



IGNITE360

STORYMASTERS SOLUTIONS

Who tells your  
story when you're  
not in the room?

***“Our organization needs to be better storytellers.”***

***“We are in a state of analysis paralysis.”***

***“I’m having trouble getting traction with this project.”***

If any of this sounds familiar, you could likely benefit from being more strategic about how you socialize your story.  
**The implications are far-reaching for your organization.**

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Think of story socialization difficulties like the climate crisis. If you look at it as a whole, the idea of reversing climate change (or your whole organization’s communication style) is both unrealistic and overwhelming. But if you take small actions towards climate change (e.g. buying reusables) you have an impact and people take notice (“Where’d you get that great grocery bag?”). Same for socializing your story. If you take actions on a small, controllable scale, you will get noticed and you will make change happen.

Okay, so **what are these small actions you can take to socialize your story?** The key word here is “socialize.” Call them what you want - your influencers, your advocate network, your champions, your colleagues. It’s whoever has your back. They are going to help you carry the torch forward.

Let’s be clear here, this is not a solo venture. You must have allies to help you move your story along. You cannot do it alone, nor should you. Look at any hero story - friends and allies always make the story better.

# Map Your Advocate Network

**This is how the socialization process works.** Full disclosure – you are going to have to put in some effort. Socializing your story isn't something people are just good at or not, it takes work and rigorous practice.



## *GOAL*

To socialize your story

## *PROCESS*

Map your network. Make them aware of your story. Get them invested.

## *TOOL*

The advocate map – highlight how to leverage the connections between the story and the influencers/decision makers.

## *ROI*

Your advocate network helps you successfully influence decision-making on your project, initiative, idea, [fill in the blank].

## *EFFORT LEVEL*

High at first, low as the initiative progresses.

## *METAPHOR*

Think of this network like a domino chain. It takes a lot of time to set up but once you set it in motion, the dominoes will fall where you want them to.



## STEP 1

### Get names down on paper.

Using a mind map, grid, or an excel spreadsheet (whatever is your comfort zone) write out the names of all the advocates you could engage.

- **Obvious advocates**

Project sponsor, core team, you.

- **Non-obvious advocates**

If you cast the net a bit wider, you'll notice that downstream during activation and implementation, there are other stakeholders that might be smart to include (e.g. the expanded team, an advisory council, creative or ad agency partners, leaders from other departments, other trusted peers, your manager, etc.).

- **Internal/external advocates**

Be open to help from outside of your organization or department. Maybe you could use a subject matter expert to lend credibility to your message. Or maybe there is someone internal who knows the organization so well they could connect you to someone you might have overlooked.

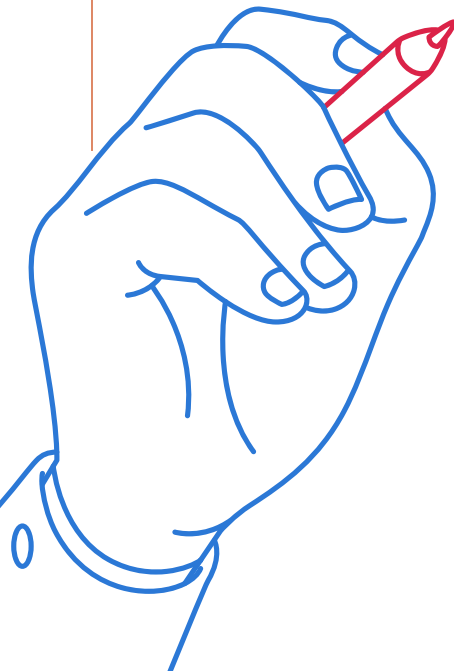
- **Random advocates**

These are the people who don't necessarily "make sense" at first but intuitively you want them in your camp.

## STEP 2

### Define the nature of the relationship between the story and the advocate.

Next to each of their names, fill in the what (your ask of their involvement, and what they will get in return), where (you think you can connect with them), how (they can help move the story along), and why (they are important to story).

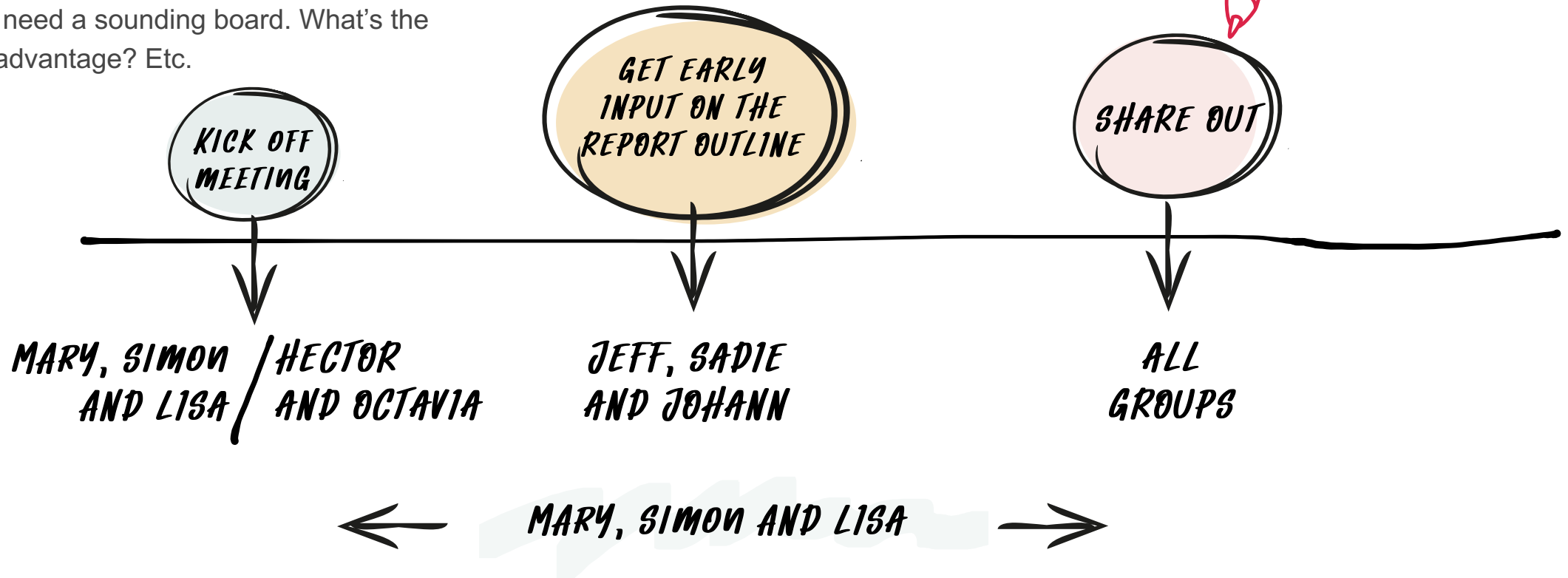


## STEP 3

### Sketch a rough timeline of your project.

Identify points along the timeline when you should engage your advocates. For example, when is the best time to talk to Max from XX department?

Trust your judgment and intuition. It could be during the initial stages or maybe when things are further along and you need a sounding board. What's the advantage/disadvantage? Etc.



# Watch Outs

Here are **three problems we've seen time and again**. Have we stumbled over these barriers? Absolutely. Do we strive to get better each time? Absolutely. You can do the same.

***Storytelling is about practice.***

1

## If everyone is an advocate, no one is an advocate

The tactic of socializing the story with everyone seems like a good idea at first. It covers all your bases. However, you aren't being strategic about whom you choose to include in your network.

**Result:** The story becomes too diffuse. Things don't happen because no one knows who owns it, and therefore, no one wants to own it. The story becomes like the weird, unclaimed Tupperware container in the breakroom fridge.

2

## The holding pattern

You keep acquiring data, but still can't figure out how to move the story forward.

**Result:** You can't land the story. Without traffic control advocates guiding you forward, you'll never know when to land.

3

## It's too much work

It's on the top of your list, but it's not on the top of everybody else's list necessarily. Mapping seems good, but it's too much work to engage all these people. The temptation is to wing it.

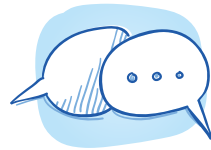
**Result:** By not enrolling others and asking them for help, you are guaranteed not to get any. Yes, the story may move forward, but you end up doing all the work. And to make matters worse, it's highly unlikely the business would pick up the story and do something with it in the absence of any additional supporters.

# The Biggest Barrier of All

**Socializing your story can be hard on a good day, so how do you socialize during a pandemic?** Without the impromptu water cooler moments or lunches, it can be hard to reach your advocates in an informal way. The strategy is the same, it's your approach which needs to be different right now.



Start by **mapping your network**. Then note what the best way to reach each person might be.



Take into account **individual communication styles and preferences**. You can even ask, "What's the best way to reach you these days?"



**Leave space in your meetings**. Say you have an hour scheduled on initiative X. And you know a couple of your advocates will be on the call. Finish the meeting 5 minutes early and use that extra time at the end to say, "Hey, do you have a minute to stay on the line? I had a question for you"



Remember **the power of a phone call**. Send a pre-emptive text or g-chat, and ask, "Can I run something by you?"

**Your advocates are the people who tell your story when you're not in the room.**

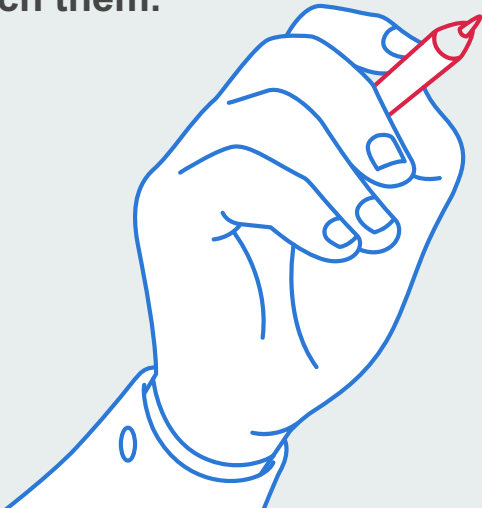
Socializing your story is about providing parameters and rigor around what a group could do together. It involves strategic inclusion and advocacy. Socialization greatly increases your chances of success.

# Storytelling in Action

Think of a project on which you're working. On a blank piece of paper, number 1 to 15. **Write down the names of 15 people you could involve.**

Yes, we know this is probably overkill if it's a small project, but we want you to make your brain sweat a little. Are you going to use everyone? Probably not.

Refine your list to your true advocates. **Then identify why, how, and when you'd approach them.**



	<i>WHO / WHY</i>	<i>HOW</i>	<i>WHEN</i>
1	<i>KAREN H</i>	<i>INVITE FOR VIRTUAL COFFEE</i>	<i>BEFORE KICK-OFF</i>
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			



**Thank you for  
joining us for the  
Storymasters:  
Solutions series.**

**Do you have more  
questions about the  
best way to socialize  
you story?**

**We've got answers!**  
**Email us at**  
**[storymasters@ignite-360.com](mailto:storymasters@ignite-360.com)**

