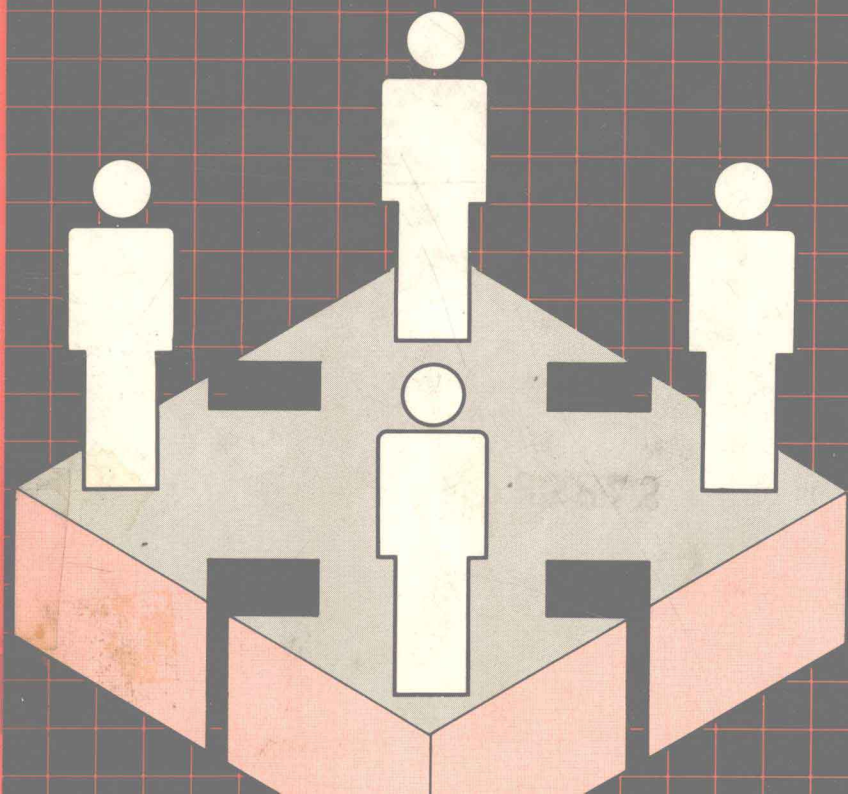


CURRENT RESEARCH IN **MANAGEMENT**

Edited by

Valerie Hammond



Current Research in Management

Edited by
Valerie Hammond



Frances Pinter (Publishers)
London and Dover, N.H.

For The Association of Teachers of Management
Polytechnic of Central London
35 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5LS

© The Association of Teachers of Management 1985

First published in Great Britain in 1985 by
Frances Pinter (Publishers) Limited
25 Floral Street, London WC2E 9DS

Published in the United States of America in 1985 by
Frances Pinter (Publishers), 51 Washington Street
Dover, New Hampshire

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Current research in management.

1. Management

I. Hammond, Valerie

658 HD31

ISBN 0-86187-546-X

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

Current research in management.

1. Management—Research—Addresses, essays, lectures. I. Hammond, Valerie.

HD30.4.C87 1985 658'.0072 85-3464

Typeset by Joshua Associates, Oxford
Printed in Great Britain by SRP Ltd, Exeter

Current Research in Management

List of Contributors

A. Arthurs, Ph.D.,
Lecturer in Personnel Management and Industrial Relations,
University of Bath

G. Bamber, Ph.D.,
Lecturer in Industrial Relations and Director of Research,
Durham University Business School

P. B. Beaumont, Ph.D.,
Senior Lecturer in Industrial Relations,
Department of Social and Economic Research,
University of Glasgow

R. C. Bennett, Ph.D.,
Associate Professor, Associate Dean and
Director of MBA Program at McGill University, Canada

A. J. Berry, Ph.D.,
Manchester Business School

M. Berry,
University of Manchester

D. Boddy, B.Sc.(Econ.), M.A.,
Senior Lecturer in Management Studies,
University of Glasgow

J. Davies, B.A.
Lecturer, Department of Management Learning,
Lancaster University

L. de Chernatony, B.Sc., AM Inst. P.,
Senior Lecturer in Marketing,
Hatfield Polytechnic

M. Easterby-Smith, Ph.D.,
Director of Postgraduate Research Programme,
Centre for the Study of Management Learning,
University of Lancaster

viii List of Contributors

L. Gialloredo,
Faculty Lecturer,
McGill University and
Corporate Strategist,
Air Canada

G. Johnson, Ph.D.,
Lecturer in Business Policy and Head of the Strategic Management Group,
University of Aston Management Centre

A. P. Kakabadse, Ph.D.,
Professor of Management Development,
Cranfield School of Management

P. Lansley, M.Sc., FSS,
Reader in Management Studies, Department of Construction Management,
Reading University

D. A. Littler, Ph.D.,
Department of Management Sciences,
University of Manchester

A. McLean, M.Sc.,
Lecturer in Organisational Behaviour,
School of Management,
University of Bath

C. Margerison,
University of Queensland Business School, Australia

J. Marshall, Ph.D.,
Lecturer in Organisational Behaviour,
School of Management,
University of Bath

D. Paskins, Ph.D.,
Lecturer,
Brighton Polytechnic

J. W. Seddon, M.Sc.,
Independent Consultant

P. Smith, B.A.,
Research and Tutor, Ashridge Management College and
Associate and Research Fellow,
Templeton College, Oxford Centre for Management Studies

E. Snape, M.Sc. (Econ.),
Research Assistant,
Durham University Business School

R. C. Sweeting, Ph.D.,
Department of Management Sciences,
University of Manchester

B. Townley, Ph.D.,
Lecturer in Personnel Management,
Department of Behaviour in Organisations,
Lancaster University

Foreword

The papers which form the Parts of this book were selected from those presented at the Conference, Current Research in Management, organised by the Association of Teachers of Management (ATM) in conjunction with Ashridge Management College and held at the College on 3-4 January 1985. The aim of the Conference was to encourage debate on management issues between researchers from different disciplines and between researchers and managers. The themes included: competitive strategies for business success, developing new businesses, product range management, product operations and manufacturing strategy, stimulus of new technology, the effects of culture on individuals and organisations, developments in IR and personnel, new directions in training and career development. The selected papers have been regrouped for easy reference in this book.

Although it has not been possible to include all the papers presented at the Conference in this volume, others will be published in *Management Education and Development* (MEAD), which is the journal of the Association of Teachers of Management. A full list of Conference papers appears at the end of this volume.

Among the many people involved in the preparation of this book, special thanks are due to Kenneth Gee, Terry Hill, Romy Jenkins, Colin Sully and Sue Thame for their help in selecting papers for the Conference and for publication. Thanks are also due to Marguerite Greatorex of ATM, without whom the Conference would not have happened, and to Viki Holton and Jan Rabbetts for their unfailing energy and enthusiasm.

Valerie J. Hammond,
Ashridge Management College,
Berkhamsted
January 1985

Introduction

This book presents some of the current research into management issues. The range of potential topics is vast in that management research includes studies, for example, in accounting and finance, marketing and product management, production and technology, and in human resource management. The actual subjects and themes studied inevitably reflect the times and it is no coincidence that there exists both a rich diversity in research work and, at the same time, a drawing together of different threads. Issues are researched from several different perspectives and multi-discipline teams are becoming more common, although there are still relatively few forums for across-specialism debate.

The last decade has seen a change from the buoyant, optimistic 1970s to a recession and the rather more pessimistic 1980s. Change, of itself, whether it is social, technical, political or economic—and, over the last ten years, it has been all of these—creates an environment which offers fertile ground for study. It is not surprising, therefore, that despite pressures on funding, the volume and range of management research projects remains high.

The same can not yet be said about the dissemination of research findings. Although there are notable exceptions, dissemination often stops at publication in an appropriate academic journal, or with feedback, to the individual sponsor. Too often, research reports are shelved, literally. The opportunity for any wider, more general application is lost and the needs of managers go unfulfilled. This is a cause of such concern to major funding bodies that the Economic and Social Research Council (UK) has commissioned a study into ways of improving the dissemination and application of work they support. Perhaps in the future more, if not most, major research projects will be designed along the line of the Forecasting and Assessment in Science and Technology (FAST) programmes (EEC) which include provision for conferences, networks, seminars and publications from the outset. Researchers are, in that way, encouraged to identify many different targets for the outcomes of their projects and they work closely with specialists who have responsibility for ensuring the wide communication of the results. In a smaller way, it is hoped that the papers included in this book will be read by practising managers and by academics from many different disciplines and that they will provoke thought and stimulate discussion.

Some research is, of course, already communicated to managers through

journals and books specifically marketed for them. A characteristic of work that is typically disseminated in this way is that it is rooted in practical experience within organisations and that, increasingly, managers are themselves involved in collecting and explaining the findings. Much work of this kind originates in management consultancies and other similar organisations. It contributes to the public image of such firms by demonstrating a practical concern for problems and issues experienced by actual and potential clients. In these firms, a truth is recognised: managers and researchers live in the same world. There is no separation between management where harsh reality dictates action and the supposed isolated environment of the researcher where dispassionate judgement prevails. Successful managers do, in any case, carry out research as part of their everyday work, although they might not recognise it as such. They investigate, receive and analyse, plan and assess information, and act.

Effective researchers also have to manage. They organise and structure their projects; they may control and guide the work of others in collecting and interpreting data; they certainly have to manage the use of scarce resources. Empirical work, therefore, offers good opportunities for drawing together managers and researchers from different backgrounds and specialisms. The papers collected here reflect an emphasis on practical rather than theoretical work and demonstrate the contribution that is made by different institutions and individuals.

The book is divided into a number of parts, each of which includes papers dealing with research around a major theme which is of current concern to management. These papers are not intended to be definitive documents. In most cases, the research is on-going and some others are clearly position statements indicating the need for investigation and further analysis. Nor is it intended that these papers should reflect all the themes in current management research. Instead, the linking theme of 'understanding' is one which embraces organisational and human resource issues.

Classification of the papers is a difficult and sensitive process. Some papers can be classified more broadly than is indicated here and it is suggested that readers should scan all the synopses to check for possible interest in overlapping themes.

Part I deals with research which is concerned with understanding organisations and cultures. Where values are threatened, or when membership of one's chosen group is at risk, then the issues are more sharply defined. Social and economic change in society has had a similar effect and this accounts, at least in part, for the interest that is shown in this subject by practising managers and researchers. *In Search of Excellence*

(Peters and Waterman, Harper and Row, 1982), which is proving to be a seminal book for managers and researchers alike, exemplifies the approach and demonstrates the scope for using culture as a means of creating awareness and for stimulating a climate to support change. The papers included here demonstrate how making culture explicit helps researchers to understand the client environment and enables managers and others within organisations to adapt to change whilst retaining the core values of the organisation.

Part II looks more closely at managers and their needs. The economic recession, together with social and technological change, has had a dramatic effect on the career development of managers and other professionals both in terms of processes and prospects. Serious concern is expressed in many organisations about how management development needs can be met when career prospects are limited for reasons other than the personal limitations of the individual. The papers in this part indicate alternative ways of approaching management development needs.

Part III broadens the discussion to look at what is happening in the workplace. After the emphasis in the 1970s on social legislation, what is the situation with regard to industrial relations and personnel management? Papers in this part examine the employment relationships between different groups of employees as well as the situation at greenfield sites.

Part IV is firmly rooted in the changes—social, technical, political and economic—that have been shaping the management environment. The papers in this part each address issues concerning new or different directions for business as a result of these changes. Comparisons are drawn between the experiences in different parts of the world and inferences made about the implications for different industries.

Part V describes, by way of example, a practical product of research. The example given is of a computer simulation for use by managers which is based on material gathered for other long-term projects.

The book does not pretend to give a balanced assessment of *all* current research in management. Rather, it is intended to give a flavour of some of the papers recently presented and an indication of the type of issues that are being studied now. Criticisms and comments are welcome as a contribution to increasing knowledge and understanding about management.

Contents

List of Contributors	vii
Foreword	xi
Introduction	xiii
Part I Understanding Organisations and Cultures	1
1 Exploring Organisation Culture as a Route to Organisational Change <i>Judi Marshall and Adrian McLean</i>	2
2 Strategic Management in Action <i>Gerry Johnson</i>	21
3 Organisational Myths from the Perspective of Evaluation <i>Julia Davies and Mark Easterby-Smith</i>	39
4 Serial Dependence and Reciprocity <i>Anthony Berry and Mary Berry</i>	56
Part II Understanding Managers and their Needs	69
5 Planning Horizons and Organisational Strata <i>David Paskins</i>	70
6 The Stages in a Manager's Job <i>Peter Smith</i>	84
7 The Development and Indigenisation of Third World Business: African Values in the Workplace <i>John W. Seddon</i>	98
8 The Management Development Needs of Chief Executives <i>Andrew Kakabadse and Charles Margerison</i>	110
Part III Developments in Personnel and IR	129
9 Egalitarianism in the Workplace? <i>Alan Arthurs</i>	130

10	Analysing the Employment Relationship of Managers and Professional Staff <i>Ed Snape and Greg Bamber</i>	144
11	Greenfield Sites, New Plants and Work Practices <i>Philip Beaumont and Barbara Townley</i>	163
Part IV	New Directions in Business	181
12	Policies for New Business Development <i>Dale Littler and Robert Sweeting</i>	182
13	Industries' Reaction to Deregulation: The Example of the Airlines in the United States <i>Roger Bennett and Louis Gialloreto</i>	201
14	New Technology in an Engineering Factory <i>David Boddy</i>	215
15	Generics: The Impact of a Third Tier in Grocery Retailing <i>Leslie de Chernatony</i>	229
Part V	Research into Practice	245
16	The Case of AROUSAL <i>Peter Lansley</i>	246
	Complete list of papers presented at Current Research in Management Conference	261

PART I

Understanding Organisations and Cultures

All four papers in Part I are concerned with understanding the concept of culture in the context of organisations and of making effective use of the knowledge.

J. Marshall and A. McLean first consider the relevance of the culture concept to organisation studies and then describe a practical approach to organisation change using this perspective. G. Johnson then outlines a long-term study of strategic change. He argues that cultural, political and cognitive perspectives need to be included in any framework to understand strategic management in action. J. Davies and M. Easterby-Smith continue with an exploration of organisation myths and an indication of the way these underpin political power structures. They indicate the value of organisational myths as a perspective for evaluators of management training. Finally, A. Berry and M. Berry describe the relationship between task systems and social structure in organisations. They argue for a new theory of organisation: the theory of maturing organisations which would explicitly take account of unconscious processes.

1 Exploring Organisation Culture as a Route to Organisational Change

JUDI MARSHALL and ADRIAN McLEAN

Synopsis

This paper explores the value of the concept of organisation culture in relation to organisational change. The concept of culture, largely imported from anthropology, has captured theorists' imaginations recently as a metaphor through which to understand more of the complexities of organisational life. It does this by illuminating the organisation's network of norms and values, and their significance in shaping attitudes and behaviour.

We argue that this perspective affords new ways of conceptualising the processes of changing organisations. This view brings into question the role of rational planning and offers new strategies which emphasise freeing companies' own capacities for evolution. The paper proposes principles and practice for working with organisations in this different mode, using examples from research and consultancy work. Some of the implications of this approach for change agents, organisation members and the organisation's future development will be explored. For example:

- We will suggest that change agents can sometimes become seduced into exemplifying the culture they are attempting to change, and so unwittingly help the organisation stay the same.
- Paradoxically, consideration needs to be paid to forces for stability within the organisation if we are to achieve radical change. These are not necessarily 'obstacles' to change, but are legitimate needs which require attention. Through processes of reframing they can also become sound platforms for eventual change.
- Change agents and organisation members who use this approach are less able to predict the direction of change than in traditional OD interventions, and so must more deliberately handle the emotional responses to uncertainty which the process stimulates.

The use of the culture metaphor to describe organisations has captured the imaginations of academics and practitioners alike in recent years, as is evidenced by the spate of journals devoting special editions to the subject and by the appearance of popular texts, one of which has even

achieved the status of a bestseller in North America. While such notoriety is as likely to arouse caution and suspicion as it is to engender excitement and interest, we suggest that this way of viewing organisations has much to offer both academics and practising managers. However, we see considerable scope both for further refinement of the concept theoretically as a framework for studying organisations, and for the development of culture-based methodologies for intervening in organisational settings.

Thus far, the emphasis of researchers' attention seems to have been on portraying different forms of culture; in some cases implying that it is this albeit elusive factor that most powerfully determines excellence or mediocrity. Certainly the cultural 'factor' has achieved increased prominence as a consequence of the close scrutiny of Japanese methods of managing and organising. The energy of academics has been concentrated in a number of related areas. The first is how culture is evident in organisations and what therefore is available for the researcher to study. A second emphasis is descriptive, portraying the cultures of organisations and explicating some of the consequences for individual actors within those cultures. A third focus is the origins and transmission of culture over time. Our interest has to do with the implications of the cultural metaphor for organisational change. In this, we are attempting to reconcile the conceptual insights emerging from the recent interest in culture with the more practical and pragmatic considerations facing those who seek to foster change within organisations.

Viewing organisations as cultural milieux can offer valuable insights into the ways in which they replicate their patterns of responding to events and, possibly of greater importance, the ways in which organisational members conceive of and attempt to effect changes. This paper explores the relevance of the cultural metaphor to the field of organisational change, drawing on an illustration from the engineering industry. We argue that this perspective poses some important questions for would-be change agents and we explore these in some detail. The paper starts with a consideration of the concept of culture and discusses its relevance to organisation studies, before developing the proposition that its usefulness in the field of change derives from the insights that it offers into the patterns and processes of order within organisations. We then go on to describe and illustrate the practical approach we have taken to organisational change working from a cultural perspective, and to discuss some of its implications.

Conceptions of Culture

The concept of culture is elusive and difficult to pin down in a compact or elegant definition. Typically, writers allude to it through the use of aphorisms such as Ouchi and Johnson's (1978) 'how things are done around here', or the 'rules that guide the way of life of a social group' (Foster, 1962). While a number of writers invoke Sanday's (1979) classification of ethnographic paradigms, they often attempt to cram the richness and density of the term into cryptic phrases such as 'learned ways of coping with experience', which they then need to qualify further; 'a system of meanings that accompany the myriad of behaviours and practices recognised as a distinct way of life' (Gregory, 1983). While we share Pettigrew's view that 'culture treated as a unitary concept lacks bite' (1979), we fear that his suggestion that we should regard culture as 'the source of a family of concepts . . . symbol, language, ideology, belief, ritual and myth', runs a different risk, that of conceiving of culture as a poorly integrated rag-bag of items. In our view the challenge of defining the term lies in capturing its complexity while also portraying something of the mutuality and interconnectedness of its many facets.

Clifford Geertz comes as close to accomplishing this as anyone in his book *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), and we have chosen two of his statements about culture to represent our position. He offers two different languages through which to describe culture—the one analytic, the other evocative. This juxtaposition is wholly appropriate to our understanding of culture as a describable phenomenon but one which is essentially lived and defies ready classification. Geertz defines culture as: ' . . . an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life', and goes on to say: ' . . . man is an animal suspended in webs of signification he himself has spun. I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning'.

In emphasising that culture is concerned with meanings and that it is patterned for a group of people, Geertz aligns himself with the semiotic tradition and suggests that a key concern for students of culture is to discover how meaning is ordered in a society. This requires attending to the symbols that serve as the vehicles of meaning and, most significantly, how people interpret different symbols. The study of a culture is more than this, however, since it is also concerned with the ways in which