

The 4 Essentials to Telling Your Story

Whether you're looking to define your organization's story for the past year or strategizing how to communicate what's to come, there are a few crucial steps you can take to ensure that you're hitting all the right points. The below will serve as a checklist to ensure that you're providing the right context for your audience and ready to answer any questions from potential donors, partners or your board.

1

Start collecting information ASAP - and never stop.

A story is nothing without content, and examples are the best way to get your ideas across and to resonate with your audience. The more information you can collect from the communities you work with the better. Gather data through surveys, interviews, experts in the field, public data, and local and national articles about your issue area. These details can guide the narrative of your story, working your way to the big reveal - the positive outcomes your work is driving!

Remember - stories can continue to evolve. Make sure you're not limiting your information collection to one or two times a year when you need it for a presentation or fundraising campaign.



Product shortcut: The UpMetrics platform now makes it easy to save any article or web page that you think would contribute to the narrative of your story. On any browser, simply bookmark the URL, and you'll see that page on your Stories tab moving forward! In Chrome, it's even easier - download the Chrome extension and click any time you want to add what you're looking at to the platform.

2

Make it relevant.

These real examples and other information around your programs can directly support another key element of storytelling. You want the audience to resonate with your story so they're more likely to stay engaged. The best way to do this is connecting the story to something they care about or something that displays the importance of the work that you're doing. Never assume they can make the connection themselves, even if you think the need is obvious. Providing your stakeholders with stories and information helps them become more empowered advocates of your work.

The content you bookmark while exploring news websites or research publications can support this effort. Articles or references to current events can help explain why your organization's story may have shifted slightly for a period of time. 2020 and the impact of the pandemic is an excellent example. If your organization pivoted, use reputable sources to show why.

3

Connect the quantitative data to the qualitative.

The qualitative data - pictures, quotes, and anecdotes - serve as the backbone for any story. But to truly create a narrative that will not just delight the audience but also ignite action, you need to incorporate the numbers. Quantitative data can make the connection for the reader between your activity and the results that are shown with the qualitative data, showing causation. It displays confidence in the actions taken, taking the audience along a journey for how you intentionally got to your desired outcomes.



Product shortcut: With the UpMetrics platform, your impact organization can utilize dashboards to track progress toward your goals using data from multiple sources. These visuals provide clear views into the quantitative results you're seeing with your work. To complete the story, you can then layer in story points that give the details or context behind those numbers. Manually add them, like photos from a 5k fundraiser that explains a spike in fundraising dollars - or use the bookmark functionality to add in relevant news articles like a feature on your impact organization in a local publication, leading to more donations.

4

Group story points into collections.

As you prepare to share your story across different channels, to various audiences, you'll want to be able to focus on the correct narrative for that environment. Creating collections of stories is especially helpful if your organization works in multiple issue areas. Highlighting areas that are relevant is the optimal way to engage your audience and to build a personal connection. To do this easily, without pulling out a selection of data points and trying to make them fit into a narrative each time, group data into categories. These categories can reflect your different funding areas, geographic locations, or any other qualifier that you're tracking.