# DIY OF EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING

Harness the power of digital storytelling to engage your audience

PART 1: Making viral social media stories

Tips, examples, tools, formats
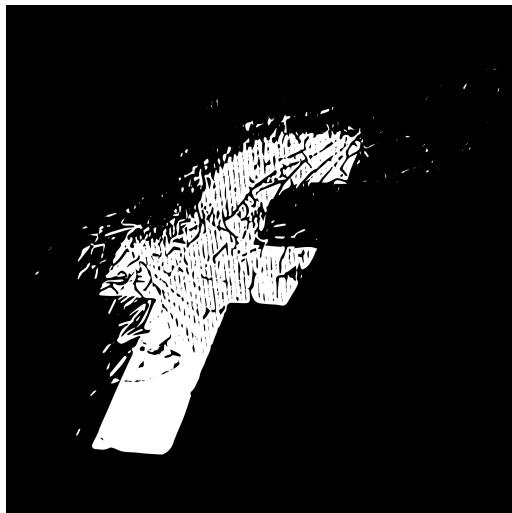
Step 1: The SM storytelling matrix. Pick your format, storytelling type and audience goals

Examples of Storytelling Formats:

News article, official announcement, interview, checklist, meme, documentary, travel video blog, video blog, blog, multimedia longread, review, live broadcast, test, game, quiz, survey
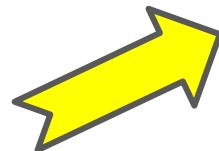
Key Types of Digital Storytelling and platform:

post (text + video / image / link / audio / hashtags / document)

gallery (images + text / video / hashtags)

story (text / video / photo / background / audio / sticker / tag / live stream / masks / AR / link)

live (streaming / live / guest)
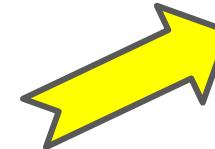
Audience Goals:

Engagement (reactions, subscriptions, comments, time, depth of interaction), referrals, views, direct message

Step 2: Pick the type of your future social media story

Native: you create the content for a specific social media platform, taking into account the platform's algorithms and native formats.

Repackaging: you take content not created for a social media at first (a website article or recorded TV interview) and transform it in a social media-friendly format that would fit one or numerous social media platforms.

Step 3: Learn how people consume social media stories


SHORT SESSIONS

UNPLANNED

FREQUENT

DISCOVERY AND

CONNECTION
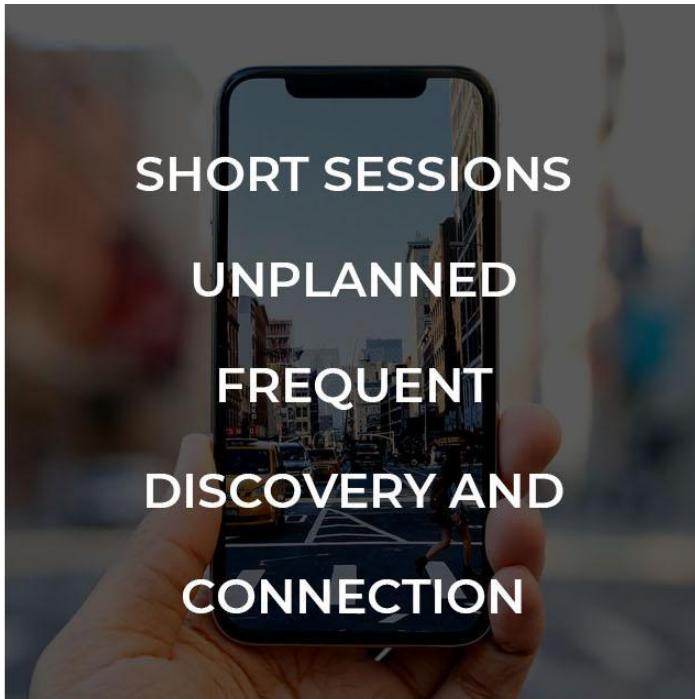
ON-THE-GO

Step 3: Learn how people consume social media stories

LONGER SESSIONS

PLANNED

INTENTIONAL

RELAXATION AND

ENTERTAINMENT
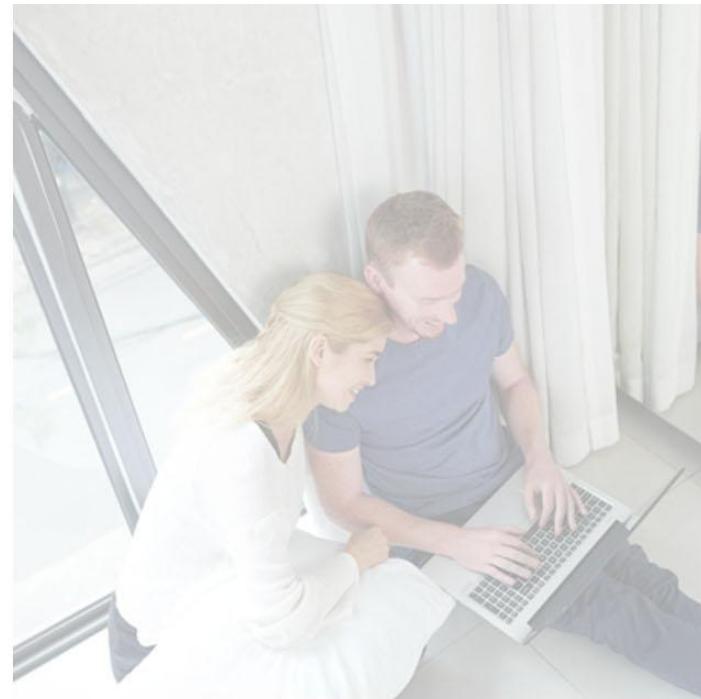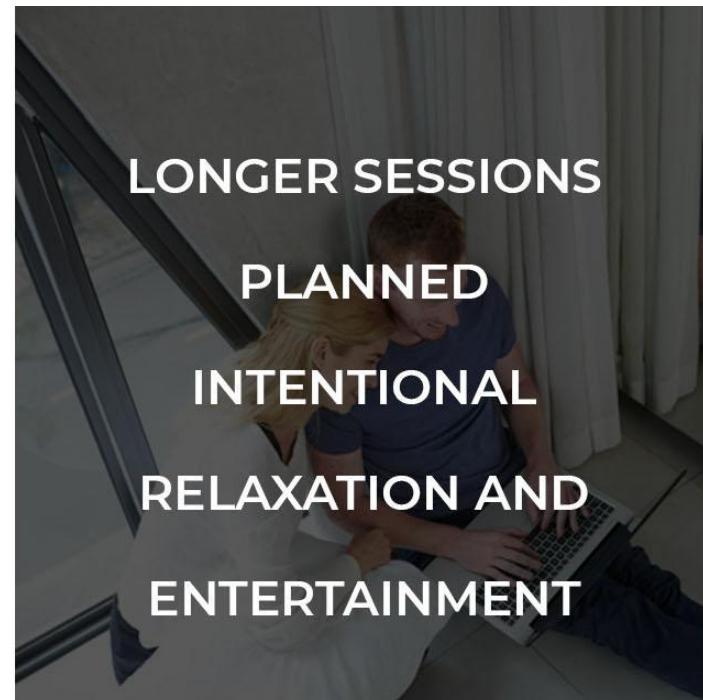
CAPTIVATED VIEWING

Step 4: calibrate your visuals for each platform

1920x1080

1080x1080

1080x1350

1080x1920

➤ **Horizontal** - universal for all platforms, but not ideal for some
➤ **Square** - good for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram feeds (1 minute limit)
➤ **Mobile 2.0** - for most social media feeds, especially in the mobile version
➤ **Vertical** - stories IG, FB, Youtube, TikTok

Step 5: Harness the great potential of the 'stories' format

Selfie videos and entertainment: watching real people is more interesting.

Engaging: questions, polls, quizzes

Captivating storytelling: intrigue, emotions, keeping the audience

Reading works: makes interaction time longer (user need to tap and hold the screen to pause)

Highlights/pin your stories: so they do not disappear from your profile

Step 6: Harness the great potential of the 'stories' format

Instagram: photo, posts, streams, video. You can add stickers, text, gifs to them. Disappear after 24 hours.

Facebook: The same. You can connect your Instagram account with a Facebook page. Disappear after 48 hours.

Youtube: Length: 15-60 seconds (ideally less than 30 seconds for higher engagement). Aspect Ratio: 9:16 (vertical format).

Resolution: Minimum 720p (1080 x 1920 pixels), but 1080p is recommended for better quality.

EXAMPLE: how we 'repackage' in a social media format

The Xchange repackaged a human rights report by a Russian organization "Legal Initiative" that documented gendered murders. We communicated the essence of the report in one minute of SM-friendly video story.

36

WOMEN KILLED
IN THE NORTHERN CAUCASUS
(2012 - 2017)

Stories format. The mistakes to avoid

Optimal resolution 1080x1920

Beware of screen edges: different smartphones have different screen resolution, the top and bottom of your visual may ended up cut off

Keep 'Safe Zone': when you create an image or video, Instagram recommends leaving 200 or 250 pixels of the top and bottom free from text, logos, or other elements.
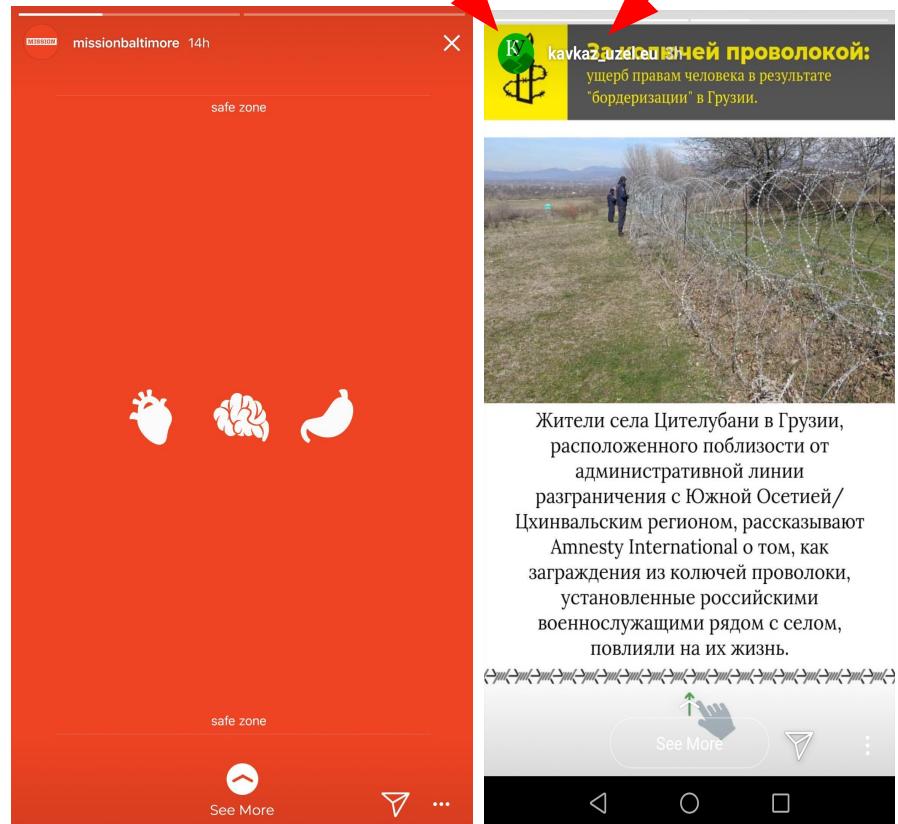
Social Media Video. The mistakes to avoid
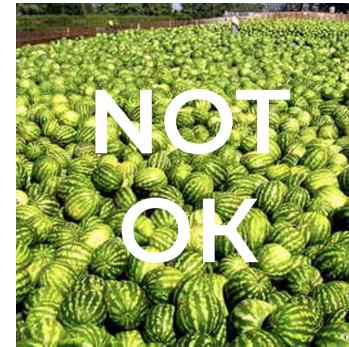
❏   Avoid too many objects in the frame

❏   Low resolution is the ultimate engagement killer (always use HD or Full HD)

Social Media Video. The mistakes to avoid
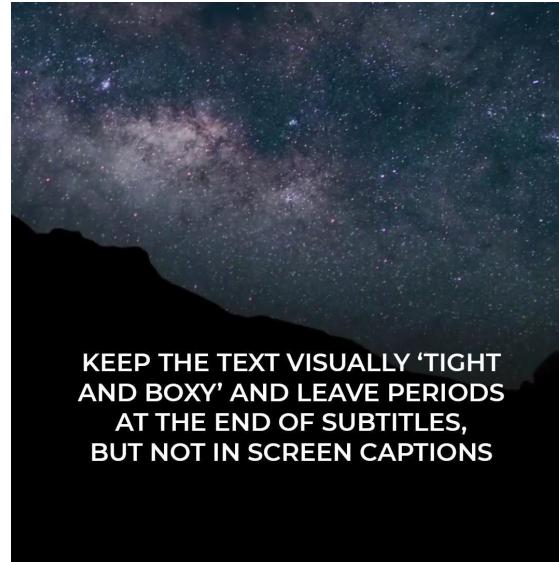
❏ Lack of dynamic transitions

❏ For screen captions: keep the text visually 'tight and boxy' and leave periods at the end of subtitles, but not in screen captions

'Safe zones' in SM-videos

1. No-go zone
2. No-action zone
3. Zone safe for captions
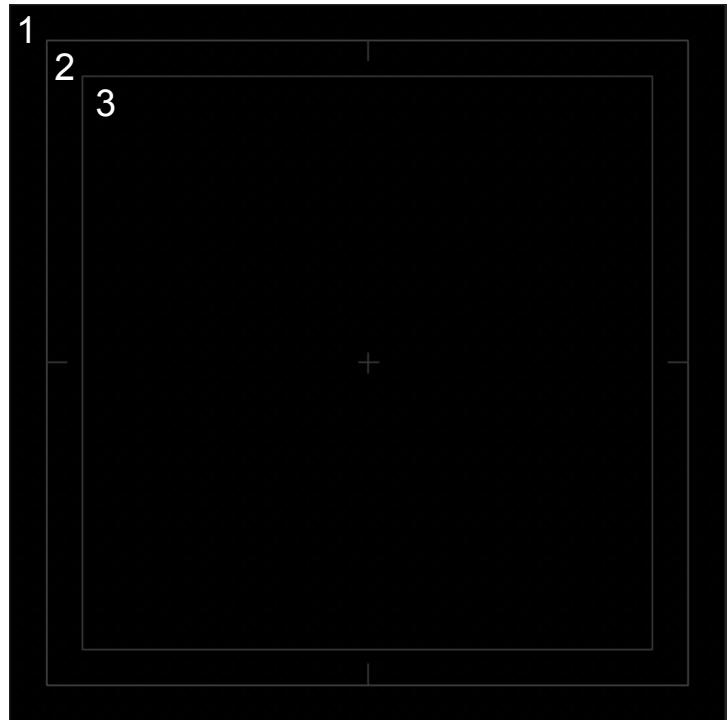
The 3-second rule

It's essential to introduce the viewer to key messages of your video (the title, the best visuals) within the first 3 seconds

Video captions. 3 things to remember

- ❏ Use a contrasting background color

- ❏ Use a larger font, most will see your video from a smartphone

- ❏ Don't use rare fonts, it's better to use sans serif fonts

AaBbCc Sans-serif font
AaBbCc Serif font
AaBbCc Serifs (coloured in red)

USE A CONTRASTING BACKGROUND COLOR

USE A LARGER FONT,
MOST WILL SEE YOUR VIDEO FROM A SMARTPHONE
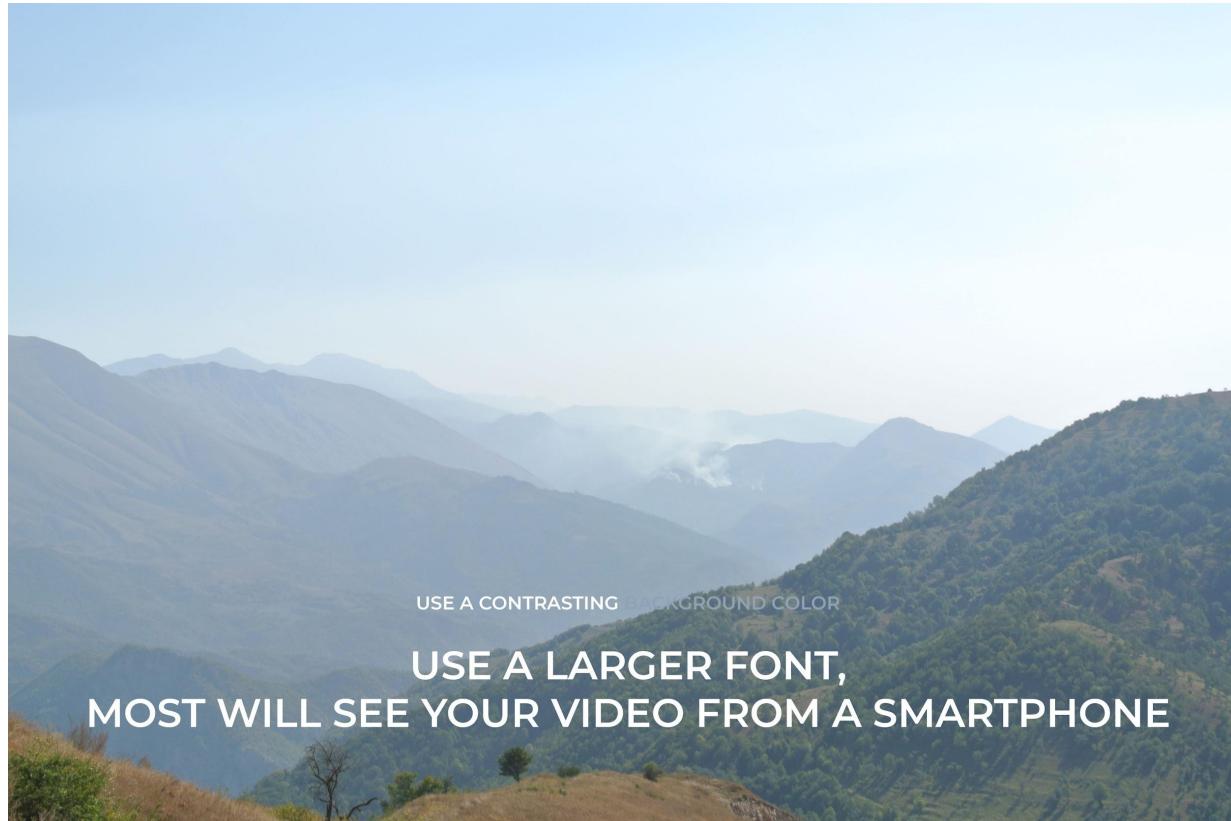
Utilize storyboard for more efficient video production

PROJECT NAME:
PRODUCING PARTNER:
PRODUCTION REFERENCE CONTACT:
DELIVERY PLATFORMS:
DEADLINE:

	IMAGERY VISUAL ELEMENTS (description, links, screenshots, or sketches)	DURATION	ON-SCREEN CAPTIONS	VOICEOVER (if any)
1				
2				
3				
9	END CREDITS ____			
10	LOGOS			

Reference images/links:

PART 2: Metrics, channels, promotion

There's little alternative to paid promotion

- ❏ Paid advertising on social media platforms is the most efficient way to reach larger audience.
- ❏ Paid promotion would be useless if you don't calibrate your target audience right (gender, age, geography, demography, interests, media consumption, added value)
- ❏ There are 'free' alternatives, though. Work with groups, group chats, cross-posting and content plugs on popular account.

'Vanity' metrics

There are many useless metrics you can apply to your social media stories. Still many use them.

- **Reach.** Look at what % of people are engaged, not overall reach
- **Video views.** Look not at the total views, but ThruPlay (15 second or full video views) or average completion rate
- **Pageviews.** Watch quality, not number of views: conversion rate, time, bounce rate

Key Audience Metrics to Monitor

- Engagement Rate: likes, comments, shares, saves.
- Completion Rate: especially for video content.
- Click-Through Rate (CTR): clicks on links or calls to action.
- Conversion Rate: actions taken due to your content.
- Sentiment Analysis: analyze feedback to gauge perception.

Why nobody's watching?

- ❏ If the average viewing percentage is low, you need to think about how to change the first 3-5 second of your video
- ❏ Call To Action. A call to action would be a must (watch, open, subscribe…)

Simple Tricks to Enhance Social Media Engagement

- Leverage current trends and popular audio clips.
- Humanize content with personal stories.
- Use interactive elements: polls, quizzes, and Q&A.
- Optimize visuals for platform-specific formats.
- Use humor and memes to increase shareability.

Attracting Media Attention After a Viral Story

- Prepare a press release with story highlights.
- Use personal contacts with journalists.
- Offer exclusive interviews or materials.
- Amplify through partnerships with NGOs and influencers.
- Share updates and follow-up stories.