**ISKO Singapore: Business Storytelling with Mark Schenk – 1st April 2020**

**Discussion Notes**

A: Can this idea of speaking with stories apply to written communications eg emails

C: I think it depends on the email? With the amount that we have to go through, some people would prefer a more factual to the point email.

G: Related question: I find emails that use story-telling to be spammy in nature. Is it only me?

P: That’s a bit like my example of the person who “tried too hard” on an artificial story… we are very good at recognising good stories and spotting “fake” ones

**Key Takeaways from the Session**

M: Telling a story depends on context. It may be difficult to break out into a story when the situation is stressful.

J: Breakout room 6’s insight is exactly the same as Maish’s

K: Group 3 - Takeaway, storytelling has to be a cultural norm in the company before it’s used prevalently. Audience needs to feel connected by using relevant stories otherwise it feels awkward and not very sincere.

W: Depending on the goal of the communication, we may need to choose different means. If we want to make something emoteable, a story can help. If we want to foster understanding, a more factual approach can be better.

M: (Group 5) Our key takeaway is that other than getting information top down, story telling is the best way to influence people who are higher up in the ranks than you!

J: Good point, I’ve seen that happen too. Probably need to ensure the storyteller has some training and has worked on the story

B: Discussion notes from our group: When do you tell a story and when do you tell the facts? People who are already convinced do not need the story. If you need to convince people the story is needed. If you have a big group, some just want the facts. They just want to know what to do. The people that ask direct questions are the convinced. Story can be useful to set the context at the beginning of presentation/ event.

4 Types of audience.

Drivers – they want to get things done.

Engineers – they care about accuracy and facts but don’t make the decisions.

Flamboyant - like stories because they take up time and put them centre stage.

Counsellor - want to connect emotionally with their audience.

You need to know who you are talking to and what stage of socialization they are at.

G: We came up with three takeaways: Balance, Context, Clarity. Balance: You need to balance your strategy depending on the type of people you are talking to. You need to balance and not use stories too much. Context: Are you talking to the already converted? Are you talking to people who just want direct answers? Clarity: You need to know what you are talking about. E.g. If the boss asks you a question: you may want to start with a story. Use stories only if he doesn't seem to understand your answer. In the presentation, it requires you to know your audience. In a group of engineers, they may prefer facts over stories. Use with care.

B: It is annoying to ‘be played’

G: B, Yes, Very.

K: Good point Group 5, you are so right. Turns out that’s how we have been convincing top mgmt, with something called the "Business Case" which is really "In the past… then something happened… and therefore we need to do the following"

S: Adding on to K's point - sometimes the 'business case' is just no longer convincing. People no longer buy it, hence defeats the purpose of 'the story'.

Recommended book: Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird* on how to get started, step by step.