

How to get an S.R.O. (Standing Room Only) Crowd with **Act!vated Storytellers** *Promoting the Show*

Getting people to walk through the door is the most important part of the planning process. Because getting the word out is key, it is vital to focus most of your efforts on promotional activities. The Act!vated Storytellers will prepare diligently for the audience and a top quality program is guaranteed, even if only one audience member is present, but proper promotion helps to ensure good attendance. We help you generate excitement by providing promotional materials and posting your event on our Web site.

The following techniques are based on years of experience in promoting our show and attracting audiences across the country. These techniques have yielded many packed libraries, school family nights, and bookstore and museum events.

PUBLICITY MATERIALS AVAILABLE AT

<http://www.activated-storytellers.com/activate.html>

- Photos
- Flyers and Posters
- Study Guide for Teachers
- Press Releases/PSA
- Show Description

Here are other creative ways you can promote your event.

- Prominently list the event on your organization's Website and on the sites of your community's various arts organizations. Be sure to link back to Act!vated Storytellers' web site.
- Place a notice on marquees around town
- Issue special invitations to Friends of the Library, board members, and those interested in the arts in your community, and "talk up" the event.

- Link to the Act!vated Stories podcasts <http://activated.libsyn.com>
- Have your staff "talk it up" to your clients/students/patrons, generating excitement in the community a few weeks before the event.
- Morning intercom announcements at local schools. The PSA can be adapted for this and audio files are also available upon request.
- Posters colored by storytime/Summer Reading Club participants

GUEST-STARS: 8-12 "Guest-Stars", (outgoing children age 6 and up from your community) will get to perform on stage in the show. Guest Stars attend a free half-hour workshop to learn their parts.

Use this unique opportunity to generate excitement. There are several ways you can approach this. 1) Hold a contest – i.e. the ones who read the most, get to be in the show. 2) Call and invite the parents of children you think would benefit most from this experience. 3) Hold a drawing to pick the names.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Act!vated Storytellers have a universal appeal to all types of audiences, attracting not just children, but the entire family.

- Families the performers are a family promoting families working, learning, traveling and playing together.
- Homeschoolers Contact local homeschoolers and ask them to spread the word to their groups. Let them know the Goza Family homeschools on the road. They may be interested in scheduling additional workshops or lectures for their groups. This is a great group to tap when looking for volunteers to "guest-star".

Act!vated Storytellers

- Scout Groups The shows offer opportunities for scouts working on badges in communication, theatre arts, folktales, reading and poetry. These are great groups to tap when looking for volunteers to “guest-star”.
- Senior Groups. Contact the activity/social directors of retirement centers, inviting them to bring a group from their facility.
- Tourists Leave flyers or postcards at your local chamber of commerce, tourist information center, campgrounds, laundromats, and other locations tourists are likely to frequent.
- Deaf/Hearing-Impaired and ASL Students The shows feature American Sign Language, encouraging hearing audiences to explore the language, in addition to making it more accessible (an interpreter still should be provided). Deaf and Hearing Impaired are also welcome to participate as “Guest Stars”.
- Theatre Students and Theatre Lovers of all ages. Contact local theatre classes and drama groups and invite them to participate as “Guest Stars”.

MEDIA

<http://www.activated-storytellers.com/media>

Send media releases to the newspapers and radio and TV stations in the area (including regional public radio and television stations, since storytelling and performing arts patrons often are willing to travel a few miles to attend a good show). Press releases are available in the media section of the web site. Encourage newspapers and radio stations to interview the performers in advance. It’s nice if the newspaper sends a photographer, or the TV station sends a news crew the day of the show

but it won’t help bring in the crowds like advance publicity.

PHONE INTERVIEWS

If any local media representative would like to do a phone interview, call our toll-free pager/voice mail 1(800) 429-6576 or cell phone (818) 720-3061 and leave the name, telephone # and possible appointment times so the performers can call in from the road.

NEWSPAPERS

Act!vated Storytellers make a great story because of their novelty and family appeal. Before sending materials to a publication, call to find out who will cover it and be sure to speak to that person. It is usually a feature writer who covers Arts & Entertainment; there may also be a section for Lifestyles, Education, Family or Special Events. Let them know what materials are available, ask if they would be interested in doing a phone interview with the performers, and invite them to the show. Leave your number so they can call if they have questions or need a quick quote. If they say they can only do an event listing, find out who can actually write a feature story. If they are too busy to do one from scratch, our press release is designed to be printed as an article; just be sure to fill in the blanks with the correct information before sending it. Let reporters know about the Act!vated Storytellers media page.

PHOTOS: Color photos are available with instructions for quick and easy download on the media page of the web site.

FOLLOW-UP: After the materials have been sent, it is essential to make follow-up calls to be sure they have reached the right person. Ask the reporter when they are planning to run the story & remind them about the dates. Often there is an Entertainment or Lifestyle section once a week; find out when

Fun Educational Family Shows

and be sure it runs in time (if the section or listing comes out on Sunday and the show is on Friday, it should run the week before). The more notice you have given them, the better the chance of high-profile coverage. It is especially important to remind the reporters again as the date approaches.

RADIO

PSA: Start by calling the appropriate stations and ask who is in charge of reading PSA's (Public Service Announcements). Fax or send the PSA to this person's attention. Ask if there is also a calendar listing of events and fax or send the PSA to this person as well. The Act!vated Storytellers can also record and email a professional PSA suited to the event, upon request.

ADDITIONAL AUDIO: Short stories by the Act!vated Storytellers are available for stations which feature children's programming.

TELEVISION

LIVE APPEARANCES: An interview with the cast (Goza Family) can and should be arranged with news or talk shows covering the region. The performers are prepared to do a short scene in the studio.

PSA: If a live appearance cannot be arranged in advance. Send a PSA to the local stations and let them know that video and photos are available.

BEYOND TRADITIONAL MEDIA

COMPUTER

Prominently list the event on your organization's web site and on the sites of your community's various arts organizations. Photos are available.

<http://www.activated-storytellers.com> is a fun-filled, award-winning Internet destination with folktales to read and listen to, background information and much more.

POSTERS & FLYERS

Color posters and flyers are great attention-getters. Do not underestimate the importance of posters. Stores that cater to families, students, or tourists are best. Postcards are also available for mailing lists.

IMPRINTING: The posters and flyers contain a white space at the bottom for show specifics. This should include the name and address of the performance venue, dates, times, ticket prices (if applicable), and venue phone number.

NEWSLETTER

If you publish a newsletter or brochure, a photo with a blurb about the show always helps.

FRONT DESK

The front desk should have our flyer posted as well as our show-description sheet; this gives them some quick phrases to give the callers who ask what the show is about.

LOBBY/CHILDREN'S AREA/RESTROOMS

Hang posters prominently in the lobby and put flyers on tables and on restroom stall doors (where they will get plenty of attention).

MARQUEES

Put ACTIVATED STORYTELLERS on the marquee in advance; use both words in the title with the event details to maximize draw. Most local banks, shopping malls, schools, and other community organizations are willing to do

Act!vated Storytellers

the same as a service to the community if you ask.

BOOK/TAPE DISPLAY

Prominently display books related to the show – stories, folktales, theatre, ASL etc.

Put copies of “**Out of the Bag**”, “**Know Fooling**” it in a prominent place, readily available for patrons to check out. If you don’t already have the CD/ tape you can order copies in advance.

FUN PRE-SHOW TIE-IN ACTIVITIES

Start setting the stage a month or so in advance by hosting a series of activities that tie in to the upcoming event. (See Study Guide for more ideas)

ACTIVATE YOUR STORY TIME: In the preceding weeks, read the Act!vated Storytellers’ feature folktale (available online) aloud at your standard story time. Invite the participants to have fun acting it out.

SCHOOL OUTREACH

“School” can mean summer camp and day care centers. Inform school principals and teachers, daycare centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, Girls Inc., and other organizations that serve the children of your community, giving them a special invitation to attend. Schools may be interested in providing their students with workshops, additional performances or storytelling sessions.

STUDY GUIDE: The Study Guide for Teachers covers topics such as performing arts and background information related to the stories are available online. And it’s appropriate for all age groups.

FLYERS: The flyers given to schools should be imprinted with the words “Study Guide available. For more information see our Web site: <http://www.activated-storytellers.com>” This way, teachers will know about the guide and can ask for it if the principal forgets.

CLASSROOM VISITS: Volunteer to spend a few minutes visiting classrooms. Show them the promo video and bring along a folktale to read to the students. Several folktales are available to print out from our website, or use our suggested reading list from the Study Guide for Teachers. Let the students know when and where the show will be. Be sure to take along flyers or postcards so the information can be passed on to the parents.

Children (and adults) are excited to learn that the Act!vated Storytellers are a family who travel 365 days a year across the U.S. Use our tour schedule and stories from our website to tell them about some of the places we’ve been.

Let them know that they will get to see funny stories acted out before a giant oversized book. Hold your hand above your head to show them how tall the book is. And stretch your arms wide to show them how wide it is. Our shows include physical comedy, acrobatics, and American Sign Language.

Be sure to leave our Web site address and contact information with the teacher.

GET HELP

Ask for volunteer help from your library’s friends group, teen volunteers, homeschoolers or local scout troops. Recruiting volunteers has a twofold purpose: You get additional help, and volunteers will have a vested interest in the event, develop a deeper appreciation and help generate a larger turnout.