



CHECKLIST:

**THE FIVE THINGS
YOUR BRAND
STORY NEEDS
TO CREATE
IMPACT**

COPYRIGHT © 2020 ALICE FAIRFAX

MAKE AN IMPACT WITH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Hello Storytellers!

If you are an nonprofit leader, a marketer for an organization or an entrepreneur, you ARE a storyteller! Or you had to become one.

If you're trying to get your message to stick, clever copy won't do it. You need to tell a story *and* you need to turn all your data, examples, and information into stories.

Story makes people sit up and take notice. It engages their brain, makes it memorable and creates a relationship with your brand.

You **need** a story to engage your target audience and keep them engaged. When you can turn your information, origin story, and mission into a brand story, then you can easily create daily and weekly copy that is story based.

Don't worry. You've got this. Once you build a kit of story tools, you'll be able to create compelling posts and give meaningful speeches. Quickly and easily. (**Bonus!** You might actually start enjoying it instead of losing sleep.)

The first thing to know is that there are five key elements that every story needs to make an impact. Before we get to the checklist, we need to talk about your brand story.

YOUR BRAND STORY

Wait, my brand story? What's that?!

Think of your brand story as the branch and the stories (daily posts, marketing campaigns, emails, and examples) as the leaves dangling from the branch.

Most nonprofits and entrepreneurs have two things — an origin story and a mission statement. That's great information. Neither of those **engage** your audience.

Your brand story goes beyond the 'we started in a garage' origin. It takes the values of your mission and creates one story you tell over and over, reminding your target audience who you are, what you do, what you promise, and how they will benefit from your brand. This story does not change.

The next level are the *example* stories — the videos you create and post on Youtube, your annual report, your weekly post on LinkedIn and Facebook, the examples you use in your speech to the University Club. These stories are always changing. You are hopefully adding new ones all the time.

Your stories are informed by your brand story. When you know your brand story, you can find and craft the daily impact stories.

Use this checklist to make sure you're using the elements of story that will take you from information that is easily dismissed to a story that creates a loyal audience.

√ An Ideal

Your overarching brand story connects with individuals on an aspirational level. It makes them feel something. They feel hope or understanding or joy.

My first story rule is what I call The Story Mantra: *Universal So We Relate. Specific So We Care.*

Look at your mission statement and look for the ideal. Finding that universal theme is the cable that connects your story to your audience. From there you can build your brand story and your ongoing stories.

Do you have an ideal that is universal? A universal theme, trait or value anyone can relate to?

√ A Picture

Your brand story needs to paint a vision for your audience — where they can go, who they can be, what they can achieve because of your service or product.

The second part of the story mantra *Specific So We Care* is captured by painting specific details into your story. How many times have you seen on a website (maybe even your own!) copy that reads like this:

Our participants engage in real-world scenarios and are benefited by the training they receive here.

Great information but you and I can't see it so we can't feel it. What if you turned that information into a story version?

Joey rides the bus to our training program. The brown-haired, seventeen year-old works with our counselors to learn Excel, a skill that helped him land a job as a data entry clerk at a warehouse.

Are you painting a picture using interesting and unique detail? What colors, details, textures can you use?

√ A Window

A story opens a window that invites your audience into your story.

When you create a way for your audience to see themselves in your story — their dreams, their hopes, their ambitions — they will make themselves a character in your story.

There are several ways to do that including story flow, structure and pace.

The most important way to invite your audience in is trouble. Drama is conflict and every great story is about a problem. What problem does your audience have that your story shows them how to solve?

Is your target audience passive or are they engaged in your story? How are you inviting them into your story? What trouble are they experiencing? What problem do you solve?

√ Action

Have you ever received an email from a company you like and trust and thought, "Oh, this doesn't pertain to me"? The organization wanted it to pertain to you, so why did it miss the mark?

Often, email copy isn't filled with action, it's more a commentary 'about' an event, product or service.

Passive stories start like this:

We have been planning the yearly fundraiser and next week will be your opportunity to sign up.

There are SIX verbs in that sentence. To capture your audience you need action.

Your story doesn't need to blow up a death star but it does need to move people from one place to another. Check your copy for the passive voice. Count the verbs!

Do you use action verbs in a meaningful way? Do you drive the action in your content?

√ A Hero

Every story needs a hero and you want your audience members to be the hero. Yes, of your story!

Your target audience wants to feel the victory that comes from working with your organization.

When they experience the victory of being part of your story and winning by using your products or services, you'll both win.

How might you position your audience as the hero? Do they feel the victory that comes from your help?

If you went through this checklist, you might be feeling a little overwhelmed right now. Do I start with a window or a picture?! How do I make my audience the hero? Do I really have a universal ideal? Don't worry.



I get it! I'm a professional storyteller. I entertained thousands of people at Walt Disney World. I KNOW how to tell a story.

BUT when I sit down to craft my weekly email or devise the copy for a month's worth of social posts —I freeze. I start to panic. What will I say? What SHOULD I say? What if what I say isn't strong enough, clear enough, compelling enough?! If only I had a **magic wand**. Wait, I do!

The tools I created for my Tell Your Story workshops are like waving a **magic wand**. Every time I sit down to write a press release, social copy or an email, I start with these five essential elements. From there I use one of the over 50 tools I've gathered to create the best story for that audience.

I have such a heart for entrepreneurs and nonprofit leaders who are doing ALL the things. You make your organization thrive — payroll, scheduling, managing people, connecting with the board, meeting with clients. When I think about YOU doing all of that and then sitting down on a Friday to plan the social media calendar...it just wears me out.

Even for those organizations that have a team — a marketing manager even! Making sure your message is getting out there and really engaging takes up a bulk of the week.

In my digital course **Tell Your Story: Mastering the Five Essential Story Tools** I'll give you a week's worth of exercises for each of these five elements.

You'll be able to open up a blank page then copy and paste a tool that launches your creative thinking.

You'll create several copy options and actually be energized rather than drained.

You'll know you are maintaining the brand integrity because you will craft your brand story.

Stick with me and I'll get all those tools to you. As we get closer to course registration, if you're on my email list, you'll be the first to know.

We all know that telling a story is the most effective way to connect with and retain your audience.

Figuring out the best story to tell and crafting it well isn't a science but with the right tools it is easier to create story magic!

Here's to telling your story,

– *alice*

PS The next page is a one-sheet version of the five story elements. Use it to make writing that weekly email a snap!

STORY CHECKLIST

√ An Ideal

Universal so we can relate

√ A Picture

Specific so we care

√ A Window

You're looking for trouble

√ Action

Make it move

√ A Hero

Let them win