

THE UPLIFT × BREAK THE MOLD

Rethinking finance through foresight.

Endorsed by the UNESCO Chair of Future Studies · Featured as a case study by Sohail Inayatullah, creator of Causal Layered Analysis

CASE STUDY

Catalyst Now — Feb 2026

Storytelling as a Foresight Tool for Entrepreneurs Raising Capital

What happens when entrepreneurs stop pitching and start telling the story only they can tell.

23

Participants

4.8/5

Satisfaction score

100%

Would recommend

A direct Break the Mold fellowship application came in before the session ended.

That's what narrative-first looks like in practice.

THE BRIEF

Catalyst Now invited Clémence Betesuku — Co-Founder of Break the Mold and Founder of The Uplift — to deliver a workshop for African francophone entrepreneurs looking to raise capital.

The challenge: most entrepreneurs in the impact space default to pitching — presenting data, metrics, and business models. But the entrepreneurs who actually open doors are the ones who make investors and partners feel something first.

The question the workshop set out to answer:

How do you tell the story only you can tell — in a way that makes the right people want to be part of it?

THE APPROACH

The workshop applied a foresight-inspired framework to entrepreneurial storytelling — shifting participants away from linear pitch logic toward narrative architecture. The core insight:

Think of your storytelling as a movie trailer.

Not a summary. Not a pitch deck. A trailer that makes people lean forward.

The three-act structure introduced:

- › Début — establish the world as it is and the tension that exists within it
- › Élément perturbateur — the disruption, the problem, the moment everything changed
- › Horizon — the future you're building toward, and why you're the one to build it

CLA applied to entrepreneurial storytelling:

Layer 1 — Litany: "Here is my business model" → The classic pitch. Necessary but not sufficient.

Layer 2 — Social: "Here is why investors should trust me" → Implicit expectations about credibility.

Layer 3 — Structural: "Here are the biases keeping me from being heard" → e.g. having to prove twice as much as others.

Layer 4 — Mythic: "Here is the future I want to create — and why it matters to you" → **The trailer. The vision that makes people want to be part of it.**

Dominique's journey — from Ouagadougou to the TED Countdown Global Stage — was used as a live case study throughout. He didn't open doors because of his slides. He opened them because his story made people feel: "I want to be part of this future."

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID

✓ What landed

- › The clear distinction between storytelling and pitch
- › The three-act structure — simple and immediately applicable
- › Dominique's story as a concrete, inspiring example
- › The emotional connection angle
- › The interactive format and group exchanges

→ What they asked for next

- › More hands-on exercises to apply the structure to their own projects
- › Follow-up sessions to work on pitch after storytelling
- › More time for personalised feedback

Coordinator feedback (Ingrid Yitamben, Catalyst Now):

"Les retours des participants ont été extrêmement positifs, et l'engagement observé pendant la session en est une belle preuve."

— Ingrid Yitamben, Regional Coordinator, Catalyst Now

THE OUTCOME

4.8/5

Recommendation score

1

Direct BTM application during the session

YT

Session recorded — coming to YouTube

Want to bring this workshop to your ecosystem?

The Uplift delivers storytelling and foresight workshops for entrepreneurs, ecosystems, and organizations navigating systems change.

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