

# Storyteller helps execs with communication

Mark Binder has joined New Commons in Providence as resident storyteller. He is the



CEO of Mark Binder Inc. and tells stories at festivals, theaters, libraries and schools. In his new role,

Binder's storytelling helps train individuals and organizations to improve their presentation skills. He has a bachelor's degree from Columbia University and a master's from Rhode Island College.

**PBN:** How does one become a "storyteller"?

**BINDER:** Becoming a professional storyteller is like starting

up a business. You have to discover the needs of your target market, create promotional materials, design business and publicity strategies. ... I often joke one of the reasons I'm successful is I make it a point to call people back. The easiest part of my business is the performance.

**PBN:** What does a storyteller do at New Commons?

**BINDER:** I remind people to use stories in their conversation. Executives talk about bottom lines. They want facts and numbers. All of which is necessary, but by framing this information as a story, a remarkable shift happens. The work they are doing gains meaning.

**PBN:** How does that work?

**'Storytelling cuts through the morass of everyday life.'**

**BINDER:** Storytelling cuts through the morass of everyday life. We're all overwhelmed by information. The e-mail glut is a perfect example. How many hours a week do you spend with e-mail that is important? The increasing reliance on digital media means that old-fashioned face-to-face communication has a new level of importance. Storytelling is the quickest, most powerful, and most efficient way to deliver a message.

**PBN:** What projects are you working on?

**BINDER:** New Commons has been holding a series of conversations called, "A Year in Providence and the Region." At those meetings, I help shape narrative discussion and point out the value of expressing goals and ideas in the form of a story – rather than dry facts.

**PBN:** What do you hope to accomplish?

**BINDER:** We are bringing storytelling into the seminars and programs we develop. We're also developing stand-alone storytelling workshops to help organizations and communities craft their narratives, and communicate more effectively. ■