

Ten tips about telling great stories

Storytelling is something that helps us get our message across in ways that connect and engage with people. Here are 10 top tips about doing it yourself, including three real charity examples:

1. There are three types of stories that you might like to use:
 - a. Beneficiary stories – these are about the people/animals or cause that you help. They are powerful because they convey your mission more emotionally than your mission statement.
 - b. Testimonials – these are often about your donors or fundraisers, who share why they give or why they have chosen to raise money for you at an event. You can find out a little more about using testimonials [here](#).
 - c. Hero stories – sometimes the heroes are your donors and beneficiaries, but sometimes they are members of your team. Medical research charities have amazing medical researchers, animal charities may have workers in the field who work to rescue animals, and other charities may have activists, campaigners, and other really amazing staff members who have great stories to tell. It's a great way to show, rather than tell people about your work.
2. Identify the objectives of your message to help you seek the right story to feature. For example, if your objective is to motivate a donor, think about featuring a beneficiary who is in great need, or a hero that needs financial support to keep continuing his or her fine work.
3. Keep it simple and emotional. There are lots of complexities in stories, and while you want to include some nice detail, you want to avoid the complicating details. But don't leave out the emotion – corny, tacky and over-the-top are great attributes to include when telling a good story. Did it bring a tear or sparkle to your eye? Hope so!
4. Use real people's words: don't sanitise too much for grammar. Raw language helps us believe it's a real person telling a real story.
5. Avoid boasting. Nobody likes a boaster. Use stories that people can relate to and that make sense in the context of the overall email or message you are trying to get across.
6. If you can't identify your subjects for privacy reasons, change names, use models and let people know that you are doing it to respect privacy, but that the stories are real.
7. Read *Made to Stick* by Chip and Dan Heath. It will improve the way you communicate and has a great chapter on storytelling.

https://www.amazon.com/Made-Stick-Ideas-Survive-Others/dp/1400064287/181-1164445-6866523?ie=UTF8&keywords=made%20to%20stick&qid=1376551313&ref_=sr_1_1&sr=8-1

8. Get better at telling your own personal stories – when you are out with family or friends, try to craft a good, short story about something you experienced this week. Then try to do that at work about something cause-related that you experienced this week.
9. Great quotes about the importance of storytelling may encourage you even more!
 - a. “After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the things we need most in the world.” Philip Pullman, author, *The Golden Compass*
 - b. “To hell with facts! We need stories!” Ken Kesey, author, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*.
10. Three great examples of using stories in emails can be seen below. We hope you agree that it’s worth the effort.