Nonprofit Story Telling: An Essential Capacity Builder Skill

Texas CASA Webinar
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Biography

- 10 years corporate marketing, public relations, advertising (psychiatric hospitals, DFW Tourism)
- **Carter BloodCare**, *Marketing Director*
- **Dallas Zoo**, *Graphics Specialist*
- **Dallas Public Library**, *Volunteer Coordinator*
- **Volunteer Center of North Texas** – *Agency Relations Director*
- **Austin Public Library Foundation** – *Executive Director*
- **TANO** – *Community Outreach Director*
- **San Antonio Area Foundation** – *Curriculum Development Director*
- **501c³ - Taking Nonprofits to the Third Power**
- – *Passionate Nonprofit Expert*
- **Leadership Texas Class of 2015**
A Few of Our Clients...

- Texas CASA
- US Tennis Association (USTA)
- Meals on Wheels of America
- Texas Association of Museums
- Habitat for Humanity Texas
- Arkansas Literacy Coalition
- Keep Texas Beautiful
- Literacy Texas
- Texas Library Association
- Healy Murphy Center
- San Antonio Nonprofit Council
- Florida Festivals & Events
Our Goals Today

- Think about using your organization’s stories more effectively
- Take action and test out some new ideas ASAP
  - Only way to improve is to test
  - Pick one or two ideas and try them
  - Small actions can have big results
Best Practices?

❖ A “best practice” = what works in your org

❖ Its like a buffet
  ❖ Try and few things and see if you like them
  ❖ If it works, go back for more
  ❖ If not, try something else

❖ Testing is the key
Why Story Telling?

- Your nonprofits most valuable asset.
- Story. Telling.
- It’s natural.
- We do it anyway – might as well be intentional
- Inspires action, creates change. Stories move people so we can use them to mobilize support for our mission.
- Will any story do? Effective stories are strategic and authentic.
- Stories are Memorable. This is how history was handed down for generations.
KNOW THAT YOU MADE AN IMPACT

TAKE ACTION!
Know Your Audience

- Not just *who* is your audience but also...
- What they want to know
- What do they need to know
- What do they find interesting
- How can you create an emotional experience for them
Experience vs. Words

- Know your target audience

- Why do your readers care?
Hyperbole vs. Jargon

- Outcome are good but don’t forget the “why”
- Separate yourself from other nonprofits
- What do you want your readers to feel?
“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”

-- Maya Angelou
Just the Facts

What donors want to hear about:
- Organizational Impact (80%)
- Success Stories (74%)
- More details about the organization (71%)
- Info on financial accountability (43%)

- Community Philanthropy 2.0 survey
“Facts don’t have the power to change someone’s story. Your goal is to introduce a new story that will let your facts in.”

-- Annette Simmons
What Should Your Audience Do?

- Start with the end in mind.
- Donation is not always the answer.
  - Inspire one person...
    - Motivate them to action...
    - Motivate them to inspire others...
  - Create Acumen!
Develop Real Acumen

- Do more than inspire...
  - First - Motivate your “evangelists” to share your story
  - Then - Motivate the friends of your evangelists to share your story!
- Social media! Create ambassadors with a RT or Share – be sure to say thanks!
- Encourage others to “Pay it Forward”

http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/nonprofit-marketingimpact-content-list
Keep The Real Goal in Mind

- Advocate recruitment?
- Donor development?
- Community outreach?
CREATE STORIES THAT INSPIRE
How to Find Stories

- Anywhere and everywhere
  - Just keep your ears open
  - Brainstorm in staff meetings

- Ask for them from...
  - Staff, clients, donors, sponsors
  - Ask - Why do you ________?
Craft Better Stories

- Highlight the visual AND emotional content
  - Focus on images that create emotion
  - Watch TV commercials for clues
  - Remember, emotion first >> then rationality

- Individual stories are more powerful
  - Always relate back to the individual
Laws of Storytelling

- Stories are about people.
  - Include your characters’ name “Ann” “Billy”

- The people in your story have to want something.
  - Beware of the passive voice!

- Stories need to be fixed in time and space.
  - Once your audience gets their bearings, they stop wondering about the where and when of your story and more readily follow you into the deeper meaning within.
Laws of Storytelling

- Let your characters speak for themselves.
  - Lends immediacy and urgency to the piece.
- Audiences bore easily.
- Stories speak the audience’s language.
  - Plain speaking is the order of the day.
  - Good storytellers also have a keen ear for the colloquialisms and local slang that quickly establish common ground between the teller and listener.
Laws of Storytelling

- **Stories stir up emotions.**
  - Not intended to be manipulative
  - Deliver message this is worth your attention.

- **Stories have at least one “moment of truth.”**
  - The best stories show us something about how we should treat ourselves, how we should treat other people, or how we should treat the world around us.

- **Stories have clear meaning.**
  - When the final line is spoken, your audience should know exactly why they took this journey with you.
  - “What was that story all about?”
Laws of Storytelling

- Nonprofits that switch from tragedies to happy endings are more successful
- Every story has a hero – usually person who got participant involved
- Create a story telling culture and everyone will want to tell your story
- Easiest way to get stakeholders to tell your story is to ask them why they got involved
CREATE A CULTURE OF STORYTELLING
Get Your House in Order

- How does your organization describe itself?
- Is your story consistent?
- Is your story compelling? Does it allow for the imagination?
- What language are you using to draw people to take action?
- Test different messages to identify what causes an effect.
Incorporate into Agency Culture

- Like yoga – it’s your practice.
- Be patient.
- What are you sharing? What are you not sharing?
- How do you describe your mission to others?
- How do you explain your organization in introductions?
- Continue to evolve.
Develop Evangelists

- Board Members
- Volunteers
- Donors
- Staff
- Clients
Learn From Others

- Ask your evangelists to explain your mission.
- Do they have a story they are already telling?
- Listen how others explain your mission.
- Use social media to “hear” your mission.
Laws of Storytelling for Funding

Peer-to-Peer Fundraising:

- When a participant beats their goal – increase it to challenge themselves again – they easily get more donations

- Supporters who turn their fundraising journey into storytelling and tell about their progress and success through words, photos and video – raise more!

http://donordrive.com/blog/the-6-most-important-facts-about-nonprofit-storytelling-from-our-free-ebook
Recap: Cultivate a Culture of Story Telling

- Look for stories, everywhere!
- Is your story consistent, compelling inspires imagination?
- Test. Test. Test.
- Empower others to tell your story.
- Listen.
- Move from inspiration to acumen.
“Perfection is attained not where there is no longer anything to add but when there is no longer anything to take away.”

-- Antoine de Saint Exupery
SEIZE ATTENTION OF A DISTRACTED AUDIENCE
How to Get Attention

- A story has a beginning, middle, and end. Talking heads are not stories.

- The best stories are the ones that you remember and moves you to share again or take action.

- Don’t make your story about your org, make it about your cause and clients.

- Storytelling shouldn’t live with marketing team. Employees, clients, supporters, all can contribute to a culture of storytelling

- How to get staff stories or other stories out? Pair people up with volunteer transcribers, recorders.
Video Storytelling

- Which medium to use for storytelling? How to choose? Use video for “motion and emotion”.

- For viral video goals, statistics show that maximum 1-2 minutes works. You lose viewers every 10-20 seconds.

- Make the link between the person watching the video and who they are watching = compelling

- Simple stories are the best & don’t be afraid to fail.
Types of Stories

- The Success Story
  - #1 best way to start
  - Best way to show what you do and WHY

- The Why We Do What We Do
  - Simon Sinek video
  - What makes you remarkable / different

Imagine a world...
Types of Stories

- **Staff Stories**
  - Show the passion
  - Why are they here and what do they do
  - Testimonials from clients / success stories

- **Cautionary Tale**
  - What can happen if we don’t do what we do
  - Working together we can keep this from happening
“Staying vulnerable is a risk we have to take if we want to experience connection.”

-- Brene Brown
“If I look at the mass I will never act; if I look at one I will.”

-- Mother Theresa
Recap: Developing Your Story

❖ Who are you trying to attract?

❖ Why do they already care or should start to care?

❖ What do you want them to feel?

❖ How can you tell a story that inspires action?

❖ Your story is not so much about what but why
Nonprofit Resources
Storytelling Resources

- **Storytellers for Good** – Cara Jones
- **Nonprofits that know how to tell a good story** - [http://jcsocialmarketing.com/tag/nonprofit-storytelling](http://jcsocialmarketing.com/tag/nonprofit-storytelling)
- **Story vs Article** - [http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/go-beyond-blogging-how-to-become-a-great-storyteller](http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/go-beyond-blogging-how-to-become-a-great-storyteller)
- **Hubspot.com**
Made to Stick – Heath Brothers

- **Simple** — Find the core of any idea
- **Unexpected** — Grab people's attention by surprising them
- **Concrete** — Make sure an idea can be grasped and remembered later
- **Credible** — Give an idea believability
- **Emotional** — Help people see the importance of an idea
- **Stories** — Empower people to use an idea through narrative
Deep Dive!

PRESENTERS: Tom Ahern, Jeff Brooks, Shanon Doolittle, Leah Eustace, Peter Drury, Harvey McKinnon, Jen Love, Vanessa Chase, Marc A. Pitman, Tammy Zonker, R. Trent Thompson, Steven Screen, and Chris Davenport

WHERE: Hyatt at Olive 8, Seattle

www.NonprofitStorytellingConference.com
Real Examples of Acumen in Action

- Invisible Children
- Charity: water
- Share Our Strength
- Splash

- Highlight their impact.
- Transparent operations.
- Connect individual actions with tangible outcomes.
- Create a sense that each stakeholder is critical to success.
- Leverage a blend of inbound marketing techniques providing a robust, immersive experience to empower supporters.
Favorite Nonprofit Websites

- GrantStation – www.grantstation.com
- Chronicle of Philanthropy - www.philanthropy.com
- Nonprofit Quarterly - www.nonprofitquarterly.org
- Blue Avocado – www.blueavocado.org
- BoardSource - www.boardsource.org
- Idealware – www.idealware.org
- TechSoup – www.techsoup.org
- Nonprofit Risk Management Center – www.nonprofitrisk.org
- Independent Sector – www.independentsector.org
- C-Forward – www.cforward.org
- Texas C-Bar – www.texascbar.org
Volunteer Management Services
LeadershipPlenty Modules
Nonprofit Management Courses
Strategic Planning
Succession Planning
Change Management
Advocacy
Understanding the Nonprofit Sector
Social Media & Marketing Courses

Our services start with a free conversation to access your situation; together we then determine what elements of support you may need and provide you with an individualized proposal based on those needs and budget. Through our skilled diagnosis, we ensure that you receive the level of support you need at a price your agency can afford.

Our mission is to Unleash the Power of the Nonprofit Community by generating Confidence, Competence and Collaborations!
Programs for Conferences and Resource Centers
Customized Programs for Individual Nonprofits
Strategic Initiative Retreats for Nonprofit Boards
Nonprofit Interventions for Staff, Boards and Volunteers
Certified ToPs (Technology of Participation) Facilitations
Qualified LeadershipPlenty Courses
Constant Contact - Authorized Local Expert
Certified CCAT (Core Capacity Assessment Tool) Evaluations
Association Management Consulting Targeting Membership Growth Dynamics
Volunteer Program Assessments

*Free* Nonprofit Career Counseling for Universities as well as Individuals

*Free* Nonprofit Referrals and Resources
Free Advice and Counsel

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