

# Tips for Crafting Successful Stories

Despite the science behind storytelling, being successful is an art and it takes practice. Here are some tips for developing and crafting stories:

- **Know your audience.** Who are you talking to? Make sure your story connects to your audience.
- **Know your message.** Make sure that the story transitions smoothly into your message and ask. One way to do this is by thinking, if not saying aloud, “I tell you this story because...”
- **Keep it short (and simple).** Your story doesn’t have to be long and complicated and neither do your sentences. Keep your writing and delivery short, punchy and impactful.
- **Use “telling” details.** The difference between a story that resonates and sticks with your audience and one that falls flat is the detail that makes it genuine. Paint a picture through some small detail that brings the subject to life. If you’re talking about a person, tell us how many children they have, or the exact number of miles they have to travel to get to school or see a doctor. Specific details take your story to another level.
- **Build suspense.** If the end of your story is predictable, it’s also forgettable. Surprising or counterintuitive endings stick with people. One way to do this is by repeating memorable phrases.
- **“Cast” your audience.** If the first step is to know your audience, the second is to understand how they fit into your story. Stories generally have heroes, victims, helpers and other archetypes. Think about which character your audience will identify with...and be careful not to cast your listener as the “villain” or the barrier to a good outcome. Show them how they can be part of the solution.
- **Be authentic.** If you don’t genuinely care about your story as you’re telling it, your audience will know.
- **Share your optimism and resolve.** Give people a sense of possibility.