

Building Employee Engagement and Reputation through Storytelling

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Abstract

Organisational storytelling can be used as an effective means to improve engagement between employers and staff by communicating and reinforcing the employee opportunities, developments and benefits associated with working for the organisation. The characteristics of storytelling make it an excellent medium for the organisation to engage with employees on a more personal level and can aid in the retention of information valuable to building an employee-focused work culture.

Employer of choice (EOC) for Australian organisations is an emerging issue, as it relates to the way organisations provide a safe, healthy and progressive work environment. By informing employees about their EOC structure through stories, a stronger commitment can be fostered towards their organisation, resulting in improved reputation, both internally and externally.

The use of organisational stories as an internal communication instrument may result in employees becoming reputation champions for their organisation. Narration that positively represents the organisation can be adopted by staff and adapted to become more relevant to the particular stakeholders they encounter through their work. Staff who are more engaged with, and have a deep trust for, their employer are likely to feel more buoyant about their work and conduct themselves in a constructive manner. This often results in improved productivity, a healthier brand and a decreased risk of losing staffing.

Introduction

This conceptual paper aims to demonstrate a direct link between the use of organisational storytelling and improved employee engagement. Furthermore, the paper clarifies how storytelling and narration is a valuable internal communication instrument, defines employer of choice (EOC) for Australian business conditions, demonstrates how organisational storytelling can enhance employee engagement through informing staff about their EOC structure, and expands on the valuable contribution staff may add to organisational reputation through becoming storytellers themselves.

Storytelling has been an effective form of communicating a message for thousands of years. Storytelling is fundamental to communicating across gender, age and culture (Denning, 2004). It can be used effectively in a corporate environment to reinforce the values, brand and employee opportunities in an organisation.

Organisational storytelling is one way of persuading, motivating and inspiring employees about their employer (Simmons, 2006). The essence of storytelling allows the receiver to align a component of understanding and connection with the message based on their own beliefs and past experiences (Hansen, 2008). Storytelling has a 'cut-through' to the receiver that statistics, facts and figures alone cannot achieve (Naidu in Hansen, 2008). It has a strong association with the shaping of opinions, expectations and commitment (Gardner, 2004; Sinclair, 2005). Therefore, storytelling is an appropriate medium to build and advance employee engagement in an organisation's EOC structure.

EOC is an emerging issue for Australian organisations. Prior to the global financial crisis of 2008-09 Australia experienced a ten-year period of low unemployment and strong wages, which resulted in a 'job-seekers market' mentality (ABS, 2008; Fracaro, 2005). Many employees currently desire working environments that promote not only remuneration, but opportunities for development and alignment of employer operations with values and personal beliefs (Fracaro, 2005). Engagement with staff on issues, such as what motivates them and aligns with their values, is important for employers. Evolving and enhancing EOC status that is recognised externally allows employers to attract and retain desirable staff (Ahlrichs, 2000).

Narration, through its ability to reach out and connect with each audience, is effective for engagement with internal and external stakeholders. Such engagement plays a crucial role in

reputation and risk management for an organisation through improving staff satisfaction and building better understandings on the desired brand values (Louisot, 2006; Donaldson, 2006). The ability of internal staff to represent the organisation's values and goals through their interaction with external stakeholders is central to drawing worth from the intangible asset of reputation (Ballow, 2004; Dowling, 2006). Through addressing EOC, organisations are able to galvanise a positive internal reputation, which is further represented externally through employee interaction with other key stakeholders.

Storytelling used as an internal communication instrument to enhance the EOC status of an organisation can significantly contribute to the mitigating risk associated with staff discontentment, reputation loss and poor employee commitment.

Methods of investigation

Two methods were used to support this conceptual paper and address the core questions of what defines EOC for Australian business and why storytelling can be more engaging for employees:

1. Literature reviews of corporate communication concepts based on storytelling and narration, focussing on contemporary theories; and
2. Analysis of reports and surveys relating to employer of choice and 'good' employer practices.

In order to clarify organisational storytelling and its relationship to employee engagement, literature reviews were conducted on papers and books recently published relating to the use of stories and narration in the workplace, especially with regard to developing culture and as an effective internal communication instrument. This review was carried out in order to define contemporary organisational storytelling and determine collective agreement from theorists on the benefits to using stories in employee engagement. Relevant statistics and figures stated in these publications are cited in this paper. Research is also drawn from notable and distinguished publishers on the topic of corporate communication, namely: Drucker (1989), and Denning (2005 & 2006) Fombrun (1996 & 1990), Gardner (2004), and Shanley (1990).

Analysis was conducted on published research relating to EOC and its emergence as a concept for Australian business. Key words used in the search of academic journals, business books and industry journals included: employer of choice, employee opportunities, good employer practices and best employer. Although searches returned a broad spectrum of

information relating to the key words, the scope of the review was limited to documents with acceptable levels of credibility in terms of research practice (i.e. universities and government documents), and internationally recognised research houses and consultancy groups, such as: KPMG, Ashridge Centre, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, and IBM.

Global surveys addressing rating and certification by agencies that assess organisations on their employee opportunities and good employer practices towards staff, such as: Hewitt ‘Best Employer’ Awards, A Great Place To Work, Employer of Choice for Women (Australia) and HR Awards for Business (Australia), were analysed in order to pinpoint key criteria necessary for EOC awards and citations. This information also defined what areas of employee engagement organisations need to address in order to be considered ‘good’ employers.

The broader term ‘organisational’ is the generic term used in this paper to represent all manner of workplaces. The business term for organisations, ‘corporate’, remains present in quotes from cited authors.

Storytelling

Storytelling is a phenomenon that is fundamental to all nations, societies and cultures, and has been so since time immemorial, according to Denning (2004). The use of narration through stories has the ability to transcend age-groups, cultures and genders and capture the imagination and attention of listeners regardless of background. Telling a meaningful story can set the communication apart from ‘mundane message overflow’. It may also inspire listeners to come to the same conclusion as the narrator using their own decision-making processes.

“Stories can be affirmed as having both high social presence (bring people physically and psychologically closer) and media richness (variety of media), as research has proven that they carry symbolic information and convey meaning, as well as greatly enhance both commitment and recollection,” (Sinclair, 2005, p. 60).

Stories can tap into personal elements enabling the presenter (narrator) to construct a believable picture for receivers in tune with their own ideas and goals, making the narration more captivating (Sinclair, 2005; Simmons, 2006). A story can add a personal component of understanding and connection that statistics alone cannot achieve (Hansen, 2008). According to Lawrence and Mealman (1999) meaning is derived through reflection on experience, and

the value added by stories and metaphor can be substantial. The meaning of experiential learning can be defined as the way people make sense of situations they encounter in their daily lives (Lawrence & Mealman, 1999).

Howard Gardner's (2004) research in the field of cognitive psychology supports using stories to change people's minds and reinforce opinions, which complements many objectives of a successful internal communication program. Gardner is a strong advocate of business leaders using this approach. Storytelling decreases the suspicion of a hidden agenda resulting in true influence (Sinclair, 2005). Stories share knowledge amongst those present who interpret the narration in line with their own experiences, allowing personalised cognition about problems, solutions and explanations (Denning, 2004).

Therefore, storytelling is a natural and engaging way of communicating across a diverse audience.

Organisational storytelling

Organisational storytelling is the process of developing a message that creates a new point-of-view or reinforces an opinion or behaviour by using narration about people, the organisation, the past, visions for the future, social bonding and work itself. Stories offer a way to motivate people and create a message memorable enough for people to take action. Organisational stories have an objective beyond being just entertainment, including changing or reinforcing behaviour and opinion (Prusak, 2001).

Storytelling today plays a huge role in the world of organisations, business and politics today and has developed into a valuable method for engendering culture into an organisation (Denning, 2004). The role of the communicator through storytelling is to ensure the content is appropriate to the communication objective and that the audience have the ability to comprehend the message of the story (Harrison, 2008). This makes storytelling an ideal mode for delivering communication that is engaging and relevant to the employee. Leading companies are increasingly recognising the need to train leaders in the use of artful narrative to inspire and guide their organisation to respond effectively to strategic challenges (Denning, 2006).

A key benefit of storytelling is its universal appeal to culturally rich audiences who have diverse interests and learning styles. Many organisations have a range of stakeholders. Stories

provide a flexible framework for a storyteller in an organisation to reflect the company's position in line with the selected interests of the particular stakeholders for whom it wants to make an impression on (Dowling, 2006).

“The roles of corporate narrative are to: explain the behaviour of a company in terms of its mission and morality, and in this way create an emotional bond with key stakeholders that will help to foster their trust and support. Greater trust and support will help stakeholders to better appreciate the company's corporate sustainability and social responsibility activities” (Dowling, 2006, p. 83).

People are in information overload in today's business and more traditional forms of communication in an office may be contributing to this (Simmons, 2006). A personal means of communication can be more effective for business information that relates to specific to tasks and roles. Knowledge that is fertile in tacit dimensions is commonly transferred informally by means of socialisation and internalisation through two transfer mechanisms – mentoring and storytelling (Swap, Leonard, Shields & Abrams, 2001).

Narrative communication is ideally placed to significantly contribute to the reputation building efforts of the company (Dowling, 2006).

Attributes of good organisational stories

The main purpose of an organisational story is to create interest in that organisation, either to an internal or external audience, which helps to shape the expectations of the stakeholders (Dowling, 2006).

Dowling (2006) puts forward the notion that organisational stories unfold over three parts: yesterday, today and tomorrow. He suggests stories that address the life-cycle models and the sciences of planning programs for organisations sit comfortably with planning based on where the organisation has come from, where it currently is and where it is heading.

A simple example can be the story of R.M. Williams, the Australian boot and clothing manufacturer. Staff can gain an understanding about the humble beginning of the company when told about Reginald Murray Williams' friendship with a bushman named Dollar Mick, which led to the creation of the first R.M. Williams factory in the backyard of the family home in the small town of Prospect, South Australia, in 1932. Growing demand led to the move to

the current location of Salisbury, just outside of Adelaide. This narration helps staff understand the brand and its purpose of being functional and hardwearing, yet stylish, work wear made by Australians for Australian conditions. By informing staff on its designs to expand further into the North American and European markets, staff may feel part of its vision for the future (R.M. Williams, 2009)

Denning (2006) proposes using more of a springboard approach for the 'future part' of the story, where the future is kept vague so that listeners are encouraged to be part of the solution and direction. Using the above example, R.M. Williams employees might be asked to consider 'where to now' for the company that already has a strong Australian reputation. This provides employees with a sense of contributing to, and ownership of, the strategic planning for the organisation.

Prusak (2001) suggests four attributes to a good organisational story: endurance, salience, sense-making, and comfort level. Stories need to endure. Durable stories may have changed names and circumstances, but the behavioural lesson remains the same. Salience refers to relevance and punch in the story. Prusak (2001) recommends three things to make a story salient: wit, succinctness and emotional power. The explanatory ability of the story relates to sense-making; meaning that is true to the receiver's own experience. Finally, receivers need to be comfortable with the feeling they get from the narration. Information that is too confronting or outside the parameters of their own experiences can be blocked out.

Rossiter and Bellman (2005) state that an organisation needs to project expert, sincere, likeable and powerful characteristics through its stories if it aims to enhance reputation. Expertise fosters esteem and respect. Sincerity fosters trust and corporate citizenship. Stakeholders will identify with the organisation if they like what it stands for. Finally, organisations are considered to be leaders as a result of their perceived power.

A key consideration for public relations when developing narration for organisational stories is to stay true to the organisation's identity and brand. Stories must represent who the organisation is and what the organisation offers (Dowling, 2006; Fombrun, 2005).

Limitations of Organisational Stories

Organisational storytelling is but one public relations method that can be used as an effective means to communication and persuasion. It is necessary to consider the theory of varied

communications in order to provide the opportunity for shared meaning across a diverse audience (Mohan, McGregor, Saunders & Arhee, 2008).

The ability of the audience to practice analytical thinking through other methods of communication means the decision-making process isn't replaced by storytelling. Storytelling supplements decision-making by enabling employees and communicators to imagine new perspectives and is ideally suited to communicating change and stimulating innovation (Denning, 2004).

Storytelling as a less formal approach to information exchange still applies the principles of effective communication (Harrison, 2008). Consideration for the audience, their abilities, aspirations and their motivations are still critical to the foundation of any good communication plan (Dowling, 2006). Narrative patterns must consider the desired goals and objectives for the storytelling in line with leadership and desired outcome (Denning, 2004). Careful planning in line with 'good' communication practice apply equally to storytelling when used in a business environment.

Time and location considerations may apply and restrict the practicality of the more personal approach to storytelling. Even though podcasts and video-streaming can overcome the variables of distance and time-zones for storytelling, the face-to-face delivery that involves a more personal approach is somewhat lost through these media (Harrison, 2007; Macnamara, 2006).

The tone and pitch of the story needs to be constructed in a positive format in order to incite productive action. It is important that the narrator composes the story from a perspective that will resonate positively with the audience. Using a story of a negative tonality will generally fail to spark action, as opposed to a springboard story which communicates complex ideas and launches people into action (Denning, 2006).

The composition, style and delivery of the narration will have a critical effect on the outcome of an organisational story. Research on the target audience and reflection on the desired outcome of the communication still play essential roles in the use of storytelling. Public relations practitioners need to focus on storytelling as 'one tool from the toolbox' for delivering verbal information, when face-to-face delivery is established as the most effective medium (Harrison, 2007, Mohan et al., 2008).

Employer of Choice for Australian Business

A key objective of internal communication is to advance employee commitment to the organisation through developing and reinforcing the brand values. An important element to the brand, from an internal perspective, is the organisation's measured support for staff and its responsibilities within the community (Harrison, 2007; Macnamara, 2005). This is evidenced through the organisation's approach to being an employer of choice. Storytelling is an ideal method for engaging with staff on their organisation's EOC practices and policies.

A succinct, consistent and definitive explanation for the concept of employer of choice is not evident in current academic, industry and public discussion papers addressing EOC for Australian organisations.

In Australia, EOC has typically been associated with recruitment and strategies to attract and retain staff (Herman & Gioia, 2004; Leary-Joyce, 2004; Drucker, 1999). Traditionally, North American EOC status has been narrowly aligned with employee benefits, including health plans and recruitment incentives (Fishman, 1998; Ahlrichs, 2000). More recently, EOC has evolved and expanded to be viewed as 'best practice in industry' for employment conditions driven by global acknowledgment and awards. Criteria assessed includes: employee opportunities, sustainable culture, public reputation and desirable qualities like facilities and support networks that make organisations attractive employers (Great Place To Work, 2005; Hewitt, 2003; Hull & Read, 2003; PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2002).

A number of studies have outlined essential criteria for running a successful EOC program. These include: "Best employers to work for in Australia" (Hewitt, 2003); "What makes a best employer global study" (Looi, Marusz and Baumruk, 2004); "Simply the best workplaces in Australia" paper (Hull & Read, 2003); Global Human Capital Survey 2002/3 (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2002); and "The Capability Within – The Global Human Capital Study 2005" (IBM, 2005).

The identified essential criteria for EOC under Australian business conditions includes: leadership and inter-relationships, safety, wellbeing, staff development, opportunity, inclusion, community involvement, financial education, and sustainable practice. According to Hull and Read (2003), leadership and inter-relationships are pivotal criteria to a successful EOC program. Many of these criteria reflect the broader concept of an organisation being environmentally, socially and financially responsible (Suggett & Goodsir, 2002). This can be

put more simply as the degree to which an organisation exercises corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Dowling, 2006).

Using Stories to Enhance EOC

Employees, generally, have a vested interest in information that relates to their own wellbeing and opportunity for advancement. According to Green (1998) adults often seek out learning opportunities they can use to improve their position or make a change for the better. Many organisations already have in place policies and practices that complement what employees desire from their employers (Hewitt, 2003; Hull & Read, 2003; PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2002; IBM, 2005). However communication and engagement with staff on these EOC structures may not be effectively reaching the desired audiences. Many Australian organisations are failing to communicate with staff on how to make EOC policies work effectively for them, especially in terms of staff engagement and reputation enhancement, stated Simon Morgan, Director of Morgan & Maher Financial PR Consulting (personal communication, January 8, 2008).

The use of narration via face-to-face stories is a valuable method for educating and engaging with staff about their organisation's EOC policies and practices.

“Internal organisational communication – face-to-face communication is considered the richest communication medium in the hierarchy of media richness,” (Sinclair, 2005, p. 55).

Leaders within an organisation can use stories to fast-track trust and credibility, both internally and externally (Naidu in Hansen, 2008). Gaining employee trust is critical to building a healthy internal reputation and opening the lines of engagement with employees (Dowling, 2006). As narratives have a powerful cognitive impact, organisations can take advantage of storytelling opportunities to build on their engagement with staff, using the advantages outlined above to ensure the right messages and branding is being shared with, and understood by, employees (Sinclair, 2005).

The value of narration regarding an organisation's EOC structure endures beyond the original delivery, as it has the capacity to become a story in itself told by employees (Prusak, 2001). Employees take ownership of relevant information from EOC organisational stories, passing on appropriate information to colleagues and other stakeholders. In a sense, stories generate

EOC practice like business relationships, commitment and discussion on vision and values, along with enabling employees to share and understand organisational culture and opportunity (Sinclair, 2005). The intrinsic worth of EOC becomes self-fulfilling as individual employees become advocates and reference points for other employees regarding organisational values, opportunities, safety and wellbeing. This concept reinforces Drucker's (1989) perception of the knowledge worker as a powerful resource in terms of increasing the intellectual capital of an organisation and improving the productivity and viability of the operation.

Content for EOC stories

One key objective for the organisation using storytelling to promote their EOC structure would be maintaining and enhancing employee relations by highlighting the staff benefits and opportunities with the organisation (Lawrence, 2001; Leary-Joyce, 2004). Another key objective is to build corporate branding. Dowling (2006) stated that a fundamental driver of employee engagement is to effect good corporate reputations, both internally and externally. To improve internal reputation, stories need to address the general issues of concern for employees.

Narration relating to leadership and relationship management are central to the success of EOC structure according to a study conducted by Hull and Read (2004). Employees need to feel comfortable in the presence of management and be aware of the various forms of communication available between management and staff. Storytelling also opens up a more human and personal side of management by providing a clearer picture of the social system through the process of relaying information in story format (Simmons, 2006).

Staff safety and wellbeing issues are key topics which would complement the objective of storytelling in the organisation. Backing up formal policy and procedure with examples of accidents, incidents and near-misses, along with pertinent examples of exercising organisational policy in order to maintain health and work-life balance, are invaluable contributors to employee engagement (Work Safe Victoria, 2004). Narration can be crafted to directly relate to particular work environments in keeping with the belief that learning is heightened in an authentic social setting (Alley & Jansak, 2001). More poignant points can be drawn out through relating to personal experience, which in turn enhances inter-relationships between management and staff (Denning, 2004).

Human resources and human capital management may be more 'humanised' through providing stories on obtaining financial security, staff development and opportunities, particularly through the use of case studies referencing current staff. Bureaucracy can be a buffer between human resources units and general staff and the benefits associated with storytelling may individualise such interaction (O'Carroll, 2008). Individual approaches through storytelling can also address the concern of inclusion and ensure all within the organisation have access to the same information to opportunities regardless of their diverse abilities.

A real strength to storytelling is advancing the organisation's stance on corporate social responsibility through the perceptions of both internal and external stakeholders. Narration regarding the organisation's community relations, social values and environmental practices can gain traction through improved credibility and enable internally generated social and commercial behaviour that supports the organisation's mission and morality (Lawrence and Mealman, 1999).

This more personal approach may inspire and motivate stakeholders to promote the organisation's mission to the degree of becoming spokespeople for the cause through their own interpretation of the narration (Dowling, 2006; Simmons, 2006). Stories are a natural medium to convey an organisation's good deeds and aspirations (Gardner, 2004). The task facing a corporate communicator is to craft a corporate story with style and content appropriate to help build and promote the company's good reputation through stakeholders (Dowling, 2006). Ultimately, stakeholders, particularly internal staff, may become the reputation champions for the organisation (Campbell, 2004).

Organisational Reputation

An organisation's reputation is an important asset that needs to be nurtured and protected, and needs to be considered for its value in line with all other assets (Beder, 2002). An organisation's wealth is increasingly attributable to 'soft forms' of capital - reputation, trust, goodwill, image and relationships, commonly referred to as intangible assets (Post, 2004). These intangible assets, which originate from inside the organisation, undeniably deliver value to the company according to 96 per cent of executives polled in an Accenture Survey (Post, 2004). Other previous Accenture surveys have also shown that in 1980 the book value of a company comprised 80 per cent of its market value. In 1990 the book value comprised 55 per cent, while intangible assets comprised 45 per cent of the market value. In 2002 only 25

per cent of a company's book value was reflected in the market value, with intangibles ballooning to 75 per cent (Donaldson, 2006).

Fombrun and Shanley's seminal model (1990, p. 235) hypothesises that corporate reputations represent the public cumulative judgements of organisations over time, which in turn affect the organisation's relative success in fulfilling expectations of multiple stakeholders. The corporate brand is considered to be what stakeholders perceive the organisation as, while reputation is the esteem in which organisations are held (Beder, 2002). Employees are central to an organisation's reputation through their interaction with stakeholders, the way in which they represent the brand and their attitude towards their employer.

Employees, Stories and Reputation

Employees who are comfortable with their organisation's values and work practices are important assets to enhancing their employer's reputation (Herman & Gioia, 2004; Leary-Joyce, 2004). According to Harris and de Chernatony (2001) employees constitute the interface between a brand's internal and external environments and can have a powerful impact on consumers' perceptions regarding the brand and the organisation. In a sense, employees are recognised as brand ambassadors through their emotional interactions with other stakeholders: as a source of information, a service, at the point of sale and as a provider (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001).

Employees who endorse their employer through EOC surveys and awards can also build a marketable EOC status for their organisation. This may effect in an enhanced external reputation with prospective employees and interested stakeholders in the industry passing judgement on the organisation in light of its EOC status (Looi et al., 2004).

The best way to manage reputation through narration is to ensure all insiders are involved and all outsiders' interests are taken into account (Louisot, 2006). Organisations can build loyalty, commitment and pride towards one's employer through using the effective medium of storytelling as a means to engage with employees by highlighting opportunities, benefits and the organisation's values (Sinclair, 2005, Hewitt, 2003). According to Campbell (2004) organisations must pay attention to the worth of making their employees their reputation champions.

In order for employees to be able to represent the organisation's desired reputation with external stakeholders in a credible and influential manner, staff need to have faith in the narrative. This means aligning their interpretation and trust in the content of the story regarding the organisation's corporate brand, values and identity. Content of the message needs to be chosen carefully in order to reinforce the virtue of the organisation internally (Dowling, 2006). It is the obligation of the organisation to align work values and behaviour of employees with the desired brand values that reflect the economic, social and environmental responsibilities of the organisation (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Employees who are 'on-board' with the organisation's representation of the brand, in effect, become the organisation's reputation storyteller (Post, 2005).

Drucker (1989) describes individuals who carry knowledge of organisations as a powerful resource, which the individual owns rather than the organisation. In terms of reputation, the benefit is two-fold: the employee has custody over the formation of their knowledge, and the employee has a deep belief and trust in the conviction of their knowledge - having formulated their own meaning through interpretation (Mohan et al., 2008). Therefore, the conveyed meaning regarding the virtues of the organisation through the employee to external stakeholders has greater passion.

“Enhanced reputation is a result of a lengthy project to build trust through consistent efforts in all stakeholders, as stakeholders may have diverse or contrary interests in the organisation,” (Louisot, 2006, p.39).

Greater conviction and belief in the brand and the positives it stands for by the employees will strongly contribute to expressing this belief among the various stakeholders associated with an organisation. Stories and narration passed on to employees by leaders within the organisation are interpreted and adopted by staff, then relayed in alignment with the interests of the various stakeholders. Employees take ownership of the message, resulting in stronger credibility and trust in the content of the message by the receiver, who has an established relationship with the employee (Mohan et al., 2008). Reputation for the brand is fortified as a result of the employee's belief in their organisation. A belief generated, in part, through stories from within the organisation.

Conclusion

From the information presented and general observations from personal experience, stories have always been a valuable communication medium and have an important role to play in organisational communication. Organisational storytelling can have substantial benefit in terms of engaging with employees, engendering a culture of value-sharing and 'living the brand'. Carefully planned narration delivered through a story can reach the audience at a more personal level, strongly improving the potential for recollection and strengthening commitment to the message.

Employer of choice has been shown to add real value to reputation, both internally and externally. EOC reflects the way an organisation engages with its employees, the opportunities available to staff and the significance placed on the worth of its workers. Stories are a powerful way of reinforcing an organisation's EOC structure, as they personalise the message and are interpreted by the receiver in relation to their individual circumstances, ensuring the message is more relevant and significant.

Through the use of organisational stories, employees may become reputation champions for their organisation, simply by adopting and adapting stories that positively represent the organisation and making the narration more applicable to particular stakeholders they encounter. Staff are able to more effectively represent and communicate the brand and values of the organisation due to the deeper understanding and professional relationship that they have with relevant stakeholders.

It has been demonstrated that organisational storytelling has a genuine capacity to improve employee engagement and strengthen an organisation's reputation.

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