

STORYTELLING IN CONSULTANCY

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Introduction

Storytelling has been widely studied in the organizational context, however there is limited research in the area of external consultancy.

This study seeks to fill that gap and provides empirical evidence about consultants' perceptions and experiences of storytelling in their business and training roles.



Research Strategy

The research strategy selected, is that of narrative inquiry and adopts Fisher's (1987) assumption that human communication can be better interpreted from a narrational perspective.

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research strategy in which the data is collected in a narrative form, i.e. the participants share information about the subject matter by describing their past experiences and expressing these experiences in the form of stories.

Therefore, storytelling, in this study, works in two ways: it is not only the subject of research but also the method of conducting the research.



Data Collection

Primary information about the subject was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews of 10 consultants, who provided their consultancy services in more than 30 countries in Europe, North America, Asia and Africa.

A purposive sampling approach was adopted which is a non-probability sampling method and focuses on a small number of selected items (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). This method was selected because it allowed the collection of data from information-rich cases, for in-depth study.

References

Fisher, W. (1987) *Human Communication As Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action*. Columbia: University of South Carolina.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., Thornhill, A. (2016) *Research Methods for Business Students*. 7th edn. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

Findings

The consultants that participated in the study explained the powerful features of storytelling by interpreting the impact that storytelling has on their clients. The analysis of the consultants' insights led to the creation of a list with 6 storytelling impacts, as shown in the following figure.

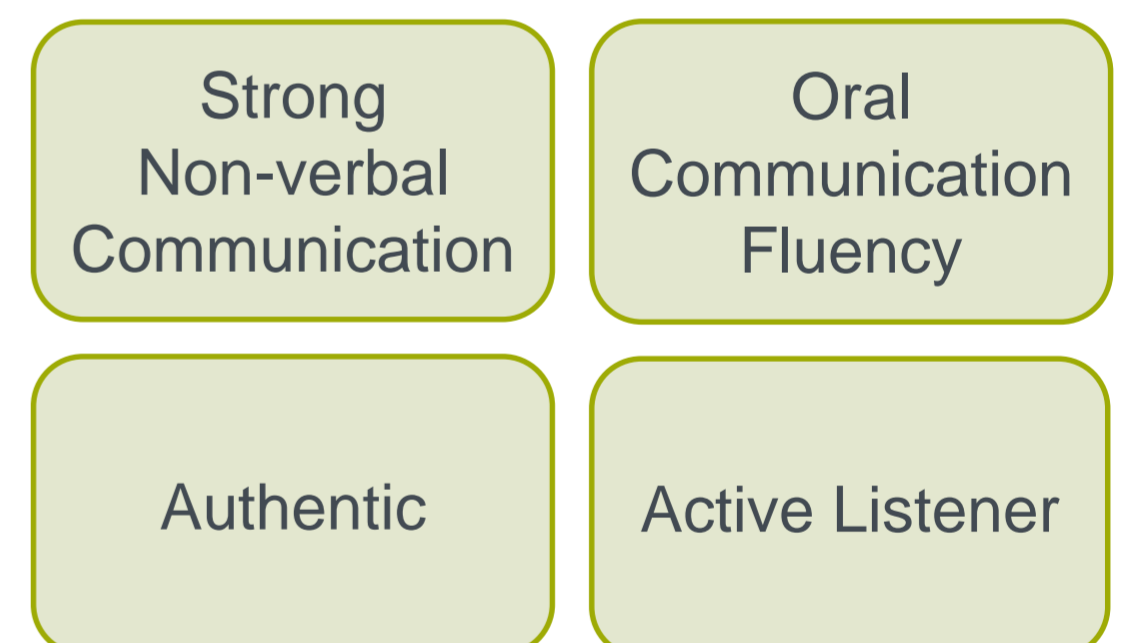
In addition, it is found that the effectiveness of storytelling can be determined both by certain characteristics that a story should have, but also by the traits of the storyteller, as shown below.



Effective Story



Effective Storyteller



Development of Storytelling Capabilities

Storytelling can be learned and improved, and the results of this study can be used for the development of educational material and workshops about storytelling in consultancy.

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