

Tips for writing bios

When writing a bio for a website, it's important to write something that someone will want to read. Ideally, each bio should be three short paragraphs, each following a consistent formula; for example:

- First paragraph:
 - When did the person join the organisation and in what role?
 - What has been the overall career progression and associated duties?
- Second paragraph:
 - What relevant qualifications does the person have?
 - What relevant experience/achievements does the person have?
- Third paragraph:
 - What is the person passionate about and how does that tie in with the sector?

EXAMPLE BIO

Marie is our Operations Manager, having joined us in 2009. She brings with her a wealth of expertise gained from over a decade of experience in the community sector.

Her career has involved program development, strategic planning, marketing and communication, and income and fund management. Marie has a keen interest in volunteering and has achieved many milestones in this area, including being instrumental in the establishment of the School of Volunteer Management.

Marie's passion for social justice is reflected in the work she has done with the ageing and with children, as well as with those who experience mental illness and intellectual disability.

GENERAL TIPS

- Add an image – a picture paints a thousand words and all that. Make sure it is a decent image, and that all images match (in the case of bios for more than one person). It's best practice to float the image to the right of the page.
- Less is more – don't be too descriptive with your bios. They shouldn't read like a CV or job resume. Rather, pick out the most relevant achievements/qualifications.
- Make them interesting – come from the angle of telling a story about the subject of the bio.

- Be consistent – each bio should follow the same general formula.
- Make them personal – adding one or two relevant personal facts about the subject greatly increases readability.
- Spend some time planning before commencing the information-gathering and writing process for the bios. Have a clear idea on how you'd like them to be written (formal, informal, etc.).
- Treat everyone equally – stick to the formula, length, etc. of your bio for all subjects.
- Use simple language well. This ensures that your site is accessible to a wider audience, and is clear, clean and concise.

Bio Questionnaire

BACKGROUND

The answers provided to the following set of questions will be used to compile a short bio about you (200 or 300 words). Don't worry too much about clarity of expression, etc. Remember: more is more. It is easier to condense what is already written than it is to expand upon what is not. Three or four sentences for each question would be ideal.

1. *What is your current position/role with <organisation>, and how long have you been in it?*
2. *What was your position when you first joined <organisation>? What other positions have you held?*
3. *What training/qualifications do you have that you would like to mention in your bio?*
4. *What is your employment background? Have you always worked in the <specialist> arena?*
5. *Why are you so passionate about working in the <specialist> area?*
6. *What else are you passionate about (sometimes these things can add an extra human interest and warmth to a bio)?*