COMMUNICATIONS AND MESSAGING FOR A HIGHLY QUALIFIED AND FAIRLY COMPENSATED WORKFORCE

February 26, 2019
WHY TELL STORIES?

The Challenge:
Gaining Attention for Good Ideas

- On average, we check our phones 50 times a day
- We spend about 6 hours a day consuming digital media
- As a result, the human attention span has fallen to from 12 seconds to eight seconds since 2000 (the goldfish attention span is nine seconds)
WHY TELL STORIES?

The Solution:
The Science of Storytelling

- Facts delivered via stories are 22x more memorable

- The brain releases dopamine when its experiences an emotionally-charged story, making it easier to remember and with increased accuracy

- Storytelling activates parts of the brain that cause a listener to turn the story into their own idea and experience in a process called neural coupling
We aren’t sure what our most high impact messages are.
IDENTIFY YOUR STORYTELLING OBJECTIVE

Understanding your goal helps define what success looks like and anticipate the commitment needed to reach that objective.

PREREQUISITE STEPS

AWARENESS
Your audience must know about your ideas or argument in order for any other goal to be accomplished.

EDUCATION
Learning about an issue requires awareness of, and engagement with, the ideas or argument.

PERSUASION
The ability to move an audience to a desired conclusion over time requires both awareness and education.

ACTION
Activation requires audiences be aware, educated, persuaded, and moved to do something about it.

STORYTELLER COMMITMENT & EFFORT NEEDED
Local lawmaker Bob Smith has consistently rejected appeals to fund childcare expansion in Everytown, USA. In anticipation of next session’s vote, Advoc8Childcare wants to lay the educational groundwork to help Mr. Smith understand why childcare is important to his community.

- **Awareness**
  Educate Bob Smith about the importance of affordable, high-quality childcare programs

- **Education**
  Educate Bob Smith about the importance of affordable, high-quality childcare programs

- **Persuasion**
  Persuade Bob Smith to support childcare expansion

- **Action**
  Action: Push for childcare expansion in the next session's vote

**Example Scenario:** Identify Your Objective
Collect Your Storytelling Elements

If logic leads to conclusion, emotion leads to action.

Use this moment to identify what storytelling elements (testimonials, data, anecdotes, etc.) will make up the foundation of your story.

Good stories blend logic and emotion to achieve results.
To build the logical foundation for the story, Advoc8Childcare gathers internal data on the ROI of locally invested childcare dollars, external data on the average national cost of childcare and stats on brain development.

For the emotional elements, Advoc8-Childcare gathers a parent testimonial and pictures of children in childcare programs.

**Logic**

- Childcare now costs more annually than college tuition or rent in a majority of states
- Learning begins at birth and the brain develops faster between birth and age 3 than any other period of life. That is why early care and education are critical to a child’s development.
- Kids who have high-quality early learning experiences are more likely to succeed in school and life. Not to mention that the return on investment on early learning is huge — for every $1 invested locally in early learning there is a later return of $8!

**Emotion**

I am a mother of two and my story is about how difficult a time I had finding affordable care for my children. The cost of childcare for a toddler and a preschooler would have taken about 80% of my paychecks.

—Rachel
We have a message, but need to work on our story.
UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE

**GRASSTOPs**
- Politicians
- School Boards
- City Councils
- Business Leaders
- Funders

**GRASSROOTS**
- CBOs
- Colleagues
- Parents/Families

**Lead with...**
(connect)

**Conclude with...**
(Convince)
Recognizing that Councilmember Smith thinks of his role as making the best decisions for the most people, Advoc8Childcare knows they should lead with data and logic to get buy-in, and conclude with specific emotional anecdotes to personalize the need and give him examples he can share down the road.
## Develop Your Story’s Narrative Arc

### Hook
Why should the reader pay attention?
- A surprising or impressive statistic or data point
- A thought-provoking logical analogy
- A compelling personal impact anecdote from someone in the community
- A thought-provoking emotional analogy

### Situation
What is the context?
- Data or anecdotes demonstrating the status quo
- Description of the environment in which the subjects of your story are operating and what the best outcomes should be

### Challenge
What is the barrier to overcome?
- Description of the factors your organization is working to overcome
- Data or anecdotes demonstrating the challenges you or your community face and any resulting negative outcomes
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- Data or anecdotes demonstrating the challenges you or your community face and any resulting negative outcomes

### Resolution
How is the challenge being solved?
- Testimonials and explanations of what is being done to overcome the challenge
- A clear call-to-action that guides audiences to what they can do
- Data demonstrating the impact of those efforts
- A clear call-to-action that guides audiences to what they can do
**EXAMPLE SCENARIO:**

**DEVELOP YOUR STORY’S NARRATIVE ARC**

**GRASSTOPS** (local lawmaker)

**HOOK**
Why should the reader pay attention?

Childcare now costs more annually than college tuition or rent in a majority of states.

**SITUATION**
What is the context?

Learning begins at birth and the brain develops faster between birth and age 3 than any other period of life. That is why early care and education are critical to a child’s development.

Kids who have high-quality early learning experiences are more likely to succeed in school and life. Not to mention that the return on investment on early learning is huge — for every $1 invested locally in early learning there is a later return of $8!

**CHALLENGE**
What is the barrier to overcome?

Yet only 3 in 10 of working families have access to affordable high-quality preschool opportunities.

I am a mother of two toddlers and my story is about how difficult a time I had finding affordable care for my children. The cost of childcare for an infant and a two year old would have taken about 80% of my paychecks... —Rachel

**RESOLUTION**
How is the challenge being solved?

Affordable, high-quality early learning programs like childcare and preschool help working families and the economy. Increasing funding for these important childcare programs in this year’s budget is critical to the health of your community’s youngest and most vulnerable citizens.
We want to build capacity in our state to tell stories.
GATHERING YOUR STORIES

- Identifying local stakeholders
- Building relationships and buy-in for the importance of storytelling
- Vehicles for story collection
GATHERING YOUR STORIES

Pennsylvania’s Office of Childhood Development and Early Learning
Storytelling Webpage

Check it out!
We need to disseminate a message, what’s next?
What is the best way to reach your audience?

• News Media
• Social Media
  fb, Twitter, Instagram
• Professional Association
• Host an Event
• Personal Contact
• Correspondence letter/email

• Widespread/unpredictable
• Message control/limited content and reach
• Relevant audience/unpredictable
• Message control/time suck
• Builds relationships/time
• Message control/unreliable open rate
5  We have opportunities to talk with the media about this work – help!
“Good Cop/Bad Cop” Messaging

• “Increased public investment in early learning is a pro-growth strategy that can reduce overall government expenditures.”
  -- W. Steven Barnett, Board of Governor’s Scholar and founder, National Institute of Early Education Research, Rutgers University

• “The earliest years are the most promising for brain and skill development, yet it is when the U.S. invests the least.”
  -- Hirokazu Yoshikawa, The Courtney Sale Ross Professor of Globalization and Education, NYU
Did you know... *(pre-K benefits)*

• High-quality early education is one of the best investments we can make with public dollars: an effective weapon against academic failure, high school dropout, crime and poverty and for a shared future that is healthier, more academically, socially, and economically successful.

• Access to high-quality early education remains scarce. Even many middle-income families can’t find or afford such an education before their children start kindergarten.

• The benefits of preschool—for children, families, and society at large—only accrue if preschool education truly is high-quality.

• Poor quality early childhood programs may actually widen the achievement gap.
• Good preschool teachers don’t just focus on academics, but support each child’s physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development in partnership with parents.

• According to U.S. Department of Labor (2016), the median hourly wage for preschool teachers is less than $14.

• Low wages and limited opportunity for professional development and support often leads to high rates of teacher turnover.

• High teacher turnover has been found to negatively affect children's social, emotional, and language development.
Suggested Talking Points (teachers)

• Teaching pre-K is “rocket science”–complex, nuanced, dynamic
• The foundation for good teaching is a well-prepared teacher with a reasonably small class and strong supports in and out of the classroom
• Recent research shows coaching focused on improving interactions with children can both improve teaching practices and ensure high-quality classroom environments
• Poor pay and higher levels of teacher stress are associated with lower observed classroom quality in early childhood programs
• Experiences children have within classrooms--primarily interactions with teachers and peers--are significantly linked with their development.
• At its core, high quality is great teaching–teachers who understand the unique needs of each young child in their care and tailor their teaching to each individual child, day by day.
QUESTIONS & REFLECTIONS
THANK YOU!

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