

MAKING MEDIA WORK

WHY MEDIA?

There are many ways to share stories and messages that are important to you and your work, and by using media effectively you are able to reach a large audience with these messages. Through strategic and professional use of media tools, you are able to provide a platform for participants and communities to speak up about important topics. With the help of technology, we are lucky to have access to numerous media outlets that can be used in a variety of creative ways. This allows us to share information about issues that matter most to our participants, to our volunteers and to the community in which we work. In this guide, we highlight various tools that we hope can help you in your journey in learning how to effectively tell stories that matter and to leave a lasting impact. Further, we focus on cost effective ways to use media, so that you can tell important stories without breaking your budget.



1 VISIONS & VOICES

There are several steps you can take before you start exploring ways in which to engage with your audience. Together with your colleagues, start by deciding how and why you want to get your message out, and what kind of message is important to you and to your participants. Be sure that everybody on the team understands the message and the way in which it should be shared. That does not mean that everybody has to share the same opinion regarding a certain topic, but it does mean that the team must be aware of and respect the various opinions.

The most important thing you can do in story telling is ensuring that you remain honest and transparent with the way in which you tell a story or share an event. Remember that people from all walks of life have access to the stories you choose to share, no matter how you choose to share them. As such, your attention to accuracy, truth and honesty is what can set your story telling apart from others. You should always make it a priority to reflect voices and opinions in an honest and transparent fashion.

QUICK TIP

Keep in mind that sharing a message with the world carries with it a very serious responsibility – and that responsibility lies in being truthful, accurate and nonjudgmental.

2 TOOLS

There are lots of ways to share your story, ranging from article writing, report writing and reporting, to using camera, radio, the internet and even your mobile phone. We have found that using a variety of media outlets opens up our possibilities to share, and presents us with different exciting ways to get our message out. Because we reach a larger

following with this strategy, we appeal to a diverse and engaged audience. Below, we have briefly identified a few of the different types of media tools that you can use (but bear in mind there are many more!). We also share ways in which to access these tools if you are operating on a low budget.

WRITING:

Writing is an effective way to get your story across for which you don't need more than a pen and paper. To write an interesting story, you can interview people in your community or in your program, or you can focus on an urgent story that needs immediate attention. Report writing and research are very important if you are working on raising awareness on a certain topic. By using statistics, you are able to present your story with the help of facts and figures (just make sure to double check and quote your sources!).

QUICK TIP

Although it can be challenging at first to put your thoughts, experiences and research on paper, with practice you will find that reflecting on important issues in your community not only helps raise awareness, it also builds a strong base and grounding for your organization's work.



PHOTOGRAPHY:

Photography is an incredibly powerful tool to get a message out to the world. Images can be striking and leave a lasting impression on the viewer. If you live in a city that boasts a film school or studio, you can work together and find ways to explore how to use photography effectively for both partners. The good news is that many “every day” devices, such as cell phones, can be used to take photos. This allows you to take snapshots of important moments, and to create interesting and engaging stories around these shots. Take photos that tell a story and that are interesting to look at, and work with members in your community to create ways in which the photograph becomes the story.

QUICK TIP

Only take and publish photos that won't put the subjects in danger, or that might misrepresent an issue or subject.

ROLE PLAY, THEATRE AND MUSIC:

Role play, theatre and music can be used as tools for development in many different ways. They can offer an outlet, a sense of community, and a way to share. In participatory theatre, the audience is encouraged to be involved, and the actors are encouraged to improvise. Theatre can also be fully scripted and staged, which allows your project's participants to create scenarios surrounding issues that are important within the community. Writing a script, or a song, and 'pretending', can offer a safe space to talk about difficult topics. Role play, theatre and music are effective tools for engaging an audience and for allowing full motion of creativity.

QUICK TIP

Through the use of role play, theatre and music for educational purposes, for therapeutic purposes and as exploratory or explanatory methods in development, you are able to engage not only with your audience, but also with your players, cast or ensemble.

RADIO:

Globally, the radio is often relied on to get news out – loud and proud! Radio is one of the few media available to people all over the world, ranging from busy cities to rural communities. You can use the radio in various different ways: by producing and/or hosting your own radio show, by conducting interviews or by being interviewed, or by submitting your own pre-recorded radio story/sound-bite that can be 'looped' or, played on repeat.

QUICK TIP

The power of the radio lies in the fact that so many people have access to it, and depending on your target audience, it could be a viable and cost effective way for you to raise awareness and share your stories.



VIDEO (TELEVISION & ONLINE):

Using video in a compelling and professional way can be an incredibly powerful approach to telling a story. Getting access to a camera might be difficult and expensive, and learning how to use a camera might feel almost impossible. If you find it hard to learn, but still want to use video, it's time to get creative! By building partnerships with local film schools or studios equipped with talented young creators that are willing to help you, you can start exploring ways in which video can work for you.

Just like every other media tool, you can tread into dangerous territory if video isn't used accurately, and if the stories you are telling start to shy away from upholding the three important guidelines mentioned earlier; accuracy, honesty and a nonjudgmental tone.

QUICK TIP

As with other media tools, it is very important that you accurately reflect the voices of the subjects in your work - your subject's truth should be the priority.

3 TYPES

Although we can't cover all types in this introductory guide, below we highlight three widely used platforms that allow you to reach a large audience.

INTERNET

The Internet is a global network of communities, individuals, organizations, etc. that provides us with information on an endless array of topics. You can imagine that using the Internet strategically allows you to reach a large audience. By creating a website, blogging, and pointing your audience to your website or your blog, you are able to start a virtual conversation with your supporters and fans (and critics). Particularly through the effective use of social media, you are able to engage with your audience, by;

- Posting relevant photos, stories and videos
 - Sticking to a consistent tone in your posts and articles
 - Engaging with your audience if they
- post a question or comment in one of your social networks
 - Ensuring your online presence is professional and reflects the message of your organization

TRY TO ONLY SHARE STORIES THAT REALLY MATTER – YOU DON'T WANT YOUR AUDIENCE TO FEEL TOO OVERWHELMED!

QUICK TIP

Don't "over-post", that way your audience trusts that when you do have something to share, it will be important.

To engage with your audience in a more direct online conversation, you can use a variety of tools such as Google Hangouts, Skype, and Watchitoo (depending on internet connectivity). All these tools allow you to communicate with your audience around the world. Get creative: you can host information sharing sessions, meetings and webinars to provide your supporters with information that is important to you and to your organization. Or, you can simply have a chat!

PRINT MEDIA

Mastering print media is very important if you want to get your stories out to your audience. Short, engaging pieces are effective, as your reader is less likely to get distracted. Longer pieces, such as academic research papers or feature stories, allow you to dive into a topic while providing lots of detail. If you are conducting an interview for a story, make sure you have done background research on the person you are speaking with, highlight topics that you want to discuss, and prepare your questions well in advance.

In an interview, encourage your interviewee to use stories to illustrate their point; this is an effective way of getting a message across, because it helps people put what you are saying into context. If your interviewee uses facts or figures, use rounded figures but be careful not to exaggerate. Once you have conducted the interview, keep the story brief and engaging; no matter what media you choose to use.

QUICK TIP

As a journalist for your organization, be on the lookout for good stories, quotes or sound bites – and don't hesitate to use them in an attention-grabbing way!

TELEVISION & VIDEO

Using both television and the Internet to share your videos is crucial if you want to reach a wide audience. Getting a product you created on air can be challenging as networks often have a set schedule and agenda. Don't let that stop you! You should contact your local broadcasters and networks to see if they are interested in airing your video(s). Using the Internet to share your videos is effective, as you are able to control when you want to release your work and where you want to host it (try platforms such as YouTube, Vimeo/Vimeo Pro, or LinkTV). To make sure your video looks good online;

- Keep it short and sweet
- Research a topic well before you launch a video on it, and get as much feedback as possible from friends, families and others in your network
- Don't over sensationalize a sensitive topic – you could hurt those whose stories you are sharing through which you run the risk of losing credibility as a journalist, artist or creator

QUICK TIP

If you are posting your videos online, make sure your logo is clearly visible, and that you use the right software to compress the video to avoid discoloration

4 CREATE

Don't be afraid to go out and create! You have the power to choose how you want to share and show. Bear in mind that honesty, accuracy and a nonjudgmental tone are important elements to help guide your creative journey.

In successful story telling, whether through a written, traditional or digital medium, you can have a variety of goals and aims in order to reach numerous audiences. Through

the use of media tools in a creative way, we've explored different ways to reach our goals. By being brave in our creative choices, and in order to grow, we focus on what matters to Girls & Football SA and to our communities – if you do the same, we are convinced you'll get your message out loud and clear, too!

QUICK TIP

Be bold, brave and interesting!

DON'T BE AFRAID TO GO OUT AND CREATE!

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CHOOSE HOW YOU WANT TO SHARE AND SHOW.