

Tips for Creating a Story-Optimized Homepage



How to effectively incorporate stories into your organization's prime real estate

- ✓ Take advantage of the top third of each page; make sure that stories (or links to stories) are clearly visible without needing users to scroll.
- ✓ Display at least one story on the homepage with a clear link to where visitors can find more.
- ✓ A picture is worth 1,000 words. Make sure that homepage images (real, not stock) are big, correctly cropped and the appropriate resolution, and linked to a story or call-to-action. Combining even 1-2 sentences with an image can tell a great, compelling story.
- ✓ When choosing where to place a story link in the navigation, pick a place that makes sense for your organization; ideally, it should be no more than one click from the homepage. Make sure that you name it something obvious, as well (like success stories, stories of impact, etc.).
- ✓ Repetition of a great story within a site is OK (especially if you make use of teasers or incorporate visuals in different versions).
- ✓ Story length on the homepage is important! Keep it short and sweet, or create a 'teaser' version that links to the full version (and, ideally, a page that has more stories).
- ✓ Choose your tools wisely – make sure your website is updated enough to handle a variety of multimedia across all of the browsers (desktop and mobile) your users could be using. You want to avoid the blank square box where a video is supposed to load.
- ✓ Donate buttons with hyperlinks as well as sharing buttons to social channels should appear next to an inspiring story on your website.
- ✓ Update the homepage often. Seeing the same story on the homepage month after month makes your content (and organization) appear dated.
- ✓ Display contact information quickly and easily for your visitors. Don't make them dig for a phone number, address, or place/time of an upcoming event after they've been inspired by a story.
- ✓ If you have links to your blog or to sign up for your e-newsletter, let people know the kinds of content (i.e. stories) they can expect if they click or sign up. A simple "visit our blog for more stories of impact" sets clearer expectations than "read our blog."
- ✓ If the homepage features an RSS feed of recent blog posts, try naming posts that are stories with some kind of indicator in the title that it's a story. Again, the key is transparency and setting expectations for users.