



Storytelling, Social Media & Societal Change

2022 SEBAC PREP MEETING





Why Storytelling is Important for Policy Making

“Each of us walks around with a bunch of stories in our heads about the way the world works. And whatever we confront, whatever facts are presented to us, whatever data we run into, we filter through these stories. And if the data agrees with our stories, we’ll let it in and if it doesn’t, we’ll reject it. **So, if you’re trying to give people new information that they don’t have, they’ve got to have a story in their head that will let that data in**”

Davidson, B. Storytelling and evidence-based policy: lessons from the grey literature. *Palgrave Commun* 3, 17093 (2017).
<https://doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2017.93>

What is Data-based Storytelling?

Data storytelling is the process of translating **data** analyses into layman's terms in order to influence a business decision or action. With the rise of digital business and **data-driven** decision making, **data storytelling** has become a much-talked-about skill often associated with the **data** science and analytics community.

Why is Storytelling Important?

- We're inherently more empathetic when we connect with the human element behind the numbers and policies
- We “fit” the world around us and the myriad of objects and people therein, into story patterns
- We are bombarded with information as we move through our lives and we seek patterns within that information to simplify complexity and reduce ambiguity, so that we can make sense of the world and act within it.



Shaping Your Narrative

3 Questions to Help Develop a Narrative

1. Understand your end goal: Why are you telling this story? What are your optimal intervention points?
 - a. EX: We are telling this story to save state services and for 2022 our next optimal intervention point is before the BCG report comes out.
2. Understand the rules and norms: What platforms are you sharing your story on?
 - a. EX: These videos are intended for websites and social media as opposed to testimony that we would want to be more formal.
3. Know your audience: Who is your audience? How can we be emotionally compelling to that audience?
 - a. EX: The audience for these videos is the general public, so it's important to connect our message to something they can relate to.

Crow, D. and Jones, M. Mastering the art of the narrative: using stories to shape public policy. *The London School of Economics and Political Science* (2018).
<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2018/07/18/mastering-the-art-of-the-narrative-using-stories-to-shape-public-policy/>

5 Steps to Better Narratives

1. Tell your story: your policy stances is actually your policy stories
2. Set the stage: purposefully choose content, include evidence, geography and relevant laws.
3. Establish the plot: determine how props and characters interact, track time and establish your cause/effect which allows for blame and solutions
4. Cast your characters: identify your victims, villains and heroes understanding that known characters (e.g. Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton) have embedded emotions which will guide your audience's response
5. State the moral: your moral is a solution to the policy problem at heart, it could be a policy, awareness, call to action, etc., but helps conclude story with something that can be done.

Effective, Data-based Storytelling

- Level-headed, but non-robotic tone
- Accessible and easily-verified data
- Connection to the audience
- End “story” with a call to action (petition, story share, call your legislators, etc.)
- Predicting opposing responses

Ineffective, uninformed Argument

- Argumentative tone
- Exaggerated or unproven statements
- Lack of “story” that allows the audience to connect
- Fails to offer a solution to the problem
- Fails to address clear opposing responses in a simple manner.



Amplifying your Story

What to do with Union Handles

- Share content you see on your union (or union ally!) to your personal page
- Comment to reaffirm key points
- React to help the algorithm

What to do with your Personal Handles

- Tag friends and use hashtags to bring the content to folks who normally wouldn't have seen it
- Share, Comment and React - in this order!

@aftct

@uconnaaup

@AREmployeesUnion

@4CsSEIU1973

@ProtectCTPensions

@SEBAC_CT

@CSEA_CT

@WorkersForJustice

@NEHCEU1199

@connecticutemployeesunionindependent

@CTStateUaaup

@cpfulaborunion

@council4