

BUILDING A CULTURE OF STORYTELLING

YOUR ROLE AS A LEADER

You are one of the organization's lead **ambassadors**, a **champion** for the work of your organization. Ambassadors represent an organization in all settings. You are always an organizational leader (not just at meetings or events) and should always be considering your interactions and your connections in that light.

*YOU MUST BE A GOOD STORYTELLER
TO BE A GOOD AMBASSADOR.*

WHEN YOU ARE ASKED:

*“What does your
organization do?”*

YOU HAVE TO **NAIL** IT.

*You have to be “**on message**”
and able to, in any situation,
tell folks about your org, **why**
it's important and **why** it is
important to you.*

IMPORTANT EQUATION

AMBASSADOR + COMPELLING STORY = NEW STAKEHOLDER

(VOLUNTEER, PROSPECTIVE BOARD OR STAFF MEMBER, DONOR)



•• HOW ORGANIZATIONS COMMUNICATE ••

TAG LINE

Typically this is a line that follows the name of your organization. Some organizations have them; others don't. They are solely for simple marketing. A great tag line can be helpful but doesn't tell me enough.

MISSION STATEMENT

That 2-4 sentence statement your organization struggled with / wordsmithed and edited as a group. The end result often reflects the "decision by committee" model (not always best).

♦ HOW AMBASSADORS COMMUNICATE ♦

Never begin with the words "Our mission is..." And don't bother memorizing it.

Sit down and write your own heartfelt version of what that mission statement means to you and then practice it. That will be your 'elevator pitch.'

Identify one story that you can tell to bring the work to life for your listener. Look for the "home run" that talks about different facets of your work in a single story.

◆ DOs & DON'Ts FOR A 2 MINUTE ELEVATOR PITCH ◆

DON'T

- **Assume.** You know SO much more about your organization than your audience. Talk to them as if you were telling a 10---year---old about the work you do.
- **Provide a List.** People need to understand the big picture – holistically. You can "rattle off" as a way to illustrate. For example, a direct service organization that supports the elderly in NYC might approach the variety of services this way: *"We are all about the elderly in Upper Manhattan – the elderly who value and **deserve** their independence and with services ranging from X to Y to Z, we ..."*
- **Lead with Your Vision.** It can be paralyzing. *"We are working to end all human slavery."* What does a listener do with that.

DO

- **Change the Question.** From *"What does your organization do?"* to TELL ME ABOUT YOUR ORG. The latter Q gives you running room. The former leads you to a list of stuff.
- **Bring Your Organization To Life.** You may not have time for a whole story but remember the work is about people; programs are a vehicle.
- **Ask a Q of Your Own That You Can Answer For Them.** *"Did you know that there are X number of homeless youth in our community and our shelter has beds only for Y number every night?"*
- **Be Passionate – It's Contagious.** Something like: *"I love this organization --- I began as a volunteer and today I am a board member. The work of this place runs through my veins. Let me tell you why..."*



★★ HOW TO TELL A GREAT NONPROFIT STORY ★★

If you are lucky enough to get time with someone and can tell a great story, illustrative of your elevator pitch, remember the elements:

SOMEONE TO ROOT FOR

MAKE IT PERSONAL - USE A NAME - MARY



PROBLEM TO SOLVE/CONFLICT

WHAT KIND OF HELP DOES MARY NEED?



HOW IS YOUR ORGANIZATION WORKING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

A PROGRAM SUCCESS



EMPATHY/WARMTH/PERSONAL CONNECTION



EVIDENCE OF FORWARD MOTION WITH NEW GOALS

ARTICLES THAT MAY BE OF VALUE

THE BIG MISTAKE THAT IS HURTING YOUR NONPROFIT (AND HOW YOU CAN FIX IT)
<http://www.joangarry.com/nonprofit-elevator-pitch-1/>

HOW TO BE A GREAT STORYTELLER
<http://www.joangarry.com/nonprofit-storytelling/>

To learn more about Joan, have a look at www.joangarry.com/about-joan. For more on the added value Joan can bring to a nonprofit, visit <http://www.joangarry.com/work-with-joan>.