

Invest Health

Messaging and Storytelling

June 7, 2017

Goals

- ✓ **Refine core messages about your site**
- ✓ **Refine a story about your site**
- ✓ **Identify key pieces of data to support your messaging and stories**

What is a Message?

Data Points Don't Speak for Themselves

A message provides context and an interpretation of information. It provides the big picture—and why your audience should care.

Elements of a message

- Problem
- Solution
- Ask
- Hope
- Urgency

Tips for Creating Messages that Resonate

- **Avoid Jargon**

- Infrastructure*
- Vulnerable populations
- Capacity building
- Mobility
- Paradigm
- Synergy
- Stakeholder
- Cross-sector/multi-sectoral
- Development
- Systemic
- Collective action
- Morbidity

Tips for Creating Messages that Resonate

- **Avoid Jargon**
- **Use data sparingly—and rely on 2-3 of your most powerful data points**
- **Make it about individual people – not just “communities”**
- **Think 1, 2, 3 – never 8, 9, 10**
- **Show, don’t tell**
- **Carefully message “process”**

Exercise 1: Mock Interviews

Exercise 2: Elevator Version

Strategic Storytelling: Recap

I tell you this story because...

What is a Story?

A story is about a relatable character* overcoming clear challenges to reach a goal.

Character	→	Obstacle	→	Goal
✓ <i>Relatable</i> ✓ <i>Compelling</i> ✓ <i>Real</i>		✓ <i>Clear</i> ✓ <i>Understandable</i>		✓ <i>Admirable</i> ✓ <i>Obtainable</i> ✓ <i>Realistic</i>

What is a Story?

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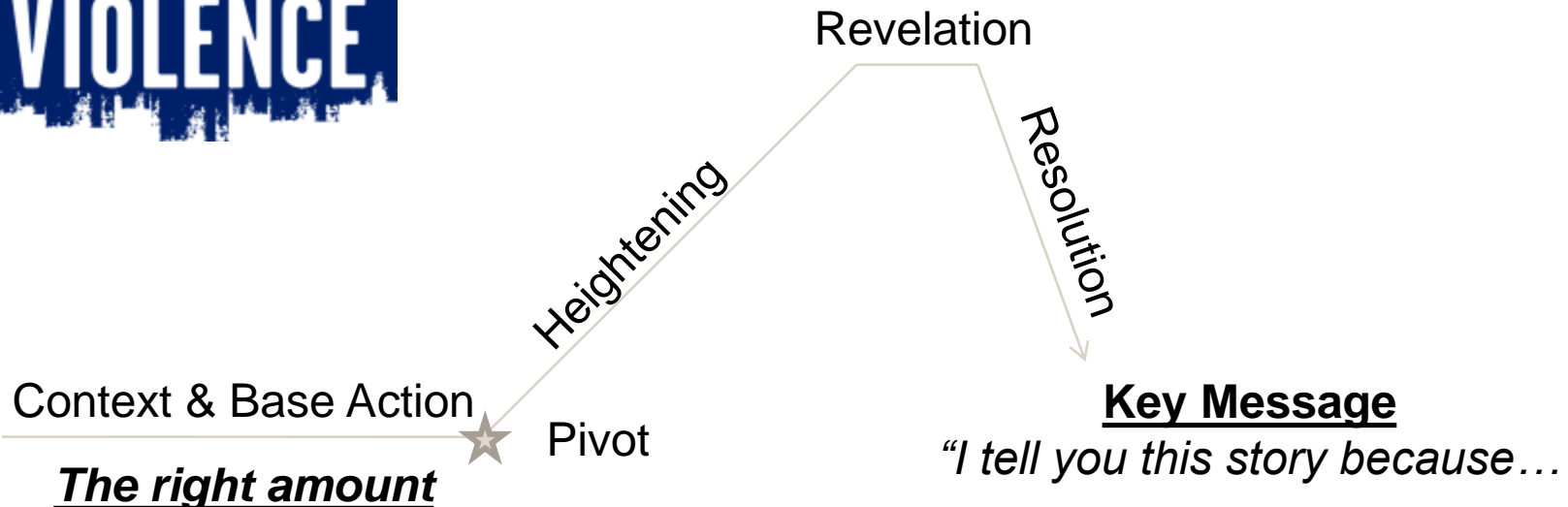
Cast your audience? *How does your audience relate to your story?*

- ✓ *Hero/Main Character (will they feel empowered?)*
- ✓ *Helper (are they helping to clear the obstacles?)*
- ✓ *Villain (are they the obstacle?)*

Questions as You Develop Your Story

- **Who is your audience?**
 - What are their values?
 - What do they care about?
- **What story—if any—has your audience already bought into?**
- **What message/values are you trying to convey?**
- **Who can best tell this story?**

Structure of a story



Context	<p>At an early age I became deeply entrenched in the streets and involved in gangs, drug dealing and armed robbery and gun violence for me personally was basically just a reflex for dealing with conflicts and taking what I wanted.</p> <p>At age 17, I'd had already been arrested several times and I was later convicted for four gun related offenses. And upon release I was eager to work in the streets where I was comfortable and to work with individuals with whom I could relate to.</p>
Base Action	<p>I had an opportunity to work with one individual who used to walk down the street with a book bag full of guns and after I worked with him for a while I actually was able to get him enrolled in a GED program.</p>
Pivot & Heightening	<p>Several months after that I remember *he was involved in a heated confrontation on the street and he reached into his book bag and—at that moment everybody was nervous because we assumed what he was going to do...</p>
Revelation	<p>...and he actually pulled out a book and he said, “Man you need to read this because you don't know shit about nothing.”</p>
Resolution	<p>And for me, personally, that was a reflection that demonstrated how far he'd come.</p>

What Research Tells Us

Challenges

- **People overestimate how well a single story reflects all cases**
- **More vivid and extreme stories can distort how people view the broader issue**
- **Stories of “superheroes” can shift burden to everyone else.**

How to Avoid Pitfalls

- **Don't tell the story of the exceptional person.** Tell the story of a typical person (exceptionally well).
- **Balance the stories of individuals and the “system.”** Your project should be a compelling, central character in your story as well.
- **Use data to provide a clear context for any individual.** Be explicit about what the data mean.
- **Reflect on what the story means to you while you tell it.**
- **Tell solutions stories that can't be seen as a triumph for the “up-by-the-bootstraps” mentality.**

Telling Stories

- Keep it short (and simple)...
- ...but use “telling” details
- Craft your story and build suspense
- Be authentic and reflective
- Pacing

Example: Buffalo

Context	<p>Willie Weatherspoon is a retired office worker living in Delavan Grider, a neighborhood in Buffalo. Her community of many retirees has some of the worst health in the state – with 1 in 5 people having diabetes, 1 in 3 being obese and half having high blood pressure.</p> <p>Willie and her family are close. She takes care of her grandchildren after school and her adult children take her to the grocery store that's 3 miles away because she can't drive because of severely impaired eyesight.</p>
Pivot	<p>The creation of Invest Health provided an opportunity for change.</p>
Heightening	<p>Through community discussions, they agreed that improving access to affordable, fresh and nutritious food would have the greatest impact on health.</p> <p>Together, they decided to convert abandoned manufacturing warehouses into community space that supports good health habits.</p>
Revelation	<p>When Willie learned about the plans to build an indoor farmer's market a few blocks from her home, she was ecstatic. She looked forward to taking a stroll with her grandchildren to pick up fresh vegetables and fish.</p>
Resolution	<p>The project will bring healthy options to this neighborhood. They plan to start with a sustainable aquaponics project that will grow fish and produce to be sold in the new space and eventually to neighboring restaurants with the goal of reinvesting the profits. Eventually, the site will offer healthy cooking classes and fit classes.</p> <p>The community decided what it needed and took action. The Buffalo Invest Health project will change how Willie and her neighbors shop and their chances to be healthier.</p>

Breakout Session

Outline, refine and practice your story