

Lori L. Silverman

— “Wake Me Up When
the Data Is Over”

How Organizations Use Stories
to Drive Results

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— Foreword

This book shatters a long-standing pattern. Volumes that are edited, whether as collections of articles or as anthologies, are enormously difficult to do. The quality of the papers is uneven, they are not well knit together (the sum is not greater than the parts), coherent philosophies and concepts are lacking, and the reader is left with too many disconnected ideas or conflicting opinions. By the end, readers are not sure what to think or next steps to take. Worse yet, these edited volumes do not sell because of these shortcomings.

The contributors Lori Silverman has worked with, their seminal contributions, and the way she has woven all together into a wonderful and meaningful package for us make a distinct break from the same-old, same-old. Lori worked tirelessly to create a consistent voice and pattern to each chapter while not reducing the contributions to milquetoast. In this work you will find clear, consistent thinking, concepts that weave the chapters together, lots of meat, and clear direction for anyone who wants to bring storytelling into core business activities. Readers will not only walk away understanding why storytelling is so powerful in organizational life, they will also begin to take those steps necessary to follow the examples and advice from the companies and contributors found within these pages. We no longer need justifications for why storytelling is important for organizations. Today, we are ready for more—more detail, more experiences, more insights, and more specific results. That is what this book provides: practical experiences from the field to guide you on your way to using stories and storytelling effectively in your organization.

Lori and fourteen contributors interviewed more than 140 people from more than seventy organizations around the world about their work with stories within their own organizations. These for-profit, nonprofit, and government organizations not only share their experiences, processes, and learnings, they also provide hard-core results gained through their story work initiatives. Parts One and Two cover

tactical and strategic business issues that organizations grapple with every day: serving customers, engaging employees, building teamwork and leadership, branding, strategic planning, changing culture, and managing finances, to name a few. Here you will find the nuts and bolts of how stories and storytelling are being used in organizations. There is no fluff here—simply real-world knowledge and tangible, quantifiable outcomes.

Part Three brings it all home by delving into lessons from story pioneers, insights from those conducting research on storytelling in organizations, and an examination of themes that emerged from a study of the story applications covered in this book. In the last chapter Lori presents a model for those who want to bring stories and storytelling into their organizations. Not only is this a significant contribution to the field, it will also help organizations chart a course for using stories effectively in myriad ways to achieve results. This book will soon become required reading for anyone wanting to access the power of storytelling within organizations.

I trust you will enjoy reading how story work has a place center stage in organizational line activities. I know I have. And I am certain that the material provided here will motivate you to immediately start working with stories and experts in the field to generate powerful outcomes for your organization.

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