SHARE YOUR STORY

Why stories fail

No one wants to come across as cheesy, salesy or worse, viewed as self-promotional. We get that.

But the biggest reason stories fail is that they take huge effort to find, write, get permissions, secure photo assets, and then you only tell it once or twice, or post it in the corner of your website. **Sharing** your story is 80% of good storytelling.

While we're offering you an easy guide below to telling your story via multiple communication channels, please remember that when it comes to social media, we always recommend that you get really good at ONE channel—the channel your supporters or clients most use—and focus on "owning" that social media platform. Most of us don't have the time or get the ROI to be good at all social media channels.

Why are you reading my story via…

Can you answer this question? Why is your audience accessing you through a communication touch point?

The thing about storytelling is that the **context the story is being read/heard/seen really matters**. Here's what we mean:

- If someone is reading your story via **direct mail** they have likely supported you or supported a similar cause in the recent past. You may have rented their name or they could be a major donor. Regardless, they most likely have an affinity to you or your mission.

- If someone is reading your story **via email,** they've actually opted into at some point, so they are **looking for value.**

- **Blogs** are the most likely place a story reader will go with the intention of reading a story, and are often the best place to start sharing a story to get feedback. Your readers engaging with you on your blog are usually high quality supporters, or could be high quality prospects.

- No one is on **Facebook** to do business. We're looking to be entertained there—which is great for storytelling. If someone is reading your story on Facebook, encourage them to share the story.

- **YouTube** – Wildly popular as both a destination and embeddable storytelling tool. Storytellers best friend. If you do one thing in 2014 it's to get good at videos and use them frequently.

- **Twitter** is the "content-snack" of the social media world. You have 140 characters to share breaking news, gossip, frustration, and humor. We love to use Twitter to monitor trending topics and keep a pulse on what people are thinking. Links perform well in Twitter, so if you can't fit your story into 140 characters, you can write a great teaser and link to your story, image, or video.

- **Pinterest** – highly visual, highly shareable. Use imagery with text overlay to get the most Pins. Offer a link to the "full story."

- **Instagram** – already one of the top ten mobile applications in 2013. Expected growth of Instagram makes it one to watch if you're not already watching it. It's especially important if your nonprofit is highly visual, such as wildlife, wilderness, water, etc. Downside is that Instagram, unlike Twitter, doesn't allow you to embed outside links to drive traffic to your website or landing page. Your engagement is limited to Instagram. Captions with question marks do a better job of engaging users, but we're biased toward using social media to drive traffic through your funnel.

We know there are a lot of other social media channels, SnapChat, Medium, Tumblr, and probably half a dozen more in early start-up phase. By now you get the gist of what we're trying to say: honor the way your reader wants to hear your story.

Here's a handy worksheet to complete for each story in your story bank. We list the communication channel and then have a space for you to complete your strategy per channel.

CHANNEL	READER CONTEXT	AUDIENCE VIEW RATE	FREQUENCY
Direct mail	Has an affinity to your organization or mission	1.2% - 4.4% response rate. More people will read but we have no way to measure open rate.	1 – 3 repetitions based on cost
Email	Reader opted-in and is looking for value	15% - 28% open rate	2 – 3 repetitions Make it "shareable"

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CHANNEL	READER CONTEXT	AUDIENCE VIEW RATE	FREQUENCY
Blog	High quality subscriber looking to connect and learn	Variable	Up to 3 repetitions , with variable perspective/ copy/image
Facebook	Entertainment	9% in Newsfeed 20% via Promoted Post Ads expand target reach	Up to 5 repetitions , with variable copy/image
YouTube	Entertainment	Variable based on embedded version and YouTube Channel	1 long version 1 short version
Twitter	Microblog – Data Snack	.46%	Up to 5 repetitions , with variable copy/image

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