

FEATURE

Marketing 101 Tell Your Story

Words have power. Does your organization take advantage of that? I don't mean to discount the importance of the numbers you share with your audience. Being able to apply hard facts and figures to the work done by you and your colleagues is a quick, impactful way to show the good you do in the world. But explaining the driving force behind that data requires you to hearken back to something almost all of us experienced as kids: story time.

Good stories are easy to remember. They resonate with you. They jump to the front of your memory at the slightest reminder. They make a connection. Shouldn't those be the goals your organization strives for every time it sends a communication? You need to stick in your audience's minds and give them a reason to retain your information rather than discard it.

Whether you're talking about your charity's founding, its mission or recent success stories, there's a general blueprint you can use:

1. **Exposition.** This is where you outline background information, such as the challenge your organization works to overcome.
2. **Rising action.** Talk about the incidents along the way that made things difficult.

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3. **Climax/crisis.** Here's your turning point, the moment when things start to go in your favor.
4. **Falling action.** The conflict you set up earlier plays out, allowing you to outline exactly how you cleared the obstacle.
5. **Resolution.** The tension you built during your story finally gets released, and the audience feels good about the outcome.

This is the basic outline of just about every story, but it's crucial that you make it your own. You know the details of your cause better than anyone. You know who the heroes are and the actions they took to overcome the villains. Give your audience something to cheer for, and you'll also give them a story to remember.

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