

STORYTELLING FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

How can you develop an engaging brand story around your mission, values and impact and craft ongoing storytelling around your organisation and the difference it makes? In this first session, we learn tips from Colin McMillan at [Firstport](#) and Lara Friedman at the [Social Enterprise Academy](#) on how to develop a distinct brand voice, look and feel, and an elevator pitch.

Explore your model

Are you clear on what your social enterprise model is? Whether you're just starting out or have run your organisation for a few years, it's always a good idea to go back to basics and explore what your business model is as it might have changed and evolved over time. A good place to start is to ask yourself these questions:

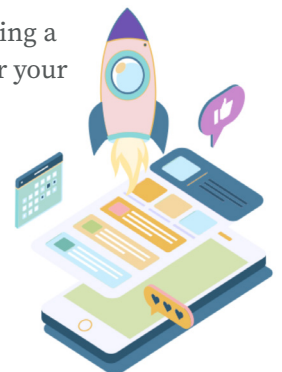
- Who are your customers? Who is likely to want your product or service and is ready to pay for it? What are key drivers of purchase for them?
- Who are your social beneficiaries? Are they a recipient of a needs-based product or service, for example? How do you deliver impact for them and how do you fund this work in your balance sheet over the year?
- Try to add all this information to a business model canvas. There are many versions of these available online, including ones that focus specifically on social enterprise.

[Download the 'Social Business Model Canvas Tool' from the Social Enterprise Institute.](#)

Hone in on your 'Why'

Developing a vision and mission statement can help you hone in on what your organisation is all about and what you're trying to accomplish, as well as to communicate this clearly with your different target audiences. Here is a popular example to inspire you:

- Oxfam's organisation vision is "A world without poverty." Your vision should be a concise impact statement that states your core ideals and purpose, what your overarching goal is.
- Your mission is an actionable promise of how you will make your vision a reality. It's the Who, the What and the Why.
- Oxfam's mission is: "Our purpose is to help create lasting solutions to the injustice of poverty. We are part of a global movement for change, empowering people to create a future that is secure, just and free from poverty."
- What about you? If you try writing a vision and mission statement for your organisation, what do they say?



Profile your customers

Do you have a good idea of who your target audiences and customers are? Developing profiles that help you understand their motivations is key to knowing how, when and where to communicate with them.

- Flesh out details about the people interested in your product or service? There might be different 'customer segments' you can identify.
- Spend time researching and understanding them. You can brainstorm with your team or even set up focus groups by reaching out to them directly or sharing an online survey.
- Find out their motivations: what are their interests and pain points, what are their behaviours, what is important to them?
- Use these findings to develop a more strategic approach in the way you communicate with them. You can set up an internal document with a profile for each customer segment to keep note of what drives them and your tactics to engage with them better.

[Read the 'Steps to defining a target market' by Inspire2Enterprise](#)

Craft your brand voice

Developing brand guidelines that help you express your personality in a way that communicates your values, fits your customer expectations and is compatible with your beneficiaries is key to creating content assets that work well across different channels.

- If your social enterprise was a person, who would they likely be? Pick adjectives to describe your tone of voice and decide the Dos and Don'ts of how your organisation speaks and behaves.
- Do you want to portray sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, ruggedness and so on? Which tone and vocabulary will help you express yourself clearly and cohesively?
- Which stories do you want to tell? You can talk about what makes your organisation stand out from the crowd in an engaging way without being too salesy. Speak with your target audience in mind, on a personal and practical level to share relevant information while engaging them on an emotional level.
- Build relationships with your audiences by creating regular, cohesive and relevant content that will interest them and drive loyalty. You will need to plan this accordingly to your capacity.



Create a content map

Do you have lots of things to say but not sure how and when to share them? Or perhaps you lack inspiration about what to write on your website, blog and social media pages? Having a content strategy can help you organise your thoughts and the topics that are relevant to you as well as the best channels and formats to use.

- A good rule of thumb with content is to follow the 80/20 rule. Make 80% of your content about adding value to your followers, and share 20% of content that is more promotional.
- Plan content that is relevant to your business story and your brand. Be open, transparent and personable. Tell customers about you and your team. When and why did you start? What was your early-stage vision? How has the company evolved? What are your values and goals?
- Keep your content visual by using pictures and videos. Good stories draw people in and spark an emotional response. They make us laugh, cry, remind us of what matters, and often share a meaningful truth that we can all relate to.
- Remember that conversations are a two-way street, especially on social media. Set some time aside regularly to read replies and mentions about your organisation and engage with your followers as well as people you follow. You never know what new connections can bring.

[Download this 'Social calendar template' from Hootsuite on Google Sheets](#)

Practice your pitch

Imagine you enter a lift. The door closes. You have 30 seconds to tell your business story. What would you say? The 'elevator pitch' is a common tool used by entrepreneurs to practice telling their organisation's story and what they're all about in a clear and succinct way to convince funders, influencers and customers to engage with them and champion them.

- Try writing a draft elevator pitch that will have universal appeal first, and then work out slightly different versions that can resonate with each of your target audiences individually.
- Be clear and concise: What problem(s) are you addressing? What impact do you have? Highlight what makes you different. Be bold and have the confidence to be your own advocate.
- Do you have a specific ask or call to action you need to express? Tell your target audiences what you need from them (money, network, support) and you need to highlight, if they support you, how this may be mutually beneficial.
- Practice makes perfect! Once you've nailed your elevator pitch, you'll be able to speak from the heart and not the script. And remember, things are not set in stone, you can look to update your pitch every year as things change and you develop your business model further.

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