

DSC SPEED READS

**COMMUNICATIONS**

# Storytelling for Impact

Sarah Myers



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**Sarah Myers**

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# Introduction

## *Who will this book help?*

This book is a practical guide for charities of all shapes and sizes that want to incorporate the power of storytelling into their work.

Everyone involved in a charity will be working towards the same goal: achieving its vision and mission. Whether that's saving donkeys, beating cancer or tackling the climate emergency, stories have a key part to play in making it happen. So, it's in everyone's interest to get involved in storytelling.

No matter what your role or experience is, this book will help you create stories that inspire your audiences to take action – from making a donation, to volunteering their time, to getting behind your latest campaign.

## *What will it give you?*

This book focuses on written stories, rather than videos or audio storytelling. It aims to demystify the art of storytelling by breaking down the process. Starting with the purpose and power of stories, it considers how they can be woven into a charity's communications. There are tips on where to find people who want to share their stories, example questions to ask that will evoke interesting and emotive answers, and ideas for turning these answers into stories with impact.

The book will help you work together – sensitively and effectively – with storytellers to achieve your charity's goals. Importantly, it includes reminders of the duty of care you have to your storytellers as you become the guardian of their story.

# Chapter 1

## Working with stories

*This chapter helps you to understand the purpose and power of your charity's stories.*

### Why bother?

People have been sharing stories since time began. Stories bring facts and ideas to life, partly because they give us information in a context we can identify with – other people. As humans, we care about other humans. They interest and influence us.

#### Top tip



Avoid the term 'case studies'. Instead, talk about 'stories' and 'storytellers' or 'story contributors'.

A story can take an intangible, broad or complex issue and turn it into something relatable – something we can connect with on an emotional level, remember and share with others. We remember stories because emotions stay in our memory longer than facts. According to neuroscientists, when we see something emotive, our brain interprets it more vividly and stores it with greater clarity.<sup>1</sup> So, if you

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<sup>1</sup> See Chair Tyng, Hafeez Amin, Mohamad Saad and Aamir Malik, 'The Influences of Emotion on Learning and Memory', *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 8, no. 1454, 2017.

# Storytelling for Impact

Charities have vital stories to tell. This practical guide will help you find, write and share them. Follow the advice in this book, and the stories you tell will inspire your audiences to take action – whether that’s making a donation, volunteering time or getting behind your latest campaign.

Sarah Myers is a copywriter, editorial consultant and creative manager, with more than 20 years’ experience in the not-for-profit sector. Her previous roles include Senior Writer and Creative Services Manager at Macmillan Cancer Support and Managing Editor at a charity communications agency. Now freelance, she works with an extensive range of charities, social enterprises, professional bodies and specialist agencies.

‘Everything you need to tell inspiring stories and put the voices of your storytellers centre stage.’

**Adeela Warley, CEO, CharityComms**

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