

ENLISTING EMOTIVE LANGUAGE AND POWERFUL IMAGERY



USING STORYTELLING TO CREATE COMPELLING NUTRITION MESSAGES

Storytelling has been used to pass on valuable information for centuries – just think of ancient medical practices from the likes of Hippocrates that have been passed down from generation to generation and continue to be used today. More recently, marketing and communications companies have also used storytelling as a tool to communicate their own messages.

Storytelling employs a narrative to share information in a way that is memorable, easy to retain, and connects people of different backgrounds with a common human truth. Even if you are not a natural storyteller, you can still include some components of storytelling to improve your message delivery.

Within nutrition communications, storytelling helps important messages stick, but also helps to create authenticity. This can help people to take meaningful actions to improve their health.

SIMPLE TIPS TO BRING STORYTELLING TO YOUR MESSAGE DELIVERY

START WITH A CATCHY BEGINNING

You need your readers to be drawn in immediately, so they are encouraged to read on or listen. Incorporate memorable or surprising statistics if available to really capture your audience.



SHOW YOUR PERSONALITY

Allow your personality to shine through in the way you communicate. Personality and humour makes it easier for your audience to relate to you as another person facing food choices too and helps build trust.



EXPLAIN THE DETAIL

Provide enough information to help clients understand a fact or study using simple yet powerful language! This is where you will highlight the importance of the information, whether that be new nutrition guidance or new research. You can also take this moment to discuss any relevant limitations or 'watch outs' when integrating new information.



THE MAGIC OF SEVEN

An average person's short-term memory can retain around seven things at any given time (plus or minus two!). So, keep this in mind when you are trying to convey an important message. If you provide too much information, it is more than likely going to be forgotten.



USE POWERFUL IMAGERY

The brain processes images 60 x faster than words, so using imagery that explains a complex research or guidance can be a really useful tool. Whether you create a simple schematic to visually demonstrate your point or use contextual images in a presentation, a handout or blog post, the visual cues help the audience understand you and remain attentive.



MAKE THE FACTS RELEVANT

Think of it as the 'A-Ha!' or 'Why should I care?' moment. Make sure your message delivers an interesting nugget of information that people will either be surprised to learn or feel like could fit into their daily lives.



END WITH A TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Deliver some advice for your reader/audience that relates back to the new research or guidance that you're explaining. Make it relevant to your reader and tie the story up with a solid ending. Using some verbal cues such as "if you only remember one thing, it is..." makes your message memorable.



EXAMPLE OF STORYTELLING

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My grandfather passed away from heart disease and my dad had a triple bypass when he turned 65 last year – right after he retired. As a dietitian, and because of my family history, heart health is at the forefront of my health priorities. For many of us, heart disease is seldom thought of as a pressing health concern. That’s understandable. Since you can’t feel high cholesterol or your arteries clogging with plaque, and we don’t see heart disease, most people don’t pay it as much attention as they should. Yet, we are not powerless because a whopping 80% of premature deaths from heart disease could be avoided with meaningful changes to diet and lifestyleⁱ. These changes can be small but significant like getting moving with a daily walk, reaching for a healthy snack like a handful of almonds, or losing some weight, especially around your middle.

A recent studyⁱⁱ found that choosing almonds as a snack, as part of a cholesterol-lowering diet, helped to reduce fat around the middle and significantly improved cholesterol levels. Seeing the results of a smaller waistline feels good on the outside, but your heart, working quietly on the inside, will pay you the biggest compliment! A 28-gram serving of almonds – about 23 almonds – is a delicious way to do your taste buds – and your heart – some good. ”



REFERENCES

i www.who.int/cardiovascular_diseases/en/

ii Berryman CE, West SG, Fleming JA, Bordi PL, Kris-Etherton PM. Effects of Daily Almond Consumption on Cardiometabolic Risk and Abdominal Adiposity in Healthy Adults with Elevated LDL-Cholesterol: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Jour of the Amer Heart Assn* 2014; 4:e000993, 2015.