

**The use of stories and storytelling
as knowledge sharing practices:
a case study in the South African mining industry**

By

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of the requirements for the degree
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To Whom It May Concern:

Language Editor Letter

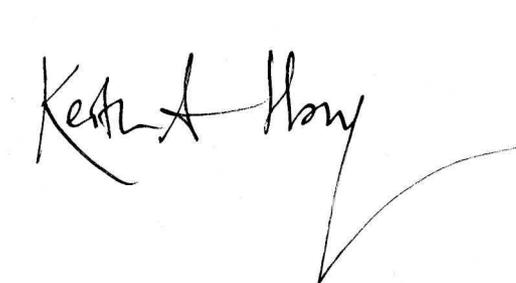
This letter serves to confirm that I, Keith Archibald Hay, [ID number: 7202295753185], have acted as the final language editor for this thesis authored by Mr Peter K J Tobin.

This has been to ensure that, where possible, punctuation, grammar and phrasing conform to the accepted language rules.

This also confirms that I possess an MA Honours degree in English Literature and History, from the University of Edinburgh, conferred in 1994.

I can be contacted either at the above address, or through email at needle.haystack@virgin.net. Phone contact may be had on +44 1620 842583.

I would be happy to answer any queries that you have.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Archibald Hay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

KEITH ARCHIBALD HAY

MA Hons (Edin)

Abstract

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A great deal has been written in the management literature concerning the field of knowledge management. Some of that literature has focused on the use of stories and storytelling, including for the sharing of knowledge. However, the field of knowledge management is relatively immature in South Africa. In particular within that field, there is not a clear understanding of the use of stories and storytelling for knowledge sharing within the country. The purpose of the study was to improve that understanding through research into a case study within the South African mining industry, with a focus on world-class performance. To assist in the performance evaluation of the case study organisation, a framework for world-class performance was developed and used as an analytical tool in conjunction with a research instrument that was based on the findings of the non-empirical research into the fields of knowledge management and stories and storytelling. The empirical research then focused on the activities of a particular community of practice within the case study organisation and sought to understand the way in which stories and storytelling were used to support the sharing of knowledge in the organisation, as a contributor to world-class performance.

Whilst conducting the empirical research, assessment and analysis, it was identified that the case study organisation made use of a number of practices and tools to support the use of stories and storytelling, in particular graphical representations (storyboards) of the stories to complement their oral delivery. The analysis of the case

study data indicated that a significant opportunity existed to improve the extent of world-class performance for the use of stories and storytelling and a number of recommendations were made in that regard.

Keywords

Capability maturity model; case study; community of practice; knowledge; knowledge management; knowledge sharing; stories; storyboards; storytelling; world-class performance.

Opsomming

Heelwat literatuur is al gepubliseer oor die onderwerp kennisbestuur, en van dié literatuur fokus op die gebruik van stories en storievertelling, insluitend vir die deel van kennis. Die veld kennisbestuur is egter relatief jonk in Suid-Afrika, en veral die gebruik van stories en storievertelling vir die deel van kennis. Die doel van die studie was om 'n beter begrip te verkry met behulp van gevallestudie navorsing in die Suid-Afrikaanse mynbedryf, met die fokus op wêreldklas prestasie. Ter ondersteuning van die prestasie evaluering van die gevallestudie organisasie, is 'n raamwerk vir wêreldklas prestasie ontwikkel om gebruik te word as 'n analitiese hulpmiddel in samewerking met 'n navorsingsinstrument wat gebaseer is op die bevindings van die nie-empiriese navorsing in die velde, kennisbestuur en stories en storievertelling.

Dié empiriese navorsing fokus op die aktiwiteite van 'n spesifieke kennisgilde binne die gevallestudie organisasie, asook die verskillende maniere waarop stories en storievertelling gebruik word in die deel van kennis in die organisasie wat dan bydra tot wêreldklas prestasie. Gedurende die empiriese navorsing analise is daar gevind dat die gevallestudie organisasie wel gebruik maak van verskeie praktyke en hulpmiddels om die gebruik van stories en storievertelling te ondersteun, veral grafiese voorstellings (storieborde) van stories om hul verbale vertellings te komplimenteer.

Die analise van die gevallestudie data het aangedui dat daar wel geleenthede bestaan waardeur die omvang van wêreldklas prestasie verbeter kan word in die gebruik van stories en storievertelling en verskeie aanbevelings is gemaak na aanleiding van die bevindings.

Sleutelwoorde

Bekwaamheidsmodel, Gevallestudies, Kennis, Kennisbestuur, Kennisdeling, Stories, Storieborde, Storievertelling, Wêreldklas prestasie, Kennisgildes

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