



Marketing, Communications & Storytelling

1. How do we explain what a CDFI is without leading with the acronym?

Many audiences don't know or care what a CDFI is. They care about housing, child care, entrepreneurship, community facilities and access to capital. How do we make the financing gap understandable before we explain the financing tool?

2. What makes a strong CDFI story?

What elements consistently resonate with readers? Is it the entrepreneur, the challenge, the partnership, the community outcome, or some combination of all four? How do we move beyond transaction-based storytelling ("we made a loan") to impact-based storytelling ("here's why the investment mattered")?

3. How do we keep borrowers and communities at the center of the story?

Many organizations unintentionally become the hero of their own stories. How do we ensure entrepreneurs, nonprofits and communities remain the protagonists while still explaining the role of the CDFI?

4. How do we balance data and storytelling?

Funders, regulators and policymakers want metrics. Audiences connect with people. How do we combine quantitative impact with authentic human stories without reducing either to an afterthought?

5. How should we talk about partnerships with banks and other lenders?

CDFIs often complement rather than compete with traditional lenders. How do we communicate that role clearly and help audiences understand where CDFIs fit within the broader financing ecosystem?

6. What storytelling approaches work best in rural communities?

Rural development stories often look very different from urban development stories. One small project can have outsized community effects. What communications approaches best capture those unique dynamics?

7. How can AI help small CDFI communications teams?

Most CDFIs don't have large marketing departments. Where might AI help scale storytelling, content adaptation and communications workflows? What guardrails are necessary to preserve accuracy, borrower trust and organizational credibility? Where should human judgment always remain in the process? As AI tools become more common, where is the line between useful automation and human responsibility? What parts of storytelling should always remain in human hands, regardless of technology?