THE ROLE OF STORYTELLING IN ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT

By

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**Declaration**

*I hereby certify that the work embodied in this Dissertation Project is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.*

Signature:  ..................................  Date:  ..................
Acknowledgements

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to all employees who have experienced what it is like to go through organisational change without understanding its purpose and benefit.

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Synopsis

Organisations constantly evolve to improve their internal strengths and in anticipation or reaction to the state of the environment in which they exist. This research focussed its investigation on the effect of organisational change communication on employee attitude and employee engagement. The primary aim of this research was to offer an investigative discussion, based on literature and research evidence, around the benefit of communicating organisational change through multiple narrative perspectives. A secondary aim of the study was to determine if there is a link between organisational change communication and the achievement of organisational change business objectives. The final aim of this research was to provide inductive theories of sensemaking, role influence, and the process of narrative, within the context of Social Construction Theory (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005; Sonenshein, 2010; Cuncliffe & Coupland, 2012).

This case study of natural and experimental design provided an opportunity to compare the effect of multi-level storytelling as change communication, between two groups of frontline employees, in a medium-sized Australian financial institution at a time when the employees were experiencing the trial of a new change process. This study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. How, if at all, does storytelling impact employee attitude to organisational change?
   1.1 What affect does communication between and across roles have on employee attitude to change?
   1.2 What role does time play in employee attitude to change?
1.3 Does the formal or informal nature of communication affect employee attitude to change?

1.4 To what extent does attitude affect formal change management outcomes?

The attitudes and business performance of both groups were collected and analysed using quantitative and qualitative methods.

Evidence from the study suggests that multi-level storytelling as a form of organisational change communication has a positive effect on change recipient attitude. It is proposed that this effect contributes to active employee engagement with organisational change, resulting in improved business performance. Findings from this study also recommend change practitioners enlist the support of the customer to tell their story during change, and to appoint employees who demonstrate the ability to understand multiple perspectives of change as change agents.