

# THE WORK OF MANAGERS

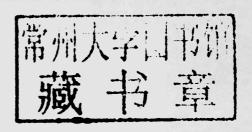
TOWARDS A PRACTICE THEORY
OF MANAGEMENT

EDITED BY STEFAN TENGBLAD

# The Work of Managers

Towards a Practice Theory of Management

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#### THE WORK OF MANAGERS

To Professor Sune Carlson and all his followers who have studied management as work practices

#### Preface

Editing a book with more than thirty authors is a challenging task. Thanks to the responsible collaboration by all the authors, to say nothing of their impressive research competence, my task was greatly simplified. In my opinion, this book is a unique collection of high quality studies on managerial work.

As the book progressed, I noted the many similarities between editorship and the managerial work that the book's authors describe. First, uncertainty was a constant. Will the invited authors join the project? Will they deliver their chapters on schedule? Will their contributions be high quality? Will a respected publisher accept the manuscript?

Second, there is complexity. It was a challenge to unify the book's goals and themes and to write the introduction and conclusion chapters that would do justice to the individual contributions.

Third, there is the dynamic process of planning, rescheduling, and making adjustments and innovations. An anthology editor begins with a formal plan that appeals to the invited authors, but as the project evolves, it is constantly necessary to improvise and innovate. However, a project to edit a research book that does not include an important degree of learning is not worth undertaking. And anything more than 10–15 per cent of the total work effort spent on planning instead of execution is procrastination.

Fourth, and perhaps most important, an editor must establish and maintain good relationships with the book's contributors in the same way that managers need to develop good relationship with their peers. Many promising book projects have failed because of poor rapport between editor and contributor(s). It is my hope that the process of editing this book has strengthened my professional, as well as personal, relationships with the chapter authors.

The fifth and last similarity between managerial and editorial work is the pride of having completed a challenging project. Successful editorial work, like successful managerial work, is fun and rewarding!

Despite the complexity, uncertainty, and pressure of assembling a book on innovative management research, the editor of such a book, like the managers these chapters describe, can contribute to better organizations and societies. For both editors and managers, the key is to remain energetic, curious, optimistic, adaptive, and communicative.

For practical reasons, I am hesitant to undertake such a book project again as sole editor in the near future. Nevertheless, I will always remember my positive experience of finalizing this book. Therefore, I thank all the authors for their chapters, as well as their support. I especially thank Lars Engwall and Carin Eriksson Lindvall for their valuable assistance in the work of launching this book project and for their efforts as hosts for a book workshop and a Symposium in memory of Sune Carlson held in Gustavianum, Uppsala, in August 2009.

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Swedish Agency for Innovation. I moreover thank Ola Edvin Vie and Rebecka Arman for their effort as co-authors and coordinators of several chapters in the book and Marcia Halvorsen for language editing. My thanks finally go to all the studied managers, to Sten Jönsson for introducing me to this research field, and to David Musson and his very professional and helpful colleagues at the Oxford University Press. Thank you all!

Stefan Tengblad Skövde and Gothenburg

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