Your Personal Story

What is the story of how you came to work for/support your organization?
What is the story of why you decided to work for/support your organization?
What is the story of an experience that made you say, “I want to support this organization” or “I am committed to this organization”
What is the story of your growth or evolution in your organization
What is the story of an experience that affirmed your commitment to your organization?
What is a story?
“Mirror neurons in our brains re-create for us the distress we see on the screen. We have empathy for the fictional characters—we know how they’re feeling—because we literally experience the same feelings ourselves.”

– Marco Iacoboni, Mirror Neuron Researcher
Throughout History, Stories ...

Pass on values and culture
Teach important lessons
Warn others of danger
Explain complicated or abstract ideas and make them memorable
Persuade and inspire

*story first*
What makes an effective story?

Defined audience
Clear purpose
Change
Defined Audience

Who do you think your story really speaks to? What are some of the defining characteristics of the ideal audience for that story? Why?

Who else do you think your story speaks to? Why?

What do you know about this audience? What kinds of stories do you think they are most receptive to?

story first
Clear Purpose

What do you want?

What are you asking for?

What response do you want from your audience?

story first
Clear Purpose

What story to tell

How to tell it

When to tell it

story first
Change

What is the change that happens in your story?
Does your story do justice to that transformation?
What is at stake in this story?
Why should I pay attention?
Why should I get emotionally invested?

story first
Becoming a Storytelling Organization

Gather
Develop
Tell

story first
Gather

There is no storytelling silver bullet
You can tell the stories of others
Others can tell your stories
Think like a journalist with a beat

story first
WE ARE FAMILY
A great team, women-owned status and major construction contract jump-started New Jersey’s Potty Pros
Page 14

EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY
Louisiana’s Event Solutions sets the table for the world’s biggest Creole cookout
Page 30

PRODUCT FOCUS
Temporary Site Services – Traffic Control, VIP/Special Events Page 30
Identify Potential Sources

Donors — New and long-time
Volunteers — New and long-time
Staff — New and long-time
Quiet people
Beneficiaries
Becoming a Storytelling Organization

Create a story library, for yourself and the organization
Establish a process to draw out stories
Establish a process to capture and share stories
"There were plenty of times I wanted to leave St. Louis, but I did end up staying. I went to SLU for undergrad, and I went to UMSL for grad school. I’m ‘so St. Louis,’ as they say. I’ve been here since day one. I take vacations sometimes, but there’s something to staying home. St. Louis has produced so many outstanding people across institutions, across racial lines. Very talented, multifaceted pe... See More — with Faybra Hemphil."
Develop

For every story you gather:

Clarify your audience
Clarify your purpose
Clarify the change
Story Structure

Beginning › Middle › End
Before › Transformation › Now
Problem › Transformation › Resolution

story first
Tell

Website
Text
Video
Photo
Direct mail

Email
Social media
Grant applications
Face to face

story first
Becoming a Storytelling Organization

Narrative establishment
Narrative awareness
Narrative alignment
Becoming a Storytelling Organization

Stories …

Remind you of your purpose
Reinforce the culture of the organization
Reiterate your value to your audiences
Becoming a Storytelling Organization

You already are a part of a storytelling organization.

Is your organization telling stories by design, or by default?

story first
Thank you!

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