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The Roots of Corporate Storytelling through Orality and Literacy

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Abstract:

Stories are communication tools that have formed the societies and conveyed the culture from past to present. For centuries, societies have conveyed their customs and traditions to next generations by means of stories. As one of the most significant communication tools, stories later began to take part in communication practices of corporations as well. Corporations just like societies explicate their cultures, histories, visions, missions, goals and objectives to their employees, target audiences and stakeholders by means of stories. The goal of this study is to describe the place and significance of storytelling in communication practices of corporations, having explained the significance of stories which are an important part of oral and literate cultures. This study concludes that corporate stories feature characteristics of both oral and literate culture and they are current extensions of both culture and essential elements of the corporate culture.

Keywords: *Orality and Literacy, Storytelling, Corporate Storytelling*

1. Introduction

From the moment of birth, people are encompassed by stories. In time, people begin to share the stories they learned and they begin to create their own stories. A connection is formed between the narrator and the listener by conveying the emotions and thoughts about the stories to the other parties besides just providing information. The stories are celebrated by the society having been told from one person to another, and they become a common asset for the society. The stories embodied in oral culture later maintained their existence together with literate culture.

Today stories are used in every area of communication. Corporations benefit from the communicative power of the stories in their reputation management, marketing efforts, advertisements and public relations practices. Stories are also utilised while relaying the corporate identity and the corporate image, which are important components of the corporate reputation, to the stakeholders.

Corporations are in search of solutions to create a distinction in order to ensure the recognition of their products, services and brands, and to get ahead of their competitors. Beyond being a creative narrative that works in short term, storytelling also means to highlight the identity of the corporation with the purpose of establishing a communication inside and outside the company. Storytelling which has become an application that is being used more often by many corporations especially in the recent years, establishes a mutual connection between the listeners and the narrators from the very moment they are told and in time, it creates a synergy inside the corporation that involves the employees, shareholders, media and stakeholders. Within this context, stories assume an effective role in communication practices of the corporation.

2. Storytelling

2.1. Story Telling in Orality and Literacy

According to Tooze; stories are the stuff of life. Stories are the major form of human communication. Stories are to teach, to learn, to entertain, to enjoy and to inspire. Stories are to tell (as cited in Mathews, 2008:18).

Pellowski (1990:10), lists the causes of the stories to emerge as follows:

1. They emerged from people's needs to entertain themselves.
2. They are a product of efforts to explain the physical world that people are living in.
3. They emerged from peoples' innate ethereal needs with the purpose of being protected from the wrath of or to honour the supernatural forces that are believed exist on earth.
4. They evolved along the lines of the need to express one's experiences to other people.
5. It resulted from the people's desires to record the actions and characteristics of their ancestors or leaders with the hope of bringing them immortality.
6. It corresponds to the expression of the aesthetic needs regarding the beauty, order and form through expressive language, music and body movements.
7. It enables the coding and protection of social interaction norms adopted by a society.

Common causes for the emergence of stories include entertainment, desire to understand and explain the world, sharing experiences and ensuring social interaction. Basic aspect for the emergence and usage of stories is about being able to evoke "togetherness and cooperation.

While telling about the importance of stories and narratives, Muller makes the following description: Stories are like a compass of life. We can reach prehistory with it. Stories are also an instrument to access information, beliefs, logic and values and they have entertaining aspects. As the human brain advances, gets through a particular process, all the things we learn and information we store in our minds are expressed in stories (Kütük, 2007:31).

Georges (1969:313), states that the scientists of the 19th century accepted the stories as cultural artefacts and described them as traditional linguistics that have survived, hidden in symbols. Georges explains the question how wide spread the storytelling was with written records and ethnographic reports. Georges states this case as follows: Universality of the stories is accepted as a priority. Written records confirm the existence of stories in ancient civilizations of western world as well. These records collected on a very wide scale show that the stories kept their significance in European communities who neither read nor write. According to ethnographic reports, the stories also emerged in primitive societies, not just in western societies.

It is an important issue how stories were told and conveyed as much as their existence in social life. When we heard the same story from different people or from different societies, we witness different narratives. The cause of this is about how the person internalized or interpreted the story, besides just being a different narrator. If we are to look at it from a different perspective, even if the listeners hear the story from the same narrator at the same time, each listener makes his or her own interpretation and tells the stories within the light of what is left in his or her mind. Therefore, telling and conveying stories is one of the important building blocks of oral culture.

Livo and Riet (1986:45), having expressed that the storytelling is a process as natural as breathing", state that "it is reconstruction of the language and thoughts towards a bigger and more universal thing.

Barry Sanders (2010) state that tales/stories are the lifeblood of oral culture and the heart of the tribe or the community. According to Sanders (2010:28), the narrations cannot be possibly analysed in oral cultures. Because, once the remarks are made in orality, it is not possible to make the same statement again and it is obvious that nothing stays the same in orality. Sanders, by saying that both the narrative and the story told go through a transformation, states this transformation as follows: where storytelling constitute a model for people's lives, a "reality" as referred by literates is not possible. Nobody can tell the same story in the same way twice. The narrator will tell the incident in a different way every time. One day he will make the protagonist go through one way, next day through another. But the protagonist is the same protagonist and every time, he gets to same people waiting for him at his home. However, no one can blame the ones who narrate the stories as liars. No one doubts that the tale teller narrates such an intangible and certain thing that could be referred as the truth.

In oral culture, there are intangible concepts. A communication is established where there is orality; words, sentences and narratives are imagined in a different manner in each person's mind. In short, transition of intangible words into tangible concepts happen in a different way in each person's mind. Right at this point, intangible concepts had become tangible being recorded in writing together with the earliest writings. The stories were put it writing by different writers and narrators, the stories began to be conveyed to other generations in both oral and literate forms together with transition to writing.

Assmann (2001:101) expresses this transition to writing as follows: 'When the narrative gets certainty in form of written symbols and turn into an objectified text, and does not affect its carriers like a current of thought from their inside, there is a break that would bring out the distinction between the old and the new, the past and present in the consciousness. narrative achieves a form that causes its narrators to be in a critical approach only in written form. On the other side, the narrator achieves the freedom to put his own creation as new, strange and unheard of, against the known tradition thanks to writing

The transition from oral culture environment into literate culture environment also affected the folk narratives. As mentioned before, the narrative has a great significance in oral culture. Because, people use stories about human activities in order to keep the knowledge, maintain and convey the culture. According to Ong, while the oral culture without the written text keeps the thought as a whole for a long time without breaking it, the literate culture connects it together physically, reads and achieves the order that it desires by returning from where it doesn't understand (Ong,2007:97).

Stories and storytelling is one of the most important tools of communication. Stories had an important role in transmission of culture to new generation in the transition from the oral culture to literate culture. Storytelling which has an important place in folklore served the oral culture, reached to generations and played an important role in transmission of the cultures of societies to new generations for years having preserved its aspects inside its own inner dynamics, having repeated the narratives until the transition to literate culture is achieved.

Luhmann states that the written text is in a constant state against the time unlike the volatility of the oral communication (Alver,2006:155). And this makes it possible for different people to understand the written texts and establish a communication link at different times. Together with the writing, the stories had their own place in the form of texts and books in every moment of our lives independent from the narrator.

Ong (2007:97) expresses the following about the literate culture: Without writing, the mind of the literate cannot function as it functions now not only while being written but in oral transmission of thoughts as well. The writing is the single invention that changed the human mind so much. Being dissociated from its writer, the written statement unlike oral statement is a statement about which one cannot ask questions, which cannot be questioned.

Sanders (2010:169), also states the influence of storytelling on literate culture as follows: We see storytelling in literate culture as an activity utilised in various types of literate such as novels, stories and so forth. In fact, storytelling, though unconsciously maintains its deep connections with the oral culture and continues to affect the life in literate culture.

When we look at the evolution of the stories throughout the history and their place in communication world; it is seen that the emergence of oral culture environment happened as a result of the face to face communication at the beginning and the literate culture environment was shaped having gone through important changes as a result of the verbal speech was tied to a setting in writing and spread of writing with invention of the printing press.

Together with the literate culture, oral culture went through a change in terms of understanding and interpretation of the stories. In oral culture, people shared the same setting while the stories were being told and the stories went through changes every time while the narrator was being heard thanks to vocal tone, stress and mutual conversations. Yet in literate culture, the stories were carried into a written environment thanks to printing press, and the stories began to be shared without the narrator and the listeners being face to face. Since the reader did not see the narrator, the emotions of the narrator were not transmitted to the other party and each reader was in a position to consider the stories through their own interpretation.

Corporate stories incorporate aspects of face to face communication and sharing the same setting with the narrator which are present in oral culture, and aspects of keeping, repeating and conveying information that exist in literate culture.

2.2. Corporate Storytelling

Corporate studies might be observed in the form of stories that were designed and formed by the corporation as well as they may be in the form of narratives of the employees and shareholders about the corporation. Corporate stories told by the employees and shareholders carry a great significance in terms of personal experiences and realities. Stories told by the employees working inside the corporation and the shareholders from outside the corporation are also important in terms of reflecting the values, culture, vision and mission of the corporation (Engin,2016:164).

Gray et. al (2015:636) emphasize that; one of the oldest art forms in human history is considered to be telling stories and until the invention of written language, was the primary method by which wisdom, knowledge and information was passed from generation to generation (Czarnecki 2009). Bettelheim (1976) asserts that stories provide 'powerful, palatable and memorable ways of learning about the world'. It is the primary medium that people use to organize, and to make meaning of, their experiences (Polkinhorne 1988) and through which culture is transmitted (Little and Froggett 2010).

Stories are among the most important tools used for the transmission of culture. In oral culture; stories provide the listeners information about the daily living, beliefs and cultural values of their societies. In the same way, corporate stories also provide information both inside and outside the corporation, information about the daily living and cultural values of the corporation. The individuals that do not have any information about the corporation begin to know and learn about the corporation by means of the stories they hear. For instance; people who just started to work in the corporation evaluate the corporation along the lines of the stories they hear. Yet after a while, having heard about the story of the corporation from different tellers and having experienced the corporate life by themselves, they learn about and internalize the corporate culture.

The study conducted about the organisational stories by Mitroff and Kilmann in 1975 was one of the very first studies conducted about this subject. After that, research and studies about stories were conducted in lots of different disciplines from communication to psychology, from management to discourse analysis. Popularity of studies on stories coincides with the emergence of "culture" metaphor in studies conducted in the area of management and interpretive approach in organizational communication. Theories, and studies conducted in the area of organizational behaviour and organizational communication show that the most determinative form for the organizational speech is the storytelling. One of the oldest studies concerning the organizational stories was conducted by Mitroff and Kilmann (1975:20) They have defined the stories as follows; if accounts and finance are the backbone of an organization, then the stories that interpenetrated into all types of organizations off all scales are the lifeblood of organizations; they reveal the significance of stories for the corporations once more. In parallel with this definition by Mitroff and Kilmann, Livo and Rietz (1986:6) also say that the storytelling is as natural as breathing.

Marzec (2007:26), states corporate stories in simplest terms are an instrument that tells the strategic story of the corporation. Corporate stories tell the shareholders of the corporation "who" they are and "where" they are going, with emotional and rational support. While telling about the vision, mission and future plans of the corporation, corporate stories are also a route map for the employees. Researchers such as Cees B.M. Van Riel and Charles Fombrun (2007:136) suggested some models for designing stories that are ideal for the corporations, that could contribute to their reputation and that would strengthen the communication with the shareholders. Van Riel and Fombrun express that some stories bring the corporations to the foreground, some become more popular against others and some attract more attention from the media than others do. Corporations, from this point of view, operate in an environment rich in narratives, stories, counter-stories, folklore and strategic messages. This environment in which the corporations operate is in fact an interpreted form of the society.

Stories cannot be considered separate from their societies; from the life style and culture of the society. Within this scope, the stories are influenced from many incidents and variables experienced inside and outside the corporation; and each change can affect the corporate life. Therefore, just as in the societies, multiple stories exist and are told in corporations at the same time. This situation shows that the corporate stories carry the aspects of oral culture. And in the process of telling and transferring the visions, missions and values of the corporation, literate culture comes into play. We can say that corporate stories are a part of literate culture within the frame of many factors such as publications inside and outside the corporation, messages from the founders on their websites, history

of how the corporation was established and arrived to our day, texts written by the founders about the corporation and messages from the executives.

Gabriel Yiannis (2008:283) states that the research on organizational narratives accelerated visibly since 1990 and the reason for this was based on considering the stories as data for organizational analyses. In this manner, a gate is also opened into emotional, political and cultural lives of organizations.

Foundation of the studies conducted on stories is based on corporate culture. In order to understand a corporation and its culture, it will usually be helpful for us to know its stories. Swap et.al. (2001: 103) state that stories emerge from inside the organization and therefore they reflect upon the norms, values and culture of the organization. Hellriegel and Slocum (as cited in Becerikli, 2007:197) defined the corporate culture as the identity of the organization shared by the most and all of the employees and that can be learned by the new members who would like to progress or work in the organization'. This definition emphasizes three important aspects about the organizational culture, which is that the organizational culture is a concept that can be learned, shared and conveyed.

Just like the corporate culture, corporate stories are also learnt, shared and conveyed. Employees, shareholders and executives of the corporation are important components both in narrating and in conveying the corporate story. Employees and executives of the corporation are the conveyors of story besides being the narrators of the story. Corporate story of each narrator is different just as in the oral culture. Within this scope, it is ensured that the corporate culture and stories are adopted by the members of the corporation having made sure that the vision, mission and values of the corporation reunite the corporation on a common ground.

Edgar Schein (1992:91), states the following about the corporate stories: since the stories are understood more easily compared to corporate publications, stories are sometimes shared with the employees of the organization to reinforce the cultural norms and sometimes with the new comers of the corporation as teachings. An organization can convey its ideology and most basic assumptions especially to those who just started to work here, who need to know what is important inside the organization and emulate this with particular examples, by means of stories, short stories and various means of literate and oral history

Nowadays, most of the corporations are aware of the significance of use of stories in corporate communication. One of the most important causes of this is that the stories have an observable impact on employees who are among the most valuable assets for the companies. Van Riel and Fombrun (2004:144) studied on how a good corporate story should be designed. Since a good story would reinforce the communication between the company and the shareholders, they mention that it would put the company on a successful position against its rivals and attract royalty from the employees. They emphasize that a successful story would be built upon unique identified aspects of the corporation.

Corporate stories act as a bridge in establishing the connections between the management and the employees, between the corporation and the shareholders. Corporate stories which are an extension of oral culture increase the sharing both between the narrators and listeners, then this sharing provide a two-way communication. Corporate stories provide a competitive advantage for the corporation against its rivals besides ensuring an awareness towards the corporation.

The communication facilitates awareness in and understanding towards corporations, especially understanding of the strategic objectives of the corporation. Van Riel (2000:157) says, if this communication is based on corporate stories as a source for the communication programs inside and outside the corporation, it will be more effective.

Corporations differentiates from each other with their stories. Stories are very hard to imitate and they provide consistency in all corporate messages.

Van Riel (2000:157) states 4 criteria for corporate story to be more effective: before everything else, the story should be rational. Secondly, the story should be suitable. Shareholders should be aware that the key message has a positive value for them. The first two criteria provide information about the content of the story. The third criteria describe the form of communication within the scope of particular principles. Corporate story is a dynamic asset emerged as a result of constant interaction of inside and outside shareholders and that has been revealed once more. The last criteria for an effective corporate story is the sustainability level of the stories. If the stories are successful in finding and maintaining a balance between the demands of the shareholders and desires of the organization, the corporate stories will also be sustainable.

By providing an awareness and uniqueness for the corporations, stories enable corporations to have a distinction against the other corporations. David Boje who has a lot of studies in the literature about corporate stories and storytelling, states that the storytelling is a preferred interpretation instrument that apply to inside and outside shareholders of corporations. Boje (1991:106) states that stories function just like the case studies in juridical system. Just like in courts, the stories are reinterpreted for the responses given in similar situation by making references to incidents experienced in the organizations before.

Corporate stories provide foresight and making deductions as to what kind of an approach should be adopted in the face of new incidents experienced by the corporation by helping to keep the past incidents fresh in minds and to carry them to our day.

Even if the corporations provide services in the same sector and along the lines of the same objectives of profitability; the stories, corporate objectives, targets and ways of communication are different for each corporation. The corporations put their own identities and distinctions to acquire a competitive advantage against their rivals. In order to succeed this, they need the employees and executives loyal to themselves, gathered around the same objective to achieve this same objective. Among other building blocks, corporate culture and corporate stories play an important role in attaining this loyalty.

Larsen (2000:199-200) describes a management process in relation to stories. Larsen states that being able to express itself by means of stories, and to access its shareholders inside and outside depend on the vision, mission, identity and reputation of the corporation. Larsen explains the process of forming and conveying the corporate story with vision, mission, identity and reputation. If the relation between the vision, mission, identity and reputation is weak, the distance between is far and compliance is low, then it will be very

hard for that corporation to form a consistent and strong story. Therefore, a good management process is required in order to form a strong and consistent story.

Leaders, executives and CEOs are the narrators of the stories just as in the oral culture. Employees of the corporation know the corporation with the stories they find out, became a part of this story and convey it to the employees that come after them. In this way, all employees become the listeners, parts and conveyors of the story.

Eubank (1998:3-5) states that there are 5 defining features about corporate stories:

1. Stories are told about past organizational events and gives them a sense of temporality. Stories are often recalled from the organization's history and are sometimes repeated with enough frequency to become an enduring part of the folklore of the organization.
2. Story, recounts an event which has taken place in an organization of which the teller and/or the audience are or have been members. The main characters are usually organizational members instead of clients or other non-members. A story teller often tells about an event in which he or she is the 'hero' of the story.
3. Organizational story is that is believed to have some basis in fact or relative accuracy. Organizational stories are factually accurate, only that they are believed to be accurate by the teller and/or the listener.
4. Organizational story is usually communicated in the course of a conversation between two or more people, at least one of whom is an organizational member. The telling of the story exhibits a story grammar, including a preface, recounting and closing sequence, in other words the story has a plot.
5. Organizational stories usually make a point which may or may not be supplied by the teller. This characteristic of stories permits communication about a variety of topics related to local or informal knowledge that may not be easily expressed with other communication forms, such as reports and or manuals.

The evaluation of the aforementioned five characteristics show that corporate stories reflect the spirit of the time they were told in and that they have temporal aspects. This situation creates an influence on the listeners, in other words, target audience and employees. In some cases, when stories are not told formally, they assist in establishing informal communication. In addition, as an important communication tool for new employees of the corporation, it provides guidance to employees towards understanding the corporate culture.

Studies conducted on corporate stories revealed different results on how stories are used throughout an organization. In a corporation, stories are used as both a management tool and culture tool. Alan Wilkins and Joanne Martin are renowned researchers producing high number of reliable studies. They define organizational stories as a symbolic form used by management to relay information to the employees. Furthermore, organization's management use stories in order to get the desired response from employees (Eubank, 1998:3).

Interactive storytelling does not only bring forward the past but also recreates the reality of the past each time a story is told. Stories change, they are reorganized and fictionalized with a successful narrative when considered from this perspective. As the stories are told as a part of organizational communication, audience create a social reality (Eubank, 1998:3).

Corporate stories are used to tell about bad periods and particularly crisis periods experienced by corporations in addition to relaying good times and successful periods of corporations. Tellers of corporate stories are not always leaders and executives. Each member of a corporation is a part and teller of corporate stories.

As an important part of the corporate culture, stories are important tools to spread and have corporate culture embraced. Characteristics of stories serving towards establishing social integrity, passing the culture from generation to generation and adding meaning to the society we live in apply corporate stories, too. Therefore, leaders of the present day must recognize stories as an important communication tool in order to achieve competitive advantage. Leaders of today's modern corporations must have open, long-term visions. Leaders lacking a vision fail in carrying their corporations to the future. A vision would be effective as long as it is shared and embraced by employees and stakeholders of the corporation. Visionary leaders use storytelling for relaying corporate vision to their stakeholders (Forster et al, 1999:11).

Corporate stories are both a part and narrators of the corporate culture. Storytelling is considered as an important communication tool in relaying the corporate culture to employees, make them embrace the values and assist new employees in the adaptation period. Stories giving information on the past and current position of a corporation tell about the founder, foundation period and past of a corporation and they form the building blocks of that corporation. Therefore, corporate stories and corporate culture parts of an entity complementing each other. Two-way communication in oral culture turned into one-way communication with the literate culture. Story tellers, the most important contributor of the oral culture, have been replaced with leaders, CEOs and executives with the introduction of corporate stories in the communication world; texts that are the most important indicators of literate culture managed to reach to all target audiences of the corporations. Thus corporate stories attained characteristics of both oral culture and literate culture.

Corporate stories may be created and presented to us by the corporation itself or they may appear as everything that are told about corporation by the stakeholders. Stories created by using the background information, messages relayed by the corporation during communication campaigns, stories created for reputation are examples of the stories fictionalized and created by the corporation itself. The primary objective of such stories is describing the corporation, corporate identity, mission and vision, objectives of the corporation to stakeholders in order to position the corporate culture on a solid foundation. Real stories that were not created for a specific purpose but originating from the corporation are told by employees and stakeholders of the corporation. In addition to the stories created for a specific purpose, stories told about personal and real experiences are of great importance for the corporation.

Stories told by employees of the corporation and external stakeholders based on their personal and corporate experiences in addition to their own realities are of great importance in terms of reflecting the corporate values, culture, vision and mission.

In addition to the existing stories, the presence of fictionalized corporate stories and corporate stories originating within the organization add value to the common meanings. These stories shed light to unsolved questions, dilemmas and tensions within the corporation and they show the way to the solution. This is because all stories consist of experiences and realities.

This is the reason why corporate culture defines the corporate values, vision and mission and stories told based on such aspects. Employees comprehend the meaning of why they do their job in the way they do and what they are required to show commitment to the corporation by using the stories. Stories told within a corporation serve as a mechanism to understand meanings of relaying the mission and values of organization to both internal and external stakeholders (Victor,2007:2).

Koç Holding, the biggest group of companies in Turkey, is an example to the corporate stories and tellers of such stories. (<http://www.koc.com.tr/tr-tr>) Vehbi Koç, founder of the group, started his career at the age of 16 in the grocery store opened in Ankara by his father and the story of progress achieved by Koç Holding that was established in 1926 towards an international company is shared among leaders and executives, employees, business partners of the organization and the media. In addition to the oral storytelling, holding website where biographies of the founders and contributions and words of each executive are shared, corporate publications and bulletins are used to share these stories in other communication platforms. Corporate vision: *Koc Group pursues the goal of progressing in collaboration with its employees and establishing the customer satisfaction by offering products and services at universal quality standards. Therefore, its target is to become a symbol of reliability, sustainability and reputation for its country, customers, partners, distributors and by-industry.* sheds light onto the story of corporation. In addition, the innovations made in Turkey by the organization, inspiring career stories of executives, success stories and rewards are given place in the its website and relayed to the target audience in a chronological order.

Personal success story of Richard Branson, CEO of Virgin Group of Companies, and stories on the presence of the group in the business world stapled by continuous growth can be shown as examples of the corporate stories. (<https://www.virgin.com>) Colourful personality of Richard Branson and story of the corporation are given place in the corporate website under the headline '*From Student Magazine in 1968 to Virgin Active Singapore in 2013 - this is our story...*'. Website designed with photographs and videos appears as the reflection of oral and literate culture in their companies.

In brief, culture is a phenomenon that influences the associated society and becomes affected by the society. Stories, one of the most important indicators and communication means of the culture, took place among the communication tools that are used in creating and relaying the corporate identity. Just like unique life story of each individual, corporations, too, have their own life story and these stories reveal the identity, image and reputation of that corporation through both oral and literate narratives. Corporate story is one of the important communication tools that take place in formal and informal corporate communication, establish a link between both internal and external stakeholders and serve towards relaying the culture internally and externally. As stories are told, they create interaction and sharing between employees, executives and target audience of the corporation and elements of the story ensure memorability. Corporate stories increasing in value and importance for many companies take their place in the communication campaigns of the corporations.

3. Conclusion

For centuries, stories have been one of the important tools for establishing communication. Stories originate from the culture and are enriched through experiences. Just like stories originating from the society, stories originating from corporations have been an important tool for interpretation tool for both employees and external stakeholders. Stories are communication tools that show us who we are, what matters in our life and how we should behave. They play an important role towards preserving and relaying values within the society and in the course of professional life.

First, the role of stories in oral culture was described in analysing the evolution of stories from past to the present. The audience gathering around the storyteller in the oral culture interpreted the story by imagining and they converted the abstract concepts into physical concepts. Persons who listened to a story relayed the same story to others by citing what they heard and adding their own interpretations and its imaginative reflections in their mind. Therefore, none of the stories remained as they were told by the original story teller. In the literate culture, stories gained physical presence, they were cited in texts and relayed to the audience. Although stories that became one of the most important indicators of the oral culture were carried over to texts in time, each text was interpreted by the reader in a different way. Likewise, corporations also started creating and telling their own stories and their corporate culture was interpreted differently by internal and external target audiences.

With the introduction of the literate culture, stories moved away from their aspect of gathering people together as a part of the oral culture. A person reading a story does not enter into face-to-face interaction with the author. At this point, reader does not perceive what was thought, felt while writing the story and the style of relaying it. On the other hand, in the oral culture, story teller appears physically before the audience and they experience the relayed emotion. Literate culture provided the advantage of permanent access and repetitive reading of the stories. Each person reading a story told it making personal interpretations which in turn carries corporate stories to a different point from the original moment of telling as described for the oral culture. Stories were given a place in the vision, mission and values of the organizations and they played a role of formal communication tool, thus they became an essential part of the corporate culture.

In the present day, organizations recognize the value of stories and they give a place to stories in the communication campaigns with the awareness of its power in corporate communication. Each organization has numerous different stories. These stories take similarities of differences as a start point and help reflecting the corporate vision, mission and values. The process of creating and

sharing these stories is one of the strongest communication methods of the business world. Stories told by founders, CEOs, executives and corporate leaders lead to a sharing experience in the same environment similar to that done in the oral culture. Publications, vision, mission and values of the corporation are relayed as the elements of the literate culture in order to ensure that corporate stories are heard and embraced by higher number of people. In this context, corporate stories feature characteristics of both oral and literate culture. In brief, corporate stories take root from both oral and literate culture, stories are current extensions of both culture and essential elements of the corporate culture.

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