



# The new bee hive

Example to explain how Narratives work

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Hello, my name is Daniel. I am a DevOps engineer at Wandelbots, and I want to invite you to "The new bee hive" – a document using a narrative format that can be used to provide information and drive decisions.

This format is commonly used at Amazon to decide on critical changes, new features, but also management decisions. We are also using it on some FOSS (free and open source software) projects, too. It can be adapted to mailing lists, written documents, describing changes or seeking support.

Let's create an example on how to use the narrative format using bees and the birth of a new queen.

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Word buzzes from the honeycombs of the bee stock, "A new queen is born". A clear sign that a new era has begun. The birth of a new queen is an event unknown to the bee population and everybody is eager to see her. Slowly, concerns are raised, *"What shall we do with two queens?"*, *"What happens with our current queen?"*, *"Do we need to generate double the honey now?"*.

In one particular honeycomb, a worker bee in the midst of repairing a hole thinks about the situation. She's a typical worker bee – yellow with black stripes, the typical fur and 6 legs, a sting – but she prides herself on her rather unusual bee name, Buzzeny.

When Buzzeny once collected pollen, she overheard some of the bizz and buzz from other hive's bees. They had talked about their colony's origins, how they grew it and mentioned the wise bees sitting in the honey tavern rambling about *"the old settler days"*. Buzzeny was known for her curiosity, so she listened carefully and followed them to their fresh and polished bee hive.

Inspired by that memory, Buzzeny is now determined to found a new bee hive. But how can she convince everybee of her idea? How to recruit other worker bees and the drones? How

can she even get close to her New Majesty? She is just a worker, meant to harvest pollen and contribute to the current bee hive.

Over the next days, she talks to other bees that are part of the pollen team. She inquires about risks, planning, required skills and resource funding. *"How long did it take to build your hive?" "How much did it cost?", "What went wrong?"*. In the afternoon, her head buzzes with all the information she was able to gather. She now knows about suitable locations, bee hive blueprints and can recite stories on how other bee populations succeeded. And now? What is she supposed to do with all this knowledge?

Just as the other bee's stories convinced her, she's now determined to write her own story to explain her research to the others. But with lot less booze than the wise workers. She starts with a draft containing the right amount of coolness and glory. In her second draft she adds risks that lie ahead. And her third draft grows even longer by adding statistics and illustrations. She finishes on page 6 and is ready to take the stage.

The next day, during the huge buzzing (a meeting with the whole bee hive), she hands out printed copies of the narratie to each bee. *"Please read carefully"* she adds, *"My story is worth the discussion."* After a while, she inquires if everybee has finished, but two workers forgot their glasses and need more time. As they signal her being ready, Buzzeny asks, *"What do you think?"*

There's a big silence.

Suddenly, one of the older worker bees raises her voice and states, "Buzzeny, this is very well researched but I have some questions and remarks." The rest of the buzzing is filled with questions, scribbling and comments. At the end of the Buzzing, Buzzeny inhales deeply, *"I need a glass of honey. Back to the storyboard. The next version will be better."*

One week later, Buzzeny presents the improved narrative. She added missing numbers, refined some descriptions, added attachments and provided further information. This time no question are raised. Instead, the same old worker bee from the last meeting flies onto the podium and asks for a group voting, *"If you support Buzzeny's idea, fly upwards!"*. In the end, hundreds of bees fill the air around the podium supporting Buzzeny's idea.

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Like the bees in the narrative presented above, we can own our ideas and develop them into a project worth voting for. We just need to do our homework, transform them into a comprehensive story and pour our energy into it. You're not alone like Buzzeny was. You can always work with your team, your peers and customers to work on such a story.