

How to Tell Your Story

People forget facts and figures. But they remember stories. And when they're told well, they will share that story with others.

Here are some tips on how to tell yours.

Putting together a story calls for gathering ingredients. Here's a "shopping list" to make sure you have what you need.

Real people

You will need at least one real person to focus on. He or she will be your focal point. So find someone who is eager to talk and doesn't mind (or even enjoys) being written about.

Real challenges

Most people want to root for the underdog. The scrappy team that beats the big guys at the buzzer. The cancer survivor who manages to climb Mt. Everest. What are the obstacles facing the person you're profiling? (Maybe they're living paycheck to paycheck or trying to support three children.) What specific goal are they trying to reach? (Do they want to become a nurse or some other medical professional.)

Real details

Your story will have a bigger impact with key details. In journalism, the old saying is "Get the name of the dog." That means we need to know Fido's name to care about him, to make him real. Here are some questions to ask the person you're profiling:

- How old are you?
- What city do you live in?
- Are you a parent/how many children?
- How much education? Ex: Graduated high school in xx year, OR dropped out in xx.
- Are they a person of color, do they have a disability, are they a veteran?

Who, What, Where, When, Why

Play reporter and ask the five "Ws." This will help you get answers that tell your story. The biggest W is "Why." This is essential to having a story that resonates. Ask your subject why they are doing this, putting in the hours, sacrificing time with their family. Let them give you a big answer. This will get them talking and help you tell *their* story, and in so doing, tell yours!

Use a quote

Take notes and when a person is done talking, you'll have several quotes. Don't make it a bureaucratic quote by trying to "fix it." Let it be authentic and genuine.

Take a picture

We would like a jpeg of the person you're profiling. Please take a shot focused on their face, otherwise known as a mug shot. We also want a photo showing them at work (action photo).

Thank you!

Thank you for helping the Workforce Board tell your success story. Have questions? Call communications specialist Marina Parr at 360-586-8679, or email her at mparr@wtb.wa.gov.