CONTENTS

Preface ix

Introduction 1
The purpose of the book and the process by which it came to be written.

Part One: The Role of Story in Organizations 15

1 Telling the Right Story: Choosing the Right Story for the Leadership Challenge at Hand 17
Based on the author’s personal journey of discovery, the chapter offers a catalogue of narrative patterns and a cost-benefit analysis of organizational storytelling.

2 Telling the Story Right: Four Key Elements of Storytelling Performance 40
In an organizational context, telling the story right usually begins by choosing a plain style in which you tell the story as though you are talking to a single individual. You tell the truth as you see it, and prepare carefully for the performance. In the actual performance, you make yourself fully available for the audience and endeavor to connect with them as individuals.

Part Two: Eight Narrative Patterns 57

3 Motivate Others to Action: Using Narrative to Ignite Action and Implement New Ideas 59
The challenge of igniting action and implementing new ideas is pervasive in organizations today. The main elements of the kind of story that can accomplish
this—a springboard story—are the story’s foundation in a sound change idea, its truth, its minimalist style, and its positive tone.

4 Build Trust: Using Narrative to Communicate Who You Are

Communicating who you are and so building trust in you as an authentic person is vital for today’s leader. The type of story that can accomplish this typically focuses on a turning point in your life. It has a positive tone and is told with context. Sometimes it is appropriate to tell your story, but sometimes it isn’t.

5 Use Narrative to Build Your Brand: The World of Social Media

Just as a story can communicate who you are, a story can communicate who your company is. Stories that the company tells about its brand are becoming less important than stories that customers tell. The products and services that are being offered are often the most effective vehicle to communicate the brand narrative to external stakeholders.

6 Transmit Your Values: Using Narrative to Instill Organizational Values

Values differ: there are robber baron, hardball, instrumental, and ethical values; there are personal and corporate values, and espoused and operational values. Values are established by actions and can be transmitted by narratives like parables that are not necessarily true and are typically told in a minimalist fashion.

7 Get Others Working Together: Using Narrative to Get Things Done Collaboratively

Different patterns of working together include work groups, teams, communities, and networks. Whereas conventional management techniques have difficulty in generating high-performing teams and communities, narrative techniques are well suited to the challenge.
Contents

8 Share Knowledge: Using Narrative to Transmit Knowledge and Understanding
   Knowledge-sharing stories tend to be about problems and have a different pattern from the traditional well-told story. They are told with context, and have something traditional stories lack: an explanation. Establishing the appropriate setting for telling the story is often a central aspect of eliciting knowledge-sharing stories.

9 Tame the Grapevine: Using Narrative to Neutralize Gossip and Rumor
   Stories form the basis of corporate culture, which is a type of know-how. Although conventional management techniques are generally impotent to deal with the rumor mill, narrative techniques can neutralize untrue rumors by satirizing them out of existence.

10 Create and Share Your Vision: Using Narrative to Lead People into the Future
   Future stories are important to organizations, although they can be difficult to tell in a compelling fashion since the future is inherently uncertain. The leader can tell a future story in an evocative fashion or use a springboard story as a shortcut to the future. The differences among simulations, informal stories, plans, business models, strategies, scenarios, and visions are reviewed.

Part Three: Putting It All Together

11 Solve the Paradox of Innovation: Using Narrative to Transform Your Organization
   None of the traditional approaches to transformational innovation actually works. Solving the paradox of innovation requires rethinking the whole concept of management. Storytelling has a major role to play.

12 A Different Kind of Leader: Using Narrative to Become an Interactive Leader
   Effective use of the full array of narrative techniques entails becoming an interactive leader, that is, a kind of
leader quite different from a conventional command-and-control manager. The interactive leader is someone who participates, connects, and communicates with people on a plane of equality and is relatively free of ego.

Notes 295
Bibliography 315
Acknowledgments 327
About the Author 329
Index 331