

What Makes a Good Feature Story?

Send Us Everything

My first instinct is to tell you to tell us your idea, all of your ideas. Just shoot us a quick email. While it might not make a Web feature story, it might be appropriate for the alumni *Journal* or *Insighter*, our intra-campus newsletter. Or not. But we won't know until we've heard first from you. And we want to hear from you.

Capture Attention

Can you write a five-word headline about your story idea that makes you want to read the story?

Is It Intriguing?

Feature stories should have some element of surprise and uniqueness to them. The idea should engage the reader's emotions or interests quickly and reward them for reading.

Position It

Keep in mind our audience (primarily prospective students and their families), and how a story idea must appeal to readers of various ages who are bombarded with information from various media.

Impact

Good stories are about making a difference--people who have been an instrumental influence on students' lives.

Who are you when not at UT?

We're interested in what work you're doing outside of the classroom (and what innovative things you're doing inside the classroom as well). This is almost a sure winner if current students are assisting in the outside research.

Self-Serving?

A self-serving story idea is usually a bad story idea. The best ideas usually come from people who aren't related to the subject - they just heard about this person or place or event and thought it was a story all of the UT community should know. (McNamara, 2009)

Give Them Insight

Behind the Scenes: Inside views of unusual occupations, issues and events give readers a feeling of penetrating the inner circle or being a mouse in a corner. Readers like feeling privy to unusual details and well kept secrets about procedures or activities they might not ordinarily be exposed to or allowed to participate in. (Curtis, 2011)

We'll Like It Too

Finally, and most importantly, if it's a story that really caught your interest - if it's something you couldn't wait to tell other people about - chances are we'll feel the same. (McNamara, 2009)

Works Cited

Curtis, A. (2011). *How To Write a Feature Story*. (University of North Carolina at Pembroke) Retrieved June 19, 2013, from www.uncp.edu: <http://www.uncp.edu/home/acurtis/Courses/ResourcesForCourses/WritingFeaturesStories.html>

McNamara, M. (2009, February 11). *What Makes A Good Story?* Retrieved June 19, 2013, from CBS News: http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-18563_162-2442172.html