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STORYTELLING & COMMUNICATION

Getting your message across through stories

'All the members of the international liaison team have said how much they enjoyed and benefited from the storytelling day. It was just a very positive experience – much more relevant than we'd have guessed too.' Bob Verhayen, DHL, Brussels

Imagination is an ancient and powerful human tool and storytelling is a marvellous way of unlocking it. Being able to captivate and enchant your audience with a tale means that your message can get through and be understood in quite different ways. Good storytelling can complement any kind of presentation – and indeed any good presentation is a form of storytelling.

This course teaches vital skills and techniques in an immediate way. It has relevance for communicators in all walks of life and has been taken by leading international businessmen and media experts amongst others. It is available as an in-house training for organizations.

EXAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE

Timings are examples only. All timings are adjustable to suit organizations. Content may also be adjusted (see example alternative/additional unit below).

Session 1. 9.30 to 11.00

Starting points in tale telling

Three introductory stories. Natural and developed storytelling skills. Why is storytelling always relevant to any communicator? How stories and metaphors communicate and the importance of imagination. Some interesting and relevant elements of the psychology of story. Fun with story games: how story games can model aspects of story skill.

Activities~:

- Tall Tale Telling: making up spontaneous stories through story games
- Multi-sensory picturing and stories
- Passing it on: sharing short invented stories and imaginings

Plenary: Drawing together threads and lessons re. natural storytelling capacities.

Session 2. 11.20 to 1.00 p.m.

Learning stories

Learning stories from key words and skeletons. Using visualization to learn stories. Adapting stories: stretching and collapsing a tale. How stories need to be stretched or trimmed to suit time, place and people and to emphasize metaphors/meanings etc.

Activities:

- Learning 3 x stories from outlines (Separate sets for Groups A & B)
- Re-telling selected stories in own words one-to-one
- The Embroidery Game: Making stories stretch.
- Further re-telling in small & larger groups (Members of A with A and B with B)

Plenary: ways to keep stories in memory,

Session 3. 2.00 p.m to 3.15 p.m.

The words and more: techniques and tricks

Introductory: verbal and non-verbal tricks of the trade: some traditional and contemporary techniques and how to adapt them creatively. Intros and outros, listing, treading water, using threes, suspense, chorusing, etc. Reading and adapting to audience mood.. Rapport with audiences and reading the group mood. How to get into and out of a story. The effect of combining stories

Activities:

1. Story games modelling verbal telling techniques, e.g. –

- Long ago before...
- The Bright Yellow Bird
- Three Things
- Tangents to loops etc.

2. Ghosting it: non-verbal telling game

Plenary: Intuitive and learned: integrating techniques and tricks.

Tea.coffee: 3.15 to 3.35 p.m.

Session 4. (3.35 to 5.00 p.m.)

Presentation as storytelling: imaginative ways of getting it across.

Presentation: linear and non-linear approaches and the advantages of tangents. Rapport with audiences and reading group mood. How to get into and out of a story. The extraordinary and hypnotic effect of combining stories

Activities:

- Preparation of presentation –
- presentation in small groups using interruption game
- Passing it on game

Plenary: making it work.

Conclusion of the day, with recommendations for development and repertoire building appropriate to participants' context(s)

Alternatives/additions

The above single day schedule focuses on storytelling purely for communication in presentation etc. Some organizations may prefer a simultaneous focus on other possibilities, such as using storytelling for institutional/group change and development. The following is an example of a unit successfully used alongside an adapted and shortened version of the above programme in single days and also expanded (with other material) to make a stimulating second day

Example alternative/additional unit (90 minutes)

Changing the Culture

Stories as change instruments. How unrecognized stories and metaphors underpin the working of many organizations and may restrict their effectiveness. How to spot such stories. Nominalizations and false metaphors. Some effective forms of change: taking account of human needs and creating win-win scenarios. Practical ways to use storytelling to adapt corporate cultures. Principles of re-framing through stories.

Activities:

spot the story
picking and unpicking the wording
making new stories for change
utopias and practicalities

Plenary: Conclusions and discussion. Story

***Your tutor:** Rob Parkinson has been a professional storyteller since 1984. He is one of the leading professionals working in storytelling education and training in the UK today and is highly skilled in telling tales to large and small audiences of all ages. Rob has run training courses for very many professionals in education, counselling, therapy and healthcare and contrastingly also for communications specialists in major corporations. He has also written extensively on the subject of storytelling, story games and stories and is the author of a major book on the subject of change through stories. Various CDs, publications and free downloads of Rob's work are also available from www.imaginaryjourneys.co.uk*

Other contact details.

**c/o Imaginary Journeys,
27 London Road,
Tonbridge,
Kent TN10 3AB**

e-mail: info@imaginaryjourneys.co.uk

Tel/fax 01732 362356

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