

MAKING MISSION STORIES

WORK FOR YOU

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Telling stories that inspire board members, staff, volunteers, and donors.

A strong and compelling mission statement creates a unifying purpose for everyone associated with an organization. Here's a technique that can be used at meetings to remind the board, staff and volunteers (and even donors) of the purpose of the organization. It seeks to "ground" the meeting so that people are reminded immediately why they are there.

In addition to the mission statement, stories about clients create a strong, unique culture for the organization. By telling vivid stories about how clients' lives have been positively changed by the organization, the board, staff and volunteers can communicate the value of the organization in a compelling and memorable way.

Using the Mission Story at board meetings: (an example)

Make sure the Mission Story is a standard agenda item at your board meetings. At the start of each board meeting have someone **tell a story that illustrates the mission**. The story should be something that has happened since the last meeting— so it's a fresh memory. You're putting the story into the memory bank of the board. At first, you might ask the Executive Director to tell a story. (She or he is the most likely person to have experienced the mission since the last board meeting.) As your board gets more sophisticated and has more exposure to the good work of the organization, any board member can contribute a mission story.

SUGGESTION: Avoid the potential silence by asking "Who'd like to give us a mission story today?" Always ask people **IN ADVANCE** to provide a "mission story." If you know that a board member is going to have exposure to the organization between now and the next meeting, ask them to give the "mission story" at the next meeting. If your board is not getting exposure to your organization's clients – invite them to meet some clients soon. Suggest that your board member bring along a friend to help spread the word about the organization.