Tips for Telling Your Rural Story

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• Established in 1980, at The University of North Dakota (UND) School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Grand Forks, ND

• One of the country’s most experienced state rural health offices

• UND Center of Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity

• Home to seven national programs

• Recipient of the UND Award for Departmental Excellence in Research

Focus on
  – Educating and Informing
  – Policy
  – Research and Evaluation
  – Working with Communities
  – American Indians
  – Health Workforce
  – Hospitals and Facilities

ruralhealth.und.edu
Me? A Storytellor?

Inside each of us is a natural-born storyteller, waiting to be released.

- Robin Moore
First Things First: Who is Your Audience?

• Who are you trying to reach/engage?
• What are their goals and needs related to your organization?
• What do they want or need to know?
• How do they access information?
• Other attributes and preferences
  • Age, gender, income, etc.
  • Health literacy
  • Existing knowledge of and engagement with your organization
What are Your Objectives and Resources for Telling Your Story?

• What are your business goals in providing information to your audiences?
• What resources do you have or can you afford to develop?
• Who else can help you tell your story?
Where Do Audiences and Objectives Intersect?

Audience Needs & Interests

Your Objectives

Storytelling Sweet Spot
Why Are You Telling Your Story?

You can’t tell any kind of a story without having some kind of a theme, something to say between the lines

-Robert Wise
Your Story in Context

Your story will be consumed and interpreted differently depending on the way it is disseminated.

How does/should each medium influence or shape your content?

- Your website
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Blogs
- Email newsletters
- Infographics
- Video
- Podcasts
Consistency across platforms

What’s your strategy?

Documentation, such as style and brand guides helps with:

• Voice
• Branding
• Design elements
• Message optimized for each platform
• Seamless user experience among platforms
Social Media - Tell Your Story Every Day

• Have a plan!
• Look for micro-stories that can help people understand you
• #Hashtag it
Websites

- About Us page
  - History
  - Mission
  - What makes you special?
- Highlight:
  - Current events
  - Initiatives
  - Your ongoing commitment to mission and community
- Use pictures and videos to make it engaging
- Make content easy to share
- Connections to your other platforms
Website Content Lifecycle

Who? What? How? When?

Audit & Analyze
Maintain & Archive
Create
Publish
Strategize
Structure
Finding the Right Focus

Instead of telling a story about how great your brand is, try telling a story that shows you completely understand and empathize with your customer and their life.

- Lewis Howes
Brainstorming: What Makes a Compelling Story?
Telling Your Story

• Why
• What
• How
• Where
WHY?

Because ... if you don’t someone less expert might.
WHY?

Health and wellness *business* begets
Health and wellness *education* begets
Health and wellness *storytelling*
WHAT? Tell your readers something important they don’t know.
WHAT?

“Important?”

Everything...

“Don’t Know?”

A lot...
Look around. Listen to your organization... your community...
WHAT?

Mechanics of care:
- Advanced directives
- Medication lists
- Discharge
WHAT?

People doing care:
- Doctors
- Nurses
- Social workers
- Physical therapists
- Respiratory therapists
- Housekeeping team
- Volunteers
WHAT?

Local/County health department
Librarians
School nurses
Extension agents
Community events
Faith-based organizations
Community service organizations
WHAT?

The questions experts:

*Your Patients*
- Parents
- Teens
- Retirees
- Business owners
WHAT?

Dry Time
WHAT?

Dry Time
The “Surprise”
The “Aha”
The “Unique”
The “Grateful”
What?

Notice the pattern?
Engage Your Staff!
Community Collaboration

*These are the Keys to RHIIhub’s Storytelling*
Academic *rural* journalism literature: “Individual resonance” & Timeliness
Telling Your Story

• Why
• What
• How
• Where
HOW?
Tell It Plain,
Tell It Simple
Dr. Paul Smith, University of Wisconsin-Madison

“When I give audiences the statistics that a third to half of Americans have trouble just reading, and then I tell them that only one in ten of all Americans have any proficiency with understanding health information, they sit in stunned silence.”
Dr. Paul Smith, University of Wisconsin-Madison cont.

“Even for the folks who do have proficiency, all you have to do is to give them a cancer diagnosis, make them sleep deprived, experiencing severe pain, any of those things that happen all the time In a hospital or an emergency room...
Dr. Paul Smith,
University of Wisconsin-Madison cont.

...Anybody, anybody with those things happening is going to have trouble processing, remembering, or making decisions related to healthcare information.”
HOW?

Healthcare Storyteller = Health Lingo Translator
Telling Your Story

• Why
• What
• How
• Where
WHERE?

Print:
- Newspapers
- Special editions
- Newsletters
- Magazines
  (yours and others)

Online:
- Websites
- Blogs
- Social media
  (yours and others)
Engage Your Community:

WHERE?

“Can we provide a story for you?”
WHERE? Small rural newspapers:
- Dominant medium
- High trust
- Consistent “pass-along” rate

2014 National Newspaper Association survey:
WHERE?

Al Cross
• Director, Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues, University of Kentucky
• Academic partners at 28 universities in 18 states

The Rural Blog
Kentucky Health News
WHERE?

1. Public service: health and wellness
2. “Arm’s length relationship”
3. Expertise: News and news writing
4. Sell advertising space
5. Limited resources
## Telling Your Story

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Newspapers</th>
<th>Healthcare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experts</td>
<td>Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Relationship</td>
<td>“Arm’s length”</td>
<td>“Arm’s length”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Space</td>
<td>Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health/Wellness</td>
<td>Public service Awareness/Promotion</td>
<td>Mission and business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHERE?

Pitch your story:
Email &/or phone call
Provide a story framework
Press release
Full story

Be visible:
Media/communication
Public affairs contact info
Don’t Just Pitch the Media, *BE* the Media!

**WHERE?**

**Online:**
Website?
No longer optional.
(Many free/low costs options)

**Social Media:**
Twitter, Facebook?
No longer optional.
(Multiple academic studies prove huge outreach impact)
Multimedia: No longer optional

WHERE? Audio-Visual Storytelling

No longer optional?
What’s this guy’s story?

Professional and Family man
Center for Rural Health

Tell your rural health story visually.

Professional vs Amateur
Video Production Tips

Ask some basic questions

What are the goals?

Who is the audience?

What do they know?

How will the video be used?
Know your target audience.

Demographics determine treatment

Keep videos shorter.

Key on main goals.

Be “infotaining”.

Tease viewers into action.
It doesn’t have to be complicated.

Social Media

Grab attention with visuals

Short video clips

Capture attention

Don’t need extra equipment

Rebecca Quinn and Linda Harmon setting up the Unmasking Brain Injury display at #UNDSMHS
How to Tell Your Visual Rural Health Story.

Develop your story arc

What is your story?

What is the message?

Who are the main players?

What are the visuals?
Trinity Hospital Twin City Fit For Life Program
Finding a production company.

Check around

Colleagues or friends

Check local or regional listings

Ask to see samples
Cost to do a video project.

Prices often vary

Complexity of project

$500 to $1000/finished minute

Location of the production

A plan helps to lower the cost
How to lower your costs.

Help with Pre-production

Start with an outline.

Develop a script.

Suggested shot list and graphic ideas.

Organize the shooting schedule.
Other things to consider.

Get it in writing

Get signed video releases.

Avoid copy written material.

Obtaining permission can be difficult.

Does the video company own or subscribe to a music library?
Can’t afford a professional, shoot it yourself.

Video interviewing tips

Avoid vertical video.

Find a quiet location.

Avoid white/plain backgrounds

Move subject away from the background.
Be aware of your surroundings and backgrounds.

Video interviewing tips

Do NOT shoot interview into a window

Use a tripod.

Shoot at eye-level.
Good audio is as important as good video.

Sound recording tips

Find a quiet location.

Use a microphone whenever possible.

Monitor audio if possible.
Let there be light.

Any light helps

Set up light behind or beside camera.

Under a fixture.

Light from a window.
You’ve been framed.

Proper Composition

Nose room

Headroom

Odd framing
You are ready to record.

Don’t forget

Quiet Location
Microphone
Lighting
Composition

PRESS THE RECORD BUTTON 😊
Questions?

Contact Us:
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Kay Miller Temple, kay@ruralhealthinfo.org
Marv Leier, marvin.leier@med.und.edu
Resources:

Health Literacy Tools:

• Center for Disease Control and Prevention:
  • Everyday Words for Public Health Communication
  • Plain Language Thesaurus for Health Communications (downloads as a Word document)
  • Crisis Emergency Risk Communication
  • TRAIN (Includes courses on writing and speaking for the public)

• National Institute of Health
  • Clear Communication, Health Literacy Module

Tips for Community Engagement:

• The American Hospital Association:
  • Engaging Patient and Communities in the Community Health Needs Assessment Process

• NORC Walsh Center
  • Exploring Strategies to Improve Health and Equity in Rural Communities