

# Project Tales

## Sharing Tacit Knowledge in Projects

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Session # **ADV09**



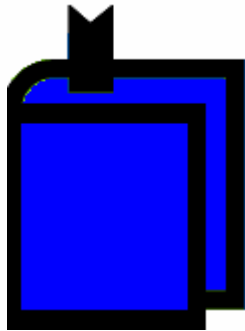
# Objectives

- Identify the two **Types of Knowledge**
- Recognize the **Power of Stories** in Knowledge and Project Management;
- Acquire the basic structure to create a successful **Project Tale**.



# Two Types of Knowledge

## EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE



## TACIT KNOWLEDGE



# Tacit Knowledge and Projects

- Knowledge transfer is a **competitive** element in today's marketplace;
- PMBOK® Guide **emphasizes** Explicit Knowledge;
- Tacit Knowledge is **intrinsically** linked to project management and its best practices;
- The needs and peculiarities of the project environment require a **tailored** knowledge transfer system.



# How to Bridge the Gap?

- The ideal “*tool*” should be:
  - user **friendly**;
  - **multitasking**;
  - **adaptable**;
  - **fast**;
  - ...



# An Ancient Art ...

- From prehistoric **graffiti** to “*organizational narrative*”, from Homer to **Scheherazade** and the “Commedia dell’Arte”...
- The sound of stories **accompanies** us during our entire lifetime;
- Narrative engages the mind in a **sequential, action-oriented**, detail-driven mode of thinking.



# The Power of Stories

- Stories help the storyteller to **summarize** key elements, correlation and patterns and convey the unique **wisdom** of personal experience;
- Stories make knowledge **tangible** and **memorable**;
- Stories offer a “*surrogate experience*” and help the listener by **anchoring** the new knowledge to a context;
- Stories are **cumulative** and help to form and maintain a community.



# Stories and Projects

- During any project, stories will be **told**, related and listened to **every day**...
- ...**with or without** the Project Manager;
- Why not delving into the “*project lore*”?



# What is a Project Tale?

- A **structured** story relating a personal experience which pertains to a specific area of knowledge;
- The aim of a Project Tales is to **share** and **document** Tacit Knowledge;
- A Project Tale focus on “*the **sweet spot of learning** between disaster and pure success*”.



# A Project Tale is not *just a story*

- A **Project Tale** should:
  - Be a **true** story;
  - Present an **anomaly**;
  - Be related to clear knowledge **objectives**.
- Also:
  - It could be a **success** story;
  - It should not assign **blame** or fuel pessimism.



# Crafting a Project Tale

- A **Project Tale** should:
  - include the setting, the problem, the solution and the **explanation**;
  - capture the “*weak signals*” which point to the relevant areas of knowledge;
  - reflect **multiple perspectives**;
  - welcome a touch of **serendipity**...
  - be designed as “*portable and highly tuck-in-able*”.



# The Making of a Project Tale

- A **Special Skill** you want to share
- Three **Key Words** (area of knowledge)
- A **Specific Instance** (true story)
- An **Opening Line** (the context)
- The **Problem** (weak signals leading to an anomaly, with multiple perspectives)
- The **Solution** (an explanation)
- A **Closing line** (the synthesis of Knowledge Objectives)



# Opening Lines

*Once upon a time...*

*The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there ...*

***It was a dark and stormy night ...***

**The trouble with mornings is that they come when you are not awake...**

IT WAS THE BEST OF TIMES, IT WAS THE WORST OF TIMES ...

Midway along the path of life...

*It was the night before Xmas, not even a mouse stirred...*



# Closing Lines

**Well, nobody is perfect**

**The best way to make your dreams come true is to wake up**

*After all, tomorrow is another day*

**Back to the future**

***Never mistake action with motion***

**THENCE WE CAME FORTH TO SEE THE STARS AGAIN**

**Never say never**



# Delivering a Project Tale

- Create a “*a joint space for a **collective** meaning*”
- Choose the **right** time;
- Add the desire to **share**, a little practice and ... an apple...
- Remember to **breath!**



# Documenting a Project Tale

- Spontaneous and/or prompted Project Tale should always be **recorded**;
- Project Tales **complement** the official project management documents;
- Database, blogs, wikis, newsletters ...
- And ... the **Storyboard**.



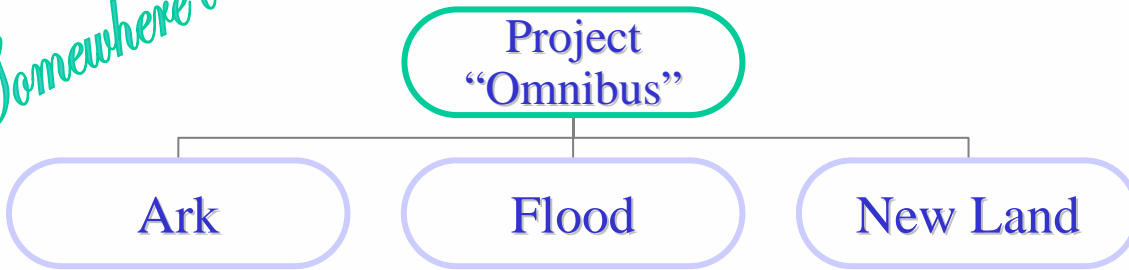
# The Storyboard

- Originally a panel of **rough sketches** outlining the scene **sequence** and major **changes of action** or plot in a film or video;
- The “***rough copy***” of a Project Tale, including small pieces of information, **pictures**, proverbs, metaphors, **key words**, original statements...
- The **collected** storyboards form the ***Chronicles*** of each project, embodying its “*underground know-how*”.



*Somewhere over the rainbow...*

# Noah's Storyboard

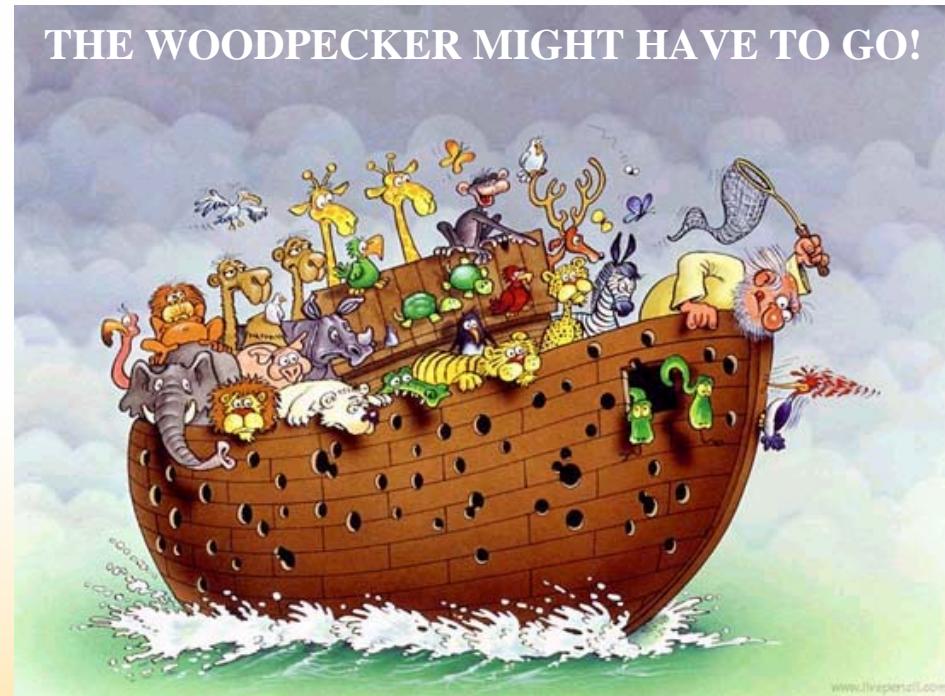


**CLEAR PURPOSE**  
**IN PAIRS**  
**THREE LEVELS**  
**Patience**  
**The Day After**

The Sloth: *Cruising? Quite overrated if you ask me*

The Flea: *I deemed better to keep a low profile...*

The Bear: *Another instance of unethical discrimination against single animals*



# Best Practices



[www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)



<http://appel.nasa.gov/ask>



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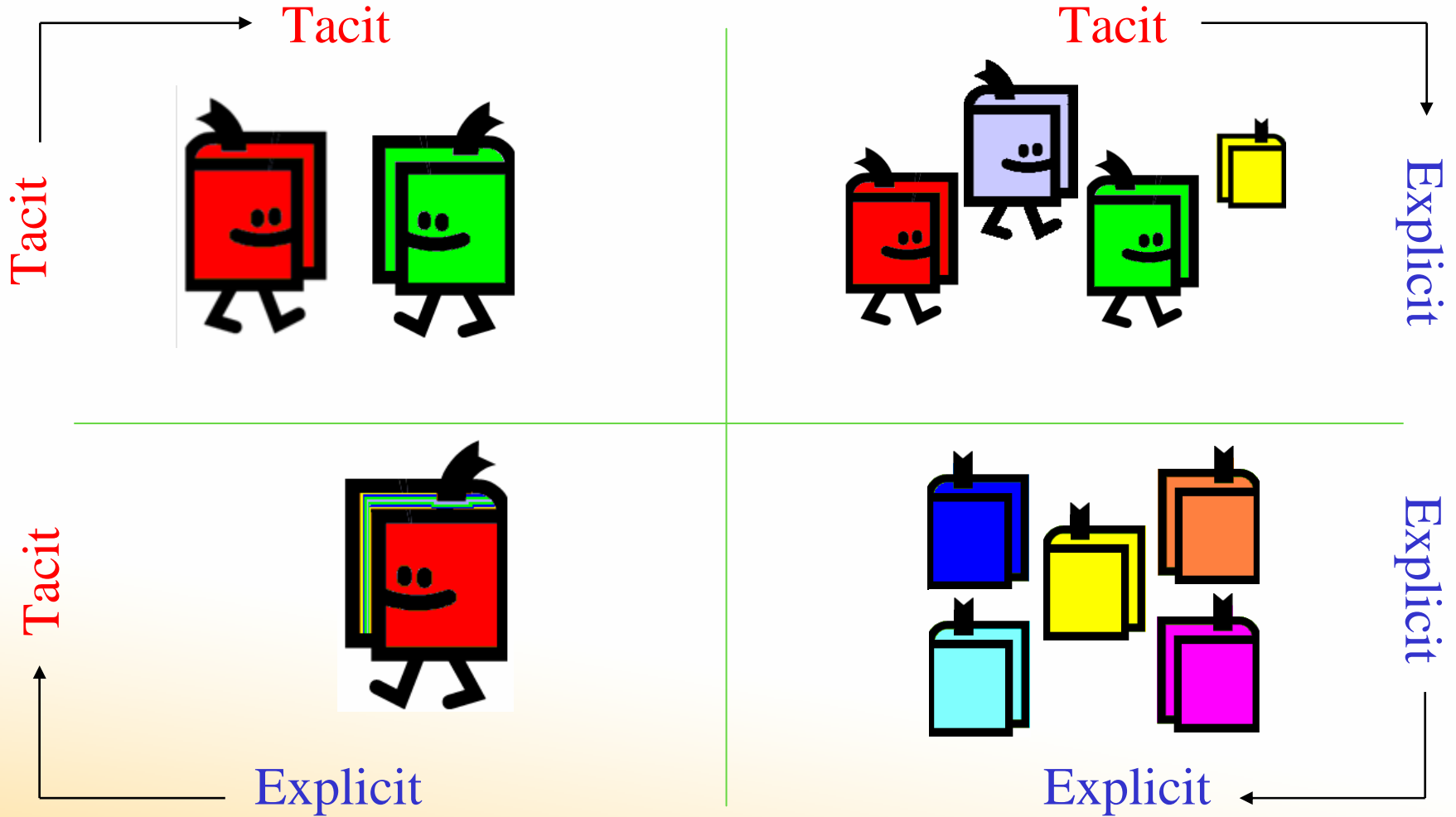
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# A new cycle begins...

- Project Tales will be **retold** a number of times by different people;
- Each time they will be **refined** and modified to fit the storyteller's point of view;
- Each time the listeners will find a new **perspective**;
- Each time a new knowledge creation cycle will begin ...



# “The Tale of Project Tales”



# Contact Information

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Thank you



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