

Abby Jarvis 0:00

We are here to talk about next level tactics for storytelling. I'm really excited to talk about this with you for a few different reasons. But before I get into it, let's go over some housekeeping items. All right, this is being recorded. And in the future, we are going to send you an email with a link to the recording, you'll also be able to see my slides, and any other kind of references or resources I talked about during the presentation. So that is coming. The other is that we are taking questions. So as I talk, I'm going to be keeping an eye on the q&a. And I'm actually going to be asking you to talk to me a little bit during this session. We have a great group on today. And I want to be able to tailor what I talk about to your experiences and your needs. So while I'm also I'm gonna throw this out there first, especially in this, this section, or this webinar, we're going to be talking about some some kind of basic rules and strategies that you can use. Now that said, there is no one size fits all approach to storytelling for nonprofits.

So while we do talk about some of these techniques, and ideas, and rules, do feel free to use the ones that work for you, and what works for you what may be best for your organization, and your mission may not be the best fit for someone else. So take everything I say with a grain of salt. And feel free to experiment with what I talked about today.

The last housekeeping thing I wanted to touch on, as I wanted to invite all of you to our upcoming conference is the generosity exchange. And that is coming up in mid to late October. So it's the 19th and 20th, you can scan this QR code to check out some of the sessions that we're going to offer, get a feel for what you can expect. And then if you'd like you can register right there on that page. So general admission is free for you to join. It includes access to all of the different sessions, you'll get all of the recordings for the sessions. And then there is a premium ticket available as well. That premium ticket includes a really cool swag box. The box will include a Sherpa blanket, which I am very jealous of book and some other goodies. That premium ticket also includes some additional workshops and events outside of generosity exchange. So check that out.

All right, you're curious about who I am and why I'm talking to you today. Hello, my name is Abby, I'm part of the team at NEON one. And if you're not familiar with us at NEON one, we are a nonprofit tech company. And we are passionate about helping nonprofits find and engage and retain donors and supporters. So I've been in the nonprofit tech world for a little over nine years. And I've gotten extremely passionate about understanding how nonprofits can connect with donors, and really inspire generosity, and then keep those donors engaged long term. So I'm exceptionally excited about today's session because it draws on two of my favorite things. I have a passionate storyteller. When I'm not working at NEON one, I write a ton of stories. I'm actually currently working on writing fairy tales for each of my four nieces and nephews. I finished two and I'm halfway through with the third. And then I'm also going to draw on my experience as a content marketer, including some of the tactics I use every day to create and share and then reshare content at NEON one. So all of that said, here's a quick overview of what we're going to go over today. So first, I'm going to share a reliable formula that you can use to tell effective stories. For a few minutes, you may feel like you're in an English class, but I promise to keep it short. And then we'll look at some different ways that you can

come up with stories regardless of your mission. So if you've ever had a hard time telling stories, because your clients aren't cute babies or furry animals, I think I have some tactics that will help you. And we'll also look at some ideas for sourcing stories from other people if you get stuck. Or if you want to diversify the perspectives you have in your storytelling. We'll also touch on some ways you can make sure you're telling your stories ethically. And we'll look at some strategies you can use if you're telling stories where privacy is a concern. And then for the last portion of our time together, I'll share some tips you can use to share and reshare your stories so you can get as much work out or as much mileage out of your work as possible. So

I'm pretty sure I could feel all of you roll your eyes a little bit when I rolled over to this slide. So if you're a fundraiser, you have almost certainly heard about the importance of storytelling. There are dozens hundreds of articles out there about it. So before I go any further, I want to ask you a question. Do you feel like you have a good grasp on why storytelling is an important part of fundraising? So

drop a yes or no in the q&a, not the chat because apparently I can see that. Oh, no, you guys can't see my slides.

Okay.

relearning on Zoom was a great time. All right. Can you see them now?

Can't see the slides?

Don't see the slides.

Zoom is having a hard time today. I'm sorry, everybody. I'm having some computer problems. It's my favorite. Can you see them now? And oh, six? Nope, don't see this. Let's stop share.

Let's share the screen.

How about now? Do you see them now? Awesome. Okay, great. Okay, let's try this again.

Drop in the chat if you know what storytelling is good for, and why it is so important to nonprofits. If you do, I am going to kind of skim over the next slide. If a lot of you have questions about why this is important. drop a note in the q&a. And I will spend a little extra time on this slide.

So thank you, Ryan, for letting me know. Things are going great. Okay.

All right. So you guys seem like you have a fairly good grasp on why storytelling is important. So let's just touch on it, and then we'll move on. Okay. So nothing on this side is new information. Humans love stories, and more importantly, donors love stories. Stories speak to donors desires to help real people. And they help build emotional connections between your donors and the people that they will support with their generosity. So stories can also signal to donors and potential donors that the

money they have given you in the past has been used well, and it will signal that any financial support they give you in the future is also going to be used wisely and will make a tangible difference to the community you serve. So wonderful. Storytelling is important. We are all on the same page. Let's look at the structure of a good story.

So the first thing we need to do before we can start telling a story is choose the character whose story we're going to share. So that can be a person obviously, that's probably the most common character that nonprofits choose for their stories. But it can also be other things, it can be an animal, that's very helpful if you are an animal shelter, or if you were an environmental conservation organization

that has a lot of kind of a history and nonprofit shall we say. Now you can also try doing something completely different. And anthropomorphizing an inanimate object.

If you are not familiar with the word anthropomorphizing, which I learned recently is not as common a word as I tend to, or as I thought it was. anthropomorphizing is the act of giving a human characteristic or human qualities to an inanimate object. So, this example here is an old the great example of an anthropomorphized object. So this little character over here is Phil, Phil is a paper bag. And this comes from the agents of good who are up in Canada, which is important because apparently, paper bag food drives are very well known in Canada. So having a mascot of a paper bag for a food drive would make a lot of sense to the audience who's seeing the story.

Now, having a mascot like this can open up a lot of different possibilities. So your mascot may be able to be more whimsical, then one of your actual in real life clients, maybe it can also help you share perspectives that you might not be able to get from a real life client.

If you have the chance. And if you're interested in seeing some cool examples of having a mascot like this, and the possibilities opens up to you, I recommend checking out the agents of good. They're not paying me to say this. They don't even know that I'm quoting them in this. But they've got some really great examples of mascots. One that sticks out to me, they had a campaign it was a mascot of a bus for a fundraiser to raise money for a bus. So check that out.

Now, does this look familiar to any of you? So I have a Literature degree so I can see this diagram literally in my sleep. But this may be new to some of you. This is a classic storytelling structure. And there are a lot of other structures that you can use, but this one is probably one of the most well known. So here's how this story structure kind of works. You introduce your

A character that says exposition corner down here, some things happen, the story progresses, that this rising action here, and then you come to the climax of the story, there is usually here a tough decision to be made.

Or there's a confrontation, your character is dealing with a lot of obstacles. Here's where everything gets to kind of that make or break moment. And then there is this falling action here. Things start coming together, there's some resolution, all

of the ends are tied up. And then it all resolves at the end. So this is a classic, this is literally a tale as old as time. This is a tried and true story. So how can you use this at your nonprofit.

So you can tweak that story structure a little bit to make it applicable to your work. So here, you introduce your character, you establish your character's background, and there are circumstances here is where you really focus on making them a human.

You provide details that help your donors connect to your character on a personal level. And then here, you'll introduce the problem or the obstacle or the circumstances that your character is facing. And at the peak here, your character encounters your organization. So maybe they've lost their job, and they need some help getting groceries and they found your food bank, maybe they are a dog that was hurt or abandoned. They came to your organization and got medical treatment, or maybe you are in a clinic and someone is sick and comes to your clinic and receives treatment. That's the peak of the story. The falling action here is where your character circumstances are improved. They found the support they needed. While they get back on their feet, the dog gets medical care and finds a forever home. Your character receives treatment and they're they're healthy, and they're managing their health again. And then here at the end, you kind of show the you've showed the donor the problem, you've showed how your organization can help fix that problem for your character. And then you invite the donor to get involved in solving that same problem for other people in the future.

So like I said, there are a lot of different story structures, a lot of different kind of path that you can take with your narrative. But if you're stuck, this one is a tried and true formula that you can use to lay out almost any story you can think of at your organization.

All right, so you've got your structure. Now, maybe you use are reliable, which we just looked at, maybe you've got another formula that you're using instead. Now let's go over looking at some ideas for finding stories to share.

Now, the most common story source for any nonprofit is client stories. So if you're going to source your story from a client, here are some steps you can take to make it as effective as possible. The first is to tell success stories whenever you can.

And then as you're sharing that success story, ask your client to be a part of the storytelling process. And this is important for a couple of reasons. One is that sharing success stories is very powerful because it helps you establish that story structure we just looked at right?

You show a problem, you show a character experiencing that problem, you show a solution and then you invite the donor to be a part of that solution.

Now there are exceptions to every rule, including this one, you don't always have to share success stories. Sometimes you don't have successes. Sometimes you're asking people to give because there has been an emergency situation or dire circumstances. If you are trying to rebuild your facility after a hurricane has come through a

success story is going to be difficult to include there. But for general appeals, annual appeals, etc. Try to share some uplifting narratives. If for no other reason, then there's a lot of negativity out there and your donors will appreciate being given a positive uplifting story. So ask your clients to share stories with you and ask them to share those stories in their own words. This can help you get some valuable quotes you can use in your campaign. It can also help you make sure you're telling your story ethically in a way that empowers your client or your character.

In that same vein, ask your client to look over the story you have created before you build a whole campaign around it. It would be a real bummer to build out a campaign, create a donation page, write all of the emails, take all the photos and then find out that your client doesn't actually like the way the story was told or has concerns. So ask them to look over your story

And then as you as you think through collecting client stories, remember that clients aren't necessarily always the entity that is directly benefiting from your services. If you're telling stories about students, you may want to work with the parents of that student to collect that stories. If you're an animal shelter, that cat you save won't be able to share their story, but their new owner, maybe you will do. So kind of keep that in your mind, you have your client, you're directly working out, but you may have secondary or tertiary clients, it could be valuable story sources as well.

You can also try sourcing stories from your volunteers. So your volunteers are the folks that are out there doing the work, they have boots on the ground, they probably have some amazing stories to tell. And I fairly recently served on a board for a nonprofit here in my hometown. And my favorite part of working with them was connecting with volunteers and hearing stories about their interactions with our clients. So your your volunteers similarly can be an invaluable source of nuanced, compelling stories, they may see things and have stories that you may not have been able to access because you are not necessarily working with the same groups of clients that they are. So try asking your volunteers questions to draw some stories out of them. You can ask about why they're passionate about your cause. You can ask them how they got involved with your nonprofit, you can ask them to share their own favorite stories, you can ask them to talk about why they love volunteering, you may be absolutely blown away by what they have to share. As a bonus, amplifying your volunteers voices in this way can strengthen your relationship with your volunteer base. And it may even be able to help you recruit additional volunteers because the signals to potential volunteers that you value the the time and effort and work that your volunteers put toward your organization.

Now, how many of you have ever wished your board would be more involved in the development process? That is a very common kind of concern that I hear from a lot of nonprofits, a lot of fundraisers are looking for ways to get their boards more involved in fundraising. And it can be like pulling teeth. Now, there are a lot of reasons your board may be reluctant to help with fundraising. But one of those reasons is almost certainly fear. They're not nonprofit professionals, they don't know how to raise money, they don't know how to help, they don't know how to ask their friends for support. getting them started in the fundraising process by asking them to share their story with you can help. So talk to your board members, ask them

why they decided to get involved with your work. Ask them why they think your work is so important and why it kind of resonates with them. You may even want to ask them their their vision for how your nonprofit grows in the future. This is all compelling stuff. And the cool thing is that if you're using this as a source, if you're talking to your nonprofits, board members, and asking them to share their story with you, ask your board members then to share those stories with their friends and family. They may be much more likely to help with fundraising by sharing appeals, or sharing impact stories and maybe even interacting with you on social media to boost your visibility there if it's their story. So this is definitely something to try, especially if you want to get your board members more involved in the fundraising process.

Another really wonderful source you may want to look to if you're looking for stories is your your donor base. If you have a loyal donor that has been giving to you over an extended period of time, something about your cause resonates with them. So reach out to them and ask them some questions to try to uncover the reason and the motivation behind their support. So why did they decide to support your nonprofit? And more importantly, almost ask them why they stay involved with your nonprofit, ask them why they continue to fund your work. Why is that work so important to them? sharing these stories, sharing stories from your donors, kind of like sharing stories from your volunteers and your board members is a really wonderful source of social proof. So your readers will see a peer who supports your work and they'll see a testimonial about why they should get involved and why they should support your work. And that is that's huge.

There are a ton of other sources for stories around you too. Maybe someone on your staff has a great story they can share. Maybe you can write a story from the perspective of an animal or mascot or one of those anthropomorphized inanimate objects.

One of my all time favorite appeals is another agents of good appeal that was written from the perspective of a hummingbird as she migrated through Canada. Even the other day, I received an appeal that was written from the perspective of a river that needed to be cleaned up. And it was an appeal for a conservation organization. There are so many opportunities out there, I hope this has given you some ideas for places that you can find stories, and has kind of kick started the the story finding process.

Cool. At this point, you have chosen a character you've nailed down the structure you're going to use, you've got some ideas for how to source stories. Now it's time to talk about how to tell your story ethically.

Now, I've alluded at least once, maybe twice to ethical storytelling. It's a phrase that is cropping up more and more as people in the nonprofit space discuss kind of how to tell their stories in an ethical way. So before we get into how you share stories, ethically, I want to know what does ethical storytelling mean to you. You can drop a note in the q&a, I don't know how to how to re enable chat, but drop it in the q&a. And let me know what what the phrase ethical storytelling means to you and what comes to mind there. Because I know my impression of what ethical storytelling was radically different before I started working in the nonprofit

space.

So before we really dig into strategies for telling stories, ethically, I want to give a little bit of insight into what unethical storytelling is. So in unethical storytelling, there's an unequal power relationship between your character and the donor or potential donor with whom you're speaking. So here, the donor is asked to step in and save someone, we ask donors to deign to kind of show their support to the people who need your services, characters are often reduced to their circumstances, or characters become a symbol of a problem instead of an actual person.

It's easy in those instances to kind of other your character. An example of this that I've actually seen recently was an appeal to, quote, give a voice to the voiceless.

Were the people that that appeal was referencing actually voiceless? Do they? Do they actually not have a way to advocate for themselves? No, they, they have voices, they don't need me the donor to be their voice, they need me to listen to them. They need people to amplify those voices. So the power exchange here is is the key. And I want to make a note because I can feel the questions coming.

It this really applies predominantly to human beings, it's really hard to have an equal power exchange between like a donor and the Golden Retriever at your shelter. That means medical care.

Yeah, you could probably have a philosophical conversation around whether or not you're exploiting that golden retriever in your appeal. But the key thing here is that we do need to be very intentional not to exploit other human beings in these stories. So that's the big takeaway here. So unethical storytelling can look like a lot of different things. It can look like making characters very one dimensional or reducing them to their circumstances. Unethical storytelling doesn't acknowledge a person's humanity or their agency. It reduces that person to being a character that is in need, and it positions the donor as the Savior, the only thing that can help this poor, abused character succeed. So if you want an example, you remember those commercials that I recently learned are still happening. I didn't know this.

It would come on, like late at night in the 90s and Sally Struthers would pop up. And she would be surrounded by like children and they were all looking pleadingly at the camera and she would ask me for 65 cents a day to feed "needy kids."

If it's an easier comparison, there is that ASPCA commercial where Sarah McLaughlin comes on and sings in the arms of the angels. And all those dogs look up very mournfully at you. It's that kind of unethical storytelling that I'm talking about. When people obviously know dogs, although I will say the pure number of memes that are out there about the ASPCA thing is a pretty good sign that that's not really the way to raise money anymore. But that's that's what I'm talking about. When I talk about unethical storytelling, positioning people this way as being terrible, poor, downtrodden, faceless characters that desperately need your Savior, the donor to sweep and that's not that's not what we want to do. So in ethical storytelling, the past

Our exchange is a lot different. So instead of setting up your client as the needy, or being helpless or a one dimensional character that is purely reduced to their need, ethical storytelling presents the character as a nuanced, dignified human being, and it invites your donor to come alongside this person who needs their support. So, create nuanced characters, show your audience that nuance. And instead of positioning the donor as a savior figure that can kind of swoop in and save the day. You can present them as a partner who is coming together with another human being to help them out. So it's a subtle distinction, but it's an important one. I love that Lisa has called out that she immediately changes the channel when those Sally Struthers or ASPCA commercials come on. And that is the attitude that we want to avoid in our donors. And that's attitude that we can very often kind of establishing those donors if we share those stories, ethical storytelling, asking people to partner together instead of asking one person to swoop in and save the other is a wonderful, wonderful move. So it's great to talk about what is ethical and what is not ethical storytelling. It's not very useful if you don't have some strategies that you can actually use to switch. So here are some steps you can take to tell ethical stories. Now, as I've mentioned, is critically important to acknowledge your character as a human being provided they are a human being not as a symbol of the problem you want your donor to solve. So invite your donor to come alongside you and your clients to solve problems. If you're sourcing your story directly from a client, we've talked about this, get your client involved in the storytelling process. Then make sure they understand how the story they're sharing with you is going to be used.

And then before you actually go use it, ask your ask your character, your your client to review the story with you. Now, here's an important tip. When you do this, watch your character's reaction, your clients reaction,

and see how they respond on a physical level to the story that you showed them. If they seem uncomfortable, if they seem reluctant, if they don't seem super happy with it, keep working on your story. keep refining it, they may feel bad, especially if they have received services from your organization, they may feel bad telling you that they're unhappy with it. So as you watch your client, if they see if they say yes, if they say yes, this is fine, you can use it but they don't seem enthusiastic about it. Keep workshopping it, anything other than an enthusiastic Yes, this is great, I'm happy with this you can share it should be talked about with that, that client respectfully, and that story shouldn't be used until they're happy with it. Another step to take is to be intentional with your language.

So avoid the temptation to reduce your character to their circumstances. And language here means a lot. So an example instead of talking about like the homeless, talk about our homeless neighbors, or our neighbors experiencing homelessness or unhoused individuals.

Be willing to talk about this with other people, including your clients. Learn the language your clients are using to refer to themselves and ask them how they want you to talk about the sick, the circumstances that they're facing. These are very subtle conversations. This is not a perfect art. The language that one client may want you to use your refer to them may be different than the language another client

wants you to use. Just be open to having these conversations. Don't be too hard on yourself if you make a mistake. The important thing here is that you take as many steps as possible that you try your very best to speak about your clients in a way that makes them happy and makes them comfortable, and really work towards sharing these stories and as ethical manner as you absolutely can. Now this image here is a perfect example. So here the story is either written by the patient, which is what I think happened or it has been written with the patient who has received care from this nonprofit. So you can tell by the way the headline is phrased. So how a small regional hospital helped me realize the value of CF care. Here CF is Cystic Fibrosis.

The subtitle here also is written from a first person perspective, which implies that the patient has actually been involved in writing here.

There the patient is also listed as the author of the story, which is important.

And then check out the image they've used for this story right here. So the it would have been tempting to you

Use a picture of this patient in a hospital bed, or

a photo of them looking pained or weak as they were experiencing a cystic fibrosis flare up. But they didn't, instead of using a photo like that, which would probably have caught people's attention, they they used this photo here, they use an image of the author that is empowering and presents them as a full person that is not just reduced the fact that there is Cystic Fibrosis patient. Now, that's not to say that there's never any room for a photo of a person in a sensitive situation. That's completely up to the client whose story you are sharing. But it is a great example of a nonprofit sharing a story about a sensitive topic in a way that centers their character. As a human being who is empowered instead of reducing them to a token or a symbol of hear this, the difficulties people with cystic fibrosis can face. So I hope that makes sense. And then someone said, I want to read the rest of the hospital story. It's an intriguing beginning. I wish I had written down I think I'll find this and see if I can share a link to that in the follow up email, I'll look and see.

All right, another big concern in ethical storytelling is privacy. Privacy is a concern in a number of different situations, some of which many of you probably face. So some of you may be working with groups of people who are dealing with very sensitive circumstances.

People dealing with abuse or violence or other concerns may not be able to freely share their story. Whether that is for safety reasons, or just because it's a very sensitive subject. If you work for a healthcare organization, there may be HIPAA compliance that you need to keep in mind.

I will say if you are sharing a story directly from a patient, like the example we saw on the previous slide, HIPAA is a little less of a concern, because you are not disclosing that person's medical history they are. But you do need to be extra careful as you tell their story, especially if you're telling a story from like a

volunteer nurse who is referencing her patients. Either way, here are some things you can try as you share some of these more sensitive stories. So one, you could try creating a composite character that represents your client base. So you may not be able to share a story about person in a domestic violence shelter, but you may be able to create a character that is a composite of many characters, or many clients of yours. And you can make that character represent the people who are in your client base. You may also want to explore giving your clients the opportunity to share their stories anonymously.

If you do that, will really if you do either, you can supplement both of those story types. So a composite character or an anonymous story with either thoughtfully chosen stock images, so you don't actually risk putting a face to a name or a face to a character. Or you could try doing something like we see here where you take photographs of your client that does not include any identifying characteristics. So

if you want to see some examples of what this can look like, or really, if you just want to see some really great examples of storytelling, I really recommend checking out Humans of New York, that crater does a beautiful job of sharing compelling stories, many of which have recently raised a lot of money, and sharing stories of very nuanced characters. And lots of those stories are anonymous. That account is actually where I pulled these two images from the silhouette. The storyteller, or the character here is not easily identifiable. And the same with this photo here of this person's hands. Now, of course, you can always share stories that do not come from your clients. Now, you do want to make sure that those stories are also told ethically. But the power exchange between a donor and one of your volunteers, or one of your board members is not really as fraught as the power exchange between a donor and one of our clients. I will say even there, though, do things like keep an eye on language and make sure that your storyteller is sharing those stories ethically. You'll want to make sure you're protecting your clients dignity, especially if those people are talking directly about working with your clients. So keep that in mind.

So at this point, now, you've identified some stories, you've identified a story structure, you have worked with your client to tell that story ethically. And now it's time to share that story with your audience. So here, I'm going to take off my storyteller hat and put on my marketing hat and share some strategies that I've learned around storytelling and marketing.

with you. So you're going to spend a lot of time and resources, creating the story that you're going to, you're going to use in your campaign, your nonprofit fundraiser, all of those resources. And all that time and effort needs to be used wisely. So really sharing your story, it will help you get as much wear out of that work is possible. And resharing is going to be easiest if you plan in advance to reshare that story. So I have two tips for you here. Now, the first tip is important. And I wish I could yell but I won't, because I'll scare my cat who's over there in the corner.

Please, when you share your story, write it on a page on your website. Okay, put it on your website. This is important, because when you share your story through email, if you share it on social media, if you're doing any kind of advertising, if you do that, or even if you're sharing your story on analog channels like

like a direct mail appeal, you may want to direct people to your website. So you want them on your website, because one, it's a handy place for them to read your story. If you have your story written in full on a page on your website, you don't have to tell that story in full over and over and over again. So it'll save you time. But it's also nice to have it on your website and then share that link. Because that's where your donation form is your donation form is on your website. And if you want people to give, it'll be easy for them to do. So if they're already on the site where that donation form lives. So you're gonna send everyone to your story written on your website, then I highly recommend you think through the different assets you'll want to have handy as you share, and as you reshare your story. So I would recommend having kind of at minimum a collection of photos that you can use, not just one or two, try to come up with a good photo album that you can choose from. So as you interview your, your character, take photos of them if they're okay with that, or select some photos online that you can use to support your storytelling.

You don't need to hire a photographer here, although if you want to. I'm very proud of you. But you don't need a photographer, smartphones. And honestly, digital cameras are now advanced enough that you can take some pretty great pictures on your own.

If you can, after you've gotten at least the pictures together, you may want to consider putting together some videos,

consider doing long form videos. So kind of over three minutes. Or definitely if you can do video, try to do some short form videos. So under under three minutes, maybe even under one minute. Again, you don't need a really highly produced super professional polished video. There are some brilliant video tools out there that you can use to kind of put something together yourself. And then after that, get creative. How else can you support your story? Can you create an infographic about the development of your character story? Can the volunteer that is sharing a story about how she works at your clinic share maybe a playlist of her favorite songs to listen to while she works. Can the student whose story you're telling draw a picture that can go along with it. What makes your character and their story unique look for opportunities to share something creative that your donors may never have seen before. It will make your story very compelling and will give it a lot of reshare value. And you'll see a lot of engagement that way.

Now, preparing to reshare your story in multiple ways on multiple channels is an important step. Because if you're not really sharing your stories, you're creating extra work for yourself. So look at these statistics. Now this may kind of bum you out for a minute, but don't don't let it do that. So the average open rate for an email is around 25%. That means around 75% of the people on your email list are not seeing your emails. The average reach for an organic Facebook post is just over 5%. And that means only one and 20 of your Facebook fans will actually see your posts the other 19 won't see them the first time you post them.

If you are on Instagram, the average reach pronoun profit on Instagram is 8.4% if you're posting in your stories, and it does go up to 26.6% for feed images. And

those percentages go down The bigger your audiences so I don't know how many of you have audiences with more than 50,000 people in them. But your your numbers will start to go down The bigger your audiences. So I tell you this not to bum you out but to encourage you. If you are concerned about resharing your content Don't be the majority of your followers are probably not going to see your messaging the first time you post it and that may and that may be kind of hard to to like see as a benefit but it does mean that you

You have a lot of opportunity to share and reshare your message over and over again and get it in front of more people. Now, you're going to notice that I just said, the majority of your followers are not going to see your posts, there is always going to be a group of people who see your posts. So your challenge is to reshare your story in a way that one communicates your key message to the people who have not seen your messaging or your post your email, without it being repetitive to those who have seen it already. So all of those assets we talked about earlier, the photos, the videos, the graphics, those will all help. That said, here are some extra tips for you. So you can kind of mix up your messaging a little bit.

Because social media is so well suited to storytelling, you have a lot of options on those channels. So try serializing your story serializing is splitting a long narrative up into multiple little chunks that you share one at a time to kind of get people excited about the next update.

While you're looking for stories on Humans of New York, if you choose to do that, you'll see a number of serialized stories that get phenomenal reactions from people. So try that if you don't want to try serializing it, you could also try writing summaries or even like little teasers for your stories. And then we can share that and then link your readers to the rest of the story that's already on your website, which I'm sure you have available, because I have begged you to put it on your website.

Alternatively, you could share quotes or you could share excerpts from your stories and then link to the full article. And then you can accompany those those summaries those excerpt for those quotes with the pictures and videos and other assets that you have created. And when you have a list of all those excerpts and quotes, and a list of all of your accompanying assets, you have an almost endless, like array of options in front of you. So here's an example. And the examples I have here are part of a group of stories that were gathered and told by our friends over at the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. Here, they took a serialized group of shorter stories from a bunch of different clients, all of the stories republished on one page. And then the organization highlighted each individual story in its own post on all of the channels. When they did that, they were able to share that one post that one collection of stories over and over and over again. But they kept it fresh by changing the faces and perspectives and stories that they focused on. So they got a ton of mileage out of a single post on their website by switching up the way they presented it.

Now, here's another tip for you. This is direct from my my experience as a content marketer. If you notice that you have posts that are doing exceptionally well, whether they are social media posts, or emails that you have sent out, or even

direct mail like updates or letters. Use that that to your advantage. If you know that they're successful, use that to your advantage.

Especially if you're sharing on social media, try boosting a post that has done well, you can get a ton of additional reach for five or \$10. And you already know that that post is probably going to perform well with new audiences because because it has performed well with existing audience. You can also try resharing posts and adding additional commentary. So pull up your your Facebook page, sort your posts to see which have performed the best hit Share, and then reshare it with additional commentary, and maybe even some conversation starters. You can also look and see if you have as a group of posts that have performed very well on social media look and see if you can identify any common characteristics and then use those characteristics in future posts. So say you notice that a quote from a client story for like a quote from the client, and then a link accompanied by a picture performs really well. You can use that format over and over and over again. And you can apply the same concept to emails. So maybe you want to look and see the five emails over the past couple of years that have resulted in the most donations look and see if you can find any similar characteristics and then include those characteristics and future appeals to you know, that works well with your audience. So you can use that to kind of give yourself a little performance boost if you need to.

Now your story can also be the basis of appeals it can be the basis of

impact updates. You can use your story in a newsletter to drive traffic to your site. There are so many other things that you can do with a story, we don't have time to really dig into all of them today.

We can't dig into how to use your story and display ads or printed materials or signage, or any one of the 100 Other things you might be doing to support your campaign.

But the goal here is to create a story set yourself up for success by creating assets that you can use with it to share over and over again, on a variety of different channels.

So, at this point, we have gone over a ton of different strategies you can use to identify stories, build them, share them, ethically, use them over and over again. And I wanted to give you the opportunity to ask some questions. We've got a little over 15 minutes for questions and conversation. So do feel free to drop any questions in the q&a, and I will make sure we go over them. But in the meantime, since I foolishly did not share my screen correctly, the first time here is that slide that I referenced, if you scan this QR code, you can check out generosity exchange, it's our two day virtual conference coming up October 19, and 20th. We have free general admission or you can buy one of those really cool premium tickets to get a little, a little extra. So check that out.

Donna asked, Can I explain serializing again, absolutely.

serializing is taking your story and splitting it into multiple individual posts or emails, or whatever medium you're using. So think of it kind of like a sitcom, you

want maybe a sitcom as a bad idea. Maybe think of it like Breaking Bad or Game of Thrones or something like that. It's a big long story arc, and they cut it into multiple different little pieces. The advantage of serializing a story is you can more easily get your readers invested in the story as you split it into these different pieces. So an example could be Humans of New York, he shared a really beautiful serialized story from a woman named kangaroo a, she told a very long story, he split it into posts that I think went up

once or twice a day. And you can kind of leave people on cliffhangers. serializing. The stories will get people more invested in you may find that they keep checking your your website or social media or any of those other channels to see what you have shared about your new character. So try leaving people on cliffhangers try closing out those serialized stories with a short call to action, to ask them to donate or to get involved. But if you split up a story into multiple parts, you can get a lot of mileage out of the story you've put together. If you post say, quote from the story that you shared on your website, that's a single post. But if you can serialize it, if you can split into multiple different posts, you can get four or five or more social media posts out of a single story. So it's a great way to get a lot of mileage out of the story that you've already put together. So that's what serializing is.

Alright, that looks like the last of the questions. Let me scroll through and make sure I got everything now. Thank you all so much for being so patient with me as I figured out the

the slide sharing situation that is a first for me, someone is looking for a recommendation on a story gathering gathering method for staff, something to drop ideas into one database per program. They need to activate this for their team somehow. And there are five different programs. So it depends Angela on on kind of how you want to collect it. So something that you might try.

If you use something like Slack, or teams or something like that, you may be able to set up a chat or a forum that people can use to drop their own stories or ideas into another thing that you might be able to do if you don't use something like that. If you have

a spreadsheet or even a word document that's available to all of your staff members, you can invite them to add story ideas, or even their own stories right in that that document. That way. If you get stuck, you can pull up that file and have a database of stories that you may be able to tell. Now here is something that may be a little controversial maybe not um

And if you don't already have that storytelling strategy kind of already built into the culture at your nonprofit, you may find that it's a little difficult to get people to share stories, not because they don't want to, or because they don't see the value of sharing their stories, it's just not part of their day to day routine. So what you may want to do is send out periodic reminders, asking people to share stories or drop story ideas into that document. You may even want to incentivize sharing stories, it doesn't have to be a crazy incentive, maybe you could just have like,

I don't know, a monthly or quarterly drawing for a gift card if people are consistently sharing their stories, or you could share that story on a really popular channel. So your staff, it depends on what motivates your staff if your staff is excited about seeing themselves and their stories represented on your marketing channels that may be compelling in and of itself. But those are some different things. And then Karen shared in response to Angela's question, we're experimenting with a tool called memory fox that captures videos and testimonials directly from participants, using their mobile phones and prompts. That's the coolest thing I've ever heard. Karen share that you can email them a link or a QR code. That's so handy. I am actually going to make a note of that shirt, and no memory foxes. Because that's something that I would love to check out. So yeah, there are all kinds of different tools out there that you can use, including something called memory Fox, which sounds very neat.

Thank you, Karen, for sharing that.

So if any of the rest of you have any ideas about how to capture ideas from staff, especially if you can capture ideas from staff that are spread over a wider geographic area, something like that memory Fox may be really cool. Karen said, it's also great for retirement and birthday parties, which I genuinely didn't think of. But that is a really wonderful idea. Thank you for sharing that.

Hey, everyone, it looks like those are the last questions that we have. I do want to invite you if you want to do more of this kind of ideas exchange in in, in this case, not a chat and the q&a box out during chat on. I do highly recommend you check out generosity exchange, in addition to all of the sessions and the cool workshops that we have going on. There's also going to be a ton of opportunity for kind of networking like this and swapping ideas like Angela and Karen. So check that out. If you have any questions, feel free to email me directly. My email is at Jarvis at NEON one.com. You can DM us on any of our social media channels, you can contact us through the website, get a hold of us. And don't worry, even though I did not share my slides correctly at the beginning of the session, the slides will be available along with the transcript and the recording of this session. You should get that email in the next couple of days. So thank you so much for spending your time with me today. I really appreciate you being here. I know how hard you work when you are working with a nonprofit and I know that committing 54 minutes of your day to learn about storytelling can be a big deal. So thank you so much. Keep an eye on your inbox for a link to the recording slides and transcript. And I hope you have a wonderful day

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