

Openings: *"It is tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."* (Macbeth, Act 5, Scene 5). Whether or not you agree with William Shakespeare's comment, only in the telling can you reach your conclusion.

Spotlight: There are two aspects to every business, what is endeavoured and the tale that is told about those endeavours. A business' success relies as much on storytelling as it does on the efficiency of its operations. Advertising, annual reports, and employment postings are examples of how a business' story is told in print. As well, all interaction between stakeholders contains an aspect of storytelling; every individual's experience of the business is expressed in first person narrative.

Many management theories such as "management by walking around" recognise, if indirectly, the importance of storytelling. The distance between the top and the bottom of an organisation disappears through a shared experience, especially one that can be mythologized. These theories work not because they hold any unique truth, but because they bring people closer together.

There are no rules governing storytelling, as long as there is an environment conducive to storytelling, the stories take care of themselves. Making the time and space for storytelling means accepting operating inefficiencies. What may be inefficient can also be highly effective in achieving corporate objectives. As well, arriving at a destination by a circuitous route is usually more enjoyable.

Effective stories are organic and while they can be cultivated, they cannot be manufactured. Positioning and mission statements are only useful when they capture the essence of an enterprise. When they are about what someone thinks the business *should be* rather than about what the business *is*, these instruments do not serve anyone. The message is inconsistent with the experience and that leads to dissatisfaction.

The only error a business can make is mandating a story. If when asked about the corporate or department mission, an employee glances at a wall plaque or repeats a memorized phrase, there is no power in that story. The words themselves do not hold the power; rather it is their authenticity and spontaneity – in any form or combination – that point to the source.

Storytelling, like all skills, can be taught. The more storytellers your enterprise can boast the greater your success and the greater significance the enterprise holds in the lives of all stakeholders.

Fact: Ratio of average CEO pay to average pay of U.S. blue-collar worker: 531 to 1. **Links:** Sometimes we just need to get a little perspective on life and at www.secretan.com/godsconsulting.html you can do just that.

Quotation: The author James Carroll has the following to say about storytelling:

"The very act of storytelling, of arranging memory and invention according to the structure of the narrative, is by definition holy. We tell stories because we love to entertain and hope to edify. We tell stories because they fill the silence death imposes. We tell stories because they save us."

Just For Fun: Jaron Lanier was thinking about flawless, permanent data storage and so he created the ultimate information storage device: a cockroach. By manipulating the genetic code inside the cockroach, Jaron was able to devise a way to store the entire contents of a year's worth of the New York Times in a single cockroach's DNA. By breeding this live time capsule and releasing the cockroaches in a nurturing environment (New York City), within 14 years, every cockroach in the city would carry the archived information.

Lexicon: The two words, circumstances and circumambulations, describe the world "around" you. Circumstances describe the world that surrounds the place where you stand while circumambulations describe your movements through that world. Whether at rest or in motion, a circle defines the world ensuring that the beginning meets up with the end bringing every undertaking to completion.

Going in circles may be a round-about way of getting where you are going and it also seems to be the most effective.

Musings: Having previously expanded on the name *Blackberry Civil Works*, it seems appropriate to do the same for the accompanying tag line, *Humanly Engineered Solutions*.

Solutions speak to the act of being dissolved rather than the act of solving problems. In this sense, a solution is something to soak in, a place to be until things free up and start to move. Engineering such a solution means to come to the work with a clear intention and appropriate attention. Planning, patience, and perseverance result in a design that stands the test of time. Finally, striving for that which is humanly possible requires a holistic awareness of the venture. The quest is to ensure that truth, beauty, and goodness are all encompassed in an equitable balance.

A Humanly Engineered Solution is only so when it satisfies us on all levels.