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Review

Organizational Storytelling for Librarians: Using Stories for Effective Leadership

Kate Marek. Chicago: American Library Association, 2011. 120 pp. ISBN: 978-0-83891-079-5. \$50.00.

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When I read the title of Kate Marek's book, *Organizational Storytelling for Librarians: Using Stories for Effective Leadership*, my expectation was that the book would provide instruction to help develop storytelling skills and to learn to identify opportunities to use those skills to maximum effect. The introduction reinforced that expectation. Instead, the book is essentially a literature review providing examples of different types of stories and scenarios where storytelling has been used effectively.

Organized into six chapters, this brief volume progresses logically from providing context for the book's premise, to highlighting different examples of the applications of organizational storytelling, to a final chapter that is meant to serve as a primer to develop your own skills as a storyteller. While some of the specific story examples are not as compelling as one might hope, the chapter on telling stories through buildings is quite interesting. Although I wish Marek had provided pictures of the buildings she describes, the stories definitely inspired me to think about my own library building and how I can use its story to convey our institutional identity and values to our community.

The chapter that was intended to instruct librarians how to develop a skill set as a story-teller had a lot of potential but was not particularly original. Marek brings her personal experiences to the table as she describes the processes and principles of storytelling and then outlines the different types of stories identified by Stephen Denning and Annette Simmons, two authors whose work she refers to extensively. Much of her advice will appear to be common sense to those of you who have any experience with storytelling, and some of it will seem redundant. However, the section about story triggers is helpful if compiling a list of your own personal stories seems daunting.

Storytelling is a valuable skill that would benefit librarians in any setting, but there are certainly other books out there that provide better, more engaging coverage of the topic. For example, although it is not a scholarly book, Chip and Dan Heath's 2007 book, *Made to Stick* (Random House, 2007), did an excellent job coaching the reader on how to use storytelling to be an effective communicator. This book, along with many others, is listed in the excellent resources list, which is a good source for those interested in learning more about organizational storytelling.

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