



**The International Professional and Applied Management Review**  
incorporating

**The International Journal of Professional Management**  
ISSN 20422341

**The Journal of the International Professional Managers Association**  
and  
IPE Management School, Paris



# **Special Edition**

## **May 2017**

# **Arts and Management**

**Introduction and Paper 2**

**Structuring Storytelling in Management  
Practice**

**Authors: Martin Eley and Geof Hill**

**Pages 14-21**

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International Journal of Professional Management  
Volume 12, Issue 3, 2017**

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## **Introduction**

### **Why a special edition?**

The International Journal of Professional Management (IJPM) has a broad scope. Professional management is defined as “activities which have an impact on personal and/or organisational development.” This invites papers ranging from one-to-one coaching to globalisation, and everything in between.

It is good to reach out like this, but it is also good to reach in, to explore one topic in more depth. Special editions give the opportunity to bring together writers with similar interests, and have each one explore a different aspect of the same subject. This could be, for example, green issues, training programmes, e-commerce, or any activity that “has an impact on personal and/or organisational development.”

On this occasion we are having a special edition on the role of the arts in management?

### **Why the role of the arts?**

The scientific approach is good. Measurement, prediction, testing and reassessing gives you solid information. Sometimes too solid. It is rare, in human interaction, to have invariable truth with absolute proof. But we like to know, rather than just believe, and then assume we know, and unconsciously get in a rut that blocks alternative thinking. Scientific logic needs to be intermeshed with free flow human multi-directional thought, and the arts excel in that.

Often the arts are seen as the lesser discipline, less rigorous and therefore less reliable, but strict linear thought, especially in the social sciences, can lead to errors of omission. Linear thinking needs the addition of lateral thinking, as De Bono has eloquently pointed out in his six-hat model, for six types of thinking. We need regularly to don the green hat, for creativity, as part of balanced progress.

This is especially so in periods of change, and humanity is always in a period of change, with times of sudden and dramatic improvement – the wheel, writing, domestication of the horse, steam power, telephones, cars, and recently the computer and its many ramifications. Each of these changes has come about by somebody thinking of a new idea, something that didn't exist, and not being discouraged by it seeming impossible at the time. The first spark has been imagination. Nothing new can come without initial imagination, and the arts nurture imagination.

New knowledge comes from people thinking, experimenting, discussing, and then thinking, experimenting and discussing again. It needs an all round approach encompassing freedom to depart from the norm for creativity and innovation, and rigorous checking through replication and measurement. Arts and sciences have vital roles to play. This special edition focuses on the arts, but also has research, experimentation, discussion and rethinking at its core. The arts and sciences are two sides of the same coin.

This special edition emerged from papers at the 2016 conference of the Art of Management and Organisation (AoMO) – Empowering the Intangible.

Many thanks to Cathryn Lloyd and Geof Hill for co-editing this issue.

## **Art of Management & Organisation (AoMO)**

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Stephen Linstead is Professor of Critical Management Studies at the University of York and one of the founders of the Art of Management and Organisation Conference. He and co-author, Heather Hopfl published the seminal text *The Aesthetics of Organisation*. More recently Stephen has moved into the area of film as a method of research and engagement. His first documentary film 'Black Snow', depicting the tragic events of the Oaks Colliery disaster, has won a number of international film awards.

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## **The Art of Management & Organisation (AoMO)**

The Art of Management & Organisation represents a vibrant international community of scholars, artists and creative practitioners passionate in their exploration of the intersections between management, organisations and the arts. They organise a biannual international conference, publish their own peer-reviewed open access journal, *Organisational Aesthetics*, have a prominent social media presence and support various other events and training opportunities. The Art of Management & Organisation conferences are something of a unique experience and continually strive for experiential difference and excellence in pushing the boundaries between management and the arts. But where did it all begin?

The aim was, and continues to be, the exploration and promotion of the arts (in the most inclusive sense) as a means of understanding management and organisational life and its contexts; as well as the utilisation of artistic processes in the activity of managing. The conference grew out of the Standing Conference on Organisational Symbolism (SCOS), especially its 1992 conference on Organisation and Theatre at Lancaster, and was informed by the dramatic growth of field of organisational aesthetics in the following decade, specifically a series of workshops organised by Heather Höpfl and Stephen Linstead in Bolton and

Northumbria, culminating in an influential book 'The Aesthetics of Organisation' (Linstead and Höpfl 2000) published by Sage.

September 2002 saw the launch of the first Art of Management and Organisation Conference on London's legendary South Bank in collaboration with Tate Modern, followed up by the second in Paris in 2004 in collaboration with the Pompidou Centre. Since then the conference has continued its collaborative and open ethos in Paris (2004), Krakow (2006), Banff (2008), Istanbul (2010), York (2012), Copenhagen (2014) and most recently in Bled (2016) and has given rise to a vibrant global community of praxis – including both scholars and practitioners - and will continue to do so in Brighton on the 30th August – 2nd September 2018.

These experimental events focused on those dimensions of management and organisation that render them an art, not purely a science. However, the conferences rapidly evolved to encompass far more than simply a concern with organisational aesthetics. They came to embrace a cornucopia of ground breaking, exciting and informative encounters, extending from traditional academic papers, to displays, exhibitions, performances, screenings, demonstrations, community building processes, and skills sessions, all of which served to address the field of art and organisation in all its richness. However, throughout this blossoming they have most importantly continued to be informed by the themes of inclusivity, diversity creativity and innovation, pursued with a spirit of both inspiration and critical inquiry, which were central to the founding ethos of the conference series.

When in 2005 the Academy of Management decided not to continue to support its Arts initiatives, AoMO became the major available global channel for arts based inquiry in business and management. The conferences have thus unfolded as an endeavour to draw in and provide a space for new, promising, burgeoning or potential avenues of exploration that are evolving in or around the field of study of management and organisation. They have encouraged material from other critical traditions in the humanities and arts, which may be unfamiliar to those working in the organisation and management field – and have eventually included spheres as diverse as sport, philosophy, painting, technology, theatre, poetry, film, dance and art history. Indeed, 2016 saw the inaugural Heather Hopfl AoMO Artist in Residence, Scholarship awarded to a woodcraftsman, Emmanuel Guy.

Emmanuel is also an academic holding a professorship in maritime transportation and public policy at Université du Québec à Rimouski. The Heather Hopfl Artist in Residence Scholarship will also be the occasion to embark on a deeper reflection about the entanglements of his academic and artistic practices and how they can or cannot feed one another. Between now and the conference in 2018 it is planned that as artist in residence, Emmanuel will share on social media his experiences and reflections in this journey with the AoMO community. In addition, Emmanuel will be compiling a photo essay detailing artistic process, inspirations and developments to the chair to be published in AoMO's Organisational Aesthetics.

Organisational Aesthetics, as a journal, is attempting to create both a dialogue and a place for artistic forms and art-as-research within the domain of academic journals. In this way, it is a pioneer in the publication of management and organisation studies. Indeed, this special issue of the International Journal of Professional Management has emerged out of a successful stream of the 2016 AoMO conference, hosted by the IEDC in Bled, Slovenia.

### **Empowering the Intangible: Bled, Slovenia 2016**

The 8th AoMO conference was hosted by the IEDC Bled School of Management in Bled, Slovenia. The IEDC boasts of being a 'School with a View' with every right. Danica Purg, founder of the IEDC had a vision to create a learning environment in which business leaders were taught and explored the value of the arts to leadership and management. More than 30 years on she is president of a thriving private business school set on the shores of the idyllic

Lake Bled. It was in this resplendent environment that the AoMO community came together to explore the theme 'Empowering the Intangible'.

The theme of 'Empowering the Intangible' was developed by Professor Ian Sutherland, formerly of the IEDC. Ian is both an accomplished scholar and musician and was keen to explore how these interests and skill sets, so often thought to be mutually exclusive, converged to inform and ignite one another. In the spirit of exploration, play, creativity and critique, the 2016 Art of Management and Organisation conference explored the intangible aspects of organisational life.

Proliferating our academic and professional discourses are calls to recognise, engage and empower the intangible aspects of organisational life – the felt, sensory and emotional aspects that so often go under the radar. Like the medieval court jester that could speak of things courtiers could not, the conference theme "Empowering the Intangible" sought out novel ways of exploring, feeling and expressing management and organisation through the arts. AoMO 2016 encouraged the community to explore, feel and express the felt, sensory and emotional aspects of management, leadership and daily organisational life.

This conference attracted 145 delegates from around the world, highlighting the growing movement in this area of scholarly and creative interest. There were 11 streams, each showcasing academic work, practitioner methodologies and techniques and performances. Each stream is convened and facilitated by a small team of academics and/or practitioners with the support and oversight of the AoMO host to ensure each conference captures the diversity of the field. 2016 certainly did just that with the following streams:

***The Power of Poetics*** – This stream focused on the creative interplay between poetry, poetics and creativity in order to advance understanding of the concepts and their context. The stream encouraged participants to play with poetry of all varieties, to interpret poetics broadly and to be creative in exploring the power of poetry and poetics.

***Making the Intangible Tangible*** – This stream encouraged participants to explore 'stories' and 'storytelling' as a post-positivistic method of organisational enquiry in which stories are data.

***Leadership as a Performance Art*** – Arguing that the 'art of leadership' has much in common with 'performance art' this stream invited diverse ways of understanding, imagining, framing, and expressing leadership as a performance art by welcoming submissions that advance, celebrate, challenge, explore and illuminate theory and practice

***Fashion Futures*** – Fashion is undeniably an aesthetic power with a strong influence on consumption, community building and style, including of management, leadership and organising. This stream explored the intangible power of fashion (able) organising.

***Art, Space and the Body*** - This stream brought together theories and practices of art, creativity theory, phenomenology, performance and installation. The focus of the stream is the human body where the body in space can improvise, model and simulate forms of process-based creation, which in turn informs our understanding of the processes of organising systems and structures and people.

***Organising Movement: On Dance, Sound, Embodied Cognition and Organisations*** – Dance is more than an art form, it is a culturally shaped bodily practice and experience-based activity that allows the exploration of human movement, expression and sensemaking. This stream hosted papers, performances and demonstrations to explore dance as an art form, a social practice and its applications to organisational development and our understanding of organisation studies.



### ***A Home for Happy People: Creativity, Critical Reflections and Belonging in Organisations***

– In this ambitious stream in which the convenors asked, can we be at home in organisations in the contemporary world of work or are we condemned to an endless unfulfilled, restless searching. If we can ‘be at home’ what does this feel and look like, if this is still a challenge what might it feel and look like and how can we express our hopes, fears and dreams for it?

***The Virtual Studio*** – This was another ambitious stream which sought to explore diverse academic perspectives on the role and nature of the ‘studio’ in arts-based methods and approaches to teaching and learning. This stream attracted a number of ‘virtual’ contributions in which contributors were streamed in live from international destinations to present and perform.

***Improvisation and the Art of Innovating Uncertainty*** - This stream explored how improvisation can contribute to a new understanding and practice of professional work, innovation and management in organisations. Times of uncertainty, disruption and overwhelming complexity call for an extension of the idea of professional work, innovation and management, which is often understood as a rational action of setting goals, planning, and controlling. While improvisation is often belittled as an unspecific and rather unprofessional dealing with messiness, we seek to look at improvisation differently. This stream brought together interdisciplinary scholars and practitioners with the goal of understanding and developing improvisation in organisation and management contexts.

***Arts-based Community Development*** – Art is increasingly used as a catalyst in global communities to explore and tackle community development issues. This stream brought together a range of accounts and projects that explored the skill sets required to undertake such work.

***The Open Stream*** – This stream captured innovative and unique submissions that did not fall neatly within the remit of the other streams. This year saw it play host to papers on artistic freedom, artful inquiry as a leadership skill, and silence as the essence of organisation.

Outside the streams were ongoing exhibitions, pop-up streams, events and gatherings and the freedom to express and explore ideas as they emerged. This special issue of the International Journal of Professional Management is a showcase of just some of the contributions made to the stream titled, ‘Making the Intangible Tangible: Stories as a Process for Organisational and Management Inquiry’. This popular stream ran for two days and included 13 experiential presentations. The stream took place in an amphitheatre style room, ideal for storytelling and wisdom sharing, yet, in a creative AoMO twist the space had access to an outdoor, enclosed private grassed area. Presenters took advantage of this surprise alternative sensory setting and thus, presentations or parts thereof alternated between the indoor and outdoor environs.

This is perhaps the essence of what makes AoMO conferences and events special – there are very few rules. Yes, there is a conference programme and yes, there is a book of abstracts but few days or hours at an AoMO conference will feel structured or predetermined. Organisers embrace and encourage changes to be made and creativity to emerge. Resources are provided to encourage such artistry from plasticine, to pastels, to paints and postcards. This culture of creative embrace, flexibility and democracy are among features that make AoMO conferences unique shared and safe spaces for innovation and liberal creation.

The University of Brighton, UK will host the 9th Art of Management & Organisation conference with the theme of Performance. Already, the organisers are encouraging events, workshops and performances in alternative spaces including the beach. To find out more visit [www.artofmanagement.org](http://www.artofmanagement.org)

### **Bibliography**

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## **What do the articles published in this issue contribute to the knowledge associated with creativity and professional artistry in management?**

The following papers reveal how the use of stories provides a meaningful and creative way for professional practitioners to gain deeper insight into their practices and the organisations in which they work, and in turn develop the professional artistry they need to navigate organisational life. In keeping with the spirit of the journal we provide a brief snapshot of the papers as we intend to let the stories speak for themselves.

### **1. Stories as a Process for Organisational and Management Inquiry**

Cathryn Lloyd and Geof Hill

Practitioners are at the centre of organisations, and their personal stories are entwined with the company stories. Different professionals sharing their stories, in both artistic (hands on) and artful (using all the senses) can expand what we gain from experience.

### **2. Structuring Storytelling in Management Practice**

Martin Eley & Geoff Hill

The authors discuss stories they have solicited from business professionals that speak to issues of leadership. They posit a model for drawing emotional distinctions within stories about leadership.

### **3. Resistance, Resonance and Restoration: How Generative Stories Shape Organisational Futures**

Michelle LeBaron & Nadja Alexander

The authors discuss specifically at generative stories at work in organisations and how these types of stories can be crafted and how they contribute to organisational awareness

### **4. Telling Stories in Organisations: Reflective Practice/Curated Practice**

Jo Trelfa

The author articulates a process for generating organisational stories. Her model adds to the discussion of the literature about storytelling and reflective practice in organisational contexts.

### **5. Body Mapping: A Personal and Professional Artful Inquiry Process**

Cathryn Lloyd

The author describes her use of body mapping as an artful inquiry and a way to facilitate professionals' creative thinking and reflection about their professional practice

### **6. Towards a Methodology: Organisational Cartographies**

Kate Carruthers Thomas

The author uses a mapping metaphor, describing a very different approach to mapping.

### **7. Beating the Blues: An Exploration of the Value of Blues Music to Improve Performance**

Jack Pinter

The author describes his use of blues to elicit and perform organisational stories of discontent in ways that are seen as celebratory rather than complaining.

### **8. Bringing the Body into Change Practice through Storied Performance**

Hedy Bryant

The author illuminates a particular form of storytelling in performative poetry and explores how her own poem 'The Shapeshifter' helped her to articulate her organisational practice related to organisational change.



## 2. Structuring Storytelling in Management Practice

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Martin has substantial practitioner expertise and experience in operational and strategic management. Also a successful management consultant for many years, having led assignments and research across multiple sectors, and practised collaboration, innovation and enterprise methodologies. Now as a practitioner academic he continues to lead and contribute to many research initiatives. Martin is Associate Professor in Management Practice at Birmingham City University.

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Dr Geof Hill has been a management consultant for thirty-five years. Since training as a work-study analyst in 1980s he has developed management consultancies in business, health, education and mining. He has held academic positions in courses which develop professionals for the fields in which he consults. His consultancy work and his university teaching now focus on professional practice and people seeking to advance their professional practice through a range of investigative processes. He is currently a reader in Education at Birmingham City University.

### Abstract

This paper is based on the findings of an inquiry undertaken to analyse the use of storytelling in leadership/management practices. The aim of the inquiry is to identify one or more structural commonalities that drive or contribute to change in business professionals' perception and practice of leadership.

The contrasting approaches to investigating management practice between modernism and post-modernism have divided the discourse. Encouragement for soft attribute management in contrast to scientific management has led to a range of alternative person centred ways of investigating management practice. This includes the use of practitioner stories.

A structured questionnaire was used as a consistent method of data collection across different groups and in different international locations. The findings from the questionnaire and the examples of stories it solicited led us to posit a structural model which can be simply applied when considering a story in a leadership and management context. It identifies and explains the Eley-Hill FACE Switch (Fundamental Associated Change in Emotion). In so doing it contributes to knowledge in this area and facilitates management practice and thereby potentially performance impact.

## Introduction

The classic contrast between modernism and post-modernism in management practice (Morgan 1997; Crowther 2005; Ritzer 2011; Hatch 2013) has continued to divide management practice thinking in areas such as leadership, efficiency/production and career development. In essence this is the difference between a focus on scientific management (Taylor, 2004; Tsutsui 2001) (measurement, control, small tasks etc.) and a focus on soft attributes (Heckman, 2012) (empowerment, motivation, mentoring/coaching etc.), sometimes called the art of management.

This paper focuses on an inquiry into the role of stories in changing management practice as part of this softer side, or art, of management. The conceptual and cognitive position of storytelling in management practice will be viewed in conjunction with the analysis of a practice research empirical study.

The importance of embodied practice research is emphasised in the 'practice-turn' (see background review below) a movement of organisational inquirers holding a common notion that practice is embodied in, or involves people. It predominantly advocates ethnographic inquiry, however Nicolini (2009) encouraged a broader range of investigative approaches. Alongside the practice turn's encouragement for an embodied view of practice through ethnography, the paradigm wars (Mir 2002, Denzin 2010) also encouraged new person-centred paradigms of inquiry for investigating practice. Both contexts invite consideration of professional stories as data for organisational and management inquiry. This inquiry looks for a basic pattern in business stories from original empirical research and provides a related contextual background and positioning.

## Background and context review

The 'practice-turn' (Schatzki, 2001; Whittington, 2006; Simpson, 2009; Boud, 2010, 29; Corradi 2010, 267) is a contemporary term coined by Schatzki et al. (2001) in the title for their collection of essentially ethnographic essays on business practice. When the continuum of business research practice reaches a point where attention is specifically on embodiment of professional practice, that point is called the 'practice turn.' The practice turn has been associated with the emergence of a new research paradigm (Simpson, 2009, 1330). It can be thought of in the context of the broader research revolution of 'paradigm wars' (Mir 2002, Denzin 2010), that is the debate/discourse relating to human inquiry or research involving humans.

Although Schatzki et al's (2001) 'practice turn' emerged from a common thread of seeing 'practice as embodied,' subsequent theorists (Whittington, 2006; Nicolini, 2009; Simpson, 2009; Boud, 2010, 29; Corradi, , 2010, 267) have established it as a movement typified by person-centred methodologies. While Simpson (2009, 1330) described the 'practice turn' as a 'new paradigm', Schön (1983, 21) had already posited a new paradigm for professionals investigating their practice in his 'reflective practitioner inquiry'

Snowdon (1999, 31) drew attention to the value of practitioner stories, suggesting these are 'something which already exists as an integral part of defining what that organisation is; what it means to buy from it; what it means to work for it'. McAdam's (1993) thesis connecting personal myths to notions of identity suggested that the stories people tell reveal some of the themes that influence their sense of self. In addition Boyce (1996, 5) described stories as 'a natural entry point to understanding and intervening in the culture(s) of an organisation'. Belbin (2010, 53) suggested that one common feature within a broad variance of abilities in effective leaders is a leader's ability to clarify where the team is going and canvas ideas from team members (Belbin, 2010, 53). Many effective leaders use stories to communicate these forms of team direction (Klein 2000; Freedman 2011, Noe 2014,). Although there has been discourse surrounding the use of stories in organisational analysis, there are still gaps in the literature

surrounding understanding of how stories used to illuminate leadership and management are structured.

### **The investigation activity**

This inquiry is based on stories from business professionals about what informed their own agendas of leadership and management practice. Stories were sought from MBA participants and a range of management professionals attending the 2016 Art of Management and Organisation Conference in Bled. Practitioner's stories used as data are referred to in the research literature simply as 'stories' (Ayas, 2001; Abbott, 1988; Gold 2001; Gold, 2002; Küpers, 2013). They are also recognised under other methodological terms such as 'reflective practice interviews' (Chivers, 2003), 'memoir' (Hartog, 2005), 'narrative' (Drake, 2010), 'first-person action inquiry' (Cook, 2009; Marshall, 2011) and 'auto-ethnography' (Fusch, 2015). 'Storytelling as inquiry' (Reason, 1988) represents an umbrella term for all these variations and uses the term 'inquiry' to position the approach as post-positivist (Reason, 1988).

The inquiry invited business professionals to identify stories that had informed their concepts of leadership. A questionnaire was issued to contributors with explanatory notes focussing them on two key lines of thought:

- How do business professionals make use of stories?
- How are business professionals inspired by stories to change their management and business practices?

The whole documentation was constructed in-line with good ethical practice and was approved by the University's ethics committee.

Firstly, business professionals were asked to summarise a story that has been told which inspired them or others to change their management and/or business practices, and then asked about the context, impact and benefit of it.

Secondly they were asked for the same information for a story which restricted, frightened or held back themselves or others in their management and/or business practices. This represents the first stage of a longitudinal inquiry from which further inquiry is made in order to strengthen or question the indicative findings.

It is useful to outline the analysis methods that have been applied to clustering and segmenting the data gathered. In this context it was text as data and application of thematic analysis with 'open coding,' in other words no pre-definition of the issues allowed the identification of structural patterns. Gibson (2006) described thematic analysis as "an approach to dealing with data that involves the creation and application of 'codes' to data. In this context 'codes' are expressed as common structural components. For example words such as 'enthused, happy or motivated' could all be grouped together and coded as positive emotions. Similarly words such as 'fear, failed or bereavement' can all be grouped together as negative emotions.

This approach inherently involves the researcher in the formation of the research results and raises a potential question of whether the researcher is influencing it or clarifying it. This suggests the subjectivity of the methodology. At this inquiry stage the findings are therefore indicative and will require further inquiry to move from an indicative to a statistically sound interpretation.

### **Findings and discussion**

The aim or prospect in the analysis of the stories is sense making (Klein, 2006) or greater understanding of the 'tangible intangible' (De Young, 1993) that storytelling can bring to leadership and management practice. Although this is a pilot inquiry, the participants come from at least four different identifiable business sectors and five different countries (albeit all in the western world). Stories collected thus far represent a reasonable degree of diversity on

which to base indicative or initial findings. The positive stories (stories about what had inspired leadership) indicated an initial pattern that started with a negative element and then moved quite sharply into a full positive or caring element. Two small extracts from the participants may help to illustrate this.

#### **Individual A**

Story told to audience by someone who had climbed Mount Everest several times

*“Each time this person did not reach the summit. The first time they had to stop because of bad weather and ill health, but near the top a member of the party had died in his arms. He explained that deaths on Mount Everest do happen but the bodies have to stay on the mountain as it is too dangerous to try to take them back to base camp.”*

Researcher inserted a break in text here:

*“This individual had decided that he wanted to keep returning to Mount Everest to perform funeral rites appropriate to their faith so that the families could complete their grieving process. When he presented to us he was preparing for his next trip. His efforts had been recognised and whole on one trip he received a call from Nelson Mandela thinking him.”*

When asked about the impact Individual A said:

*“The way in which the story was told was very funny, but also very poignant, which really left you feeling inspired to do what is right.”*

#### **Individual B**

*“A colleague was on a listening course, who said arrogantly that he did not know why he was there.”*

Researcher inserted a break in text here:

*“Two days later [he] ran out of the room crying when we started to talk about child bereavement. It made me think of two friends, one who successfully committed suicide, and one who failed.”*

When asked about the impact Individual B said:

*“It has always reminded me that you should never judge a person as you never know what is going on in their life.”*

The break in the paragraphs has been inserted to help illustrate the sudden change or ‘flip/switch’ in order to contrast the second part. Whether it is from negative to positive or from hard to soft/caring there is commonly a point at which this switch can be seen in stories that the recipient sees as having an impact.

On reflection individual A commented that:

*“For me, it made me really try to focus on what was the right and moral thing to do in my work ... It was not about implementing a specific activity but keeping the focus.”*

Also, individual B commented that:

*“It has shaped my team and management practice to never judge anyone and be cautious as you do not know what is behind a person's outer layer.”*

In all cases where this 'switch' was effectively used it seems to have caused a change in attitude, which has lasted beyond the immediate term. This abrupt switch would appear to cause, emphasise or add to the impact of the story. From the accounts it can also be seen that the participants believe it has resulted in a change in their leadership/management practice. This is shown in Figure 1 – The Eley-Hill FACE Switch (Fundamental Associated Change in Emotion).

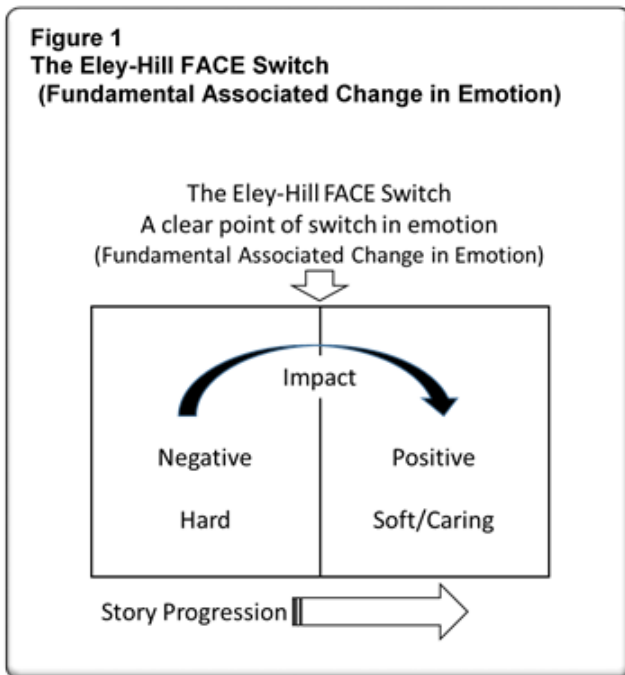
### Telling a story to change attitude and leadership/management practice

When reading or listening to these stories, the reader/listener can clearly detect a change in the storyteller's emotional positioning. The storyteller may not be as aware of this change in emotion which is why it is important for the stories to be shared in a context of reader/listener reflection.

This switch represents a high-level distinction or point within the storytelling progression; a fundamental point of switch with the story being constructed either side of this. Each side has its own emotional positioning which is in sharp contrast to the other side, for example from negative to positive or positive to negative. There is a clear effect here, which is about managing the outcome imparted to the original recipient of the story. If only the positive or soft side of the story is told then the recipient has no contrast with which to contextualise it, which could reduce or negate the impact of the story. Without this change of context recipients could add their own context, which may be the same as the end emotional context of the story, thereby equally negating its impact. If they were already positioned in a positive place then there is a probability of lack of, or no, impact being generated. By emotionally positioning the outcome with the first part of the story, it conditions the recipient as to their reception of the second part, which strengthens and emphasises the power of the second part, thus achieving the intended impact to the original recipient of the story.

Tamietto (2010, 705) talks of 'non-conscious perception of emotional signals – expressive and autonomic changes induced by non-conscious perception of emotional stimuli.' Therefore when the storyteller draws attention to the shift in emotion during telling the story it helps the reader/listener become conscious of the emotional stimuli evident in the story. Other works (Bradley, 2012) similarly support the idea of emotional conditioning through stimuli, which can include verbal stimuli. The common opportunity recognised from all of this is in creating a more extreme perception on one side of emotion from which you can clearly create a sharp contrast in that perception to create a memorable emotional impact. This all is part of the psychological focus area of emotional perceptions, which provides a base of support for the FACE Switch identified here.

The activity and analysis so far is part of an on-going theme of inquiry in which further work will be undertaken to deconstruct each side of the FACE Switch to look at how the negative and positive sides are individually structured. This paper therefore represents a finding and conclusion in its own right and at the same time is also a progressive step in a continuum (or meta-agenda) of themed inquiry on storytelling in leadership/management practice.





Using stories in this way represents a specific strategy within the broader leadership and management discourse on coaching and mentoring. It provides a way for a coach or mentor (manager/leader) to work with practitioner stories and help them to recognise the insights these stories provide and the ways in which they can shift the perceptions of those to whom they are telling the stories.

## Conclusion

Effective avenues of communication (Kim, 2002) are increasingly seen as fundamental to motivation and superior performance (Spencer, 2008). Increasing understanding, and thereby application, in this area brings development to professional management practice. Brownell (1986) proposes a concept that cognitions are an intervening variable between motivational force and objective performance, which again supports storytelling as an effective area for professional development and performance.

In general terms, the findings here fit in well with what is known and supported by recognised psychological and emotional understandings (Tamietto, 2010; Bradley, 2012). It adds to theory in this area and thereby potentially to professional and performance practice. The challenge it brings is to create impact through its application for managers acting as facilitators and mentors as part of their management role.

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