



The Power of Stories: Building a Shared Sense of Organizational Purpose

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April 28, 2009



A Skeptic Asks the Question:



What do *stories*...



Sextus Empiricus

...have to do with *knowledge*?



The Story about Government: 1981

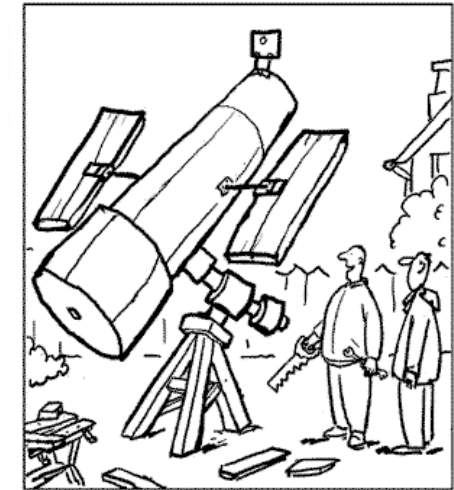
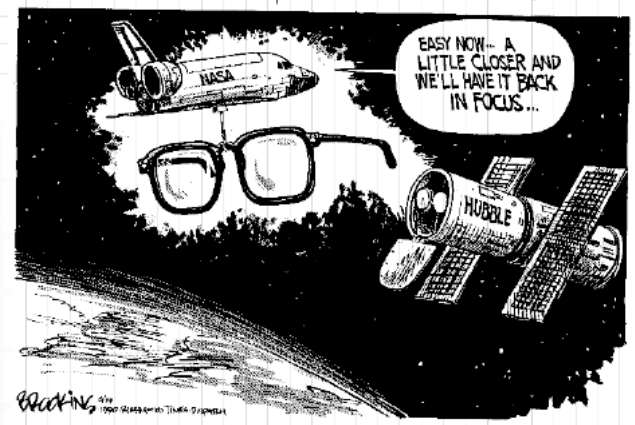
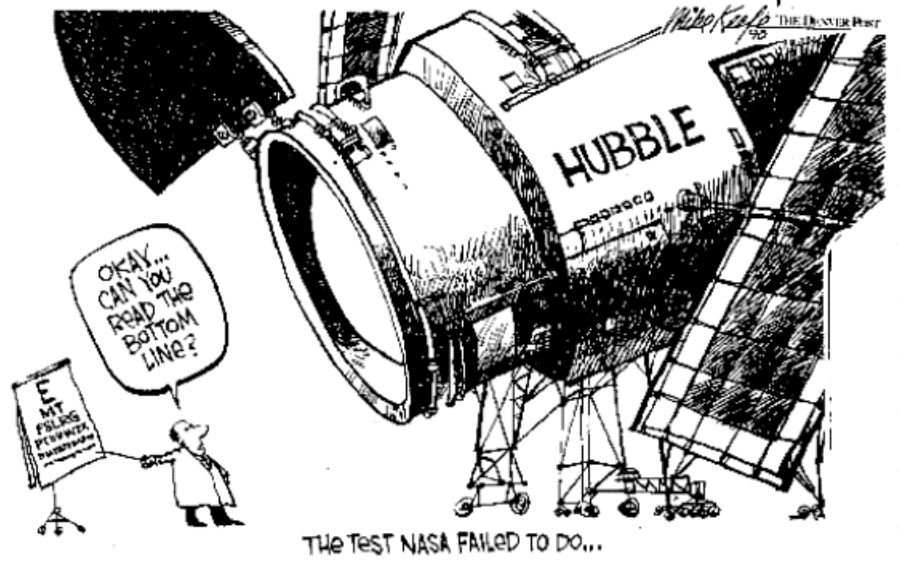
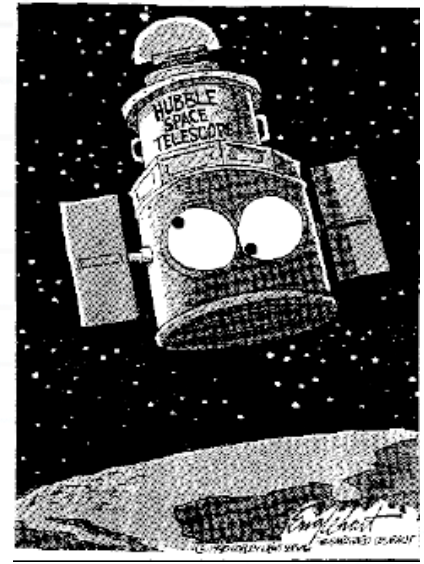


“In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem.”





The Story about Government: 1990





The Story about Government: 2005



"I've been in New Orleans a number of times since Katrina. It's a tragedy, and it is largely a tragedy of government. The federal government failed, the state government failed, the city government failed..."





The Story about Government: 2009



THE BLACKBERRY PRESIDENT QUITTING THE THUG LIFE

Newsweek.

**WE ARE ALL
SOCIALISTS NOW**

THE PERILS AND PROMISE OF THE NEW ERA OF BIG GOVERNMENT



The perils and the promise of the new era of big government



A Project-Based World: Critical Questions



- Do you focus extensively on **cost**?
- Are people asking about your **schedule**?
- Is **performance** a critical variable?
- Do you rely on a mix of **talent** from **multiple disciplines**?
- Does your work have **global impact**?

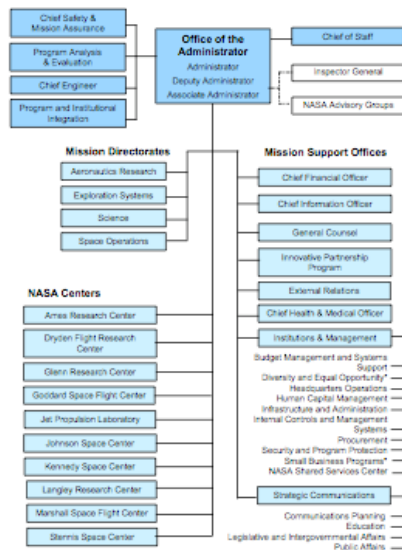


What Drives Project Complexity?

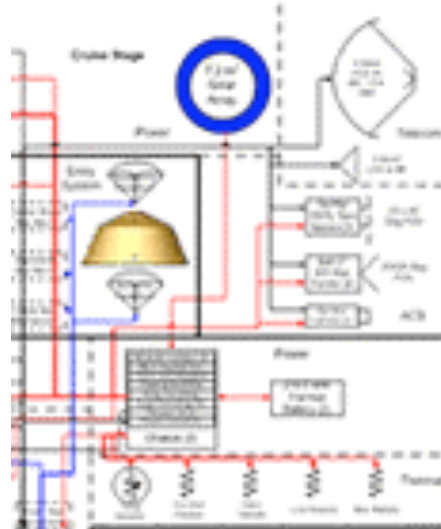


3 Dimensions of Complexity

Organizational



System Design



Uncertainty

Markets data

EQUITIES

Index	Last	Previous Close	Today's Change
FTSE 100	5,028	5,026	+2.70 +0.05%
FTSE EUROFIRST	1,092	1,091	+0.52 +0.05%
S&P 500	1,214	1,214	0.00 0.00%
NIKKEI	11,750	11,610	+140.07 +1.21%

Market data delayed by at least 20 minutes.

COMMODITIES

Commodity	Last Price	Today's Change
WTI Crude (NYMEX)	93.96	+3.08%
Natural Gas (NYMEX)	7.46	+2.53%
Gold (COMEX)	785.60	+0.65%

[Research commodity data >](#)

CURRENCIES

	Last	Today's Change
\$ per £	1.7875	+0.08%
\$ per Euro	1.4184	+0.47%
\$ per Yen	0.0095	+0.81%
£ per Euro	0.7934	+0.25%

Increased Complexity

leads to

Increased Risk

which demands

Adaptive Leadership



Mission and Goals



MISSION

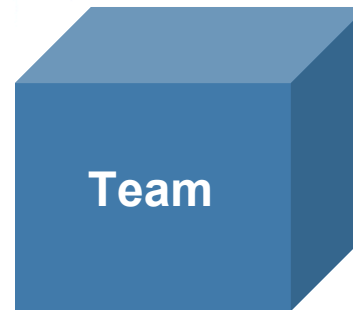
To support NASA's mission by promoting individual, team, and organizational excellence in program/project management and engineering through the application of learning strategies, methods, models, and tools.

GOALS

- Provide a common frame of reference for NASA's technical workforce.
- Provide and enhance critical job skills.
- Support engineering, program and project teams.
- Promote organizational learning across the agency.
- Supplement formal educational programs.



Complexity Demands Continuous Learning



Approach

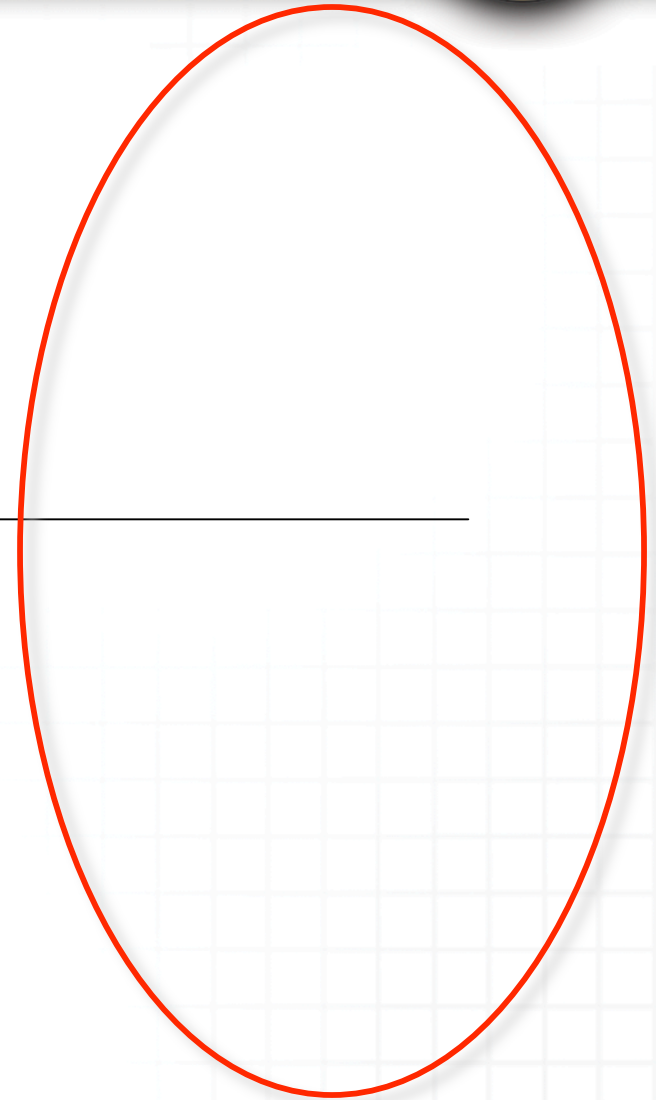
**Training curriculum
Hands-on assignments**

**Direct support to
project teams**

Activities

- Core curriculum for 4 career levels
- In-depth offerings in subject areas
- Hands-on opportunities
- Developmental assignments

- Online assessments
- Workshops
- Mentoring and coaching
- Expert practitioners and technical lifecycle support
- Team building and process support



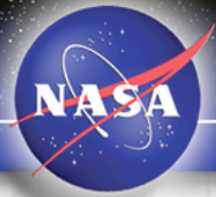


Objectives:

- Capture and transfer knowledge from seasoned program/project managers and engineers across NASA.
- Build a learning community of reflective practitioners.
- Facilitate open communication and dialogue.



Knowledge sharing addresses GAO and external report recommendations



The Power of Stories

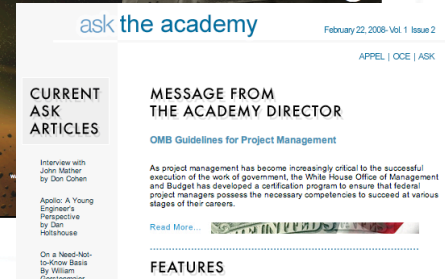


Knowledge sharing activities emphasize the vital
in the effective exchange of knowledge.



Media

Video
Click to
Play Video





Telling Stories: Conferences and Forums



PM Challenge

NASA-wide annual event
1200 attendance in 2009



PROJECT MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE
Fourth Annual NASA Project Management Challenge

+ Program + Frequent Questions + Speakers + F

NASA Project Management Challenge 2007
Moody Gardens Hotel and Convention Center - Conference Times 8:00

Febru

Program

PROGRAM

- + About the Conference
- + General Session Speakers
- + **Tracks**
 - + Spotlight on System Engineering
 - + Knowledge Works
 - + Launch and Learn
 - + Risk Management
 - + Great Ideas
 - + CSI: NASA
- + Conference Schedule
- + Team Building Blocks
- + Down to Business
- + Shared Voyages
- + Back to Basics
- + Hot Topics

+ Home

+ 2007 Flyer



Masters Forum

Invitational semiannual event
60 - 80 participants

Masters Forum 13

Video Summaries

In Good Company

Building Social Capital



Larry Prusak, ASK Magazine

Research proves that knowledge is best accumulated and retained through the development of social capital. Noted knowledge management author and researcher Prusak discusses the importance of trust, rich social networks, and social norms and values in developing social capital within and between organizations.

1 hour and 18 minutes running time

Lessons from DART



Dr. Fred Bickley
Gary Lyles

Bickley presented lessons from the Autonomous Rendezvous Test Board, which point to several projects in areas of budget analysis, systems engineering management and peer review.





Telling Stories: Publications



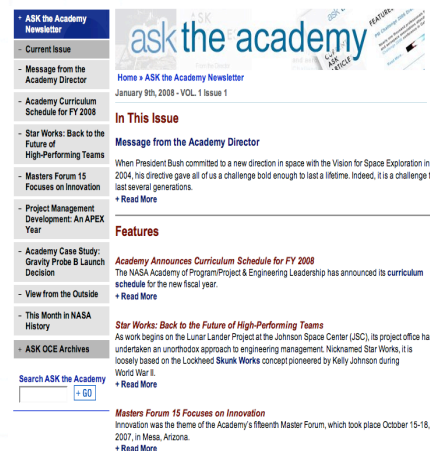
ASK Magazine

- Award-winning quarterly publication
- First-person practitioner stories



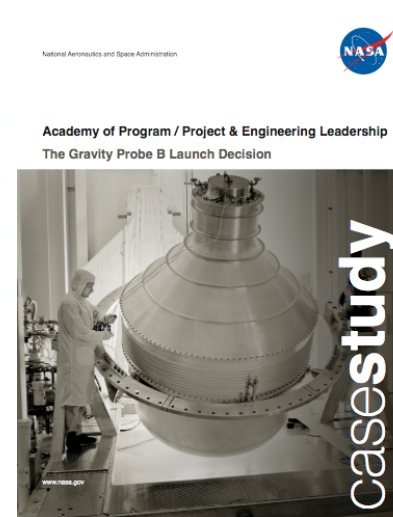
ASK the Academy

- Monthly e-newsletter
- Academy news, updates, features

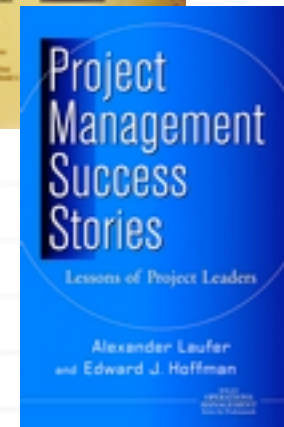


Case Studies

In-depth studies of NASA missions



Books



<http://www.nasa.gov/offices/oc/apel/knowledge/publications/206.html>



A Good Story



- Starts with a problem/conflict/challenge/etc.
- Describes a unique experience.
- Describes concrete actions by people.
- Makes a point — arrives at some basic truth.



Stories Can Be a Matter of Life or Death



“A single death is a tragedy. A million deaths is a statistic.”

- Joseph Stalin



Stories: Value and Dignity



Whatever has a **value** can be replaced by something else which is equivalent; whatever, on the other hand, is **above all value**, and therefore admits of no equivalent, has a **dignity**.

- Immanuel Kant

Storytelling helps us construct a sense of dignity, meaning, and purpose for our work.



The Need for a Network



If you agree that:

- we are living in a project-based world;
- knowledge is social; and
- stories are a powerful tool for communication/engagement

how do we attract others who share this understanding?

- There is a need for a network of like-minded practitioners across government

Tell your story—if you don't, someone else will.



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