

Look around you. The ones who can tell a good story are often the ones who move faster up the ladder of success. A little talked-about skill, storytelling, is a formidable tool for persuasion, putting forth an idea or simply just communicating with another person.

Right from the interview stage, good storytellers have an edge, as they are able to illustrate examples of their abilities better. "The ability to tell a story and captivate people's imagination is a gifted quality that very few possess. However, this is something that can be nurtured as well. At work, monotonous lecturing and instructing can wear people out and there is a need to capture and hold the interest of listeners. Story-telling is essential to instill a vi-

*It's not just those in creative pursuits who have to master the art of storytelling. Narrative skills can be pivotal in any job, discovers Ankita Shreeram*

## ONCE UPON A TIME...



visionary image of what is being said verbally to enhance a more receptive conveyance of the message," explains Vardhman Jain, founder director, Laurus Edutech. "Storytelling is a good tool for a leader at the time of leading and motivating people. It also comes in handy while pitching to a prospective client when one can narrate the success stories of the past, which will not only build a company's reputation but also help in creating a good impression on the person concerned,"

agrees Dr Deb Mukherji, MD, ADM Technologies. "We learn storytelling right from the time we start walking on this earth. Yet, when it comes to assimilating stories into our businesses, we need to keep a few things in our minds," says Amit Samson, GM, The Lalit Ashok. He adds, "Let the stories be from real life as far as possible. Such stories gain more interest

from listeners. Many a times, stories and parables from the scriptures teach us how ethics in business lead to everlasting and pronounced outcomes."

Kartik Ravichander, partner, PKV Law Partners advises professionals to listen to good storytellers and observe how they retain interest, then collect stories from one's own life and finally, test-

drive them after much practice. He offers a few more tips for those planning to tell a story at the next presentation or award function:

- **PRETEND THAT YOU ARE CONFIDENT.** Don't make apologies, either with your body language or words;
- **DON'T MEMORISE IT.** Tell it with your own words and your own images;
- **IF YOU GET STUCK, KEEP GOING.** There are no mistakes, because no one knows what you were going to say, so they can't tell if you've messed up. Think on your feet and improvise - sometimes, you will stumble on real gems;
- **KEEP YOUR STORIES SHORT** (ten minutes or less);
- **TAKE TIME TO FINISH WELL.** Don't rush through the punch line.

"Are you a good storyteller?" is not a question that recruiters often ask. Yet, there are many ways to ascertain whether a candidate possesses good narrative skills or not. "Narrative skills are cultivated with practice and cannot be developed overnight. It is very important to check a candidate's soft-skill prowess while interviewing him or her, and keenly observe how comfortable he or she is while selling an idea or pre-

pivotal skill that is needed by many leaders today to make a bigger impact on their organisations. Enlisting the workforce to embrace and foster progress is the desired outcome that should drive all employee engagement efforts. This type of change will only be sustained by creating a culture of transformation to achieve employee excellence and engagement for higher business productivity and profitability as an ongoing concern.

what kind of employer you want to be perceived as to potential employees, and understand ways to communicate this to the world. The way your employer brand is presented internally and externally can make or break the ability to engage and retain the talent. Achievement through team effort, collaboration, and an overall positive culture will be apparent to those looking to decide whether your organisation is the right fit. Alignment

senting themselves," says Dr Roshan Joseph - VP, learning and development, QuEST Global. "Candidates usually come prepared with standard acceptable responses that interviewers ask. It is important to check on their articulation skills, which can be done by giving them scenarios and situations that compel them to be original in their responses and then evaluate their ability to articulate clearly in a concise manner," adds Puja Kapoor, head HR, dunnhumby.

We all love a good story. So why not use this tool to add value to your professional life as well?

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ADVERTORIAL AND PROMOTIONAL FEATURE



*"The youth should see the value in obtaining a skill certificate"*

DILIP CHETTY, CEO AND MD, NATIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (NSDC) DISCUSSES WITH VIREN NAIDU THE URGENT NEED TO SKILL THE GROWING YOUNG POPULATION OF INDIA AND MAKE IT JOB-READY

Aspiring Minds for IT/ITeS, MBA and hotel management graduates indicate that only a fraction of people coming out of the education system every year is employable. These results are due to the fundamental disconnect between the world of work and the world of education. First of all, we need to identify which skills are required at the workplace to perform a specific task. Then, with the help of the industry, we need to define a set of job roles and for each job role, a set of competencies need to be defined. These will be available to the education system in the form of 'qualification packs', thus resulting in an opportunity to create a curriculum covering the knowledge, skills and attitude required by the industry/economy across different job roles. We have to ensure that the assessments are done in conjunction with the employers, and there is a need to create sector bodies - Sector Skill Councils - which will also be responsible for meeting the skills requirement of that sector.

**BUT DO YOU THINK THAT THE YOUTH COULD BE SLIGHTLY AVERSE TO THE CONCEPT OF 'SKILLING'? THE PHILOSOPHY OF ALWAYS ATTAINING A DEGREE IS INGRAINED IN INDIAN CULTURE.**

Given the gross enrolment ratio currently and projected gross enrolment ratio, we may have a larger number of graduates than those required by the industry. This may lead to a situation where a lot of young graduates may not aspire for jobs, which they consider below their qualification level and therefore further aggravate the mismatch between the aspiration of the youth and the employment opportunities. Currently, a lot of skilling programmes across the country have youth dropping out midway mainly because many trainees do not have an economic stake in the project. We need them to come forward and offer loans for vocational training programmes across the country. Recognising the dearth of technological intervention in the skilling space, we are working on supporting several models to enhance the skilling eco-system. These cover

interventions to lower cost of skilling, i.e. simulators, increasing the reach of good trainers, satellite training centres, repeatable assessments through online assessment, etc.

**WHICH ARE THE KEY CHALLENGES THAT INDIA HAS TO OVERCOME IN A QUEST TO BECOME THE WORLD'S LARGEST 'SKILLS CAPITAL'?**

We need to ensure that skills, which are being imparted are at all times mapped to the needs of an employer or the job, and people are trained in a way that their skills are at par with other countries. Further, we need a structural database, sector-wise, validated and owned by the employers, to ensure a synergy between the demand and supply of the

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**STEPHEN LOWISZ,** author, educator and international speaker will speak on 'Creating great organisations: employer branding best practices'. It is important for every or-

### ASCENT CONTEST

There is a lot of talk about diversity but how much of it is actually practised? Are Indian organisations truly diverse?

Log on to [www.ItsMyAscent.com](http://www.ItsMyAscent.com) to participate. The winning entries will be printed in Ascent. The last date for submitting your entries is 5th February, 2014.



TO FIND OUT ABOUT NATIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION'S PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR, LOG ON TO [www.ItsMyAscent.com/CareerAdvice](http://www.ItsMyAscent.com/CareerAdvice)

**DO YOU THINK THE INDIAN WORKING POPULATION IS 'EMPLOYABLE'?**