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Exploring Strategic Communication for Creating Images of the Future: Role of Narrative Strategies

A Master's Thesis submitted for the degree of
“Executive Master of Business Administration”

supervised by
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Vienna, 14.10.2024

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Affidavit

I, **VITALINA VERGELES**, hereby declare

1. that I am the sole author of the present Master's Thesis, "EXPLORING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FOR CREATING IMAGES OF THE FUTURE: ROLE OF NARRATIVE STRATEGIES", 89 pages, bound, and that I have not used any source or tool other than those referenced or any other illicit aid or tool, and
2. that I have not prior to this date submitted this Master's Thesis as an examination paper in any form in Austria or abroad.

Vienna, 14.10.2024

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Signature

Acknowledgments

This thesis is the result of my two-year MBA journey at TU Wien. Looking back, it was an interesting and exciting experience.

I am grateful to many supporters who went with me till the end.

Firstly, I would like to say thank you to my family, who supported me. Without their encouragement, I would not have accomplished it.

Further, I would like to thank the ACE MBA program management team and TU Bibliothek. Without their continued support and patience in providing materials and information, it would be challenging to finish this two-year study.

I am grateful to my thesis supervisor, Professor Dr. Jochen Koch, for inspiring me to write on this topic and for his continued patience.

I wish to thank my classmates who shared their valuable experiences with me.

Vitalina Vergeles August 2024

Abstract

This study explored the power and role of narrative in strategic communication, examining how these narratives are used to construct organizational visions of future opportunities. The work aimed to identify key narrative elements influencing future-making to understand how well they work across different types of businesses. The following methodology has been designed to conduct this research: conceptual argumentation to analyze strategic communications and a comprehensive literature review. The strategic communication analysis will focus on narrative aspects by reviewing relevant literature on storytelling, narratives, and methodologies in organizational studies. The results showed that successful storytelling is indispensable for winning trust, respectability, and alignment and getting stakeholder buy-in. The research underscored the necessity of customizing narratives per audience, with abstract framing being necessary when audiences are less likely to associate concepts and concrete framing needed where they would closely. It also detailed the difficulties and factors organizations had to contend with when deploying narrative strategies. The results emphasize a broader understanding of the function narratives serve, suggesting that stories do more than simply diffuse information in organizations: They also contribute to identity structures and adapt culture, thus enabling particularly reflexive responses towards critical contingencies. In conclusion, the research also provided significant findings related to narrative tactics that have practical implications for organizations interested in leveraging these insights to improve their communication strategies and develop stronger narratives guiding vision.

Keywords: Strategic Communication, Narrative, Organizational Goals, Storytelling, Future

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1. Introduction

In contemporary society, storytelling is paradoxical, simultaneously paramount, and trivial. Conventional storytelling methods have diminished in appeal among audiences, mainly due to the rise of digital media and the multitude of platforms that facilitate the publication of narratives. The advent of digital culture and global communication has drawn attention to and expanded the role of narrative strategies in strategic communication. Master Thesis explains the role of narrative in strategic communication, focusing on future perspectives. The document explores how strategic communication is essential for organizations to aim messages at different stakeholders and prepare for future challenges, trends, opportunities, and threats. The main of narrative strategy is to identify critical narratives that can be a framework for an organization's decision-making.

We create imaginary narratives about the future because it is unclear. Any strategy is constantly referring to the future. Different narratives perceive how the future is shaped and envisioned. We see the future as an extension of the present and the past. Striving to achieve desired outcomes, strategic communicators helps to develop and tell stories about the future that resonate with audiences. Organizations could establish strategic communication strategies that navigate potential changes effectively by taking a proactive approach and looking into possible future contexts. Additionally, this Master Thesis work emphasizes the importance of developing narratives about the organization to shape stakeholder perceptions and create a sense of shared identity. By incorporating future perspectives into strategic communication, organizations can stay ahead of trends, maintain marketplace advantages, and align organizational goals with compelling narratives.

With the ever-evolving landscape of business development, firms and companies are constantly seeking innovative methods and approaches to create their vision and attract more attention from investors. The narrative strategy represents a novel and creative approach to crafting persuasive future-oriented narratives that can influence the attitudes of potential investors and other stakeholders. The concept of 'Imagining the future' is a captivating topic integral to innovation. The concise nature of narratives demands a strategic articulation of future visions,

allowing for a focused exploration of narrative strategies employed by firms and individuals in shaping compelling images of the future.

The aim of this research is to identify narratives with powerful characteristics and their potential in strategic communication, especially when technology, culture, and emotion are involved. By doing so, we provide practical insights on how organizations can harness the power of relational storytelling to build trust, foster engagement, and navigate complexity in the business environment, empowering them to apply these strategies in their contexts.

This exploration of narrative strategy uncovers the art of crafting compelling future-oriented narratives and provides insights that can significantly contribute to developing the literature in this area. Our study can further our understanding of how narratives shape organizational identities and others' perceptions, establishing a solid foundation for future research.

We have discovered the importance of digital narratives in driving emotional engagement, showcasing how powerful storytelling aligns organizations with stakeholders. Recognizing the important cultural context is a key factor in determining how narratives are framed and received, reinforcing that organizations must be culturally informed when seeking to tell stories.

The study also covers transmedia storytelling and digital storytelling, showing how stories can be distributed effectively across multiple platforms to encourage audience participation. A major contribution of the volume is its introduction to feminist narratology and how this perspective can be employed in story analysis, through which it suggests a call for greater inclusivity.

In addition, we address the narrative genres utopia and dystopia as essential instruments for organizations to tell their visions of the future-whether inspirational (utopian) or cautionary (dystopial). We investigate the nexus between strategic communication and organizational identity, arguing that through narratives, perceptions are informed while building a coherent organizational narrative.

Strategic narratives are used in specific contexts, the military being one of them, to rally personal and mission goals together. We also acknowledge the importance of art criticism as a form of storytelling to build upon organizational stories and offer dimensionality with cultural

context. Research emphasizes the importance of data stories in presenting information to a different auditory.

Finally, we emphasize effective narrative strategies in startup pitches, and keynote presentations play a great role in turning investors' heads due to their storytelling power. The introduction is the base for presenting these themes in more layers, with expansive referencing to carry out research on strategic communication.

1.1.Scope and objectives

The study explores narrative strategies in strategic communication and their role in shaping future-oriented messages and strategies for organizational success.

Key Objectives:

- To identify narrative roles and components that influence future-making and strategic communication.
- To analyze the effectiveness of narrative in strategic communication and their impact on organizational messaging.
- To examine how the future is shaped and involved in different narratives.
- To research the impact of technology, culture, and emotions on narrative.

We address these objectives and explore the scope of the narrative role in strategic communication. The research aims to provide an understanding of how different organizations and individuals can use storytelling techniques, like painting pictures of the future, to share their vision, gain trust, and align with their specific goals.

1.2.Research questions.

This research explores the role of narratives. Therefore, we can talk about three main research questions in this work:

a) What are the characteristics of compelling narratives in strategic communication that help create convincing images of the future?
b) What is the impact of narrative effectiveness on organizational messaging in strategic communication?
c) How do technology, culture, and emotions shape narratives in strategic communication and contribute to organizational success?

1.4. Methodology

The research employed conceptual argumentation and literature review as a methodology. Using a literature review, we aimed to show that this approach can help us conceptualize narratives' role in communication strategy. Building on recent studies that explore narratives as contextual influences, our goal was to examine a new aspect of future planning: narrative strategy.

Conceptual argumentation was a methodological tool to review narrative dimensions within strategic communication. Drawing on existing literature concerning storytelling and narratives, this paper developed a series of formalized logical arguments that provided an organized framework for systematically examining how narratives shaped forthcoming methodologies in organizational communication. This argumentative design enabled the critique of narrative and strategic communication to help pinpoint the critical elements in narratives that frame organizational messages and future images. The paper aimed to contribute empirically with a theoretical argumentation to provide an evidence-based account of narrative strategies' significance on pictures of the future within an organizational setting. Besides, argumentation helped to describe forms of organizational communication and theory building based on propositional and explicit knowledge.

The methodology involved a literature review of different approaches to storytelling, narrative strategies, communication strategies, and future practices. This review serves as the theoretical background for the research, providing insights into the current state of knowledge in the field. A literature review is a methodology for uncovering narrative strategies that efficiently impact future-making and organizational messaging. The study synthesizes extant research on narrative features to suggest more methodological approaches for studies of organizations. The literature review identified narrative elements in strategic communication using an analytical approach by conceptual argumentation. Formulated concepts through a literature review and the exploration of narrative components present in them offer valuable insights into how organizations create messages, shaping images of their future.

1.3.Structure

The paper is divided into six parts. The introduction provides a general overview of the paper. The second chapter focuses on the Introduction to Strategic Communication, Definition and Characteristics of Strategic Communication, General Overview, and Types of Strategic Communication. This chapter also includes future perspectives as an essential aspect of strategic communication. The third chapter presents the definition and characteristics of a narrative, gives an understanding of narrative, compares narrative and storytelling, and depicts the analysis of information on start-up picks and their importance. The chapter also discusses the construction of narratives in strategic communication. The fourth chapter focuses on the strategic use of narratives in communication, building trust and credibility for organizations by using strategic communication, and aligning narratives with organizational goals. This chapter also presents Challenges, Criticism, and Considerations for narrative in strategic communication. The fifth chapter includes information about the interplay of technology, culture, and emotion in modern narrative strategies, which separately outlines the technological, cultural, and emotional impact on Narratives. The sixth chapter presents the conclusion.

1.5. Literature review

In this literature review, we monitored the terminology of narratives as part of the communication strategy. The past, present, or future events form an exposition. As Matthias Wenzel and Jochen Koch explained, strategy can be a staged performance where narrative is essential in delivering the message.[1] According to Hardin Tibbs, we monitored literature on the "future-casting" approach, a powerful tool for aligning organizational goals and creating a shared identity.[2] We saw that future perspectives in strategic communication are essential for many reasons. Judy VanSlyke Turk believed that it helps organizations prepare for operating environment changes.[3]

We researched how strategic communicators can examine future contexts to develop communication strategies that best serve the organization through these possible changes.[4] According to Swain N., a narrative represents at least two real or fictive events or situations in a time sequence, neither presupposing nor entails the other. The narrative may be conveyed orally,[5] electronically [6] or in documents. A narrative can be a joke, anecdote, or stand-up story. The story is one form of narrative; the story features characters (protagonists, antagonists, heroes, victims, etc.), dramatic tension, temporal ordering of events, and a point to give meaning and value to the story in a setting where people are involved in the "interpretation and assessment of meaning".[7] Stories are fictions formulated from real and imagined events with a beginning, middle, and end. Stories can be recorded, documented, and analyzed. Various authors and approaches confirm the

[1] Wenzel, M., & Koch, J. (2018). Strategy as staged performance: A critical discursive perspective on keynote speeches as a genre of strategic communication. Strategic Management Journal, 39(3), 639-663. https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.2725

[2] Tibbs, H. (2021). Making the Future Visible: Psychology, Scenarios, and Strategy. World Futures Review, 13(1), 8-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/19467567211014557

[3] Turk, J. V. (1986). Public relations' influence on the news. Public Relations Review, Newspaper Research Journal 7(4), 15-26. https://doi.org/10.1177/073953298600700402

[4] Hofvenschioeld, E., & Khodadadi, M. (2019). Communication in Futures Studies: A Discursive Analysis of the Literature. Futures, 115, School of Business and Creative Industries, University of the West of Scotland https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2019.102493

[5] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. (1975). A parable in context: A social interactional analysis of storytelling performance. Folklore: Performance and Communication, edited by Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 1975, 105-130. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110880229.105

[6] Snowden, D. (2001). Narrative patterns. Ark Group. 1-12

[7] Fisher, W. R. (1985). The narrative paradigm: In the beginning. Journal of Communication, 35(4), 74-89 pp. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1985.tb02974.x

disassociation the narrative from the teller and their life. Narratives simultaneously communicate a specific content and its evaluation.[8] We examined perspectives in Autobiographical Storytelling, Emotion, and Narrative presented by Habermas in 2018. We can observe Art Criticism Through Storytelling as well.[9]

The work of Martin and Powers in 1982[10] emphasizes the persuasive power of narratives, suggesting that emotional responses can often be more compelling than logical arguments. This aligns with the observations made by Nicholas Kristof regarding the challenges of eliciting emotional reactions to large-scale humanitarian crises, such as the situation in Darfur, where personal stories can resonate more deeply than abstract statistics. The interplay between culture and narrative is further explored through the lens of Kluckhon and Strodtbeck in 1961 and Schein in 1985, who discuss how narratives are descriptive and prescriptive, reflecting cultural norms and values. This duality is crucial in understanding how narratives shape organizational identity and stakeholder perceptions. The work document also referenced the impact of technology on narrative strategies, mainly through digital storytelling. According to Paul Ricoeur, this idea emphasizes the term "power of configuration" in storytelling. It suggests that combining different forms of expression, including spoken, written, and visual components—can improve narratives, making them more engaging and exciting for the audience.[11]

James Phelan, Peter J. Rabinowitz, and Robyn Warhol presented The Evolution of Feminist Narratology, which reflected a broader understanding of how narratives are influenced by gender, race, and other social constructs. Robyn Warhol's work critiques traditional narratology for its male-centric perspectives, advocating for a more inclusive approach considering diverse narratives and their cultural contexts. During 2023, Nick Blas proposed using strategic narratives in the military context. He used the term military strategy within a larger framework of strategic narratives. It may enable a greater understanding of a strategy's connection with the political and public spheres. In this case, strategic narratives serve as a vital link that enhances communication

[8] Koch, J., & Schreyögg, G. (2005). Knowledge management and narratives: Organizational effectiveness through storytelling. Erich Schmidt Verlag. 4-5 p.
[9] Schappelle, L. S. (2006). Art criticism through storytelling (Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland). College Park, MD: University of Maryland.
[10] Martin, J. (1982). Stories and scripts in organizational settings. In Cognitive social psychology, ed. A. Hasdorf and A. Isen, 225-305. New York: Elsevier-North Holland.
[11] Ricoeur, P. (1984). Time and narrative (Vol. 1). University of Chicago Press. 3-11 p.

and collaboration among different groups within a given environment. By doing so, they play a crucial role in transforming military strength into achievable strategic goals.

2. Introduction to Strategic Communication

2.1 Definition and Characteristics

Strategic communication refers to an organization's intentional use of communication to achieve objectives and fulfill its mission. It involves developing, implementing, and assessing communications to achieve organizational goals.[12]

Strategic communication is essential because it provides a way to address intentional connections within companies. It enables organizations to be more purposeful in representing themselves, communicating and engaging with their audiences, and operating within various organizational contexts. By underlining the vital importance of communication in every endeavor an organization takes part in, strategic communication helps management, advertising, and public relations sciences stay true to their theoretical base. Strategic communication also provides insights into how organizations navigate various groups of stakeholders and their presence in society while simultaneously communicating from global and virtual perspectives.

Strategic communication is necessary for organizations to conduct their relationships and messages in this perpetually changing world of communication. In the digital age, strategic communication is crucial in adapting to technological advancements, leveraging digital platforms for engagement, and addressing diverse audiences' evolving needs and preferences. Effective strategic communication strategies enable organizations to stay competitive, responsive, and relevant in a rapidly changing business environment. [13]

Let us look closer at the Critical characteristics of Strategic Communication. One characteristic of strategic communication is that it helps an organization complete its mission. Communication activities are intended and congruent with the organization's objectives and goals.

[12] Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., van Ruler, B., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2007). Defining Strategic Communication. International Journal of Strategic Communication, 1(1), 3–35.
[13] Tunc, A. O., & Aslan, P. (2020). Business management and communication perspectives in industry 4.0. IGI Global, Business Science Reference 71-90 p.

Besides, strategic communication entails that six disciplines jointly explore, form, and assess organizational communications. These disciplines are management, marketing, public relations, technical communication, political communication, and normative/societal marketing campaigns. Splendid managerial quality is the key to success in this communication process; all six people work as a unit. Otherwise, there would be no consensus over what should be said or misunderstood targets.

Strategic communication necessitates meticulous planning and implementation to accomplish objectives. Intentional and deliberate tactics, not randomness or accident, characterize strategic interaction.

Strategic communication involves examining communicative exchanges, environments, and consequences. It analyzes stakeholder relationships with entities like patrons, workers, shareholders, regulators, and community members and involves understanding how systems of interrelation operate and culminate. Periodic assessment tracks progress toward cooperating harmoniously and productively with diverse parties through judicious messaging.

Strategic communication reflects societal changes and organizing principles. It involves observing beyond traditional communication disciplines, including diplomacy, military psychological operations, and social marketing.

These elements illustrate the holistic and strategic conception of organizational and corporate communication, focusing on how communication helps organizations accomplish their goals and communicate with various stakeholder groups.

2.2 Overview of Strategic Communication

In the 1990s, discussions about strategic communication began to take on a more formal structure, and this trend has continued into the present century. Significant efforts have been made to develop a scientific framework for understanding strategic organizational communication. Over the years, numerous articles, conference presentations, and books have aimed to define, clarify,

and validate this concept.[14] One example is the International Journal of Strategic Communication, launched in 2007.[15]

The International Journal of Strategic Communication (IJSC) has been important in spreading the concept of strategic communication in both scholarly and practical settings. This concept addresses various real-world challenges and can be understood differently. These interpretations frequently overlap, making the term seem unclear or difficult to pin down.

To start, term strategic communication is now used instead of integrated communication, which previously referred to a broad category encompassing all forms of communication aimed at achieving specific goals.[16] It was initiated by organizations to address any stakeholders and audiences. Meaningful discussions were fostered by introducing diverse communication concepts and emphasizing the six key areas—management, marketing, public relations, technical communication, political communication, and information/social marketing campaigns. This dialogue has contributed to the institutionalization of strategic communication, reflected in academic conferences, educational programs, research institutes, and an expanding body of literature in journals and books. The core element in this debate is the multidisciplinary perspective. This viewpoint offers various reasons for strategic communication, including addressing economic needs, shaping political decision-making, and informing citizens. This text sets the foundation for grasping multiple methods—such as paid, earned, owned, and shared media—and essential concepts like campaigns and programs. Additionally, it introduces different approaches, including the distinctions between messaging and listening, monologues, dialogues, and the difference between arguing and persuading. It highlights the critical difference between communicating as a back-and-forth process where meaning is created by different people and managing those communication processes as a action.[17]

[14] Heath, R. L. (2022). Strategic communication: Historical overview and concept development. Edward Elgar Publishing EBooks. 62–82. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800379893.00010
[15] Falkheimer, J., & Heide, M. (2022). Research handbook on strategic communication. Edward Elgar Publishing
[16]Zerfass, A (2023). Communication Management - Communication – Oxford.Bibliographies. Retrieved from https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/abstract/document/obo-9780199756841/obo-9780199756841-0244.xml [07.06.2024]
[17] Zerfass, A., Verčič, D., Nothhaft, H., & Werder, K. P. (2018). Strategic Communication: Defining the Field and its Contribution to Research and Practice. International Journal of Strategic Communication, 12(4), 487–505. https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2018.1493485

Strategic communication consists of a range of purposeful and intentional communication practices carried out by the organization to have a desired impact. Revisiting the functional communication approach, it redeploys the strategic soul unto the heart of communication practices, with a massive plea for communicators to better align communication efforts to the organizational goals. Several types of communication are linked under strategic communication, including internal and external communications, followed by crisis communication and public relations, such as strategic communications, marketing communications, and digital communications.

Strategic communication puts management practice at the core of its approach to communication. This includes strategy development, internal communication processes, stakeholder engagement, managing change, and analyzing complex organizational environments. Strategic communication even goes as far as to advocate for communication as a central fact of organizational life — thus a mechanism that organizations can be displayed and exchanged with, in partnership with the fast-arriving and still shaping the new world of communication.

In this rapidly changing competitive business environment, strategic communication is a pillar in forming organizational messaging, relationship management, reputation building, and effectively achieving strategic objectives. It guides organizations to communicate intentionally, interact with their public correctly, and evolve along with communication trends to remain pertinent and practical.

If we observe IT businesses, we see how entrepreneurs can convincingly communicate their vision and passion through storytelling to attract investors' funds.[18]

We often see business owners create engaging stories that effectively communicate their goals, purpose, and the issues they intend to address. It is essential to ensure that their story is interesting, authentic and echoes the values of potential investors. Besides, entrepreneurs demonstrate passion. They can give insight into what makes their heartbeat by sharing personal anecdotes or the stories behind how their business was born. Showing they have a personal tie to the problem they are addressing can inspire investors to feel empathy and trust.

[18] Martens, M. L., Jennings, J. E., & Jennings, P. D. (2007). Do The Stories They Tell Get Them The Money They Need? The Role of Entrepreneurial Narratives In Resource Acquisition. Academy of Management Journal, 50(5): 1107-1132.

Entrepreneurs showcase the core value proposition. Entrepreneurs must demonstrate their business's core value proposition and explain why it stands out among competitors. Emphasizing what sets their business apart can capture the interest of investors. Adding more visual aids, such as presentations, infographics, or prototypes, will enhance storytelling and help investors visualize the impact that can be achieved.

The best Entrepreneurs customize their message to the audience. Learning what investors care about can help shape and create your story effectively. They emphasize the market opportunity for the specific venture: market size, the market growth, and, ideally, the expected market segment. Showing a solid grasp of the market can boost investor confidence.

Successful entrepreneurs draw a clear roadmap for their goals and milestones achieved by taking a fact-based approach. This confidence in a venture's potential success can be boosted further if the entrepreneur presents a sound strategy.

2.3 Types of Strategic Communication

Strategic communication includes various approaches and methods focused on achieving specific organizational goals. Some types of strategic communication are:

1. Internal Communication: This message is about sharing important information within the organization to keep everyone updated and involved and ensure that all are working together toward the company's goals and values. These internal communication strategies could include newsletters, intranet platforms, team meetings, and employee engagement initiatives.

2. External Communication includes interacting with people and other stakeholders that do not belong to the organization, including customers, investors, etc. This type of communication involves creating and sustaining relationships, some of which may be mutually beneficial, managing the organization's reputation, and promoting its products, services, initiatives, perspectives, and even people. To name a few, we can end up landing in press releases, social media campaigns, advertisements, or public relations efforts.

3. Crisis Communication: Crisis communications is a specialized area within public relations that focuses on safeguarding and defending the reputation of a person, company, or organization when they encounter a public challenge. The best crisis communication strategies involve responding to stakeholders quickly and honestly, managing their fears, and keeping the organization credible.

4. Marketing Communication: Marketing communication refers to the various activities involved in promoting a product to an end consumer, ranging from informational communication to brand communication to social networks. It includes advertising, branding, digital marketing, content marketing, and customer relationship management, i.e., content management and relationship marketing efforts designed to attract, engage, and convert customers at different points.

5. Change Communication: Change communication is essential when any changes are introduced in an organization, such as a merger, restructuring, or change in process. We use it to discuss why changes are necessary, to help our team understand, answer their questions, and support them in adjusting to the new situation.

6. Corporate Communication: Corporate communication is written to the organization, its reputation, and stakeholder relations. This includes creating regular messaging, handling media relations, and ensuring that your communication aligns with your organization's strategic objectives.

7. Digital Communication: Digital communication involves utilizing digital channels and technologies to find, attract, and engage with your audience. Which encompasses social media, Email Marketing, Website Content, Online Advertising, and Mobile Communication Strategies.

8. One of the most important is Narrative communication. This type of communication involves specifically sharing stories. Narratives are symbolic representations of related events communicated with a structure. They are formed within a particular space-time narrative, which might include implicit or explicit messaging about the topics under discussion.

Storytelling, pitches, business presentations, and quarterly reports are distinct types of strategic communication commonly used in various organizational contexts. Here is a brief overview of each:

Table 1

Communication Methods (Source: Author)

Narrative Communication Method	Definition	Purpose	Use Cases
Storytelling	The art of conveying information through a narrative structure	Communicate values, brand identity, etc.	Marketing, internal comms, PR
Pitches	Concise, persuasive presentation to convince support	Secure investments, partnerships, etc.	Sales, marketing, entrepreneurship
Business Presentations	Delivery of information in a formal setting	Share updates, pitch ideas, etc.	Inform, persuade, and educate stakeholders.
Quarterly Reports	Formal document on company performance	Assess progress, financial health, etc.	Openness and responsibility to all parties involved (stakeholders)
Keynote speech	Opening speech at the start of an event, conference, or meeting to establish the mood and focus for the occasion	Inspire, Set the Tone, and Knowledge Sharing	Industry Summits, Product Launches, Graduation Ceremonies

- Storytelling

Storytelling is the delivery of information, messages, or ideas based on the structure of a story. It's an engaging way to communicate that grabs people's attention, stirs up emotions, and helps them remember the content more effectively. Storytelling often aims to express the company's commitments, brand personality, product profiles, or cultural status.

- Pitches

A pitch is a short presentation/proposal designed to get someone else to believe in an idea, a product you will bring to market or a project. This often includes important information, benefits, and a call to action. Pitches are frequently used in sales, marketing, entrepreneurship, and project management to secure resources, clients, partnerships, an investment for a project, etc. They are intended to catch the eye, generate interest, and elicit the desired behavior of the audience.

- Business Presentations

Business presentations refer to communicating and presenting information, data, or insights to a group of people in a formal or professional scenario. They usually include visual components (slides, charts, and graphs) that make the explanation more straightforward.It can be used at the Company Overview, Project Updates, Training sessions, Awards, Ideas or Pitches, and Financial Results reported. Business Presentations are developed to update, convince, or teach stakeholders about different subjects.

- Quarterly Report

Few years ago financial reports might have seemed like secondary not important documents, but now that they are mandatory, they have become essential. Quarterly reports, for example, provide a clear snapshot of a company's performance, financial impact, achievements, and challenges over a specific period. These reports are crucial for stakeholders—investors, shareholders, employees, and regulators—because they offer insights into the organization's progress, financial well-being, and strategic direction. They show transparency, accountability, and a view into what is happening behind the scenes at a company.

- Keynote speech:

A keynote speech is a specific talk or even presentation that establishes the central theme or mood for an event, conference, or gathering. Keynote speeches are typically delivered by prominent experts in their field and intended to inspire, motivate, or educate the audience. Keynote speeches can cover various topics, from industry trends and innovations to personal anecdotes and motivational stories. Keynote speeches address the following groups: industry professionals, corporate executives, entrepreneurs, students, and a general audience. They provide group insights/inspiration/guidance. Keynote speakers speak to various groups with unique needs and interests to engage, motivate, and educate attendees. Addressing the proper target audience with keynote speeches is essential to tailor the content, tone, and message in a way that will strike and make sense to the attendees so the right impact and engagement are achieved.[19]

Such communications have a purpose and demand their skills and strategies to deliver information and achieve desired ends in organizational settings. Knowing what makes a good story, as opposed to a pitch, a business presentation, or a quarterly report, helps communicators create the messages that get people to act and drive organizational performance.

Let us examine why telling stories is essential for business and strategic communication. According to Aleksandr Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur, the story can serve as a powerful tool to make a new business model.[20]

Firstly, the story can introduce new ways. New business model ideas can appear anywhere in an organization. Some ideas may be good, some mediocre, and some downright useless. Even the best business model ideas can struggle to get through all the levels of management and become part of a company's strategy. That is why it is essential to pitch your business model ideas effectively to the decision-maker. This is where stories can help. In the end, managers focus on

[19] Wenzel, M., & Koch, J. (2018). Strategy as staged performance: A critical discursive perspective on keynote speeches as a genre of strategic communication. Strategic Management Journal, 39(3), 639-663. https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.2725

[20] Osterwalder, A., & Pigneur, Y. (2010). Business model generation: a handbook for visionaries, game changers, and challengers. Wiley.

data and facts, but a strong narrative can capture their interest. A well-told story is an effective method to present a big-picture idea before diving into the specifics.[21]

Secondly, it is suitable for pitching to investors. As an entrepreneur, you can present your idea or business model to investors or potential shareholders. However, many investors tend to tune out when you claim you will be the next Google. Investors and other shareholders want to know: How will you create customer value? How will you make money doing so? That is the perfect setting for a story. It is the ideal way to introduce your venture and business model before getting into the full business plan.

Thirdly, Stories are engaging employees. When a company shifts from its current business model to a new one, it must get its team on board. Everyone should clearly understand the new model and how it impacts their roles. In short, the organization needs to engage its employees powerfully. That is where standard PowerPoint presentations often miss the mark. Bringing in a new business model through a captivating story-driven presentation—using PowerPoint, sketches, or other methods—has a much better chance of resonating with your audience. Capturing people's attention and curiosity paves the way for in-depth presentations and discussions of the unfamiliar.

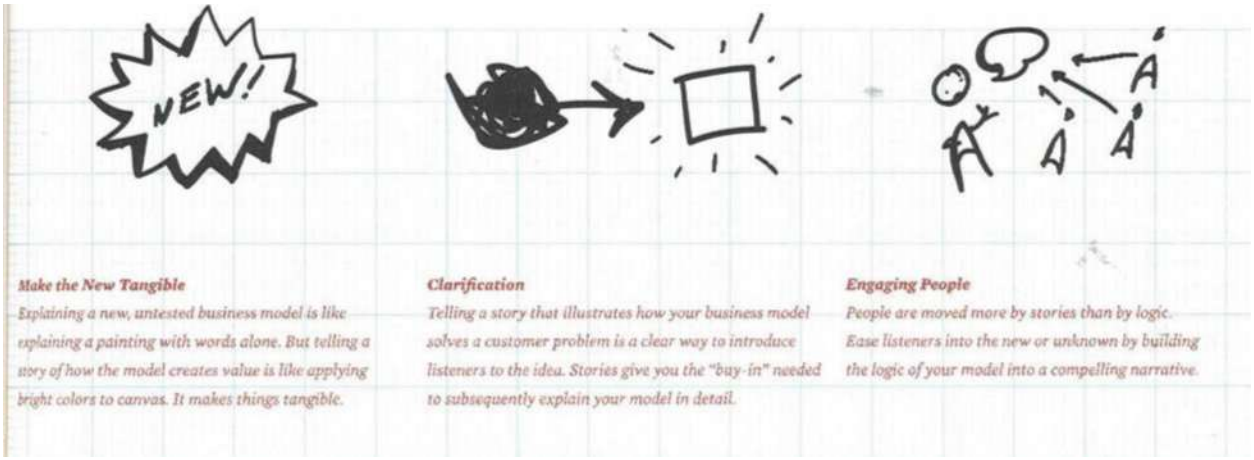


Figure 1
Storytelling value. (Source: Osterwalder and Pigneur 2010)

[21] Osterwalder, A., & Pigneur, Y. (2010). Business model generation: a handbook for visionaries, game changers, and challengers. Wiley

2.4. Future perspective as an essential aspect of Strategic Communication

Strategic communication is not just a tool but a key to organizational success. It allows organizations to direct their messages to stakeholders, such as customers, investors, employees, and the public. Crucially, strategic communication is future-focused, enabling organizations to better prepare for what lies ahead, including potential challenges, trends, opportunities, and threats.

Strategic communicators must be able to create and tell stories about the future. This enables them to develop messages that resonate with audiences and lead to the desired results. The future is an extension of the past.

Future perspectives in strategic communication are crucial. They help organizations prepare for future changes in the operating environment, ensuring they are always one step ahead.[22]. Strategic communicators can look into possible future contexts where they develop strategic communication strategies that get the organization best through these possible changes.[23] By taking this proactive approach, businesses can keep up with where things are going, not just where they are - which can offer a substantial marketplace edge.

Secondly, the future perspective allows strategic communicators to develop the narratives of where their organization will be. Communicators can shape the organization's perceptions and get stakeholders to connect so emotionally to the organization if compelling narratives are created around the vision, values, and aspirations, according to Tibbs , this "future-casting." [24] approach can be a powerful tool for aligning organizational goals and creating a shared identity.

[22] Turk, J. V. (1985) Information subsidies and influence. Public Relations Review, Volume 11, Issue 3, 10-25 pp. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111(85)80078-3

[23] Hofvenschioeld, E., & Khodadadi, M. (2019). Communication in Futures Studies: A Discursive Analysis of the Literature. Futures, 115, School of Business and Creative Industries, University of the West of Scotland https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2019.102493

[24] Tibbs, H. (2021). Making the Future Visible: Psychology, Scenarios, and Strategy. World Futures Review, 13(1), 8-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/19467567211014557

According to Bernhard Fischer-Appelt [25], narratives communicate past events or current strategies and frame an organization's future direction and aspirations. We could observe four points regarding the role of the future in the narrative:

Narrative strategy is described as even more future-oriented compared to classic corporate storytelling. It establishes an organization about larger societal narratives while mobilizing public understanding to help craft a single change narrative for the association.

Looking ahead: Stories allow organizations to speculate on future shifts in changing landscapes. Organizations can sync strategy to trends and stakeholder expectations by building their narratives on future possibilities.

The authors reveal the importance of storytelling for mid- and long-term sense-making in an organization. This involves understanding how to deal with your current constraints and paint an impressive picture of the future that attracts investors.

By incorporating narratives into strategy-making, firms can improve their learning ability and open up a more comprehensive set of possible future strategies. That allows us to adapt better to the trends and shifts of societal narratives.

We could also talk about the imaginary and realistic future. How much should we stick to the present while looking into a fortune-telling Crystal ball?

Figure 2

The future cab as a strategic landscape. (Source: Hardin Tibbs 2021)

[25] Fischer-Appelt, B., & Dernbach, R. (2022). Exploring narrative strategy: the role of narratives in the strategic positioning of organizational change. Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, 36(1), 85–95. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2022.2062303

The concept of viewing the future as a psychological domain can be enhanced by portraying it as a physical terrain. When the cognitive and emotional aspects intersect, they manifest as distinct features within this landscape. Envisioning the strategic actor, whether an entity or an individual, gazing toward the future along a timeline over an expansive terrain (refer to Figure 1) is a powerful image. In the distant sky, a brilliant star shines, while a looming mountain peak lies in the mid-range, aligned with the star. A vast plain stretches out between the strategic actor and the mountain, resembling a colossal chessboard.

Storytelling isn't just a method; it's a formidable asset in strategic communication. It empowers organizations to craft compelling stories, think innovatively, and build unique campaigns. It has the potential to inspire stakeholders towards a common goal and can be a driving force behind organizational success.

We need to create an inspiring vision to make stories work. We use imagination to communicate a great story about the future state, which can inspire stakeholders toward a common goal. For instance, if an organization narrates visions of a sustainable future employing creative storytelling, it might inspire and get its audience's buy-in.

Besides, it is important to stand out from the crowd: Creative campaigns, a different brand story, or a message that surprises an audience are ways to hook their attention.

Additionally, thinking abstractly is one form of creative thinking that helps communicators develop new approaches to overcome obstacles. This might involve deploying new communication channels, building unusual partnerships, or experimenting with content in different packaging.

Imagination is crucial, but realism keeps strategic communication functional, credible, and feasible. Realism helps communicators in different ways.

Firstly, being credible. Credibility is critical—excessive or unrealistic claims can damage your credit and message delivery. Trust is created by setting realistic goals and providing transparent and accurate information.

Secondly, it is important to match communication strategies with resources and facilities. Pragmatic planning guarantees that all communication strategies will be in harmony with available resources, such as budget, human resources, and technology. This is how to avoid setting the bar too high only to come up short—a one-two punch of underpromising and overdelivering.

Thirdly, responding to the current contexts. Being pragmatic means being sensitive to the sociopolitical, economic, and technological environment. This includes understanding your audience's needs, desires, and behaviours and staying awake to current issues and trends.

Based on the facts described, the best strategy could be balancing imagination and reality because good strategic communication combines fantasy and reality. This is where communicators can strike a balance:

- Goals should be a stretch but realistic. The correct balance means teams are incentivized but not disadvantaged at the outset.
- Use data and analytics to ground creative ideas in real data. Once communicators know the audience insights or the market trend, they can craft creative ideas accordingly to work well.
- An iterative process enables fine-tuning of strategies through real-world feedback. That may require testing creative ideas, compiling data on how they affect change, and tweaking variations to keep them in good shape.
- Keep your stakeholders in the loop so your innovative ideas address real needs and are supported by their opinions. This co-creative style improves buy-in and allegiance.

However, sticking to the present is very important for a good communication strategy. Communication is effective only if it centers around the audience's current issues, demands, and concerns. Failure to consider the here and now can result in messages that seem out of touch.

As communicators, trends can limit our relevance if we do not know what they are and go on to master them. It may mean using the platforms that are hot in the market, joining the conversation, or updating the technologies the audience is currently consuming. Leveraging established strengths and accomplishments helps build a solid foundation for future development and innovation.

As per Liveley, G., Slocombe, W., and Spiers, E., when we think about the chances, options, and what we hope for in the future, we're engaging with our current ideas of what those possible futures might look like – like a fictional story world.[26] We come to know our role in the world, both now and in the future, by sharing and telling stories. Miller noted back in 2008 that it's essential to understand that creating exploratory situations for society mainly involves storytelling.[27]. As Prince highlights, narratives not only reflect events; they also uncover and create possibilities for the future.[28]

[26] Liveley, G., Slocombe, W., & Spiers, E. (2021). Futures literacy through narrative. Retrieved from https://core.ac.uk/download/374288193.pdf [01.07.2024]

[27] Miller, Sara & Pennycuff, Lisa. (2008). The Power of Story: Using Storytelling to Improve Literacy Learning. Journal of Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives in Education. Vol. 1, No. 1. 36 - 43

[28] Biwu, S. & Prince, Gerald. (2018). Core concepts and basic theories of narrative: A conversation with Gerald Prince. Interdisciplinary Studies of Literature. 2. 13-25.

3. Understanding the role of the Narrative

3.1. Definition and Characteristics

The stories convey insights into success and failure, whether solutions to problems are effective, and themes like good fortune, justice, and beauty. By engaging with these narratives, the audience gets entertained and understands the key ideas, arguments, and connections being presented.[29]As opposed to the discursive mode of thought, which requires analytical clarity, the narrative mode is, as already mentioned, mixed and ambiguous. Stories share at least two aspects: First, they reveal personal experiences, skills, and traditional responses. Second, they provide a reason for the underlying messages they carry.[30] In other words, narratives communicate specific content and evaluate it simultaneously. It's crucial to recognize a narrative's unique features, which serve both to describe and to guide. Cultural studies familiarize us with learning skills, values, and beliefs while validating them as correct and fair. [31]. Essentially, culture both describes and supports what we know. The way we share stories is closely connected to the concept of "life-world" (Lebenswelt), which refers to the everyday experiences and contexts we usually overlook[32].

Storytelling is crucial for shaping a narrative. It takes the writer's message and presents it to the audience deliberately. We can consider narrative as a digital space that appears when we communicate. It features a series of events that unfold sequentially and logically. So, the main part of a narrative is events that make sense together and happen in order. Since this main part has different pieces, we can also call it a scaffold, like the frame of a building. I also suggest that this digital space, including the main part and other features, be called a narrative. Moreover, the main part itself, the scaffold, should be called a story. Narration is just the way we tell or share these stories.[33]

[29] Schreyögg, G., & Geiger, D. (2005). Exploring Narrative Variety: Narrative-Based Knowledge Sharing in the Oil Exploration Industry https://doi.org/10.17169/refubium-22570

[30] Lyotard, J.-F. (1984). The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge. (G. Bennington & B. Massumi, Trans.). University of Minnesota Press. (Original work published 1979)

[31] Lang, R. (2015). Schein, Edgar H. (1985): Organizational culture and leadership. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publisher

[32] Schütz, A., & Luckmann, T. (1989). The structures of the life-world (R. M. Zaner & H. T. Engelhardt Jr., Trans.). Northwestern University Press.21-44 p.

[33]Elleström, L. (2019). Transmedial narration: Narratives and stories in different media. Palgrave Macmillan.

Gerard Genette suggests that the primary meaning of the narrative, which is currently the most noticeable and commonly used, pertains to the narrative statement itself. This oral or written discourse undertakes to tell of an event or a series of events; thus, we would term the narrative of Ulysses the speech given by the hero to the Phaeacians in Books IX-XII of the Odyssey, and also these four books themselves, that is,, the section of Homeric text that purports to be the faithful transcription of that speech.[34]

A second meaning, less widespread but current today among analysts and theoreticians of narrative content, is that narrative refers to the succession of events, real or fictitious, that are the subjects of this discourse and to their several relations of linking, opposition, repetition, etc. Analysis of narrative refers to examining a complete set of actions and circumstances on their own, without considering the specific medium—language or something else—that conveys that entire picture to us.[35]

Lars Elleström describes a narrative as a space that forms during communication, full of events that are related to each other over time in a significant way. The essence of a narrative lies in these connections between events. Since this core includes multiple elements, we can consider it a framework. Overall, when we talk about the entire space that has this core and often includes other media aspects, we refer to it as a narrative, while the essential connected events make up what we call a story. Narration should be understood as the communication of narratives.[36]

Lately, in discussions in public and academic circles, the word narrative has been used in vague and sometimes conflicting ways. Hübner argues that it has turned into a catch-all phrase for any description. Meanwhile, Schneider goes so far as to say that it reflects a "propagation of thoughtlessness," [37] suggesting that it does not differ from the word story aside from having a trendy appeal. Etymologically, the term narrative is derived from the verb narrate (Latin: to tell, report, recount). According to Nahari, Glicksohn, and Nachson,[38] there is still debate on the

[34] Dickson, K. M. (1990). A Typology of Mediation in Homer. Retrieved from https://core.ac.uk/download/160495136.pdf [03.05.2024]
[35] Genette, G. (1980). Narrative discourse. Cornell University Press. 9-10 pp.
[36] Elleström, L. (2019). Transmedial narration: Narratives and stories in different media. Palgrave Macmillan.
[37] Fischer-Appelt, B., & Dernbach, R. (2022). Exploring narrative strategy: the role of narratives in the strategic positioning of organizational change. Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, 36(1), 85–95 pp.
[38] Nahari, Galit & Glicksohn, Joseph & Nachson, Israel. (2009). Credibility judgments of narratives: Language, plausibility, and absorption. The American journal of psychology. 123. 319-335 pp.

definitions of “narrative” in the humanities and social sciences, mainly focusing on narratives' purpose, functions, and structures. [39]

A narrator is the speaker or 'voice' of the narrative discourse.[40] He or she is the agent who establishes communicative contact with an addressee (the 'narratee'), who manages the exposition, who decides what is to be told, how it is to be said (especially from what point of view, and in what sequence), and what is to be left out.

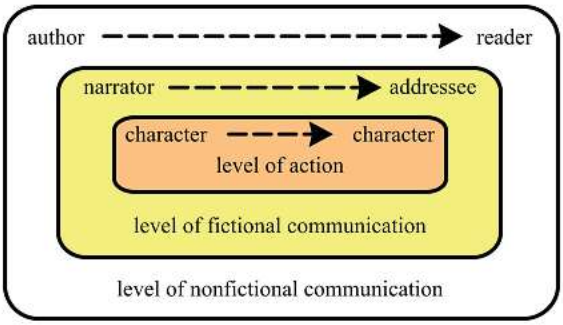


Figure 3

Levels of narrative communication (Source: Jahn, Manfred 2021)

What are the key elements that make up a story? What must a narrative have for it to count as a narrative? To put it simply, every story has a plot and is filled with characters. Stories can be shared in many ways, like through speaking, writing, films, pictures, performances, or even a mix of these. When stories are told verbally, there is also a storyteller or narrator involved.[41]

[39] Fischer-Appelt, B., & Dernbach, R. (2022). Exploring narrative strategy: the role of narratives in the strategic positioning of organizational change. Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, 36(1), 85–95.
[40] Genette, G. (1980). Narrative discourse. Cornell University Press 9-10 pp.
[41] Jahn, M. (2021). Narratology 2.3: A guide to the theory of narrative. English Department, University of Cologne

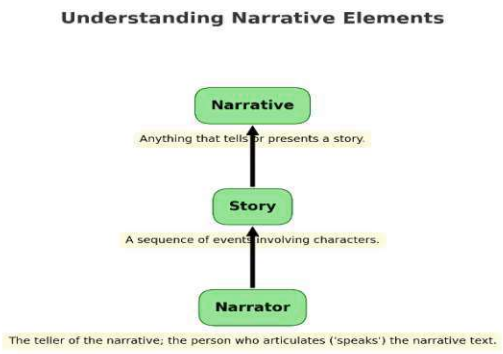


Figure 4

Elements of Narrative (Source: Author)

Authors and storytellers have long been drawn to the interplay between utopias and dystopias, which they use as conceptual frameworks to explore human identity aspirations, fears, and paradoxes. Utopias are fundamentally idealized visions of a perfect society. They provide a fresh slate to reflect our deepest aspirations and hidden anxieties about the world around us. On the flip side, dystopias warn us of what may happen if such noble objectives are pursued unchecked.[42]

The ultimate essence of this dynamic is rooted in the natural human inclination towards creative self-expression and self-regulation. Like the most compelling dystopian ideas, utopian thinking can inspire people to elevate their perspectives. It encourages them to detach from their current circumstances, allowing them to recognize the realities of society and work towards creating something more significant.[43]It defines unrealistic ideal goals for a better future as a utopian dream, but its seduction can also switch actors off from the present as they will seek refuge to an unattainable perfection. Dystopias then act as the yin to that yang, showing us the dark side of what could happen if things go wrong with stable ideas gone awry.

[42] Sadeq, A.E., Shalabi, I.A., & Alkurdi, S. (2011). Major Themes in Renaissance Utopias. Asian Social Science, 7, 131.
[43] Kashima, Y., & Fernando, J. (2020). Utopia and ideology in cultural dynamics. Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences, 34, 102-106 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2020.01.002

The word "utopia" refers to a literary genre that features vivid, dreamlike images of an ideal life and more abstract socio-political and philosophical ideas.[44] For instance, Alfred Dorens' definition of utopia captures this installation of desirability within utopia, since utopia in his work is associated with the Wunschraum and the Wunschzeit (desirable space and the desirable time. Utopia refers to the good projected in some remote space; similarly, it may refer to the projection of the good in time.[45]

Utopias and dystopias are creative visions of what could possibly be, reflecting either a hopeful or critical view of society. Utopianism includes personal dreams and the broader fictional idea of an ideal world, showing a deep desire for something better. Both utopias and dystopias tell stories that express this feeling. Utopian fiction plays a crucial role in the literary history of the United States. This country has produced more science fiction and utopian literature than many others, especially during the genre's peak in the 19th century.[46]

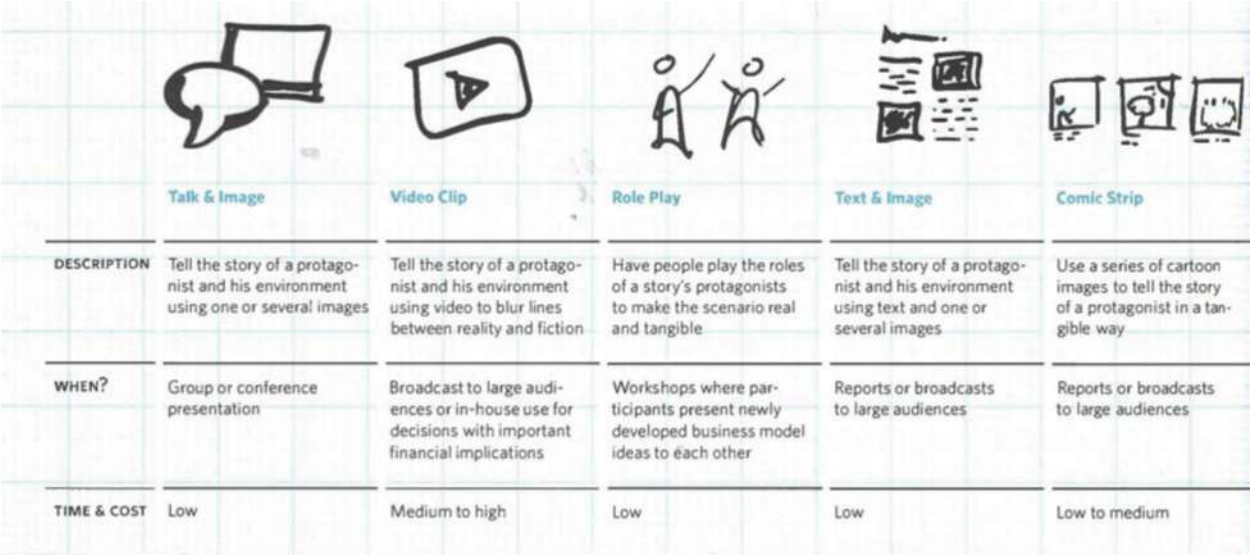
3.2. Narrative vs. Storytelling

A storytelling method is a specific framework that helps you shape your narrative and engage your audience effectively. By employing a practical and effective approach, you can tap into the true potential of storytelling—sticking to the time-tested principles that have made it successful for ages while tweaking them just enough to add your personal touch. This approach is just as relevant for business storytelling—creating captivating presentations and infographics—as it is for crafting novels, screenplays, and more. Business presentations increasingly adopt storytelling techniques, as evidenced by Cisco Systems' transition from data-centric to narrative-driven presentations. This shift has proven instrumental in enhancing Cisco's success in product promotion.

[44] Kumar, Vidya. (2003). A Critical Methodology of Globalization: Politics of the 21st Century?. Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies. 10. 87-111 .
[45] Papastephanou, M. (2009). Dystopia, utopia and the plasticity of humanity. In M. Papastephanou (Ed.), Educational philosophy and theory. Wiley-Blackwell. 43–62
[46] Sands, P. (2017). Utopias and dystopias. Routledge

So, what did the successful leaders do? They created stories highlighting actions inconsistent with a firm's established culture but reinforcing a more strategically aligned alternative culture. Tales of dedicated employees who went the extra mile for customers played a key role in the formulation of service-focused strategies. Narratives about bold decision-making and inventive perseverance bolstered innovative approaches. Additionally, accounts showcasing meticulous attention to detail and significant process improvement supported strategies prioritizing high-quality, cost-effective production.[47]

Different techniques and options can be used to tell an engaging with public story. Each technique has advantages and disadvantages and is better suited for certain situations and audiences. Once you know your audience and the situation you will be presenting in, you can choose the right approach [48]



	Talk & Image	Video Clip	Role Play	Text & Image	Comic Strip
DESCRIPTION	Tell the story of a protagonist and his environment using one or several images	Tell the story of a protagonist and his environment using video to blur lines between reality and fiction	Have people play the roles of a story's protagonists to make the scenario real and tangible	Tell the story of a protagonist and his environment using text and one or several images	Use a series of cartoon images to tell the story of a protagonist in a tangible way
WHEN?	Group or conference presentation	Broadcast to large audiences or in-house use for decisions with important financial implications	Workshops where participants present newly developed business model ideas to each other	Reports or broadcasts to large audiences	Reports or broadcasts to large audiences
TIME & COST	Low	Medium to high	Low	Low	Low to medium

Figure 5

Techniques to tell a story. (Source: Osterwalder and Pigneur 2010)

One common reason why many stories presentations fail is that they do not target the right audience. Another critical issue is not fully grasping the purpose of the presentation. Very few

[47] Barney, J. B., Amorim, M., & Júlio, C. (2023, September). Create stories that change your company's culture. Retrieved from Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2023/09/create-stories-that-change-your-companys-culture [01.06.2024]

[48] Osterwalder, A., & Pigneur, Y. (2010). Business model generation: a handbook for visionaries, game changers, and challengers. Wiley.

presentations are just meant to inform. Most presentations must persuade audiences. Other presentations, such as a lecture at a university, call for inspiring the audience. Another common reason presentations often miss the mark is that the speaker hasn't taken the time to think about the occasion. Events can range from casual meetings to formal symposiums, and each type comes with different audience expectations. For example, the audience attending a morning formal conference will have different expectations compared to those at an after-dinner speech.[49]

Some studies indicate that people are naturally inclined to engage with stories. For example, neuroscientist Uri Hasson's fMRI research found that when a story is told, the audience's brain activity aligns with that of the storyteller. This means that your brain reacts similarly to the storyteller's, allowing you to share the same emotions.[50]

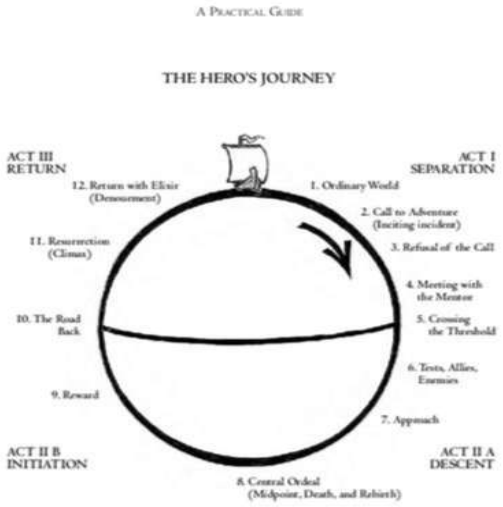


Figure 6

Hero's Journey Diagram from (Source :Vogler 2007)

For some years now, Henry Jenkins's concept of transmedia storytelling has been widespread. This idea includes the contemporary trend of creating extensive stories of more

[49] Alley M.(2008): The Craft of Scientific Writing

[50] Chang CHC, Nastase SA, Hasson U (2023): How a speaker herds the audience: Multi-brain neural convergence over time during naturalistic storytelling. Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience https://doi.org/10.1101/2023.10.10.561803

miniature tales shared across various media types. This includes films, comics, video games, novels, and different online platforms[51]: "A transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole".[52]There is a common phenomenon seen in various mythologies, such as those from Hindu, Greek, and Christian traditions. It is essential to recognize the different historical and cultural contexts behind each.[53]

There are eight storytelling techniques:[54]

- Monomyth: Often referred to as the hero's journey, is a specific storytelling structure you can find in many folk tales, myths, and religious writings from different cultures around the globe. Namely, the monomyth consists of the hero getting called to leave their lands and venture on a perilous journey that will see them transition from what is certain to what is unfamiliar and unknown. The idea of the hero's journey can be related to many different human challenges and helps them think about their own experiences. This pattern shows various aspects of life, illustrating more than one type of reality. It effectively outlines the journey and the essential components that make up a good story.[55]
- The mountain: The mountain structure is a narrative format for arranging a story's tension and advancement. This concept is akin to a monomyth but not necessarily bound to reach a resolution or a happy ending. In the mountain structure, the plot is usually prefaced with an exposition, after which multiple challenges appear, the peak of which constitutes the challenge's focus.
- Nested loops: Nested loops are a narrating method where various stories are hidden inside each other. The central story, the one that needs to be told, lies in the middle, and the others serve as supplement to explain or clarify the central message.

[51] Elleström, L. (2021). Transmedial Narration. Narratives and stories in different media. Palgrave Macmillan
[52] Jenkins, H. (2006). Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide. New York University Press ,97 -98 p.
[53] Elleström, L. (2019). Transmedial narration: Narratives and stories in different media. Palgrave Macmillan.
[54] Sparkol. (n.d.). 8 classic storytelling techniques for engaging presentations. Retrieved from https://blog.sparkol.com/8-classic-storytelling-techniques-for-engaging-presentations [20.04.2024]
[55] Peterson, L. (2017). The science behind the art of storytelling. Retrieved from Harvard Business School Publishing Retrieved from https://www.harvardbusiness.org/the-science-behind-the-art-of-storytelling/ [13.05.2024]

- Sparklines: Sparklines are a narrative tool to structure presentations around a story developed to draw attention to a specific social, personal, or business problem. The presenter tries to capture the audience by creating an emotion of change and arousing the desire within them to support his movie.
- In medias res: In medias res is a storytelling method where the narrative starts from the middle and then spirals to the beginning. By incorporating the climax at the start of the narrative, the audience is guaranteed engagement as it cannot wait to know how the whole thing unfolded.
- Converging ideas: Converging ideas represent the construction for a speech showing how many facets and ideas merged into a singular product or concept. The ideas may explain the emergence of a project or show how many iterations of ideas coalesced into a single goal.
- False start: The false start method begins with an initial substantial course of a story-building up people's expectations only to be interrupted. Such a narrative captures the audience off-guard by flexible writing that reverses the script when observers think they know all occurrences. This narrative is suitable for failures' stories building up people's experiences and applications and hinting at their solutions or lessons learned.
- Petal structure: Petal structure is a narrative for arranging separate speakers or conversations as long as they of a central theme. This form is suitable for different, unconnected stories relaying one narrative.

Table 2

Storytelling techniques. (Source: Author)

Storytelling Technique	Strengths	Considerations	Example
Monomyth (Hero's Journey)	Universality, Emotional Impact, Clear Structure	Predictability, Adaptation	Steve Jobs commencement address at Stanford University in 2005, CEO Apple
In Medias Res (Starting in the Middle)	Immediate Engagement, Mystery, Dynamic Opening	Requires Skill, Risk of Confusion	The Odyssey
Nested Loops	Complexity, Intellectual Challenge, Depth	Potential Confusion, May Not Suit All Genres	Cloud Atlas (David Mitchell)

Sparklines	Visual Impact, Contrast, Conciseness	Context Matters, Requires Creativity	Elon Musk's Speeches
Mountain Structure	Tension, Emotional Arc, Realism	Non-Linear, Requires Skill	Speech of CEO Drew Houston - Dropbox Launch Presentation (2008)
Conversing Idea	Engaging Dialogue, Intellectual Stimulation, Nuanced Exploration	Balance, May Not Suit Action-Driven Stories	Plato's Dialogues
False Start	Surprise, Curiosity, Creativity	Risk of Disorientation Requires Skill	The Catcher in the Rye
Petal Structure	Multidimensionality, Depth, Creativity	Complexity May Not Suit Short Stories	Cloud Atlas (David Mitchell)

3.3. Start-up Pitches

The concept of the pitch can be traced back to the early days of commerce when merchants would pitch their wares to potential buyers. During the 20th century, the concept of the pitch evolved into what we know as the "elevator pitch." This is a brief, to-the-point presentation aimed at capturing the interest of potential investors.[56]

In the 1980s and 1990s, the pitch evolved further with the advent of personal computers and presentation software like PowerPoint. This enabled entrepreneurs to create more visually appealing and interactive presentations, leading to the development of the modern pitch deck.

The ability to convey the essence of a business proposal beautifully and succinctly has always been a vital craft for entrepreneurs and industry actors. One of the primary instruments here is a pitch deck and elevator pitch, each having unique application areas and strengths.

Let us observe more closely what a Startup Pitch Deck is. A startup pitch deck is a tool that entrepreneurs use to present their business ideas and plans to prospective investors. This presentation usually contains essential details about the company's mission, the products or

[56] Pitch Deck. (n.d.). The evolution of pitch decks. Retrieved from https://www.apitchdeck.com/blog/the-evolution-of-pitch-decks-a-history-and-analysis-from-a-pitch-deck-expert [13.05.2024]

services offered, market research, the business model, the team behind the venture, financial forecasts, and the funding needed. The goal of a pitch deck is to persuade investors to provide financial backing to the startup. [57]

Startup Elevator Pitch is implemented when you have just a minute or two to present your idea to your potential investor. It is a concise, compelling summary of your business that you can give it in the time it takes to go up an elevator. Elevator pitches are your chance to grab someone's attention quickly. They are perfect for networking events, chance encounters, or anytime you need to make a memorable first impression.[58]

Constructing start-up pitches needs to be approached with due consideration to the level of competence in assessing new ideas that their audience possesses. Differentiating the framing as abstract or concrete dramatically alters the view of the proposal and its status. For audiences unfamiliar with the concept, abstract framing in the "why" section reminds them about the meaning and impact. Conversely, for expert viewers, the "how" section must be framed concretely to make it pragmatic and harmonized with their advanced knowledge. Through these pitch strategy tactics based on audience appropriateness, start-ups can best present their novelties to attract support, find themselves, and maximize their chances of securing investors and partners.[59]

It is important to outline if you are Pitching an idea or Product. When you pitch an idea, you are not presenting the product itself. You are sharing the central concept, the advantages of the vision, and the issues and problems you aim to solve. The purpose is to generate stakeholders' interest regarding the idea and the opportunity that it provides. Conversely, when you pitch a product, you discuss something much more material. After all, this product has undergone several initial stages of development and may either be a market-ready solution or close to becoming one.

[57]Sabaj, O., Cabezas, P., Varas Espinoza, G., González Vergara, C., & Pina Stranger, A. (2020). Empirical literature on the business pitch: Classes, critiques and future trends. Journal of Technology Management and Innovation, 15(1), 55-63. https://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-27242020000100055

[58] Maslennikov, D. (n.d.). Pitch deck and elevator pitch .Retrieved from https://pitchbob.io/blog/pitch-deck-vs-elevator-pitch [01.05.2024]

[59] Falchetti, D., Cattani, G., & Ferriani, S. (2022). Start with "Why," but only if you have to:The strategic framing of novel ideas across different audiences. Strategic Management Journal, Wiley Blackwell, vol. 43(1), pages 130-159, January

Here, you are discussing how the product helps solve the problem and its selling points. Focused on the specific features and where it fits in the current market[60].

In table 3 below, we could see the main differences between an Elevator Pitch and a Pitch Deck:

Table 3

Main differences between an Elevator Pitch and a Pitch Deck (Source: Author)

Category	Pitch Deck	Elevator Pitch
Audience Focus	Engaged & Interested Audience (Investors, VCs, Industry Decision-makers)	Broad Audience (Anyone you meet)
Goal	Detailed Information & Investment	Capture Interest & Intrigue
Creation Process	Detailed Planning, Research & Design	Distill Ideas to Essential Components
Length	Multiple Slides (Extensive)	30 Seconds to 2 Minutes (Short)

While those with critical resources necessary for fostering innovation—like crowd funders, venture capitalists, investors, funding organizations, innovation or R&D managers, and users—aim to choose the best ideas, they often stay behind. In the early stages of funding for entrepreneurial projects, resource providers frequently miss or dismiss innovative business concepts that later turn out to be incredibly valuable. Founders of big companies, such as Apple, Southwest Airlines, Airbnb, Grameen Bank, and Teach for America, all experienced multiple rejections when pitching their ideas to potential investors.[61]

This way, the study will help technology businesses learn what works best and, in the process, identify what hurts the audience regarding business context and message delivery. Startup CEOs' and Heads of technology companies' speeches are replete with information to digest their various storytelling techniques in the business setting. Hence, this analysis will help to understand how the different methods of transmitting messages work or what becomes disturbing to the audience about business.

[60] Startup Grind. (n.d.). The difference between pitching a product and an idea. Retrieved from https://www.startupgrind.com/blog/the-difference-between-pitching-an-idea-vs-pitching-a-product/ [07.08.2024]

[61] Ferriani, S., Cattani, G., & Falchetti, D. (2021, October). When pitching an idea, should you focus on "why" or "how"? Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2021/10/when-pitching-an-idea-should-you-focus-on-why-or-how?registration=success

3.4. Construction of Narratives in Strategic Communication

What is the key to making these new stories work? How is the best narrative is constructed and why? According to research from Harvard Business Review, there are six key principles that business leaders should adhere to:[62]

- Have authentic stories. Your stories should mirror your core values. If they don't align, your team may question your sincerity over time. Crafting genuine stories can feel daunting as it requires personal vulnerability, with uncertain reactions from others.
- Feature Yourself in Your Stories. One more way to show that your dedication to a new culture is genuine -is to ensure that you actively participate in the stories you create.
- Let go of the past and pave the way for the future.
- Appeal to Hearts and Minds. If your stories do not create a compelling business case to create a new culture, your actions may be written off as the efforts of your inner narcissist. Most of the time, the prevailing business case will be a reformed culture, which will make it easier to implement your strategy, meaning you will get more economic value out of the firm. However, culture is not simply a matter of economic values. It's about how employees connect with your company's purpose, and your stories need to resonate with them on an emotional level as well.
- Be Theatrical. Be memorable. If you want employees to share your stories, you should make them make them memorable.
- Empower Others to Create Their Own Stories. To drive cultural change in their organizations, they needed to welcome and celebrate the diverse stories of others.

Besides, scientists are discovering that chemicals like cortisol, dopamine, and oxytocin are released in the brain when we are told a story. Why does that matter? If we are trying to make a point stick, cortisol assists with our formulating memories. Dopamine, which helps regulate our emotional responses, keeps us engaged. When creating deeper connections with others, oxytocin is associated with empathy, an essential element in building, deepening or maintaining good

[62] Barney, J. B., Amorim, M., & Júlio, C. (2023, September). Create stories that change your company's culture. Retrieved from Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2023/09/create-stories-that-change-your-companys-culture [01.06.2024]

relationships. One of the key aspects of storytelling is its role in shaping our understanding of the world. Through stories, we explore and reflect on our truths and beliefs while also considering how they relate to those of others. Through story listening, we gain new perspectives and [63] better understand the world around us. We expand our perspective by considering how others view and interpret the world around us. We all move closer to understanding the reality when we share and listen to each other's experiences.[64]

Narratives matter in strategic communication — they are important for shaping perceptions, changing behaviors, and accomplishing organizational objectives. Several important principles can inform the approach to narratives when considering them as constructed in strategic communication expressions.[65]

One principle states that a story is more than just a way we communicate; rather, it is a way in which we process information, so it is how we come to conclusions. Narratives in strategic communication can be very helpful in spreading messages and not giving up on the public's expectations, but they can also be a blessing.

Another one principle includes anomalous stories, meaning stories that are equally supported but an explanation that shocks existing beliefs need to be surprised or shaken up by some evidence[66] and those models or point of view and/or stories that should be 'so believable, so ingrained: as no one questions what it is they think they see or hear. Using unique and interesting stories can grab attention and prompt stakeholders to stop, read, and ponder.

Like in social science research, sourcing transparency is important for strategic communication to keep credibility and trust. It is easy to represent stories badly or to distort them with factors that can counteract a story's effectiveness.

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[63] The Role of Storytelling in Influence - Information Professionals Association.Retrieved from The Role of Storytelling in Influence - Information Professionals Association (information-professionals.org) [04.08.2024]

[64] Peterson, L. (2017). The science behind the art of storytelling. Harvard Business School Publishing. Retrieved from https://www.harvardbusiness.org/the-science-behind-the-art-of-storytelling/ [13.05.2024]

[65] Gelman, A., & Basbøll, T. (2014). When do stories work? Evidence and illustration in the social sciences. Sociological Methods & Research, 43(4), 547-570 http://www.stat.columbia.edu/~gelman/research/published/storytelling.pdf

[66] Cheng, L. (1997). Organizational slack and response to environmental shifts: The impact of resource allocation patterns. The Impact of Resource Allocation Patterns. Journal of Management, 23(1), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-2063(97)90003-9

A narrative is more impactful and authentic if rich in detail and context. Taking this approach means strategic communicators dive deep into the story, which leads to creating a more engaging and convincing narrative that speaks to the audience.

The main role of narratives is to impart content in strategic communication and the epistemic of stories too need to be examined. A good narrative is essential for making connections and create understanding. If the story is irrelevant, unclear, or does not align with the organization's goals, the speaker cannot just share any random tale and expect it to resonate.

By weaving together these principles from the storytelling discourse, organizations can deliver stories that incite stakeholder interest, influence attitudes, and result in desired actions in their strategic communication processing.

4. Strategic Use of Narrative in Communication

4.1. Building Trust and Credibility

Building trust and credibility is one of the most basic aims in all forms of communication. The narrative should not only demonstrate that this individual is honest in a reality where deceit is quickly revealed. The process whereby evidence works to convince rests on that evidence being part of the story. This creates a dichotomy in values among speakers rooted in anti-oppositional derisive remarks, paving the way for an all-or-nothing, winner-take-all contest focusing on dominance and scrutiny of a winning or master narrative.

Using storytelling strategically in communication is essential to develop trust and credibility among organizations. Telling a story allows your leaders to create a bond, transmit information with force, and pass on cultural values effectively to their people. Beyond engendering trust and credibility, storytelling imbues humanity, which is indispensable to both effective leadership inside any organization and outside its walls.[67]

Mastering the art of storytelling is essential for a good leader. It helps them connect, communicate, and engage with their team effectively, fostering employee loyalty. By sharing stories, management engages with employees more human, provides glimpses of the organization's soul, and encourages loyalty to it.

Then, organizational narratives and tales embedded in the employee culture help spread specific messages amongst colleagues and stakeholders. This will not only adhere to the brand values and commitment but also generate discussions around vision and values. These are the type of stories that employees enthusiastically buy into, telling those stories in the brand's name and defending the organization from any angle, all the while enabling the brand to enjoy wider recognition.

For a brand narrative to be successful in a public relations strategy, the story needs to be a unified, clear, and authentic voice that speaks to both internal and external audiences. This approach makes the story relatable to more people. This sense of familiarity builds trust and makes

[67] Gill, R. (2009). Telling stories to build reputation. Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal, 10, 110–127.

the message more trustworthy. Guided by the rules of effective communication, storytelling brings different scenarios of the future, emotional communication about change, and inspiration for innovation, filling the decision-making process with new nuances.

Corporate communications have three critical functions for most companies. First, external communication aims to increase awareness and foster understanding and appreciation of the organization among key stakeholders. This function is essential for building trust. The second function is to clarify or justify the company's actions, especially when they may be controversial. These two roles are crucial because they cannot hide a weak company strategy or balance out bad behavior/reputation. Claiming that a company is reputable or asking for trust usually does not convince people. The third function is how well a company communicates internally, which is just as crucial for building a solid corporate reputation as the messages it shares with the outside world.[68] This can be used to clarify and strengthen the company's mission and values, or, as David Vogel points out, its integrity. [69]

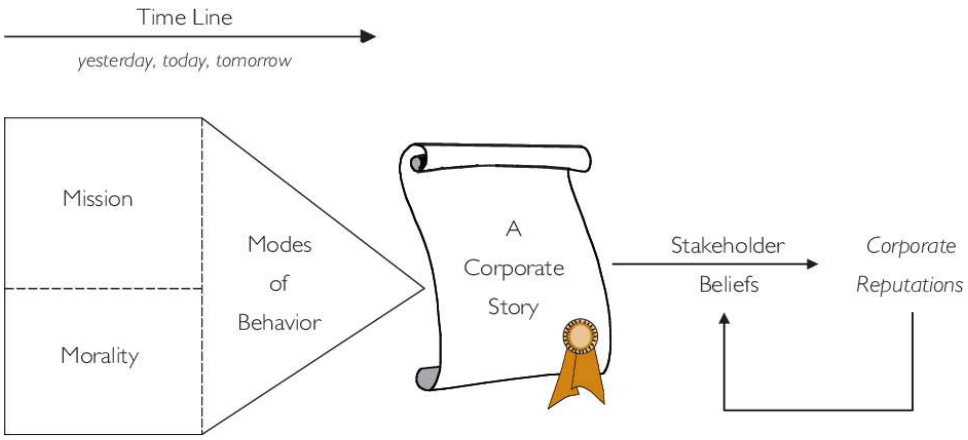


Figure 7
Reputation story. (Source: Grahame R. Dowling 2006)

Mission, values, and behaviors create a foundation for its reputation. At the same time, stakeholders' beliefs and expectations shape the current public perception, and the company's

[68] Dowling, G.R. (2006). Communicating Corporate Reputation through Stories. California Management Review, 49, 100 - 82.
[69] Vogel, D. (2006). The market for virtue. Brookings Institution Press.

narrative will be evaluated. If the corporate narrative aligns with critical stakeholders' values, instincts, and interests, they will reaffirm and adjust their beliefs accordingly.[70]

But why is corporate reputation and trust important? A study conducted by Fombrun and Rindova in 1998, focusing on companies in the US and UK, revealed that those with a more substantial reputation communicated their core mission and identity more effectively than those with lower rankings. Additionally, these reputable companies provide more comprehensive information about their products and various aspects of their operations, goals, identity, and history. A solid corporate reputation fosters successful client relationships, significantly influencing a company's performance.[71]

We can observe characteristics of corporate storytelling that provide the formula for reputation-building success[72]:

- Emotion Electric: The best company narratives cultivate emotion, resonating with audiences and pulling them in more deeply.
- Stories have wide-ranging appeal across ages, cultures, and genders, exciting people of all ages and characters.
- Investment and Customization: When employees see their own experiences reflected in the company story, they feel more connected and inspired and have a more powerful narrative to share.
- Trust and Credibility: Storytelling, as an institutionalized process within an organization, provides a fast track to trust and credibility, both of which are necessary for leaders to develop a healthy environment within the institution and to communicate effectively with employees.
- More Employee Engagement and Commitment: Your employees are more likely to be engaged and committed in the workplace if you interact with them by sharing stories about your business values and practices.

[70]Dowling, G.R. (2006). Communicating Corporate Reputation through Stories. California Management Review, 49, 100 - 82.
[71]Omar, M., Williams, R. Jr., & Lingelbach, D. C. (2009). Global brand market-entry strategy to manage corporate reputation. Journal of Product & Brand Management, 18(6), No. 3, pp. 177-187. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/10610420910957807
[72]Gill, R. (2009). Telling stories to build a reputation. Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal, 10, 110–127.

- Brand Value Generation- Employees adopt relevant information from corporate stories and pass it on to colleagues and stakeholders, leading to brand value generation, commitment, and dialogue around vision and values.
- Improved Personal Connection: By telling personal stories, employees feel a personal connection to their leadership, get a better understanding of the culture, and are more likely to remain loyal.

Table 4
Characteristic of corporate storytelling. (Source: Author)

Characteristic of corporate storytelling	Description
Emotional Appeal	Stories connect with audiences on a deeper level
Universal Appeal	Stories transcend backgrounds and capture the attention
Ownership and Adaptation	Employees personalize stories for impact
Trust and Credibility	Stories build trust within the organization
Engagement and Commitment	Stories lead to employee engagement
Brand Value Generation	Employees share stories, boosting brand value
Personal Connection	Stories create a personal connection with leaders

4.2. Aligning Narratives with Organizational Goals

Narratives have also proven to be a constitutive element in organizational sense-making processes. David Boje, for instance, holds that storytelling is the preferred "sense-making-currency" in organizations.[73] We can related this to the way organizational memory works.[74] Concepts like storytelling in organizations, making sense of experiences, and organizational culture have become key topics for understanding modern organizations. All of these ideas highlight the narrative aspect of how organizations operate, either directly or indirectly.[75] That is why organizations are now seen more as social systems than formal ones. In these systems, things

[73] Rosile, Graceann & Boje, David & Carlon, Donna & Downs, Alexis & Saylors, Rohny. (2013). Storytelling Diamond An Antenarrative Integration of the Six Facets of Storytelling in Organization Research Design. Organizational Research Methods. 16. 557-580 pp. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428113482490
[74] Orr, J. E. (1990). Sharing knowledge, celebrating identity: War stories and community memory in a service culture. In D. Middleton & D. Edwards (Eds.), Collective remembering .Sage Publications, Inc. 169-189.
[75] Boje, D. M. (1991). The Storytelling Organization: A Study of Story Performance in an Office- Supply Firm. Administrative Science Quarterly. 36. 106 p. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2393432

like unwritten rules, shared stories, and fundamental beliefs are significant. Furthermore, other current approaches, especially aesthetics, literature, emotional theory, and so on, also reflect and contribute to this broadened view of organizations, and in a way, these all relate to the narrative side of organizations as they locate symbolization and expression in this form of organizational communication.[76] All these approaches conceive of organizations as complex webs of narratives representing at the same time the core of organizational practices and knowledge.[77] As a result of this idea, managing knowledge is now seen more as managing the environment in which an organization operates, aiming to foster a culture that encourages storytelling.[78]

Is storytelling an effective internal communication tool that can help engage employees and improve a company's reputation? Corporate storytelling involves crafting a narrative that creates perceptions or strengthens beliefs through tales or stories about individuals, the organization, its history, future aspirations, social connections, and the work itself. By sharing stories, organizations can inspire and motivate their employees, creating memorable messages that encourage action, especially when there is a clear interest in the audience.[79]

The force of corporate storytelling is its link with the corporate strategy. Through forming appreciation, understanding, comprehension, and interpretation, organizational members working within a strategy produce outcomes that reflect, articulate, and are congruent with that strategy. These 'signature outcomes' are a powerful element in the change process. These activities create signposts that indicate that the strategy is working as planned. Narrative form is ideal for enhancing the creation of meaning, in order to signpost that strategy implementation is moving forward. However, it will only be of use when utilized for sufficient meaning to be created and for an appropriate narrative form to be used.

[76] Czarniawska, B. (1999). Writing management: Organization theory as a literary genre. Oxford University Press.
[77] Brown, J. S., & Duguid, P. (1991). Organizational learning and communities-of-practice: Toward a unified view of working, learning, and innovation. Organization Science, 2(1), 40-57. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2.1.40
[78] Koch, J., & Schreyögg, G. (2005). Knowledge management and narratives: Organizational effectiveness through storytelling. Erich Schmidt Verlag.
[79] Gill, R. (2011). An integrative review of storytelling: Using corporate stories to strengthen employee engagement and internal and external reputation. 8(1): Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267917060_An_integrative_review_of_storytelling_Using_corporate_stories_to_strengthen_employee_engagement_and_internal_and_external_reputation [01.07.2024]

Alignment requires awareness and attention for training managers who wish to create and maintain effective organizational storytelling. The discipline measure is the degree to which storytelling is congruent with organizational goals in purpose, scope, meaning, and strategic focus, and so already this narrative frame becomes yet more complex. From this perspective, 'missing' 'other' stories become apparent. Telling people one set of stories furthers organizational goals, yet a system of rewards, recognition, and in links systematically encourages other stories altogether. Organizational change and transformation is a communications process within which storytelling, image creation, and the creation of sense and meaning are central.

Numerous studies explore how storytelling and narratives help individuals personally connect with and understand strategy.[80] Studies have examined how storytelling can boost or challenge employee engagement in company strategies.[81] It was investigated how storytelling makes strategies regarding innovation in organizations more straightforward to understand. For instance, Bartel and Garud highlighted that sharing stories about innovation plays a vital role in keeping that innovation alive and helping to spread ideas throughout the organization.[82] Various studies have concentrated on using storytelling as a strategy for businesses and entrepreneurs. This approach helps in building a solid foundation, gaining credibility and support from stakeholders, and managing organizational change.

We can talk about conceptualizing the role of narratives within strategic processes. For instance, Fenton and Langley in 2011 observed a ‘narrative turn’ in strategy development. They examined story-based strategy-process techniques as part of a greater research field investigating ‘strategy as practice’.Further studies also show that storytelling and narratives can be essential in strategy development. In 2007, Buchanan and Dawson described organizational change as a multi-story process where multiple stories about a change event coexist simultaneously. A newer area of research investigates how narrative strategies can shape an organization's future. Unlike traditional

[80] Adamson, Gary & Pine II, B. & Steenhoven, Tom & Nelson, Jodi. (2006). How storytelling can drive strategic change. Strategy & Leadership. 34. 36-41. https://doi.org/10.1108/10878570610637876
[81] Spear, Sara & Roper, Stuart. (2016). Storytelling in organizations: supporting or subverting corporate strategy?. Corporate Communications: An International Journal. 21. 516-532 https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-02-2016-0020
[82] Bartel, Caroline & Garud, Raghu. (2008). The Role of Narratives in Sustaining Organizational Innovation. Organization Science. 20. 107-117. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1080.0372

corporate storytelling methods, these studies suggest that narrative strategy plays a crucial role in the overall strategic process of an organization.[83]

By developing a corporate narrative, companies can better unite their leadership, motivate employees, and establish a unique competitive edge. The narrative serves as a tool for management to clarify and highlight the reasons behind business decisions. It allows employees to understand the customers, their market challenges, and their part in achieving the overall business strategy and shared success. A solid corporate story ensures consistency at the same time addressing the needs of different stakeholders. It adds clarity, stability, and uniqueness, guiding decision-making effectively.

According to Deloitte & Touche, studies indicate that the potential rewards can be significant. When companies communicate their business strategy, their market-to-book ratio is 43% higher than that of those that do not.[84] Marzec M. believes that companies that keep their employees informed—by sharing business plans, goals, and financial details, being open about issues that impact workers, and connecting individual roles to the overall strategy—typically see an average increase in their market value of 4.8%.[85]

Crafted well, a narrative is central to uniting leadership teams, inspiring employees, and setting an organization apart from the competition. Here are some ideas:

1. Aligning Leaders. Act as a shared vision of unity among leaders across the organization. This guarantees that the goals, values, and priorities are translated to all leaders. A powerful story can inspire leaders to communicate well, lead with intent, and make decisions that resonate with the company narrative. It inspires leaders to personify the story and become walking billboards of it.

2. Engaging Employees. Corporate storytelling can also help define the sense of purpose and bring belonging to employees. Employees know how they contribute to the big picture, which keeps

[83] Fischer-Appelt, B., & Dernbach, R. (2022). Exploring narrative strategy: the role of narratives in the strategic positioning of organizational change. Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, 36(1), 85–95. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2022.2062303

[84] Deloitte & Touche. (2013). Governance of Subsidiaries. A survey of global companies

[85] Marzec, M. (2007). Telling the corporate story: Vision into action. Journal of Business Strategy, Vol. 28 No. 1, 26-36 https://doi.org/10.1108/02756660710723189

spirits and motivation high. Stories can help create a bond among employees. A powerful story can drive allegiance and connectivity within the staff.

3. Creating a Competitive Edge.An extremely pleasurable corporate story is uncommon to the point that it isolates your brand from its competitors. This defines the brand identity/values/positioning in the market and sets it ahead of its competitors.A provocative story connects with customers and stakeholders, building a favorable image of the firm. This allows it to draw and retain customers who resonate with the business's values and story, giving it a competitive edge.

4. Innovation and Adaptation. A story highlighting ingenuity, creativity, or nimbleness can inspire employees to push the boundaries and continuously improve within your organization. A well-defined narrative is agile in nature, enabling organizations to fight threats, grab opportunities, or stay ahead in a rapidly changing business landscape.

5. Improved Communication and Collaboration. We are all familiar with the concept that telling a story can be one of the most powerful forms of communication, and if nothing else we make better use at our end within the broader organization to frame clear & consistent message. To provide transparency, alignment and collaboration among employees most goal setting processes are used by teams. In such cases, collaboration means getting the leaders on the same page as all others to engage in cross-functional teamwork toward common causes.

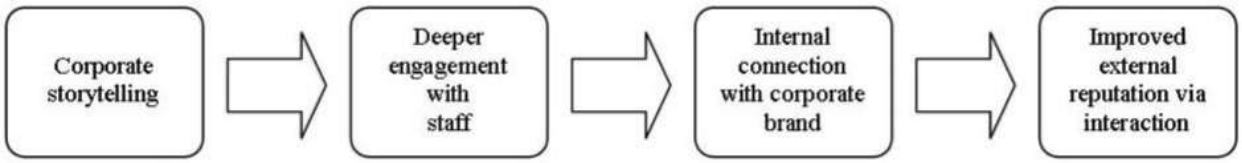


Figure 8

Using corporate stories to strengthen employee engagement and internal and external reputation. (Source: Gill, R. 2011).

Storytelling marks a fundamental shift from the way many organizations understand ‘‘strategy.’ Strategy is often reduced to strategic planning, which amounts only to preparatory work including data collection and analysis, breaking goals down into specific actions required for

them to be accomplished or when particularly relevant accountabilities & resources. The outline form captured in bullet points on a PowerPoint deck may characterize the plan, but ‘‘it will usually not rise further than that; it is unlikely to be strengthened by extensive analysis or spark any real commitment’’.[86]

Finally, no doubt highlighting the narrative side of organizations and of the scientific knowledge of organizations provides a template for gaining fresh and fruitful insights into organizational life and knowing processes, both in organizations and in the community of organization researchers. On the other hand, there is an irritating overtone in most literature [87]that exaggerates the narrative dimension without any further thought. Considering the role of the narrative and its linkages to knowledge, we must not forget that stories emerge and are told in an institutional setting called an organization and that this institution acts in an economic or administrative area with its logic.[88]

4.3. Challenges, Criticism, and Considerations

The importance of narrative in strategic communication has been debated for many years. Although narrative methods have been recognized for their potential contributions, researchers have also discussed the challenges and barriers to using this approach.[89]

The narratives themselves are not good or bad, but simply that: stories, usually in a rather engaging form and often for the first time serving to inform in an improved manner multiple stakeholder types. However, as a weapon of active strategic communication narratives can be employed to frame the interpretation or announcement of a powerful entity or event. While there is no doubt arguments to be made regarding the importance of unity and its relationship to narrative, or the destabilizing nature of strategic communication in which narratives are of course

[86] Shaw, J. D., Duffy, M. K., & Johnson, J. L. (1998).).Turnover, social capital losses, and performance. Academy of Management Journal, v. 48, 594-606 pp.
[87] Gabriel, Y. (2015). Narratives and Stories in Organizational Life. In The Handbook of Narrative Analysis (eds A. De Fina and A. Georgakopoulou). https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118458204.ch14
[88] Koch, J., & Schreyögg, G. (2005). Knowledge management and narratives: Organizational effectiveness through storytelling. Erich Schmidt Verlag.
[89] Zerfaß, A., Viertmann, C., & Wiesenberg, M. (2017). Creating business value through corporate communication: A theory-based framework and its practical application. Journal of Communication Management, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 68-81. https://doi.org/10.1108/JCOM-07-2016-0059

also entangled, what we do with power is now accessible with much greater ease (the methodological odyssey it can be achieved, exercised, reshuffled, retained, and reshaped), is relatively new.

The main point of this discussion centers on whether storytelling should play a role in shaping policy and decision-making. Supporters believe that narratives can effectively present challenging and complex issues, foster empathy, and align the views of all involved parties. However, critics of narrative argue that, because narratives are subjective, this can make the issues being explored feel simple and basic while also providing a narrow presentation of the debate and may risk manipulation with its use.[90]

Another set of considerations has stemmed from the fact that narrative research is an interdisciplinary field. The use of narrative techniques from literature and psychology by strategic communicators has broadened the toolkit but also revealed that a more thorough study is required of what narrative thinking actually does. In fact, a growing body of researchers across disciplines are working to explore how the storytelling and narrative construction itself can influence our interpretations and decision-making, as part of the larger conversation around the so-called narrative turn.

For example, David Herman argues that narratives are simultaneously a cognitive style, a discourse genre, and a resource for writing. Because stories are strategies that help humans make sense of their world, narratives have logic and logic, providing an irreplaceable resource for structuring and comprehending experience.[91]

Nick Blas proposes to use strategic narratives in the military context. He is putting military strategy into a wider perspective of strategic stories.[92] It may enable a greater understanding of a strategy's connection with the political and public spheres. Strategic narratives act as a chain that strengthens connections between different groups in an environment, facilitating the translation of military power and orders into clear strategic goals.[93]

[90] László, J. (2008). The Science of Stories An Introduction to Narrative Psychology Routledge
[91] Herman, D. (2002). Story logic: Problems and possibilities of narrative. University of Nebraska Press.
[92] Blas, N. (2023). Beyond storytelling: Strategic narratives in military strategy. A Journal of Strategic Airpower & Spacepower, 46-57 pp.
[93] Culkin, D. T. (2013). Discerning the role of the narrative in strategy development. Military Review, 93(1), 24-34.

The initial application of a strategic narrative in military strategy involves understanding the nature of the conflict. Analysing the narratives in a conflict zone enables strategists to assess the current situation better and identify desired future goals. This understanding is crucial for effective strategic design during the planning phase. By examining strategic narratives, planners gain insights into the conflict environment, allowing them to harness the power of these narratives for their advantage effectively.[94]

The second step in using strategic narratives is to maintain strong public support and connect actions to national security goals. For example, the U.S. military recognizes that these narratives play a key role in aligning actions and messages to complete missions successfully. According to Nick Blas, if there is not enough support at home, carrying out long-term military operations becomes very challenging.

Finally, thinking about strategic narratives when using military force is essential. They help ensure that actions are taken with clear intent to provoke a specific reaction from the enemy and to meet national security goals. Quick wins on the battlefield are less critical than using military force smartly to meet well-defined strategic objectives through effective communication.[95]

Since narratives must be entertaining to the audience and comply with a poetic mode, the language used is full of metaphors, syllogisms and so on.[96] This allows narrations to cover much ambiguity and leaves space for different interpretations of the same story. Therefore, narrative knowledge is rich; it is not well ordered and covers many different things, interpretations, and even cognitive and emotional elements[97].This makes them at the same time very convincing to the audience. One does not need to be persuaded by good reasons; an emotional response may be sufficient to trigger the story's acceptance. Moreover, as opposed to discursive knowledge, narrations embrace different discourses. In a single story, it is possible to find a mix of various

[94] Miskimmon, A., O'Loughlin, B., & Roselle, L. (2017) Strategic narratives .University of Michigan Press.23-24 pp.
[95] Blas, N. (2023). Beyond storytelling: Strategic narratives in military strategy. A Journal of Strategic Airpower & Spacepower, 46-57 pp.
[96] Gabriel, Y. (1991). On organizational stories and myths: Why it is easier to slay a dragon than to kill a myth. International Sociology, 6(4): 427-442.
[97]Dyer, G.M. (1983). The role of affect in narrative. Cognitive Science, 7: 211-242. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15516709cog0703_3

types of statements—normative, descriptive, evaluative, and more—blending rather than being kept apart.[98]

One of the interesting subjects for consideration is the feminist narrative. This theory was initially centered on feminist narratology, which examined how culturally defined gender influences narrative forms and how they are received; it has grown to encompass a wider range of aspects, including race, sexuality, nationality, class, ethnicity, and gender, in its text analyses. Robyn Warhol notes that traditional narratology emerged from a distinctly male-dominated academic environment, relying on theories created by men primarily based on analyzing texts written by men.[99] Feminist narratology aims to explore lesser-known texts to uncover insights about storytelling that might go unnoticed in mainstream literature. This concept developed from the feminist belief that texts are inherently connected to the historical context in which they are created and received, challenging the formalist approach of traditional narratology. Due to Gerald Prince's contributions, this perspective has gained wider acceptance within narrative theory, particularly when examining texts from ethnic or postcolonial backgrounds.[100]

James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz present a contrasting view of Warhol's approach. They are critical of her for exploring narrative approaches that challenge traditional ideas of what is appropriate for a female character's life or the work of a female author. While they acknowledge the shared political beliefs, they find her strategy methodologically problematic. They argue that texts do not dictate their meanings, and a perceptive reader can easily find whatever she seeks. The commitment to uncovering signs of forward-looking consciousness can, they argue, overshadow the author’s narrative shaping, reducing the text to a reflection of the reader’s desires.

Sometimes, storytelling can be considered a means of critically analyzing a work of art. Students at the University of Maryland researched written and spoken communication to see which was more effective in creating practical art criticism. They wanted to see whether storytelling would be an effective art criticism format. They were curious about the distinction between written

[98] Koch, J., & Schreyögg, G. (2005). Knowledge management and narratives: Organizational effectiveness through storytelling. Erich Schmidt Verlag.
[99] Parent S. (2012) . Quatre perspectives « post-classiques » en théorie narrative (Acta fabula). vol. 13, n° 9, Notes de lectur. Retrieved from https://www.fabula.org/revue/document7360.php [17.07.2024]
[100]Phelan, J., Rabinowitz, P. J., & Warhol, R. (2012). Narrative theory: Core concepts and critical debates. Ohio State University Press

and verbal communication and its impact[101]. It is unclear what result was achieved, but the debate on the best form of communication looked interesting.

[101] Schappelle, L. S. (2006). Art criticism through storytelling. University Press.

5. The Interplay of Technology, Culture, and Emotion in Modern Narrative Strategies

5.1. Impact of Technology on Narrative Strategies

Digital storytelling takes the age-old art and adds various formats, like images, videos, and audio. Paul Ricoeur highlights the "power of configuration"[102] when it comes to storytelling that uses text. The multimodal digital story connects oral, written, and visual storytelling elements. Digital storytelling created by amateurs, especially those sharing personal experiences, often has more qualities of traditional oral storytelling than professional media productions. By exploring theories of oral composition, we can gain insights into how digital stories are created. Should be noted that crafting digital narratives involves more than just rearranging existing elements. The various digital tools available play a crucial role in shaping stories that might not be able to be conveyed without digital platforms' unique capabilities.[103]

We talk about Digital storytelling as using digital tools, including audio, video, art, graphics, photographs, and words, to communicate a story. The first uses of digital storytelling involved documenting oral narratives. Back in the 1980s, the Center for Digital Storytelling started teaching lectures on how to preserve their personal stories, ensuring these valuable narratives would not fade from history.[104]

Tools that would have once been locked away in the technology closet in a department's basement are now available on a typical smartphone. A camera, video recorder, and audio recorder, and even editing and presentation software either come with the phone or are downloadable as apps. Several free or low-cost apps add additional utility to these tools. For instance, a photo and text editing app like ReType (sumoing.com/apps/retype) allows the author to overlay text in different picture formats. An audio-editing tool such as Voice Recorder (online-voice-

[102] Ricoeur, P. (1984). Time and narrative (Vol. 1). University of Chicago Press 3-11 pp.
[103] Hertzberg Kaare, B., & Lundby, K. (2008). The power of configuration in digital storytelling. Innsbruck University Press.
[104] Sage, M.; Singer, J. B.; LaMarre, A.; and Rice, C. (2018). Digital Storytelling: Tools, Techniques, and Traditions. Digital Social Work, 90-108, Retrieved from Loyola eCommons, Social Work: School of Social Work Faculty Publications and Other Works.

recorder.com/) allows for parts of the audio to be clipped or combined. The video editing app Magisto allows for advanced video editing and narration. Applications for capturing and sharing digital stories, such as the movie creator in Google Photos, are designed for mobile devices and work better on desktop versions.

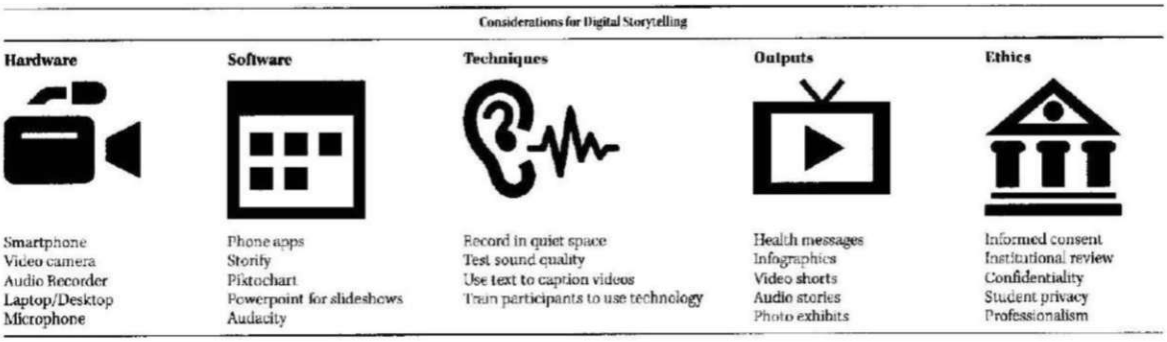


Figure 9

Lists tools and techniques that are currently used in telling a digital story. (Source: Melanie Sage ,2018)

Many researchers refer to digital storytelling as how we tell stories today on digital platforms. However, one undeniable truth remains: there is a strong connection between storytelling, the digital tools we use, and the platforms that allow us to share those stories.[105] Stories are now shared through digital platforms like social media, interactive books, and video games, allowing users to engage with narratives in new and different ways. Recent research has shown the importance of digital storytelling for preserving cultural values and heritage. For instance, a study by Ginzarly and Srour in 2022[106] explored cultural heritage in an online setting. Storytelling is becoming increasingly important in education, underscoring its value in teaching practices. With the rise of digital transformation, storytelling can take on many forms, resonating on both personal and emotional levels. Additionally, storytelling plays a significant role in conveying cultural heritage, addressing specific themes to build a comprehensive narrative.

[105] Miller, C. (2020). Tales from the Digital Frontier: Breakthroughs in Storytelling New Media & Society, 16(1), 78-95. Retrieved from https://writersstore.com/blogs/news/tales-from-the-digital-frontier-breakthroughs-in-storytelling [01.08.2024]

[106] Ginzarly, Manal & Srour, F.. (2021). Cultural heritage through the lens of COVID-19. Poetics. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2021.101622

Another vital impact plays on narrative are “Visual aids”. We receive about 90% of our knowledge through what we see—like movies and books—while only 7-11% comes from just listening. The average audience will remember about 70 % of purely verbal presentations three hours later and as little as 10 % only three days later. About 85 % of mixed verbal/visual presentations are remembered after three hours, and as much as 66 % are remembered after three days. Presenters who implement visual aids are usually seen as more professional and convincing compared to those who depend solely on their words.[107]

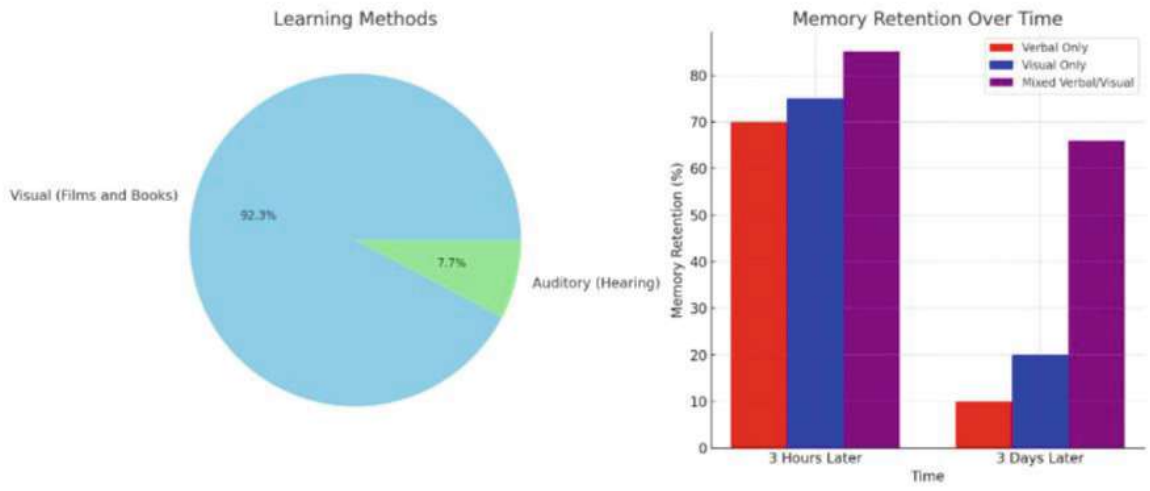


Figure 10

Effectiveness of visual aids and mixed presentations in enhancing memory retention compared to purely verbal methods. (Source: Author).

One of the important aspects of narrative and technology is data storytelling. Data storytelling is all about creating a narrative around a dataset and its visual elements, making it engaging and meaningful to express the importance of the information.[108]

[107] Bradbury, A. (2000). Successful presentation skills. Kogan Page

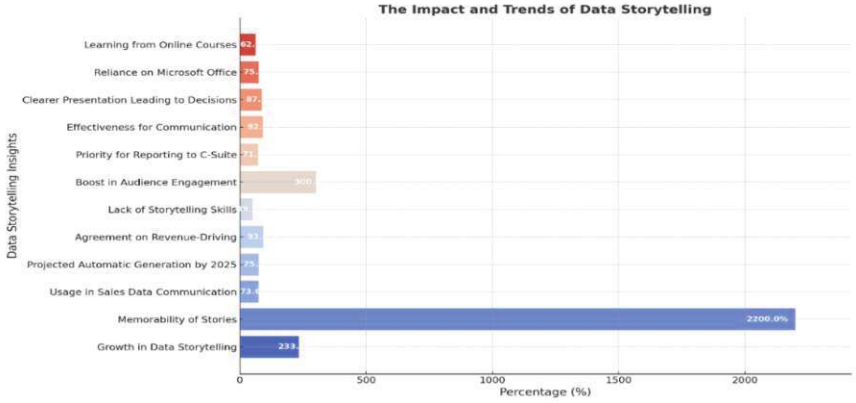
[108] TDWI BI & Analytics Glossary – What is Data Storytelling? Retrieved from https://tdwi.org/portals/what-is-data-storytelling-definition.aspx [20.05.2024]

According to data storytelling statistics provided by company Leapmesh,[109] data storytelling has grown by a remarkable 233%. Stories are 22 times more memorable than facts alone.[110] Over 73.67% of people utilize data storytelling to share and make attractive sales information. By 2025, it is projected that 75% of data stories will be automatically generated.

- Around 93% of people believe data storytelling leads to decisions that boost revenue.
- 49% feel their organizations lack storytelling skills, regardless of employees' data literacy.
- 71% of executives consider data storytelling skills essential when reporting to important stakeholders.
- 92% agree that data storytelling effectively communicates data and analytics.
- 87% agree that clearer data presentation leads to more data-driven decisions by leadership.
- 75% of marketers rely on Microsoft Office for data visualizations.
- 62% learned data storytelling skills from online courses.

Table 5

The Impact and Trends of Data Storytelling (Source: Author)



Data stories in 2025 are expected to become the most popular way to consume analytics. According to reports, augmented analytics techniques will automatically generate 75% of these stories. Data stories will be automatically generated with the help of augmented intelligence and

[109] Leapmesh. (n.d.). Data storytelling statistics: Unleashing insights for engaging narratives. Retrieved from https://leapmesh.com/data-storytelling-statistics [01.05.2024]

[110] Childerhose, B. (2023). A Fool's Journey.: A Settler's Meta Narrative

machine learning, so data analysts will no longer have to create them by hand anymore. As AI adoption increases, generating data stories from vast analytics becomes increasingly practical. According to reports, 93% of respondents recognize that decisions driven by successful data storytelling have the potential to increase revenue.[111]

One of the combinations of narrative and technology is transmedia storytelling. Transmedia storytelling is the practice of developing a single narrative experience across multiple platforms. Each injects character qualities unique to its medium in a way that contributes separately and together, which adds layers of depth and meaning for audience members across multiple platforms.[112]

Transmedia stories are stories told across multiple media. At present, the most significant stories tend to flow across multiple media platforms.[113] In the ideal form of TS, each medium does what it does best — so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels, and comics, and its world might be explored and experienced through gameplay. Each franchise entry needs to be self-contained enough to enable autonomous consumption.[114]Briefly, then, transmedia stories are a particular narrative structure that expands through both different languages (verbal, iconic, etc.) and media (cinema, comics, television, video games, etc.). TS is not just an adaptation from one media to another. The story that the comics tell is not the same as that told on television or in cinema; the different media and languages participate and contribute to the construction of the transmedia narrative world. This textual dispersion is one of the most important sources of complexity in contemporary popular culture.[115]

Transmedia storytelling offers a powerful channel for narrative in virtually any kind of arena can be deployed not only as new forms or platforms but also to execute different functions

[111] Leapmesh. (n.d.). Data storytelling statistics: Unleashing insights for engaging narratives. Retrieved from https://leapmesh.com/data-storytelling-statistics [01.05.2024]
[112] Schiller, M. (2018). Transmedia storytelling: New practices and audiences. In I. Christie, A. van den Oever, & A. van der Oever (Eds.), Stories . 97-108 pp.
[113] Jenkins, H., Purushotma, R., Clinton, K., Weigel, M., & Robison, A. J. (2009). Confronting the challenges of participatory culture: Media education for the 21st century. The MIT Press.
[114] Jenkins, H. (2003). Game design as narrative architecture. New media as story, performance, and game. MIT Press.118-130 pp.
[115] Scolari, C. A. (2009). Transmedia storytelling: Implicit consumers, narrative worlds, and branding in contemporary media production. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10854/2867 [01.08.2024]

that from public education, journalism and political campaign ran. As a 'guerrilla' or the power holder's strategy. The shift in emphasises is echoed by Guy Starkey (2008), contending that transmedia storytelling can be viewed as both a new medium strategy and an extension of the more well-established franchise/transmedia marketing approach Through transmedia storytelling, it is possible to place many of grand narrative from objective into its paradigm form for as long as audiences can be provided access without the usual high capital required by professional media makers or with a greatly reduced version there off. The purpose of a given transmedia narrative function (to populate the audience, to set up an experience extension programme etc) is actually one from some multiple fractal distribution pattern overlaid with the first domination - these are different in case of various actors playing those functions - author(s), content provider group-member(s) working/moving inside/marketing strategists/people contributing their perspective/working on different levels.[116]

Certain features of transmedia Storytelling are as follows: [117]

- Cross-platform: Storytelling across multiple platforms, including films and tv shows; books and comics; video games; as well as web-only content - all of which require considerable time in planning out the story. So, every platform offers a dimension or perspective of the story.
- Integrated Story: The story is spread seamlessly across these different media allowing for a universal and integrated entertainment experience. This, of course begs for the ideal scenario in which each medium contributes something distinct to narrative.
- Self-Contained Engagement: No matter what other options there are, people should be able to connect with the story through just one way. Similarly, a film can be enjoyed by an audience even if they have never read the comic or novel it is based on.

[116] Freire, M. M. (2020). Transmedia storytelling: From convergence to transliteracy. DELTA: Documentação de Estudos em Lingüística Teórica e Aplicada. SciELO Brasil. https://doi.org/10.1590/1678-460X2020360309

[117] Schiller, M. (2018). Transmedia storytelling: New practices and audiences. In I. Christie, A. van den Oever, & A. van der Oever (Eds.), Stories. Amsterdam University Press. 97-108 pp. https://doi.org/10.1515/9789048537082-008

- Broad Story Worlds: Transmedia storytelling gives us broad story bodies, which are places where stories are started in one medium and extended into other mediums, making the narrative richer and more complex.
- Audience Participation: This concept often leads to the audience's active participation in content like fan chats, social media, and other general community engagement.
- It Is Shaping Culture: It also reflects the digital age and online culture, transmedia storytelling contributes to creating communities that engage in stories across global platforms.

Transmedia storytelling entails telling narratives and engaging with them across various mediums (transitive in form).

So, whether we are building technology story and transmedia storytelling relationships, what matters is to appreciate the evolution of platforms that change how stories can be developed essentially at every stage within their life cycle. According to Melanie Schiller, ways to create this connection are:

- Strengthened Storytelling Methods: Technology allows us to alter and create new forms of distributed storytelling platforms, including virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), as well as interactive websites. These technologies are ideal for creating immersive experiences that can make transmedia narratives even more compelling and also allow audiences to connect with stories in all new types of ways.
- Cross-Media Integration: Transmedia stories exist within a world where the same story may be told across different platforms, enabling new narratives to emerge. Technology provides the capability to make this integration as smooth and less bifurcate by means of transitioning from one format (let's say a video game) into another or even creating an intercepting point for a complete narrative experience like going through web series, mobile app, etc.
- Participation Through Technology: Increased social media, forums and interactive WooCommerce technology. The audience interaction can strengthen the relationship to the narrative and its figures; audiences start sharing experiences, speculating, or creating fan art - adding facilitation of transmedia storytelling.

- Data-Driven Storytelling: Because of new technology, we can now collect information about our customers and create marketing strategies tailored to those specific group. The result is a more nuanced approach to content that benefits storytelling in transmedia ways.
- Emergence of new narrative forms: Technology has enabled the rise in a multiplicity of different types of narratives, including webisodes, podcasts, and mobile storytelling. It allows for these formats to be incorporated into transmedia narratives that tell the same story in various unique ways.
- Global Reach and Accessibility: It allows human stories to travel across countries seamlessly, breaking geographies. Transmedia storytelling can capitalize on this global interconnectivity to construct narratives that cut across cultures and languages; in other words, it is designed to produce a globally diverse audience.
- Innovative Marketing: Technology-based marketing strategies can benefit transmedia storytelling by creating excitement and expectation about a narrative. This type of content, also known as alternate reality games (ARGs) or social media challenges, constitutes interactive marketing campaigns that bring audiences into the fold before a story is ever released.

Using this connection, we can appreciate how technology not only enables but reshapes the ecosystem of transmedia storytelling, yielding more immersive and vibrant story worlds that consumers love.

5.2. The Impact of Culture on Narrative Perception

The idea that culture influences narrative perception--the lens through which we understand dialogue, events, and other elements of the storytelling process- seems obvious. After all, why else do scenes in movies that feature elements of disbelief (e.g., Faerie abduction stories; spurned-mistress melodramas like Fatal Attraction, and tales about slavery, natural disasters, or nuclear war) reduce us to mirth or moral smugness? When confronted by events in life that match the events depicted in these movies, our initial reaction is typically to pause or to wonder what the characters--if only they could have done so--might have done differently to anticipate the impending calamity and thereby avoid it.

How does culture influence narrative perception? From the Toyota Motor Company's ad showing a group of male office workers meeting executives of a Latin American subsidiary who give them what appears to be a small and underdeveloped jet which nascent arises from the desert, to the Pepsi commercial boasting, "We are the world," featuring young people of different races and nationalities uniting to humiliate the Russian guard who refuses to let an elderly man with glasses pass through, toting a refreshment of Crystal Pepsi. These advertisements illustrate what some anthropologists and cross-cultural psychologists have been telling us for years: that our culture easily influences us, and that everything--from what we wear to how we express our feelings about love--is learned from the society in which we live.

It is important to remember that cultures vary widely from one another, and it can impact and influence how narratives are understood. These cultural differences can alter how people perceive and think about stories, meaning that everyone's understanding and interpretation of narratives are influenced by their own cultural context rather than being the same for everyone.[118]

Communication involves factors like the order of words, tailoring the message for the audience, and how it affects them, all viewed through cultural norms regarding what language is considered valuable and appropriate. Specifically, the meaning and significance attributed to linguistic acts can vary across cultural contexts. How people see polite, effective, or meaningful communication can vary significantly from one culture to another.[119] Cultures and narrative perceptions are different. Recent studies have revealed a dynamic relationship between cultural context and perceptual processes, indicating that an individual's engagement with different social and cultural practices can induce long-term and short-term shifts in their perceptual tendencies.[120] In addition, the influence of culture on narrative perception is evident in various aspects of storytelling. For instance, movie scenes featuring disbelief elements can evoke different reactions based on cultural backgrounds. Movies often make people think about different choices that might

[118] Kastanakis, M., & Voyer, B. G. (2014) The effect of culture on perception and cognition: a conceptual framework. Journal of Consumer Research, 41(4), 925-940. Retrieved from https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/50048/ [01.08.2024]
[119] Liddicoat, A. J. (2009). Communication as Culturally Contexted Practice: A View from Intercultural Communication. Australian Journal of Linguistics. 29(1), 115–133
[120] Nisbett, R. E., & Miyamoto, Y. (2005). The influence of culture: Holistic versus analytic perception. Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 9(10), 467-473. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2005.08.004

have changed the story, showing how cultural backgrounds influence on our understanding of these narratives.

Cultural influence on narrative perception is also apparent in advertising. Advertisements often reflect cultural values and norms, shaping how individuals perceive and interpret messages. Cultural differences can lead to variations in perceptual and cognitive processes, highlighting the impact of cultural backgrounds on narrative perception.

Furthermore, communication practices are influenced by cultural understandings about language use. Cultures assign different meanings and importance to how people use language, affecting how communication is understood in those cultural settings.

Cultural influences play a significant role in shaping narrative perception, impacting how individuals interpret and respond to stories, advertisements, and communication practices. Curtis, & Cachia[121], suggested that a person's language can affect how they think and perceive the world, resulting in different perspectives among cultures.

It is important for people working in diverse environments to have an idea how cultural differences can affect communication and how stories are understood. This becomes even more important as globalization increases movement and interactions between different cultures.[122]

In 2012, the Swedish furniture brand, IKEA entered the Saudi market. Their well-loved catalogs highlight their products but include some images of women. In Saudi Arabia, it is inappropriate for women to be seen in public without covering their face and body. Because of this, the company removed images of women from the catalog intended for the Saudi Arabian market. When the Swedish newspaper reported on the action, it sparked significant backlash. The Swedish government has been working to support the role of women in society, which highlights a challenge that international public relations professionals often encounter. On one side, creating communication materials resonating with local cultural norms was necessary. However, the Swedish government was standing to promote the role of women in society. We can see that this

[121] Curtis, H , Cachia, M (2015) The impact of globalisation on organisational communication: an interpretative phenomenological analysis. In: BPS Developmental Section and Social Section Annual Conference, 9-11 Sept 2015, Manchester, UK. Retrieved from https://repository.uwl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1265/ [10.08.2024]

[122] Aririguzoh, S. (2002) Communication competencies, culture and SDGs: effective processes to cross-cultural communication. Humanit Soc Sci Commun 9, 96 https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01109-4

incident illustrated a dilemma that every international public relations practitioner faces. On the one hand, it is necessary to develop culturally specific communication products and messages that are acceptable to local audience.

On the other hand, it is also essential to project a coherent global identity and values - especially in our modern, globalized world in which messages intended for a particular audience often spread far beyond their intended reach.[123]Cultures differ, which impacts narrative perception.

Greert Hofstede published the seminal study of cultural dimensions in his 1980 book Culture Consequences, based on surveys of IBM employees worldwide.[124]For example, Cultures with high power distance, such as Russia, China, and Mexico, are more hierarchical. By contrast, cultures with low power distance, such as Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, are more egalitarian. The level of power distance in society will impact your narrative messages and how you interact with your colleagues. Meyer notes that in hierarchical cultures such as Japan, Korea, Nigeria, and Saudi Arabia, subordinates call their bosses by formal titles and will not skip layers of management to communicate with those too far above and below. [125]

Cultural symbols, often overlooked, are crucial in communication strategies. They are excellent at expressing complex ideas and feelings, helping to connect different cultures, and making stories more engaging.[126] For example, during the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong 2014, demonstrators used umbrellas to symbolize their movement, creating umbrella-themed enormous outdoor art exhibitions.

The New York Times observed that political art, often filled with humor, has evolved into a form of protest as powerful as loud speeches and heavy metal barricades on the streets. Similarly, in literature and media, cultural symbols such as the American flag, the Eiffel Tower, or the Taj Mahal are often used to evoke specific emotions or convey messages. [127]

[123] Alaimo, K. (2017). Pitch, tweet, or engage on the street: How to practice global public relations and strategic communication. Routledge.
[124] Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
[125] Meyer, E. (2014). The culture map: Breaking through the invisible boundaries of global business. Public Affairs
[126]Keck, M. E. (1998). Activists beyond borders: Advocacy networks in international politics. Cornell University Press.
[127] Alaimo, K. (2017). Pitch, tweet, or engage on the street: How to practice global public relations and strategic communication. Routledge

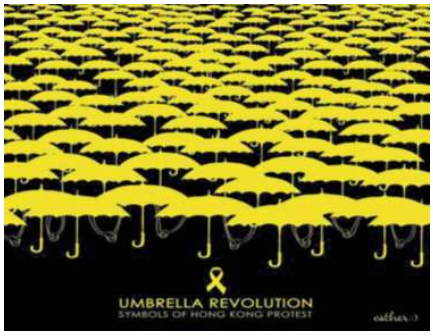


Figure 11

The Umbrella Revolution, Hong Kong 2014. (Source:Will Mainente, 2014)

Another strategy is to humanize a problem by sharing dramatic stories about how your issue impacts people. New York Times writer Nicholas Kristof,[128] talked about how crucial this strategy was when he expressed disappointment that his coverage of the humanitarian crisis in Darfur did not stir up more global outrage. Kristof spoke with individuals who witnessed men being taken off buses and murdered due to their belonging to the tribe and skin color.[129] So why this story did not touch people`s hearts in the USA? It could be more accessible to connect with the story of another living being (for example, a hurt bird in Central Park) than to process and react emotionally to the more abstract idea of large-scale problems.

Adults often use storytelling to pass their families' history to younger generations. This can involve sharing stories through diaries, books, or oral traditions. It is important to note that storytellers often share stories that reflect their perspectives and viewpoints. This allows for subjects like slavery and the Hiroshima tragedy to be explored and used through the perspective of the storyteller's interpretation.

[128] Kristof, N. (2008, October). Darfur camp attacked. The New York Times. Retrieved from https://archive.nytimes.com/kristof.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/10/29/darfur-camp-attacked/ [13.07.204]

[129] Alaimo, K. S. (2014). Brief 10: How the United Nations Should Promote the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Governance and Sustainability Issue Brief Series: Brief 10. Center for Governance and Sustainability. University of Massachusetts Boston.

5.3. Emotional Impact of Narratives

Whether in literature, film, or other media, narratives can elicit strong emotional responses from audienKristoces. This can be attributed to the narrative's inherent characteristics, which allow for the expression of complex emotions, the exploration of personal experiences, and the creation of emotional resonance with the viewer or reader. The audience's experiences and emotional states can significantly influence their responses to a narrative, making it a deeply personal and subjective experience.[130] Profound narratives can effectively convey ideas and knowledge by tapping into the emotional lives of the audience. The protagonist's journey, with its ups and downs, can evoke emotions, from empathy and identification to catharsis and personal reflection. When narratives combine informational and emotional elements, they become a powerful tool for engaging audiences and building trust and rapport, creating a sense of connection and engagement.[131]

Emotion in narratives is not merely a means of entertainment or aesthetic pleasure; it serves a deeper purpose.[132] Emotion-inducing content is often more memorable and can influence how individuals understand and form opinions about the world around them. The emotional responses elicited by narratives can function as heuristics, guiding individuals' attitudes and beliefs in a way that might not be achieved through purely cognitive approaches, thereby influencing and guiding them.

Ultimately, narratives' emotional impact lies in their ability to connect with audiences on a personal level, inspire reflection and understanding, and significantly shape how individuals perceive and engage with the world, enlightening and inspiring them.

The above quotation reflects a common intuition about both life and art, namely a belief that emotions are events, with beginnings and endings, caused by things that happen to people. The quotation is part of a broader argument, associated with novelists such as Henry James and

[130] Zhou, S., Yang, X., Wang, Y. et al.(2023). Affective agenda dynamics on social media: interactions of emotional content posted by the public, government, and media during the COVID-19 pandemic. Humanit Soc Sci Commun 10, 797 https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02265-x

[131] Hogan, P. C. (2003) The Mind and its Stories: Narrative Universals and Human Emotion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511499951

[132] Greber, H. Hannah & Lecheler, S. (2023). Feeling the News? The Differential Effects of Immersive Journalism on Emotional Response. Digital Journalism. 11. 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2155205

critics such as Percy Lubbock, that this tendency of narratives to capture emotional aspects of human experience constitutes an essential aspect of their appeal. From a more abstract perspective, the quote also signifies that we can capture how experiences are presented in a narrative structure or process. Whether this idea applies to life, art, or both, it invites the following research questions: How do narratives represent emotional responses? Do they represent common aspects of emotional experience? Moreover, if so, how do they represent these? Conversation, literature, and narrative expressions, more generally, depict emotional experiences by describing their context, causes, and effects.

Emotions in a narrative, a part of its structure, are distinct from the feelings associated with fictional characters. These attributions can be made directly by a narrator using thought reports or psycho-narration about a character's emotions, revealed through the character's monologue, or inferred by a reader through external cues such as actions or characterization. Narrative emotions, which can be part of storytelling, differ from the feelings that character's experience. A narrator might directly express a character's emotions using thought reporting or psycho-narration techniques. Alternatively, these emotions can be shown through a character's spoken thoughts or monologues, or readers can form an opinion based on actions or the character's portrayal.[133]

Narrative effects are typically attributed to an immersed experiential state characteristic of story experience: Stories can capture recipients' attention, evoke a rich mental representation of the events unfolding, and elicit strong emotions. Much research on story experience is based on narrative transportation [134]and the related construct of narrative engagement. Both concepts include understanding a story, constructing mental models, and building mental imagery.[135]

Keen S. says two terms are vital to understanding narrative emotions: affect and narrativity. Affect can be defined in various ways, but one significant perspective for literary studies originates from ethics. Brian Massumi makes a critical distinction, arguing that affect should not be equated with emotion, as is often done in social sciences. Referencing Spinoza's philosophy in his 1987

[133] Habermas, T. (2019). Emotion and narrative: Perspectives in autobiographical storytelling. Cambridge University Press.
[134] Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2000). The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79(5), 701-721. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.79.5.701
[135] Busselle, R., & Bilandzic, H. (2008). Measuring Narrative Engagement. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 3(3), 255-266. https://doi.org/10.1080/15213260903287259

translation “A Thousand Plateaus,” Massumi describes affecting as a mental and physical state that signals a shift from one condition to another, which can result in either an enhancement or a reduction in the body's capacity to act. [136] How does this phenomenon apply to narrative form? One link happens in the desire to continue reading or watching. The core bodily effects of desire, pleasure, and pain may be translated into narrative form using narrativity, defined next. Furthermore, it should be noted that plots consist of related events, and their beginnings allude to changing states of affairs. Thus, Change and disruption are the narrative's natural states, which cannot exist long in stasis. Something must happen to stimulate the unspooling of related events that constitute the plot, and those state changes invite readers to experience versions of affect. This is one reason the core narrative affects curiosity, surprise, and suspense related to narrativity.

The narrative plays a vital role in resolving problems in psychiatry. For example, Freud explores the psychoanalytic issue of narrative in his first comprehensive case study, titled "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria," published in 1905[137]. This work is more commonly referred to by the name of its main subject, “Dora.” Freud starts treatment and observes by asking the patient to share the complete story of their life and illness, but that is not what he gets. This initial description can be likened an compared to a river that’s difficult to navigate; at times, it is blocked by large rocks, and at other moments, it branches off and disappears in shallow waters and sandbars. Freud continues describing the patient's narrative: "The connections - even the ostensible ones - are mostly incoherent, and the sequence of different events is uncertain. The patients' inability to give an ordered history of their life in so far as it coincides with the history of their illness is not merely characteristic of the neurosis. It has considerable theoretical importance. After discussing how amnesias and paramnesias in the narrative fulfill the requirements of repression, Freud wraps up his initial analysis.: “In the further course of the treatment, the patient supplies the facts which, though he had known them all along, had been kept back by him or had not occurred to his mind”.[138]

The effect of stories on us is not just a result of the interplay between words and the author but also the reader—a dynamic triangle where emotion plays a crucial role. Emotions and the

[136] Massumi, B. (2002). Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation. Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11smvr0
[137] Freud, S. (1905). Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria.
[138] Brooks, P. (1994). Psychoanalysis and storytelling. Oxford University Press.pp 48

Embodied Experience of Narratives: Understanding stories involves the author's emotional input and the reader's emotional response, thereby making emotion an integral and active part of narrative comprehension.[139] The way a reader feels is not just a response; it is a crucial part of the storytelling journey.

1. Emotions and literature. Emotions are essential to our humanity and influence how we interpret and respond to different stories. A writer will often use emotional hooks to create a desired response in the reader, whether it is through vivid details, compelling interactions between characters, or story elements and plot twists.

2. Sensory and motor Simulation: The theory suggests that when we read stories, our brains simulate characters' activities at a sensory and motor level, leading to a deep emotional involvement. This allows readers to connect with the characters on a deeper level, genuinely feeling their emotions as if they were experiencing them firsthand, which improves the overall reading experience.[140]

3. Interplay of Mind and Body: Embodied narratology considers the connection between mind and body in reading. Embodied metaphors and sensory descriptors can create affective responses that blur the edges between readerly engagement (or what we might call the imaginative) with a text and our reading bodies.

4. Insights on Narratives from Neuroscientific Research: Neuroscience of Cognitive Processes Recently, advances in the neuroimaging techniques used to track cognitive processes have offered a view into how narratives affect our brains and emotions. Research has indicated that reading fiction can recruit regions implicated in empathy, theory of mind, and emotional processing, and hence, the impact narratives have on our emotions is quite significant.

5. Author-Reader Relationship: Stories also impact the emotional impact of storytelling, not just what is said or written down but also how it relates between author and text.

[139] Cohn, Neil. (2019). Visual narrative comprehension: Universal or not?. Psychonomic Bulletin & Review. 27. 266–285 https://doi.org/10.3758/s13423-019-01670-1

[140] Gallese, V., & Wojciechowski, H. (2011). How stories make us feel: Toward an embodied narratology. California Italian Studies, 2(1), 1–14. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.5070/C321008974 [01.08.2024]

Authors skillfully encode their emotions into their writing, which are then decoded by readers and viscerally felt through the embodied simulation process; these tacitly shared feelings take both author and audience on an emotional journey together. The emotional impact of narratives is a complex and evolving process involving all three elements: narrative construction, embodiment, and cognitive processes. By examining the complex interplays between emotions, embodiment, and storytelling, we can better understand how stories filter our experience.

It is crucial to outline that selecting the right audience helps build a deep emotional connection. For example, J. Robert Oppenheimer delivered early lectures at California-Berkeley in 1929. Despite being just twenty-five years old, he was already a prominent figure in quantum theory. Oppenheimer taught a class of enthusiastic graduate students at the start of that first semester. In the middle of the semester, attendance in his course dropped to just one student, leaving others feeling disappointed. Oppenheimer's lack of alignment with the students was the main reason for the drop in enrolment. The students deemed his pace excessively fast, although Oppenheimer perceived it as too slow. Moreover, his lectures contained obscure references to literary and philosophical classics. These issues led many students to voice their concerns to the department head. Acknowledging the feedback, Oppenheimer diligently adjusted his pace, clarified his concepts, and drew connections between ideas. As a result, subsequent students found Oppenheimer to be the most captivating lecturer they had encountered.[141]

Oppenheimer's early lectures lacked the crucial element of aligning the content with the audience, purpose, and occasion. Failing to achieve this alignment results in delivering the wrong speech. Additionally, many young scientists and engineers struggle with determining the appropriate source of words for their speech – whether they originate extemporaneously, from memory, from reading, or prepared points on note cards or slides. The presentation's context should guide the choice of word source, and using the wrong source often leads to presentation failure. This chapter initially explores methods for making one's speech unique before delving into ways to support arguments within a speech effectively.[142]

Humor is one of the most successful ways to make a story resonate emotionally with the audience. This element not only adds uniqueness to the presentation but also benefits the audience.

[141] Goodchild, P., & Oppenheimer, J. R. (1981). J. Robert Oppenheimer. Houghton Mifflin Company. 25 -26 pp.
[142] Alley, M. (2003). The craft of scientific presentations. Springer.

Analogies, examples, and stories can help the audience remember the content. Personal anecdotes can captivate the audience, while humor helps them feel at ease and engage actively.

During one of his presentations as president of Sandia National Laboratories, C. Paul Robinson started: "As a small boy, I had two dreams, and I was torn between them. Sometimes I dreamt of being a scientist, while other times, I wanted escaping and joining the circus. However, thanks to the grace of God and a career in the Department of Energy's laboratories, I have fulfilled both dreams."[143]

Richard Feynman had honor to receive the Albert Einstein Award in 1954 during his Messenger Lectures at Cornell. Besides, he was also a former member of the Manhattan Project during World War II and had a passion for playing the bongo drums. In his opening remarks, Feynman amusingly noted: "Isn't it odd that whenever I'm invited to play the bongo drums at an official event, the person introducing me never mentions my work in theoretical physics?".[144]

Comedy can help the audience feel relaxed. It also allows the audience to interact with a presentation. Even more, humor can attract attention and relieve listeners. It feels funny, but not everyone can make a whole crowd laugh. Humor takes many forms, but not all comedy styles will work for everyone.

It is almost impossible to know precisely what will make everyone laugh and others where you might overstep the line. People tend to react differently to each other depending on how they see things and their situation. Even in something as statistically improbably random as a large professional organization, there will always be at least one person who cries (and rightfully so) foul on issues such as race or gender, religion, etc. In that case, what should the subjects be? Generally, stories of your failures are the least risky.

Sometimes, narratives can appeal to fear as emotion. For example, the fear tactics used by anti-nuclear organizations had a significant impact on the political choice of government to stop the construction of nuclear power plants in the 1980s. Even though the nuclear power industry provided solid facts, like how coal plants release much more damaging radiation than most nuclear plants, the fear strategy used by anti-nuclear communities had a bigger impact. There are many

[143] Ibid pp.19

[144] Feynman, R. P. (1965). The character of physical law, MIT Press. 13 pp.

examples where emotional appeals determined decisions, like efforts to protect endangered animals, preserve forests and rivers, and boost funding for disease research. One of examples is a case has been the significant research funding provided by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to combat the AIDS epidemic. The relatively recent appearance of AIDS and the quick rise in the number of cases have played a large part in securing this funding. Additionally, the emotional and highly publicized demands for research support from AIDS activists have also contributed to this effort.[145]

[145] Alley, M. (2003). The craft of scientific presentations. Springer.

6. Conclusion

Strategic communication can indeed form organizational narratives and relationships with beneficiaries. Organizations can improve their storytelling habits by having narrative elements to work with and matching narratives strategically against the objectives set. Stories in strategic communication deepen this audience connection and can give us a stronger identity as we tell our tale or narrative (for good or bad). Successful navigation of these obstacles when using narratives in messaging requires a keen understanding by strategic communicators about the relationship between technology, culture, and emotion as they relate to current techniques for delivering engaging stories.

The Master thesis stresses that the future is a critical element in strategic communication, arguing that organizations must craft future narratives or risk being left behind by global trends and their goals. By using storytelling techniques, enterprises can better create stakeholder perceptions and communicate their future vision.

The paper used conceptual argumentation and a literature review to study narrative elements in strategic communication. This method aims to clarify further the function played by narrative in organizational studies and, more practically, contribute suggestions for an enriched communication policy.

The study of the future illuminates narrative strategies as central to how people create images about what is to come and circulate these in strategic communication. Organizations that understand the properties of compelling narratives travel through difficulties, and ride on technology, culture, and emotion will be able to communicate their vision powerfully while building credibility with key stakeholders and tangibly accelerating progress toward strategic goals. The paper highlighted the value of a story in strategic communication by examining its role in framing organizational messages and creating connections with stakeholders.

This work used the following framework to explain how narrative plays a role in strategic communication:

- Creating and narrating: Good stories draw on narrative elements to build an organization's identity by highlighting shared purpose (vision), core values, and mutual desires for future state/s. Strategic communicators build stories around these core aspects to shape stakeholder perceptions and create a feeling of shared identity.
- Building Emotional Connections: Stories are a powerful way to engage and connect stakeholders emotionally to an organization. Strategic communicators tell relevant stories to their audiences through authentic and safe storytelling, thereby earning trust, credibility, and loyalty.
- Guiding Organizational Change: Equipped with narratives, strategic communicators can navigate organizational changes by acting proactively for those possible future contexts. When stakeholders can be prepared for impending challenges, trends, and opportunities by envisioning where the organization is headed next, that matters.
- Strategic Objectives - Organizations may choose to map narratives onto their strategic objectives, crafting stories that appeal to different stakeholders. Organizations can communicate their point of view regarding the same by delivering meaningful narratives in ways related to future perspectives that they seek and encourage them for change.

The research work broadly underscores the importance of narrative in strategic communication. It enables firms to use their vision for communication with the broader market, forming relationships with stakeholders, and managing effectively within turbulent business landscapes. In turn, the research concludes with an argument that narrative strategies in strategic communication are vital for shaping organizational messages and relationships with stakeholders. This brings a powerful lens onto narratives' more significant role in painting images of the future that resonate with audiences and deliver end behaviours.

We can underscore that narrative strategies in strategic communication are complex, dynamic processes with cognitive and emotional effects that have a direct impact on emotion mobilization as well as organizational identity. According to the study, stories serve as a powerful expander of emotional contact exposure with stakeholders through trust and loyalty. How

narratives are created and consumed is heavily influenced by cultural contexts, highlighting the importance of organizations to consider with sensitivity their outputs. Transmedia storytelling and digital storytelling, including narratives on different platforms (from books to movies) allow for greater reach due to the dispersal of information across multiple interfaces.

Furthermore, the research work incorporates feminist narratology, revealing the ways in which narratives counter conventional power structures and foster inclusion. By studying narrative genres like utopia and dystopia, it provides a structured approach to help explore how organizations can imagine and tell stories about their future hopes or, instead, warn against potential threats.

This research investigates how narrative strategies in organizations and their consequences for communication change with time as new narratives are established within digital scenarios. Moreover, studying technology-mediated negotiation between culture and emotion might give hints on improving the design strategy to deepen audience involvement and understanding. Organizations that continue to learn from and improve the narrative techniques of strategic communication will be ahead of trends, keep their market advantages, and stick precisely with their business strategy. Future research efforts in this area might add to a fuller picture of how narratives shape organizational identities and perceptions within what we know is an ever-shifting, dynamic business landscape. Narrative approaches as a strategic communication tool are not limited to international politics and business; examples from different sectors, like the military using its own narrative approach to keep personnel integrated and motivated, show how useful these tools can be in specific contexts.

In addition, the research underlines that art storytelling as a critical aspect enables art criticism which is proven to add another dimension on top of organisational narratives through cultural and emotional depth. Incorporating data stories into a storytelling framework enables organizations to share complex information in forms that appeal more to different audiences. This is very important for startups, where a great storyline in pitch or keynote presentation can be the difference between funds invested and gathered interest. An effective narrative that resonates with our emotions and culture will be decisive in strategic communications - allowing organizations to help solve problems while properly articulating their vision of tomorrow.

Designing a future state story involves creating strategic fiction about potential futures, nurtured into compelling narratives grounded in an organization's desired aspirations. Strategic communications are typically forward-looking as we plan for the desired future and try to concoct a narrative that matches our long-term(end) goals. Organizations can do this by picturing different futures and constructing narratives around them to demonstrate their vision and engage emotional stakeholders.

The future is just a continuation of today and yesterday. Our actions now and in the past , create the direction we're heading in the moment. Strategic communicators translate this through narratives that bridge these dimensions of time, connecting how the past has influenced today and how what happens in the present can determine tomorrow. Such stories can be a way for stakeholders to relate the organization's journey, values, and goals - offering continuity of identity.

The ability to foster future thinking in organizations by envisaging alternative developments and thereby allowing them to proactively explore paths of development and obstacles that might be ahead - but also new challenges or opportunities. Strategic communicators have the power to write stories about potential futures dependent on strategic choices; these future tales can align stakeholders on a shared vision and direction. At its end, the craft of speculative storytelling enables strategic communication to define who we are, move us to act, and maneuver truths in an increasingly uncertain business environment.

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