

Turning Your Story Into Money

Marshall H. Ginn, Capital Development Strategies LLC,

Amy K. Harbison, Open Window Creative Strategies LLC

IT'S SPRINGTIME AND
I WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE IT.

Mercy Corps: Personalizing Pays!

■ **Email 1:** “It’s been a busy summer for our emergency response teams. Near record monsoons in parts of Pakistan, Nepal and India. Torrential rains in central Sudan...”

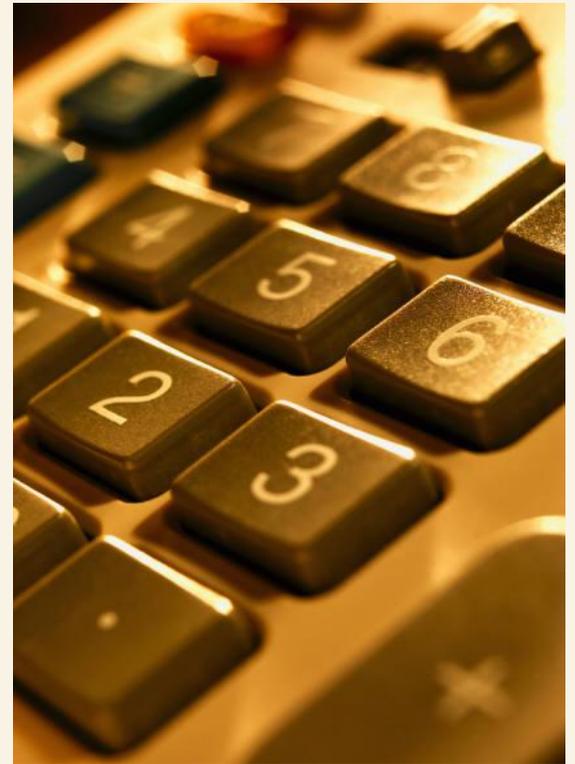
Email 2: “Young Giselle fled the violence sweeping the Democratic Republic of Congo twice last week. On Monday, her family hastily abandoned their farm when soldiers arrived.”

Stories Work Better Than Numbers

“Numbers numb, jargon jar,
and nobody ever marched on Washington
because of a pie chart.

If you want to connect with your audience,
tell them a story.”

Andy Goodman



Listen. Stories are everywhere.

Ask yourself:

Who is the proper target audience?

What moves them?

What is your data/money story?

What visuals move the story forward?



Elements of a Good Story

- Keep it simple. Less is more.
- Remain focused. Clear.
- Be honest and authentic. Use real quotes—sparingly.
- Put yourself in your audience's shoes. Why should they care?
- Talk as if you have an audience of ONE.
- Connect. Find a hook.
- **ARC: Characters. Tension. Climax. Resolution.**

Tahirih Justice Center – tackling tough subject matter with stories

TAHIRIH JUSTICE CENTER PROTECTING IMMIGRANT WOMEN AND GIRLS FLEEING VIOLENCE

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Become a LifeSaver

FACT
In the next decade, more than 100 million girls worldwide will marry before their 18th birthday.

STORIES OF VICTORY

Mariam's Story
My husband accused me of saying prayers to harm his business and told me that my religion disturbed every part of his life. Whenever I returned home from church service, Jean was waiting for me. He whipped me with a belt many times and once, he even threatened me with a hammer. He told me he would kill me. [Continue Reading](#)

NEWSROOM

Mariam's Story
08/16/2011

Tahirih Launches National Survey on Forced Marriage in Immigrant Communities in the United States

HEAR VOICES OF COURAGE

charity: water

“Remembering Rachel”



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Remembering Rachel.

Nine-year-old Rachel Beckwith has left an incredible legacy. After a fatal car accident, people around the world have picked up where she left off. Her birthday wish to bring clean water to people in need has touched thousands and raised more than \$1 million so far.

[visit Rachel's page >>](#)

charity: water is a non-profit organization bringing clean and safe drinking water to people in developing nations. 100% of public donations directly fund water projects. [Learn more or donate.](#)

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Mercy Corps: strong visual storytelling

A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Dear Friends of Mercy Corps,
In 2010, thanks to your generosity, Mercy Corps helped people in the world's toughest places survive, recover and become self-sufficient.
After Haiti's devastating earthquake, you helped bring jobs, food, water and cholera-prevention education to the brave survivors. Haiti will continue to need our support for a long time. But the people of Haiti have not given up – and neither have we.
In 36 countries, our programs are saving and improving the lives of mothers, fathers and children. You made this happen, and we are pleased to share these highlights with you.

Neal Kerry Guyer
Neal Kerry Guyer
Chief Executive Officer

Linda Mason
Linda Mason
Chair of the Board of Directors

A CRISIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING

For 32 years, Mercy Corps has helped people grappling with the toughest hardships survive – and then thrive. We know that communities are the best agents of their own change. And that local markets are often the fastest, most durable drivers of economic recovery.
That's why Mercy Corps listens to local people and helps get markets up and running. We bring groups together to negotiate conflicts and discover mutual interests. We think big, start small and take responsible risks to find solutions that benefit the greatest number of people.

WHAT WE DO
Mercy Corps helps people turn the crises they confront into the opportunities they deserve. Driven by local needs, our programs provide communities in the world's toughest places with the tools and support they need to transform their own lives. Our worldwide team is improving the lives of 19 million people in 36 countries.

OUR MISSION
Mercy Corps exists to alleviate suffering, poverty and oppression by helping people build secure, productive and just communities.

Left, Anderson Haiti - Ben Dreyer for Mercy Corps; Central, Mission Hospital - Christopher Mason for Mercy Corps; Right, Market Stand for Mercy Corps, Afghanistan - Miguel Sanchez for Mercy Corps

Repurpose your stories.



Appeal letters
Annual reports
Speeches
Social media
Proposals
Site visits
Case statement
Volunteer/board
orientation
Staff recruitment
Media pitches
Elevator pitches
Website
E-newsletters
Special events

Collecting stories = \$ in the bank.





“People don’t want information. They are up to their eyeballs in information.

They want faith – faith in you, your goals, your success, in the story you tell.”

Annette Simmons,

The Story Factor

From Storytelling to Fundraising

It's not such a big leap!

I will do anything for the organization...just don't make me ask for money!

Well, can you tell someone a story about why your organization is important? Or a story about why you contribute to the organization?

Guess what...you've just started fundraising...

\$ in the bank for our organizations is what we're after, right?

- It's a cycle that builds on itself → MESSAGE → MONEY → MISSION
 - A good message enables you to bring in money
 - Money provides the resources that enables you to fulfill your mission
 - Mission – and your accomplishments – provides the building blocks for your stories, which are used to highlight your message
- Good storytelling results in good fundraising

Stories Work Better Than Numbers

- Dollar figures, ask amounts, fear, worry, etc. all get in the way of good fundraising with so many people!
 - It's easy to get hung up on numbers when fundraising is somewhat bottomline driven.
- In fundraising, we are supposed to focus on what the dollars make possible – not the dollars themselves
- Using stories helps get all of us – staff and volunteers – past the fear/anxiety of the dollar part of the conversation so that we can move on to real fundraising

Look. Fundraising is everywhere!

- Ever told a friend, colleague or neighbor about what your organization does? You've just started fundraising and you didn't even know it.
- Fundraising is a part of everyone's job at a nonprofit, not just the development director or the executive director.
- Everyone can equip themselves to do this and be successful at it!
 - 2-3, 2-3, Link exercise



Elements of good solicitation

- Many of the SAME elements of good storytelling! These all come into play when you are making a strong solicitation. Everybody can do this!
 - Focus and clarity of your message is critical
 - Honesty and authenticity is really motivational
 - Putting yourself in the mind of the potential donor is absolutely essential
 - Using emotional links to draw your prospect in works all the time

Putting your stories to use

- ▣ Stories are but one tool in our fundraising toolkit. They provide a great beginning, but we have to use them properly.
- ▣ Remember how your stories could all be “repurposed?”
 - ▣ We’re going to do it some more.
- ▣ One of your most important fundraising stories is your own personal “basic ask.”
 - ▣ Work on creating your own, use the 2-3, 2-3 exercise
 - ▣ Practice it and rehearse
- ▣ You will never be caught off guard – you’re always ready with an ask when you meet someone who can help your organization!

The role of the executive director

- Model good fundraising behavior – you are your organization’s chief fundraiser – even if there’s a director of development on board
- Create a culture where fundraising is important, where everyone understands and appreciates that it’s part of their job
- Build and use a fundraising “team” that can provide real leadership to the effort (ED, Board Chair, Dev. Comm. Chair and DoD)



Conversation/Questions

Storytelling and Fundraising – What has worked for you? What challenges have you come up against?

Charge: Use what you've learned today

- Go back to your office and tell at least one person about something you learned, or a perspective you heard that made an impression
- Talk to your colleagues about the importance of creating a story bank AND about how fundraising is part of everyone's responsibility
- Start working on your own stories – the ones you can use every day – and give yourselves a practical tool that helps refine your message, enabling you to engage people on how money makes your mission possible

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