



Using Video Storytelling to Create Impact

Nonprofits use storytelling to build interest in their work and connect to their audience on an emotional level. While there are several ways of telling a story well in an impactful manner, **it is best to use different channels** to get your work across. And one effective way to do so is through the use of video storytelling, which is a powerful medium to **generate interest** in your nonprofit and helps achieve the results you desire, whether it is to promote your nonprofit or for fundraising.

Here, I've listed out 5 effective tips for nonprofit video storytelling.

1. Plan your story (along with all its aspects)

With any movie, there is always a definitive beginning, middle, and end. Think of your video as a short movie...because that's exactly what it is! You'll need to figure out how you want your video to start, what you want to display, and how you want it to end, even if it's just 30 seconds or shorter in length.

Every film starts off with a script, so start off by writing one which may or may not include a protagonist, depending on what you're planning to show in your nonprofit video. Once you have visualized it in your head, make a list of people and things you will require for your nonprofit video production, such as:

- A director for getting the right angles on your shots
- A graphic designer, if you're planning to include animations
- An editor and a producer for blending the shots together
- A composer for background music
- A voiceover artist if there is any dialogue

These are just some aspects to take into consideration for a professional video. If you're planning to go for a more amateur feel, by all means, do so!- it is completely possible to create a strong video using nothing but your smartphone or a handheld camera. Remember, at the end of the day, the message behind

the video and the emotions created in viewers is more important than the video itself.

2. Show Impact

The purpose of making a digital video is to create a connection with your existing audience while also tapping into a new audience base. Portray [vivid stories of actual people and causes](#) helped by your nonprofit. The best way to build a connection is to show your protagonist in their real-life setting, going about their lives.

For instance, if your nonprofit helped educate a young boy in a backward area, record him doing some ordinary activity such as playing football with his friends on a street, or him walking to school- anything which makes the audience go *'hey, this isn't a fictional story with a fictional character; it's a real story featuring an actual person'* – this automatically appeals to their emotional instincts and gives them someone to root for.

This video story from Charity Water ticks all the boxes: it's short, features a protagonist talking about her experiences, shows the work the nonprofit aims to do, creates an emotional response in viewers, and has a clear goal (i.e. to raise funds for a cause)

You can also show volunteers while they are working- this shows audiences that your nonprofit does valuable work towards a particular cause. A behind-the-scenes video works wonders as well! A quick 30 second (or shorter) video featuring volunteers working or taking part in a discussion shown in a fast-forward format essentially humanizes your nonprofit and shows viewers that you go beyond just numbers and statistics.

You can even shoot a video showing an interview of either the protagonist and their experiences before-and-after your nonprofit helped them. Or, of your volunteers with the challenges they faced and the satisfaction experienced upon successfully completing work. A video testimonial is certainly more impactful than a written one displayed on your website or social media handle.

3. Keep it short and sweet

Today, attention spans are at an all-time low. With tons of videos, links, and ads popping up on different pages, it is a real challenge to get people hooked onto your particular video, especially if they don't know about your nonprofit.

Research estimates that our [attention span is about 8 seconds](#), and is even lower on the internet. So it is necessary to keep your video short and to the point in today's era of quick vines and Instagram videos. If your opening isn't captivating or interesting enough, rest assured very few people will actually watch your video.

Start your video with a shot which either clearly explains what the video is going to be about or at least gives hints about what viewers can expect. While your video is a movie, it's a short one, so don't expect the audience to hang on for too long if it isn't engaging enough. Use the opening shot to reel people in; a stunning visual frame, a unique angle on the shot, a captivating animation, getting right of the bat by showing the protagonist talking or doing something...there are several ways to capture interest; it could be one of these or a mix of two or more elements...find out what works for your video before finalizing it!

Keep in mind that your video [storytelling](#) should be consistent with the rest of your nonprofit's image; use styles and effects which viewers are likely to associate with your nonprofit. Also, test your video with a test audience or take different viewpoints into consideration so you'll know what to expect.

4. Know your Target Audience (and don't be superfluous)

The type of video you create depends upon the audience you're aiming to target. No matter how your video story unfolds, you must have a specific audience in mind who you want specifically to view your nonprofit video. Every aspect of it, from the soundtrack to the pacing and direction should be done in a manner likely to appeal to the target viewer base.

For instance:

- if you're looking to target the millennial generation, make the video fast-paced, throwing viewers right into the fray of your subject matter so that the theme is instantly clear; you can also use jump cuts and a modern soundtrack to create a sense of familiarity.
- For an older generation, you can go a little slow on the pacing by giving more context of the subject matter. However, the video shouldn't be too long; everyone's attention span on the internet is short.
- Alternatively, you may not have a target audience in mind, and that's completely fine! In this case, your video will have to be composed in a way which doesn't alienate any particular segment.

No matter who the audience is, only show what needs to be shown. Being superfluous is unnecessary. If your digital storytelling is crisp and concise, viewers subconsciously appreciate the directness of the video. Another nifty tip you can use, especially if your subject matter is particularly large and a short video simply won't do it justice, is to cut your video into segments and post a clip every week or so.

A '*...to be continued*' or '*Stay tuned for more!*' only increases a sense of suspense among viewers and leaves them wanting more, which is a good thing for your nonprofit as it increases engagement rate.

5. Combine with other channels (and include a CTA)

Nonprofit videos are powerful, but to magnify their impact, it's best to combine multiple channels to appeal to different audiences. Don't just focus on putting out a video, also think of the different ways in which you can promote it (and along with that, your nonprofit). In nonprofit storytelling, you post the video you've created on different sites such as on your nonprofit's website and on social media...and that's just the first step.

What you should now do is create content related to the video. If your nonprofit provide d clean water to a village, in addition to telling the story in the form of video, also write a blog post, create a photo story (a before vs after digital album of photos), schedule a podcast where you interview the protagonist(s) or volunteers, or put up stories on Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook. The more channels you use, better the impact created by your video.

Also, don't forget to include a clear [Call to Action \(CTA\)](#) at the end of your video corresponding to your goals. If you want more engagement or visibility, include a button allowing viewers to share the video on social media. If you're looking for donations, include a donation button or a link leading to a donation page. Similarly, if you're looking for feedback (on the video or on the work you've portrayed), include a link or a [shortcode](#) which viewers can send a text to and complete a text survey.

Adding a CTA is useful in measuring the success and the engagement rate of your video, so make sure to include it.

[This video](#) by Falling Whistles is brilliant in the way it's edited and presents information in an extremely engaging manner. It also strikes the right emotional chords and achieves its goal of promoting the nonprofit and encouraging viewers to be a part of a movement for peace.

For nonprofit video storytelling, visuals and emotions form the basis of your story. So make sure to include impactful shots while making your story inspiring so that your digital story shows the difference you've made (and are making) as a nonprofit.

<https://callhub.io/nonprofits-should-use-video-storytelling-to-create-impact/>