

Seven Tips for Storytelling (via [Ceros](#))

1. **Stories are about people.** People connect with other people, so make sure you focus your story on the real-life characters of your story. Even if your organization (a) is serving other (b) toils in the dense thicket of policy change, or (c) helps other organizations work more effectively, human beings are still driving the action. So focus on the people involved. People are what serve as the audience's guide through the story, and what an audience will connect with.
2. **Let your characters speak for themselves.** An important part of storytelling is making the story personable and relatable. When characters speak to each other in a story, it lends immediacy urgency and authenticity to the piece. So use direct quotes and let characters speak in idiosyncratic voices, lending credibility to the dialogue.
3. **Audiences bore easily.** Let's face it: these days, our attention spans are strained and unless you're keeping people interested, you are wasting your breath. So when telling a story, get them engaged: make them wonder "what happens next?" or "how is this going to turn out?" As the people in your story pursue their goal, they must run into obstacles, surprises, or something that makes the audience sit up and take notice.
4. **Stories stir up emotions.** Human beings are not inclined to think about things they don't care about. Stories stir emotions not to be manipulative, not simply for melodramatic effect, but to break through the white noise of information that continuously inundates us and to deliver the message: *this is worth your attention.*
5. **Stories don't tell: they show.** Show don't tell is the most fundamental maxim of storytelling, and for good reason. Your audience should see a picture, feel the conflict, and become more involved with the story – not just be receptacles for a long list of facts.
6. **Stories have at least one "moment of truth."** The best stories show us something about how we should treat ourselves, others, or the world around us. Call it an "Aha" moment – that point when your story conveys a message that really makes your audience say, "Yes! That's a powerful idea."
7. **Stories have a clear meaning.** When the final line is spoken, your audience should know exactly why they took this journey with you. In the end, this may be the most important rule of all. If your audience can't answer the question, "What was the story all about?" it won't matter if you followed rules one through six.

Keep these things in mind: What do you want the audience to feel? What do you want the audience to remember? What was the critical moment in the story? Make sure you know what message you want your audience to come away with, so that the story you've told is one your audience can retell, too.