Story Work in Organizations:

The purposes, practices and challenges of working with stories in organizations

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In the 1980s, faced with massive budget cuts, Xerox was desperate for ways to boost productivity of its office-site repairmen. John Seely Brown, Chief Scientist of Xerox, supported a study on how these repairmen actually did their work. Xerox found that these technology specialists went out of their way to gather with each other – whether over a coffee, at a warehouse break room, after work for a drink or just on the phone. When they were together they would swap stories from the field. In a time of budget cuts, some might see this behavior as a waste of time. But Seely Brown viewed it as the exact opposite. The stories they were telling were an important part of their professional learning. They shared stories of complicated jobs, puzzles they couldn't figure out and tricks of fixing particular models. To boost productivity, Xerox didn't try to cut this important story time. Rather, Xerox gave each repairmen mobile telephones so they could more frequently ask one another for help and listen to stories from the field (Brown and Gray 1995).

Over the past decade, more and more organizations have followed Xerox's lead. Leaders like Seely Brown are coming to understand the power of story and tapping into it to meet the complex challenges of thriving in fast-changing work environments. The World Bank, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratories, IBM, Krispy Kreme Doughnuts, Pfizer, and the US Army are just a few examples of the dozens of diverse organizations that are increasingly turning to stories to solve problems in the workplace. Their decision to understand story makes good business sense. Noted economist Donald McCloskey argues that one-quarter of the GDP in the United States involves communicating persuasive points of view (McCloskey and Klamer 1995). To varying degrees, the revenue produced from all occupations –ranging from lawyers, actors, social workers, reporters, executives to photocopy repairmen –counts on good storytelling. If just half of persuasive talk involves stories, then in the past year alone stories in US workplaces generated a staggering $1.3 trillion dollars.

Given its prevalence and power, it is surprising how little is known about how and why stories are used in organizations. Practices exist, but in disconnected pockets and for different purposes. Organizations rarely have the time to learn from one another and instead waste money and time to reinvent the wheel. The time is ripe to look across organizations and understand how and why they and their leaders choose a story approach. Without such a study, story in organizations will be relegated to a passing fad and organizations will continue to stumble in harnessing its power.

In this document I explore why and how organizations work with stories. Over the past year, the International Storytelling Center has supported a team of educational researchers at Harvard Graduate School of Education's Project Zero to conduct a literature review of books, articles and journal publications on the power of story in organizations and interview leading organizational researchers and practitioners. Our literature search selected and reviewed 19 books, 39 journal articles and seven online web sites (See Appendix A). Based on prevalence in the literature and through discussions with the founder of director of the International Storytelling Center, Jimmy Neil Smith, I created an initial list of a dozen story work practitioners and experts with whom I could consult. Five practitioners and experts who were most prevalent in the literature were interviewed via email and phone with a protocol tuned to illuminate answers to our research questions (see Appendix B). The remaining seven practitioners and experts were invited to react and provided feedback to drafts of this document. I thank Steve Anderson, Steve Denning, Doug Lipman, David Perkins, Robin Pringle, Rudy Ruggles, Steve Seidel, Jimmy Neil Smith, David Snowden, Deborah Soule, Rick Stone and Chris Unger for their generosity in sharing their experiences and critical feedback to this report. I also wish to thank the researchers, Tina Blythe, Lia Davis and Teresa Whitehurst who gave feedback and guidance to the various versions of this report..

Based the input of these experts and practitioners and the themes in the literature, I begin this report by outlining the various purposes and practices of story work currently underway in a variety of organizations. I then turn our focus to the practical challenges of conducting story work in organizations and conclude by commenting on areas for future innovation that I believe can enhance the quality of story work in organizational settings.

Why use stories in organizations?

Through a dialectical process of reviewing the literature and interviewing experts, I identified a comprehensive initial list of purposes for which stories are used in organizations. In many cases, practitioners and experts explicitly stated their intentions in using stories. To understand the purpose of story use more generally, I then sought to simplify and classify the initial list. A subsequent analysis focused on generalization and categorization of terms, which yielded the following three categories.

Providing Leadership	*Knowledge Sharing & Learning*	*Fostering Cultural Change*
Launching a vision	Exchanging strategies/solutions	Revealing beliefs
Strategic Planning	Sharing tacit knowledge	Building trust & commitment
Persuading others	Communicating complex ideas	Conveying values and norms
Communicating identity	Training through simulations	Fostering collaboration
Motivating others	Facilitating unlearning	Reconciling conflict
Controlling rumors	Career Development	

Figure 1: Situations in which organizational practitioners use stories

Providing Leadership

Author Howard Gardner argues that the principal way leaders work is through stories. Stories communicate who we are, who we can be, and they work to shape and change people's minds (Gardner and Laskin 1995). Each day leaders, whether they are the US President or a floor manager at automobile factory, face challenges of communicating identity, persuading others, and articulating new directions. Some of the purposes for which leaders use stories are the following:

Vision Launching. Steve Denning, former Knowledge Management Director with the World Bank, recounts how in 1996 the World Bank needed to change its business from banking to knowledge sharing (Denning 2000). It was investing lots of money on developing countries and gathering loads of information but there was very little learning from project to project. While working at the World Bank as a high level executive, Denning presented graphs, reports, and numbers with little success at making the case for a new direction towards knowledge sharing. Finally, he stood up at a high pressure board meeting and told them a story. In recent weeks the government of Pakistan asked the World Bank for help on new paving technologies for repairing their rapidly failing highway systems. Rather than drafting a report which would have taken months, the World Bank team leader in Pakistan emailed the problem to other highway project leaders around the world. Within forty-eight hours, highway experts from Jordan, South Africa, New Zealand and Argentina gave their advice on new technologies they were using with positive results. The World Bank team leader shared the practical knowledge with the Pakistani government and began discussing how to adapt it to their context. Denning's powerful story convinced the board of the value of making knowledge sharing part of the World Bank's new vision and mission.

Strategic Planning. At 3M, business plans are no longer a just a list of bullet points of things to do. With the support of then executive of planning Gordon Shaw, 3M learned that strategic plans are more compelling and coherent when incorporating narrative (Shaw, Brown et al. 1998). Executives at 3M became skilled in "strategic storytelling," which depicts pictures of future markets, competitors and the strategy needed to succeed. These stories captured the critical relationships that need to occur to achieve the business goals.

Persuading others. Denning and Shaw's experiences also illustrates the important role persuasion plays in the successful launching of a new direction. The need for persuading others towards a point of view or a path of action is found in a variety of settings besides leading a new direction (Simmons 2002). A management team might need to be persuaded to change their support of an executive candidate, a stockholder needs to be convinced not to sell shares and customers need to know why they should buy your product instead of another. Noted screenplay writer and teacher Robert McKee believes that successful leaders tell persuading stories that aim to get the attention and support of an audience to change their minds (McKee 2003). Scott Livengood, CeO of Krispy

Kreme Doughnut Company, believes that telling story is an integral part of making convincing business arguments. Employees in its Leadership Institute learn to make business cases using narrative instead of statistics and diagrams. The persuasive power of story is also illustrated in research by Daphne Jameson with restaurant managers. Her studies show how narrative of prior experiences more often convinces peers to change their minds than data or abstract policies (Jameson 2001).

Communicating identity: In his tenure as Principal Manager of IBM consulting services, Larry Prusak witnessed both the successes and failures of many organizations. Prusak believes that stories are a powerful force in the growth process of organizations because they convey a sense of "who we are" across generations within the organization (Denning 2002). Harley-Davidson, Oxford University and Walt Disney Company each have powerful stories that feature their historical identity. These stories derive from each organization's past and create future opportunities. For example, Harley-Davidson's patriotic identity, which underscores a commitment to high-quality, has enabled it to flourish through partnerships with the US Army in the 1930s, the US Postal Office in the 1950s and US police forces to this day. Stories are excellent conduits for sharing a sense of organizational, group and individual identity.

Motivating others. When teams are flagging, leaders often choose to tell emotionally engaging stories to inspire and reinvigorate others. Stories that are analogous to previous experiences can conjure up those latent emotions (Simmons 2002). Stories with unexpected turns of events can invoke surprise, anxiety or surprise. Knowledge that is conveyed by such stories becomes "sticky" (Szulanski 1996)—more easily retained and recalled—because it is associated with these emotions.

Controlling rumors. David Snowden, Director of the UK's Cynefin Centre for Organisational Complexity, argues that successful leaders also harness the power of stories to control rumors and steer away from destructive gossip. Snowden researches narrative patterning in organizations and works with leaders on strategies of employing "anti-stories" and "myth management" to disarm rumors (Snowden 2001).

In this section I have outlined five overlapping categories of purposes found in the literature for which organizational practitioners choose stories when facing leadership challenges. In these approaches of story work I note an interesting emphasis on story telling. That is, the overwhelming number of strategies focused on how to best tell a story that motivates, persuades or controls rumors. In some cases, such as the work of McKee and Snowden, practitioners work with leaders to dig below the surface of telling and engage in process of creating and refining stories before it is shared with others. Let us now turn to a second category of purposes in using story work, that of knowledge sharing and learning.

Knowledge Sharing & Learning

I opened this paper with a story of Xerox copier repairmen, which illustrates how practitioners use stories as moments to share knowledge and insights to improve work performance. Of the three categories of purposes for using stories, knowledge sharing and learning was the most

prevalent in the literature and in reports from practitioners. The following are examples of purposes that researchers synthesized from the literature and interviews:

Exchanging strategies and solutions: A popular purpose of telling stories in organizations is to share strategies and solutions throughout an organization. While Kent Greenes, now CKO of Science Applications International Corporation, was leading knowledge management at British Petroleum, he initiated a program of "peer assists." Before teams began new projects, they would call together other teams who had previously faced similar experiences and listen to their stories for lessons learned (Collison and Parcell 2001). The US Army's Center for Army Lessons Learned uses a similar technique called "after action reviews, through which the key insights from a battle field event are shared among peers and supervisors (Garvin 2000). Victor Newman, Chief Knowledge Officer at Pfizer's UK Research University has implemented a similar strategy called "baton passing" in which research teams tell stories of their project experiences, so newly formed teams can learn from their successes and mistakes when confronting similar project milestones (Newman 2002). Other organizations such as Jet Propulsions Laboratories and the World Bank are also noted for employing similar knowledge sharing structures. In an analysis of knowledge sharing through storytelling, Sole and Wilson (Sole and Wilson 2002) note that the success of knowledge-sharing stories depends largely on communicating the richness of context so that others can adopt and adapt the practical wisdom into their own situations.

Sharing tacit knowledge: Harvard Business School Professors Dorothy Leonard and colleague studied how employees share embedded or tacit knowledge in organizations. Their studies show that much tacit knowledge is transferred through informal storytelling (Swap, Leonard et al. 2001). Although the explicit wisdom and knowledge of an organization, such as standards of practice or policies, is built into its formal processes, many authors note that this formalized structure of knowledge is often insufficient to meet the needs of novel problems that arise. For example, a large segment of Boeing Rocketdyne's engineering force is set to retire in the coming decade. Their traditional document-based knowledge sharing system, though important to the formal structure, is ill equipped to share the vital expertise of these retirees. Boeing has found success using video to capture veteran wisdom and make it accessible to junior engineers (Sohn 2003). As in the case of Xerox and Boeing, stories are a vehicle for exchanging that tacit and highly contextual knowledge.

Communicating complex ideas. While working at Cap Gemini Ernst & Young, Rudy Ruggles noted how many accountants and other professionals in organizations used stories as "idea wrappers" to communicate more complicated knowledge. For example, rather than list all the dizzying loops and detailed codes in the current US tax laws, an accountant might first use scenarios to illustrate fundamental ideas. These scenarios can be, in Ruggles terms, unwrapped to explore the nuances of complex knowledge in more detail. Thus, stories act as entry points to express various complexities of a field of knowledge (Ruggles 2002).

Learning through simulations. Stories are also used as simulated experiences from which others can learn. Curricula at West Point are centered debates of the strategies of famous battles and scenarios. Harvard Business School professor David Garvin points out that the Harvard Schools of Medicine, Business and Law use case studies in very different ways to simulate the thinking and complexities of practice in their fields (Garvin 2003). Steve Anderson, Story Master at Krispy Kreme, points to the success of using stories in their training program. "We've incorporated about a dozen real stories from our customers into computer-based components of some of our training programs so employees can hear the customer's experience. These stories relay the actual impact that ideas they are learning have on our customer." Captured stories such as these are often used as powerful training tools to engage learners in a simulated experience.

Facilitating unlearning. Xerox's John Seely Brown argues that stories play an important role not just in learning but in unlearning (Denning 2002). To compete in a constantly changing work environment, organizations and their employees need to change deeply entrenched habits of thinking and acting. Unlearning these practices and mental frames is often not a matter of making a simple New Year's resolution to change. Stories that describe the new practice, tap into the audiences' emotions, persuade and motivate, play a pivotal role in the unlearning process.

Career Development. In other instances, organizations use stories as part of workshops or curriculums aimed to support human development of their employees. Working with Sam Keen's ideas of human development through articulating one's life story as a personal mythic journey (Keen and Fox 1989), Krispy Kreme's employee development program engages participants in building self-authorship skills. Employees engage in workshops and sessions in which they consider their personal and professional journeys. Organizations such as Krispy Kreme tap the reflective power of story to promote personal and professional learning.

Knowledge sharing and learning was the most widely reported purpose I found for using stories. Similar to the purposes and approaches reported in the leadership category, these story work approaches also had a strong emphasis on storytelling –creating structures where peers could tell their story and knowledge, relating a complex idea through story or telling a story to support unlearning a work habit. A few practices included strategies for designing stories and case studies to support learning through simulation or how to craft a story to communicate complex knowledge. Let us now examine a related but distinct category of using story for fostering cultural change.

Fostering Cultural Change

The research by Leonard and Swap suggests the power of stories as a means to share tacit knowledge. Building on this finding, many practitioners turn to stories to understand those values, beliefs and attitudes that often lie just beneath our awareness yet drive thinking and practice in organizations. These values, beliefs and attitudes comprise an organization's culture (Schein 1985). Stories are often used to understand a group's culture as well as inform how that

culture might be supported to change. From interviews with experts and insights from the literature, I identify the following four sub-categories of why practitioners use story:

Revealing beliefs and values: Snowden contends that by listening closely to stories, one can better understand the dominant beliefs, metaphors, and mental models that drive a group culture (Snowden 2001). Examining the myths of an organization, key events and central figures can the way in which facts from the past have been interpreted. Snowden also believes that these stories can indicate how entrenched these beliefs are within an organization and how difficult it will be to shape and change these mental models. For example, if a new story conflicts with current organizational myths it may be rejected. If a new story builds on and modifies existing myths, adoption of the new perspective or action is more likely. The work of Yusi Wang underscores this point (Wang 2002). She studied how employees use stories to reinforce misperceptions of self and the environment with detrimental effect on decisions. Executives may tell stories which reinforce their identity as elite and untouchable. Their stories may cultivate a view of their customers as dim and their competitors as sleazy. Wang argues that such stories lead organizations to miss opportunities in the marketplace. Stories are an important tool to many who wish to understand and change the beliefs within an organizational culture.

Building trust and commitment. Stories are also used when it is important to build trust through communicating one's competencies and commitments. Revealing personal stories can expose one's own competence and commitment to issues, as well as signal one's trust in and willingness to be vulnerable to others. Boston's "Public Conversations" project uses story-sharing methods to build trust and understanding between divided groups such as the Pro-life and Pro-choice leaders (Chasin, Herzig et al. 1996). At work, stories of commendation or complaint about an organization, office or a leader convey information about their reliability and trustworthiness. Generating and sustaining trust and commitment is a key part of work life and stories play a vital role how we do this (Wilkins 1984).

Fostering collaboration. Stories are also used in team building to build rapport, group familiarity and a sense of community that facilitates collaboration. Seth Kahan, former senior information officer at the World Bank, works with organizations to tap this power of stories by engaging teams in a technique called jumpstart storytelling (Kahan 2003). This strategy invites members of a working group to share short personal stories connected to a theme. Through the telling and listening of these stories, Kahan and other practitioners note that participants build a better sense of understanding one another. This sense of connection can then elevate the group's ability to work together.

Reconciling conflict: Ben & Rosamund Zander work with organizations to tell "we" stories to dissolve the "us/them" or "you/I" attitudes that naturally exist but are often detrimental to organizations, communities and societies (Zander and Zander 2000). Built on the principles of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "we" stories point to relationships rather than individuals and aim to counteract individual defensiveness and cultures of revenge and retribution. The research of Jameson points

out another way in which managers use stories to reframe and make meaning out of tensions and conflict (Jameson 2001). For example when arguing the logic of a new rule or regulation, managers communicated by using anecdotes and hypothetical cases to vet and weigh their decisions and resolve conflicting points of view.

In contrast to the approaches listed in the previous purposes, I noted that these approaches embodied a strong emphasize on understanding and listening to the stories of others. Many practices focused on good listening skills, understanding the meanings of others' stories and how to interact with their stories. Similar to the previous categories, approaches such as Snowden's myth management, Zander's "we" stories, and Jameson's research on stories to settle conflict also emphasize the telling and designing of stories. But I noted with interest that story work approaches targeting cultural change attended to the listening to and interacting with stories more than the story work approaches aimed at leadership or knowledge issues.

Why do organizations and practitioners choose to work with stories? In this section I reported that organizations and practitioners elect a strategy of story when there are challenges in *providing leadership, knowledge sharing and learning,* and *cultural change*. It is worth repeating that these categories simply outline the general trends identified in our sources. Arguably, some approaches, such as Dave Snowden's "myth management" and Boston's Public Conversations Project, work across purposes. Other approaches, such as McKee's story coaching and the US Army's after-action reviews, align with one category of purpose than others.

It is our expectation that this list of purposes and examples of specific approaches underway in organizations will evolve with further research. Following up with sites, conducting further interviews and future reading of related articles and newly published books will produce an augmented and more complete picture of proven and promising story work approaches. With that caveat in mind, let us turn our attention to our sense at this moment of the challenges that practitioners report when working with stories in organizations.

Challenges of Story Work in Organizations

In the interviews with story practitioners, I asked them about the challenges they have found in organizational story work. I aggregated this data with our notes from the literature into the following themes:

Dismissed as soft: Narrative does not and will not appeal to everyone in the same way. We each have different histories and proclivities when it comes to interacting with one another. Our attitudes and preferences vary about what counts as better ways to communicate. And our fields of work value certain forms of communication over others. In the literature, most authors note that many fields are built on non-narrative knowledge – engineers draw on universal principles, marketing teams rely on proven facts and demographic figures, and economists strive for generalized theories. Stories are more contextual, interpretative and can be told from a variety of perspectives. Many

practitioners find that stories are perceived as less rigorous and thus are dismissed as less valuable in organizations.

Met with cynicism: The literature suggests that when stories seem over-polished and rehearsed an audience will be apt to view the teller as disingenuous. McKee advises leaders that stories with perfect endings of success will be received with harsh skepticism (McKee 2003). Moreover, Snowden believes that skepticism and cynicism is a naturally occurring counter-reaction to an official story of goodness that fails to reflect the reality of the audiences' experiences. To bridge this disconnect, Snowden believes that many construct "anti-stories" which create an inherent challenge in using stories within organizations (Snowden 2001)

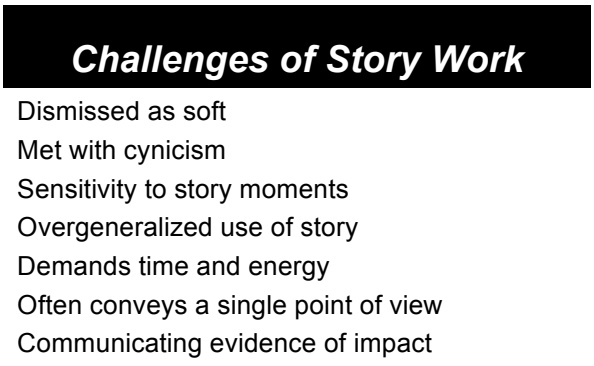

Figure 2: The challenges of using stories in organizations

Sensitivity to story moments: Our analysis of the interview data and literature reveals another challenge: In the everyday flow and stresses of work, it is difficult to recognize moments of when to tell a story, make a story or listen to stories. The research on thinking dispositions by David Perkins argues that knowing what to do (e.g. how to tell a story) is often not the biggest challenge (Perkins 1995). A bigger challenge is being sensitive in-the-moment to recognize opportunities to do it (e.g. when to tell a story). A team might send signs of its flagging energy, a colleague might ask for some advice, or a client might begin to complain about a recent meeting. Each of these moments presents story telling or story listening opportunities that could easily be overlooked. A challenge in organizations is developing the sensitivity to recognize when (and when not) to choose a story work approach in the flow of work.

Overgeneralized use of story: It is also a challenge to recognize when not to use story. Or better said, when, given a set of purposes, it may be wiser not to tell a story and select a different approach. Researchers Deborah Sole and Daniel Wilson at Harvard's Learning Innovations Laboratories argue that although stories are a powerful means to share values and building trust, stories are usually not an effective or efficient strategy to communicate explicit rules or policies (Sole and Wilson 2002). Codified resources and symbolic objects, such as an operation manual and traffic signs, are more effective than stories in sharing this sort of information. Moreover, in many contexts direct modeling may be more effective than stories when seeking to exchange tacit knowledge and facilitate unlearning and change. Developing a discerning eye for when and when not to use story in organizations is another challenge in effective story work.

Demands time and energy. All the practitioners interviewed noted that time and energy are inherent challenges when working with story. Crafting, telling and listening to stories

take time. Identifying, capturing and then making those stories accessible to others throughout an organization typically demands a small army of highly skilled staff dedicated to this sole purpose. Whether working with stories at the small scale of a single office or across the large scale divisions in a multi-national organization, practitioners continually struggle with the inherent tensions between the richness of using story and constraints of time and attention in organizations.

Often conveys a single viewpoint: A challenge particular to knowledge-sharing approaches the singularity of viewpoint that stories often convey (Sole and Wilson 2002). A scientist tells of how his team proved their results or a sergeant debriefs his commander about a skirmish that erupted on a peace keeping mission. This single point of view is inherently biased and may overlook events relevant to the audience, or may simply not recall important details of an experience. Recently, some story practitioners have been creating techniques of capturing and sharing stories that draw on multiple perspectives (Cohen and Tyson 2002). An interesting connection to this approach appears in theatre with the popular play *Tamara.* The play puts dozens of characters simultaneously in motion but their stories do not occur on a single stage but within a real multistory building. Inside the building the audience breaks into small groups which follow characters from room to room, floor to floor and can choose to switch groups at anytime and follow a different plot (Boje 1995). Researchers Roth and Kleiner have a related approach in organizations known as a "learning history" which brings together quotations capturing viewpoints from various organizational employees to make sense of an organizational event (Kleiner and Roth 1997).Understanding how to work with multiple stories in knowledge sharing and cultural change applications of story is a vital need.

Communicating evidence of impact: Demonstrating the effectiveness of using stories is often tricky business. Often those who need to be convinced are those who are looking for hard numbers and clear casual relationships on impact. However story and the changes that emerge are quite qualitative in nature -- perspectives shift, engagement rises, trust and empathy are built. Such changes are important given the purposes for which story is used in organizations. And clearly using stories themselves as a means to communicate these qualitative changes. That said, practitioners still face the challenges of showing results to a variety of audiences and would like to know more about how others in their field communicate success. Many would find it useful to learn more about how others gauge success, use metrics and general make the case for the impact story has on traditional bottom line.

Areas for Future Innovation

Based on our analysis of the patterns of purposes and challenges I believe that the following two areas hold the most promise of supporting high-quality innovation in the field:

Focusing on listening to and understanding the stories of others

Many of the organizational story work approaches I encountered, particularly those aiming for providing leadership and knowledge sharing and learning, focused on story telling and strategies for designing stories. Unlike the trend of story work for cultural change, there was little to no emphasis in the categories of leadership and knowledge sharing on how to listen to and understand the stories of others. At first this lack of attention did not bother me. In fact, I felt that the names of the categories of purposes themselves –leadership and knowledge sharing – suggested a natural leaning toward story telling and designing. That said, however, our analysis of the challenges reported in interviews and in the literature suggests to us that focusing on story listening and understanding across purposes may be warranted. The challenges of cynicism, sensitivity, overgeneralization, skepticism and discounting seem to describe the challenges of how individuals hear and interact with stories from others. Understanding how leaders and teams develop story listening skills, in combination with story telling and making approaches, strikes us as an extremely promising area for future innovation.

Understanding evaluation strategies

Another opportunity for future innovation is to understand how various sorts of organizations provide evidence of success and impact of story work. Gathering and documenting the various metrics and logics the organizations use to show evidence of impact would be highly valuable in building the field. The story work practices of organizations such as 3M, Boeing Rocketdyne, British Petroleum, Harvard Business School, IBM, Jet Propulsions Laboratories, Krispy Kreme, US Army, Pfizer, Science Applications International Corporation, the World Bank and Xerox have been highlighted in this report. Systematic study of their assessments could save other organizations time and energy. Sharing of evaluation practices across these and other organizations could not only help shift skeptical beliefs that story is soft and not a useful approach in many professions, but could potentially secure story work as central method in supporting success in a variety of organizations.

Conclusions

It is my belief that story work is in the early stages of field building. Currently there are pockets of proven and promising practices but little coherent and systematic study of the various approaches, challenges and methods of evaluation across organizations. In our view to best support innovation, the organizations like the International Storytelling Center (ISC) can play an important role in gathering together leading practitioners of story work and build this field. To build this field I would recommend more systematic study of the purposes, approaches and challenges that I have claimed in this report. Given the challenges that many story practitioners report, I call upon organizations and leaders to two high leverage areas: focus on building story listening skills and methods of evaluating success. In my view, attention to these areas will substantially contribute to building the field of story work around the globe.

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Appendix A

A list of resource books, journals and websites on story work in organizations:

Books

Armstrong, D. (1992). Managing by Storying Around: A new method of leadership. New York: Doubleday.

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Appendix B

Semi-structured interview protocol administered to story work experts and practitioners. Each question was follow-up to gather specific examples:

1. What are the ways that you and [organization] are working with stories? *Probe for examples of specific strategies and programs.*

2. What are you and [organization] doing this? For what purposes?

3. What are some of the difficulties you or [organization] are encountering when working with stories?

4. Who are some other organizations or practitioners that you consider to be doing promising or proven practices with story?