HATTAWAY
COMMUNICATIONS

THE COMMUNICATIONS
NETWORK

Storytelling for Good

Workbook

Strategy

AUDIENCE and OBJECTIVES

Strategic storytelling begins with an understanding of the people you need to motivate and mobilize for your cause. Focus first on the people who have something at stake in the issue and have a real role to play in achieving your goals. Consider them your priority audience. Answer these questions:

Who needs to take action?

What actions do they need to take?

CREATING YOUR NARRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Your narrative framework will guide you developing individual stories to ensure they all work together to advance a similar set of ideas. That's how strategic storytelling helps you achieve your objectives.

The exercises below will guide you in mapping out a set of ideas that motivate people to support your cause or organization.

PEOPLE

The exercise prompts you to think about people connected to your cause in different ways—people you serve, people who support the cause, and people within your organization. You might share stories about all of these people, when you're looking to raise money, recruit volunteers, attract employees, or other objectives. See if you can think of aspirations, values, and personal traits that are common to all of them.

People You Serve
Think about the people you serve. What are they like as people?

People Who Support the Cause

Think about people who support the work, like donors and volunteers. What are they like as people?

People in Your Organization

Think about the people in your organization. What are they like as people?

Tip: Note a few personal values and/or positive traits that might be common among all of the people involved in your cause.

GOALS

Imagine how people's lives will change if their goals are achieved. Write words and phrases that describe the future in vivid terms, which means they evoke images of people, places, things, and actions. Avoid abstract language, which does not evoke images.

For example, a program that serves low-income people describes their goal as "have a good home and provide for their families." You can picture homes and families. An abstract term for this kind of goal is "financial security." It's an important idea, but those words are difficult to visualize.

You can try a visual exercise to get started: Draw a picture that shows what people's lives will look like when your work is successful. Then you can put words to that vision.

What are the goals of the people you serve?

PROBLEMS

There are two angles to consider when describing problems: People need to understand both the cause and the consequences.

Sometimes, we tend to talk about problems at a surface level. In the case of an anti-poverty program, that might sound like this: "The problem is people are poor." That's not a useful problem statement, because it doesn't speak to the cause or consequences.

A more motivating message about the problem facing low-income people is: "Their jobs don't pay enough (cause), so their families struggle to make ends meet (consequence). Anti-poverty programs help them learn valuable skills and earn more money."

Poverty is a complex problem, and anti-poverty programs do many things to address it. But this simple message presents the problem and solution in a simple, straightforward way.

What problem stands between the people you serve and their goals?

What is the cause of this problem? Consider the work your organization actually does.

What are the consequences of this problem? In other words, how does it affect people's lives?

SOLUTIONS

What is your solution to the problem?

How does your solution benefit individuals?

How does your solution benefit the community and/or society?

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

Complete the narrative framework with a few key words that work together.

People

Goals

Problems

Solutions

Tip: You can explore different directions for your framework. Try out a few different versions and see what clicks. You might have one framework for all of the storytelling about your organization's work, which is helpful for building a strong brand. You might use different versions for different audiences and issues.

CRAFTING A STRATEGIC STORY

You'll use a grid like the one below to craft a strategic story, drawing from your narrative framework. On the left, you'll see the ideas from the narrative framework. On the right, you'll see how the user brings those ideas to life.

This tool adds several elements to help you flesh out your story, including a lesson and a call to action.

The lesson is the big idea you want people to take away from your story. Storytelling research has shown that stating your takeaway up front can help your audience understand and remember the point of the story.

The call to action is an invitation to take a specific action. When you have people's attention, you need to seize the moment and tell them how they can help.

There are many ways to tell a story. Your story could be told in first person, meaning the person is telling their own story, or in third person, with a narrator telling it. You might include a lot of detail that paints a vivid picture of the people, places, and things.

Tip: Pictures make your stories more powerful. You can also use this tool to think about images that bring different aspects of the story to life.

AUDIENCE AND OBJECTIVE Who is this story for? What do you need them to do?	
LESSON What's the big idea you need them to take away?	
PEOPLE Who are the people in the story?	

GOAL What do they hope to achieve?	
PROBLEMS What obstacle(s) do they face?	
SOLUTIONS How do they overcome the obstacle(s)?	
IMPACT How are lives changing as a result?	
CALL TO ACTION What specific action can people take to support the cause?	

Content

SOCIAL IMPACT STORY MAP

CHARACTER & SETTING

Tip: It's important to consider who will tell the story and how their point of view will affect the narrative. Is the narrator part of the story, or external to it? Is he or she watching the story unfold, or looking back on something that has already happened?

Who is the main character in your story?

Tip: The most effective stories are told from the perspective of an individual. Describe the person and the situation they find themselves in at the beginning of the story.

Who are the other characters in your story?

Tip: Describe other individuals who play meaningful roles in the story.

Now, let's create your Social Impact Story Map.
Answer the following questions to guide your story development.

Eyes Opened: How were your main character's eyes opened to the need?

Tip: Recreate the moment when the person realized that something needed to be done. This can help your audience experience the "eye-opening" moment as well. You could think of it as the problem or solution.

Doubts Arise: What doubts or concerns did they have prior to taking action?

Tip: State the doubts or concerns in the voice of the main character: What would he or she say?

Solutions Emerge: What idea, inspiration or change occurred that pointed toward a possible solution?

First Steps: What was the first step taken by your main character?
What was their ultimate goal?

OBSTACLES AND ALLIES

Obstacles Encountered: What challenges or obstacles did the characters encounter?

Allies Join: What allies joined the work? What role did they play?

Tip: Show people involved in creating solutions to their own problems—as well as others who supported the cause. Who is telling your story?

Action Taken: What other actions or steps were taken after the allies joined?

Breakthrough occurs: What breakthrough occurred that helped the characters realize that they could overcome the obstacle?

IMPACT

Lives are Changed: What was the impact on people's lives?

Lessons Shared: Are there lessons to be shared from the story?

Tip: Think of a specific lesson that the audience can take away from your story—and a specific action they can take to help the cause.

Call to Action: What actions can your audience take to help advance the cause?

Tip: Your story has inspired and informed people—what can they do to help?