



EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING

Understand your ideal audience.

It's essential to identify and understand your audience before you tell a story. Different audiences respond to different messages.

Define your audience beyond demographics, including their familiarity with the topic, cultural background, and language.

Get curious. What might prevent them from responding to your message? Understanding all of this allows you to tell a story that resonates with them and makes an emotional connection.



Make an authentic, emotional connection

People sometimes say that others may forget what you said or what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel.

When we're trying to connect with our audience, it's not enough to make a rational case. Emotional engagement inspires action.

Authenticity is also fundamental to compelling storytelling. Use personal anecdotes and experiences to help connect with your audience and create a more engaging and memorable story.



Tell a focused, relevant, and credible story.

It's not just telling an emotional story, it's how you tell it.

- Keep it simple: Use clear, straightforward language and keep your story focused on a single message.
- Make it relevant: The best stories are relevant to the audience and demonstrate how you or your club can solve a problem they face.
- Finally, use data: Citing facts and a few relevant statistics to support your story shows your credibility.



Speak when and where your story is welcome.

Effective communication requires an audience that is ready to be receptive to your message. That also means they have time and are in the right environment for it.

People are also more likely to respond to stories where we share the credit for our work.

For example, if you are discussing Rotary's work to eradicate polio, talk about the efforts of members worldwide and how we have worked with our partners, rather than presenting Rotary as the sole hero.



Be clear about how you want people to respond.

So, you know who your audience is, you crafted a story just for them, and you conveyed your message in a way that they were receptive to.

Don't forget the final step: Your story needs a clear call to action that tells people what they should do next. Make your call to action clear and compelling.



HOW TO USE YOUR STORYTELLING SKILLS

- Ensure that every member is aware of how they can tell stories about Rotary's impact in the world.
- Think about the kinds of Rotary stories you would tell different audiences, such as prospective members, new partners, or potential donors.
- Use these skills when you contact media outlets about your club's activities and events.

Now that you have these skills, how can you use them? First, share these skills with others. Second, think about the different stories that you'd want to tell different audiences. And then use these skills when you work with the media as well.

Here's an example:

When Rotary launched its PolioPlus program in 1988, a thousand children were paralyzed by polio daily in 125 countries where polio was endemic. Today, because of our strong partnerships and the work of Rotary members around the world, polio remains endemic in just two countries: Afghanistan and Pakistan. But we know that polio anywhere can be a threat to children everywhere. Help us protect children around the world by donating today.