

The background of the cover is a vintage map with a grid of latitude and longitude lines. A large, dark magnifying glass is positioned over the map, with its handle extending from the top right towards the center. The map shows various geographical features and place names, including 'Lagos', 'FOTONON', 'APAR', 'PHILIPPINE', 'ISLA', and 'CIBOLA'. A compass rose is visible in the lower right quadrant of the map.

C O R P O R A N I A

(The Treasure Map)

Using storytelling, story and narrative in effective transition

BY SPARKTEAM

**CORPORANIA
(THE TREASURE MAP)**

Sparkpress Notebooks

Sparkpress notebooks are intended to form a collection of stories, commentaries and ideas to enrich understanding in the experimental and emerging area of the management of intellectual capital, knowledge and intangible assets.

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CORPORANIA (THE TREASURE MAP)

Using storytelling, story and narrative in effecting transition

Stories by Sparkteam
Annotations and notes by Victoria Ward and Sue Smithson
with generous collaboration of Carol Russell and
Sparkteam

"The storytelling that thrives for a long time in the milieu of work – the rural, the maritime and the urban – is in itself an artisan of communication, as it were. It does not aim to convey the pure essence of the thing, like information or a report. It sinks the thing into the life of the storyteller, in order to bring it out of him again. Thus, traces of the storyteller cling to the story, the way the hand prints of a potter cling to the clay vessel."

Walter Benjamin - *Illuminations*

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Introduction

The Treasure Map in Context

Steve Denning (formerly World Bank) calls a story a “tiny fuse” which can ignite a big spark. For about 4 years we, at Sparknow, have been using stories, narrative, drama and performance as a tool for effecting change and transition.

In our early work, we used mapping and directories to prompt more encounters, both face to face and by phone, between experts. An example of this was the creation of a guide to experience and expertise, called The Green Book, at an investment bank. The idea was that individual knowledge could be shared more accurately through anecdote, illustration and story, because questions could be asked and answered by the person who had experienced the activity. The asking of questions, or the sharing of a story, prompts others to respond with their own stories, creating a shared experience. A conscious collection of anecdotes can yield insights and patterns which make visible the defining moments and experiences of the organisation. The components can then be constructed into archetypal stories around which organisations and teams can organise themselves. When undertaking projects, we experimented with journalism to create narratives about them, which would increase both understanding and the sharing of experience.

From these experiments we moved on to explore two distinct elements. Firstly, the systematic use of principles of stories and narrative and, secondly, drama and performance. We are still learning how different these can be.

One useful use of story has been to explore the lessons learnt in large-scale projects. It allows people to explore issues without threat or blame and gives time for reflection on good practice. We have used different techniques to help elicit those stories; one of the most powerful is semi-structured constructive interviewing to uncover and share success stories. Two other techniques include librarian tools such as classification and visualisation through maps, charts and images. All these can inform projects for the future.

In our work, Sparknow always tries to bring into present actions a deep view of the past and a long view of the future. We have learned that the conscious role of story can be an invaluable tool to create an understanding of the unfolding present. The past and future viewpoints can then be combined to find a new way of fashioning projects from the outset. The project story, a blueprint, as it is envisaged at the outset, helps people to hold to a shared purpose and to be creative. It is important that this is present to offset the bumpy ride, inevitable diversions and disappointments as the project progresses. It also helps us to recognise success, creating those tiny moments of euphoria, or great shouts of “we’ve done it, we’ve actually done it”, which punctuate the period in which the project is live.

As we become bolder and more experienced in using story and its associated techniques, we become more confident in their huge impact and in the fact that they create a glue which holds things, people and determination together; this is particularly important at stages of a project when things become uncertain, confused, and we feel we are groping through a miasma of organisational stresses and changes. It is interesting that after four years, we have arrived at an

Introduction

understanding that storytelling, the most traditional method of knowledge exchange, can have a major role to play in the business organisations of the 21st century.

Towards the end of this learning period, Sparknow decided to commission a professional storyteller to encapsulate the experience and lessons learnt from the Green Book project, which was in fact the compilation of an expertise guide. It is the resulting story which forms the central part of this volume; the annotations to it and the notes in Part II also give extra knowledge and thoughts about storytelling as a technique or as performance for all who are interested. The contents can therefore be used to support workshops where practical storytelling activities are undertaken or as a stand-alone guide.

The Story of Corporania

What you are about to read is the written text of a project history; it has been transformed into a universal story, or fable, which we now know has resonance with many people working in different organisations. It has the greatest impact if you hear it told. Anybody who has attended a Sparknow event, where this has been performed, will bear this out. If you have not, you may like to begin by reading it aloud. Storytelling is an oral tradition and, as such, the understanding of stories should not, in the first instance, be interrupted by comment. That will come later.

It is for this reason that we have printed “The Treasure Map” in its entirety, without notes. For your analysis, we then repeat the story, with annotations and notes. Part Two comprises Guidance Notes for Storytelling. Where there is

overlap between the annotations and the notes, we have cross-referenced. Part Two also ties the threads of this volume together providing grounding, conclusions and applications of how storytelling can be used in contemporary business.

So what kind of story is this? It is not a true story, although it is based on a true story, it is not a myth, it is not a report. Perhaps it is a Quest Story? We incline to the view that it is a fable derived from a true case study of the creation of a directory at an investment bank. The storyteller (who describes the process as one of “working in raw trust”) was asked to interview about 15 people who had either contributed directly to, or been a user of the directory. She could then make any story she liked out of it, and describe to us the process. After conducting and listening to some 25 hours of interviews, she did write a story. The trouble was, it was a report. So she threw it away and started again.

The story of the Treasure Map works on many levels; it retells the experience in a way that it can be a teaching story, or even just one to entertain. We now know, from the reactions of people in a variety of organisations, that some perceive it as a triumph story, some a disaster, some as a story of loss, but mostly as a truly “corporate” fable.

Part One

The Treasure Map – The Story of Corporania

Corporania

1 The Treasure Map – A Fable

The story is set somewhere at some time. Any resemblance to any living person is more than mere coincidence.

Once upon a time, not so long ago, there was a divided kingdom. The kingdom of Corporania: a kingdom where people passed each other without really seeing each other. No one smiled. Hardly anyone spoke. It was a kingdom of strangers.

On one of his annual peregrinations, the king of Corporania noticed that his people were becoming more and more isolated. He was deeply concerned. He knew that something would have to be done, otherwise his kingdom would stop being a force within the world. He called together his royal advisors, but none of them could help. As far as he could see, their solutions would only make matters worse. As he contemplated the problem, he remembered reading about another kingdom. The people there smiled. They spoke to each other. They shared things. He summoned one of the Royal Runners.

"I need you to go to the outskirts of the kingdom and find the woman they call The Innovator."

On the day the Innovator arrived in Corporania it was raining. People scurried around, huddled beneath layers of clothing, their faces hidden behind dark umbrellas. No one noticed her arrival. Shaking her head, she made her way to the palace. After spending many hours talking to the king, she agreed to help him.

On her first trip out she became hopelessly lost. She tried asking people for directions, but no one knew where anything was, unless it was in their immediate environment. At the end of that first day, she realised that people did share with each other, but only with members of their own community. Small groups, covering small areas. She also found that there were people who wanted to share more, but they didn't know how. These people were to become the Knowledge Co-ordinators. She went back to the king and asked for some help. Unfortunately, the kingdom was in the middle of the Great Audit, and there weren't too many people who weren't up to their eyeballs. But he managed to spare two, and so the Innovator started to build her team.

To help her, she called upon a man known only as The Outsider. He'd made a career out of swooping down into troubled areas and helping the inhabitants do what they did more efficiently. Being an outsider, he could see the things that people had become so used to that they no longer noticed. Together with the Innovator and the two people the king could spare they set about finding out what the people in the kingdom really wanted.

At first it was really difficult to get anyone to talk to them. The people of Corporania had become deeply suspicious, guarding their knowledge jealously. But slowly, their naturally suspicious nature was overcome by curiosity, and the team was able to tease out valuable information. They discovered that what most people wanted was something that would put them in touch with the right people to help them maximise their own endeavours.

The team put their heads together and, after a particularly exciting brainstorming session, they came up with the idea of

The Treasure Map

creating a kind of map, a treasure map of knowledge that would serve every part of the kingdom. A tall order, but one the Innovator and her team rose to with a great deal of enthusiasm.

The Great Audit had taken up a lot of space in the palace and the team had to find room where they could. The only space available was the broom cupboard behind the storage room. Undeterred, the team made the space their own and brought to it a sense of the magical. It was a space where anything could happen.

As the Innovator was returning from a meeting with the king, she noticed a young woman she hadn't seen before. She was wandering around looking a little lost, but defiant. She found out that the woman she nicknamed The Sceptic had recently lost her boss, so she invited her to join her team. With nowhere else to go, and no one else to work for, the Sceptic reluctantly joined the team. She thought the whole idea of creating a treasure map that would serve the entire kingdom was crazy and more than a little far-fetched. It would never work. But, with nowhere else to go, and nothing else to do, she joined the team. I mean, what's a girl to do. She has to earn a living.

The Sceptic was teamed up with the Eternal Optimist, a nice chap with a sunny disposition, but he hadn't been living in the kingdom for long, and the Sceptic thought that people wouldn't talk to him. They barely opened up to each other. The other thing that concerned her was that he didn't know the right people to talk to, which was the reason they needed the map in the first place. She, however, had worked in the kingdom for a long time and, because of her old position, she had quite a long list of contacts. Still sceptical, she helped

him. She pointed him in the right direction, going with him when she knew the person she was sending him to was even more suspicious than was natural, even for Corporanians.

What they were trying to do was find out what everyone knew. Who were the experts and what were they experts in? This was no easy task. Every person they approached asked the same question:

“What’s in it for me?” A Corporanian question, which demanded a Corporanian reply. But this wasn’t a typical Corporanian project, so the answer “A knowledge map” never satisfied all of the people all of the time, especially the Bottom Liners. But, with patience, the information started to flow. As the Sceptic started to work with the team, she began to change her original opinion of the project. Almost against her better judgement, she became enthusiastic.

Around this time, the Eternal Optimist was taken off the information gathering part of the project and sent to see how else the map could be used. The Sceptic was alone behind a huge pile of papers, trying to make sense of all the information. Just as she began to revise her new opinion of the project, the Innovator introduced her to an Old Sea Dog. “He’s had a lot of experience with charts, sextants and ships’ logbooks. I think you two would work well together.” The Sceptic couldn’t see how he was going to be of any use, but she’d learnt to keep her feelings to herself. She’d also learnt, in her time with the Innovator, that the more outlandish the idea, the more likely it would work. She didn’t know why, but she was in now and, as her old mother would say, “In for a penny, in for a pound.”

There was still a lot of information to collect, but she handed over what she had to the Old Sea Dog and left him to it.

The Treasure Map

What he came back with surprised her. It also helped her to become more efficient. The Sceptic loved efficiency. This project really was a good idea.

There was a change of ruler to he who was known throughout all the kingdom as El Capitan. The Great Audit had thrown up many problems and money had to be saved. The knowledge map team knew that, in the great shake-up, they would be the first to go.

Their first deadline to produce the Knowledge Map came and went, but they were undeterred. Then El Capitan called them into the Grand Hall and told them, in no uncertain terms,

“I’m afraid you won’t be able to make that map after all. We haven’t got time and, really, it’s not that important.”

The team tried to reason with him. They tried to explain all the good things that were already happening because of the Knowledge Map. More people were talking to each other than ever before. But, El Capitan didn’t want to know. He wasn’t interested in magic. He didn’t care that more people were talking to each other. All he cared about was doing his job, which was to bring the kingdom of Corporania into line with the neighbouring kingdoms.

The Innovator sent everyone else away and stayed locked up with El Capitan for most of the rest of the day. When she came out, she looked tired and worn. The first person she met was the Sceptic, who was eager to know what had happened.

“Well, he’s still not absolutely convinced, but he’s going to let us go ahead and, by the way, we’ve got a month to get the whole thing done.”

Staying only long enough to make sure the Innovator was all right, the Sceptic rushed away to give the news to the rest of the team and get straight back to work.

The team worked almost round the clock for the next month. The Sceptic and the Old Sea Dog sifted through mountains of information (treasure the Innovator called it) hunting for, and finding, the gems. They made the links, checking and re-checking the information. Until finally, one day it was done. Now all they had to do was create the artefact. A book; a green book; a treasure map of Knowledge. Who had it? Where to find it? Knowledge is the wealth of any kingdom.

Next stop the Royal Printers, but first, back to El Capitan for some money. He took one look at the budget and laughed.

"You're joking right?"

The Sceptic looked at the Innovator, who calmly explained that, in order for the Knowledge Map to be of use to the kingdom, everybody had to have one. El Capitan's eyes narrowed. His lips thinned. His voice froze the blood in the Sceptic's veins.

"No way."

"But we had a deal," the Innovator said.

"Yeah, right, but that was before you came in here trying to break the bank. Take it away."

The Innovator looked at the sceptic who took her cue and excused herself, saying that she had to see a man about a dog. Many hours passed. The royal servants carried trays of food past the Sceptic, who kept a vigil outside the door of the royal chamber. When, in the early hours of the morning, the Innovator finally emerged, seeing the question etched on the Sceptic's face, she said,

The Treasure Map

"It's not good, but it's not bad either. We can print one hundred and fifty copies."

"One hundred and fifty! But that's nowhere near enough!"

"I know, but it will have to do. It's that or nothing."

"Why, of all the mean" The Innovator cut her off:

"I know, but it's better than nothing. I'd get off to the printers as soon as you can, if I were you. Before he changes his mind.

When the first Knowledge Maps came off the press, the whole knowledge team was present for the birth. They checked all its fingers and all its toes and pronounced it beautiful. The news of the birth travelled around the kingdom like fire through dry grass and the next morning there was a queue outside the knowledge broom cupboard of baying citizens who couldn't wait for the Royal Mail. Smiling, the Innovator said,

"I think it's brilliant that they even know how to find us. I'll go out and talk to them."

After their initial disappointment at not being able to take away their promised copy of the Knowledge Map, the people were comforted by the news that the enlightened ones would be commissioned as Knowledge Co-ordinators. They would be able to help any citizen find exactly what they needed. It wasn't ideal, but the people were comforted by this. There were some in the crowd who hadn't expected it to happen at all.

In the following months, the people of Corporania made great use of the Knowledge Map. In fact, it was hailed as a great success. Although, to be fair, there were a few who weren't happy with their place on the map, others who were angry that they didn't get a map, and a tiny few who nothing at all

Corporania

would have pleased. They were the ones who made comments like,

"Why did it have to be a book?"

or

"Why did it have to be on paper?"

But then, everybody knows that you can't please all of the people all of the time, so there's no point in trying.

The creation of the Knowledge Map brought the people of Corporania together in a way that they had never been before. It strengthened old ties and created new ones. The project created an understanding of the need to share knowledge and created a new sense of unity.

As a postscript to this story, the Bottom Liners, with the help of the Knowledge Map, brought new business to the kingdom of Corporania. And, although the information was three, or even four steps removed, the Sceptic heard about it and was happy.

2 The Treasure Map – A Fable¹ (Annotated)

Cast² in order of appearance

King of Corporania

The Royal Runners

The Innovator

The Knowledge Co-ordinators

The Outsider

The Sceptic

The Eternal Optimist

The Bottom Liners

The Old Sea Dog

El Capitan

The Knowledge Co-ordinators

Once upon a time,³ not so long ago, there was a divided kingdom. The kingdom of **Corporania**.⁴ a kingdom where people passed each other without really seeing each other. No one smiled. Hardly anyone spoke. It was a kingdom of strangers.

On one of his annual peregrinations, the **king of Corporania**² noticed that his people were becoming more and more isolated. He was deeply concerned. He knew that something would have to be done, otherwise his kingdom would stop being a force within the world. He called

¹ Story types

² Casting and character

³ Beginnings and endings

⁴ Naming things and situations

together his royal advisors, but none of them could help. As far as he could see, their solutions would only make matters worse. As he contemplated the problem, he remembered reading about another kingdom. The people there smiled. They spoke to each other. They shared things. He summoned one of the Royal Runners.

"I need you to go to the **outskirts**⁵ of the kingdom and find the woman they call **The Innovator**.² "

On the day the **Innovator**² arrived in **Corporania**⁴ it was raining. People scurried around, huddled beneath layers of clothing, their faces hidden behind dark umbrellas. No one noticed her arrival. Shaking her head, she made her way to the palace. After spending many hours talking to the king, she agreed to help him.

On her **first trip out**⁶ she became hopelessly lost. She tried asking people for directions, but no one knew where anything was, unless it was in their immediate environment. At the end of that first day, she realised that people did share with each other, but only with members of their own community. Small groups, covering small areas. She also found that there were people who wanted to share more, but they didn't know how. These people were to become the **Knowledge Co-ordinators**.² She went back to the king and asked for some help. Unfortunately, the kingdom was in the middle of the Great Audit, and there weren't too many people who weren't up to their eyeballs. But he managed to spare two, and so the Innovator started to build her team.

⁵ Boundaries

⁶ Journeys

To help her, she called upon a man known only as **The Outsider**.² He'd made a career out of swooping down into troubled areas and helping the inhabitants do what they did more efficiently. Being an outsider, he could see the things that people had become so used to that they no longer noticed. Together with **the Innovator**² and the two people the king could spare they set about finding out what the people in the kingdom really wanted.

At first it was really difficult to get anyone to talk to them. The people of **Corporania**⁴ had become deeply suspicious, guarding their knowledge jealously. But slowly, their naturally suspicious nature was overcome by curiosity, and the team was able to tease out valuable information. They discovered that what most people wanted was something that would put them in touch with the right people to help them maximise their own endeavours.

The team put their heads together and, after a particularly exciting brainstorming session, they came up with the idea of creating a kind of **map**⁷, a treasure map of knowledge that would serve every part of the kingdom. A tall order, but one **the Innovator**² and her team rose to with a great deal of enthusiasm.

The Great Audit had taken up a lot of space in the palace and the team had to find room where they could. The only space available was the broom cupboard behind the storage room. Undeterred, the team made the **space**⁸ their own and

⁷ Maps

⁸ Location and space

brought to it a sense of the **magical**.⁹ It was a **space** where anything could happen.

As **the Innovator**² was returning from a meeting with the king, **she noticed a young woman she hadn't seen before**¹⁰. She was wandering around looking a little lost, but defiant. She found out that the woman she nicknamed **The Sceptic**² had recently lost her boss, so she invited her to join her team. With nowhere else to go, and no one else to work for, **the Sceptic**² reluctantly joined the team. She thought the whole idea of creating a treasure map that would serve the entire kingdom was crazy and more than a little far-fetched. It would never work. But, with nowhere else to go, and nothing else to do, she joined the team. I mean, what's a girl to do. **She has to earn a living**.¹¹

The Sceptic² was teamed up with the **Eternal Optimist**,² a nice chap with a sunny disposition, but he hadn't been living in the kingdom for long, and **the Sceptic**² thought that people wouldn't talk to him. **They barely opened up to each other**.¹² The other thing that concerned her was that he didn't know the right people to talk to, which was the reason they needed the map in the first place. She, however, had worked in the kingdom for a long time and, because of her old position, she had quite a long list of contacts. Still sceptical, she helped him. She pointed him in the right direction, going with him when she knew the person she was sending him to was even more suspicious than was natural, even for **Corporanians**.⁴

⁹ Magic, mystery and surprise

¹⁰ Serendipity, chance encounter

¹¹ Cliché

¹² Elicitation

What they were trying to do was find out what everyone knew. Who were the experts and what were they experts in? This was no easy task. Every person they approached asked the same question:

“What’s in it for me?” A **Corporanian**⁴ question, which demanded a **Corporanian**⁴ reply. But this wasn’t a typical **Corporanian**⁴ project, so the answer “A knowledge map” never satisfied all of the people all of the time, especially the Bottom Liners. But, with patience, the information started to flow. As **the Sceptic**² started to work with the team, she began to change her original opinion of the project. **Almost against her better judgement, she became enthusiastic.**¹³

Around this time, **the Eternal Optimist**² was taken off the information gathering part of the project and sent to see how else the map could be used. The Sceptic was alone behind a huge pile of papers, trying to make sense of all the information. Just as she began to revise her new opinion of the project, the Innovator introduced her to an **Old Sea Dog**.²

“He’s had a lot of experience with charts, sextants and ships’ logbooks. I think you two would work well together.” **The Sceptic**² couldn’t see how he was going to be of any use, but she’d learnt to keep her feelings to herself. She’d also learnt, in her time with **the Innovator**,² that the more outlandish the idea, the more likely it would work. She didn’t know why, but she was in now and, as her old mother would say, “In for a penny, in for a pound.”

¹³ Contract, collaboration and commitment

There was still a lot of information to collect, but she handed over what she had to the **Old Sea Dog**² and left him to it. What he came back with surprised her. It also helped her to become more efficient. **The Sceptic**² loved efficiency. This project really was a good idea.

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Their first deadline to produce **the Knowledge Map**⁷ came and went, but they were undeterred. Then **EI Capitan**² called them into the Grand Hall and told them, in no uncertain terms,

"I'm afraid you won't be able to make that map after all. We haven't got time and, really, it's not that important."¹⁴

The team tried to reason with him. They tried to explain all the good things that were already happening because of **the Knowledge Map**⁷. More people were talking to each other than ever before. But, **EI Capitan**² didn't want to know. He wasn't interested in magic. He didn't care that more people were talking to each other. All he cared about was doing his job, which was to bring the kingdom of **Corporania**⁴ into line with the neighbouring kingdoms.

The Innovator² sent everyone else away and stayed locked up with **EI Capitan**² for most of the rest of the day. When she came out, she looked tired and worn. The first person

¹⁴ Defining moments and turning points

she met was the **Sceptic**,² who was eager to know what had happened.

“Well, he’s still not absolutely convinced, but he’s going to let us go ahead and, by the way, we’ve got a month to get the whole thing done.”

Staying only long enough to make sure the Innovator was all right, **the Sceptic**² rushed away to give the news to the rest of the team and get straight back to work.

The team worked almost round the clock for the next month. **The Sceptic and the Old Sea Dog**² sifted through mountains of information (treasure **the Innovator**² called it) hunting for, and finding, the gems. They made the links, checking and re-checking the information. Until finally, one day it was done. **Now all they had to do was create the artefact**.¹⁶ A book, a green book, a treasure **Map of Knowledge**.⁷ Who had it? Where to find it? Knowledge is the wealth of any kingdom.

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“No way.”

“But we had a deal,” **the Innovator**² said.

“Yeah, right, but that was before you came in here trying to break the bank. Take it away.”

¹⁵Artefacts and negotiated meaning

The Innovator² looked at the sceptic who took her cue and excused herself, saying that she had to see a man about a dog. Many hours passed. The royal servants carried trays of food past **the Sceptic**,² who kept a vigil outside the door of the royal chamber. When, in the early hours of the morning, **the Innovator**² finally emerged, seeing the question etched on **the Sceptic's**² face, she said,

"It's not good, but it's not bad either. We can print one hundred and fifty copies."

"One hundred and fifty! But that's nowhere near enough!"

"I know, but it will have to do. It's that or nothing."

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"I think it's brilliant that they even know how to find us. I'll go out and talk to them."

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were comforted by this. There were some in the crowd who hadn't expected it to happen at all.

In the following months, the people of **Corporania**⁴ made great use of the **Knowledge Map**.⁷ In fact, it was hailed as a great success. Although, to be fair, there were a few who weren't happy with their place on the map, others who were angry that they didn't get a map, and a tiny few who nothing at all would have pleased. They were the ones who made comments like,

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The creation of the **Knowledge Map**⁷ brought the people of **Corporania**⁴ together in a way that they had never been before. It strengthened old ties and created new ones. The project created an understanding of the need to share knowledge and created a new sense of unity.

As a postscript to this story, the **Bottom Liners**,² with the help of the **Knowledge Map**,⁷ brought new business to the kingdom of **Corporania**.⁴ And, although the information was three, or even four steps removed, **the Sceptic**² heard about it and was happy.

Corporania

3 Annotations

1 Story Types

Traditional story types can be categorised as fables, myths, legends, quests, fairy tales, sagas. We have chosen to call Corporania a fable because it has the salient characteristics of giving an analogous narrative to real life in order to communicate a moral or lesson (as in Aesop, La Fontaine). Some of the types are described in more detail in Part Two.

2 Casting and Character

In early drafts, the storyteller considered making a series of short stories, each telling the story from the point of view of a different individual in the story. Instead, these characters became part of a single narrative, yet retaining the qualities of different perspective. This allows for **ambiguity** and the idiosyncratic perception of individual viewpoints. The story is carried along by several narratives, several points of view, all of them valid.

There is an important **duality** to be recognised, in that the characters are both typical and archetypal. The Sceptic is a typical influence on all projects, but this Sceptic still recognises herself in the story as an individual. And so she is acting in many ways: as a co-author of the story; as an actor in it and as an individual.

The risk of demonising, or of repeating, inappropriate archetypes is also worth pointing out here. In playing out this story, people often transpose El Capitan to “The Black Prince” or something with a flavour of judgement. Here, the storyteller has taken great care to characterise him as a caricature villain, but not as an evil person or a demon.

3 Beginnings and Endings

All story beginnings need to contain an invitation to listen. “Once upon a time not so long ago” sets the story in time and space and compels our attention because it is a traditional opening. Other thoughts on beginnings, endings, time and space are contained in the notes.

4 Naming Things and Situations

Corporania is, from the moment the name is introduced, a bad land to be in. Why is that? How does it set the context of the story? (See also previous annotation on **Casting and Character** for risks in demonising through names).

Naming situations (even individual words can conjure up a story – “Titanic” for example) provides a way of bringing into play resources from past experience that might not otherwise be accessible. This, in turn, can provide levels of reassurance, a sense of history repeating.

5 Boundaries

Agents of change are rarely at the centre of power, they are at the periphery. They come from the outside. Gabriel (2000) sees stories as spaces where all kinds of organisational controls are evaded, dodged or side stepped. They test and retest the boundaries of the organisation. Here the boundaries exist as part of the story. Why is the Innovator at the edges of the Kingdom? Is it because she has tested the boundaries of the organisation?

6 Journeys

All stories are journeys and all journeys are stories. Walter Benjamin points to two kinds of storyteller; Yiannis Gabriel describes the researcher as a “fellow traveller” and points out the dangers of the researcher bringing an angle, opinion or judgement to bear in the **elicitation** process.

Journeys are of course not all in space – they can be in time, relationships, understanding. Of course these are all also interchangeable – this shifting of context for the journey is the process by which a story moves forwards. Sometimes, journeys are attended by a mentor, as in Dante's inferno.

Others have pointed to the way in which stories can act as maps, roadmaps, which help people to make sense of unfamiliar situations.

7 Maps

Stories can act as maps. But maps also act as stories and story generating devices. Here, the Treasure Map is a knowledge map of Corporania, a map of people's expertise and experience. It is a device for collecting, collaborating and exchanging stories and knowledge.

8 Location and Space

The broom cupboard in this story is the chosen space for the generation of the map. Storyscapes are strongly characteristic of the individual narrative giving it setting and meaning. The broom cupboard is the centre of the story's energy. Other stories have used the same device – wardrobes are an entry to a kingdom, mountain and forest settings are often central to a story's atmosphere and meaning. Gabriel cites Michel de Certeau (1984), who makes a distinction in his work on stories between "places" (organised planned and policed) and "spaces" (determined by actions of historical subjects, temporal, ephemeral, full of meaning).

9 Magic, Mystery and Surprise

There is a moment of magic in this story, which is in part reflected in the way borrowed space (the broom cupboard) is transformed into the nerve centre of a project, which starts to make things possible. The ideas of magic and magic space can be

developed in important ways in project structures generally. Equally important are ideas of surprise and mystery. Mystery (rather than intrigue) can be an important project asset, arousing curiosity and attracting people to find out more.

10 Serendipity, Chance Encounter

In most stories, the chance encounter is a catalyst to the action. The quest story is a particular example where this element is essential; the character introduced in this way becomes a major protagonist progressing the action and bringing a new viewpoint to the narrative, as in the case of the Sceptic here.

11 Cliché

This is a saying, normally overworked, which here is used to humorous effect to enhance the character of the new protagonist; as this is an oral story, it fits the context of instant recognition by the audience, tying it to current usage.

12 Elicitation

To gather relevant information, an interdisciplinary project team such as the one described here, needs to elicit stories from others. The Knowledge Co-ordinators will help the Innovator and her team to gather the stories and knowledge that will form the Treasure Map and which will be reflected for others who seek this knowledge within the Kingdom (organisation).

13 Contract, Collaboration and Commitment

Here we see the Sceptic being drawn into the story of the project. The power of collaboration is illustrated by the fact that she becomes enthusiastic in spite of her scepticism and as a convert is committed now to the outcome. She is now a willing participant rather than an outsider.

14 Defining Moments and Turning Points

In reviewing any project, story or history, there are defining moments or turning points that become pivots on which the story turns. One way of using this story is to ask people to retell it, as a warning story, or an inspirational or disaster story. Each group will find a turning point in the story from which to create subtle shifts, and so alter the nature of the lessons in the story. This technique can be used in, for example, analysing lessons learned from projects.

There is also a relation to the use of Soft Systems Methodology and Systems thinking – identifying the points of leverage for creating new stories for the future.

15 Artefacts and Negotiated Meaning

The first time the Knowledge Map is referred to with capital letters it has a changed status. It has become an entity. Stories themselves can be described or viewed as artefacts, and of course, maps may also be viewed as stories, so now we have a fully circular, and slightly muddled set of images. In ethnography stories, rituals and material artefacts are all expressions of shared belief systems.

The Knowledge Map, and the values that underpin its construction, are both an expression of an emergent system of shared beliefs and a kind of ethnographic view of Corporania.

The role of artefacts extends beyond that of creative stimulus. Used properly, the act of collecting and archiving can play an important role in the creation of communities extending beyond organisational boundaries. Alternatively, they can serve as a catalyst to capture and preserve the important experiences of a project in such a way as to develop tools for understanding.

Corporania

Part Two

Storytelling

Corporania

4 Storytelling Guidance Notes

Introduction: Definition, Purpose, Approach

What is a story?

Aristotle defined a story with a successful plot as “the successful change from one status quo to another, to the emotional satisfaction of the user”.

A story is a way of communicating information and ideas, which is memorable to the listener. It informs and inspires, often using common memories to communicate moral or factual truths, which underlie human experience and behaviour.

Stories have their roots in an oral, shared tradition of myth and legend. From the earliest of times philosophers, leaders and teachers have used parables and fables to give insight and vision to others. British law is based on case law – interpretations of the law retain their context.

A story is a safe way of exploring issues and opening minds to the possibilities of change. It fosters listening and concentrates our minds on the human as opposed to only the material needs in society. It stimulates discussion, recognises different points of view and ambiguity and promotes sharing as a way of moving forward.

A story can shift from one context to another and still provide meaning.

Why use story?

A story also secures an experience, makes it tangible and transferable. Gathering memory into a story is a way of

testing the experience in which it is rooted. Stories can be seen as a trace of experience. So stories actually produce meaning, and can be seen as sense-making tools that do more than reflect or provide an interpretation of events.

This meaning can be particularly important in providing continuity and purpose when jobs and structures change. In times of rapid change stories can also act as a vehicle for quiet voices which otherwise get crowded out.

There is also a “people” end of this particular equation. People also make meaning and stories are an example of them providing an opportunity for others to do it. We will consider the ways in which stories have been used recently in organisations later in these notes but it is worth quoting Stephen Denning’s experience here:

Why storytelling?

Nothing else worked.

Charts left listeners bemused.

Prose remained unread.

Dialogue was just too laborious and slow.

Time after time, when faced with the task of persuading a group of managers or front-line staff in a large organization to get enthusiastic about a major change, I found that storytelling was the only thing that worked. (Denning: 2001, xiii)

How are stories told?

Approaches to storytelling are as varied as its long history. Stories may be told orally or in a written form. The most immediate medium is the oral one, both for elicitation of stories and for passing them on. They may be told by a professional

performer, a manager for organisational purposes or informally between colleagues or friends, or to children.

The **Treasure Map** is a story that was collected orally and is intended to be used in the intimacy of a face to face setting as an oral history or teaching story. In fact it is an organisational story – a corporate fable. Stories told in a traditional context are often to support, further or change a culture; they are now being told for similar reasons in organisations. There are different advantages and problems in each approach. For example in oral storytelling, an important characteristic of the making and sharing of stories is the intimacy of the setting in which it takes place, and the related networks of trust and mutuality that evolve as a result. In using story, it is important to be acutely aware of the fragility of such structures and the ease with which they can be damaged irreparably. To create a story which will be communicated without the original teller, author or actors is sometimes difficult. One way of transferring the story is to use transitional objects, or artefacts, to effect the transfer from a collection of individual experiences to a collective memory.

It was found that in once instance we have studied, an organisation had developed a concept of “Unburied Time Capsules”. The project team selected important artefacts. By describing what these mean to the initiators of a new project, the team is actively seeking to capture and transfer important histories and stories which will influence success.

In our view, this method, and others like it, make an important bridge between the physical and the conceptual, or the public and the private, using narrative and storytelling technique expressed through artefacts. There is also a nice counterpoint between speed and longevity. Projects begin and end with teams dissolving. Handled correctly, the collections (or artefacts) used

to encapsulate project histories, and pass them on, provide continuity in change. Wenger (1998), in his work on communities of practice, emphasises this interaction of participation and artefact as key to the existence of shared meaning in communities. Schein (1992) underscores the importance of artefacts as the visible expression of the hidden layer of an organisation and the basic underlying assumptions, unconscious beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings that are taken for granted and not questioned.

Objects, used in this way, can act as transitional. They can act as mnemonic devices, recalling time, place and action.

Every time a story is told and every time it is heard, it will in any case subtly change though the central meaning should remain. It is however open to changes in emphasis by the storyteller in interaction with an audience and different interpretations reliant on the perceptions of the listeners. It is worth quoting Walter Benjamin here:

The storytelling that thrives for a long time in the milieu of work - the rural, the maritime and the urban – is itself an artisan for of communication, as it were. It does not aim to convey the pure essence of the thing, like information or a report. It sinks the thing into the life of the storyteller, in order to bring it out of him again. Thus traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel.
(Benjamin: 1999, p. 91)

In written stories, the problems and advantages are rather different but again may depend on differing perceptions that influence language. In one organisation it was found that people were almost entirely unaware of the difference between written

and spoken, internal and external communications and the impact of those differences. A strong and effective storytelling capacity in their interactions with the outside world was transposed in the inner world into an acutely bureaucratic reporting structure, which also had status attached. The loss of immediacy and relevance as things are encoded into the written language of the organisation cannot be stressed too strongly. This is also characteristic for written stories and books – there is a dependence on people using their imagination to recapture the immediacy of the experience. It is not so vivid as oral storytelling but it does allow for greater exploration by the reader.

Story Types

1. Traditional Stories

A short summary of the various categories of traditional stories may help us understand how they were used and how their structure is still evident through storytelling in corporate organisations and communities of practice. These stories also show how imagination is fired and insight given into human behaviour.

Fables

These are stories that use archetypes, often using animals to take the threat from the story and to communicate a moral or a lesson underpinning the values of society. Aesop's story of the Tortoise and the Hare, La Fontaine's story of the Grasshopper and the Ant, praise thrift and methodical hard work for example.

Parables

These also preach morals relating to human behaviour using simple examples. They underpin religious as well as societal codes and often try to convey complex and difficult ideas such as forgiveness; the Prodigal Son is a good example.

Myths, Quests, Sagas

These stories often involve encounters between the natural and the supernatural world. They frequently centre on a quest – the Golden Fleece, the Holy Grail – involving journeys and meetings with the spiritual world. There is sometimes a mentor who guides the main protagonist. These stories usually contain a central conflict and a reward for valour or virtue – not necessarily earthly. They also contain warnings against the breaking of the societal code – usually warrior society. The Icelandic and Norwegian Saga, often stretching over more than one generation, can also be subsumed here.

Legends

These have their roots in real historical events around which embroidered stories have been made. They contain elements of history, myth and often magic. Merlin and King Arthur as well as the Irish legends are excellent examples of these.

Fairy Tales

By their very nature, they contain elements of fantasy and magic. They are also part of our oral inheritance, even though many were written down by such literary figures as the Grimm brothers and Perrault. They are primarily aimed at children, and have a strong teaching message – good and evil are clear cut and the poor and disadvantaged are often lent magic to address the power balance.

The Treasure Map contains elements of all the types of traditional story described here. Probably, for this reason, The Treasure Map strikes a resonance with a broad range of people operating in a wide variety of organisations.

The power, in storytelling, of de-construction from original events and people is well demonstrated, as is the effective re-

construction as a universal story to stimulate new ways of seeing, hearing and responding.

2. Corporate and Community Stories

Why are stories being used by organisations and in communities, rather than best practice databases? One reason is that a story creates a dynamic. A story presupposes both a narrator and a listener whose different viewpoints affect how the story is told. In different circumstances the emphasis or the selection of content may be altered without necessarily changing the inner truth to be conveyed.

The teller of the story has a listener who will respond and become the author of a further story, building on, adapting and/or contrasting the earlier story always in the broad sense, including material and social aspects. There are a number of different ways of using story in the organisational or community context.

Hidden Histories

One important aspect of story creation is that the structure makes it possible to disinter hidden, often painful histories. This creates a possible shift from a culture of blame to a culture where the story becomes a device for maintaining organisational truth where a project goes through difficult times, or where past failures burden new projects. Using such structures as Learning History methods (MIT), it is possible to examine difficult issues, and transfer important, sometimes painful, learning.

Medicine, Law and Other Case-Based Work

By opening up discussions on ethics in order to explore change issues. By promoting listening to narratives by patients and others involved in their histories in order to

promote more holistic approaches. By providing context for legal decisions which explores interpretation and supports reuse.

Leadership and Organisational Culture

By recognising that stories play an important part in institutional memory, managers have made efforts to become part of the process. Attempts are now being made to find (or construct) and circulate stories as a way of changing or strengthening organisational values, see for example *Social Entrepreneurs* (Leadbeater: 1997) and "The Cunning Plots of Leadership" (Stewart: 1998). Managers need to recognise that stories allow people to share knowledge safely and to promote trust, which is essential to enable an organisation and its people to manage uncertainty.

Managing Change.

Stories can be used as instruments of change; managers can start to anticipate and plan the collection of assets relating to a project or initiative which can make good stories for future use – anecdotes, project learnings, pictures, videos, taped meetings. They can use stories to gain commitment to the change process.

Managing Risk – The Story as a "Third Eye"

In Australian aboriginal culture, the story is sometimes known as the "third eye," although nowadays the expression comes to the surface more in the resolution of cultural and legal issues, and conflict. Stories are taught by one generation to another and are a way of providing precedents in times of crisis where there is no time to teach and learn, but where anticipation and responsiveness already exist. Simulations, scenarios and case studies all provide a kind of "third eye".

The Chinese use stories from different eras, to provide a safe way to examine current conflict. This, in a different way, is managing the risk in a situation, making it possible for individuals to explore their immediate situation in a more open way.

Learning and Development

The Goal (Goldratt and Cox: 1993) uses narrative story to introduce new concepts of production scheduling to an audience not renowned for its avid devouring of books – text books or novels. Another book aimed at creating changes in behaviour among industrial managers and supervisors is *Zapp! The Lightning of Empowerment* (Byham and Cox: 1999). This uses characters from myth and legend together with metaphor to bring new perspectives to a familiar organisational culture.

Presentations and Persuasion

To hold the attention of an audience is a fundamental skill in storytelling – it is also an ability shown by the most accomplished presenters. We are all used to bullet point presentations in business, sales and strategic planning meetings and they have the advantage of being simple, clear and short yet allow the presenter to elaborate freely. However, there are problems in this format; they tend to be general rather than specific; they avoid the complexity of some issues in the search for economy and brevity; but perhaps most important, they are rarely memorable, often failing to obtain involvement, retention and commitment..

Perhaps because of this many organisations are deliberately adopting storytelling techniques in their presentations. The Environment Agency is using it to train technical specialists to talk to non-technical audiences and to help them understand and remember the message; by using metaphors and pictures,

complex processes can be communicated effectively and memorably.

Learning Histories – “Lessons Learnt”

These tell stories about critical events in the lives of organisations or communities of practice in the words of the people who experience them. Such defining moments might be a successful project, a new initiative, the process of a difficult merger or a painful downsizing. Within the narrative there are questions, observations and individual quotations or interpretations, which help readers to think about the story in the light of their personal experiences.

Readers then meet in small groups to discuss the story and gain a deeper understanding of the thinking and the critical choices, which it encapsulates. As with traditional storytelling people can together re-experience the events and learn their meaning collectively. They may explore ways in which it is applicable to future planning and decision making.

Communities of Practice and “Deep Stories”

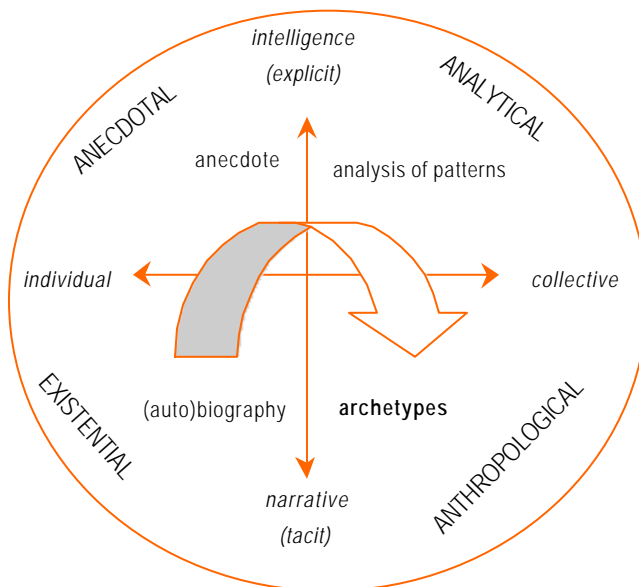
The Chief Executive of a Local Authority said recently at a conference, “there has been a collapse of deep stories”. He cited the use of structured stories as a way to align the different providers (health, education, social services, police) to the citizens of his region. Each provider tended to see only the story of their own service and not the story of the end user who may need several such services. The “Deep Story” is the story of the whole context and the interrelationship between the various organisational entities.

Deep Stories can be constructed by organisations that are transforming themselves. A conscious collection of anecdote (through scenarios, audits, structured interviews) can yield

insights and patterns about the important stories of the enterprise. The components can then be constructed into archetypal stories around which organisations, teams and individuals can organise themselves. Gabriel (2000) believes that the power of stories lies partly in the fact that they can operate at both surface and deep levels.

Using Stories in a Knowledge Management Context – From Anecdote to Archetype

Stories and anecdotes, personal experiences and individual recollections can be analysed, deconstructed and then synthesised into core stories. The following diagram shows how useful it may be to overlay the conversion of personal experiences into core stories (and back again) on the simplistic matrices of knowledge management (the Individual to Collective axis, intercepted by the Tacit to Explicit axis):



Dangers in Organisational Storytelling

Gabriel (2000) examines the role of story in organisational research and sounds a note of caution. One risk, for him is the interpretative stance of the enquirer or researcher (whom he calls a fellow traveller). Another is lack of clarity about the unit of analysis. It could be focused on

- The individual story
- The storyteller
- Specific incidents in the organisation's history
- Specific themes
- Particular types of story
- The whole organisation

Scapegoating, or the reinforcing of unhelpful archetypes, is another potential danger. Sometimes, research activities can raise serious questions of unhelpful stereotyping rather than helpful sense making and communication. In other words the behaviour of the researcher can change the situation for the worse.

A more serious risk is the ethic underpinning the use of story. Any organisation, unit or individual needs to be very responsible in consciously adopting such a technique. Stories as virus, or planting stories with manipulative intent, can be extremely dangerous (Snowden 1999).

It is well known how fast rumour can travel, as in the story of the man from HR being stopped by the health and safety inspector for running in the factory.

"What are you up to in such a hurry?"

"Well, I've just started a rumour down in stores and I'm trying to see if I can beat it to the other end of the factory."

A further risk is that the story is quickly corrupted on its way. The version that spreads will be the one that people want to hear - it may be very different from what you intended.

Another important point to consider is the degradation of the story should it become disconnected from its custodian, or teller. Sometimes this needs to be managed, while the story is shared for a particular purpose. Sometimes the story, or mosaic of stories, will unfold in a complex and unmanaged way, which is fine. But beware of "the blunt monster with uncounted heads, The still-discordant wavering multitude" (Shakespeare, *Henry IV*, Part 2: 1597).

Structure of Stories

What are the characteristics of a successful story – and how can we use them to construct our own stories for either individual or organisational insight? In 1996, Nigel Watts expanded on Aristotle's definition to identify eight critical points in a story:

- stasis
- trigger
- the quest
- surprise
- critical choice
- climax
- reversal
- resolution

More simply, on the first day of this millenium in an article in the Financial Times, Hugh Dickinson reflecting on the hidden story behind it, stated that if we are to have hope, "we need to believe that there is a beginning, a middle and an end and that things are going somewhere like an arrow". The framing of continuous time into chunks with a beginning, middle and an end is important for sense making.

The study of myths, fables, parables and traditional stories shows certain common characteristics in structure, too. Though of course the content will differ, the pattern is often similar.

A six-piece storytelling structure, which is almost universal in all stories, includes:

- the main character/setting (who and where?)
- the task and mission (what?),
- the helper(s) (who else?)
- the obstacle (what problems?)
- the way the characters cope with the obstacle (how?)
- the outcome (after the story – what happened?)

The Invitation To Listen

In oral storytelling there are many calls and responses for starting a storytelling session used as a way of inviting the listener to step over the threshold and into a story space. In West African story the cry from the storyteller is "Il", the response from the audience "Ou." For Caribbean stories it's "Cric/Crac." For Irish stories, it's "A cockerel and a hen/Let the story begin." For Jewish stories it's "A story, a story/Let it come, let it go." This leads on to the real beginning of the story.

A Beginning – which comprises

- an invitation to listen which should be arresting and often gives the context or setting.
Examples of well-known beginnings are:
“Once upon a time – it could be tomorrow...”
(traditional: oral but with a twist)
“To begin at the beginning: it is a spring moonless night in the small town, starless and bible black...” (Dylan Thomas, *Under Milk Wood*)
“It was a bright cold day in April and the clocks were striking thirteen” (George Orwell, *1984*)
- an expansion of the content or setting
- an initiating event
- a main protagonist

The Middle – which often contains

- a quest or journey
- at least one important meeting or parting
- a number of recognisable characters
- a discussion of the feelings/motivation of the protagonist(s) – their internal responses to the events
- problems and reactions which are encountered – external responses to the events/characters

The Ending – which will usually present

- a consequence, outcome or denouement
- the reflection and response of the protagonist(s)
- an external response – a moral or comment from the storyteller

Examples of well-known endings are:

“Reader – I married him” (Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*)

“After all, tomorrow is another day” (Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind*)

“The creatures outside looked from man to pig and from pig to man again – but already it was impossible to say which was which” (George Orwell, *Animal Farm*).

Elements and Further Characteristics of Stories

Cast and Character – Archetypes and Ambiguity

Characters in stories are often presented as archetypes as in the Corporania Story or as animals as in fables. This is to allow us to recognise characteristics easily while removing threat or blame. Sometimes one or more characters take on the narrative and the result will be an ambiguity in the story as it is seen from the perspective of different people. *Sophie's World* (Jostein Gaarder) is a good example of this, as is *The Alexandria Quartet* by Lawrence Durrell.

In storytelling, not only will the storyteller often adopt and use a different “voice” but will ask the reader or listener to adopt different “ears”, setting them too in a different role to give a different perception of events.

In organisational terms, there is frequent ambiguity in the relationship between complex projects and sponsors, boards of directors, fund holders. The use of story provides an opportunity to develop a common understanding through the exploration of the ambiguity – whilst accepting that it will always be there.

Exploring Dynamic and Difference

Through engaging the listener and sharing experience, a story facilitates learning and movement, which are both purely voluntary activities.

Stories often represent either classical recurrent cases or extreme atypical ones; they develop our abilities to question expectations and **interrupt** stereotyped thought patterns. Interruption can be a great irritant. It can also be used as a powerful device to dislocate expectation and shift people out of normal responses. This can be done in quite subtle, sensory ways, or by tiny shifts in pattern. The story construct itself is an interruption, a shift from the expected norm of report or best practice database. The shift itself creates a different kind of **interaction**.

A deliberate use of interruption is found in "Nested Stories". This is a technique used by many expert storytellers. Billy Conolly uses this approach to hilarious effect, holding the audience's attention through a series of related and yet different stories.

Stories open up different possible interpretations that can be shared to explore new developments positively and to help us adjust to change.

Labor and Waletzky (1967, quoted by Gabriel in his *Storytelling in Organizations*) note that only incidents that are unusual, unexpected or unique are capable of supplying story material. The work done on story, and communities of practice, inside Rank Xerox (John Seeley Brown) partly substantiates this.

Conclusions

We hope that this notebook has proved an interesting introduction to the uses of storytelling in organisations. Many of business presentations today – notably strategic planning – have now adopted this style, rather than the "bullet point" approach, in

order to make the topic more memorable. Giving a story, or narrative presentation, has been found to communicate more quickly, increase retention and gain people's commitment more rapidly. "Lessons learnt" stories have helped people to exchange experiences with trust and without blame, to build on success and avoid failure. Stories have also been used effectively to steer change and explore values. The work that Sparknow has undertaken with clients has used all of these forms of story to help clients achieve their particular objectives.

Finally, storytelling, as an oral performance, is now being revived at festivals all over the world. People are recognising storytelling for its power in feeding the imagination, enriching thought and unlocking both creativity and innovation.

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Ward, Victoria and Holtham, Clive (2000, Knowledge Management: Concepts and Controversies, University of Warwick, UK), *The Role of Private and Public Spaces in Knowledge Management.*

Watts, Nigel (1996, www.ccweb.co.uk), *The Storyscape, Introduction.* An examination of the structure of story, as derived from Aristotelean principles.

Corporania

Weick, Karl E. (1995, Sage Publications), *Sensemaking in Organizations – Foundations for Organisational Science*.

Weiner, Edmund and Simpson, John (1991, OUP), *Oxford English Dictionary*, Compact Edition. The scientific description of nations, races of men, their customs, habits and differences.

Wenger, Etienne (1998, CUP), *Communities of Practice, Learning, Meaning and Identity*. NB not directly about story, but a set of insights into the combination of “artefacts” and “participation”, which make up “negotiated meaning”. This book has been an important influence in prompting Sparknow’s work in story construction.

Yates, Frances A (1999, Pimlico), *The Art of Memory*.

Links

www.ankerhus.dk/storytelling.htm

Organizational Storytelling: Creating Enduring Values in a High-Tech Company – Soren R. Nymark. *New Book*.

www.ccweb.co.uk/home1.html

Nick Franchini's Storyscape website that derives its structures from the poetics of Aristotle, describes narrative sequences and looks into the "Valley of Change" – using a story to explain I.T., How to tell Stories and Giving People the Will to Work (all within Storyscape).

www.m.pace.edu/rmd/1998_forum_postmodern_stories.html

The Postmodern Turn of form, Stories-as-Objects to Stories-in-Context methods. A paper differentiating between these two conceptions. (See also, *Using Narrative and Telling Stories*) – David M. Boje.

www.ccweb.co.uk/course.html

Storytelling in organisations. Courses at Emerson College.

www.research.ibm.com/knowsoc/project-goals.html

How can storytelling be supported and enriched in organizations.

www.sri-hq.com/iapmf/stories.htm

Stories as a means for Assimilating Knowledge & Practice – AMACOM.

See also *Fast Company*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Centre for Creative Thinking* and *Fortune*, who have all published articles and papers over the last few years.

www.anu.edu.au/law/pub/teaching_material/culture/module6.html
Culture, Law & Conflict Resolution Australia. Fascinating use of storytelling.

Traditional African Storytelling Links

We have selected only a few of many. They should provide the links that you require to cover most of the continent.

www.lifeinafrica.com

www.afriprov.org

www.motherlandnigeria.com/stories.html

Guilds and Online Communities

There are storytelling guilds all over the world; country, state, province, county, town. They are easily found via a good international search engine. There are also many websites on matters such as folklore and urban legends, which can yield repositories of stories to draw on as materials.