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The State of Storytelling 2026

By Elliott Rayner



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**PRODUCT
NARRATIVES**

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About This Report

Something new is appearing at the top of the org chart.

Since the beginning of 2024, a new leadership role has been opening up across some of the most closely watched companies in the world. Not a rebrand of an existing function. A genuinely new one. It goes by different names: Head of Storytelling, VP of Brand and Narrative Marketing, Head of Strategic Positioning Narratives. But the underlying brief is the same: go build the story this company should be telling, and make it stick across every team that touches the market.

This is not a creative hire. It is a structural one. And most brands are still figuring out what that means.

What does this role actually own? Where does it report? Who is the right person for it? What should it cost? What does it take to succeed in it? The fact that these questions remain largely unanswered is precisely what this report is for.

To find answers, we collected and studied twenty-five storytelling leadership job descriptions at Head of, Director, VP, and Senior Director level, across twenty-three companies and twenty-one industries. We read them side by side, looking for what connects them and what separates them. That gap is where the real understanding lives.

What emerged was a clear picture of a role that is genuinely new, consequential, and still being invented in real time. This report is our attempt to document where it stands today, and to make the case for why storytelling may be the most important new function in the modern organisation.

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Introduction

Head of Storytelling roles are opening up.

In the last eighteen months, a new leadership title has been appearing across the org charts of some of the most closely watched companies in the world. It goes by different names: Head of Storytelling, Head of Strategic Positioning Narratives, VP of Brand and Narrative Marketing. The salary ranges from \$139,000 to \$400,000. The seniority is consistently senior. And in most cases, the role did not exist three years ago.

The companies hiring span industries with almost nothing else in common. Google. GitHub. Anthropic. Nike. UnitedHealth Group. SharkNinja. Field AI. Formlabs. Miro. Vanta. Dental technology, mortgage servicing, artificial intelligence, enterprise software, medical devices, financial services, government tech, 3D printing, fusion energy, fitness, robotics, consumer products. What they share is not a sector or a size. It is a problem.

Most of them can describe what their product does. Fewer can agree, across departments, on what their product means.

That gap has always existed. What has changed is the cost of leaving it open.

Why now

Three pressures are converging to make this hire urgent.

01

Product complexity has outgrown feature-based communication

As software products mature, they become broader and more modular. A tool becomes a platform. A platform becomes a suite. At that point, listing features stops being useful. Customers do not struggle because the product lacks capability. They struggle because they cannot see what the product is for. Storytelling becomes the mechanism for restoring clarity.

02

Execution has become cheap. Meaning has not.

AI has dramatically lowered the cost of producing content. Blogs, sales decks, landing pages can now be generated at speed. That abundance has exposed a different bottleneck. Most companies are not struggling to produce content. They are struggling to produce coherent meaning. When execution is cheap, differentiation moves upstream.

03

Storytelling is shifting from craft to leadership

In the average B2B company, story alignment across internal teams sits at around 19 per cent. That means more than four out of five people are telling a slightly different version of what the company does and why it matters. When storytelling is fragmented at that level, no amount of creative execution compensates for it.

What the role actually is

The instinct is to read Head of Storytelling as a creative title. A grander version of content director, or a senior copywriter with a bigger brief.

Read the job descriptions carefully, and that reading falls apart.

These roles are not hired to produce more content. They are hired to close a gap: the gap between what a company has built and what the world understands. Google's version of the role, titled Head of Strategic Positioning Narratives, owns the global narrative for Google Ads, refreshes it three times a year to reflect product launches and macro shifts, and commands a base salary of up to \$305,000. That is not a communications hire. That is a market architecture hire.

Valon wants someone to build a reputation engine: a system that converts founder credibility into distributable proof, which converts into candidate conviction, which converts into hires. Dandy's brief is

for customers to explain Dandy better than Dandy can. Miro puts Brand Marketing, Content, Social, PR, and Influencer all under one narrative leader.

What all of them are actually hiring for is the ability to close the gap between strategy and comprehension. And no existing role was closing it.

Why the existing org could not fix it

The CMO could not fix it, because fixing it required going upstream into product and sales territory. The content team could not fix it, because they lacked the authority to override competing narratives from other departments. The PR agency could not fix it, because they were managing external perception, not internal alignment.

The Head of Storytelling exists because the problem is structural, not executional. You cannot solve a fragmentation problem with better writing. You need someone with the authority, the cross-functional access, and the strategic thinking to build one coherent narrative and make it stick across the organisation.

That is why the roles in this report sit everywhere: inside the CRO's office, at executive level, inside People, inside Marketing, inside Communications. Not because companies cannot agree on where storytelling belongs. Because storytelling, done properly, belongs everywhere, and you need seniority and access to make that true.

This report maps those roles, what they pay, where they sit, and what they are actually being asked to do. It also includes spotlight analysis on five roles that illuminate the function from different angles, and a case study from a real fractional engagement.

Key Findings

01

Six reporting lines

Across twenty-five job descriptions, the role reports into six distinct functions: CRO, C-Suite/Founders, Marketing, Communications, People, and the Office of the CRO. No industry standard has emerged.

02

Salaries from \$139K to \$400K

Salary data was disclosed for eighteen of the twenty-five roles. The range spans \$139,600 to \$400,000 USD. Every role that listed an experience requirement asked for 10 or more years.

03

Twenty-one industries, not one

AI, SaaS, dental tech, mortgage, healthcare, visual workspace, compliance, fintech, developer tools, sports, search advertising, construction tech, government tech, life sciences, agentic AI, 3D printing hardware, fusion energy, women's health, cloud computing, consumer products, and robotics. This is no longer a Silicon Valley trend.

04

Editorial judgment is the universal skill

Every job description, regardless of industry or reporting line, asked for the ability to know what good looks like, set a bar, and hold it.

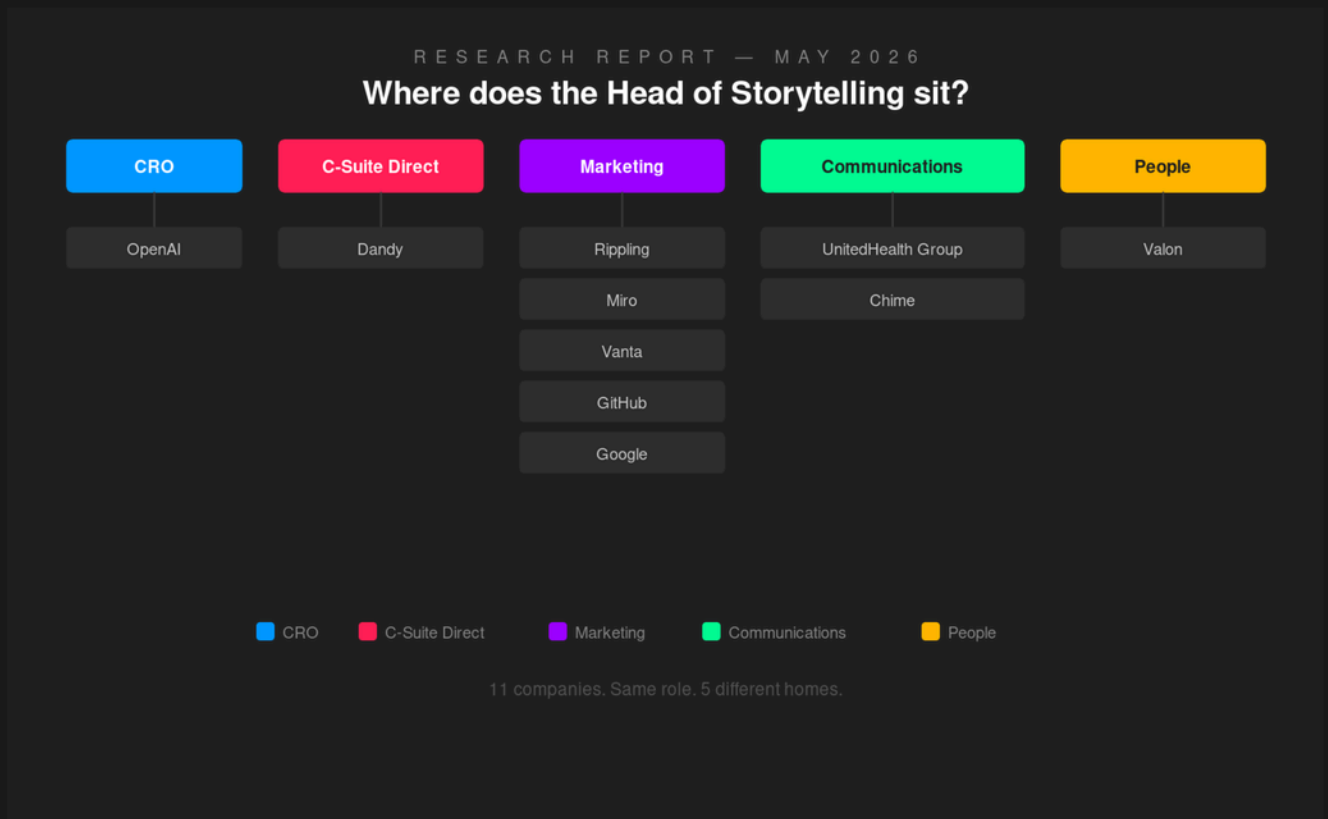
05

It is a structural role, not a creative one

In every case, the brief was cross-functional. Sales alignment, product storytelling, leadership credibility. The Head of Storytelling exists to solve a fragmentation problem.

Where does the Head of Storytelling sit?

Same role. Same seniority. Six completely different homes. The reporting line is not a detail. It reveals what each company thinks storytelling is actually for.



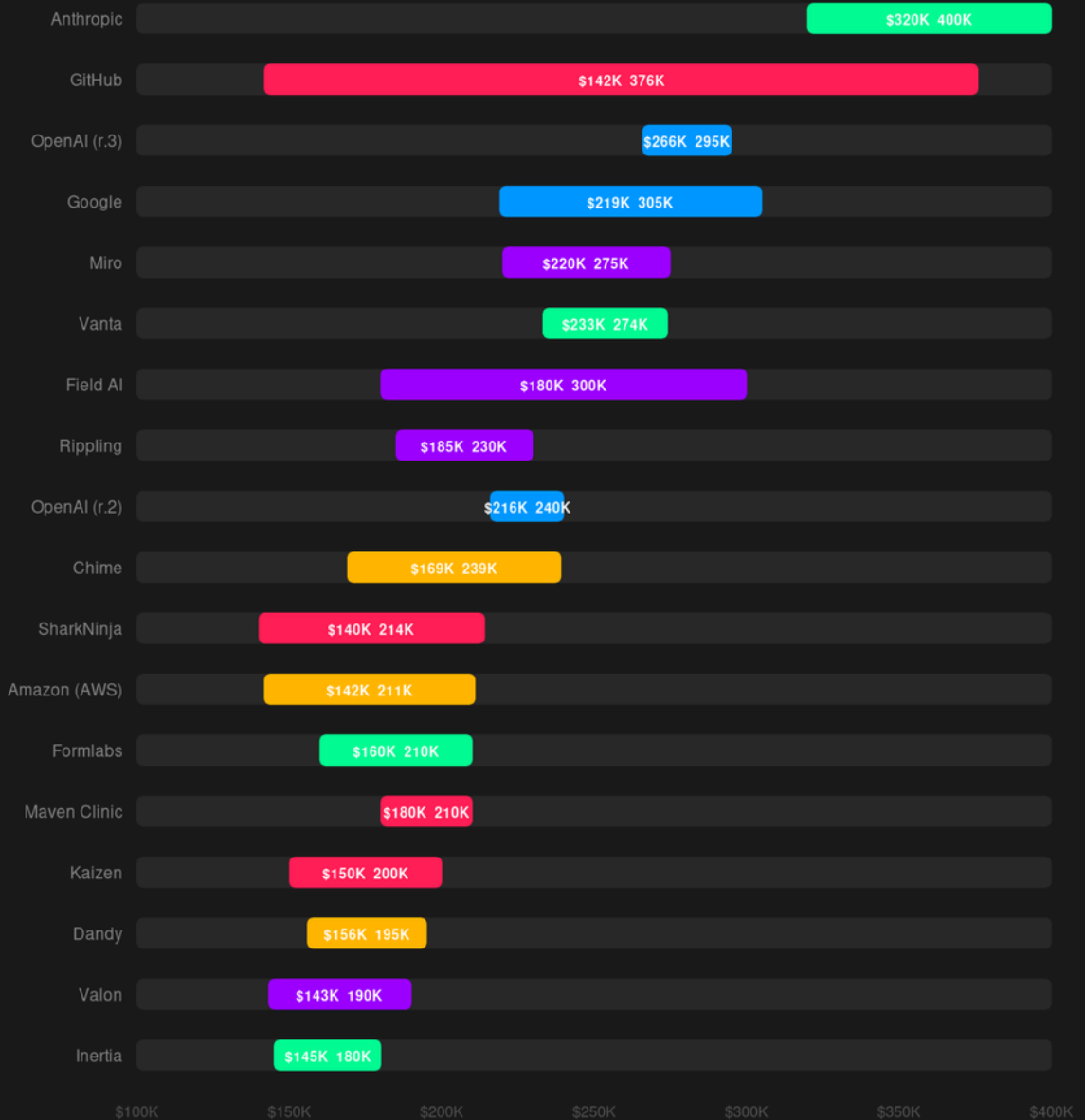
KEY INSIGHT

Where a company places this role reveals what it believes storytelling is actually for. Reporting into the CRO signals that narrative is a revenue instrument. Sitting inside Communications means the brief is reputation. Under Marketing, it is brand. Under the CEO or founders, it is market creation.

What is most striking is not any single position but the fact that no consensus has emerged. Six different functions. All naming the same problem. All solving it in a different place. The absence of a standard home is itself a finding: this role is still being discovered, and every company is working out where it belongs.

What the market pays for storytelling

Salary data was disclosed for eighteen of the twenty-five roles. The range is striking: \$139,600 to \$400,000 USD for positions that barely existed five years ago. GitHub holds the widest range in the set. Every role that listed an experience requirement asked for 10 or more years.



\$139K	\$400K	10+	18/25
Floor (disclosed)	Ceiling (disclosed)	Years exp. required	Roles disclosed salary

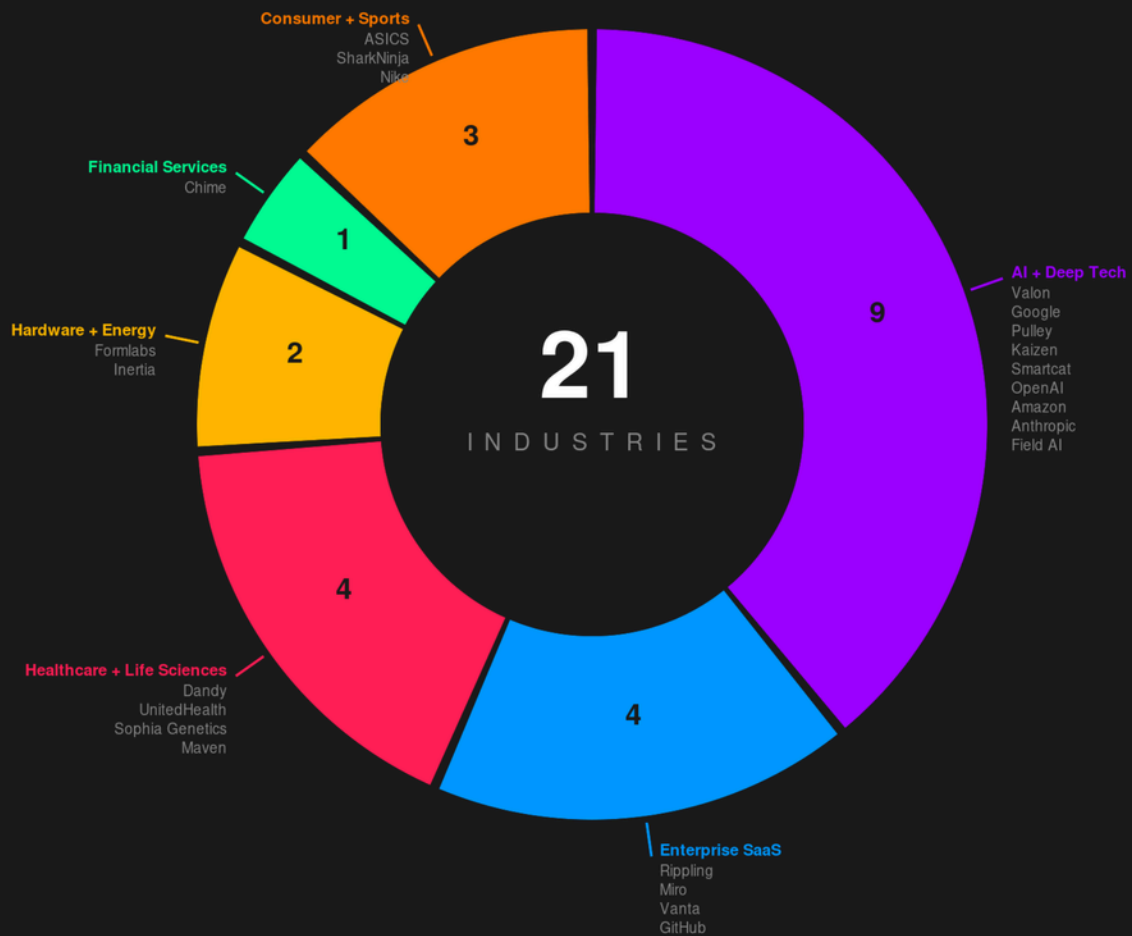
KEY INSIGHT

The floor is \$139K. The ceiling is \$400K. Both are for the same function. Anthropic's Head of GTM Narrative tops the dataset at \$400,000. GitHub's range alone spans nearly \$235K, which is not noise: it reflects a company that has not yet agreed on what it is worth to have someone who defines how the world understands your product.

Every role that listed an experience requirement asked for ten or more years. This is not a content marketing hire. It is a strategic hire, priced and treated accordingly. The salary data confirms what the org charts suggest: companies are not filling a gap in their content calendar. They are solving a structural problem at senior level.

This is not a Silicon Valley trend

Twenty-one industries are now hiring for this function. From government tech to fusion energy, from robotics to consumer products, the pattern is spreading fast.

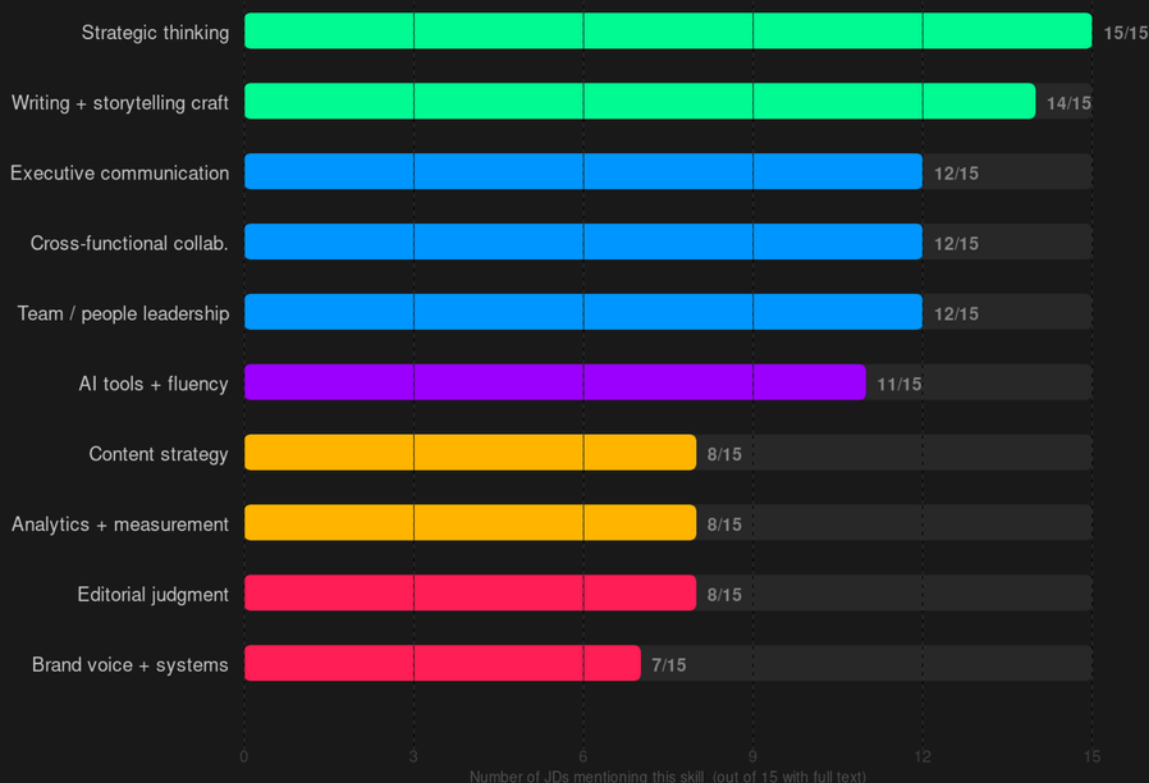


KEY INSIGHT

The spread is the story. AI and deep tech lead the chart, which is expected. Less expected are consumer products, robotics, government tech, life sciences, 3D printing hardware, and fusion energy. What they share is that each is building something the market does not yet have language for. The Head of Storytelling appears wherever complexity is highest and comprehension is most at risk.

The one skill that appeared everywhere

Across fifteen job descriptions with full text, one capability appeared in every brief without exception, regardless of industry, seniority level, or reporting line: strategic thinking about narrative. But underneath every brief, connecting them all, is a more precise idea.



KEY INSIGHT

Most people assume a Head of Storytelling is a creative hire. Someone to generate ideas, write well, set an editorial bar. The data tells a different story.

Look at the three blue bars: executive communication, cross-functional collaboration, team and people leadership. Each appears in twelve of fifteen job descriptions. These are not creative skills. They are alignment skills. The job is not to produce stories. The job is to align an entire organisation around one.

That shift in framing changes everything about how this role should be hired for, scoped, and evaluated. Companies are not looking for a storyteller. They are looking for someone who can make the whole company tell the same story, clearly, consistently, and at every level.

The Roles

All twenty-five roles, side by side.

#	Company	Role Title	Reports To	Industry	Salary
02	Dandy	Head of Storytelling	C-Suite	Dental Tech	\$156-195K
03	Valon	Narrative and Brand Lead	Founders	Mortgage / Fintech	\$143-190K
04	Rippling	Head of Storytelling	Marketing	HR / SaaS	\$185-230K
05	UnitedHealth Group	VP, Storytelling & Creative Content	Communications	Healthcare	N/D
06	Miro	Head of Storytelling	Marketing	Visual Workspace	\$220-275K
07	Vanta	Head of Storytelling	Marketing	Compliance / Security	\$233-274K
08	Chime	Dir, Editorial & Storytelling	Communications	Fintech / Banking	\$169-239K
09	GitHub	Sr Dir, Brand Strategy & Narrative	Marketing	Developer Tools	\$142-376K
10	ASICS	Head of Storytelling	Marketing	Sports / Performance	N/D
11	Google	Head of Strategic Positioning Narratives	Marketing	Search / Advertising	\$219-305K
12	Pulley	Narratives Lead	Founders	Construction Tech / AI	N/D
13	Kaizen	Brand & Storytelling Lead	Co-founders	Government Tech	\$150-200K
14	Sophia Genetics	Brand & Storytelling Lead	N/S	Life Sciences	N/D
15	Smartcat	Market Narrative & Comms Manager	Marketing	Agentic AI / SaaS	N/D
16	OpenAI	Visual Storytelling & Innovation Lead	CRO Office	AI / Tech	\$216-240K
17	Formlabs	VP, Brand & Narrative Marketing	CEO	3D Printing / Hardware	\$160-210K
18	Inertia	Head of Content & Storytelling	CCO	Energy / Deep Tech	\$145-180K
19	OpenAI (r.3)	Executive Programs Narrative Lead	Marketing	AI / Tech	\$266-295K
20	Maven Clinic	Director of GTM Narrative	Chief Brand + Comms	Women's Health	\$180-210K

21	Amazon (AWS)	Principal, Exec. Audience Messaging	Marketing	Cloud / Enterprise Tech	\$142-211K
22	SharkNinja	Head of Storytelling (StoryWorks)	CCO	Consumer Products	\$139-214K
23	Anthropic	Head of GTM Narrative	Executive / GTM	AI / Enterprise Tech	\$320-400K
24	Field AI	Director, Narrative & Video Storytelling	Leadership	Robotics / AI	\$180-300K
25	Nike	Sr Professional, Brand Creative Narrative GC	Creative Dir.	Sports / Consumer	N/D

N/D = Not disclosed. N/S = Not specified. Salaries are USD base pay ranges.

Google

Head of Strategic Positioning Narratives

\$219,000 to \$305,000 · Marketing (Ads) · Search / Advertising

"You will work at the intersection of our Product, Sales, and Global Insights Teams, translating technical product information into a sharp positioning framework to win market share from engagement. You will anticipate our participants' moves and know what it takes to keep our position on top."

The first thing to notice about this role is the language. Google does not say competitors. They say "participants." That is not an accident. It is the vocabulary of market architecture, not marketing. The person in this role is not building brand awareness. They are running a strategic operation: identify the competitive claims in the market, find the data to neutralise them, and build the argument that keeps Google Ads on top.

The brief refreshes three times a year. That is not a brand positioning cycle. That is a trading cycle. The narrative responds to product launches and macro shifts in the advertising economy in near real-time. And the salary, up to \$305,000, reflects exactly that. This is not a creative hire dressed up in senior language. It is a competitive intelligence function with a narrative output.

"Use generative AI tools for deep-dive research, data synthesis, and narrative iteration, setting the standard for how technology is used to sharpen strategic thinking."

OPINION

What Google has built here is a narrative function that operates the way a trading desk operates: continuously updated, data-backed, reactive to market conditions, and accountable to commercial outcomes. Most companies treat storytelling as something you do once and refine slowly. Google treats it as a live instrument. The title is not a grandiose rebranding of content director. It is a genuinely different conception of what narrative work can be.

OpenAI

Visual Storytelling & Innovation Lead, Office of the CRO

\$216,000 to \$240,000 · Office of the CRO · AI / Tech

"You will work at the intersection of storytelling, design, and innovation, owning high-impact executive narratives while also driving 'customer zero' experimentation with emerging OpenAI technologies. This role complements the strategic and operational work of the Office of the CRO by focusing on how ideas are translated into clear, compelling stories and how new tools can unlock more effective and empowered ways of working."

No other role in this set asks a storyteller to also build products. The "customer zero" mandate means the person in this role is expected to be the first inside the CRO's organisation to prototype and scale OpenAI's own tools: custom GPTs, internal apps, new workflows. Then, having done that, to build the narratives that show customers and stakeholders what those tools can actually do in practice.

It is a genuinely new brief. Storytelling and AI product adoption have been collapsed into one role. The assumption underneath it is that the best person to explain what OpenAI's tools can do is someone who has been living inside them, building with them, and developing the creative judgment to know which stories those tools make possible. The traditional separation between the person who makes things and the person who explains things has been deliberately removed.

"Prototype and develop lightweight custom GPTs and internal apps that enhance productivity, unlock new workflows, and showcase how OpenAI technologies can be applied across the Office of the CRO and GTM teams."

OPINION

This role is probably a preview of where storytelling leadership is heading more broadly. As AI tools become standard across every function, the people who can both use those tools and build narratives around what they make possible will become disproportionately valuable. OpenAI has simply hired for that combination earlier than anyone else. The person in this role is not just telling the story of AI. They are using AI to tell it, and that distinction matters.

Miro

Head of Storytelling

\$220,000 to \$275,000 · Marketing · Visual Workspace

"You'll create the vision for how we communicate and elevate Miro's brand narrative through content, brand activations, social media, partnerships and communications. Build and manage high-performing teams across Brand Marketing, Content, Social Media, PR, and Influencer Marketing."

The Miro brief is the most structurally ambitious of the three. By placing Brand Marketing, Content, Social Media, PR, and Influencer Marketing under a single leader, Miro is making a specific architectural bet: that narrative consistency across channels requires unified ownership. This is not a coordination challenge. It is a fragmentation problem, and Miro is treating it as one.

The internal title for this role is Head of Marketing Communications, not Head of Storytelling. Miro is calling it storytelling externally because that is how they are framing the problem they are trying to solve. The naming choice signals something important: they do not see this as a communications hire, a content hire, or a brand hire. They see it as a narrative hire. Someone who owns the story first, and then owns all the channels through which that story travels.

"Experience leading communications through company transitions (e.g., multi-product evolution, repositioning)."

OPINION

Most companies solve the fragmentation problem tactically. They build better briefing processes, run more cross-functional workshops, create brand guidelines nobody reads. Miro's answer is structural: give one person the authority and the team to own the narrative end-to-end. The Head of Storytelling at Miro is not a coordinator. They are the owner. That is a fundamentally different approach, and the salary reflects it.

Vanta

Head of Storytelling

\$233,000 to \$274,000 · Marketing · Compliance / Security

"Drive Measurable Impact: Build a content engine that influences pipeline, improves GEO and LLM visibility, and connects brand storytelling to business outcomes. Understand how discovery is changing. You're fluent in SEO, GEO, and the new world of AI search and know how to make content work across them."

GEO — Generative Engine Optimisation — is the practice of writing for AI systems that increasingly mediate how people find information. When someone asks an LLM a question, the answer it surfaces depends on what it has been trained on, what it considers authoritative, and how clearly a company has structured its content. Vanta is the first company in this set to make that a core hiring requirement. It signals a shift that will eventually reach every brief in this dataset: stories need to be legible not just to human audiences, but to the AI systems deciding which stories those audiences see.

The brief also has a scope that defies easy categorisation. "From memes that make founders look twice to data stories shared in CISO Slack groups." That is a 25-year-old first-time founder and a 55-year-old Chief Information Security Officer. Different media, different vocabulary, different risk tolerances, different motivations. What connects them is that both are trying to decide whether a compliance platform is worth trusting. The storyteller has to make that case to both simultaneously, which means the craft here is about audience intelligence as much as narrative craft.

"Open to using AI to amplify your skills and strengthen your work, demonstrating curiosity, a willingness to learn, and sound judgment in applying AI responsibly to improve efficiency and impact."

OPINION

Vanta is not asking for someone who has learned to use AI tools. It is asking for someone who understands that the discovery layer — the infrastructure through which audiences find content — is being rebuilt. That is a strategic problem, not a production one. The Head of Storytelling who treats GEO as a technical detail for someone else to handle will find their work progressively harder to discover, no matter how good it is. Vanta has made this understanding a baseline requirement.

Amazon (AWS)

Principal, Executive Audience Messaging and Narrative Strategy

\$142,000 to \$211,000 · Global Executive Marketing · Cloud / Enterprise Tech

"You'll own end-to-end narrative strategy, from defining the value propositions that differentiate AWS to building the messaging frameworks and content that bring them to life for executive audiences."

The title tells you something most job descriptions bury. Principal is Amazon's most senior individual contributor level, roughly equivalent to VP elsewhere in the industry. There are no direct reports. No team management section. The role is defined entirely by influence: building the messaging framework, creating the assets and templates, establishing the narrative system that field teams across the globe customise for their own executive engagements. The output is not content. It is the infrastructure that allows thousands of people to produce consistent content at scale. The impact is multiplicative rather than direct.

The opening section of this brief is unlike anything else in the dataset. Before describing what the role produces, it describes what the role must understand. "Know Your Executive Customer Deeply." Map how CIOs, CFOs, CEOs, and Boards define success, discover information, and make decisions. This is audience research framed as a primary job responsibility, not a precursor to one. Amazon is saying the narrative cannot begin until the listener has been understood with precision. That framing runs through the entire brief: the storyteller here is, above all else, a student of the room.

"Serve as the executive audience subject matter expert — the go-to resource that teams across Marketing, Sales, and Communications turn to for guidance on how to engage senior leaders effectively."

OPINION

The Amazon brief reveals something the other roles in this dataset do not make explicit. At large enough scale, the narrative function is no longer about writing the story. It is about building the system that allows thousands of people to tell consistent versions of it simultaneously. The Principal title is precise in that context: the influence is architectural, not authorial. The person who holds this role will never write most of the content their work enables. That is the point.

The Role of AI

Sixteen of the twenty-five job descriptions in this set mention AI in some form. But the way it appears tells three different stories about what companies actually expect from a Head of Storytelling in 2026.

AI as production infrastructure

Chime's brief is the most direct. It has a dedicated section called "AI-Powered Editorial Innovation" and names the specific tools it expects the hire to integrate: ChatGPT, Sora, Runway, Synthesia, ElevenLabs. The expectation is not familiarity. It is fluency.

"You'll inspire a lean, high-performing team that pairs journalistic chops with AI-powered tools to accelerate output, personalise at scale, and create an editorial engine that is award-winning, next practice, and impossible to ignore."

That is a production brief, not a strategy brief. AI here is a set of tools that compress the distance between idea and execution. Google takes a similar position, asking the hire to use generative AI for "deep-dive research, data synthesis, and narrative iteration" and to set the standard for how technology sharpens strategic thinking.

AI as a new distribution landscape

Vanta's brief goes further. It is the only job description in the set to explicitly name GEO — Generative Engine Optimisation — as a direct responsibility. The expectation is not just that the storyteller creates for AI search, but that they understand how discovery is being structurally rebuilt.

"Drive Measurable Impact: Build a content engine that influences pipeline, improves GEO and LLM visibility, and connects brand storytelling to business outcomes."

This is a different problem from production speed. A Head of Storytelling who does not understand LLM visibility is navigating without a map. The channel through which stories reach their audience is changing. Vanta is the first company in this set to treat that as a core hiring requirement rather than a nice-to-have.

AI as the job itself

OpenAI's Visual Storytelling and Innovation Lead collapses both problems into one brief. The person in this role does not use AI to accelerate their storytelling work. They use storytelling to accelerate AI adoption. They prototype custom GPTs, build internal apps, and act as customer zero for OpenAI's own tools inside the CRO organisation. Then they build the narratives that help customers understand what those tools can do in practice.

"Prototype and develop lightweight custom GPTs and internal apps that enhance productivity, unlock new workflows, and showcase how OpenAI technologies can be applied across the Office of the CRO and GTM teams."

The traditional separation between the person who makes things and the person who explains them has been deliberately removed. This is probably a preview of where the role is heading more broadly. As AI tools become standard across every function, the storytellers who can build with those tools as well as narrate around them will be disproportionately valuable.

The roles that do not mention AI

Rippling, UHG, Miro, and Formlabs. Four strong briefs, no mention of AI. This is not evidence that those companies do not care about AI. It likely means those job descriptions were written before the expectation became standard, or that those companies have separated the AI question from the storytelling hire. Either way, it confirms that there is no single industry standard yet for how AI fits into this role.

KEY INSIGHT

The question is no longer whether a Head of Storytelling needs to understand AI. Sixteen out of twenty-five job descriptions in this set assume they will. The question is which version of that requirement applies: AI as a production toolkit, AI as a new distribution landscape, or AI as the core product being adopted and explained. Those are three meaningfully different jobs, and the market has not yet settled on one answer.

Insights

Each finding in this report answers a specific question. Together they answer a different one: what is this function actually for, and why is it appearing now?

The instinct, reading these job descriptions, is to see a creative hire. Someone who raises the quality of the company's communications, sets an editorial bar, and makes the storytelling sharper. The skills data makes that reading difficult to sustain. Strategic thinking and writing craft lead the chart, as expected. But the three skills that appear in twelve of fifteen job descriptions are executive communication, cross-functional collaboration, and team and people leadership. Those are not creative capabilities. They are the capabilities of someone who changes how an organisation operates.

The person these companies are actually hiring does not primarily produce. They align. They establish a single clear narrative and make it legible to everyone from the sales team to the board. They sit in product reviews not to write the announcement but to ask what the announcement needs to say for the strategy to land. The output is not a piece of content. It is coherence.

The findings reinforce each other when read together. Finding 01 maps six different reporting lines with no pattern across twenty-one job descriptions. Finding 04 shows the most demanded skills are all alignment and influence capabilities. These two facts point to the same conclusion: this role exists to solve an organisational fragmentation problem, and different companies are placing it wherever they feel that fragmentation most acutely. The org chart placement is not a detail. It is the company's theory of where the gap lives.

The salary data and industry spread carry a related message. A \$234,000 range at a single company is not a compensation band. It is an organisation that has not had a decisive internal conversation about what this work is worth. Twenty-one different job descriptions and not one shared title is not variety. It is a function that has not yet developed institutional language for itself. These are signals of the same condition: a professional category being invented in real time, without precedent, without established frameworks, and without a settled sense of what success looks like.

The companies that will get the most from this hire are the ones that answer one question before they write the brief: what problem are we actually trying to solve? Not what content do we want to produce, but what gap between what we have built and what the world understands has become too costly to leave open. That answer shapes the scope, the reporting line, the success metrics, and ultimately the kind of person who will thrive in the role.

These companies are not hiring a storyteller. They are hiring someone to make the whole company tell the same story.

Predictions

The data in this report describes where the Head of Storytelling function is today. The pattern it reveals makes several things about where it is heading reasonably predictable.

The titles will converge

There are currently twenty-one job descriptions in this dataset and not one shared title. That will not persist. As the role professionalises and hiring managers develop clearer frameworks for what they are buying, the vocabulary will narrow. The most likely outcome is a small cluster of titles: Chief Storytelling Officer at the executive level, Head of Narrative or VP of Narrative one tier below. The current diversity of naming reflects a function still working out its identity. Convergence will follow once a critical mass of companies have run this hire and compared notes on what worked.

The salary floor will rise

Wide salary ranges are a symptom of institutional uncertainty. When companies cannot define success metrics for a role, they struggle to defend a number in a compensation conversation. As clearer frameworks emerge for what this function delivers and how to measure it, the pricing will tighten and the floor will lift. The companies currently paying at the lower end of the range are, in most cases, the ones least clear about what they are hiring for. That ambiguity is expensive in a different way: it attracts the wrong candidates and produces worse outcomes.

AI raises the value of this role rather than reducing it

The obvious assumption is that AI, by automating content production, reduces the need for senior narrative leadership. The opposite is more likely. When content is cheap to produce, the competitive advantage shifts entirely to whether the content says the right thing. Volume no longer differentiates. Precision does. The strategic layer of the Head of Storytelling function, the judgment about what the narrative should be and how it should work across the organisation, becomes more valuable as execution becomes commoditised. The companies that understand this will invest more in the role. The ones that do not will automate their way into more efficient incoherence.

The function will move up the org chart

Several companies in this dataset already place the role at executive or near-executive level. That will become more common. A narrative function without access to the rooms where strategy is made cannot do the work. The Head of Storytelling needs to be in the product review, the sales kickoff, the board preparation. As companies discover that lower placement produces weaker outcomes, the reporting line will migrate upward. The Chief Storytelling Officer title, still rare, will become more recognisable over the next five years.

More industries will follow

The nineteen industries in this dataset are not the limit. They are the early adopters. The pattern behind their diversity is consistent: this function appears wherever products are complex, markets are competitive on clarity rather than features, and the cost of internal narrative fragmentation has become visible. That description fits a far wider set of industries than the ones represented here. Manufacturing, professional services, education technology, climate tech, and infrastructure software all meet these criteria and are underrepresented in the current data. The next wave of these hires is already forming.

The alignment framing will replace the creative framing

The most consequential shift will be in how companies conceptualise the role before they hire for it. Right now, most briefs are written through a creative lens: the candidate is evaluated on editorial instinct and writing quality, and the role is scoped around content outputs. That framing produces a certain kind of hire that solves a certain kind of problem, and leaves the deeper fragmentation intact. As more companies run this experiment and compare results, the framing will shift. The ones that treat this as an organisational alignment function, and give it the access and authority that requires, will build something durable. That outcome, repeated often enough, will change how the next generation of briefs gets written.

What Three Months of Fractional Storytelling Looks Like

Most B2B companies have a version of the same problem. They can describe what their product does. They struggle to explain why it matters in terms their buyers actually use.

This gap tends to widen as the product grows. More features, more use cases, more audiences, and a communications layer that lags behind, still shaped by whoever wrote the first pitch deck.

Even when a company has done the hard work of brand positioning, knowing their market, their competitors, and their ambitions, what often remains missing is the connective layer between that strategic clarity and the way the team actually talks about the product day to day.

This was the position Joyce Kremer, Head of Marketing at Ingrid, was in when we first spoke. She had a deadline in the calendar: a major conference launch. She wanted to arrive at it with a product narrative that was not just ready for the event, but clear and compelling enough to be used consistently across all teams long after it.

We worked together on a three-part process: a month to discover the narrative, a month to define it, and a month to deliver it across sales enablement.

Month One: Discovery

The first stage was listening. But listening well requires preparation.

Before any conversations took place, all existing discovery materials were compiled and analysed: previous positioning documents, sales decks, website copy, customer research, and internal strategy work. AI was used to surface patterns and expose gaps. The goal was to understand what was already known before entering the room, so that conversations could focus entirely on what was not.

The people being interviewed had almost certainly answered broad discovery questions before, for agencies, for consultants, for new hires. These were not those conversations. Each question existed because existing materials could not answer it. That kept the sessions short, focused, and useful for the people giving their time.

Twelve conversations took place across the company: with the founder, the VP of Growth, sales leadership, customer success, product, and marketing. Directed conversations designed to surface the language that already existed inside the business. The phrases people reached for when explaining something they cared about. The tensions that had never quite been named.

Ingrid is a complex platform spanning the entire customer journey, from product discovery through checkout, tracking, transport, and returns. The company had deep domain expertise. What it had not yet done was extract that expertise into a narrative that non-technical buyers could follow as easily as technical ones.

"By letting you talk to them, it's the most efficient and highest quality way of giving you access to that expertise and knowledge, to actually embed that in the product narrative."

Joyce Kremer, Head of Marketing, Ingrid

A narrative that a company will genuinely own has to begin from what the company already knows. The role of the Fractional Head of Storytelling at this stage is not to arrive with a story ready-made. It is to find the signal that already exists inside the organisation and give it a structure the whole business can work from.

The conversations also solved a practical problem. Getting alignment across leadership, sales, product, and marketing typically takes months of internal back and forth. Because the right people were involved from the start, the feedback and iteration cycle that followed took two to three weeks, not two to three months.

Month Two: Definition

With the interviews synthesised, three prototype narrative directions were presented to the Ingrid team. Each had a distinct angle, a working headline, and a short narrative arc.

The team scored them together, openly, with each department scoring independently before results were compared. The purpose was not to reach a quick consensus. It was to expose blind spots and surface assumptions that had never been formally tested. Across engagements, departments score the same narrative directions with an average gap of 19 per cent. That gap is where the most important conversations happen.

At Ingrid, the scoring revealed the smaller details all departments agreed on, even where they diverged on the bigger directions. Those points of shared conviction became the foundation of the final narrative. When it was presented for sign-off, it did not feel like a new story from an outside voice. Teams could see their own feedback and fingerprints throughout it.

"By creating the content and the material, we could feel organically that one version was working better than the other, and we started to use certain phrases and elements more naturally than others."

Joyce Kremer

One shift in particular became the clearest signal that the direction was right. Ingrid had long described itself as a delivery experience platform. Through the narrative work, it became clear the story sat somewhere more precise: intelligence, not just experience. The phrase delivery intelligence platform was introduced.

What confirmed it was not a boardroom decision. People across the company began using the new phrase in their own conversations before it had been officially adopted. That is usually the most reliable indicator that a narrative is working. Not sign-off. Organic use.

Month Three: Delivery

The final month was about making the narrative usable.

One of the most common mistakes in product narrative work, made by in-house teams and agencies alike, is treating sign-off as the finish line. A document gets approved, shared across teams, and filed away. That is not success. Success is when the narrative is visibly reflected across every brand touchpoint.

At Ingrid, that meant building a full set of tools from the narrative foundation: value-based messaging for every product feature across ten product areas; a sales message house with opening hooks, objection responses, and product talking points; a strategic brief for the ingrid.com landing page redesign; a custom AI messaging agent trained on the narrative and ready to deploy; and a structured handover board so the team could navigate and apply the work independently.

"You were really an extension of the team, really allowing her to scale up her work. The systems you built, the agentic flows, the messaging frameworks, the website review. It was more like a pressure cooker with a lot of results."

Joyce Kremer

"I'm pretty confident we would have not made the deadline if we did not bring you in on a fractional role."

Joyce Kremer

A narrative is not a document

The most common point of failure in product narrative work is not the quality of the story. It is what happens after the story is approved.

A document gets signed off, shared in a Slack channel, and added to a folder most people will never open again. The narrative exists. The business keeps communicating the same way it always did.

Nothing changes.

This is why the finish line for this kind of engagement is not sign-off. It is consistency. The narrative has done its job when it is visibly present across every touchpoint the business owns: the website, the product pages, the sales script, the conference booth, the pitch deck, the way a salesperson opens a call on a Tuesday afternoon.

At Ingrid, the narrative built over three months is now the active foundation for everything the company communicates. Not a reference document. Not a style guide. The starting point for every campaign, every launch, every conversation with a prospective customer.

That is what a product narrative is supposed to do.

Closing

The most interesting thing about these roles is not any single one of them. It is the pattern.

Twenty-five job descriptions. Twenty-one industries. Six different reporting lines. All hiring for the same function, all for the same reason: the gap between what they have built and what the world understands has become too costly to ignore.

That gap has always existed. What is new is that companies are starting to name it, treat it as structural rather than executional, and hire for it at a level of seniority that gives it a real chance of being fixed.

This is not a creative role. It is an alignment role. The companies in this report do not need someone to generate stories. They already have products, vision, and ambition. What they need is someone who can translate all of that into one narrative the whole company can tell, and their customers actually believe. The skills that show up most consistently are not about craft. They are about influence, coordination, and the ability to work across functions, levels, and audiences until everyone is pointing in the same direction.

This report will grow. More job descriptions, more salary data, and interviews with people doing this work at the highest level. If you would like to contribute, share a role, or talk about what this function looks like inside your organisation, get in touch.

Hire a fractional head of storytelling

Work with Elliott on a bi-weekly or intensive engagement to build, align, and embed your product narrative across marketing, sales, and product.

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Book a product narrative workshop

A focused session for your team to discover, define, and deliver the narrative your company should be telling. Tailored to your product, your market, and your moment.

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About the author

Elliott Rayner is a Fractional Head of Storytelling and the author of *The Story Engine*. He spent a decade in the sports industry at Adidas and ASICS before leading marketing in tech at Babbel and ARION. He now helps growth-stage companies build the narrative foundation that makes their whole organisation tell the same story.