Theses and Dissertations

2012

A good story changes everything

Daraunda Bryant

Recommended Citation

Bryant, Daraunda, "A good story changes everything" (2012). *Theses and Dissertations*. 273.
https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/etd/273

A GOOD STORY CHANGES EVERYTHING

A Research Project

Presented to the Faculty of

The George L. Graziadio

School of Business and Management

Pepperdine University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

in

Organization Development

---

by

Daraunda Bryant

August 2012

This research project, completed by

DARAUNDA BRYANT

under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been

submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The George L. Graziadio School of Business

and Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Date: August 2012

Faculty Committee

Committee Chair, Julie Chesley, Ph.D.

Committee Member, Terri Egan, Ph.D.

Linda Livingstone, Ph.D., Dean
The George L. Graziadio
School of Business and Management

Abstract

Although applied in organizational settings, storytelling is not commonly used or understood in change efforts. Furthermore, storytelling's impact on changing organizational culture has not been widely examined. This study therefore sought to answer the question: What is the effect of stories on culture change? Twenty-five participants (4 managers and 21 associates) completed one-on-one, in-person interviews prior to a storytelling workshop. All associates attended the storytelling workshop, followed by interviews of all four managers and four randomly selected associates regarding culture change. This study found that storytelling, in particular the storytelling workshop, influenced the behaviors and attitudes of organizational members and, as a result, began to impact the organization's culture. Organization development practitioners can apply storytelling to culture change strategies by telling their own stories, eliciting the personal stories of organization members, and encouraging management to reinforce the desired culture that has been changed.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1

Introduction

It is a challenge to deny the constant bombardment of messages. With commercials, PowerPoint presentations, emails, texts, and memos, people are in a continuous state of processing statistics, numbers, ideas, and theories. For example, the bathrooms of Chicago's O'Hare International Airport are being equipped with 150 mirrors capable of running commercials continuously. Also there are numerous 24-hour news stations that stream headlines at the bottom of the television screen at the same time the news anchor is relaying other events (UPI, 2011). Data such as this is readily available in vast amounts for the general public. Cameron and Quinn (2006) stated, "More information was produced last year than was produced in the previous five thousand years. The amount of information available to the average person doubles every year" (p. 8). With the continued advancement of technology and data generation, it is likely more information is present to contend with since the six years even since this statistic was produced.

Organizations are also experiencing the impact of increased messages. A study conducted by the Radicati Group reported, "The average office worker spends 41% of each work day managing email volume" (Cullen, 2011, para. 5). Additionally, *The Economist* stated, "Wal-Mart, a retail giant, handles more than 1m customer transactions every hour, feeding databases estimated at more than 2.5 petabytes—the equivalent of 167 times the books in America's Library of Congress" (Cukier, 2010, para. 2). In 2010, a global survey of 543 business executives focusing on this flood of data, referred to as "big data," found "The data deluge is real. In fact, the majority of respondents report being overwhelmed by the amount of data in the workplace" (Avanade, 2010, para. 2).

Given this vast amount of data, how can messages be relayed effectively with the greatest impact, especially those designed to inspire change? Behaviors and beliefs rarely change by simply stating the facts. Americans can easily identify the dangers of smoking. In his study evaluating risk comprehension, Weinstein (1999) found, "When questions ask about specific effects, lung cancer, heart disease, and emphysema are the diseases most commonly associated with smoking by the lay person. A large majority of survey respondents agree that cigarettes can cause those illnesses" (para. 18). Yet, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2002) estimates, "each day, about 1,800 adults 18 years of age or older begin smoking on a daily basis." Simply citing facts and statistics does not appear to have the motivational pull to stimulate change.

In order to be impactful, data associated with change needs to appeal to both intellect and emotions (Denning, 2007). Since childhood, the medium for learning and understanding the world has been storytelling (Baldwin & Dudding, 2007, p. 45). Children are told fables to learn lessons of ethics and build character; most can recall stories with great accuracy into adulthood. Narratives of ancestors are passed down through generations, allowing a sense of pride and association for an individual's history. Or, as Pink (2005) stated in his *New York Times* and *BusinessWeek* bestseller *A Whole New Mind*, stories provide "context enriched by emotion, a deeper understanding of how we fit and why that matters" (p. 115). Given this, it is interesting to explore the impact of storytelling on change.

Background and Significance

To consider storytelling's impact on change, we must first understand the significance of storytelling. Interestingly, the reach of storytelling extends far beyond stories told within the family unit. In fact, the number one bestselling book of all time is

the Bible, having been translated into more than 2,000 languages and dialects (Griese, 2010). The founder and president of the International Consortium for Executive Development Research, Douglas Ready, stated, "The Bible is one of the best examples of how storytelling has been used to shape behaviors, cultural norms and core values" (2002, p. 64).

The impact of stories is also important to understand. An effective story has the power to encapsulate, contextualize, and emotionalize a message (Pink, 2005). It does so due to several factors. First, the ability to receive data and organize it into a concise package aids in retention. The immense abundance of information makes remembering facts difficult. However, weaving vital information into a story allows for summarization and easier recall. Professional presentation advisor Jon Thomas asserts facts of a story "are easily recalled because you're recalling them within the context of the story, as opposed to a bullet-point list" (2009, para. 10). Second, stories allow us to personally relate and internalize the information, giving significance to abstract ideas. President and chief executive officer of WisdomTools, Inc., Craig Wortmann (2008) wrote, "When we show people slides with bullet points on them, what we are actually showing them is a lot of rich information that has been stripped down to its bare minimum for expediency's sake" (p. 136). Wortmann continued, "We all have so much information coming at us all the time, that we've learned how to tune out most of it" (p. 136). Giving meaning to data makes it worthy of our attention and consideration. Third, and possibly most significant, a compelling story causes us to feel. Award-winning writer and director Robert McKee recognized the power of stories in organizations by stating, "A big part of a CEO's job is to motivate people to reach certain goals. To do that, he or she must engage their emotions, and the key to their hearts is story" (Fryer, 2003, p. 52).

Not only is storytelling influential for individuals, but narratives can be impactful for organizations as well. With Appreciative Inquiry, "people share stories of exceptional accomplishment, discuss the core life-giving factors of their organization, and deliberate on the aspects of their organization's history that they most value and want to bring to the future" (Watkins & Mohr, 2001, p. 43). Additionally, with the modernization of technology and information exchange, globalization has continued to expand and become the standard model for many industries. However, working with varying cultures has its challenges. Barker and Gower (2010) wrote, "Evolving multinational working relationships provide a rich source of information, products, and business opportunities for every corporate venture. With this global interaction, however, comes the challenge of effectively communicating among work groups with different backgrounds" (p. 295). They also discussed "Narrative Paradigm Theory" or "NPT," a communication technique focusing on storytelling (pp. 299-303). They argued that "Based on its inherent assumptions and proven effectiveness in cross-cultural communication, it seems that the increased and effective use of NPT might be the best solution to the challenges of organizational diversity" (p. 309). Or, phrased more succinctly, Pink (2005) wrote, "There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories" (p. 105). Stories are actively used in all cultures and have the capability to lessen the effects of cultural diversity. It appears that regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, religion, organizational affiliation, or geographical location, all humans have the ability to send and receive messages through stories.

Purpose and Research Question

Because of the vast amounts of data received, the speed with which change needs to happen, and the cross-cultural interactions globalization affords, leaders need a more

effective way to inspire and motivate transformation. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of storytelling as an agent of change, specifically in the case of culture change. The research question asks: What is the effect of stories on culture change?

Methodology

This thesis applied a storytelling workshop intervention to a division within a mid-sized logistics company. Semi-structured interviews were conducted prior to the workshop with all 25 members of the division, 21 associates and 4 managers. Following the storytelling workshop, all four managers and four randomly selected associates were interviewed again.

Thesis Outline

This chapter introduced storytelling, including the background, purpose, and significance. In addition, storytelling as an agent of change was presented as a possible value to both individuals and organizations in changing culture. Chapter 2 reviews and integrates the existing literature on storytelling. Chapter 3 explains the methodology used in this thesis including the research design, sample, interview protocols, and the process by which the data was collected and analyzed. Chapter 4 evaluates the research findings, and chapter 5 presents the summary and conclusions as well as implications of this research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter summarizes and synthesizes existing literature and research on storytelling, specifically as it relates to business practices today. Themes reviewed are storytelling's impact on change, knowledge transfer, management, and leadership. The considerations to using storytelling in a business environment are also explored. Information presented demonstrates a gap in the field of study of storytelling, supporting the research question: What is the effect of stories on culture change? In this case, storytelling becomes not only a way to convey information, but also a tool to initiate change. The chapter is organized to start with a history and brief overview of storytelling. This is followed by operational definitions and an in-depth examination and analysis of the literature regarding storytelling in business, organized by themes. Considerations are discussed, and the chapter concludes with a summary and highlights the need for further examination of the research question.

Overview

Storytelling was practiced prior to the existence of written language in the form of drawings, dancing, and narrations. To help explain phenomena not understood, such as thunder and lightning, stories of gods and goddesses were developed and told. In his book *The Mind of Mankind*, Hamilton (1996) described the history of storytelling and how storytellers evolved into "mankind's most influential people" (p. 42). According to Hamilton, storytellers from the Hebrew tribe told tales, created traditions, and passed down their stories verbally for generations. Once these stories were collected and written down, the word of God was developed and the Bible was created. Followers of Jesus Christ later added their own stories, and the New Testament was added (pp. 42-46).

Today, storytelling continues as an inherent part of our society and culture. Lives are impacted and influenced daily through books, television, movies, music, art, and religion. A story told about an automobile accident on a particular road can alter a person's route or create an emotional response. Stories help shape our beliefs, values, likes, dislikes, and dreams (Sinclair, 2005). Additionally, they help design our future and define our past (Baldwin & Dudding, 2007). History is simply the telling of stories passed on from one generation to the next (Hamilton, 1996). "Storytelling is one of the few human traits that are truly universal across culture and through all of known history" (Hsu, 2008, "A Good Yam" section, para. 1).

Stories also have been shown to be extremely powerful in facilitating great change. For example, Nazi Germany demonstrates the power of story in two diametrically opposed ways. Adolf Hitler's book *Mein Kampf* (English translation: "My Struggle") clearly outlines his major ideas that culminated in the horrors of World War II ("Mein Kampf: Nazi Germany," n.d.). Hitler used his book to tell stories of "the Jewish peril," writing of an alleged Jewish conspiracy to gain world leadership. Hitler also used *Mein Kampf* to introduce his belief in Aryan superiority. His story was so convincing that even though Hitler had brown hair and blue eyes, blond hair and blue eyes became the ideal. These German Aryans were placed at the top of the hierarchy and afforded many advantages, most importantly the right to life. The changes that Hitler's stories enacted cost six million Jewish lives (*The Simon Wiesenthal Center's 36 Questions about the Holocaust,* n.d., Question 2).

In opposition to the destruction and devastation Hitler's stories helped to create, the story of a teenage girl inspired millions. *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* (Frank, 1947) introduced the world to the severe impact of war and the enormous cost of

disregarding human life. Her story inspired world leaders such as United States President John F. Kennedy, South African President Nelson Mandela, and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton (Aspel, 1999). Anne Frank's story personalized the struggle for human dignity in the face of discrimination and genocide. In the introduction, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote, "Written by a young girl—and the young are not afraid of telling the truth—it is one of the wisest and most moving commentaries on war and its impact on human beings that I have ever read" (Frank, 1947, p. xiv). Because of Anne Frank's story, the world ceased to see solely the destruction of the Jewish people during Nazi Germany, but also saw the obliteration of a young girl with parents, a sister, friends, and dreams for her future. Because of their stories, both Adolf Hitler and Anne Frank have had lasting influence in the world, albeit in contrasting ways.

The influence of stories is also recognized in a diversity of subject areas. For example, Amazon.com lists more than 200 books under the subject heading "storytelling art and technique." Although much has been written about storytelling from a variety of genres such as literature, folklore, and education, business literature has only recently applied the topic. Prior to 1989, the database Business Source Premier listed only three academic journals or trade publications under the subject terms "storytelling and business." This number grew to 22 articles between 1990 and 1999. However, the years 2000 to 2011 saw the greatest increase with 179 new articles. These articles regarding storytelling in organizational settings are the focus of this literature review.

Definitions

Because the research question addresses the impact of storytelling on changing a culture, an operational definition of culture had to be established. Unlike biological instincts humans are born with, culture is learned; therefore attitudes, beliefs, and

behaviors vary greatly depending on the group (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010).

Culture also has varied definitions. An anthropological definition of culture is, ". . . taken

in its broad, ethnographic sense, [culture] is that complex whole which includes

knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits

acquired by man as a member of society" ("Culture," n.d.a). A psychological definition

is, "Culture is the set of ideas, behaviors, attitudes, and traditions that exist within large

groups of people" ("Culture," n.d.b). Business researcher and author Edgar Schein

(2010) defined culture as follows:

> The culture of a group can now be defined as a pattern of shared basic
> assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation
> and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid
> and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think,
> and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 18)

Given the focus of this thesis, this will be the operational definition of culture for the

purpose of this study.

Themes

When reviewing the literature regarding stories and storytelling in business, four

major themes emerged—change, knowledge transfer, management, and leadership.

Table 1 outlines these themes.

Change. One of the primary themes when examining the literature on storytelling

in business is change. Effective storytelling can garner attention, address feelings, and

inspire in a short amount of time (Stoval, 2007). Stories add context back into data

(McClintock, 2004; Wortmann, 2008). Imagine trying to ride a bike without actually

getting on a bike. Pure data is reading about the movements needed to master bike

riding. Adding stories is equivalent to getting on the bike and moving. By slowing the

Table 1

Major Themes of Storytelling Literature in Business

Major Themes	Summary	Sources/Researchers
Change	Storytelling is an effective, although underutilized, tool for inspiring/facilitating change within an organization or supporting an organization's members during times of change	Adamson, Pine, VanSteenhoven, & Kroupa, 2006; Brown, 2007; Denning, 2004, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2011; McCarthy, 2002; McClintock, 2004; Schein, 2010; Stoval, 2007; Watkins & Mohr, 2001; Wortmann, 2008
Knowledge Transfer	Stories in the form of case studies, scenarios, and personal history can aid in the learning and dissemination of the organization's culture and specific roles/job	Barker & Gower, 2010; Boyce, 1996; Damon, 2008; Fryer, 2003; Gargiulo, 2006; McLellan, 2006; O'Neil, 2008; Schein, 2010; Spaulding, 2010; Tyler, 2007; Watkins & Mohr, 2001
Management	Storytelling as a method used by managers to facilitate group identity/ focus and collaboration	Blair, 2006; Denning, 2004; James & Minnis, 2004; Kahan, 2006; Pederson, 2010
Leadership	Stories can assist with creating better leaders within an organization, and storytelling can be utilized by leaders to create better organizations	Cashman, 2008; Chopra, 2010; Denning, 2007; Karakas, 2009; Pink, 2005; Ready, 2002

listener down, listeners are able to relate and reflect. Stories do not tell the listeners what to do, but rather let them draw their own conclusions, making change a less threatening proposition (Wortmann, 2008). But most importantly, stories capture imaginations and evoke emotions (Adamson, Pine, VanSteenhoven, & Kroupa, 2006; Denning, 2008a, 2008b; Fryer, 2003; Stoval, 2007; Wortmann, 2008). Data alone appeals to rationale and intelligence, but this is only half the target. If a manager seeks to encourage change, feelings need to be induced and an excitement for the future created (Denning, 2008a).

The written material on storytelling's impact on change falls within two categories: an attempt to inspire or facilitate change and change as it is occurring in an organization. Those articles addressing a leader wanting to encourage change in an organization agree that storytelling is a valid and effective tool (Adamson et al., 2006; Denning, 2004, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2011; McClintock, 2004; Stoval, 2007; Watkins & Mohr, 2001; Wortmann, 2008). Adamson et al. (2006) stated,

> So the key message executives should take away from this story on stories is this: Don't just spend countless hours, valuable brain cells, and barrels full of money doing the research, analysis, goal-setting, and implementation planning necessary to come up with an industry-altering strategy. If you want your change message to actually take hold—if you want it to transform how things are done in your world—then weave your message about the new strategy into a compelling and memorable story. (p. 41)

Stories are seen as a viable method for motivating change in today's business environment. Researchers find that leaders who rely solely on facts to gain the confidence and support of organization members to alter behaviors or beliefs are falling short for several reasons (Adamson et al., 2006; Denning, 2008a, 2008b; Wortmann, 2008). First, with the amount of information received by an individual on a daily basis, today's workers have become somewhat immune to data—it simply no longer seizes attention. With messages being delivered 24 hours a day through emails, television,

smart phones, radios, newspapers, PowerPoint presentations, and such, an ability to filter

and tune out information has been developed (Denning, 2008a, 2008b; Wortmann, 2008).

Wortmann (2008) described this phenomenon by writing, "In corporate America, it's

now official—people are bullet-proof" (p. 136). In his study on story's impact on

changing an organization, Wortmann also found that

> Stories are the most successful way to change a culture. By "adding back"
> context, stories carry success and failure messages, they allow us to reflect and
> learn by drawing us in, and finally stories influence us to create the right kinds of
> behavior. (p. 134)

Second, by simply providing numbers and statistics, change is treated as a basic

information issue. Adamson et al. (2006) found managers assume that if staff has the

correct data, change will naturally follow. However, their study determined that for

most, change can be intimidating or even considered risky. The status quo may not be

working, but at least it is predictable. Change provokes an emotional response that

simply providing numbers does not address. Their study also found, "Stories create the

experience that lets strategy be understood at a personal level. In order to be effective,

strategy must not just inform, it must inspire" (p. 37). Third, researchers found that

simply providing facts and figures to inspire change is less effective due to the advances

in technology, allowing organizational change to happen at a rapid pace. Not only do

businesses have the ability to change quickly, Lawler and Worley (2006) argued that

organizations must change quickly to be prosperous. They stated, "Change is all around

us and is occurring more and more rapidly. It demands the attention of every executive

and every organization that wants to survive" (p. 2). Therefore, a need exists to

communicate compellingly and quickly so people are swiftly energized and motivated to

make the alterations required for success. Watkins and Mohr (2001) spoke to this need

for rapid organizational change in their book *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination* by stating: "Sometimes the inherent slowness of traditional change processes makes organizations vulnerable to yet another shift in the environment or in leadership before the change effort can demonstrate results" (p. 24). They acknowledged the strength of stories in the workplace to initiate change by writing, "Stories have a depth and breadth that allows meaning to be conveyed much more effectively than would a list of key points or other analytical reports" (p. 77). Additionally, Denning (2008b) recognized the need for effective communication to inspire and support prompt change. He wrote,

> The imperative for faster innovation, the emergence of global networks of partners, the rapidly growing role of intangibles, the increasing ownership of the means of production by knowledge workers, the escalating power of customers in the marketplace and burgeoning diversity—all these forces imply a capacity to communicate in a compelling manner and mobilize people energetically and rapidly behind change. (pp. 129-130)

The "compelling manner" his study found most effective is storytelling (p. 130). Furthermore, Denning (2008b) asserted that storytelling is a skill all humans possess and managers should utilize when communicating change needed in an organization: "Leadership storytelling involves taking a capacity that people already have and applying it for constructive purposes. Anyone can master the discipline" (p. 130). Denning continued, "Storytelling is not a rare skill possessed by a few people born with the gift of gab. All human beings start spontaneously telling stories at age 2 and go on doing it for the rest of their lives" (p. 130).

If storytelling is such a powerful tool for inspiring change, why do so few leaders utilize it? Some believe it is too "warm and fuzzy" a concept for those in power (Adamson et al., 2006; Denning, 2008b). Still, others blame the education system in that

storytelling is not introduced in business schools as an effective instrument (Brown, 2007, p. 152). But the overwhelming reason given for the rare use of stories in a business setting is the inability of leaders to deliver an effective and appropriate tale to inspire change. This has led to another concept (and industry) in relation to stories being employed to embolden change—story tools and training. Several of the articles (Denning, 2008a, 2008b; Gargiulo, 2006; McClintock, 2004; Ready, 2002) listed step-by-step instructions and specific elements for developing a dynamic story. Wortmann (2008) not only develops and sells story tools, but provides a story matrix "designed to capture the stories that will most impact performance" (p. 138). Denning (2008b) offered four tips when using storytelling as a leadership tool to inspire change within an organization: learn "the narrative patterns relevant to business," "be authentic and truthful," understand that "'story listening' is just as important as storytelling," and "beware of the prevalent myths of organizational storytelling" (p. 130). In a separate article, Denning (2008a) advocated that leaders cultivate a storytelling competency through training, leadership development program, or outside workshop (p. 15).

Not only is storytelling an effective tool for inspiring change, it also has a function when change is already in progress. Management scholars have suggested that one of the uses of stories is to gather data (McCarthy, 2002; Watkins & Mohr, 2001). By allowing employees to tell organizational stories, feedback can be gathered about the change progress. Those impacted by the change can insightfully convey how the transformation is manifesting at varying levels within and outside the organization (McCarthy, 2002). Again, by only utilizing numbers and statistics, only part of the change process is being examined. Using stories generates "human data"—how employees feel about the differences in the organization, how customers are reacting to

the changes in business, the level of job satisfaction with different tasks or focus, etc. In his study of storytelling during organizational change, McCarthy found, "Listening to and studying organizational stories more carefully brings about a richer understanding of organizations and leadership in the contemporary turbulent environment" (p. 3).

In addition, during times of change, storytelling allows retention of organizational culture as tales are shared. Schein (2010) stated,

> All human systems attempt to maintain equilibrium and to maximize their autonomy vis-à-vis their environment. Coping, growth, and survival all involve maintaining the integrity of the system in the face of a changing environment that is constantly causing varying degrees of disequilibrium. (p. 300)

Therefore, as the internal or external environment demands that business is conducted in a different fashion for survival or growth, stories enable retention of those elements of the culture most valued and protected, giving organizational members some sense of stability during an unstable time of change (Stoval, 2007). Most significantly, McCarthy (2002) was able to show a strong correlation between a higher incidence of storytelling in an organization and resilience, commitment, and optimism during a time of change. McCarthy stated, ". . . the relationships were statically significant and directionally consistent, where increased storytelling was strongly associated with favorable commitment and higher resilience" (p. 186). He continued, "Organization members who are able to tell positive stories about past challenges are more likely to express optimistic outlooks" (p. 186). Overall, organizational stories during a period of transition or transformation can yield positive benefits for all impacted by the change.

The weakness regarding the literature on storytelling as an agent of change in business is the lack of empirical data. The articles in trade journals are not supported by studies or validated reports. There is also limited data obtained through action research

supporting the impact of storytelling on change; however, there are a number of articles that provide anecdotes or case study evidence. The only sources providing statistical data were doctoral candidate's dissertations. However, none of the research results refuted the philosophies provided by the industry experts. Supporting this gap in the literature, Tyler (2007) wrote, "Though the texts focusing on storytelling were laden with tips, tools, and techniques for using stories, largely missing was research by a third party investigating actual practice by HRD [human resource development] practitioners or the phenomenon of stories in organizations" (p. 560). Sinclair (2005) agreed with the lack of formal research regarding storytelling as an agent of change by stating, "The need for further research of the impacts of stories is evident" (p. 54).

Additionally, studies regarding storytelling and change do not address storytelling's ability to change the culture of an organization. Given the newness of storytelling to business literature and thought, the field is open for future research and study.

Knowledge transfer. When examining the literature relating to storytelling in the workplace, the second theme is knowledge transfer. A story is always going to impart some information—the hero, the villain, the feeling, the impact, etc. However, stories are specifically being told and designed to relay targeted information in businesses. Organizations use stories to relay information externally and internally (McLellan, 2006). Coca-Cola is an excellent example of a successful company offering stories to the public for the organization's advantage. The World of Coca-Cola is a museum located in downtown Atlanta dedicated to the beverage, Coca-Cola. Here, tourists can visit the Coca-Cola Connections room and listen to stories about the Coca-Cola system and how lives around the world are improved through Coke's local programs and initiatives.

Through the use of stories, Coca-Cola informs the public of its humanitarian efforts, leaving a positive and lasting impression of the soft drink company (Coca-Cola Connections, n.d.). Similarly, other businesses have created alternate means of telling stories about the positive impact of their company or product. The *New York Times* praised General Electric's commercials for "saluting the workers" by telling the stories of its employees and the products they produce (Elliot, 2012). Through television, magazines, newsletters, and websites, organizations recognize and use the power of stories to communicate the company's vision and purpose.

Knowledge transfer through storytelling can also have the opposite effect on a company. Those companies that do not pay attention to their stories have lost profits and credibility (McLellan, 2006). Take, for example, the athletic apparel company Nike. Once conjuring images of sports heroes such as Michael Jordon and Lance Armstrong, Nike suffered a blow to its image when a story was released about Nike's unethical labor practices. The *Los Angeles Times* reported

> That Nike cachet has been clouded by a new image—of Asian workers in hot, noisy factories, stitching together shoes for as little as 80 cents a day. Suddenly, Nike doesn't seem so cool anymore. The biggest swoosh now is the sound of falling profits. (McNall, 1998, para. 2)

Internally, the use of stories as a way to transfer knowledge is widespread and effective (Boyce, 1996; Gargiulo, 2006; O'Neil, 2008; Tyler, 2007; Watkins & Mohr, 2001). Appreciative Inquiry uses storytelling to gather information about the "life-giving forces," those unique assets that give a group or organization vitality when performing at its peak (Watkins & Mohr, 2001, p. 75). From these stories, themes are discovered and further inquiry is initiated. Rich data is garnered that a survey could not produce (Watkins & Mohr, 2001).

Additionally, stories have been found to be an effective learning tool. Through stories, employees are relaying the knowledge gained by working through a problem to other employees (McLellan, 2006, p. 18). Tyler (2007) also acknowledged the effectiveness of organizational storytelling, "especially as it pertains to learning, knowledge building, and knowledge creation as social processes" (p. 566). In his research on alternative methods for knowledge transfer, Spaulding (2010) found, "Stories are a natural instructional strategy that can facilitate the experiential learning process" (p. 90). Author, educator, and consultant William Noonan (2007) uses storytelling in his business book *Discussing the Undiscussable* for learning purposes. He wrote, "In this book, I also use storytelling as a means of making sense of organizational defensive routines and as a teaching tool" (p. 8).

Another use of internal storytelling is to enable the transfer of knowledge in the area of human resource development. Occupational training through storytelling has been shown to impart specific aspects of a role or position (Damon, 2008; Gargiulo, 2006). For example, case studies are stories that draw directly from real experiences. Here, learning is based on the actual experiences of others, as opposed to fictional scenarios that are designed to give an individual the experience of a situation without having to live it personally (McLellan, 2006).

The use of storytelling is not limited to training employees in procedures or jobs already in place. New knowledge can also be created and shared with stories. Imparting a tale can ignite powerful subsequent conversations. In her study of how storytelling is being utilized in human resource development, Tyler (2007) found, "Poststorytelling work is a facilitated opportunity for listeners to connect with the story and each other in

ways that reinforce learning, build relationships, generate new ideas, and transfer additional knowledge" (p. 577).

Similarly, stories also are used in teaching the culture of an organization, both to new employees and the public in general (McLellan, 2006). By sharing organizational stories, newcomers are introduced into the culture of a given company, including values and beliefs. When describing how culture is transmitted within an organization, Schein (2010) wrote, "Thus, the story—whether it is in the form of a parable, legend, or even myth—reinforces assumptions and teaches assumptions to newcomers" (p. 255). For example, the story of Mary Swanson is told to all new employees during orientations for SilverSneakers, the nation's leading fitness program for older adults and now a product of Healthways, Inc. Swanson was moved to create SilverSneakers after her beloved father could not find a suitable fitness program for older adults. This in turn created a company culture of caring, advocacy, and passion (Healthways, Inc., 2006). In addition, companies will tell their stories to the public to encourage a better understanding and appreciation of the organizational culture. Starbucks Coffee Company recognizes the power of telling its story to consumers. Currently being sold in bookstores and Starbucks coffeehouses is *Pour Your Heart Into It: How Starbucks Built a Company One Cup at a Time* (Schultz & Yang, 1997). In the book, founder and chief executive officer Howard Schultz wants the reader to understand,

> No matter how many avenues Starbucks pursues, and no matter how much we grow, our fundamental core values and purpose won't change. I want Starbucks to be admired not only for what we have achieved but how we achieve it. (p. 332)

The literature on knowledge transfer by means of stories offered numerous examples of this practice already in use in varied organizations. Additionally, storytelling as a tool for knowledge transfer has been analytically studied (Boyce, 1996;

O'Neil, 2008; Sinclair, 2005; Spaulding, 2010; Tyler, 2007). This differs from what has been written about stories as instruments of change, where certain practices were advocated but less formally studied. The themes of change and knowledge transfer are related in terms of organizational leaders. Human resource development professionals will often refer to the use of storytelling practices as utilizing "narratives," fearing the disapproval or discounting of managers and executives (Tyler, 2007, p. 573). This seems to have a direct relationship to leaders' hesitancy in using stories to inspire change. Stories may possess a "warm and fuzzy" stigma for upper levels of an organization and thereby be seen as a non-legitimate practice. Denning (2011) confirmed by stating, "When you talk about 'storytelling' to a group of hardheaded executives, you'd better be prepared for some eye rolling" (p. 19).

Management. Although less written about, the positive results reaped by using stories in managing others are also addressed in the area of group identity/focus and collaboration. As has been touched on previously, stories are an "artifact" of the organization's culture (Schein, 2010, p. 23). By allowing employees to tell these stories, managers can create a sense of community. Here, stories have the ability to remind the organization members why they are there and reveal the common ground (Blair, 2006). In addition, stories have the power to revitalize a group or refocus energy and attention. Blair asserts, "Research shows that we act upon what we think about. If we think about how to do things right, we are more likely to do things right" (p. 13). Stories shared of best practices and successes within a group can create a positive and optimistic outlook (James & Minnis, 2004, p. 30).

Another strategy for the use of stories by managers involves collaboration. Management books often speak to the benefits of getting employees to work together.

Stories can be an enhancement to teamwork (Pederson, 2010). Storytelling has the power to transform the tension and competitive agendas that can undermine teamwork (Kahan, 2006). A story is a much less threatening way to offer and receive differing points of view. Similarly, the various perspectives of multiple stories also produce a wider view of an issue being addressed or emphasized by a team. As shown by James and Minnis (2004) in their study of organizational stories, problem solving can be positively impacted when story sharing is part of the teamwork. In addition, James and Minnis also found that storytelling has the ability to override an organizational culture that hinders problem solving with the use of "emotionalism and personalization" (p. 28). Denning (2004) advocated the use of storytelling to foster collaboration by advising, "generate a common narrative around a group's concerns and goals, beginning with a story told by one member of the group. Ideally, that first story sparks another, which sparks another" (p. 126). Kahan (2006) found storytelling can "accelerate collaboration without compromising diverse perspectives" (p. 24).

Again, research on the effectiveness of management using storytelling techniques is limited. Most information offered in professional journals was broad in scope and merely offered as suggestions. This may be a result of the concept of management itself. The current business environment must deal with a variety of challenges including the global economy, the rate of social and economic change, diversity in the workplace, and the need for increased innovation, just to name a few. With these challenges, many authors expressed that what is required is not a manager of people, but a leader to inspire. Denning (2007) wrote,

> The ability to get results in the face of these challenges will depend at least as much on leadership as on management. It will depend on a capacity to inspire enduring enthusiasm in people over whom we have no hierarchical control.

These irresistible forces will drive organizations to develop genuine leadership
capability as a necessary competence. (p. 217)

This leads to the final theme present in the business literature relating to storytelling,

leadership.

Leadership. Although the use of storytelling by leaders in an organization has

been addressed in previous themes, the focus here is slightly different. Most authors

contributing to this conversation acknowledge the underutilization and lack of

storytelling skills in a vast majority of leaders today. However, this theme relates to

leadership development. Stories have two purposes in the development of leaders—first,

using stories to create better leaders within an organization and, second, teaching leaders

to be better storytellers to create better organizations.

To become a more effective leader, learning is best accomplished in the context

where the skill will be utilized and from those who have the practical and real-life

knowledge (Ready, 2002). As opposed to sending potential leaders to an outside institute

to learn leadership competencies, using storytelling from current leaders has been found

to offer several advantages. Different companies will have different components of

leadership effectiveness. When current leaders convey stories of past challenges or

future objectives, potential leaders acquire the leadership elements supported in the

cultural environment of that organization. Stories provide a map for those elements. In

addition, by internally developing the leaders of the future of an organization, not only

are the individuals learning the preferred methods, but a relationship of mentor and

student is also allowed to develop. Ready stated,

> When done the right way—and it's not as easy or as simple as it may sound—
> storytelling by a company's senior executives is a way of providing potential
> leaders with the necessary context from respected role models. It can produce
> impressive results that help position a company to succeed when the current

generation of leaders has departed and a new generation steps in to take the helm. (p. 64).

By using storytelling to develop leaders, the art of effective storytelling is also taught, something business schools have failed to address (Brown, 2007). This leads to the next use of storytelling for leaders in business, to develop storytelling competencies to facilitate better organizations.

There appears to be a movement for leaders, both current and those of the future, to alter the way they conduct business (Karakas, 2009). This movement urges leaders to be more humanistic. In his study on changes to organization development methods, Karakas found, "The holistic and quantum approaches to management suggest that it is good for managers and employees to bring their whole person to work, their bodies, minds and spirits" (p. 14). Karakas suggested that managers craft "high quality relationships" by "using art and storytelling, encouraging self-expression, conveying compelling messages, and conveying passion" (p. 18). Bestselling author and spiritual guide Deepak Chopra wrote, "Potential leaders are taught to use their minds to analyze various hypothetical scenarios. By leaving out feeling, intuition, insight, and the profound wisdom of the soul, this training falls short of its potential" (2010, p. 29). To become a more soulful leader, Chopra advocates the sharing of stories: "Speak to the group from the heart. Inspire from the soul. Share personal stories about peak experiences in your life. Ask for the same from others" (p. 53). The power of a leader is not the ability to develop and implement strategy. Experts who specialize in developing strategic plans can be hired in from outside the organization to evaluate and establish the future focus. Leaders are called to motivate and energize the forces (Denning, 2008a). Even more, followers demand inspiration. Charts, graphs, and statistics do not persuade

(Fryer, 2003). Why? Because numbers have no heart, but stories can touch and ignite emotions. Cashman (2008) in his bestselling book *Leadership from the Inside Out* stated, "Stories are the language of leadership. They separate a boring, personally detached, closed manager from a motivating, personally connected, open leader" (p. 100). Whether the goal is to motivate change, confidence, commitment, patience, or passion, leaders benefit from the storytelling competency to influence and inspire.

Considerations

Although the business literature regarding the use of storytelling is overwhelmingly positive, there are two aspects which could be considered shortcomings or at least areas for concern. First and most striking is storytelling being manipulative. Because stories access feelings, storytelling can be used as "storyselling" (Lapp & Carr, 2008, p. 534). If the emotion evoked from a story is guilt, fear, or shame, subsequent actions from the listener may be reactionary more than genuine. Without knowing the intent of the storyteller, a listener risks being manipulated by "storyselling." In their study of organizational storytelling, Lapp and Carr (2008) found that "without adequate psychodynamic analysis of one's motivation for telling a story, there is greater likelihood that both teller and listener fall prey to storyselling" (p. 534).

Second, the selection of a story is highly important. If conveyed as a true story, the story and all elements communicated need to be accurate (Fryer, 2003). Damage done if communicating a "real" story that is untrue or altered has long-term implications (Denning, 2008b). When a leader conveys an untrue story, "the backlash on the story and the storyteller is devastating" (Denning, 2008b, p. 130). Similarly, telling the whole story is imperative (Fryer, 2003). Imagine the implications of telling the true story of 700 passengers who arrived in New York after the Titanic's maiden voyage. Not telling the

rest of the story regarding the 1,500 passengers who drowned would be unethical (Denning, 2008b). Regaining a level of trust and confidence will be timely and costly to business. Additionally, differences in culture, age, level within the organization, sex, and educational background can influence the interpretation of a story. Knowing the audience is imperative in the story selection (Barker & Gower, 2010; Damon, 2008; Denning, 2008a, 2008b; Gargiulo, 2006; Ready, 2002; Tyler, 2007). Gargiulo (2006) has developed a "decision matrix that can be used to determine what type of story to select for a given situation" (p. 8). He asserted, "Good leaders have a rich index of stories. They find the right story to tell at the right time" (p. 7).

Summary

The topic of storytelling in business is well represented in academic journals, business books, and professional periodicals, with the majority being written within the last 11 years. The four major themes found were change, knowledge transfer, management, and leadership. There are a plethora of stories about the use of stories. In the literature reviewed, storytelling is presented as an effective and underutilized tool. However, the literature on using storytelling in organizations lacks quantitative data.

Mention was made in some of the literature reviewed of story's impact on cultural change. Watkins and Mohr (2001) acknowledged Appreciative Inquiry's use of personal storytelling to gather data. This data is used to design a preferred future, which may include a change in culture. However, most literature did not address storytelling specifically, including which features of organizational culture can be altered with the use of stories or how the change takes place. In addition, the current literature contributes little insight to the type of story needed to change the culture of an organization, a personal story versus a story relayed to a listener. What is addressed is the benefit of

using story as opposed to solely data or numbers. In his book *The Secret Language of Leadership*, Denning (2007) referenced a study that discovered messages that personalize, evoke emotion, and come from a trustworthy source best gain the attention of a listener (p. 30). However, showing a relationship between an emotional story and change was not made. Therefore, the gap in the current literature supports further examination of stories as an agent of change for culture.

Based on the current literature available regarding storytelling in business, further research is needed regarding storytelling. Specifically, it is valuable to examine storytelling's ability to change an organization. The present study examines the impact of storytelling on culture change in an organization. The next chapter details the methods used in this study.

Chapter 3

Methods

This thesis explored storytelling as an agent of change, assessing the research question: What is the effect of stories on culture change?

This chapter describes the methodology used in this study. Topics covered in this chapter include the overall design of the research, the setting and sampling strategy, the protection of participants' rights, the study design including the data analysis plan, and the limitations of the research design.

Research Design

A qualitative design was used for this study. Qualitative research was selected for its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. Several methods of collecting qualitative data exist, including interviews, researcher observation, participant observation, and document analysis (Punch, 2005). Because the research question examines personal perceptions and thoughts, this study used in-depth research interviewing. Interviews allow for collecting rich data, particularly when seeking "information about the human side of an issue—that is, the often contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals" (*Qualitative Research Methods*, 2011, p. 1).

Although interviews are appropriate and ideal for this study, weaknesses do exist and need to be taken into consideration. Because the researcher has his or her own worldview, biases need to be acknowledged and controlled as much as possible when data is collected, interpreted, and reported. In addition, the researcher's skill and personal approach to the interview can strongly influence the outcome of the study.

Measures taken to minimize the weaknesses of interviews are addressed later in this chapter.

Research Setting and Sampling

The population of this study was comprised of managers and associates with the Inland Transportation division of one of the nation's leading domestic ocean shipping companies. Inland Transportation's role entails coordinating inland delivery of cargo after it has been brought to ports by vessels throughout the coasts of the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. To facilitate the delivery of these goods on land, Inland Transportation coordinates the logistics of rail, truck, and inner harbor. The Inland Transportation division managers and associates work directly with both customers and providers (e.g., truckers, rail lines). Including the general manager, the management team consisted of four members. At the time of this study, there were 21 associates. Inland Transportation was divided into three groups—The Domestic Jones Act group; FSX, Pricing and Optimization group; and Finance and Worksheet group. Table 2 gives a breakdown of employee distribution by group.

Table 2

Inland Transportation Employee Distribution by Group

Group	Number of Employees
Management	4
The Domestic Jones Act	10
FSX, Pricing and Optimization	7
Finance and Worksheet	4

All 25 members of Inland Transportation participated in the pre-storytelling workshop interviews for a census sampling. All members of the management team and four randomly selected associates were interviewed for the post-storytelling workshop interviews. Since all associates had the same chance for being interviewed after the workshop, a simple random sample was utilized.

Protecting Participants' Rights

This study was conducted under the guidance of the Pepperdine Institutional Review Board. In addition, the researcher completed the training course "Protecting Human Research Participants" offered by The National Institute of Health. All participants provided written consent to participate (Appendix A) prior to being interviewed or joining the storytelling workshop. Participants were free to decline answering any question or participating in the storytelling workshop at any time during the study without penalty. In addition, the participant's employment was not affected by participating or not participating in the study.

All participant responses were kept confidential. Interview recordings and notes did not contain identifying data, including names or personal information. Only aggregate themes were reported in the results, although anonymous quotes were provided as illustrations of themes and to minimize bias of the researcher.

Study Design

Pre-storytelling workshop interviews. At the beginning of the study, the researcher met with the general manager on three separate occasions to discuss the challenges being experienced within Inland Transportation. Based on these discussions, four areas of focus for the way Inland Transportation members completed work and interacted were identified: communication, collaboration, support, and change.

Pre-storytelling workshop interview questions were designed using these areas of focus

along with input from five managers (not related to the studied organization) and theories

presented in *Paradoxes of Group Life* by Smith and Berg (1987). Table 3 list the pre-

storytelling workshop interview questions related to the area of focus. Using these areas

of focus, a pre-storytelling workshop interview script was developed (Appendix B).

Table 3

Area of Focus and Questions for Pre-Storytelling Workshop Interview

Area of Focus	Pre-Storytelling Workshop Interview Questions
Communication	1. Describe your comfort level with asking individuals from your group for information. The other two groups? If levels of comfort differ —What do you feel causes the difference in comfort levels? 2. How do you typically communicate with members from the other two groups of Inland Transportation? Can you tell me about a time when you used another form of communication? What was the result?
Collaboration	3. Tell me how the three groups within Inland Transportation collaborate to resolve an issue? Can you give a specific example? Was the issue successfully resolved? 4. How valued and understood do you feel your work is by individuals from the other two groups? By management? Can you give me an example? 5. How willingly and how often are best practices shared between the groups within Inland Transportation? Can you give an example when best practices were or were not shared and it made a difference, either positively or negatively?
Support	6. How important do you feel the work of Inland Transportation group is in the overall success of . . . [the company]? 7. Tell me about the support you receive from management. Are all members of Inland Transportation treated equally and receive the same support from management? 8. How supported do you feel by the other two groups within Inland Transportation? Can you give an example?
Change	9. What has change within the Inland Transportation group been like over the past four years? What changes would you like to see?

Interviews scripts were piloted and tested for clarity and meaning before interviews were conducted. Prior to data collection, each member of the studied organization received an email from the researcher explaining the study, including the interview process; the storytelling workshop design; the voluntary nature; and the confidentiality assurance (Appendix C). In addition, consent forms were attached to the email to be reviewed and signed by participants prior to their involvement in the study (Appendix A).

Pre-storytelling workshop interviews were conducted with all 25 member of the studied organization, both manager and associates. The one-on-one, semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face by the researcher. All interviews took place in a secure and private location at the offices of the studied organization over a four-day period and during normal working hours. To minimize bias of the researcher, all interviews utilized the same interview script and were recorded, allowing for direct quotes from interviewees. Additionally, the researcher took notes on her laptop computer during the interviews. At their request, three participants were not recorded. Interviews lasted between 30 to 60 minutes.

Data analysis of pre-storytelling workshop interviews. After all pre-storytelling workshop interviews were completed, the researcher listened to each recorded interview again and took additional notes, creating master notes for each individual interview. Master notes were read and reviewed three times for meaning and understanding. Meaning units were underlined on the master notes. Meaning units were a word, phrase, sentence, or multiple sentences that offered insight or knowledge into answering the questions regarding the focus areas—communication, collaboration, support, and change. Master notes were read again, this time focusing on the underlined

meaning units. Meaning units were then listed in a spreadsheet divided into categories by the four focus areas. Meaning units were placed into the most appropriate category, not necessarily the focus area that question was meant to examine. For example, if a participant offered an answer about fear of change to a question designed to learn about communication, that meaning unit was listed under the change category. The spreadsheet with categorized meaning units was read and reviewed twice, paying particular attention to recurring meaning units and ideas. Within each focus area category, different colored highlighters were used to identify meaning units that could be grouped together into one key concept. These initial key concepts were placed into another spreadsheet, again divided by the four focus areas. The initial key concept list was integrated where appropriate to form a primary key concept list. The areas of focus and primary key concepts were combined to create overall themes from the pre-storytelling workshop interviews—inefficient communication, deficient collaboration, appropriate support, and resistance to change. Chapter 4 will detail primary key concepts and overall theme findings.

In an effort to ensure accuracy and guard against any bias by the researcher, the master interview notes were read again after overall themes were developed, looking for discrepancies. Throughout the data analysis process, the researcher listened to the recorded interviews to assure coding reflected sentiments of the interviewees. Additionally, the primary key concepts and overall themes were shared with Inland Transportation's management team, who agreed with and confirmed the findings.

Designing the storytelling workshop. Given the significance of storytelling in the Discovery Phase of Appreciative Inquiry, the storytelling workshop design borrowed concepts and steps used in this process, including paired interviews, story sharing, and

identifying themes. Based on the overall themes identified from the pre-storytelling workshop interviews, the specific elements of the storytelling workshop were planned. By reviewing the primary key concepts and overall themes, the general manager determined the level of support within Inland Transportation to be sufficient. Therefore, the overall theme of appropriate support was not addressed in the storytelling workshop. Additionally, to assist in directing the design of the workshop, the general manager and researcher developed subthemes for each overall theme. Chapter 4 will detail the remaining overall themes along with subthemes.

Working with the management team, deficient collaboration and resistance to change were identified as the two overall themes most negatively impacting the work and culture of Inland Transportation. The management team also believed that inefficient communication could be improved by simply participating in the workshop where stories and dialogue are shared. Therefore, exercises in the storytelling workshop were developed with the intent of prompting associates to tell their personal stories of positive collaboration and change. Chapter 4 offers a detailed description of the storytelling workshop.

Post-storytelling workshop interviews. Post-storytelling workshop interviews were conducted with the entire management team and four randomly selected associates, six weeks following the intervention. As with the pre-storytelling workshop interviews, all interviews were conducted at the offices of the studied organization in a private and secure office. Interviews were conducted in person by the researcher, one-on-one and semi-structured. Additionally, to minimize the influence and bias of the researcher, interview scripts were used (Appendix D). During the interviews, a recorder was utilized and the researcher took notes on her laptop computer.

Although the storytelling workshop was designed to address the overall themes of inefficient communication and deficient collaboration, the interviews following the storytelling workshop inquired into all the areas of focus—communication, collaboration, support, and change. The research question for this study examined storytelling's ability to change the culture of an organization. The researcher was interested in the impact the storytelling workshop had on all elements of the culture of Inland Transportation previously examined. Therefore, general questions about the overall climate changes, if any, were also included in the post-storytelling workshop interview script. Table 4 links the post-storytelling workshop interview questions with the correlating area of focus.

Data analysis of post-storytelling workshop interviews. Post-storytelling workshop interview responses were analyzed similarly to the pre-storytelling workshop interview. After completion of the interviews, the researcher listened to all recorded interviews and took additional notes, creating a master note for each interview. Master notes were read and reviewed three times prior to the underlining of meaning units. Meaning units were placed on a spreadsheet divided by areas of focus—communication, collaboration, support, and change. A general atmosphere category was added. Within each focus area, meaning units were grouped together using colored highlighter, forming initial key concepts. These initial key concepts were placed on a separate spreadsheet divided into the five categories—communication, collaboration, support, change, and general. This initial key concept list was assimilated where appropriate to form a primary key concept list. Chapter 4 details the primary key concepts found.

Table 4

Area of Focus and Questions for Post-Storytelling Workshop Interview

Area of Focus	Post-Storytelling Workshop Interview Questions
Communication	1. Describe any changes you have seen when information needs to be conveyed or obtained between the groups? Can you think of a specific example? Do you feel this is an improvement, same, or worse since the storytelling workshop? 2. Have you seen changes to the typical form of communication between the three groups of Inland Transportation? If so, what was different and the result? Do members appear to socialize outside their group? How is this different than before the storytelling workshop, if at all?
Collaboration	3. Tell me about collaboration between the groups to resolve issues since the storytelling workshop. Can you give a specific example? Was the issue successfully resolved?
Support	4. Think about the level of support between the groups prior to the storytelling workshop. Now, tell me about the level of support between the groups now. What is different? What is unchanged?
Change	6. Prior to the storytelling workshop, members of the Inland Transportation division were fearful of change. What differences have you seen in attitudes regarding change within the Inland Transportation division, if any?
General	5. If you had to describe the overall work atmosphere of Inland Transportation prior to the storytelling workshop, what would you say? Post-storytelling workshop? In your opinion, what has been the most significant difference in the work atmosphere, if any? 7. As a manager/associate, what has been the most positive change since the storytelling workshop? Can you give an example of how this has improved the work of your group? Have there been negative outcomes? If so, how has this hurt the work of your group?

In an effort to ensure accuracy and guard against any bias by the researcher, the master post-storytelling workshop interview notes were read again after primary key concepts were identified, looking for discrepancies. Additionally, recorded interviews were listened to as needed for correct representation.

Limitations

As documented throughout this chapter, several steps were taken to limit the influence and bias of the researcher, such as sharing and confirming findings with the management team, utilizing interview scripts, ensuring accuracy of themes by rereading master notes, and recording and referencing interviews. However, limitations still exist with the research design of this study. Although all members of Inland Transportation were interviewed prior to the storytelling workshop, only eight interviews were conducted following the workshop. Those key concepts identified in the post-storytelling workshop interview may not be experienced by all members of the division.

Summary

This chapter described the methods used to study the impact of storytelling on changing the culture of an organization. Included in this chapter are descriptions of the research design, research setting and sampling, procedures for protecting participants' rights, measurement and interview procedures, and limitations. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the collected data.

Chapter 4

Results

This thesis examines storytelling's influence on culture change using the following overarching question: What is the effect of stories on culture change? This chapter reports the results of the study.

The first section details the pre-storytelling workshop interview analysis, including themes found. The second section describes the storytelling workshop, including deliverables produced by study participants, and the third section covers the follow-up meeting with management. The fourth section presents the post-storytelling workshop interview analysis with findings. Finally, the chapter closes with a summary of findings.

Pre-Storytelling Workshop Interview Analysis

Once the data from the 25 pre-storytelling workshop interviews was compiled and examined, primary key concepts were identified for each focus area. Table 5 presents these primary key concepts. The areas of focus and primary key concepts were combined to create overall themes from the pre-storytelling workshop interviews—inefficient communication, deficient collaboration, appropriate support, and resistance to change.

Because the general manager believed the level of support experienced in Inland Transportation to be sufficient, the overall theme of appropriate support was not addressed in the storytelling workshop. To assist in designing the workshop, subthemes were assigned to the three remaining themes, in line with primary key concepts. Table 6 lists the remaining overall themes with subthemes used to design the storytelling workshop.

Table 5

Primary Key Concepts Identified from Pre-Storytelling Workshop Interviews

Areas of Focus	Primary Key Concepts Identified
Communication	In person and calls identified as most effective method of communication Email was preferred and most used form of communication Communication is often negative in tone Very comfortable asking for information within group, less between groups
Collaboration	No formal way to share best practices Best practices shared within a group, less between groups Territorial of information and responsibilities Assistance and suggestions are not accepted Lack of knowledge of job and responsibility outside of each group
Support	Believe work is vital to the overall success of the organization Feel supported in groups Feel less supported between groups Feel equally supported by management
Change	Unwilling to alter the way work gets done Averse to entertaining/discussing new methods Fearful of changes within division Unwilling to make adjustments to meet challenges

Table 6

Overall Themes with Subthemes

Overall Themes	Subthemes
Inefficient Communication	Ineffective method Negative tone
Deficient Collaboration	Territorial behavior Lack of knowledge
Resistance to Change	Unwilling to alter the way work gets done Fear of change

The following sections describe each theme in detail.

Inefficient communication. Although questions 1 and 2 were designed to obtain information regarding communication style within the Inland Transportation division, communication was mentioned by participants throughout the interviews. When asked to describe an example of support between the groups within Inland Transportation (Question 8), 8 out of 17 responses included a need for better communication. One respondent stated she did not feel comfortable asking for help because "interaction between the groups is rare." This same respondent stated email as her primary form of communication and declared she seldom tries to resolve a work issue in person, even though, according to her, "in person produces faster results." In fact, 13 out of 25 responses named email as the primary form of communication used. However, 13 out of 17 who used in person as an alternative communication method reported faster or better results and clearer communication. Four out of the same 17 responses declared that face-to-face communication increases the risk of confrontation or frustration. When asked to describe a time when an alternative form of communication was used, an interviewee responded (when describing a face-to-face interaction):

> I went to a dispatcher to deliver the message that we had to cancel the contract of one of their carriers. Then I had to listen to that dispatcher complain and moan because this was going to cause them more work. I should have just emailed him.

Communication was also linked to contributing to the "negative atmosphere" within Inland Transportation. When asked what changes she would like to see in Inland Transportation, another respondent stated "for people to be more considerate with the communication and be respectful." In agreement, 10 out of 31 responses involved a desire for more positive communication.

Because of comments such as these throughout the interviews, inefficient

communication's two subthemes of ineffective methods and negativity can be supported.

Table 7 further supports these findings.

Table 7

Inefficient Communication Subthemes

Inefficient Communication Subthemes	Sample Quotes to Support Subthemes
Ineffective Method	"I will email first, even though in person or a call will get better results." "I only go to the person directly if the issue is dragging on." "I make a call to communicate with my customers so I can develop a better relationship. With people at work, I email." "Going to the person is quicker, but emails allow me to cover my butt."
Negative Tone	"I use email because I need to document everything that is said. This way when something goes wrong, I have proof it is not my fault." "People need to remember that we are their internal customers and be more considerate in communication." "I'm afraid to pick up the phone and call someone with a question because I'm not sure who to ask what. And if I get the wrong person, they will be frustrated." "When people are talking, I would like them to be more positive and complain less." "The changes made sour people."

Deficient collaboration. The second theme revealed as a challenge for Inland

Transportation during the pre-storytelling workshop interviews was a lack of

collaboration. Eleven of 25 interviewees responded that more collaboration is needed.

When questioned about collaboration between the three groups within Inland

Transportation, one respondent stated, "People are afraid to listen to suggestions. When I

try to help, they get defensive." Eleven of the 21 associates interviewed spoke of needing

a better understanding of others' roles and responsibilities for collaboration to take place.

One respondent stated, "I don't know who to go to for answers, and this slows the whole process down."

When questioned about the frequency of sharing best practices, 16 of 25 responded with rarely, never, or not between the groups. Additionally, when asked for examples where sharing or not sharing best practices impacted a result, 11 of 22 responses spoke of work taking longer. Therefore, had best practices been shared, work could have been completed in a more timely manner. One interviewee spoke of experiencing a "coding issue" that was "easily resolved" when another associate shared her best practice with her. However, she stated, "I had been struggling with this problem for months. Think about how much time I wasted trying to figure out how to code that route."

These examples support the subthemes found for Theme 2, deficient collaboration: territorial behavior and lack of knowledge. Table 8 provides additional support.

Resistance to change. Although only one question specifically addressed the topic of change within Inland Transportation, the subject was a consistent issue throughout the pre-storytelling workshop interviews. When asked about the frequency of sharing best practices, 5 of the 17 responded they did not engage in best practice sharing because people are unwilling to change the way they do work. One associate declared, "People want to continue to do what they have done and how they have done it for the last 15 years." Similarly, when questioned about the support received from other associates, one person stated, "When people are unwilling to change or whine about work, I do not feel supported."

Table 8

Deficient Collaboration Subthemes

Deficient Collaboration Subthemes	Sample Quotes to Support Subthemes
Territorial Behavior	"It's like they have up a protective wall." "Nobody wants anyone to know what they are doing." "People think that if they share what they know, they will no longer be the only person that could do that job." "That's their work and we aren't allowed to touch." "You can't make suggestions because people get defensive."
Lack of Knowledge	"I don't know enough about their work and I don't want to look foolish." "I would like to learn more about other jobs and how that ties into mine." "I wouldn't feel the need to explain why I need certain information if other groups had a better idea of what I do and what I need to do my job."

In conjunction with a resistance to altering the way work gets accomplished, the fear of change was commonly expressed. When asked what change has been like within Inland Transportation, 10 of 20 responses involved fear. Fear came from two sources. One source of anxiety was that people are fearful to try new techniques because the chance of making a mistake is higher. "Processes change all the time and which client is the priority changes all the time. Sometimes I worry if I can keep up." The second source of anxiety was the change within the larger organization, specifically the reductions in force. Although Inland Transportation had only lost two associates in the previous four years due to layoffs, the fear of future reductions was a significant topic discussed. Ten of 21 associates interviewed stated a fear of losing their jobs because of layoffs. When questioned about what change has been like with Inland Transportation, one associate said

> If I didn't fear being laid off, I would be producing better because I would be happier. We could come to work and have it be relaxing and happy. Now, it just

feels like this is a job and I have to do it. I wish I had something to look forward to, not fear.

Table 9 offers further evidence of the resistance to change in Inland

Transportation, supporting the subthemes of an unwillingness to alter work practices and

anxiety associated with change.

Table 9

Resistance to Change Subthemes

Resistance to Change Subthemes	Sample Quotes to Support Subthemes
Unwilling to Alter the Way Work Gets Done	"People don't get the big picture. They are very narrow-minded and can't think outside the box." "People are set in their ways and not willing to change. Work takes longer the old way." "Some people have been sitting at one desk too long and are in their comfy zone." "Others resist change, so I am less likely to try and help them." "People get set in their ways. They would benefit from having to learn new carriers and new roles." "We need to have flexibility in our group and make adjustments as needed." "I wish people would be willing to make changes and see it as a good thing."
Fear of Change	"This is a job where you need to embrace change, but I do not like change." "Some are afraid to change because they might make a mistake. And they do not want to be blamed." "The changes to procedures are not always communicated immediately, so I'm afraid I may not be doing something right." "The layoffs didn't really affect our group, but fear is still present." "There is a level of fear no one is talking about. Every year at Christmas time, layoffs come. How are we supposed to get more work done with less people?"

Storytelling Workshop

By using the themes gathered from the pre-storytelling workshop interviews

(inefficient communication, deficient collaboration, and resistance to change) and

borrowing concepts from the Discovery Phase of Appreciative Inquiry, the design for the storytelling workshop was developed.

Workshop details. All 21 associates with Inland Transportation attended the storytelling workshop. The four-person management team did not attend, allowing them to deal with carriers and customers needing immediate assistance. The workshop was held on-site in the main conference room during a work day. The workshop took approximately four hours, allowing for breaks, and was conducted in the course of normal working hours.

Because one of the subthemes uncovered by the pre-storytelling workshop interview was "lack of knowledge," particularly of the roles and responsibilities within Inland Transportation, the decision was made to have assigned seating, intermingling the three groups. Five tables were used, with each holding either three or four associates.

Storytelling workshop design and findings. The decision was made with the management team to focus the workshop on the two most prevalent themes—deficient collaboration and resistance to change. Management believed that simply by having all associates in the same room together, working towards a common goal, some of the issues surrounding communication would begin to be addressed. After all associates were seated at their assigned seating, the workshop was explained and the day's schedule was introduced. Prior to beginning the tasks, associates were informed that deliverables would be shared with management. To introduce the idea of telling their stories, the researcher told her personal story of change and collaboration. The story told involved significant change in the researcher's life that necessitated increased collaboration and further changes, both professionally and personally. By relaying her personal story, the

researcher modeled the level of depth, detail, and emotion desired. Ten minutes were devoted to the opening of the storytelling workshop.

Task 1 asked for participants to interview a partner from their table. To assure consistency and focus attention of the workshop onto collaboration and change, Interview Guidelines were distributed (Appendix E). Because 21 associates attended the workshop, one interview group was required to have three members. Forty minutes were allotted for the paired interviews.

Task 2 involved story sharing. The participants returned to their assigned seats and were giving directions for story sharing (Appendix F). Each participant told the story of his or her partner, learned from the paired interview, to the table group. As each story was retold, participants were asked to notice and create a personal list of themes heard in the stories on the story sharing direction sheet. Themes were described as high points and ideas that "grabbed" the listener. Thirty minutes were allowed for story sharing.

Task 3 required identifying common themes (Appendix G). As a group, each table group was asked to combine all themes developed individually into one comprehensive list and discuss which of these elements and ideas they would like more of within Inland Transportation. After discussion, the table group agreed upon three to five major themes it believed most important for creating a healthy and vital organization. These major themes were put onto a piece of flip chart paper and hung on the wall. Each group then presented its themes to the larger group. After all groups hung and presented their major themes lists, each associate was given three stickers. Working alone, each person decided on the themes he or she felt were most important for the future of Inland Transportation. A sticker was placed next to those three themes. Each person was

instructed to "vote" for one theme only once (as opposed to using all three stickers on one theme). Forty minutes were allowed for identifying common themes.

Task 4 was a group discussion about the major themes identified and voted on by the group. The researcher asked the group to describe what they saw on the flip charts hung on the wall. Based on the sticker count, what seemed most important to the group? What about this theme made it important to the future of Inland Transportation? After a 20-minute discussion, the associates agreed upon the major themes they believed, as a group, were most important for Inland Transportation's future. These are (in order) teamwork, respect, communication, challenges, positive attitudes, and efficiency.

Although themes beyond the focus of the storytelling workshop were identified, collaboration and change (represented in the major theme list as "teamwork" and "challenges") were identified and discussed. Table 10 includes further quotes to support the themes identified.

Table 10

Quotes to Support Need for Identified Theme

Themes	Quotes to Support Need for Identified Theme
Collaboration Identified as "Teamwork"	"We need to work together." "One team—one goal." "Let's learn to trust each other to help each other out." "It's important for us to appreciate what we have in this team." "If you know a better way to do something, share it with the group."
Change Identified as "Challenge"	"Let's challenge each other to grow!" "If we were more open-minded to changes, we could be a great team!" "Be more flexible in the way we get work done." "Learn to love to conquer challenges!" "Try a new way. It is okay to make mistakes!"

Keeping the major themes as a focus, Task 5 was developing and agreeing upon specific actions the associates could take to obtain the desired future of Inland Transportation. Each major theme was addressed individually. The participants discussed the major theme and associated needed behavior. The researcher asked that behaviors and actions be limited to what those currently in the room could enact, not management or other divisions. Before a specific action was listed, associates agreed to make every effort to commit to the behavior. No action was listed unless agreed to by all associates. This led to open communication; debate; and, ultimately, a list the associates of Inland Transportation could own. Although 30 minutes were allocated for discussing behavior changes needed with the Inland Transportation division to accomplish the major themes, the team required additional time. Therefore, 40 minutes were devoted to discussing and establishing behaviors needed. Table 11 lists behaviors associates agreed upon to reach major themes.

Table 11

Behaviors Agreed Upon to Reach Major Themes

Major Themes Identified by the Entire Group	Behaviors Agreed Upon to Reach Major Themes
Teamwork	Ask for help/accept help Trust each other's abilities Take ownership of mistakes Thinking together to create solutions
Respect	Recognize what talent is here Be respectful of differences in how work gets done
Communication	Communicate your needs Share the knowledge
Challenges	Open to change "Give it a try" attitude
Positive attitudes	Positive focus No negative chatter
Efficiency	Eliminate redundancies by letting others know what you are working on

Task 6 offered the associates the opportunity to develop suggested changes to Inland Transportation management that they believed would assist in reaching the desired future of Inland Transportation. Participants were informed that all suggestions would be relayed to the management team by the researcher. Again, keeping the major themes identified earlier as the guide for creating the suggestions, the associates began discussing as a group the changes they would like to see. As suggestions were made, the researcher documented on a flip chart, visible to all. After a master list was developed, each suggestion was discussed individually as to overall agreement and feasibility. Several suggestions were removed from the list, while some suggestions were combined. Finally, a comprehensive list was created and approved by all associates. Suggestions to management were guests at meetings (both have guests from other departments and be a guest of other departments, explain impact of job); access to additional documentation between the three groups; work from home; space to share best practices (Wednesday meetings and shared site); lunch 'n learn; provide incentives (for example, movie tickets); cross-training; and quarterly luncheons. Thirty minutes were spent on Task 6.

After completing Task 6, the work of the storytelling workshop was complete. To bring the workshop to a close, the researcher asked participants to describe their experience in one or two words. Responses included "positive," "interesting," "fun," "hope building," and "empowering." The associates were assured their suggestions would be heard by management. Throughout the storytelling workshop, the researcher acted solely as a facilitator, asking questions to initiate conversation and capturing the participants' responses. The researcher did not contribute directly to the deliverables. The closing of the storytelling workshop took approximately 15 minutes.

Storytelling Workshop Follow-up

Two days following the storytelling workshop, the researcher met with the

management team, including the managers from each of the three groups and the general

manager of Inland Transportation, to report on the storytelling workshop. The

storytelling workshop design and process were briefly introduced. Additionally,

deliverables were presented, including the list of major themes, behavior seen as needed,

and suggestions developed by the associates. After discussion between the management

team, an agreement was made to recognize and reinforce associates who demonstrated

the behaviors identified during the storytelling workshop. Discussion also included

which of the suggestions made by the associates could be put into place, with a decision

to continue the dialogue during the next Wednesday meeting with all of Inland

Transportation (associates and management).

Post-Storytelling Workshop Interview Analysis

To assist in answering the research question regarding storytelling as an agent of

change, post-storytelling workshop interviews were conducted six weeks following the

storytelling workshop with the four-person management team, including the general

manager, and four randomly selected associates. Although the management team did not

attend the storytelling workshop, they were asked to describe any observable changes

following the intervention. Table 12 lists the post-storytelling workshop primary key

concepts in relation to the appropriate focus area found through data analysis. Using the

themes discovered during the pre-storytelling workshop interviews (inefficient

communication, deficient collaboration, and resistance to change) and the correlating

subthemes, a comparison can be made between responses given prior to and following

the storytelling workshop.

Table 12

Primary Key Concepts Identified from Post-Storytelling Workshop Interviews

Areas of Focus	Primary Key Concepts Identified
Communication	Communication is more open Increase in positive communication More information shared between groups Increase of in-person communication Email still primary form of communication
Collaboration	Collaboration increased Working together more to solve problems Help offered and received more often Increase of asking for help Lessening of territorial behavior, although still present
Support	Continued to feel supported within group Support between groups increased
Change	Change more openly discussed Not much change to the way work gets completed
General	Increase in socialization More positive attitude Felt more connected throughout Inland Transportation Groups less divided Division felt closer

Inefficient communication. Although the storytelling workshop design did not

include an opportunity to share a specific story of effective communication, all eight of

those interviewed after the storytelling workshop declared improved communication

within Inland Transportation. The general manager stated, "The team is more willing to

speak personally with one another. They are also more willing to talk about ongoing

issues that would have been handled differently in the past." In fact, five of the eight

involved in the post-storytelling workshop interviews acknowledged an increase with in-

person communication. Three interviewees believed email continued to be the primary

form of communication but stated more information is communicated in the email. Four

of the eight experienced a rise in socialization within Inland Transportation. One

manager said, "We're much closer knit after the workshop." Additionally, an associate reported, "Before, we felt like we stood alone. Now, we feel like a connected group."

In addition to an improvement in the quality of communication, there was also a shift in the tone of communication. Seven of the eight interviewees mentioned a more positive attitude within Inland Transportation, both in communication and extending out to the overall work atmosphere. One associate professed, "After the workshop, there was an intentional focus on the positive. It changed the way we talked to each other and how we saw our team." Another stated, "Because people are now more willing to give up information, the attitude of the group has changed. We are no longer walking around in a constant state of frustration." This increase in positive experiences was a theme throughout the post-storytelling workshop interviews. "The energy level has come up since the workshop," stated an interviewee about the overall work atmosphere. Another associate described the tone of Inland Transportation after the storytelling workshop as "light-hearted."

These examples address the impact the storytelling workshop had on communication within Inland Transportation and, specifically, the two subthemes— ineffective method and negative tone. Table 13 provides further examples.

Deficient collaboration. Changes in collaboration were also experienced by members within Inland Transportation following the storytelling workshop. The general manager stated, "Collaboration has increased. There has been some progress in being less siloed." The most mentioned change to collaboration was the asking and receiving of assistance from other team members. One manager said, "The group is more willing to listen and take the time to see how they can help." Another manager confirmed, "The workshop was a safe venue to discuss among the group the unwillingness to receive help.

The fact that this was not brought up by managers made it more powerful." In fact, seven of the eight respondents mentioned an increase in cooperation within the division, including a willingness to hear suggestions or accept support.

Table 13

Sample Quotes to Support Change in Inefficient Communication Subthemes

Inefficient Communication Subthemes	Sample Quotes to Support Change in the Subthemes
Ineffective Method	"Communication lines have opened up." "Before, I had to beg for answers. Now, I get a response faster." "Although they still use email, more information is communicated."
Negative Tone	"After the workshop, everyone was happy." "There's a desire to maintain that positive team feeling. We are planning on doing activities together next month." "There is an overall more positive feeling."

Additionally, reports of increased knowledge sharing were described by interviewees. One respondent stated, "Before, dispatchers wouldn't share what they discussed with carriers. Now they share that information." When questioned about territorial behavior, the general manager replied, "There has been progress in allowing others to assist, but there still exists a reluctance to let go of the power base." Four of the eight interviewed after the storytelling workshop reported a lessening of the territorial behavior previously experienced in Inland Transportation. Accordingly, an associate acknowledged, "Getting a trip request done is faster since the workshop because people are giving information easier."

Table 14 includes further examples of change in collaboration after the storytelling workshop, specifically the two subthemes of territorial behavior and lack of knowledge.

Table 14

Sample Quotes to Support Change in Deficient Collaboration Subthemes

Deficient Collaboration Subthemes	Sample Quotes to Support Change in the Subthemes
Territorial Behavior	"People are more open-minded to what we have to say." "More people are pulled in to resolve an issue, which has increased the chances for idea exchange." "The workshop helped them see where they could collaborate more."
Lack of Knowledge	"Other groups have a feel for what we do now." "Because there is a better sense of who does what, people are more comfortable going directly to a person for information as opposed to first asking management." "After the workshop, I crossed-trained someone from another group. That associate has a much better idea of what is required of my job."

Resistance to change. Prior to the storytelling workshop, the members of Inland Transportation, both associates and management, reported a resistance to change within the division. However, seven of the eight interviewed following the workshop reported a shift in attitude regarding change. The general manager commented, "Change is more openly discussed." One associate stated, "Hearing the stories of change during the workshop allowed a level of acceptance of change."

Less reported was a willingness to alter the way work is completed. Only two of the eight respondents mentioned a specific change in altering work practices. When questioned about the differences regarding change within Inland Transportation, one associate stated, "When I requested change in the past, it was drag, drag, drag. Now changes are made more promptly."

Table 15 chronicles additional examples of the shift regarding change and the two subthemes, altering work practices and the fear of change.

Table 15

Sample Quotes to Support Change in the Resistance to Change Subthemes

Resistance to Change Subthemes	Sample Quotes to Support Change in the Subthemes
Unwilling to Alter the Way Work Gets Done	"The group has been more willing to make adjustments in how they do something." "There has been a slight shift in accepting the changes to how work will need to get done in the future."
Fear of Change	"People are trying to be upbeat and positive about change." "Everyone is a little more open to it." "Hearing the stories of change helped put change into perspective."

Summary of Findings

By comparing the data prior to and following the storytelling workshop, the theory of storytelling being an agent for cultural change can be supported in three areas—procedures, behaviors, and attitudes.

Procedures. Between the time of the storytelling workshop and the post-storytelling workshop interviews (approximately six weeks), several procedural changes had been enacted within Inland Transportation. First, an associate agreed to produce a monthly newsletter to assist in messaging information to the division and upper management. The newsletter is also to be used as a way to recognize and honor outstanding work. Second, as suggested by the associates, a representative from the Vessels group (a separate division) spoke to Inland Transportation during a Wednesday meeting. Although 30 minutes were allotted to the guest speaker to describe his role, responsibilities, and how the work of Inland Transportation impacted his work, the segment lasted over an hour. The general manager said, "The team was really engaged, asking informed and intelligent questions." Third, also as a result of the suggestions developed during the workshop, the first incentive had been given to an associate for

outstanding collaboration in resolving a delivery issue. The associate received a gift card and a certificate to be hung in the general office area of Inland Transportation that read, "In honor of your above and beyond performance." Fourth, in an effort to gain better knowledge of others' roles, cross-training between positions had been introduced. This was also a suggestion offered to management after the storytelling workshop. The general manager reported that monthly socials and lunch 'n learns were being planned and scheduled.

Behaviors. Keeping in mind the themes that directed and focused the storytelling workshop design (inefficient communication, deficient collaboration, and resistance to change), behavioral changes within Inland Transportation were also found.

Communication was consistently reported as improved by those who participated in the post-storytelling workshop interviews. Although email remained the primary form of communication, in-person discussion increased with improved quality of information being relayed, both personally and in emails. Additionally, associates also reported improved communication between the three groups and with management.

Collaboration and teamwork were also reported as enhanced following the storytelling workshop. Although not unanimous, a lessening of territorial behavior was described by both management and associates. Information sharing increased between associates, allowing for fewer silos and opening lines of communication. This has also permitted a better understanding of roles and responsibilities. The greatest change in terms of collaboration was associated with receiving and asking for help. By the associates acknowledging the importance of asking for and giving assistance during the workshop, the stigma attached to this action was reduced.

Attitudes. Not only were changes reported to procedures and behaviors following the storytelling workshop, but all eight post-storytelling interviewees described a positive shift in attitudes within Inland Transportation. The once-negative tone of communication was reported as significantly more positive after the workshop. The increase in optimistic attitudes expanded to the work environment as a whole. After the storytelling workshop, the atmosphere within Inland Transportation was described as "energetic," "happy," "more content," "family-like," and "friendlier."

Discovered in the post-storytelling workshop interviews, attitudes towards change were shifted significantly more than behaviors. Change was now discussed in Inland Transportation, and associates were more open to the idea of change. However, very few behavioral changes were noted as far as altering how work is completed.

Based on the findings, the storytelling workshop had an impact on procedures, behaviors, and attitudes. While the culture of Inland Transportation was not measured explicitly, the definition of organizational culture would indicate these elements are key aspects. Schein (2010) defined organization culture as

> A pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein, 2010, p. 18)

Therefore, in answering the research question of the effect of storytelling on changing the culture of an organization, several conclusions can be drawn and will be analyzed in Chapter 5, along with discussing the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 5

Summary and Conclusions

This research project was an examination of storytelling's ability to influence change, addressing the question: What is the effect of stories on culture change? This chapter provides insights and includes a discussion of the study results and conclusions, practical recommendations, suggestions for additional research, and limitations.

Conclusions

As stated in chapter 4, six weeks following the storytelling workshop, three significant changes to Inland Transportation were reported—shifts in procedures (newsletter, guest speakers, incentives, and cross-training); behaviors (improved communication and collaboration); and attitudes (willingness to entertain change within the division and positive focus). By examining these findings, it is clear that storytelling can influence the culture of an organization, specifically the behaviors and attitudes of the members.

Storytelling's impact on changing behaviors. Prior to the storytelling workshop, all participants reported a pattern of operating in self-imposed silos combined with territorial behavior towards responsibilities and information distribution. These behaviors were well embedded in the group's culture, having been a standard norm for many years. Job protection and an absence of a cohesive team were cited as reasons for the situation. Managers claimed previous attempts to alter these behaviors through conversations and directives had been unsuccessful. However, after sharing individual stories of times when success with collaboration had been experienced during the storytelling workshop, associates approached teamwork differently. Improved cooperation in resolving work issues was reported by the general manager, department

managers, and associates. Vital information was more readily shared, and more effective

forms of communication were utilized when necessary, in person as opposed to email.

This phenomenon of storytelling facilitating a change in behaviors and actions

where previous command-and-control approaches failed is supported by research done by

Wortmann (2008). He found,

> Whereas bits and bullets fly by us and bounce off us without even being noticed, a
> story helps us look around and see multiple perspectives and ways of dealing with
> issues. A story lets listeners/viewers "see" the differences between success and
> failure, and the behaviors that lead to both. (p. 136)

Denning (2008a) also supported the notion of storytelling facilitating change where other

methods fall short by stating, "Inspiring enthusiasm for change requires a distinct shift

from the traditional mode of communication, in which the leader states the problem to be

dealt with, followed by an analysis of the options, and a recommended conclusion"

(p. 11).

One reason for storytelling's success in facilitating change to an organization's

culture where directives have been less effective may relate to the personal nature of the

stories. Because participants were encouraged to tell their own stories of positive change

and collaboration, they were able to envision what change and collaboration could look

like. Not only did the sharing of stories give context to the idea of operating differently,

but positive change and increased collaboration became a desired goal of the Inland

Transportation associates, not one mandated by management.

Although most literature focuses on the leader of an organization telling a

compelling story to the members of the organization, this idea of personal, self-directed

motivation is also supported. Wortmann (2008) acknowledged the empowering property

of stories by writing, "A story doesn't 'tell you what to do,' but rather lets you draw your

own conclusions" (p. 136). Denning (2008a) stated, "Since it's their own story, they tend to embrace it" (p. 14). Denning again recognized the importance of a personal story by writing, "the messages that both evoked emotion and were personalized were more than twice as likely to be attended to as the messages without these attributes" (p. 11). It is this ability of stories to touch emotions that also assists in changing attitudes.

Storytelling's impact on changing attitudes. In examining storytelling's impact on shifting the culture of an organization, the feelings and attitudes of the members are critical. In addition to the recognition of silos, territorial behavior, and ineffective communication, the members of Inland Transportation also experienced a culture of fear and negativity.

Triggering fear for many of the associates was the concept of change and the implications change could have on the group and how work is completed. As stated in chapter 4, although reductions in force had not greatly impacted the Inland Transportation division, the company as a whole had experienced two layoffs within the previous four years. Several associates expressed concern that attempting to change the way work was completed risked making mistakes, which could result in not being viewed as a valuable employee, putting them at jeopardy during reductions. Furthermore, tenure was high in this organization. The average associate had been employed for more than 12 years and had little need to change work patterns. For example, until recently, several associates utilizing worksheets were continuing to complete the forms by hand as opposed to using the computer program available. New processes and technology caused anxiety for many involved.

However, by asking participants to tell their stories of change, those frustrated by the resistance to change heard the stories of those afraid of change, resulting in increased

understanding and a decrease in fears. Storytelling offered an unthreatening, safe method for associates to voice and understand the emotions associated with change. Once the emotions were understood and addressed by the group, forward progress was made in lessening the fear and entertaining the idea of altering the way work is completed within Inland Transportation. These honest discussions increased the level of empathy between those comfortable with change and those who fear change. This heightened level of understanding helped facilitate the cohesive atmosphere described by participants directly following the storytelling workshop. This willingness to entertain change and increased understanding within the division continued past the workshop as reported by associates and managers during the post-storytelling workshop interviews.

Using storytelling in organizations as a tool for addressing and understanding emotions is also identified in the literature. Gargiulo (2006) acknowledged storytelling's power in bringing to the open the emotions felt by organization members. He found, "Stories can emphasize shades of meaning and feelings often left hidden or inadequately expressed in didactic forms of communication. As one person shares a story, the listener finds a similar correspondence from his/her experience" (p. 6). Similarly, McLellan (2006) found, "stories help us to identify and understand the forces impacting upon us" and "stories give 'permission' to explore controversial or uncomfortable topics" (p. 17).

Another norm that was present for the Inland Transportation division was an atmosphere of negativity. Contributing to the negative atmosphere were strained relationships and voiced complaints about work and co-workers which limited the possibility for positive communication and collaboration. All associates and managers interviewed six weeks after the storytelling workshop cited improved relationships and positive attitudes. To them, the simple act of collectively gathering to tell and listen to

the stories of co-workers allowed for the foundation of teambuilding. Additionally, the storytelling workshop allowed for open dialogue regarding the negativity experienced in the group, and associates collectively acknowledged the desire for a more positive working environment.

These findings align with current literature regarding organizational storytelling improving relationships and work environments. When writing about story's impact on working relationships, Gargiulo (2006) declared, "stories facilitate the development of bonds between people, thereby maximizing informal channels of communication" (p. 6). He continued, "Sharing stories promotes healing when there is tension or conflict between people in organizations" (p. 8). Also recognizing storytelling's impact on relationship building, Adamson et al. (2006) found, "Storytelling develops relationships by helping everyone realize we all have issues in common. Stories crystallize common values and beliefs. They build stronger teams and a stronger sense of community" (p. 37). Asserting that stories can assist with creating a positive work environment, Gargiulo (2006) stated that "stories open channels of communication and allow people to meaningfully converse about the experiences and perceptions that can get in the way of trust and positive energy" (p. 7).

Practical Recommendations

Based on the finding that storytelling can impact the culture of an organization by influencing behaviors and attitudes of the members, several useful recommendations for the organization development (OD) practitioner can be offered.

First, the OD practitioner wanting to influence the existing culture of an organization can tap into the power of members' personal stories, in addition to those stories being relayed to them by a leader. Regarding culture change, excluding

Appreciative Inquiry, the majority of the current literature on organizational storytelling speaks to the leader telling a compelling story to the members of the organization. However, this study found evidence of the members' personal stories being empowering, both in identifying the needed changes and later in the ownership of making these targeted changes. Additionally, empowering the participants to tell their stories allows them to create a "new story" for their organization. Denning (2008a) shared a similar conclusion, "The key insight is that if the listeners are to own the change idea, they have to discover it for themselves in the form of a new story" (p. 14). During the pre-storytelling workshop interviews, associates and managers spoke of unsuccessful inquiries and efforts of a previous OD practitioner to make changes in Inland Transportation. However, the design of the storytelling workshop allowed associates to identify changes they wanted to see by telling and listening to their personal stories of collaboration and change. As a collective, associates identified six areas of change they would like to see in their division—teamwork, respect, communication, challenges (open to change), positive attitudes, and efficiency. Significantly, they also named and agreed upon specific behaviors and attitudes required to achieve these changes (Table 11). At the time of post-storytelling workshop interviews, associates and managers spoke of the changes being successfully implemented within the division. These changes were also reported as encouraging improved communication and collaboration within the division.

Second, another finding and recommendation for an OD practitioner employing a storytelling workshop to influence the culture of an organization is the use of the OD practitioner's individual story. The researcher began the storytelling workshop by telling her own story of collaboration and change, prior to asking the participants to share their stories. All associates questioned during the post-storytelling workshop interviews

mentioned the significance of this event. By first telling her personal story, the researcher modeled the type of story and level of candidness desired. Additionally, by imparting her own story, the researcher aided in building trust with the participants.

Third, to be effective in impacting the current culture of an organization, any deliverables from the storytelling workshop that are aligned with the preferred culture should be reinforced by management. After the storytelling workshop, the researcher met with the management team to present the identified changes and suggestions associates developed during the workshop. At this time, management discussed and identified which ideas would support the desired culture (that is, a monthly newsletter created by associates, guest speakers, management-given incentives for outstanding work, public recognition for teamwork, positive focus, asking for and giving help) and which ideas would not facilitate the desired culture (that is, working from home or access to certain documents). The management team committed to supporting those preferred suggestions and changes, including providing the needed resources of funds and employee time. Without management support, the targeted changes would have been difficult, if not impossible, to employ. Although not written about in storytelling literature, this concept is aligned with literature on managing change. Kotter (1995) acknowledged the importance of support from those with the power to guide the change. He found, "Efforts that don't have a powerful enough guiding coalition can make apparent progress for a while. But, sooner or later, the opposition gathers itself together and stops the change" (p. 63). Cummings and Worley (2009) also recognized the importance of management support for change initiatives. When studying leading and managing change, they found, "A strong tendency exists among organization members to return to old behaviors and well-known processes unless they receive sustained support and reinforcement for

carrying the changes through to completion" (p. 180). Furthermore, by allocating time and resources, the managers increased the probability of making the desired changes. Kotter (1995) found when an organization wants change, "renewal requires the removal of obstacles" (p. 64). Additionally, the associates found management support of their suggestions empowering.

Suggestions for Further Research

Suggestions for further research closely resemble the recommendation for OD practitioners. First, a comparison study is proposed. Much of the literature on storytelling as an agent of change speaks to the story being told by the leader of the organization. Comparing the effectiveness of a storytelling workshop where a leader's narratives are told versus the storytelling workshop administered for this study, where participants told their own personal stories, would be helpful to understanding more clearly the influence of all stories being heard. Second, the researcher found positive results by sharing her personal story of change and collaboration. Further research in this area could assist in answering how important the role of modeling is to the process of story sharing. Third, the importance of management reinforcement could also be further examined. Management for this study was highly supportive of the suggestions and changes developed by the associates during the storytelling workshop. However, several behaviors and attitudes agreed upon by the associates (for example, "ask for help/accept help," "recognize what talent is here," and "no negative chatter") could have been initiated without management authorization or additional resources. Subsequent studies could examine the effectiveness of storytelling impacting the culture of an organization without the added support of management. Fourth, this study looked at the influence of storytelling on the culture of an organization six weeks after the storytelling workshop

intervention. Examining the lasting impact of storytelling on the behaviors and attitudes of an organization's members would be constructive.

Study Limitations

Several limitations affected the nature and depth of the study findings and require acknowledgement. First, although all members of Inland Transportation were included in this study, the sample of participants represents one division of one organization; therefore, it is not possible for these results to be generalized to the broader population of all organizations. Second, this study explored the impact of storytelling on the culture of an organization by examining changes six weeks after the storytelling workshop. Long-term impact of the storytelling workshop's influence was not examined. Schein's (2010) definition of organizational culture speaks to "a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group" and as being "taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel" (p. 18). Declaring storytelling as an agent of change to the culture of an organization based on the findings from this study may be premature. Follow-up of the study would need to be conducted to assert lasting changes to culture. The findings from this study point to storytelling having an influence on aspects of the culture of an organization, namely behaviors and attitudes.

Summary

To assist with examining the impact of storytelling on changing the culture of an organization, all non-management members (associates) of the Inland Transportation division of a major logistics company attended a storytelling workshop facilitated by the researcher. The storytelling workshop was designed to inspire positive stories from the participants of when they had positive experiences with change and collaboration. Prior to the storytelling workshop, change and collaboration were problematic areas within

Inland Transportation as reported by associates and management. The storytelling

workshop also asked associates to collectively determine changes they would like to see

within the division. After the storytelling workshop, associates and managers reported an

improvement in communication, collaboration, and attitudes towards change. The

storytelling workshop also resulted in several positive procedural changes. Following the

storytelling workshop, the overall work atmosphere was reported as more positive than

prior to the workshop.

The findings demonstrate storytelling's ability to influence the behaviors and

attitudes of organizational members and therefore the organization's culture. This

chapter offered a summary of the research findings including conclusions drawn from the

research and commented on the findings in relation to the literature of the field. Future

research suggestions, recommendations for OD practitioners, and limitations of the study

were also included.

References

References

Adamson, G., Pine, J., VanSteenhoven, T., & Kroupa, J. (2006). How storytelling can drive strategic change. *Strategy & Leadership, 34*(1), 36-41. doi:10.1108/10878570610637876

Apsel, J. (1999, October 18). Anne Frank: Lessons in human rights and dignity. *St. Petersburg Times Online.* Retrieved from http://www.sptimes.com/annefrank/

Avanade. (2010). Global survey: *The business impact of big data*. Retrieved from http://www.avanade.com/Documents/

Baldwin, J., & Dudding, K. (2007). *Storytelling in schools*. Retrieved from http://www.storynet-advocacy.org/edu/booklet.pdf.

Barker, R. T., & Gower, K. (2010, July). Strategic application of storytelling in organizations. *Journal of Business Communication, 47*(3), 295-312.

Blair, M. (2006, Spring). Renewable energy: How a story can revitalize your organization. *The Journal for Quality & Participation, 29*(1), 9-13.

Boyce, M. (1996). Organizational story and storytelling: A critical review. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, *9*(5), 5-26.

Brown, J. S. (2007). Storytelling in organizations: Why storytelling is transforming 21st century organizations and management. *Vikalpa*, *32*(3), 151-155.

Cameron, K., & Quinn, R. (2006). *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Cashman, K. (2008). *Leadership from the inside out*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Kohler.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2002). *Cigarette smoking among adults—United States, morbidity and mortality weekly report*, *51*, 642-645. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/fast_facts/index.htm

Chopra, D. (2010). *The soul of leadership: Unlocking your potential for greatness*. New York: Harmony Books.

Coca-Cola Connections. (n.d.). *World of Coca-Cola*. Retrieved from http://www.worldofcoca-cola.com/tour_inside.aspx

Cukier, K. (2010, February). Data, data everywhere. *The Economist*. Retrieved from http://www.economist.com/node/15557443

Cullen, M. (2011, July). Managing email volume. *Instructional Solutions*. Retrieved from http://www.instructionalsolutions.com.

Culture. (n.d.a). In *Anthrobase Dictionary* online dictionary. Retrieved from
    http://www.anthrobase.com/Dic/eng/index.html

Culture. (n.d.b). In *Psychology Glossary* online dictionary. Retrieved from
    http://www.alleydog.com/glossary/definition.php?term=Culture

Cummings, T., & Worley, C. (2009). *Organization development & change* (9th ed.).
    Mason, OH: South-Western.

Damon, N. (2008, March). Once upon a workplace. . . . , *Training & Coaching Today*,
    13.

Denning, S. (2004, May). Telling tales. *Harvard Business Review*, *82*(5), 122-129.

Denning, S. (2007). *The secret language of leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Denning, S. (2008a). How leaders can use powerful narratives as change catalysts.
    Strategy & Leadership, 36(2), 11-15. doi:10.1108/10878570810857528

Denning, S. (2008b, September) Stories in the workplace. *HR Magazine*, *53*(9), 129-132.

Denning, S. (2011). *The leader's guide to storytelling: Mastering the art and discipline of
    business narrative*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Elliot, S. (2012, February 5). Judging the Super Bowl commercial. From charming to
    smarmy. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from
    http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/06/business/media/super-bowl-commercials-
    from-charming-to-smarmy.html?_r=1

Frank, A. (1947). *Anne Frank: The diary of a young girl*. New York: Doubleday.

Fryer, B. (2003, June). Storytelling that moves people. *Harvard Business Review*, *81*(6),
    51-54.

Gargiulo, T. (2006, Spring). Power of stories. *The Journal for Quality & Participation*, 5-
    8.

Griese, N. (2010, September). *The Bible vs. Mao: A "best guess" of the top 25 bestselling
    books of all time*. Publishing Perspectives. Retrieved from
    http://publishingperspectives.com/2010/09/top-25-bestselling-books-of-all-time

Hamilton, D. (1996). *The mind of mankind: Human imagination—The source of
    mankind's tremendous power*. Buffalo, NY: Suna Press.

Healthways, Inc. (2006). *Healthways orientation manual*. Unpublished training manual.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and organizations:
    Software of the mind* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Hsu, J. (2008, August). The secrets of storytelling: Why we love a good yarn. *Scientific American Mind*. Retrieved from http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=the-secrets-of-storytelling

James, C., & Minnis, W. (2004). Organizational storytelling: It makes sense. *Business Horizons, 47*(4), 23-32.

Kahan, S. (2006, Spring). The power of storytelling to jumpstart collaboration. *The Journal for Quality & Participation*, *29*(1), 23-25.

Karakas, F. (2009). New paradigms in organization development: Positivity, spirituality, and complexity. *Organization Development Journal*, *27*(1), 11-26.

Kotter, J. P. (1995, March-April). Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review*, *73*(2), 59-67.

Lapp, C., & Carr, A. (2008). Coaching can be storyselling: Creating change through crisis of confidence. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 21*(5), 532-559.

Lawler, E., &Worley, C. (2006). *Built to change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

McCarthy, J. F. (2002). *Short stories and tall tales at work: Organizational storytelling as a leadership conduit during turbulent times* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (UMI No. 3067196)

McClintock, C. (2004). Using narrative methods to link program evaluation and organization development. *The Evaluation Exchange, 9*(4).

McLellan, H. (2006, Spring). Corporate storytelling perspectives. *The Journal for Quality & Participation*, *29*(1), 17-20.

McNall, W. (1998, October 18). Nike fighting uphill battle over bad image. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from http://articles.latimes.com/1998/oct/11/sports/sp-31370

Mein Kampf: Nazi Germany. (n.d.). Spartacus Educational Publishers Ltd. Retrieved from http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/GERmein.htm

Noonan, W. (2007). *Discussing the undiscussable*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

O'Neil, B. (2008). Facilitating organizational meaning-making as learning through storytelling: The orientation experiences of new employees and volunteers in an acute healthcare setting (Master's thesis). Retrieved from ProQuest. (AAT MR37683, ISBN 978-0-494-37683-6.)

Pederson, D. (2010). *Teamwork skills—How storytelling relates*. EzineArticles. Retrieved from http://ezinearticles.com/?Teamwork-Skills---How-Storytelling-Relates&id=5403119

Pink, D. (2005). *A whole new mind*. New York: Riverhead Books.

Punch, K. F. (2005). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Qualitative research methods: A data collector's field guide (2011). Family Health International. Retrieved from http://www.fhi.org/nr/rdonlyres/etl7vogszehu5s4stpzb3tyqlpp7rojv4waq37elpbyei3tgmc4ty6dunbccfzxtaj2rvbaubzmz4f/overview1.pdf

Ready, D. (2002). How storytelling builds the next generation of leaders. *MIT Sloan Management Review, 43*(4), 63-69.

Schein, E. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Schultz, H., & Yang, D. J. (1997). *Pour your heart into it: How Starbucks built a company one cup at a time*. New York: Hyperion.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center's 36 questions about the holocaust. (n.d.). The Jewish Virtual Library, 1-18. Retrieved from http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/36quest1.html

Sinclair, J. (2005). The impact of stories. *The Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management, 3*(1), 53-64.

Smith, K. K., & Berg, D. N. (1987). *Paradoxes of group life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Spaulding, R. J. (2010). *An alternative expert knowledge transfer model: A case of indigenous storytelling approach* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (UMI Number: 3432666)

Stoval, S. A. (2007). *Gathering around the organizational campfire: Storytelling as a way of maintaining and changing for-profit organizational culture*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (UMI Number: 3286864)

Thomas, J. (2009). *Engagement and recall: The power of storytelling in presentations*. Presentation Advisors. Retrieved from http://www.presentationadvisors.com/engagement-and-recall-the-power-of-storytelling-in-presentations

Tyler, J. A. (2007). Incorporating storytelling into practices: How HRD practitioners foster strategic storytelling. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 18*(4), 559-587.

UPI. (2011, January 21). *Ads coming to airport's bathroom mirrors*. UPI.com. Retrieved on January 22, 2011, from UPI website: http://www.upi.com/Odd_News/2011/01/21/Ads-coming-to-airports-bathroom-mirrors/UPI-26121295633375/

Watkins, J. M., & Mohr, B. (2001). *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the speed of imagination*. San Francisco, CA. Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

Weinstein, N. D. (1999). What does it mean to understand a risk? Evaluating risk comprehension. *Oxford Journals*, JNCI Monographs, *1999*(25), 15-20.

Wortmann, C. (2008). Can stories change a culture? *Industrial and Commercial Training*, *40*(3), 134-141. doi:10.1108/00197850810868621

Appendix A: Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Appendix A

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

<u>Participant Consent Form</u>

TITLE OF THE STUDY: A Good Story Changes Everything: Examining the Effect of Storytelling on Changing a Culture

PURPOSE: The purpose of this research study is to explore the effect of storytelling on changing the culture of an organization. All research is being conducted by Daraunda Bryant and supervised by Dr. Julie Chesley as part of the requirements for a Master of Science in Organization Development degree from Pepperdine University.

PROCEDURES: If you decide to volunteer, you will participate in an interview and storytelling workshop. The interview will be conducted by Daraunda Bryant in a private office at . . . [the company] during normal working hours and will last approximately between 45 minutes to one hour. You will be asked questions about your perceptions regarding relations between the groups within Inland Transportation. The researcher will be taking notes during the interview, which will also be taped and transcribed. The storytelling workshop will be conducted for all willing members of the Inland Transportation division. The workshop will be held at the . . . [company] office, during normal working hours, for a total of 3-4 hours. Participants will be asked to share stories regarding positive work experiences.

PARTICIPATION: Participation in this study is voluntary. Participants have the right to refuse answering any interview question or participating in story sharing during the storytelling workshop. Risks for participation in this study are minimal. Your standing in your organization will not be affected by your acceptance or refusal to participate. The researcher's class standing, grades, and/or job status will not be affected by refusal to participate or by withdrawal from this study. Benefits could include improved relationships within the Inland Transportation division.

CONFIDENTIALITY: No names will be used to identify anyone who takes part in the study. Your responses will be pooled with others and summarized only in an attempt to see themes, trends, and/or patterns. Only summarized information will be reported. No comments will be attributed to any individual. Only the researcher will have direct access to the data. The confidentiality of individual records will be protected during and after the study, and anonymity will be preserved in the publication of results. Study data will be retained for 3 years following the study, at which point all data will be destroyed.

You understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries you may have concerning the research herein described. You understand that you may contact Dr. Julie Chesley at jchesley@pepperdine.edu if you have other questions or concerns about this research. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may

contact Pepperdine University Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB) at gpsirb@pepperdine.edu

_____
Signature of Participation   Date

Appendix B: Pre-Storytelling Workshop Interview Script

Appendix B

<u>Pre-Storytelling Workshop Interview Script</u>

I would like to ask you questions about the Inland Transportation Team. For the purpose of this discussion, the Inland Team will be considered 3 distinct groups:

1. The Domestic Jones Act

2. FSX, Pricing and Optimization

3. Finance and Worksheet

Please keep this in mind as you answer questions about members inside or outside your group (remembering, all questions are pertaining to the groups within Inland Transportation). Please also try to be as honest as possible. All answers are kept confidential.

1. Describe your comfort level with asking individuals from your group for information. The other 2 groups? *If levels of comfort differ*—What do you feel causes the difference in comfort level?

2. How do you typically communicate with members from the other 2 groups of Inland Transportation? Can you tell me about a time when you used another form of communication? What was the result?

3. Tell me how the 3 groups within Inland Transportation collaborate to resolve an issue? Can you give a specific example? Was the issue successfully resolved?

4. How valued do you feel your work is by individuals from the other 2 groups? By management? Can you give me an example? How understood do you feel your work is by individuals from the other 2 groups? By management? Can you give me an example?

5. How willingly are best practices shared between the groups within Inland Transportation? How often are best practices shared between the groups within Inland Transportation? Can you give an example when best practices were or were not shared and it made a difference, either positively or negatively?

6. How important do you feel the work of Inland Transportation group is in the overall success of . . . [the company]?

7. Tell me about the support you receive from management. Are all members of Inland Transportation treated equally and receive the same support from management?

8. How supported do you feel by the other 2 groups within Inland Transportation? Can you give an example?

9. What has change within the Inland transportation group been like over the past 4 years? What changes would you like to see?

Is there anything else you would like to share with me? Thank you for your time today.

Appendix C: Email Interview Invitation

Appendix C

Email Interview Invitation

Dear [Name],

I am currently a graduate student at Pepperdine University and in the process of conducting research for my thesis project. In my study I am researching the effect of storytelling on changing the culture of an organization.

All members of the Inland Transportation division of . . . [the company] are given the opportunity to participate in this study. The first part of the study involves me conducting a one-on-one interview with you. The purpose of the interview is to learn about your beliefs and feelings regarding the relationships between the groups within Inland Transportation and should take only 45-60 minutes of your time. All interviews will be conducted in a private office at the . . . [company's] offices during normal working hours. Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.

The second part of the study involves taking part in a storytelling workshop I will be conducting at the . . . [company's] offices. The workshop will be your opportunity to share positive experiences and hear about those of your coworkers. Date and time for the workshop will be announced later.

Your participation in the interview and/or storytelling workshop is strictly voluntary.

Should you decide to participate in the study, a consent form has been attached for your review. Please read it closely and contact me with any questions you may have. You may deliver the signed consent form to me at the time of the interview.

I appreciate your consideration and hope to hear your stories soon.

Thank you,

Rondi Bryant
rondifitness@tx.rr.com

Appendix D: Post-Storytelling Workshop Interview Script

Appendix D

Post-Storytelling Workshop Interview Script

I would like to ask you questions about any changes you have witnessed in the Inland Transportation division following the storytelling workshop.

Please try to be as honest as possible. All answers are kept confidential.

1. Describe any changes you have seen when information needs to be conveyed or obtained between the groups? Can you think of a specific example? Do you feel this is an improvement, same, or worse since the storytelling workshop?
2. Have you seen changes to the typical form of communication between the 3 groups of Inland Transportation? If so, what was different and the result? Do members appear to socialize outside their group? How is this different than before the storytelling workshop, if at all?
3. Tell me about collaboration between the groups to resolve issues since the storytelling workshop. Can you give a specific example? Was the issue successfully resolved?
4. Think about the level of support between the groups prior to the storytelling workshop. Now, tell me about the level of support between the groups now. What is different? What is unchanged?
5. If you had to describe the overall work atmosphere of Inland Transportation prior to the storytelling workshop, what would you say? Post-storytelling workshop? In your opinion, what has been the most significant difference in the work atmosphere, if any?
6. Prior to the storytelling workshop, members of the Inland Transportation division were fearful of change. What differences have you seen in attitudes regarding change within the Inland transportation division, if any?
7. As a manager/associate, what has been the most positive change since the storytelling workshop? Can you give an example of how this has improved the work of your group? Have there been negative outcomes? If so, how has this hurt the work of your group?

Is there anything else you would like to share with me? Thank you for your time today.

Appendix E: Paired Interviews

Appendix E

| Task 1 |
| Paired Interviews |

Topic 1—Flexibility with Change

- "Change in all things is sweet."—Aristotle
- Times of change are full of both uncertainty and opportunity
- You have probably gone through many changes in your life—at work, at home, or in your community
- Some of those may have been difficult and some you came through well

Please think back to one of your most *positive* experiences of living through change and tell me the story of that time.

- What happened?
- Who was involved?
- How did you influence the outcome?
- How was the result better than you anticipated?

Topic 2—Strength in Collaboration

- To work in association with others for some form of mutual benefit
- Used to achieve higher strengths or capacities and superior results
- With full and complete knowledge of roles and responsibilities

Share with me a story about a collaboration that was a high point for you, a time when you were involved with someone else and together were able to achieve *more than you imagined*.

- Who was involved?
- What happened?
- What strengths did you bring to the experience?
- How did you rely on the strengths of others?

Topic 3—What You Value Most

Let's talk about what you value most—specifically about yourself and Inland Transportation as a group.

- Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself, as a human being?

- What are the most important qualities or strengths you bring to Inland Transportation?
- Which of these qualities will help you with both finding *flexibility with change and strength in collaboration*?

Topic 4—Wishes

You have three wishes that will make Inland Transportation the best, most exciting and effective group you have been part of in your life.

What are they?

1.

2.

3.

Appendix F: Story Sharing

Appendix F

Task 2 Story Sharing

Each person at the table shares the story told by their partner. Listen carefully to the stories from each person in your group and make a personal list of the themes that you hear embedded in the stories.

A theme is a word, idea, or concept that identifies what is important in the stories people are telling about times of greatest excitement, creativity, or reward. Look for high points, ideas that "grabbed" you. You are looking for concepts about what life was like for that person when they were experiencing "a best."

Story Themes List:

Appendix G: Identifying Common Themes

Appendix G

<table>
<tr><td>Task 3
Identifying Common Themes</td></tr>
</table>

As a table group, identify all the themes from your stories. List <u>all </u>these themes, and after having a conversation about these, select themes that, as a group, you believe are common among many of the stories and important for understanding what is present when people are feeling excited and fulfilled by their participation in the group.

Which of those do you, as a group, want more of in Inland Transportation?

Select 3-5 Major Themes:

- From your **group's list**, come to agreement on <u>3-5 themes </u>for your group. As a group, select the themes you believe are most important for creating a healthy and vital organization.
- Write the 3-5 themes on the sheet provided.
- Post your sheets on the wall.