

Strong Narrative Worksheet

What makes a great story?

A story has a beginning, middle and end. It has tension or conflict. It has characters and a plot. It has details and emotion.

Who's the Protagonist?

Make it personal about real people. Use real names where possible, or else composite, fictionalized ones - staff, board members and volunteers are great resources!

What's the Hook?

Begin your story at a place where the audience can identify with the situation, or with the protagonist's goal. The idea is to hook them from the start.

What Keeps It Interesting?

Predictable stories are boring; throw some barriers and surprises in there to keep your audience's attention.

Where's the Conflict?

There is no drama without conflict ("narrative demands reversal," to quote Aristotle), and heroic action is heightened when juxtaposed against villainous misdeeds.

Have You Included Telling Details?

Brevity is a goal, so try to find the few well-chosen details that concisely and vividly paint a picture of the world you are portraying.

What's the Emotional Hook?

In return for their time and attention, readers expect more than a recitation of the facts. Give them an emotional experience that makes their time worthwhile.

Prompts to help us think about good stories:

- What is unique about what our organization is doing?
- What's new?
- What are the timely issues?
- What makes you angry?
- What gives you hope?
- What impact are we having on people?
- What impact are we having on our issue?
- What is inspiring?
- What successes can we share?
- What is the most emotional aspect?
- What is urgent?
- What are our recent achievements?
- Why did this program get started?
- What challenge have we been up against?
- What is the problem your organization/program is trying to solve?
- Have we solved that problem in an innovative way?
- What is happening/has happened that people need to know about?
- When have you felt an emotional connection to this work?
- What are you most proud of in your program?
- What is the best lesson you've learned this year?
- How are we making a difference?

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