



## Storytelling:

How to tell your organization's story to gain support  
and drive the narrative

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## Goals:

- Support your organizational goals through strategic storytelling
  - Gain support to drive the narrative around your entity
- Identify stories and tie them to organizational goals
- Develop stories for various platforms and audiences



## Storytelling:

- Storytelling is a powerful tool for communicating information, humanizing your organization, and building trust.
- PR storytelling is about capturing the attention of your audiences by relaying the story your organization in an impactful and compelling way.



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**Identify Goals:**



## Identify Goals:

- Start with your strategic plan:
  - Mission
  - Values



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## Identify Goals:

- Communication goals:
  - Raise awareness
  - Change attitudes
  - Motivating action

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## Awareness & Action





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## Identify Stories





## Identify Stories:

- Internal Communications
  - Employee safety – winter weather, summer heat
  - Ladder safety
  - Lifeguard training
  - Safe employee spotlights
- External Communications
  - Day in the life of a refuse worker – serving community, staying safe
  - Come see what it's like to be a bus driver!
  - Process videos – behind the scenes of wastewater treatment

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## Identify Stories:

- Create a culture of curiosity
  - Create an “editorial” committee. Meet weekly/monthly.
  - Include individuals from all departments.
  - Share your goals:
  - Ask them:
    - How they can help you fill the gaps (stories told, audiences reached)
    - Who is the best person to tell these stories - often individuals you may not expect will help create best stories

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## Human Interest Story



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## Crafting Your Story:



## Crafting Your Story:

- 5 C's of Storytelling:
  1. Circumstance
  2. Curiosity
  3. Characters
  4. Conversations
  5. Conflict

## Crafting Your Story:

- Circumstance:
  - Talking to risk manager about reducing hazards throughout the Town of Herndon – for both citizens and staff – by conducting site inspections – and how VRSA is helping.
- Curiosity:
  - What are the things the Town of Herndon is doing to make them successful at identifying and reducing risks throughout the town? How is VRSA helping?
- Characters:
  - Roxann Fox Simkins and all the dedicated employees in Herndon
- Conversations:
  - Discuss with Roxann her “why,” and why this is important to her and the Town of Herndon. Listen.
- Conflict:
  - In this situation, the conflict is in reducing risks of all types through regular site inspections.

## Crafting Your Story:

- Develop an outline of how the story will flow:
  - Beginning
    - Why is it important to conduct regular site inspections to protect employees and citizens – what are the costs of not doing so?
  - Middle
    - Meet Roxann Fox Simkins, here is what she and the Town of Herndon are doing to conduct site inspections and reduce risks.
    - Make it relatable, interesting, and fun
  - End
    - Here are ways you can get started conducting site inspections in your workplace/organization



## Crafting Your Story:

- What information will you need to craft beginning?
  - Data and statistics, graphics, numbers on the real importance of establishing a site inspection program.
- What questions would you ask Roxann to craft the middle?
  - Why is this important? How does it impact the community? How are you accomplishing this?
- What resources do you offer to help craft the ending?
  - How VRSA can help you learn how to conduct effective site inspections!

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## Herndon Clip



## Crafting Your Story:

- Interviewing skills:
  - Listen and engage
  - Bring curiosity and desire to understand their story
  - Be aware of biases
  - Take notes or use transcription like [otter.ai](#) to capture information

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## Cool Visuals



## Crafting Your Story:

- Transcribe your interviews, start to draft a narrative
  - Video Script:
    - Voiceovers
    - Graphics
    - Visuals (interview, b-roll)
  - Written story
    - Photographs
  - Audio (podcast)
    - Ambient noises, sounds from the places you visited (think NPR)

## Crafting Your Story:

- A good story gets your attention in the first 60 seconds.
  - Hit your heart, impact the community, get people talking
- A good story answers what, how, when and where
  - A great story will also show the impact this makes on the readers
- A good story has a connection to something currently taking place
  - Tie your story into recognitions – National Safety Month
  - Tie your story to new policies
  - Tie your story to recent news

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## Winchester: Winter Weather





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## Alex Renew – National Safety Month



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## Crafting Your Story:

- Make sure your story ties back to your brand story and major talking points (mission, vision, values):
  - VRSA is here to protect our members and their employees so they can effectively serve their communities

## Crafting Your Story:

- Communicate Clearly!
- Tips for all communications:
  - Avoid:
    - Wordy
    - Verbose
    - Hype
    - Unclear
    - “Corporate” speak
    - Jargon
    - Fact-free
    - Vague
    - Not newsworthy



## Crafting Your Story:

- Facts Show, Hype Tells:
  - Facts inform readers and let them make their own conclusion.
  - Hype tells readers what to think – and they won't buy it.
    - HYPE: The water treatment tank was built with state-of-the-art technology to treat unprecedented amounts of water.
    - FACTS: The water treatment tank was built using **<technical name>** technology, which **<definition>**. The tank will hold 400,000 gallons of water, more than the previous 200,000 gallon tank.

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## Culpeper Schools: Safety Rodeo



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## Video Production Tips:





## Crafting Your Story: Video

- Visuals: Images bring a story to life
  - Animated or colorful graphics
  - Drone footage
  - Timelapse footage
  - Music
  - Voiceovers
  - Effective editing



## Video Production Tips:

- What do you need?
  - NEED To Have:
    - Camera
    - Editing software
  - GOOD To Have:
    - Tripod
    - Microphone
    - Music and Graphics
    - Gimbal
    - Lighting
    - Drone



## Video Production Tips:

- Camera
  - Smartphone
  - DSLR

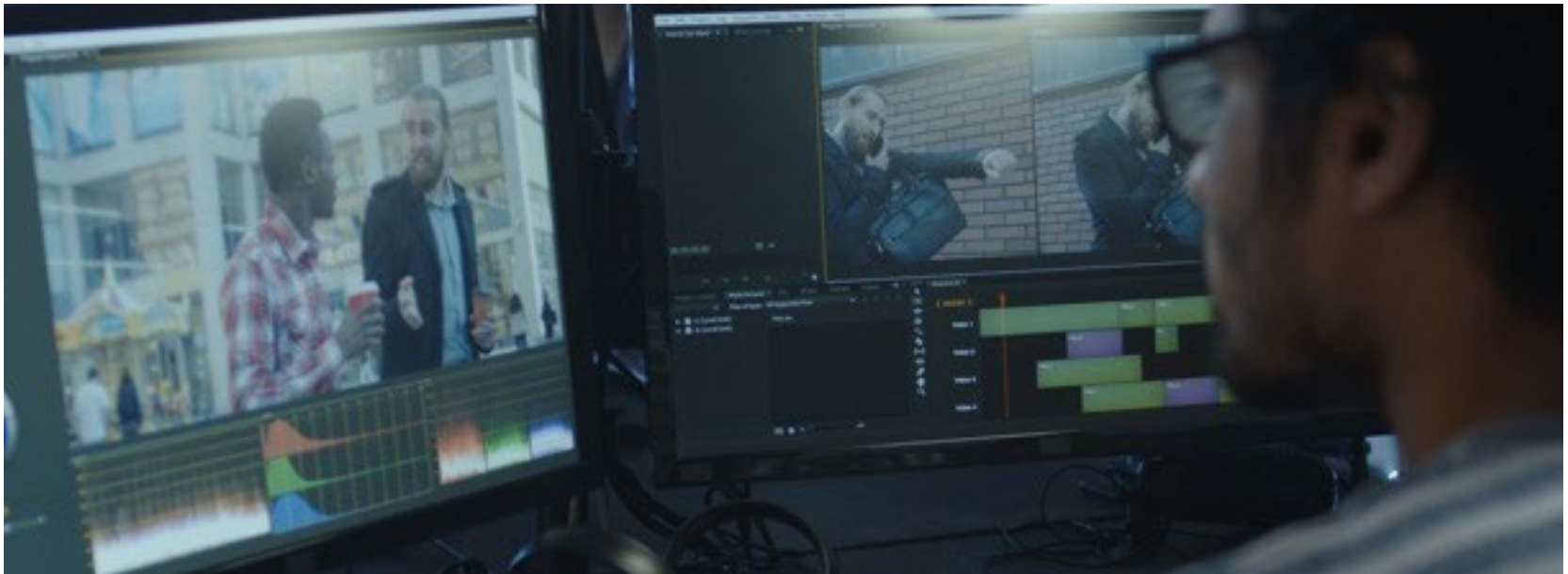


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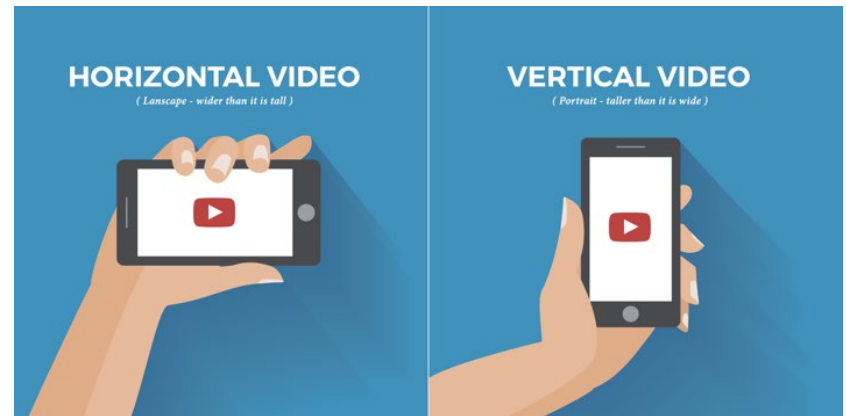
## Video Production Tips:

- Editing Software
  - Video Editor, iMovie, Final Cut, Adobe Premiere, Mobile Apps, ActivePresenter, Shotcut, OpenShot



## Video Production Tips:

- Capturing your story
  - Horizontal video:
    - Standard. Best on YouTube and Facebook and LinkedIn.
  - Vertical:
    - Tik Tok, Instagram
- Recommendation: Shoot wide!!!



## Video Production Tips:

- Shot Lists
  - What is the story you want to tell? What shots do you need to tell that story?
  - Always include an establishment shot, 5 – 6 seconds.
    - Exterior shot – sign, building, something that shows viewers where you are.
  - Interviews – find good backdrops.
  - B-roll – to use while the interview subject is speaking to avoid “talking heads.”
  - Can include still photos and use editing to make them more appealing through Ken Burns and other effects.

## Video Production Tips:

- Editing
  - FIVE Seconds
    - Viewers decide whether to watch in the first five seconds – editing is key.
    - Past two minutes – engagement drops by 65 percent.
      - Facebook’s algorithm prioritizes videos around three minutes long.
      - However, engagement is most driven by QUALITY, not the algorithm
    - Lead with the best imagery – sets the tone – for about five to six seconds to set the stage for the video.
    - Interviews after those opening images.
  - Pacing - Pacing can be done through editing /music/how fast your cuts are.

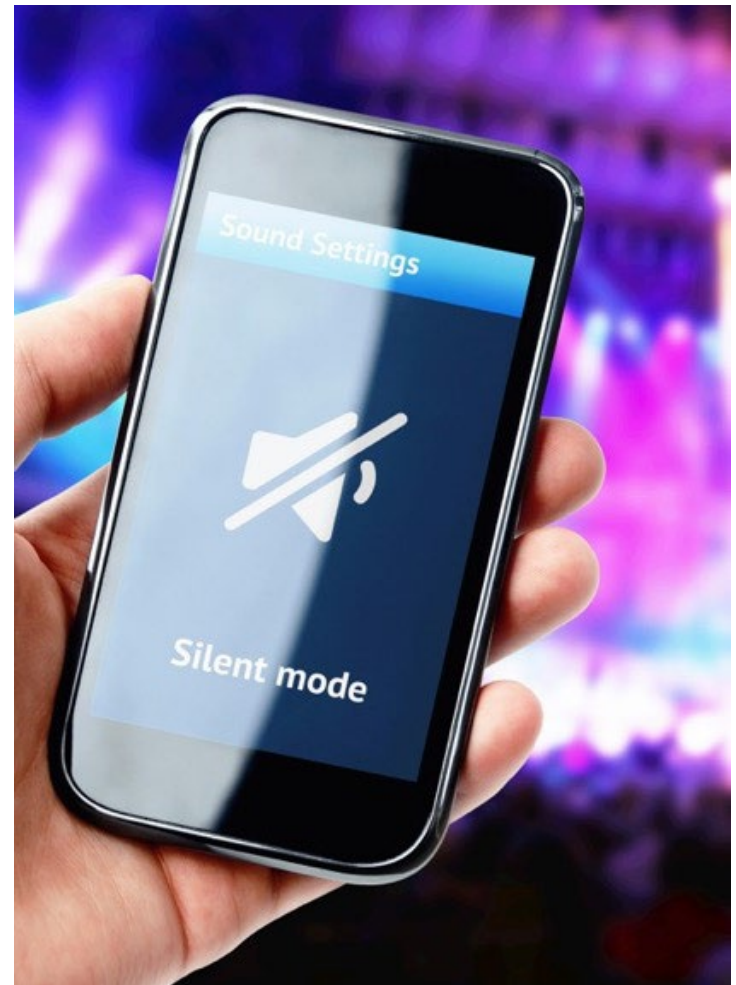
## Video Production Tips:

- Editing:
  - Example: 3 Minute Video
    - Half a day worth of shooting/interviewing
    - One minute of video = One hour of editing
      - 3-minute video: 3 hours of editing



## Video Production Tips:

- Editing:
  - 85 percent of videos on social media are being viewed without sound
    - Lead with best imagery.
    - Talking heads – could be interesting but without the sound, doesn't work.
    - Don't lead off with best audio.
    - Build videos with text boxes – not just captions, but explainer boxes.

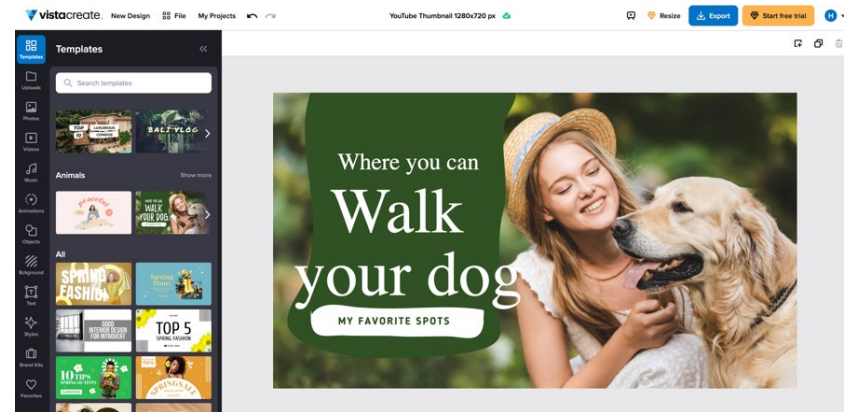


## Video Production Tips:

- Editing:
  - One video – several edits:
    - YouTube, LinkedIn
    - Facebook (older audiences) – emotional content that will pull at heartstrings
    - Instagram (younger, hipper vibe, faster edits)
      - 10 – 15 second chunks
      - Portrait rather than landscape
    - Tik Tok (what is the trending type of video)

## Video Production Tips:

- YouTube Thumbnail:
  - The image that advertises the video.
  - Could be an image from the video
  - Could be something you design yourself



## Sharing Your Stories:

- Amplify – Use different media types to share stories with people who need to hear them
  - Take the transcript of the interview and write a blog post
  - Create a video with the interview and b-roll and upload to YouTube/Vimeo
  - Use the audio from the interview to develop a podcast
  - Share a short clip of the longer video on social media
  - Create an attractive graphic of a quote that was said
  - Reach out to journalists/influencers to share the story on their platforms
- It is work – but gives work more mileage. Creating content and sharing it once, is like buying an expensive outfit, wearing it once, and throwing it away.

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## Analyze, Rinse, Repeat:



## Analyze, Rinse, Repeat:

- Social media sites collect data differently
  - Facebook: Insights
    - Impressions, reach, engagement, and demographics of your followers
  - LinkedIn: Analytics
    - Impressions, reactions, clicks, engagement rate, demographics, click-through rate
  - YouTube:
    - # of views
    - Watch time/percentage
  - Mailchimp:
    - Open rate, click-through rate

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## Analyze, Rinse, Repeat

- How will you determine when you have moved the needle?
- Set smart objectives.