

Session: Leadership Storytelling: How to effectively use your board and staff to convey your “Why” to your audience and donors.

As we discussed in my session, nonprofit boards and senior staff are often the least utilized group in terms of storytelling, yet they usually have large networks both personally and professionally.

Leadership storytelling is about putting your leaders out front in order to; influence your audience, build trust and rapport with your community, and engage their networks (many of which may not know about your mission or impact).

Before you can tell anyone how great your programs are or the importance of your organization's mission AND well before you can ask them for money - you need to get their ATTENTION. Your leaders have powerful stories to tell and they usually are the kind of stories that can connect with your audience and resonate with new donors.

Different Types of Leadership Stories

1. Personal Stories – Share connection to the mission
2. Donor Stories - Share philanthropic interest
3. Thank You Stories – Express gratitude and share impact

TWO powerful stories to share:

1. A story about “that moment in time” when they made the decision to give.
2. A story that answers the question, “Why I give...”

Remember, leaders possess three SUPER POWERS...

1. The power of **Recommendation**
2. The power of **Referral**
3. The power of **Persuasion**

Let's put the lessons of this session into action. Start planning your leadership campaign using this check list

1. **Preparing your board members and senior staff for a media campaign.**
 - a. True learning requires taking in information a number of different ways. Start by speaking to your group with what will be expected in terms of PARTICIPATION, ENGAGEMENT, and the GOALS for the campaign.

- b. Following up individually, in person or by phone, is a **MUST** to review all campaign elements to ensure understanding **AND** ramp up excitement.
 - c. **ALWAYS** start with the 2-3 leaders who are eager to participate. Share those examples with the rest of the group to alleviate anxiety and show what a final product will like.
- 2. Ask open-ended questions to support the “content” creation process, which will share your leader’s voice with your audience.**
- a. The goal is to always find a person’s **AUTHENTIC** voice. Sometimes this requires taking a large amount of information/thoughts and working with them to narrow it down to the raw elements in order to find it.
 - b. Ask not just, “Why are you involved?” Get **DEEP**. Ask, “What connects you to our mission?” OR “What moved you to align yourself with our mission?”
- 3. Set clear expectations with the creative team.**
- a. **ALWAYS** review with the photographer/videographer the goals for the project and expectations for the shoot. Artists are artist, but **YOU** are the **DIRECTOR**.
 - b. Everything from the background color, participant’s facial expressions and body language, and props (table, chairs) affects the tone of a message.
- 4. Coaching through the creative process.**
- a. Always have an idea about the how you want your creative to be displayed. Will you use black and white or color photos, will music be playing in the back ground, and will video be cut and edited in a certain way.
 - b. Share research with examples, talk with your leaders, what creative tells the most powerful story, what gets their **ATTENTION**.
- 5. How to launch, establishing the right cadence to deploy your content.**
- a. The organization should take the lead on distributing content, then shortly after the participants launch the content on their personal/preferred channels.
 - b. In each board or leadership meeting review reactions and engagement.
- 6. How to capitalize on the engagement and feedback after launch.**
- a. Which piece of content received the most feedback or elicited the largest response or reaction. Organize follow-up, engage and express gratitude.
 - b. Edit language to deliver a more detailed message or call to action.

Remember: The best way to win donor attention is to create content with only **ONE** goal to **PROVIDE VALUE** and well-crafted leadership stories have the power to do that.