "Conversations created opportunities."

Lesson: People matter more than
impersonal applications.

Collaboration
Communication
Networking



Story 5: "Effort ≠ Outcome."

Lesson: Ownership drives results
beyond mere effort.

Prioritization
Ownership
Value



Story 6: "Redesign the system."

Lesson: Think beyond tasks to
systemic improvements.

Process Optimization
Critical Thinking
Efficiency



Story 7: "Doer → Thinker."

Lesson: An identity shift is crucial
for leadership growth.

Ownership Mindset
Confidence
Positioning



Story 8: "Start over. Stronger."

Lesson: Adaptability is key to overcoming setbacks.

Adaptability
Resilience
Market awareness



Story 9: "Exposure creates direction."

Lesson: You can't plan what you
don't see or experience.

Exploration

Curiosity

Opportunity awareness



Story 10: From Nestle to Toronto Police

A transformative journey in project leadership.



Scope: Driving Change

Modernizing platforms like CRM and AI to achieve significant operational transformation.



Schedule: Building Momentum

Utilizing agile sprints, strategic releases, and strong governance for continuous progress.



Cost: Delivering Value

Tangible financial impact and efficiency gains

\$1M+

Savings identified and realized through project optimization.

**\$90K/
month**

Operational costs recovered through streamlined processes.

Optimized

Streamlined processes increasing overall efficiency.

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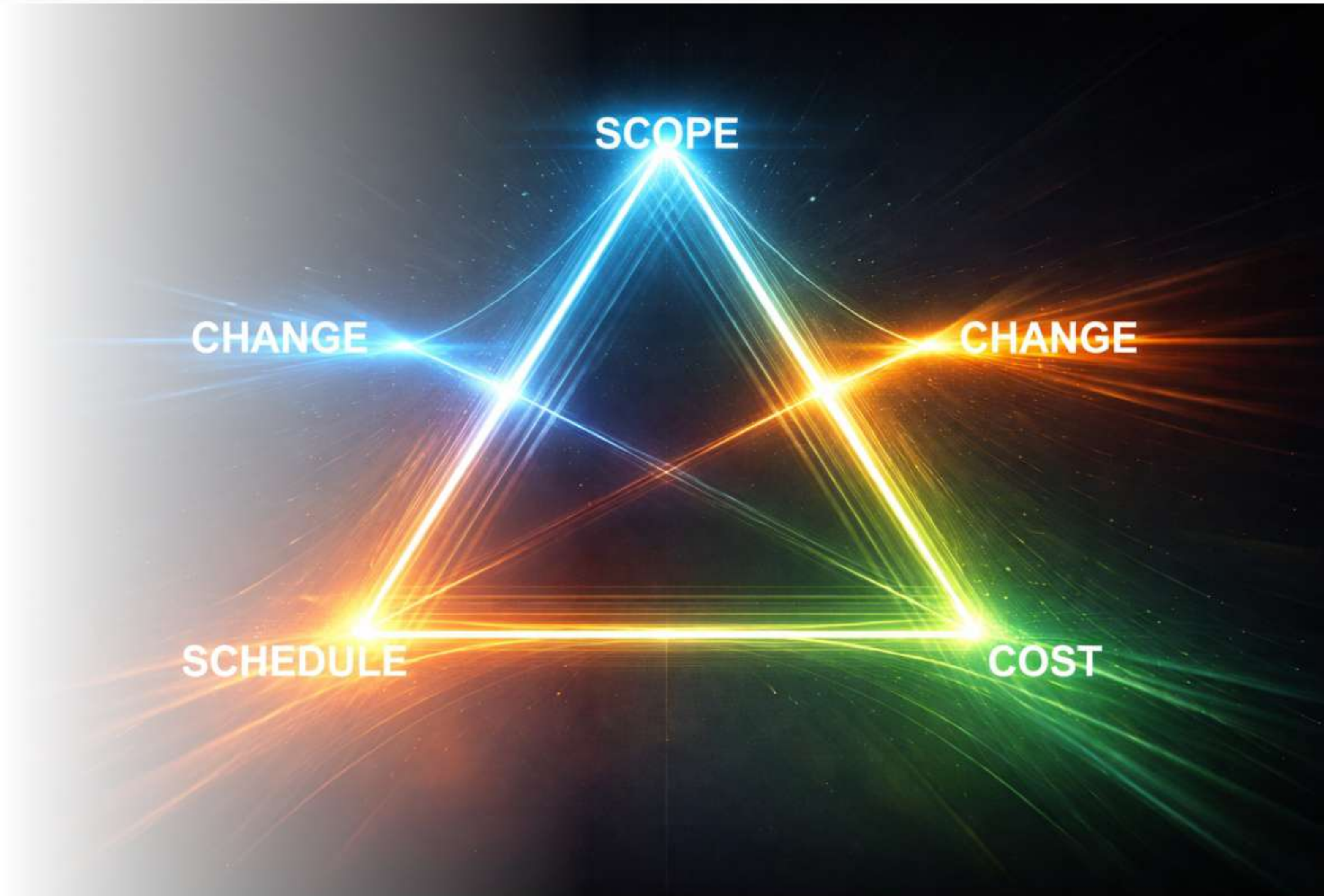
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Translating Projects into Stories

Understanding how Scope drives Change, Schedule builds Momentum, and Cost delivers Value transforms complex projects into compelling narratives.



The Power of Your Project Story

If stakeholders don't understand your story, they won't support your project. Clarity fosters commitment.



Key Themes from Our Stories



- ➔ Strategic Decisions guiding career paths and project outcomes.
- ➔ Valuable Relationships fostering opportunities and support.
- ➔ Critical Reflection for continuous learning and adaptation.

The Project Leadership Triangle

Effective project leadership encompasses three vital dimensions: Ways of Working, Power Skills, and Business Acumen.



What is Your Story?



- ➔ Identify a significant turning point in your professional journey.
- ➔ What is the key lesson you learned from this experience?
- ➔ How did this experience create a lasting impact?

Beyond the Résumé

Your résumé gets you in the room, but your compelling story keeps you there. What narrative do people tell about you when you're not in the room?





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Project Leader: Digital | Marketing
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