



# Public Relations (PR) & Communication toolkit

**Building your business through  
effective communications**



## Hello entrepreneurs and innovators

### Welcome to the SME Communications Toolkit!

The 4Afrika team has created a one-stop resource for you to get started in building an effective, impactful, measurable and repeatable communications strategy. The toolkit is designed to help smaller businesses, working with smaller budgets, to create maximum impact and set and achieve realistic goals to see results.

Before the team put the toolkit together, they conducted a survey of SMEs across Africa to learn more about their communications needs and custom-built the toolkit with these needs in mind. The team asked SMEs what format the toolkit should be available in and in response, we have created this downloadable e-booklet filled with guidelines, tips and tricks, links to extra information, video interviews with local experts and downloadable templates.

The toolkit will take you through all the fundamental building blocks of effective communications: from creating an elevator pitch to writing a press release and getting started on social media. There is also guidance and insight on how to measure your return on investment, important when resources are scarce. And there is much more to discover within. I hope this toolkit helps you with the craft of communications to grow your own business.

I look forward to reading all of your business stories in the near future!

**Frank X. Shaw**  
**Corporate Vice President, Communications, Microsoft Corporation**



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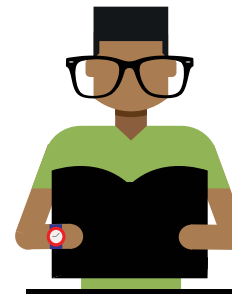
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# 01

## The basics of PR

### Why do I need to do this?

- Understand what PR is and how it can help your business
- Communicate the mission and values of your business in a compelling and memorable way
- Create key messages that will form the skeleton of all your messaging

### What is PR?

If a young man tells his date how handsome, smart and successful he is – that's advertising. If the young man tells his date she's intelligent, looks lovely and is a great conversationalist, he's saying the right things to the right person – that's marketing. If someone else tells the young woman how handsome, smart and successful her date is – that's PR!

Public relations (PR) is a strategic communication process. It is often referred to as the 'business of influence' because it helps you to shape what others think and say about you and your business.

PR will help you to manage your reputation and build good relationships with your customers and stakeholders, which will motivate them to take the actions you want.

## What are owned, paid and earned channels?

There are three different channels you can use when doing your PR:

### Owned



#### Property that you own and control:

Company website, brochures, blog, Facebook page or internal newsletter.

#### Why it's good:

Allows you to create your own content with unique messaging, tone and style that cannot be altered. You can share this messaging wherever and whenever you want.

### Paid



#### Advertising:

Newspaper, magazine, billboard, TV, radio, Facebook or Twitter adverts.

#### Why it's good:

Good way to promote your content, attract new followers and drive them to your owned channels. However, it is less valuable than earned media.

### Earned



#### Word-of-mouth advertising:

When someone outside of your business shares stories about your brand: Journalist articles, forums, social media shares and comments.

#### Why it's good:

Best kind of channel. It is a third party endorsement of your brand that people are more likely to trust.

#### Note:

All three channels are important to your communications strategy. It is up to you how you evaluate these themes and decide where to allocate your resources.

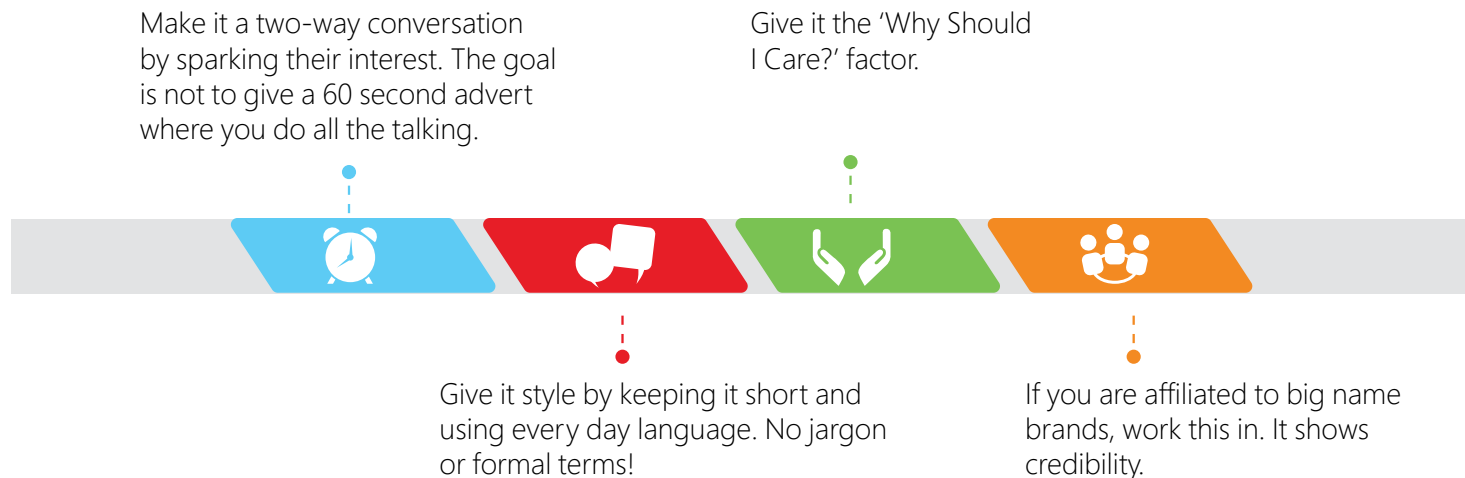
## What is an Elevator Pitch?

An elevator pitch is a short and compelling summary about you or your business, which you could easily say to someone during the time it takes you to go up in an elevator. It is one of the most basic and important pieces of PR.

### Your elevator pitch should include:

- Who you are
- What your company does
- A fun and memorable story about your business  
e.g. "The idea for my app came from a farmer who loved his cattle so much, he let the calves sleep in his bed!"
- A call to action  
Give them your card or arrange a meet-up to chat more

### Some tips for creating your elevator pitch:





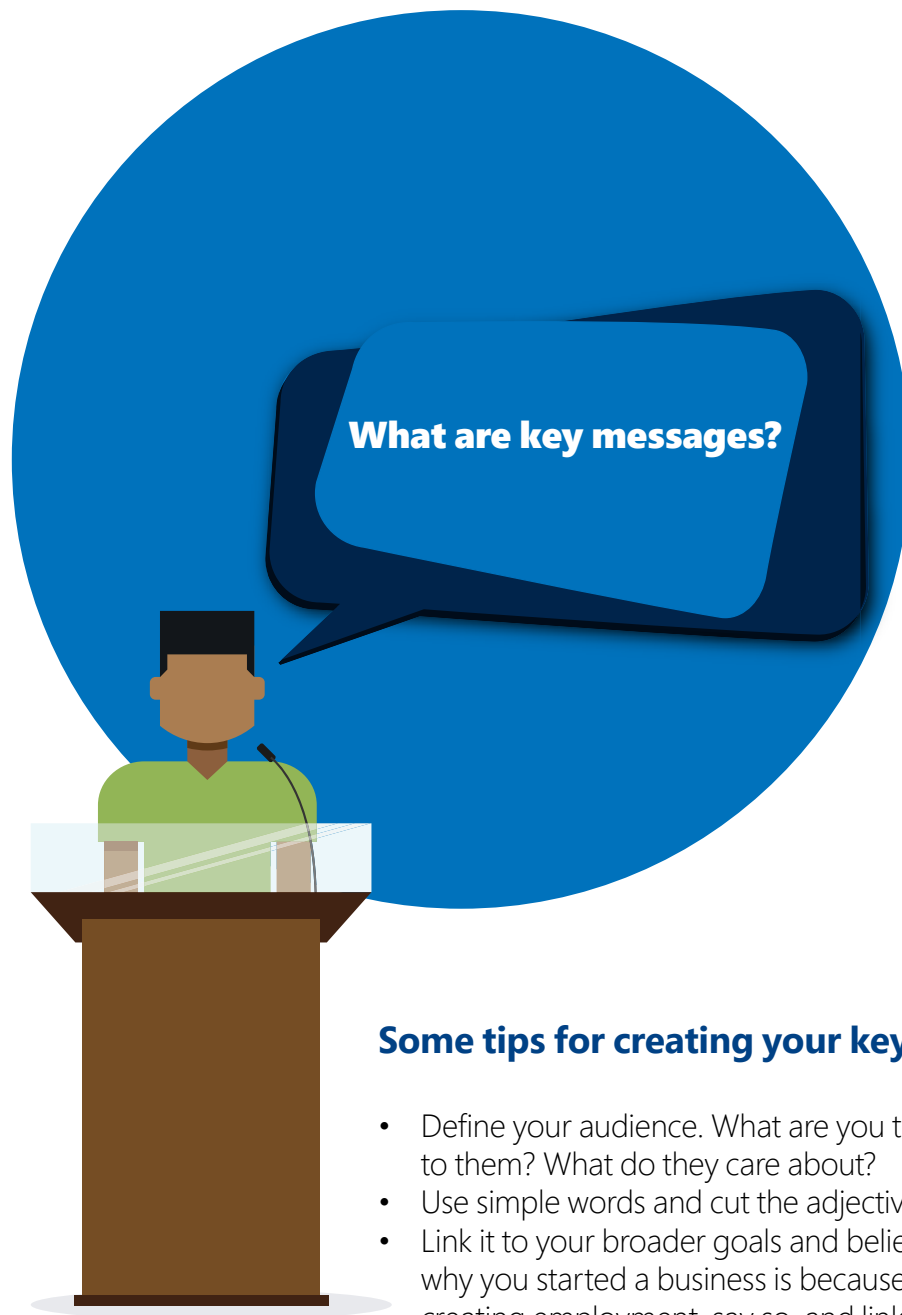
## How do you give something the 'Why Should I Care' factor?

Make what you are saying relevant to the person you are talking to. Explain how your business will make their lives better. Why should they care?



### Which one would you pick?

- A) The new Kyoto protocol will uphold carbon tax concessions for member countries that want to conserve forests
- B) The new Kyoto protocol will enable countries with forests to save 50% on carbon tax



## What are key messages?

Key messages are the core / most important things you want to say to your audience. They can highlight your findings, your goals or your values in specific and memorable soundbites.

Key messages will form the skeleton of all your communication materials. Normally, your business should have three key messages per topic. Topics can include your business, your industry and your stakeholders.

**NB: A key message is not a tagline or a slogan. Taglines and slogans are more 'marketing speak' and will be used in advertising materials. For example: Go-Mobile. Moving with you.**

[Click here to see examples of good key messages.](#) ➞

### Some tips for creating your key messages:

- Define your audience. What are you trying to say to them? What do they care about?
- Use simple words and cut the adjectives
- Link it to your broader goals and beliefs. If part of why you started a business is because you believe in creating employment, say so, and link it back to why creating employment is important
- Back up what you say with facts
- Show local relevance
- Test if it's memorable. Can you remember it? Can a friend remember it?

## How to create a basic communications plan

When approaching your PR strategy, like a business, there should be a clear roadmap in the form of a detailed plan or matrix. This will include timelines, deliverables, tactics and channels. Most importantly, you need to focus on your goal, and the plan should map to this. This keeps everyone on the same page and to ensure that your efforts are consistently mapping to the same objective and reinforcing it.

Your communications objective, should also be closely aligned to your business objective. To read more about creating your plan, this instructional blog will help get you started!





# 02

## How to get news of your company published

### **Why do I need to do this?**

- Build critical voice and market share that investors look for
- Inspire potential consumers to act
- Reach new markets and audiences to add more potential customers to your sales pipeline
- Build your business narrative
- Build your own personal story to increase trust – people do not trust brands, they trust people

### **What is your Business Narrative?**

A business narrative is the story of your business. It provides context and continuity, so that consumers and stakeholders have a clear idea – at all times – of where you came from, what you are doing and where you are going.

Everything you do, whether it is launching a new product or scaling to a new country, should be in harmony with the story of your business. This way, all your steps and strategies are seamless, tie in with your values and mission and make sense in the mind of your audience.

## Step 01 | Writing your press release

### What is a press release?

A press release is an official, formal, written statement that you send out to the media to announce something significant or newsworthy that you have done.

### What constitutes significant and newsworthy?

- ✓ Starting a new business
- ✓ Introducing a new product
- ✓ Receiving funding
- ✓ Receiving an award or winning a competition
- ✓ Sponsoring or participating in an event, seminar or workshop
- ✓ Forming a new strategic alliance or partnership
- ✓ Getting a new, significant customer
- ✓ Scaling or expanding your business
- ✓ Celebrating an anniversary

### What goes into a press release?



[Click here to view a press release template.](#) ➔



## **What is a Call to Action?**

A call to action tells the reader what action to take after reading your content. This can include visiting a website, donating to a cause, reading more, watching a video or signing up for a program.

## Do's and Dont's of writing a press release

### Do's

#### Write a catchy title

When writing your title, focus less on what your brand is doing and more on how you are benefitting other people



African students can now pay online – using their smartphones!



Retty launches new mobile banking app in Africa

#### Start with all your important information first

It's unlikely that someone will read your entire press release from start to finish. Put all the most important information up at the top, where it is more likely to be read.



**What** your product / service is. **Why** you launched it. **Where** it is available. **How** it works.



According to XX, 80% of Africans do not have a bank account and operate in a cash-based environment.

#### Include important facts and stats

These help build your credibility and position you as a thought leader in your industry. Always credit the source of the fact or statistic.



According to XX, 80% of Africans do not have a bank account and operate in a cash-based environment

#### Make your subheading an interesting soundbite

Use your subheading to briefly summarise the most important or interesting takeaways from your press release.

Do not re-word your title or make it sound like an advert. You can also use bullet points to highlight key information upfront, like product specs advert. You can also use bullet points to highlight key information upfront, like product specs.



New, locally-developed app uses e-wallet technology to facilitate buying, selling and sending remittances online



With Retty's new app, now you too can shop online!

#### Make your quotes 'quotable'

Include quotes that add value and an extra layer of industry insight on how your product / service is going to make an impact. Keep your quotes 2 -3 lines long.



"Debit and credit card penetration in Africa is low. With our new mobile banking app, we are making it easier for Africans to access products and services online. Since our launch in 2014, we have registered over 2 000 active users."



"We are very excited to be launching this product."

PRESS  
RELEASE

## Do's and Dont's of writing a press release

### Dont's

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#### **Make your press release longer than 400 – 500 words in length**

Your reader will lose interest – even just by looking at it. Keep your press release short, sharp and compelling, sharing only the relevant facts.

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#### **Create false expectations in your title**

Do not exaggerate and claim to be doing more than you actually are. Journalists and readers will catch on and quickly lose trust in you.

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#### **Use adjectives, including 'unique', 'innovative', 'amazing' and 'world-leading'**

Adjectives are empty and boastful words that add unnecessary length to your writing. They make you sound cliché, uncreative, unreliable and like an infomercial. Journalists are paid to take adjectives out. Rather, use facts that speak for themselves. If you are truly 'world-first', prove it.

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## Step 02 | Pitching your press release

### Who do I pitch it to?

Once you have your press release ready, it's up to you to research your media and find out who writes about the topics that are relevant to your news.

Do not just send out a mass mail to every journalist out there! It is also a good idea to start forming relationships with key media – this will be addressed below.

### Researching your media

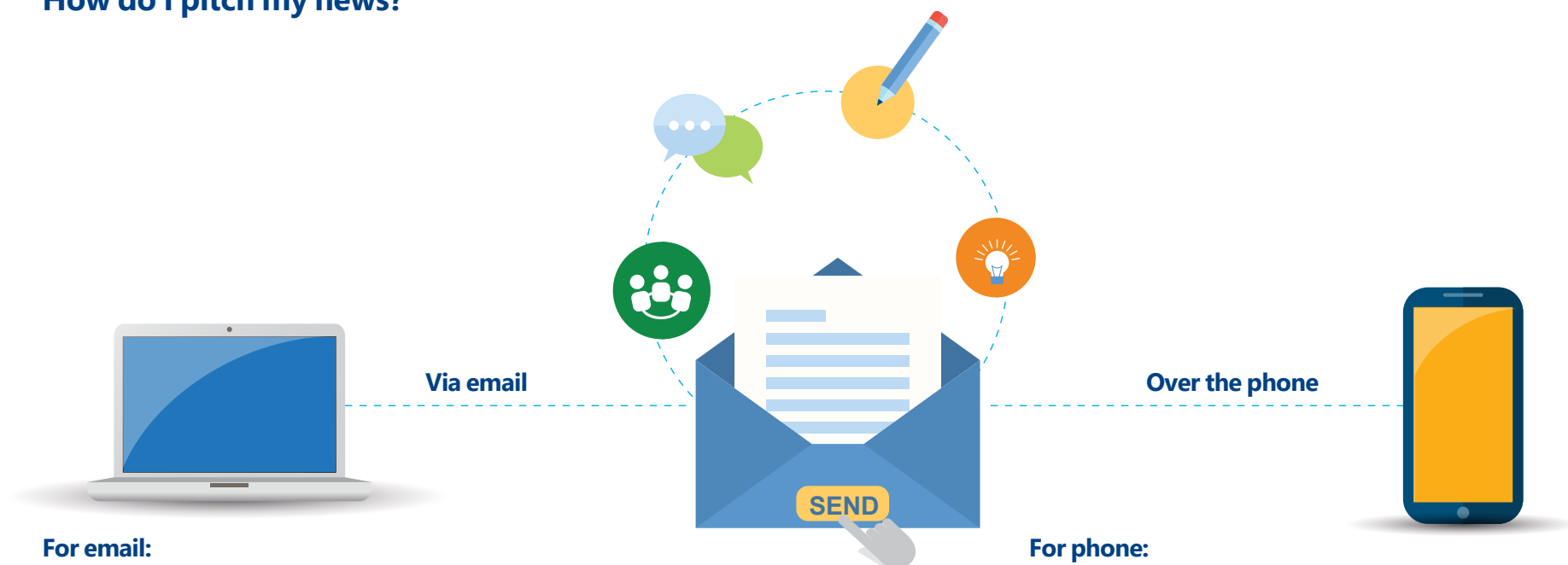
- Visit your nearest bookstore and read local newspapers and magazines
- Go online and search for online publications
- Ask your customers to fill out a survey on which publications they read (you want to publish news where your customers are)
- Note down all the publications that have sections relevant to you (e.g. technology, business, entertainment)

### Creating a media list

- Source the contact details (email addresses and phone numbers) of editors and journalists from your chosen publications, either online or via email / phone
- Compile a list of all publications, contact details and publication deadlines. This will help you pitch to the right person, on time.



## How do I pitch my news?



### For email:

- Send your press release to a journalist
- Accompany your press release with a buddy mail. A buddy mail acts like a cover letter to a CV. Use it to directly address the journalist by name, introduce yourself and state what the purpose of your email is, directing their attention to the press release below.

### Note:

Always send your emails out **individually**.  
Never copy another person or journalist into your email.

### For phone:

- Call the journalist
- Address them by name, introduce yourself and let them know what the purpose of your call is.
- Always send a follow-up email to the journalist after, so that you can clarify any details or remind them to take action.

### Note:

Take note of media deadlines when pitching your news. Some people publish news every day, some every Friday, or some every month.

[Click here to see a buddy mail template.](#) ➞



## Building relationships with media and influencers

### Why should I do this?

Your life will become much easier if you are on a first name basis with a handful of journalists or influencers in your sector. Journalists get hundreds of emails and press releases a day. If they know who you are, and know that you provide them with good content, they will open your email.

This doesn't mean sending them random news every day! But once a month send them an interesting update about your business, or even better, an industry trend related you have spotted that they can create a good story from.

If you are on Twitter you can also engage with influencers on this platform, and think about hosting an interesting event or cocktail evening to bring your network together and even your best clients. Client feedback is key, and putting clients that will say a good word in front of your influencers, is even better

## Step 03 | Follow ups

### How will I know if a journalist has published my news?

- Search online by typing in the name of the journalist, publication and title of your press release. You will see your news in their publication on the same day / week / month

#### **NB: Take note of deadlines and publishing schedules in your media list**

- The journalist will respond to you asking for more information, photographs or an interview

## Step 04 | Preparing for interviews

### What do I prepare if a journalist contacts me for an interview?

Once you have sent out your press release, a journalist might be interested in interviewing you for more information. Interviews can take place over email, over the phone or on television

#### **No matter the format, ensure that you:**

- Know your topic and the issues surrounding it back to front Journalists often like to branch out and talk about challenges and opportunities in your industry at large.
- Draft some practice questions (some easy and some challenging) that you can rehearse answering them Sometimes a journalist will send through a list of questions, but sometimes they will not. It is up to you to feel prepared.

- Research previous interviews that the journalist has done this will give you a good sense of what to expect
- Practice naturally **weaving in your key messages**

**It is important to include your key messages in your interview, so think of or practice scenarios where you can bring them in naturally.**

#### **For email:**

- Answer in as much relevant detail as possible
- Use a clear, easy to read font and simple colour
- Respond in a timely manner. Remember that journalists have deadlines to meet!

#### **For telephone:**

- Set up a time that is convenient for both you and the journalist
- Take the interview in a quiet room and speak clearly
- Ensure you have good signal and volume
- Do not be afraid to pause between questions if you need time to think
- If you are having the interview over Skype, test the connection before you start. A broken line will be frustrating for you both
- Answer your phone at the time you promised

#### **For television**

Click here to see a list of television interview tips ➞

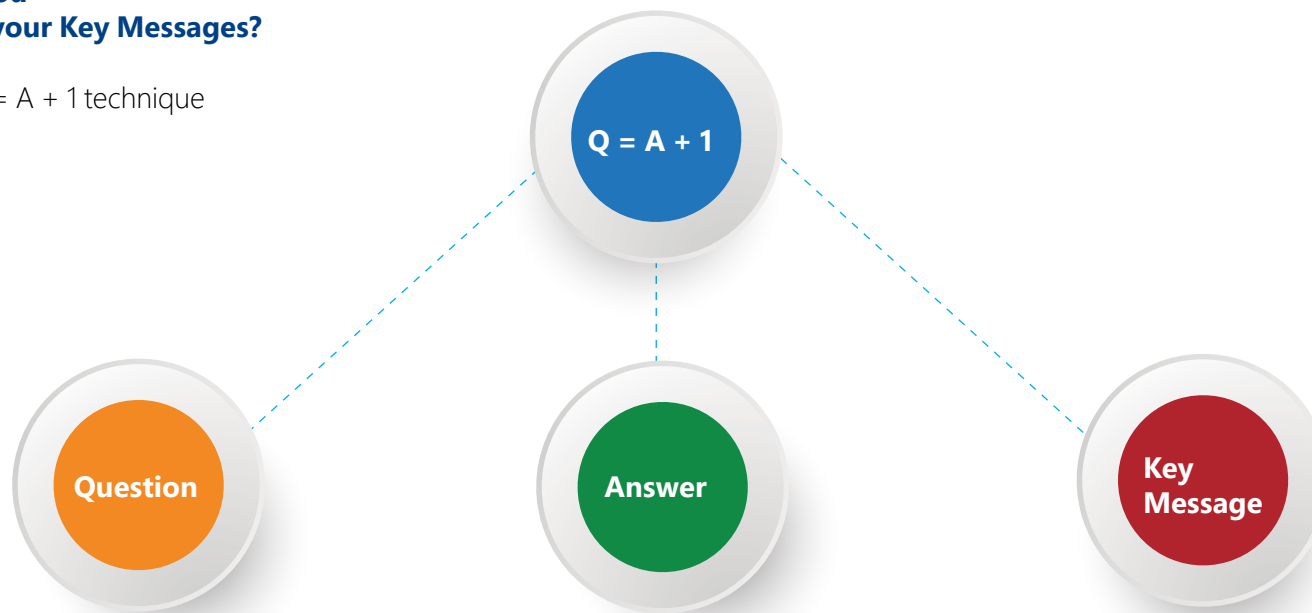


## What do I do if I get a difficult question that I cannot answer?

Not a problem. Simply divert to something you can say by saying: "I can't answer that for you, but what I can tell you is that XX"

### How do you weave in your Key Messages?

Use the  $Q = A + 1$  technique



### Note:

Never just say **"no comment."** This opens you up for speculation.

## Step 05 | Giving your content legs

### What else should I do with my press release?

Whether your news got good coverage in the media or not, always consider re-purposing your news and sharing it on your own channels (LinkedIn page etc.).

Use it to create a blog post or YouTube video. This way, you can tailor your message to different audiences and make your news last longer.

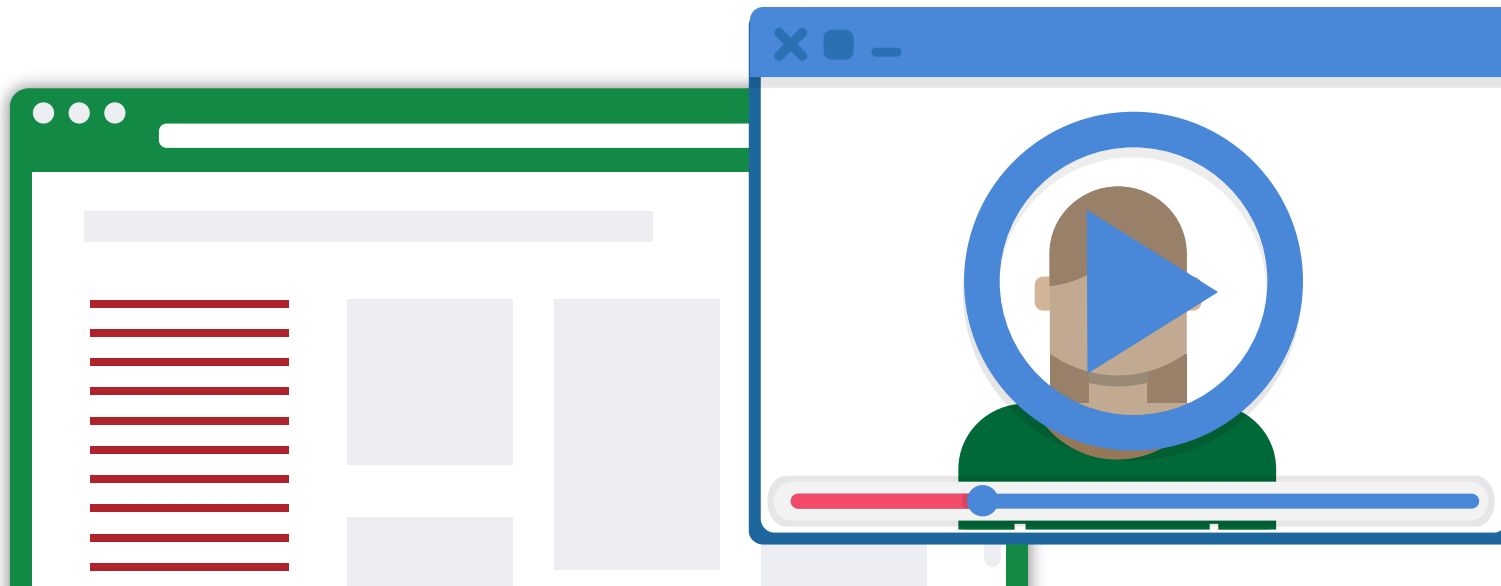
#### Example:

If you have a press release around a new mobile app, create a YouTube video that demos it to your customers. Or write a blog post detailing the process of how you went about researching and developing your app.

Beneficiary stories are also very effective, where you use testimonials to show how your product has helped another business or person greatly improve their operations.

#### Note:

If you feel a video is the most effective way to share your news, consider sending the video to journalists instead of a press release.



You may also want to do a search for your product online and see what competitors come up. Are they on more media outlets than you? Do they have more Twitter followers? These questions can guide you on where you need to focus your efforts.

Agree to your measurement targets upfront so you have something to work towards. For example: I will get one article published about my business every three months and I will build relationships with at least three journalists in that time. Or, I aim to double my Facebook followers in the next six months and increase engagements by 10%.

Setting targets help, but don't make them unrealistic. For example, if you have already gained 1 000 Facebook followers within three months without doing any real work or advertising, it is probably fair to say you will at least gain between 2 000 – 3 000 in the next three-month cycle if you double your efforts.

A lot of public relations and storytelling is about building affinity, trust and loyalty around your brand, which is not immediately tangible or necessarily quantifiable in monetary terms. But it is the constant repetition of your messages that will keep you and our business top of mind and talked about. And remember, investors don't want to invest in a business that is not mentioned anywhere!

Here are some interesting articles you can read on the topic of ROI:

- Huffington Post: **Measuring ROI, the experts weigh in**
- CMO: **8 ways to measure return on PR investment**







### Tom Jackson

is a technology and business journalist based in London, but intrepid traveller of Africa and has lived in Cape Town, Nairobi and Lagos. He was previously managing editor of award-winning pan-African news website, HumanIPO, which largely focused on entrepreneurial success stories in Africa.

### VIDEO: How to influence journalists and bloggers with Tom Jackson!



@TomJackson1988

Tom believes passionately in the power of technology to drive Africa's growth and prosperity, and is dedicated to documenting the continent's incredible tech startup scene. He now runs his own blog, **Disrupt Africa**, and is a speaker at various events including AfricaCom and DemoAfrica.

## Video links: Tom Jackson



[Why is it important for SMEs to market themselves to the media?](#) ➞

[How should SMEs pitch their news to a journalist or blogger?](#) ➞

[Why is it so important to build relationships with the media?](#) ➞

[What is your advice for setting up a blog?](#) ➞

# External resources document

## How to get news of your company published



### Example of a good press release:

[SA tech start-up solves Google's WOZA Online problem](#) →

### Examples of bad press releases:

[8 ridiculous examples of press release fails](#) →

### Examples of thought leadership:

[Africa has the tech infrastructure to make kids rich, now let's bring out the skills](#) →

[When technology and innovation meet, inclusive growth follows](#) →

### Tips

[7 Ways to get the press coverage you want](#) →

[Infographic: 29 ways to stay creative](#) →

[Why investing in PR is good for your bottom line](#) →

[Case study: Inside Square's winning PR strategy](#) →

[Key messages: Key communicators of your brand](#) →



# 03

## How to use social media as an effective business tool

### Why do I need to do this?

- Build your visibility and credibility
- Tell your brand's story with effective visual content
- Improve your SEO
- Network with new markets and audiences
- Have valuable conversations with your customers and get their feedback
- Research industry trends and competitor activity

### What is a SEO?

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimisation. It is the process of making your website appear at the top, or on the first page, of search results when someone types in a query online so that you are easily visible. This process is done using organic / unpaid tactics, such as:

- Publishing good quality content on a regular basis (blogs, social media posts etc.)
- Using the correct keywords and terms in your copy (i.e. the words people are searching for)
- Linking to other sites and have them link back to you
- Note down all the publications that have sections relevant to you (e.g. technology, business, entertainment)

## Step **01** | Creating and maintaining a blog

### Why do I need a blog?

#### Controlled content

Journalists often tweak your press release or take out / add in certain pieces of information. A blog gives you full control over your content, allowing you to post what you want, when you want.

#### What is SEO

A blog allows you to create fresh and good quality content on a regular basis, which is good SEO practice and will help keep your website on the first page of search results.

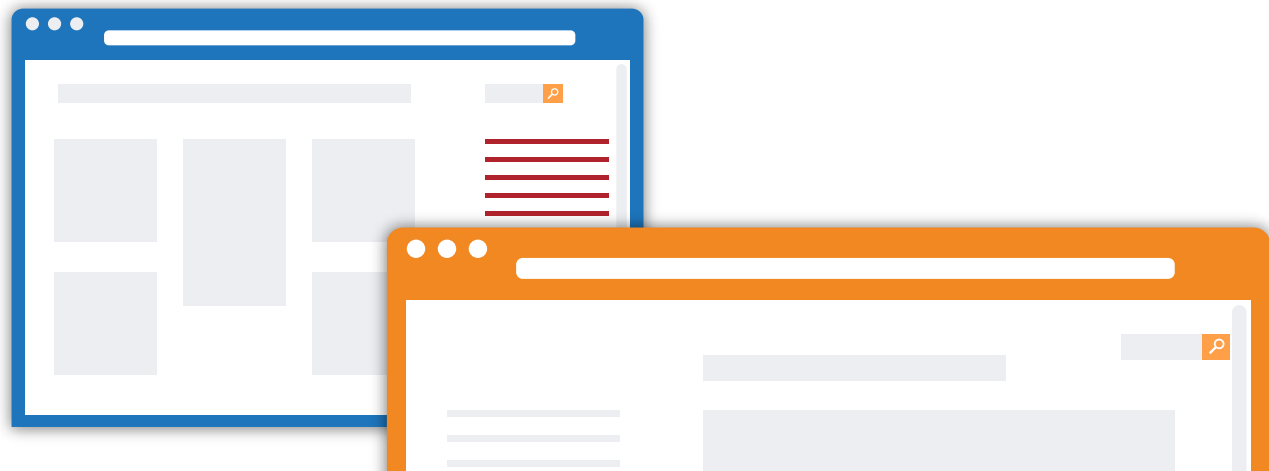
#### Thought leadership

A blog gives you a platform to not only share your news about your service or product, but also offer commentary or insights on relevant issues or events. This will build your status as a thought leader in your industry and invite engagement from your customers.

### How do I set up a blog?

#### There are two kinds of blogs:

- A written blog
- A video blog / vlog



Below are a number of free and paid-for online tools you can use to set up your blog.  
Link your blog to your website to maximise your SEO.

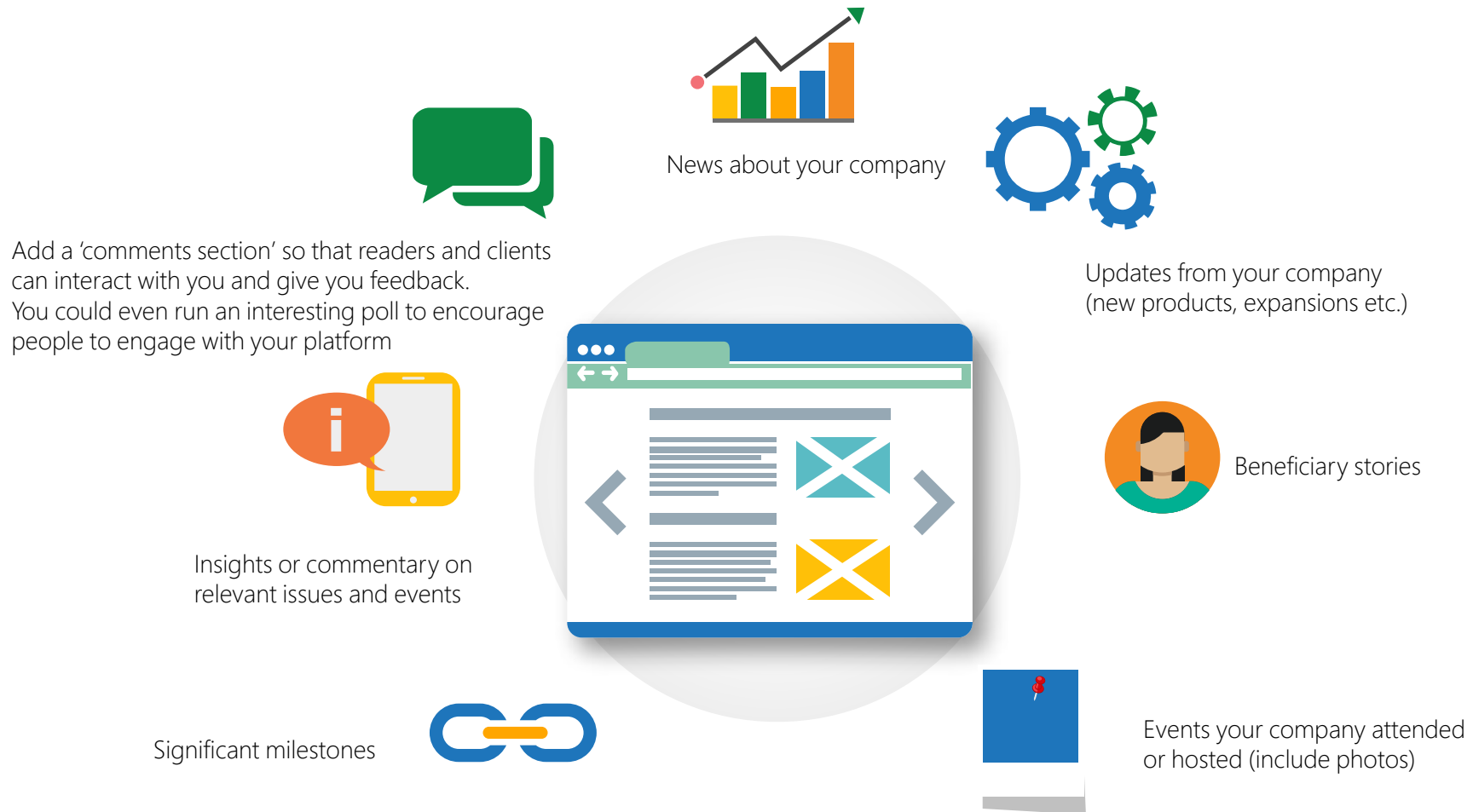
Written blog tools	Online blog tools
List recommended free / paid-for tools	YouTube

## How often do I update my blog?

For good SEO practice, at least 2 – 3 times a month.



## What kind of content should I put into my blog?



### Note:

Blogs should be more informal and conversational than press releases. Get creative and let the personality of your brand shine through. Instead of sharing news about a new product in a press-release format, tell the story of how you came up with and developed the idea. Share your journey with your customers. Remember to use lots of pictures.

## **What is a Beneficiary Story?**

Beneficiary stories tell stories of how your product or service is making a significant impact in someone else's life. Instead of you talking about your company, you're getting someone else to do it for you.

These are effective marketing tools because they act as testimonials, which potential customers are more likely to listen to and trust when considering to buy from you.



## Step 02 | Using Twitter as a business tool

### Why should I use Twitter?

#### For my business:

- Marketing in real-time
- Engaging with your customers in real-time
- Staying up-to-date with industry trends
- Researching competitor activity and behavior
- Improving your SEO
- Interacting with clients

### What should I be tweeting about?

#### For my business:

- Live tweets from events that you host or attend
- Industry trends and updates relevant to you
- Your blog posts and articles
- Non-promotional content still related to your brand interests
- Activity and updates around your business
- Products and specials

#### Note:

- Keep self-promotional tweets to a minimum. While it is good to share updates with your fans, they do not want to be advertised to on social media. Give your tweets the 'why should I care' factor. Every tweet should add value to your followers.
- Never make jokes or comments around an issue or event that could offend and cause controversy. Think before you tweet.

#### For myself:

- Giving a credible and trusted face to your company (people like doing business with people)
- Building your personal brand

#### For myself:

- Topics that interest you
- Live tweets from trainings you host or attend
- Personal anecdotes and entertaining content

#### Note:

Never tweet crude, offensive, rude or demeaning content. Although it is your personal account and you are entitled to freedom of speech, remember that customers and investors will look at your account and your content could depend on whether or not they do business with you.



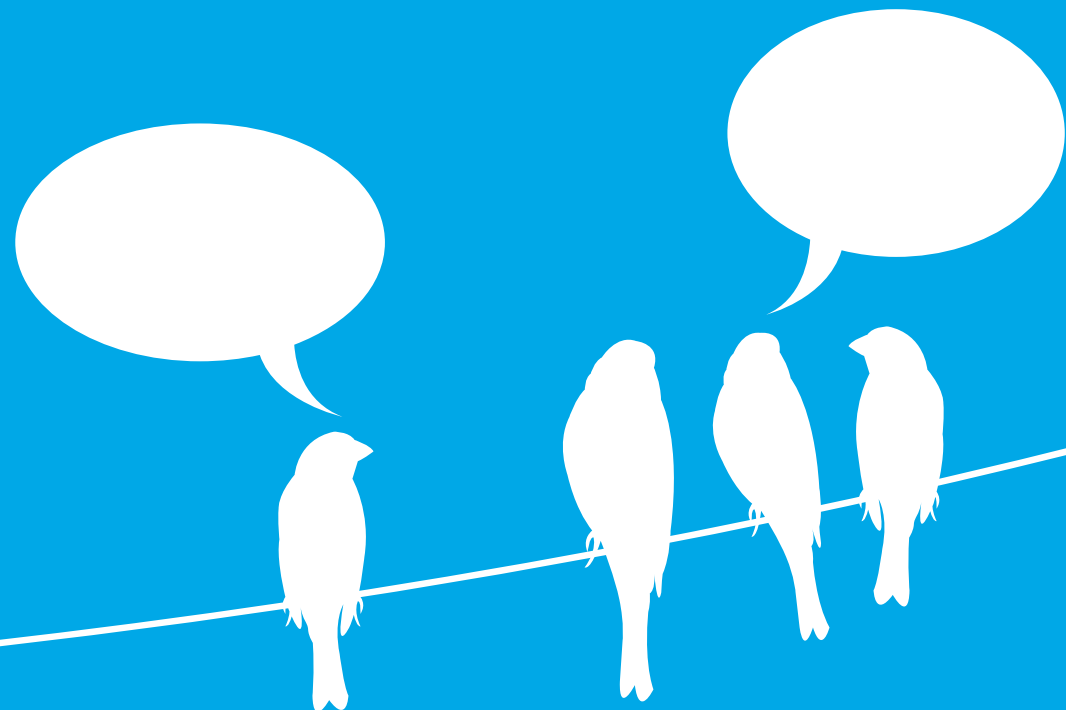
### Some tips for tweeting:

- If your tweet starts with an @ sign (i.e. when you are tweeting somebody in specific), remember to put a full stop in front of it if you want other people to see it on their timeline.

**.@Retty – if you want other people to see it**

**@Retty – if you only want Retty to see it. The tweet will only be visible to other people if they click on 'Tweets and Replies' on your page.  
If you want it to be 100% private, send a Direct Message**

- If you are including a long URL, use a URL shortner. These tools are free and available online
- Keep your tweets around 110 – 120 characters in length, so that it is easier for other people to retweet it and add a comment



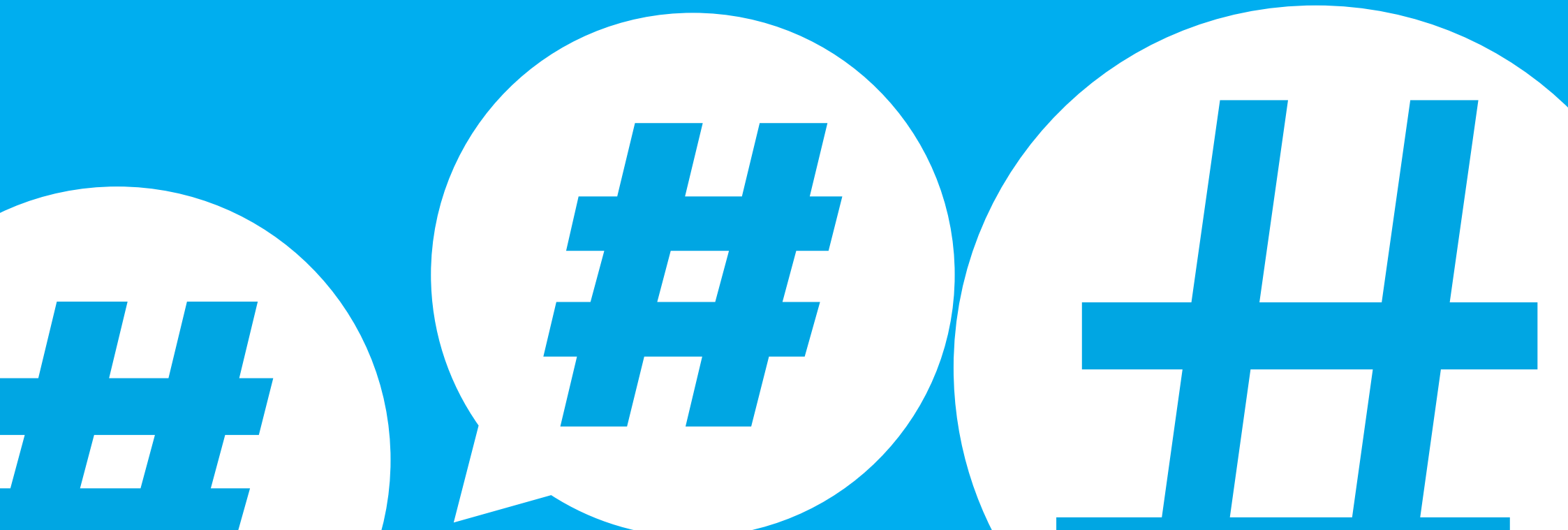
## What are hashtags?

Hashtags (#) are used on Twitter to mark and find messages on a certain topic, so that you can create and connect conversations. When you hashtag, you make it easier for people who are interested in a topic to find and engage with you. You can also search for hashtags in Twitter to find out what other people are saying about a product, event, issue or competitor.

**Examples: #AFCON2015, #WorldIPDay and #ThrowBackThursday**

### **Note:**

- Never hashtag random words, such as #technology. Rather hashtag a specific name, event or phrase that you know people would talk about.
- Only use a maximum of two hashtags per tweet



## How can I use hashtags effectively?

- Build yourself up as a thought leader or expert in your field by starting and facilitating conversations around something that interests you
- Have an #Ask[Your company name] Q&A session
- Live tweet from an event you host or attend using the dedicated event hashtag
- Use it for specific campaigns, promotions and competitions
- Get market insights by searching different hashtags on Twitter. Find out what people are saying about you, your industry and your competitors. This will help you create good issue based stories for your media or your blog

### **Note:**

Before you create a hashtag, search to see if it already exists.

## **What is an Issue-Based Story?**

*Issue-based stories look at current local challenges that are impacting people and communities and provide insights on or proposed solutions to these challenges.*

*They are effective marketing tools because they show your brand as being relevant, up-to-date, genuinely concerned about public well-being and a potential lifesaver.*

## Step 03 | Getting your brand on Facebook and LinkedIn

### Why should I post on Facebook?

- Marketing in real-time
- Engaging with your customers in real-time
- Staying up-to-date with industry trends
- Researching competitor activity and behavior
- Improving your SEO
- Interacting with clients

### Why should I use Facebook and LinkedIn?

- Campaigns and competitions
- User-generated content (testimonials, fan photos and stories)
- Polls and questions
- Industry trends and updates relevant to you
- Your blog posts and articles
- Non-promotional, humorous content still related to your brand interests (at least once per week)
- Activity and updates around your business
- Products and specials

#### Note:

- Put a Call to Action in every post. Social media is about engaging in two-way conversations. Ask them to comment, share or visit a website to read more.
- For increased engagement and visibility, keep your posts as visual as possible. In other words, use high-quality pictures, but be aware of copyright rules and regulations.
- Regularly check Facebook's **terms and policies** (they change frequently) and make sure your page complies with them.

### Do I have to use both?

No, but it is better. Facebook is a more informal platform, where you can talk to your followers and market with the occasional fun, humorous and visual pieces of content. It is a great platform for shaping your brand's personality and managing your customer service.

LinkedIn offers a more formal platform, where you can share the overview, values and mission of your company, your products, your articles and your recommendations from consumers. Having both a Facebook and LinkedIn profile also enhances your SEO.



## Step 04 | Considering other social media platforms

### Should I be on all the social media platforms available? Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube etc?

#### Only be on the platforms that:

##### **Make sense to your brand**

*An accounting firm, for example, would not have much to post on Instagram.  
But a clothing brand would.*

##### **You can update regularly with good, relevant content**

*Social media management is a full-time job!  
Only commit to as much as you can manage.*





### **Liron Segev**

is the founder of several successful businesses and the award-winning blog, TheTechieGuy.com, which was best South African Science & Technology blog in 2012 and 2013, and Best Advice blog in Africa 2014. With over 14 years of experience in the IT industry, he started SwiftSMS and Swift Consulting which survived the "DOT COM" days with solid business models and real revenue,

**VIDEO: How to create and sustain a blog and build your digital following with Liron Segev!**

 @Liron\_Segev

which is what every business needs! Liron Segev is passionate about business and the various challenges that business owners face on a daily basis and is a consultant to help business solve various challenges. You can also catch him on South African radio waves where he presents on the latest technology and business trends.

## Video links: Liron Segev



[What does it take to become an entrepreneur and build your own blog?](#) ➔

[Everything you need to know about sustaining and creating content for your blog](#) ➔

[What is the importance of SEO and what is the best way to apply it?](#) ➔

[What should SMEs keep in mind when reaching out to bloggers?](#) ➔

[How do I pick which social media channels to use?](#) ➔



# External resources document

## Using social media effectively



### Twitter

[Infographic: The 36 rules of social media](#) ➔

[How to host a tweet party](#) ➔

[Advertising on Twitter for small businesses](#) ➔

[Making the most of Twitter for small businesses](#) ➔

[10 Awesome Twitter examples: How to make your tweets shareable](#) ➔

[Infographic: A strategic approach to using Twitter](#) ➔



### Facebook

[Facebook hits 100 million active monthly users in Africa](#) ➔

[Internet and Facebook users in Africa](#) ➔

[Five ways small businesses can make the most of Facebook](#) ➔



### Tips

[The social media frequency guide: How often should I be posting?](#) ➔

[5 Ways to make your Instagram stand out](#) ➔

[Five excellent small business blogs to learn from](#) ➔

# 04

## How to tell good business stories

### Why do I need to do this?

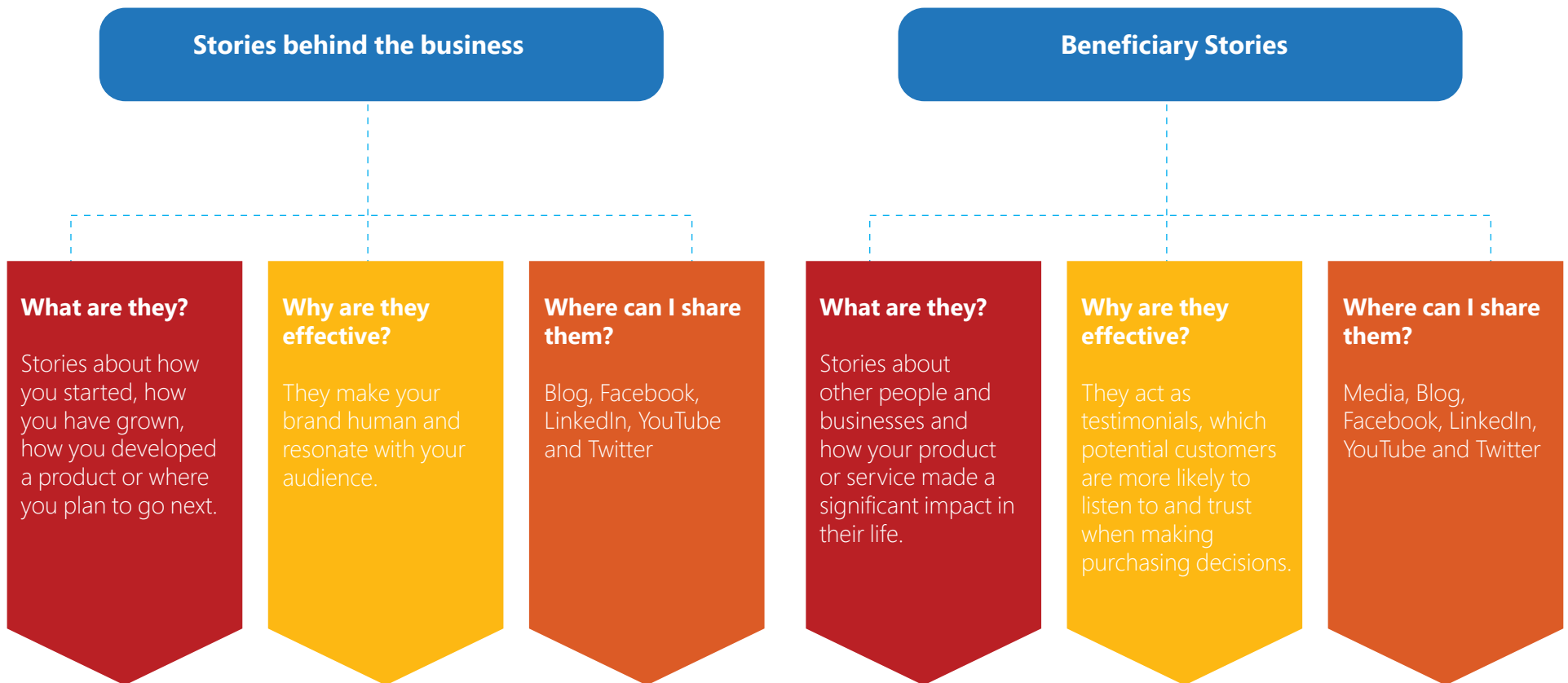
- Make your brand memorable
- Breathe life into complex issues, terms, data and statistics
- Create lasting emotional connections that will motivate your stakeholders and customers to act
- Increase word-of-mouth advertising

**“Tell me a fact and I’ll learn. Tell me a truth and I’ll believe.  
But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever.”**

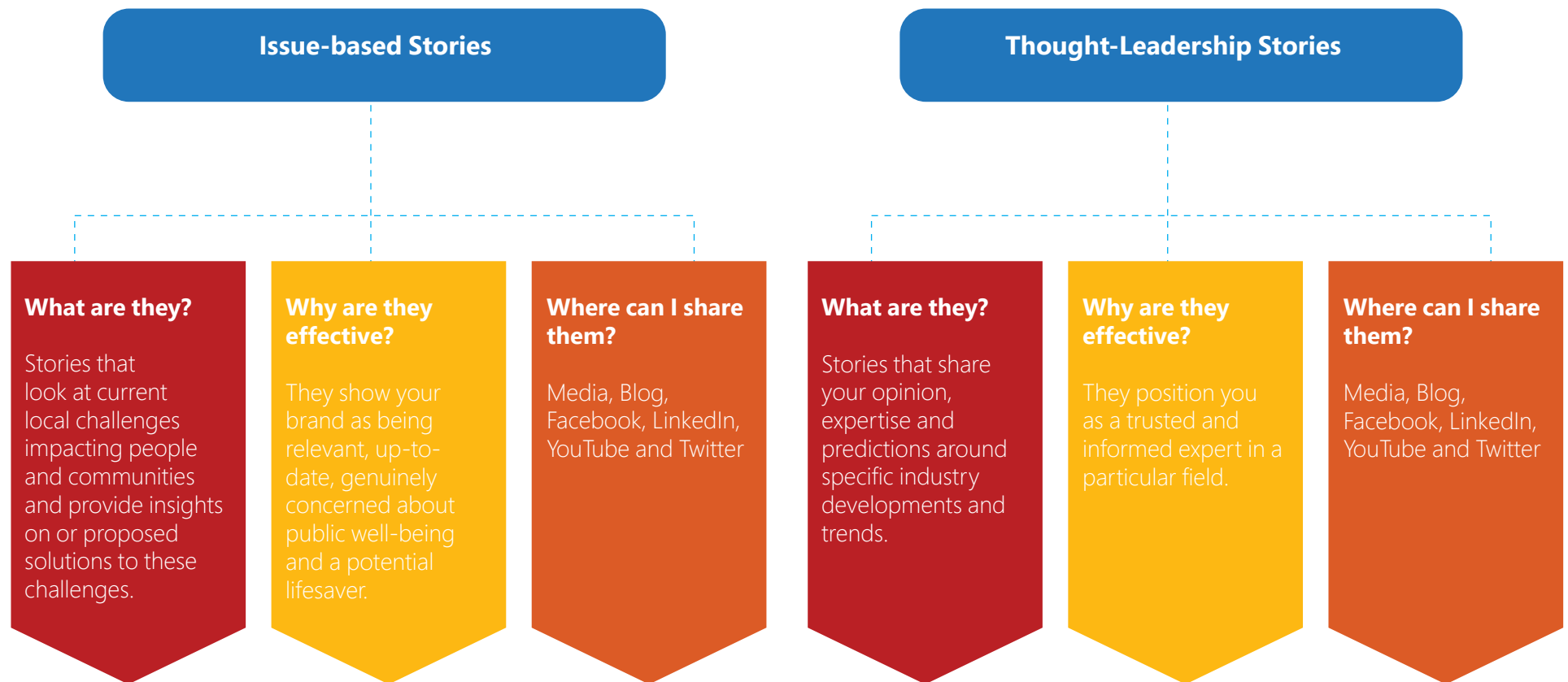


## Step **01** | Finding the right stories to tell

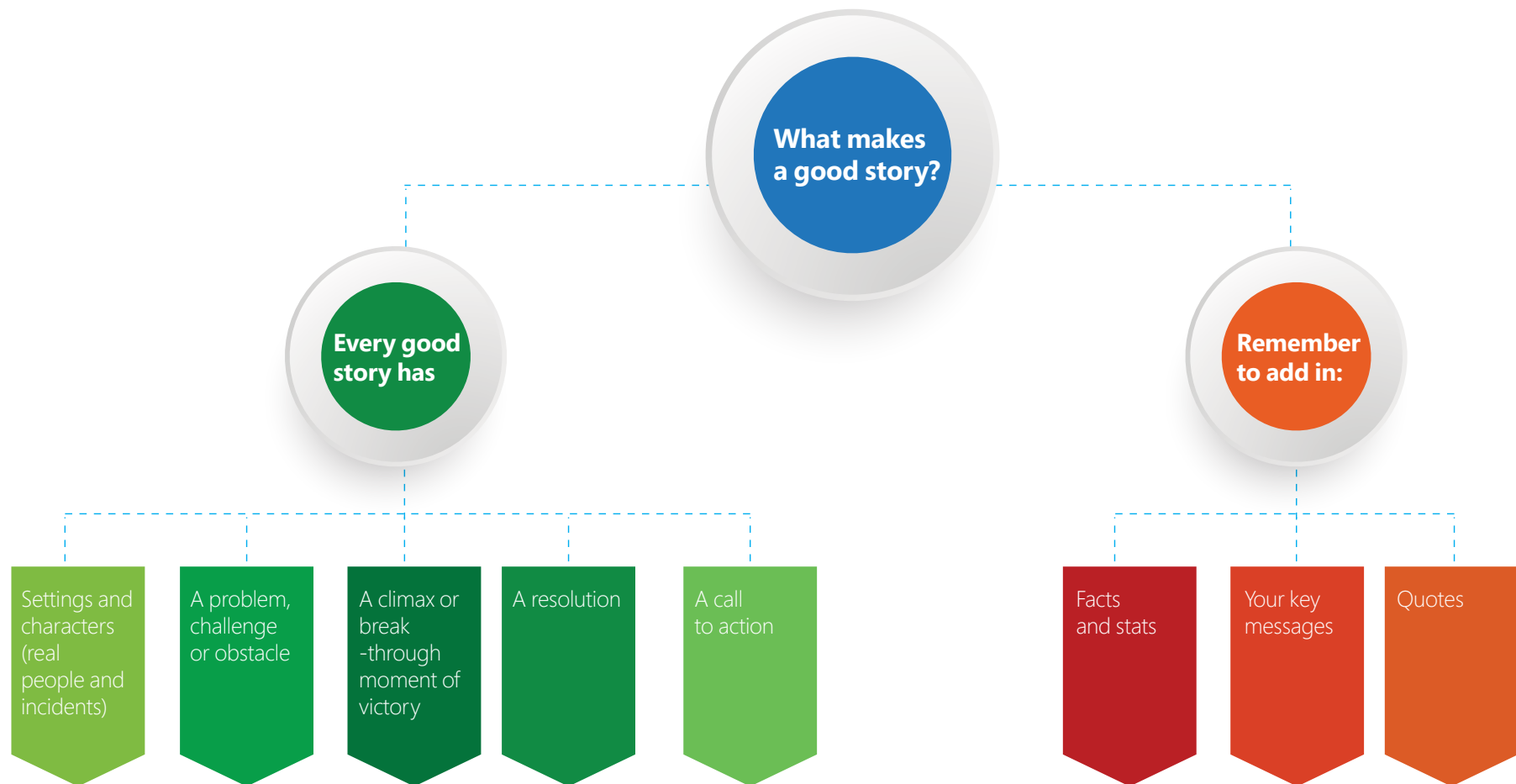
### What types of stories can my business tell?



## What types of stories can my business tell?



## Step **02** | Writing an effective story



[Click here to see story templates](#) ➔

**Panashe Chigumadzi**

is a journalist who is passionate about African storytelling and women's empowerment. She is currently editor and founder of Vanguard Magazine South Africa and a World Economic Forum Global Shaper.

**VIDEO: How to tell a great story with Panashe Chigumadzi**

 [@panashechig](https://twitter.com/panashechig)

Previously she worked for Forbes Africa and CNBC Africa. She has also presented a TED Talk on storytelling in post 1994 South Africa

## Video links: Panashe



What key learnings can you share from setting up your own business? ➔

Why is the art of storytelling so important for brands? ➔

PanasheWhat does it take to create and sustain an online platform like the Vanguard? ➔

How should SMEs tell their stories? ➔

What makes a good story? ➔

What key learnings can you share from setting up your own business? ➔

# External resources document

## The art of storytelling



### Great story examples:

#### Watch:

[The impossible family portrait](#) ➔

[Help a child reach five](#) ➔

[Sapeurs New Guinness Advert](#) ➔

[What makes a great story? Filmmaker, Andrew Stanton \(Toy Story, WALL – E\) shares his secrets](#) ➔



### Why is storytelling so effective?

[The science behind good storytelling:](#)

[What is happening in your brain](#) ➔

[Infographic: How stories affect your brain](#) ➔

[Infographic: The power of a story](#) ➔



# 05

## Measuring my Return on Investment (ROI)

### **How do I measure the ROI of my PR?**

This question comes up time and again. Truth is, there is no exact way to quantify public relations. Any weird and wacky formulas used by PR professionals in the 80s have long since been sacked!

However, considering your budgets are tight, you need to know exactly what you are getting for your time and money.

The best way to measure your ROI is to always ask your customers: 'How did you hear about us?' This way you will know what channel is working best. Did they hear about you from an article on a blog? Was it through a Facebook advert? Was it through a Google advert?

Furthermore, do they have a good grasp of your business and what you do from the information they absorbed?

Asking these questions will give you an indication whether you are using the right messaging on the right platform.

# Press Release

Title

Sub Title

**City , Country summarise your whole story, including:**

- What happened?
- Where did it happen?
- Why did it happen?
- Who does it benefit?

- About [your company name]
- Insert bio of your company.
- About [your partner(s), if relevant]
- Insert bio of your partner(s), if relevant

**“Quote – include key messages”**

**Call to action: Where can people go to learn more, register, donate**

**Expand on your intro summary**

- How did it happen?
- What and who is involved?

**Expand on your intro summary:**

- What is the future of this?
- Next steps?

**“Quote – include key messages”**

# Buddy Mail



Email subject: Press release:  
[Title of your press release]

Always write 'Press Release' to let journalists know what you are sending them.

This also ensures your email doesn't look like spam.



Hi  
[journalist name]

If it is your first time pitching to them: Introduce yourself If you have pitched to them before: Announce that you are sharing the latest update with them

Briefly (in 3- 2 lines) summarise the most important, interesting and impactful pieces of your news



Thanks and kind regards,  
[Your name]



Direct their attention to the press release below

Include a Call to Action: Availability for interviews, website or blog with more information etc.

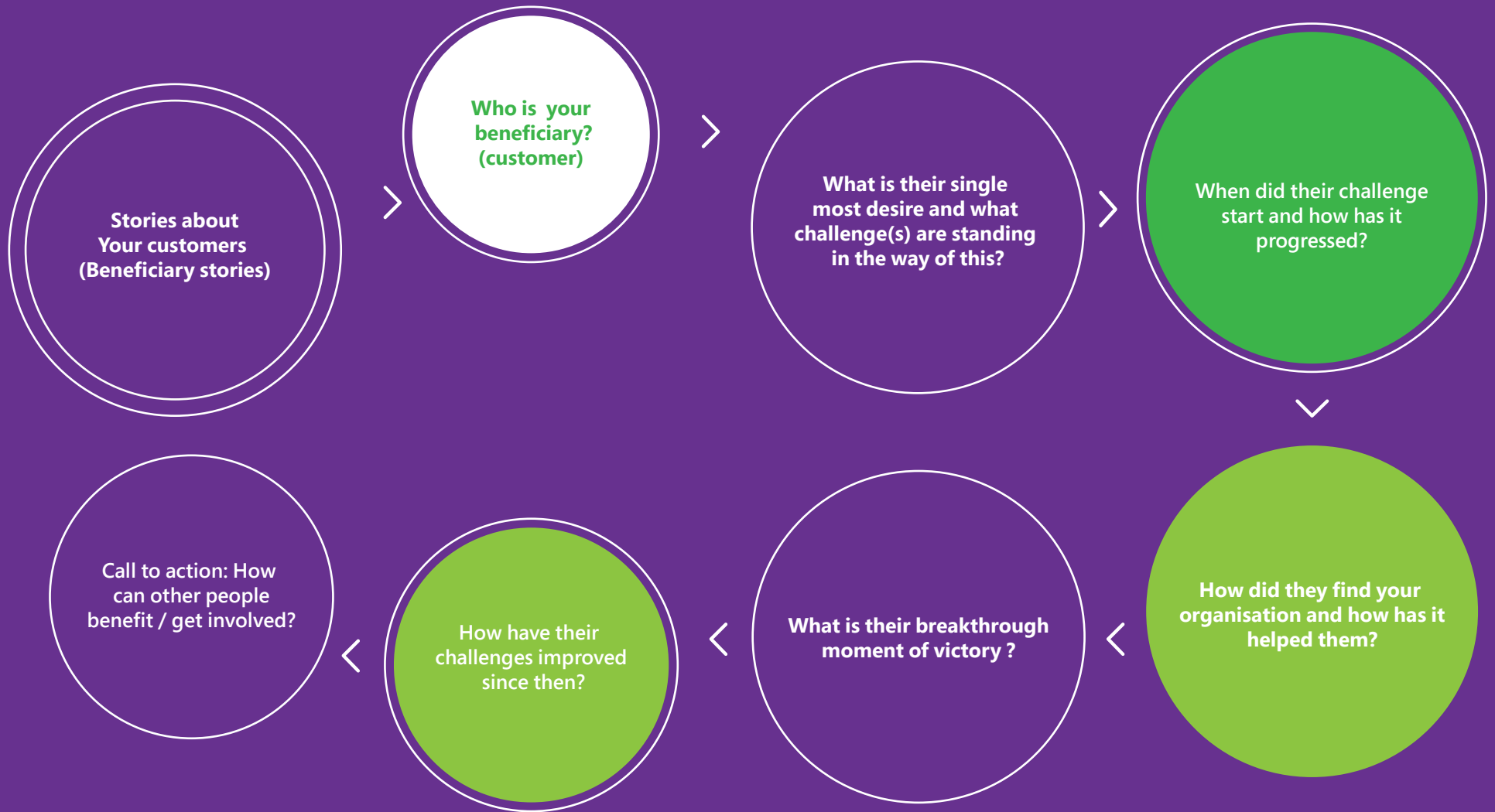
[Include press release here]

# Key Messages Matrix

Who is your audience?	
What are you trying to say to them about these values?	
What are the common values that you and your audience share?	
How do you want them to act?	
Can you back up what you say?	
Key messages one	
Key messages two	
Key message three	

- Title: This can be more informal and quirky. Use something to catch attention. Blog titles can also be longer than news headlines.
- Opening with something personal: Blogs are less structured than press releases and more personal. So you could open with a personal anecdote or even something funny that happened to you.
- Visuals: Use pictures to build on the blog, even better are your own photos. Try not to use pictures you found on the internet, as there will be copyright issues unless you have the owner's permission.
- Include links to extra information or other stories and blogs. This enables you to keep your blog short and also improves your SEO.
- Author: State upfront who has written the blog and a brief description of what they do to show relevance. If it is a guest blog by someone outside your organisation, say so.
- Middle: Now link your anecdote or story to the main point you are trying to make, and make it strongly. You can express what your own views and opinions are in a blog. Just be careful not to discredit any suppliers or partners
- Keywords: Try weave in the keywords related to your business to increase SEO. For example a dating app would weave in 'love', 'dating' relationships', online dating'. Many blogs also allow you to include 'tags' at the end. These are the words that when people search, your blog will come up.
- Bring in your key messages:

# Story Templates



## Story Templates Stories About Issues (Issue-based Stories)



What is currently  
making news headlines?



What are the challenges,  
fears, threats and desires  
around this issue?



How is this issue  
progressing?



What finding or insight  
do you have that can help  
solve this issue?

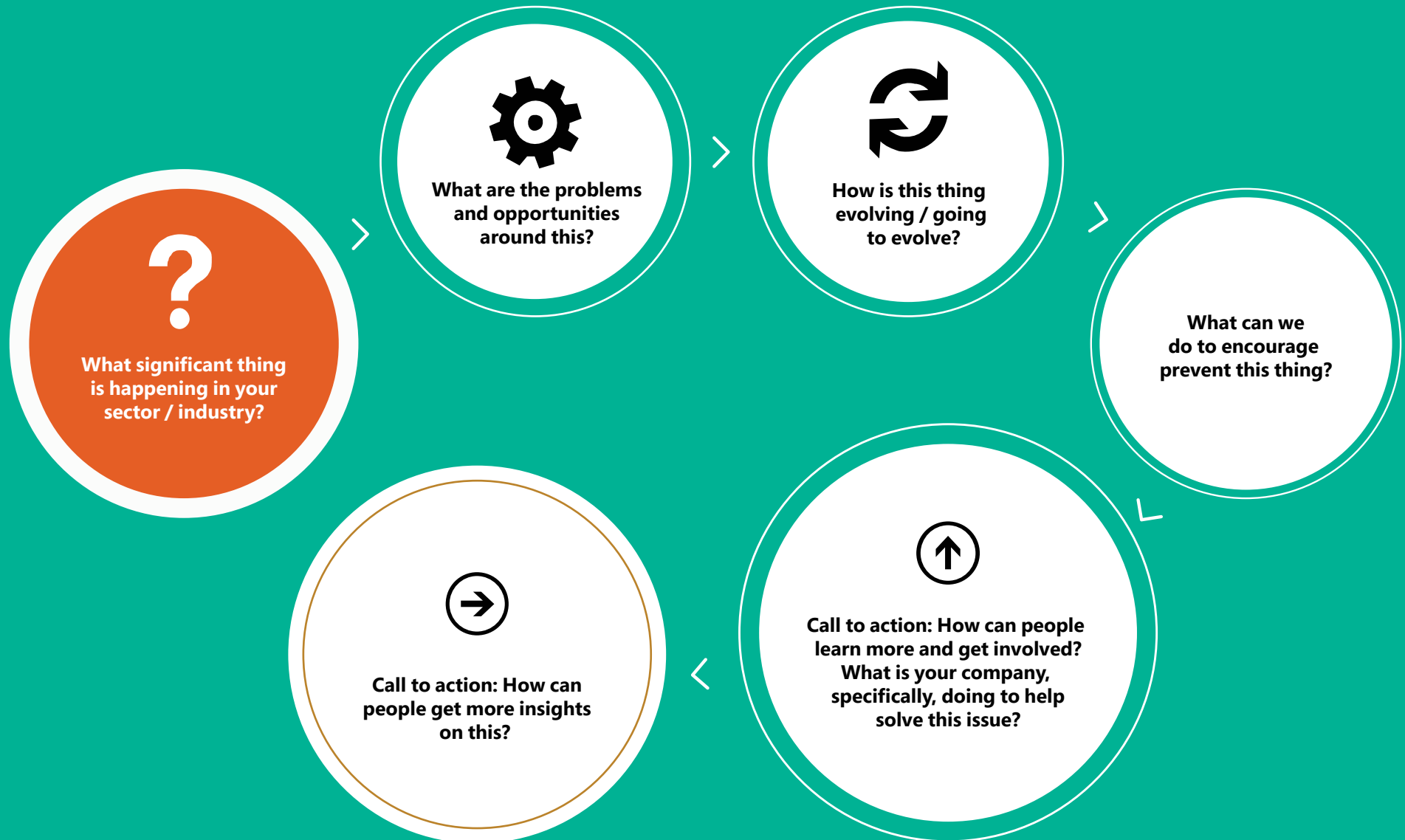


Call to action: How can people learn more and get involved?  
What is your company, specifically, doing to help solve this issue?



How does this finding or insight help solve the issue?

## Story Templates: Stories About Your Industry (Thought Leadership Stories)



## Notes

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## Notes

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