**Book Title:**

Stories at Work – Unlock the Secret to Business Storytelling.

**Publisher:**

Penguin Random House

**Why the book:**

There is a growing buzz about the power of stories in business. However, most people are unsure whether it really works and how does one go about harnessing it.

Several myths prevail.

Myth 1: Our understanding of stories comes largely from books of fiction and movies. Those have a plot, a hero, a villain. The plot also needs a climax, needs emotion and a powerful ending. All of which needs JK Rowling like creativity. How can that ever be achieved by everyone in business is a question most people have.

Myth 2: Storytelling is an art and can only be done by someone who is creative. Executives in business, where a high majority have studied science, engineering, accounting or business management have labeled themselves left brained. Hence, they believe that art is not their domain of expertise.

Myth 3: Stories are usually made up. They are primarily for children. And usually used for entertainment.

This book, which is replete with real examples (stories) from business, shatters those myths. Then it helps the readers with tools and techniques – science – which can help them on a journey to become a more impactful, a more connected and a more memorable communicator. Someone who can get messages to stick and inspire people to act.

The premise of the book is that in business, stories are facts, wrapped in context and delivered with emotion.

**Target Audience**

Anyone in business. From the intern to the CEO. Anyone who needs to connect, engage, motivate and inspire.

**Synopsis:**

The book is in three parts.

**Part One** lays the foundations about why stories are powerful. We discuss the science behind it. How evolution and biology makes us natural born storytellers. Humans have been telling stories via cave paintings even before language was born. Thousands of years of storytelling ensures that babies are born predisposed to telling stories. The way our brain reacts to stories and the kind of chemicals it releases as a response, ensures stories create empathy and
guarantees memorability.

We then discuss how we can create a story bank which allows us to have an easy to access repertoire of stories. A bank that can be started with the stories people read in this book.

Story work is more than just storytelling. We introduce the concept of Story listening – the process of getting others to tell us stories and Story triggering – becoming the hero of stories other people tell about us. These stories give our teams and associates a window into who we are, what we believe in and what makes us tick.

**Part Two** introduces us to the various story patterns. Tools and techniques that will help us craft stories that can be used, with impact, in various business situations.

Connection story – Anecdotes from our past that helps us build rapport. After all people first need to ‘buy’ us before they buy our idea, product or service.

Clarity story – A story pattern that helps us set the context for change messages and helps us address anti-stories - stories about why the change would not work.

Influence story – Data and analysis are often not enough to change people’s mind. That is because often they have a story in their head and a story can never be argued with using just data. It needs to be replaced with a better story. We learn the story pattern to do just that.

Success story – An essential document in business is a case study. Unfortunately it is also the second most boring piece of work ever put together in any business, after admin manuals. This pattern helps us breathe life into it and make it interesting.

Story listening – the technique to get others to tell stories.

**Part Three** brings it all together.

We discuss how various combinations of the techniques discussed in Part Two can help us in –

Getting values to be understood, remembered and put into action.
Understanding complex human issues by listening to stories
Managing change
Managing knowledge
Building the employer brand
Understanding consumers & customers to help generate insights
Becoming the super salesman
Making impactful presentations
Storytelling with data

We then discuss ethics in storytelling. After all, with great power comes great responsibility.

We end the book with ideas of how to build a sustainable storytelling organisation and how to perfect storytelling ourselves.
ADVANCE PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

‘The secret sauce to inspirational leadership is storytelling. Learning to tell stories based on real business experiences can ignite imagination and transform other businesses. That’s where Stories at Work . . . works!’—Anand Kripalu, managing director and CEO, United Spirits Limited

‘We are never too old for stories. And in business, storytelling drives shared values and organizational culture. This book is a delightful introduction to this most important leadership skill’—Anand Mahindra, chairman, Mahindra Group

‘I saw first-hand the power of stories three years ago when Indranil helped us craft and narrate stories for one of our transformation initiatives. This is a delightful book full of insights, tools and techniques that can help leaders learn and practise this powerful leadership skill’—Bhargav Dasgupta, managing director and CEO, ICICI Lombard

‘Storytelling has been a buzz word of late but has remained steeped in mystery. This is the first book that makes it simple and learnable. I recommend this as a must-read for all those aspiring to be in positions of influence’—Krish Shankar, executive vice president and group head, human resource development, Infosys

‘Facts and data don’t shift behaviours. Stories do. I believe stories are a powerful tool to change cultures, to live values. Indranil is a master storyteller and I would recommend his book to anyone interested in driving change and transformation’—Leena Nair, chief human resource officer, Unilever

‘Bullet points and opinions never inspire and are quickly forgotten. But stories are remembered, always inspire and have a tendency to spread. This book tells you how to communicate with clarity using storytelling—a powerful leadership skill’—Mukul Deoras, chief marketing officer, Colgate–Palmolive

‘If you’ve ever wondered how you could communicate with more impact, look no further. This book is a simple, practical guide to potentially transformational outcomes’ —Nitin Paranjpe, president, food and refreshments, Unilever

‘In a simple and memorable way, Indranil brings to life the power of storytelling. Not just the why, but also the how. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is looking to communicate with impact’ —Prabir Jha, president and global chief people officer, Cipla

‘In human communication, facts talk to the mind, emotions and context warm the heart. Storytelling combines fact, emotion and context. Storytelling is a human evolutionary inheritance—no different from language, rationality and standing on two legs rather than four! Yet humans need to relearn the skill. Indranil explains how . . . a worthy read . . .’—R. Gopalakrishnan, corporate adviser and author of A Biography of Innovations and What the CEO Really Wants from You

‘I was in the audience at a seminar when I heard Indranil speak about the power of stories in business. At the end of the allotted hour, I realized that I had not checked my phone even once. This book holds the promise of engaging your attention completely and mindfully’—Rama Bijaourkar, management consultant and author of We Are like That Only and A Never-Before World
'I have known Indranil for two decades, he has taught the principles of storytelling in every company where I was a chief executive officer (CEO) and that helped us. He was also a regular speaker at AIMA retreats’—Shiv Shivakumar, group executive president, Aditya Birla Group

‘Stories at Work is a great read for everyone as it brings to life the magical moments of engagement you can create through storytelling. Your authentic story is the most potent force that you can use to connect, engage and inspire’—Srikanth Balachandran, global chief human resource officer, Airtel

‘Indranil’s book comes at a time when organizations are coping with information overload and attention deficiency. In this, the casualty is individual alignment with the organization’s goals. That “alignment” is a mental process. Neurologically speaking, it involves paying attention to something, liking it, remembering it and then following it. Thus, we have to build memorability for the message and it is only possible through the narrative. The CEO of the future is a master narrator’—Subroto Bagchi, co-founder, Mindtree, and author of Sell: The Art, the Science, the Witchcraft and On Leadership and Innovation

‘Through my career as a business journalist I have discovered that the best companies, CEOs, and managers are invariably those that have the best stories. I am delighted to see Indranil’s popular column in the Mint progressing to a book’—Sukumar Ranganathan, editor-in-chief, Hindustan Times
‘In business, storytelling drives shared values and organizational culture. This book is a delightful introduction to this most important leadership skill’
Anand Mahindra, chairman, Mahindra Group

‘Indranil is a master storyteller and I would recommend his book to anyone interested in driving change and transformation’
Leena Nair, chief human resource officer, Unilever

‘Wish this book had been written earlier’
Nitin Paranjpe, president, food and refreshments, Unilever

‘All of us who have been beleaguered with endless PowerPoint presentations will love the alternative that this book offers’
Rama Bijapurkar, management consultant and author of We Are Like That Only and A Never-Before World

‘Stories define us. This book defines storytelling’
Shiv Shivakumar, group executive president, Aditya Birla Group

‘Indranil’s work comes at a time when organizations are coping with information overload and attention deficiency. We have to build memorability for the message and this is only possible through the narrative’
Subroto Bagchi, co-founder, Mindtree, author