



Welcome!

## **Telling Your Main Street Story, Part 2: Your Story in Words**

*with Jeff Sadler, Doug Jackson, & Kyle Meyer,  
Virginia Main Street Staff*  
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1. Keep phone muted [\*6] during the webinar
2. Un-mute [#6] to share after the assignments
3. Use the chat feature to communicate with everyone!
4. Register for VMS Essentials, Abingdon, Sept. 22 & 23
5. Please complete the evaluation after the webinar



What is your story?

Time to ask some  
questions

*YEARS*

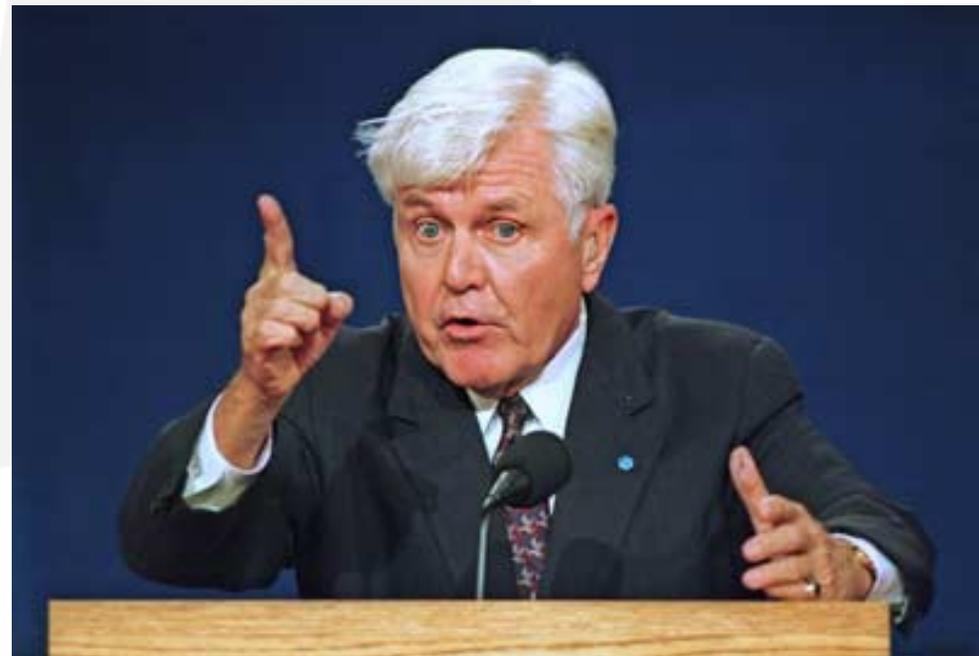


# From the Existential

- Who am I?
- Why am I here?

Or, sometimes

- Why me?



*YEARS*



## To the very specific

- Why do you do what you do?
- What are you trying to accomplish?
- What do you do?
- How can you count what you do?
- How does it affect your audience?

YEARS



# Wait a minute – Which audience?





# Wait a minute – Which audience?



YEARS



# Wait a minute – Which audience?



YEARS



# Telling your story well can help:

- Raise Funds
- Engage Volunteers
- Attract new businesses
- Create excitement
- Forge partnerships
- Sell your ideas
- Speed development/rehab



# Think about these a minute

-Jot these down-

- Why do you do what you do [Mission]?
- What are you trying to accomplish [Goals]?
- What do you do [Activities]?
- How can you count what you do [Success]?
- How does it affect your audience [Why do they care]?

YEARS



## Assignment #1

# How would you respond...

If you were stuck in line at the grocery store and someone asked you “What does Main Street do for me?”

1. Keep phone muted [\*6]
2. 5 minutes to discuss
3. Use the chat feature to respond
4. Un-mute [#6] to share



## Pick One:

Most people in my community view Main Street as:

- a) The Party People
- b) Worthwhile, but not sure exactly what they do
- c) The “Taste Police”
- d) A waste of money
- e) An active knowledgeable group making a difference for business folks like you and me
- f) What’s Main Street?



## The 4 “C’s” of telling your story

- Clear
- Concise
- Consistent
- Careful

And one “P”

- **Powerful!**

*YEARS*



# Clear

- You must know what you are trying to say
- You must use very specific, distinct words/phrases
- Give examples
- Relate your activities to results
- Restate your point

YEARS



# Concise

- “Brevity is the soul of wit” - Hamlet
- The more you say, the more opportunities you have to be confusing
- Keeps you focused on your message
- Keeps the “sound bite” where you want it
- Keeps their attention
- Attracts questions – starts a dialogue

YEARS



# Consistent

- Reinforce your ideas by restating them
- Make sure everyone in your org is on the same page
- Every activity should be an example of how you are achieving your mission
- Keeps the confusion level low

YEARS



# Careful

- Carefully craft your central message to be easy to understand
- Carefully create activities that support this message
- Carefully cultivate media relationships that are sympathetic to your mission
- Carefully choose your words to stay on message



Is your carefully constructed, clear, concise & consistent message powerful?

- Emotional appeal
  - How would you fare in the W, P, K & O debate? (Widows, Puppies, Kittens and Orphans)
- Can you count it?
  - \_\_\_% increase in property values over the past x yrs
  - Downtown has created \_\_\_\_\_ new jobs since 20\_\_.

YEARS



## **How could you argue with this?**

Since 2007, Main Street created 209 new jobs and \$3.6 million in new tax revenue, thus relieving pressure on social services, holding tax rates level, and allowing Grandparents to adopt more orphans who will play with puppies and kittens

*YEARS*





## Assignment #2

### **What would you say...**

If you had the opportunity  
to be quoted  
“above the fold”  
in 30 words or fewer?

1. Keep phone muted [\*6]
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# The 5-minute guide to media relations



YEARS



# Types of Media

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Radio
- TV
- Online

*YEARS*



# Newspapers

- Local Daily
- Regional/National Daily
- Arts & Culture Weekly
- College

25  
YEARS



# Magazines

- Regional Glossy
  - Southern Living
  - Blue Ridge Country
- Special Interest
  - Food & Wine
  - Train Hobbyist
- National News
  - Time/Newsweek
  - Harpers/Economist
- General Interest
  - Vanity Fair
- Regional Special Interest Pulp
  - Blue Ridge Outdoors
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Trade Publications
- What else?

YEARS



## TV

- Local Affiliate
  - Local Cable
  - National Network
- Cable
    - News
    - Cooking
    - Travel
    - Sports

*YEARS*



# Local News

- Meet the reporters/editors
- Befriend them
- Ask them what they like in a story
- Make it juicy
- Invite them
- Help them write it
- Give them good quotes
- Stick to your message!



# Everybody

- Be prepared
- Respond quickly
- Ask them to submit questions ahead of time so you can research your answers
- Ask them to repeat any “on the record” quotes for accuracy
- Stick to your message!

YEARS



# Everybody

- Make it compelling
- Use superlatives
- Keep it energetic & positive
- Offer up photographs or the points YOU are trying to make
- Call them back later if you think of something you forgot
- Stick to your message!



## Jeff's (on the record) Media Maxim #1

Most news departments are woefully understaffed and do not have the time or resources to follow up on every lead.

So –

You should not only bring the lead to them, fully fleshed out, with quotes included

But-

You should not be surprised if they reprint what you wrote almost verbatim



## Jeff's (on the record) Media Maxim #2

Most news departments are woefully understaffed and do not have the time or resources to check their facts very carefully.

So –

You should expect to be misquoted, have your name spelled incorrectly and have any data points like time, date, amount, statistics completely wrong

But-

It is your responsibility to correct them in a nonthreatening manner that allows them to save face



# Jeff's (off the record) Media Maxim

Many news departments are woefully underpaid and therefore attract some very lazy reporters and editors.

So –

If you are friendly, and offer them “ready made” stories, they will mostly take your word for it

But-

You need to make sure that they know how much you appreciate the hard work they spent making sure that the article you wrote for them made it to print under their byline



# Homework!

- Flesh out 2 or 3 themes or stories you'd like to tell
- Identify activities that support those stories
- Invite the press to your activities
- Assign someone reliable to meet them and talk to them while they are there
- Follow up with a press release

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