

Grow your storytelling, grow your brand

 By [Parusha Partab](#)

20 Apr 2017

In prehistoric times, great stories were told sitting around a campfire. In the glow of the flames storytellers would share exciting tales to impart information, to teach, to encourage and to entertain. Storytelling is an evolutionary mechanism crucial to human communication and central to our success.



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Good stories offer both valuable information and emotional engagement making them memorable experiences. The experience of a good story is why people remember, internalise and, most importantly, react to the information at its core. As advertising agencies we are responsible for constructing and communicating good stories. To build elaborate narratives around brands, services, products and then ensure they reach their intended audience.

Often the consequence of this process culminates in a television commercial. Unsurprisingly, as biological anthropologist, Helen Fisher, once concluded that the television is the **contemporary global campfire**. The modern equivalent of where we come to learn about, discuss and access the world. We sit passive and poised for the consumption of story after story as they play out in the news, shows and adverts in between.

With the advent of digital technology, a new glow calls from the palm of our hands – a new global campfire. The one that allows the audience to tap and touch back. The one with spaces where we can write their own stories. The one where we can influence larger narratives.

While ‘campfires’ like television or radio allow advertisers to broadcast their stories to large silent, captive audiences, digital channels warrant active participation and inclusive discussion. Digital advertising channels can expand on our traditional channels and allow us to extend and create shared and shareable stories.

The transformed global campfire

However, when such integrated campaigns are not done well, advertisers can in turn be brought to task on social media. They then often react with anxiety and defense rather than consideration. Negative sentiment or online criticism is taken as threatening and met with paranoia, (as with most hysteria) it is largely unnecessary.

A more sober view is that the global campfire has transformed. No longer merely a space to gather and listen, the campfire is now a hotbed for co-creation. Where audiences can participate and guide narratives to better connect with and reflect themselves. The potential of learning to be gained from this more interactive space should be met with warm reception rather than alarm.

Because **integrated advertising brings the capacity for broadcasting, listening and engaging**. Summoning both advertisers and audiences to co-create shared brand narratives.

So, tell the story around the television campfire, expand on this story within the online space and watch how people respond amongst themselves. Then listen to the data. The analytics, sentiment indicators and reports are significant growth enablers for both brands and advertisers. Sometimes the audience will clap. Sometimes they will jeer. Sometimes they will give you notes and valuable insights to help you tell a better story next time.

The universal truth remains; that regardless of the campfire, audience or storyteller, the most empowering narratives are the ones which are not afraid to change. Most importantly the ones which we consider and create together.

ABOUT PARUSHA PARTAB

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