Telling Your Story Like a Journalist

Diane Becker, Communications Director
Nebraska League Association of Risk Management

Sherman Chow, Director of Claims
Municipal Insurance Association of British Columbia

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YaYsufMtUOxtI

Just because it’s “new” doesn’t mean it’s effective communication.

How and why do we want to tell the stories of our pool members?
Who are we?

LARM is an insurance pool made up of 166 governmental entities across Nebraska who have pooled their resources to insure each other.

Which is true?

- We’re a pool and pools, along with the cities that are their members, are impersonal, bottom-line only, faceless bureaucracies.
- We are a pool and we and our members care about safety and risk management because we care about the welfare of the people who live and work there.

Low trust factor
High trust factor
Probably both.

Chick-fil-a: Every Life Has a Story

“Chick-fil-A’s average sales per restaurant in 2014 were $3.1 million. Its fried-chicken competitor KFC sold $960,000 per restaurant that year.” - Business Insider
Why tell member stories?

• Pools differentiate themselves from commercial insurance companies when pools show they care about their members.
• Sending press releases to our members’ local news demonstrates that the member cares about their citizens.
• Your members will stand out. Your pool will stand out because you’re bringing in the human element and you’re ...

Building Trust.

When you build trust you promote

long term relationships.

Build trust with your members and the communities they serve by making the stories:

• Relatable – easy to relate to, identify with.
• Highlight a successful project or event.
• Provoke a positive emotional response.
• Look for the superlatives – longest bridge, oldest park, newest library.
Wherever there are people, there are stories to tell. Veterans and police officers are great stories but also the unsung heroes in every community.

Legion member puts up 300 flags four times a year that have belonged to veterans.

Caring through doing, demonstrated by a successful community project or event...

Public works department presents Energy Fest for area fourth graders each year.

It’s all about telling stories of real people who are successfully bringing people together in their community.

Czech Festival draws thousands to the community of 623 people each June.
When you engage people – you ignite emotion and make a connection.

Her mom’s the police chief who has apprehended criminals and does CSI workshops in her high school.

Relatable in that it’s common to everyone’s neighborhood:

Town of 1500 has public transportation service for 40 years

Superlatives:
longest pedestrian bridge, newest library

Town of Hershey NE boasts new longest pedestrian bridge in NE, crossing five train tracks
In telling member stories you’re also saying...

Hoskins’ annual Fourth of July Parade and Pancake Feed

We’re all in this together...

Pilger has new safety equipment even for the town mascot. (good Facebook photo)

Oshkosh making last minute preparations on new pool

The additional message is that LARM understands the unique challenges of running a city and helps members communicate that to their communities...

Gibbon park worker has challenges with dry weather and park upkeep
In some cases LARM can tell the story how they were there for the community and the community is there for the citizen...

Tornado in Beaver Crossing NE 2014 – 400 trees planted since then. Recent LARM members, the community had just updated their valuations.

You can also make the news happen...

Holbrook Nebraska awarded $500 Lean on LARM Safety Grant for vests and harnesses.

Making News: Lean on LARM Grant

Over 60 of our LARM members have applied for and been awarded $500 Lean on LARM Safety Grants for everything from security cameras to safety vests to barricades. Stories show LARM cares and the city cares enough to apply and receive a grant.

David City - new street barricades

Atkinson - safety harnesses

Pawnee City - first aid kits
Training or special events that you sponsor demonstrate the pool cares and the members care enough to participate, make great stories.

**Making News:**

Stop the Bleed
Surviving Emotional Trauma
Risk management seminar

Articles about your members include more of the elements that are used in traditional storytelling — description, scene-setting, quotes and background information.

The aim is to have readers paint a visual portrait in their minds of what good things are happening in that city. A good article will get readers engaged with the story and have them looking at their city with a positive outlook.

Make sure your members and their citizens are getting the information:

Nationally:
- Internet: 21%
- Radio: 15%
- Print: 13%
- Television: 55%
How Nebraskans get their information:

- Internet: 40%
- Television: 25%
- Print: 18%
- Radio: 13%
- Family and Friends: 4%

Best practices:
Make the stories short and readable on a phone— one or two lines as a teaser then take the reader to the full version on a website of at the most-400 words.

Send links to the stories in their email using an email client...
http://www.constantcontact.com
Online and print magazines...

Radio and TV Interviews

Radio interviews

Media websites


NBC in Scottsbluff at the Risk Management Seminar-
LARM Loss Control Manager Dave Bos talking from his knowledge as a police officer about workplace violence.

Include Quality Photos

“90 percent of information transmitted to the brain is visual, and we process images 60,000 times faster than plain text. By using photos and videos in your campaigns you can dramatically increase user engagement and ROI – on Facebook, photos are liked more than twice as often as text updates, and some 700 videos are shared on Twitter each and every minute.” –Adweek

$8.4 million library expansion

New fire hall replacing one taken by a tornado
Tell interesting stories that resonate with the people in your pool communities:

Build trust with your members and the communities they serve by making the stories:

• Relatable – easy to relate to, identify with
• Highlight a special project or event
• Provokes a positive emotional response
• Look for the superlatives – longest bridge, oldest park, newest library

Make your own news by:

• Giving out safety award plaques at city council meetings
• Starting a safety grant program where photos and stories are written about the grant recipient
• Providing training at member locations, taking photos and press releases from the event

Draw them in:

• The articles should be interesting and under 400 words so can be read on a phone
• Put a short teaser on social media so they go to your website to read more
• Have great photos/videos with everything you do
• Put articles on website, Facebook, email link, online magazines, press releases

Tell the stories with integrity

Gain trust

Build loyalty

The Municipal Insurance Association of British Columbia Story
What we have in common

- Formed during the liability insurance crises in the early to mid-1980’s,
- Many of the people who know why we were formed are no longer around,
- A new generation of people don’t know or care about the history - they see insurance as a commodity,
- And that commodity is easily available, the market is soft, competition is intense and it is all about the cost,
- How do you change the narrative?

Storytelling Project

- The right message
- Bill Baker (BB&Co.) – Strategic Storytelling
- StoryFinding process to uncover our story,
- StoryTelling helps us express our story,
- StoryKeeping helps us embed our story into our operations, communications and culture of the organization.

Storytelling Process

- Project started in mid-2014,
- Interview management, staff, board members, members and service providers,
- Workshops to flesh out the story,
- Teach everyone how to tell our story,
- Storytelling tools – new graphic identity,
- Illustrated Storyline – printed piece
Storytelling Purpose

• Determine our true message,
• Distinguish ourselves from the competition,
• Explain the “Why”,
• Consistency,
• Teach people how to tell a story – the emotional connection,
• Engage the membership on multiple levels,
• Get the story out at every opportunity.

Storytelling => Rebranding

• Once we completed the Storytelling project and uncovered our new story, this had to be reflected in our Branding
• New logo to reflect the new message

Our Message
Mission

• Stability
• Experience
• Support
Vision

• Thriving communities
• Enrich the lives of British Columbians

Principles

• Membership has its benefits and responsibilities,
• Serve every member equally and uniquely,
• Principles precede profit,
• From Partnership comes power.

It is not over!

• Website to reflect our message,
• Library of stories,
• The “Why” is always changing,
• Member engagement,
• Stay ahead of the competition.
Henry Ford - Industrialist

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”

Questions?

Diane Becker
diane.becker@larmpool.org

Sherman Chow
schow@miabc.org