

10 Tips for Successful Storytelling

1) Before telling your stories, be sure that you have met the basic needs of your visitor. If they are hungry, thirsty, need to use a restroom, concerned about their schedule, too hot/cold, or can't see or hear, visitors won't fully appreciate the stories you have to tell.

2) Know where your stories come from and don't be shy about sharing your sources. If a story is based on local legends or oral traditions, say that up front.

3) Think about how the stories of your site connect to a bigger story and make those connections for your visitors.

4) If you have personal interaction with your visitors, find out where they are from and what they are interested to see if you can make any personal connections between the stories you tell and your visitors.

5) Be respectful of other perspectives as you tell your stories. Keep in mind that everyone has a right to his/her own opinion.

6) If you are telling your story in writing: keep the text short, use simple words, include lots of visuals, encourage interaction and use language to make visitors think. For example use active language like "Can you find..." or "What do you think...."

7) As you share your stories, find ways to engage as many of the visitor's five senses as you can. Keep in mind that visitors will remember 10% of what they hear, 30% of what they read, 50% of what they see and 90% of what they do.

8) Keep in mind that visitors may have different interests, individual needs and schedules. Think about how you can customize the experience you offer to match up with what each visitor is looking for.

9) Choose storytelling tools that make the most sense for your audience and your budget.

10) Be sure to ask your visitors how they liked their visit to your site. If you listen to your visitors, they can help you find ways to make the experience even better.

