



OXFORD

THE WORK OF MANAGERS

**TOWARDS A PRACTICE THEORY
OF MANAGEMENT**

EDITED BY STEFAN TENGBLAD

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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.

I also want to acknowledge the financial support for this book project from the Jan Wallander and Tom Hedelius Research Foundation, and from Vinnova; the

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!

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Table of Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	x
<i>List of Tables</i>	xii
<i>Notes on the Contributors</i>	xiv

Part I: Framework

1. Overcoming the rationalistic fallacy in management research 3
Stefan Tengblad
2. Management in practice: Overview of classic studies on managerial work 18
Stefan Tengblad and Ola Edvin Vie

Part II: A practice perspective on leadership and managerial work

3. Managerial leadership as event-driven improvisation 47
Ingalill Holmberg and Mats Tyrstrup
4. Managerial leadership: Identities, processes, and interactions 69
Stefan Sveningsson, Johan Alvehus, and Mats Alvesson
5. Multi-framing as a tool in top management teams 87
Gary Kokk, Sten Jönsson, and Airi Rovio-Johansson

Part III: Operational managerial work

6. Work activities and stress among managers in health care 105
Rebecka Arman, Ewa Wikström, Ellinor Tengelin, and Lotta Dellve
7. Leadership as muddling through: Site managers in the construction industry 131
Alexander Styhre
8. R&D managers leading knowledge workers with care 146
Ola Edvin Vie

Part IV: Administrative managerial work

9. Managers at the municipal top 167
Anna Cregård and Rolf Solli
10. The Swedish Municipality Director: A managerial function between politics and administration 190
Leif Jonsson

11. Leaders of modern universities: <i>Primi inter pares</i> or chief executive officers? <i>Lars Engwall and Carin Eriksson Lindvall</i>	206
12. Managerial work at the top: Tracing changes in work practices and efforts towards theory development <i>Stefan Tengblad</i>	226
Part V: Managerial work in small businesses	
13. Managerial behaviour in small firms: Does it matter what managers do? <i>Henrik Florén and Joakim Tell</i>	245
14. The duality of strategic managerial work in SMEs: A structuration perspective <i>Anders Nilsson, Mats Westerberg, and Einar Häckner</i>	264
15. Managerial practices in family-owned firms: Strategizing actors, their arenas, and their emotions <i>Ethel Brundin and Leif Melin</i>	281
Part VI: The way forward	
16. Refining shadowing methods for studying managerial work <i>Rebecka Arman, Ola Edvin Vie, and Håvard Åsvoll</i>	301
17. Bridging the management theory and practice gap <i>Rob B. Briner, Lars Engwall, Tina L. Juillerat, Henry Mintzberg, Frederick P. Morgeson, Michael G. Pratt, and Stefan Tengblad</i>	318
18. Conclusions and the way forward: Towards a practice theory of management <i>Stefan Tengblad</i>	337
<i>Index</i>	357

List of Figures

3.1 Classification scheme for leadership narratives from a process perspective	52
6.1 Examples of individual variation for a select set of activities (average number of hours/day)	115
6.2 Comparison of contact patterns, first- and second-line managers (average percentage of time, the smallest categories excluded)	118
10.1 Understandings on the MD function	203
11.1 States, professions, and markets	209
11.2 Variations in university systems (based on Clark, 1983: 143)	209
12.1 Length of periods before interruptions occur when working alone (Tengblad, 2002: 558)	231
14.1 Strategic intensity as a result of environmental conditions and belief in the business idea	274
15.1 A model of actors and arenas showing the character of strategizing in family firms (figure 5 in Nordqvist, 2005: 263)	287

List of Tables

1.1 Theoretical themes and researcher advice	13
1.2 Empirical chapters and methods used to study managers	16
2.1 Studies of managerial behaviour	19
4.1 Positions on leadership	84
6.1 Representative example of work activities	113
6.2 Main purpose of activities	114
8.1 Total working hours average values per manager	153
8.2 Participants in verbal contact	153
8.3 Purpose of verbal contact	154
8A.1 Total working hours	161
8A.2 Participants in verbal contact	161
8A.3 Purpose of verbal contact	162
9.1 High-ranking municipal managers and their contacts	174
10.1 MDs' working hours	194
10.2 MD's time allocated by contexts	194
10.3 MDs' time allocated by activities	195
10.4 MDs' forms of communication	196
11.1 States, professions, and markets	208
11.2 The mean rankings of VCs based on the importance and time spent on six tasks and their views on future development	215
11.3 Expected DC roles	218
11.4 Working conditions of the DCs	220
12.1 Comparative figures for the three studies of executive behaviour	230
12.2 Total working time: Average values per participant (Tengblad, 2006: 1446)	232
12.3 The functional area of activities (Tengblad, 2002: 555)	233
12.4 Financial and functional work tasks in functional and multidivisional organizations (Tengblad, 2002: 564)	234
12.5 Purpose of contacts (Tengblad, 2006: 1449)	234
12.6 Four-week distribution of meetings (Tengblad, 2002: 553)	236
13.1 Managerial work as roles (Choran, 1969; Mintzberg, 1973)	247
13.2 A comparison of managerial activities of small firm managers	251
13.3 A comparison of managerial activities of fewer than nine minutes, of more than sixty minutes, and of verbal contacts by small firm managers	251
13.4 A comparison of managerial activities, including range of data for small firm managers, excluding lunches and breaks	252

13.5 A comparison of small firm managers' work roles	253
13A.1 A comparison of the no/slow growth firms and the fast growth firms	258
14.1 Structure and agency in the strategic managerial work of SMEs (Macintosh and Scapens, 1990, elaborated)	267
14.2 Structural properties of strategic managerial work in SMEs	273
18.1 Four types of management work practices	348