

SPITFIRE STRATEGIES STORY PLANNER

STEP 1: GROUND YOUR STORY IN YOUR COMMUNICATION STRATEGY.

What communication objective will this story support?

Who is the priority audience?

What is the purpose of the story?

- ☐ Simplify the complex
- ☐ Build an emotional connection
- ☐ Build credibility
- ☐ Other

What type of story do you need to tell to fulfill that purpose?

- ☐ Nature of our challenge
- ☐ How we got started
- ☐ Performance
- ☐ Where we are going
- ☐ Emblematic success
- ☐ Striving to improve

What messages will your story reinforce?

How will your story inspire the audience to action?



STEP 2: BUILD YOUR STORY.

CHARACTERS

Who or what is the hero? Is the hero a person? If not, what is it? What is the hero's name? Describe the hero with vivid details. Provide context on their life and state their aspirations/dreams.

Who or what is the villain (or challenge to overcome)? Is the villain a person? Is it a problem or a systemic issue? Name the villain. Describe the villain or the problem in detail.

PLOT

Where is the conflict? Why are the hero and villain in conflict? What obstacles must the hero overcome? What's at stake for the hero?

What developments carry the story from beginning to end? Share details of steps along the way.

Summarize the story in one sentence that includes the big lesson.

STRUCTURE

Once upon a time... (How does the story capture the audience's attention? Introduce the hero? Set the scene?)

And then what happened? (How does the conflict build?)



And what finally happened to resolve the conflict?

Why does it matter? (What is the result? Link it to your ask.)

STEP 3: CONDUCT A FINAL CHECK.

How many elements of good storytelling does your story have?

- ☐ Attention-getting beginning
- ☐ Hero your audience can relate to and respect
- ☐ Villain that represents a real problem you are trying to solve
- ☐ Vivid details that bring the story to life
- ☐ Evokes a specific emotion
- ☐ Conflict that creates tension
- ☐ One clear plot line
- ☐ A surprise or unexpected twist
- ☐ Does not hide or gloss over critical moments
- ☐ Ending where conflict is resolved
- ☐ A central lesson
- ☐ No soul-killing jargon
- ☐ Brevity (You can tell it in three minutes or less.)
- ☐ Repeatable (Will other messengers be able to retell it?)
- ☐ Ethical and responsible (check Step 5)

STEP 4: PRACTICE TELLING YOUR STORY.

- ☐ Share your story with your training partner
- ☐ Listen for feedback and make adjustments
- ☐ Now listen to their story. What more did you want to hear? What did not work for you?

STEP 4: FINDING AND SHARING STORIES ETHICALLY.

- _____ Will you find stories from your clients or staff?
- _____ Who is the story about, and do they have the opportunity to write or co-create the story?
- _____ Do you have permission to share their story? Have you shared the final version of the story with them?
- _____ Who is the protagonist and antagonist in the story? Does the story subject have agency to succeed (or does your organization step in)?
- _____ Are there photos, videos and quotes used to illustrate the story? Have waivers been signed?
- _____ Is the story subject prepared to have their name and story shared in the media or social media?
- _____ How long will the story be shared by your organization (every month, year etc.)? When is the expiration date on the story?
- _____ Have you compensated them for their time sharing the story?
- _____ Does this story reinforce any harmful narratives about the individual or community? Will the subject of the story be the 'face' of the problem in your materials?
- _____ Are you using person-first language in the story and asset framing?