



STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

How to Share Your Coalition Success Stories

Participant Guide



STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Overview of Storytelling	5
Why Storytelling Is Useful.....	5
Elements of a Good Story	5
Why Story Structures Are Useful	5
What Is Digital Storytelling?	6
The Hero’s Journey Story Structure	8
Seven Steps in the Hero’s Journey Structure	8
The Problem-Solution Story Structure	9
Four Steps in the Problem-Solution Story Structure	9
Build Your Story	11
Choose a Suitable Story Structure	11
Use a Checklist to Ensure Good Story Elements.....	11
Collect Story Content with Interviews	12
The Benefits of Multiple Short Writing Cycles	14
Share Your Story	17
Ways to Share Your Story	17
Enhance Your Story	18
Skill Practice.....	20

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STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

Introduction

In 2017, the *American Cancer Society*, supported by the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*, developed a course on **Storytelling for Coalitions: How to Share Your Coalition Success Stories** for Comprehensive Cancer Control coalitions.

This introductory course is intended for *Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition* members who have little or no experience with the techniques of good storytelling. If you already understand storytelling concepts, this course might be below your skill level.

Learning Objectives

In this course, you will learn:

- **Why storytelling is important** for your coalition messages
- How to tell a story that **motivates your audience**
- How to use **the memorable Hero's journey structure** for your story
- How to use **the successful Problem-Solution structure** for your story
- How to **keep your audience engaged** in your whole story
- How to **join your story to a call to action** for your audience
- How to **jump-start your story creation easily in only one hour**

Course Features

This course has the following helpful features and benefits:

- **A user-friendly online format** – you can proceed at your own pace with pause and replay
- **A companion guide** – you can scan the key ideas in a written format
- **Practice exercises** – to further develop your skills
- **Online Resources** – for further exploration of techniques and effective examples

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

Topics in This Guide

Overview of Storytelling

- The usefulness of storytelling

The Hero's Journey Story Structure

- What it is, when to use it, and tips

The Problem-Solution Story Structure

- What it is, when to use it, and tips

Build Your Story

- Collect your story content using interviews

Share Your Story

- Ways to share your story

Enhance Your Story

- Add Pictures and animations in PowerPoint

Skill Practice

- How to grow a story example in three phases

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

Overview of Storytelling

Why Storytelling Is Useful

Storytelling is useful for coalitions because it is an effective way for your readers to experience your coalition messages. The practice of storytelling is thousands of years old, and most of us learn to appreciate story journeys at an early age in our childhood.

Stories help you to share your messages with large audiences because digital stories can be easily accessed at any time by your audiences.

Elements of a Good Story

The key elements of good stories were first described by Aristotle more than 2,000 years ago. The key elements have not changed since that time. A good story still has three parts: a beginning, a middle, and an end.

At the beginning of your story, you need to do three things. First, you introduce your character (which can be a person, group, or an organization) and their normal life before the story begins. Next, you show the event that motivated your character to pursue a goal. And then you describe the goal that your character sets for the rest of the story.

In the middle of your story, you describe the problems and challenges that your character faces and the actions that your character takes to reach the goal.

Finally, in the conclusion of your story, you show the results of reaching the goal and how life is better going forward because of the changes that were made.

Why Story Structures Are Useful

Story structures are useful because they help you and your audience to recognize and organize all the key elements that are needed for a good story experience for your audience.

For you as a storyteller, a story structure gives you clear targets for what you need to include to produce a good story element.

For your audience, a good story structure gives them what they need so that they can emotionally participate in each story step as you lead them through the beginning, middle, and end of your story.

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

Without using a story structure, it is harder for you to identify and organize the key elements of a good story. For example, you might miss a key story element and leave your audience wondering, “What happened? How did we end up over here?”

But if you use a proven story structure that is known to work well, you will not forget any steps, and you can make it easy for your audience to connect with your story emotionally. They will be able to follow you and participate emotionally in every step of your story.

The following pages show you two of the most popular and most proven story structures that have been used throughout history.

What Is Digital Storytelling?

Digital storytelling is storytelling that is done with digital forms of communication. Modern storytelling formats include online documents, slideshows, screencasts, web pages, and movies. Digital storytelling is empowering because it gives you the freedom to share your messages in your own voice and style with your audience.

Digital stories are accessible to a wide group of people on many different kinds of digital devices. For example, people use smartphones, tablets, computers, e-readers, and Internet-connected televisions to access digital stories.

Digital production tools are easily available, and you can make a modern, multimedia, interactive video document with convenient software tools that suit your working methods. Free software makes it easy to create and share digital documents, and slideshows. You can easily create your digital story on your computer, upload it to a website or YouTube, and share it with millions of people around the world.

You can learn more about digital storytelling by searching on Google. Here are a few links for easy reference. Also, check out the CDC blog website at <https://blogs.cdc.gov/cancer/> for some examples of inspiring personal success stories.

Storytelling Links

[Why Storytelling Matters](#)

[Making Data Mean More Through Storytelling](#)

[Basic Steps to Digital Storytelling](#)

[Seven Elements of Digital Storytelling](#)

[Creative Narrations](#)

[8 Steps to Great Digital Storytelling](#)

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

Six Ways to Implement Digital Storytelling

Some Online Story Examples

To get some ideas for your story, you can read or watch a few success stories on the *CDC* website (or on the *Alberta Health Services* YouTube channel.* (Search for "Digital Storytelling@AHS" on YouTube). You can also find more stories by searching the web using Google.

- The *CDC* website: <https://blogs.cdc.gov/cancer/>
- The *Alberta Health Services* channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLi1tOF1I5ZoWY3hfrrwu15NTWz8e9amOt>

* The American Cancer Society does not endorse any product or service.

The Hero's Journey Story Structure

In the hero's journey structure, the hero can be any character that struggles toward a goal. For example, a hero can be a person, a group, a cancer coalition, or an organization.

The hero's journey story structure is thousands of years old and applies to individual and group journeys of every possible kind of story that you can imagine. It can probably work for your story too.

Seven Steps in the Hero's Journey Structure

The hero's journey structure has seven key steps. These are the steps that you need to include in your story to give your audience a complete and engaging story experience.

1. **Once upon a time ...** Introduce the character and story setting.
2. **Every day ...** Show the normal life before the hero's journey begins.
3. **And then one day ...** Show the turning point that motivated the hero to change.
4. **Because of that, a goal was set ...** Show the character setting a goal.
5. **Challenges and actions ...** Show challenges for the character and their actions in response.
6. **Until finally one day ...** Show the character achieving the goal.
7. **And every day since then ...** Show how life is better after the journey ends.

When to Use the Hero's Journey Structure

The hero's journey story structure works well:

- When your story is emotional
- When your story is about a specific person or team that the audience can follow emotionally

For example, a hero's journey structure is appropriate for cancer survivor stories, for clinic teams that set specific achievement goals, or when a campaign team sets a specific goal for the campaign.

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

The Problem-Solution Story Structure

The problem-solution story structure uses a problem to connect with the audience. Stories of this kind open with words that help your audience to recognize a problem that they know about or have experienced in their lives.

For example, here is an opening paragraph from a problem-solution style story. Notice how the problem is used to connect with the audience right away:

***Have you ever** felt like you wanted a healthier lifestyle? I was like that. I sat around too much without exercising, and I did not eat enough fruits and vegetables.*

Four Steps in the Problem-Solution Story Structure

Here are the four steps in the problem-solution story structure. The descriptions show what you need to include in each step of your story.

1. **Problem Identity** - Describe the problem.
2. **Challenges** - Show the consequences of the problem and why your audience should care.
3. **Solutions and actions** – Show the actions that solve the problem.
4. **Results** - Show how life is better after the solution.

A Story Example

This example uses a coalition as the main story character. (Remember that groups and organizations can be characters too.) Keywords and phrases (in bold) mark key story elements.

(Problem Identity ...) Screening people for colorectal cancer is a challenge. Only 67% of adults ages 50 to 75 years were up-to-date on screening in 2016. Those less likely to get tested included people with lower education and income and those who did not have health insurance.

(Challenges ...) This is an important problem because increasing screening rates to 80% by 2018 would prevent an estimated 277,000 new cases of colon cancer and 203,000 deaths in the USA within 20 years, according to a new 2015 study.

(Solutions and actions ...) Our coalition was formed in 2017 to help address the screening problem in our local community. We set a goal to increase our local screening rates by 10% within 2 years.

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

To reach our goal, we recruited a physician champion and a patient navigator to guide patients through the screening process and requested donated colonoscopies from local practitioners.

(Results ...) Since we began, we have increased our local screening rates from 50% to 70%. Now we provide four donated colonoscopies per month. The work is all done by volunteers and in partnership with the help and guidance of other partner organizations. Our statistics show that we have caught five early-stage cancers, and have probably saved several lives. That is a good feeling for us.

When to Use a Problem-Solution Structure

The problem-solution structure works well:

- When you do not have much time and must use a short presentation
- When your story has no hero person or clinic team for your audience to follow emotionally
- Where your story is about a general problem such as low screening rates or statistics

Build Your Story

Choose a Suitable Story Structure

Choosing the right story structure for your situation is important because a good match will help you to produce a better story. You will not miss any key story elements, and your audience will experience a better and more memorable story.

Use a Checklist to Ensure Good Story Elements

Your story structure will give you the initial outline steps for your story. You can then fill in the story structure steps with the specific details of your story.

You can improve your story by using a checklist to make sure that you give your audience all the good story elements that they need to have a good experience from your story. Good story elements go beyond just the four or seven steps in your story structure.

Good story elements are also about the *way* you present the story element. Clear descriptions, visual imagery, and good phrases all help your audience to participate in the steps of your story. Here are some checklist items to help you improve your story elements.

- Clearly identify the hero, the problem, the turning point, the goal, the struggles, and the results.
- Help your audience to participate emotionally by helping them to visualize each story step.
- Use specific numbers and clear phrases to increase the clarity of your story.
- Take the reader on an interesting journey that reaches a goal or solves a problem.
- Try to create emotions in your readers to hold their interest.
- Show how life is better after the goal has been reached.

If you choose your story elements carefully and make them easy for the audience to recognize, visualize, and identify with, you can increase the emotional content of your story and make it more enjoyable and memorable for your audience.

The best practice is to give your audience what they need to participate emotionally in your story. They need to know whom to cheer for and what the goal is. They need to recognize and feel the strength of the obstacles, and they need to know who took what actions and what happened when the goal was reached.

Describe each moment carefully and visually so that your audience can participate in your story!

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

Collect Story Content with Interviews

Use the **interview method** for collecting your story content. It works well because it helps you to capture your story in the words of the people that you interview.

You ask people questions about the key story structure elements such as the main hero character, the turning point, the goal, and how daily life changed after the story journey was completed. Then you write down what they say. The interview method is a very friendly way of gathering information. It is just like having coffee with a friend.

Example Story Interview Questions

Here are some example interview questions that you can use to draw out key story element information from an interviewee, to get good content for your coalition story.

The example below uses the same story as above to make it easy for you to match the interview questions with example answers (the story elements that you have seen before) from the interviewee.

Once upon a time ... Introduce the character, setting, and daily life

Q: Hi Joe, we're excited to hear about your coalition success story. **Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and what your daily life looks like** at work? (Ask for information to introduce the character and the setting.)

A: I am a physician at Premier Medical Associates in the eastern suburbs of Pittsburgh. We are a multi-specialty group with 100 providers. Each of our seven adult primary care offices has embraced the patient-centered medical home concept.

Every day ...

A: This means we practice a team-based approach to medicine that is comprehensive, continuous, and centered on patient needs. One of the most difficult tasks I face is convincing reluctant patients to be screened for colorectal cancer. Many patients do not fully understand the prevalence of this disease or the benefits of timely screenings.

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

And then one day ... The Turning Point

Q: Was there a **special event that motivated you** to start this project?

A: I became a strong champion for colorectal cancer screening several years ago after one of my patients died from this terrible disease in his early 50s. Despite my advice at every annual visit to complete some form of colorectal cancer screening, he did not comply.

Because of that ... A goal was set ...

Q: What did you do because of that?

A: Our practice kicked off an effort to improve screening rates in December 2012. At the time, our screening rates were very close to the national screening rates (in the low 60% range).

Challenges and actions

Q: How did you start to progress toward your goal? **What challenges did you encounter? How did you solve them?**

Q: Who participates in delivering and coordinating screening services? (Ask about other team members and what actions they take to help reach the goal.)

Until finally one day ... The goal was reached

Q: What do you think were **the key factors that allowed you to be successful?** Do you have any **lessons learned** to pass on to others who want to increase screening rates in their community? (Asks about lessons learned to share with people who hear the story.)

Q: Tell us about the impact that you are making in your local community. (Asks about **the results and outcomes of the actions/challenges/actions of the story journey.**)



STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

And every day after that ... (sustainability, and a better life for the community)

Q: **What have you done to help the sustainability of the changes** you made to your services? (Ask about lessons learned to share with people who hear the story, and about why the program will continue into the future.)

And they lived happily ever after... Inspiration, It is Possible, You Can Do It Too

Q: **What lessons would you like to share with others who** are interested in forming community partnerships to offer donated screening services?

Q: Do you have **any final tips** for our readers that are working to increase their screening rates? (Ask about even more lessons or tips to share.)

Tips for Ending Your Story

Try to include something encouraging and inspirational at the end of your story. Leave your audience with a warm feeling about the future, because you want your story to inspire and motivate other people to share their own stories.

Create a Storyboard

By this time, you have made a lot of progress. You have a story structure, and you have an outline that shows your key story ideas. You have collected information from interviews and probably have identified the emotional images and steps that will make it easy for your audience to visualize and participate in each moment of your story.

To fill in your story, use the steps in the story structure. Add one or two bullets to each slide or paragraph in your story structure to fill out your story. Describe each moment carefully and visually so that your audience can visualize each story moment and participate in your story.

Then just keep expanding your story step-by-step until you are done! Do not worry if your story is not perfect on the first try. You have only just begun. Your story will get better as you work on it.

The Benefits of Multiple Short Writing Cycles

The goal of a creative activity is to start with an idea and finish with a working product.

Most writers "loop" through multiple iterations or **cycles** to build successively deeper and richer versions of their creations until they produce a completed product.

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

For example, a writer might create a premise statement on the first cycle, a rough outline on the second cycle, a detailed outline on the third cycle, and a first draft on the fourth cycle.

Creative Activities in Each Cycle

During each cycle, creators compare, contrast, and balance the elements of their work. Thus, they can avoid going too far off course while moving toward a completed product.

Also, for each cycle, course adjustments or changes can be done as early in the creative process as possible. **This saves creative time and effort.**

For example, it is easier to change an outline than to change detailed body text. An outline is light and is easily changed or replaced. In contrast, a completed work may require more time and effort to modify.

Concepts and Benefits of Short Creative Cycle Times

The **cycle time** of a creative activity is the time that it takes to make one "loop" over the product to add another layer of detail or to adjust the balance or content of the work.

In a learning situation, **it is advantageous for you to keep your cycle time short.** This is because:

- You will probably learn something new in each cycle.
- If you use more cycles of shorter duration, you will learn faster.
- Corrective or creative changes are easier, and faster when they are more lightweight.
- You always have a "working" product, even if it is not perfect.
- Having a working product increases motivation.
- Having a working product enables you to collect feedback earlier.
- Having a working product avoids integration problems late in the schedule.

To be most efficient, **try to keep your cycle time short** as you create your digital story. Focus on one thing at a time. Do the story text first, and keep it simple.

Your First Cycles for Your Story

During your first story cycle, write one sentence for each key story element. That will force you to focus by putting the most valuable information into a single sentence.

As you move to your second and third cycles, you should strive to use two or three sentences for each key story element to create your next story versions.

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

Then you will be on your way. You will have a working product that you can grow into your final masterpiece in a controlled way, step by step. And you will always have something to show people for critiquing and feedback.

If you use short creative cycles, it is easy to abandon a lightweight change that does not work out. Simply go back to the previous version. But notice that taking a small step back only works with lightweight steps forward. If you use big, long, high-cost cycles going forward, you will also find yourself taking big, long, high-cost steps backward if one of your creative ideas does not work out.

Short creative cycle times are your friend. Use them whenever you can.

Share Your Story

Ways to Share Your Story

Once your story is complete and ready to tell, here are some ways to share it:

- Volunteer as a speaker to tell your story. Many organizations appreciate new speakers. Do not worry if you do not feel confident. You will get better each time you share your story.
- Create a slideshow or a movie of your story and upload it to YouTube. You can mark your video as unlisted so that the public cannot see it unless you give them the unlisted link.
- Upload your video to a suitable website (after you get all appropriate permissions).
- Make a guest blog post on someone else's website, and include a link to your video.
- You can also carry your video or slideshow on a flash drive so that you can plug it into any computer at any time. That way, you can be ready to tell your story at any moment.

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

Enhance Your Story

Add Pictures, Animations, and Music with PowerPoint

After you have your story outline and details in place, you have a basic story that is functional and usable.

Next, you can enhance it and polish it by adding visual elements such as pictures and animations. You might also decide to add some background music if you are not narrating the story at the same time.

In order to add pictures and animations, you must use a slideshow program such as PowerPoint or a video production program such as Camtasia (Windows) or Screenflow (Mac).*

There are a variety of PowerPoint techniques that you can use for these enhancements. Two resources are provided in this course:

- **A companion document on PowerPoint skills** for this course (accompanies this document)
- **A Digital Storytelling YouTube Playlist** link for PowerPoint techniques (see the link below).

Both of these resources are well-matched to this course.

*The American Cancer Society does not endorse any product or service.

A YouTube Playlist for PowerPoint Skills

In this course, we will focus on using PowerPoint as a tool to help you create a digital story. Many people have access to PowerPoint, and it is an easy tool to use for a basic digital story.

You can find many free and helpful teaching resources on the Internet to help you with your PowerPoint skills. Free teaching videos can show you simple techniques such as adding charts to your slideshow. They can also show you advanced animation and design techniques to make your story look even more professional.

Have some fun learning these new techniques. You will become an expert with PowerPoint long before you run out of PowerPoint resources on YouTube.

Here is a YouTube playlist that is well-matched to this course. Search the Internet for “digital storytelling” if you want to find more resources or additional perspectives on storytelling.

- The Digital Storytelling Course Playlist
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLliW67NMzKpw2EI3bpulz8aRu3aYufgMM>

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

Two techniques that you might concentrate on are:

- First, try to include some pictures or charts that immediately show your story point visually. People can absorb and understand good charts and pictures almost instantly. That also means they can participate almost instantly in your story.
- Second, try to make your phrases and sentences both concise and memorable. Simple and emotional words from the people you interviewed are powerful. Such words can carry lots of emotion and make it easy for your audience to visualize themselves hearing the words directly from the person who originally spoke them.

Avoid the Use of Copyrighted Images and Music

When you add pictures or music to your story, be careful to avoid the use of copyrighted material from the Internet. **Just because it is on the Internet does not mean that you can legally use it in your story.**

You should be especially careful if you are creating your story on behalf of your organization. If you use materials that are illegal in your story, you might hurt the reputation of your organization or make it liable for copyright infringements.

Links to Free Images and Music*

Do not worry about finding images and sounds for your story. You can find many websites that provide free images and sounds for your story. Here are a few links for examples. The Creative Commons license is one example of a license that permits general use by anyone.

- www.flickr.com/creativecommons/
- www.freeimages.co.uk/
- www.public-domain-photos.com/
- www.pexels.com
- www.pixabay.com
- www.stocksnap.io

Here are some websites that offer copyright-free music:

- www.jamendo.com/en/
- www.openmusicarchive.org

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STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

Skill Practice

In this skill practice session, you will

- See story examples that use Hero's journey story structure
- Learn how to critique and evaluate your story to improve it
- Learn how to add images to your story for visual emphasis and interest
- Create the first draft of your success story using the hero's journey template below

Goals

- See the story templates and examples below to help you get started on your own hero's journey of creating your first Comprehensive Cancer Control success story.
- Read a few success stories on the CDC blog <https://blogs.cdc.gov/cancer/> to get ideas for improving your own Comprehensive Cancer Control (CCC) success story. Look for the key story elements in each story. Identify the audience, the hero, the goal, the struggles, the actions, and the resolutions. Watch for any good descriptions of emotions, events, or visual images that add depth and color to the story. Maybe you can use the same techniques in your story.
- Practice story structure by making a few simple, small stories. Create one or two stories using the problem-solution structure, and one or two stories using the Hero's journey structure. Use a single sentence for each story element to keep the stories short and your practice interesting.
- Each story should only take you about five minutes. Create stories about people, groups, dogs, or any other heroes that you like. Have some fun creating the stories. The important thing is to practice assembling the key story elements into a story.
- **Create the first draft of your CCC success story for your coalition** using one (or both) story structures. Ensure that your success story has all the key story elements—a character, setting, inciting incident or motivation, goal, obstacles, actions, and resolution.
- **Critique your story** using the principles shown above. Work with a partner to get a critique from another person. Refine and improve your story accordingly.

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

A Story Example with Structural Hints

The following sections demonstrate how to use a template to build up a story. Copy and paste the template below into your own story document.

As a quick reminder, here is the hero's journey story structure again.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY STORY STRUCTURE

- **Once upon a time** ... Introduce the character and story setting
- **Every day** ... Show the normal life "before" the story journey begins
- **And then one day** ... Show the inciting incident, the impetus to change
- **Because of that** ... The character sets a goal
- **Challenges and actions** ... Show character challenges, responses, and actions
- **Until finally one day** ... Show the results of the actions (the "after" in before/after)
- **And every day since then** ... Show how life is better in the post-struggle world

The following example story is a real-life story from the CDC website. Some details in the original story have been omitted for this teaching example to make the story structure stand out.

The First Creative Cycle

In the first creative cycle of building your story, use a structural template that tells you what information to place in each step of the story. In the "first phase of your story" example below, the structural hints appear in bold font. A single sentence is used for each story step.

Once upon a time

Start your story here by giving the audience a starting point they can connect with.

I am a physician at Premier Medical Associates in the eastern suburbs of Pittsburgh, part of a multi-specialty group with 100 providers.

Every day

Extend your starting point by connecting it to some form of human behavior or circumstance in real life that is relevant to your audience.

One of the most difficult tasks I face is convincing reluctant patients to be screened for colorectal cancer because many patients do not fully understand the benefits of timely screenings.

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

And then one day

Identify a key inciting event that motivated a person or group to change their behavior or goals because of the event.

I became a very strong champion for colorectal cancer screening several years ago after one of my patients died from this terrible disease in his early 50s.

Because of that

Give the story a goal of some kind, so the audience knows what to hope for.

Our practice kicked off an effort to improve screening rates in December 2012. At the time, our screening rates were very close to the national screening rates (in the low 60% range).

Challenges and actions

Pick one challenge for this story exercise, and show how it was addressed or solved.

For every patient visit, I encouraged providers and staff members to use the EHR system to look for patients who had not been screened so they could recommend screening to these patients.

Until finally one day

Zoom out to a higher-level view, and tell the audience the outcome of the project.

My practice cares for about 17,000 patients who need to be screened for colorectal cancer, and we are closing in on the 75% screened mark.

And every day since then

Zoom out even further and look towards a happy, better, or inspirational future.

My practice is proof that we can increase screening, and I challenge other medical practices to commit to increasing colorectal cancer screening rates to save more lives, too.

A Story Example in Final Form

The Second Creative Cycle

Here is the previous story at the end of the second creative cycle. In the second cycle, the structural hints were removed. Now the story is ready to be narrated into an audio clip on a slide. In this second cycle, you can try to read your story out loud to see how it sounds in audio format.

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

There are only seven sentences—one sentence for each story element in the Hero's journey. By using single sentences, you can keep your cycle time short in the beginning!

1. I am a physician at Premier Medical Associates in the eastern suburbs of Pittsburgh, part of a multi-specialty group with 100 providers.
2. One of the most difficult tasks I face is convincing reluctant patients to be screened for colorectal cancer because they do not fully understand the benefits of timely screenings.
3. I became a very strong champion for colorectal cancer screening several years ago after one of my patients died from this terrible disease in his early 50s.
4. Our practice kicked off an effort to improve screening rates in December 2012, when our screening rates were very close to the national screening rates (in the low 60% range).
5. For every patient visit, I encouraged staff members to use the EHR system to look for unscreened patients so they could recommend screening to these patients.
6. My practice cares for about 17,000 patients who need to be screened for colorectal cancer, and we are closing in on the 75% screened mark.
7. My practice is proof that we can increase screening, and I challenge other medical practices to commit to increasing colorectal cancer screening rates, too.

A Story Example with Image Ideas

The Third Creative Cycle

Now that you have a working slideshow with seven simple slides and sentences consider how to improve the story slides by adding visual images or charts.

The section below shows you one possible way to associate image ideas with your storylines. You add an extra sentence to each step of the story to highlight possible additional bullets or image ideas.

(Warning: After you add extra lines for bullet or image ideas to your story steps, the steps will become more difficult to narrate smoothly for your audio track. That is because it is more difficult for your mind to skip over unwanted lines while you are narrating. Skipping the unwanted lines creates awkward blank spots in your narration if you are not careful. So, you will probably get better narration results if you narrate only slides that have pure story text on them.)

1. I am a physician at Premier Medical Associates in the eastern suburbs of Pittsburgh, part of a multi-specialty group with 100 providers.

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

Bullet Ideas: name of practice, location, size, specialties

Image Ideas: picture of practice, and/or of the physician

2. One of the most difficult tasks I face is convincing reluctant patients to be screened for colorectal cancer because they do not fully understand the benefits of timely screenings.

Bullet ideas: benefits of screenings, lives affected/saved, screenings per year in practice

3. I became a very strong champion for colorectal cancer screening several years ago after one of my patients died from this terrible disease in his early 50s.

Bullet ideas: statistics on deaths by age group, impact on lives

Images: of the patient, if permission is obtained; chart of deaths by age group

4. Our practice kicked off an effort to improve screening rates in December 2012, when our screening rates were very close to the national screening rates (in the low 60% range).

Bullet ideas: starting date, starting screening rate, the national screening rate

Images: an Excel chart of initial screening rate vs. national rate

5. For every patient visit, I encouraged staff members to use the EHR system to look for unscreened patients so they could recommend screening to these patients.

Bullet ideas: statistics on unscreened patients, screening process, other actions taken

Images: pictures of someone working at the EHR terminal in the clinic

6. My practice cares for about 17,000 patients who need to be screened for colorectal cancer, and we are closing in on the 75% screened mark.

Bullet ideas: compare starting screening rates with current rates and national rates

Image: an Excel graph showing the increasing slope of screening rates

7. My practice is proof that we can increase screening, and I challenge other medical practices to commit to increasing colorectal cancer screening rates too.

Bullets: final stats, potential to achieve in the future, inspirational close

Image: happy team, smiling clinic staff/patients, a feel-good pic

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

A Template for Your Own Story

Now it is your turn. Write a simple, seven-sentence skeleton version of your story using the template below (or use the separate companion document). Keep your sentences short and your cycle time low, and "grow" your story into the smallest story that you can narrate with satisfaction.

As a focus challenge, consider starting with seven simple one-liner sentences first and then grow them into longer compound sentences on the second cycle if necessary.

Here is the summary template for the Hero's journey structure. You have seen this structure before.

- **Once upon a time ...** Introduce the character and story setting
- **Every day ...** Show the normal life "before" the story journey begins
- **And then one day ...** Show the inciting incident, the impetus to change
- **Because of that ...** The character sets a goal
- **Challenges and actions ...** Show character challenges, responses, and actions
- **Until finally one day ...** Show the results of the actions (the "after" in before/after)
- **And every day since then ...** Show how life is better in the post-struggle world

Once upon a time

Start your story here by giving the audience a starting point they can connect with.

Write your sentence here.

Every day

Extend your starting point and opening idea by connecting it to some form of human behavior or circumstance in real life that is relevant to your audience.

Write your sentence here.

And then one day

Identify a key inciting event that motivated a person or group to change their behavior or goals because of the event.

Write your sentence here.

Because of that

Give the story a goal of some kind, so the audience knows what to hope for.

STORYTELLING FOR COALITIONS

Write your sentence here.

Challenges and actions

Pick one challenge for this story exercise, and show how it was addressed or solved.

Write your sentence here.

Until finally one day

Zoom out to a higher-level view, and tell the audience the outcome of the project.

Write your sentence here.

And every day since then

Zoom out even farther and look towards a happy, better, or inspirational future.

Write your sentence here.