

Telling the Extension Story:

How to Tell a Good Story for Connection & Advocacy

Inga Haugen, Ag Librarian
lhaugen@vt.edu
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Tell Your Story:

Communicating the work you do for Cooperative Extension

Inga Haugen, Ag Librarian
lhaugen@vt.edu

Who is Inga Haugen?

- **A real person that cares deeply about the Extension Mission**
- **With a concern: Do you trust I have the chops to teach you about this topic?**
- **Let me share why I *KNOW* Extension**
- **Which will allow us to structure our 90 minutes in useful ways for you.**



Who is Inga Haugen?

- **Agriculture, Life Sciences, and Scholarly Communication Librarian**
- Minnesota transplant to Virginia
- Researcher, auntie, friend
- Equivalent to an Extension specialist; my speciality is information
- Always willing to talk about cows



Agenda

- Why this is important?
- What kind of stories are we trying to tell?
- Consider types of audience
- Consider types of channels
- Good Options



Think, Pair, Share

Take 30 seconds think about it yourself.

Take 2 minutes to share with one other person.

Take 5 minutes to share at your table.

Relevance

Why is clear communication important?

Take 30 seconds think about it yourself.

Take 2 minutes to share with one other person.

Take 5 minutes to share at your table.

In Real Life: Personal Branding

- Your passion
- Your assets
- Potential collaborations
- How to be remembered

You also represent Extension.



Extension Professional: Fulfill Obligations

As a Extension professional, you volunteer to share information.

Sharing it effectively makes it a welcome gift.



What kind of stories are we trying to tell?

- Extension stories
- Personal stories so we can show folk how we connect with Extension, and to the Extension mission
 - “UT Extension's mission is to help Tennesseans improve their quality of life and solve problems through the application of research and evidence based knowledge about agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, and community development.”

HOW STORYTELLING AFFECTS THE BRAIN

NEURAL COUPLING

A story activates parts in the brain that allows the listener to turn the story in to their own ideas and experience thanks to a process called neural coupling.

MIRRORING

Listeners will not only experience the similar brain activity to each other, but also to the speaker.



DOPAMINE

The brain releases dopamine into the system when it experiences an emotionally-charged event, making it easier to remember and with greater accuracy.

CORTEX ACTIVITY

When processing facts, two areas of the brain are activated (Broca's and Wernicke's area). A well-told story can engage many additional areas, including the motor cortex, sensory cortex and frontal cortex.

<https://www.onespot.com/blog/infographic-the-science-of-storytelling/>

Why story? It works.
And yes, you can do it.

Audiences

Business/Corporate /Industry



Schools/Academic/Formal Learning Spaces



Informal Learning Spaces



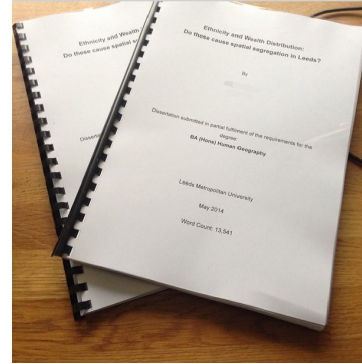
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Personal Networks

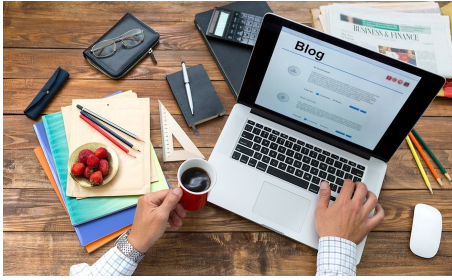


Channels

Academic



Popular



**Take 5 minutes to talk
in groups about
audiences and
channels**

Demonstration

Good Options

1. Play your style aka “be yourself”
2. Be mindful of your body language
3. Smile. :D
4. Have a plan
5. Set boundaries
6. Never memorize
7. Emphasize key words
8. Be mindful of the wrap up/transition



Questions for your Speech

- What are you passionate about?
- What problem do you identify in this passion?
- How are you working with the problem?
- How does your work affect your audience?

Consider how to wrap up/hand off/invite the next person to participate.



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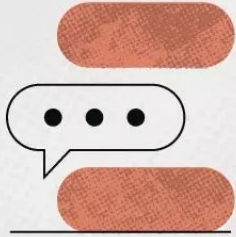


Elevator Speech Template

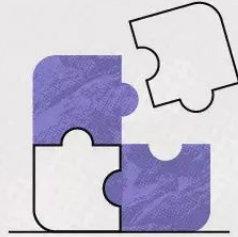
I help [insert target audience] [insert verb phrase] at the Extension office so that [insert proven/expected positive outcome for target audience].

- Example 1 (4H):** I help parents and caregivers learn and sign up for 4-H at the Extension office so their children can learn by doing with hands on learning activities.
- Example 2 (Volunteer Program):** I help potential volunteers discover our Master Gardener opportunities at Extension so they can improve the lives of Tennesseans through horticulture education.
- Example 3 (Admin/Front Desk):** I help people who contact us connect to the people, programs, and publications at the Extension office so that they can have the support they need to be successful.

A foolproof elevator pitch template



01
Introduce
yourself



02
Present
the problem



03
Present
your solution



04
Share your value
proposition



05
Add a call
to action

Pick One of Each

Audiences

Corporate/Industry

Academic

Personal Networks

Channels

Podcast

Academic
Conference

Informal

Now...it's your turn!

What is one Extension story you wish you
could tell...
OR wish you could tell better?

Questions and Channels

- What are you passionate about?
- What problem do you identify in this passion?
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