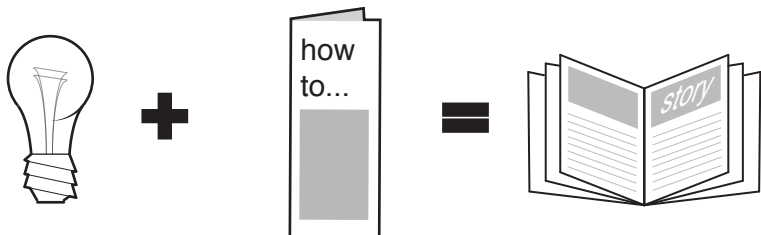


HOW DO I...

CREATE A STORY FOR MY PROJECT?

Telling a story about your project can be a very important tool. The steps to creating a story can help strengthen your mission statement, move your project forward and secure additional resources. Though this how-to guide is project-based, the same ideas can be used for businesses, organizations and programs. This guide describes how to create a compelling story to help accomplish your goals.



GETTING STARTED

- 1 KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE.** Who are you trying to reach? Your community, the media, funders, all of the above?
- 2 WHY IS YOUR PROJECT IMPORTANT?** Specify the needs and issues that your project seeks to address. How are you addressing them, and why it is important?
- 3 IDENTIFY STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, NEEDS AND GOALS.** Define the assets that you and your community bring to the table and can leverage for the project. Also recognize your constraints and identify goals for your project.
- 4 SET ACTION ITEMS AND REALISTIC TIME FRAMES.** Determine next steps that will help guide your progress. Frame your action items in terms of a time line, ranging from near to long term (3-6 months, 2 years, 5 years...).
- 5 USE YOUR BIG PICTURE GOALS TO CREATE A PROJECT STATEMENT.** Use key words from your primary goals to define a concise statement (1-2 sentences) that explains your project.
- 6 PRACTICE YOUR STORY AND SPREAD THE WORD.** Practice makes perfect! The more comfortable you are explaining your project and goals, the more likely you are to gain support.

What are key parts of my story?



Audience

Identify the audience you are trying to reach and how you will contact them. Are you planning to reach out to community members by talking to people on the street or handing out flyers? Are you trying to reach a broader audience through social media? Are you trying to reach potential funders through a grant proposal? If you have multiple audiences, you will need to create your story accordingly, so that you can communicate with different groups of people and in different formats.

Needs/Issues

Specify the needs or issue that you are addressing and *HOW* your project is addressing them. Think about how you will evaluate the success of your project and what you are trying to achieve. You should answer: *Why is this project important?*

Strengths and Challenges

What do you and your partners bring to the table? This could range from specific skills and expertise to more tangible things like land and money. Listing these assets will help you set realistic goals. What challenges are you up against? Identify weaknesses that you may need to address or obstacles that you may need to work around so that you can proceed knowing what needs to be tackled.

Goals and Actions

Setting goals, objectives and action items will really help move your project forward. **GOALS** are the big ideas that guide your project and what you are trying to reach. **OBJECTIVES** are smaller tasks that you can achieve in the short term. **ACTION ITEMS** are immediate next steps that will help you achieve your objectives and ultimately your larger goals.

Project Statement

Your project statement should help clarify the issue you are addressing and your intentions and goals moving forward. This concise story will help you explain your project and highlight the most important aspects. It will also help you make decisions in the future by focusing on what drives your project.

Presentation

Be prepared to tell your story. Consider preparing a one page overview to share with others.

For guidance on crafting mission statements, please see these resources:

Idealist: <http://www.idealists.org/info/Nonprofits/Gov1>

Foundation Center: <http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/establish/statements.html>