

Story telling: An organisational approach

Effective participation in organisations requires a constant reinterpretation of our identity and of the scenarios in which we will find the opportunities to express ourselves as members of the organisation through actions related to organisational performance.

Reinterpretation can be imposed on us by external circumstances. In an extreme we confront our survival menaced by the lack of temporal plasticity of our organisational identity. On the other extreme we simply adapt within the capacity of our identity to cope with change.

Given the rate of change it is necessary to ask ourselves about the possibility to anticipate the limits of our plasticity and the limitations of our structural determination derived from our learning, working and emotional experience.

Story Telling, a methodology to articulate interpretations about ourselves and about our present and anticipated scenarios, may be of help in mitigating the suffering of our inability to adapt, shortening our learning process to adequately perform in a new scenario, or improving our capacity to increase organisational performance.

Story Telling is a learning experience to inquire about specific problem situations and their representation in our private and in the public world.

From an organisational perspective Story Telling may provide with the capacity to test and develop the organisational observer of the participants and also the observer system constituted by the interaction of people with different experiences and different locations in the organisation.

The development of a Story Telling Experience requires the support of Information and Communication Technologies as they provide the capacity for detailed processing of the contents of interactions and self observation of the bodies and shifts in the emotions.

The Story Telling experience is a device to deal with the costs of unproductive silence, silence resulting from fear or distrust in ourselves or others. It may give birth to a new quality of silence stemming out of reflection.

Suffering Silence is dear to organisations. It may bring sickness to people as a result of not dealing with their self-perceived shortcomings and inhibit their ability to learn and their effectiveness.

Silence may also restrict the openness to have orthogonal conversations, those in which we confront our ignorance and by doing so we become aware of the complexity that we must cope with as a team, as an organisation. The development of orthogonal interactions may produce a metasystemic “jump” the outcome of which is an increase in our ability to deal with new levels of complexity.

Shifts in our organisational observer happen as a result of experience. There is also the possibility to induce these shifts in synchronisation with anticipated changes in our position in the organisation or in response or anticipation to changes in the environment. Story telling creates an opening for a first step in this dimension.

The above ideas will be illustrated through an audiovisual case study to be presented at the Task Force meeting.