

MODULE 1: Why We're Here

CORE CONCEPTS

 **How to Use the Complete Storytelling System**

 **What You'll Learn from this System**

 **Definitions of Key Terms**

 **How We All Think in Story**

 **MODULE SPOTLIGHT:**
Stories Beat Data

 **MODULE PRACTICE:**
Instituting a Mission Moment at Meetings



★ **MODULE SPOTLIGHT:** Stories Beat Data

Research done at Carnegie Mellon University for the nonprofit organization, Save The Children, was designed to find an identifiable factor that donors use when making a decision to give or not give. Essentially the study asked: Is it the story or is it the data that makes the stronger case?

The research participants—college students—were asked to fill out a questionnaire. Then they got an envelope with five one dollar bills in it.

In every envelope, there were horrible statistics about the millions of children without food in the country of Malawi. The envelope also contained an explanation that by making a cash contribution, the student could help to fight that poverty.

About half the participants had some additional information in their envelope. In addition to the statistics, these students got the story of Rokia, along with her photograph. Rokia was a seven year old little girl, with deep chocolate eyes looking much older than she really was. The story explained that Rokia was so hungry that she went to bed every night with an ache in her stomach. In fact, her family was so desperately poor that she would likely die of starvation by the age of ten if she didn't start eating regularly soon.

The story ended by explaining that a gift from the student could change Rokia's life forever. The story even highlighted the dollar amount money that could really make an impact for Rokia and her family.

The participants who received only the statistics about hunger in Malawi contributed on average a little over a dollar to Save The Children. But the participants who read the story about Rokia and saw her picture contributed an average of \$2.38—almost double.

The research is clear: story beats data.

⚙️ **MODULE PRACTICE:** Instituting a Mission Moment at Meetings

The simple act of sharing “mission moments” can have lasting and far reaching effects.

Organizations who have implement a “mission moment” at the start of board and staff meetings. Organizations who have done this have seen a transformation in participation and engagement. It makes a big difference when more people can see clearly how your work matters.

Begin the practice of sharing a mission moment. It's simple and takes only a couple of minutes but the outcome is more powerful than you can imagine.

This is especially critical if staff are the only people with access to those you serve—incorporating mission moments at your board meeting changes board members from observers to engaged participants.

How to Begin the Practice of Sharing a Mission Moment

1 Define the concept with your team.

MISSION MOMENT

“Any short, inspirational, example of how your organization is making an impact.”

- Must be about a real person.
- Could be a client, camper, staff person, volunteer, parent, board member, donor, former of any of these, or...?
- This is a tiny slice of an interaction: the look on someone’s face as they came through the door; a comment someone made to you about your important work; the way someone feels now that they have what they came to find.

2 Make time—2-3 minutes—at the start of each staff, board, and committee meeting.

Invite someone to share an example of a “mission moment” or to give a short example of the WHY of your work. *(You may have to be the first example to show people how to do it.)*

3 Just one “mission moment” shared at each meeting is plenty.

4 Keep the sharing to literally a minute or two at the most.

5 Rotate the shares between staff and board by using a sign-up sheet for each meeting.

6 There are no rules about what the mission moment is about.

If it inspired the person sharing...that’s the measure of a good mission moment.



How to Begin the Practice of Sharing a Mission Moment

7 Ask the group for feedback about that specific share.

Did it inspire them? Have they met that person? What might they want to know more of or less of about that mission moment?

Get people talking and connecting about real people and real feelings about your work. This is the basis of WHY you will review financials, ask for money, train volunteers, and lobby at the capital.

8 Continually invite board members, staff, donors and others for examples of people from your organization that have inspired them.

For more information visit: <http://www.ignitedfundraising.com/mission-moments/>

