Storytelling Practices in Project Management

Exploratory study in new business process implementation in Information and Communication Technology projects

Authors: Ulukbek Abdubaliev
Aizhan Akyseva

Supervisor: Medhanie Gaim

Student
Umeå School of Business and Economics
Autumn semester 2017
Master thesis, one year, 15 hp
Acknowledgements

This thesis was written in the atmosphere of delighted collaboration based on solid friendship between the researchers. We would like to thank our supervisor Pr. Medhanie Gaim for continuous support and guidance in this thesis work.

The Masters journey would not be the same without our friends, family and colleagues from MSPME10. It has been an experience of lifetime, the moment of discovery for precious wonders of the world – the joy of bonding and partnership, the beauty of travelling and learning. We wholeheartedly thank every person we have met on our path of studies. With all the excitement about what lies ahead of us now, we do not take any day we spent with you for granted.
Abstract

Stories have always been present in the life of people as a part of their culture, it is a rather ancient narrative technique. The message delivered in a form of a story is specifically appealing to listeners, which makes it a powerful communication tool. The thesis explores storytelling practices in project management by answering the question: “How project managers use storytelling in new business process implementation in ICT projects?” The choice of the topic was driven by the gap in the literature and the choice of context was chosen by the level of maturity of project management in ICT industry. Within the framework of interpretivist research paradigm, the data was collected by interviewing ten project managers of new business process implementation in ICT projects.

The thesis findings suggest that storytelling in implementation of new business processes in ICT projects is used in formal and informal forums in written and verbal format. Project managers use storytelling to pursue several goals: making sense of ICT projects, human resource management, promoting adaptation to new business processes, knowledge management and attracting new customers and investments into ICT projects. Storytelling in ICT projects is also limited by storytelling conditions, such as organizational culture, extent of change, governance structure. Storytelling in projects is subject to challenges, such as logistics and timeliness of practices.

From the practical point of view, the thesis explores storytelling as an effective communication tool that can be used for multiple goals in project management. It allows adding storytelling to the requirement list of new soft competences of project managers. The thesis has bridged a literature gap between storytelling and project management, which opens new theoretical perspective of interpreting the reality in projects and creates space for further research.

Keywords: project management; storytelling; project communication; project reality; project story
# Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HRM</td>
<td>Human Resource Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KES</td>
<td>Knowledge Embedded Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMO</td>
<td>Project Management Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SyLLK</td>
<td>Systematic Lessons Learned Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAT</td>
<td>Used Acceptance Testing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents

## Introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 1. Literature Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1. What is a story?</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. What is the purpose of storytelling in business organizations?</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1. Storytelling in business communication</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2. Storytelling in knowledge management</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.3. Storytelling in branding</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.4. Storytelling in employee engagement</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.5. Storytelling in leadership and innovation</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.6. Storytelling in adapting to organizational change</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.7. Storytelling in project management</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 2. Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Research philosophy</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1. Ontology</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2. Epistemology</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. Research approach</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. Research strategy</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4. Research method</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5. Data collection</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.1. Interview guide</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2. Interview design and proceedings</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6. Data Analysis</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7. Ethical considerations</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8. Research quality</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 3. Empirical Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1. Findings</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1. Case studies description</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2. Formats and forums of storytelling</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2.1. Verbal Storytelling</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2.2. Written storytelling</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2.3. Storytelling skills</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3. Goals achieved by storytelling</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3.1. Creating sense of reality in ICT projects</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3.2. Aspects of Human Resource management</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3.3. Promoting adaptation of the organization and the end-users</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3.4. Aspects of knowledge management</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3.5. Attracting new customers and new investments to ICT projects</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3.6. Consistency of storytelling purposes by respondents</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.4. Limitations of storytelling practices</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.4.1. Conditions of storytelling</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.4.2. Challenges of storytelling</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 3.2. Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1. Formats and forums of storytelling</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2. Goals achieved by storytelling</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3. Limitations of storytelling practices</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 4. Conclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography............................................................................................................................... 77
Appendix 1.................................................................................................................................. 81
Appendix 2.................................................................................................................................. 83

List of tables
Table 1. Storytelling objectives in business ................................................................................. 13
Table 2. Corporate storytelling functions ..................................................................................... 16
Table 3. Respondent and interview details .................................................................................... 33
Table 4. Ethical issues and preventive actions .............................................................................. 37
Table 5. Summary of the research quality assurance methods ..................................................... 39
Table 6. Respondent and project information .............................................................................. 41
Table 7. Summary of findings ....................................................................................................... 63

List of figures
Figure 1. Genres of narrative visualization .................................................................................... 11
Figure 2. Definitions of story and characteristics of storytelling ................................................ 11
Figure 3. 'Raiders of the Lost Art' story map .............................................................................. 18
Figure 4. Apollo lunar mission project storytelling framework .................................................. 20
Figure 5. Storytelling in business – summary of literature review ............................................. 23
Figure 6. Project storytelling categorization by respondents ...................................................... 60
Introduction

“It was an unusually busy afternoon at the local Domino’s Pizza in small town in America. Orders were coming in at a blistering pace, the kitchen was at maximum capacity and the blue-uniformed delivery boys and girls were working overtime to get pizzas out to hungry customers. It was just then that the unthinkable happened: they were nearly out of pizza dough… Action was needed, and fast. The manager grabbed the phone and called the national Vice President of Distribution for the US, explaining the situation. A chill ran down the spine of the Vice President as he thought of the public embarrassment if one of Domino’s outlets could not deliver as promised. Springing into action, he did everything in his power to solve the problem: A private jet was dispatched at once, laden with Domino’s special deep pan dough… Unfortunately, all their efforts were in vain. Even a private jet couldn’t get the dough there on time, and that night Domino’s Pizza was forced to disappoint many hungry customers. For an entire month afterwards, employees went to work wearing black mourning bands.” (Fog, et al., 2010, pp. 15-16)

Although, the ending of this story is not particularly happy, Domino’s Pizza clearly showcases the power of storytelling: it delivers the message about the core values of the company and the endeavor that the heroes undertake to be able to deliver the promised value to customers (Fog, et al., 2010, p. 34). Even though, there is no commonly agreed definition of ‘storytelling’ or the best practice, a story generally consists of the characters, conflict, resolution and the outcome (Nielsen & Madsen, 2006, p. 4; Fog, et al., 2010, p.33).

There are several reasons why the message delivered in a form of a story is particularly appealing to listeners. First, people naturally think narratively rather than paradigmatically, stories are more appealing for listeners than concepts (Hiltunen, 2002). Secondly, the episodic information is easier to store and retrieve from the memory (Hiltunen, 2002). When audience feels the relatedness and empathy towards the heroes, they understand the motives and processes behind the behaviour rather than plain outcomes of the events (Wertime, 2002). And lastly, the notion of ‘guiding people towards what makes them happy’ behind the storytelling is the basis of brand-consumer storytelling theory (Bagozzi & Natarajaian, 2000).

Stories have always been present in the life of people as a part of their culture, it is a rather ancient narrative technique (Lugmayr, et al., 2017, p. 15707). However, recently, it has found practice in business management area as an effective communication tool for achieving business goals (Denning, 2011, pp. 26-31). There is still some skepticism about storytelling among business practitioners (Brown, et al., 2009, p. 324; Denning, 2006, p.19), the large body of academic literature highlights the benefits of storytelling in organizations in the field of branding (Woodside, 2010; Pulizzi, 2012), human resource management (Gill, 2015), knowledge management (Kalid & Mahmood, 2016; Duffield & Whitty, 2016; Sole & Wilson, 2002; Hannabuss, 2000), organizational change and innovation (Adamson, et al., 2006; Brown, et al., 2009; Hagen, 2008; Kim, et al., 2010).
While storytelling has been well studied in the context of organization as a whole, there is a lack of literature on the role of storytelling within the projects. Project management practices are currently under a great scrutiny by both researchers and practitioners. There is a search for new ways of communicating the projects and explaining their objectives, journey and benefits (Blomquist & Lundin, 2010, p. 10). This has driven the focus of thesis on project management area. With the business management area undergoing a so-called ‘projectification’, project management gets more and more crucial as the amount of activities that organizations execute in a form of ‘temporary organizations’ raises (Blomquist & Lundin, 2010, p. 10). Coming back to Domino’s Pizza, the heroes of the story, in fact, run the project of supplying the shop with additional dough. They create a ‘save the day’ team with the store manager, Vice President of Distribution and delivery boys and girls in it. The story delivers the message in an easily understandable way. Behind the scene, it, in many ways, resembles a project journey story: it delivers the message about the efforts team has made, their objective, context, timeline of the events and the outcome. The storyteller makes the audience feel empathic towards the team and their journey. Even though it is a project failure story, the listener is more likely to accept and excuse the fact that the shop left many customers hungry that day rather than to leave with a negative feeling towards Domino’s Pizza. This demonstrates the ability of a storyteller to influence the acceptance of project outcomes by the audience (Fog, et al., 2010, pp. 15-16).

Narrowing the context further, the thesis aims to explore storytelling practices within the communication in new business process implementation in ICT (Information and Communication Technology) projects. Information and Communication Technology is an integral part of business process and implementation of new business processes is closely related to ICT projects (Monteiro de Carvalho, 2013, p. 37). ICT projects, that are chosen as a context of the study in this thesis, occupy a big portion of project portfolios in business organizations (Monteiro de Carvalho, 2013, p. 37). Information and Communication Technology is a term similar to Information Technology, but is extended to highlight the importance of the telecommunication ecosystems, the interrelatedness of various software applications and their integration within business processes (Basl & Gála, 2009, p. 70). ICT plays an important role in technological innovation and innovation of business processes in business organizations (Basl & Gála, 2009, p. 70). These types of projects are strongly backed up by knowledge of best practices in project management (Monteiro de Carvalho, 2013, p. 37). The level of maturity of project management in new business process implementation in ICT projects leads to the assumption that the communication methods in these projects have breached the minimum required level (Monteiro de Carvalho, 2013, p. 37), thus creating a fitting context for bridging the literature gap between project management and storytelling. Bridging the gap between project management and storytelling is important for academic literature in order to catch up with industry practices and portray the rich picture of reality of communications in projects. From the practitioner’s point of view, exploration of storytelling practices in new business process implementation in ICT projects provides the opportunity to add another instrument to the toolbox of effective project communication. Therefore, the research question is: “How do project managers use storytelling in new business process implementation in ICT projects?”

The thesis sets following objectives to address the research question:

1. To identify the forums and formats of storytelling practices in new business process implementation in ICT projects;
II. To identify what goals can be achieved by project managers through storytelling in new business process implementation in ICT projects;

III. To identify limitations of storytelling in project management in new business process implementation in ICT projects.

Following chapter of thesis provides the literature review on storytelling in business context, chapter 2 describes applied methodology, chapter 3 shows the results data analysis, and conclusion draws the theoretical and managerial implications of thesis, its limitations and ideas for further research.
1. Literature Review

Following the ‘standing on the shoulders of a giant’ metaphor, theoretical background chapter of this thesis referred to existing discoveries about storytelling in organizations and project management. In the attempt to understand what stories are told in the business world and why, this section of the thesis has drawn from the theory in management and social studies. While the literature collected and summarized on the topic of interest is not exhaustive, it is to the best of knowledge of the researchers. The remaining part of the literature discussion is presented in the following manner: first, it provides various ideas of what constitutes a story; second, it explores the purpose of storytelling in business organizations; third, it discusses the literature on storytelling in project management area. And, lastly, the chapter concludes with the tabular summary of literature review.

1.1. What is a story?

The first step in defining the role of storytelling in business is to understand what storytelling is and what makes the narrative a story. According to some authors a word ‘story’ comes from Latin and Greek, meaning ‘knowledge and wisdom’ (Farzaneh & Shamizanjani, 2014, p. 3); however others claim that the word has Indo-European roots, meaning ‘look and see’ (Benjamin, 2006, p. 159).

Commonly agreed by storytelling authors - storytelling has always existed in human history (Farzaneh & Shamizanjani, 2014, p. 3; Benjamin, 2006, p.160). When talking about the oldest stories, Sadigh (2010, p. 76), for example, traced back to 3000 BC and explores the ‘The Epic of Gilgamesh’. According to the author, a narrative portrays a life of Gilgamesh, the king of ancient city of Uruk, who challenges the gods on his path ‘to find the purpose of existence’ (Sadigh, 2010, p. 85). The story of Gilgamesh helps its listeners to “embrace [death] as a part of life… and discover inner freedom, which even gods can not defy” (Sadigh, 2010, p. 87). Sadigh (2010, p. 87) suggested that even though the story of the king was told way ahead of the term ‘existentialism’ coming to use, it still finds its sense today (Sadigh, 2010, p. 87). Communicated verbally or through writings, similar to the ‘Epic of Gilgamesh’, stories develop and preserve culture of people by describing individual experiences within the societies and by transferring the message about norms of behaviour (Farzaneh & Shamizanjani, 2014, p. 3; Benjamin, 2006, p.160).

Coming back to modern days, technology has given new platforms for storytellers (Segel & Heer, 2010, p. 1). This has reinforced the idea of Denning (2011, p. 13), who sees storytelling ‘tent’ to be accommodating tenants of various form and shapes. The stories are now digitalized and visualized, invading the everyday life of people as images and videos on computer screens, printed pages and television (Segel & Heer, 2010, p. 1).
Segel & Heer (2010, p. 7) went as far as to categorize the genres of visual storytelling, as presented in Figure 1. Authors highlighted that visuals are widely used by the businesses and credited it to ‘the power of human stories’ (Segel & Heer, 2010, p. 7). In their work, one of the visual designers identified himself as “storyteller first” (Segel & Heer, 2010, p. 7). He explained the idea of a story in a following way: “I define ‘story’ quite loosely. To me, a story can be as small as a gesture or as large as a life. But the basic elements of a story can probably be summed up with the well-worn Who / What / Where / When / Why / How” (Segel & Heer, 2010, p. 7). Alternative views narrowed the definition down by stating that a story necessarily consists of a “protagonist, a plot, and a turning point leading to a resolution” (Denning, 2011, p. 13).

There are several explanations for characteristics of storytelling and various definitions to what a story is. Some of them are presented in the Figure 2. This thesis, in turn, adopts the
view of Denning (2011, p.13), who suggested that the terms ‘story’ and ‘narrative’ can be used interchangably. It is stated that “story is a large tent, with many variations within it” (Denning, 2011, p. 13). The type of narration, according to the author, is determined by the purpose of the message that is being communicated (Denning, 2011, p. 13).

1.2. What is the purpose of storytelling in business organizations?
The review of the literature shows that storytelling has multiple purposes in business. It has revealed 7 occurring themes related to storytelling in business: business communication tool, a way of transferring knowledge, branding of the organization and its products, engagement of employees, leadership, innovation and a help to adapt to organizational change. Little is known about storytelling in project management though. Each of the identified themes is discussed further.

1.2.1. Storytelling in business communication
Denning (2006) and Taylor et al. (2002) investigated how storytelling is used by business organizations in their internal and external communications. While raising the topic of effective storytelling, both introduced the idea of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ storytelling (Denning, 2006; Taylor, et al., 2002). Some stories are more effective then the other, both works have said, but they differed in the opinion as to why (Denning, 2006; Taylor, et al., 2002).

Taylor et al. (2002, p. 314), referred to storytelling as “folk art and performance [that] has been around since the dawn of time”. Because they saw storytelling as such, authors adopted aesthetic theory as the basis of their search for features of an effective story. Authors argued that one story can be more effective than the other, depending on the extent of the aesthetic experience lived by the audience while being exposed to the story (Taylor, et al., 2002, p. 314). Aesthetic experience is achieved by understanding the ‘felt meaning’ of the story (Taylor, et al., 2002, p. 315); accepting the ‘truth’ by relating to own experiences and ‘enjoying the story for it’s own sake’, i.e. experiencing engagement and tendency for retelling the story (Taylor, et al., 2002, p. 316). It is claimed that storytelling is a practice to be used by organizational leaders, mainly because it is a ‘source of power’, that can be used in variety of managerial processes requiring communication (Taylor, et al., 2002, p. 324).

Similar to Taylor et al. (2002), Denning (2006) saw storytelling skills among core business management competences. Denning (2006) assumed that the characteristics of the story and the way of delivery should be chosen depending on the purpose of the narrator. Unlike Taylor et al. (2002), Denning (2006, p. 43) stated that the effectiveness of the story depends on how well the narrator matches the objective of delivering the message to his/her performing tone and his/her choice in typology of the story (Denning, 2006, p. 43). The objectives of storytelling, as categorized by Denning (2006), represented his view on the role of storytelling in business and, in a way, acted as the framework suggested for ‘good’ storytelling practices (see Table 1).

According to the literature of storytelling in business communication, storytelling practices have an impact on several areas of management in the business organizations, however the extent of its usefulness depends on how well developed the organizational storytelling skills are (Denning, 2006; Taylor, et al., 2002).
### Table 1. Storytelling objectives in business - Adopted from Denning (2006, p. 43)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the objective of the narrator?</th>
<th>What is the right story to tell?</th>
<th>How should the story be told?</th>
<th>Expected feedback from the audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sparking action</strong></td>
<td>Describes how a successful change was implemented in the past, but allows listeners to imagine how it might work in their situation.</td>
<td>Avoid excessive detail that will take the audience's mind off its own challenge.</td>
<td>“Just imagine . . .” “What if . . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicating who you are</strong></td>
<td>Provides audience-engaging drama and reveals some strength or vulnerability from your past.</td>
<td>Provide meaningful details but also make sure the audience has the time and inclination to hear your story.</td>
<td>“I didn’t know that about him!” “Now I see what she’s driving at!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transmitting values</strong></td>
<td>Feels familiar to the audience and will prompt discussion about the issues raised by the value being promoted.</td>
<td>Use believable (though perhaps hypothetical) characters and situations, and never forget that the story must be consistent with your own actions.</td>
<td>“That’s so right!” “Why don’t we do that all the time!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicating who the firm is—branding</strong></td>
<td>Is usually told by the product or service itself, or by customer word of mouth or by a credible third party</td>
<td>Be sure that the firm is actually delivering on the brand promise.</td>
<td>“Wow!” “I’m going to tell my friends about this!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fostering collaboration</strong></td>
<td>Movingly recounts a situation that listeners have also experienced and prompts them to share their own stories about the topic.</td>
<td>Ensure that a set agenda doesn’t squelch this swapping of stories—and that you have an action plan ready to tap the energy unleashed by this narrative chain reaction</td>
<td>“That reminds me of the time that I . . .” “Hey, I’ve got a story like that.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taming the grapevine</strong></td>
<td>Highlights, often through the use of gentle humor, some aspect of a rumor that reveals it to be untrue or unreasonable.</td>
<td>Avoid the temptation to be mean-spirited—and be sure that the rumor is indeed false!</td>
<td>“No kidding!” “I’d never thought about it like that before!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharing knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Focuses on problems and shows in some detail how they were corrected, with an explanation of why the solution worked</td>
<td>Solicit alternative—and possibly better—solutions.</td>
<td>“There but for the grace of God ...” “Gosh! We’d better watch out for that in the future!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leading people into the future</strong></td>
<td>Evokes the future you want to create without providing excessive detail that will only turn out to be wrong.</td>
<td>Be sure of your storytelling skills. Otherwise use a story in which the past can serve as a springboard to the future.</td>
<td>“When do we start?” “Let’s do it!”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2.2. Storytelling in knowledge management

In today’s competitive world, organizational learning process have become vital for many companies, business environment tends to be more knowledge-oriented due to the benefits of gaining competitive advantage (Williams, 2003, p. 443). This raises the need for companies to be more efficient and effective by managing knowledge generation and transfer process, which is one of the main challenges for organizations according to Hobday (2000, p. 872). O’Gorman & Gillespie (2010, p. 660) stated that one of the best knowledge sharing tools to be employed by organizations to communicate complex messages with a much larger penetration than other methods is storytelling. According to Farzaneh & Shamizanjani (2014, p. 84), storytelling as a way of extracting and transferring knowledge is considered a useful method to utilize the valuable knowledge at low cost.

The literature confirmed that the old skill of storytelling is now put in a new context of knowledge management (Kalid & Mahmood, 2016, p.12). Stories are useful because organizations learn easily from stories which makes them capable of externalizing tacit knowledge. Stories work best when they evolve from personal experience, ideas, and questions (Kalid & Mahmood, 2016, p.12). Storytelling is used as a technique to describe complex issues, explain events, understand difficult changes, present other perspectives, make connections and communicate experience (Kalid & Mahmood, 2016, p.12). Stories told in organizations are most effective when they focus on teaching, inspiring, motivating, and adding meaning.

In the context of knowledge transfer, tacit knowledge can be transferred through highly interactive experience, brainstorming, storytelling, and freedom to express fully formed ideas. This has been proven in the case study about Xerox, the famous manufacturer of copy machines (Fog, et al., 2010, p. 146). According to Fog, et al. (2010, p. 146), the inside audit of the company was surprised to reveal that the most of the knowledge that the repair service employees have obtained over the years is sourced from stories that the workers exchange with each other over the coffee breaks and water stops. The stories swapped about ‘how I have been doing today’ have been more useful in learning how to identify the copy machine malfunction reasons and how to fix them rather than corporate manuals and costly trainings (Fog, et al., 2010, p. 146). Once this was understood, Xerox was fast to collect, categorize and make ‘coffee break stories’ data accessible to workers across the entire organizations (Fog, et al., 2010, p. 146). Later, ‘Eureka’ – a knowledge management database has resulted the cut of 100 million dollars per year (Fog, et al., 2010, p. 146).

1.2.3. Storytelling in branding

Another category of articles explored storytelling in the context of branding, mainly drawn from the theory of consumer behavior (Woodside, 2010, p. 532; Pulizzi, 2012, p. 117). The importance of storytelling in branding was highlighted by Fog et al. (2010), who saw storytelling as a tool of external and internal communication, that is used to “paint a picture of the company’s culture and values, heroes and enemies, good points and bad, both towards employees and customers” (Fog, et al., 2010, p. 18). According to Fog et al. (2010, p. 24), the power of storytelling in branding lies in how a story allows communicating beliefs, that the brand represents, in a simple format in order to build emotional ties with the audience. The author differentiated branding as internal and external: external is directed towards the
customer, whereas internal is directed towards the employees (Fog, et al., 2010, p. 24). Consistency of the message about brand values transmitted through stories told internally and externally is a necessity in building effective branding strategies, something the authors referred to as “holistic approach to storytelling” (Fog, et al., 2010, p. 55).

Among the branding stories told inside the organization, consistent with Fog, et al. (2010, p. 109), are the narratives of organizational origin, its employees and leaders. Over the time, authors argued, the lines between the fiction and reality of these stories become blurred, but the symbolism remains (Fog, et al., 2010, p. 109). One of the example is a CEO story, which gets told in Hewlett Packard till today:

“Many years ago, Bill Hewlett was wandering around the research and development department and found the door to the storage room locked. He immediately cut the lock with a bolt-cutter and put a note on the door, 'Never lock this door again. Bill’” (Fog, et al., 2010, p. 109).

Fog, et al. (2010, p. 109) stated that Bill Hewlett was aware of the symbolism of his activities and the narratives spreading about him, which allowed him to successfully deliver the message about the value of “trusting and respecting your employees”, which was reinforced by stories about him unlocking the doors (Fog, et al., 2010, p. 109).

Referring to external branding, for selling the products today, the authors argued, high quality and affordability is no longer enough, because the market has a large supply of products with similar quality and price features (Fog, et al., 2010, p. 22). The current need is to supply customers with the ‘unique experiences’, appealing to emotions and motives of people, and storytelling helps visualizing those experiences (Fog, et al., 2010, p. 21). Woodside (2010) and Pulizzi (2012) referred to the concept of ‘the self’ as the main reason behind the success of storytelling in branding. Consumers buy products with the desire of obtaining similar characteristics as the characters used for product marketing purposes (Woodside, 2010, p. 537). Pulizzi (2012) emphasized the importance of ‘content marketing’, the role of the brand itself in the life of consumers (Pulizzi, 2012, p. 118).

1.2.4. Storytelling in employee engagement

By stating that corporate storytelling increases the engagement of employees, Gill (2015) continued the idea of Fog et al. (2010), who suggested that storytelling can act as an effective internal communication tool. Gill (2015) has provided a comprehensive literature review investigating the impact of corporate storytelling on employee engagement in business organizations. The author defined corporate storytelling as “the process of developing and delivering an organization’s message by using narration about people, the organization, the past, visions for the future, social bonding and work itself in order to create a new point-of-view or reinforce an opinion or behavior” (Gill, 2015, p. 664). It is stated that organizations, practicing corporate storytelling, tend to experience higher employee commitment towards the corporate values and organizational goals (Gill, 2015, p. 666). The results of the survey related to practices of storytelling in the organization, in fact, conclude that 99% of organizations practice storytelling in formal and informal context (Gill, 2015, p. 665).
Discussing the benefits of corporate storytelling in human resource management, Gill (2015) relied on the statistics from 2012 Corporate Communication Survey in Table 2. As much as 84% of respondents agree that storytelling in the working environment increases the feeling of relatedness within the group and 76% agree that it helps supporting the communication (Gill, 2015, p. 666).

One of the examples of the success of storytelling practice in human resource management purposes on organizational level is the case of Ericsson Australia and New Zealand in 2008 (Gill, 2015, p. 665). According to Gill (2015, p. 665), after the global financial crisis, the communication network company experienced the decline in employee engagement, which was revealed by survey displaying low awareness of strategy and a decline in belief of employees in leadership capabilities of motivation and communication. To improve the situation, within the three-year strategy program, the management team of Ericsson Australia and New Zealand has invested into developing their storytelling skills in order to be able to reach out to the employees on personal level rather than conceptually explain the new strategy (Gill, 2015, p. 665). The executive board and employees have then participated the workshops on storytelling, where the new organizational strategy was communicated to employees using the elements of storytelling (Gill, 2015, p. 665). The same information was distributed in printed and digitalized forms (Gill, 2015, p. 665). As a result of using storytelling practices, the surveys of 2009 have shown a significant increase in employee engagement (Gill, 2015, p. 665).

### Table 2. Corporate Storytelling Functions - 2012 Corporate Communication Survey - Adopted from Gill, 2015, p.666

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer choices</th>
<th>Responses (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen your working relationship with other staff</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly reinforce a point you are trying to make</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve/strengthen staff trust</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve/strengthen staff loyalty</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve/strengthen staff commitment</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open up the lines of communication between staff and management</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make staff feel more relaxed around management and colleagues</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve understanding and comprehension</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2.5. **Storytelling in leadership and innovation**

Păuș & Dobre (2013) scrutinized storytelling practices in the industry of insurance in Romania by conducting interviews with the stakeholders, such as journalists, public relations managers and senior managers of insurance companies. Referring to storytelling, authors claimed that “…it exerts great influence on the employee’s performance and, by inference, on the performance of the organization” (Păuș & Dobre, 2013, p. 28). As the products that are sold by insurance organizations are intangible, authors state that the relationship between the insurer and his customer is based on promise and communication (Păuș & Dobre, 2013, p. 27). Therefore, authors concluded that storytelling is the required leadership tool in the “…insurance domain because ‘selling trust’ is a promise to be close to people…” (Păuș & Dobre, 2013, p. 27).
Within their study, Boal & Schultz (2007) argued that organizational stories “help to link the past to the present and present to the future” (Boal & Schultz, 2007, p. 419). According to the authors, strategic leaders create and promote “organizational life story schema”, “which draws attention to, elaborates, and arranges the many tales and legends told among members into a consistently patterned, autobiographical account of the organization over time” (Boal & Schultz, 2007, p. 420). By doing so, leaders build a consistent view on what organization identifies with, what leadership does for the organization, what “reality of organizational life” is and, eventually, lead to grounding of the organization’s capability in addressing possible future changes of the environment (Boal & Schultz, 2007, p. 421).

On the other hand, storytelling promotes alternative visions of future, which is important for the organizations that seek to avoid the ‘innovation blindness’ (Petrick, 2014, p. 54). The statement is based on the idea that storytelling stories experience collaborativeness by being “re-told” from different perspectives and “thinking about the world through someone else’s eyes, observing that world from new perspectives offers a powerful window on alternate futures” (Petrick, 2014, p. 55).

The format of a story proves itself to be easily understood by people of different origins and education, hence are an effective method of delivering the message (Kim, et al., 2010, p. 26). According to Kim, et al. (2010, p. 26), all stories consist of turning point, a dramatic change, which captures the attention of the different groups, who focus their attention and sort the stories based on the parameter of novelty. It is suggested that the beauty of the stories is that they appeal to people from different disciplines and, in turn, multi-disciplinary interactions drives innovative ideas (Kim, et al., 2010, p. 25). As an example, Ahoka non-profit organization, collects and indexes the stories from social entrepreneurs around the world in order to “match” the problems and solutions on the global level (Kim, et al., 2010, p. 25). The search for innovation in the organizations lead to innovation projects, i.e. the projects with less pre-determined objectives (Enninga & van der Lugt, 2016, p. 104). According to Enninga & van der Lugt (2016), peculiarity of the leadership in innovation is to manage four interrelated goals: setting the environment for innovation, meeting the requirements of quality, time and budget, stimulating the creativity and managing stakeholders (Enninga & van der Lugt, 2016, p. 104). Within their study, scholars have collected the stories told by innovation leaders and find that each of the story targets one of the four goals within the innovation project (Enninga & van der Lugt, 2016, p. 110). Hence, storytelling and storymaking trigger the innovation processes by satisfying all four needs of innovation leadership (Kim, et al., 2010; Enninga & van der Lugt, 2016).

1.2.6. Storytelling in adapting to organizational change

Adamson, et al. (2006, p. 36) discussed the ‘traditional’ approach of circulating the information about the organizational changes. “Just Tell’Em” method, criticized by the authors, is when “e-mails are sent, meetings called, retreats planned, and newsletter articles published, all to insure that, at the end of the day, the new value proposition and business model have been ingrained in the culture” (Adamson, et al., 2006, p. 36). The underlying assumption of this approach, claimed wrong by the authors, is that employees accept the change presented as any piece of information (Adamson, et al., 2006, p. 36). The reality is different though, in order for organization to fully accept, recognize and understand the
change, the message about change should be “as much about relations, emotions, and gut feel as it is about facts” (Adamson, et al., 2006, p. 36). That is the reason why storytelling can be helpful in promoting the understanding and acceptance of change.

The effectiveness of the strategy of communicating strategic changes of the organization can be measured by how inspiring it is, thus storytelling can help reducing the resistance to change (Adamson, et al., 2006, p. 41). For example, Adamson, et al. (2006, p. 37) discussed the case of San Juan Regional Medical Centers in Flemington, New Mexico, United States. As the mean of overcoming financial difficulties, San Juan Regional management has made a decision to transition from patient-centric to employee-centric business model by introducing personalized benefit programs (Adamson, et al., 2006, p. 37). Although, what was supposed to happen was clear for medical personnel, it is the lack of understanding of why it is happening that could not be explained through traditional presentations, which eventually lead to creation of unhealthy environment of confusion and discomfort among medical center workers (Adamson, et al., 2006, p. 37). This is when the management team has come with an idea of interactive storytelling and visualization of the new experiences, a story they called ‘The Raiders of the Lost Art’ (Adamson, et al., 2006, p. 38). The name of the story had a rather symbolic meaning, as it represented the endeavor to be undertaken to recover the practice of personalized healthcare (Adamson, et al., 2006, p. 38).

*Figure 3. ‘Raiders of the Lost Art’ story map - Adopted from Adamson, et al., 2006, p. 38*

According to the plot of the narrative, the raiders went through three different lands in their journey, shown on the story map in Figure 3: “Medicus (Medical Professionals), the land of Communia (Regional Community), and the land of Patiem (Patients)”; and in each of three lands the protagonists had to overcome the symbolic antagonists representing the requirements, statistics and competitive failures of the given area (Adamson, et al., 2006, p. 38). The narration was also carried in the adventurous manner to capture the interest of the listeners (Adamson, et al., 2006, p. 39). As the storytelling was interactive, besides being narrated, the story was also questioned by the audience, which has helped to engage the
employees even more (Adamson, et al., 2006, p. 39). While the story was widely discussed within the personnel, the amount of people who have joined voluntary storytelling sessions has reached 70% of all employees (Adamson, et al., 2006, p. 39). Eventually, the organizational changes were made clear and widely accepted with over 80% of medical personnel signing up for the suggested program. Storytelling sessions have established the feeling of relatedness between employees and the management and have helped to adapt to new business model in medical centers (Adamson, et al., 2006, p. 39).

1.2.7. Storytelling in project management
The discussion about purpose of storytelling in business has shown that storytelling can be an effective tool in several areas of management. Whether we are talking about employee engagement, knowledge management, branding, communication, leadership and innovation or adapting to organizational change, these all are the elements of project management. The next logical step would be to talk about the specifics of storytelling in project management. Some authors have mentioned that interpretation of stories by listeners can promote or prevent the willingness and action for change (Brown, et al., 2009, p. 323) and even trigger innovation (Petrick, 2014; Kim, et al., 2010; Boal & Schultz, 2007), but little is known on how narrative helps embracing organizational transformation that has been implemented in the form of projects.

Operating in dynamic environments, contemporary organizations tend to carry out business activities in a form of projects (Blomquist & Lundin, 2010, p. 11), hence defining the success factors of projects is crucial in achieving business sustainability. Storytelling can potentially be one of those factors. Bringing together the topics of storytelling and project management is expected to adopt a ‘social phenomena’ (Blomquist & Lundin, 2010, p. 20) perspective on projects. The focus is made on the ‘soft’ aspects such as narrative and discourse within ‘vehicles of change’ - projects. This, in a way, responds to the call to “…find other ways to describe data or to tell the story of project manager and everyday life in projects” (Blomquist & Lundin, 2010, p. 21). Consideration of the ‘soft’ aspects is also relevant because project management is criticized for being only focused on tangible, measurable characteristics of management (Machado, et al., 2016, p. 2049). Over-documentation of projects and technicality of the language used causes difficulties of storing, retrieving and sharing project information, which eventually leads to ‘project-amnesia’ (Schindler & Eppler, 2003, p. 221). As storytelling has proven itself to be a framework to communicate the information in an easy and understandable way, there is a need to investigate if it is used by project managers to prevent ‘project-amnesia’.

Project is widely defined as a “temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service or outcome” (Farzaneh & Shamizanjani, 2014, p. 88). The definition fits into definition of story that “includes a situation or context in which life is relatively in balance or implied to be in balance.. But then an event—screenwriters call this event the “inciting incident”— throws life out of balance… The story goes on to describe how, in an effort to restore balance…” (Woodside, 2010, p. 534). The project team can be thought of as a protagonist overcoming the challenges to bring “balance” to an organization, this may promote deeper understanding of the changes in business processes by employees and ease the process of adapting.
Machado, et al. (2016) and Munk-Madsen & Andersen (2006), stated that the project plans and project reports can be transformed and communicated in appealing stories. The origins of relating storytelling to project management is credited to US President J.F. Kennedy’s speech about Apollo Lunar Mission back in 1961 (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006). Although, Apollo Lunar Mission is one of the most famous projects in history of humankind now, it has been initiated in the middle of ‘Cold War’ and could easily be taken one of many projects in US military (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 5). Presenting a project plan as a story about “space travel and moral armament” has helped J.F. Kennedy to promote understanding, acceptance and approval of project plan by people (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 5).

Figure 4. Apollo Lunar Mission Project Storytelling Framework – Adopted from Munk-Madsen & Andersen (2006, p. 9)

In their work, Munk-Madsen & Andersen (2006, p. 9) analyzed the presidential speech in the framework of storytelling represented in Figure 4. The researchers have shown that the project plan of Apollo Lunar Mission has been told in a format of a story, and each of the project stakeholders was assigned a specific role in it. President Kennedy has managed to appeal to empathy of tax-payers (American people) and engage them to the project by narrating the project plan as a story of Americans fighting for freedom in developing countries (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 11). Storytelling has constituted to the widespread acceptance and enthusiasm about the complex and expensive project by tax-payers in America (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 10).
Munk-Madsen & Andersen (2006, p. 2) argued that any project plans can be converted into stories using the similar framework of storytelling, and doing so increases the project’s likelihood for approval and success. Waterfall methodology of project management means a clear sequence of project events, from initiation to closure and the aim of the project storyteller is not to make up the stories, but to narrate this sequence in a form of a story (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 22). Agile project management consists of iterational deliveries, and every one of it can create a sub-story (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 23). Temporariness of the projects, in general, provides the baseline for a plot of the project story.

The plot of the story is the journey of the protagonist in the attempt to obtain the subject, such as the development team trying to implement software in the organization or austranauts reaching to the moon (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 7). Assignment of story roles to stakeholders matters a lot, authors argued, but depending on the purpose of the project storyteller the roles can also be shifted (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 17). For example, the protagonists of the story is suggested to be stereotypical and sympathetic, so the audience could easily relate to them and forgive them in case of failure to obtain the object (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 18). While it is easy to build the empathy around the character of the austranaut, it is not that easy for software developers (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 12). The authors recommended to either shift the role of software developers from observers to helpers by placing the end-users as the protagonists or to describe developers as very ordinary likable characters (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 22).

The conflict of the project storyline is created with the introduction of the antagonist’s role in the conflict axis (see Figure 4) (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 19). This line in the project story is more relevant in case of waterfall project management approach as, it is the section of risk analysis and mitigation in the project stories (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 21). The main line in project storytelling is the axis of communication between the giver and a receiver, which is a “donation that happens in the story”, such as handover of the software to the end-users (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 19). The communication axis determines whether the story is about a successful project or the failure (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 20). The evidence of the acceptance of the object by the receiver has to be provided by storyteller for the protagonist to pass the “glorying test” and for the audience to decide whether it is the story of success or failure (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2006, p. 20).

In practise, determining whether the project results have been accepted and approved can be challenging. Focusing on the ‘vehicles’ of organizational change - projects, Boddy & Paton (2004) raised the idea that stakeholders may generate competing stories about projects. Supporting the same argument, Brown, et al. (2009) stated that different groups within the organizations may be exposed to different narratives, that do not engage with each other, then it becomes less of a dialogue and promotes “fantasized images” (Brown, et al., 2009, p. 326). If seen in the context of organizational change, this means that the stories about project success are told within the organizations even if they are not built centrally by project management representatives. The knowledge obtained from the project and acceptance of delivered change depends on how the project manager deals with the competing stories. The
idea of storytelling by project managers, not stakeholders, and its influence on adapting to business process change remains an open question in the literature. Similarly, little is known on the influence of project level storytelling on engagement of project team members and stakeholders.

Storytelling is a powerful branding tool (Pulizzi, 2012, p. 116). Gill (2015) suggested that organizational level storytelling enhances employee engagement, but it is not clear if it would be the same for the project team. Although, mentioning branding of projects was not found in the body of reviewed literature, the evidence of usage of visual storytelling about projects was found through the review of the advertisements by such organizations as Oracle Corporation and SAP Software Company. On their web-site, both Oracle and SAP tell the customer success stories in a form of illustrative text or a video (Oracle Corporation, 2017; SAP Software Company, 2017). The businesses, that sell services and products in the form of projects, in ICT industry, for example, use storytelling to showcase their projects. It is common to see the stories of customer success, that has been achieved through the projects in collaboration with promoted companies or software solutions.

Many researches have been dedicated to the role that storytelling plays to support knowledge management processes (Kalid & Mahmood, 2016; Denning, 2006; Hannabuss, 2000). Unlike other themes, the link between knowledge sharing and storytelling is discussed evenly in both contexts- organizational level and project level. Peculiarity of project management studies in this category is that they are based on action research, i.e. each article describes the result of specific practical storytelling methodology tested in the projects. These methodologies are collective knowledge sharing workshops (Nielsen & Madsen, 2006, p. 3), knowledge embedded story (KES) techniques (Kalid & Mahmood, 2016, p. 16) and Systemic Lessons Learned Knowledge models (Syllk) (Duffield & Whitty, 2016, p. 431). The use of storytelling for knowledge management purposes is becoming more and more widespread among project-based organizations, since project stories contain beneficial information about various expectations of the project, which are often known as a source of problems (Farzaneh & Shamizanjani, 2014, p. 87). Stories used in knowledge management thus create an idea about whether the project is on the right track and about the changes in expectations and needs during different courses of the project (Machado, et al., 2016; Farzaneh & Shamizanjani, 2014). From a long term perspective, systematic project learning enables the organizations to develop project competencies that lead to a sustainable competitive advantage (Schindler & Eppler, 2003, p. 221), while successful project management is based on accumulated knowledge, and on individual and collective competences (Kasvi, et al., 2003, p. 571). Stories used in knowledge management, unlike the ones employed in branding and employee engagement, do not necessarily have to be positive and inspiring (Nielsen & Madsen, 2006; Machado, et al., 2016). One of the most famous cases in knowledge transfer through storytelling is the case of Toyota recalling 3.8 million cars due to a faulty accelerator pedal that caused a fatal accident that led to a massive scandal and a huge decline in company’s reputation (U.S. Department Of Transportation, 2011). The project team that worked on the installation of the new pedal and the testing team did not coordinate well to ensure the pedal functions properly, which caused the faulty part to appear on every car produced after the testing of the accelerator. This story was retold many times in Toyota and helped not only to utilize all the knowledge from the failure of the project, but also to push the project teams to work more effectively (Liker, 2011).
Figure 5. Storytelling in Business – Summary of Literature Review

**Role of storytelling in knowledge management**

**Organizational level**
- (Kalid & Mahmood, 2016)
- (Duffield & Wintt, 2016)
- (Sole & Wilson, 2002)
- (Hannah, 2000)

Storytelling techniques are effective at knowledge transfer in organizations and is best for tacit knowledge sharing, collective knowledge sharing.

**Project Level**
- (Nielsen & Madsen, 2006)
- (Farzaneh & Shamizanjani, 2014)
- (Kasvi, et al., 2003)
- (Machado, et al., 2016)
- (Schindler & Epler, 2003)

Storytelling techniques are effective at cross-project knowledge sharing. It is an inexpensive mechanism for managing project knowledge.

**Role of storytelling in business communication**

**Organizational level**
- (Taylor, et al., 2002)
- (Deming, 2006)
- (Deming, 2011)

Good storytelling capabilities are useful for business managers for purposeful delivery of message.

**Project Level**
- (Munk-Madsen & Andersen, 2005)

Project plans can be transformed into project stories by project managers to gain acceptance and support.

**Role of storytelling in innovation**

**Organizational level**
- (Kim, et al., 2010)
- (Hagen, 2008)
- (Petrick, 2014)

Stories focus people’s attention on particular topics, aligning their interest and acting as the invisible driving force behind innovation. Because stories are natural communication vehicles, teams can escape established roles and procedures through storytelling, thus finding new approaches and products.

**Project Level**
- (Ennenga & van der Lught, 2016)

Story, storytelling, and story making can support to deliver innovation.

**Role of storytelling in adapting to organizational change**

**Organizational level**
- (Adamson, et al., 2006)
- (Brown, et al., 2009)

Storytelling can influence the acceptance of change.

**Role of storytelling in employee engagement**

**Organizational level**
- (Gill, 2015)

Corporate storytelling practices increase the employee engagement.

**Role of storytelling in leadership**

**Organizational level**
- (Boa & Schultz, 2007)

Strategic leaders play a crucial role in organizational learning and adaptation through dialogue and storytelling.
Literature analysis has concluded that business organizations practice and benefit from storytelling practices in major areas: business communication, knowledge management, leadership and innovation, adapting to organizational change and employee engagement. None of the articles finds storytelling to be useless or harmful for the organization, although articles do mention that it should be used systematically and correctly to be influential (Denning, 2006, p. 48; Gill, 2015, p. 671). This thesis does not claim the collected literature to be exhaustive, but it is the best of knowledge of the authors. As seen in Figure 5 - summary of literature review, storytelling is a relatively well researched topic on the level of organization, however the information about the purpose of storytelling in project management in scarce, even though above mentioned areas are part of project management. As projects occupy a large portion of activities in business, it is important to bridge the gap between project management and storytelling to be able to understand modern practices of project management in a more comprehensive manner. It is assumed that bridging can be done by exploring storytelling practices in project management of ICT projects that bring the changes in business processes of organizations.
2. Methodology

2.1. Research philosophy

Understanding the philosophical position taken in this study has helped the researchers in determination of the approach of the research, including the strategy and design of it. While ontological and epistemological considerations are discussed further in this chapter, it is worth mentioning that the thesis work adopts the interpretivist research paradigm. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 118) define research paradigm as “a way of examining social phenomena from which particular understandings of these phenomena can be gained and explanations attempted”. By the analogy made by Saunders, et al. (2009, p. 109), identifying the stance in the research in terms of it’s view on reality and knowledge has acted as the outerlayer of the research ‘onion’ and has greatly contributed to the understanding of the subject of the study. The choice of philosophical stance was impacted by the research question, selected data gathering methods and analysis tools as discussed below.

2.1.1. Ontology

Ontology is a stance on what reality is and how we view it (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, p. 55). According to Saunders, et al. (2009, p. 110) there are two main types of ontological considerations that are accepted in the area of academic research: subjectivism and objectivism (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 110). Objectivism “represents the position that social entities exist in reality external to social actors” (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 110), while subjectivism claims that “social phenomena are created from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors” (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 111).

As for this thesis work - it is found that subjectivist view is more relevant, mainly due to the nature of the researched question and its focus on the ‘soft’ aspects of project. Taking an objectivist stance would, on the contrary, assumes that adapting to organizational change, for example, is possible to be measured and tested (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, p. 56). This thesis has taken the opposite perspective by suggesting that both storytelling and adapting to change are phenomena that can only be understood through interpreting the perception and feelings of the study subjects. Furthermore, the sense of stories is made through perceiving and experiencing them in the organizational context by the audience (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, p. 56). The same story can make a different impact on different people depending on the listener’s interpretation, feeling of relatedness and narrative skills of a storyteller (Brown, et al., 2009, p. 323). Subjectivist considerations are also one of the reasons why the data has been collected through interviews rather than statistical values.

2.1.2. Epistemology

Epistemology concerns the ways of acquiring knowledge (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 112). According to O’Gorman & MacIntosh (2015, p. 58), two main opposing epistemological views are positivist and interpretivist, although there are other variations including realism and action research (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, p. 58). Positivism applies the assumptions of natural sciences to social science by suggesting that the knowledge generated in the studies has the nature of “causality and fundamental laws” (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, p. 60), that are ‘value-free’, i.e. independent of the researcher (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 114). On the other side of the epistemological spectrum, interpretivist see the knowledge as something inducted from the data and draw a line between natural science and human
Rather than determining the ‘laws’ in social phenomena obeys, interpretivist seek to understand the social relationship through interpretation of its meaning, therefore, the results of the study and collected data are affected by the researchers (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, p. 65). The literature review on the subject of storytelling has revealed that researchers, such as Denning (2006), Gill (2015), Kalid & Mahmood (2016), Machado, et al. (2016), Sole & Wilson (2002), Woodside (2010), Hiltunen (2002), Fog, et al. (2010), made sense of storytelling by exploring the narratives within the organization and by interpreting the feelings, attitudes and behaviors of the study subjects in order to understand its effect. This leads to the idea, that the domain of storytelling research recognizes the credibility of the knowledge obtained through understanding the influence of storytelling, rather than measuring it. Agreeing with the approach of the previous researchers (Denning, 2006; Gill, 2015; Kalid & Mahmood, 2016; Machado, et al., 2016; Sole & Wilson, 2002; Woodside, 2010; Hiltunen, 2002; Păuș & Dobre, 2013), this thesis work saw it impossible and irrelevant to shape storytelling through statistics and to represent its impact in numerical values. Neither did the thesis agree that the effect of storytelling is a ‘fundamental law’ open to easy generalizations (O’Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015, p. 60). Due to the nature of research question, the interpretivist stance on epistemology was found more suitable. Going further, the research approach and strategy is adopted in accordance with the epistemological choice.

2.2. Research approach

Following the traditions of interpretivist paradigm, this thesis has followed the inductive approach in research. Main driver for inductive approach preferences in this thesis is the thesis researchers’ assumption that the effect of storytelling is dependent on the context, such as past experiences of the listeners, their interpretation of the meaning of the story, cultural background and personal values and beliefs. According to Saunders, et al. (2009, p. 126), inductive approach is more suitable for the study of the topics that are context determined (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 126). This type of researches is likely to be qualitative based on a smaller sample size (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 126).

Inductive approach is relevant in answering the research question for several reasons:

1. The thesis did not seek to test the existing hypothesis (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 125) and saw it more valuable to understand the practices of storytelling in project management by exploring the perceptions and opinions of the subjects of the study;
2. The relationship between storytelling and the project management has not been previously established in the reviewed literature, thus the thesis attempts to formulate theory;
3. The studied variables are not “operationalized … to be measured quantitatively” (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 125) because the ways of providing the quantitative measure of storytelling have not been identified.
4. The thesis avoided the generalizations, giving more value to deeper understanding of smaller study sample due to research time related constraints.

2.3. Research strategy

A research strategy represents a research plan that helps to answer key research questions in exploratory, descriptive or explanatory forms, each belonging to deductive or inductive
approach (Yin, 2009, p. 19). However, what is more important, according to Saunders et al. (2009, p. 142), is that there is no research strategy that is more effective than any other is, while it all depends on the research question and objectives. The main research strategies outlined by Saunders et al. (2009, p. 141) and used by researchers in the business world are experiment, survey, case study, action research, and grounded theory.

The strategy suitable for this research work was determined to be the case study. The case study strategy is a widely used strategy in the business context and is often defined as a research strategy that involves an empirical study of a phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence (Robson, 2002, p. 178). It allows the researcher to get a rich understanding of the context analyzed and is recognized to be effective for answering "why?", "how?", and "what?" questions, and is often used in exploratory and explanatory researches (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 146). Since this thesis is focused on exploring the "how?" question, specifically how project managers use storytelling in new business process implementation in ICT projects, thus representing an exploratory study, the choice of the case study strategy fully aligns with the research question to be answered, and gives the researchers the opportunity to gain a rich understanding of the context of the research, which is an important aspect for the purpose of this study. There are two dimensions of case studies that set the research on the right path based on the research questions and objectives (Yin, 2009, p. 47): multiple or single case study, and holistic or embedded case study. A single case study represents a single critical case that allows to observe and analyze a certain phenomenon. A multiple case study, on the other hand, incorporates several cases with the purpose of investigation of whether the findings of the initial case can take place in other cases as well, which increases reliability of the findings (Yin, 2009, p. 148). For the purposes of this thesis, a multiple case study strategy was used with the intention to obtain a reliable answer to the set research question by analyzing storytelling practices in organizations through the number of selected project managers outlined later in the ‘Data Collection’ section. If a single case study strategy was chosen as a research strategy, there would be a possible bias on the information obtained from the company practices that are most likely to be a practice that rarely exists in other organizations and projects. As for the holistic or embedded dimension of a case study, since the research question sets out to understand how storytelling is used in new business implementation in ICT projects, involving a change on the organizational level, a holistic study will be utilized to understand the role of storytelling as a practice in such projects and organizations as a whole.

To make sure that the case study strategy is the most suitable strategy for this study, the researchers also reviewed the other strategies for comparison purposes. The survey strategy mainly utilizes questionnaires and structured observations to collect quantitative data, suggesting possible reasons for particular relationships between variables, which makes it possible to generate findings that are representative of the whole population (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 144). Since this study does not involve variables to be studied and does not aim to make generalizable conclusion, the survey strategy was determined to be not suitable for this study. Another strategy, the grounded theory, emphasizes development of a new theory from a series of observations that generate hypotheses, which are then tested with other observations confirming or refusing the predictions theory development and theory building as its final objectives (Saunders et. al, 2009, p. 149). Since this study does not aim to produce a new theory, but rather to explore the practices concerning the old theory in a new setting.
that is under researched, the grounded theory was not considered for the study. Finally, action research is a strategy that involves the practitioners in the research with the close collaboration with the researcher making the study exclusively linked to a certain organization to solve issues taking place within it (Saunders et. al, 2009, p.147). Since this study does not target problem resolution within one organization, but rather focus on multiple projects within several organizations to understand the role of storytelling in ICT projects, the case study strategy was finally confirmed to be chosen to all of the mentioned strategy.

2.4. Research method

Often referred to as the ‘research choice’ by Saunders et al. (2009, p. 152), a selected research method based on the research study purpose and questions sets the foundation of how and what data will be collected. The research method options include two main ones, which are mono or multiple methods of conducting either qualitative or quantitative researches, or the combination of both respectively (Bryman, 2016, p. 32). The main difference between qualitative and quantitative research type is fairly intuitive: quantitative type generates numerical data and is used as the data collection technique in such tools as a questionnaire, or as a data analysis process such as graphs, while qualitative type generates non-numerical data and is used as a data collection technique such as an interview or data analysis process such as categorizing data (Saunders, et al., 2009, p.151). Bryman (2011, p.32) further distinguishes between the two research types based on the research philosophy they are oriented at, where the quantitative type takes a positivist epistemological stance with a deductive approach for hypothesis testing, while the qualitative takes a subjectivist epistemological view with an inductive approach directed at theory generation. A multiple method of using the two mentioned types integrates both by utilizing the advantages of each type, thus maximizing the effort of answering the research questions (Saunders, et al., 2009, p.152). However, according to Creswell (2014, p. 1), the choice of a particular method strongly depends on the research nature, context, philosophy, and limitations, which determine the most appropriate method.

This research work utilizes a mono method by exclusively using the qualitative type of research and data collection, since the focus of this work is made on the investigation of the role of storytelling in managing new business process implementation brought by ICT projects, thus ‘soft’ organizational and project aspects, which can hardly be quantified or measured. Based on this, the data will be collected through qualitative measures. The qualitative mono method was also determined to be aligned with the research philosophy outlined in the earlier section, which takes subjectivist epistemological stance utilizing inductive approach directed at building a theory based on the analysis and interpretation of the collected qualitative data. Mono method utilizing quantitative approach was determined to be not suitable for the research purposes due to its lack of response flexibility in terms of ability of the respondents to provide as much information as possible through elaboration on a particular question, which is a very crucial aspect in this research work. Furthermore, quantitative approach is heavily focused on the pre-determined answer options, which limits the individuals participating in the research in their response, while due to the nature of this research it is nearly impossible to predict and pre-determine the perceptions of the respondents on the subject matter. Finally, the multiple method of using both qualitative and quantitative would be a method to consider for this work due to its possible incorporation in
gathering data from project managers in a form of interviews and surveys respectively. However, the quantitative part of this method would be at risk of being incomplete due to lack of accessibility to project team members or invalid due to insufficient data gathering because of the time limitations of this research. Therefore, the mono method of qualitative data gathering was determined to be the most suitable method for the purposes of this work.

2.5. Data collection
Taking an interpretivist orientation and using an inductive approach by conducting qualitative research, namely multiple case studies, this research work utilizes two types of data collection: primary data through interviews, and secondary data through exploration of company websites and available project documentation and respondent profiles on LinkedIn. While secondary data collection is considered a straightforward process that supports the research, primary data collection using interviews is a more complex process and requires a well-thought approach (Saunders, et al., 2009, p.320). The type of the interview determines how accurate the collected data will be, and according to Saunders et al. (2009, p.320), the most common classification concerns the level of formality and structure: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews.

Structured interviews are based on an identical set of questions, administered by the interviewer, and the aim of these interviews is to give each participant the same questions. The only interactions accepted between the interviewer and the participant are at the beginning of the interview when the preliminary explanations are provided. In order to minimize any type of bias (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p.211), the explanation and the question should be read as they are written and in the same tone of voice. This type of interviews is used mainly to collect quantifiable data, that is why they are referred to as ‘quantitative research interviews’ (Saunders et al., 2009, p.320). In contrast, unstructured interviews are mostly informal, since they are used to explore in depth a general area of interest - they are also called ‘in-depth interviews’. With this type of interviews there is no predefined list of questions to work through. However, this does not mean that a clear idea of the aspects to explore is not needed (Saunders et al., 2009, p.321). In this case, the participant is encouraged to talk freely without any kind of direction (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p.481).

Since the purpose of this research is to investigate if project managers use storytelling practices in new business process implementation in ICT projects, the semi-structured interview will be used to collect data that will help answer the research question. This type of non-standardized interviews is used to gather data, which is normally analyzed qualitatively (Saunders et al., 2009, p.321). Moreover, this type of interview is usually adopted on exploratory studies, since they can be very helpful to find out what is happening and to seek new insights (Robson, 2002, p.59). With semi-structured interviews there is a predetermined list of questions, but this may vary, omitting or adding them, according to the specific interviewee or the emergent elements coming out during the conversations. This aspect offers multiple benefits as it allows exploring and going deeper on the elements of the conversation more relevant to answer the research question (Robson, 2002, p.280). Semi-structured interview type was also chosen with a strong consideration of the research strategy, since, according to Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 473), multiple case study research needs cross-
case comparability, which is ensured the most by utilizing semi-structured interviews. Another aspect that was considered when choosing the semi-structured interview is that it usually uses open questions, providing interviewees with the opportunity to reflect and develop complete answers. In addition, the interviewer has the opportunity to explain in a better way how the information will be used (Saunders et al., 2009, p.324). If the structured interview was chosen for this research, it would limit the findings to the set of questions chosen, avoiding the possibility to explore new points of view raised during the interviews, while the unstructured interview type does not fit the specific research question or objective.

Subjects were chosen for interviews based on purposive sampling. Purposeful sampling is a technique commonly used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002, p. 230). In this study, the expertise and opinions of project managers were looked to be obtained. The project managers were selected due to their in-depth knowledge in ICT project management, their practical experience of new business process implementation in ICT projects and educational background in project management or ICT. The researchers have not included the selection criteria or evaluated the storytelling skills of project managers due to practical impossibility. The purposeful sampling process was carried out through exploration of profiles of project managers on LinkedIn professional network platform and websites of companies with a wide range of ICT projects that brought a major change in the business processes in the organization. The criterion for the project managers to be selected included at least two completed ICT projects to reduce bias resulting from a single project implementation that could possible cause the project manager's inaccurate perception on the project implications and company practices.

The potential participants were contacted through LinkedIn professional network and work e-mails found on the websites of the organizations of interest. LinkedIn users were contacted through the ‘personal message’ option in their profile, which also let the researches see if the messages were received and read by the account holders, while the potential respondents found on company websites were contacted either directly via e-mails or through the general company e-mails, where the messages were redirected to the particular employees of interest. In total forty-five potential respondents from thirty-nine companies were contacted by the researchers who outlined the purpose and a short description of the study and its implications for their organizations. Out of forty-five contacted individuals, ten managers from nine companies agreed to participate in the study. This is considered to be a low response rate, the reason of which was revealed by the thesis researchers to be busyness of some of the contacted individuals due to the high end-of-year workload, as explained by them. The above-mentioned number of selected project managers was determined to be the possible maximum of respondents that could be interviewed and whose responses could be thoroughly analyzed given the available timeframe for the research. The selection of project managers from different companies rather than from a single company was very crucial to obtain reliable results, while a single-company case study would not allow to explore the role of storytelling in new business process implementation in ICT projects in a broader context.
2.5.1. Interview guide
Before contacting the selected interviewees (listed in section 2.6.2), an interview guide was prepared to make sure that the research question was addressed with a strong focus in the interview, and that each of the objectives of this study was accompanied by a set of related questions (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 329). When designing questions, the researchers took into consideration the theoretical framework of the study, the research aim, question and objectives, ensuring the logical flow of questions (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 475). To match the three objectives of the study with the questions, the researchers constructed the interview questions in the following way:

Objective 1: To explore the formats and contexts of storytelling practices in new business process implementation in ICT projects. The questions were designed to find out what formats of sharing and communicating stories the project managers use in their projects and the organization as a whole. The questions were designed not to be leading and too direct, as suggested by Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 475). Thus, instead of asking, “What formats of storytelling do you use in your project or organization?”, which might confuse the respondent and cause vague or incomplete answers, the researchers first aimed to find out what kind of communication is used within the project and the organization to get a general understanding. Then the questions were directed at finding out whether stories are shared within the project or organization, what setting it happens in, and whether it constitutes an obligatory company practice or not. If the objective was not reached, additional questions with examples of stories were asked.

Objective 2: To identify what goals can be achieved by project managers through storytelling in new business process implementation in ICT projects. This objective constitutes a big part of the study and is fundamental to answer the research question. To reach this objective, the researchers, as mentioned in the previous objective, avoided being too direct, and designed the questions first to be aimed at finding out how the communication about new business processes is done in the organization, to what audience it is communicated, and whether feedback from employees is collected as a result of this communication. This helped the researchers to find out whether storytelling elements are present in respondents’ communication about new business processes, and how this communication is perceived by the audience. The researchers then focused on questions that were directed at identifying the specific stories that are told to employees, the purpose of those stories, and finally at identifying whether the respondents would consider using storytelling as a communication tool in their organization. This category of questions was crucial to get respondents to share stories in order for the researchers to understand their purpose; thus, if the respondents did not share specific stories, the researchers repeated the question or brought an example to help the respondents to recall recent stories.

Objective 3: To identify what are the limitations of storytelling in project management in new business process implementation in ICT projects. The questions under this objective were designed by the researchers to find out whether storytelling is helpful in any business process implementation project and organization, focusing mostly on “why?” and “how?” questions. The researchers focused on the project managers’ perception on usefulness of storytelling and whether it was and would be useful for their projects. The most important thing for the
researchers was not getting answers such as “yes, it is important”, “no, it is not important”, or “not always”, but rather finding out the reasons for such answers.

The closure of the interview was a very important part to thank the respondent for the contribution and to let him or her know about the dates of the thesis publishing, so that the respondents could access the work and review the results. The complete interview guide can be found in Appendix 1.

2.5.2. Interview design and proceedings

All of the interviews were chosen to be conducted via Skype video chat software due to the location and time difference between the researchers and the respondents (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 349). Before the scheduled interview date, the researchers sent the interview guide to all of the respondents to make sure that there were no questions that would make them uncomfortable and to confirm that they were ready to answer all of the outlined questions (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 473); otherwise, the respondents had an option to withdraw from the study. The following table 3 represents an interview list with all of the respondents, their background, current position, and the time and date of the conducted interview.

Once the final consent for participation of the mentioned ten managers was obtained, the researchers offered free time slots to the respondents to choose from to avoid overlapping interviews, estimating the interview time to be one hour, as well as reserving another hour for unexpected situations, where the respondent is late for the interview, or when the interview takes more time. When the respondent did not find the suitable time for the interview, the researchers created new time slots for the next available day.
Table 3. Respondent and interview details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
<th>Work experience</th>
<th>Current company</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Interview date</th>
<th>Interview duration (hh:mm:ss)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>MSc in Strategic Project Management</td>
<td>Human Resources Project Consultant in change management and talent management programs; Project manager in innovation/idea management at Retail Industry</td>
<td>International Supermarket Chain in Germany</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>05.12.17</td>
<td>00:31:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>MSc in Computer Science</td>
<td>IT management in insurance and banking; Project Management office in software development and integration</td>
<td>Information Technology company in Albania</td>
<td>Head of Project Preparation Unit</td>
<td>06.12.17</td>
<td>00:40:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>MSc in Strategic Project Management</td>
<td>IT engineering in banking and telecommunication, Project management at software development and integration projects</td>
<td>Information Technology company in Albania</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>07.12.17</td>
<td>00:34:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>MSc in Computer Science</td>
<td>IT project management in Banking; Database administration in banking</td>
<td>Commercial Bank in Thailand</td>
<td>Software Integration Project Lead</td>
<td>09.12.17</td>
<td>00:40:02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>MSc in Strategic Project Management; BSc in Management</td>
<td>Project Officer at a consultancy program in the UK; Business tourism researcher at a marketing company in the UK</td>
<td>Consultancy company in the UK</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>06.12.17</td>
<td>00:28:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td>MSc in Strategic Project Management; BSc in Industrial Engineering</td>
<td>Assistant project manager at a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Congo (European Commission projects), Consultant in Supply Hiring in Middle East</td>
<td>Information Technology company in Italy</td>
<td>Project Management Assistant</td>
<td>06.12.17 00:49:34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td>MSc in Strategic Project Management; BA in Marketing</td>
<td>Project manager at a global banking and finance company in Italy; Digital project manager at an advertising agency</td>
<td>Advertising company in Germany</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>09.12.17 00:29:43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R8</td>
<td>MSc in Strategic Project Management; BSc in Industrial Engineering</td>
<td>Accounting controller for an airline in Latin America; Business consultant at an international company,</td>
<td>Bottling company in Chile</td>
<td>Project Management Office (PMO) Assistant Manager</td>
<td>09.12.17 00:46:25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R9</td>
<td>BSc in Banking and Finance</td>
<td>IT Project management and Business analysis in banking</td>
<td>Commercial Bank in Russia</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>08.12.17 00:40:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10</td>
<td>MSc in Strategic Project Management; BSc in Banking and Finance</td>
<td>IT Project management and Business analysis in banking</td>
<td>Commercial Bank in Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>20.12.17 00:30:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both of the researchers were involved in the interview process to make sure research quality is achieved by ensuring reliability and preventing biased interpretation of the results (Yin, 2009, p. 42). The interview language was chosen to be English, since it was the language both the researchers and the respondents could speak and comprehend fluently. This also made transcription process easier for the researchers, eliminating the need to translate the interviews if they were conducted in another language. For the transcription purposes, the researchers also utilized screen and sound recording software to make sure all of the responses were fully recorded; for this, the respondents’ permission was obtained prior to starting the recording. All of the respondents, except Respondent 9, gave their permission for the recording. For Respondent 9, the researchers took notes and double-checked the information to avoid biased interpretations.

The researchers started interviews by conducting a short ice-breaking activity by introducing themselves once again and talking about the respondents’ day and work. This was done in order to create an open and friendly atmosphere between the researchers and the respondents (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 349). The researchers then outlined the purpose of the study and informed about the confidentiality of the sensitive information obtained from the respondents, such as their names and the names of the specific companies they worked in, as part of the ethical considerations closely described in the next section of this thesis. After that, researchers made sure the respondents were willing to continue the interview, the respondents were asked to talk about their background and the current company and projects they were working on to ensure that the researchers had a clear profile of the respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 475). Before going to the main questions in the interview guide, the researchers made sure that the respondents were familiar with the concept of storytelling, which was important for ensuring the understanding of the topic and the questions asked by the respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 473). When going through the questions, the researchers carefully listed to the responses of the respondents and took notes for new questions to be asked as part of the unstructured element of the semi-structured interview. When the respondents did not answer the question fully or the response was unrelated to the question asked, the researchers reformulated the same question to get the precise answer without pushing the respondents (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 325). All of the respondents seemed to be confident during the interviews and showed no signs of being stressed or unwilling to answer questions fully. At the end of the interviews, the researchers thanked the respondents and informed about the approximate publication date of the thesis to allow them to review the results of the study. All of the respondents were willing to provide additional information after the interview and gave permission to be contacted if more input was needed from them.

2.6. Data Analysis
Thematic analysis of data (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 571) was conducted in iterations of activities: 1. transcribing interviews, 2. analysis of transcriptions to identify the main themes, 3. categorizing data into themes, 4. categorizing data into sub-themes, 5. Interpretation and theorization.

Audio-recordings of interviews were converted into written text, which is a recommended step in qualitative data analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 482). As suggested by Bryman &
Bell (2011, p. 482), the process of interview transcription was found time-consuming, but it has allowed the researchers to examine the answers of respondents. The transcription has been made fully, there weren’t any recorded narrations that have not been transcribed. The inaudible fragments of the recordings were indicated as convention [inaudible] after careful consideration by both researchers in the thesis, which is in line with the best practices of interview transcriptions by Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 483).

The initial draft of finding themes was prepared at the end of the interview transcription process. All interview transcriptions were later examined thoroughly to finalize identification of findings themes shown on Appendix 2. Each theme was intended to correspond to a specific objective of the study in order to avoid the issue related to the amount of data, which is the main problem in thematic analysis according to Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 572). This has allowed the selection of data, driving the findings, to be relevant to the research question. Selected interview quotes were placed under each theme. Some of the quotes were placed under several themes, as they would provide the answer to both: the purpose and the format of storytelling. When selecting the quotes corresponding to the theme, the researchers had to often re-define the original themes by combining them into one, so it was an elaborative process that required several rounds of consideration. This, according to Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 573), is one of the difficulties in inductive research strategy.

The data under each theme was classified into sub-themes in order to give more precision to findings. The findings were then interpreted by both researchers of the research and the original transcriptions were referred to achieve the common understanding between researchers. Another difficulty of inductive approach mentioned by Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 573) is related to theorization of data analysis results. As the topic of storytelling was not found to be explored in the context of project management in the existing literature, the theorization of the data was conducted by comparing the findings of thesis to the literature on storytelling in business. For some aspects, however, such as specifics of communication in ICT projects (Monteiro de Carvalho, 2013), the literature review had to be revisited and supplemented.

2.7. Ethical considerations
Research ethics is a big topic to be considered in a research study and is defined by “the appropriateness of the researchers’ behavior in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of a research project” (Saunders et al., 2009, p.183). However, it was crucial for the researchers to consider not only the subjects of the research represented by the interviews respondents, but all the stakeholders who are or might be affected by the study, such as the companies the respondents work or used to work for, the academic institution the authors study at (Umea University), and the wider society, such as other academic institutions or researchers, practitioners, and other members. All of these stakeholders are affected by the study differently and the approach to each group in terms of ethical considerations was determined to be personalized by the researchers. Thus, the following table outlines the actions taken in relation to each stakeholder to prevent unethical behavior from the researchers’ side.
Table 4. Ethical issues and preventive actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Ethical issues</th>
<th>Prevention of unethical actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents (interviewees)</td>
<td>Anonymity of respondents</td>
<td>The researchers replaced names of the respondents by the word “Respondent” and the accompanying interview number (e.g., “Respondent 1”, “R1”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidentiality of sensitive information</td>
<td>The researchers did not disclose sensitive information (company/project name, project financial data, and project employee names)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>The researchers refrained from asking questions about respondents’ private life or questions that are too personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of informed consent</td>
<td>The researchers provided the full information about the study and made sure the respondents understood the implications of participating in interviews; the respondent’s consent was obtained both via e-mail and verbally before the interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deception</td>
<td>The researchers provided truthful information about the study and ensured that the respondents knew how the obtained data would be used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents’ employers (companies)</td>
<td>Anonymity of the employer</td>
<td>The researchers made sure not to include the names of companies the respondents worked or used to work in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of informed consent</td>
<td>The researchers ensured the companies are aware of the respondents’ participation in the study by informing them directly or through the respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidentiality of sensitive information</td>
<td>The researchers asked the respondents about what kind of information they shared was not for public disclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umea University (supervisors, thesis evaluators, opposition members, faculty, other students)</td>
<td>Deception and data manipulation</td>
<td>The researchers made sure not to misuse the interview data or manipulate it by faking responses for their own benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plagiarism</td>
<td>The researchers provided full citations and references for all the relevant literature and did not claim other authors’ ideas as their own; the researchers did not use parts of previously submitted works in this thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wider society (academic institutions, business professionals, other society members)</td>
<td>Deception and data manipulation</td>
<td>The researchers refrained from misusing the collected data and were fully conscious that fake study results might harm society and the academic and business worlds by stated misleading benefits/disadvantages of storytelling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since one of the main stakeholders involved in the study is the respondents, the researchers considered several aspects of ethics to protect them from harm of any extent. The researchers ensured the provision of the right for the respondents to voluntarily participate in or withdraw from the study (Saunders et al., 2009, p.185). To reach out to the selected respondents, the researchers sent an invitation to participate in the study to the project manager directly or to a service employee who forwarded it to the related individual. The invitation included a presentation of the researchers together with a short description of the study. The description included an explanation of what their participation consisted of and the ethical boundaries that protected their rights and privacy throughout the study (Saunders et al., 2009, p.185). At the beginning of the interview, the researchers were granted permission to record the interview process (Saunders et al., 2009, p.194). Since the study intended to collect internal information on organizational practices, employee relations, and management decisions, the researchers ensured the anonymity and non-disclosure of this sensitive information. Considering this, all the respondents’ names in this thesis are replaced by the word “Respondent” and his or her number according to the sequenced order in the interview. For instance, the respondent who was interviewed first is referred to as “Respondent 1” in full or “R1” in short. This ensured the confidentiality of the respondent sensitive information and prevents third parties that might request the interview transcriptions and other interview data for verification of the accuracy of the analyzed data from knowing the source company’s name, which protects the anonymity of the respondent employer company as well.

The researchers considered data manipulation and deception as a completely unacceptable practice that could harm all the stakeholders (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 136); thus, the researchers made sure that all the data is used with a high level of honesty, responsibility, and academic professionalism, while all the ideas, frameworks, and statements that did not belong to the researchers were properly cited and referred to. Finally, the researchers realized that inaccurate data and conclusions made out of this study could harm and mislead the wider society that might use the results of the study for further study or for practical reasons (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.137). Thus, the researchers were fully aware of the possible implications of the unethical behavior on the society, paying great respect to the ethical standards and acting to the best of their academic capacity.

2.8. Research quality

To ensure the quality of the research design presented above, it is crucial to evaluate the research against the quality criteria concerning the qualitative research. Qualitative research has been a debatable topic in the academic community because of the lack of consensus for assessing its quality, comparing quantitative research against qualitative (Meyrick, 2006, p.801). However, it has been concluded that some similarities exist amongst this variety of qualitative research approaches (Meyrick, 2006, p.801). Kirk & Miller (1986) outlined reliability and validity as the adapted criteria for the qualitative research. However, Lincoln & Guba (1985, p.316) stated that reliability and validity could only relate to the quantitative methods, while qualitative research should be assessed by an alternative criterion, such as trustworthiness, which consists of credibility (alternative to internal validity), transferability (alternative to external validity), dependability (alternative to reliability), and confirmability (alternative to objectivity). Since the researchers aimed at particularly evaluating the
Qualitative research, the trustworthiness criterion of Lincoln & Guba (1985) was utilized. The following table summarizes the tactics used to assure the quality of this study.

*Table 5. Summary of the research quality assurance methods*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | Credibility    | Involved in establishing that the results of the research are believable; depends more on the richness of the information gathered, rather than the amount of data gathered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316) | - *Analyst triangulation:* both of the researchers were involved in all of the stages of the study;  
  - *Member checking:* all of the research information and results were shared with the respondents to double-check the accurateness of the data. |
| 2 | Transferability| Related to the issue of generalizability, which means whether the research findings are generalizable beyond the presented case (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316) | - *Thick description:* the findings are not intended to be generalized; however, the researchers provided detailed information on data collection for thesis readers to objectively judge the extent of transferability. |
| 3 | Dependability  | Related to the consistency of findings, specifically whether the researcher was consistent and accurate conceptualizing the study, collecting the data, interpreting the findings and reporting results, and whether the study could be replicated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 317) | - *Dependability audit:* all of the information contained in this thesis has been checked by the supervisor to ensure consistency;  
  - *Thick description:* detailed description of the research method and procedures that can be used in order to repeat this study were provided; |
| 4 | Confirmability | Concerns about how the research findings are supported by the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 317) | - *Audit trails:* both of the researchers were involved in the data collection and analysis to prevent biases;  
  - The chain of evidence was ensured by keeping records of the research process;  
  - The collected data and results were checked by the respondents and the supervisor. |
Credibility is one of the most critical aspects of assuring trustworthiness of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.316). The authors ensured credibility by conducting analyst triangulation, which considers the involvement of multiple analysts, through involving both of the researchers in all of the stages of the study to crosscheck the data, while also utilizing member checks to get the accurateness approval from the respondents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.316). Transferability of the findings was found by the researchers to be a criterion to be evaluated majorly by the readers of this work, as also outlined by Lincoln & Guba (1985, p.316), however, the researchers’ aim was not to generalize the findings, but rather to enrich the understanding of the role of storytelling in the particular new business process implementation in ICT projects. Consistency of findings, or dependability, as outlined by Lincoln & Guba (1985, p.317), was ensured by involving an independent evaluator represented by the thesis supervisor, who provided guidance and rechecked all of the information contained in this study, as well as by outlining the detailed description of the study and methodology to create space for replicating the study as part of the thick description assessment technique. Finally, confirmability of the findings, as well as the prevention of possible biases, were ensured by the involvement of both of the researchers in the data collection and analysis stages of the study to increase the accurateness of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.317). To create space for third party checks of consistency, the researchers made sure to keep records of the research process and crosscheck with the supervisor.
3. Empirical Analysis

3.1. Findings

The information obtained in the interviews with project managers has been thematically presented in this chapter of thesis. The thesis question of ‘How project managers use storytelling in new business process implementation in ICT projects’ is attempted to be answered by setting three objectives of the thesis. First, the findings section describes the forums where storytelling is practiced and experienced by thesis respondents in verbal and written format. Second, this section of thesis states the findings on the goals that are achieved by project managers by storytelling in new business process implementation in ICT projects. Third, it reveals the findings in limitations of storytelling practices depending on the extent of change, size of the organization and it’s governance style. Revealing the findings thematically in these three objectives is expected to provide the answer to the research question in this thesis.

3.1.1. Case studies description

Before presenting the findings, the researchers found it important to outline the overview of the case studies. Since ICT projects exist in various industries, the respondents’ projects and organizations were found to be in 6 different industries. Three of interviewed respondents operate in the ICT industry, three are from the banking industry, while the rest of the respondents work in retail, consulting, advertising and beverage bottling industries. All of the projects the respondents manage are ICT projects that incorporate new business processes in their organizations. These new business process implementation projects are found to have two common goals: 1. To ensure that functionality of the software satisfies the business need of the organization 2. The soft aspect of the project is to ensure that the new business processes are integrated in the organization and accepted by employees and stakeholders. The following table 6 summarizes the respondent and project information that the case studies are based on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Project type</th>
<th>Type of organizational change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>Implementation of new business process and software system integration</td>
<td>Integration of new business process, where the employees of stores and warehouses can submit innovation ideas to the central idea processing unit through software installed of personal devices of employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Implementation of new business process</td>
<td>Integration of project management office procedure changes related to project management practices, such as induction of newly hired project managers, project documentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and knowledge management in projects in software development and integration company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Service Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Software system integration</td>
<td>Development and integration of Patient Management System in medical centers across the country, which impacts day to day activities of hospital staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Software system integration</td>
<td>Integration of Core Banking System in commercial bank in branches across the country, which impacts day to day activities of bank staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Information sharing system implementation</td>
<td>Implementation of the information sharing system where new startups find business support in the form of workshops, mentoring, and consultancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Corporate Content Management System Implementation</td>
<td>Implementation of a corporate content management system and changing the document usage and circulation in the company into a more structured process using ICT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Digital campaign development</td>
<td>Development and implementation of a digital end-to-end web campaign project for an overseas manufacturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R8</td>
<td>Beverage bottling</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>New product development</td>
<td>Development of a new product by using ICT and manufacturing equipment to improve consumer experience and enrich the product range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R9</td>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Software system integration</td>
<td>Integration of Core Banking System in commercial bank in branches across the country, which impacts day to day activities of bank staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10</td>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>Software system integration</td>
<td>Integration of Core Banking System in commercial bank in branches across the country, which impacts day to day activities of bank staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1.2. Formats and forums of storytelling

The first objective of this research that sets the foundation to answer the main research question is to identify what formats storytelling practices take place in new business process implementation in ICT projects. In order to fulfill this objective, a set of questions developed in the interview guide was directed to identify the format of sharing stories in the organization or a specific project, the channels and the audience for communicating stories in each format, as well as the role of a project manager in the storytelling process and his or her specific skills that are needed to convey the message in the most effective and efficient way. Starting from the format of sharing stories, according to the interview data gathered from the respondents, two main formats were identified: 1. verbal storytelling, which was addressed both in formal and informal settings by the respondents, and 2. written storytelling.

3.1.2.1. Verbal Storytelling

All ten respondents stated that verbal storytelling plays a crucial role in implementing new business process. For instance, Respondent 2 stated that “Verbal communication is very important, especially into building relationships which is important in the project management team...” while Respondent 6, when asked specifically about whether it is important to share verbally a message with the project team to prepare them for changes resulting from the new business process implementation, highlighted: “It is fundamental, again. You need to do it through storytelling.” However, the extent to which storytelling was used in the verbal format by the respondents varied depending on the particular setting, such as formal or informal way of sharing stories, which are closely discussed further.

Verbal storytelling in formal setting

The formal setting in which stories are shared is addressed by the researchers as a setting that takes place on the organizational level as a continued established practice, such as scheduled project, department, or company level meetings. Nine out of ten respondents (R2, R3, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10) stated that they do practice storytelling in a formal setting, while Respondent 1 said that he only shares stories in an informal setting: “I would never rely on formal communication to do that [storytelling].” However, the type of formal settings outlined by the nine mentioned respondents differed among them. The respondents listed retrospective meetings at the end of each project iteration, project manager to program and executing management meetings, project manager to employee meetings, and hackathons, as discussed further.

Retrospective meetings at the end of each project iteration: Two of the respondents (R3, R7) mentioned retrospective meetings at the end of each project iteration as one of their main forum to share stories with the project team with the purpose to discuss challenges of the last iteration, find ways to improve processes during the next iteration, and to transfer information to the new project members. Specifically, Respondent 7 said: “We have the retrospective meetings, meaning that at the end of each [project] iteration we can assess what went well, what didn’t, and then use that for future iterations...”, while Respondent 3 highlighted: “It is interesting for storytelling from our perspective because, since the big software is divided in iterations, in these projects changes in the staff are important, cause some staff comes, some staff leaves, and it is important for us to transfer history somehow...”
Project manager to executive management meetings: Five out of ten respondents (R2, R5, R6, R8, R10) highlighted the importance of communicating stories to the executive management in formal meetings that take place in the form of presentations. According to Respondent 10, this format of sharing stories with the executive management is very efficient and effective way to convey key messages and communicate cases of success and challenges of current and past projects, which triggers the executive management to take action if necessary. **Respondent 10**, for instance, shared: “In the formal setting, these are often the presentations to people from headquarters of our organization. We talk about project completed in reporting period and current projects as well.”

Project manager to employee meetings: Six out of ten respondents (R2, R3, R6, R7, R8, R9) mentioned management to employee meetings as a forum for communicating stories in a formal way, outlining that it is crucial to convey the message to the project team and employees from other projects and departments. Specifically, **Respondent 6** indicated that formal verbal communication is very important in the organization, stating: “For me the fundamental moment [is] where the first two meeting with everyone of the departments responsible [happen], and not only them, but then the [project] teams, it was fundamental to involve as many key people as possible in this kind of meetings.” **Respondent 9** added that all the meetings have to be interactive to maximize the effectiveness of story sharing, stressing that “…two-way communication is always a good thing to do during these meetings.”

Hackathons: **Respondent 4** was the only respondent that shared a special format of formal meetings that is practiced in his organization called hackathons, where new ideas are brainstormed in small groups, which are free to use any form of communication, including storytelling. Particularly, he mentions: “In this organization, we meet once a month. We call it in technical words, hackathon. Every month there is a hackathon. Everybody is welcome to join that. Like 10-15 people can sit together in one room and for hours they can stay in room and brainstorm and share their ideas.”

Verbal storytelling in informal setting

Although, formal storytelling does frequently take place in organizations and projects according to the respondents, informal storytelling is a format that tends to be more widespread. Informal storytelling is addressed by the respondents as a way of sharing stories in a setting that does not represent a required or obligatory company practice. All of the respondents mentioned that they use informal storytelling more than formal storytelling and practice it mostly with the project team members to drive the execution of ICT projects on new business process implementation. For instance, **Respondent 2** mentioned that informal meetings with the project teams are important to share stories on the current or completed projects, stating: “We organize frequent meetings, once in trimester meetings or bi-annual meetings when we describe verbally, not formally, what projects have been delivered, high level description meeting business needs and how we achieved, succeeded or fulfilled them.”

These informal meetings mentioned by **Respondent 2** are not the only format discussed by all the respondents; therefore, with the purpose of looking closely at the ways stories can be shared informally, the formats outlined further will be discussed.
Free-time talks: All of the respondents confessed that when it comes to sharing stories with their project teams or colleagues from other departments, the storytelling process happens mostly during free-time talks, such as discussions over lunch or breaks during the workday. According to the respondents, this type of setting represents a natural and casual way of sharing challenges, concerns, and success stories, helping teams to stay engaged, informed, and motivated. In regards to this, Respondent 7 shared: “With some of the colleagues we always come to the point where we discuss the project during the lunch time or free time. We mainly talk about things that are not going well, things that we don’t like, things that we would like to change. Something that does not go to public discussion, or wider forum.” Respondent 2 supported this idea by stating: “...being in same office we can share among us...let’s say not work, information or stories. We also have these monthly meetings like the dinners and lunch together, and people feel free and comfortable to tell about themselves.”

Another important advantage of informal free-time talks that the respondents shared is the possibility of having the two-way communication with the project team, which creates grounds not only for a project manager to act as a storyteller, but also for the project team members to tell their own stories or share their feedback. This is a crucial aspect of storytelling in the context of ICT projects, since new business process implementation entails changes in the organization that require constant feedback according to Respondent 6, who said: “I strongly believe in personal face-to-face communication...When I speak about the project, I try [to] have this two-way communication... So the idea is to show them [the project team] revision and what the advantages will be with the new process. Again, without hiding the difficulties, but proposing the solution to them... The point is you show trust and you are transparent with the difficulties”

Program to project manager communications: When talking about program to project manager communications, three respondents (R1, R6, R8) stated that storytelling in that case does not happen formally only, but takes place in an informal setting as well. The reason behind the informal talks between the two managers is to save time when reviewing project documentation, as well as to verify what was put in writing as stated by Respondent 1, who outlined: “…informally, I also tend to check with the project managers because what you put in writing is tricky...” The informal format of communication between the managers is believed to create an atmosphere that reduces tension and helps the managers to be more open when talking about projects and challenges within it as outlined by the mentioned respondents.

Project presentations to middle management: Having mentioned that informal communication between program and project managers can be a helpful practice, two of the respondents (R1, R4) also stated that turning formal presentations into informal verbal sharing of stories is an effective addition to having a much more efficient communication and understanding. Specifically, when asked about the type of communication of stories to the middle management team, Respondent 1 stated: “When I do one of these appointments I say, 'I have a deck of slides here with me, but I think we can just skip them and I can tell you a few things',” while Respondent 4 replied the following on the same question: “Actually [it happens in] just an informal way. Even if it is my future partners, it can be done during just networking or one to one communication. It was never a presentation or special meetings. Just informal ways.” The respondents additionally mentioned that having an
informal talk instead of a formal presentation helps the communications stay focused only on what is important and relevant to a particular project.

**Corporate events:** In addition to the free-time talks discussed by all the respondents, two of them (R4, R9) also outlined that a lot of verbal storytelling happens during the corporate events, such as celebrations related to project completion. Although these events are most of the times a formal practice in the organizations and projects, they create an open environment where stories of success and challenges are shared. **Respondent 4** provided a clear idea of this by stating: “There should be a cut-off. In my experience [when] the project is over, the project manager just says that it is over. But there should be a celebration, could be informally, but with the entire team. And it can be a right place to tell the story as a presentation.”

**Respondent 9** also contributes to this idea by noting that “…success stories and struggles are widely shared in the moments of celebrations after the project completion”, which supports previous statements about the importance of an open environment and context to facilitate sharing of stories.

### Written storytelling

According to all of the respondents, written communication is a very formal way to document project status or share updates. However, all of the respondents concluded that written communication does not happen in a form of storytelling as much as in the verbal format. When talking about storytelling in written format, the respondents mentioned the lessons learned report, final documentation or project summary, project status report, as well as newsletters and stories shared through company websites.

**Lessons learned report:** When asked about the documents that the respondents refer to when creating a project story, eight of the respondents (R2, R3, R4, R6, R7, R8, R10) mentioned the lessons learned report. However, only one respondent (R8) stated that his organization uses the lessons learned report itself to tell a story rather than just using it as a tool to communicate facts. Specifically, he mentioned: “…it is better to share lessons learned from another area through storytelling… it is helpful.” The rest of the respondents stated that the lessons learned report is a very formal document that is used to communicate key project facts rather than a compelling project story. For example, **Respondent 1** stated that the lessons learned document is a mandatory step in outlining the areas of improvement and has to be done in a strictly formal way: “In the end you are supposed to write the Lessons Learned Report, you know what you could have done better next time. And that is a very formal thing.”

**Newsletter:** Five out of ten respondents (R3, R5, R6, R9, R10) mentioned that when it comes to communicating stories in writing, they mainly use newsletters to share how the project team overcame challenges in their business project implementation and successfully completed it. According to **Respondent 9**, sharing success stories through newsletters is a very effective way to engage people and motivate them to recreate the success achieved in the previous projects. Specifically, **Respondent 9** mentions: “Newsletters are very effective in sharing a compelling story and reaching a wider audience, which does not always happen when such kind of stories are shared verbally.”
At the same time, **Respondent 10** also mentioned that newsletters in their organization are an important thing to keep employees informed about the projects in a more engaging way, since reading short stories is always more interesting than a lengthy project report. Specifically, the respondent stated: “Nobody has time to read a big project report, especially when you are not obliged to do that. But when you get a newsletter, it is always fun to look through it and read about the projects done by your colleagues or even yourself. That is a great way to spread a success story throughout the company.”

**Company website:** Seven out of ten respondents (R3, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10) mentioned that they do storytelling through their company websites, but only in projects where new business process implementation is also benefited by the customer, client, or end-user. According to the mentioned respondents, the main type of stories that are shared through the website are success stories that sell the project or strengthen the brand of the company. Specifically, **Respondent 3** stated: “So on company web site there is a tab, where there are projects, where we describe list of most successful projects what we did”, while **Respondent 9** mentioned that success stories shared on the websites increases trust from the customers and clients, saying: “Websites are a great tool to show your customers through storytelling how your company is progressing and how it improves its operations to serve them better.”

**Final project documentation:** Besides the lessons learned, eight out of ten respondents (R1, R3, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10) mentioned that they use different kind of final project documentation, such as resume of successful projects, project summary, and project reports, to tell a story of a project in a simple and understandable for everybody way. **Respondent 3** provided a clear idea of this, stating the following: “We are formally writing down a resume of successful project as high level describing what was the need from the client side, how we approached them, how we analyzed the business analysis and what we delivered as value. It is important to do it in a short and presentable way, and it is a good idea to start this success story by the challenges that took place before the project.” At the same time, **Respondent 8** outlined that emphasizing the highlights of the projects through a story that could give an understanding of a context of a project is a very important aspect of proving final project documentation: “When sharing a project story at the end of the project... I would say that being focused on what the cool parts of the projects... even if they were negative... being able to turn them to lessons learned, it is fundamental to describe a project in this kind of situations... when you present a project it is [important] to contextualize it, so having something like quick, that can give an understanding of a context is really important.”

3.1.2.3. **Storytelling skills**

Having discussed that the format and context of storytelling is a crucial aspect to consider before sharing stories, it was important for the researches to explore the role of a project manager in the storytelling process and his or her specific skills that are needed to convey the message in the most effective and efficient way, which represents a critical step to reach the first objective of the research. All of the respondents stated that the project manager plays a major role in storytelling practices in projects, since he/she is the main point of communication and contact between various teams and departments. Concerning the skills of the project manager in this process, the respondents outlined salesmanship (R1), narration
skills (R2) and the ability to convey consistent messages about project and corporate values (R1, R2, R8).

Salesmanship skills: When talking about the skills of a project manager, seven respondents (R1, R3, R4, R6, R7, R8, R9) highlighted the importance of selling skills, which take place when there is a need to promote a project or convince people on usefulness of the project for the change of business processes to happen. In support of this, Respondent 1 shared a specific case: “I have sort of salesmanship in my inner most self... So I find it very easy to tell a compelling story when I have one concrete example. So I use the example of one store level idea. About one guy at a store level in Austria, who is now able to submit his ideas. Because I am on a different level than the countries, so I am international level and they are this level. So, they are by nature suspicious about anything I tell them, that’s my job to give them things to do.” Respondent 3 also outlined the connection between salesmanship and trust: “I do provide storytelling to make customer sure that I do have capabilities to trust me.”

In addition to the salesmanship skills, Respondent 8 shared that another important skill for a project manager is to transfer these skills to the project team, so that they become salesmen who promote the project. Specifically, he highlighted: “We like our workers to be ambassadors of our brands. So, together with providing them with the technical information and the storytelling of how they should treat operationally speaking this new product, we provide them with the storytelling from the marketing point of view.” Respondent 6 concluded that the success of the project depends on these salesman skills, stating that “if you have no one being able to communicate the advantages and driving sponsorship of the project, then the project has a high possibility of failure.”

Narration skills: Since storytelling is all about narrations, all of the respondents emphasized that it is crucial for a project manager to have the ability to put together a narrative to convey a strong message. Nine respondents (R1, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10) stated that in some cases storytelling is a much more effective tool than the standard communication of facts. Respondent 9 brought a specific example: “Sometimes even overtime payments are not enough to keep people in the office in the evenings, so in this cases appealing to people on the personal level is important. You find the stories that they can relate to and sometimes in personal communications stories are selected individually.” Respondent 8 also pointed out that it is crucial for a project manager to be able to build a story that is compelling and impressive in a way that can motivate people to change, stating: “When you [as a project manager] use storytelling, you need to give a sense of epicness of the project in order to better communicate a real objective of it... I use storytelling as a communication tool when I want to raise awareness of the people that we need to change the way that we are doing things.”

3.1.3. Goals achieved by storytelling

After establishing what storytelling practices are used in project management, the next step is to understand how storytelling helps project managers in achieving their goals. In this sense, the ‘how’ part of the question is closely related to the goals pursued by storytellers in projects and establishing the purpose of storytelling is expected to answer it. Identifying the
The purpose of storytelling by project managers is found to be essential in exploring storytelling in the context of new business process implementation in ICT projects.

The thesis findings presented in this section are split into five major themes, each corresponding to a specific goal, that is pursued by interview respondents through storytelling practices in new business process implementation in ICT projects: 1. to make sense of projects; 2. to cover certain aspects of human resource management in projects; 3. to promote adaptation of ICT end-users and the organization to new business processes; 4. to preserve and transfer project knowledge; and 5. to attract new customers and investments into projects.

3.1.3.1. Creating sense of reality in ICT projects
Nine out of ten project managers (R1, R2, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10), interviewed in this thesis, have mentioned that storytelling practices help them to either understand current challenges of the project or to deliver the message about the project scope and about the complexity of the environment around the project. Typically, stories about the ongoing projects fall into this category (R1, R2, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10).

Understanding of current status and challenges in ongoing ICT projects: According to interviewed portfolio manager (R1), the stories about the projects, that are shared in the informal conversations between portfolio managers and project managers, tend to reveal more realistic picture about the current project status rather than the formal status update reports: “I also tend to check with the project managers because what you put in writing is tricky... you would try to avoid finger pointing, you wouldn’t blame anyone is specific, because you write it down and that always looks bad if you start pointing fingers at people. So, when I check with them, they say ‘oh you know, that department X totally screwed up and I know I also missed this contract bit’”. In respondent’s (R1) experience in the role of portfolio manager, the project managers would practice storytelling in the informal setting in order to reveal the information about the less successful parts of the projects, which has helped the portfolio manager to draw the clearer picture of current project challenges: “The formal project report tends to be rarer than formal discussion about the project, because that is what you do when you take a grab a cup of coffee and say ‘Oh, you know, I just finished topic X and ... it was really a bugger, because we really messed up on the last bit’”.

Another representative of project management office (R2), has a practice of informal communication with the project managers during the project execution stage in order to reveal the weaknesses of new project management office procedures and policies. The feedback collected from project managers comes in a form of a story, that exemplifies the inefficiencies: “…what I am doing is I am talking with each project manager, asking ... how do they find, who do they feel with changes, are they comfortable is it more or less work to do... And discuss and brainstorm the understanding on how it gets done in practice”.

Two interview respondents (R1, R7), find that the escalations of issues in the ICT project teams can be identified by paying attention to the narratives that circulate in the informal communications between the project team members. Respondent 1 mentions that in their organization, it is a regular practice for projects to involve human resources from ‘standard
departments’ – the people out of project management office, and usually “resource responsible managers are also keeping an eye of what kind of topics are swirling around”. According to Respondent 1, paying attention to the narratives about ongoing projects within the project teams in informal setting helps identifying whether there is a resource overload issues due to multi-project involvement of the project team member. Another example of how storytelling in informal conversations help project managers to reveal the problems in project is related to the stories about the external parties involved in the projects (R7). Respondent 7, for example, states: “... the comments that I hear from them in informal conversations, that they are not happy with the way [vendors] work, and they do not accept this kind of culture... I need to understand what is the feeling overall of the team and what is the things that have the problem with the client and overall project.”

Explaining the project activities to people, who do not possess the technical or project language competences: Two out of ten interviewed project managers (R4, R10) practice storytelling when communicating the project related information, such as activities involved in new business process implementation in ICT projects, to the audience outside to project team.

The project manager of Core Banking System implementation in the bank (R10) says: “I am in banking and IT, so the terminology is very specific. If the audience comes from different background, it is sometimes hard to convert the message into commonly spoken language”. The other project manager of the similar software project from another bank (R4) supports that by saying: “...[in] discussions ... with the teams that know about banking, finance or the projects itself... I don’t need to put metaphors or worlds that are not from banking industry... The other 20% of discussions are with non-technical and non-financial guys. In this case I try to put it as a story”.

In order to provide an example on how the information about activities in Core Banking System implementation projects is simplified for the audience, who do not have the knowledge about IT or finance, Respondent 4 talks about the story, that he has shared with such type of audience to make them understand the scope of Core Banking System implementation:

“... project management is like building a house... When building the tasks or like software you need to bring a system architect, which in real life is just an architect. So, we will need to discuss with him, and architect should provide some technical task or just some requirement specification. For us it is the list of action items.

After that, I can take them [audience] to another building and show them what we built before... Then you can see the gaps, you can explain the differences between the current system and what we are going to provide. In this case we are trying to understand the gaps. ... if I show them my previous examples, like 'ok, this is my previous building, which we built with our vendors, and it was two floors apartment, but now they [bank] need three floor but without swimming pool...'. At this point of time we can understand the gaps and make sense of the complexity of the project”.

50
Another example made by the respondent (R4) for the similar case is comparing the process of software development in the Agile methodology to creative writing process:

“I was discussing with team and I was trying to explain how creative teams can be closer to the development of software... The idea is that when we are speaking about Agile or Scrum, we can put the development process in some items... We call them sprints. Each sprint, we are writing [a part of] a poem or novel...
[Sprint] is about [...] first you will put some main idea in the center, one by one you will increase it, like you will put the snowflakes one by one. You are given ten main items about your project. Then again for each snowflake, you are given more and more. At the end it will be like a big snowball”.

Explaining the complexity of the environment around the project and its relation to the project: The project manager from the retail industry (R6) highlights the importance of explaining the context of projects, when communicating project stories, “because, otherwise, it would be meaningless or can be misunderstood” (R6). According to respondent from the ICT industry (R5), project managers from the same organization, swap different stories about their project with each other and it is of big importance when the projects belong to the same program, as it allows each project manager to see the holistic picture of what is going on and how it may impact their own project.

Three project managers (R4, R8, R9) found themselves to be using the elements of storytelling to explain the complexity of the environment around the project to the project team and the end-users of the software that is being implemented. They (R4, R8, R9) also consider storytelling to be useful to explain how the changes in the environment impact the project. When asked about storytelling, the interview respondent from Chile (R8), recalls giving his project a name of the highest mountain in Latin America:

“... we named the project ‘Aconcagua’... what the company wanted was to be number one in Latin America, and that made sense, everything was related to achieving the goal of climbing the mountain and reaching the top. It was helpful... you use storytelling [when] you need to give a sense of ‘epicness’ of the project in order to better communicate a real objective of it.”

The project manager of Core Banking System implementation project in Russia (R9) has made a project logo, that was used in project related documentation. The logo is an image of a car running at a fast speed with the outline of the engine in it (R9). It was made to deliver the idea that was circulated by project manager in presentations earlier – replacing a Core Banking System in their bank is like replacing the engine of a car while the car is still running (R9). This, according to the respondent (R9), expresses the idea on how the things change at a rapid speed in the organization and how the bank cannot be stopped while replacing the Core Banking System. The respondent (R9) considers that project managers have to be very creative in order to attract the attention of people in organization and for them to remember about the complexity around the project. The metaphorical representation of the project as replacing the engine in the running car has attracted the interest in the organization, and the project manager (R9) “even got a call from HR, who were curious about the car story”.
When explaining the project logo to end-users of the Core Banking System, project manager (R9) finishes the story by stating that the new engine will transform the car from Zaporozhec into Ferrari, which in the opinion of the respondent, represents a significant improvement in business processes for end-users of the software.

Another project manager of Core Banking System implementation project in Thailand (R4), has played a YouTube video clip on the shared screen during the project team meeting. The animated video plot is the people building the plane, while the plane is in the air. In the respondent’s opinion (R4), the video explains the environment around the project and its influence on the project plan. The project manager (R4) says the following about video and project team’s reaction to it:

“10-15 years ago, when I started working in banks, that time we had perfects plans. ... right now, all the projects ... all of them [are] like building a plane during a flight. You will never be sure that in one month nothing will change. So, we need to be agile, and we cannot tell business to wait for another half a year. We are already flying by this plane... that story about plane, everybody was laughing at that time, but anyway it went to their mind. Even after 4 years [listeners] still remember and I still remember. It means that it will be [stored] somewhere in your mind”.

3.1.3.2. Aspects of Human Resource management

Seven out of ten thesis respondents (R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R9) are found to be using storytelling for certain aspects of Human Resource Management, specifically: 1. Employee engagement during the induction to ICT projects (R2, R3, R7); 2. Motivation of the ICT project team (R3, R4, R5, R6, R9); 3. Strengthening relations within the ICT project team (R2, R5, R7); and 4. Increasing the credibility of ICT project manager (R3, R4, R5). All the seven respondents mention that these are the stories of success (R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R9). Typically, the stories about past projects, stories about completed stages in ongoing projects, stories about the future scenarios of the career development of individuals in project teams and stories about the past experiences of project managers fall into this category (R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R9).

Storytelling in employee engagement during the induction process to ICT projects: Three project managers working in the ICT industry (R2, R3, R7) see the use of storytelling in engagement of new team members into ICT projects. The respondent working in project management office (R2) facilitates sharing of project success stories with new members of teams during their induction into projects. According to the respondent (R2): “…people need to hear that they are working for a successful company, [that] is delivering value in the market...”. The selection of successful story format has been justified by the respondent (R2) as follows: “Salary and other benefits are very important, but having faith and feeling ensured is also very important for the new comers in the company. Time has shown that is has been good to share this [project success stories] with the new staff”.

The project manager from the same organization (R3) relates to the usage of storytelling as the mean of transferring the history of interactions with clients in development of software
in Agile methodology. The stories about the previous iterations, according to Respondent 3, promote the understanding of the customer needs. Due to the changes in the team of software developers from one iteration to another, the project manager (R3) shares stories about the first iterations to ensure the understanding of the business requirements and behavioral patterns of a customer.

Another project manager (R7) mentions the frequent turnover of staff in projects, and states that the stories of previous projects have the power to show the holistic picture of projects and interrelations of the activities within them, hence contributes to commitment of an employee to the team. The responded (R7) also mentions that “it is way which you tell the story that you can get to engage with the project or not”.

**Storytelling in motivating ICT project team:** Storytelling is found to play a role in motivating employees to work in ICT projects (R3, R4, R5, R6, R9). Respondent project managers (R5, R4, R6) state that showing the examples of cases, when the project teams have successfully overcome the challenges in past projects is inspiring to new project teams. Similarly, Respondent 3 states that rather than just declaring that there are some phases of the project that are harder than others, it is more efficient to exemplify it by telling the story of an individual successful experience in the same phase in past projects. In these stories, Respondent 3 stresses of the temporariness of challenges rather than the challenge itself. The project manager (R3) states the following to demonstrate the practice:

“I do put them in the story, it is better to make it concrete. Like, for example: ‘... when we had to deliver that project, you know what happened with [name]... He suffered a lot during the software release through test and at the end we managed to deliver the software and he had a lot of stress, he was shouting to us and at the end we managed to deliver’. What I try to emphasize in this message is that this is temporary, so I try not to make them afraid of it... Since some of the resources are not experienced, I need to make sure that they do not be afraid of the pressure that will increase with the coming days or weeks. Just wanna make sure [they understand] that this is temporary, and, at the end, we will deliver, and it is process, and, at the end, this is business as usual.”

The respondent project manager from Russia (R9) brings the example on how storytelling has helped in motivating the project team members while working overtime at the final stages of Core Banking System implementation project. According to Respondent 9, the same story might not work for all the members of the team equally and she selects the story depending on the interests and background of the listener: “You find the stories that they can relate to”. As an example, Respondent 9 has explained how she has chosen different narratives in motivating two different project team members. In one of the cases, Respondent 9 wanted to motivate an employee to work overtime. The employee seemed tired and upset about working at a late time of the day, but they had to do it due to deadlines (R9). In order to keep him going, the respondent (R9) shared a phrase that has been used in the military in post-war Russia: “For the Homeland, for Stalin!” Respondent 9 knew that this project team member has served in the military. Therefore, Respondent 9 expected that the phrase would bring back the memories and make the employee think how his service back then and now is very
appreciated. According to **Respondent 9**, the person smiled back and worked hard for many more hours that night. In another case, the intention of the project manager (**R9**) was to motivate the female employee, who often worked in the project overtime. The employee did not have a family yet, as **Respondent 9** knew. So, **Respondent 9** shared her own experience when she was leaving her house that day and her daughter told her that she misses her. According to the respondent (**R9**), the narration made the employee think about all her colleagues with families, who work over-time, and this was a motivating factor for her.

Another respondent from banking industry (**R4**) stated that sharing stories, that portray scenarios of possible future career development of project participants, helps keeping the project team members motivated. In the respondent’s (**R4**) opinion, during the project phases when the team is under the pressure, the stories about the possible personal development are more effective than the narration about the organizational benefit of the ICT project. According to project manager (**R4**), usually he uses the narratives related to salary increase or gaining the new competences in projects in the following way:

“If you ask me as a project manager... we are speaking about UAT, core team...So the first thing I explained them, I believe on the third meeting informal way... So, I told them: ‘You can see my progress. My salary was increased in the last 5 or 10 years, my salary was increased 5-6 times... If you are working on the same environment [standard departments of the bank], even [if] you [are] exceeding expectation, nobody will give you salary rise’.

I explain them: ‘If you know the market killing product, in my case - core banking solution, if you know how to work, if you know more than others you will be a champion... Head hunters will try to catch you... To increase the competence means - you will be... on a good count. In your company [project] you can start as a junior, you can be a tester and you will do 100 test cases per day, but after some time if you show your progress, you will become as senior. But if you are working on ordinary positions [standard departments of the bank] this upgrade of your position will come in 5-6 years. During implementation project it will come in 3-5 months’.

The same respondent (**R4**) also mentions that sharing the stories of successful projects with the people outside the projects motivates the project teams and increases the team spirit. According to the project manager (**R4**): “This promotes the understanding of projects internally within entire organization, it motivates the project teams, increases your power as project manager and helps acceptance of change”.

**Storytelling in strengthening relations within the ICT project team:** In the opinion of **Respondent 7**, these are the things that the project teams are not able to share in formal settings. Some of the respondents (**R2, R5, R7**) highlight the importance of existence of the forums, that would facilitate the project teams to share the stories about past projects. According to **Respondent 7**, during the breaks the project teams “**talk about things that are not going well, things that we don’t like, things that we would like to change**”. While it is a “**a good opportunity [for project team] to release frustrations**”, the project manager can “**learn what is it that [project manager] can do in the future to prevent that**”. Project manager
(R5) sees her roles in encouraging these stories to be told informally by “facilitating... sharing environment”.

Sharing the stories about personal life is found to be another storytelling practice, that strengthens the relations within the teams (R2). One of the interviewed project managers (R2), specifically, says:

“We also have these monthly meetings like the dinners and lunch together. And people feel free and comfortable to tell about themselves. Yes, we do know how they came to company and what was bravest experience, what was enjoyable in present and what was not with the other employees... It is more of sharing histories with each other”.

Storytelling in increasing the credibility of the ICT project manager: Three respondents of the interviews (R4, R3, R5) state that storytelling about the projects helps them in building their personal portfolios about the projects. Respondent (R4) states that he presents the information about completed projects in the form of a story about the resolution of business problems to potential employers. Another respondent (R3) mentions that project storytelling, where the client is placed in the center of the story, is useful in building personal and organizational project CV. These stories are also part of LinkedIn profiles of project managers (R5). Besides interactions will potential employer (R4), project managers tell the stories of completed projects to project teams in order to increase their credibility by showing what they have done before (R5).

3.1.3.3. Promoting adaptation of the organization and the end-users
Seven out of ten respondent project managers practice storytelling to help the organization and the end-users of new software to the change in business processes (R1, R4, R7, R2, R8, R10, R9). The stories circulated in order to promote the acceptance of new business processes are told at the initiation of the new projects (R1, R2, R4, R7, R8, R10) and after the completion of the project (R9, R10).

The plot of the stories, that are intended to engage the stakeholders in the beginning of the projects, is targeted at highlighting the drivers for change (R1, R4, R2, R7). According to the respondents (R1, R4, R2, R7), in the beginning of the project, the stories about the success of competitive organizations in similar business process changes and stories of project compliance to corporate goals are the most effective in this case. After the projects are completed, the information about the projects is attempted to be delivered in a form of a success story (R9, R10) in order to promote the acceptance of new business processes and new software systems by end-users.

Success stories about competing organizations: One of the thesis interview respondents (R1) works in the project related to implementation of idea and innovation management processes in a multi-national supermarket chain organization. According to the project manager (R1), part of his functions in the project is to convince the country-level management at the initiation level of project. The project manager (R1) prefers verbal communication with the country level managers in conveying the information about the drivers for the project: “... I would never rely on formal communication to do that. So, I always, when I do one of these
appointments, I say: ‘...I have a deck of slides here with me, but I think we can just skip them and I can tell you a few things’”. The project manager (R1), then verbally tells the story related to the success of the competing organization in the similar process. Respondent 1 finds the organization to be highly competitive both internally and externally, as the countries and stores compete with each other inside the organization and they compete with other supermarket chains as well. The project manager mentions, that the stories about the competitors on both levels helps reducing the resistance at the initial stage of the project. To exemplify, the project manager (R1) continues:

“So, you easily say: ‘well we would like to implement this because otherwise competitor X is catching up on us’. Or if I pitch one country against the other, I can say: ‘In Portugal why aren’t we implementing the system, why aren’t we getting as many ideas ... [Company name] Sweden is giving us X amount of ideas. That is a very strong driving factor and we have... the overall impulse to win or to sell a lot... I find it very easy to tell a compelling story when I have one concrete example. So, I use the example of one store level idea. About one guy at a store level in Austria, who is now able to submit his ideas”.

The project manager from banking (R4) mentioned that describing the success stories in the competing organizations helps the audience to understand the benefits of the suggested projects at the initiation stage. The story of 40% decrease in customer service in the competing bank, according to Respondent 4, has helped him in to effectively deliver the message about the necessity of Core Banking System update.

Another project manager (R7) has met the resistance form client’s side in regard to the frequent iterations with vendor companies and found it challenging to make the client understand why agile methodology should be used for that specific project rather than traditional methodology, that the client organization was used to. The project manager has re-told success stories related to Agile methodology in competing agencies and, according to the Respondent 7, it has helped the client to be less reluctant about the change.

Consistency of project goals and corporate values in project stories: Two other respondents (R8, R10) have also mentioned that storytelling is helpful in delivering the message about the end goals of the projects and reduce the fear of change. The project manager of Core Banking System implementation (R4), for example says: “For end users of core banking system, you have to explain how the new system makes their life easier. And the system has to prove itself too. But before they put hands on it, in their mind, they need to give a new system a chance. When they users hear about a new system, they naturally fear the change as it involves unlearning the previous system and learning the new one. The stress can only be reduced by transparency in communication and goals of the project as well as its impact on end-users in organization”.

Storytelling, according to Respondent 2, is one of the most helpful tools in helping the organizations accepts the change, because “no one likes to be pushed or told... they [organizations] have to understand that [driver for change]... people like to be treated as equal”. The project managers (R10, R1) find it important to highlight how project goals are consistent to core values of the organization: “if I tell them ... a story about another country
of their level, similar experience, and use one concrete example, then designates with our core values, then it usually works very well”. One of the core values of the supermarket-chain, that the Respondent 1 works at, is “If you don’t get better, you will never be good”, which the project manager often uses to promote the acceptance of new innovation management process implementation. Respondent 3, stated: “I do provide sharing [of] a lot of information because you need to bring in line with what is happening, also to build up some prides or needs out of the work, that we are doing and the results we are achieving. It is very much related to the culture and values of the company.” Respondent 8 pointed out that it is also important to remind people about the objective of the project, which can be done through storytelling: “Storytelling can be useful to understand the strategic objective of the project... like the strategic meaning of why the project exists.”

Another project manager (R10) states that project related message should be consistent across the project team and therefore the project team members are trained to communicate about the projects with the rest of the organization. When explaining the reasons for the necessity of consistency of the core messages of the project story, the project manager (R10) continues: “Cause if they [project team members] tell the story of the failure of software, then it becomes very hard to make people accept the new software”. Two respondents (R10, R7) state that it is important to avoid “seeming fake” (R7) and it important to be “honest” (R10) in the project stories.

Showcasing the success of project after its completion: Two project managers have described the examples on how they have demonstrated the success of the project through storytelling (R9, R10) after the ICT project was completed. Both project managers (R9, R10) refer to the projects related to Core Banking System implementation. Respondent 9, a project manager from Russia, works in the Bank with multiple subsidiaries across Europe and Asia. When the end-users of the system have a negative attitude, and complain about how hard it is to learn how to use the new system, the project manager (R9) tries to redirect the communication to positive story of never stopping bank. One of the stories the respondent (R9) tells is about the similar Core Banking system, that was implemented in the Italian subsidiary of the organization, the Italian subsidiary had to stop working for 2 days because of the system issues after it was released. The bank in Russia, however, has managed to never stop the routine activities, which, according to the project manager (R9), showcases the success of the project and the project team. This story has been retold many times by the project manager (R9) to people who were not satisfied with the new system.

Another example of showcasing the success Core Banking System implementation, by visualizing the positive experience of the individual software user, is explained by the project manager in Kyrgyzstan (R10) as follows:

“Inevitably, people start comparing the new system to the old one. They do not see the holistic picture, so even small inconveniences in new system will be blown to big scales. Also, the adaptation speed is different. So, it is important to communicate the stories of successful branches across the entire organization to be able to push others to catch up. For example, in a week after the release of software, when analyzing the levels of activity, we have noticed that one of the operators from a remote branch has registered 40 customers a day, while the
average for others was like 20. I asked the marketing [department] to interview to publish the story of the operator as the small text with her picture and comments on the usability of the new software. Eventually, I think it made people understand that this is what they can do as well. The hero operator was new to the organization too, so I counted everybody to be like ‘if she can do that, then I can do [it too]’. So, she appeared to be very relatable in the newsletter article”.

3.1.3.4. Aspects of knowledge management
Nine of ten respondents confirm the usage of storytelling practices in knowledge management in new business process implementation in ICT projects (R1, R6, R2, R3, R4, R7, R9, R8). The stories, that are classified into this category, are 1. stories about failed projects; 2. stories about successful projects; and 3. the stories about external organizations involved in the projects, such as clients and suppliers.

Stories about failed projects: The project manager working in the multi-national supermarket chain (R1) stated that portfolio managers facilitate the cross-country exchange of failed project stories. Respondent 1 explained the motives behind as follows: “Because we work on so many levels, and so if [company name] Sweden implements a project, and maybe [company name] Spain has already found out that it is [censored]”.

The project manager of ICT projects in UK (R6), has the experience of project storytelling on project management office meeting, where the stories are shared in peer-to-peer communication to help avoiding the past errors in future projects. Respondent 6 stated that the organization collects, analyzes and reads the case studies to learn from the past projects in the similar industry. When classifying a case study as the practice of storytelling, the project manager (R6) says: “I think it [storytelling] is very widely recognized as case studies... because you are telling a story on what has happened... I think the only way you can get a case study is like storytelling”.

Stories about successful projects: Each respondent in this category states that sharing the stories of success in projects helps preserving and transferring the knowledge in new business process implementation in ICT projects (R1, R6, R2, R3, R4, R7, R9, R8). According to the respondents, sharing the successful elements in projects after its completion in the form of a story helps understanding the context around the project (R2), whether these elements can be re-implemented as the regular practices (R7), and sharing and building the knowledge in the project management office (R2).

Stories about external organizations involved in projects: Two project managers (R7, R9) have highlighted that stories, that are informally shared about the interaction of project team with external organizations, such as clients and suppliers, provide the lessons learned for the further style of collaborations with these organizations. According to Respondent 7, these stories allow the project team to acquire knowledge necessary to build the expectations and manage the risks in project activities. As an example, the project manager (R7) recalls the story circulated about the customer, that has allowed the organization to adjust the working style with one of the clients:
“We work with a large Korean manufacturer, and they have very different ethics than what we have here in Europe or even North America. Once, they said that they want their vendors to work 20 hours, sometimes 24 hours a day... So, might we come to the point where we have to stay in the office until very late? And that obviously affects the dynamics in the team”.

Another project manager (R9), states that the knowledge about culture and policies of suppliers can only be obtained through listening to the stories about the past experience of interactions. These stories help in anticipating what difficulties maybe faced with them, if the declared deadlines are realistic, and specifics of vendor’s work in technical questions such as data migration.

3.1.3.5. Attracting new customers and new investments to ICT projects

Two respondents working in the same software development and integration company (R2, R3) have suggested that the storytelling practices about the past project is used to attract new customers, who could potentially implement the software developed in their organization. Typically, these are the stories of successful software implementation projects, describing how the software and project team has helped the customers to overcome business challenges in the past. The stories describe “what was the situation of the client, what was their pain and what was their reaction of the client, and time and efforts and headache they saved” (R2). According to Respondent 2, project success storytelling approach in attracting new customers has been suggested by the sales department of the organization. The sales personnel tell the project success stories to potential customers (R2). On a wider scale, the forums for sharing the project success stories to increase future project sales are presented in the media and public conferences (R6). The narrators chosen for this occasion are not necessarily the project managers, these are the people, “who have the ability and skills to present” (R2). The organization also publishes the stories about the successful projects and customer testimonials on their web-site (R3). The language chosen to help the visualization of completed project benefits of existing customers is classified as ‘not very detailed and not technical at all’ by Respondent 2

The organization of another project manager (R5), also publishes the stories of the successful projects in a form of illustrative text or video on the company web-site. Project managers (R3, R5) state that the stories of past project success send a message about the capabilities of the project teams and software solutions and helps the project managers in gaining the trust from customers. Respondent 8 says the following about branding the projects: “But still, we like our workers to be ambassadors of our brands. So, together with providing them with the technical information and the storytelling of how they should treat, operationally speaking, this new product, we provide them with the storytelling from the marketing point of view”.

Showcasing successful projects as a story is also used to attract new investments to organizations, Respondent 6 says the following: “After the end of a project in Congo, we had to describe the project to some potential new founding partners, so we had to describe our project and how it went, because there was an interest from the NGO and clients, and funding stakeholders for new projects... I would say that being focused on what the cool
parts of the projects... even if they were negative... being able to turn them to lessons learned, it is fundamental to describe a project in this kind of situations... That’s basically what I have in mind when I present projects”.

3.1.3.6. **Consistency of storytelling purposes by respondents**

**Figure 6. Project storytelling categorization by respondents**

The respondents of this thesis are not found to be using storytelling practices evenly in terms of its purpose. Figure 6 demonstrates storytelling purpose related findings per each respondent. Here, it is worth mentioning that the same story can have several effects, therefore project managers often pursue multiple goals when telling a story in ICT projects (R2). One of the respondents (R2), for example, says the following when asked whether telling success stories of completed projects to ICT development and implementation teams is intended to share knowledge or to engage employees: “It is both. I cannot define, find strict line between two of them.”

3.1.4. **Limitations of storytelling practices**

Although all of the respondents found storytelling practices useful, nine pointed out that the helpfulness of sharing stories in new business process implementation projects is not universal, meaning that it depends on several factors and settings, while there are also downfall and restrictions on using storytelling. The dependencies mentioned by the respondents are the size of the organizations where the business process change projects take place, the extent of the change, as well as the cultural aspect of the organization as a whole. The downfall outlined by the respondents are the amount of time that stories require to be shaped, logistic difficulties, as well as the authoritarian governance structure that limits storytelling practices in the organization.
3.1.4.1. Conditions of storytelling

Extent of change: Nine of the respondents (R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10) stated that the extent to which storytelling is helpful or can take place in the organization depends on the extent of change and the context where this change is placed. Respondent 3 provided a clear summary of all the dependencies that storytelling encounters: “What is important: it [storytelling] is case by case. Different organizations, different projects, different setup. I have changed a lot of companies. What happens in one organization does not necessarily happen in the other one. It depends on where do you place these kind of changes. What level you are, with whom you are dealing.” At the same time, Respondent 1 provided a specific example of where and what kind of changes would not accept storytelling practices: “For other kinds of organizational changes it may apply, but for store level employees, they are not.. it is a very high fluctuating business, it’s very simple and it’s very top down.” Respondent 2 also supported the idea that storytelling would not work for low level workers, stating that “…sometimes it is not possible at all. Because what has to be done has to be done.”

Respondent 8 shared an example of what type of projects in his organization accept storytelling as a helpful practice, and which ones do not: “…storytelling’s helpfulness will depend on the type of project. For example, in my experience, I need storytelling when we are launching a new project in which you need to communicate, but not to the customers, but to your co-workers and to the operational area: logistics, operations, so on... If the management board wants to change something or wants to create or generate a project to change from the operational point of view, more like an engineering type of project, storytelling is not really helpful.”

Size of the organization: Eight Respondents (R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R8, R10) found it difficult to use storytelling on the organizational level, where the organization is big and operates all in different parts of the world. Particularly, Respondent 8 shared that organizations like that mostly use communication rather than storytelling: “Sometimes it also depends on the size of the organization. It is difficult to convey a story throughout an organization that is spread all over the world. I don’t know, something that you communicate in order to get a broader message. It is not like ok, we need to do this because of this reasons. I don’t think that is storytelling, that is just communication.”

Cultural differences: Seven respondents (R1, R2, R3, R5, R6, R7, R8) mentioned culture as a barrier to use storytelling which might not be acceptable in certain cultural settings. The culture that the respondents talked about does not mainly relate to the cultural differences between the countries, but more on the cultural differences on the organizational level. For instance, Respondent 4 highlighted: “In my current situation, because of the mentality it will not work. Here only the strict decisions and action points will work. I am telling about the challenging environments, when you have the deadlines.” At the same time, Respondent 8 stressed that the use of storytelling does not depend on the country or its culture, but rather on the type of message that needs to be shared with people in that culture. Specifically, he stated that: “Storytelling can be useful in any culture, it is like movies, every culture likes
movies, but some cultures have different types of movies. I think that instead of the channel would be like the message or the narrative inside the storytelling that needs to be adapted."

3.1.4.2. Challenges of storytelling

Stories require time to be shaped and shared: Although the respondents stated that storytelling is a helpful practice to adopt in new business process implementation projects, all of them agreed that it takes time for stories to be shaped or for project communication to be converted into a compelling story. Respondent 3, for instance, stated: “Storytelling requires a lot of time. We don’t have much time for storytelling in an elaborative way. This is the only reason.” All of the respondents mentioned that storytelling practices happen more in an informal way also due to the time that formalization of storytelling takes; therefore, it is easier to share stories informally. Respondent 5 shared that trying to formalize the process is not always the right thing to do, because it will not happen in a natural way eventually: “I don’t really think to try to formalize the process of storytelling would work, because it is almost like trying to force it. I feel like it needs to be more of a natural process.” Respondent 10 also supported the idea that storytelling is not given much attention in organizations due to the time it takes to be shaped, but still mentioned that it needs to be practiced, stating that: “The only problem is that in most of the cases, it is not prioritized, but it should be I believe.”

Logistic difficulties: Seven respondents mentioned that storytelling might not take place in big organizations due to the logistical difficulties, since storytelling requires personal approach, which is hard to execute within an organization and project teams that operate in different locations. Specifically, Respondent 10 mentioned that “There are logistical challenges of people being many and spread across the country. So you can’t talk to people one to one.” The logistical challenges are also caused by the authoritarian governance structure, which makes it hard for stories to be communicated between the different hierarchies. Particularly, Respondent 6 stated that “The project manager, depending on the organizational structure, does not really have formal power or let’s say responsibility to go and speak with all the teams.” However, Respondent 10 highlighted that even though there are logistical difficulties within such an organization, stories still have to be shared to some extent to make sure all the teams are on track with the overall progress in the organization: “It is important to communicate the stories of successful branches across the entire organization to be able to push others to catch up.”
Table 7. Summary of findings

<p>| How project managers use storytelling in new business process implementation in ICT projects? |
|---|---|---|
| <strong>Verbal Storytelling</strong> | <strong>Written Storytelling</strong> | <strong>Role and skills of a project manager in storytelling</strong> |
| ▪ Exists in formal and informal forums, but informal sharing of stories tends to be used more frequently | ▪ Written storytelling is favored to be used when face-to-face communication becomes difficult, but is found to be less used compared to verbal storytelling | ▪ In order for both verbal and written storytelling to happen, it is found to be crucial for a project manager to have salesmanship skills, which help promote the usefulness of the new business process implementation and adapt the organization to the change this implementation entails, as well as narration skills, which are fundamental for conveying a strong and compelling message to the project team |
| ▪ Formal verbal storytelling takes place during retrospective meetings at the end of each project iteration, project manager to program and executive management meetings, and project manager to employee meetings | ▪ Written storytelling is found to be present in ICT projects mainly in form of newsletters and websites, and less frequent presence in lessons learned reports and final project documentation | |
| ▪ Informal verbal storytelling exists during free-time talks, program to project manager communications, project presentations to middle management, and corporate events | | |
| <strong>Forums and formats of storytelling</strong> | <strong>Aspects of Human Resource Management</strong> | <strong>Promoting adaptation of the organization and the end-users</strong> |
| ▪ Creating sense of reality in ICT projects | ▪ The stories of ongoing projects help to identify the reality of the project issues, explain the project activities and goals to the audience from varying backgrounds, and deliver the message about the complexity of the environment and its impact on the ICT project. | ▪ Explaining the drivers for new projects by sharing the success stories of competitors and showcasing the success of completed project through storytelling is found to help in promoting the acceptance of new business processes in ICT projects. |
| ▪ Storytelling delivers the message in an easily understandable way is applied in these scenarios. | ▪ Stories of success about past projects, completed stages in ongoing projects, personal experiences of the project manager and possible future of individual project employees have the Human Resource Management purposes in new business process implementation in ICT projects. | ▪ Consistency of project goals to organizational goals in the project story is found to be effective in reducing the resistance to change. |
| <strong>Goals achieved by project managers through storytelling</strong> | <strong>Aspects of knowledge management</strong> | <strong>Consistency of storytelling purposes by respondents</strong> |
| ▪ Attracting new customers and new investments | ▪ Organizations studied in thesis also apply storytelling practices to attract new customers and investments into ICT projects | ▪ The respondents of this thesis are not found to be using storytelling practices evenly in terms of its purpose |
| ▪ Stories about past successful and failed projects, stories about the counter-parties in projects promote knowledge sharing and preservation. | ▪ Storytelling sends a message about the capabilities of the project teams and software solutions and helps the project managers in gaining the trust from customers | ▪ The same story can have several effects; therefore, project managers often pursue multiple goals when telling a story in ICT projects |
| ▪ Storytelling allows the listeners to connect to the message and learn from it. | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limitations of storytelling</th>
<th>Conditions for storytelling</th>
<th>Challenges of storytelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Helpfulness of storytelling is not universal, but rather depends on the size of the organization and the extent of change that the new business process implementation entails.</td>
<td>▪ Large organizations with project teams and offices spread across the several locations find it hard to use storytelling due to the logistical challenges of storytelling, which makes it difficult to reach each employee in the organization.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ The use of storytelling is also dependent on the cultural aspects of the organization, where storytelling might not fit the mentality of the organization.</td>
<td>▪ Project managers find storytelling useful, shaping and sharing stories requires time, which is always a scarce resource for projects and organizations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Authoritarian structure of the organization is a barrier for utilizing storytelling in ICT projects, which does not create space for sharing stories, preferring a standard hierarchical communication approach.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2. Discussion

Trying to keep up with the dynamicity of the markets, organizations look for increase in competitiveness, often by optimizing their business processes. Advancements in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) make the business process changes even more frequent. These days, ICT systems are an integral part of day-to-day activities in many organizations. The functionality and architecture of software systems influences the business processes and vice versa. In other words, ICT project is more than testing and installing the software, it often comes hand in hand with the changes in operations. Projects of software integration and upgrades have become the equivalent of implementation of new business processes in contemporary organizations. While it doesn’t make the life of a project manager easier, he/she has to deal with both at the same time. This thesis assumes that storytelling can be one of the ways of doing so in implementation of new business processes in ICT projects.

3.2.1. Formats and forums of storytelling

According to the literature, verbal storytelling is the one of the most widespread formats of sharing crucial messages in organizations and projects (Farzaneh & Shamizanjani, 2014; Denning, 2006; Taylor, et al., 2002), which was confirmed by the respondents of the conducted interviews. The findings showed that verbal storytelling is critical for new business process implementation in ICT projects, since it mainly helps to build relationships in the project team and the organization as a whole, as well as to prepare people for changes that are entailed after completion of such projects, which was also stressed by Adamson et al. (2006, p. 36). The researchers revealed that verbal storytelling is an efficient and effective way of sharing compelling messages in terms of the time it requires to convey the story and the possibility to utilize two-way communication that allows storytellers to get feedback and lets listeners share their own stories back. However, after analyzing the practices of verbal storytelling in ICT projects by the respondents, the researchers concluded that the extent to which verbal storytelling is helpful and used is different depending on whether it happens in formal or informal contexts.

According to the analysis of the interview data, the researchers discovered that informal verbal storytelling takes place more often in new business process implementation in ICT projects compared to formal storytelling. The researchers justify this practice of informal verbal storytelling by the respondents’ statements on the importance of having a natural way of sharing stories being in a casual environment, which is in line with Gill (2015), Denning (2006), and Taylor et al. (2002), who emphasized the role of a sharing environment in storytelling. This implied to the researchers that sharing stories becomes easier when it is not forced by the company as an obligatory practice, but rather happens naturally, which adds more value to the stories shared. This mostly takes place during free-time talks mentioned by the interview respondents, which represent the highest level of an open sharing environment where trust and understanding are promoted. This was revealed to be fundamental to facilitate execution of ICT projects on new business process implementation, since trust creates space for faster adaptation to change, as stated by Adamson et al. (2006, p. 37).

Despite the practices of organizations on having formal communication between the project manager and middle or program management, the researchers discovered that turning this kind of formal communication into informal story sharing is a preferred method of
communication by project managers, specifically in ICT projects. The researchers found this discovery to be directly related to Machado et al. (2016) and Munk-Madsen & Andersen (2006), who stated that project meetings can be transformed into story sharing. The researchers concluded that the informal format of communication between the managers creates an atmosphere that reduces tension and helps the managers to be more open when talking about projects and challenges within it as outlined by the respondents and stated by Denning (2011, pp. 26-31). Moreover, having an informal sharing of stories instead of a formal presentation helps the communications stay focused only on what is important and relevant to a particular project, which supports the literature that states that informal verbal storytelling is an efficient and effective way to convey messages within a project (Brown, et al., 2009, p. 326). Additionally, the researchers discovered corporate events, such as celebrations after project completion, as a good opportunity to facilitate sharing of success stories and challenges, since these events create a festive atmosphere where all the organization staff gather to share a common positive moment. According to the findings on the collected data, this is highly important for new business process implementation in ICT projects, since conveying positive messages among as many project and organization employees as possible makes stories spread efficiently and effectively, which has an impact on the faster adaptation to the new business processes.

Formal verbal storytelling was revealed to be used less than informal format of sharing stories verbally. According to the analysis of the collected data, this was confirmed to happen due to the reliance of organizations on standard ways of communication and their non-consideration of storytelling as a possible organizational practice, which confirmed the statements of Brown et al. (2009, p. 324) and Denning (2006, p.19) that organizations tend to be skeptical about the adoption of storytelling on the organizational level. However, the researchers did reveal the elements of storytelling in the following forums in new business process implementation in ICT: retrospective meetings at the end of each project iteration, project manager to program and executing management meetings, project manager to employee meetings, and hackathons.

The researchers found retrospective meetings at the end of each project iteration to be good forum to share challenges and find ways to improve processes, which were shared by two of the respondents (R3, R7). However, the researchers concluded that the project managers rely more on the standard communication in a formal setting, which they believe is a more appropriate way to talk about the status of the project. On the contrast, the two other mentioned forums, which involve the meetings of the project manager with employees and executive management, were revealed to be a very efficient and effective way to convey key messages and communicate cases of success and challenges of current and past projects according to the analysis of the collected data.

According to collected data, the researchers concluded that written communication is a very formal way to document project status or share updates. Having concluded previously that storytelling tends to take place more in an informal environment according to the interview data and literature (Gill, 2015; Brown et al., 2009; Denning, 2006), written communication was observed to happen less in a form of storytelling, as compared to the verbal format. When talking about storytelling in the written format, the researchers found that the lessons learned
report, final documentation or project summary tend to be in a form of standard communication rather than storytelling, while newsletters and stories shared through company websites were revealed to be the most used channels to communicate stories both internally and externally. According to the analyzed data, both of these formats allow to reach a greater number of employees to share a compelling success story of the project, as compared to the verbal format of storytelling. Additionally, the researchers found out that project teams and employees from other departments in the organization prefer reading a short success story about a project rather than standard lengthy project reports, which are not as engaging as stories. This supports the literature that states that stories are more appealing and engaging compared to formal project documentation (Adamson, et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2010; Denning, 2006). This implied to the researchers that written storytelling is an effective tool for making sure that an important message reaches the desired audience.

The mentioned lessons learned report and final project documentation were revealed to have less elements of storytelling, which supports the previous findings on the non-popularity of storytelling in formal processes in ICT projects. However, the researchers discovered that, according to the respondents answers, project managers and project teams would find it helpful if organizations adopted storytelling as a regular practice in organization, both in the formal written and formal verbal formats, due to the engaging nature of storytelling, which is aligned with the literature (Adamson, et al., 2006; Hagen, 2008; Kim, et al., 2010) that states that stories are more compelling to the organization’s staff rather that standard written forms of communication.

Having revealed that the format and context of storytelling is a crucial aspect to consider before sharing stories, the researchers found the role of a project manager critical in the storytelling process and his or her specific skills that are needed to convey the message in the most effective and efficient way, which represents an important step to reach the first objective of the research. The researchers discovered that the project manager plays a major role in storytelling practices in projects, since he/she is the main point of communication and contact between various teams and departments. This was in line with the literature that gives the organizational leaders the role of the main storyteller and narrator in projects (Farzaneh & Shamizanjani, 2014; Boddy & Paton, 2004; Kalid & Mahmood, 2016). In the context of new business process implementation in ICT project, the critical skills of the project manager that facilitates the process are found by researchers to be salesmanship, narration skills, and the ability to convey consistent messages about project and corporate values.

When talking about the skills of a project manager, the analysis highlighted the importance of selling skills, which take place when there is a need to promote a project or convince people on usefulness of the project for the change of business processes to happen. Since storytelling is all about narrations, the researchers checked with the literature, particularly Taylor et al. (2002) and Denning (2006), who see storytelling skills among core business management competences, to find out whether the analysis is in line with this statement. The researchers revealed that it is crucial for a project manager to have the ability to put together a narrative to convey a strong message, while in some cases storytelling is a much more effective tool than the standard communication of facts. It was found crucial for a project manager to be able to build a story that is compelling and impressive in a way that can motivate people to change. Concluding the topic on skills of a project manager in the
storytelling process, the researchers revealed that it is crucial to be able to share consistent messages about the project and corporate values of the organization to keep projects aligned with the strategy and mission of the company, and create pride in the employees.

3.2.2. Goals achieved by storytelling
The review of existing literature revealed multi-purposefulness in storytelling is business organizations. Similarly, the findings of this thesis state that storytelling practices in new business process implementation in ICT projects pursues multiple goals.

The main purpose of the story is to deliver the message (Farzaneh & Shamizanjani, 2014, p. 3; Benjamin, 2006, p. 160), so naturally the majority of respondent project managers (R1, R2, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10) find the usefulness of storytelling in making sense about the projects. Respondent 1 implies that the communication about the challenges in the projects tend to be more informal rather than formal due to the political interests of project storytellers in organizations. This, in the opinion of researchers, facilitates the usage of storytelling practices in face-to-face communications. It may also explain why the project teams describe the current project issues in a form of an interrelated events leading to an existing challenge, which essentially is storytelling. Informal verbal communication setting allows the speaker to freely choose the format of narration, hence it gives more sense about the reality of the project than the documented project information. Compliant to suggestions by Machado, et al. (2016) and Farzaneh & Shamizanjani (2014), project stories create the knowledge on whether the project is on the right track. It also puts the project managers, who want to realistically estimate the problems in current ICT project, in the position of the listener and the interpreter of the narratives within the project. Some of the examples of the ongoing project issues that can be revealed by project managers by listening to project related narratives is escalation of the conflict between the project members and stakeholders from other departments or other organizations. Each side of the conflict tells their understanding of truth in the story, which creates multiple realities within the project. Boddy & Paton (2004) raise the idea of competing stories generated by stakeholders within the same project in regards to project success, and this thesis extends this idea to project problems. Interestingly, mentioning the practice of project related narratives by project managers as a way of revealing realistic issues in ongoing projects has not been identified in the literature review within the given thesis.

Respondent 10 finds it difficult to explain the Core Banking System implementation project activities and goals to the audience, that doesn’t have the knowledge of the IT or finance terminology. Here, the storytelling can be used to build analogies between ICT projects and more commonly known processes, such as construction of buildings or making a snowball (R4), able to explain what the ICT project is about. This corresponds to the definition of storytelling by Gill (2015, p. 3), who states that storytelling “captures the imagination and attention of listeners regardless of the background”. According to Respondent 4, 20% of his communication counter-parties in ICT projects are not familiar with technical terminology, hence storytelling is quite often practiced by project managers to make the audience understand the ICT projects.
Another need of the ICT projects is for the project manager to be able to communicate the
dynamicity and complexity of the environment around the project and to provide the holistic
view of project in order to explain the relationship between the project and the organizational
environment (R6, R4, R8, R9). Metaphorical representation of project as a highest mountain
(R8), for example, is an example of storytelling practice, that allows making sense of the
importance of the project to a larger audience. It also allows to “transcend age-groups,
cultures and genders” (Gill, 2015, p.3). On the other hand, the representation of the project
team as the people, who attempt to conquer the highest peak in the region rather than software
developers is more appealing to the audience, which is consistent with the recommendation
of Munk-Madsen & Andersen (2006, p. 22) in the technique of making the protagonists of
the story sympathetic to the audience.

Denning (2011, p.13) states that a story can take many shapes and forms. When portraying
the Core Banking System project as an attempt to re-build the plane on the air (R4) or replace
the engine of a running car (R10), project managers try to deliver the message about the
complexity of the environment in the form of a logo image and video clip. This proves the
statement by Fog, et al. (2010, p. 109), who discusses the use of symbolism in storytelling in
business. In this case, a flying plane and a running car act as a symbol of the dynamic state
of the bank. The activity of replacing the engine and re-building the plane in these stories
send the message about the difficulty of the job of project teams, which, again, makes the
rest of the people in the organizations feel empathetic. Responded 4 stated that the video of
re-building plane on the air has made the employees involved in the project laugh initially,
but then the sense of necessity of ability in responding to business requirement changes in
the ICT projects has stayed in the memory of the team in the long-term. Hiltunen (2002)
states that the ability of the message to be remembered is due to the storytelling format of
it’s delivery. Telling the ICT project stories through project logo (R9) also supports the
idea that modern technologies trigger the practice of visual storytelling (Segel & Heer, 2010, p.
7).

The findings of the thesis suggest that storytelling practices within the communication of
project team members serve for Human Resource Management purposes, similar to
arguments of Gill (2015). Fog et al. (2010) also suggest that storytelling can be an internal
communication tool. Storytelling on the organizational level reinforces the commitment of
employees, social bonding and employee engagement (Gill, 2015). Identically, storytelling
in ICT projects is found to increase the motivation of employees to work in projects, their
engagement; it is also found to strengthen the relations within the project team and to increase
the feeling of trust of project team members in capabilities of project manager. In fact,
conclusions made by Gill (2015) regarding the influence of corporate storytelling in
employee engagement in organizations are found to be similar to thesis findings on the
influence of ICT project storytelling on project teams.

Sharing successful project stories with the employees, who have newly joined an ICT project
is one of the project human resource practices in the business software development and
integration companies (R2, R3, R7). Telling compelling stories about completed successful
ICT projects to new comers helps the project managers to increase the commitment of
employees to organization in the long-term (R2). In fact, this has become a regular part of
induction process in the organizations, whose core activities are the development of software
and its integration in business organizations (R2, R3). Exchanging stories during the face-to-face communication also connects the members of the teams and strengthens the ICT project team spirit (R2, R5, R7).

As confirmed by respondents from the IT companies working in Agile methodology (R2, R3, R7), the organizations experience high employee turnover rates and new-comers join the project at later iterations of ICT projects. In this scenario project managers (R3) facilitate sharing of stories about the previous iterations with new team members, as it allows new comers to stay aligned with the overall goal of the project, which in the end comes helpful for the project. While of Gill (2015, p. 664) states that corporate storytelling is about the past and the vision of future of organizations, Boal & Schultz (2007, p. 419) state that storytelling can help to connect the past, present and the future of the organization in the minds of employees by creating “organizational life story schema”. Similarly, in Agile project management, storytelling about the past iterations in the projects helps building ‘project life story schema’, that helps new comers in making sense of the ‘reality of the project life’, as well as to understand ICT project team capabilities and to address possible project changes in the future.

ICT projects have some phases that the respondents (R5, R4, R6) find especially demotivating for the project teams. The stories about the individual experiences in past projects help motivating the project teams to prepare themselves for similar situation. These stories tend to be the cases of success, about the protagonist, that has overcome similar challenges. Temporariness of difficulties is seemed to be centered in the message of these stories (R4). This, in fact, demonstrates the power of storytelling, it allows transforming the actual events from the perception of hardship to the perception of overcoming hardships, which is more motivating to employees, who relate to the protagonist of the story. However, it is also important to be aware of the background of the listener to be able to connect on a personal level, to appeal to personal values and to find fitting motivational message of the story (R9). Another type of narratives in this category portray the possible career development scenarios of the project team members (R4). As mentioned by Petrick (2014, p. 55), storytelling “offers a powerful window on alternate futures”. The researchers of this thesis believe that ethical consideration of the behavior of a storyteller have to be kept in mind in cases of appealing to personal values of individual project team member with the intention of work motivation. The idea of the future career success is surely motivating for the project members, especially when the story details to the specific measures such as 5-6 times increase in salary. But as there is always a possibility that the raise of salary may not happen even if the performance of the employee is up to expectations, the story may have the de-motivating impact in the long-term while project is temporary. Another example of necessary ethical behavior considerations is in appealing to military past or family related emotions of project teams to motivate them to work over-time in projects. Storytelling is a powerful communication tool, however it is up to storyteller in projects to define the ethical boundaries in motivational message topics.

Project managers (R4, R3, R5) have acknowledged that storytelling practices about past projects are used by them in order to increase their own credibility in the eyes of the project team and potential employers. Project managers build their own portfolio of project success stories to showcase own competences and gain trust form project team. This is in line with
the theory on the role of storytelling in leadership presented by Păuș & Dobre (2013, p. 27), who suggest that storytelling is a powerful leadership tool that helps ‘selling trust’.

The literature review on the role of storytelling in helping the organization to adopt to organizational change confirms that traditional approach of explaining the concept of organizational change is not efficient in helping people to adopt and storytelling helps in delivering the message by appealing to emotions and inspiring employees (Adamson, et al., 2006, p. 36). The soft aspect of the new business process implementation in project demands the project managers to help end-users of the software and other impacted stakeholders in adaptation. Project managers (R10, R4, R1, R9, R7) apply practices of storytelling to reduce the resistance to change in two phases of the project: initiation and completion.

In the beginning stage of project, project managers try to engage the stakeholders of the projects by sharing the stories about the success of the competing organizations (R1, R4, R7). These stories are about the benefits achieved by competitive organizations or competitive subsidiaries in the same organizations by implementing suggested ICT products and business processes (R1, R4, R7). The stories centered around the competitive competences act as the driver for change. When put in the project storytelling framework suggested by Munk-Madsen & Andersen (2006), the competitive advantage acts the as the object of desire in these stories and story triggers the sense of competitiveness in the audience. This seems to be especially effective in motivating the middle management to be engaged in the project (R1, R7).

After the project is already completed, the purpose of storytelling shifts to deliver the message of success of the project (R9, R10). Respondent 9, for example, stresses on the sense of organizational pride by telling the story of how their project is more successful than similar projects in other subsidiaries of organization. Respondent 10 visualizes the project success by transmitting the story of individual pleasant experience of the software user with the new system in the corporate newsletter. Respondent 10 highlights the importance of the main hero in the story to be relatable to the regular users of new software, which is consistent with the recommendations of Munk-Madsen & Andersen (2006) project storytelling framework.

The findings of thesis suggest that the consistency between the project goals and corporate values in ICT project stories helps stories to designate with its listeners more, this is the holistic approach of storytelling that comes from the theory on branding (Fog, et al., 2010, p. 55). Part of the narration about completed or starting project is dedicated to explaining how project goals constitute to overall strategy of the organization (R1). The practices go further, Respondent 10, for example, sees the responsibility of the project manager in ensuring that all the information about the project that goes out from the project team only stresses on the successfulness of the project. In the opinion of the researchers, there may be the negative implications of this practice on the transparency in project management.

The theory on the role of storytelling in knowledge management suggests the usage of storytelling techniques in order to preserve and transfer project knowledge (Nielsen & Madsen, 2006, p. 3; Kalid & Mahmood, 2016, p. 3; Duffield & Whitty, 2016, p. 431). Although none of respondents of the given thesis confirm the usage of specific storytelling
metholodgy in project management, project stories are found to be swapped between project managers in peer-to-peer communication to help acquiring the knowledge and avoid possible future project issues.

Denning (2011, p. 43) states that the stories shared with the purpose of sharing knowledge are usually constructed around the initial failure and recovery solutions. Unlike this proposition (Denning, 2011, p. 43), the findings of the thesis suggest that stories about failed, successful ICT projects and the stories about the experiences of interaction with the external organizations are shared within the project teams to acquire knowledge in ICT projects. While failed project stories are intended to help the future project teams in avoiding the mistakes (R1), the stories of successful ICT projects are targeted at identifying and re-using best practices (R6). The stories about the interactions with external organizations are of use for transferring the knowledge about the culture and work style of the counter-parties in ICT projects (R7, R9).

As many business organizations use ICT products in their day-to-day activities, the companies that develop and integrate software increase. Essentially ICT companies compete with each other in selling the software licenses and the services of its implementation in client organizations. This makes ICT projects a unit of trade, which facilitates adaptation of branding strategies to projects. According to Respondent 2, the organization’s sales team shares the stories of successful projects by personally telling them to potential customers and by visualizing the project stories on corporate web-sites. These are the stories of success of past projects that highlight the business problems of past customers that were resolved with the help of the ICT project vendors (R2). In the project storytelling framework of Munk-Madsen & Andersen (2006), the success project story is built by assigning the clients as the protagonists of the story and showing the ICT vendor as a helper in overcoming business challenges (R2). This may trigger potential customers to contract the ICT vendor, as the potential customer may wish to obtain characteristics similar to main character of the project success story (Woodside, 2010, p. 537). The software quality, however, has to prove itself during the demo sessions (R10).

Denning (2011, p. 13) argues that the efficiency of the story depends on the match between the purpose of storytelling and the type of the story. Although the respondents seem to accept the importance of purposeful storytelling, some (R2) assume that the same story may pursue several goals. For instance, the story of the success in completed project is intended at sharing the knowledge and engaging the employees at the same time (R2). As Denning (2011, p. 43) relates the effectiveness of storytelling to the match between the type and purpose, this finding the finding of multi-purposefulness of ICT project stories may imply that the storytelling practices by some respondents (R2) are ineffective or it may suggest to reconsider the validity of Denning’s (2011, p. 43) framework of effective storytelling. The researchers tend to believe in the validity of purposeful storytelling framework by Denning (2011, p. 43), as Denning (2011, p. 43) suggests that the level of details in storytelling for sharing knowledge and sparking action (employee engagement) varies. In other words, the length of the story intended at sharing knowledge may tire the listener, whose engagement in the topic of narration was expected to be increased. The lack of skills in storytelling by project managers in their organization is later confirmed by the same respondent (R2) by saying that project managers, often, do not narrate success stories of their own project on the wider
forum, when the information is communicated to external agencies with the attempt to sell new projects. This, in a way, also confirms the idea that some storytellers are better than the others, as proposed by Denning (2006) and Taylor et al. (2002). The findings also reveal that storytelling is not used by respondents in a similar way, some respondents see more use in storytelling and cover more goals of communication than the others. This may be due to the level of development of storytelling skills on the individual and organizational level, personal preferences in terms of communication tools and limitations of storytelling discussed below.

3.2.3. Limitations of storytelling practices

Although the interview data analysis found storytelling practices to be useful, the researchers revealed that the helpfulness of sharing stories in new business process implementation in ICT projects is not universal, and depends on several factors and settings, while there are also challenges and restrictions on using storytelling. The dependencies that the researchers discovered through the data analysis are the size of the organizations where the business process change projects take place, the extent of the change, as well as the cultural aspect of the organization as a whole. These dependencies were not explicitly outlined by literature, although Nielsen & Madsen (2006), Kalid & Mahmood (2016), Denning (2006); Taylor et al., (2002) did cover the idea that storytelling may not be acceptable for all projects and organizations. The downfalls revealed by the researchers are the amount of time that stories require to be shaped, logistic difficulties, as well as the authoritarian governance structure that limits storytelling practices in the organization.

According to the literature (Denning, 2006; Taylor, et al., 2002), the usefulness of storytelling varies from organization to organization, and depends on how developed their storytelling skills are. The researchers confirmed this statement by revealing from the data analysis that storytelling is not a universal tool, and in the context of new business process implementation in ICT it depends mainly on the size of the organization, extent of the change that the mentioned ICT projects bring, as well as the cultural aspect. The size of the organization was revealed to be a crucial aspect of using storytelling, since the all of the interview respondents found it difficult to use storytelling on the organizational level, where the organization is big and operates in several locations. This implied to the researchers that it is difficult for project managers to convey a story throughout an organization that is spread all over the world. The other aspect which was found to be crucial by the researchers is the extent of change that the ICT projects entail. The researchers found out from the respondents that the new business processes incorporated in the organization that affect only low-level employees do not need to be accompanied by storytelling. The researchers concluded that the organizational change in simple operations is an inarguable necessity for the organization, which rarely needs to be promoted. Concerning the cultural aspect mentioned in the conducted interviews, the researchers revealed that the presence of storytelling does not depend on the culture of the country the project takes place in, but rather on the organizational culture of the company, as well as the content of the story shared.

Although it was revealed that storytelling is a helpful practice to adopt in new business process implementation projects, bearing in mind the dependencies of storytelling, there are several disadvantaged aspects that researchers revealed to be considered when using storytelling according to the findings. The biggest constraint of storytelling that was revealed
as a result of the analysis is that it takes time for stories to be shaped or for project communication to be converted into a compelling story. According to Munk-Madsen & Andersen (2006, p. 22), this is one of the reasons managers do not practice storytelling often. This clears things out for the researchers why storytelling practices happen more in an informal way, since the time that formalization of storytelling takes is a downside for organizations, which explains why it is easier to share stories informally. Observing the disagreement between the respondents on whether formalizing the process of storytelling is beneficial or not, the researchers again concluded that the dependencies outlined earlier play a big role in determining this.

Having mentioned the role of the size of the organization on the use of storytelling, it was revealed that storytelling might not take place in big organizations due to the logistical difficulties, since storytelling requires personal approach, which is hard to execute within an organization and project teams that operate in different locations. This logistical difficulties might be present in any organization and project as well, as concluded by the researchers and supported by Gill (2015), especially when it comes to verbal storytelling, which shows that the use of this format is limited with regards to the logistical difficulties. The logistical challenges were discovered to be caused by the authoritarian governance structure, which makes it hard for stories to be communicated between the different hierarchies. However, it was concluded by researchers that even though there are logistical difficulties within such an organization, stories still have to be shared to some extent to make sure all the teams are on track with the overall progress in the organization.
4. Conclusion

The thesis aims to explore storytelling practices in project management by answering the research question: “How project managers use storytelling in new business process implementation in ICT projects?”.

To answer the research question, storytelling practices of ten project managers have been analyzed in multiple new business process implementation in ICT project cases. By conducting semi-structured interviews, the thesis has focused on 1. New business process implementation in ICT project forums and formats for storytelling; 2. Goals achieved by project managers through storytelling in new business process implementation in ICT projects; and 3. Limitations of storytelling in project management in new business process implementation in ICT projects. Addressing these three objectives on research is expected to provide the answer to the research question. The thesis findings suggest that storytelling in implementation of new business processes in ICT projects is used in formal and informal forums in written and verbal format. Project managers use storytelling to pursue several goals: making sense of ICT projects, human resource management, promoting adaptation to new business processes, knowledge management and attracting new customers and investments into ICT projects. Storytelling in ICT projects is also limited by storytelling conditions, such as organizational culture, extent of change, governance structure and challenges, such as logistics and time consumption.

The thesis mainly draws from literature on organizational storytelling by Denning (2011), Fog, et al. (2010) and Gill (2015). While the named authors focus on the organizational level of storytelling, this thesis attempts to explore storytelling in the new business management context of implementation of new business processes in ICT projects. Thesis researchers consider it to be the main contribution of thesis into existing theoretical framework on storytelling in business. The thesis also contributes to the body of knowledge in project management by responding to the call of Blomquist & Lundin (2010) in finding the new ways of communicating everyday life of projects. Combining the social sciences and project management area provides a new perspective on projects by focusing on social interactions within ICT projects.

Findings of the thesis suggest that storytelling is used by the project managers to achieve multiple goals. From the managerial perspective, the thesis explores one of the communication tools that may potentially help project managers in successful implementation of new business processes in ICT projects. Researchers believe that storytelling could potentially be placed among the requirements of soft competences in project management in any business industry, which implies that project managers may develop storytelling skills to improve project leadership. The findings of thesis detail of the typology of stories used for described goals of storytelling in project management, which may act as the basis of framework for effective storytelling in project management.

Availability of time, literature, and logistic capabilities has drawn the boundaries of study, which leads to methodological and theoretical limitations of the thesis work. From the theoretical point of view, the body of literature collected for thesis is not exhaustive. The
literature on the storytelling practices in project management is found to be very scarce, therefore the discussion of findings is mainly conducted by drawing the parallels between thesis findings and existing knowledge on storytelling practices on organizational level. The line between storytelling and other means of communication is not well defined as thesis adopts Denning’s (2011, p. 13) definition of story, which states that storytelling accommodates a broad spectrum of narratives. From the point of view of methodology, the main limitation of thesis is the focus on the perspective of representatives of project management office, such as portfolio and project managers. The impact of storytelling has not been investigated from the point of view of the audience: other project team members and end-users of the organization. Further research conducted on the perception of messages delivered through storytelling by the audience in ICT projects could potentially provide valuable insights on social interactions within ICT projects.

The selection of interview respondents has been made to the best of the capabilities of thesis researchers by ensuring the educational background in project management area and experience relevant to the context of the thesis. However, the researchers do not claim that the selected respondents possess well developed skills in storytelling, hence the findings are classified as the basis for the framework of effective storytelling in project management that requires advancements. The limitations in the existing literature on storytelling in project management has framed the methodology to be broadened to include any possible goals achieved by storytelling in project management. Future studies on the effectiveness of storytelling in specific area of project, such as stakeholder management would allow to narrow down the research area. Focusing on one goal of storytelling in ICT project management out of several identified in this thesis in a single case study would allow generating an in-depth knowledge in social sciences and project management.

The researchers believe that the reality of projects can only be revealed in the process of social interaction. Project is a social system in the first place and storytellers have the ability to construct the reality of it for the audience. The power of storytelling opens the gates for both manipulating the perceptions of project reality and giving the authentic idea of what is going on in projects. Drawing the line between authentic and constructive reality is a difficult task by itself, and in the pursuit of personal or project agendas, it is up to individual ethical boundaries of the project storytellers to choose what fits them most.
Bibliography


Appendix 1

Interview guide - version 1.2

Semi-structured interviews held from 4th December to 6th December 2017. Held via Skype with project managers. Total duration: up to 60 minutes.

The questions highlighted in blue are ‘critical-to-know’ and will be asked first. If there is any time remaining, then ‘good-to-know’ question highlighted in orange will be asked.

Part I: Introduction

▪ The researchers introduce themselves and thank the interviewees for participation
▪ The respondent will be informed about the confidentiality of the interview: non-disclosure of company or interviewee name
▪ The respondent will be asked for consent on audio recording of the interview
▪ The researchers shortly introduce the study subject: The Role of Storytelling in New Business Process Implementation in ICT projects. Storytelling is explained as: “Formal or informal narrative about the protagonist who takes a journey to overcome challenges and achieves some kind of results”. Example of Domino’s pizza will be given, if it is required by interviewee.

Part II: Questions to identify what storytelling practices take place in projects

▪ Do you find yourself in the situation when you describe your project after its completion to somebody who was not part of the project team?
▪ If yes, then what was the situation? Can you describe it? Was it in a formal or informal communication, was it a meeting or just an informal conversation.
▪ If you are asked what projects you have completed within the last year and you are given only 1 hour to present them, what document(s) would you refer to? Have you ever found yourself in the situation like this?
▪ What difficulties have you encountered when you communicate your project success?
▪ When you share the information about the project journey or project success, what would be the elements of the story that you are telling?
▪ Within the change management procedure is there a phase in the project or after its completion when you have to summarize the journey of your project? If yes, then how do you summarize it? In what format (document, oral narration)?
▪ Is the current formal process of project closure enough to convey the message about the project or do you think further steps/documents are needed to summarize your project and communicate it to others.

PART III: Questions to identify the goals achieved by storytelling in implementation of new business processes in ICT projects

▪ What, in your view, is important to make people ready for new business processes?
▪ How does your organization communicate the information about the new business processes? How do you select the audience to communicate change? Do you collect feedback?
▪ What do you see as the most problematic aspect of communication about new business processes?
As a project manager, do you think there is anything you could do to promote the understanding and acceptance of new business processes (reasons, context, impact)?

Is there any project management practice that is intended to help to understand new business processes in ICT projects? If yes, then what is it?

Do you think that the way you tell project stories has an impact on understanding of new business processes by employees?

Do you think there is a possibility to use storytelling as a communication tool in your projects?

For you personally, what has been the most valuable lesson regarding the communication about project stories?

PART IV: Questions to identify if storytelling about projects is subject to constraints

Do you think it’s important to share the stories of your projects with the people from other department in your organization? If yes, then why? How useful it is?

Someone once said: “If you don’t share the story of your project, someone else will do it instead of you”. Do you agree? Have you ever faced competing stories in the same project?

Have you ever faced a situation when you had to manage the perception of usefulness of your projects through communicating with stakeholders/employees?

What do you feel is the general perception among employees regarding your latest project? How have you collected this information?

Do you think storytelling is useful in any project? Why?

The interview will then be concluded by thanking the interviewee for his/her participation.
Appendix 2

Finding Themes - version 1.3

How project managers use storytelling in new business process implementation through ICT projects?

Forums and formats of storytelling practices

- Verbal
  - Formal: Lessons Learned Report, Salesmanship
  - Informal: Final project docs, Storyteller, Narrator
- Written
  - Formal: Status and Challenges, Employee engagement
  - Informal: Goals and Activities
- PM Skills
  - Formal: Complexity of environment
  - Informal: Increasing PM credibility
- Creating sense of reality
  - Formal: Status and Challenges, Goals and Activities
  - Informal: Complexity of environment
- HRM
  - Formal: Employee engagement, Competitor stories
  - Informal: Motivation of team, Consistency of strategic goals
- Adaptation to change
  - Formal: Showing success
  - Informal: Strengthening relations
- Knowledge management
  - Formal: Failed projects
  - Informal: Successful projects
- Attracting new customers and investments
  - Formal: Counter-party stories
  - Informal: Stories take time to be shaped

Limitations of storytelling in project management

Conditions of storytelling

- Extent of change
- Size of organization
- Logistic difficulties

Challenges of storytelling

- Cultural differences
- Governance structure