

Marcy's Storytelling Tips

Marcy Mason from US Customs and Border Protection shared a number of storytelling tips at the conference. Here they are:

Tip #1: Regardless of the topic you're writing about, there's always a story. You just have to find it. You can find stories in the most unlikely places. I have even found stories while having conversations with colleagues in the 'bathroom.'

Tip #2: Remember your audience. You're writing for your readers. My litmus test is: "Is this interesting to me?" If it's not, then forget it. Always ask yourself: "What would interest me about this story?" And then follow your instincts.

Tip #3: Grab your readers' attention immediately. Open your story with something interesting.

Tip #4: You need to reward readers. This means your story has to contain information of value.

Tip #5: Don't sensationalize. It isn't necessary. And it generally works against you.

Tip #6: Every source has his or her own perspective. So when you're interviewing people, be aware that each person sees things through his or her own eyes. As the writer, you need to make sure that you stay focused on your story and don't get sidetracked telling the story that others want to tell.

Tip #7: Do more than tell the facts. Tell a story that conveys the human side of your organization. Your messages will be remembered better that way.

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