



YOUNG TURK

Tripti Kedia gave up reporting success stories on television to create one of her own with her company Your Portrait.

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Portraying SUCCESS





Here is one young Marwari who simply had to follow her entrepreneurial dreams even if it meant leaving a promising career and launching into uncharted territory. 31 year old Tripti Kedia was a news anchor at UTV Bloomberg when she hit upon an interesting concept. Your Portrait was born out of that idea and it is simply brilliant. You give Tripti a photograph of yourself—just about any you choose—and she gives you back a custom made portrait of that portrait.

Creating, not reporting success stories

After studying International Journalism from Westminster University U.K., she found a job at UTV Bloomberg and worked her way through the ranks to become an anchor for their breakfast show. After eight years of working as a journalist and being a part of the crazy, hectic world of the 24/7 television news channels, Tripti quit her job to follow her entrepreneurial and artistic dreams.

This move from journalism, one imagines, must have required her to overcome some possibly overwhelming fears and doubts. She describes that period of her life when she was in a state of flux professionally, as a challenging one. As she puts it, the result of her constant interactions with corporate honchos due to her job as a financial reporter led her to realize that there was a lot more she wanted to achieve in life “instead of just reporting the success stories of others from the sidelines”. “I wanted to create something for myself”, she says.

Do it now

There was no better time than the present to start. From the perspective of the Indian economy too, it was the perfect time to experiment and face a new challenge. “I thought this was one of the best times for me, personally and professionally,” she explains.

Tripti is convinced that her desire to start a business on her own was not instant. In retrospect, she says that she probably always had this latent desire to be an entrepreneur. “The idea to start Your Portrait had been in my mind for at least a year or a year and a half. But it took a while for me to decide to start this company because I wanted to be sure that this was what I wanted to do with my life if I moved away from journalism.”

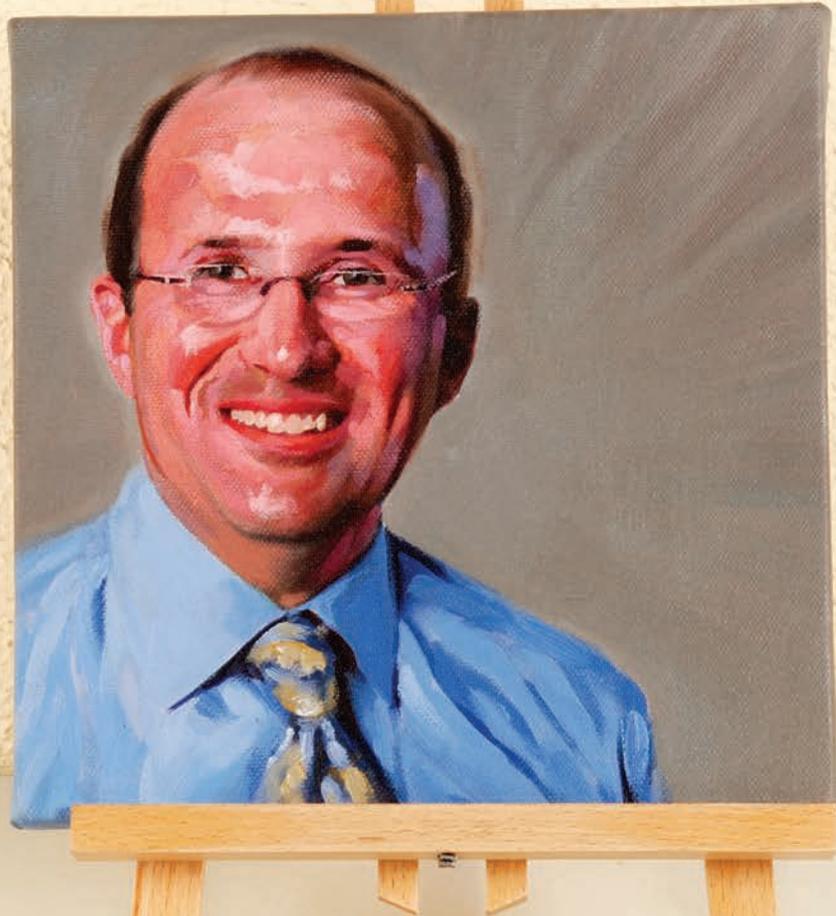
She may have allowed the idea to play in her mind for more than a year but just a few months of running Your Portrait has left her with no doubts about her career move. In fact, one can immediately see that Tripti is confident about her ideas and her product, and is very optimistic about the future.

A slice of life

Ask her about portraits and she excitedly talks about why people must own at least one. “We give people a piece of their own life, a slice of their life, and a manifestation of their memories. There is always a need to capture eternity and immortalize a moment and that’s exactly the higher principle behind portraits. For me, especially, this need is very strong. I come from the world of digital media where everything is ephemeral and the emphasis is always on the instant.”

But in this age of digital photographs, one wonders if there really is a place or need for portraits. She is quick to clarify that portraits must not be viewed as competitors of photographs. Portraits occupy a different space in your home and your life. While one may have many photographs, only one portrait is required in your home to immortalize a special moment in your lives. She explains, “It’s something special. We don’t want to give you ten portraits. Instead, take one and cherish it. They can also be passed down from one generation to another.” And of course, portraits, she smilingly says are basically art works. “Anyone who has some interest in art can own a portrait. Its art for all.” Art has certainly been one of Tripti’s passions and this passion has been the driving force behind the creation of this company. Tripti lights up when she talks about art, her love for it apparent. She gives credit to her mother for the love for art that is instilled in her.





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“My mum has a very strong artistic bent. We were exposed to what can loosely be termed as the ‘finer pleasures of life’ as children. We were members of the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA), Mumbai. We saw lots of good plays and participated in many theatre productions.” Moreover, Tripti says that her years at Westminster University and at Sophia College exposed her to a lot of art. At Sophia, she says, “I studied about artists such as Monet, Manet and Rembrandt”. The Impressionist style of art that Monet and Manet pioneered seems to be one of Tripti’s favourites. And Your Portrait offers you the chance to get a portrait done in this particular style.

The biggest challenge

Your Portrait is now emerging as a quite a success. Corporate companies like HDFC had given this fledgling company a chance and have now become regular customers. However, the initial months, Tripti remembers, were definitely not easy. “Everyone I knew asked me if I saw enough potential to grow in this business, or whether I felt it was the right thing to do to leave my job as a journalist.” One of the biggest challenges she faced was to convert her ‘employee mind’ into that of an entrepreneur’s. One fine day, she found herself with no office to go to and no structure of a finely tuned, up and running establishment to fall back on she could fall back on in crises. “I was managing my finances, the budget and taking decisions on all the different aspects of the business on my own for the first time.” Approaching the first few clients too, she shares, was daunting because she had her own inhibitions to overcome.

But now, the young entrepreneur is truly confident that her business will thrive. “I’m not worried”, she grins, “That the appetite for portraits will be over. I mean, there are a billion people in India and even if I sell portraits to half the families in the country, it will keep me going for years together.”

Safety net

Tripti’s family, she claims, has always been supportive of her decisions. She has a family of entrepreneurs and she feels that all those years growing up when she helped her mother run the business or heard conversations about business, may have subconsciously trained her in running a business. And her parents’ (Vijay and Shanti Gupta) progressive thinking has helped her immensely in the carving of an identity for herself. She proudly says, “My parents did not suffocate us or impose their ideas on us.” In fact, she describes her upbringing as very Non-Marwari. Tripti appears to be fiercely independent. She asserts that her independence, financial and otherwise is very important to her. “You know, you want to have your own space. You want to create something new for yourself. You want to prove to yourself that you can handle the business or your career on your own.” And that’s probably why she didn’t join her family’s flourishing business and branched out on her own to create Your Portrait. Tripti, however, does feel that the Marwari community, especially in Mumbai is gradually becoming more progressive. She is happy to note that there is a greater stress on education for Marwari women, who are also now encouraged to work, and be independent and free. 🌟