

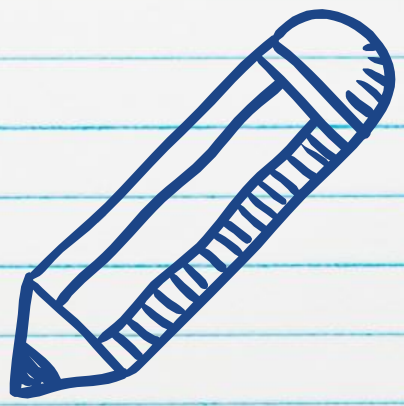
*Sloane Dell'Orto,  
Streamline*

# HOW TO TELL YOUR STORY

*Week 3*



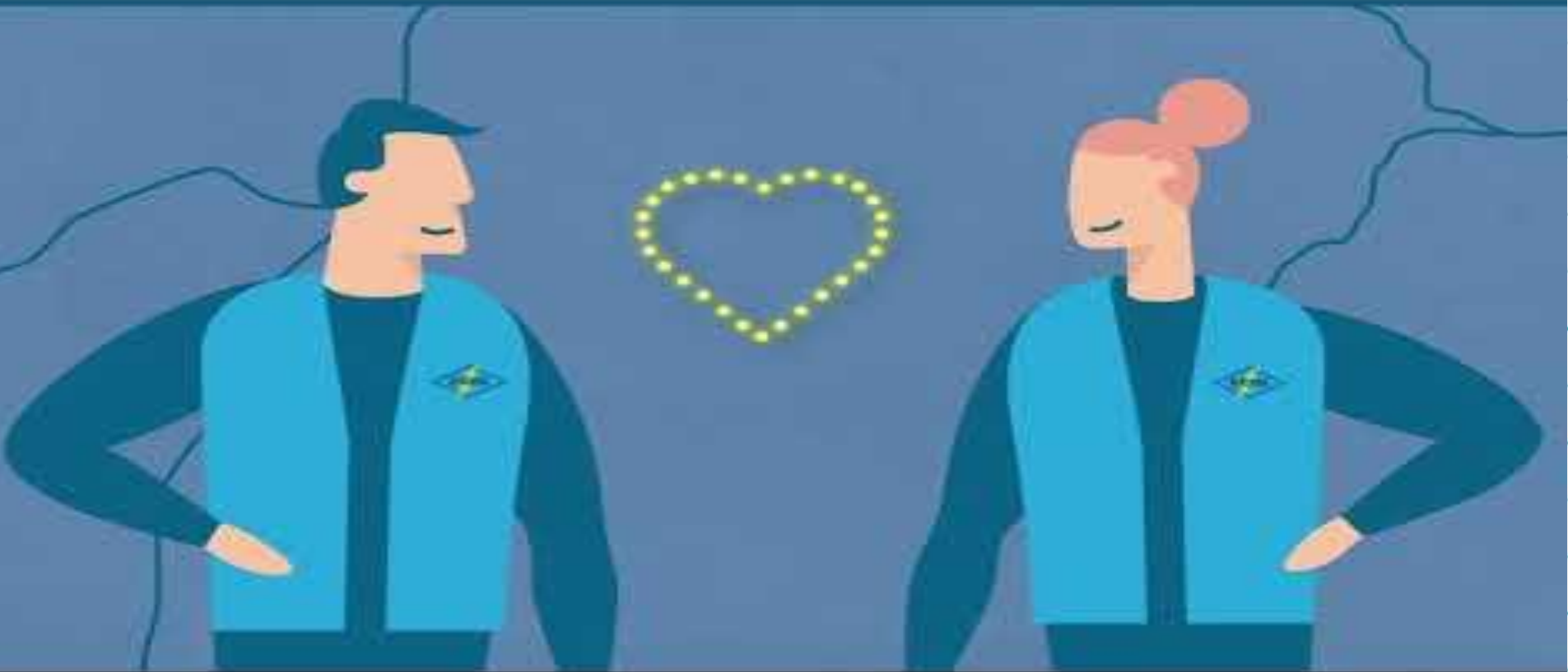
# TIPS AND EXAMPLES OF GOOD STORYTELLING



The overwhelming majority of special districts serve their communities well and are a better choice than investor-owned utilities and service providers.

Now: How to tell it?

<https://avalaunchmedia.com>

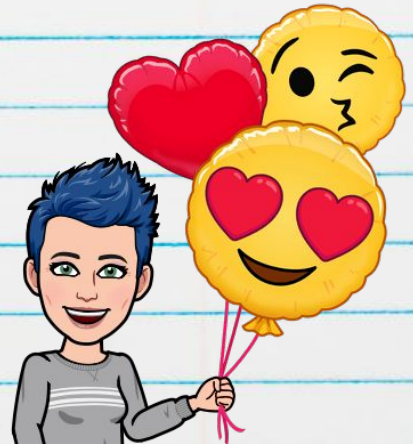


A photograph of a vast, multi-tiered bookshelf filled with books of various colors and sizes. The books are arranged in neat rows, creating a textured, colorful background. In the center, a white rectangular box contains the text "STORYTELLING IS PERSONAL" in a blue, hand-drawn, sans-serif font. The lighting is warm, highlighting the spines of the books and the texture of the paper.

STORYTELLING IS  
PERSONAL

# Make it personal

- Include employees, board members, or volunteers in the story
- Connect the story to community members - the more specific, the better
- Why does this matter to the reader?  
Does it affect them in any way?
- How do you want them to feel after reading or hearing your story?



# Make it digestible, and memorable

- Use headings to break sections or topics up
- Try to keep figures and facts focused and easy to digest (infographics, bullet points)
- Start with the "lede" and/or "nut graph"

## The lede (or lead into your story)

- The origin of the 'lede' dates back to the middle of the twentieth century, where its popularity as slang for a newspaper story's first sentence began to grow and circulate around newsrooms.
- There are two different types of ledes:



# The summary lede



Much more  
like a press  
release

known as a 'straight' or 'direct lede,' this type delivers all the essential points of the story right away, immediately giving the reader everything they need to know in the first sentence.

- This inverted pyramid-style is the preferred method of writing hard news stories.
- Similar to the nut graph, including who, what, where, why.





# The feature lede

- Also known as a 'delayed' lede, this type paces the facts of a story, setting the scene, weaving together a narrative, and delivering the information to the reader more in the style of a short story before addressing the main point.

# The feature lede

- These ledes can be more emotional, appealing to a reader's sense of empathy in order to hook them into the subject matter.
- They can also pose a question to the reader, enticing them to continue on as they read to reveal the answer.



## *The feature lede in action:*

It's all around you, all the time. Tidily rolled up next to the toilet when you wake up in the morning, handed to you at the corner cafe with your morning coffee, all over your desk at work, and surrounding much of the food you buy at the grocery store before heading home.

— Dan Murphy, Christian Science Monitor

## *The same story, summary-lead style:*

Due to a shortage of paper goods, and in an effort to reduce paper waste, the city has adopted a new ordinance that makes grocery stores charge 10 cents per paper bag.

## The nut graph:

- In American journalism terminology, a nut graph (or nutshell paragraph) is a paragraph, particularly in a feature story, that explains the news value of the story.
- In biz speak this might be related to the 30 second elevator pitch. It lays out the "why" for someone to continue reading.
- It may follow the lede, or be used as the lede.

## The nut graph in action:



State officials are developing new water-use regulations for retail water agencies in response to legislation signed by Gov. Jerry Brown in May 2018. Senate Bill 606 and Assembly Bill 1668 were intended to help California better prepare for and respond to droughts and climate change by directing state agencies to adopt water efficiency rules.

***(Why do I care about bill numbers? Moving on...)***



A prominent report about new water conservation regulations passed in May 2018 said there was a statewide mandate not to take a shower and do laundry on the same day, and that each person would be limited to using a certain amount of water indoors.

***(Wait, what? Do I have to choose between a shower and doing laundry?)***

*“I’ve learned that people will forget  
what you said, people will forget what  
you did, but people will never forget  
how you made them feel.”*

*- Maya Angelou*



# Storytelling methods

- You can start with a statement, question, interesting fact, quote, or even a mini story inside of a story.
- Let's see which one feels more compelling:

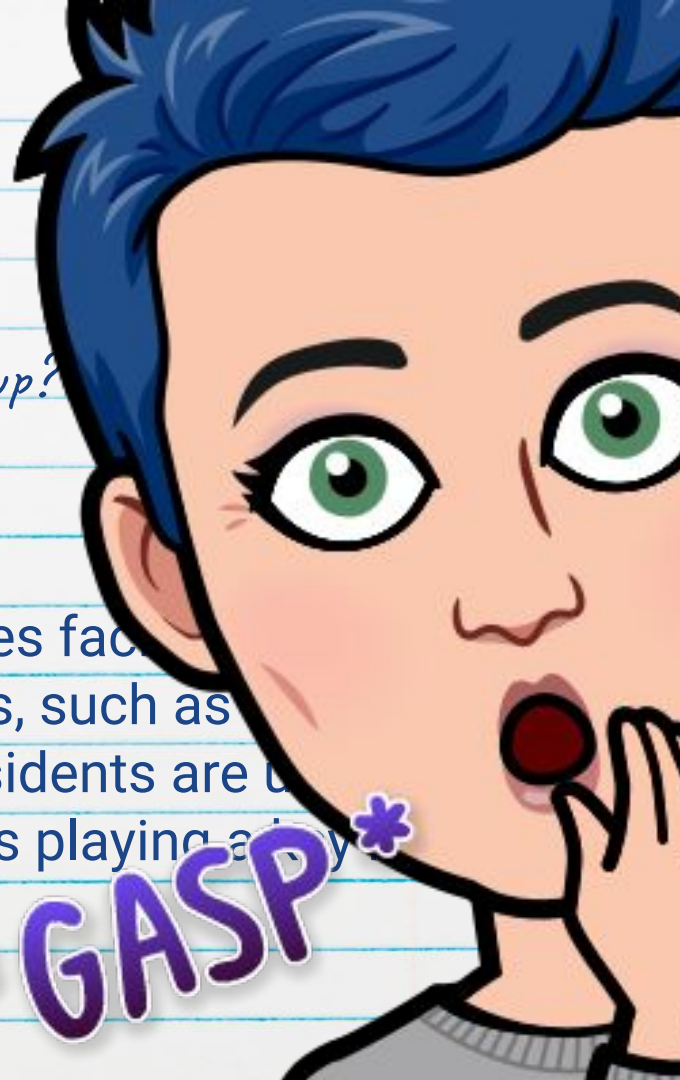
## START WITH A STATEMENT:

*Wonder why your utility rates are going up?  
an obscure state commission*

BY NEIL MCCORMICK

As more Californians find themselves facing rising costs for essential household needs, such as water, sewer and electric service, most residents are beginning to wonder that an obscure state commission is playing a key role in driving rates higher.

*\* GASP \**



## START WITH A FACT:

*Wonder why your utility rates are going up? It could be an obscure state commission*

BY **NOT** NEIL MCCORMICK

On average, people in Colorado have seen their water rates go up 8,000%\* over the past five years, and it's all due to mandates being passed on to local government by the State, where they force agencies to comply without providing any funds to assist them.

*\*this is not actually a fact*



## START WITH A QUOTE:

*Wonder why your utility rates are going up? It could be an*  
*obscure state commission*

BY **NOT** NEIL MCCORMICK

“We don’t want to pass these costs on to our customers, many of whom are already struggling financially. But the state has given us no choice,” said Joe Smith, General Manager of Acme Water District. “The state mandates just keep coming, and there’s nothing we, or our customers, can do about it.”



## START WITH A STORY:

*Wonder why your utility rates are going up?  
obscure state commission*

BY **NOT** NEIL MCCORMICK

Mary Smith has been working two jobs for as long as she can remember. As a single mom with two young kids, the rising cost of utilities makes it impossible to make ends meet otherwise.



OR DITCH ALL OF THAT  
AND USE HUMOR ....



*SOMEWHERE IN THE*  
**WILD WEST**

Play (k)



0:02 / 1:30



IRRIGATION DISTRICTS



Districts help our communities grow



[DistrictsMakeTheDifference.org](http://DistrictsMakeTheDifference.org)

WATER DISTRICTS



Districts invest in a sustainable future



[DistrictsMakeTheDifference.org](http://DistrictsMakeTheDifference.org)

REACTIVE DISTRICTS



Districts promote healthy communities



[DistrictsMakeTheDifference.org](http://DistrictsMakeTheDifference.org)

RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICTS



Districts improve our quality of life




[DistrictsMakeTheDifference.org](http://DistrictsMakeTheDifference.org)



*What resonated with you most?*

*Different approaches will work best for different topics, of course*



*You've got  
the story,  
now what?*

*Cost effective  
ways to get  
the word out*

WEEKS 4-6:  
GETTING THE WORD OUT /  
GUERRILLA MARKETING

#SpecialDistrictStories

