MASTER THESIS

Strategy and change stories at work

Translating ideal official stories into real case stories

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Five key words: Strategy implementation, change management, storytelling, genre, language.

Purpose: The purpose of the thesis was to investigate how official ideal stories are translated into real case stories.

Methodology: Literature review and real case interviews through storytelling

Theoretical perspectives: Strategy, strategy implementation, change management, storytelling, language, genre.

Empirical foundation: Multiple voices and stories are prerequisites for both sides to survive: simplified version of life is needed for practitioners to make sense of the complicated world; and complex and chaotic reality is the source that researchers build their conceptualizations from.

Conclusions: Our study's salient feature is to reveal the importance of searching for deeper meanings in the complex organizational environments from which and in which stories are told.

Abstract

When referring to the same event, people can have different assumptions. What is interesting to see is why these assumptions are different, why do people have different stories? Some of the reasons could be different levels of expectation, different communication channels or even different cultural backgrounds. We have analysed all these by having a case study within a company that has recently gone through a change management/strategy implementation process.

The research reviewed in this paper originates in two different worlds. One world is a research world where stories come from textbooks and articles. These stories could be named as observed stories since we do not directly participate in it. The other world is a workplace, an organization where we took interviews about what was happening in that organization (constructed stories). MacLeod and Davidson (2007) argue that storytelling is a key distinguishing point between observed and constructed stories. Stories should be viewed as artefacts to be studied in the organizational setting. However, we disagree and want to show that stories can come from different sources. The researcher is an observer who can assess the story and teller's intended meaning.

What the literature brings is an official, ideal story on strategy and change. On the other hand, when observing a company that is going through a change process/strategy implementation, a new story is created, the real case story. The translation of the ideal story into a real case story comes with creating a bridge between the two concepts. We did not approach change management from the perspective of how to implement it but we took the implementation as a starting point in order to determine how people feel about it.

The purpose of the thesis was to investigate how official ideal stories are translated into real case stories. We did that by answering the following two research questions:

1. How does the literature talk about strategy and change??
2. How do different people talk about strategy and change in real case study?

Organizations are not static entities; different processes are constantly constructed and reconstructed through language, interaction. Language is a tool to construct different realities and we wanted to use these tools to understand how people perceive and talk about those realities. Therefore, we chose to reveal ideal official reality constructed by researchers and reality constructed by people in organization trough storytelling.

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1. Introduction

This chapter presents the background and problem discussion, together with the purpose and research questions. A short description of the thesis' structure is also included.

1.1. Background and problem discussion

1.1.1. Strategy and Change management

When looking at the statistics related to change we can clearly see that something is not working as it should. According to a corporate reengineering report from the Fortune magazine, the success rate in 1000 companies is below 50%. Managers and employees have been struggling for years to create a successful change management process but few have succeeded. They have experienced successes, failures and frustrations while trying to reach their goal. There are various reasons for which a change management program can fail and we are going to talk about that later in the literature review in Chapter 4. There is, however, a common root of the problem that can be identified. That is that managers and employees view change differently. Related to this is also the level of enthusiasm and involvement that different categories of people have when going through a change. These can be different depending on the person or even the hierarchical level. What top management sees as a great opportunity to change the organization can be seen by the rest of the employees as useless, time consuming, unnecessary headache or additional workload. The misalignment between the two perspectives leads to a misestimating of the effort that is required in dealing with resistance to change.

Change can be very easily associated with something negative. Whether we think insecure about the future or fear the unknown, no one likes to go through change process.

However, people's perceptions on change can be influenced if the appropriate methods are being used. If employees feel that they are treated according to their needs, organisations might end up having positive surprises from their attitudes towards change. Nevertheless, many authors argue that the starting point should always be within the organisational culture i.e. change should be seen as something positive.

We will not approach strategy and change management from the perspective of how to implement it but we will take the implementation as a starting point in order to determine how people feel about it.

When referring to the same event, people can have different assumptions. What is interesting to see is why these assumptions are different, why do people have different stories? Some of the reasons could be different levels of expectation, different communication channels or even different cultural backgrounds. We will analyse all these by having a case study within a company that has recently gone through a change management/strategy implementation process.

One way of studying change and strategy implementation is comparing theory with practice. Theory produces what we later call ideal official story based on management literature. Practice is what a real organization is going through, it can be studied by looking at the different stories of people involved that are related to change. What we want to achieve is to translate the official stories into real case stories, i.e. to build a bridge between the two.

1.1.2. Stories and storytelling

Story is the way to weave the different pieces. So if information is the thread, then the fabric or the garment that we end up with is the story. The story can cloak information and thereby make it more accessible.

Ever since we were kids we have been told different types of stories. Not much changes when we grow up. Whether we do this consciously or not, we always tend to remember only the most interesting stories, the ones that we consider catchy. Stories have always been connecting people with their cultures. For example, history has been passed down through different generations by word of mouth. If we relate this to the business world, we will see that survival in business is based on group's understanding of the same topic. According to Harvard professor Howard Gardner: "Stories are the single most powerful tool in a leader's tool kit."

But first, what is storytelling? More than that, what makes a story interesting?

Storytelling means passing on wisdom and culture. Business organizations however value forms of knowledge that can be categorized, calculated and analyzed. Storytelling is a traditional and even ancient means of passing on wisdom and culture. Yet in organizations – particularly business organizations – what is most explicitly valued are harder forms of knowledge that can be classified, categorized, calculated and analyzed. In recent years, however, there has been increasing attention by organizations and their leaders to the role and value of narrative and anecdotal information conveyed in the form of stories. This renewed interest in an ancient genre of communication is perhaps a result of the realization of the importance of knowledge in organizations and the recognition that knowledge cannot be completely abstracted into categorical and analytical forms and is inadequately conveyed in such forms (Sole & Wilson, 2007). Instead, organizations seek communicative forms that synthesize rather than analyze. Stories are such a communicative form.

Therefore, a lot of emphasis is being put on organisational storytelling and the competitive advantage that it brings to the companies. But what about the stories that the people within the organisation have? Do they have the same stories when going through a change process? Even more, do they even see it as a change process? These were some of the questions that we had when we starting writing our thesis.

When organizations use storytelling to build an image, they do it because storytelling breaks the patterns created by the organisational culture and turns it into emotionalism and personalization. A fundamental shift is required when talking about storytelling in relation to strategy. That is because strategy is usually associated with data collection, breaking down goals into specific steps, and assigning accountabilities and resources. The outcome of the strategy planning is a list of goals and to-dos. Next step is to package all this in a Powerpoint presentation. “However, it often fail[s] to reflect deep thought or inspire commitment” (Shaw et al., 1998). What storytelling does is that it enables strategy execution by linking strategic planning with strategic thinking. Strategic thinking involves the ‘stuff’ leaders are made of – the ability to create a compelling vision, build a platform for action, tap into people’s motivations, inspire a shift in thinking, and share organizational learning. Strategic thinking results in integrated solutions – outcomes shaped by multiple perspectives.

So let us tell you a story…

It’s a story about two beautiful beautiful women… And these two women once…long long ago… lived in a small house at the edge of the village. The two women were exceedingly beautiful. One day they were having a slight discussion and discussion became an argument and they began to talk who was the most beautiful and who would be the most accepted by the villagers. They began to be really heated and so finally they decided that they will have a contest. The contest was that they both, one at a time, walk through the village and they would see who had the most friends. And so they agreed…

Truth went first. Truth walked out and as she walked out down the central village street, the people who were out in their lawns began to ease back into their houses. Some of them who were up in their windows closed the shutters. And by the time Truth had got to the end of the village, there were very few people left outside. So she got to the end, she turned round and she was thinking to herself. “I’m going to loose this contest. What can I do to make myself even more attractive?” She thought there’s only one thing left to do… So she disrobed. She took off her great robe and she stood there completely naked. And then she walked back through the village thinking that people would flock from their houses to see her. But it turned to be the opposite…. All of the remaining people went back into their houses. They closed their shutters and they disappeared. She eventually ended up walking back all the way by herself. Truth met her companion there. Her companion was Story. Story asked “Well… How did it go?” Truth said “I can’t believe it. There was no one there”. Then Story asked Truth to let her try.

So Story left and she walked alone. As she walked through the village all the people began to come out from their houses! The windows opened! People came down and began to talk amongst themselves. There was a wonderful gathering! As Story was walking back, people were streaming behind her. The entire village gathered in the centre as she walked through. When Story got back, Truth was quite humble and said “I’m sorry. I have lost the contest and I realize now that story is more powerful.” Story walked up to the Truth and she said that it’s not that story is more powerful. It’s just that nobody liked the truth. And especially they don't like the naked truth. “If what you need is to get across your point, all you need is to make a story”. So the Story took her multi-coloured cloak and draped it around the shoulders of Truth. That time, when Truth went back to the village, the people came out. Because now they could hear what she had to say…

(Story from a Jewish tradition)

The story represents quite well our thesis intentions. We do not want to observe the real world, compare it to the prescriptions given by the literature and come up with our recommendations on how strategy or change should be implemented. We want to wrap this naked truth with a story cloak. We chose to reveal how literature and how people talk about strategy and change through storytelling. We want to reveal that there are different ways and sources where stories help us reveal diverse realities: ideal and real case. Strategy and change has a lot to do with perceptions and insights in regards with implementation processes and storytelling enables us to resurface those insights. We further use the insights to translate ideal official story into real case stories by finding and interpreting the meaning of one text and see if it is still equivalent and message in the other text is still the same. In the texts or stories which represent multiple voices (taken from literature and real case), we investigate the morals, values and beliefs behind each story.

1.2. Purpose

The research reviewed in this paper originates in two different worlds. One world is a research world where stories come from textbooks and articles. These stories could be named as observed stories since we do not directly participate in it. The other world is a workplace, an organization where we took interviews about what was happening in that organization (constructed stories). MacLeod and Davidson (2007) argue that storytelling is a key distinguishing point between observed and constructed stories. Stories should be viewed as artefacts to be studied in the organizational setting. Organizational setting is a real case study in organization Active Group. We studied a strategy and change implementation at a specific time of the implementation process. Strategy implementation is a standardization of all processes within the organization. This is more explicitly discussed further on, in the Company presentation. However, we disagree and want to show that stories can come from different sources. The researcher is an observer who can assess the story and teller's intended meaning.

What the literature brings is an official, ideal story on strategy and change. On the other hand, when observing a company that is going through a change process/strategy implementation, a new story is created, the real case story. The translation of the ideal story into a real case story comes with creating a bridge between the two concepts.

The purpose of the thesis is to investigate how official ideal stories are translated into real case stories.

The aims of the thesis are the following:

- Describe the ideal story on strategy and change that is presented in the literature.
- Describe the different stories that employees and managers have related to the strategy implementation.

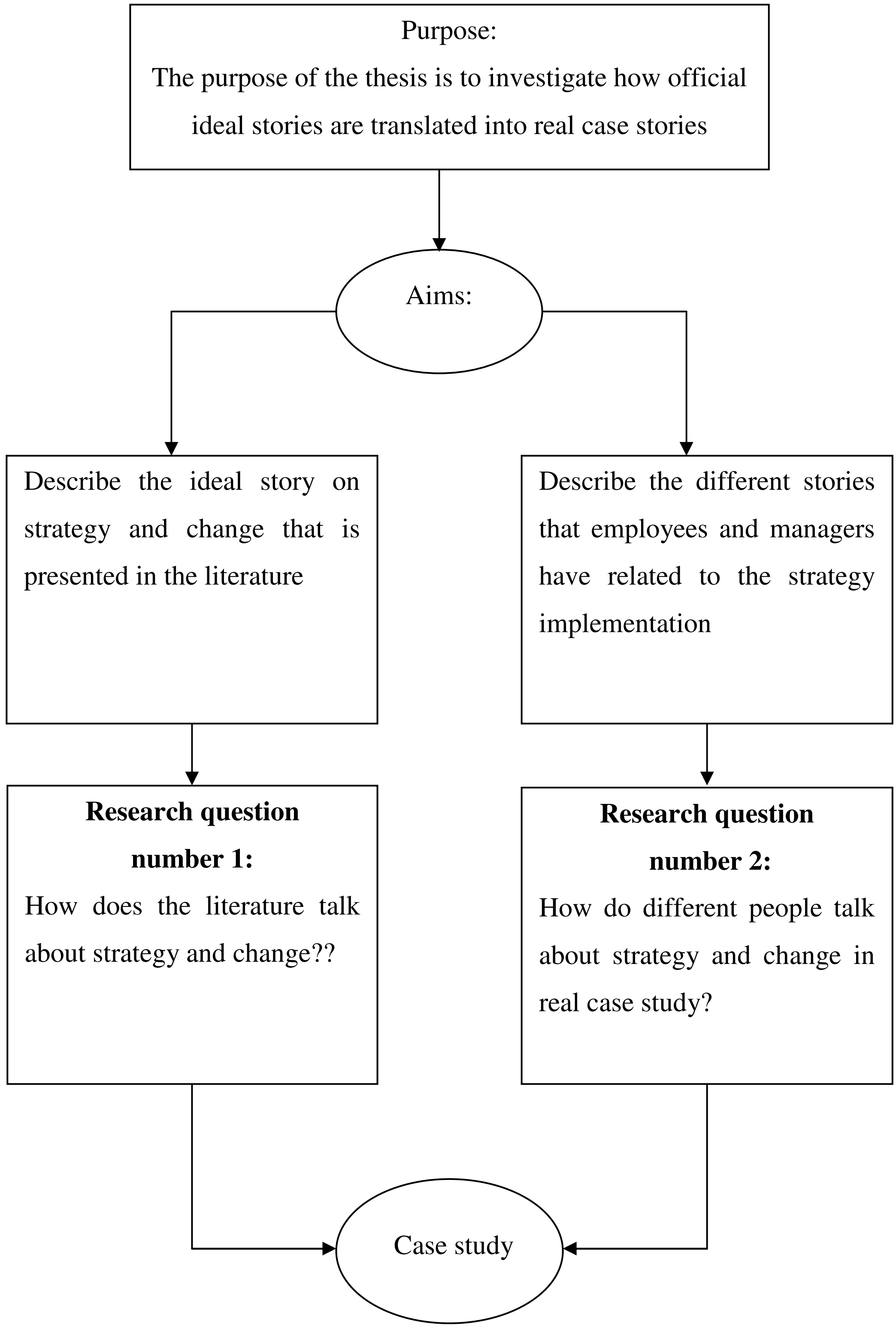


Figure 1 – Purpose, aims, and research questions

1.3. Research questions

In order to be able to reach the purpose of the thesis we have identified the following two research questions:

1. How does the literature talk about strategy and change? What is the ideal official story on strategy and change? We will analyze the available literature on the subject, that give recommendations on strategy and change implementation
2. How do different people talk about strategy and change in real case study? What is the real story? Even if both employees and managers go through the same change processes, they do have different stories related to them. We will try to investigate how do they feel about it? What kind of language are they using? How do they avoid talking about it?

1.4. Company and strategy presentation

Active Group is a global organization in the logistics field established in 1920. Since then, then company has grown and it now has over 100 000 employees all over the world. One of the disadvantages that a global organization has is misaligned businesses. According to company's Intranet, one of the biggest challenges that they faced was to implement a low cost strategy throughout the entire organization. However, they knew that you cannot enforce a strategy based on low cost unless you have aligned business. Therefore, the conclusion was that they need to align their processes in order to organize the business in a standardized way. In 2005, the Process Excellence Team (PEX) was formed and had the strategic role of supporting the organization in eliminating, simplifying and automating the existing business processes in order to remove unnecessary complexity. In the past 20 months the following steps have been taken:

- Processes has been identified and classified as either core or non core based on the importance and value brought to the overall activity.
- Almost all core processes have been mapped i.e. sales, operations, finance resulting into Global reference process models.

The reason behind the mapping (and at a later stage, standardization) is that the same organization has different work practices and different countries have different approaches towards the same processes.

Therefore, global process mapping objectives were in line with PEX's objectives:

- To identify best practice and standardize processes (The only exception is allowed when it has to deal with legal regulations of different countries).
- To introduce global IT governance. Since there are hundreds of offices in various countries and each has different work processes, local IT applications differ from country to country. Different IT applications mean a significant cost to the company overall and a variety of applications makes it impossible to centralize and manage various processes around the world and makes any further changes extremely hard to implement.

During the process of standardization the company realized that in order to be able to standardize global processes, they need to understand what the local legal and business requirements that will drive variation are. And this is how the strategy was born.

The main objective of the strategy was to eliminate as much as possible the local variants taking into consideration legal and IT requirements. The only possible way to do that was to identify what the variances are on a local level (that is to perform process mapping on a local level). This has never been done before in the organization and required a lot of planning and resources. China was chosen to test the strategy implementation: The reasons behind the decision were:

1. Networking/interpersonal relationships. The process improvement team has good connections and social networks with local managers in the chosen country.
2. China has already undergone structural change and therefore it has the appropriate organizational structure in place.
3. China is big enough to have all the processes in place. Processes are complex and therefore important to test.

The implementation consists of two important steps: conduct a training session so that the people involved have the necessary tools in order to do the mapping and start doing the actual mapping based on the procedures identified in the strategy.

Note: We will further on refer to the strategy of process standardization using the following terms: local variant mapping, strategy, change process, change and/or strategy process initiative, pilot, and training (as part of the strategy implementation).

1.5. Structure

The Preface (Chapter 1) gives an insight on the reasoning behind choosing this theme and, together with this chapter makes a complete overview on background, purpose and research questions. Chapter 2 gives a presentation of two important concepts that represent the main focus of the thesis: language and storytelling. Research methodology, which relates to Chapter 3, gives more details on the reasoning behind choosing particular way of analysis and the methods being used. The story begins with Chapter 4, where we have constructed an ideal official story based on the available literature. We present the research area and boundaries when talking about strategy, strategic management, strategy implementation and change management. Chapter 5, on the other hand, is a real case story based on interviews we have conducted with several managers in headquarters and China. The analysis (Chapter 6) is based on two different perspectives: comparison and contrast of the stories at work and translation of the official ideal story into the real case story. The final chapter (Chapter 7) refers to conclusions that we have based on the analysis of the two research questions.

2. Theoretical Frame of Reference

The central theme of this chapter is to provide a brief presentation of the research area and to define its boundaries. The purpose of this thesis is to elaborate the relevance of the research issue, to offer basis for defining relevant research questions, and to summarise the existing theories on the research issue. Therefore, it seems necessary to introduce some general concepts and definitions within the theoretical framework of the research.

We begin with the introduction of a concept of language in order to facilitate the storytelling aspect of the thesis to the reader. Further, we discuss the historical background and a definition of story and storytelling in the literature. Theoretical frame of reference is continued by presenting the purpose of organizational storytelling and introducing the theory on development of a storyline. The chapter is concluded by discussing the importance of multiple voices and stories and presenting the use of the theory in the thesis.

2.1. Language

Organizational life is a processual one. “Organizations are not static entities, but dynamic processes constantly constructed and reconstructed through activities and practices, being woven in and through language and talk” (Tietze 2003, pp 11). Boden (1994, pp 8) says that language is the lifeblood of all organizations and, as such, it both shapes and is shaped by the structure of the organization itself. It is claimed that language is a mirror of an objective reality – unchanging and unchangeable. However, it is also argued that it rather creates and reflects organizational realities. Language is not a “mere messenger from the kingdom of reality” but to use a language is to engage in a social process of constructing particular realities (Gergen 1999, pp 11). Karsten (2006) supports Gergen’s view by stating that language is not simply a representational device to inform others. He argues that speaker continuously influences listener through language. “Besides the description of reality through language, by presenting facts about the world, language is used to promise, ask, order, warn and request” (Karsten 2006, pp 200). This means that the use of language is active and outcome oriented in any social perspective. Language creates reality in the sense that it is to some extent arbitrary and constructs a particular version of what it is supposed to represent.

Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) argue that language is context dependent and the same statement may have different meanings. It is a complicated phenomenon and one cannot just compare meanings in different contexts. “Terms such as leader, decentralization, hierarchy, strategic, motives, participation, decision, and so on do not have abstract, context-free meanings” (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000, pp 142). In our analysis further in the thesis, we will analyze and see how people talk about strategy and change in a particular context. With the help of stories and storytelling, we seek to understand how people perceive strategy and change. We want to investigate whether meanings, held by different people in the organization, regarding these concepts vary.

2.2. Storytelling

2.2.1. Background

Howard (1991, cited in Russell and Lucariello 1992, pp 671) have asserted that all “human thought . . . is nothing but storytelling” - including science, mathematics, logic, and religion. He was also arguing that storytelling is the process by which infants “grow into their role as Homo fabulans” or storytellers. There is no point disputing with the fact that, as children, individuals are exposed to stories, as well as they are exposed to all sorts of physical and cultural phenomena. (Russell and Lucariello 1992). Stories evolved since elders in tribes learned to pass myths and legends from generation to generation. These stories were sources of knowledge, information and experiences. “These stories helped shape the identity of the tribe, gave it values and boundaries and helped establish its reputation among rivalling tribes - it was storytelling in its purest form” (Fog et al. 2004, pp 16). Generally speaking, not much has changed ever since. Nowadays, stories in organizations tell what kind of values and culture that particular organization has, who the heroes and villains are. According to Fog et al. (2004), we define ‘who we are’ and ‘what we stand for” by sharing our stories. Every experience, every relationship, every entity is stored in our mind as a story. People think, feel and live through stories.

“The world is nothing but my perception of it. I see only through myself. I hear only through the filter of my story.” - quote by Katie Byron

James and Minnis (2004, pp 23) claim that stories began to draw researchers' attention "during the surge of interest in organizational culture in the 1980s". Storytelling was identified as a powerful tool that can be used to enhance organization's culture, performance. But first, we need to understand and define what story and storytelling is.

2.2.2. Definition of a story and storytelling

The simplest definition of a story: "story is an account of an event or series of events, a narrative" (Allen 2005, pp 63). Narratives and stories are used interchangeably.

Other authors define it more thoroughly. Gabriel (2000, cited in Tietze 2003, pp 56) defines stories as "narratives with simple but resonant plots and characters involving narrative skill, entailing risk, and aiming to entertain, persuade, and win over". MacLeod and Davidson (2007) argue that "stories follow a chronological sequence, and events are told in a linear order …a story is always responding to the question and then what happened?" They (MacLeod and Davidson 2007) claim that story is a particular kind of narrative that has a beginning, central characters, and a culminating event or climax. Weick (1995, Tietze 2003, pp 56) sees making "stories as part of a wider meaning making process". Gabriel (1998; Smith and Keyton 2001, pp 150) supports this view and claims that "stories are emotionally and symbolically charged narratives; they do not present information or facts about 'events,' but they enrich, enhance and infuse facts with meaning." Black (2008, pp 101) further notes that meaning of stories lies in context – "in the way they [stories] are addressed by someone to others in a context of interaction".

Boje (1991) says that stories to the storytelling system are what precedent cases are to the judicial system. Stories are shared among individuals to make sense of a situation that is vague, just like in the court. Boje (1991, pp 106) claims that stories are the institutional memory system of the organization by having different bits of organization experience recounted socially and formulating recognizable, convincing, defensible, and seemingly rational collective accounts that serve as precedents for individual assumption, decision, and action.

Stories are thickly imbedded with meaning (Boje 1995, pp 1000). “People construct meaning about their lives through the stories they tell; and intelligence is a function that enables people to create and translate those stories” (McCarthy 2008, pp 164).

Bruner (1990, cited in Nielsen and Madsen 2006, pp 37) argues that storytelling consists of four elements:

- A narrator’s perspective.
- Sequences - incidents, states of minds, etc.
- Actions towards a goal or overcoming an obstacle.
- Sensitivity towards what is considered social practice within a norm in a given culture. “Stories function as explanations for deviations from accepted social practice; they excuse the extraordinary or create explanations for it” (Nielsen and Madsen 2006, pp 37).

Stories are socially constructed and, therefore, continuously reproduced, challenged and transformed. Stories can provide us with knowledge about how particular types of social practice take place and “the rules and relationships embedded with them” (Tietze 2003, pp 77).

The narratives in the world are countless. “Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres (…) Able to carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting (…) stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news item, conversation, interview” (Barthes 1977). Genres are forms of communication practice and they vary in forms: from speeches, interviews, conversations, presentations, negotiations, meetings, instructions to poems, novels and even jokes (Tietze et al. 2003). The concept of genre refers to the form of the text or the type of encounter it is rather than the text itself. Genres code certain sets of rules and social relationships. “Although genres can be seen as shaping the way people communicate, they do not determine their interaction (…) Genres are neither static nor wholly deterministic – they are reproduced and transformed through social practice” (Tietze et al. 2003, pp 76).

2.2.3. Purpose of stories and storytelling

There is an increasing awareness that narratives are becoming vital to address different organizational challenges such as communicating the risks and opportunities identified by strategic plans or other management tools.

Tietze (2003) believes that stories are the core component of the culture; stories are able to represent and reflect cultural values. They act as templates for organizational behaviour and moral judgement. “In their original form they functions as providers of values and mores and in doing so provide guidance on what it means to be good, and as a consequence what is means to behave in certain ways” (Tietze 2003, pp 50).

“Identifying stories in context will be rewarded by the discovery that there is a multitude of stories that are not discernable at first” (Boje 1991, pp 110). Therefore, storytelling has many purposes and reveals different advantages since different stories can tell us different things. First of all, stories reveal how an organization sees itself: stories can reveal organizational identity, desired future. Fog et al. (2004, pp 126) argues that “stories place words and images on shared experiences. They help shape individuals’ perceptions of ‘who we are’ and ‘what we stand for’ ”. Organisation’s values can be uncovered by analysing and interpreting those stories. Storytelling has the ability to secure organization’s values, visions and culture.

Secondly, storytelling is purposeful “because stories are contextually embedded, their meaning unfolds through the storytelling performance event” (Boje 1991, pp 110). Stories reveal the emotional life of members of organization and “constitute an ongoing part of how meaning is made, values are shaped and through which socialization is achieved (Gabriel 1997; Tietze 2003, pp 51). It is possible to capture human experiences and understand the reasons behind different action, intentions, beliefs, goals and values through storytelling. Furthermore, stories examine relationships in organizations and with the help of storytelling, “knowledge that is normally hidden comes into view” (McCarthy 2008, pp 164). Storytelling has been identified as a powerful management tool to facilitate knowledge sharing, guide problem solving and decision making, and generate commitment to change (James and Minnis 2004, pp 23). Alvesson (2004) argues that storytelling is knowledge-sharing or generating activity and stories are as carriers of rich and meaningful information. Sandberg and Targama (2007, pp 99) add that “organizational stories express criteria, norms and procedures on how to perform the work and therefore also represent core aspects of collective competence. Collective competence is developed and sustained in terms of storytelling." Since knowledge is contained in stories – stories can shed more light on "possible causal explanations how the problem has arisen, what actions had been taken and how the problem was eliminated" (Allen 2005, Sandberg and Targama 2007, pp 144). Because of this reason, stories often act as catalysts for change. "Some tellings may initiate change, others advance a political view, others predict the stability or transience of relationships and agreements, while others are attempts to isolate and make sense of the impact of turbulent events" (Boje 1991, pp 110). Stories can act to suppress anxiety and enhance the organization's ability to navigate through change by clarifying key organizational values and giving instructions how things are done in particular settings (Boje 1991; McCarthy 2008, pp 164).

"Management has latched on to the persuasive and didactic power of stories and they use stories/storytelling for purposes of social control, the construction for public images and for organizational learning and strategic development" (Tietze 2003, pp 54). James and Minnis (2004, pp 26) note that stories can communicate a vision, build a sense of shared goals and meanings, and create community among diverse people. They have summarized different applications of storytelling:

- exemplify corporate culture
- modify and control behaviour
- solve problems and make decisions
- manage change
- plan strategy
- enhance leader image
- train future leaders
- transfer knowledge

2.2.4. Development of a storyline

Through the process of storytelling, James and Minnis (2004, pp 25) note that "organizational stories facilitate recall, generate belief, and engender deeper commitment than other means of communicating information". The reason for this is that cognitive and emotional mechanisms are engaged in this process. Emotions in a workplace are more and more seriously treated by scholars and businessmen. Emotions directly affect motivation, behaviour, performance review, and even negotiation outcomes.

What is little considered when first employing storytelling or narratives in the organization is that there is no single right way to tell a story. Storytelling can satisfy different purposes that organization is trying to achieve because it embraces a wide range of tools necessary to reach a particular goal.

A storyline ultimately involves a prioritization of different insights that are generated through observation. Morgan (2006, pp 355) argues that "the development of storyline is always a highly relativistic affair, depending on the precise circumstances being faced". An effective observation and storyline hinges on a capability to play with several insights with an intention of integrating them into a coherent pattern (Morgan 2006).

MacLeod and Davidson (2007) note that "phrases chosen and placed within the text, words emphasized or omitted, audiences addressed or excluded, time and location each play a part in conveying the story's meaning". Storytellers can alter and even completely change the meaning of the story by adjusting the elements mentioned above. Storytellers can also includes their own reflection and considerable detail to add impact and interest on topics they want to emphasize or that are of particular importance to them. Finally, it is important to consider how the story is communicated and in what context (Fog et al. 2004).

Fog et al. (2004) warns that one needs to be aware of the fact that storytelling is a dynamic and continuous process. Most storytelling is done in conversation and involves listeners in various ways. "As listeners, we are co-producers with the teller of the story performance" (Boje 1991, pp 107).

2.3. Multiple voices and stories.

Boje (1995, pp 998) explains that the "use of a plurality of stories, voices, and realities, as well as a multiplicity of ways to interpret stories, appears in experimental fictions that the French term nouveau roman. The aim of a nouveau roman is to provide multiple forms of discourse". When Boje (1995) speaks of discourse, he means the infinite play of differences in meanings through socially constructed practices that are largely expressed in stories.

Stories are explained in individual ways; however, this view is challenged: multiple voices and multiple realities must be considered as well (Boje 1995; McCarthy 2008). Since narrators or storytellers usually depict particular fragments of stories they consider important, researchers need to take that into account and research multiple stories to hear different voices (McCarthy 2008, pp 164). MacLeod and Davidson (2007) argue that in order to compensate for the filtered reality presented by a single storyteller, different sets of stories should be collected. Organizations have many voices, many of which are excluded from organizational narratives. Moreover, different narrators will tell different stories and over time the story theme will evolve (Boje 1995). Since stories reproduce what the organization is, its problems, relationships and goals, no single story can integrate all these viewpoints and perceptions. "Organizations cannot be registered as one story, but instead are a multiplicity, a plurality of stories and story interpretations in struggle with one another" (Boje 1995, pp 1001). Multiple stories construct a better understanding of events and organization members' interpretations of those events (MacLeod and Davidson 2007). Organizational life cannot be interpreted from a single story; it is more chaotic, complex and indeterminable that it may seem from a first glance.

3. Research methodology

This part of the thesis is focusing on giving more detailed information on why particular research strategy was chosen and what methods were used. We will further explain and give reasons for sample selection and methods on data collection. Data analysis will follow as well as the estimation of the reliability and validity of the methods that are going to be used in this thesis. Finally, we will add limitations of our research methodology.

3.1. Research purpose

The research is constructed based on two different worlds. First, we analyse the research world where the main source for stories is textbooks and articles. Going forward, we will refer to them as observed stories because we do not directly participate in it. Second, we look at the workplace, the location that was also used for conducting the interviews (constructed stories). We disagree with MacLeod and Davidson's statement (2007) that storytelling is a key distinguishing point between observed and constructed stories. Stories should be viewed as artefacts to be studied in the organizational setting. What we want to show is that stories can come from different sources. The researcher is an observer who can assess the story and teller's intended meaning.

Research benefits more when researchers observe stories in action where the storyteller, the story text, the story context, and the audience(s) reaction are recorded. In observed stories the researcher passively observes a storytelling exchange while and constructed stories allow the researcher to interview organizational members in order to elicit stories (MacLeod and Davidson 2007). Nevertheless, all stories are constructed to represent the storyteller's view. Storytellers that are either observed (textbook material) or interviewed will include a particular perspective in their story. As Wagner (2002) puts it: "stories [are] rhetorical devices… [where participants] will narrativize a particular version of reality in an attempt to convince the researcher of the influence of their perspective".

Most researchers agree that there are usually three different research purposes: exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory.

- Exploratory studies are practical if one wishes to clarify understanding of a problem (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2000). Robson (1993, cited Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2000) describes exploratory studies as a method of finding out "what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light". Exploratory studies usually focus on "what" questions rather than "why" trying to uncover different topics and facts about these topics. The studies mostly involve the use of the in-depth interviews
- Explanatory studies are valuable when one wishes to establish causal relationships between variables. The emphasis in this sort of study is to examine a situation or a problem in order to explain the relationships between variables (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2000). Explanatory research tries to find a reason for situation or behaviour to occur; it focuses on the "why" questions.
- Descriptive studies are relevant when one wishes to represent phenomena such as events, situations or processes in specific details. The aim is to describe the set of circumstances. Moreover, a descriptive study way of writing a research is also appropriate when research topic is focused and the problem is clearly structured. Mostly focuses on "how" questions.

The purpose of our thesis is more descriptive since we would like to investigate how textbook talks about strategy and change and how employees and managers talk about strategy and change in a real case study. We are going to capture storytellers' views through storytelling and investigate how official ideal stories from textbooks are translated into real case stories.

3.2. Research design

In this part, the research design and the development process of the thesis construct is discussed. "Research design is the logic that links data to be collected and the conclusions to be drawn to the initial questions of the study" (Yin 1984, pp 27). Research design is not just a plan on how to carry out a research. The purpose is to ensure that the data and methods used are suitable for answering the research questions we want to investigate. The objective further is to show the reader how the data needed for the research was received, from which sources and by which methods data was generated and, finally, how the interpretation of data was carried out.

3.2.1. Research method and technique

Research method

There are different methods and techniques for data collection and these methods typically involve interviews or questionnaires in order to get insights into different research problems. Quantitative research is a systematic scientific investigation of different properties of the phenomena and their relationships. Davenport (2000) defines quantitative research as an inquiry into a human problem based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers. While quantitative research employs mathematical models to understand relationships between variables, qualitative research methods are often used to gain better insight of such things as intentionality (response from interviewee) and meaning (what is the meaning, why was it said?). Qualitative research refers to a less formalized approach; it has a more philosophical note to it. According to Davenport (2000), a qualitative research is practical when a researcher wants to transform what has been observed, reported or registered into written words. This type of research usually relies on exhaustive and thorough descriptions of events or people. Since it deals with natural phenomena such as people's lives, human behaviour and is concerned with how individuals derive meaning, this approach is not controlled. This allows interviewer to see how people make sense and ascribe meanings in social context. Our aim is to let literature as well as employees in organization 'speak' to us and tell their stories. Quantitative approach would limit our aim to hear stories and would simply give us a general, impersonal story.

According to McCarthy (2008, pp 199), "interpretive qualitative research is most appropriate to strive to capture complex conceptual configurations such as organizational values and meaning in stories". Therefore, we have decided to rely on qualitative approach in our study to describe different viewpoints of storytellers on the same topic: strategy and change. Qualitative researches are often associated with small-scale studies, and due to the ability to penetrate a situation or a problem it is considered to be an excellent tool to handle multifaceted situations (Davenport 2000). By using small-scale studies, we will have an opportunity to investigate different stories in depth, and thus, get a better understanding of the research area and problem. We will collect data by gathering information regarding strategy and change from different sources: articles, textbooks, online material as well as by interviewing employees and managers in an organization regarding these topics.

We chose storytelling as our method of presenting findings because stories work to integrate the complex and often conflicting nature of company practices and actions. James and Minnis (2004, pp 24) argue that stories "go beyond simply making sense of the existing social world and actually serve to create one. Martin et al. (cited in James and Minnis 2004) maintain that organizational stories are usually constructed with a self-enhancing bias for explaining events, taking credit for success, and evading blame".

Research technique

We take the definition of a case study from Robson (1993) who defines it as the development of detailed, intensive knowledge about a single 'case', or a small number of related 'cases'. We are going to use this strategy to gain a better understanding of the context of the research and the process being enacted (Morris and Wood, 1991). Case studies are extremely valuable to researchers when it comes to the maintaining of the holistic and significant characteristics of real-life events, such as human behaviour as well as organizational and managerial processes. It can also contribute to knowledge of an individual, organization or society in general. The case study approach will allow us to find the answer to the "how" question (Robson 1993).

Cases or stories in our case will allow us to answer our research question how literature and members of organization actually talk about strategy and change and how the ideal official story presented in the literature is translated into real case stories. But to begin with, let us guide you through the techniques used to retrieve those stories.

First of all, we have focused answering research question number 1 - how does the literature talk about strategy and change? We have gathered and presented different models, theories, and opinions that are presented in management literature on strategy and change. We have summarized and retold their stories in order to introduce the reader to what the official story on strategy and change is. We have named it official ideal story in order to show its wide-acceptance in the human world. In the second part, we focused on retelling the real case stories. The technique used to obtain stories from employees and managers from an organization was through a questionnaire (see Appendix 1). The questionnaire was based on themes that the official ideal story refers to as factors for successful strategy and change implementation. We have developed a set of questions for each theme so that the questions would require the interviewee to give his/her opinion regarding strategy and change and his/her view on success factors of implementation. The questions were specifically designed for interviewees to answer on what is happening in their organization. Since they were undergoing a strategy and change implementation process, we wanted to hear their personal opinions and developed them into real case stories by narrating their answers. We have intentionally picked themes from the official ideal story told in order to be able to investigate how the socially accepted representation of strategy and change is translated into a real-world case.

3.2.2. Sample selection

"Sampling techniques provide a range of methods that enable you to reduce the amount of data you need to collect by considering only data from a sub-group rather than all possible cases or elements" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000). Probability sampling involves random selection while non-probability sampling is a technique that does not involve randomization. Purposive sampling or judgemental sampling is a non-probability sampling approach that essentially allows a researcher to select cases that seem to be the best suited to answer the research questions, especially in a case study when the researcher is looking for cases that are particularly informative. This is used mainly when there are a limited number of individuals that have expertise in the area being researched or have the most profound knowledge or information regarding the topic being researched.

Our sample selection is based on a judgemental sampling, which is a non-probability sampling. As for the literature, we have chosen most known and quoted authors in strategy and change management literature that have developed various theories and models regarding strategy and change, e.g. Kotter, Lewin, Cummings and Worley, etc. In the organization of our research, we have studied the employees for interviews and we have selected six interviewees. Two Project Managers, Yin and Jay (we further refer them as employees), and one Senior Director, John (we further refer him as a manager), that are primarily involved with strategy and change implementation in the pilot location (China) were interviewed. We have selected them due to their direct involvement with implementation process and also the reason that they had just undergone a training regarding the new strategy. Furthermore, we have interviewed a Senior Director, Jesper, and General Manager, Anna, (we further refer them as managers) from headquarters (HQ) who have developed the strategy and initiated change implementation process. We also had a chance to speak with the Communications and Change Manager, Michael, from HQ. The reason for selecting these particular interviewees was based on our goal to hear opinions from different kinds of people:

- Employees and managers,
- People who have different backgrounds: China and HQ (Europe),
- People who develop strategy and people who directly participate in implementation process.

We wanted to reduce bias of having similar stories due to similar employment positions, cultural backgrounds or effect of strategy and change on daily work life.

Due to the location constraints that we experienced (the pilot test is being conducted in China), all interviews with Project Managers were conducted via telephone. We had face-to-face meetings with the rest of interviewees.

3.2.3. Data Collection Method

One source of information is not better than other according to Yin (2003). They should in fact be considered complementary. A case study should be better if it relies on more sources.

During the process of data gathering, several sources of evidence should be used. Therefore, this should be considered an important. Different sources of evidence refer to multiple measures of the same phenomenon, adding validity to the scientific study. Interviews are the most important sources for the case study information (Yin 2003). The techniques that can be used are telephone and personal interviews.

An interview is a purposeful discussion between two or more people (Kahn and Cannel, 1957 cited by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000). The use of the interviews can help you gather valid and reliable data that is relevant to your research question and then record the response on a standardized schedule, usually with pre-coded answers (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000).

The non-standardized interviews refer to semi-structured and unstructured interviews.

- Semi-structured interviews – starting point is a list of questions that need to be covered. Not all questions need to be used as the researcher may omit some of them, depending on the context. The flow of conversation will dictate the order of questions. There is also the possibility that additional questions are needed depending on the nature of events within the organization. The nature of questions and the ensuing discussion mean that data will be recorded by note taking, or perhaps by tape recording the conversation (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000).
- Unstructured interviews are informal as they are being used to explore in depth a general area in which you are interested. There is no predetermined list of questions to work through in this situation, although you need to have a clear idea about the aspects you want to explore (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000).

Different types of interviews have different purposes. Structured or standardized interviews can be used in survey research to gather data, which can then be the subject of quantitative analysis. Semi-structured and in-depth, or non-standardized, interviews are used in qualitative research in order to conduct exploratory discussions not only to reveal and understand the "what" and the "how" but also to place more emphasis on exploring the "why" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000).

As mentioned before, the main purpose of our research will be to answer "how" questions. Therefore, our primary data collection was accomplished through face-to-face as well as telephone semi-structured interviews. We have developed a set of questions but, in the same time, the interview was open, allowing the flexibility of the discussion. This way, additional information came up during the free discussion. We used open-ended interviews to develop elicit stories around major organizational event which was strategy and change implementation. We have asked questions such as 'How do you think the local mapping initiative is seen throughout the whole organization?' or 'How would you evaluate the willingness to accept and implement change by the staff and management?', 'How was the company prepared for changes?' etc. These questions were more effective at generating meaningful narrative responses than, for example, asking for someone to tell a story, where respondents may feel pressure to capably perform in their responses. Interviews were about an hour each, which were recorded with respondent's consent.

3.2.4. Data analysis

We analyzed data first by building individual case studies, or stories, and then compared them to answer our thesis purpose. As a first step, we gathered information from textbooks, articles from management literature. We created some graphs to facilitate retelling of the story and even express it graphically. As a second step, we entered all transcribed interviews responses into an excel file table (see extract in Appendix 2). Using these synthesized responses, we carved out organizational stories told by each interviewee. Once individual stories were completed, we gathered responses expressed by different interviewees to the same question or theme which is based on themes cited in literature or ideal official story. These themes were success factors during strategy or change implementation. Initially, we compared the responses to identify common dilemmas and refine the unique aspects of each particular story. However, we further decided to translate ideal official story through the responses of interviewees. The excel table helped us to indicate discrepancies between the ideal story and the real stories since we systematically separated responses to particular themes. This enables us to make the translation of one story into another possible.

3.3. Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability have to be considered to reduce the risk of obtaining incorrect answers to research questions (Chisnall, 1997).

3.3.1. Validity

Validity is the quality of fit between an observation and the basis on which it is made according to Kirk and Miller (1987). Validity is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000). It refers to how well a specific research method measures what it claims to measure (Chisnall, 1997).

"The quality of the research design is commonly confirmed by maximising the following four aspects of research: construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability" (Yin 1984, pp 40). According to Yin (1984, 85), some general guidelines apply to all means of collecting data and substantially increase the quality of the research. Such guidelines are:

1. Use multiple sources of evidence,
2. Establish chain of evidence,
3. Have key informants review draft case study report (Yin, 2003).

Those are explicit links between the questions asked, the data collected and the conclusions drawn.

We used interviews and documents from an organization researched as sources of evidence. The criteria for choosing particular textbooks or interviewees are introduced in 3.2.2. We wanted stories to come from various sources, different backgrounds. The main idea was not to provide generalisation but, rather, to provide more thorough understanding how strategy and change is talked about in different environments. In order to establish chain of evidence, we have to make sure that results are not method dependent. This would allow us to enhance reliability, to check the validity of the data and to generate richer data. In order to check out the consistency of different data sources, we had several people to have a look at the same data, finding or phenomenon at different occasions. Different sources of data were applied in different phases of the research and our challenge was to point out similarity and distinction in data from different sources, to find patterns and explanations and to make conclusion through a deep understanding of the phenomenon.

We could have placed more emphasis on having case study reports reviewed by key informants. Some informants did review cases and placed their comments. Most of the comments were very supporting and as a result we had one more case or story added to our thesis (Communications and Change Manager Story).

3.3.2. Reliability

Reliability refers to the stability and consistency of the results derived from research. It is the probability that the same results could be obtained if the measures used in the research were simulated. In order to allow future researchers to repeat our study, we had a thorough documentation of the research implementation process. The way to ensure the reliability of the study is the use of techniques and methods for every study in the exact same way. Therefore, we have constructed and presented identical questionnaires to be able to see how different people talk about the same topic, i.e. strategy and change.

One of the factors that might run the risk of affecting reliability of the study is the respondent's lack of knowledge. However, since it is a personal opinion of the respondent and we are trying to investigate how they are talking about a certain topic, a lack of knowledge on particular subject is also a finding. It is further suggested that if respondent at the moments is tired or stressed, or have negative attitudes towards the interview, it can impact negatively on the reliability of the study (Yin, 2003). In order to prevent that and make stories more fluent, we have notified the interviewees a month in advance of our intention to interview them and we sent a questionnaire a day before the interview took place.

The interviews have been conducted in English. Due to the fact that English is neither our native language nor it is the interviewees', we could have encounter some language barriers. This will be taken into consideration when evaluating the results. We have recorded all interviews that all answers are being kept as a reference this way reducing the possibility of misunderstanding and have a chance to listen to the recordings again to get the most from the information provided.

Another challenge regarding the reliability emerged because of the iterative nature of the research. That is, the questions that intrigued us in the beginning of the research were not exactly the same as those at the end of the study.

3.4. Limitations of research methodology

It is difficult to say whether the stories would have been different if we had a chance to listen to interviewees' stories at a later stage. We have scheduled the interviews just after the initial training was conducted in the pilot country. The interviewees' perception of the strategy and change could change with time as they get more accustomed with it. This could (possibly significantly) influence the stories of the members of organization and alter our findings.

However, it should be noted that any other external causes can also influence the results; therefore, we decided to focus on stories happening at a particular time and place in order to have a similar context to make the stories more reliable.

The other limitation is that we have focused only on one organization. The research could have been more varied in terms of different industries and countries investigated. Nevertheless, as mentioned before we have decided to focus on particular organization. The reason behind is that members of organization are experiencing the same strategy and change implementation and we had a good access to organization exploiting this factor. There were only 6 interviews conducted in total. However, they were well-justified and in-depth investigations. The interviewees chosen were the first and so far the only people in organization to undergo a strategy and change implementation.

It is difficult to say whether we were influenced by our research or we have influenced it. We have also tried not to influence the respondents, by avoiding use of "leading question" and through concept- and control questions like "how",“ why" or "explain". We have been working two people on this project and tried not to interpret and perceive the information in a subjective way. We have tried to exercise great awareness towards this issue.

4. The Ideal Official Story

There are two ideal official stories we would like to retell you: one about a strategy and the other about change. The first story introduces the reader to the concept of strategy and strategic management. It talks about strategy process; it mentions key strategic management implementation factors and introduces the reader to the barriers that one might encounter on his journey implementing the strategy. The second story is a story about organisational change and change management. It reveals different theories of organisational change. The story continues when planned change as a particular way of changing organisation and people's perceptions comes into play. As all great stories it provides with a lesson how different factors contributing or hindering implementation of a change can be overcome.

The dominating genre in chapter 4 is a textbook/academic genre. It is a particular type of genre and we would like to explain it in more detail. Textbooks are usually written with pedagogical objectives in mind for potential learning situations and learning environments, i.e. schools, universities. Most research in textbooks focuses on producing knowledge that can later be used for prescriptions. Basically, textbook genre is concerned with describing a method that objectively demonstrates how different techniques, approaches, models might be useful. It presents the knowledge on particular topic and offers a variety of perspectives. The textbook genre has a specific type of language: dialogical, problem focused, language of thinking. It is a highly interactive genre, with a double purpose: being informative and promotional of particular best practice methods. Academic genre is similar to textbook genre. It is referred to as a study of a problem using the area's theories and methods, aiming at convincing a reader or colleague researcher about the validity of the results and conclusions of the study/investigation. Academic genre is usually what one could refer as – up-to-date knowledge of earlier researches. Information presented should be considered as true and rendered doable. This genre is always presented in a manner acceptable to the academic discourse community, which means that language is unambiguous and explicit – the reader does not have to draw conclusions or interpret the meanings him/herself. We call textbook/academic genre as an *ideal story* due to its idyllic, simplified representation of the reality. Stories have been accredited as truthful representations of the real world by the research society and they are widely accepted in the social world; and therefore, this commonsensical reasoning and description used in the textbook genre makes the story about strategy and change an *official story* too.

4.1. A story about strategy

4.1.1. Strategy

Once upon a time, world was not a safe place to be. There have been many kingdoms fighting over land, rivers and fields. The Art of war and strategy became valuable skills and knowledge that was taught to young soldiers. Strategy is a term that has been in use for thousands of years. It has first been referred by leaders in war and politics. It was mostly considered as a plan of action to achieve a goal, to win. The word derives from the Greek word stratēgos. It is derived from two words: stratos, meaning army, and ago, which stands for ancient Greek for leading (Wikipedia). However, no one really knows what strategy truly is. Over the years, researchers have had many ideas and suggestions on what strategy could possibly be. Michael Porter, a most known researcher in the field of strategy, asked this question. Although, for more and more businesses, having a sound global strategy is a must-have, he admits that nobody really knows the answer still. According to Porter (1996), a strategy indicates a deliberate exercise of choices. He says it is like choosing a particular set of activities to deliver a unique set of value (Porter 1996). Another representative of classical strategic thinking is Chandler who has defined strategy as “the determination of the basic long term goals and objectives of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for those goals” (Chandler 1962, pp 13). Researchers speak of strategy as a movement of an organization from its present position to a desired one. This process of getting from present to future state is described as complicated and problematic.

Arrto et al. (2007) has given a definition to strategy and explained the different elements of this definition. According to Arrto et al. (2007, pp 9), “strategy is a direction in an organization that contributes to success of the planned objectives in its environment”. ‘Direction’ is a goal, plan, guideline, mean, method, tool and technique that is capable to influence the course of a strategy, says Artto et al. (2007). ‘Contribution’ refers to the assumption that the ‘direction’ can make the difference and, as a result, have an effect on the organization. ‘Success’ consigns the ability of the strategy to accomplish the given objectives and goals. As authors put it (Arrto et al. 2007, pp 9), “a success may in some situations relate to strategy’s capability to survive in its hostile environment until it has accomplished its tasks”. ‘Environment’ refers to the internal and external environment, an open system that strategy has an effect on.

Wittington (2002) claims that strategy very much depends on the social system which it is meant for. A strategy is said to reflect the particular social system in which companies take part, it defines organization’s interest and rules by which organizations endure. Mintzberg (Mintzberg et al. 2005) agrees with Porter who suggests that the leader has to make sure that everyone in the organization understands the strategy. Strategy is not a single, simple approach. Brown and Eisenhardt (1998, pp 243) argue that “it is a diverse collection of moves that are loosely linked together in a semi-coherent strategic direction”. What all of these storytellers are talking about is that managers’ role is to simplify and order organizational life that is too complicated and too chaotic for employees to grasp. They are stating that strategy has to show a way, in which the organization could be different and creating value. According to Mintzberg (Mintzberg et al. 2005), this is crucial in order to fulfil the most fundamental purpose of a strategy - to make sure that the organizational activities are aligned throughout the organization and all members understand the direction of the strategy. “Strategies become organizational when they become collective, that is, when the patterns proliferate to pervade the behaviour of the organization at large” (Mintzberg et al. 2005, pp 217).

Before the story moves to explaining the strategy process, it describes strategic management and links it to strategy.

4.1.2. Strategic Management

Herbert and Deresky (1987) claim that organizational effectiveness depends on the ability of the organization to adapt to its environment, which, in turn, is influenced primarily by its strategic management. Strategic management is said to have as many definitions as strategy does. Pearce and Robinson (1988) talk about the strategic management as the set of decisions and actions resulting in formulation and implementation of strategies designed to achieve the objectives of an organization. Authors refer to strategic management as an organization-wide task that demands the ability to guide the organisation as a whole through strategic change under conditions of complexity and ambiguity. It is concerned with the future success of the business which may indicate major changes in the organization (Woods and Joyce 2003). The art of strategic management is as important as the art of war, they both entail implementing the planned changes/actions seamlessly and flawlessly. Otherwise, it means failure/defeat. That can be a matter of death and life for an organization/army.

Most of the stories told by academics define strategy in an implicit and ambiguous way. They discuss the process of formulating and implementing the strategy rather than defining it. Nonetheless, strategy is argued to be defined as a plan of objectives and formal directions that organization wants to pursue. Woods and Joyce add that strategy itself is "a set of beliefs about how a firm can be successful or more successful" (Woods and Joyce 2003, pp 182). Strategic management, on the other hand, is described as a process, a tool to implement those objectives.

4.1.3. The Strategy Process

If you are a General in the battlefield and an army of thousands, you will only go out there having a good strategy beforehand. It is based on the core theory that the starting point of strategy is the analysis, followed by strategy formulation and ultimately implementation.

In order to bring the planned strategy as close as possible to a realized one, strategic management/General has to be a part of active management of implementation process and strategy has to be a plan that provides clear goals on possible actions.

A graphical representation of the strategy process would look like this:

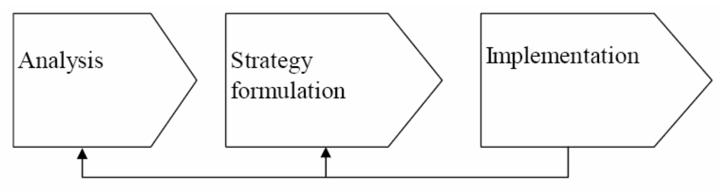


Figure 2 - Strategy Process

Researchers claim that the strategy process starts with an analysis of internal weaknesses and strengths and of the external threats and opportunities, i.e. SWOT analysis. Strategy formulation, on one hand, is said to be concerned with determining the future direction of the organization by designing appropriate strategies and strategy implementation. On the other hand, it is described as the process of translating these into action (Shah, 2005). The strategy process is argued to be “concerned with how an organization develops, implements and changes its strategy” (Saloner et al., 2001, p. 381).

In order to understand strategy development and its initial phase, it is necessary to understand the basic distinction between intended strategy and emergent strategy (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985). Are you going to attack your enemies first or is it your enemies attacking you in revenge? “Organizations can either develop objectives for their future and they evolve patterns out of their past; the former is intended strategy and the latter - emergent strategy” (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel, 1998, p. 10). In real world, strategies are said to be neither intended nor emergent; they are rather a combination of both. A General has to be always prepared to attack and defence at any time. Mintzberg started to deconstruct the view of strategy formulation as a top-down, analytical process. He argued that ‘‘strategies can form without being formulated’’ (Mintzberg 1994, p. 26).

Strategy formulation has always been a fundamental component of strategic management. Based on in-depth analysis of external and internal factors and conditions, strategy is formulated to achieve intended and/or emergent goals. It is important that strategy is sound; otherwise, an implementation of a poorly formulated strategy is likely destined to fail. A sound strategy makes the difference between winning and loosing. A “well-crafted, sound strategy exudes confidence and a compelling logic that facilitates buy-in, commitment and implementation success” (Hrebiniak 1992, pp 393). However, all academics agree that a good strategy alone is not sufficient to guarantee success. Each organization/army follows its purpose and strategic thinking is steered by this purpose, e.g. defend your motherland. Therefore, strategy is said to be directly influenced by the content of the purpose. The guiding principle behind the purpose corresponds in the strategy; research world refers it to organization’s mission. It is comprised of organizational beliefs and values. It should not be confused with organizational vision which authors describe as outlines of the desired future state that organization is aiming at. Wit and Meyer (2004, pp 594) talks about a mission which can be valuable for three reasons: direction, legitimization and motivation. Direction defines boundaries of strategic choices, while legitimization conveys the appropriateness e.g. of the strategy, to employees as well as stakeholders who, hopefully, would increase commitment and support towards the strategy. A step further is motivation that can inspire members of organization to work in a particular way over a prolonged period of time.

Some are saying that technically feasible, logical strategy is not sufficient (Hrebiniak 1992; Wit and Meyer 2004). A comprehensive and doable strategy must also be politically acceptable. Technical feasibility refers to particular strategy being realistic and practically possible. Different types of resources and technical expertise is needed to pursue a given strategy. Political acceptability can be defined as a strategic decision that is consistent with organization's values and needs, and is compatible with critical decision makers or stakeholders' views. "Political acceptability does not always guarantee organizational rationality and optimality in a choice of company strategy" (Hrebiniak 1992, pp 393).

Setting up a strategy is only half the story. In fact, the most elegantly envisaged, precisely articulated strategy is believed by practitioners to be practically worthless unless it is implemented successfully. "While strategy formation and implementation are tightly integrated functions, strategy implementation is the most complicated and time-consuming part of strategic management" (Shah 2005, pp 294). It is difficult enough to formulate a strategy; however, "getting there, and getting key people to go along willingly, committed to the same vision" requires particular sets of skills, resources and commitment (Hrebiniak 1992, pp 392). It takes Napoleon or Alexander's charisma and leadership skills to achieve this.

Stories are filled with solutions and remedies on how to make your strategy successful. Researchers and practitioners believe that coordination, information sharing, and integration are becoming crucial in implementation of the strategy. "Sharing and leverage denote the need for coordination, which further implies a need for effective communication and control" across the departments, units, maybe even countries (Hrebiniak 1992, pp 398). They state that organization must become boundary-less in pursue of organizational objectives set by the strategy. A seamless transition from one state to another should entail coordination, control and common perceptions of interdependence and cooperation. Authors argue (Shah 2005; Hrebiniak 1992; Wit and Meyer 2004; Brown and Eisenhardt 1998) that in order to achieve that, one has to consider critical strategy implementation variables or strategy implementation tactics.

Figure 3. Implementation model

What the model is saying is that strategy has to be consistent with the other strategies; it cannot contradict the overall strategy. Many authors argue that it is difficult to implement something that is vague, misunderstood or inappropriate since it cannot be easily communicated. Organizational structure needs to be taken into consideration as it plays a role in how a strategy is being coordinated and communicated. For example, organizations that are highly vertical in their structure may need more time and resources to implement strategy due to loss of synergy or efficiency. Brown and Eisenhardt (1998, pp 29) argue that "systems of any kind are poised on the edge of chaos between too much structure and too little structure". What they say is that, on one hand, organizations are too rigid to implement change, on the other hand, they are too loose and implementation chaotically falls apart. The need for coordination is directly influenced by organizational structure. "Structure affects interdependence and the need for joint decision making" (Hrebiniak 1992, pp 395). Effective integration and communication become key elements when strategies travel across cultures and countries and the need for coordination further increases. The management of perceptions and beliefs is important in winning over people's minds and hearts. Various incentive and control systems are portrayed as tools against resistance to strategy change. Surveillance and feedback are talked about as systems that help monitor business key performance indicators (KPIs). Beer and Eisenstat, (2000) say that it is important to have metrics, something tangible, that would unambiguously reveal conditions or performance that is outside the norm and that indicates a need for managerial intervention. Human resources are described as central to implementation and permeate the whole model. Skilled and qualified people are argued to be essential ingredients of company, culture, and their presence and impact can spell success or failure for the strategy implementation process. To all these remedies, Shah (2005) adds some more must-have: allocation of sufficient resources, effective information systems, management commitment and leadership. "Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat" (Sun Tzu, Chinese General and Author of Art of War, 500 BC).

4.1.4. Strategy Implementation Success Factors and Barriers

There have been numerous tragic stories reported when strategic implementation fails. The lesson is said to be learned. Authors (Davenport 1998; Oke and Oke 2007; Hit et al. 2001; Dettmer 2003; Gray 1986) describe the main problems to be mostly related to technical implementation problems e.g. choosing information systems, reporting, control and surveillance, or organizational ones such as lack of involvement by employees and managers, resistance to change, etc. A successful strategy implementation process is showed as an integrated technical and organizational solution and failing to take proper account of problems related to both increases the risk of failure. Success stories urge organizations to recognize, analyze and deal with critical factors that may enhance the successful implementation of any strategy. Arrto et al. (2007) explain that a successful implementation means that it is implemented in a correct and complete way at minimum cost, time, and human resources. “A successfully implemented strategy will soon start to produce the expected and planned benefits for an organization so that it can develop the competitive advantages that management had in mind when it decided to pursue the strategy” (Bernal and Sanchez 2007, pp 294). Critical success factors become barriers/obstacles to implementation when they do not work as planned (Mintzberg et al. 1998; Hammer and Champy 1993; Saloner et al. 2001, Chaffee 1985; Wit and Meyer 2004; Brown and Eisenhardt 1998):

1. Lack of coordination
    - Poor reporting and control systems
    - Organizational structure is too rigid or too loose
2. Failure to follow the plan
    - Poor follow up through after initial planning
    - No tracking of progress
3. Poor communications
    - Insufficient information sharing or poor information systems
    - Lack of involvement on part of end-users
4. Failure to manage change
    - Inadequate understanding of the resistance to change
    - Lack of vision and mission
5. Lack of management commitment
    - Failure to get management involved from the start
    - Failure to obtain sufficient company resources to accomplish strategy

6. Lack of employee commitment

    New strategy is poorly explained to employees

    No incentives given to embrace the new strategy

7. Lack of performance measurements

    Poor or no objective metrics on performance analysis

    On schedule and within budget

8. Lack of training and skills

    Can the staff, equipment, and processes handle the new strategy

    Failure to develop new employee and management skills

4.2. A story about change

4.2.1. Change

Most of the stories have something in common. This story is no exception. As with story of strategy, the story of change talks about "change being the new state of things which is different from the old state of things" (French and Bell 1999, pp 2). Organisational change is often portrayed as going from current state to future state in the organization and the concept of organizational change is usually regarded as organization-wide change. Change is said to be provoked by different factors that are either some major external driving force or an internal one. External forces are told to originate in the external environment and may come from competitors, customers, government, and technology innovation related factors. Changes can be political, cultural, demographic, economic or technological (Child 2005). Dawson (2003) talks about internal forces to come from the organization itself and they can be triggered by new strategies, new people in key positions, pressure to modify organizational structure, etc. Organizations usually undertake organization-wide change to progress to a different level in their life cycle, e.g., going from a highly reactive, entrepreneurial organization to more stable and planned development. Goodstein and Burke (1997, pp 159) speak of the primary cause that usually stems from external pressure rather than internal desire to change. Organisational change is said to set off only if there is the perception or experience of environmental threat, risk or opportunity.

There are many different kinds and types of changes that organization might undergo and so storyline told can vary too. Authors (Ackerman 1997; Mintzberg and Westley 1992) claim that changes can be planned or emergent, episodic or continuous, top-down or bottom-up; changes can also be radical or incremental focusing on people, systems, structures and processes or culture. Depending on the type of change, different approaches towards change implementation should be considered. An organization that is undergoing a "large-scale, fundamentally radical change that is about to bring transformation, turnaround, refocus or reorientation" should have a different strategy from the one that is going through "incremental, evolutionary changes that are about fine-tuning, fixing problems, making adjustments and modifying processes; that is, implementing modest changes that improve an organisation's performance" (Mintzberg and Westley 1992). Change strategy and change implementation are said to be different when it comes to changing individual's skills, attitudes and behaviour or systems, work design and other work related processes. In pursue of change, one is asked to consider purpose and contents of change. Katzenbach (1995, pp 7) puts it clearly when noting that "real change leaders do not care if the change effort is fast or slow, empowered or controlled, one-time or recurring, cultural or engineered – or all of the above. They only care that it is people intensive, and performance oriented." Nevertheless, researchers dispute and say that disparities in change implementation exist. Categorizations of change tend to be simplifications of reality – it is not just black and white colours out there.

4.2.2. Change Management

Change management is term that is widely used but not necessarily understood. The most obvious definition of 'change management' is said to refer to the task of managing change. Nickols (2007) refers 'managing change' to the making of changes in a planned and managed or systematic fashion. The aim of change management is to effectively implement new methods and systems in an organization. It is described as a structured approach to shifting organization to a desired future state by changing individual's behaviour and attitudes in order to accept and espouse the future state. Mesinger (2008) argues that most organizations perceive change management as a business function that improves organizational effectiveness and enables them to become flexible and adaptable in a competitive marketplace. Fulla (2007, pp 36) defines change management as "the act of managing modifications to an organization's culture, hierarchy, and/or business processes in order to achieve a desired outcome". Change management mostly addresses the effective implementation of planned change (Cummings and Worley 2005, pp 2). Harrison (2008) says that by undertaking a structured approach to change management, organizations are ensuring themselves that it is planned, managed, reinforced and, above all, focused on delivering sustained business benefits. “At present change management mainly concentrates on the goals of the strategic triangle that are cost, time and quality” (Wit and Meyer 2004, pp 206). Since conventional solutions are powerless to solve the inherent conflict between these three goals, change management comes into play.

From the definitions above, Nickols (2007) describes four emerging features of change management:

1. Change management is a task that goes from reactive to proactive state of affairs.
2. Change management requires considerable variation in competency and skill; it is a professional practice.
3. Change management is a body of knowledge that consists of models, methods, techniques, and other tools.
4. Change management is a control mechanism. It comprises different requirements, standards, processes and procedures.

4.2.3. Change Models and Processes

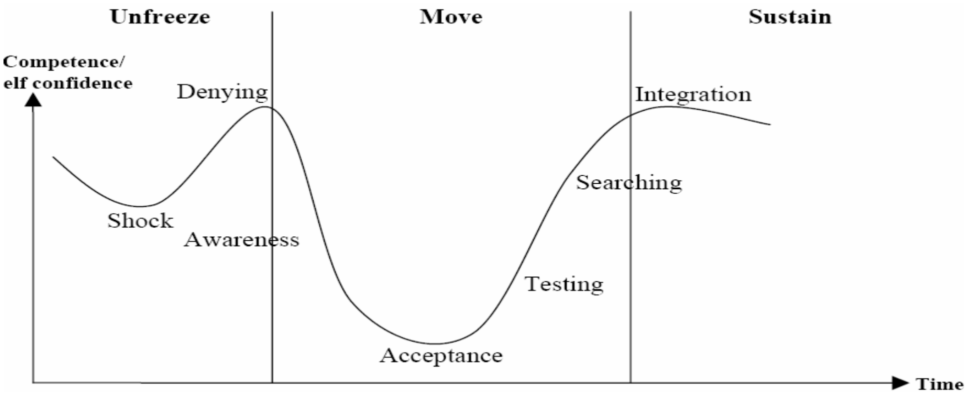
As it was mentioned before, change can come in different shapes and sizes. One type of change is planned change. According to Lippitt et al. (1958, pp 10), “planned change originates in a decision to make a deliberate effort to improve the system”. The term indicates the action of planning and following it which is common to all change models that present different stages or phases of change. Fulla (2007) speaks of change management as a process that should be maintained throughout each of these stages with its ultimate goal of achieving ‘equilibrium’ as soon as possible. During the period of adaptation to new processes and procedures work outputs and efforts are noted to usually drop significantly. Therefore, “the focus of change management is to minimize the length of this dip and indoctrinate the procedures into the standard operating procedures and culture of the organization so that the organization may realize quickly its optimal performance level” (Fulla 2007, pp 36).

One of the first ways suggested on planned change is the one of Kurt Lewin – a three-stage process of unfreezing, moving, and refreezing. It has been improved by other authors, i.e.

Schein (1987), Balogun and Hailey (1999), Goodstein and Burke (1997). Lewin's model is added a psychological mechanism distinctive for each phase of the model, as well as indications how management should act during the different phases. We have summarized the model below the figure 4.

Lewin (1950's)

Schein (1987)



Balogun and Hailey (1999)	• Help individuals to let go of past and accept the change • Minimize shock • Communicate intentions as early as possible	• Help individuals to change: listen, sympathize, support, encourage, coach, debate, take and give feedback • Establish education, training, personal development, new working practices and systems.	• Support individuals and their new roles • Encourage reflection on change and learning • Celebrate success and reinforce new ways of behaving
Goodstein and Burke (1997)	• Top management changes • Reduction of the levels of hierarchy • Redefinition of the business • Top management commitment and involvement	• Empowering and participation of employees • Supporting the change by support groups • New incentives and bonuses • Intensive training according to the business strategy and values • Management tools to support change	• Continuous monitoring and feedback • Promoting new values • New performance appraisal system • Use of task forces

Figure 4. Change Implementation Process

When an organization is undergoing a change, it has, first of all, has to be unfreezed. It is a very difficult and complex process for people and the first reaction is shock and denial. Top management has to be involved with the process from the very beginning and it must be fully committed to the change project. The reason for this is to help employees minimize shock and make them accept change as soon as possible by increasing their awareness of the change and its purpose and by constant communication and support. The second stage is moving where employees are aware of change and trying to accept it. They should be encouraged to develop new skills in order to prepare for change and minimize insecurities and fears that are related to change. Different approaches should be taken to help increase acceptance of change: soft, support, feedback, discussion, and hard, incentives and bonuses. Once the organization and its members have learned to work in a new way, these attitudes and behaviours have to be sustained. The third stage is concerned with integrating change and supporting employees in their new roles. Monitoring and feedback are tools that could help not fall back to the old habit of doing things, as well as celebration of success should be used to promote the new values.

The other known model in use is Kotter's (1996) eight stage process that enhances change efforts. Kotter has studied over hundred organisations and came up with eight most common mistakes causing change to fail. In Kotter's view changes tend to be associated with a multi-step process that creates enough power and motivation for overcoming various obstacles. First of all, he says that an organization has to establish a sense of urgency. There has to be a clear need for change. Secondly, it is crucial to create a guiding coalition that would back up the change project. Political acceptance should not be underplayed. The third and the fourth steps involve developing a clear vision and strategy for change and communicating it to all members of organization. Additionally, management has to take action and empower employees to take broad-based action themselves. This step is important in order to generate short term wins which is critical when management wants to keep the motivation up. Furthermore, by consolidating gains, organization can produce more change and one event after another will secure that change is sustained. Finally, cultural perspective should be taken into consideration. Management has to anchor new approaches in the culture by developing appropriate and change supporting values.

Cummings and Worley (2004) have a different perspective: they are saying that most planned change and stage-models portray change effort in a misleading way. They declare that planned change is chaotic by nature and change models typically characterize change as a sequence of steps to be carried out. However, this is an oversimplification of the reality. Models lack causality and cannot explain how steps should be taken in different environments. Cummings and Worley (2004, pp 156) claim that change can be organised into five major categories as illustrated in Figure 5.

However, even though models look different, the model of Cummings and Worley are doing the exact same job of describing key variables that are critical to effective change management. The first is motivating change or establishing a sense of urgency and need for change. The second variable is talking about creating a vision and mission. It continues claiming that organization should identify key stakeholders in order to get the political support which is also a step mentioned by Kotter. The first three boxes represent Lewin's unfreezing stage. The fourth box is related to the Lewin's 'moving' stage where transition is supported by planning and appropriate organisational structures. Finally, authors suggest 'refreezing' the change or sustaining the momentum through reinforcement of new behaviours by building a support system or incentives.

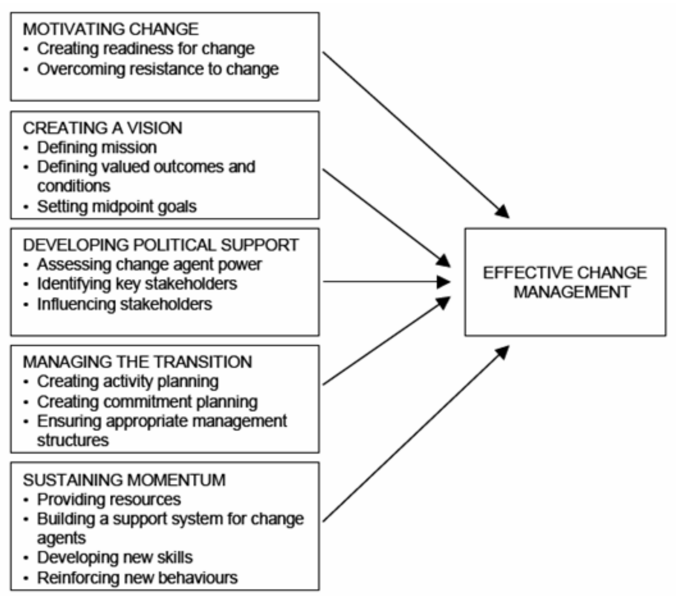


Figure 5. Activities Contributing to effective change management, Cummings and Worley (2004, pp 156)

The models presented above are only a few in a wide array of models, concepts and processes. Iles and Sutherland (2001) summarize possible approaches towards different types of change in Figure 6.

Type	Possible approach
Incremental	• TQM • Parallel learning structures and Quality circles • Organisational development
Step-change	• Project management • BPR
Organic	• TQM • Parallel learning structures and Quality circles • The Learning Organisation • Benchmarking • Action research
Directive	• BPR • Project management • Organisational development
Planned	• Project management • Organisational development
Emergent	• TQM • Action research • The Learning Organisation
Episodic	• BPR • Project management
Continuous	• Parallel learning structures and Quality circles • The Learning organization • TQM • Action Research

Figure 6. Possible approaches to different types of change, Iles and Sutherland (2001)

Previous research has indicated and showed that even though organizations may be faced with comparable contextual forces for change, the strategies and change processes they choose are different. “Someone places more emphasis e.g., on human issues whereas someone else may stress visions and strategies” (Kotter 1996, pp 21). The reasons behind this could be in different ways of interpreting signals in the environment or organizational capacity to undergo change. “Organizations often experience opposing demands in terms of handling both continuity and change during the implementation process” (Meyer and Stensaker 2006, pp 218), which makes it even harder to choose a particular model in terms of their usability in real life context.

Nickols (2007) provides some factors in selecting change strategy. First of all, he says it is important to assess the scope and scale of change. The larger the scope and scale of change, the broader mix of strategies will be required. The degree of resistance is another important factor. Strong resistance argues for coercive, adaptive strategies. The same strategy should be used if time frame for change implementation is short. In case the target population of change is very large, management will be required to use a mix of strategies in order to reach the critical mass for change to happen. There is also the dependency factor which is a classic double-edged sword. If the organization is dependent on its people, management's ability to order is limited. On the other hand, if people are reliant upon the organization, their ability to resist is limited. However, when the stakes are high, Nickols (2007) says that nothing can be left to chance – a mix of different strategies should be in use for employees to commit to change.

Nonetheless, “understanding that organisational change is a process that can be facilitated by perceptive and insightful planning and analysis and well crafted, sensitive implementation phases, while acknowledging that it can never be fully isolated from the effects of serendipity, uncertainty and chance” (Dawson, 1996).

4.2.4. Change Management success factors and barriers

Effective change management requires an understanding of the possible effects of change on various factors in organization. Tichy (1983) argues that organization has to consider 3 parts simultaneously in order to change organization and secure long-term survival:

1. The technical system,
2. Political system,
3. Cultural system.

Mintzberg and Quinn (1991, pp 93) suggest that in order to manage all these systems, “people must abandon the roots of their past successes and develop entirely new skills and attitudes”. This situation is said to clearly become worrisome for most people as they become anxious for their future forced to learn new skills, move away from the old ways of doing things. However, most problems arise not because of the external change, but because of employee’s inability to adapt or identify with the change. Change models and critical success factors give an idea on how to deal with these fears.

Kotter (1996, pp 21) implies that it is difficult and maybe even pointless to distinguish between change models and critical success factors as change models are based on some kind of critical success factors and critical success factors resemble change models. Critical success factors are described as a combination of knowledge and professional expertise derived from change management. Based on different authors (Lippit 1958; Cummings and Worley 2004; Kotter 1996; Goodstein and Burke 1997; Carnall 1990; Dawson 2003;

Hrebiniak 1992), a list of critical success factors follows and this is what different authors have to say about critical factors.

- Top management commitment, support and leadership. “The management’s commitment to strategic success can be infectious, positively affecting the commitment of other managers and increasing the probability of agreement or consensus on the chosen plan of action” (Hrebiniak 1992, pp 393).
- User competence, training. “An appropriate training is furthermore a prerequisite for successful empowerment, yet many organisations do not want to confront the issue due to the amount of effort and money needed for arranging proper training”. (Kotter 1996, pp 103)
- Co-operation. Nowadays, organizations are very complex – functional, language, cultural barriers exist. “The problems cannot be solved inside one single function or department” (Carnall 1990, pp 9). Cooperation is vital in change projects to share information, knowledge, best practices.
- Clear vision and goals. Visions and strategies that are not actionable will raise doubt. Management needs to create a vision that can lead and inspire others. “Strategy implementation is difficult enough. It must be made even more questionable by having one hand work at cross-purposes with the other” (Hrebiniak 1992, pp 394).
- Clear need for change. In change process it is of vital importance to establish a sense of urgency, i.e., “making sure that all people involved in the change effort have internalised the need for it” (French and Bell 1999, pp 122; Kotter 1996).
- Identifying key persons. ”Change processes are force fields of promoters and opponents which implementation management must impact and control on the individual as well as on the group level (Meyer and Wit 2004, pp 218).
- Purposeful planning. A change project that is considered to be good consists of clear visions and goals, budgets, schedule, methods, resources needed, etc. It builds credibility of the change effort as a whole. However, Meyer and Wit (2004) argue that there is no ‘master plan’. Change project concept should be designed which is contingent upon current situation.
- Effective communication. Management must evaluate what employee reactions will be and craft a change program that will provide support as employees go through the process of accepting change. “The more open and thorough communication is

undertaken, the more trust is likely to develop between different parties involved in the change" (Kaufman 1992, pp 88).

- Motivation. Many different factors create motivation and none can be particularly distinguished as people find different things to be motivating. There is no single universal definition of what motivation is. The fastest way to make people motivated is to use concepts that produce practical, tangible results fastest.
- Control and feedback on progress. Control is needed to monitor visible short-term wins. Monitoring and feedback enables recognizing problems in early stages and can even help employees feel motivated and involved.
- Dealing with resistance to change. A change attempt should start with a recognized urgency and a clear need to expand. "Resistance to change is perhaps the most well-known of the problems and risks associated with change projects" (e.g., Salminen et al. 2000, 26).
- Culture. "A prominent skill for management is empathy, because in most instances organisational change is about working with people from different occupational, local and national cultures. Thus, the sensitivity to cultural differences, struggle for understanding various motives and backgrounds, and the ability to communicate in an intelligible fashion is crucial" (Carnall 1990, pp 114).

Instead on focusing on critical success factors, Meyer and Wit (2004) talk about barriers of change. They argue that personnel barriers are the core problem of change. There can be three types of barriers: company-wide barriers, management barriers and employee barriers. Company-wide barriers are associated with particular culture in organization. Corporate culture can facilitate or impede any change projects. Meyer and Wit (2004, pp 208-209) state that management barriers can stem from 'expert-doer syndrome' where "individuals try to apply previously successful solutions without realizing that situation has changed" or 'authority fear syndrome' which comes from "insecurity and fear to assume responsibility making individuals reactive rather than proactive". Employees can have attitude and/or behavioural barriers toward change. Authors suggest taking change initiative very seriously and treat any implementation as a change project. "Better effects will be achieved if the activities of power and politics and those of management of perceptions and beliefs are harmonised in an implementation mix, similar to marketing mix" (Meyer and Wit 2004, pp 213).

We have retold you a story about strategy and change that has been collected from many academic storytellers. The genre used in this chapter was a textbook/academic genre. Chapter 2 described four elements present in a story (Bruner 1990, cited in Nielsen and Madsen 2006, pp 37). A story usually includes narrator's perspective which, in our case, treats the story as a success story describing how strategy and change works in ideal world. Official ideal story has been recognized as truthful representation of the real world by researchers and practitioners. The sequences in this story are events that are taking place in the world: strategy and change implementations. These events are described in a fashion that turns chaotic and in flux reality into orderly and simplified form easier to understand and comprehend. The state of mind in the ideal official story is an orderly one, ascribing things in their rightful places. The actions directed to overcoming different obstacles are neatly defined step-by-step prescriptions on strategy and change implementation barriers. The remedies suggested by these stories are important rhetorical and practical resources that keep organizational flow of activity smooth, continuous, with few interruptions. Strategy and change management remedies are usually commonly held beliefs that have developed, through the accretion of anecdote and experience, until they finally emerge in a textbook and acquire authority (Leopold et al. 2005, pp 181). Academic storytellers are sensitive to the fact that their story is idealistic and should be treated as simplification of the reality. However, it does not prevent them from making the story very prescriptive and dogmatic. They suggest a best practice approach without much further consideration how the suggested remedies would work in different environments, cultures.

5. Stories at work[1]

The next part of the thesis describes the stories that we have identified at work. Whether it's the story of the manager or that of the normal employee, we will describe all stories related to the change process that the company is going through. Also, each story begins with a short description of the main character. The stories are taken from Active Group company where employees were undergoing the implementation of process standardization strategy. Part of the process standardization is mapping of various processes within the Active Group. All of the stories are revolving around strategy development and first part of implementation process which is a training session teaching the mapping techniques and introducing employees to the overall company strategy.
Stories at work are a mixture of two genres: interview and storytelling genres. The purpose of the interview is to gather information from the person being interviewed, the interviewee. The interview is a spoken genre. The tone used in the conversation was both formal and informal, depending on the person that we have interviewed. Storytelling genre refers to distancing yourself from the main character and being able to tell the story without getting involved. Therefore, we have made a very clear distinction between the character opinion and our own opinions when retelling different stories.

5.1. A Senior Director's Story

Jesper is the Senior Director of the Process Excellence Team, Centre organisation. He has been with the company for almost 5 years, having different positions. The change process that the company is going through was initiated by him and he also played a major role in the strategy creation and implementation.

5.1.1. Company story

Long ago, a new logistics company called Active Group was established. The company has always been an entrepreneurial one, meaning that it has been built on people who had the responsibility to go out and set up the business. "And when you give people the responsibility

[1] The language of transcripts is not censored in this chapter.

of going out in the world in order to set up new business you basically give them a gun and a bag of money in order to do the job". This had both advantages and disadvantages. One of the main disadvantages was that the business has been set up in the way where each manager could set it up as he/she thought proper. So over the past 25 years the company had realized that it has a very fragmented process landscape with 125 countries organized and working in 125 different ways.

One day in 2006 they decided to implement a new information system that will help automate their processes. Faced with the fact that they had to accommodate local variance, they realized that they need to understand what the legal and business requirements that will drive variation are. That is because otherwise, they would have probably end up with 125 ways of implementing the same system. And at that point in time "we realized that we need to do something here. Otherwise, implementation is going to be extremely costly". After implementing the new system in 10 countries, Jesper realized that they "need to have a bigger perspective on this". This is when the Process Excellence Team (PEX) was formed and had the strategic role of supporting the organization in eliminating, simplifying and automating the existing business processes in order to remove unnecessary complexity. Jesper was then given the position of head of the department. It all started with a brainstorm in order to identify the major issues that the company is going through.

Finally, they have identified around 500 issues requiring process improvement, IT development and in some cases, strategic decisions. And they all agreed, based on a detailed root analysis, on a new strategy.

5.1.2. Local variant mapping story

It was "a need driven by business and the vision of aligning the company processes" that brought the need to have a local variant mapping strategy. Over the last year, together with his department, Jesper has built a vision on how to get their arms around it. Its main objective was to align processes and IT globally – standardization to the highest degree possible.

When talking about the people involvement, Jesper brings up the two different parties involved in the project: the initiator who also had the vision (which was in fact Jesper himself) and the team that helped driving the strategy. "We have formed a strategy that hopefully will fulfil the strategy that I've had". "Most people that work within the company hate standardization. This is because they are entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs hate standardization". However, standardization was needed if they wanted to react rapidly in a fast changing market. "It's a kind of balance on how do you standardize while also keeping agility in your business that you can change when the market changes". He talks about he rest of the team as being definitely business oriented people due to a business oriented requirement.

Back in 2006, a mandate was given by the board of directors so that two new divisions should be created: Business process management and process improvement. Jesper was one of the three people who created the baseline for future improvements. The whole communication started from the board of directors and went down to the CEOs of the company. Further on, this was communicated to the newly established Business Process Owners (BPOs). The BPOs have been introduced into the entire story of the process standardisation: why, what, when, how, action plan and timeline. They had to further go out and build new organizations based on the information they have received. It was then the BPOs responsibility to advertise and create awareness of what was happening inside the organization. "And that was the journey that we have been through in 2007." However, the communication cycle is not complete as the average employee does not know anything about this initiative. Only people that have been involved are aware of the initiative. He identifies the need of improving the communication throughout the organization.

When talking about the reasoning behind selecting the pilot country, Jesper brings up major drivers in taking the decision. First one is the strategic geographical location of China. "If you get them on board, everything will work. They have a big say when you speak to the management". Part of the strategy was to select some pilot countries that could act as guinea pigs and verify if the strategy implementation works the way it has been designed. He also talks about the organizational structure which is very important and China was chosen also because it had a proper organizational structure. Last reason that he mentions is networking: "I know John and I feel confident that if we make an agreement, this will work".

The story of the pilot that has been introduced in China has a clear objective: i.e. identifying what could work or not before a full scale roll out. "I think it was an early test and we should recognize it as an early test and there were some learning that we might need to take back and say…wait…this might not work." According to the feedback received from China, some of the initial assumptions will be changed as they might not work. Jesper mentions again the communication level that needs to be improved. He talks about communication as something that they haven't been focusing on until now but have a clear intention to change. "We have to improve our communication. We know that and that's actually what we are working on as we speak".

The story continues with a description of the agreement that has been made with China. He talks about a list of actions that have been put into a document including a timeline for each action.

There are no KPIs identified in order to measure the success or failure of the implementation. The way they measure is that they assess if the objectives identified in the initial strategy have been achieved in a timely manner. "If we get the success criteria under control in a timely manner, then we can say that we have achieved what we have planned".

When talking about the internal employees, Jesper clearly identifies some of the major advantages that he sees coming from the standardization process. "From an employee perspective, it should ease transition between jobs. It should be easier for employees to understand what are my objectives, how am I measured, what training do I need, and how so I work as part of the end to end process. The process mapping should create transparency to the employee. Where am I, the link in the big chain? The external customers on the other hand, would like to see to see themselves as part of an end to end supply chain. Customers have started asking for process documentation in order to make sure that we create transparency".

Pilot objectives have been clearly defined. "We need to understand whether our approach will work". Then, he talks about testing if training could be delivered in the timeframe that they have set. And, finally, he brings up the agreement in the governance principles that have been designed in the centre. Jesper has a very clear picture in his mind on how things should be done and most important what are the final objectives that need to be achieved.

When asked whether the pilot can be considered a change management process, Jesper said that he sees a problem with it. His explanation was the following: "When they refer to it as a daily thing they refer to it that the mindset of doing the way we want to do business should be part of the daily thing. We mobilize the team, we see the future, we run a test, we implement and then we move through the cycle of continuous improvement. That's the mindset that they are talking about and I concur. But they probably don't see the big picture as a change."

Then he starts explaining his own views on what was the scope of the pilot and what he initially wanted to achieve with its implementation. "Running a pilot will create clarity both on our side and their side and the focus on our side was to understand the governance principles in setting up the framework and if you go out and ask them how it would change their lives, it will not justify by running a 3 days session. If they feel that they are being left in the dark, I can understand because the clarity has only come to us within the last 48 hours." (That is after starting to receive feedback from several parties).

He admits that it is a huge, complex project. "We have created a monster. Nobody knew what this was all about. Now we see it. We are on the right track but we need to build the same picture in the other people's minds. It's a journey. It's a transition process."

A project cannot work if some of the puzzle pieces are missing. One of the most important parts, in Jesper's opinion, is communication. In the beginning he puts a lot of emphasis on the fact that communication is missing. Later he starts detailing the plans that he has on how to reinforce communication. "You could argue: should you include junior people in a one day discussion with senior management. Again, the pilot was to go and understand this locally. And if you do not know the big picture and we are sitting in a meeting, people that know each other are discussing things on a very abstract level. How would you feel? What's the impact on me? And we were not discussing what does this mean to the project manager. We were discussing how this would work for China and not how it would change the project manager's daily life. Project managers should maybe have not even participated in the first day. They would have probably felt quite different if they would have only participated in the training: this is what you need to do and this is how you do it." He then continues "For the next pilot, we will change the communication package that we will send out. Maybe we should not even refer to it as a pilot but more as a dialogue on how should we make this work. You can create something in the centre (HQ) and then go to the region and roll it out or you can enter into a dialogue with them...OK, this is what we think we should do, what is your opinion?"

Cultural differences are important and have been taken into consideration when working on the strategy. “You should also take into account that there is a cultural difference and especially Asian people underplay it a little because it’s easier afterwards to show success. If you have been in China for a longer period you will learn that their first reaction is …wow…this won’t work”.

5.2. A General Manager’s story

Anna is the General Manager of the Process Excellence Team who works in the Centre organization. She has been with the company for 2 years now but she has been involved from the first moment in the strategy initiation. She was directly involved in the strategy implementation as she, along with Jesper was the one providing the training for the team in China.

This story starts with a short overview of the people involved in the strategy creation. Anna explains that the strategy was created by the Process Excellence Team. It has always been the idea that at some point, this strategy should go out. And it has always been planned to do a phased approach, “build up a base centrally and then we start rolling things out”.

Talking about communication, Anna mentions that the pilot is not a totally new concept for the centre. They used informal meetings in order to communicate the strategy within the local organisation. “After we made the first draft of the strategy we went to the Business Process Owners and we had meetings where we presented… OK, this is how we do it and we received their feedback. So that’s been the primary communication”.

Communication was different when it came to looking to the local organisation. Their main tool was the monthly reader (similar to a newsletter). Apparently, it was really well received as “We got a lot of questions after we sent the first newsletter”.
Even if there was no feedback received from China, at least some of the initial objectives of the pilot have been achieved. That is because they have identified several aspects that will need to be changed going further: “there are some things that I want to change for the next training but that’s the whole purpose of the pilot”.

She sees a clear communication loop between the strategy implementation team and the team in China. The questions that may come up after the training are being collected either directly by Anna, or indirectly through a support e-mail address.

But can this be considered big change? Anna says she doesn't think so. More than that, she doesn't think that people are going to be affected because they really do the same things today. "I don't see it as a big change. A new tool, a new method...it's just a tweak on how they do it today. So it's not going to dramatically increase or reduce their workload".

In Anna's view, the only KPI needed was to have all the regions trained within 1 year. "Other than that we didn't define any KPIs."

The success of the strategy is mostly based on feedback. Because these are pilots, "we spent more time than we will spend in the future on discussing our approach and see if there are any adjustments that needed to be done based on their recommendations."

Initial feedback is considered to be enough. There is no need to go back to the country that had the pilot in order to collect additional information. Also, Anna cannot see why this activity should be any different than any other activities performed until now. "I don't really expect to go out for more feedback…I mean I don't see this training as being different from any other training".

When talking about the target audience, Anna identifies the whole organisation as being the target audience. This is because everyone can benefit from it.

The story then takes us to the reasoning behind choosing China as a guinea pig. Firstly, Anna says that China was very eager to start the pilot. Secondly, their organizational structure allowed them to start working as soon as they received the training "they have a very well established PEX organisation that has been there for a while, they already done some mapping in the past so they have a little experience". Lastly, she adds that it's "also a matter of who knows who".

Change management is seen as something unnecessary as "this is a small change. It's so minor that you don't need change management".

5.3. A Senior Director's story

John has been a senior Director in China since PEX Team was created. He leads the team that is supposed to implement the strategy. Also, he has attended part of the training that the team from the headquarters conducted.

John grew together with PEX organisation. He first heard about it when he was offered a job in China. "So I've been part of the PEX organisation more of less from the outset. We started with the PEX setup here in China a year and a half ago and I've been part of that since then. I've sort of grown up with the PEX organisation". The local variant mapping, which he describes as a new initiative and not as a strategy, was communicated to him by Jesper "..say..3-4 months ago with the question whether we would be interested in becoming the pilot for the local variant mapping".

Keeping track of the project seems to play an important role in a project implementation. However, John explains that they haven't really set up clear governance on how they are going to report the progress or share any kind of information. "We are establishing the project documentation so we have agreed on a number of action points and in order to keep track of these action points we will use day to day correspondence via mail or whatever to report whatever issues we may have. So we haven't really setup a clear governance on how are we going to report the progress or share any kind of information…but we do have a small project plan to cover the key milestones of the project".

The strategy as a whole is welcomed; however, it is not considered a change. "I don't see the local variant mapping as a change process. I think it's not going to be a major process impact or any kind of major change in the organisation here. Do we have a strategy for local variant mapping? I was not aware of that. To the rest of my knowledge we have a pilot that we are now starting to work on…I am not familiar with any kind of strategy for local variant mapping. I would assume that the strategy is something that goes out from one of the two pilots…so, to my knowledge we don't have any strategy on this. And surely we haven't formulated any local strategy for the local variant mapping here in China".

When talking about the long term plans, and the impact that the strategy will have on customers and employees, John has one answer: “I don’t know…it’s way to early to say”.

As the local variant mapping is not seen as a change process, most of the change project elements are missing: establishing the KPIs before inducing the change and defining clear roles and responsibilities. “No KPIs have been identified in order to keep track of what is happening or assessing if the strategy is working or not. Maybe we will need to do that, but again, it’s way too early. And I don’t think we know what kind of outcome the process excellence team expects to get out of here. The KPIs should come from the centre as they are not something that we set here. Of course, we need to agree to it but it but that’s something that we set in”.

“A key success of actually doing this is that we can see some benefits on the productivity level or improve the demarcations but, ideally, it would be improvement to productivity. And another would be that we have joint governance on how we manage our projects”.

When we asked what John thinks why his team was selected for the pilot, he says: “Why China? I have no clue…probably if you ask Jesper he would say that China is the most troublesome country to deal with so he would actually prefer to go with the most complex one so that things will go smoothly afterwards. So if they can manage China, they can probably manage anything”.

Even if John did not take part of the training as he is not going to perform the actual process mapping, he identifies the main objectives of the training as being to understand the global processes and the roadmap of going forward.

He does not seem to be concerned about the organisational structure but in the same time, he doesn’t know what to expect in the future. “The pilot will grow as we launch and learn. For now, I would say that we have the right team in place to support the pilot”.

He is very enthusiastic about the local variant mapping initiative: “I think it’s a fantastic initiative and it’s long overdue for many good reasons. We’ve been talking for a long time on how to manage this. Clearly an advantage is that if we can do it here in China, I am very sure that we can do it in any other region…so from our opinion, we need to have a clear image on how we deal with local variants so that we avoid continuous discussions going further. Whenever we speak about change, people think that it will require them to do extra work, at least in the beginning". John sees this as a disadvantage but in the end it will be worthy: "…I don't know, more work. But it's a needed initiative."

John sees the cultural differences related to China as a competitive advantage. "When you are working in a country like China, they are usually very good at absorbing changes. Over the past year and a half we have implemented several changes that the organisation has absorbed them extremely well".

5.4. A Project Manager's story

Jay's holds a Project Manager's position in the Process Excellence Team in the China office. Her next challenge, along with her colleague Yin, will be to do the local variant mapping which is part of the process standardization strategy.

Jay's story begins with a short description of how she first heard about the Process Excellence team and then about the Local variant mapping initiative. It was all e-mail related communication. She received an e-mail from her manager informing the team about the newly created Process Excellence Department. That was probably about 1 year ago. A week before the actual strategy implementation she received another e-mail containing information on the local variant mapping strategy.

A lot of emphasis is put on e-mail communication as she mentions that the way that they report and track the progress related to the strategy is, as well, through e-mail.

She then starts talking about the most important factor that she sees as mandatory in order to achieve success with the strategy implementation. "I think first of all, we should have a very clear deadline of how to carry out the mapping so we should have aligned methodology and the support for tools that we are using".

She has a long term approach when talking about the strategy impact on internal and external customers. "I think the effect is that the customer will be clear on what the actual process is so that eventually we would be able to align the processes. The customer will then benefit from this so and it would make work a lot more efficient".

She is aware of the fact that no KPIs have been established but she seems to know what her team is supposed is supposed to do in the future. "There are no KPIs established so far. We have received the training and we will start mapping. When we are done, we will send the maps for approval. Eventually the success could be measured by the correctness of the methodology. Also, the project maps need to be easy to understand by all the parties so they can be shared for other countries".

The objectives of the training were to give the team a "very detailed introduction of the functionality and to enhance the knowledge on process mapping". However, when asked about the reason for which she thinks China was selected as a pilot country, she said she had no idea.

Jay gives some suggestions on how to improve the next pilot projects that are going to be performed. "I think that the training is a more theoretical one and we do need a lot of emphasis in the training but real processes are more complicated than the exercises".

She says she does consider the local variant mapping a change project and at the same time she sees it as a positive change. Even if, currently, the organisation is in a transition period, "things will get better as soon as this is over". She also speaks about the organisation being able to overcome and adapt very easy to the change and she relates it to company culture rather than country culture.

When we asked Jay how the new strategy was going to help them to understand what they would not do in the future, Jay answered: "We are told what to do".

5.5. A Project Manager's Story

Yin is a Project Manager within the Process Excellence Team who works in the China. She was part of the training conducted by the team in the centre and she will work together with Jay on local variant mapping process.

The first time Yin heard about PEX team is when the PEX department was established. The first time she heard about the strategy was a day before the training of process mapping where she was told she was chosen to participate in. Yin felt quite surprised as she didn't know any details regarding the strategy or the decision that China was selected to be the pilot test country for the new strategy. Yin didn't understand why or how particular people were selected to participate in the training. "If there is something we are going to implement in the organization in the future and you (headquarters - HQ) selected China as a pilot country, I mean at least we should expect something sent out from central area (HQ). Saying ok… we have a new initiative and we would like to have it implemented in a whole organization. We now have selected China as a pilot. I did not see such information sent out from the centre. So to me this is something suddenly happening. So what do you expect from this situation - to get more stress from the different regions?" Yin says she felt like there was lack of planning or preparation before the launch of the pilot test. Without the proper groundwork and planning, the whole strategy was lacking purpose and made central intentions very vague. "If you (HQ) want the whole organization to be notified that something is going to happen quite soon and you (HQ) do need the participation from the employees then employees, firstly, need to know what's going to happen and then, secondly, they will look at this and then they will certainly contribute more by viewing these inputs and adding comments or suggestions. There must be some communication sent out, otherwise, to us it will be more like there's just another application implemented."

In Yin's opinion, the strategy of process standardization and process mapping is a good initiative. "I partly think it is more or less like internal, better management of all these processes and then we understand clearly what activities exactly we are doing every day and then we can better manage productivity levels. It can be an advantage to us (to have a unified global process)". However, project manager was struggling to explain the purpose of the strategy and its impact. Nor was she aware of any schedules, budgets, or other resources involved regarding the strategy. In fact, Yin was a bit sceptical regarding the strategy. "Firstly, we realize that there will be variety in real life. Processes are different in different areas. This is a real life; we can't just say ok…we want to have a global procedure to cover everything. It is not possible and it is not okay in real life. I don't know how we are going to use this mapping – the global one combined with the local ones." Yin is trying to understand how global process will be able to manage all the differences among all the 125 countries and take it into account when it comes to requirements for the handling procedures. The more she elaborates about it, the more distant she becomes from the initial strategy. Yin develops her own way of how things should be. “If one can find a good way to do the same things (process standardization), I would suggest if then someone from HQ or some other department make an analysis on these different processes. I suggest we mark these different parts (as opposed to the global process) which can benefit us and publish all the information then. We should use those differences to improve customer satisfaction or improve productivity”. Yin is resisting the new strategy because she finds it difficult to comprehend and make sense of it. She suggests an alternative way where things would stay as they were before, but she would just look for innovative or different ways from other regions that she thinks would be useful to her work. “At this moment if there’s nothing specially addressed to them (employees) to tell or bring some fresh, very suggestive idea; I, personally, don't think it (process standardization) will make a difference to employees.”

Yin expresses concern upon employee motivation related to the strategy: “What’s the purpose of this besides having everything mapped and to know how these different areas do things? What do we expect from this, from our employees? They will just look at different processes. It is very possible they not catch much interest into it.” Besides a lack of motivation, Yin says that there is no specific target audience for this strategy and it would result in information overload. “Now we have something published in our internet and it is about processes for our own area or global process and what will we do? We’ll go through all of them?? There is too much information and not specific to particular target audience. We have a lot of information there (internal internet) and if we put something new there, I don't think it will make a difference”.

Communication is insufficient and obscure; Yin says that employees are left with many unanswered questions. “I think the very good part of the training is practice. That’s the best way to learn systems. The other side is questions that we would like to have some answers to. Maybe answers cannot be given at this moment, but I personally think we need a place for our questions and look at answers later. Maybe there are people with different point of view, and then they have different questions. We may even have some common concerns. In the beginning, we have more general questions and not how to use a specific system.” When Yin was asked where she would look for an answer, she said “If I have a question… I’m not sure… I guess I will go back to the trainer…” With communication being vague, there can’t be real track of progress regarding the pilot test or the training. Yin suggested that reporting tool should be agreed upon before between the pilot country and HQ. “If there’s an agreement between your end (HQ) and the pilot (pilot country), then we can have a plan of the processing input, I think it would be better”.

With the training finished, Yin was still not sure of her role and different responsibilities that she and others had. “There are some other things that need to be agreed firstly. It is totally my personal point of view. However, it is surely subject to the agreement between the management team….Who should do what? ” She feels there’s a gap there: “I don't think it would be the best way to have the PEX (process excellence team that Yin is part of) team, who are not the process owners to sit down in the office to just input the processes”. Yin expressed resistance to how things should be done. “It’s not up to me to say how to do it; it’s up to the management team. None of us is really the owner of this process. What we are going to do, I don't know, I have no idea. It depends on management decisions. I really want to ask more consideration whether it should be the pilot project team to handle all the processes or whether it is better to have the representative of the function.” Yin continues to show her hesitation and insecurity as the mapping she is responsible of is outside her expertise. She is not sure how to work with the given task and how to input it into the system she was asked to. “If I look at the current team, we all have our own projects. My processes cover a very big area, several functions and I don't know how I need to proceed. You need to talk to my manager about it.” Yin offered that departments should cooperate so that the same work wouldn’t be done twice. Project manager felt uncomfortable doing something outside her responsibility. “We are full time on our projects. I personally think this (process mapping) is something additional (workload). Maybe we should have dedicated recourses for that.”

When Yin was asked whether she feels that China, since it was a pilot test, was prepared for changes in the company or at least informed about the changes that will come regarding the strategy of process standardization, Yin answered: “What kind of change are you talking about?” Yin did not see the new strategy as a change initiative. She referred to it in the future terms as if it is something not related to her or her work. Yin described change in her company as: “This (change) is something new to us. If there is going to be something, it will be happening in the future. It should be something happening, not already happened. We haven’t had a chance to sit down together (management) and discuss about this (strategy). We need the whole team to sit down and to discuss it later”.

5.6. A Communication and Change Manager's Story

Michael is a communication manager who works in the centre. He is responsible for the communication related to the Process Excellence Team within the global organization. He was not involved in the local variant mapping strategy creation/implementation.

Michael is a manager responsible for the communications and change management for the process excellence (PEX). His primary task is to do communications with his group internally within the centre PEX team as well as the regional offices. He also had communications network which was representative from each regional PEX teams. Michael used his network "to bounce ideas off and to cascade messaging, to have a two way feedback mechanism so that when I put things out there, they're my go-to-people now for them to feed information back to me." His role was to set the strategy for the communications in PEX, establish what the key messages are and plan how to help increase the awareness of the organization about what PEX is all about.

In Michael's view, strategy and change should go hand-in-hand. "Generally you're putting a strategy in place to set a direction where you want to go. That direction is most likely a different direction from where you've been going. As a result of that, most likely it is a change in that area as well." Michael said that change often is regarded as a discipline on its own. "But really it needs to be integrated. Anytime you're dealing with people and behaviours and emotions, you are going to have change involved in it. And in my view, you need to have in incorporated into the strategy, into rollouts, into all things that we're doing here."

Michael had a very clear idea of what the strategy was in the company and how it was being carried out. "From process excellence perspective, last year we set the foundation for what it is process excellence is all about, the conceptual perspective. The goal for this year is to go beyond what the conceptual textbook's stuff that you can read or learn about in a workshop and make it more practical." He said that management has started out with what the vision for the process excellence was, what the aim for the systems map was. They also tied in their company's values, the objectives of the strategy. "Just taking this big vision and narrowing it down to all the things that are happening within the organization and coming up with what our priorities are as a process excellence organization." The three priorities that came out as a result of the strategy and communication work were: “One was to drive PEX from awareness to internalization. The other was to promote the brand both internally and externally. And lastly, to coach and support regions and functions to effectively allow them to cascade and communicate PEX to their audiences.” Michael could clearly see the direction of the strategy and its purpose. He was confident and proud of the future plans regarding strategy. He was anxious to see things start changing, see people getting involved. “Last year was setting the stage: what is our vision, what is our mission. Now we have a road map in place explaining what it is, explaining what these big process projects are and stuff like that. A lot of good things are happening and that's why our goal this year is to start talking about the results. Show how process excellence is saving the organization money and increasing our efficiency, making us easier to work with from a customer’s perspective.”

When talking about change, Michael had a very meticulous step-by-step approach towards it - how change should be implemented, communicated and how the organization should be prepared for any changes. It felt almost like reading the textbook again. “A lot of it has to do, when you’re talking about change, having people needing to change the behaviour and the way they do things. They need to understand why, what the reason is for it, what the purpose behind it is and why it is important to them and what the change that specifically impacts them is.”

First of all, Michael suggested that before undergoing a change, one should have made an analysis for organizational readiness for change. “You can have a readiness matrix and it’s a list of 10 or 15 questions, very specific questions where it talks about how the organization is prepared from a resource perspective, from a training perspective, from a systems perspective.” Secondly, he says that organization should have a plan, a schedule to keep track of progress. “Ideally, when you undergo a change programme, what you want to do is to make sure that there’s no uncertainty. You have to be upfront communicating specific deadlines and you have to meet those deadlines. Because if you do that people will understand that you are delivering what you are committed to.” Michael kept further talking of critical factors like identifying key persons in the organization. “But one of the ways doing it is looking at what your ‘as-is’ situation is, what you key stakeholders are. And… doing stakeholder analysis by looking at specific leaders and trying to get those leaders onboard to back you up in this change programme together with the change agents. Ideally, when you’re doing something like this… you have identified at least one person in that particular area who you know is a proponent of this and you can use him as your change agent or change champion." Besides having key persons supporting the strategy and change, Michael stressed the importance of making it very clear to everybody in the organization why the change was needed. "It's talking to people whether they understand this change, whether they're buying into it, and whether they understand what it is all about. And if they don't, then you have to go round again and try another tactic." Communications manager continued with the critical factor list adding leadership's commitment and supporting environment. "When a leader is standing behind what he/she says, it just does phenomenally with the change and people's ability to adapt to the change and wanting to change. They are more susceptible when they see that things are actually happening. He may not like all of it but if you say why things are happening, how it will impact them and the specific deadlines when this will happen, that is what will help you with your change." Michael was particularly focusing on employee commitment regarding changes. He said that commitment had everything to do with the change. "You have your awareness, understanding, positive perception, adoption and internalization. It becomes part of you, your being, in your DNA. You breathe and do everything about whatever that change is… in this case process excellence."

Communication is another vital part when it comes to change implementation. One of the ways Michael was suggesting is to have focus groups in order to understand from employee perspective how they were feeling about this change and trying to put together pieces that would help them understand what that change was all about. In his view, the best way communicating change was having employees' immediate managers talking about it face-to-face with them. Michael was sensitive to cultural differences when talking about change and strategy. He said that changes and strategies had to be adapted culturally. "You do have to take cultural differenced into consideration. The idea is that I come up with the global messages and plan global strategy for communication. However, I can only go so far in communicating that global message because it doesn't have that local impact. I'm relying on those local people to translate some of these global messages I have into local terms that would resonate with their local audiences."

The current strategy for communication was set to be storytelling. "From a communications perspective, storytelling is a powerful way of conveying messages. When it's done properly, when you read a story – there's a problem. You kinda get emotionally involved in the characters…you kinda pushing for them and hoping they succeed. And in the end you see what happens, you can put some twist in it…you set a problem and characters managing to get through that.” Michael wanted to make communication in a company less formal, less textbook-like. The way he described it was “Putting it in people’s normal words”. The aim was not to hear the story of a manager but someone who’s been working in the frontline. “Our goal is bringing those experiences and those stories up to the surface. So somebody who’s sitting in china can read about something that’s happening in Latin America and someone is doing something similar and realizes…hey, this process excellence thing I have been hearing about… it’s not just my boss talking about it once in a while. And this thing will start to spread.” Michael said he was convinced that through stories people would start embracing that change perspective and it would help them making it more tangible.

6. Analysis of stories

In this part of the thesis we will analyze the stories from two different perspectives. First, we will focus on the comparison and contrast of the stories at work, the main purpose being to identify the similarities and differences in the different voices of the characters. Second, we will translate the official ideal story into the real case story, making the connection between the literature and the organization's story.

6.1. Comparison and contrast of stories at work

All the people that we have interviewed are main characters in their own stories. This is what makes the stories so different. And only after we put the stories together we can say that we have a clear image of what the organization has gone through. We have selected the main characters of the stories due to their direct involvement in the strategy implementation. Therefore, we have interviewed three people in the centre location and another three in China. Each of them has his own unique story to tell, a story of the same thing: implementation of a process standardization strategy. We have used Bruner's model (explained in detail in 2.2.2) to make it easier to compare the stories with each other.

Bruner's model helped us to develop a storyline for each story. Our finding was that each story was unique, different and had different attitude towards strategy and change.

But what are their stories?

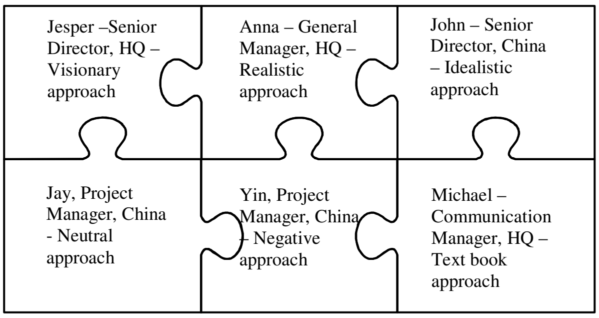


Figure 7 – Stories at work

6.1.1. Jesper – the visionary approach

We started our stories with Jesper, the Senior Director from the centre. The reasoning behind our decision was that he is the one who came up with the vision for having a strategy in the first place, so he is the initiator of the strategy. Also, he has been with the company for a long time, being involved in different projects so at this point, he has the overall view of what is happening.

His story is very positive, going from being idealistic to more realistic, identifying in the same time the difficulties that come along with the implementation. "We have created a monster. Nobody knew what this was all about. Now we see it." He talks about the events that drove to the creation of the strategy and he has a clear image of what has happened in the company and what the future plans related to the strategy are. His vision can only be achieved if the communication is improved. And this is one of his goals in the near future.

6.1.2. Anna – the realistic approach

One of the main tasks that Anna, the General Manger from the centre, had was to conduct the training in China as part of the strategy implementation. She has a very positive and realistic approach on the strategy. Being very down to earth, she has the overall view at the same time focusing her energy on getting things done, i.e. on the actual implementation. "There are some things that I want to change for the next training but that's the whole purpose of the pilot". The result oriented attitude is the starting point for not identifying any communication issues. "I don't really expect to go out for more feedback…I mean I don't see this training as being different from any other training". She does, however, have a very clear image of the roles and responsibilities of the team. All in all, she has a very clear image of how to achieve objectives and goals set by the strategy.

6.1.3. John – the idealistic approach

John does not seem to be concerned about the future. This is not because he doesn't care what's happening, but because he doesn't see any problems with the strategy. In his opinion, the strategy implementation is not considered a change project so he doesn't see the issues that comes along with it. “I think it’s not going to be a major process impact or any kind of major change in the organisation here”. On the other hand, he is enthusiastic about China being the first country to have the pilot. This is why he is willing to cooperate and help in any way he can. “So if they can manage China, they can probably manage anything”. Being located in China, John does not have all the information related to what is happening. He decides not to assume anything, but rather to wait and see what happens. “I don’t know…it’s way to early to say”. He creates an ideal world in which issues can be overcome as they go along.

6.1.4. Jay – the neutral approach

Jay has an important role in driving the strategy forward as she is one of the Project Managers working in China, who will have to work on a daily basis with the local variant mapping. She knows everything she is supposed to know, she has all the information. Jay follows the procedures, without really having an opinion of her own. The fact that the strategy implementation brings additional workload does not scare her and she decides not to complain about it. “Things will get better as soon as this is over”. Her neutral approach is related with the fact that she simply sees the additional workload as something part of the job description.

6.1.5. Yin – the negative approach

Yin is a very interesting character. She has her own opinion on everything and has developed her own way of how the strategy should look like. “It is not possible and it is not okay in real life. I don’t know how we are going to use this mapping – the global one combined with the local ones.” She feels left out in a way as she has no information on the pilot being conducted in China. Roles and responsibilities play an important role in Yin’s story. She is very much aware of her roles and responsibilities before the implementation but has no idea on was she is supposed to do next, nor how the centre may help her. She makes a clear distinction between the China and the headquarters. “If you (HQ) want the whole organization to be notified…”. Therefore she is sceptical about all initiatives coming from the centre. Having a lot of unanswered questions, she tries to interpret things and see how they would work in the real life. The fact that she doesn’t have all the information stops her from getting an overall idea of what the big picture is. “I did not see such information sent out from the centre. So to me this is something suddenly happening. So what do you expect from this situation - to get more stress from the different regions?" This is the starting point of the negative attitude that can be observed from her story.

6.1.6. Michael – textbook approach

We have interviewed Michael even if we knew that he has not been involved in any part of the strategy creation or implementation. He did, however, tell us a very interesting story on how change is communicated and dealt with in the organization. "A lot of it has to do, when you're talking about change, having people needing to change the behaviour and the way they do things. They need to understand why, what the reason is for it, what the purpose behind it is and why it is important to them and what the change that specifically impacts them is." Therefore, his story falls out of the rest of the stories. We can say that Michael's story is the closest to our ideal official story.

Several similarities and differences can be identified from the stories so we are going to focus on the most important ones. Change is something that most of the characters don't seem to identify as being present. None of them, except for Jesper and Yin and Jay, to some extent, treat the strategy implementation as a change process. We go from "This is definitely a change" according to Jesper's opinion to Anna, who says "I don't see it as a big change".

Managers are aware of the strategy objectives and are able to enumerate them without any problem. However, the rest of the employees seem to be unable to distinguish clearly why they are doing the pilot. "Now we have something published in our internet and it is about processes for our own area or global process and what will we do? We'll go through all of them??" (Yin's story).

Communication is being identified as a major issue by all of them. Even if they talk about it differently, they all agree that this is something that they need to work on. John, however is the only one who does not seem to have any problems with the existing communication.

The different stories that we have identified can be categorised as a combination of drama and comedy depending on the person and subject of the story. Either way, the stories are part of each individual's life and represent the way they see the implementation of a new strategy.

6.2. Translating stories

The purpose of the thesis is to investigate how official ideal stories are translated into real case stories. In order to do that we, first of all, had to understand how the literature talks about strategy and change and how different people talk about strategy and change in an organization. Chapters 5 and 6 were dedicated to see how strategy and change is talked about in different worlds. The purpose, however, is not to see whether the strategy and change implementation in an organization was successful or not. This sub-chapter is dedicated to translating the ideal official story into real case stories. We want to build a bridge between the two genres and see whether what is considered to be a truthful representation of reality (ideal official stories) renders to the actual reality (stories at work). The aim is to compare and contrast different stories through the analysis of success factors of strategy and change implementation.

6.2.1. Top management commitment, supporting environment and leadership

The first success factor is described in the literature as top management commitment, supporting environment and leadership. Management in the ideal story is committed to strategy and change initiatives, they are involved from the very beginning to the very end of all strategic and change projects. Supporting environment is described as an environment that gives incentives, motivation to employees to embrace the new strategy and the chosen plan of action is based on consensus rather than force. Even the structure of organization should be supporting the strategy and/or change initiative. Leadership has to be 'infectious' in order to clearly communicate the strategy. The stories at work describe the environment that employees are at. Management has been involved with the strategy for quite some time now showing their commitment and their passion regarding the strategy. One of the managers, John, said that he grew up with the organization and the team responsible for the strategy implementation. Jesper, Senior Director, has initially developed the strategy himself which later became organization's strategy and Anna, General Manager, was involved with the strategy development and implementation from a very start of it. Michael, Communications and Change Manager, stressed how important the commitment is: it must become a part of one's DNA. All of the four managers are very eager and quite positive to roll out the new project. Even though, managers are very committed to change, Yin, Project manager, feels like she would want more support and information from her manager. She said she feels like the whole team needs to sit down with the managers and discuss it.

6.2.2. Employee competence and training

Other important factor is employee competence and training. According to official story, rigorous training results in staff having necessary skills to handle the new strategy and systems or processes associated with that new strategy. Training is also needed to empower the employees and make them feel more secure by explaining and discussing how things are going to be done. The training conducted in the pilot country was quite successful. Employees have clearly understood the objectives of the training and practical part of the training was considered to be the most useful. Managers have identified things that will be changed when conducting the training in the next country: change the communication package sent out to employees before the training, rearrange the structure and contents of the training to make it clearer and less confusing to employees, reduce information overload. The management is taking the training process very seriously. They have dedicated significant resources, sent high level managers to carry out the trainings themselves to show that the new strategy is very important.

6.2.3. Cooperation

Cooperation is described as a vital practice to share information, knowledge between groups, departments, countries. Functional, language, even cultural barriers must be overcome because single function or department would loose the competitive advantage solving complex problems on its own. Global problems require global cooperation. One of the managers, Michael, suggests that storytelling should become a part of cooperation activities in order to bring down barriers by increasing the awareness how things are done in other departments, countries. From management point of view, the strategy implementation in the organization is involving people from different positions in the organization (from senior directors, communication managers to project managers), cross-functional (process mapping involves all participation of all functions in the organization), spread across countries – pilot test conducted in China. However, employees feel that the roles given to them after the training have changed and it would be better to have representatives from each functional department to do the mapping process. Employees feel uncomfortable doing the tasks that are outside their assigned function.

6.2.4. Clear visions and goals

In ideal world, clear visions and clear goals make members of organizations understand what the future holds for them, what it is going to be like? Vision shows the direction that the organization is going to take. Visions are simple and communicable, therefore, inspiring employees. Goals are specific and measurable making employees commit to the objectives outlined. In the reality, the managers are trying to achieve immediate goals, like having the training, getting feedback on the training. However, there is no clear roadmap established which would link the immediate short-term goals with the long-term goals or the overall strategy. One of the managers, John, does not even consider local variant mapping (that the training was conducted on) to be part of the strategy. He says that strategy will come out of the pilot test. The manager that has a very clear picture regarding the strategy and visions is Jesper. He had them developed himself. Employees, on the other hand, can explain what the strategy is and what objectives it has, but they cannot yet make sense how the strategy is actually going to affect their daily life or what tangible benefits it would bring. Employees expressed a wish to have further trainings and workshops to be able to understand how things would work in the future. Michael has explained that this year the organization wants to go beyond the conceptual textbook's stuff and make it more practical. Visions are turned into more practical objectives so that employees would comprehend them and make more sense out of them.

6.2.5. Clear need for change

Ideally, clear need for change is expressed among members of organization by having a sense of urgency to change things. Employees have internalized the need for change and see it as a necessary and even inevitable course of action. In the real world we have observed a paradox. Even though employees have welcomed the strategy and referred to it as a great initiative, they do not see this initiative as a change. They have not internalized the need for change as they are refusing to talk about it as a change process. They describe it as something that is not going to have a major impact on organization, while strategy actually outlines that the work processes will be different from the ones worked with at the moment. The people that clearly see the strategy as change are Michael and Jesper. Michael explains that if people need to alter their behaviour or the way they used to do things, then one has definitely to deal with the change process. He says it is very important to make it clear to everybody in the organization why the change is needed in order for employees to understand it and buy into it. Jesper tries to reason that people don't see the strategy as a change process because they don't see the big picture.

6.2.6. Identifying key persons

Identifying key persons is all about controlling the opponents and supporting promoters of change, or change, from the very early stages of strategy or change development. From the short stories at work, we see that the change agent in China is Senior Director, John. He was approached by the strategy developer Jesper some time ago and they had an ongoing discussion since then. Jesper has been using networking to carry out an initial step of the implementation process. This was one of the main reasons to choose China as a pilot country – Jesper was confident John would gladly accept and promote the strategy initiative. Michael also talks about key stakeholders and points of that organizations should do stakeholder analysis before undergoing a change to make sure that strategy and change would be backed up and sustained throughout the whole process.

6.2.7. Purposeful planning

Purposeful planning is a success factor of critical importance indicated by every strategy and change implementation researcher. They refer to planning in terms of clear objectives, schedules, methods used, resources needed. Organization can be successful in achieving its goals only if it has clear and objective metrics regarding the performance and if it is on schedule and within the budget. Constant follow up of the plan builds credibility for the change effort as a whole. However, from stories at work, we see that planning takes place as management goes along with the strategy implementation. The plan is not established yet: so there is no proper documentation of resources used or methods approved. John mentions that they have some key milestones regarding the strategy, but nothing very specific or explicit. He agrees that they don't have clear governance regarding the strategy project yet and also argues that metrics for performance measurements should be sent out from HQ. Jesper talks that the most important factor is having the initial strategy implemented in a timely manner. As for Anna, she is just concerned with having all local variant mapping trainings to be conducted within a year. In her opinion, the success of the pilot will be entirely based on feedback received from employees. From the other two stories by Jay and Yin, we understand that they are now aware of any 'master plans' or any planning, budgets, timelines. Jay says that she misses clear deadlines, aligned methodologies regarding mapping process and support for tools that employees are going to use. Michael adds one more perspective saying that organizations should always carry out an analysis for organizational readiness for change and create a plan based on the findings. He says organization has to be upfront with communication regarding the compliance with the plan and meeting deadlines. Michael completely supports the view expressed in ideal official story.

6.2.8. Effective communication

Communication in ideal world is continuous, instructive and supporting. It is vital to monitor employees' reactions and provide support by communicating issues that prevent employees from accepting change or strategy. Communication develops trust and confidence between different parties involved with the various processes. Reporting and information systems are well-developed and sharing of information is widely encouraged. End-users are involved in discussions and workshops sharing their ideas and suggestions. Organizational structure is neither too loose nor too rigid; it is adequate enough to maintain communication flow quick and easy. In the real case story, Jesper admits that communication is missing, but he has a plan on how to reinforce it. John avoids talking about communication; he sees other issues to be of higher importance at the moment. In his opinion, what they need is a clear image how to deal with local variants, so that to avoid continuous and time-consuming discussions. Anna distances herself when it comes to communicating things: she says that all the information is provided in the training material, emails, and newsletters. If there would be a need, they would make a meeting or a conference call to provide more insights on various issues. Employees, on the other hand, feel they need more information and communication; they want some kind of platform, a forum, where they could ask questions and get answers. The tone and the language used in stories indicated that lack of communication makes them frustrated and demotivated: "who should do what, I'm not sure about the target audience, not sure about the process owners, not sure how the process is working, whose responsibility is it?" Employees haven't met their manager yet to discuss the new strategy. Michael, again, has a different opinion on how things should be like. He talks quite abstractly about communication, almost textbook-like. He offers to arrange focus groups with employees in order to find their perspectives and feelings about change. Michael stresses the importance of immediate managers having face-to-face meetings with their employees making them committed to change process. Communication should be simple so that employees could easily understand and relate to it: in other words, putting it normal people's words. The paradox observed is that employees feel left out from seeing the overall picture but management decides to skip that part of the training. They think that it makes employees even more confused and overloaded with details they don't need to know.

6.2.9. Motivation

It is hard to evaluate what the source for motivation in organization is. There are many factors affecting motivation and different factors are of higher importance to different people. Motivation should be included in the discussion of every success factor because it may come from communication, management commitment, participation, etc. In ideal world members of organization are motivated when they see tangible and rapid proof of the usefulness of the new strategy or change process. The managers in the real case are very motivated and inspired to implement the new strategy: they say it is a needed initiative and it has been long overdue. John says that if in the end of the day employees see the benefits of the strategy, it will be as easy as 'walking in the park' to do the actual implementation. He understands it will cause more work, but he's certain that benefits that will come with the new strategy will compensate it. Jay and Yin, employees in the organization, see the advantages that strategy is offering but they don't understand yet how this new strategy would be used to bring benefits to their daily work life. Yin is not really motivated as she does it because it's part of her job description and she is supposed to do what the job description states. She complains that this extra work will affect her other direct responsibilities at work.

6.2.10. Control and feedback on progress

Control helps monitor visible short-term wins in the organizations while monitoring and feedback facilitate problem identification in early stages and can help employees feel motivated and make them feel involved. Ideally, organization has a follow up-plan; it monitors and tracks initial results after the implementation or parts of the implementation process. In the observed real case study, managers gathered all the feedback after the training and they state that feedback is very important to them in order to understand whether there are any unresolved issues. However, employees feel that they still have a lot of questions and other matters that they do not know how to handle and not sure how to report these problems – they are saying that will probably be going back to the trainer. For them the most important is to have clear deadlines so that they could track their progress in terms of time. John says that organization would hopefully increase productivity as a result of the strategy and change implementation. However, it should be noted that there are no performance metrics established to calculate whether strategy has any affect on organizational performance. John argues that they have clear step-by-step outline on how to manage the roll out of the changes. It is said to be a very controlled, extremely well-governed process but since he doesn't think it is a change process, none of the processes are launched. Anna mentioned that they keep track of any technical or training related issues and they have been successfully resolved so far.

6.2.11. Dealing with resistance to change

Organizations employ change management practices in order to reduce resistance or keep it at a minimum level. Resistance to change stems from inadequate understanding of change and failure to create urgency. Jesper admits that it is a huge, complex project that they decided to roll out. He understands that people might not see it yet as a change project because the real understanding came to them only very recently. Jesper says that they are on the right track now and they need to build the same picture in the other people's minds. John says that there is no plan on how to overcome resistance and he is aware that if implementation starts to become 'more rigid', they will have to deal with the resistance. In his opinion, it is too early to say how they should be prepared for changes, but assured that people in China have undergone a few significant changes already and absorbed them really well. Anna supports John's views and says that people are used to changes, so there is no real need for change management practices. However, one of the employees, Yin, shows clear signs of resistance to the new strategy. She describes the new strategy as something new to her, something suddenly happening without a prior warning. Yin doesn't feel that the new initiative will be successful unless it can bring tangible results to employees. She disagrees with the strategy and develops her own idea regarding what objectives of the strategy should be: instead of collecting practices from different departments and developing a best practice, she suggests collecting the innovative practices. She is convinced that shifting focus to variety rather than standardization would be something more useful to employees.

6.2.12. Culture

Culture and cultural differences should be treated with utmost seriousness. Management must show empathy and sensitivity towards occupational differences, local and national cultures. It also has to show intelligence towards how things are communicated and whether messages are adapted to various backgrounds. Active Group is aware of this and consideration of cultural differences is engrained in the organizational culture. Michael says that they are very sensitive to cultural differences when talking about strategy and change. He's relying on the local managers to translate global messages into local terms so that these messages would resonate with local audiences. Jesper, Jay and John talk about the impact of Chinese culture on strategy and change implementation. Jesper (European) is convinced that people in China like to underplay it a little because it's then easier to show success afterwards. He says that if one has been in China for a longer period, he/she will learn that their first reaction to strategy or change initiative is a sceptical one. John (European, has lived in China for a few years now) says that people in China can easily adapt to changes and it is part of their culture. Jay (Chinese), however, thinks that flexibility to change is more a part of Active Group culture (employee selection) rather than the Chinese culture.

Success factors	Ideal official story	Real case stories
Management commitment	Management is committed, involved from the very beginning of the project. Environment based on consensus rather than force. ‘Infectious’ charismatic leadership.	Management committed and passionate, strategy is part of their DNA. Employees want more support, communication and information from their managers.
Training	Rigorous training results in staff having necessary skills to handle new systems and processes associated with the new strategy.	Training issues identified. Significant resources dedicated, high level managers carry out trainings to show the importance of the new strategy.
Cooperation	Cooperation is vital to share information between groups, departments, countries. Functional, language, cultural barriers must be overcome through cooperation.	Employees say that representatives from each functional department would do the job better. Management says that implementation is cross-functional, international.
Clear visions and goals	Visions are simple and communicable, therefore, inspiring employees. Goals are specific and measurable.	No clear roadmap established which would link the immediate short-term goals with the long-term goals.
Clear need for change	Clear need for change is expressed among members of organization by having a sense of urgency to change things. Employees have internalized the need for change.	People do not see the strategy as a change. They have not internalized the need for change as they are refusing to talk about it as a change process.
Identifying key persons	Identifying key persons is all about controlling the opponents and supporting promoters of change.	Key promoter or change champion for China identified.
Purposeful planning	Planning in terms of clear objectives, schedules, methods used, resources needed. Clear and measurable performance metrics; on schedule and within the budget.	No proper documentation of resources used, methods approved. The only metric is time. Employees are missing clear deadlines, aligned methodologies, system support.
Effective communication	Reporting and information systems are well-developed and sharing of information is widely encouraged. Communication must develop trust and confidence between parties.	Jesper admits that communication is missing. John avoids talking about it. Anna thinks it is sufficient. Michael is theoretical about it. Employees complain about the lack.
Motivation	Members of organization are motivated when they see tangible and rapid proof of the usefulness of the new strategy or change process.	John understands that change will cause more work, but benefits will compensate it. Jay and Yin, don’t see benefits to their daily life, benefits on abstract level.
Control of progress	Control helps monitor visible short-term wins in the organizations while monitoring facilitate problem identification in early stages and help employees feel motivated.	People hope to see increased productivity as a result of the strategy and change implementation. However, there are no performance metrics established.
Resistance to change	Organizations employ change management practices in order to reduce resistance or keep it at a minimum level.	Management thinks that employees resist because they don't have the same picture about change. Employees are developing alternative strategies.
Culture	Management must show empathy and sensitivity towards occupational differences, local and national cultures.	Everybody has their own idea whether change is affected by Chinese culture or not.

Figure 8. Translating ideal official story into real case stories

7. Conclusions

There has been extensive research done on strategy implementation and change management. Whether we talk about Potter, Mintzberg or Cummings and Worley, they all provide models and steps that are meant to create a roadmap when dealing with strategy and change, an official ideal story. Our main idea was not to provide generalisation but, rather, to provide more thorough understanding how strategy and change is talked about in different environments. We have constructed a study based on a unique global organisation, investigating how official ideal stories are translated into real care stories. The outcome has several strengths that are mentioned below:

- The stories that we have told come from various sources, from all the people that have been directly involved in the strategy implementation. This way we were able to identify all existing stories on the event.
- The people we have interviewed have very different backgrounds, coming from different parts of the world and having different cultures.
- Also, some of the informants reviewed the cases and placed their comments. Most of the comments were very supporting and as a result we had one more case or story added to our thesis (that is the Communications and Change Manager Story).
- We had a thorough documentation of the research implementation process (Appendix 2). We used a set of key success factors as a starting point based on which we have constructed the interview questions and later compared the different responses.
- We used the same interview questions for all the respondents, using the different answers in order to create different stories.
- The interviews have been scheduled just after the initial training was conducted in the pilot country. The strategy implementation story was fresh in their memory.

We have also raised the following concerns when answering the two research questions:

- The questions that intrigued us in the beginning of the research were not exactly the same as those at the end of the study. This is why we have updated the purpose and research questions during the research.

- We have focused only on one organization. It may be that some of the answers that we received are related to the company culture.

We have approached strategy and change management not from the perspective of how to implement it, but we rather took implementation process as a starting point in order to determine how literature and people in organization talk about it. Our paper has two researches: one research comes from literature where we retell the observed story that comes from textbooks and articles; the other stories are constructed stories that originate in an organization, a workplace, and is told by various people from an organization. The stories at work are about a single event, strategy and change implementation, told by various people. Our aim was to show that multiple stories can come from a single source, stories at work regarding the same event, as well as from multiple sources, literature and real case study.

Organizations are not static entities; different processes are constantly constructed and reconstructed through language, interaction. Language is a tool to construct different realities and we wanted to use these tools to understand how people perceive and talk about those realities. Therefore, we chose to reveal ideal official reality constructed by researchers and reality constructed by people in organization trough storytelling. The research questions are 'how' questions: how does literature and people in organization talk about strategy and change. 'How' questions are descriptive by nature and the qualities of stories helped us to answer these questions. Stories are carriers of knowledge, stories express criteria, norms and procedures on how things should be done, stories reveal how one constructs meaning and makes sense. Stories contain a lot of explicit and implicit information and we used it to answer our research questions and make a bridge between ideal official stories and real case stories.

The genre present in the first research question is a textbook/academic genre. This type of genre creates ideal official stories because these stories have been accredited as truthful representations of the real world by the academic community and they are widely accepted in the social world. Stories are simplifications of reality and they are talked about in a very idyllic manner: if step-by-step remedies on strategy and change implementation barriers are followed, one is guaranteed success. This genre is quite prescriptive and dogmatic. The interview or storytelling genre is the dominating genre in second research question. It is foremost a spoken genre which is much less formal and rigid compared to the textbook/academic genre.

The aim of our analysis was to compare and contrast all the stories from two different perspectives. Firstly, we focused on stories at work identifying the similarities and differences in the different voices of the characters. We used Bruner's model and developed a storyline for each story. Our finding was that each story was unique, different and had different attitude towards strategy and change. There was a visionary, realistic, idealistic, neutral, negative, textbook approach and each of the stories has greatly contributed to understanding of the big picture. Organizational life or event cannot be interpreted from a single story and different storylines have brought different insights through observation and prioritization of individual values. Secondly, we had a purpose to see how official ideal stories were translated into real case stories, making the connection between the literature and the organization's story. The translation of the ideal story into a real case story comes with creating a bridge between the two concepts and that bridge was common themes linking all the stories. We proposed a particular structure and design on how different genre stories can be translated. We have intentionally picked themes, which were success factors, from the official ideal story told in order to be able to investigate the translation how the socially accepted representation of strategy and change is translated into a real case. We asked identical questions and the result was that literature and people develop their own stories and interpretations about the same event – strategy and change implementation.

Translation of multiple voices is a two-way, interactive process (see Figure 9). Translation can take place when ideal official story is rendered into real case stories. Different concepts, theories, models, step-by-step approaches are provided for practitioners not to get lost in complex and chaotic reality. However, since multiple realities cannot be depicted by any models (they will never be complete) multiple voices and stories emerge trying to explain and make sense of the complexities of the real world. Practitioners depict particular fragments of ideal official stories they consider most important in particular situations. They adapt and even alter prescriptions provided by the literature – generalizations become more specific and detailed. The other way is the one where researchers make abstractions and concepts. Researches gather and analyze multiple stories from practitioners in real case studies and make simplifications of multifaceted and disordered realities. Researchers create concepts and models by abstracting and simplifying it. Therefore, multiple voices and stories are prerequisites for both sides to survive: simplified version of life is needed for practitioners to make sense of the complicated world; and complex and chaotic reality is the source that researchers build their conceptualizations from.

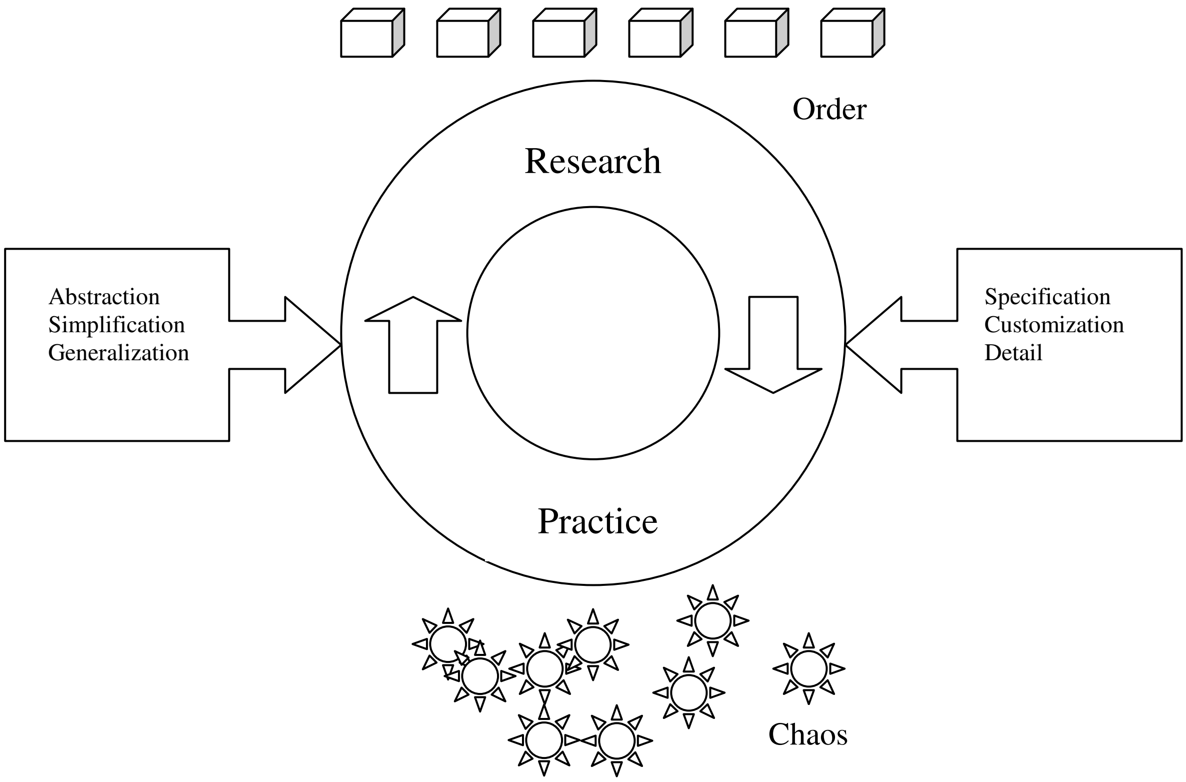


Figure 9. Translation of multiple voices

Implications for research and practice

The purpose of case studies (literature and real case) is to register events and investigate the phenomenon of storytelling within written and spoken genres. The advantage of storytelling over other methodologies is that it explores organizational and scientific narratives or stories from other's insights. Thus, our study's salient feature is to reveal the importance of searching for deeper meanings in the complex organizational environments from which and in which stories are told. Stories form a narrative that describes and explains organizational actions and other events taking place. This helps practitioners and researchers to unravel and use multiple voices to build stronger support for their practices or researches. Further research could focus on investigating different genres within the literature, exploring the ways in which frames of reference shape the way we hear others' stories, researching the implications of story performance and listener interpretation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Interview Questions

1. How was the team involved in the variant mapping strategy creation?
2. What was the mixture of knowledge of the team members? (technical, business, both)
3. How was the variant mapping initiative communicated within the local organization? How about within the selected pilot country?
4. What are the ways of reporting on progress and sharing information on key challenges for the pilot?
5. What do you think are the success factors in smooth implementation process? Communication, management support, and good information system?
6. If there is an issue, how will you determine whether it is related to poor strategy or poor strategy implementation?
7. Is there a mission statement connected to the change process that you are going through?
8. Has Mærsk conducted any analysis before initiating the change process?
9. What do you think is the relationship between the strategy and customer and employees expectations?
10. Were there any strategic and tangible benefits, resources, costs, risks and timelines outlined?
11. Has your company developed a set of key performance indicators or some other form of accountability to track the success or failure of the pilot project?
12. Have you identified a training need related to the pilot implementation?
13. Please define the main objectives that the training program has
14. What were the prerequisites for starting the project in China?
15. Which criteria have you used when selecting the pilot country?
16. How did you select the team within the pilot country? What about the team conducting the pilot/training?
17. How do you think the local mapping initiative is seen throughout the whole organization? Do you have any feedback?
18. How would you evaluate the willingness to accept and implement change by the staff and management?
19. How was the company prepared for changes (Variant mapping related to StreamLINE)?
20. What is the impact of the strategy implementation on your partners, suppliers and customers?
21. Does the company have a policy on how to deal with change projects?
22. How would you evaluate the willingness to accept and implement change by the staff and management?
23. What is strategy? How are strategies communicated to employees?
24. What are the channels of communication? Is communication uniform throughout the organization?
25. How do different cultures and languages affect communication's effectiveness?
26. Does the strategy help people understand what you will not do?

Appendix 2 – Extract from the research implementation process

Potential success factors	Effective communication
Definition	Distributing information about the changes and gathering feedback from the people
Criteria	1. Distributing information about the changes to all in the organization over the entire project 2. Discussing planned changes and potential problems among employees 3. Gathering feedback, fostering candid discussion 4. Encouraging the use of multiple channels of communication
Generic Interview Questions	1. What might be innovative ways of reporting on progress, and sharing information on key challenges and priorities for implementation? How might results be tracked? 2. How would you evaluate the attention paid to abandoning, adjusting or developing new strategies subsequent to evaluation of the initial strategies? 3. How would you rate your association's performance in communicating assessment results?
Specific Interview Questions	27.When did you first hear about the PEX organisation.? 28.How was the variant mapping initiative communicated within the local organization? How about within the selected pilot country? 2. What are the ways of reporting on progress and sharing information on key challenges for the pilot?
Yin (Project Manger China)	1. Got a notification from CEO one year ago, 2. First heard about variant mapping from the training, doesn't' know any details, got to know about it just before the training. 3. Challenges should be reported to HQ, there has to be an agreement between HQ and China, (nothing is done yet, no communication strategy), wants a plan of communication. Who should do what, not sure about the target audience, not sure about the process owners, not sure how the process is working, who's responsibility it is, present target audience is only the process department. 00:00 - 07:14
Jay (Project Manager China)	1. received a notification from the manager through e-mail. 2. 02:00 just before the training session. 3. They are currently not tracking the progress because they have just completed the training. If any issues are encountered they report them through e-mail.
John (Senior Director China)	1. 04:50 first heard of pex when he was offered a job in pex, was from the beginning, started 1.5 ago. grown up with pex. 2. 05:26 approached by Jesper (manager) 3-4 months ago whether they would be interested in becoming the pilots in local variant mapping and had an ongoing discussion since then. 3-4 months ago they were approached by process design team in the HQ 3. 06:29 they're only in progress of actually setting up a pilot, they're establishing a small project plan to mutually govern the pilot, and the pilot process. They've agreed on a number of action points, and use simple day-to-day correspondence to report the issues. No clear governance on how the issues will be reported or share the info. But they do have a small project covering key milestones of the project.
Anna (General Manager HQ)	1. 05:30 Monthly reader which contains information on all related initiatives. There wa no feedback received from China yet. 07:30 Internal communication is done through meetings (formal and informal). External communication is done through phone and newsletters. 2. 08:10 There is project documentation that helps them keep track of progress. There is no other direct communication going on.

Jesper (Senior Director, HQ)	1. He was part of the PEX team from the beginning. Was approached 2 years ago when the need of having standardisation in place has been identified. 2. The idea came from a vision that he had in the past. Since then, he worked together with the team in order to create the strategy. 3. China is supposed to use the Project documentation that has been put in place
Michael (Communication Manager, HQ)	1. Has a very clear idea of what the strategy was in the company and how it was being carried out. “From process excellence perspective, last year we set the foundation for what it is process excellence is all about, the conceptual perspective”. 2. He was not involved yet in the local variant mapping strategy communication but is aware of it. He has heard about it a while ago, from the people that have worked in establishing the strategy.
List	Formal and informal communication, employees want formal, while managers mainly use informal. Communication about strategy is different when in comes to managers and employees. Top down approach in strategy creation and implementation. Employees are not aware that tools reporting progress exist while managers don't emphasize their importance.