

SURFACE TO SOUL

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Tips for Capturing Great Stories

Stories build empathy and make the user needs and pain points memorable to your team. Effective stories speak the language of the audience, are rooted in data, and take advantage of compelling artifacts. Storytelling is how we share ideas and experiences. A narrative makes a connection between our data and why other people should care about it.

Stories help us explain difficult concepts. They spark our imaginations and generate new ideas. They fill in the gaps between what we know and what we don't know. Stories allow us to form a shared understanding. Stories bring user pain points and goals to the forefront of the conversation and help teams create a shared language about why we do what we do.

6 TIPS FOR CAPTURING GREAT STORIES

1. Adapt your vocabulary to match your audience.

Define your "audience" as anyone who is being told the story — including multidisciplinary-team members, stakeholders, clients, third-party partners, and so on. Telling stories that resonate with your audience. Use vocabulary that applies to your audience members, and that the majority of people understand.

2. Appeal to the needs of your audience.

List the concerns of your audience. List what they value and why. Speak to their pain points and their yearnings.

3. Back up your points with real data.

A compelling story is nothing without hard facts to back up the narrative. Use real case studies, research, quotes, and first-hand observations.

4. Engage all the senses; create a multi-sensory experience for the audience.

For example, put your audience in the shoes of your user by saying, "Imagine you're a single parent, have two kids and a busy full-time job, and you need to keep up with all of the extracurricular activities on your calendar." Help your audience members to picture themselves with these responsibilities, taking them away from their own perspectives.

5. Pair your story with props, metaphors, and other tangible items to deepen connections to key points.

Identify your story's key messages and then make a list of images, items, and illustrations that are meaningful and memorable for your audience. Find ways to build a bridge between your key message and item serving as an illustration.

6. Follow up with a summary.

Summarize your story or meeting with a brief email or other communication for further memorability. If decisions were made based on that story, include what was decided and why.



jladoux@vibrantfaith.org



surfacetosoul.org

