

STEP 3: 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 any critical moments of the story
- ☐ Ending where conflict is resolved
- ☐ A central lesson
- ☐ No soul-killing jargon
- ☐ Brevity—can you tell it in three minutes or less?
- ☐ Memorable—will it stick in the mind of your audience?
- ☐ Repeatable—will your messengers be able to re-tell it?



SPITFIRE STRATEGIES STORY PLANNER

STEP 1: GROUND YOUR STORY IN YOUR COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

What communications objective will this story support?

Who is the target audience?

What is the purpose of the story?

- ☐ Simplify the complex. *What do they need to understand?*
-
- ☐ Create an emotional connection. *What emotion will you evoke?*
-
- ☐ Build credibility. *How will they see your organization?*
-
- ☐ Other:
-

What kind 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
- ☐ Why we do what we do

Which of your messages will the story reinforce?

What is the lesson of the story that will help move your audience to action?

STEP 2: BUILD YOUR STORY

THE CHARACTERS

Who or what is the hero?

- Is your hero a person?
If not, what is it?
- Name your hero.
- Describe your hero with vivid details.

Who or what is the villain?

- Is your villain a person?
If not, what is it?
- Name your villain.
- Describe your villain with vivid details.

THE PLOT

Where’s the conflict?

- Why are your hero and villain in conflict?
- What obstacles must the hero overcome?
- What’s at stake for your hero?

What major developments carry the story forward from beginning to end?

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

*Ex. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.
This is the story of a shiny-nosed reindeer who was banned from reindeer games, ran away from home and eventually realized that his difference was actually his greatest strength.*

THE STRUCTURE

Once upon a time...

- How will you get their attention from the start?
- Introduce your hero.
- Set the scene.

And then what happened?

- How does the conflict build?
- Describe how with vivid details.

And then what happened?

- How does the conflict build?
- Describe how with vivid details.

And finally what happened to resolve the conflict?

- How is the conflict solved?
- What’s the result?

Why does it matter?

- What lesson should your audience take away?
- Link it to your ask.