

The Elephant in the Room!

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MOVING IMAGES

A long time ago, in a land far, far away, a group of blind men heard that a strange animal, called an elephant, had been brought to the town, but none of them were aware of what such an animal looked like. Out of curiosity, they said: "We must inspect and know it by touch."

So, when they found it, they lay their hands on different parts of the elephant. The first person, whose hand landed on the trunk, said "This creature is like a thick snake." Another man whose hand reached its ear, described it as fan. A third man, whose hand was upon its leg, disagreed, saying the elephant is a pillar - like a tree-trunk. The blind man who placed his hand upon its side said, "No, you're all wrong! The elephant is a wall." The last felt its tusk, stating that the elephant is actually a spear. Each suspected that the other was trying to fool them, and so they came to blows...

John Godfrey Saxe immortalised this parable in a poem, which concludes:

"And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!"

There is a blindspot in organisational life. Most leaders know that silo thinking is part of the problem rather than a part of the solution to business growth, yet they unwittingly reinforce silo mentality in their response to innovation.

'Silo thinking' is an inward-looking tendency that resists working collaboratively and cross-culturally. It occurs when people conclude that it is not their responsibility to coordinate activities with other groups outside their own department. With this mindset, people have little interest in understanding their part in the success of the whole enterprise.

Silo mentality results in localised, disconnected decision-making and supports a culture where there is a lack of ownership. The blindspot results in leaders and managers not responding to the possibilities of new developments from outside the organisation, and not recognising the potential of innovation from within.

'Filmed Facilitation' - the elephant in the room?

Silo thinking is not just about guarding departmental turf or seeing things from the limited perspective of subject specialisms. It also affects the whole way that leaders approach the process of change – whether that change is in leadership learning and development, business transformation, or corporate growth more broadly.

For example, in describing to a Director of People & Organisational Development recently, how we use film to connect people, teams and cultures, he said, "So this is corporate communications! Go talk to the Comms Team!" The Marketing Director tried to get his head around our offer and exclaimed, "Oh, I see! You do Talent Development – not my bag!" Each was partly right as well as completely wrong...

Because film is a digital medium, in this age of 'digital transformation' and 'digital leadership' we think this leadership blindspot is well worth exploring...

Old paradigm thinking is that leaders go away somewhere in a huddle for a few days, and come back with stories for their teams about what happened and what to focus on next. This paradigm is as true for leadership development workshops, as for business strategy workshops. The trouble is, that leaders have very varied (and usually undeveloped) storytelling skills; and that the teams listening to the stories are rarely engaged and often completely unmoved by the stories. The process is linear and based on wobbly assumptions about the effectiveness of cascading information. This thinking is itself a kind of silo.

New paradigm thinking is based on assumptions about creating emotional resonance rather than factual persuasion; about giving teams a felt sense of what happened so that they share in the moments of truth and connect more experientially with the insights their leaders had; about enabling 360° viral communication rather than cascades;

about inspiring belief through understanding the process that leaders went through as well as the outcomes that were realised; and through using creative process to stimulate creative dialogues both at and beyond the awayday...

Film is the future

Film is the perfect medium for facilitating shifts at leadership development retreats or business transformation workshops, as well as after these events, back in the business.

Far from being a distraction from discussion, our experience is that film-making focuses discussion more tightly, and used skilfully in the hands of expert facilitators, enables more creative engagement with the subjects in hand. On-the-spot editing enables moments of truth and insight to be captured and reflected, and programmes created that can be shared with teams and stakeholders who are not present after the event. These programmes are themselves emotionally engaging and stimulate further reflection and dialogue in ways that support transformation. Film really enables meaningful connections to be made, and unlocks the potential of people to make a difference!

We live in an age where we need increasingly to engage Millennials and Digital Natives. 'Moving images' are the medium of choice, not just for these groups but for us all.



Our approach is unique

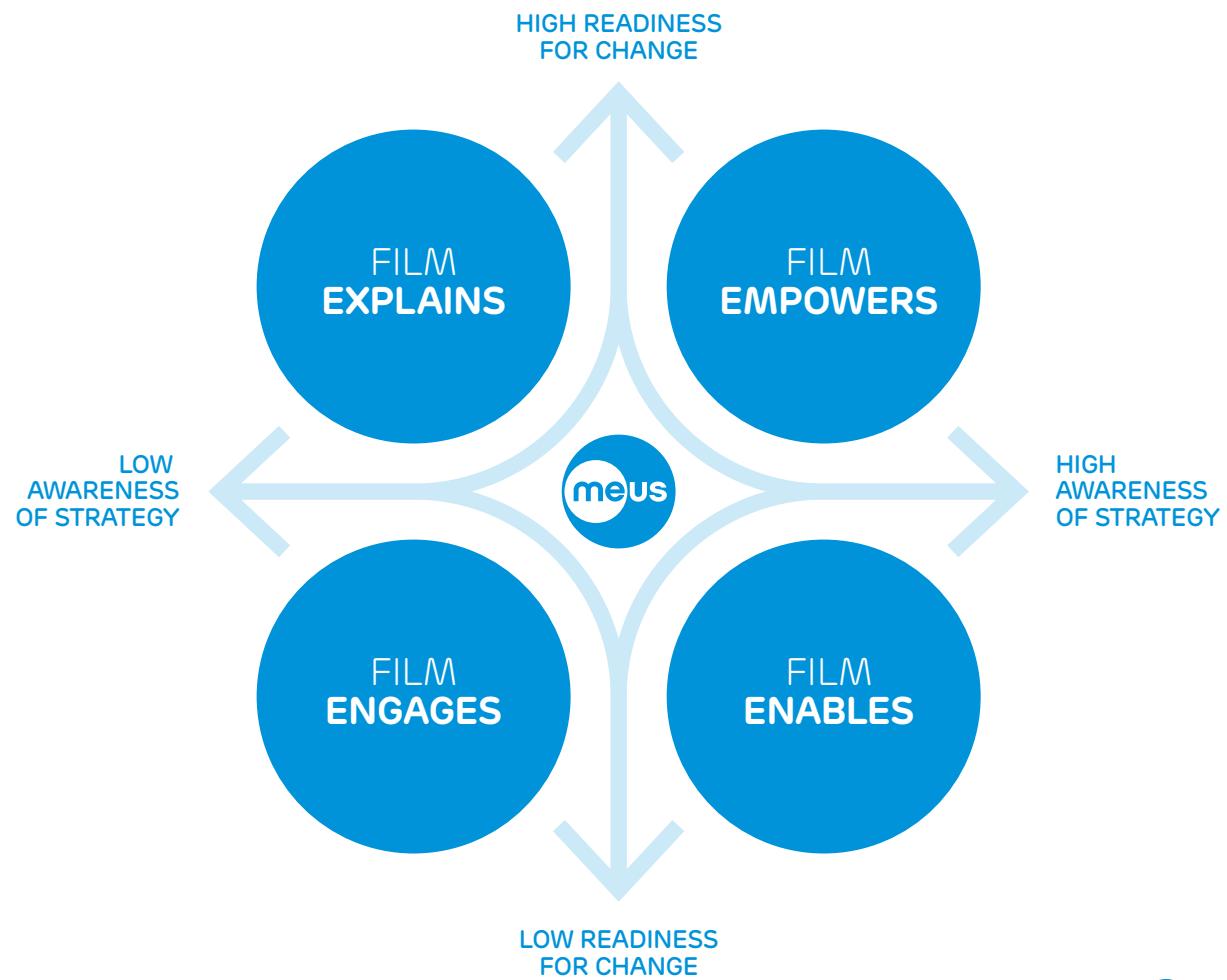
At **meus**, we play in the disconnect between Leadership & Organisational Development, and Corporate Communications.

We are a team of creative catalysts who use filmed facilitation to unlock inspiring conversations, create meaningful new stories, and make connections that help leaders learn, people develop, and organisations to change. We achieve this through the power of Belief – through showing real people making progress with real challenges in a way that we can all resonate with and relate to...

We use the power of film:

- To articulate enabling new stories that support learning and growth
- To help a team and the wider organisation articulate its core philosophy and to communicate it virally
- To connect leaders and teams to their purpose
- To help connect employees and customers to the brand story
- To contribute to business transformation.

How film contributes to transformation





'We pioneer the art of 'filmed facilitation' to explore and share moments that connect us more fully to ourselves and to one another.'

Not Corporate Communications!

We do not film glossy and rehearsed speeches from leaders (while recognising that there is absolutely a place for this kind of communication) but rather enable leaders to be seen as real in how they relate.

We help leaders and managers engage with what we call 'the *lived* brand' as opposed to the *espoused* brand – so they do not only *talk about* the brand values but are seen to actually *embody* these values in how they present themselves. But this is less about image management and more about harnessing authenticity. You cannot learn this from a presentation skills course! It requires that at some subtle level, you drop the mask and engage your signature presence...

Not Organisational Development!

What we do is closer to an emerging and unconventional form of Organisational Development. However, we do not just facilitate leadership learning journeys, or run

dialogue circles, or engagement processes, or team awaydays... We use film integrally within the design of our bespoke programmes, as it connects people to purpose more quickly; it promotes authenticity and accountability; it captures and communicates 'moments of truth' that can support personal shifts, team development and cultural transformation; it offers people a real 'felt sense' of what is possible when people connect with themselves and others... But this is less about culture change and more about human connection and engagement, from which all change emanates.

So much more!

We bring together into a unique combination, a variety of disciplines: storytelling, creative dialogue, facilitation and coaching, leadership and talent development, and executive learning – and transform them through the power of film.

This unique and evocative combination allows us to connect and engage people emotionally – not through top-down communications, but by building momentum at all levels of the business.

'Film helps to create resonance and gives people a felt sense of what is possible.'

About meus

meus creates, captures and communicates moments of connection.

We pioneer the art of 'filmed facilitation' to explore and share moments that connect us more fully to ourselves and to one another. Our films are unique 'products' that arise from our encounters with individuals and organisational teams and community groups. They not only represent a 'living record' of our various conversations for connection – but also, through sharing our films virally, unknown others can also experience the transformational power of connection.

Our practice is derived from a unique synthesis of leadership and organisational development, creative process, systems thinking and doctoral research.

We work on projects that:

- Capture people reflecting on what matters to them and what it is like to be them
- Address bigger issues about how to relate at work and in the world
- Explore how leaders in both organisations and communities can engage more authentically

About Dr Ty Francis

As a social psychologist whose PhD explored 'transformation', Ty has a deep interest in creativity and in the experience of 'breakthrough'. He uses his skills as a coach to connect with people, and as storyteller to elicit the essence of our human experience.

About Jon Riley

As an executive coach and facilitator with an abiding interest in technology, Jon combines the skills of drawing out people's inner, emotional experiences and portraying them sensitively on film. He uses his technical skills creatively, in post-production editing.





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Contact us if you'd like to explore a project through filmed facilitation or co-created documentary-making. We would love to connect with you!

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