SPITFIRE
SPARK CHANGE

ENTERPRISING VENTURES OF COLOR

SPITFIRE STRATEGIES STORY PLANNER

STEP 1: GROUND YOUR STORY IN YOUR COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

What organizational objective will this story support?

_____

Who is the priority audience for this story (be specific)?

_____

What do you want your audience to think, feel and do after hearing this story?

_____

_____

What messages will your story reinforce?

_____

_____

Who is the messenger?

_____

What is the purpose of the story?

___ Simplify the complex

___ Change behavior

___ Build an emotional connection

___ Change policies

___ Build credibility

___ Demonstrate impact

___ Change the narrative

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 (vision)

___ Emblematic success

___ Striving to improve

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.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is the resolution of the story (how does the protagonist overcome the barriers) and what is the call to action?

_____

Summarize the story in one sentence (what is the headline?).

_____

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?)

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.

___ How will you find stories from your clients or staff?

_____

___ Does the protagonist have the opportunity to write or co-create the story?

___ Do you have permission to share their story? Have you shared the final version 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 you using person-first language in the story and asset framing?

___ How will you use photos, videos and quotes 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?

_____

___ How are you compensating 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?

___ What are the narratives that you are countering or reinforcing in this story?

_____