

Communication 4312 – Every Story Has A Purpose

Every story has a purpose. It's the answer to the question, Why are we doing this? Where's the story going to be printed or used or whatever? Why are we doing this story? Who's going to read it? What is it about this story that makes it worth doing?

All sorts of possibilities exist. To answer this I think you have to include every conceivable situation you may encounter. Perhaps it's a news release you are writing for a company or an organization. Maybe it's for a brochure. Maybe it'll appear strictly on line.

No matter what the situation, you're going to have to figure out what's the best way to approach the story. Otherwise you are going to write the wrong story at the wrong time for the wrong place. You may get some help from your immediate supervisor. But probably not enough.

Some stories have the wrong approach for one reason or other. Why does this happen? It happens for fairly obvious reasons. The person doing the story didn't think through the process. And, unfortunately, the editors were either uninvolved or they themselves didn't have a sense of what should have been done.

The process begins with your preparation. Then you have to decide what the story is about. You will need to gather information by interviewing and by other means. After that comes the writing process. You should begin thinking about the story from the time you got the assignment.

Your job is to figure out the approach that you should take in the story and then to write it in such a way that it conforms to expectations.

You have to have the appropriate lead on the story. The story still has to have a distinct organization to it. You should be sure the story is error free. Be sure not to use words or constructions your editor doesn't like.

■ David McHam