

## **"Disney's Proxy Battles Reveal the Dark Side of Leadership Storytelling:**

### **And We Offer a Restorying Way Out"**

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#### **Abstract**

This chapter examines the “dark side” of leadership storytelling at Disney, focusing on the proxy battle between activist investor Nelson Peltz and CEO Bob Iger. We argue that before there were the polished corporate narratives, there were antenarratives—fragmented, hidden, and competing story fragments that reveal the tensions between shareholder versus stakeholder values. In this leadership struggle, Disney positioned Iger as the heroic defender of long-term vision against Peltz’s short-term shareholder maximization. Meanwhile, behind the scenes were mass layoffs, employee precarity, and organizational disillusionment, which exposed the collapse of values within its leadership ethos. We draw on three methods to restory a way out of this situation: antenarrative and restorying theory, SEAM’s socioeconomic approach, and Axiogenics’ value profiling. We trace how storytelling becomes focused on extrinsic measures of success, resulting in systemic neglect of intrinsic human values. We propose an Embodied Restorying Process integrating value-based mindfulness, appreciative intelligence, and socioeconomic diagnostics to restore balance, unlock hidden potential, and foster more inclusive and sustainable organizational futures. Ultimately, this chapter reframes the Disney case as both cautionary tale and possibility space for value-based quantum storytelling as an intervention capable of shifting toxic grand narratives into authentic, life-affirming living stories.

**Keywords:** Dark side of leadership, Antenarrative, Disney, Shareholder vs. stakeholder values, Storytelling organization, Processes of Embodied Restorying (PER), Quantum storytelling

**What do we mean by the “dark side” of leadership storytelling?** For this distinction, we look to the study of Axiology initiated by Robert S. Hartman. This literature distinguishes between 3 types of values: intrinsic, extrinsic, and systemic. While each value orientation has a purpose, intrinsic values are more oriented towards humanistic goals. Extrinsic values relate to a means-to-an-end type of efficiency, and systemic values relate to the fitting together of parts, with organizational implications.

The 'dark side of leadership' emerges when leaders become driven by excessive narcissism, ego-defensiveness, or impression management (Conger, 1990). When charisma replaces systems thinking—and when external metrics outweigh human values—leadership collapses into spectacle. Disney’s strategic response to the Peltz threat—laying off over 8,000 employees and restructuring core teams—reflected this imbalance. As Kets de Vries (2014) warns, unchecked executive ego and systemic overvaluation of extrinsic measures (stock price, market confidence) lead to reactive cultures defined by fear, silence, and performance fatigue.

We call this collapse of leadership values an 'antenarrative'—the fragmented, not-yet-complete storylines beneath the official Disney narrative (Boje, 2001; Rosile et al., 2013). These

antenarratives matter because they shape how leaders and employees experience strategy long before the polished official story is told. Antenarratives are defined as those narrative fragments, the ‘not yet’ fully plotted narratives.

### **Why is this a “dark side” and not simply a “he said, she said” difference of opinion? Shareholder Value vs Stakeholder Value**

Disney’s proxy battle reveals a deeper story: the clash between a 20th-century shareholder mindset—focused solely on dividends—and a more modern stakeholder view that balances long-term value for employees, communities, and investors. The struggle between Peltz and Iger was less about board seats and more about which story would define Disney’s future.

First is the "Shareholder" story, “cemented in the 20th century by the likes of Milton Friedman. This story is based on the principle of maximizing shareholder dividends. However, this view “is rapidly declining under the weight of short-termism, micromanagement, and the erosion of stakeholder trust" (Boje, 2025, p. 4). The other view is what Savall & Zardet call "socially responsible capitalism" and Cooperrider calls "stakeholder capitalism." Disney struggles between these opposing views of shareholders versus stakeholders, demonstrating the messy “antenarrative-before” examples of exception to both shareholder maximizing values, and stakeholder equanimity value positioning. It is a struggle crudely covered over by polished public relations grand narratives of villain-Peltz and hero-Iger’s quite different ‘antenarrative-bets’ on the future of Disney. It is what is beneath the glossy “public face” of much of biographical storytelling. More specifically, the “dark side” of leadership storytelling includes the untold micro stories of the voiceless followers, and the struggle of competing pre-story fragments, some of which become overshadowed by the emerging dominant narrative.

Post-pandemic volatility, generational turnover, and the echo of the 2023–2024 Nelson Peltz proxy episode have left a cultural residue in Disney Burbank and beyond. Leaders may feel it in the meeting room. Cast members may sense it backstage. Guests may never see it—but they feel its shadow.

This collapse opens space for stakeholder capitalism, a more sustainable and inclusive system that places human potential, community impact, and environmental responsibility at its core. The result is a move from extrinsic, short-term control to intrinsic, human-centered value creation—what, as noted above, Savall & Zardet call "socially responsible capitalism" and Cooperrider calls "stakeholder capitalism" (Boje, 2025).

### **Tamara-land and Quantum Storytelling**

Our case study is the leadership struggles at Disney, which has entered its own Tamara-land. Tamara-land refers to the long-running Los Angeles play performed in a mansion of many rooms where each audience member traveled from room to room as they chose, observing different characters and actions in each room. Thus each audience member experienced “the story” in a way that is “true” but unique to themselves.

Boje (1995) has suggested that organizational life is like the play Tamara, where each person experiences “the story” in a way unique to themselves. Tamara-Land refers to this landscape of fragmented narratives, backstage disillusionment, and performative coherence masking systemic breakdown (Boje, 1995). We start our story with a failed proxy war initiated by corporate raider Nelson Peltz. Peltz’s emphasis was to maximize shareholder value. This was countered by Disney-CEO Bob Iger in 2024, who defended the broader values of stakeholders. In short this was more than a shareholder debate about the next chapter of Disney’s saga. Instead, this struggle between Peltz and Iger became a stage for the collapse of leadership values playing out in full. This leadership struggle highlighted the narrower values of “shareholder” dividends, as opposed to the broader more inclusive story of “stakeholder” participants.

Disney is perhaps the quintessential storytelling organization, whose preferred currency is not merely financial, but a more preferred and revered sensemaking currency of storytelling (Boje, 1995). Its actions are highly publicized narratives, and its successes are widely recognized, as are its difficulties, including the struggles of the hero’s journey initiated by Walt Disney. The recent developments at Disney from 2023-2025 offer an example of the overlooked, lost, or hidden shadow stories of leadership. We will explain how overlooking the value-based aspect of decision making can lead to the erosion of an organization’s intrinsic values and founding vision. The result, we suggest, is the “dark side” of leadership storytelling.

Why do we call our storytelling “quantum?” To us, quantum-ness is characterized by the complexity, multiplicity, and simultaneity of a sense of time that folds back on itself. The Tamara-land view of organizational storytelling reflects this multiple and simultaneous nature of the world.

We offer the backstory and the antenarrative precursors of the Disney corporation as a ‘storytelling organization’ to demonstrate how storytelling can mask deeper antenarrative processes. As antenarrative researchers we offer our storytelling perspective to practicing managers and consultants, of Disney and other corporations. Our strategies can address and transform such toxic narratives of organizational leadership, to help organizations better enact the potentially more inclusive living stories of the values they espouse.

The three approaches we employ to allow Disney to change its organizational story are first, PERVIEW, our process of embodied restorying; second, SEAM, a detailed socioeconomic analysis of qualitative and quantitative ethnographically collected data tied to financial measures; and thirdly AAM, the Auxiliary Assumptions Method to examine often hidden assumptions in our use of organizational metrics.

## 1. PERVIEW

PERVIEW (Process of Embodied Restorying), supports individual-level employees and managers with self-report instruments and follow-up coaching to guide participants to more self-awareness and informed choices in both professional and personal life. These instruments include:

- \* Quantum Wisdom Scan - GLOW
- \* PERVIEW Mindfulness Quiz
- \* Appreciative Intelligence® Test
- \* VuJaDe.ai Test
- \* Axiogenics VQ Profile Assessment

Integrating Axiology (value impact of decisions), VuJaDé (focus of interpersonal interactions), and other proprietary instruments/quizzes to assist in cultivating the voice of The Inner Guide, we support alignment and holistic growth and integration by connecting personal and organizational wisdom. Further details on these instruments are available as indicated in ending “References.”

## **2. SEAM**

“SEAM” is the Socio-Economic Approach to Management (Savall & Zardet, 2008; Savall et al., 2017; Savall et al., 2024). This approach uncovers 'hidden costs'—the overlooked expenses of turnover, burnout, or disengagement—that can save millions when surfaced. Developers Henri Savall, Amandine Savall, Veronique Zardet, and Marc Bonnet have a 50+ years legacy. They emphasize the science of Organization Development (OD) by making hidden costs visible. Socio-economic inefficiencies are diagnosed via broad-ranging and deep ethnographic interviews. Inefficiencies are transformed into new value streams, with a focus on releasing human potential.

## **3. AAM**

Auxiliary Assumption Method. Developed by David Trafimow, these methods uncover and challenge hidden assumptions in organizational diagnostics, thus challenging the “dominant story.” This involves a Copernican shift in scientific methods, ensuring evidence-based validity. By challenging hidden “auxiliary assumptions,” we create valid, transparent, and ethically grounded assessments, leading to more effective, unbiased interventions.

Next, we will analyze what actually happened at Disney that led us to call this an example of the “dark side” of leadership and organizational storytelling. We conclude with a detailed suggestion of how the “Process of Embodied Restorying” (PER) might be implemented at Disney over 12 months to foster healing and create sustainable competitive advantage going forward.

We have seen above that leading organizational change can be addressed more comprehensively from a combination of three methods: 1. PERVIEW’s storytelling and restorying protocol for changing individual, group, and organizational stories; 2. SEAM’s integration of quantitative and qualitative in their “qualimetrics” approach to developing human potential from both bottom-up and top-down “experiments;” and 3. AAM’s analysis of underlying and often unconscious assumptions necessary for valid and rigorous assessment of organizational data. Such valid data is needed to inform our narratives and guide our restorying processes.

## **The Shadow Side of Disney**

How could a company whose name is virtually synonymous with wholesome entertainment, have a shadow side? Narrative contradictions and betrayals appear in the following comments from frontline cast members:

“They say we’re family. But we’re disposable furniture.” According to Bernie Sanders (20 18):

“The average hourly wage for Disneyland Resort workers in real dollars dropped 15% from 2000 to 2017, from \$15.80 to \$13.36. Today, over 80% of Disneyland workers make less than \$12 an hour. Almost three-quarters say that they do not earn enough money to cover basic expenses every month. Over half of Disneyland employees report concerns about being evicted from their homes or apartments.

Incredibly, more than one out of 10 Disneyland Resort employees report [having been homeless](#) – or not having a place of their own to sleep – in the past two years. More than two-thirds of Disneyland Resort workers are food insecure. Only 28% of Disneyland employees report having the same schedule every week.”

This quote is not anecdotal—it is a symptom of SEAM (Savall & Zardet, 2008) teaches us that narrative contradictions are measurable through the qualimetric assembly of dysfunctional values and actions. Such narrative dysfunctions typically result in systemic exhaustion.

What is the bet on the future that Disney’s organizational wisdom is creating?

SEAM provides the economic grounding necessary to make visible the hidden costs and human potential that a more traditional diagnosis (typically based on surveys) tends to overlook. “Antenarrative” exploration of the story fragments that existed before “the story” enables the previously buried stories and suppressed histories to be brought to the surface.

Our (hypothetical) proposed Disney cultural change program would leverage all six SEAM dysfunction categories—Working Conditions, Work Organization, the 3Cs (Communication, Coordination, Cooperation), Time Management, Integrated Training, and Strategic Implementation—mapped directly onto PerView’s 7 Steps of Embodied Restorying.

A hypothetical sample of SEAM’s 90-minute diagnostic interviews, if conducted at Disney, could produce something like the following systemic findings:

<b>Dysfunction Category</b>	<b>Key Finding</b>	<b>Hidden Cost</b>
Work Organization	Misaligned roles, top-down directives	\$312K in lost productivity
Time Management	Reactive scheduling, burnout	\$204K in rework + absenteeism
Strategic Implementation	Disconnect between brand mission and local directives	\$289K in turnover/retraining

“Storytelling is necessary but not sufficient to elaborate a relevant representation of the object under study” (Savall et al., 2024: 25).

Each dysfunction would then be addressed using the PER+VIEW restorying cycle. For example:

1. **Characterize:** "What is the breakdown in strategic intent?"
2. **Externalize:** “We’re searching for dysfunctions, not culprits.” (Savall & Zardet, 2008, p. 128)
3. **Sympathize:** What is keeping the dysfunctional behaviors, decisions, and exploitative values in play?
4. **Revise:** Cost per occurrence of disconnection estimated at \$18,500 per cast member
5. **Strategize:** Identify Little Wow Moments—e.g., local managers innovating breakroom redesigns without approval
6. **Rehistoricize:** Imagine the history if the intrinsic purpose had guided restructuring
7. **Publicize:** Share restoried narrative of employee-led redesign through internal storytelling platform

This iterative, science-grounded intervention model transforms dark side impacts into actionable story shifts.

By using Piloting Logbooks and PerView diagnostic tools, we would expect to find elevated levels of absenteeism, emotional labor fatigue, and innovation shutdown within key Los Angeles Disney divisions. These signal a failure of strategic alignment and the hidden costs of what we term *narrative betrayal*.

Values are key. Axiogenics helps us understand how the overweighting of Systemic and Extrinsic Values (e.g., shareholder maximizing of dividends in the short term) erodes the Intrinsic aspects of Stakeholder Value (in the long term). **This helps leaders rebalance decisions around people and purpose, not just profit and process.** According to Demarest & Schoof (2010), all decisions stem from value judgments—categorized as intrinsic (people, purpose), extrinsic (results, utility), and systemic (rules, procedures). In Disney Los Angeles, our hypothetical PerView-Anxiogenics Value Profiles might show an overemphasis on systemic rules (e.g., adherence to brand protocol) and extrinsic rewards (e.g., guest satisfaction scores), at the expense of intrinsic meaning-making. This is the formula for talent collapse among millennial workers, who expect authentic alignment between stated values and lived experience.

### **Axiogenics & Socioeconomic Approach: Culture Change After the Dark Side**

If Disney were to realign its culture post-Peltz-Iger-conflict using axiogenics and the socioeconomic approach:

- **Intrinsic Value Restoration:** Leadership would prioritize employee engagement, creative purpose, and stakeholder well-being, not just cost-cutting or shareholder returns.
- **Qualimetric Balance:** Decision-making would be informed by qualitative (culture, morale), quantitative (performance metrics), and financial data, as tracked in SEAM’s logbook tools.

- **Mindful, Authentic Leadership:** Adopting our version of mindfulness, leaders would cultivate attention, awareness, and authenticity, reducing ego-driven, defensive reactions and fostering a more open, resilient culture.
- **Long-Term Value Creation:** By applying these frameworks in a comprehensive, integrated fashion, Disney (or any company) could move beyond the collapse of leadership values, building a culture that values people, creativity, and sustainable success alongside financial performance.

How might this play out on a daily basis at Disney? A common problem for all businesses is turnover, especially in recent times among “millennials” (born between 1981 and 1996, also called Gen Y). Millennials are motivated to leave not because of low wages, but because of low worth. Feelings of worth reflect intrinsic value, and intrinsic value tends to be hollowed out by extrinsic targets. This phenomenon—*value dissonance*—would correlate directly with turnover in our hypothetical Disney LA diagnostic.

We also suggest the Auxiliary Assumptions Method to test the claims of executive narratives. David Trafimow’s (2024) auxiliary assumption theory demands that scientific inquiry move beyond surface hypotheses to examine the *testability* of hidden assumptions. Professor Trafimow provides a helpful taxonomy of the four kinds of assumptions that shape empirical reasoning:

1. **Theoretical assumptions** are the abstract principles proposed by a model or theory.
2. **Auxiliary assumptions** link those theoretical ideas to measurable realities.
3. **Statistical assumptions** govern the analytic procedures we employ (e.g., assumptions of normal distribution, independence of errors).
4. **Inferential assumptions** underpin the logic we use to draw conclusions from data.

Disney’s executive narrative has theoretical assumptions, such as, how “streamlining operations increases magic. Disney LA hypothetical case, if we apply Trafimow’s model to test the logic chains in executive communications, we would compare them to on-the-ground interviews. Expected result: most strategic assumptions would not be empirically grounded. Instead, they likely operate in what Trafimow calls “unbounded interpretive space,” immune to disconfirmation and thus antithetical to scientific rigor.

### **From Charisma to Coherence: A New Scientific Standard for Leadership**

Heidegger’s (2006) *Mindfulness* challenges us to dwell in the Abgrund—the abyssal groundlessness where Being emerges not through control, but through listening. At Disney LA, we suggest invoking this orientation by replacing charismatic leadership with mindful inquiry. Leadership would be invited into story circles where no decisions were made—only moods attuned. In these moments, charisma would give way to coherence. Science becomes not a set of metrics, but a mode of attentiveness. The transformation begins not in a boardroom, but in an embodied shift—a quiet attunement to voices previously drowned out by applause or ignored in silence.

### **Expected Outcomes: Scientific ROI of Ethical Story Change**

Intervention Layer	Metric	Projected 12-Month Impact
Axiogenics Value Profiling	+15% intrinsic alignment	-22% voluntary turnover
SEAM Cost Reallocation	\$1.1M recovered from hidden costs	+8% innovation activation
PerView Restorying	Increased morale, narrative coherence	2-point boost in engagement index
Auxiliary Assumption Testing	Revised strategy maps	3 major policy shifts at LA site

This is the ROI of scientific storytelling: gains are measureable when values become visible, and when stories stop hiding what systems must reveal.

In real life, Nelson Peltz's attempt to secure a seat on Disney's board of directors ended in defeat. After a high-profile proxy battle, Disney shareholders decisively rejected Peltz's proposal at the April 2024 annual meeting. Peltz received only about 31% of the shares voted in his favor, while Disney's incumbent directors retained strong support. This was Peltz's second major attempt to join the board, having previously withdrawn in early 2023 when Disney announced cost-cutting plans.

Following these failed 2023 and 2024 attempts at the board seat, Peltz's investment firm, Trian Fund Management, sold its Disney shares, reportedly making about \$1 billion from the investment as Disney's stock price had risen during the campaign. Despite the proxy fight's failure, some of Peltz's criticisms and suggestions—such as cost-cutting—were adopted by Disney, including significant job reductions. Peltz warned he might return if Disney failed to deliver on its promises for improved performance, but for now, his effort to install himself on the board was unsuccessful.

Nelson Peltz's proxy fight against Disney ultimately failed to secure him a board seat for several key reasons:

- **Insufficient Shareholder Support:** Despite a vigorous campaign, Peltz and his ally Jay Rasulo failed to convince a majority of both retail and institutional shareholders that their plans offered a compelling alternative to Disney's current leadership. While Peltz did gain some backing from proxy advisors and smaller investors, the broader shareholder base remained unconvinced, especially regarding Rasulo's candidacy.
- **Strong Support for Bob Iger and Incumbent Board:** Disney CEO Bob Iger retained overwhelming support from shareholders, with about 94% voting in his favor. This strong backing reflected both confidence in Iger's leadership and a sentimental attachment to Disney's legacy, characters, and parks among retail shareholders. Three-quarters of retail shareholders supported Disney's full slate of 12 board nominees.
- **Doubts About Peltz's Plan:** Peltz's criticisms—focusing on Disney's stock performance, the costly Fox acquisition, succession missteps, and streaming losses—did not persuade enough shareholders that his involvement would add value. His detailed proposals, such as achieving "Netflix-like" streaming margins, failed to gain traction with the majority of investors.

- **Effective Disney Counter-Campaign:** Disney mounted a robust and well-funded campaign to defend its board, spending nearly \$40 million on advertising and enlisting high-profile supporters such as JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon and Star Wars creator George Lucas. The company also highlighted its ongoing turnaround efforts, including cost-cutting and strategic investments, which reassured many shareholders.
- **Perception of Peltz's Experience:** Disney argued that Peltz lacked the necessary experience for its unique and complex business, and this narrative resonated with many voters. Additionally, the campaign became increasingly personal and contentious, which may have further alienated undecided shareholders.

In summary, Peltz's proxy fight failed because he could not present a sufficiently persuasive case for change, and Disney's leadership successfully rallied shareholder confidence around its current strategy and board composition.

- In response to Peltz's pressure, Disney CEO Bob Iger announced major cost-cutting initiatives, including laying off more than 8,000 employees since 2023, with 7,000 jobs cut as part of a strategic reorganization. These layoffs affected a wide range of divisions, including marketing, publicity, casting, development, and corporate finance, but did not eliminate entire teams.
- The layoffs and restructuring were part of Disney's efforts to increase efficiency and profitability, particularly as the company shifted focus from traditional TV to streaming and theme park growth.

While the sources detail the scale and scope of the layoffs, none provide specific data or analysis on how these cost-cutting measures have impacted millennial employee turnover. In general, large-scale layoffs and restructuring can lead to increased turnover, especially among younger employees who may be more mobile or sensitive to workplace instability. Millennials, in particular, often value job security, growth opportunities, and positive workplace culture—factors that can be negatively affected by repeated layoffs and cost-cutting.

In summary, although it is reasonable to infer that Disney's cost-cutting—spurred in part by Peltz's activism—may have contributed to higher turnover among millennial employees, especially given the scale of layoffs and ongoing organizational uncertainty, there is no direct evidence or statistics in the provided sources to confirm or quantify this effect.

We see three stages in moving Disney—or any organization—beyond the dark side:

1. **Diagnose the hidden costs** with SEAM and value profiling.
2. **Engage in restorying dialogues** that shift narratives from fear to inclusion.
3. **Sustain change with mindfulness and logbooks**, embedding daily practices that track human and financial impact.

These steps insure leadership decisions do not sacrifice qualitative well-being for short-term quantitative gains.

## Summary Table

Framework	Focus	Dark Side Manifestation	Culture Change Prescription
Axiogenics	Intrinsic, extrinsic, systemic	Overvaluing extrinsic/systemic	Re-center on intrinsic (people, purpose) values
Heidegger/Mindfulness	Authenticity, presence, mood	Ego-driven, inauthentic, reactive	Cultivate mindful, authentic, attuned leadership
SEAM (Savall)	Qualimetric (qualitative, quantitative, financial)	Ignoring qualitative/hidden costs	Balance all value types; track with Piloting Logbook

To bring the value orientation of Axiogenics and the Socioeconomic Approach into Disney’s culture after the cost-cutting and layoffs driven by the dark side of leadership, and to leverage Dr. David Boje’s 7 Steps of the Process of Embodied Restorying (PER), Disney could pursue a transformative, values-based change initiative, starting in Los Angeles. Here’s an integrated roadmap for cultural transformation:

**1. Understanding the Value Foundations**

- **Anxiogenics** (Demarest & Schoof): Emphasizes prioritizing intrinsic value (people, creativity, purpose) over extrinsic (results, utility) and systemic (rules, structure) value judgments. This orientation fosters ethical, sustainable leadership and organizational health.
- **Socioeconomic Approach (SEAM)** (Savall et al.): Focuses on balancing qualitative, quantitative, and financial values, using tools like the Piloting Logbook to track and improve culture, engagement, and hidden costs.
- **Processes of Embodied Restorying (PER)** (Boje): A narrative-based, participative approach to organizational change that helps individuals and groups re-author their stories, reconnecting with intrinsic values and collective purpose.

**2. Steps for Disney’s Cultural Transformation in Los Angeles**

**A. Initiate a Restorying Dialogue**

- Launch workshops using Boje’s 7 Steps of Embodied Restorying, inviting employees, leaders, and stakeholders to share experiences of the recent layoffs and cost-cutting, surfacing both pain points and aspirations.
- Facilitate narrative sessions where participants can “restory” their Disney experience, shifting from narratives of loss or distrust to ones of renewal, inclusion, and shared purpose.

## **B. Assess and Align Values Using Axiogenics**

- Conduct value profile assessments across teams to map current value orientations (intrinsic, extrinsic, systemic).
- Identify areas where extrinsic/systemic values have dominated (e.g., layoffs, rigid cost controls) and develop action plans to restore intrinsic value—such as employee recognition, creative autonomy, and meaningful work.

## **C. Implement SEAM’s Qualimetric Tracking**

- Deploy the Piloting Logbook tool to systematically track qualitative (employee morale, trust, inclusion), quantitative (turnover, engagement), and financial (productivity, hidden costs) metrics.
- Use these insights to identify “hidden costs” of the dark side leadership episode—such as lost creativity, disengagement, or reputational harm—and prioritize interventions that restore balance.

## **D. Foster Mindful, Authentic Leadership**

- Train leaders in Heideggerian mindfulness, encouraging presence, openness, and attunement to organizational “mood” and being.
- Encourage leaders to model vulnerability, authenticity, and a willingness to learn from past mistakes, rebuilding trust and psychological safety.

## **E. Rebuild Community and Inclusion**

- Reinforce Disney’s historical strengths: optimism, community, and creativity.
- Integrate new practices for inclusion, ensuring all voices are heard in the restorying process and that leadership reflects the diversity of Disney’s workforce and audience.

## **F. Pilot and Scale**

- Start with pilot teams or business units in Los Angeles, gathering data and stories to refine the approach.
- Celebrate early wins and share success stories to build momentum for broader rollout.

## **G. Institutionalize Value-Driven Change**

- Embed axiogenics and SEAM principles into leadership development, performance reviews, and decision-making processes.
- Make the Piloting Logbook and embodied restorying workshops regular features of Disney’s organizational life.

### Expected Outcomes

- **Restored Intrinsic Value:** Employees feel valued, heard, and engaged, leading to renewed creativity and innovation.
- **Balanced Metrics:** Leadership decisions are guided by a holistic view of value—qualitative, quantitative, and financial—reducing hidden costs and increasing long-term sustainability.
- **Cultural Healing:** The narrative of loss and distrust is transformed into one of resilience, learning, and shared purpose.
- **Sustainable Competitive Advantage:** Disney’s brand as a creative, inclusive, and values-driven organization is strengthened locally and globally.

### Table of Integrated Approach

Framework	Key Action in Disney LA Transformation	Expected Benefit
Axiogenics	Value profile assessment, intrinsic focus	Ethical, people-centered leadership
SEAM (Socioeconomic)	Piloting Logbook, qualimetric tracking	Balanced, sustainable value creation
Embodied Restorying	Narrative workshops, restorying process	Healing, engagement, renewed purpose
Heidegger/Mindfulness	Mindful, authentic leadership development	Trust, presence, adaptive culture

By integrating these frameworks and starting with a participative, narrative-driven process in Los Angeles, Disney can move beyond the legacy of the dark side of leadership, restoring a culture of value, creativity, and inclusion that supports both people and performance.

## Conclusion

Disney's leadership saga shows that beneath every polished corporate narrative, there are hidden stories—fragments of uncertainty, struggle, and possibility. The clash between shareholder and stakeholder values, the impact of layoffs, and the pressures of spectacle over substance have left cultural scars but also opened doors for transformation.

Leaders face a choice: repeat old patterns of impression management and reactive cost-cutting, or embark on a journey to restore the organization around people, purpose, and authentic engagement. By applying approaches like Axiogenics, SEAM, and Embodied Restorying, practitioners can identify and heal not just the financial costs but the deeper, human ones—unlocking creativity, trust, and adaptive strength.

Quantum storytelling invites us to look beyond grand narratives and tap into the living stories at every level of the organization. When leaders listen, restore, and track real value—intrinsic as well as extrinsic—they write a new chapter: one where ethical leadership, sustainable performance, and healing are possible.

Disney's experience is a cautionary tale, but also a call to action. Every organization navigating strategic complexity can choose to confront its shadow side. With the right narrative interventions, what begins as crisis becomes the birthplace of deeper wisdom and sustainable advantage—a shift from reactive spectacle toward thriving culture. The real magic, ultimately, is the courage to restore together.

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