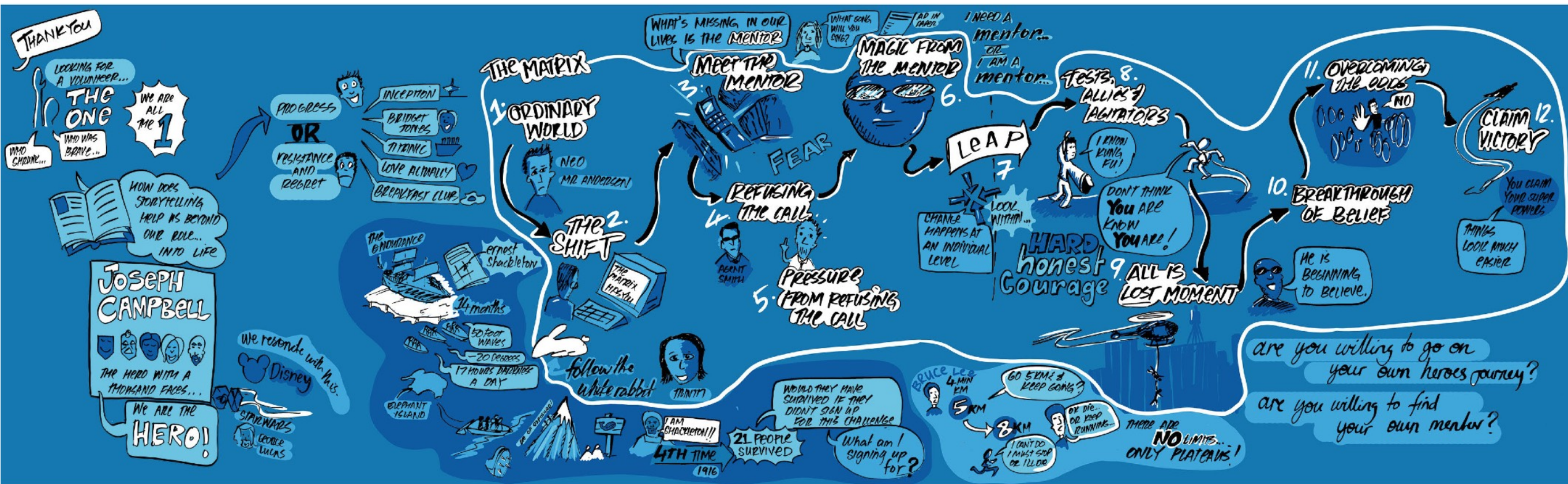
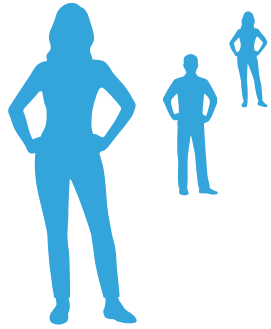


STORYTELLING

Leveraging our human connection to storytelling to make organisational change stick



THE CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY IN TIMES OF CHANGE



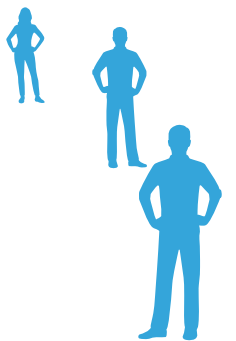
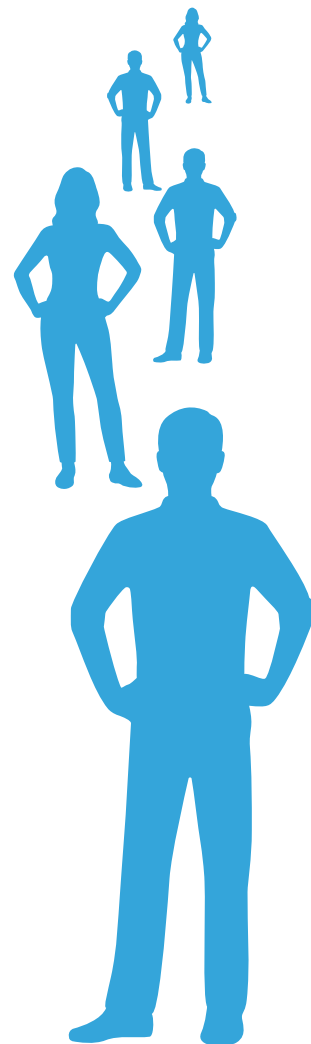
Making change stick & strategy succeed

Introducing a new organisational strategy is an important time. It's not just about the development and desired implementation of it, but also ensuring it is communicated in a way that is an ongoing conversation, rather than a once off corporate comms event; for the greatest chance of success the communication needs to be empowered by stories rather than data points. The reason is simple: Data gets processed, but humans go on journeys. Understanding what that 'journey' looks like makes an enormous difference in how you communicate a strategy.

The other side of the strategy coin

Ken Wong is the President of Lenovo Asia Pacific, before this role he was the Chief Strategic Officer. He recently shared about his reflections on his career in business, encapsulating his thoughts in one sentence: *"After more than 20 years in business, I've come to realise that the communication of strategy is of equal importance to the development of the strategy."*

Upon his reflections, he realised the significant imbalance between time spent creating the strategy compared to time spent strategising about the communication of the strategy. While they may have spent up to six months developing a strategy, sometimes they'd spend as little as six minutes actually creating a communication strategy to deliver this to the organisation.



The challenge of making strategy stick

In any organisation, this is a serious issue. The employees, after all, are the people that are responsible for doing the work to see a strategy succeed. Often it is the case that a tiny group of people work on a strategy that they need to hand over to an enormous amount of people to action if the strategy is to succeed; yet this process of communicating in a way that engages and ultimately achieves buy-in often has incredibly short timeframes, with comparatively little thought on how to do it effectively. It's easy to fall into the trap of feeling the strategy is so great, so obviously the right thing to do, that surely it will just work—except often it doesn't. This is because the expectation is employees will act like computers—take the data and get on with it—when what humans will actually do is act like humans. That means without finding personal meaning in the strategy and change initiative on an ongoing basis they will dig in their heels and try to resist change as much as possible.

A communications strategy to motivate humans to take continual action

If humans make sense of their surroundings and find meaning through journeys, what can your organisation do to empower your employees to understand the organisation's strategy and their role within it? The most effective way to do this is to leverage the universal connection with what is commonly known as 'The Hero's Journey' story framework.

ENSURING THE MESSAGE, MEANING, AND MOMENTUM OF YOUR ORGANISATION'S CHANGE JOURNEY LASTS THE DISTANCE

Managing change with the Hero's Journey

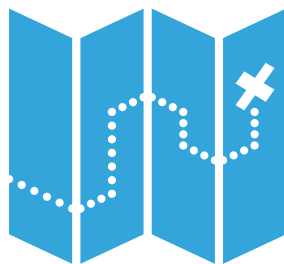
Joseph Campbell was a researcher on mythology and storytelling. After studying thousands of stories and myths from a range of different sources, ages, cultures and religions, he noticed a familiar pattern, what is now commonly called 'The Hero's Journey.'

Essentially, Campbell discovered a pattern that almost every epic story that has generated mass and lasting appeal had in common; they had at their core the same story structure: the story of the hero on a life-changing journey who meets a range of characters that help or hinder them, and who must face and overcome many obstacles and setbacks along their way to eventual victory. Every epic story has a different context and 'world' that they must venture through. We connect with this style of a story because it ultimately is our own story. We are all on a journey. We all must be courageous if we are to embark on it, and resilient if we are to overcome the obstacles on the way to success. It is a journey that is as true for employees in your organisation as it was for Luke Skywalker in Star Wars or Neo in The Matrix. The same pattern of journey, just a different context and worlds.

The Hero's Journey in an organisational setting

What if you framed your organisation as the world for these heroes (employees) to journey through? Like all epic journeys, it will be full of risk, uncertainty, and danger—but equally full of countless opportunities, rewards, and glory. It is a creative and inherently human way of communicating that what is required for this kind of journey is not solely head-smarts, but heart-courage combined with head-smarts. The most important value that needs to be genuinely lived to make this journey a success is the one where every employee must find their courage, and lean into their personal journey of progress and transformation.

The Employee Hero's Journey



Investing time to introduce and facilitate The Hero's Journey concept



Experiencing cultural shift of energy through individual engagement



Individual progress leading to organisational transformation through employees identifying their personal journey and importance within the organisation's strategy





The change journey from resistance to conviction

All over the world organisations are changing. The marketplace is changing. The way we work is changing. Despite all this, all the research shows us that when change is most required, the majority of employees are most resistant. It's human nature to hold on to what we know when we feel confused and uncertain. However, when change makes sense to us, when we can understand and engage with it, it's also human nature to find our courage and move through it.

Many employees may be stuck in a position of resistance. These are great employees who have a tremendous amount of talent, ideas, and effort to contribute but are distracted and unable to make sense of their place in the organisation's journey of change and transformation.

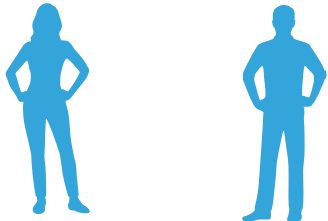


It's critical, therefore, to move people from a place of resistance to a place of awareness, where they can move out of being distracted and become more attentive. When they do this, they quickly become more open and supportive of the strategy.

Through being open to the goals and plans the organisation is embarking on, they can gain more clarity and this is the critical point where employees can engage with much more authentic interest and desire to contribute.

From this point, employees can truly begin to 'find their courage' and take greater initiative, resulting in them having greater influence in the workplace and outcomes. The more people find their courage and become influencers over the shifting culture in the organisation, the more they will move even beyond courage to act out of a profound sense of conviction.

This is the ultimate goal of leveraging the Hero's Journey as a communication strategy. It can be used to effectively engage with employees, drawing them out of a place of resistance and moving them to a place of conviction.

Communicating strategy and change through narrative rather than metrics can achieve greater outcomes within the leadership, within the sales departments, and overall with creating an inspiring culture change. It's not a stand-alone strategy; instead, it is a human-centred tool that can be used to support a whole suite of strategies currently running within the organisation. By connecting on an authentic and emotionally-driven way, storytelling as a means of communication can become a catalyst for employees to engage in their relevant roles as well as becoming advocates for the larger culture change taking place in the organisation.

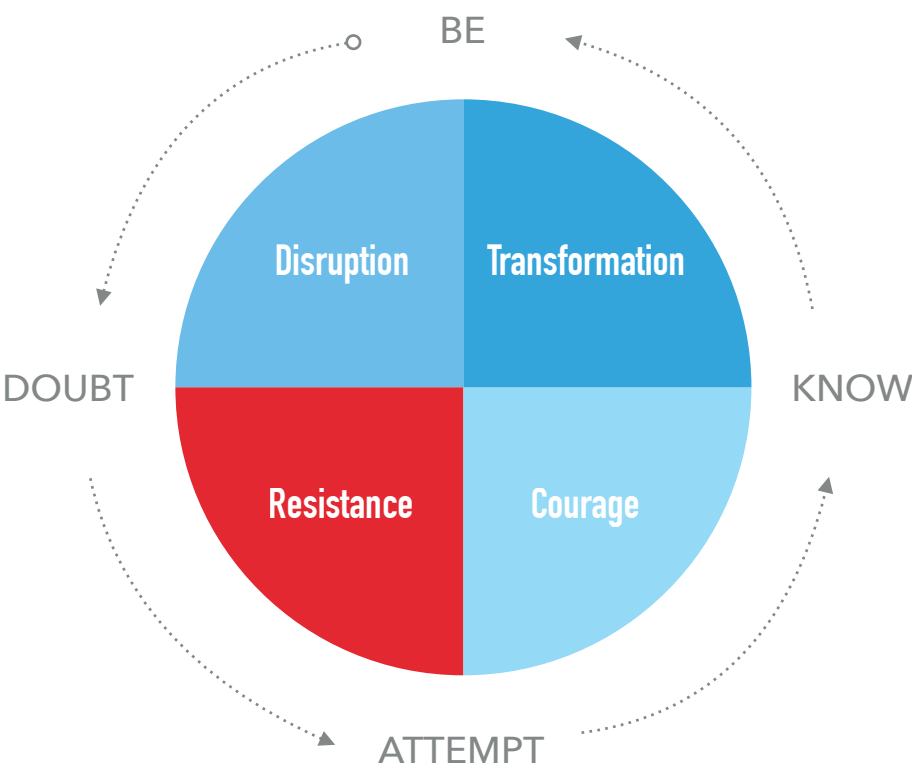
		
Employees	Growth	Culture
Conviction	10x	Inspirational
Courage	8x	Influential
Clarity	6x	Engaged
Openness	4x	Supportive
Awareness	2x	Attentive
Resistance	0	Distracted
Sabotage	-10x	Divisive

MAKING COMMERCIAL SENSE OF STORY-DRIVEN COMMUNICATION

Making transformation possible

In a real, business-world context the hero's journey is a great metaphor to explain the 4 main stages of a successful change journey for any organisation: Disruption, Resistance, Courage, & Transformation. Helping employees identify themselves within this journey and what each stage looks like is hugely beneficial in ultimately shifting people from a point of resistance to a decision to start progressing with courage. From there, they have the opportunity to overcome the odds and have a transformational experience.

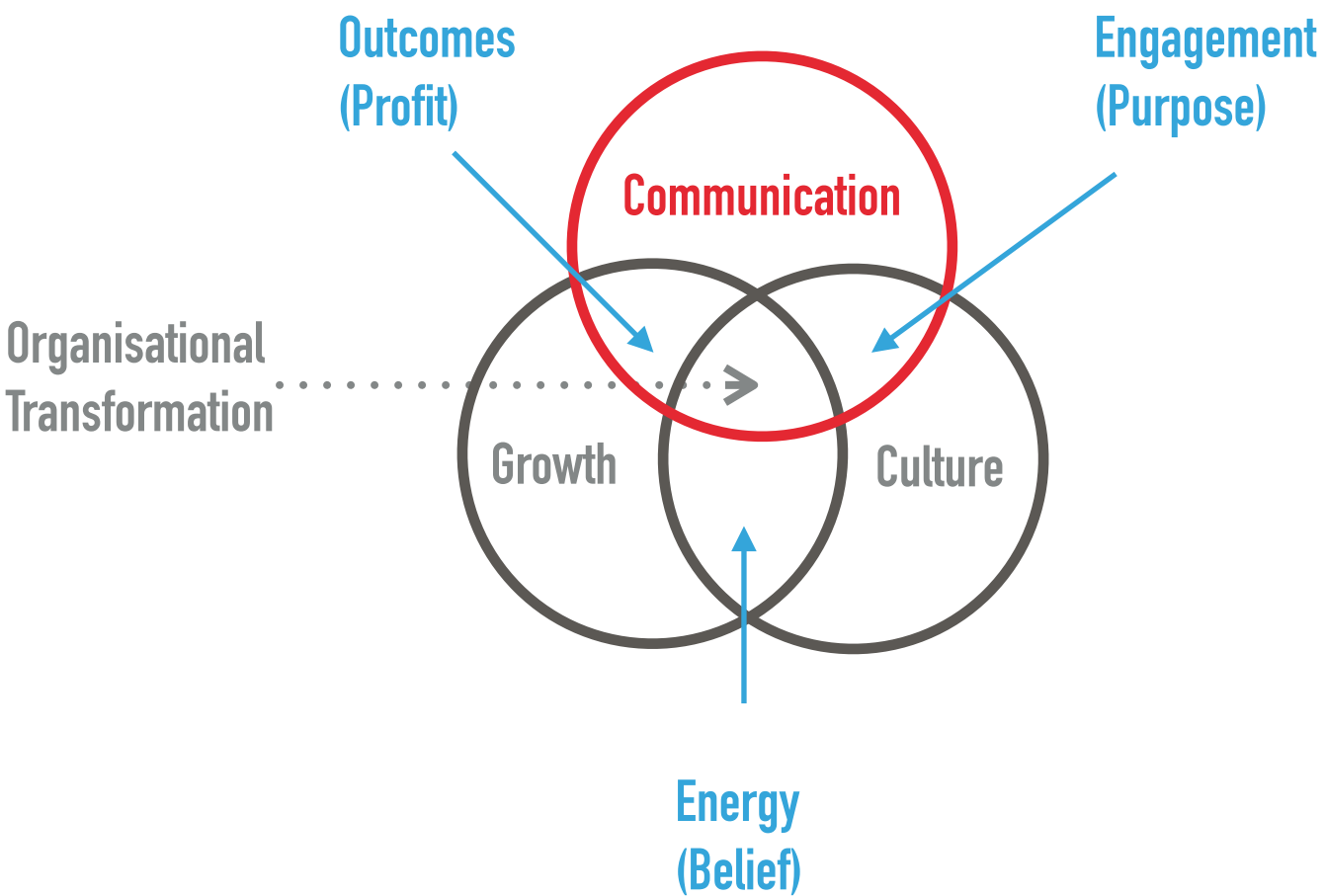
Remember, data gets processed, but humans go on journeys. Understanding what that journey looks like and empowering your staff to identify themselves as a hero within that journey can make an enormous difference in how you communicate a strategy and how effectively it is embraced and implemented by your tribe of employees.



Communication's connection to building culture and growth

Communication is more than sharing information. For it to be a catalyst for culture and business growth it needs to share *meaning*. It needs to impart a sense of purpose and it needs to have sticking power, where it continues to flow into employees conversations long after it has been originally shared. By focusing on sharing the meaning and purpose of your strategy and change initiatives through a storytelling lens, you can tap into the human connection to stories and empower your staff to not only grasp the point of the communication, but take personal steps to put it into action. Your employees need to take some heroic action if your plans are to succeed. By helping them identify themselves as a hero within the story of your organisational change, they can rise up and play the part and contribute to the whole organisation winning.

A story-driven communication initiative can make change stick and increase the odds of your organisation's strategy succeeding in the short and long term.

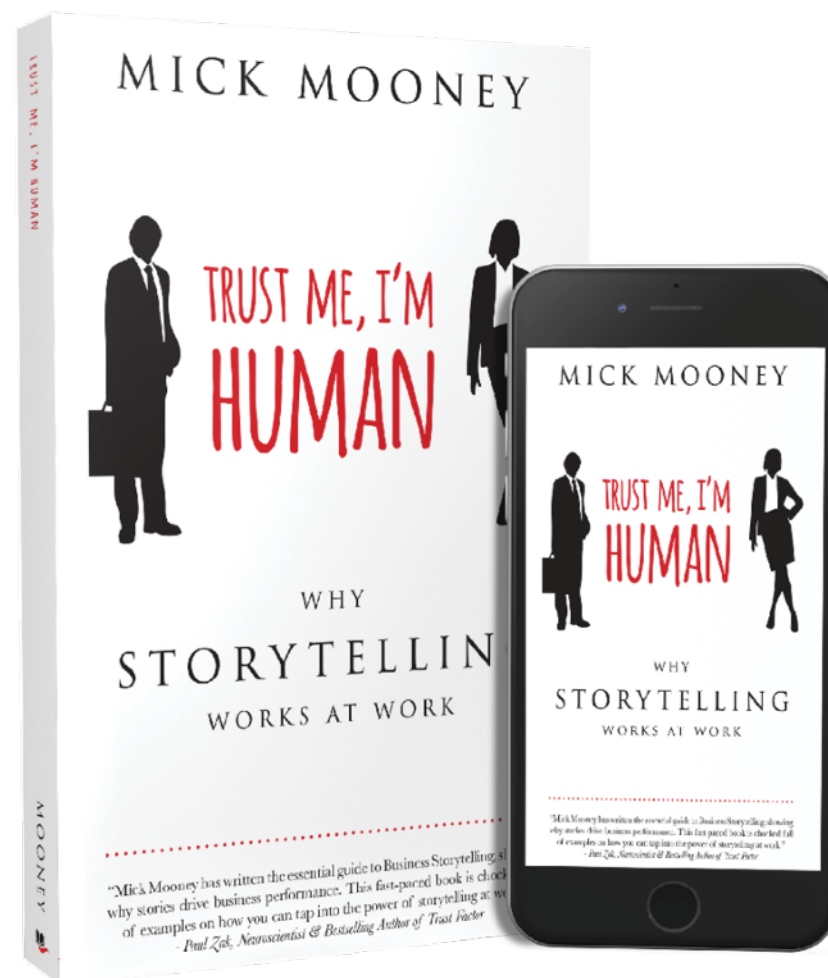


STORYTELLING

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If you would be interested in having a conversation about how your organisation could implement my Making Change Stick With Storytelling program, based on the hero's journey story framework, it would be great to connect. You can email or call me on the details provided below.

Blue skies, Mick



Mick Mooney PTY LTD
Suite 161, 4/637 Pittwater Rd, Dee Why, NSW, 2099
ABN: 55615962920
Email: mick@mickmooney.com
Web: <https://mickmooney.com>
Phone: 0423 600 793