

Storytelling in Organizations: Why Storytelling Is Transforming 21st Century Organizations and Management

[Why Organizational Storytelling Is More Than A Fad](#)

This book is the story of how four busy executives, from different backgrounds and different perspectives, were surprised to find themselves converging on the idea of narrative as an extraordinarily valuable lens for understanding and managing organizations in the twenty-first century. The idea that narrative and storytelling could be so powerful a tool in the world of organizations was initially counter-intuitive. But in their own words, John Seely Brown, Steve Denning, Katalina Groh, and Larry Prusak describe how they came to see the power of narrative and storytelling in their own experience working on knowledge management, change management, and innovation strategies in organizations such as Xerox, the World Bank, and IBM. Storytelling in Organizations lays out for the first time why narrative and storytelling should be part of the mainstream of organizational and management thinking. This case has not been made before. The tone of the book is also unique. The engagingly personal and idiosyncratic tone comes from a set of presentations made at a Smithsonian symposium on storytelling in April 2001. Reading it is as stimulating as spending an evening with Larry Prusak or John Seely Brown. The prose is probing, playful, provocative, insightful and sometime profound. It combines the liveliness and freshness of spoken English with the legibility of a ready-friendly text. Interviews with all the authors done in 2004 add a new dimension to the material, allowing the authors to reflect on their ideas and clarify points or highlight ideas that may have changed or deepened over time.

* Brings together well-known thought leaders on the importance of narrative and storytelling for organizational success* The book's easy to read, engaging style of storytelling makes you feel part of the conversation* Only book that includes personal stories and perspectives from Larry Prusak and John Seely Brown

My Personal Review:

The book offers two different timeframes -- the authors speeches from the Smithsonian symposium on storytelling in April 2001 and their thoughts today, in 2004 -- and the books value resides in showing whats changed and what hasnt in those three years.

I found the 2004 reflection sections particularly valuable, since they make clear that storytelling turned out to be far more than the fad many feared it would become in 2001. Especially useful are John Seely Browns reflections -- including his discussions of knowledge ecologies. The bibliography and the endnotes to each chapter also help map the landscape of a field that is, in Stephen Dennings words, widening and deepening.

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