



Messaging

Why are we telling this story?

Determine the single most important thing you want the audience to do or know, then determine key messages that support this point. How is this activity special, unique, unusual, a first?

Provide context

Does this story fit into a wider landscape? How will this event/activity help you meet your goals? Does this event/activity continue or build on something that already existed or is ongoing?

Spell it out for readers

As storytellers, it's easy to assume the details of your story or the value of your activity is obvious. It's not. Stories won't tell themselves, so spell out the details to make the significance clear.

Quotes

Impactful quotes humanize your story and breathe life into your data

Quotes should reinforce messaging and give voice to goals and impacts.

Planning for Great Quotes

- Plan in advance whom you want to interview and what they are best positioned to talk about. Who is closest to the action? Who is best to speak about the goals of this event/activity, the need we're addressing, the positive impacts of this event/activity?
 - Ask open-ended questions that tie back to your goals or messaging.
 - Include full name, title, and organization for each quote, so the reader will know why the person quoted is a credible source. (NOTE: This includes children! Include their name, grade level, and school or hometown.)
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Metrics

Measure your successes

Data is collected, and metrics are a measure of that data. Data is exploratory, while metrics are explanatory.

Metrics best practices:

- Share metrics, not data
- Choose which metrics to share based on the audience
- Focus on 2-3 top metrics

Don't force it. If there are no strong, applicable metrics, don't include them. Try to avoid sharing metrics unless they directly contribute to the narrative.

Photography

Capture moments before they're gone

Best Practices

- Look for the fun and engagement
- Capture faces and hands-on action
- Provide high-resolution photos – .jpg is best

- Provide a caption what they are seeing, who is pictured, and what they are doing.
- NASA requires* a media release for every recognizable person in a photo. (NOTE: This also includes institution staff!)

Layering imagery to tell a complete story

Layer 1– Personal/Emotional

Powerful on its own and capable of connecting on a personal level with the audience. This type of image can draw people in and connect with them on an emotional level.

Layer 2– Interactive/Engagement

This type of image can sometimes stand alone, but usually lacks the tight focus needed to engage the audience more deeply. Pairing with a Layer One or Layer Three image can increase its effectiveness.

Layer 3 – Context/Environment

While Layer Three images usually do a good job of providing context, they tend to be less effective on their own. Because they create distance between the humans in the image and the humans viewing the image. Pairing with a Layer One or Layer Two level image is almost always necessary to strengthen the visual story and reach the viewer at an emotional level.



Recipe for Success

Ingredients

- Summary of your event/activity
- Key messages
- Compelling quotes that reinforce your messages
- High-resolution photos, with captions
- Media releases for everyone (identifiably) pictured
- Impactful metrics that are relevant to your goals

Directions

Combine written materials, including your summary, messages, and quotes.

Gently fold in your photos, photo captions, and relevant metrics.

Work with your communications team to bake it into a finished product and find the best platform to serve it to the world.

When the story is published, share it with your own contacts!

Feel free to share it with us in NASA's Office of STEM Engagement – we love to amplify stories when we can. Send a link to the OSTEM Comms Team at HQ-STEM-Communications@nasa.gov.