

Hi, everyone. Welcome to our governance made easy webinar today titled Every Story Has Two Sides, Unlocking the Narrative Potential. Today, we're having a discussion with, our special guest, John Page of Boardworks New Zealand, Julie Garland McClellan, and Stephen Bowman on our discussion panel. And my name's Sean McDonald, of course, and I shall be your moderator for the next forty odd minutes.

Firstly, thank you for attending today. We always appreciate the effort you make to be here for our live webinar events.

During the session, if you have any questions for our panel, please use the q and a button if you can, which is on your toolbar. We'll be answering these during the session, and we'll try and get through as many of those questions as we have time for. And finally, if you stay through till the end, which we hope you will do, and as is now customary for our webinars, we have a special treat for you by answering a really short one minute survey at the end. You'll go into our draw to win a beautiful gift hamper worth over four hundred dollars.

Now for those who are not too familiar with BoardPro, we are a board software provider, sometimes called a board portal, and we serve just over thirty thousand users now across about thirty two different countries.

We enable organizations to prepare for and run their board meetings more efficiently and effectively with clever software, namely ours, with less time and deliver more impact and value for the organization.

And as much as we are a board software provider, part of our wider mission is to make the fundamentals of governance free and easy to implement for all organizations, especially those organizations with resource constraints.

These webinars and the many templates, guides, and white papers on our website on the resources page, are great tangible examples of how we look to achieve our mission for nonprofits and small businesses around the world.

Now, the slides from today, a recording of the webinar, and a transcript will be sent to you via email just after the session. In fact, it'll be tomorrow morning now. So just relax, sit back, and ask as many questions as you would like.

So without, further ado, let me hand over to the team to introduce themselves, starting first with you, Julie.

Oh, hi. I was expecting you to start with John and go from left to right across the screen. I'm Julie Garland McClellan.

Most of you probably know me from my newsletter, the director's dilemma. If you don't, I've just popped a link that you can go and check it out into the, chat.

I'm a corporate governance consultant and adviser to boards and directors.

I've been doing it for well over twenty years now and absolutely inspired by watching how much value a good board can add.

Steven, over to you.

Hi, everyone. Steve Bowman from Conscious Governance. I've been working with boards for probably about thirty five, nearly forty years now, either as CEO or chair or director or in in the last twenty odd years, advising them. So primarily around strategy, risk, leadership, governance, and all that really exciting stuff.

John.

John Page. So look, I've been working in governance for nearly twenty years one way or the other, last seven with Boardworks.

Prior to that, I made my way in the arts as a marketer, and, that's all about storytelling. So, you know, I bring that kind of perspective through I am a trained marketer.

So let's look look let's crack into this this kind of fascinating area. Let's, rip through to the Margaret Atwood slide shown and, you know, Margaret Atwood, favorite author, sums it up. You know, storytelling is built into the into the human plan. Right? We we actually can't function without it, so there's no point denying that it exists.

I did a little bit of work here, a while ago. One one one of the first things we need to understand about storytelling is that, there are two sides to every story. Right? So so you can be doing as much of this as you like, but the recipient is the one who actually, filters and makes sense of the story.

And and that may not be the same as what you thought when when you delivered it. So so, where does this relate to governance? Well, we're gonna try and do that, and Steven and Julie will keep me honest about, not drifting off into theory too much. That, of course, boardrooms are all about information and quality of information in order to make quality decisions and how you challenge information as it comes in.

So, this is kinda highly relevant in in in that sense.

It would be remiss of me not to start this without a story. So I'm gonna tell you a story.

You could ask me to define governance, and I could give you all sorts of, you know, technical things to do with risks and decisions and representing owners and blah blah blah blah. But this is this is one of the best ones, and I I I use this when I'm teaching. This comes from Charles Handy, who many of you will read, probably the empty raincoat being the major one.

He comes from, just outside Dublin from an area called the Wicklow Mountains. In New Zealand we'd call them hills for certainly like the mountains in Australia, Steve. But, and he was back there, visiting a friend, and the area is noted for little wee roads and no signposts, and he was a wee bit lost. So he pulled over and asked a local, excuse me, young swarthy man.

I'm looking for this village. And he says, oh, to be sure to be sure, you're on the right road. You just go down here for a couple of miles, right, over a wee few bounces and I'm past a gorgeous little bridge and you come to a lovely stone inn called Davies Pub. Well, your friend's village, you turn right half a mile before you get there.

And, I thought that's a really good analogy for governance. It's not about knowing when to turn right before you get to the inn because generally speaking, it's too late. So if you kind of think about what that means and the information that you have to acquire in order to make the decision ahead of time, then you're quite a long way to understanding governance.

So look, just early on, the whole thing about the importance of story, comes back, to to our success as a species. And and we could have relations with generally fifty to seventy five people, maybe two hundred.

After that, we can't cooperate. We need to believe in something. Right?

And that can be, a story you know, a totem, a god, a nation state, but we need to have something that allows us to cooperate.

So once we have something to believe in story, we can cooperate at vast numbers.

Arguably, the greatest story in terms of driving cooperation in the world was the Catholic church. One point four billion adherence around a story.

Whether you like that or not, it it's true. We need we need stories in in order to work.

So, technically speaking, when when Steve and I, believe in the same thing, it's what they call it intersubjective reality or entity. We we've agreed that we believe in this thing. Right?

May not be true, but we've agreed we believe in it. And that and that's the story because we've created it. And in many cases, it ain't true, and we're gonna talk about that too because we need to be cautious about that. So, Eric, Steve and Julie, they're, yeah, they're sort of good opening comments. We'll go on to the next next slide in a moment. Yeah.

John, in terms of story, there's there's the two elements of, you know, the story that you tell and then the story that people hear, which aren't necessarily exactly the same thing. But the other thing is how do you know how do you know when someone's telling you a story because they're trying to manipulate you?

Yeah. Yeah. Well, Danny Kahneman, the psychologist who, you know, who's written one of two two great books in life in my view, you know, Thinking Fast and Slow, says the only thing you

know about someone when they're telling you a convincing story is that they've convinced themselves.

That's the only thing that you know.

And you need to be very, very, very cautious of it. And and he went on to say late later on that that someone who comes into the into a boardroom or any meeting with that kind of story, you should be very, very careful about them. Someone who comes into a boardroom saying, well, I'm not so sure about this, and there are some contingent things that we need to think through. And this may be accurate and it may be not.

That person is rather worth listening to. Yeah? And and you will have seen that all the time. Oh, what a thought, Julie.

Yeah?

Yeah.

I also take a slightly contrary view that we sometimes need made up stories Oh, yeah.

That suit our purpose. Your strategy is just a well thought through, made up work of fiction.

You can't say without a shadow of a doubt, if we do this, this, and this, we'll get that because you haven't done it. You don't know what's in the environment.

The outcome's likely, but it's not usually guaranteed.

So, again, I like the value of stories and frameworks for helping us project ourselves into the future.

Yeah. Yeah. That that that's true that so the the governance theorist, Richard Cheikh, calls it the dominant narrative. Right?

Mhmm. So you you've you've gotta land on this consistent story, you know, and and and and it's people don't want complexity. They just want a very simple story to to believe in. And and then the the boardroom conversation around that becomes, what needs to be true in order for our story to be true, how are we traveling, you know, what what's changing.

So so we are we are constantly adjusting the reality of the story as we go. But but you're right. People wanna believe in a story. It's it's so true.

Yeah.

Adrian has just put a a good comment in the in the chat there. Right words, right time, right audience. I think that's a perfect definition of wisdom.

Yep. That's good. Yeah.

Right intention as well. Yep. Yeah. We all manipulate each other, but when you do it for good reasons, that's helpful. When you don't, it's not.

It is. So so let's do let's just do a bit of neuroscience for a while. So because we are we are gonna we are gonna do do this. So so modern the modern human, the society that we know that has some degree of sophistication about it and some science, is only a very small part of our evolutionary history.

Right? So for most of our evolutionary history, we lived in tribes. We were inside the tribe, there was some degree of, you know, safety. The saber tooth tigers were generally on the other side of the fire, etcetera, etcetera.

If you're outside the tribe, you are likely dead.

So there was this urgent need for belonging, driven into our DNA. And and, you know, if we had to believe something that was a little bit maybe not truthful in order to belong, we we we went for the belonging. And that still happens in the modern world. Yeah? We we choose belonging ahead of truth. And and that's a really important thing to understand particularly in the modern world and and and the world of disinformation.

So so, what happens when we tell a story is is that actually, weirdly enough, the neuroscientists tell us our brains couple neurocouple with the storyteller. There's a level of empathy that sits in. And if it's a really good story, the brain releases oxytocin, which is what's known as the love hormone. So so our brains actually assist in this whole whole process of of storytelling.

And and the brainwaves between the storyteller and the recipient, if it's a favorable connection, actually start to harmonize. I don't understand this stuff, but this is this is this is what we're told. So so this is really built into us, you know, as Margaret Atwood says, it's absolutely fundamentally built built into us. Now so so, how about another story?

Because we are we are doing storytelling, and this is this is a story about, you know, truth.

And there's a Jewish teaching parable.

So so it goes like this, truth Truth wandering naked and cold had been turned away from every door in the village.

Her nakedness frightened the people.

So a parable found truth naked and cold and huddling in a corner, and took her back, fed her, warmed her, dressed Truth and story, and sent her back out. So clothed in story, Truth knocked at the village's doors and was readily welcomed into people's houses, invited her to a seat at the table, and to warm herself by the fire. Now, the obvious one that comes to mind here is Al Gore's inconvenient truth. Yep.

There is a famous phrase about American politics, any presidential candidate who tells the truth is doomed to be not elected. You know?

You you've probably seen a bit of this, Steven. I would have thought. Yeah.

Yeah. In in all of this, truth is in the eye of the beholder because there's only yeah. And this one one of the biggest things for directors to recognize here too is that there's no right way. There's no best way.

There's just ways. And so that's that, you know, lies open one of the the the the ball works of, of governance, which Julie teaches in her courses, which is give me options. Don't tell me the answer. Give me the options, and then we can work out from there which are the options and whether they're working or not.

Yeah. Yeah. And the thing about stories, story is completely personal.

You you you can't take away somebody's story unless you give them another one. Right?

And and and the Japanese writer Murakami says that if you're arguing with somebody and and and what you're doing is you're basically if you're proving them wrong, you're actually attacking their identity.

So you need to be careful.

You you you just can't say you're wrong, you know.

John, this this slide you've got here, which is facts don't change our minds, reminds me of many of the board reports that we get to see, Julie, where they are so full of facts that you don't actually know what is the story that we're trying to tell or the wisdom and the insight that we're able to gain from that because the facts have taken over, particularly financial reports. John?

Yeah. No. And and and that's right. We we we often tell people, well, you know, and this relates back to, you know, the information tree concept that you you'll be familiar with, you know, data information, knowledge, wisdom. Well, boards are not interested in in the bottom two parts of the pyramid. Right? They're interested in that management have given some, you know, discernment and analysis such that by the time it gets to them, there are some patterns that they can that they can make make sense of.

And it's so important. I was just doing the feedback from a board performance review yesterday, and one of the statements that came up was we get so much data and our reports are huge, and then we have to plow through it trying to work out what it means. And I said, well, why don't you get management to tell you what they think it means? Have a heading in your board report that says management's view or management's opinion.

Oh, we couldn't do that. It wouldn't be a fact. I said, well, the fact is that management will have a view. You hired them because they're clever.

Yeah. Yeah.

And once you've got that view, you can actually now read the data and interrogate, does this data support that view? Where are the weak bits? Where are the strong bits?

You read in a much more purposeful manner even if you then disagree with the view. Whereas if you're just given the data, you're reading in a sort of scattergun, what does this mean fashion.

So, yes, I like a narrative thread and a build of facts to support a line of thinking.

Yeah. And that's because there's a lot of evidence that says, you know, narrative reporting is is kind of far more useful, than than screeds of information or or, you know, death by PowerPoint, e even.

So so, just sort of before we move move on to the the story thing about just about bad ideas.

You know, if you see a bad idea or a bad story, attacking it head on feeds it. You know, it's like feeding the monster. The best thing you can do is another story or ignore it.

So so be be cautious, I get about charging at windmills that that are bad stories.

So so moving on, we we touched earlier about and Julie mentioned about, you know, the central story for the organization and the kind of the strategy or the reason for being.

Absolutely, this is what, you know, Simon Sinek calls the just cause, you know, particularly important for for purpose organizations. You have this really clear story. And and I I was sharing with Steven and Julie the other day when we were prepping for this that some of the more astute, private equity people in the States, when they're looking at buying into something, look for the presence of the story.

And they go to the c suite, and the c suite people will give them a story. Then they go down the layers, you know, and just see how frayed the story gets. And if it's still wholly consistent at the bottom, they get, oh, well, there's a bit of cohesion in this place. You know?

May maybe we should have a have a have a think about it. You know? It it's the famous, you know, message defragging, story about, you know, send reinforcements. We're going to advance.

It gets back to headquarters as send three and four prints. We're going to a dance, which is a slightly different message because it's gone through too many years. So so the cohesion of message within the organization is is absolutely vital. And and, you know, in a modern age, we don't have time to listen to too many varied messages.

Julie, yes.

I'm just about to say, sometimes I meet organizations where there is an attempt to push a story that does not resonate as true with people at other layers in the organization.

My favorite example of this is Nokia that, had a catchphrase or a tagline of connecting people. And everyone who worked there used to say, connecting people, disconnecting families because they had a really long hours work culture.

And it was very interesting how the story got turned back on itself, until they saw the light and dropped the tag.

Yep.

Yep.

And and and, basically, people will make their own stories up about you. There's there's there's some reasonable evidence that when someone looks at an organization, they through anthropomorphize it to a certain extent. They they form a story around it. And and if people create the wrong story, what about telcos? And New Zealand is in free fall at the moment, and the analysts providing me a story about it. And it's because they don't believe the story that's coming out. And, you know, once that sort of thing take through, in their case, they've had a billion dollars wiped off their equity.

Yeah. You know, that's very, very hard to shift that stuff. Yep.

What you do, not who you are. Come on. I'm dying for this one. Go for it.

What what you do? Oh, that well, what you do yeah. That that well, that's right. This is the wise story. You know?

And and this is a bit in part about accountability, as Judy said, you can do so so much of this about, you know, this is this is what what we're gonna do. But all of it, you've gotta tell people, are you doing it?

You know? And and and the other part of that, if it's not going well, and often it doesn't, you gotta confess and say, look, we thought that wasn't was gonna work and it didn't, and we you know, this is what we're doing about it.

Because otherwise, people don't believe, you know. And one of the worst evidences of this, and you will have all seen this, is what sprayed on the wall behind the reception counter. You know? Our values are and does anybody believe them?

You know? If if they're not lived, they well, there's just so much spray paint on the wall. Yep.

One of one of the You need, I think, facts to support your story if you want it to be believable. Otherwise, it's just a fantasy.

Yep. One of the practical things I've seen some some, boards ensure is done. And it's it's not common, but when it is when it does occur, it's really powerful, is to actually have a a a six monthly or an annual state of the nation page on your website, which says here are our



strategies, here's what's worked really well, here's what hasn't worked so well. And then sort of an invitation for stakeholders to engage with them where appropriate. But that that when it's done, it it it can be quite opening up of possibilities because then not only are you reporting just about the good stuff, but you also talk about, well, what hasn't worked and what have we learned from that? So that becomes a very powerful way of actually not only being accountable, but actually bringing people together as well.

John.

Well, that's right. Especially those of you who are in member membership based organizations, you know, keep it keeping members apprised as you travel through the year rather than waiting for the vehemence of the annual meeting, is is a pretty good strategy, really.

Otherwise, you might find yourself not on the board next year, yeah, very, very quickly.

Because one of one of the great corporate stories that, was beautiful, to believe and turned out not to be true was Theranos. You know?

And that's a a really interesting reflection in people's they wanted to believe the story. Everybody wanted to believe that they could do this thing, and yet it turned out not to be true. But but also there was a really good question about where was the diligence of the board here, you know. It would have been pretty easy to test this story on the way, but see by third parties, but seemingly they didn't want to. So we don't we don't have time to do a Theranos debrief, but it is an interesting story that went wrong, very wrong for everybody.

I don't know whether Elizabeth Holmes got locked up eventually, but, He did.

He did. Yep. Right.

And again, it's that question of facts and also timing. Yeah. I have no doubt that the Theranos technology will come. Yeah. It's just probably not for another fifty years or so that we get technology that is able to sense things in blood and do so many tests on such a tiny amount of it.

It's coming. It will come.

But we don't have that technology yet.

So that that's the kind of sort of comes back to the, you know, the information necessary in the boardroom. Are we are we getting the right information to track the story? You know? Is it is it being robustly tested? And and one of the things that I I always say to people, well, we do trust merit management. But every software we want to verify, you know, and that may well be bringing, independence or third parties in just to check from time to time that the story we're getting, because we're only in the room a few hours every month, so we can't be over everything the whole time, we do need to trust verify, particularly if the story's a good one. Yeah.

And I've also seen again, another good hint for people who are on this call is, a number of boards I've come across start off every board meeting with a very short story. It's a it's a short story about, their either their vision or their values and not just the good stuff, but stories that illustrate something. So with faith based organisations, I've seen a number of them. They'll start off the really good ones start off, the meeting with a very short prayer, and then they spend a couple of minutes reflecting on the power of that prayer for their risk management process.

Oh, okay.

Or the power of that prayer when it comes to, when it comes to looking at, stakeholder engagement, just to remind people why we're there. I've seen others where they start off, one in particular where they start off each board meeting, and they meet four times a year, each board meeting with a short videoed story from one of their staff about how they went over and above what would otherwise be expected in a work health and safety issue.

And, and they they do that to make the story of health, work health and safety more than just data. They're actually people and stories that go along with it. So the illustration through using of use of a story might only take two or three minutes, but can be incredibly powerful at the start of a board meeting. If any of you who are on this call actually do start off a a a board meeting with a mission moment or a story moment, put in the chat there about some of the things that you do.

There's an excellent question just popped up. Does celebrating successes assist teams to realize progress towards the story or strategy is being made? Because often teams are busy and moving on to the next thing. So thanks, Kerry, for that lovely question.

John, what's your view on celebrating?

Oh, look. I think everybody everybody in Ailey wants to know that they are beavering to some productive gain. You know? So I I think that's good.

False false success, you know, sometimes it drifts into, you know, too much of this for too little substance. So I think you gotta do it genuinely and with a with a bit of hue humility about it. But, you know, celebration is great. I'm all in favor of that. But it's more about recognizing people's efforts, you know, I I think than anything else. Yep. So so just sitting on on the information in the boardroom thing, a little bit about, you know, is is just this is really important, you know, fact checking the story.

And we often say, you know, information flow to the board. The story that's coming in is its lifeblood, and and the board needs to have specified, you know, what information and in what form. So if you're getting rubbish in, well, there's only one person to blame.

So, I mean, Julie and Steve, you probably spend your lives advising people on the on these matters.

But yeah.

You know, what what does it look like? And and as you said earlier, we expect management to have an opinion. We didn't hire them to be mute, and we expect them to come with a recommendation and and say why you came to that conclusion.

They're supposed to be the board's principal adviser. Let's have it. Yeah? Alright.

Yeah. Another, comment in the q and a from someone who wishes to remain anonymous. That only this year, they've implemented putting their core values at the top of each board pack, which is something that will please Steve, as a helpful reminder to directors of why they are there given that most of them have multiple directorships wear a lot of hats and that this helps to recenter them for the day or the half day that they're meeting.

Yep. And the one thing that would the the one thing that would actually add to that as well too, and you may already do it, but that is to for the chair or any of the other directors to remind the board to as they're forming their responses and they're forming their questions, to go back to those values to help them with that formulation.

This is particularly useful in those organizations where you have some feisty people that aren't particularly skilled at getting their message across.

Yeah. Yeah.

But actually using the using the, the vision in particular and the values to help shape before people open their mouths. Very, very powerful, really badly done in many instances.

Just, coming back to the my opening statement about the two sides to to to every story and that a story only has validity from the point of view of the recipient.

So Steve challenged me when we were chatting. You said about for anecdote. So so there's absolutely no point at telling somebody a story about a fabulous new vacuum cleaner if they live on the street. You know?

That's just a mismatch. You know? What why why why would you do that? So so we do just tend to see a lot of a lot of that, you know, and I I I kind of tell some of my friends when they're telling me stories that have no relevance to me that I've got a buzzing in my ears.

I'm not quite sure what it is. But whatever they're telling me has no relevance.

And so much of what we attempt to communicate in the world is is of that nature. Yeah?

Yes. So there's a lovely story about Lester Pigott who was a, favored jockey in England many years ago. I'm showing my age. Who, when asked about tipping the stable boy because he'd ridden the winner, said, oh, had a fall on that ear. Can't really hear very much. And so the stable boy who'd been saying, how about five pounds because I saddled up your winner, went round the other side and said, how about ten pounds because I saddled up your winner? And he said, go back to the five pound ear.

There's been a great a great question that's been brought forward by Jane. It says, my board consists of a bunch of the world's most busy time poor specialist doctors. Oh, yes. We know them well.

It can be very transactional meeting. How can I evolve to telling? I think one of the things here is not to get misled by the fact that you need to be a storyteller, but to know that there are stories that will illustrate in thirty seconds or less something that would take you five hours of reading data.

Yep.

So the the trick in all of this is not to weave a story and take your time weaving it. It can just be a simple question. You know, how does this impact on our ability to create our vision? And then just leave it to them to actually come up with their own stories. Or, if we were to look at this through the prism of our values, for example, what are the two things that we really need to focus on? Great questions.

So my view is that you don't necessarily need to tell the story all the time, but if you help people get into that sense of curiosity that a good story will do and will illustrate, let them come up in their own mind. So transactional boards, fantastic, but you can make them even more powerful by actually alerting them to the things that are really important. It's not the transaction that's the importance. It's the impact that it's going to have that's important.

Julie?

Yeah. And I find doctors really love to see what they do having an impact in the world. And the really good ones, they'll tell a story so quickly and easily. I asked somebody recently, why can't I have a hip replacement the same way that Andy Murray did and be back playing high level tennis? I mean, the fact that I can't play tennis at all.

But the doctor just turned around and said, women's hips are bigger.

Those things wear out. He's younger. He wants to make millions of dollars in a very short time. I wouldn't recommend it. And you you can sort of hear the story even though to his mind, it was like fact, fact, fact, fact. But I could hear a story that said, back off.

This is not a good path to go down. There are warnings here about what might happen and also stories about whether it's worth it.

So you need to get to understand that sometimes the thread, the narrative between fact and fact and fact is a story even though nobody says, once upon a time, there was a surgeon.

If if anyone ever says once upon a time in a board meeting, please file them.

And I know only shareholders can, but John John's next slide he's got up here.

A story is only valid from the receiver's point of view. To me, it's just so powerful because one of the again, a gentle tip for everyone who's listening to this is that once a year I would actually, go around as chair, go around with each of your directors and ask them to describe what your vision statement means to them because each one of them will have a slightly different story of what it means. But the thread that connects it all together will always be there through the two or three things in the vision statement. So one of the most powerful ways to actually understand and get people to realize that there's no not one way, we don't have to all agree on things, but is to actually get them to say, look, here's our vision statement, here are the three elements, what does that mean to you, Mary?

Okay. What does that mean to you, John? We're not here to agree. We're just here to listen to these different things.

And that then starts to make sense that everyone hears and sees things differently, but that's why they're sitting around the board table.

Yeah. If we all agree, then none of this is necessary.

Well, only one.

Just mind mindful of time, and and there's a couple of good questions up here. Just one one little area I wanted to cover, which is which is kind of sort of, you know, the recipient thing because we all filter information through our our own biases and a couple of little kind of boardroom relevant things. So so what what is framing framing bias? So this is a danger of getting a, you know, dominant director to open the discussion.

Right? Here's the way I see it. This is what I think, you know, I dah dah dah. So what that's what that's done is create a story with a box.

Yep. So so and and it often defines the rest of the conversation within a box. So the way around that one is you get the youngest director or the newest director to to, you know, offer an opinion first and get and the chair's job is to keep, you know, keep the loud one keep the loud ones down a little bit. Yep.

So so, you know, there are all sorts of ways of, you know, of of skewing conversations.

And and the the success story is if you present something to someone that says, this, this operation has a ninety five percent chance of success. I'm gonna buy that.

But if you say, well, this operation's got a five percent chance of mortality, then nobody apparently wants to buy it. So so there is a whole lot of things in the way stories are told, and and the slide about, you know, the two systems has cut has come up, and that's worth noting.

In our psychology, we have system one, which is I see a red light. I know what to do. We don't need to think about it. We have a whole lot of things built built in to the human frame that are system one.

It just makes us easy to function in the world, you know, because we don't need to think about things. But sadly, we are lazy human beings, and when we should be using system two, which is thought and caution and and, you know, patience and, analysis, we tend to use system one. You know, I once knew an Italian who was a great cook, therefore Italians are great cooks. Well, that's just like lazy lazy thinking.

So so there are just this stuff does have relevance in the boardroom. Absolutely. We don't necessarily have time to go through all of it. One of the most dangerous things in my view is we look for stories of success.

Okay?

So and so has been great success in his or her, you know, world and, you know, we really need to listen to them and worse, we need to put them on the board.

You know, as whereas whereas Carmen would would say that mostly business success is dumb luck. Just being in the right place at the right time for a very large number of people. So but it it as humans, we want to believe in success. It's one of the it's one of the great stories.

So so we need to be cautious about tales of success that may not be relevant to our context and actually may be due to sheer dumb luck rather than actual skills that are that are relevant in the boardroom. Julie and Steve, you almost certainly seen this stuff. Yep? Yep. Yeah.

It's one of the, things I love to ask when I'm doing a reference check for a prospective board member or a board review is to ask a colleague or a an executive who's reported to the board.

Tell me about a time when this director added value and prevented you from making a mistake.

And it's interesting how many people have been in the room whilst good things happened, but nobody is aware that they ever made those things happen.

And so, again, without encouraging people to dominate the conversation, but encouraging people to really think through what's my unique specific value add on these topics.

And sometimes it's the sitting back and the nitpicking and asking questions. And sometimes it's the supporting and the enthusiasm.

And sometimes it's just doing your job and going through the boring facts and making sure you understand the arguments.

I'm I'm getting the wind up signal from Sean here.

John, can I ask you a question? Sure. What what are the two what are the two key issues with storytelling? If you if you had to condense it out, what are the two big strategic issues that we can actually use to fundamentally change the way our board deals with information and be

greater contributions? What be what would be the two big things from your point of view, from what you've seen?

In terms of stories, and this is from an old marketer's point of view, a good story is simple.

Don't overcomplicate it. But, you know, try and think, what is the one thing I'm trying to communicate here and and and work around that? And when when you're writing, narrative is great because it helps, you know, destroy. But but less less is more.

We we're not gonna have time to talk about bad stories, but, you know, this is a bad story.

May maybe another day we'll do bad stories. But, so yes. So, you know, less less is more, and good stories have people at the at the heart. Good stories about people.

You know? So make your story about people. Make your story about the impact positively that you're gonna have on people outside your organization because that's why you exist. So so I think I think we're we're probably Sean, we're we're running we're running out of time.

We're gonna do the wind ups.

We're we're we're happy to, you know, gonna send you some material afterwards, which is useful. And maybe there's a day where we we can talk a bit more about those particularly bad stories. Yeah.

Great stuff. Thank you, John. So feel free, everybody, now that we're winding things up to reach out to Julie, John, or Steven on LinkedIn. I'm sure they'll look forward to your contact there.

You shall receive an email from me. It'll be tomorrow morning now, which will include, a video of the webinar today, the presentation slides, a handout from John, and a copy of the webinar transcript.

So as you leave the webinar today, don't forget to fill in our one minute quick survey going to draw for our beautiful gift hamper.

Thank you everybody again for attending our live event. I hope you enjoyed the session today with John, Steven, and Julie.

I was gonna throw up a copy of the this quarter's webinar, schedule, but we're out of time. It's on our website if you'd like to go in and have a look at that.

Thank you everybody for your attendance today. Have a great day.