

# **29 DAYS OF MANAGING (URL)**

**Supplement to MANAGING by Henry Mintzberg  
(Berrett Koehler and Pearson, 2009)**

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## INTRODUCTION

- Observer: Mr. R. \_\_\_\_\_, we have discussed briefly this organization and the way it operates. Will you now please tell me what you do.
- Executive: What I do?
- Observer: Yes.
- Executive: That's not easy.
- Observer: Go ahead, anyway.
- Executive: As president, I am naturally responsible for many things.
- Observer: Yes, I realize that. But just what do you do?
- Executive: Well, I must see that things go all right.
- Observer: Can you give me an example?
- Executive: I must see that our financial position is sound.
- Observer: But just what do you do about it?
- Executive: Now, that is hard to say.
- Observer: Let's take another tack. What did you do yesterday?<sup>1</sup>

This document takes you into a whole bunch of yesterdays—a day in the life of each of 29 managers, from all the main sectors of organized activity (business, government, health care, and the social sector) and at all levels of management (senior, middle, first line)—see Table 1).

I have prepared this document to support my book *Managing* (Berrett Koehler and Pearson, 2009), which used the descriptions and interpretations of these 29 days to develop and illustrate its points. We begin with some brief notes on the nature of this research on the managers studied. Then the descriptions and conceptual interpretations of the 29 days are presented, some alone, some in small affinity groups (such as three managers of the Canadian Parks Service together), all of this arranged by sector.

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<sup>1</sup>. C.L. Shartle (1956) *Executive Performance and Leadership*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice Hall, p. 82

**Table 1: The 29 Managers Observed**

**MANAGEMENT  
OVERALL  
("TOP")**

**MANAGEMENT  
IN BETWEEN  
("MIDDLE")**

**MANAGEMENT AT THE  
BASE  
("BOTTOM")**

<b>BUSINESS</b>	<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>HEALTH CARE</b>	<b>SOCIAL SECTOR</b>
<p>John Cleghorn CEO Royal Bank of Canada</p> <p>Jacques Benz Director General, GSI (Paris)</p> <p>Carole Haslam Managing Director, Hawkshead Ltd. (film company, London)</p> <p>Max Mintzberg Co-president, La Cabane Téléphonique (Montreal)</p>	<p>John Tate Deputy Minister, Canadian Department of Justice</p> <p>Norm Inkster Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)</p>	<p>Sir Duncan Nichol CEO, National Health Service of England (NHS)</p> <p>"Marc" Hospital Executive Director (Montreal)</p>	<p>Paul Gilding Executive Director Greenpeace International (Amsterdam)</p> <p>Dr. Rony Brauman, Président, Médécins sans frontières (Paris)</p> <p>Catherine Joint-Dieterle Conservateur en chef, Musée de la mode et le la costume (Paris)</p> <p>Bramwell Tovey Conductor, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra</p>
<p>Brian Adams Director, Global Express, Canadair (Bombardier, Montreal)</p> <p>Alan Whelan Sales Manager, Global Computing and Electronics Sector, BT (London)</p>	<p>Glenn Rivard General Counsel, Family and Youth Law, Canadian Department of Justice</p> <p>Doug Ward Director of Programming CBC Radio, Ottawa</p> <p>Allan Burchill Commanding Officer, 'H' Division, RCMP (Halifax)</p> <p>Sandra Davis Regional Director General, Parks Canada (Calgary)</p> <p>Charlie Zinkan Superintendent Banff National Park (Alberta)</p>	<p>Peter Coe District General Manager (North Hertfordshire), NHS</p> <p>Ann Sheen Director of Nursing Services, Reading Hospitals, NHS</p>	<p>Paul Hohnen Director Toxic Trade, Forests, Economic and Political Units, Greenpeace International (Amsterdam)</p> <p>Abbas Gullet Head of Sub-delegation, International Red Cross Federation (N'gara, Tanzania)</p>
	<p>Gordon Irwin Front County Manager, Banff National Park</p> <p>Ralph Humble Commander, New Minas (Nova Scotia) Detachment, RCMP</p>	<p>Dr Michael Thick Liver Transplant Surgeon, St. Mary's Hospital (London), NHS</p> <p>Dr Stewart Webb Clinical Director (Geriatrics), St. Charles Hospital (London), NHS</p> <p>Fabienne Lavoie Head Nurse, 4 Northwest, Jewish General Hospital (Montreal)</p>	<p>Stephen Omollo Manager, Benaco and Lukole Camps, International Red Cross Federation (N'gara, Tanzania)</p>

## Choosing the Managers to Study

I wanted a wide variety of managers in this study, so I selected them with certain criteria in mind, notably the sector in which they worked, their level in the hierarchy, the size of their organization, and in some cases the places where they worked. Figure I maps the 29: 6 are from business, 9 from government, 7 from health care, and 7 from the social sector (NGOs, etc.); 11 were senior executives (I

considered a deputy minister in the Canadian government and the conductor of an orchestra to be chief executives), 11 were middle managers, and 4 were first line managers, none of the latter in business, as it turned out—the only one of the twelve boxes in Figure I that is empty.

I also realized after I had finished, that there were no fully staff managers in the sample. Implicitly, I took managing to be line managing (although, as can be seen, that deputy minister also served in a key advisory role for the minister, making his partly a staff job, and one manager from Greenpeace supervised staff as well as line units.)

Size of the organization varied, from about 18 full-time employees to over 800,000, with a wide variety in between. Five of the 29 managers were women, two in health care and one each in the other three sectors, two of them chief executives, two in middle management, one in first line managing.

With these criteria in mind, I pursued the opportunities that became available to me. There are so many managers in such a wide variety of places that I made no pretence of developing a scientific sample, even if I could have figured out what that might have meant. In any event, my intention was not to test any hypothesis, or prove anything specific, but instead to gain insight into the work of managing.

In some cases I approached people I knew: a banker in whose “chair” I sit at McGill; a relative who built up a retail chain; a friend who ran a radio station, etc. In other cases, contacts helped me line up managers to observe—at Greenpeace, the National Health Service of England, the government of Canada, etc. I also wanted to get a sense of the people coming to our new masters program in practicing management (IMPM.org), so I observed two of them before we began (one of whom never made it to the program). And then there was serendipity: a friend in the Red Cross (who had attended the program) invited me to visit the refugee camps he managed, and once there, I observed him for a day, and then one of his reports the next day (who later came on the program).

Did any of these personal relationships bias my observations or interpretations? Again, being there just to observe the practice of managing, I believe not.

**What, no Americans?** I ended up with managers working in six countries: Canada (14), England (8), France (3), Holland (2), and Tanzania (2). No Americans. (During this period, I was living half time in Canada and the other half in England and then France.)

How can anyone write a book about managing that includes no Americans? I think it’s about time! Indeed, Americans should buy the book for this very reason. We learn by perceiving differences, not similarities. The rest of the world reads its share of books that are only about Americans. They learn, don’t they? So why shouldn’t Americans learn from other managers?

But frankly, I don’t think it makes much difference. Managing is managing, whether in America or Armenia. Contexts differ, styles differ, pressures differ, but coping mechanisms prove to be remarkably similar (as discussed in Chapter 4 of the book). Again, you be the judge of that. I personally had difficulty distinguishing the Canadians in this sample from the British, or the French, etc. Chapter 4 shows that other factors appear to be far more consequential than nationality.

Reading about managers in very different contexts can bring subtly important differences into sharp relief. Learn, for example, about Abbas Gullet and Stephen Omollo practicing a rather pointed kind of “management by exception” in the refugee camps of Tanzania, or about Bramwell Tovey as he literally acted out—and undermined—the metaphor of manager as orchestra conductor. Karl Weick (1974) [N—fn \*] has pointed out the benefits of studying unusual organizations. Of course, a refugee camp is hardly unusual for the Red Cross, compared, say, with a Canadian bank. So every single one of these 29 days will be unusual to some people and immediately recognizable to others who know the

context. But as practices of managing, all should be rather recognizable to anyone who has ever practiced management anywhere.

**And So Few From Business?** Likewise, I make no apologies from having only 6 business managers among the 29 I observed.

Managers in business read too much about each other, and managers in other sectors read much too much about managers in business. Everyone can learn from managers in government, health care, and the social sector—at least when these managers are true to the needs of their sectors, rather than pretending that everything has to be managed like a business. Surgical wards and fashion museums and national parks all have their own fascinating problems, as you can see.

## **Choosing the Day to Study**

How to pick a typical day in the life of a manager? Forgot it. For one thing, the observer may have no choice: one usually gets a day that is convenient for two people's schedules, including no travel or any sensitive meetings. In one case, for example, I wished to observe, in the Canadian National Parks, a regional manager, a park manager who reported to her, and a front country manager who reported to him. It made sense to do this three days in a row. Where I could, however, I went over the schedule in advance with the manager or an assistant to find a day that would expose me to a reasonable variety of activities.

What's one day in the life of a manager? Not much, to be sure. Not that one week is much more. A year might be necessary to get into the mind of a strategist. But again all I sought was a sense of managing, in its variety. And 29 days with all different managers is a long—and I think you will find, revealing—time.

## **What I Did during the Day**

Mostly I observed and wrote down what I saw, and how I saw it, as the day unfolded. I was the fly on the wall, and off, as I followed the manager around. This is not a very fancy research method, but it worked for the purpose. (See Mintzberg [2005] for the shortcomings of fancy research methods.) I did much the same thing in my first study of managerial work, published in 1973, except that there I recorded rather precisely times and various other factors, such as media and contacts, in order to tabulate how managers allocated the time. In that case, I observed five managers for a week each—all Americans.

Beyond the day of observation, in many cases I went over the manager's agenda for a period (a week, or a month), to get a wider sense of the job, especially to identify common activities not present on the day of observation. In some cases, I did this ahead of time with an assistant, in others, I did it with the manager during pauses in the day (for example, lunch without any meeting, or local travel). I also used these and other pauses to ask questions, get clarifications, probe into issues, and seek the manager's perception of his or her job, and managing in general. I wanted to delve into what was going on and how the manager felt about it. But I had no list of questions; I just went with what came up and seemed interesting—and this led to a good deal of fascinating discussion.

I should add that for me, this research turned into an intriguing foray into the many worlds of managing. It is obvious that managing happens wherever organized life happens. At least, this became obvious to me after I began to write the book; I hadn't thought about that before. I guess I too was influenced by those *New Yorker* cartoons that show a neatly dressed manager in an orderly office with some kind of chart behind. That is a far cry from having lunch in a tent set up by an enterprising camp

refugee; discussing “bear jams” in the pristine setting of the Canadian Rockies; watching in fascination as the pieces of a fancy dress were being cleaned one by one in the archives of a fashion museum; sitting by myself on one of 2222 velvet seats to watch an orchestra conductor doing his real work (rehearsal, not performance); hanging on for dear life as a motorcycle raced against the oncoming Paris traffic to make a television interview; and freezing over lunch in the Greenpeace cafeteria.<sup>2</sup> All of that is managing at least as much as in those *New Yorker* cartoons, and I was privileged to see it.

**Did My Presence Influence What I Saw?** Of course it did—I was not doing physics, but the Heisenberg principle applied just the same. Once again, however, I was there for insight, not proof, so even those times when my presence made a difference—rarely in any significant way, I believe—may not have interfered with my basic purpose.

Indeed, in one case, it helped. Here the day was constructed to make it “typical”—the only case of its kind, to my knowledge. The assistant to John Cleghorn, CEO of the Royal Bank of Canada, set it up well ahead of time, when the agenda was open, and arranged a mix of activities. Hardly a typical day! Or was it? The activities were typical, just not this particular combination, perhaps. (As I noted in Chapter 2, find me a day in which managerial activities follow some common order.) In fact, as you will soon see, (this is the first day described), I made use of this to probe into the very idea of what typical means in the life of a manager.

## What I Did with the Data

I mused. I tried to use each day, however it came, as a means to think, dream, ponder issues about managing.

Each time, I went home with my many pages of notes and wrote them up in two ways. First, I described the day, chronologically, in as much detail as I could. Then I interpreted this day, or in some cases two or three days linked together, for what it or they revealed to me about managerial work. I put quite a bit of work into all this—generally at least a week of additional work for each day of observation. (These interpretations draw especially on the model of managing presented in Chapter 3 of the book, especially concerning the managers’ relative emphasis on each of six roles of managing: communicating (all around) and controlling (inside the unit) on the information plane; leading (inside the unit) and linking it (to the outside) on the people plane; and doing (on the inside) and dealing (on the outside) on the action plane.

Above all, I let each day or group of days speak to me in its own terms, as clearly as I could allow it to. I found, for example, that one organization that seemed to do little management development probably does more than almost any other; that plain old fashioned management may turn out to be very up-to-date in a chaotic world; that the real politics of government may happen on the ground, where the environmentalists confront the developers, more than in the great debates of the capital. I was not after consistency, but insight. So you will find that each report comes out differently.

Taken all together, I like to think that these descriptions and interpretations tell a reasonably coherent, revealing, and rather comprehensive story about managing in its varied forms. The chapters of the book build on this.

## Choosing the Days to Read

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<sup>2</sup> Not to mention following a manager into a meeting to discover that I was the speaker, or driving around with a police officer after a mix up about observing her detachment commander.



What follows are descriptions and interpretations of these 29 days. You will find a great deal of material here, and, I hope, many insights. Reading it all would take a good deal of time. Not to discourage anyone from doing that, but for those who would like some kind of shorter guide, let me suggest the following.

Read something. Go through at least one of the cases that seems of special interest to you to get a sense of what this is all about. That might encourage you to read more: look at the short abstracts at the start of each to decide which ones. In all cases, you can read just the interpretations, not necessarily the descriptions.

My favorite days are: in business, Alan Whelan of BT, and Brian Adams of Bombardier; in government, Charlie Zinkin and Gord Irwin, and especially the common interpretation about “managing on the edges” in the Banff Park; in health care, Fabienne Lavoie on the hospital ward; and in the social sector, Paul Guilding as head of Greenpeace and especially the interpretation of his and Paul Honen’s days there plus the yin and yang of Catherine Joint-Dieterle of the Paris fashion museum and Rony Brauman of Medicines Sans Frontieres, and Bramwell Tovey as conductor of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

Choose any, or choose all. Read what is closest to your own context and what is farthest from it. Get briefly into the lives of these managers, as I did, and experience the fascinating and varied world of managing.

## I. MANAGING IN BUSINESS

I observed a day in the working lives of six managers in business, in Canada, France, and England. These include the chief executive of a large bank; the owner-managers of two small firms, one in film making, the other in retailing; the number two executive of a rapidly growing systems company; and two middle managers, one in sales for a large telecommunication company, the other a program manager for the development of a new airplane.

### A “Typical” Day?\*

**John Cleghorn, Ceo of the Royal Bank of Canada  
(Montreal, 12 August 1997)**

*The chief executive of large bank was surprisingly involved in the details, highly focused, and very people-oriented. Feelings were blended with thinking throughout this day. Is this any way to oversee a large institution and develop its strategy? Probably yes.*

I sit in John Cleghorn’s Chair at McGill University. John and I attended McGill University together as undergraduates, he in commerce, I in engineering.\* We knew each other back then, but not well. I covered football for the *McGill Daily*, while he played center on the team. So even then, I observed while he acted.

John became chief executive at the Royal Bank (RBC), Canada’s largest, in 19\_\_\_\_[N—in text?], having joined it in 1974 (?). In the year of this observation, the Bank recorded a record profit (for any company in Canadian history, in fact), of \$1.7 billion. It had 51,000 employees.

John had a reputation for being “hands on”—a story was told about him calling the office on his way to the airport to report a malfunctioning automated teller machine (the company had 4200 of them). He was also known as the CEO who sold the corporate jet—he said he was uncomfortable with it—got rid of chauffeured limousines, and instituted a policy of having senior executives spend at least 25% of their time with customers and front-line employees.

After two cancellations, the day was arranged the better part of a year in advance, with John’s administrative assistant, Debbie McKibbon, who tried to make it “typical.” It was to be spent in Montreal, where the RBC maintained its official headquarters, although most of the central operations had been moved to Toronto years earlier.

### Description of the Day

John and I met at 9 a.m. at the entrance to an RBC branch inside a shopping center, near the city’s center. This was one of 21 Quebec branches designated for full service (brokerage and trust as well as retail and business banking). John wanted to check out the signs at the front entrance, but when Bob Watson, the Area Manager, appeared, he entered the branch. He was introduced to all the managers awaiting him, and he broke away to introduce himself to the receptionist sitting nearby. “When was the last time this was renovated,” he asked someone, and after receiving an answer, replied: “Well, I drop by, and I think it was Christmastime.”

A tour began of the branch, with John asking many specific questions (for example, about the door that had been installed to one office), and exhibiting a surprising knowledge of all sorts of details. Later he commented, “You know what

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\* Published in different form as A Day in the Life of John Cleghorn , *Decision* (Fall, 1997: 18-25)

\* Avoiding awkwardness, if not inconsistency, I shall use the names that come naturally to me. In most cases, that is just the first name; in some others, an official title, such as Commissioner Inkster (of the RCMP) or Sir Duncan Nichol of the NHS.

looks bad—your logo, downstairs—buried. Every time I go by, I just about go nuts. Why don't you take it down?" to which Bob replied, "Redundant—it's gone!" John insisted on meeting everyone, and asking many how long they had been with the Bank. To a receptionist who replied seven years, he said "It's important—you get to know the customers."

At 9:30, he and the several managers accompanying him headed upstairs, where they met the brokerage and trust people, who had been incorporated into the branch in an effort to gain synergies from recently acquired businesses. At 9:45, they and several others from the different services entered a small meeting room for a "Round Table" discussion on how things were progressing at the branch. They went around the table, with each person commenting and John again asking very specific questions. He was told about the problems of integrating the different business systems, about "sharing the numbers" among the group ("That's great!," he replied), and about job shadowing to learn about each others' work. John made some closing comments, and the meeting ended at 10:30, although he stayed to chat about some current events, including the pending acquisition of an insurance company.

We then got into Bob's car and headed to another branch, five minutes down the street. Bob asked, "Do you know Mrs. Brownlee," an elderly customer, whom John did. "I go once a month to pick up her bank book."

Almost as soon as he walked in, a woman came up to him. "Margo! How are you?" he asked her, explaining to me that she has been branch manager for ten years. Then he chatted with a teller of 33 years, after which John went upstairs. There he met the people concerned with mutual funds, personal banking, and brokerage, followed by another "Round Table."

At 11:55 we headed downtown. John and I chatted about other days in his schedule, including the previous week with investors and clients in New York and a recent international monetary conference he attended in London. Then he mentioned that Debbie kept a detailed record of his time allocation. (I later consulted her and found that it showed 16% of his time spent with customers and field staff—nine percentage points below his own 25% target—12% at his desk, including at home, 18% on travel, 7% with the Group Office executives, and 8% with the Board and its committees, etc. 42% of John's time was spent in Toronto, 14% in Montreal, 24% in the rest of Canada, and 20% abroad.)

From the car, John called Debbie to check in. "It's good to see it live," he said, "the enthusiasm is contagious." We arrived at 12:00 at Montreal's most prominent office tower, Place Ville Marie, where the Bank was officially headquartered, and entered the elegant 41st floor reception facilities where John chatted informally with the dozen or so institutional investors who had been invited, before all sat down to lunch at 12:30.

Monique Leroux, General Manager for the Quebec Region, did much of the early briefing after John opened the discussion and later took questions, mostly about the integration of the different businesses.

As John got involved, he drew at times on the experiences of the morning, for example recounting a story he had just heard about a receptionist who thought to refer a client to the brokerage upstairs, resulting in a \$200,000 T-Bill placement. He then reviewed a 33-page document that had been circulated here, with information on shareholding, performance, economic indicators, etc.

Again, John was not rushed, and took time to answer all the inquiries. Questions were raised about the Bank's approach to global competition ("If we let foreigners come in, it's because they're doing a better job than we are"); about the pending life insurance acquisition ("because of a need for a mobile sales force" ... "unimaginable a year ago"); about employee stock ownership (90% of employees owned stock; the CEO had to own at least three times his salary in stock, other senior executives, two). The meeting ended at 2:20.

From here, it was into his small office on the third floor, where John looked at the mail and made a few calls, including one to Don Wells, Executive Vice-President in Charge of Strategic Investments, on a potential acquisition in the United States.

Just before 3:00, it was up to the tenth floor for a meeting with thirteen people on knowledge-based industries (KBI) in Quebec. "We set up a 'typical day,'" John said in reference to my presence, and added, "It's overdue that I spend some time with the commercial business side."

The manager of KBI began a formal presentation, about information technology companies, particularly in biotechnology and media and entertainment, and what the Bank was doing in these areas. After discussion, the meeting ended at 3:45.

Five minutes later another meeting began in the same room, on strategies for Quebec business banking, with many of the same senior Quebec managers plus others from retail banking, finance and planning, etc. Monique introduced the meeting, followed by a presentation, and then questions from John.

Competition came up, in comments on competitor's virtual banks, which John said he was "watching very carefully." He referred to some of this as "educating the market," which he described as "good for us." The presentation ended at 4:40, which John described as "good...very clear," congratulating the presenter, jokingly, on "getting better: I notice you do not refer to the notes as often!"

After a short go around on regional business markets, there began at 4:50 a presentation on personal financial services in Quebec. At one point there was a mention of FTEs (Full Time Equivalent employees), a term they thought John did not like. "No," he said, "it's the reference to 'bodies' I don't like. It's dehumanizing." The session ended at 5:40. "Excellent!"

John said, and “One hour late.” The reply was “John—we ran on your time.” To Monique, he said “It was overdue,” and to me, “Thank you for giving me the excuse.”

Then it was back to the office, looking at telephone messages, playing telephone tag with Don Wells, and a walk over to chat with the Vice-Chairman.

At this point, we had a chance to talk. “I don’t think of it as a big company,” John said. Asked about the question periods during the round tables, he said “Nobody can ask a question that upsets me.” They might be asking it on the behalf of somebody. “75-80% of complaints are justified,” he added. Concerning the afternoon sessions, John pointed out that Monique was new and he wanted to see how she was doing—see her operating in what was to be her own milieu. I asked about the morning site visits, whether he also went to the problem places. He said he did, sometimes for longer periods of time. “It’s amazing the patterns you get when you do so many.” As for the afternoon, John said these kinds of meetings happened frequently.

At 7:00, John's wife Pattie picked him up at the entrance to the building in their Subaru station wagon. As they dropped me off at my office, after John said “Thank you for the typical day,” Pattie had the last word: “If it was a really typical day, something would have happened and he would have had to cancel his meetings and go somewhere else!”

## Interpretation of the Day

**An Action Overlay** Perhaps most interesting about John Cleghorn’s day is that it was so action focused, particularly in the level of detail, yet involved the taking of very little action per se, in the sense of managing specific projects, fighting specific fires, or driving specific activities. (The most evident exception was John's *suggestion* that they take down that sign at the first branch.)

Perhaps it would be best to describe all this as an *action overlay* on almost everything that happened, because of John's personal style. He seemed to be “hands on” with a vengeance, and wanted to know about as many details as possible. The chief executive of one of the world’s best known consulting firms told an executive years ago that top level managers “should have as little knowledge as possible relative to the product,” so that they could “deal efficiently with all business matters in a detached and uninhibited way”.\* This consultant would not have been impressed with John Cleghorn’s day.

Yet I doubt that any of this (aside, perhaps, from that sign) would have been interpreted as meddling by the people concerned. And it is hard to imagine that the managers who sat in the hierarchy between John and the people he met could have felt slighted by any of this—at least not in the corporate culture he was trying to promote. John would presumably claim that the only way he could deal with these issues in an effective manner was by being involved, not detached. We hear so much these days about the dangers of micro managing. Macro managing—not knowing what is going on—may now be a far more serious problem.

**Thinking and Feeling** What made this work, I suspect, is that John seemed to combine thinking and feeling so naturally. A more purely thinking manager (who would not likely have spent such a day) might have come across as detached, probing, controlling even more than meddling, while a more purely feeling manager may have come across as artificial—on some kind of an interpersonal crusade. John clearly never stopped thinking, but there was genuine feeling behind everything he did, whether meeting a long-standing teller or making his case before institutional investors. Most indicative perhaps, being *there* seemed more important to him than being *on time*.

John seemed natural throughout the day, comfortable in his role and so helping others to feel comfortable. The enthusiasm really did seem to be contagious. Peter Brook\* of the Royal Shakespeare

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\* Recounted by Bert Hopwood in *What Ever Happened to the British Motorcycle Industry?* (San Leandro, CA: Haynes Publishing, 1987), p. 173.

\* [N—Brooke ref, 1978]

Company has noted that the actor empowers the audience and the audience empowers the actor. Hence John's day might be described as one of mutual empowerment.

**Grounded Communication** A great deal of what happened on this day can be ascribed to *communication*. This was communication all around our model of Chapter 3—with employees, occasionally other executives, and institutional investors. The lunchtime meeting was largely a formal briefing—communicating out. Yet even here, amidst all the statistics being presented, John drew on anecdotes from his morning in the branches. The rest of the day saw a great deal of communication, both ways. Mostly John was learning, picking up all sorts of scraps of detail, and in some cases more aggregated figures. But he also spent time telling people about broader issues of the bank—that pending life insurance acquisition, for example—and imbibing a sense of the Bank's values, as he saw them.

**The Dangers of Idiosyncratic Information?** The advantage of this kind of “hands on” information is obvious: the manager gets the pulse of the organization, a sense of what is going on, how things are working. But the disadvantage is equally obvious: the information is idiosyncratic. How can a manager be sure that what he or she sees with his or her own eyes, especially in such a large organization, is representative? Indeed, John was this day visiting the bank branches he knew best, the very places where he grew up. Nothing, of course, stopped him from visiting branches in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan or Cornerbrooke, Newfoundland, although he would have been less likely just to “drop in.” But would he have seen there what he was able to see here, indeed would what he knew about here have influenced how he saw things there?

Banking offers an advantage in this regard, since while Moose Jaw is not Montreal, branch services can be pretty much the same across the country. This is retailing, and so the same activities replicate themselves in place after place.

Perhaps, then, the question should be reversed: Is the real danger the distorted information that comes from remaining in an office and reading aggregated reports about the operations? What a manager sees with his or her own eyes may be idiosyncratic, but it is also direct and often rich, and so can counter the disconnect that is all too common in executive suites today. Think of all the information John picked up this day that would have been excluded, filtered, or distorted on its way to his executive suite through the binary bits of a computer.

**Reinforcing the Culture** Around this time, I had heard some people complain that the RBC culture “is not what it used to be.” That may have been true, but this is also the concern I have heard from some people in every organization with a strong culture, perhaps because they are so sensitive to losing it.

To this point in time, we had had ten managers from the Royal Bank in our International Masters Program in Practicing Management (IMPM.org), and there was general agreement that “earnest” was a good way to describe them. Indeed, other members of the class—and that included Japanese managers from companies with such strong cultures, such as Matsushita—remarked repeatedly on how devoted the Royal Bank people were to the company.

Frank McCauley of the bank, a senior vice president with whom we worked closely on the program, responded to a reading of this case with the comment that “John's style has influenced the organization but, in another sense, his attention to detail and ‘common touch’ is entirely consistent

with the organization. He is both an influencer and a product of the Royal Bank's culture" (personal correspondence, 27 August, 1998).\*

It should hardly come as a surprise, therefore, that the RBC chief executive spent much of his day reinforcing its culture, and promoting its values, as he saw them, to everyone who came his way. A lot of this could have been corny—a "show" for the troops (and me)—but little of it seemed that way, thanks to John's genuine enthusiasm. He used the day to get informed, clearly, but no less to send out signals about the organization and its values.

**Double-Edged Values** There are two edges to these values, however. One was the "happy family" edge—the sense of belonging to a cherished institution. John spent a lot of time on that. The other was the competitive edge, which was no less clear in many of his comments (about performance, the competition, that "value" for the shareholders). Indeed, when I had heard people worry about changes in the RBC's culture, it was usually identified with an increase in "bottom line" thinking, frequently attributed to John himself. So while these two aspects of values may not be incompatible—the happy family can be sustained only if the company remains competitive—only by walking a careful line can that compatibility be maintained. Today's corporate world is littered with the debris of happy families sacrificed on the alter of shareholder value.

**Other Roles** While there was this action overlay, there was not much managing on the action plane, as described in Chapter 3 (although there was a hint of this in John's phone calls to Don Wells). This likely reflected Debbie's efforts to set up a "typical day." But if John's wife Pattie is to be believed, then such action taking is typical of many other days in John's working life.

Much of the activity, as noted, took place on the information plane. But hardly any of it had to do with the role of *controlling*. This reflected the nature of the day—here John was physically removed from most of his direct reports. He certainly looked at a lot of numbers—there were financial reports in virtually every formal meeting—but he was using them more for being informed than for exercising control.

On the people plane of the model, inside the organization, the role of *leading* takes place with regard to individuals (motivating, coaching, etc.), units (team building, etc.), and the organization at large (culture building). Our discussion has already noted culture building. Team building would not have been expected here—these were not John's own teams—and on the individual level, there was certainly a good deal of motivational activity, but this was embedded in culture building: creating a sense of spirit at large.

It might be added here that while John came through as very people oriented, he did not come through as particularly "Human Resource" oriented. (Recall his comment about FTEs and "bodies.")

On the people plane outside the organization, the *linking* role was clearly evident in the investors' lunch, although informing was key here too. Perhaps this meeting could be described as informing for purposes of influencing. This was the only linking meeting of the day, but evidence from various discussions as well as John's own agenda suggests that this role was also key in his work.

To sum up, another, perhaps more typical, day might have shown evidence of a good deal more *doing* and *dealing* as well as *linking*, although perhaps no less *communicating*.

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\*In a brief paper we did in 1985 called "Imaging Strategy" (*Journal of Management*), Frances Westley and I suggested that the poverty of so many of today's stylized corporate logos may reflect the poverty of their cultures. It is interesting that despite having stylized it some years ago, the Royal Bank's logo—affectionately known as "Leo"—is rather elaborate, incorporating a lion, a globe, and a crown.

**The Consciousness of Scheduling** A word on scheduling is in order here. This is important in all managers' jobs: it must be done, but as a means to other ends, namely performance of the other roles. In John's work, however, it seemed to get particularly conscious attention. I refer here to the long lead time in arranging this day, and the discussion of its typicality. John was the only manager I knowingly came across in this research who systematically tabulated and studied his own time allocation.

Clearly, to run such a large organization requires careful attention to schedule. Perhaps John also got used to this when he practiced public accounting, before joining the bank. But this seemed to reflect a personal predisposition as well. I wrote in my book, *The Nature of Managerial Work* (1973:35), and reiterated in Chapter 3, that

...no matter what [he or she] *is* doing, the manager is plagued by what [he or she] *might* do and... *must* do. In effect, the manager is encouraged by the realities of [the] work to develop a particular personality—to overload [him or herself] with work, to do things abruptly, to avoid wasting time, to participate only when the value of participation is tangible, to avoid too great an involvement with any one issue. To be superficial is, no doubt, an occupational hazard of managerial work.

It is to John Cleghorn's credit that he could be so relaxed amidst such pressures, to achieve a certain profundity in his work.

**Is this Strategy?** That consulting chief executive cited earlier, or Michael Porter who in a 1996 article questioned strategy with regard to Japanese firms\*, might read all this and wonder where the strategy can be. John was certainly informed, in his own way, but did this help him develop strategy for the RBC? Did this very *craft* style of managing make him a strategist?

While one day of observation, especially one such as this, can hardly answer such a question, I believe some speculation is in order.

There are two broad ways in which to view the chief executive as strategist. The popular one, whether from the books of the Porters or the reports of the McKinseys, is of the chief at the helm pronouncing clear strategies on where the organization must go, followed by "implementation." I believe this approach often fails, especially when that chief is disconnected from the details over which he or she pronounces (which such an approach, in fact, encourages).

The other approach—emergent, rooted in learning, as opposed to deliberate, rooted in planning—sees the strategy process as diffused throughout an organization that adapts over time. This process is more one of crafting, and the chief executive's role is to foster a structure and a culture in which this can happen, and then to perceive the strategic implications of the initiatives of others and integrate them with his or her overall vision. And that requires rather detailed, nuanced knowledge on the part of the chief executive.

There was certainly evidence in this day of John's role in helping to establish this kind of organization, also some indications of his ability to abstract from the details toward strategy thinking, for example in his comments about a new virtual bank "educating the market," and that being "good for us". (In fact, John had favorably commented to me earlier on an article of mine called "Crafting Strategy"\* [1987], which he saw as exemplifying his own style of managing.)

Of course, such a craft style of managing, based on rich, grounded information, does not make someone a strategist: that depends on the person's capacity for creative synthesis (about which this day provides no basis to comment). In my opinion, however, such a style is a prerequisite for coming up

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\* What's Strategy? *Harvard Business Review* (November-December, 1996 : 61-78)

\* Crafting Strategy, *Harvard Business Review* (1987)

with the necessary strategic insights (while the detached, or cerebral, style of managing, tends to produce formalized, and often banal strategies—clearly stated and vaguely implementable). It is the ability to bounce back and forth between the concrete and the conceptual—to understand the specifics but also be able to generalize creatively about them—that makes the great strategist. Remaining in the stratosphere of the conceptual is no better than having one's feet planted firmly in concrete. John seemed clearly at ease moving between the concrete and the conceptual.

So here's to the practice of management as a craft—low key, involved, warm, focused, maybe even quintessentially Canadian. It may not make the headlines, but it sure seems to work in the Bank.

## **Doing for Learning<sup>+</sup>** **Jacques Benz, Directeur Général, GSI (Paris, 24 August 1993)**

*This was another senior executive day of involvement in the details, but here more about the projects of a high-tech organization—in other words, about the role of doing. But this was doing to learn, in a company held together by a strong culture.*

In France, the chief executive officer is generally called Président-directeur général. At GSI, the job was split between Jacques Raiman, the founder, titled Président, and Jacques Benz, Directeur général, the two roughly corresponding to full-time chairman and president respectively in the United States. Jacques B had an office on one floor of the GSI headquarters in a contemporary building in Paris, and Jacques R had one the next floor up, seemingly less in the hub of the daily operations.

GSI was something of a phenomenon in France, not only because of its dramatic growth over the years (1993 sales were just over two and a half billion French francs), but also because of its open and flexible style of management.\* In fact, Michel Crozier devoted a chapter to GSI in one of his books, where he wrote:

GSI represents a remarkable example, and still uncommon, of a passage over a threshold.,, [based on] three new principles of organization: simplified structures and procedures, autonomy pushed right to the operating units, and development of a business culture strong enough to correct, in good degree, the dysfunctions of rules and hierarchial order. The company is run by leaders who practice real participative management and know how to keep a low profile with regard to the operating employees. (1989: 173, my translation from the French).#

Crozier wrote that the company did not sell "prefabricated services, standardized advice, or even packaged software" but "solutions to problems," what the founder Jacques R called "selware" instead of software or hardware (p. 174). Crozier also described Jacques B as an "intellectual" who quit a prestigious research institute in Paris to found an information systems consulting firm just before meeting Raiman, who brought him into GSI (p. 178).

GSI described itself as being "number one in Europe for information systems managing payroll and human resources, clearing, logistics and sales marketing data for the automotive industry. GSI also is one

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<sup>+</sup> Published in a different form as "Une journée avec un dirigeant", *Revue française de gestion* (novembre-décembre, 1996 : 106-111)

\* I had earlier done a one-day workshop with the group and was struck by the level of discussion as well as the creative atmosphere. In addition to the top several dozen executives, they had invited along, among others, a well-known French rugby coach, who had earlier addressed them on leadership, and a young British researcher who had studied the company's culture.

# [N—can you ref Michael Crozier's 1989 book here STP]



of the main suppliers worldwide of telecommunications software testing systems." For example, the company processed annually "the clearing of more than 40 million IATA tickets issued by travel agents in six European countries" (1993 Annual Report). While the company marketed software packages, many customized to user needs, it also carries out ad hoc project work for its clients.

## Description of the Day

We met at 8:45 a.m. in Jacques' tiny office—there were a few papers, a small PC, and a plain table for him to work on. An employee was seeking advice on a negotiation in progress. He left at 9:00 and we chatted for a time. Jacques described some of the people he worked with (there was no chart available), and mentioned the fact that he was often in the corridors. ("I can go out for a minute and spend two hours there.") At 9:40, eight people began to assemble gradually for a meeting, about a "software platform" the firm was designing as part of a major contract for the French Post Office. One person presented, apparently to coordinate the work of different groups on the contract, and soon they moved into an open, problem-solving mode. They discussed how to divide up and develop the project work, and shared impressions of the client's reactions. The discussion was highly animated, with everyone involved (sometimes all at once), although Jacques mostly listened carefully throughout. There was no sense of status differences. (In fact, after 20 minutes, Jacques got up and asked who wanted coffee.)

At 10:15, Jacques' secretary came to get him, and he stepped out for a few minutes, while the conversation continued. (A client concerned about poor service had been trying to reach Jacques for a couple of days so his secretary was told to interrupt him in the meeting.) At 10:30, another employee put his head in, and Jacques left again for a few minutes, this time to be informed that negotiations on a British acquisition were not going well.

At 11:05, in the midst of a discussion about whether or not to slice up the project or treat it as a single entity, Jacques made his first real intervention, pointing out that "there's a choice to make" and giving some advice on how to approach the client. He made another brief intervention at 11:23, expressing certain values and giving more advice (stressing the need to ensure that the long term needs of the client were served), and at 11:47 pushed a bit for the first time on what was needed for the next meeting. This meeting broke up at 11:53.

Asked why he attended, Jacques said this was an initial project that would become important—a precedent for the company, the "début d'une strategie", although the discussion was about the project, not its more general strategic implications ("une discussion, la strategie derriere [a discussion, the strategy in the back ground]", as Jacques put it).

Then with "Let's go see Raiman; it's what I normally do", adding "On peut faire des choses normales!" ("We can do some regular things!"), we went upstairs, and found Jacques R in the hall. They chatted for a while, about a wide variety of issues, including a meeting the previous day with someone who might fill a senior GSI position, a subsidiary in France that was in crisis and whether to continue cutting costs or just sell it, and how to avoid employee layoffs. On this issue, Jacques R was somewhat challenging, at times like a mentor (e.g., "What did you learn here?"), and sometimes more directive (e.g., "You have to do it—fast"). After some moments of silence, Jacques B said to me, "Professeur Mintzberg, c'est dur la vie, parfois!" ["life can be tough sometimes"]). They remained very much on the issues, but clearly on their strategic and organizational implications.

At 12:17, Jacques R's secretary came to get him, and after her third try some minutes later, he left. Jacques R went into Pierre-Antoine's office (he was responsible for Administration) and they discussed a 3:00 p.m. meeting, and the need to meet before it. We returned to Jacques' office at 12:25.

Jacques then placed a call to the Chairman of the French Post Office, whom he reached immediately (and with whom he used the familiar "tu"), to arrange a meeting. Jacques explained to me that GSI had five or six activities going on there, and he wanted to get a sense of what the Chairman wanted.

Then Jacques called Pierre-Antoine, who came in at 12:40 to discuss a model to standardize GSI's own salary procedures. His style, here as elsewhere, was open, more guiding than directing (e.g., "I'm giving you an idea; it's not to force it", or "What we're looking for is compatibility").

Pierre-Antoine left at 1:03, and we walked to a restaurant with the person in charge of all payroll systems services and his counterpart for Germany as well as three other GSI managers. After ordering, Jacques raised the main issue, an offer to buy a British payroll company. The head of the payroll group briefed them, directing his comments especially to Jacques, and then discussed the price, other bidders, and negative reactions to such a purchase by a French company—ironic, given this discussion was in English. (I was kidded for taking notes about the food—"very important in France"—but I was not used to seeing frog legs consumed with wine in a Chinese restaurant.) We left at 2:30.

We chatted on the way back and in the office. Jacques said the morning meeting was not that typical; he was there because he knew the Chairman of the Post Office. He also said his mail was not a big deal—he showed me a pile he hadn't even looked at, explaining that most of the operating mail was intercepted by his secretary.

He and Jacques R had been together for twenty years, he said, joining the company a year after its founding when he sold his own consulting firm to it. He described Jacques R as the thinker, himself as the doer, although he said both did both.

At 3:00, Jacques went to a meeting with Alfred, of one of the divisions, and Pierre-Antoine, about opening operations in Mexico, as a window into that country. They discussed possible markets and initial structures ("start simple" but make it "extendible") as well as where to use French nationals as opposed to locals, and who specifically. Later they focused on who should head the operations. Jacques argued for leadership qualities especially, before they began to discuss specific candidates in terms of a list they had drawn up of ideal qualities. Jacques directed this discussion, at one point suggesting that Alfred "commence ton travail du couloir" [start working the corridors]. Then, at Jacques' suggestion, they went back to structure, deciding to incorporate and discussing whether reporting would be on a business or geographic basis. As the meeting wound down, Jacques asked, "Next step, c'est quoi?" and then he ended the meeting at 4:25.

He chatted with Pierre-Antoine briefly and then invited him into his office to discuss "two or three little things," including an issuing of stock in the company, a question of legal counsel, and membership on an affiliated board, with a contrast made at one point between the "modèle hiérarchique" and the "modèle Benz". Pierre-Antoine received an urgent message at 4:54 and left a few minutes later.

Jacques had said earlier that this was a quiet time—much of France and especially Paris was on vacation in August—and so he took time to review his schedule with me. He turned randomly to March 15 and noted the meetings in his agenda:

Monday: - meeting with potential GSI investors

- Executive Committee (more of an informational than decisional meeting)

Tuesday:

- a seminar concerning GSI culture (Jacques noted there were about twenty full-day seminars per year, which he tried to attend for a half day each time, to get information from the grass roots)

- preparation for the meeting of the Board of Directors

Wednesday:

- received the President of IBM France, a major supplier and customer as well as competitor (they discussed his concern about GSI taking one of their customers)

Thursday:

- in the morning, the Board of Directors meeting (giving information and asking advice is how Jacques characterized it)

- at lunch, joined a group of GSI and France Telecom people, in a figurehead capacity in the afternoon, discussion of an acquisition in England (Jacques describing his presence as part of the group to achieve consensus)

- dinner with German clients, to create an ambiance for the all-day meeting following Jacques was there to represent GSI, since he speaks German well)

Friday:

- that meeting in the morning

- in the afternoon, attending the close of a GSI course for a question and answer session, which Jacques saw as communication, culture building, and conveyance of values

Saturday:

-meeting of the stockholders, to present results and answer questions as well as secure votes of approval

Jacques then turned randomly to two other weeks in the agenda, noting meetings for example: with investors, with a Japanese consultant about their TQM program, to attend a road show of GSI services (to see how the marketing works), to attend a speech by an American expert on computing, to help resolve employee conflicts (several of these), and several days in the United States to attend a seminar on culture and visit the company's American operations. We also looked over the upcoming September schedule, where Jacques noted many meetings, as they were entering into the period of strategic review—three-hour blocks of time with division chiefs, to hear their presentation and ask questions.

We had talked for about 45 minutes and it was then 5:50. Jacques went to see someone "for a minute" and was back at 6:20, having seen three people and covered "100 matters in half an hour!" One encounter involved achieving a concentration (which Jacques did not specify), in another, he bumped into a manager from the south of France whom he asked about the TQM program, and a third was to say hello to a new employee in Accounting.

At 6:23, Jacques went into the finance officer's office to review financial results for next year. He mostly listened, not very encouraged, asking the occasional question, and later they worked the budgeting figures more carefully together to ensure that these were correct. At 7:15, they discussed other issues, including an upcoming meeting in Marseilles and pay levels for lower and middle level people. Jacques left his office at 7:25. After four other brief encounters in the hall, to say hello or discuss a meeting, etc., each for a minute or two, we returned to his office.

Asked why there did not seem to be much external work this day, Jacques said that "these days I'm inside too much", which he attributed to the economic difficulties in the economy and in his own company: "Il est difficile de travailler en profondeur quand il y a un feu dans la maison" [It's tough to work in depth when there's a fire in the house]. Last year he had spent three days a week travelling, he added. After a brief look at the email (including a message from President Clinton that Jacques shared with four million American), Jacques called a taxi at 7:45 to end what he called "a relatively calm day."

## Interpretation of the Day

Add up all this and you have here a wide range of the activities that anyone might expect of the president of a large company—figurehead duties, culture building, working on control systems, informing and being informed, some external liaison work (though, as noted, underrepresented), and so on. But one theme seemed to overlay all of this: a clear emphasis on specific projects.

**Learning from Doing** Even as operating head of a large organization, and even taking into account Jacques' thoughtfulness and intellectual inclinations (just before I came, he had asked me for a copy of a 132 page paper I had published on schools of thought of strategy formation [Mintzberg, 1990]), the focus this day was not on abstract generalities so much as on specific activities. Jacques was clearly involved. In terms of the model that guided this research, if his work was not strictly *doing*, then it was on the line between *doing* and *communicating*, *doing* and *controlling*, *doing* and *leading*, and especially perhaps *doing* and *thinking*. In other words, as I saw it, Jacques was being a doer—involving himself in project work, especially that of a precedent-setting nature—not as an onlooker or even necessarily as a leader or controller, but as an active participant. Partly he was the wise expert, but especially he seemed, by *doing*, to be facilitating his roles of *leading*, *communicating*, *controlling*, *linking*, and especially framing, and so learning.

Thus, as might be expected of an organization that, in its customized services at least, naturally took the form of adhocracy (loose, flexible, project-oriented structure [see Mintzberg 1979, or 1983]), even its most senior management was involved in the specifics of some projects.

The *doing* was closely tied to *framing*, in the sense that strategy making here looked to be an inductive, emergent process: Jacques "did" specific things in order to help himself conceive general concepts. Likewise, the company undertook some projects to learn about and perhaps enter new businesses. Projects are about specifics, but they set precedents which can evoke more general patterns (remember Jacques' comment about the "début d'une strategie"). Even concerning Mexico, while the entry was viewed as a window to new business there, the discussion was very much about the specifics of entry, not the long-term intentions.

Thus, if GSI was hardly the stereotype of French autocracy or bureaucracy, then so too was it hardly the stereotype of French cartesian thinking. This really did appear to be a learning organization, right to a President open to all kinds of new and creative ideas.

**Framed by Culture** Culture seemed to figure prominently in GSI's approach to its operations. Jacques "did" this day in order to support and convey the GSI culture, in a very conscious way. Culture is shown in the model of Chapter 3 as part of the *leading* role, but in this sense it could be seen likewise as *controlling*, however subtly and gently, consistent with Jacques' own style.

There was some conventional *controlling* during this day too, in the form of the occasional directive and in activities concerned with the design of organizational structure. But the use of culture seemed to be Jacques' and presumably GSI's preferred way of exercising control.

Putting various parts of this discussion together suggests that the frame of Jacques' job had to remain rather loose and flexible, open to the unfolding projects and the new opportunities that came in, but nevertheless anchored in place by the strong GSI culture. This hardly seemed to be a company confused by the plethora of opportunities that it faced.

Control is usually a notoriously difficult problem in adhocracy, with its loose, free-wheeling, and highly decentralized practices. Perhaps one key message from this day is that while sheer controls may hold routine bureaucracy together, strong culture may be necessary to hold adhocracy together. In a sense, the glue between different projects and the creative people doing them has to reside in the strength of the common norms, values, and attitudes. Hence we see the emphasis GSI placed on corporate development—those twenty full-day seminars.

There was, as noted, evidence of the *communicating* and *linking* roles in Jacques' work, the latter especially in the days we reviewed in his agenda. But this was perhaps no different from the job of any such executive.

Jacques seemed to exhibit a distinct style of managing even on this one day. As previously noted: it was open, low key, supportive and informative more than directive. It was also highly thoughtful, and perhaps even intellectual, but very much inductive. Jacques combined in an interesting way the cerebral with the practical, which, may in fact be the hallmark of many successful executives.

## Hard Dealing and Soft Leading

### **Carol Haslam, Managing Director, Hawkshead Limited (London, 26 September 1991)**

*A somewhat frenetic day with the managing director of a small film production company in London uncovered an interesting dichotomy of managerial styles. There was hard, intense, focussed dealing on the outside, to secure and retain contracts in this highly competitive business. But once the deal was done, and a professional team assembled, that turned into softer, lighter, leading on the inside, more to monitor and support than to control the filmmakers.*

Hawkshead Limited epitomized adhocery, even more than GSI. It independently produced "programs of quality," many on cultural themes, for the British television networks as well as other customers, putting together creative projects of all kinds. It brokered in two respects: sometimes among broadcasters (e.g., ITV in Britain, NET in America), and always between the independent film makers and the commissioning or contracted customers. In other words, Hawkshead "did the deals": connected the skills of the filmmakers with the needs of the customers, whether it promoted the ideas of the former to the latter or found the former to produce films contracted with the latter.

This blurred the distinction between employee and supplier. Hawkshead necessarily kept itself very lean—it was the true "network organization." Eighteen permanent employees at the time, six of them administrative staff, maintained quite a thriving business, hiring people on a free-lance basis according to the work under contract. But these were not exactly arm's length buyer-supplier relationships either, not only because film making requires quite close teamwork, but also because Hawkshead had its favorite directors who were almost employees. (Jenny, for example, wrote up proposals for prospective customers as well as directing, and had been employed on a free-lance basis more or less continuously for three and a half years; she maintained an office at Hawkshead.) This, as we shall see, blurred the distinction between *linking* and *leading*.

At the time, according to Carol Haslam, its managing director (and co-partner), there were over a thousand independent film producers in the U.K., a few large, many small, and a number of intermediate ones like including Hawkshead that sought to join the ranks of the larger and more stable. In the midst of a bad recession that saw severe cost cutting, the government had recently forced the large networks to buy a certain percentage of their programming from the independents. So not only a good deal of business but also the whole industry were up for grabs. All of this suggests what Carol's work might have been like, and in one solitary day, I saw it with a vengeance. (At one point, as we raced, puffing, to her second floor office, Carol said: "It's a hodgepodge; my life is basically juggling.")

We arranged a day when she would be mostly around the office, and one that she saw as relatively low key. Good thing for me! Carol was constantly on the move, with all the characteristics of managerial

work (described in Chapter 2) present in spades. Telephone calls filled up most of the free time between the battery of meetings (except when Carol was briefing me, thoroughly, cordially, and with the same energy).

## Description of the Day

Carol and I met at 9 am, just as she arrived in front of the Hawkshead offices, a terraced house on a closed-to-traffic square in central London, a small island of tranquillity that belied the energy that was about to explode inside.

At the start of the day, Carol volunteered her view of her job as follows: (1) "bringing in new work, (2) "executive producing" that work, (3) internal administration, which Carol described as shared with one of her partners, Nigel, who did more of the financial, she more of the staffing (she, Nigel, and Frances, one of the executive producers, shared an office and even a big desk), and (4) external relations, meaning serving in various institutional capacities in the industry (e.g., on awards committee).

This day was one of non-stop dealing, linking, promoting, connecting, encouraging, and informing. I recorded 29 pages of notes on my steno pad. What follows is a summary.

Carol began with odd jobs, plus taking a phone call from a producer about meeting later in the day. At 10:00 we walked for five minutes to the Consumers Association, for whom a gardening film had just been made. Along the way, Carol met the producer (free-lance), and they met two others at the Association for a "debriefing" on the film: discussion of how it went, reactions to it, etc. Carol also sought, without success, financial help, because the film had run over budget. An idea emerged to use left-over footage for another film, to recoup the loss.

Back in the office at 11:15, Carol met Mike (free-lance), who had directed a film and came in with a written proposal for another, to be taken to Channel 4 the next day. Carol glanced through it and made comments, then slipped out "to put it into a nice thing-ee" for presentation as well as to "fax it through."

Mike left at 11:35, and Charlotte came in (another free-lance film maker who had just done a film for Hawkshead). They spent some time trying to get through to someone at BBC, frustrated at their phone system. But the time wasn't wasted, since between dialling, taking another call, and chatting to Charlotte, Carol was signing cheques! Charlotte meanwhile began to propose a series of ideas for films, to each of which Carol responded (e.g., "There has been a lot on Asian women lately" or "That's a nice idea"), often adding advice, for example on how the idea might have been further developed.

Another phone call came in, which Carol took because although "in a meeting, was dying to know what happened"—about the reaction of the Ford Foundation in New York to a proposed debate among leading politicians from around the world. (To help me keep track of all this activity, Carol passed gave me a Hawkshead document of "September 1991 In Production," which specified details on 32 projects at various stages, plus 3 pencilled in at the end.)

At 12:30, it was into another, smaller room with a large video screen, Charlotte and Jenny joined, with Carol juggling ideas between the two of them about a proposal for a pop psychology program. Sandwiches for lunch arrived at 1:00, by which time everyone had been watching an unsuccessful test video of a parapsychology film. Aside from the occasional critical comment during the viewing, the reactions came over lunch afterward, about the film itself and what Hawkshead might do with the related series. During this, Carole took the occasional call, and another video sent in by an American psychologist looking for British work was viewed briefly.

At 1:30 Charlotte left, and Carol and Jenny reviewed the schedule for the rest of the day, shared various information, and then took a closer look at a proposal Jenny had drawn up for eight thirty-minute films.

At 2:15, Claire, the full-time production manager, also in charge of financial issues, came in. Jenny remained, and the three of them, after popping out (almost literally, all at once) to get their diaries for scheduling, got into a detailed discussion about budgeting Jenny's new film, the figures for which did not seem to work out. They went back and forth between budgeting and scheduling, trying to work the budget to make the project viable. This was continuing when Carol was called and promised to be "right out."

At 3:15, Jenny and Claire left and a director came in, whom Carol was meeting for the first time, concerning a pending project about an American painter. He brought a huge book on the man's work that had been lent to him by Hawkshead. They chatted to get to know each other and gradually got into details on the proposal. Carol ended up asking about his interest and availability, asking him to draw up a proposal on how he would proceed.

Carol returned to her office at 3:50 to make a battery of telephone calls: about reactions to a broadcast the previous evening of a film Hawkshead had made for a political party; about scheduling; and about other proposals. Some of these calls went to the U.S. and to Israel.

At 4:45, Claire walked in, relieved to say she had uncovered the budgeting anomaly and asked for agreement on a point in the budget, which Carol provided immediately. She volunteered some other information too that she had gleaned from her phone calls.

Suddenly people and phone calls were coming and going in the collective office, with Frances, who had just arrived, making her own battery of telephone calls across the desk. It was during this that Carol pointed to the pile of papers stacked up on her desk and informed me that she never got to it at the office—this, as well as most video viewing, took place at home, she said.

Carol's intention was to leave for a 6:15 meeting (which I was not allowed to attend), of the Labor Party Committee, on political broadcasts, and then to go home (to make more calls and watch a video). But then she discovered she had to wait for delivery of the video, so I took the chance to ask her about work I had not seen that day.

We discussed her visits to the cutting studios to see and comment on films in the rough and later to go with production people to the client for the first viewing, "to show involvement" and to "make sure nothing goes wrong." Otherwise Carol said she tried not to interfere with the capable people she engaged to produce the Hawkshead films. She talked of board meetings and of "away days" with her three partners, and of the considerable amount of institutional work she did in the British film industry.

Then, about 6:20, Claire called and dropped in—by this time she had "cracked the budget", and they discussed how she was able to cut it to make a dicey project more viable. Finally, at 6:40: Carol left, to join the Labor Party meeting in progress, me perhaps more tired from watching all this energy than she from expending it.

## Interpretation of the Day

**Dealing Out, Leading In** Like the company she managed, Carol brokered between customers and producers, drawing on what seemed to be an immense network of contacts and a finely-tuned understanding of the British television industry. (Her diary was the thickest I had ever seen, mostly because of a hand-written telephone directory that had to be more than an inch thick.)

As expected in the management of an adhocracy, which depends on maintaining the supply of project work, Carol focused most of her energy on the front office—the lining up of projects; "the doing of deals," including putting together projects across networks, even around the world; promoting ideas to her customers and convincing them of her firm's ability to execute them. In fact, when I described this notion of maintaining the supply of project work to her at the end of the day, she immediately volunteered a pet metaphor of herself, as "mother bird with the chicks in the nest with their mouths open."

In the back office, Carol did not produce the films so much as ensure the selection of the appropriate team to do so and then oversee its progress. I had the impression that her links to production were not so much detached as indirect. Her knowledge of the whole business as well as her close ties to the customer likely give her powerful influence on film making, but that seemed to be exercised mostly in the form of advice. So while she was *dealing* out, on the action plane, she was *leading* as well as *communicating* in, on the people and information planes. Carol was an external linker-dealer above all, putting together all the elements, including her own vast array of contacts and knowledge, to "do the deals" of film making. The connection between this outside and that inside work was symbolized, in some sense, by her going out to find a "nice thing--ee" to dress up that draft proposal.

**Transmitting, not Buffering** Hawkshead's skin was thin, so to speak: it was highly exposed to its environment (compared, say, with a manufacturing firm that mass produces for a relatively stable market). So Carol's job was not to buffer, or protect the internal operations from outer pressures, so much as to transfer them in, to ensure rapid and adequate responses. Her knowledge of the industry in general, and especially of its latest happenings, seemed crucial, and so networking in the *linking* role was a major component of her job. Putting together the deals here was an intricate process, involving not just a great deal of juggling but also an enormous amount of connecting—of people, ideas, needs, capacities, and more.

**Visionary Umbrella over Opportunistic Strategies** If strategy here centered on the projects, as it does in adhocracies, then Carol was continuously making strategy. But while she did volunteer a description of her work as opportunistic on a couple of occasions, including "It's a hodgepodge" at the start of the day and "You are a complete prostitute in this business" at the end, she disputed my suggestion that strategy was about the individual projects rather than about Hawkshead itself, pointing out that she met with her three partners regularly, including on those "away days," to review overall direction and to change it.

So the strategy *process* might be seen here as in two components. Most evident was strategy-making about projects—appearing continuously on this day, because each project required its own strategy. Hence that may be where most of the strategic thinking takes place (virtually non-stop). But there was also strategy making about Hawkshead as an organization, less frequent, perhaps, and more umbrella-like in nature: an overall frame, as a vision, clear enough in its broad guidelines and reflecting strong values about quality. This deliberate umbrella sat over those more emergent opportunities—strategy as vision over strategies as ventures.

**Hard and Soft** Internally, Carol seemed to be more controller and somewhat leader than doer. *Controlling* appeared periodically but pointedly during the day, in the planning of projects and the making of decisions, while *leading* seemed to permeate softly much of what she did. Carol was, after all, working with highly talented and rather independent professionals, who required support and monitoring more than direct control. She seemed to have a gentle way of dealing with the people around her, helping and encouraging them while responding to their ideas and questions. Most of these people were technically outsiders (free-lancers), and so this could be described as *linking* rather than *leading* activity, especially networking. But, in an important way, these people constituted the Hawkshead's staff, and more to the point, its flexible production "team."

So "soft leading" seems to describe Carol's style, indeed in two respects. It describes the role of leadership in her work—soft in the sense of light, indirect, not forceful or intense. And it describes her own interpersonal way of executing that role—soft in the sense of gentle. This contrasted with her "hard dealing", in the former respect at least—direct, intense, pointed—although I would hesitate to call her dealing *style* hard.

## The Entrepreneurial Pace

### Max Mintzberg, Owner and Co-Chief Executive, The Telephone Booth (Montreal, 11 November 1992)

This was a day of fast paced "micro managing," especially of *doing* and *dealing* blended with *controlling* and *communicating* on a minute by minute basis. Was it effective? In this context, very likely yes.

Max is my cousin who, with his partner Steve, owned and ran a chain of stores called "La Cabine Téléphonique/The Telephone Booth" which sold telephones and related equipment in Quebec and Ontario. They began in 1979, and as of this date, had 26 stores (4 recently opened, but "none planned before Christmas"—i.e., next month!).

Max's office was on the main corridor, not far from the entrance, with his key support people sitting nearby (three literally within earshot). The warehouse, repair shop, and facilities shop (to construct

furniture, etc. for the stores) were all connected, through a door on the same level. So everything was convenient.

Max and Steve used to share one large office; two days earlier, they moved into separate ones, but as these faced each other, with a wide opening between them, they too were within easy earshot of each other.

## Description of the Day

I arrived at 8:40, about 5 minutes after Max, to a flurry of activity that, on my 40 pages of steno pad notes, ended up by 6:30 p.m. as 120 distinct activities, 20 of them in the first hour alone (i.e., an average of one every three minutes—and Steve was out most of that day)\*. Basically, people were coming and going constantly, interspersed with paperwork and incoming and outgoing telephone calls, and, except for a stretch at the end of the day, hardly any activity ever lasting longer than five minutes.

It makes little sense to describe 120 activities, so let's begin with a sequence, which gives a good idea of the content and pace of Max's work:

- 9:25 "Traci - Hi!" His assistant, just outside the door, comes in. "Get from the warehouse, please, one choo-choo train." (A new item, a telephone that looked and rang like a steam engine, enchanted everyone that day. Max had earlier ordered into red folders all the papers he had accumulated to pass on to people, which he kept handy, alongside a major agenda book with all kinds of notes of things to do. He spent a great deal of time this day on these.) Max passes Traci's folder to her.
- 9:28 Max chats with Lorne, just outside the door, about a soldering problem on some telephones, then turns back to Traci to continue going through the pile of papers. Just then Pierre walks by and Max requests that he not proceed with some plan, and 15 seconds later, it is back to Traci with: "OK, let's continue." Then Monique, who deals with Accounts Payable, sticks her head in to report back on an earlier request, and seconds later it is back to Traci with the comment: "They might hassle you. If they do, mark down [somebody's name]." Then Anna, who deals with customer and store service, puts her head in to report with great joy that she has solved a problem that arose earlier that morning, about the need to cancel a line for someone whose cellular telephone had been stolen. Back to Traci again, briefly, before she leaves.
- 9:35 A call comes from John, an outside associate, about a major negotiation to take place to expand the business significantly. (Earlier Max had told Heather, the receptionist, that this call had "first priority.")
- 9:37 "OK Traci," and she comes back in to take more of Max's requests, numbering about 15 in all. This was a Monday morning, and Max pointed out that because he had been out of town several days the week before, the paperwork was heavier than usual.) Then Anna sticks her head in, and they chat briefly.
- 9:45 Max says "Thank you" and Traci leaves.

Twenty Minutes!

Things continued much like this. Max's contacts were almost all on very specific issues, mostly ones that arose in the short-term. An exception were those with John on that one key long-term issue. And, of course, a number of the short term issues had long term implications. Mention was also made of a "strategic planning" meeting away from the office in a few days, the first of its kind, at the instigation of Serge, who had recently joined the firm as its first controller, from a business school, after three years of accounting experience.

But the essence of this day was a steady flow of operating problems, with tight connections between the internal operations and outside connections, sometimes concerning negotiations (which Max enjoyed; I heard on the telephone: "Come on Chadri...Chadri, Chadri" and later to me, "He took off \$650, but he took all the fun out of it because I'm still getting clipped!").

Over the course of the day, Max had several contacts with just about everyone in the office. In addition, he had several telephone calls with his own people outside, especially area managers and others who dealt with shopping center developers, and with associates and suppliers of all kinds—printers, repair people, a carpet cleaner, a store designer, people who called about late payments, etc., not to mention a brother-in-law who dropped in to say hello and an acquaintance who wanted to buy a telephone answering machine wholesale. Almost all these contacts concerned tangible operating issues, one notable exception being a call from the bank manager to check ratios—the sole case of broader external influence.

In the afternoon, there was a bit of change, as the many small encounters gave way to some longer meetings, nevertheless frequently interrupted. At 3:48 p.m., Max began to make a list for Jean, the facilities woodworker, of repairs that were needed, store by store. This list was all transferred from his agenda book, where Max had noted them during visits. Amidst numerous

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\* I counted all distinct contacts, ignoring short interruptions as well as contacts with Max's assistants that concerned only scheduling or telephone calls for which messages were left.



interruptions, this was finished at 4:54, a little over an hour later. Then Jean came in and Max went over the list, with a few interruptions, until 5:45, when Max and Steve, who had returned, shared some information (they also picked the brain of this observer for fifteen minutes). At 6:45, after closing the hall lights and checking that the photocopy machine was turned off and the alarm system was turned on, Max left, to take a conference call at home later with Steve, on the deal with John.

## Interpretation of the Day

**Doing and Dealing in the Workflow** Reviewing the circles of the model, there was surprisingly little direct *leading* or *linking* per se on this day. As for outside pressures, most of the ones from customers were passed inside to ensure the company's responsiveness. There was, of course, the important work of networking, especially with suppliers and other associates—Max seemed to connect every which way—but these fed directly into *doing* and *dealing* more than exchanging influence per se.

That doing and dealing was the focus of almost everything on this day, inside and outside alike (hardly distinguishable from each other). Max was not so much "doing deals" (with the one exception noted), or managing projects, as he was maintaining the workflow by handling all kinds of little problems that came up, whether from inside or outside. A fair amount of negotiating infused all this, as did the constant transfer of information, every which way—and fast. (Max had detailed operating figures of sales by store “up to yesterday.” He declared the ones due on this day “late” at 11 a.m., became “I should have had it by 9 o'clock”).

**Strategy on the Run** The emphasis on doing should not be interpreted to mean there was no thinking in this job, no strategizing. The discussion of the deal Max and Steve were arranging with John, which would have shifted the whole orientation of the company dramatically, suggested that some strategic thinking was taking place. Somehow, amidst the juggling of so many detailed issues, the broader picture did not seem to get lost.\*

**Blending Everything** Clearly characteristic of Max's work too was the blending together of everything, not only the strategic deals with the operating details, but also the internal work with the external, in flavor as well as actual content. The roles of the model also especially blended together here, in particular the *doing* and *dealing* with *controlling*, all infused with *communicating*. If Max's work had to be located on the model, it would be where doing and controlling meet. Max was continually giving instructions, and delegating things to do, but not passively so much as part and parcel of the issues he was overseeing personally.

Where I saw less involvement was with products per se, partly because Steve did more of this, also because by late November arrangements for the key Christmas season had already been made. I also had a sense of little involvement with customers and points of purchase, and upon questioning, both Max and Steve confirmed this as a recognized weakness. While both spent considerable time in the stores, claimed to read customer written complaints carefully, and listened to feedback from the regional managers, they confessed a certain shyness is getting this information first-hand from buyers. In the opening and upgrading of store facilities, however, Max was deeply and personally involved.

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\* Twenty-six years earlier, a few hundreds meters from where Max was working, I pilot tested my original observational study of managerial work with a very different style of manager, Max's father, who owned and ran a tag and label company. Jack was all strategist, a careful thinker, especially about new products and new machines to expand the business, and more than happy to delegate almost all the operating details to others and then tour the facilities occasionally and leisurely.

**Is Such a Pace Effective?** The pace of this day was rather extraordinary. When Max's brother-in-law popped in and, looking at me, asked "Busy?", I said "Watching Max is busy!" (Like watching Carol.) At one point, Serge, the controller, said "Let me get a pad. You're throwing so many things at me I have to write it down." Later someone else said, as Max made requests of him, "I don't write that fast!"

Is this effective management, so fast paced and so "micro"? Bear in mind that this was not the Royal Bank of Canada, but an entrepreneurial start-up in highly competitive retailing.

They sold the company the next year, due to a financial squeeze. So one might think this style was dysfunctional. But the problem—so common among entrepreneurs—was not one of sales, or operating efficiency, but of letting the expansion outrun the financing.

Max moved to Vancouver a short time later; in June of 1995, he began a new operation. Now, as I write this section ten years later, he has built an impressive chain of 17 telephone stores in Alberta and British Columbia, called "Connect." It is the largest such independent chain in Western Canada, and is doing very well indeed! [Even more so in 2009.] I have not observed Max again, although we are in frequent touch—he usually replies to my emails within minutes! So I suspect that Max's days are not much different, and his style seems to be serving his company well.

## **Managing Out of the Middle**

**Alan Whelan, Sales Manager,**

**Global Computing and Electronics Sector, BT (Bracknell, England, 15 March 1996)**

*A day of drama, with an insightful sales manager working out of the middle in various respects, leads to conclusions about selling internally in order to sell externally, about some problems with marketing compared with selling, about ethical dilemmas, and about what it might mean for a practicing manager to learn in a classroom.*

As British Telecom became BT, in the process "downsizing" by almost a half (from 225,000 to 125,000 employees), it sought to expand its horizons, beyond both Britain and the provision of a simple telephone network. Alan Whelan's job was to lead a group he set up to sell complex communications systems to multi-national companies in the computing and electronics sector. This put him into an exciting, contemporary business, but also outside of the mainstream of the traditional BT and its long established culture, which had mostly been concerned with the supply of fixed-line telephone services to residential customers.

We met for breakfast at eight, so that Alan could "understand Henry's objectives for the day," as he put it on his written agenda, also to "brief Henry on the activities for the day." Alan, whom I had not met before, turned out to be in his mid 30s, a big guy with a warm look and a lot of presence in a thoughtful way. I was to get to know him well, since he was about to embark on the new International Masters Program in Practicing Management ([www.impm.org](http://www.impm.org)) that we were creating. I had wanted to observe one of the BT participants, and Alan graciously agreed to let me do so, on a Friday before the Sunday opening of the program in Lancaster.

### **Description of the Day**

We both arrived at Alan's office at 8:55, housed in a small building outside of London. A meeting of Alan's Management Team was scheduled for the entire morning, to do the end-of-year review and discuss the plans for the next fiscal year.

As people began arriving, Alan turned to one. "We've got a problem. He won't sign off." "What? Again?" was the response.

The meeting was chaired by Alan S, who was to take over while Alan W was away in Lancaster for the next two weeks. Nine people sat around the table in a conference room, including Carol, Alan's secretary, and Peter, Alan's boss, all on the younger side, some established BT people, and other new recruits. Alan himself had come in from ICL only 18 months earlier.

The meeting began with Peter's report. "We'll start with the numbers," he said, and put up a series of charts on sales figures, budgets, and year-end forecasts. They had done well, and there was hand stomping on the table to show it. Some specific contracts were discussed, concerns were expressed about some of the trends, cost increases for example. A discussion then ensued about "how to grow the business 20%." Peter put up a "Scorecard," with four items to measure: financial perspective, customer perspective, and—"we get into the woolly areas when we have to struggle"—organizational learning and internal processes. There was plenty of general discussion and sharing, but when Peter left just after 10, the atmosphere relaxed a bit.

Alan S. put up a series of charts about mission, revenue, projections, etc., the charts becoming heavier as the meeting became lighter. A list of key prospects then brought the discussion down to a more pragmatic level. Finally Alan briefly summarized the discussion, expressing his views of the needs for the next year and then called a break at 11:00.

Alan, still worried about that sign off, went looking for Peter, whom he found eventually. "Any news?" No. They chatted about the meeting.

One month after joining the company in September of 1994, Alan had been working on a huge contract, part of a bid to the Post Office for a major system to stop fraud associated with welfare benefits. One of Alan's clients was the main bidder, with BT as a subcontractor. BT called its part Project Dryden. Two other consortia had bid on the contract, one with another part of BT as a subcontractor. Alan estimated the entire contract to be in the £500 million range, BT's part £100 million. Because of the size and unusual nature of the proposal, BT's Group Finance Director had to sign off on it, but was hesitant. They needed that approval quickly.

The meeting resumed at 11:10, with each participant presenting results, formal plans, and informal intentions for his or her own area (e.g., voice communication, data and mobile). The level of discussion remained mostly rather general, with occasional reference to specific accounts, customers, and orders. Alan's involvement was more informational than directive, sometimes conveying vision (e.g., "In general, the more focused we can get on the account, the better—I prefer it"). There was a brief report by Elaine, representing marketing, a staff function, that was qualitative, on "Team Structure" and about people, followed by some closing comments by Alan, mostly praising the team's performance but also pointing out weaknesses in recruiting, public relations, and cautiousness on budgeting. The meeting ended just before 1 o'clock.

Alan shot straight up to Peter's office for some news, but he was not there, nor was Carol back at her office, so Alan checked his voice mail. A late afternoon meeting was scheduled with the client, and the first message was about possibly holding it there. Alan left a message with Richard, the Executive Director who looked after the clients' account, asking for "Any update? ... "I desperately need it."... Another attempt to reach Peter, this time on the phone, succeeded. "Any news?" Alan asked, and then listened for a while. His first comment was "Very dangerous." Then, "Why was he talking to [X], not you? ... What time was this? ... Oh damn ... I specifically asked [Y] if he needed any more briefing," etc. At 1:14, Alan hung up, dismayed.

The sign-off had to happen this day, Alan told me, otherwise the contractor would be left with only a week to find a replacement for BT. Peter had been to see the chief executive about it, who they believed to be sympathetic, but since he had only recently joined the firm, was hesitant to intervene with the Group Financial Director. Alan was not sure how to proceed. While he wanted to wait as long as possible in the hope of getting the approval, he felt obligated to his customer too. So the deadline was set in his mind for this day.

After several other calls, and no answer, and a few minutes free before his next meeting, Alan began to describe to me his role and its impact on the larger BT, in rather strategic terms.

The days of the supplier push of services, to which clients simply subscribed, were long gone, he said. Now business clients wanted services that met their own specific needs. Power had moved to the consumer. Network services like those of BT were partial, while the client sought "end-to-end" services through a single agreement. There was thus a need for integrators to bring together data centre, desktop, network, and other services, which required that different suppliers collaborate.

BT, with its "subscriber" past, was not used to this way of working, Alan said. It was still learning how to cope with intermediation, which to some people inside the company implied a lack of control. This uncertainty was exacerbated by regulatory constraints that allowed the clients to switch to other networks. Alan saw a role for himself as challenging this thinking—challenging, in effect, the traditional BT culture. Indeed, the Masters Program which he was about to begin involved a "venture," to change something in the participating manager's organization—and Alan thought he might work on this.

The early afternoon meeting was in fact to be a review about Project Dryden—what to be done if they got the contract. Four of them sat around a table in Alan's office, beginning just before 2 p.m. Alan explained who was to do what, and then briefed them on the unfolding events. "So we're still in the lap of the gods and I made it clear to everyone that today's the day."

Their discussion continued, interrupted by the occasional phone call, including one about the later meeting, which was arranged to be held in Alan's office after all. "I don't particularly want to go to the client if I'm not ready to give them an answer," he said. The meeting ended just before 3 o'clock.

At that point, we chatted briefly. I asked how typical it was for a sales manager like Alan to spend so much of a day on internal matters. "I create the environment to do business", he said, estimating that about 80% of his time was spent internally. Linking with outsiders was something he did less here than he did at ICL, except on the major projects (as in the one that was creating so much trouble this day).

Alan saw his job as involving individual creativity but a good dose of teamwork as well. He described the structure of his unit as a matrix, with some people having client responsibility and other project responsibility. He said he preferred not to emphasize the control side of his job.

From 3:05, a series of his reports dropped in, one to discuss the contract for a new employee, which Alan read carefully and signed, another to mention some concerns about the Dryden contract, etc. Alan said he was supposed to spend a half-hour learning Windows '95 this day, but that he would not get there. And then a call was placed to Peter: "Is no news good news?" No, he was told, no news was no news!

Fiona and Mike came in at 3:18 to discuss Dryden. Fiona had some new information suggesting that the lack of a sign-off was "not a show stopper". This was discussed, as well as what Fiona might do while Alan was away, but mostly there was a sense of limbo. At 3:31, the phone rang. Alan was informed that the Dryden meeting, to put together the client with someone from BT, due to start shortly, was canceled. Fiona and Mike left at 3:34.

Alan worked at his desk, between people dropping in, including one to receive an apology about how long his promotion had been taking, with Alan making some supportive comments. With respect to the upcoming masters program, Alan added jokingly: "They've decided I need more educating; I just don't seem to be learning from experience!"

At 4:07, Alan was informed that the BT fellow who was supposed to meet the client was at reception. Alan went to get him and they returned to his office, as Peter rang: "Just about to have a fifteen minute meeting", he said, "then I'll come right down." With Fiona joining in, Alan briefed the fellow on the Dryden situation, and he in turn explained his "neutrality": he had been included on an earlier, unsuccessful BT bid for the work, They continued to discuss the issues until 4:33, interrupted by another call from Peter, who wanted to close the day with a half-hour meeting with Alan and Fiona.

Alan and Fiona then headed to Peter's office. The news was not good. The product line financial director had seen the Group Financial Director, without success. Peter suggested the decision might spill over to Monday.

Essentially the issue went to the heart of what the company was then struggling with: the existing BT, an institution that moved carefully in a massive, established industry, and the BT envisaged by people like Alan and Peter—leaner, quicker, more inclined to take risks to develop new markets. It was all coming down to this one contract, supported by one faction at the most senior management level and resisted by another.

"We're trying to find someone to make a decision", Alan pleaded, to which Peter replied, "We found someone to make a decision. We just don't like it!" "It's wrong", Alan said, but Peter said he didn't think the man would change his mind.

So there they sat on the horns of their dilemma. They could wait until Monday on the chance that the Group Finance Director would change his mind, or at least be convinced to. Or else they could inform the client that they were having trouble getting signed off but would keep trying, knowing that the client would have no choice but to arrange a backup subcontractor, in which case they might lose the contract, even if they did get the sign off.

Peter suggested they had to do "the right thing," and there was never any doubt that Alan felt he had to do just that. But first he had to agonize over the possibility of giving up what he had worked so hard to achieve: he had to rationalize the decision to himself.

Peter: "Do you think it's incumbent upon us to tell them something today?"

Alan (pensive throughout this discussion): "I won't want us to be the reason" they lost the contract.

Fiona: "They will have another deal [with a subcontractor] by Sunday night."

Gradually they were converging on the decision, having discussed first whether to make the call and now how to make it. The call was put in (it was by now 5 o'clock) and a message was left.

The atmosphere eased up. "All right", Peter asked, "do you know how to work it?" Alan was finally getting his Windows '95 lesson on his new computer, with "the least computer literate person in the company teaching me!" Peter just then took another call, informing him that the Group Financial Director had been visited again, to no avail, and that another approach could be made on Monday. So now nothing could change before Monday.

With a "It is a far, far better thing I do...", followed by "Oh shit", Alan made his call. "Good afternoon. I'm trying to contact..." His contact was still at the meeting that forced him to cancel the earlier meeting, so a message was left.

Fiona departed and Peter and Allan turned back to Windows '95. At 5:30 the machine was closed with "That is, really." They discussed briefly a pay raise allocation, which Peter promised to sort out in Alan's absence.

At 5:43, Alan returned to his office, where a message told him how to reach the ICL person on his mobile phone, "to discuss the confirmation that you are really going to give us the supply you arranged with us. We really need to know by the end

of today." Alan sat momentarily and then called the number, but only got voice mail. He left no message. "I don't want to go to the guy who works for him", preferring to speak to the man directly, Alan told me.

"So what do you think of a day in the life of a sales manager?" Alan asked me. "Well, if it's always like this, you don't get bored," I said. He agreed, reiterating the point, as he gathered his papers for Lancaster, that "very much like sales jobs, it's mostly internal."

Fiona stuck her head in to say good-bye. "It's all over", Alan told her as she left. Then Alan S. came in and they reviewed briefly what he had to do in Alan's absence—the pay raises, budget preparation for next year, etc. Alan S. asked: "Were you happy with today?", meaning the morning, and Alan said he "wants it to be more forward looking than backward looking. Rather than hearing things like 'work smarter', I want to hear ideas." Well, "enjoy the course!" Alan S. said as he left at 18:13. After collecting the rest of his papers for Lancaster and trying the number again, Alan departed his office at 6:24.

**Postscript** It was not "all over", not by a long shot. Alan reached the client that evening and conveyed his news. He persuaded the client not to seek an alternative partner, as he was confident the sign-off would be had on Monday. It was, and BT remained the partner for the final bid. That was successful, and the winning consortium was announced in the British House of Commons in May of 1996. In July, one week after Alan returned from the second module of the Masters Program, he signed a supply contract for £100,000 with his client for Europe's largest ISDN (digital) network, and BT's largest single contract under Her Majesty's Government's Private Finance Initiative.

But it was still not over. The U.K. telecommunication regulator, OFTEL, had announced ISDN price cuts from BT to take effect in September of that year. BT's competitors lodged many complaints, and in an unprecedented move, OFTEL withdrew BT's proposed price cuts. A few months later, Alan and his client terminated their contract by mutual consent. BT was now to supply this network through another intermediary, a competitive network operator.

## Interpretation of the Day

**Out of the Middle** Alan managed in the middle of all sorts of things, but we can also say that he made great efforts to manage *out* of the middle.

He was in the middle of a complex hierarchy; he was in the middle of a complicated issue; he was caught in the middle of an ethical dilemma; and he was in the middle of a culture that had to decide where it wanted to be. But rather than being caught in these and other middles, Alan clearly sought to manage his way out of them—out of the constraints. He worked the hierarchy up and down, with his own people, with his boss Peter, and with whomever he could influence indirectly beyond Peter. As Nonaka (1988) titled an article, Alan was the "middle-up-down" manager, who saw his role to push change up the hierarchy as much as to carry directives down it.

**Connecting the Concrete with the Conceptual** Especially interesting about this day was the contrast between the morning and the afternoon. One was so general, so distant from selling, and from customers and contracts, the other was so concrete, about one customer, one contract and how to sell it (internally rather than externally). Of course, Alan was not entirely happy with the morning, as he commented to the other Alan late in the day about wish lists being so common in planning exercises.

There was general in another sense too—about ideas, overviews, concepts. Especially interesting about Alan was his ability to move so easily between the concrete and the conceptual. During this one day, he could be seen trying to work out the most concrete of problems and be heard articulating the most conceptual of views, yet with the two clearly connected in his mind. At one point, Alan expressed a vision of the selling function, at another a vision of where the whole company should be going, both clearly lodged in his selling experience.

**Selling In to Sell Out** Selling is a culture too. And that may be another reason why Alan saw his position as outside the mainstream of BT. His job was not to create or maintain a telephone network. It

was to sell projects, which required the establishment and maintenance of human networks, inside and outside the organization. Granovetter (1973), in an article entitled "The Strength of Weak Ties," wrote about how groups that are weakly linked internally can be more strongly connected externally, and use these connections to protect themselves. In a sense, that is what the selling function is all about: to create those external linkages for the company. But they can come at the price of weaker links internally.

Selling is inductive, in a sense. It is rooted in the specific, the concrete. Everything is "customized," at least in the mind of the many salespeople. And there is nothing to protect this person from the customer, no buffer to the environment. Indeed, the salesperson *is* the buffer, for the rest of the organization.

The salesperson sells what can be sold: what the customers want, or what they can be convinced to want. In that respect, selling is open ended, and salespeople have to live by their wits. Sometimes they have to create, or at least propose creating, what has not yet existed, while the rest of their organizations exist to keep producing what it had been doing. So when a customer wants something new, selling has to become an internal function too: to push everyone else to accept and produce it. The sales manager becomes the promoter of change—in very concrete, specific ways—and if others resist, then the sales manager has to try and shift the culture, the strategy, and the behaviors.

This should be contrasted with marketing, even though the two appear to be similar, and in fact are sometimes confused with each other in title. While selling deals with the specifics, and from these inductively, to the general, marketing deals with aggregations—with clusters of customers—and so tends to be generic, working deductively, from the general to the specifics. Alan's conceptual proclivity was rooted in his understanding of the details as well, as in his own ability to synthesize. And he could promote real change because his job enabled him to sit in the shoes of specific customers. It is not clear that marketing, despite its leap to prominence over selling in so many companies, encourages of these inclinations. Maybe that is why it has become the new bureaucracy in so many companies.

It seems surprising that Alan saw so little of his job as external, in direct contact with the customers. This may have reflected the nature of what his unit sold—big systems rather than little items—also the fact that Alan was not a salesman but a sales *manager*: his job was to help others sell. Nonetheless, Alan's afternoon was mostly concerned with selling, even if internally. Of course, every manager spends a lot of time selling his or her ideas and pet projects. (See Dutton et al., 1997, on "issue selling" to top management.) But in this case, the internal selling was *about* external selling—namely what BT itself was prepared to sell.

**Values in a Mercenary World** Selling, for many of these reasons, does not always have the best of reputations. The salespeoples' weak internal ties, plus their drive to make the sale, sometimes cause them to be seen as the mercenaries of the corporate world. So it was interesting to see how Alan handled the ethical dilemma he faced this day.

Of course, it could be argued that he faced no ethical dilemma: not making that call could have been bad for future business. After all, the salesperson has to keep the customer happy. But I never had the sense that this was really driving Alan. (Also, the massive size of this one contract gives a sense of what Alan stood to gain and lose by these events.)

Despite Alan's brief agony, it was clear throughout what he would do. On this, to return to one of his comments, he needed no education. These are the moments of truth in management, and they seem a long way from some discussion of ethics in a business school classroom (likely preceded and followed by other classes on how to manage shareholder value and market luxury goods to resisting customers). There is some sort of knife edge in such circumstances: whether one goes over one side or stays on the other probably has more to do with internal character and upbringing than anything else, influenced, of course, by the immediately surrounding culture.

**Reversing the Roles** Turning to our model of managerial work, Alan's day had much to do with the core and the outer circle—the heaviness of *framing* and the lightness of *acting*. They appeared to be well balanced in this case, reflected in his ability to move between the conceptual and the concrete. This, too, illustrates Alan's inclination to manage out of the middle.

Alan spent a great deal of time *communicating*—receiving and sending a variety of soft information. Even the afternoon meeting that didn't work out was salvaged by becoming a briefing session. He also spent much of the afternoon concerned with *dealing*, namely acting directly to "do the deal." In a sense, here he was being more the salesman than the sales manager. But as the involvement of Peter as well as the several senior managers of BT made clear (also Jacques Benz in the earlier description), on a contract this big, everyone becomes a "doer".

Overall, this suggests a most determined style of managing, however inductive it may have been. We might call it "spearheading," Alan had a sharp sense of the frame of his job, which he imposed on himself as much as it was imposed on him. He hardly seemed like one to sit back passively and react.

The other roles of the model were in evidence this day, but they were not prominent. On the contrary, Alan made quite clear that they were not his focus, nor representative of his style of managing. *Controlling*, in the sense of formal control system and structures, were clearly present, but mostly imposed on him by the large BT organization. *Leading* and *linking* seemed to be woven in, but as natural parts of the job rather than foci of attention. Alan had built a team, and was building a network of outside contacts, both of which he was consolidating and nurturing.

**Developing Alan?** Given all of the above, did Alan need to be leaving for the International Masters in Practicing Management, beginning in Lancaster? To turn around his own words, he certainly knew how to learn from experience. So did he need some educating?

I was here this day partly to answer the question for myself (or, at least, how such educating could be done). I wanted to see one of the program's participants at work, to understand how our program could help. Now, as other obligations have intervened, I write the first draft of this paper just past the halfway point of Alan's program, nine months later (hopefully an appropriate gestation period). So I have come to know Alan well.

He is delightful to have in the class, one of the most thoughtful participants, and especially creative in many of his comments. He came up to me at the last module, in India, a few weeks ago, and asked a most provocative question: Is this program really succeeding, he wanted to know, if the many ideas coming out in the classroom are not captured in some kind of write-up for others. I was completely thrown by the question—its nature, its ambitiousness, and the fact that it had come from a manager, not a professor. That is a tall order, I responded, but it got me thinking. It was also a direct challenge to me, since I am the one, present in the class throughout, who writes about management.

Ideas are seeds; it takes a fair amount of work to develop any one into something useful. In this regard, they are like customer contacts. Look what Alan had to go through for the Project Dryden. How many leads can a good salesman pursue?

In class, however, the seeds are left to grow naturally, or not to take root at all: in a human mind, it can be difficult to tell the difference. Like the seeds of pine trees, they can lie dormant for decades and suddenly spring forth (in that case of the pine seeds, after a fire). In class, Alan has come to know all sorts of different cultures—different functions, different organizations, different nationalities. This has doubtlessly broadened his experience considerably. He has heard all kinds of different ideas, concepts, and theories. This has hopefully extended his thoughtfulness. Competences have been shared and sometimes practiced. This has presumably improved his managerial skills.

A few days into the program, we heard Professor Nonaka of Japan talk about tacit and explicit knowledge, and about how the Japanese tend to focus on the former, the Anglo-Saxon countries on the latter (see Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Likewise, Japanese management development is largely about imbibing tacit knowledge tacitly—by moving people across functions, and establishing mentoring relationships. The Anglo-Saxon, and especially American, view of management development is largely about teaching explicit knowledge explicitly—through training in technique and lecturing about knowledge. Alan has swum in that culture all his life, although he certainly functions beyond that. Indeed, his development before the program had largely been, like the Japanese, learning on the job—which he apparently did quite effectively.

Professors like Nonaka and managers like Alan succeed by making tacit knowledge explicit—to articulate the same deep-rooted processes. We have also done some of this in the program too, for example through what we call "competency sharing," where the participants share experiences about how they actually perform certain skills, such as networking or reflecting in a busy job. This is meant to be a form of consciousness raising, so that people can be more aware of their own managerial styles and impacts.

There is one relationship left, from the explicit to the tacit. That is important too, as learning becomes internalized. This must happen on the job, and so there is a requirement in the program to write "Reflection Papers": after each two weeks module (there are five of them), back on the job, the participating managers are asked to revisit the material of the module and connect whatever of it seems relevant to themselves, their jobs, their companies. By so reinforcing the learning, we hope to help the managers internalize it.

So maybe there can be a profound relationship between the managing described in the *Managing* book and the learning that can take place in a classroom. I certainly hope so. But I cannot write the last word: Alan and other managers have to do that, because only those who practice management can find the answer to how learning can be used for better managing. So I throw Allan's challenge back to him and his colleagues. Here we have exactly the kind of write-up Alan was calling for: trying to capture the ideas of the classroom. They will make a difference, if they deserve to, only if people in practice can make something of them, whether explicitly or tacitly.

## **Managing Laterally (with a Vengeance)**

**Brian A. Adams**

**Director, Global Express, Bombardier Aerospace (Montreal, 8 March 1996)**

*This day took place in the realm of program management, concerning the development of a new airplane, in a structure labeled "extended adhocracy". Management here was lateral instead of hierarchical, to link and deal especially with partners in the program.*

Brian Adams made it clear at the outset that he was a *program* manager, rather than a project manager, since—as these terms were used at Bombardier Aerospace—his responsibility for the development of the new Global Express airplane involved him in procurement, including complex relationships with subcontractors, as well as with manufacturing, finance, and marketing. (In this company, "project management" involved just engineering.) The Global Express was an ambitious program for an ambitious company, designed to have the largest cabin and the longest range (New York to Tokyo) of any corporate



jet ever built. It was a \$30 U.S. million “family addition” to both the Canadair Challenger, in its day also a bold initiative (the first wide fuselage corporate jet and the first civilian jet of any kind put into production in Canada) and the more recent Regional Jet, a small commercial aircraft (for 50 passengers) that had considerable success since going into production in 1990.

Canadair, located in Montreal, was bought some years earlier by Bombardier, to initiate its Aerospace Division. The company had a long history of aircraft and parts production, both commercial and military, and perhaps remained best known for its “amphibian” firefighting aircraft that scoop water from lake or sea to dump on forest fires. The company had its ups and downs, in and out of state ownership, before the government of Canada sold it to Bombardier in 1986 for \$140 million.

Bombardier started with its invention of the snowmobile, which originally looked like a frail tank, to take people across the winter wilderness of Quebec. That eventually became the small and sleek Ski-Doo (named serendipitously, when a sign maker put an “o” instead of “g” on “Ski-Dog”), which created and dominated the international market for the snow sports vehicles. The Sea-Doo eventually followed, a look-alike product for the water, and the company then successfully branched into larger transportation vehicles, notably subway and railway cars, before leaping into the aircraft business. To Canadair, Bombardier added de Havilland of Toronto, known for its commercial turboprop Dash aircraft, Learjet in the United States, a manufacturer of small private jet aircraft, and the associated Shorts Group in Northern Ireland, that manufactured aircraft parts. In ten years, the Bombardier Aerospace Group has grown to become the third largest manufacturer of civil aircraft in the world. In 1998, all of Bombardier had sales of \$8.4 billion and 47,000 employees worldwide.

After studying Quality Engineering, Brian Adams joined Canadair as a young man in 1980, arriving just as the Challenger was being put into production, He rode its ups and downs ever since. The Global Express was conceived in early 1991; in mid 1995, nine months earlier, Brian was put in charge of its development because the head of the division felt the program needed stronger management—a harder push.

## Description of the Day

Brian came to get me at 8:30 at the entrance to the building, a gigantic facility in suburban Montreal. We headed for his office—small with a desk and a meeting table. His job was to pull a vast group together—Figure 1 shows 23 “work packages”—including not only the four Bombardier producers but also Mitsubishi in Japan for the Wing and Center Fuselage, Lucas in the United Kingdom for the Electrical System, Honeywell in the United States for Avionics, a joint venture of BMW/Rolls-Royce for the Power Plants, and eight other international partners.

Brian described his work as more liaison than authority, having to coordinate with peers. Yet ultimate authority rested with him: as expressed in a meeting later in the day, “What we have to do is get a basic airplane in the air and go from there.” The date was set as September 1996. \* Brian said he had to watch over the entire program, and draw his immediate technical team (the “engineering gurus”) into the non-technical issues. Each of these people currently had responsibility for one part of the aircraft, including liaison with the partner that was designing and building it.

Brian was especially concerned about delays in the delivery of the engines. Gulfstream was ahead of Bombardier on a competing plane, a stretch version of an existing one, and so having that test flight in September was crucial—to show customers tangible results.

There were various brief telephone calls and people dropping in, about plans for a meeting and specifications for a “reduced vertical separation minimum,” etc. Then Stephane, Brian’s “right-hand man” (who would be with him much of this day), and just back from Toronto, came in to go over charts on the “Dry-run corporate review”. They discussed who had delivered, who was

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\* I wished to study Brian partly because I wanted to observe this kind of management and partially, I wanted to get a sense of some of the managers about to join our masters program (as in the case of Alan Whelan). A day before Brian was to fly to the first two week module, his boss forced him to cancel because of pressures of the deadline for the plane.

late, and what to emphasize in the presentation. Brian asked: "So, is there a way of doing the testing faster?" and Stephane replied: "There is a problem with one part: it blew up; we have to redesign it." Brian showed Stephane a letter, pointing to a list of "All the problems, all the problems!"

At 9:20 Brian took a short drive to the headquarter of the Aerospace Division, where he had a meeting with two of its senior financial people, on that dry-run for the upcoming meeting with Bombardier's corporate committee, including the Chairman and President.

After discussing briefly some problems with space and small tensions with de Havilland in Toronto, they went into the finances, with Brian proposing who could present what at the meeting. As they wound down, Brian asked: "Anything shocking?" "Nothing" was the reply, as well as "We're on schedule, on budget!"

At 10 o'clock, it was downstairs and into the project offices, with many people milling about. A staff meeting had just broken up, and the next one was about to begin, at a long table, with about a dozen people, including Brian and Stephane. A thick pile of papers, 34 pages in all, was circulated, full of detailed charts, graphs, and tables, concerning "Key Engineering Planning and Control Issues" on Global Express, "Week Ending March 21, 1996."

This was an informal group, a bit rambunctious, mostly engineers in their 40's continuously coming and going. They were obviously used to working with each other in this weekly meeting, held to coordinate the work of the different engineering teams. Here they reviewed different technical aspects of the project, some concerning specific parts of the airplane, in all cases to flag problems and ensure that the schedule was maintained. Specific people piped in on specific issues, for example, "Who needs to be there?" or "Does anyone here see the need for a mock-up of the floor panels?" Unlike everyone else, Brian sat back, away from the table. Mostly he listened, occasionally he became directive (e.g., "The priority is to get [a particular test] built as quickly as possible").

At one point, David, a participant, sitting in the back of the room, who had been quiet to this point (working on his PC, in fact), commented with some drama: "All the Gulfstream planes are on the ground. There is, right at this moment, not one engine flying...or ready to fly." (A Bombardier engineer stationed at the engine manufacturer had heard this in a pub and informed David the day before.) This suggested that not only was Gulfstream having a problem, but so too might Bombardier, since it was using the same engines, and the longer it took to supply the first ones to Gulfstream, the longer it could take to supply them to Bombardier. This hit the group hard. "What it amounts to", David added, "is that we have a disaster on our hands." Everything could be pushed back, he claimed, but he said he didn't know for how long.

They discussed the "need to monitor everything *now*" and to send a team over to the engine plant as soon as it would be allowed in. Someone made a comment about this "Black Friday".

It was now almost 12:30, and a secretary came in to announce that it was time to vacate the room for another meeting. The person in the chair reacted by locking the door after she left. The meeting did terminate soon after, at 12:43.

After a quick lunch, Brian, with Stephane, headed back to the other building, where at 1:30 he opened another meeting, with about twenty people, including some from de Havilland, responsible in one way or another for the work that was to follow. Most were from production, some from promotion and marketing. (The only one in the room who reported to Brian was Stephane.) The specific intention was different from the earlier meeting (here a briefing on what was to come), as were the functions represented and the way they were organized. But the broader purpose—to coordinate their efforts—and the complexity of what had to be done, seemed similar.

Brian began by explaining the Global Express program and then showed a short marketing video about it, which ended with "First Flight, September 1996." The meeting was called, he explained, so that they could all work together to make it happen, also to make sure they all knew what was coming. He then turned the chair over to the person in charge of Experimental Shops, who listed the steps in testing, beginning with "1. Complete the frame static test", and ending with "10. Dynamic testing". He then passed the chair over to someone else who presented more overheads, largely checklists for organizing the discussion. All kinds of questions followed, some quite aggressive, for example about having "a structure [that] we should be modifying—today."

We were back in Brian's office at 3:12. A brief call came soon after—it's "my boss", Brian said—and Brian did most of the talking: we "just had a good meeting", he said, "everybody in manufacturing now realizes the extensive workload. Monday we're going to sit down in a smaller group to do the detailed [manpower] planning." Mostly they discussed specific problems, about subcontractors, the union, and "eleven thousand hours of outstanding work."

Then Stephane dropped in and they chatted briefly about the afternoon meeting, which Stephane referred to as "kosher but cool". At about 3:30, the manager of Quality Assurance joined as scheduled, handing out a nine page "action plan" that specified "key milestones", challenges, and responsibilities about quality, which were reviewed and corrected as they went along. Brian and Stephane were rather directive, repeatedly asking for "commitment dates" in place of "current dates". The meeting ended at 4:06.

Several calls and drop-ins followed, and then things began to slow down, for the first time since early morning. Brian explained to me how, when he took over the program, he and the team went to a retreat off-site and realized that they needed

better structure, not clearer mandates. "So we split the plane up", with different people taking responsibility for the different parts and liaisons with the partners producing them.

At 4:30, a call came from Los Angeles, from a "problem supplier"—actually a sub-subcontractor, Brian explained. Earlier, fearing a crisis, and concerned that the subcontractor was not on top of it, he had set aside niceties (as well as the decision about who would pay the costs) and dispatched one of his people to Los Angeles, who had since been there five weeks. The call was to request an extension of his mandate. Brian promised he would help to make it happen: "I'll give you all my support to keep the engineering guy there." The call ended after five minutes, with Brian explaining to me that all three of his current problems were with sub-subcontractors, not partners. In this case, after he had met with the partner, he smelled a problem and flew to Los Angeles himself. In an hour he knew he was right—they had leveled with him, but not with the partner—which suggested that a "partner" could sometimes be not much more than a subcontractor.

Stephane dropped in for a moment to discuss scheduling for his trip the next week to Toronto, and then, at 4:50, Brian suggested a "short shop floor tour", which actually took almost half an hour. The facility there was immense: two million square feet—big enough to assemble a good-sized airplane, as well as to have its own rainstorms!

As we returned, about 5:15, Brian was ready to leave, off to have a beer with Stephane to discuss some personal issues. "What a day!" I said as we walked to his office, and he replied, "It's not so bad; I just had to sit and listen. Some days..." We were back in the office when Stephane, on the phone, was saying, "Ah, he's just back now..."

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On July 31, 1998, the Global Express obtained the Canadian Department of Transport Certification, within two months of the target date set five years earlier.

## Interpretation of the Day

**Lateral Management** At one point I had written in my notes, "Who actually works for Brian?" He had his team, some members of which came and went briefly during the day, except for Stephane, who was there most of the time. But he was almost like a personal assistant, although he seemed to take line responsibility for Toronto, at least until Brian could move there. And each member of Brian's own team mirrored his own lateral responsibilities, in maintaining liaison with the "partners". Thus *linking* was not only a key managerial role for Brian, but a key purpose of his organizational unit.

The structure here was very much an "adhocracy" (Mintzberg, 1979, Ch. 21), really an *extended* adhocracy in fact, since the huge project extended well beyond the boundaries of the company. Brian and his team coordinated the teams that each coordinated other teams, all over the corporate map as well as the world.

Brian's job was thus lateral management—with a vengeance. He had enormous responsibility, yet not a great deal of formal authority over the people involved. Even his more vertical contacts during the day felt lateral—with the finance executives at division headquarters, for example, and with his own people dealing with the suppliers. Lateral is probably a better word than horizontal, since these contacts were mostly outside the chain of command, yet often with people at different levels in their own hierarchies. Given the time pressures, the formalities of hierarchy apparently mattered less than just getting the job done.

In fact, the relationships may have been more lateral than anyone cared to admit, since the "partners"—the subcontractors, responsible for parts of the airplane—seemed on a few telling occasions to be more like suppliers, which put them in a somewhat "subordinate position. (Bear in mind that painted on the side of the Global Express would be "Bombardier," not "Consortium.") There was discussion of this in one meeting, and it was evident too in Brian's trip to Los Angeles to visit a subcontractor directly.

**Linking above all, and especially for Dealing** If the purpose of the unit and the job of its manager were essentially lateral, then the most prominent managerial roles had to be the external ones—notably *linking* on the people level and *dealing* on the action level.

This was a day of *linking* especially. It may have been largely inside the company, but also outside Brian's own unit. And much of that was for purposes of linking to outsiders, especially the subcontractors. Brian was truly in the middle, every which way. He sat at the hub of an enormous network, and somehow had to keep it all on track.\*

But the linking for Brian was especially for purposes of *dealing*. His search was for problems—for anything that could have impeded getting that plane off the ground on time—and then to resolve them. If *doing* in the model is about working on specifics internally, and *dealing* is about so working with outsiders, then while Brian clearly did both, but dealing seemed more central to his job, at least blended with the doing. The best example of this was Brian's quick decision to fly to the subcontractors' facility in Los Angeles.

But Brian's was not a classical job of "management by exception." It was the management of exceptions. He was there to find them and ensure that they were dealt with. Brian was managing a development program, not a routine operation. The designing had been more or less completed, as well as the overall planning; his job was to ensure the successful execution of these plans, and that meant dealing with anything that could throw them off course.

**A Driven Frame** If frame in the model ranges from vague to clear, and from imposed to invented, then Brian's was obviously clear and imposed, and so his style could be labeled "driven." It is hard to imagine the frame of any other managerial job being more driven in this sense.

His job was to "get it in the air," Brian said at one point---and he meant on a precise date—"then we'll see." Or, perhaps more accurately, then *they'll* decide. *That* was where hierarchy came in. At another point, Brian said about some scheduled costs: "We're bang on." He may have had to deal with enormous ambiguities in his job, but assessment of his performance was not one of them.

So this was not a job about strategic thinking, but about acting and problem solving—getting the big job done. That required great ingenuity and skill, but not setting direction; other people did that. Not that there was any absence of conceptual thinking: Brian clearly showed an ability to handle things on a conceptual as well as concrete level. Perhaps, then, we should be talking here about *strategic maneuvering* rather than strategic thinking.

As noted in Chapter 3 of the book, *linking* in managerial work is significantly about protecting or buffering the unit from outside pressures. Here, to the contrary, it was about highlighting the pressures so that they could be dealt with quickly and effectively, before crises arose. To get a new airplane into the air on a certain date, *everything* must come together. So Brian had to pass along the pressures to make sure they were dealt with, while absorbing a great deal of those pressures himself.

**Blending the Roles** There was not a lot of evident *controlling* in Brian's work this day, in the conventional sense of designing structures, issuing directives, and operating systems of control from his own people. There was, for example, a mention about having reorganized the structure, but little more.

*Controlling* was, however, more evident in two other ways. First was Brian's *extended* controlling into the supplier organizations, indicative of the overall blending of internal and external aspects of the job. It is instructive, for example, that the few directives Brian gave directly, in the morning meeting, went laterally, to people over whom Brian had no formal authority. It is even more instructive how directive Brian was when he flew past his subcontractor, past even established contacts as well as line items on his budget, to Los Angeles to deal with that problem.

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\* See Mintzberg and Van der Heyden (2000), where we describe the "organigraph" of this company as a chain of moving hubs.

And second, the program Brian headed was clearly inundated with controls, of a rather formal nature—systems, procedures, schedules, and plans, plus techniques galore for each of them. Just consider those thick handouts at several of the meetings, loaded with charts, graphs, and figures. But these were the organization's controls, part of the overall system, not Brian's own controls.

*Leading* was present but not prominent on this day. Brian had a team, he had to spend time reinforcing its effectiveness, and he went out with Stephane after hours in a leadership role. But, like controlling, while leading is ostensibly an internal role, here it seemed to blend into linking externally. The classical view of managers who "lead" their "subordinates"—motivate and coach them, build teams, and enhance culture for them in the organization—seemed here to happen significantly on the outside, with regard to engineers in other units of the company and people in other companies altogether. So we find *extended leadership* too, but with a particular nuance. Like a sheep dog, Brian could not order these people around, but rather bark at them, coax them, and nudge them on to the required course, intervening repeatedly with little corrective actions.

With such a shift from inside to outside focus seems to come a necessary shift from the information plane of managing to its people plane: managing as less directive, more convincing than controlling. This is probably true of many managerial jobs these days, but seems especially so in such a highly networked situation.

It should be added here that there was no shortage of *communicating* this day, every which way. This was clearly critical to all that Brian did, whether hard (exemplified by all those planning documents), or soft including impressions etc. from all kinds of sources (such as that intelligence gathered at the pub near the engine manufacturer).

**A Blended Style of Managing** To conclude our discussion of this day, we can describe Brian's apparent management style as itself a blend. The imposed frame, accompanied by the plethora of techniques, suggest a very directed, determined, and convergent, or deductive, approach—to keep things on the established track. Yet the emphasis on problem solving also implies considerable inductiveness, or divergence, in the work—creative resolution of the unexpected. Accordingly, Brian's style could be described as a balance of the cerebral with the insightful, above all craft more than art or science. Brian seemed to be the true engineer.

## II. MANAGING IN GOVERNMENT\*

Managing may be managing, but the public sector is not the private sector. In fact, the differences within each can be as great that between them. Just as managing a corner grocery store is hardly the same as managing Power Corporation, so managing in a national park is hardly the same as managing in the federal Department of Justice. Government touches almost every aspect of life, and so is almost as varied as life itself.

This chapter considers a day in the working life of nine managers in the Canadian government, presented mostly in clusters. (Each day is described and interpreted separately before conceptual interpretations are drawn about the cluster of them together.) All were civil servants, in one sense or other. (It should be noted that in Canada, unlike the United States in particular, career civil servants run most of the public sector, the most senior of whom report directly to the minister, who sits in the federal cabinet as head of the department.)

We begin with managers on the edges, close to the ground, where, surprisingly, the real politics seem to take place. Three days in succession are described in the work of three managers in hierarchical succession: the head of the Western Region of Parks Canada, the head of the Banff National Park within that region, and the front-country manager of that park. All kinds of edges were encountered here.

Our second cluster takes us to a very different realm of government, the federal police force, again at three levels, from the head of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, to the head of a region of that force, to the commander of a detachment in that region. All this managing was rather calm, at least compared with the parks.

The third cluster takes us into the heart of what is normally seen as governmental activity, the Department of Justice (and Attorney General), one day with the head of the department and another with the manager of a policy unit within it.

Finally we look at something a bit different, and furthest from direct political influence—the manager of a radio station in Ottawa of the public Canadian broadcaster, the CBC.

### Managing on the Edges

*If you really want to see politics in action, you would do well to leave the lofty debates of the capital and come down on the ground, where the bears searching for food cause the truckers to fight with the tourists. In three days, spent successfully with the head of the Western Region of Parks Canada, the head of the Banff Park in that region, and the front-country manager of that park, we find managing on all kinds of tricky edges.*

The following is a quotation from the book *Edges*, by Ray Rafael:

Many of the most interesting things, say the biologists, happen on the Edges—on the interface between the woods and the field, the land and the sea. There, living organisms encounter dynamic conditions that give rise to untold variety. Scientific studies of bird populations reveal that "forest edge" species are generally more abundant than those which confine their territory to the interior of the forest. The inter-tidal zone,

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\* With the exception of the last day, on Doug Ward, the rest were arranged by the Canadian Centre for Management Development of the Government of Canada. I wish to express my special thanks to Ralph Heintzman for doing this, as well as for his many thoughtful comments over the years. All these write-ups were published in different form in H. Mintzberg and J. Bourgoault, *Managing Publicly*. (Toronto: The Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 2000).

meanwhile, that thin ribbon which separates the land from the sea, supports a plurality of life uniquely adapted to both air and water... Variety, perhaps, but there is tension as well. The flora of the meadows, as they approach the woodlands, find themselves coping with increasingly unfavorable conditions: the sunlight they need might be lacking, and the soil no longer feels right. There is also the problem of competition with alien species of trees and shrubs. The Edges, in short, might abound with life, but each living form must fight for its own. (1976:5-6)

When I asked Gord Irwin late in the day I spent with him about a most curious division of labor—the separation between the "front country" that he managed in Canada's Banff National Park and the "back country" that a colleague of his looked after—he laughed. They tried to pin that down in Ottawa, he said, designating the dividing line as 50 meters off the road. In fact, the back country people looked after the trails right from the road, while his responsibility for emergency response included the entire park.\*

This story serves, not only as a wonderful illustration of what one can observe in the management of parks, but also as an apt metaphor, perhaps best described as managing on the edges. For here, ironically, despite the ambiguities in pinning down this physical edge, it is in fact crystal clear compared with some of the other, more symbolic edges, administrative and political, encountered in these surroundings. Going out to a mountain park thinking about nature and forgetting about human nature sets one up for quite a surprise.

Here we consider three managers of Parks Canada, in hierarchical succession, on three successive days: Sandy Davis, Western Regional Director, at her headquarters in Calgary; Charlie Zinkan, Superintendent of the Banff National Park, at his headquarters in Banff, Alberta; and Gord Irwin, Park Warden in Banff (for the front country), at the operations office near Banff. Together these three days provided a fascinating insight, not only into management in this particular sphere of government, but also into a pronounced form of the political pressures encountered in the public sector.

## **Politics on the Edge**

This is only the most physically evident form of conflict between factions that compete for different uses of the park. My observation of other officials in the Canadian public service, reported in after this, did not prepare me for the intensity of the political situation faced out here. Far from the federal capital, in these superb natural settings, politics seem to come out much more sharply and overtly. Perhaps the edges are clearer out here.

The most politically evident battlefield during these three days, for many years in fact, was conflict between the developers and the environmentalists. Both had their agendas—one to use the parks for their commercial purposes, the other to preserve the natural state of the parks. These could be competing agendas, of course, but what had turned natural friction into almost overt war had been the propensity of both sides to view this as a zero-sum game.

Sitting between all this were the managers of the parks, monitored closely by the press looking for good stories, the politicians wishing to accommodate their supporters while minimizing political fallout, and the public servants in the national capitol intent on avoiding scandal. Watching it all unfold in the field can get one thinking about whether the real "civilization" is not in the back country.

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\* Gord presumably had this responsibility for historical reasons — he spent a part of his career developing the Park's renowned expertise in mountain rescue. But one could also argue that the helicopters were kept, serviced in, and left from the front country.

The burning issue at this time was a proposed new parking lot for a ski hill in Banff National Park. Its owner was a rather aggressive businessman, well connected to the (then) ruling Progressive Conservative Party as well as the (then) sitting member of Parliament from this area, herself also with a reputation for aggressiveness. The parking lot was being hotly contested by environmental groups that claimed it would block a major traverse used by several species of animals, and add to the accumulating loss of old growth forest. The issue began in the front country—Gord's unit worked on an initial report and made recommendations—but it quickly escalated, not just past the front country and the park itself, but beyond Sandy's region to the whole Parks service, and then into the Department of the Environment (to which Parks Canada then reported, more recently, it had been shifted to the new "Heritage Department", as we shall see), and from there to the political level. Finally the whole "file" was managed in Ottawa. All this over a tiny plot of land in a country of ten million square kilometers.

Not that this shifting of the dossier freed these three managers from the issue. Quite the contrary; it was a central concern in both the Park and Regional headquarters on these days of observation. So one begins to get an idea of just how convoluted managing on the edges can be, between the developers and the environmentalists, the politicians and the public servants, and the truckers and the tourists in the front country combined with the bears from the back country.\*

## **The Three Managers**

Sandy Davis, Regional Director General of Parks Canada at the time, was responsible for eighteen parks (with nine million visitors annually), a staff of 2,200 people, and a budget of \$110,000,000 (Cdn.). She worked in a modern government office building in Calgary, held an MBA, and had been with the Corrections Service in Ottawa before joining the Parks service in 1988. She was considered a person who got things done and as being sympathetic to the legacy of the parks.

Charlie Zinkan headed up of one of these parks, Banff, perhaps the best known internationally and, in fact, the origin of the whole Canadian parks system. (In 1885, two years after some railway workers chanced upon some hot springs near what is now the town of Banff, the Government of Canada set aside an area around them as a park reserve.) Charlie worked in an impressive stone building, a landmark that looked down on to the main street of the town of Banff and then out to the mountains beyond. He wore his warden outfit to work, having spent his career in the parks he knew intimately.

Gord Irwin, as Park Warden in Banff National Park, worked in a prefabricated-type building on the outskirts of Banff, part of a small complex that housed some of the Park's equipment (such as trucks and snow removal machines). Gord reported to Charlie who reported to Sandy.

### **Sandy Davis, regional director general**

**(Calgary Alberta, 12 August, 1993)**

## **Description of the Day**

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\* Let alone the edges within ourselves: On a hike I did a few days later with the owner of a rustic lodge in the back country of a nearby provincial park—a five-hour hike from the nearest road—as a helicopter whirred overhead, he commented sarcastically on people who "have a nice lunch at the Banff Springs Hotel and then take a little tour of the Rockies in the afternoon." Yet his lodge functioned because those same helicopters shuttled his guests, in and out. The edges can get thin indeed at these high altitudes.



I arrived at Sandy Davis' Calgary office at 8:30 for what she described as a fairly normal "in the office" day. We chatted for about twenty minutes while she described the running of the parks: these are municipalities of sorts, a good deal of whose work involves the daily routine of removing the garbage, ploughing the roads, and ticketing the speeding motorists.

Her daily briefing followed at 8:50, with her own reports, the discussion ranging from information sharing to scheduling to making certain decisions. It proceeded briskly, with Sandy taking a rather hands-on posture of advising and sometimes directing. She briefed the others on her recent contacts with Ottawa, followed by discussion of some brewing problems—of staff appointments and a protest in one park that could turn violent." Any other 'hot' issues?" Sandy asked at one point, to which she received the reply that "There's a couple of lukewarm ones," including a railways spill and complaints about a trail closure in a park (the goats came down this time of year, followed by the bears who might have menaced the people). They also discussed links with the Heritage Department people in Vancouver. The meeting ended at 9:50.

After some brief encounters in the hall, a more formal meeting was convened with Sandy and the Region's two planning people as well as the Director of National Parks Operations, with four items on the written agenda. The first concerned the construction of a new facility, and again Sandy factored in the political dimension, expressing concern about the level of the expenditure just before an election. The next item seemed even more delicate: about approving a newsletter announcing a government-native band agreement on a new wilderness site. Sandy wanted it checked carefully.

Item 3, "my favorite topic" said Sandy, concerned the "Four Mountain Parks Planning Program," with a newsletter announcing a five-year review and inviting public participation. Sandy suggested some specific changes, including mention of the "heritage" aspect, which because of the new ministry for the parks "I think is absolutely critical").

Item 4 concerned the "Strategic Plan: Program Update." A 20-page draft was handed out, called "Defining Our Destiny—Leadership through Excellence." It included sections on the mandate, the mission, a vision statement, and ten "values" (ranging from pride in heritage to respect for "strategic thinking linked to strategic action"), and eight "strategic priorities and objectives" described at some length (including "effectively managing protected areas," "commemorating and protecting cultural heritage," and "organizational excellence").

The meeting ended at 11:03, at which point Sandy turned to me and said "Henry, let's go for a walk!" The building was being renovated in an open, cheerful way, and as we walked, Sandy greeted many people and introduced herself to the ones she didn't know. We were back in the office in about fifteen minutes and then a call came through that she had placed earlier to the new Assistant Deputy Minister, her boss. She welcomed him to his job, suggested a trip to Ottawa to brief him on the issues, and commented on a number of them, including the parking lot.

This was followed by a conference call among her people, including Charlie Zinkan at Banff, about the parking lot. They discussed location and a report being prepared. At one point, Sandy turned to me and said, "If you want to know what the biggest waste of a manager's time is, it's this sort of thing," referring to the level of detail of the conversation. Sandy intervened at one point to reiterate how contentious the issue was, how the minister might react to it, and what was her own preferred course of action. "As soon as a final recommendation is made, both sides are prepared to go to war." At 12:30, it was off to lunch, with the group that had attended the early morning meeting. "A lot of my job is mediating," Sandy said over lunch, and when I drew the model of managerial work, she pointed to the center and said "I'm that point in the hourglass."

Back at 2:25, including ten minute drives each way and discussions over lunch, Sandy turned briefly to her mail, signing bills and letters, etc. "The amount of mail I see is quite small," she said, estimating that she spent about 40% of her time dealing with issues, half outside the unit, and considerable time with her own staff, including about 30% visiting the parks.

A few minutes later, Sandy went into an "open forum" that she chaired of whoever wished to come from the regional office. Nine people showed up, mostly new, younger members of the staff, a few of whom Sandy had not yet met. She introduced herself to them and announced, "This is your session. Ask anything you like. No repercussions," and then turned to their questions. "How do you new guys like working for Parks Canada?" she asked at one point. "Great"; "like the atmosphere," and from one person who wanted to work in a park itself, "The closer you get to the parks, the more relaxed people are." Someone said "I'm not sure what you do. Heard there is supposed to be a clash of thunder behind it. So what do you do and how much power do you have?" Sandy talked about being a civil servant in a line job of delivery program operations, and about her responsibility for budgets, staffing, and development, etc. She ducked the second question by saying "it depends how you want to define power!" She was not rushed, and after an hour, as the questions petered out, she thanked everyone, expressed her availability to them, and said goodbye to each by name.

At 3:45, we went into a meeting of all the region's directors, ten people in all, called, as it turned out, to give them an opportunity to meet me. I raised the issue of managing in the middle, between the park operations and the Ottawa

headquarters, and about "empowering" versus controlling. Sandy talked about "a foundation [in the strategic plans, etc.] that creates a common understanding," which reduces the need for direct controlling, she said, although frustration was also expressed with the "paper trail" required in government. When I discussed my surprise at coming out to study the fresh air of the parks and finding the extent of the political conflict, asking if this was reflective only of that particular morning, one of the senior directors said "That's pretty well it!" The discussion lasted for about 25 minutes before Sandy briefed everyone on a few other issues.

Back in her office at 4:30, Sandy tried to call back the Member of Parliament for Banff, who had left a message, and then three of her staff people came in to review budgets. With a mention of a park that was running over budget, Sandy said "You call him and tell him that if he wants to be working for the Parks Department next year, he had better do something. This is a first warning; if I call, he'll be in my office." A call came in from a senior official in the Heritage Department in Ottawa, whom Sandy briefed for about five minutes on a meeting that had been held, including the "animosity" that had been expressed. They then turned back to the budget review, and at 5:00, they left and the regular day ended, although Sandy and I stayed and talked for some time.

When I mentioned how attuned she was to the political dimension and how she seemed to overlay that on the administrative process, Sandy said "That's my value added." But could not the broad view become the disconnected view, I asked. "I work very hard at that. I know the parks and I know the issues... I've been to every one of the parks numerous times." The difficulty, of course, was the "dichotomous mandate of protection and preservation," which she and her people tried to make into one continuum through the concept of "sustainability." But as this day and the next two made clear, that was no easy task.

## Interpretation of the Day

**Linking Up with Controlling Down** On this day, Sandy appeared to be a *linker* above all, overlaying the political dimension on the issues and operations of her region. She was certainly attuned to and astute about these issues and seemed highly informed. In this sense, she could be described as "managing up" (in terms of conventional notions of hierarchy) to the senior levels of her service, the department in Ottawa, and on to the political level—as a kind of horizontal edge hovering over her region.

Networking and communicating thus seemed to be the critical activities, to help her unit deal with the highly contentious issues that bombarded it. The parks are places where certain opposing forces square off, and the people who run the parks necessarily become the mediators, Sandy pointed out.

But this did not seem to translate into much *dealing per se*. Clearly there had to be some negotiations with outside interests, but perhaps not all that much doing of self-initiated deals. When I asked if she saw herself as a "referee" in the disputes, said she preferred the label "objective intervener."

With regard to managing *into* her unit, according to what I saw and had indicated to me, Sandy seemed to be less a doer than an indirect controller and leader. The *controlling* role was clearly evident in the budget discussions and the clear directives she issued on numerous occasions throughout the day, but she also placed emphasis on the systems aspect of controlling, namely tools such as formal planning.

*Leading* came through most clearly, and in rather pure form, in that meeting with the new staff—an impressive exercise in how to bring people on board—as well as in her encouraging comments to a number of the regional people during the day.

At times Sandy came close to *doing*. For example, when expressing herself on a new problem brewing in one of the parks, the line between issuing directives of how she wanted something done and actually taking charge of getting it done seemed to become rather thin. But overall, Sandy seemed to function more on the information and people planes than on that of action.

**Professional Management** As for managerial style, Sandy was evidently a highly determined person, and rather driven in her work, with a sharp frame in her mind. This was partly imposed by the nature of her job and partly selected by Sandy to reflect her own view of it. In overall style, Sandy

seemed to be rather close to the "professional manager." Her determination suggested more of a deliberate, deductive approach to framing, likewise a rather cerebral orientation in general.

The clearest evidence of this appeared in the "strategic planning" activities of the day, obviously championed by her, with their mandate, mission, vision, etc. Yet this took place amidst a fast-moving political context that forced people to depend on soft data, quick impressions, rapid moves, and good contacts—all of which seem antithetical to these formal systems and statements. Sandy Davis would likely have argued that these were complementary. But it is far from obvious how one reconciles "Our mission: To sustain the integrity, health, diversity, majesty and beauty of Western Canada's Cultural and National Heritage" (Parks Canada, 1993, point 2.1) with a knock-down, drag-out battle over a parking lot.

## **Charlie Zinkan, Superintendent of the Banff National Park (Banff, Alberta, 13 August 1993)**

### **Description of the Day**

The headquarters of the Banff National Park sits just beyond and above the heart of the town of Banff, Alberta, in an impressive building originally created as a spa and recently restored. Charlie Zinkan occupied a large office that looked down onto the main street. But belying that image was the low-key atmosphere inside—easy, friendly, and very much giving the impression that one was now in the park. In fact, Charlie was in a park's uniform, while some of the other people there wore jeans.

Charlie suggested I come in at 8:00, when his daily one-hour French class began. Since it was required for his bilingual position, he thought it could be considered part of his managerial work.

The class ended at 9:05, and we continued to chat (in English). He expected a light load this day, although "Some days it is almost impossible to escape this place." There used to be seven layers of management in the park, he said, but now, with a budget of \$10,000,000, including 270 people full-time and another 500 in the summer, and about 30-50 managers, it was down to three, sometimes four. There were a set of units dealing with central administration (finance, human resources, planning, communication), and others with the park services (leases, roads, campgrounds, law enforcement and public safety, conservation, and the front and back country services).

At 9:20, in the midst of going over the chart, the man in charge of program services came in for about five minutes. He talked of conflict (with a developer), referred to "licking our wounds," and "just wanted to let you know" what was done, with which Charlie agreed, commenting that "better we did it than you." They also discussed a problem with the accounting system.

Then came a call from the manager of a power company, concerned with environmentalist efforts to stop an energy supply project, and requesting a meeting. Charles explained some of the concerns of the environmental groups and suggested that early September might be best for the meeting. The manager continued, referring to the role of his company as not trying to involve itself in the management of the park but rather as providing services within the park. He also referred to a colleague's tendency of sabre rattling, intervening politically at the federal level. The call lasted 21 minutes, during most of which Charlie listened politely.

In between other calls (scheduling mostly), we chatted. Before the reorganization, morale was a serious problem in the park, Charlie said. It was a struggle to get the managers to be less directive, especially given the political pressures to centralize decision making and the fact that the science was not really up to the ecological questions that got raised. Charlie believed that classic top-down control in government was incompatible with the highly educated people attracted to work in the parks, even those doing simple jobs with the hope of moving on to more interesting ones. You "have to be careful when talking `empowerment'" to these people, Charlie said. "We have mechanics reading the *Harvard Business Review*!" The people in the field are committed to their own values: "these are the lone rangers in the organization."

Charlie described Banff Park as especially sensitive, given its history and visibility. Here, particularly, is where everything came together—tourists, developers, a transcontinental highway, etc. He described three parks, two in the United States—Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Banff—as "lightning rods" for these concerns, the ones that have most influenced world development policies. "There will be weeks and weeks when issues drive my life." The ecological interests of the Bow Valley (of the Banff Park) may be impossible to manage, he suggested, referring specifically to the conflicts between the Alberta Members of Parliament, all from the Progressive Conservative Party, and the ENGOs

(environmental non-government organizations), especially concerning that parking lot, but also proposals to "twin" the Trans-Canada Highway so that it could carry more traffic.

At 10:30, Charlie began to sign leasehold documents, a required formality. Sandy Davis called at 10:40 about a conversation she had with the local Member of Parliament, asking Charlie to speak to that person too, which he did immediately. "I'm just following up," he said, telling the woman about a consulting firm that had been hired by Ottawa and a meeting with the ski hill owner and their "very positive working relationship." That call ended just before 11 o'clock, followed by another, also of about 15 minutes, from the head of operations at the ski center who expressed concerns about the environmental report and the alignment for the road.

Charlie then met with the head of a bungalow camping ground about Indian land claims near the facility. The tone of this encounter was quite different, with the visitor mostly listening quietly as Charlie explained carefully the claim and the government's position, trying to alleviate the man's anxieties. Twenty-six years earlier, a lawyer had told him about the claim and that he could eventually be ousted, but no-one had ever come back to discuss it, nor had he sought anyone out. He was grateful to Charlie for taking the initiative to explain it.

He raised one final issue. The railroad crossed the continental divide near his camping ground, and the engineers tend to blow their whistles as they did, even during the night. "We're supposed to be providing a wilderness experience and here we have this noise pollution!" Could Charlie do anything about this? Charlie talked about having to discuss it with the railroad people. "Maybe I'll find out who the vice-president for public relations is and offer a gift certificate of a free night to listen to the whistles," he joked.

After a brief lunch ourselves, we headed off to the Park's ranch at the far end of town so that Charlie could arrange some riding to get into shape, as he was to go on a five-day trip into the back country. Charlie wanted to have a look at that part of the park and to be visible there. But this was not just "management by riding around"; he was taking along some wardens, two RCMP people, and a businessman, as an opportunity to exchange ideas.

Back at the office just after 3, the regional specialist in public safety came in, to talk about cost recovery for emergency services (search and rescue). He had spoken with other groups (such as the coast guard) about this, and had some ideas, for example to impose a surcharge on all the vehicles entering the park. He wanted Charlie's approval to "pitch" the idea to others.

After another brief meeting on space for equipment storage, we took a break in the schedule to look at Charlie's schedule in a broader sense, first his agenda of scheduled meetings for the rest of that week (this was Friday). Every day began with French. Monday there was a briefing on training and a team-building session, plus discussion of a problem a manager was having with some of his people. A Japanese attaché at the Washington Embassy came in to discuss some issues (such as Japanese commercial ownership in Banff village), which Charlie saw as a kind of V.I.P. visit. (It might be noted that Lake Louise, within the Banff Park, is a site revered by the Japanese.) Charlie also met with the owner of the ski hill, and with his own managers on real property management. On Tuesday there was a conference call on the future of "hot pools," a "zero-based budgeting" review exercise, more attention to that parking lot, a telephone interview on a survey with the Auditor General's Office in Ottawa, a meeting with a local organization about a space exchange, and, in the evening, a Heritage Department meeting. Wednesday included PC training and lunch with Sandy in Calgary (a 90 minute drive) about the parking lot, and another evening concerning the Heritage Department. Thursday saw Sandy's conference call on the parking lot ("You can see how one issue can dominate chunks of my time"), and meetings in Lake Louise (almost an hour drive the other way), on union issues, and with a hotel owner concerned about pedestrians crossing his property.

The next week's scheduled meetings included an "agenda driven" executive meeting on planning; a meeting with the ski hill owner and a consultant hired to look at different possible alignments of the parking lot; a visit by Sandy with a reception at the Banff Cultural Centre; plus a follow-up call from the Auditor General's Office in Ottawa, lunch with a U.S. Congressman on national parks conservation, and a parade at a cadet camp, where Charlie had a ceremonial role to play.

We then chatted about his job, and the reactive positive with regard to some of the projects initiated by the developers and also the Park's people themselves. As a consequence of delayering, Charlie found that his job had become heavier, with many more people reporting to him. As he put it in comments to me later, "Perhaps the problem is empowerment down to some managers who lack skills and confidence and consequently try to delegate upwards." At 4:45, a consultant to the region came in. They chatted about management in the service until 5:25, when Charlie's day ended.

## Interpretation of the Day

**Meditating Between the Forces** At one point, Charlie said that he saw himself in the same hourglass as Sandy, with the outside pressures flowing down from above and passing to the park operations below. But while this edge was no less evident in Charlie's day—in fact, more pointedly so—there seemed to be a different edge at play here. Sandy was more focused on factoring in the political dimension from Ottawa, while Charlie was much more involved with the specific conflicts in the park, on either side, if you like: between commercial interests and the ENGOS. These conflicts may have been political, and some could easily have escalated to the level of government politics, but a number (such as that between the campground and the railroad) hit tangibly and directly on Charlie as manager of the park.

Thus linking loomed large in this job this day. Charlie was not dealing externally, in the sense of negotiating final settlements (although there were hints of these in progress), but rather representing his unit to the outside world, and transmitting the information and influence he received back inside. He took a proactive stance, of informing, with the campground operator, and more of a reactive stance, of listening, on some of the other issues.

As Charlie implied, the amount of linking required in his job probably pre-empted some attention to the other roles. Thus I saw a bit of *controlling* here, but little *leading* (although some came out in the agenda of other days), and most of the *communicating* he did was tied to the linking activities (namely acting as the park's spokesperson).

The frame of Charlie's job seemed clear enough. He pointed to the strategic plan as a guiding force, within which he sought to handle the external pressures. But frame and plan are not necessarily easily reconcilable. At one point Charlie said that the problems of managing some of the ecological concerns made the technical execution of the official mandate difficult.

If a single word is required to describe Charlie's management style this day, *mediating* might be best. He sat between all these interests, necessarily responding to many (as delicately as possible). He was certainly lower key than Sandy, less inclined to impose a strong stamp on things, but that might well have been in the nature of his job. For example, he complained when signing leasehold documents that the system should allow for more delegation. This came up just after our discussion of the "lone ranger" quality of the park's operating staff. In a sense, the park superintendent took the heat for his people, much as I found in another study, that hospital medical chiefs did so for the doctors, so that they could concentrate on their specialized work (Mintzberg, 1995). Thus Charlie's sideways edge converted into a horizontal edge too, between the management and the operations.

## **Gord Irwin, Warden, Banff National Park**

**(Banff, Alberta, 14 August, 1993)**

### **Description of the Day**

Gord Irwin came in on Saturday, not to accommodate me but because weekends are key working times in the summer. The focus of this job was clearly different from the other two, right from the outset (8:30 a.m.). Gord was just back from a mountain rescue course and spent the first half hour putting ice axes, cords and crampons, etc. into their respective boxes. Finally the mountains! (Well, almost.)

While doing this, he talked proudly of the world-wide reputation of this search and rescue team, and discussed the leadership aspect of the course, especially how, in this context, leadership is not a fixed position but a function of who has particular skills at particular times. Search and rescue is viewed as an elitist group, he said, but in life and death situations, the level of expertise and knowledge, as well as trust, responsibility, and camaraderie, is that much more important. Ultimately, leadership here is a team building exercise, he felt.

Walking back to the office, Gord chatted with a couple of his people, briefing the wildlife specialist on the dart, the dose, and the procedure he and others used to tranquilize elk and so get them out of town and into the back country. "It's that public expression we have to think about," Gord said, raising the edge between his work and the public.

Between Gord's coming and goings, to chat informally with people, we discussed his job. It had been reorganized since February, although he had only come into it in June. The new structure used "product lines" instead of geographical areas, so that now he had to look after the Lake Louise area as well as Banff, which meant that 23 people reported to him. He thought that difficult, given that a lot of the work involved the settlement of disputes and the assignment of tasks.

The intention had been to flatten the organization, he said, but here, where the impact was most tangible, he felt it didn't work well: people needed someone to turn to for help, a kind of accessible mentor. Power over decision making had been, in effect, decentralized managerially but then usurped politically, which made things difficult for the operating staff. Gord mentioned the parking lot here. He noted another set of edges too: the problems that arose for the local residents when the bull elk rutted in the fall, becoming aggressive, and the cow elk calved in the spring, sometimes near town to be relatively safe from predators, who were more hesitant to be near people (an edge for the elk).

At 10:15, Gord turned to his email, commenting that once you become a manager, it can be "difficult to get meaningful work done." ("Someone in Ottawa can hit a button and get on the email of every staff person in Canada!" Once he came back after 6 days to 176 new messages: [and that was 1993]). His new messages this day included some direct material, such as a question about how to divide people for an upcoming training seminar, a request for information concerning a filmmaking project, and several questions about scheduling. Eventually Gord began scanning the messages quickly, until "[that] one is a bit of a time bomb"—about a problem in campgrounds between animal habitation and human drinking. Others concerned patrol staff availability, a housing allocation problem for employees in Lake Louise, "a meeting I dread—a free-for-all," and training in hoof care and the shoeing of horses. It was now 11:26, and his 40 messages had been reduced to 10.

A call then came in from the supervisor at Lake Louise. They chatted for a couple of minutes about various things, including the search and rescue school, and then Gord turned to his PC for a few minutes, until a staffer, full-time on mountain rescue, came in, and they reviewed some technical rescue systems in comparison with what appeared in the manuals. That person left at 12:15.

We then talked about some management issues. Gord felt that mission statements, if substantial and not just buzzwords, but could be helpful guides in dealing with the difficult trade-offs, but that policies were not—they tended to be too tight and could go out of date quickly. (Ironically, a few minutes earlier, while Gord was on the telephone, I overheard a conversation in the hall about "gearing up for a new mission and a new vision and all this and that. All they do is just crank this [...] out. It makes it look like they're doing something. We have our little mission—it sure keeps a few people busy!" We discussed the hierarchy of the parks and some of the currently popular buzzwords at its senior levels—"win-win," "empowerment," "flattening the organization," "stewardship," and, of course, "heritage." (Two days earlier, at regional headquarters, I heard: "Did you go back through [the planning document headed for Ottawa] and write down the word 'heritage' everywhere you could?") Over lunch, we also discussed leadership, with Gord describing his job as revolving around work teams and being informal as much as formal.

At 1:30, Gord placed a call to a consultant about setting up the groups for a teamwork exercise. Then he put on a video of horse use in the park, especially concerning environmental sensitivity in the back country. (When there was a mention in the film about how nice some of the old equipment was, but that the new equipment was lighter and so more environmentally friendly, Gord quipped that with "Environment" out and "Heritage" in, maybe the film would now have to be redone to favor the older, heavier equipment.) Gord had produced the film—a project left over from when he was a back country supervisor—and this was a rough first cut that he had to review. The film was being made to send to people applying for permits to ride in the park.

That ended at 2:30, and it was back to the PC—sending detailed written comments on the film. Then Gord went through the paper mail, reviewing mostly routine things that had to be signed, budget documents, and time sheets. Someone walked by and Gord asked, "Glenn, were you guys out after that bear this afternoon?" No, Glenn had been experimenting with a new tranquilizer dart, and he told Gord about the optimal distance to shoot one into an elk (22 yards) and what the size of the syringe should be. "We could do a big bull with one dart."

Glenn left at 3:10, and it was back to the mail—about visitor complaints (concerning traffic), wildlife, and a logging truck that pushed a sheep off the road (forwarded from Charlie), etc. (All the while, the park's radio was playing in the background, and the dispatcher had just handled a call concerning a road accident.) There was also a series of bulk items for information, including one on guidelines for a "Bear Management Plan."

At 3:55 someone came to ask if Gord was available to talk to two climbers, which he did, two Australians who needed advice about climbing a particular peak. (Gord knew the routes well.) When they left, two other men appeared, fresh from the back country, and told Gord about the condition of the trails.

At this point, Gord informed me that he had planned to do a boat ride on the river to look for a dead body, but now it was too late in the day to go. (Some days earlier, a visitor got drunk and convinced someone else to go over Bow Falls in a raft with him. No one had ever done that successfully. At the last minute, the other fellow jumped clear, but the first one disappeared. The initial search was unsuccessful, and a drowned body could take several days to float to the surface, Gord said.)

On other such days, Gord said he would have spent more time talking to supervisors. But on weekends there were fewer committee meetings and calls for information from the headquarters and regional offices, so it was easier to get his paperwork done. Gord said he tended to spend his time on other days going out with the staff to patrol campgrounds, picnic areas, and trailheads, chasing bears off the roads, talking to visitors, and just maintaining a park presence. In a typical week, he might make two trips to the headquarters administration building to discuss personnel or financial issues, and he spent a day a week at Lake Louise.

At 4:30, one of the staff members dropped in to discuss the rewording of a sign about firearm control at the entrance to the Park, and left shortly after.

It was at this point that Gord explained to me about the 50 meter definition to distinguish his front-country "product," as they called it, from that of back country. So we began to talk about the edges, and he explained to me that his people had worked on the initial study of the parking lot but the ski hill operator didn't like it and so took it to the political level. He talked about the wide variety of concerns that had to be dealt with here—law enforcement, wildlife, public safety, forest fire management, etc. In effect, he and his colleagues were managing a full community, even if a rather particular one.

We chatted to 5:15, and on my way back to the center of town, just a few minutes from Gord's office, I photographed elk grazing on the front lawns of private homes.

## Interpretation of the Day

**First Line Management** This was perhaps not a typical day, or, more to the point, it was typical of a quiet, in-house day. But even if only by suggestion and through discussion, this day also indicated quite clearly how close Gord was to the operations, which probably reflected two characteristics, difficult to separate. One is that Gord had been in the job for only a few months, and so retained some of his earlier operating activities (producing the film, doing mountain rescue). And the other was that this was first-line supervision, and so doing remained a natural and significant part of the job.

In fact, it would seem that other managerial roles—controlling, leading, communicating, even linking—revolved largely around the doing. In other words, the focus seemed to have been on action more than on information or people per se. When discussing *leading*, for example, Gord described it as teamwork, with the leader very much a part of the operating team. Much of the *controlling* seemed to involve the issuing of specific directives based on Gord's knowledge of and involvement in specific situations. The more formal aspects of controlling, especially regarding systems (such as budgeting), seemed to flow from controls imposed on him which he in turn had to impose on others.

*Framing* was not evident here this day, possibly because Gord was new in the job or perhaps because the frame was simply assumed: the park had to be run, including a myriad of obligations, from finding a body in the river to making a film explaining good horseback riding behavior.

Gord's frustration with some of the management jargon and procedures seemed to reflect the nature of his job as well as his newness in it. (See Hill, 2003.) Management in the formal sense (compared with Gord's view of leadership) must have been a curious thing for anyone who had to cope with these tangible operating problems, and doubly so when encountered in a mountain park.

**The Operating Edge** Again, the edges were evident, in fact here most sharply. Gord and his people were the ones who had to chase the bears away, before they hurt the tourists or angered the truckers. Otherwise people would battle each other ("literally as well figuratively" Gord added), and then the problems move from the tangible edges of the front country to the political edges of the

administration. Magnifying Gord's frustration must have been the nature his edge, of front line supervision between the operations and the administration.

On one side were all the tangible problems of managing in this natural setting, including its host of naturally occurring edges—between the truckers and the tourists, the residents and the elk, even the elk and the bears. Of course, except for the last, these were not really “natural” at all, but occurred because of human imposition on *our* “natural environment.” Indeed, the very phrase “managing the natural setting” has to be an oxymoron: that setting managed itself just fine for millennia without our “management.” Now we have “Bear Management Plans”!

And on the other side were the abstractions of administration as well as the peculiarities of politics (which themselves formed an edge—hence Gord's frustration about the promises of “decentralization” and “empowerment” having been usurped by the political maneuvering).

The truly natural edges (such as between the elk and the bear) give rise to some of the tangible, people-imposed edges (such as between the bears and the tourists), which in turn gave rise to the more abstract political edges (such as between the ski hill operators and the environmentalists). As this happened, the issues became more pervasive and more ideological, and so left the domain of Gord's operations for the higher reaches of this hierarchy, which actually left him caught in the middle. And so we can understand his response to this strange work called management.

We as human beings believe that we have developed all kinds of fancy procedures to manage things. Yet we have barely come to grips with these real problems in real operations. Our procedures work wonderfully well back in the administrative offices, where we rearrange boxes on charts (so that “Parks” can report to “Heritage”, whatever that means), and formulate well-intentioned plans, all of which have little to do with the deers and darts of daily life in the country, front and back. Here most of these procedures seem quaint at best, counterproductive at worst. And so the managers are left to manage in a vacuum.

Of course, all of these edges are really mirror images of the same thing, contrived in one way or another. People establish themselves in a natural setting so that an animal coming down into a valley becomes an imposition. And the more people come into that valley, and the greedier their demands, the more these problems magnify, and so the more “political” the whole situation becomes. Politics, of course, is the way we fight with each other figuratively, over our self-assumed right to “manage” the natural environment.

## A Model of the Edges

Edges abound in the management of Parks Canada. Edges, of course, abound everywhere, if you want to see them. But here you can't possibly miss them.

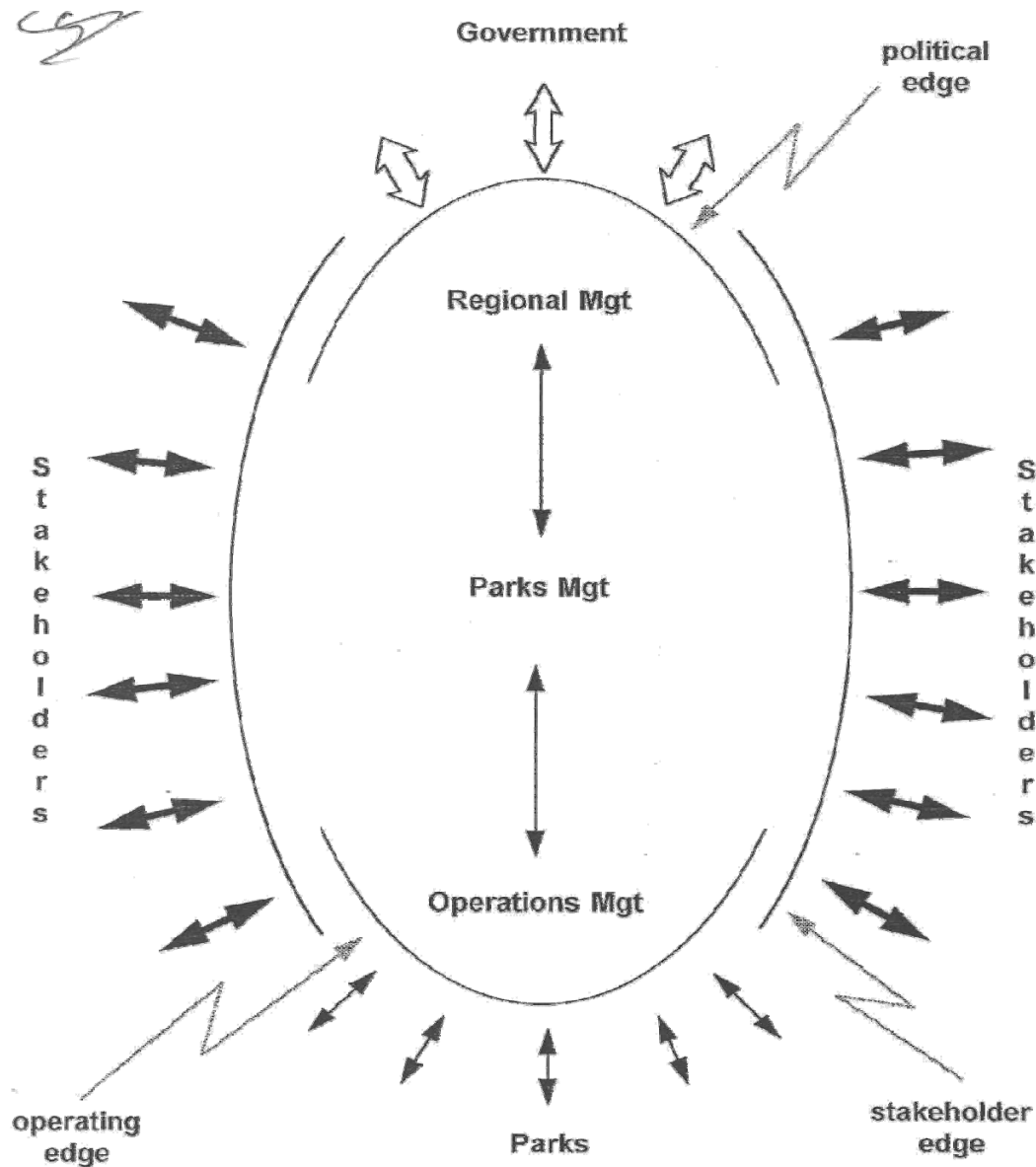
The three managers I observed on these three days dealt with some of the same edges. That parking lot, for example, came up in all their work. But they dealt with them differently, on different levels of abstraction.

As shown in Figure 1, in terms of conventional hierarchy, with ground at the base and government at the top (or the parks at the bottom and the politicians at the top), Gord especially managed the edge between the operations and administration, which can be referred to as the *operating edge*, and is shown horizontally across the bottom of the figure. He connected action to administration. Charlie's was especially the *stakeholder edge*, shown vertically to either side of him, as various outside players brought tangible pressures to bear on him. He connected influence to programs. And Sandy's job was to manage especially on the *political edge*, shown horizontally above her, particularly between the



senior managers and politicians in Ottawa and the parks in western Canada. She connected politics to process.

Figure 1



**From Tangible to Abstract Edges** As one moves “up” this hierarchy (which in reality is down—off the mountains, into the plains, and then on to the low country of the east)—as the horizontal operating edge metamorphoses into vertical stakeholder edges and then into the horizontal edge of politics—the issues become more abstract and less nuanced while the positions got blunter and more ideological. And so the system seems to tie itself increasingly into knots, and cohesive management becomes that much more difficult.

This is not to imply that any one of these three managers was free of the edges faced by the other two. That is why the lines have been rounded on the figure: all experienced the edges of the others. But

there did seem to be this difference in focus, manifested especially in the nature of the three jobs. Gord seemed to be largely a doer, who led, controlled, and linked in terms of action. Charlie seemed to be largely a linker out, a mediator between the different members of the park's community. And Sandy seemed to be mainly a linker up, to the political context of Ottawa, whose concerns she conveyed back into the system, especially in the role of controller.

Each of them was a manager in his or her own right. Yet they can also be placed in different spots on the concentric circles of our model. In a sense, they shared the same management. If Gord especially managed down, from the outer circle of the action plane, then Charlie especially managed out, from the middle circle of the people plane, while Sandy especially managed up, from the inner circle of the information plane. In these respects, Gord knew the details, Charlie knew the pressures, Sandy knew the politics. Somehow, together they had to factor all this into a coherent decision making process. How they did so—indeed whether they really did so—remains to be understood. Certainly the planning systems did not explain it. These may have helped, or perhaps they just represented a kind of ritual (see Gimpl and Dakin, 1984)—another of those things that had to be done in the hope that *something* would work (or else that at least something was being done).

Charlie sat in the middle of all this—and not just in our diagram—and so he was perhaps hit the hardest. For Sandy had her escape route to the power structure of Ottawa while Gord had his into the operations of the park. But Charlie was pulled both ways, as well as being pushed from all sides, with no easy place to hide.

**Managing a Species Out of Control** There is a great advantage in being able to manage something as real and as beautiful as a mountain park. People care, they are naturally motivated. There is much to do and a wonderful setting within which to do it.

The trouble is that people sometimes care too much, and they get motivated about different things—there remains that "discontinuous mandate of protection and preservation." Planning documents can articulate lofty ideals, but they never specify the difficult trade-offs that have to be managed continuously.

To repeat: "Many of the most interesting things, say the biologists, happen on the edges." That is where the "living organisms encounter dynamic conditions that give rise to untold variety." But "there is tension here as well," including "competition with alien species." If you really want to see the edges, the real guts of government—coping with the impossible trade-offs of conflicting interests and alien species—then you would do well to get down on the ground where the elk graze in the towns and the truckers battle the tourists. Then maybe you can work "up" from there, to the abstractions of management that so mesmerize us—where people earn larger incomes ostensibly because their work is more important but perhaps really because they have to cope with all that much more nonsense, no small measure of it imposed by some of their own formalized systems. Supposedly developed to deal with the complexities, perhaps all of this is really just a conceptual smokescreen for a species out of control, alien to its own environment. The bears know that the real problem is "people jams."

## Managing Normatively

*Control is critical in the management of a police force, the work being so sensitive and dispersed. But a day at each of the three main levels of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police—with the head of the whole force, a region of it, and a detachment of that—provided strong indication that control by norms, though a strong culture, may be far*

*more powerful than conventional controlling by systems, procedures, directives, and the like.*

Policing is about control in society, and that often converts into an obsession with control inside the police force. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), on the three days I spent with the Commissioner, the Commanding Officer of H Division in Nova Scotia, and the Commander of the New Minas Detachment there, appeared to be a different kind of force, one that controlled more normatively than instrumentally, through culture rather than by systems, rules, and procedures.

At the time of this observation, the RCMP employed 22,000 people. It acted as the federal police as well as the regional police in most of the Canadian provinces and in many of their small municipalities, but had no jurisdiction in the most populous provinces (Quebec and Ontario), nor in any of the major cities of the country.

In a hospital, where everything and everybody converges on one central point—the patient—a key factor for success is the ability to coordinate all the activity. In a police force, where the flow is the other way—activities radiate out from the organization, into the community, in every possible direction—a key factor for success becomes control, namely to ensure that the dispersed officers act in the best interests of the force, and the public. Add to this several other factors—the increasing complexity and shrewdness of criminal activities, including “white collar” and high technology crime, the sensibility of politicians to embarrassment by police actions, and in Canada having to police the second largest yet one of the least populated countries in the world, much of it subjected to some of the harshest weather conditions anywhere—and you end up with a complicated problem of control.

Yet conventional administrative controls can be problematic. Budgets must certainly be used, and various parameters have to be measured. But running the RCMP like a classical machine bureaucracy can be problematic too: the officers are well trained and once out on their own, especially in remote locations, need to exercise considerable discretion without the possibility being directly supervised. So another kind of control can become more important: normative or cultural control, based on careful recruitment, followed by extensive indoctrination.

This seems to describe the RCMP that I saw on these days. The force placed great emphasis on the kinds of people it recruited and how these recruits were socialized. This form of control in fact dates back to the RCMP’s legendary origins, as the North West Mounted Police, created to bring some order—with those vivid red jackets—to Canada’s developing west.

Normative control has been increasingly out of favor in western governments for many years, thanks to the Planning, Programming, Budgeting System (PPBS) of the 1960s, and subsequently all the paraphernalia of so-called “reinventing government”, with its emphasis on isolating units (“executive agencies”), holding individual managers accountable for their performance, and doing everything possible to measure that performance (i.e., acting like business). These three days of observation in the RCMP suggest that we might wish to consider a return to more normative control in general, where pride in work and commitment to institution meant something to people who really felt themselves to be “civil servants.”

**Norman D. Inkster, Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted  
Police**

**(Ottawa, 4 March 1993)**

## Description of the Day

After having recently observed the head nurse of a ward in a hospital, with everything revolving around her in the nursing station, I was not mentally prepared for the chief executive of Canada's largest and most famous police force. I arrived at 8:15 and after a brief greeting, went into an awaiting meeting.

Here, as during the rest of the day, most people were in uniform, the blaze of yellow stripes on the pants most evident, with people senior in the hierarchy always addressed formally ("Commissioner," "Deputy," "Sir," etc.), and their juniors by first name, when known, which, for the Commissioner, was often.\*

The commissioner, like the force he managed, was highly respected. (At the time, he was also serving a four year term as head of Interpol.) Few countries likely have a policeman as a national symbol, and one might not have expected Canada to be among them (the "Mounties" dressed in red serge).

Commissioner Inkster was as relaxed as any manager I observed, and very liberal on many of the contentious issues of policing at the time, for example the acceptance of homosexuals on the force and marriages among the officers (there were 125 of these, he told me with what sounded like a touch of pride). He believed in serious decentralization as well as honest communication within the force, and I saw evidence of this during these days, in particularly with regard to "community-based policing"—leaving wide latitude to the constables in the field as well as to their detachment commanders.

This was an "inside day," according to the Commissioner, and in part a somewhat ceremonial one. But ceremony is hardly an incidental part of this job.

The 8:30 slot was dedicated to a regular meeting with the Commissioner and his Deputy Commissioners, who managed the headquarters' units of Operations, Law Enforcement and Protective Services, Administration, and Corporate Management, and included the Director of Public Affairs, among others. They went around the table to review the events of the last twenty-four hours and the actions needed to be taken, discussing stowaways on a ship that landed on the east coast, protection for the Prime Minister during a speech in Toronto, security for party leaders in the upcoming election, and especially items in the press that mentioned the RCMP.

A packet of press clippings had been circulated, and at one point a clip was played from the CBC national news of the previous evening. This included an interview with an ex-constable of East Indian extraction in British Columbia who had accused the force of prejudice, followed by excerpts from a press conference held by a number of other constables of minority groups who denied that such prejudice was prevalent in the force. It was clear from the reaction at this meeting that the latter had acted on their own initiative, a good illustration of the spirit of decentralization in the force.

Everyone was well prepared for the meeting, the purpose of which was to brief each other and to preempt possible negative consequences of outside events on the RCMP. As Commissioner Inkster repeated several times during the day, he managed for "no surprises."

That meeting ended at 9:20 and the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners moved to another room for their Senior Executive Committee meeting, which took place about twice a month. Here the agenda was highly structured, with formal presentations by other officers followed by questioning and discussion in order to secure formal senior management approval of major items.

The first item dealt with operating budgets, the second with a cost recovery program, and the third with the acquisition of a jet airplane. This last issue was considered sensitive because, although the plane was needed for policing work (to move dangerous criminals, get security forces in place for prime ministerial speeches, etc.) it could be seen otherwise. The presentation about this was particularly detailed, and the Commissioner appeared to be highly informed about the details. The atmosphere in the room was, however, rather relaxed, with no sense of rushing. The meeting ended at 11:00.

We returned to the Commissioner's office, where he turned to me for questions. I asked about the possible frustrations of someone who began his career as a constable and now had to be involved in the abstractions of administration. He mentioned that "the highly significant cases" did "make their ways through the headquarters," and that "on occasion," although "rarely," he would get involved in an investigation. He also discussed the decentralization, which he referred to as "a franchise approach"—700 detachments as independent franchises—controlled not by measurable indicators so much as statements of expectations. In return, "the buzzword is 'no surprises'—you are obliged to let us know" when something goes wrong.

But "you have to be in a position to make certain assumptions" when you empower others, Commissioner Inkster added, otherwise there is the risk of being manipulated. And this requires an intimate understanding of the system being managed, however decentralized. Commissioner Inkster said that because of his 36 years on the force (six as Commissioner), he knew all the Commanding Officers personally. He also said he visited every division at least once a year, and emphasized the need to "sit

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\* I subscribe to this here. While I did know personally, or came to know, most of the other managers observed, and felt comfortable referring to them by first name, a certain formality feels right in this case, as it does later with *Dr. Thick* and *Dr. Webb*.

on the edge of the desk with your people" when doing so. Of particular importance to him was his belief that people were "entitled to know why I make certain decisions."

We also discussed some of his more frequent outside contacts that I would not have seen this day: with the Solicitor General (to whom he formally reported) once every two weeks on average as well as others in this minister's office to keep them informed; with other ministers and deputy ministers; various government committees on which he sat (e.g., security); other meetings with military officers, business people, representatives of different communities, and foreign visitors (including foreign police officers and ambassadors).

At noon, we were driven to the Canadian Police College, which trained officers of the force (and of foreign forces as well), to meet with a class of about forty officers on the final day of their four-week program. After an official photo, followed by cocktails and lunch in the officers' mess, which ended at 1:30 sharp (with the Commissioner asking: "Everybody done?" and in answer to a light-hearted "No", he replied "Tough"), everyone headed for a classroom.

There, after being introduced as a "visionary" leader, the Commissioner spoke casually but seriously (without notes) for a half hour, about the force and its needs in the future, espousing some very progressive views. This was followed by a long period of questions, some very blunt (e.g., about a "malaise" in one division), and answers of equal bluntness. At one point, the Commissioner discussed the experience these officers would need to move up the RCMP hierarchy, finishing with "And if you want my job, you don't need any of that!"—the opposite being obvious to everyone who watched him perform in this room. Commissioner Inkster was clearly providing information, but just as clearly was conveying beliefs and instilling values as the guardian of the RCMP culture. At 3:20, after the vigorous questioning died down, he said to the instructor, "You wanted me to get out of here around 3 o'clock or so?" and after handing out the diplomas, headed back to his office.

On the way, we discussed Interpol, and his wish to bring about a fairly major reorientation. He also emphasized again the need for officers to understand the decisions made at headquarters, and how he had set out to remove the mystery of the Commissioner's office.

Back in the office at 3:45, the activity changed significantly, as Commissioner Inkster worked with his executive assistant on scheduling, while he turned to his mail, interrupted by telephone calls and requests for brief meetings. His deputies came in a number of times, on some more or less urgent matters (including possible political consequences of an arrest, and budget cutting with regard to security at certain airports). Mostly the Commissioner was being informed, but there were also discussions about how to proceed, and if he was not personally managing any of these issues, he did appear to remain close to their management.

The mail was varied: an internal report on tobacco smuggling, a document on a nominated candidate for the Order of Canada, a letter in support of a police officer in Israel, several requests to speak at or attend official meetings, and a request to approve the leave of absence of a commanding officer ("one of the few things we haven't formally delegated").

At about 6 p.m., Commissioner Inkster indicated that his work was winding down, and so I left, although he said he would stay until 6:30 to make a call to a police officer in Japan about changes to be proposed at an upcoming meeting of Interpol.

## Interpretation of the Day

**Guarding the Culture Internally** On the surface, this seemed to be a day significantly about *controlling*, namely being informed of pending actions and granting approval. But looked at more closely, that control was intimately wrapped up with *leading*. In effect I saw Commissioner Inkster as the guardian of an institution, working hard at protecting its established culture.

Interestingly, he did this by allowing the RCMP to be more of what it had always been—a rather progressive and decentralized police force (originally because of the remoteness of its work). And so, while controlling *seemed* key, internally, it was really leading, of the whole organization, with respect to protecting and enhancing its culture, that *was* key. In other words, the RCMP controlled largely by *who* it put into uniform and *what* they were trained to believe.

When control happens through culture, every member exercises it (as was evident in the press conference of these constables out west). But it is the most senior manager who must above all represent and uphold that culture. This Norman Inkster most obviously did with dedication and grace, by blending the more obvious controlling into more subtle leading. He did "do"—helping to manage personally some of the more critical projects—and he certainly communicated, at length, but both seemed to stem from a pressing need to lead with respect to culture.

**Guarding the Culture Externally** Given the legendary status of the RCMP, its Commissioner had a major role to play in protecting and preserving its culture on the outside too.

The pressures on any police force, and especially on its chief, must be enormous. Crises abound, and the public as well as the politicians expect quick reactions. So the force can hardly be allowed to act as a closed shop, in the service of its officers—even if there is no shortage of such tendencies in some policing today. Norman Inkster appeared to understand and manage this well, for example in dealing with the politicians and the media.

So if *linking* was the key outside role here, it was practiced not so much by pushing influence out or transmitting influence in, as by a subtle buffering between the two. *Anticipated* buffering seemed especially important, as in the review in early morning of media stories that could cause problems for the RCMP. Commissioner Inkster managed for “no surprises” from the outside world as well as from his own people.

Of course, policing *means* responding to unexpected events. But enough of these arise naturally without adding ones that might occur by the oversights of the police themselves.

**Office Bound?** How happy could an action-oriented police officer have been given he had to spend most of his time in the administrative and government offices of Ottawa? Rather happy, if not completely so, I suspect, because of his pride in being able to protect an institution so important to him. This was a duty, to be sure, but so is policing itself.

In this regard, when I asked myself whether the frame of Norman Inkster's job was selected by himself or imposed on him by the circumstances, I could not answer the question. The frame was very clear, as I watched him work, and it had to do with maintaining the culture while adapting its practices. But its origins were buried in his 36 years of service, albeit with his own stamp. In an effective institution such as is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, when things go right, its leader reflects, enacts, and embodies the culture.

### **A.D.F. (Allen) Burchill, Commanding Officer of "H" Division (Halifax, 19 April 1993)**

The operations of the RCMP were divided into divisions, for each of the Canadian provinces. "H" division covered Nova Scotia, one of the smaller provinces (with a population of 900,000), which had contracted with the force to provide policing for the province at large, as well as many of its smaller municipalities. As a result, this was not only a regional managerial job, but also one that reported two ways—to the Attorney General of the province, and into the RCMP structure. But because the former relationship was contractual, while the latter was hierarchical, it was easier for the incumbent to resist political interference on the provincial level.

Otherwise the structure of the division was quite straightforward: there were various technical services (Informatics, Criminal Operations, etc.) and other administrative ones (such as planning), while the operations in the province were divided into four subdivisions comprising 52 detachments, including 21 Highway Patrols, 8 Drug Sections, 5 Dog Sections, etc.

### **Description of the Day**

I found C.O. Burchill's work, on this day at least, to be quite straightforward as well. He suggested I come in at 7 a.m., but, in fact, had been there since 6:35, reading a national and a local newspaper. He explained that he tried to keep his office open, especially early in the mornings, and several of his branch officers soon dropped in.

At 7:15, the head of the Halifax Subdivision, the largest of the four with 284 people, came in. They discussed various issues, not making decisions so much as exchanging information casually. They spoke of rearrangements of the boundaries of two districts, nomination for medals, and so on. He left at 7:35 and after ten minutes more with the newspapers, the man in charge of criminal operations dropped in. There was "not much" to report, he said—a fatal car accident the night before, someone who had a gun and shouldn't have, some issues associated with a press conference about the laying of charges, and the transfer of certain people in various parts of the country. C.O. Burchill also refused one request for authorization, and with an "Anyway, that's about it for this morning," the officer left at 8:03.

He was immediately followed by the head of the Audit Section (about policing, not budgeting), with the comment, "I haven't seen you for a couple of weeks, so I thought I'd drop in to tell you what's going on." They discussed events in a small subdivision, an appointment for a fundraising drive, and the encouragement of, and resistance to, "bar walks" by the constables. He left at 8:17 and it was back to the newspapers until 8:30, when there were a couple of brief chats in the outer office and then Ruby, the secretary, arrived, and they talked for a short time.

At 8:45, the deputy in charge of Administration and Personnel dropped in — the first person that day, besides Ruby, in civilian clothing. Again there was a steady stream of exchanged information, followed by "I don't really have much of anything else; got anything on your little list there?" and he left at 9:05.

Between the papers on the desk, including a pile of messages, we chatted, especially about C.O. Burchill's relations with the provincial authorities. He met with them often, he said (not on this day, although a meeting was scheduled the next day with the Nova Scotia Deputy Minister of Justice), adding that he took a pre-emptive position, much like the Commissioner's motto of "no surprises," for example by keeping the minister informed about issues that could have been raised in the provincial legislature.

At 9:35, a phone call came in about some problem with the new 911 number in Halifax, and then it was back to the mail, with Ruby dropping in periodically, mostly about scheduling. Most of the mail was from headquarters ("little drops of knowledge for the day"), including a lengthy document on upcoming budget cuts. The C.O. also took a lengthy telephone call, mostly listening, about a case where a judge questioned a witness's evidence. The staff sergeant on the line was discussing his investigation and the possibilities of laying perjury charges.

At 10:15 we went downstairs to the "Officers' Mess" for coffee, where eight RCMP officers talked informally, about a gift for an officer who was quite ill, and a posting that was coming up in western Canada.

Then, at 10:35, we headed into the Management Meeting, which took place about every three or four weeks. "I'm informed," the Commanding Officer told me, "but this is a go around the table to make sure they're informed." Fifteen people sat around a crowded table (one elected by the staff, all the others representing specialized functions). They went over the minutes, and then C.O. Burchill informed the group about several issues, and then the go-around started. The issues discussed ranged widely, including a disciplinary action, various policies and procedures, budget cuts, new facilities, political events, intelligence on a racist group, a coming press conference on a mine disaster, the movement of personnel, and so on.

The meeting ended at 12:15, after which C.O. Burchill provided an officer with comments on a document he had read, and then it was off to lunch, sandwiches bought in the canteen and eaten in the Officers' Mess with three or four other people. One issue discussed was the press conference on the mine disaster, with the C.O. commenting that "I just wanted to be there to show I'm interested."

Back in the office at 1:00, between the occasional person dropping by, in a couple of cases to pick up a document that was reviewed by the C.O., plus a telephone call from the Nova Scotia Department of Justice about replacing an RCMP officer who had been seconded there, it was back to the mail: certifying signatures on outgoing documents, a letter from the Department of National Defence about a criminal investigation, and an invitation to a "Good Neighbors" program.

At 2:00, C.O. Burchill went into a meeting about "car computers" that were being tested in "H" Division. An information technology team from headquarters in Ottawa had been there for several weeks doing a field evaluation, and they were reporting to ten people assembled from the division. After the report, the C.O. commented that "It's one of the few things that's really improved policing operations in the last 25 years. It's unfortunate we've worked all that time developing systems for managers," when it should have been for the operating people. He also noted how receptive the constables had been to the new system. The meeting ended at 2:22.

Asked how he knew the response of the constables to the equipment in their cars when his own job was so removed from them, C.O. Burchill said, "I get out to detachments." He tried to visit all 52 once a year, but felt the reality was probably closer to every eighteen months. There he preferred to sit in the coffee room with the constables to talk, and noted—consistent with my observations on all three days in the RCMP—that RCMP people were rather outspoken (more than in "my day", said C.O. Burchill).

Then, for most of the rest of the afternoon, aside from a coffee break in the Officers' Mess, it was back to the mail (e.g., a performance evaluation review, a memorandum about armour piercing bullets, a letter from a member of the provincial legislative assembly about someone not getting his share of local RCMP towing service [forwarded to the detachment in question], a grievance from a retiring officer about his insurance not covering a hearing aid, a Canadian law enforcement magazine, a press release on the charges laid in the mine disaster [which was read carefully]). There was also the occasional

telephone call (one to the wife of the staff sergeant who had just died, to express condolences, a second from a friend at headquarters (to commiserate about the reorganization of his branch), and people dropping in, two to have letters signed.

At 5:30, C.O. Burchill left the office, offering to drop me in town, which gave us a last chance to discuss his job. Of the lateral nature of his communication, he said "When the [Provincial] Minister calls, he calls the C.O." An interesting case recently had been the RCMP reaction to the blocking of roads near an Indian reserve in New Brunswick. As extra forces were needed, some had to be sent from Nova Scotia. But the call went from the New Brunswick provincial government via Ottawa to C.O. Burchill, who passed it to the people who could take the action. In general, he saw himself as having to keep two sets of people happy, those in his own headquarters and those in the provincial government. But the authority clearly flowed to one, with the other more in a client relationship.

C.O. Burchill admitted there was more immediate satisfaction being a constable, but that in his job you "can feel good for what your own people do." He felt he had considerable autonomy—"a good bit of room to move"—with few directives from his boss, the Commissioner (who had described this relationship in much the same way).

## Interpretation of the Day

**Controls, but not Managerial** C.O. Burchill sat in the hierarchy between a headquarters that set much of the policy, established most of the systems, and influenced many of the norms, and the detachments of highly trained and rather autonomous officers who carried out the work. Police forces, as noted earlier, need considerable controls to manage forces that are highly dispersed, but the least of these here seemed to involve his own direct supervision—that is, by the direct orders of this "superior" to this "subordinates." The *controlling* I did see was almost all by the formal authorization of letters, reports, procedures, and proposed actions, often in the process of flowing up or down the RCMP hierarchy. There were, as noted, very sharp hierarchical delineations in this force—superiors addressed by title, people's attention to rank, the existence of officers' messes, etc.—yet, ironically, not much evident direct supervision. This appeared to be a cooperative system in which people seemed to know what they had to do, and simply did it.

There were, of course, controls, but from other sources, for example ones from the headquarters that applied across the entire organization, to render the RCMP one force. And there was the training, designed as much for socialization and indoctrination into the culture as for gaining technical expertise. Just how effective this was, among 22,000 people spread across 10,000,000 square kilometres of territory, was perhaps best illustrated by the story circulating here on the east coast of Canada about an applicant for the force who was accused of cheating on his entrance examination in the central part of the country, alleged to have been inappropriately assisted by a member in the high artic!

**Lots of Communicating** Where did this leave the Commanding Officer of "H" division? When all ran as it was supposed to—in the spirit of the Commissioner's "no surprises"—then the answer seemed to be, on this day at least: with not a great deal of pressure. And so the job seemed to be largely facilitating the flow of information, keeping things on track—to evoke the common metaphors. The remarkable thing about this day was the proportion of time devoted to *communicating*. When I suggested this to C.O. Burchill, he said "That seems to be about my job."

The C.O. linked the headquarters to the detachments by ensuring that information moved easily in both directions, to guarantee no surprises, or at least to act quickly when there were. Policing can involve just about any exceptional event in society, so police force managers have to be very broadly and thoroughly informed.

As for the other managerial roles, *leading* was not particularly in evidence this day. The interpersonal relationships seemed to be clearly established and stable here, and so too was the structure of the operating teams, even if individual members of them came and went—these people did, after all, come from and



went back to, the same culture. I did see attention to staffing and appointments, as well as to performance evaluations, but that looked more like *controlling* (i.e., deciding) than leading.

I saw little *doing* or *dealing* either, although there must have been a certain amount of negotiating with the provincial authorities. The frame of this job seemed clear enough, but it probably reflected the general norms of the institution as much as this person in the job.

Some *linking* was evident in telephone calls and in the mail, and clearly much more of this would have been evident on some other days, especially related to the provincial government as client.

**A “Natural” Managerial Job?** One can distinguish “natural” from “unnatural” managerial jobs. One oversees a naturally self-contained unit, such as a hospital, while the other is concerned with entities that have been artificially combined or divided. Examples can be several hospitals that have been merged on paper, or the head of “Asia Pacific” for an automobile company, where no function really takes place on that level—not manufacturing, not sourcing, not selling, etc.

Was “H” Division, therefore, a natural managerial unit? Yes and no. Yes “out”, no “up” and “down”. Nova Scotia is a natural entity, a distinct province with its own legislature, courts, newspapers, etc. (although a glance at the borders of another province, Saskatchewan—all straight lines—might cause one to question the “naturalness” of some of the Canadian provinces). And so, having to liaise out with the province was clearly a natural part of C.O. Burchill’s job.

But looking “up” and “down,” to the controls and cultural norms emanating from the headquarters “above”, and the professionalism of the police officers themselves, ostensibly “below, this job also seemed artificial—mostly to cut the spans of control, to slice up a big country to make it more manageable. This might help explain why there was no sense of a hectic pace here, but rather much passing of information up and down the hierarchy. There was, in other words, much to do in liaising with the province, but perhaps relatively little to do in the middle of the RCMP hierarchy.

The incumbent was deeply involved: he seemed to understand fully the culture of the overall organization, and to have a deep appreciation of its basic operations at the ground level. So he helped to hold the two together. And that is a natural way to manage, even if the job may not have been entirely natural.

## **R.G. (Ralph) Humble, Detachment Commander** **\*New Minas, N.S., 20 April 1993)**

This was not the day I expected. My intention was to observe management at the three main levels of the RCMP hierarchy—the Commissioner, the head of a Division, and the Commanding Officer of a detachment at the base. But somehow we got our signals crossed, and Detachment Commander Humble had more or less set aside his time to accommodate me—namely to discuss his job and the detachment. This may have been just as well, since much of his work that I did see involved him interacting with people coming and going in the main office, and he seemed to find my presence awkward. In any event, I did want to interview, aside from observing, the managers of this study.

Commander Humble had been with the RCMP for 34 years, the last five as head of this detachment in the small town of New Minas, in Nova Scotia’s pretty, rural Annapolis Valley, covering a population of 45,000. They ran three “watches” (shifts) here, two during the day (8 hours), and one at night (9 hours), with a few hours in the middle of the night not covered. As well, there was a highway patrol and a small forensic identification section. The staff numbered 38 in all, including “civilians.”

“In Halifax,” Staff Sergeant Humble said, referring to the Division Headquarters, “just as long as those numbers are filled in....” There were, indeed, a lot of numbers: he handed me a sheet listing his 21 “Review Items”, from “Search Warrants” to “Budget Review.” “Of course, our concern is having a name

besides the number," and when something serious took place—a murder, the need for a stake-out, etc.—then the place could take on a sense of urgency. "You see it all," he said.

There was a steady buzz of conversation from the outer office, a large open area with many windows and a number of desks, where the constables rested between their patrols. At one end, behind glass, to isolate the noise, was the communications center, in touch with all the cars and with quick access to electronic files across the country. Staff Sergeant Humble described it as "really the beehive of activity." That faced the front door, which opened into a protected area, behind glass that was carefully sealed. Elsewhere in the building was a garage, which opened straight into several cells, a bank of interview rooms, a number of sealed rooms to hold evidence, and a breathalyzer test room. The forensic laboratories were upstairs.

## Description of the Day

Between our conversations, staff officers came in to get things signed, which seemed to be mostly a formality. Many of these were operating reports, as well as financial bills, all of which had to be signed by the C.O. Periodically, Staff Sergeant Humble went into the main office, "just talking to the boys" (although five of the constables were female, a change of recent years that he felt "works well," especially concerning disturbances and sexual assault investigations).

Then someone came in (a plain clothes investigator, it turned out), and handed him what seemed to be a fair amount of money, for which a form was signed. "It's a cash business," he said seriously. The money was for informants, mostly concerning drugs, but also stolen property (these people were actually asked to receipt and even sign for it). Commander Humble took out a calculator, "to balance the accounts," and then put the money in a safe.

Someone then dropped a file off about an armed robbery in a credit union. Every file had to be reviewed by someone of higher rank, I was told. But part of the job too, he said, was to keep up to date on statistical information, to see the patterns in crimes. So there was a kind of yin and yang going on, between the specific reports and the aggregated figures.

A call came from a detachment commander elsewhere in the province. They talked about his retirement and, common in many RCMP conversations, about the training of recruits and the shifting of people into new positions. Staff Sergeant Humble urged his caller to accept a proposed transfer: "You'll benefit from it in the long run." Another call came in about where to put some crime prevention materials that were being delivered.

It was now 11:15. I had been there since 8:30, talking to Staff Sergeant Humble in between the signing and the phone calls and the chats in the main office. I felt my presence was becoming more intrusive, since he seemed to want to spend more time in the outer office but was reluctant to do so. So when he asked if I would like to go out in a highway patrol car, I accepted gladly. I was introduced to Constable Dianne Stairs, and as we left, Staff Sergeant Humble was out in the main office checking with a repairman about a machine.

When Constable Stairs asked how much time I had, I said "Let's just go and see". So we went for almost four hours, and I was able to see the RCMP from yet another angle, that of the constable out in the world. I was not learning about management per se, except indirectly, although I was able to take advantage of the experience to write a short story.\* That story can speak for itself, but I would like to note here that the professionalism, and dedication of the force was amply demonstrated in this experience. Once in that car (mostly they traveled alone here), the constable was a rather autonomous entity, although, of course, that autonomy was deeply rooted in the training and systems that tied him or her to the force, not to mention the radio that served as an umbilical cord back to the detachment and on to the rest of the country.

When I returned at 3 p.m., after a quick lunch next door, Constable Stairs was in Staff Sergeant Humble's office. (He called her in because, on looking over her expense account, he could find no claim for lunch.) She was explaining her experience in the bordering province where officers had been called to deal with the roadblock by the native band. She told him that she had been in full riot gear for ten hours.

In the time I was gone, C.O. Humble told me later, there had been the sudden death of a sick woman down the road. He sent an officer there, and went himself to make sure it was being properly looked after. There was also a prescheduled visit with an investigator of a series of robberies, to meet some of the people involved, and a meeting with some local people who had made a complaint that led to an investigation: they wanted his update on what was being done, which he saw as a kind of public relations gesture.

While I was there, Staff Sergeant Humble went over the file on a sexual assault charge, to decide whether the victim, who had since moved to Ontario, would be a good enough witness to justify bringing her back to testify. He was again in and out of

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\* "An Ordinary 'Watch' for the Extraordinary", published in the RCMP magazine *Pony Express* (July/August 1994).

his office frequently. He tried to touch base with every member of the evening shift, he said, so when he heard different ones arriving, he went out to meet them. He said he also tried to drop by at night from time to time, to "make sure they know I'm interested in what they're doing."

Staff Sergeant Humble talked about being available to give advice and guidance, based on his experience, and agreed with my observation that there appeared to be little in the way of him giving direct orders or instructions. Every couple of months, however, he said he was in the habit of holding a meeting with all the members of the detachment to discuss his goals and those of the Division Commanding Officer as well as of the Commissioner. To Staff Sergeant Humble, being an effective manager was being a good and sympathetic listener.

"I don't have a lot of contact with Halifax," he said. "Sure—if I have a problem I know who to call," but "I don't talk to headquarters more than I have to," mostly about things that were needed, such as new equipment. This sentiment was expressed on the other side too: when C. O. Burchill in Halifax explained to me the arrangements he had made for me to spend the day with Staff Sergeant Humble, he added: "He must be doing well; I seldom hear from him."

## Interpretation of the Day

**Low Key Leading** It is hard to believe that this job was as calm as it seemed this day; had I been a fly on the wall on some random day, it might have looked different. But Staff Sergeant Humble was not masking some kind of frenetic job either. All things seemed highly organized in the RCMP, from the training to the systems to the operations. "No surprises" was again very much in evidence.

At the headquarters I saw culture; at the H division I saw communication; here I saw a kind of low key *leading*: the management meeting the operations in order to sustain the morale and well-being of the "members," as Staff Sergeant Humble called the operating staff, who went about their work with little need for direct supervision. This leadership seemed to be mostly one-on-one, including mentoring, coaching, supporting, and advising, because people worked mainly on their own rather than in teams.

**Controlling Up** There seemed to be a good deal of control associated with this job too, but surprisingly little of it seemed to be control downward, by the manager into the unit. Most of it was control up, *of* that manager: satisfying the various systems and procedures of the organization, through formal authorizations, and the filling out the forms. According to the model of Chapter 3, this actually comes under, not *controlling* but *linking*—of the unit to the overall organization. Controlling in the sense of making decisions, delegating work, designing, systems, etc.—was not greatly in evidence, neither in what I saw nor in what Staff Sergeant Humble discussed about his job. Thus when at one point I showed him the model and suggested his job was on the edge of *leading* and *communicating*, but not *controlling*, he replied: "I would say you're right on the money." He agreed that his job involved more guidance and advising than giving orders and instructions.

Being at the base level of management naturally involved a certain amount of *doing*, especially filling in for others and getting involved in specific investigations, perhaps to ensure they were proceeding correctly (at the interface of doing and controlling). *Linking* could be seen in the visits Staff Sergeant Humble described as "public relations" and presumably in other relationships with the local community.

The frame of this job seemed clear enough, and rather stable—largely imposed by the system at large, probably more through culture than by intended strategy.

The comparison of a police station with a hospital ward is interesting, because both do rather professional and sensitive work. But whereas the problem in the hospital is to *coordinate* all the different specialists who converge on the individual patient, the problem in the police force is to *control* the various specialists who disperse individually into the community. That likely makes the job of head nurse, also at the base level, far more interactive, with more decision making and team building at a faster pace (as can be seen in the day with Fabienne Lavoie).

Ironically, in a police force, at least one like the RCMP, *control* is built largely into the systems, procedures, and norms. Hence the *controlling* role is diminished in favor of others, especially *leading* in the unit and linking up the hierarchy. In that sense, a detachment commander sits between professionals who know what they have to do and higher authorities who know how they want to control them. His job was to make sure this connection ran smoothly.

## **The Policing Culture**

A clear message emerges from these three days, reinforced right up and down this sharply delineated hierarchy. While control is critical in the highly dispersed work of policing, and traditional controls clearly abound in the RCMP, what really seemed to matter in this force was the use of culture (normative control) to keep everything running on track. It seemed to be defined and especially reinforced at the most *senior level*, to be communicated *down* and *up* the hierarchy by the *middle level*, and to be reinforced with leadership at the *base level*.

If so, then hierarchy may not quite be the best way to describe this organization. Perhaps the senior managers are better described as being “at the center” rather than “on top”. They do have to “oversee” the operations, but with inevitable detachment. Hence, while the culture may emanate from the “top”, and be protected and enhanced as it flows down, it comes to life at the outer perimeter, where the force meets the society.

The metaphor of government as machine, dominated by rules, regulations, and standards of all kinds has long dominated, now perhaps more than ever with so much emphasis on performance control measures. But these three days of observation suggest that, at least where work is rather autonomous and professional, or should be, government as culture may be a far more effective way to function, based on the careful selection of “members,” judged by their values and attitudes alongside their credentials, followed by their careful socialization through training, which allows them to exercise a good deal of personal responsibility.

## **Managing Policy**

*Here we go to the heart of government policy, for one day with the civil service head of the Canadian Department of Justice and another day with the head of one of its key policy units. Both policy analysis and management become clear here, in one job by being split apart, in the other by being blended together.*

The Canadian Federal Department of Justice “manages the law,” including the carrying out of litigation on the part of the federal government. At the time of this observation, the department employed 2,250 people, including 1,000 lawyers, making it, in part, a kind of super-law partnership. Two to three hundred lawyers were in court every day. It also had a set of policy units—criminal law, native law, environmental issues, etc.—grouped into various sectors. Two managers of the department were observed: the deputy minister, or civil service head of the department, and the head of one of its policy sections.

**John Tait Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Attorney General of  
Canada**

**(Ottawa, 18 March, 1993)**

“I find management very hard; I’m probably not a natural manager,” John Tait told me first thing in the morning. Upward feedback showed him as hesitant to come down hard on weak performers, he said.

John, a lawyer, came from the policy-adviser side, not departmental operations. He joined the Justice Department from the Privy Council Office (secretariat of the federal cabinet and the department of the prime minister) ten years earlier, and became deputy minister four-and-a-half years before this day of observation.

Whether by design, or simply taking advantage of free time in his schedule, John devoted a good deal of time during the day to discussion with me. He said he had been terribly ill a short time before, and only come back to work two months earlier. So he was in a reflective mood, and perhaps my presence offered him an opportunity to think about his work in a different way. He used to work an eighty-hour week, he said, but since the illness, was trying to hold it to fifty-five hours maximum, including no more than five hours on the weekends.

## Description of the Day

At 8:45 a.m.—we arrived at 7:50, and had chatted since then—John’s own immediate team came in, including his administrative and executive assistants. John went over various issues concerning people and scheduling until his executive assistant raised her own issues, while the others listened. Then they did a quick go-around, and the meeting ended at 8:55.

We chatted some more, about the nature of the department and its need for teamwork as its practice of law was becoming more and more specialized. As John put it, “The territorial imperative is killing us.”

At 9:20, his secretary brought in a courier package, and John got on the telephone, discussing a particular case in court and providing advice (e.g., “You’re right in pulling out all the stops.”), as well as offering help (“O.K.—I’ll get a meeting of my key people on the litigation”). This was an official of another department, who, in John’s view, needed “a little hand holding.”

At 9:40, Mary, who headed up the Public Law Sector, came in with her executive assistant, and they were joined by one of John’s assistants. This was one of the regular meetings that John tried to hold with his sector heads about once every three weeks, to review issues, discuss programs, and convey his own wishes and priorities. Here, as throughout the day, the discussion was very much issue-oriented, but sometimes the issues were of a very conceptual nature.

The meeting began with a discussion of “individual versus collective rights,” an important issue with regard to current concerns of native peoples, among others. “People are all over the map on this, and I think the judges are too.” Mary was supervising a paper on it, and John was providing guidance as to what he wanted. She came with a draft report on which he had commented extensively, and he was clarifying some of these comments. Then they moved on to “Crown liability,” with Mary advocating procedure and discussing people and John prodding her on some aspects while she was trying to gain clarification of what he wanted. The discussion of other issues continued in the same vein—self government, judges’ salaries, priorities, etc. Mary left at 11:05.

There followed a meeting with Richard, who headed up the Criminal Law and Social Policy Sector. This was a chattier, more relaxed exchange, with some sharing of information before they again settled down to the specific agenda (e.g., firearms negotiations, native gaming), beginning with Richard’s request that John clarify some written comments he had made on a draft paper. John seemed to be reviewing progress and getting himself informed while conveying his wishes.

This meeting ended at 12:15, and after “dealing with a couple of urgent things here,” related to calls about a cartoon in a newspaper that some people had found offensive, with the decision made to be prepared for questions in Parliament that afternoon, we were driven to an Ottawa restaurant at 12:40.

There John was to have lunch with Tim, who was seeking support for his non-profit Institute on Governance. John promised to check his year-end budget about this. Otherwise the discussion ranged across various specific and general issues of government.

We returned to the office at 2:30, where John met two of his people concerning a dispute with a provincial law society about credentials. Again John provided guidance: “I think we should go step-by-step and not bring out our nuclear bombs.” They discussed a letter that had been drafted for his signature, the contents of which he had toned down.

These people left after a few minutes, and at 3:05, we headed to the Supreme Court building next door, for the unveiling of a portrait of the recently retired head of the Federal Court of Canada, followed by a cocktail party, where John went around networking. He headed back to his office, at 4:10.

From 6:30 to 10 p.m. that evening, John had a meeting to discuss briefing materials concerning the election that had to be called soon. Our own remaining time was spent in discussion, particularly about parts of the job I did not see that day. John met approximately weekly with the minister, he said, for purposed of advising; he had two or three meetings a week on average with

other ministers or deputy ministers; and every two or three weeks he went to the operations committee of cabinet. He chaired a key meeting of federal and provincial deputy ministers of justice as well.

John said he tried to restrict his access to outside individuals, preferring that one of his deputies saw them instead. He also said he spoke formally twice a year at the Canadian Bar meetings, as well as to other national organizations, and tried to meet with the chief justices of the provinces and the deans of law schools periodically. He also made sure to speak to classes attending his own department's lawyer-and manager-training programs.

He said "We are still going through a culture change in this organization—I feel my job is to lead it," especially considering the more conservative nature of some of the people.

As for the mail, he said he received about eighteen inches per day and fifty inches per weekend, excluding legal periodical indexes and books. (Financial documents alone he figured amounted to several inches per week. He also had to approve all the travel expenses of his deputies.) In Justice, "everything is in writing!" He had to see whatever the minister was to see, including all positions the department took, Supreme court cases, and all documents going to cabinet.

Shifts in the justice system, especially interpretations by the courts that, in recent years, amounted to the making of policy, complicated his job, in John's view. Ministers wanted him to "do something," especially when the department's lawyers lost a key case. On that note, John headed for his meeting of senior officials.

## Interpretation of the Day

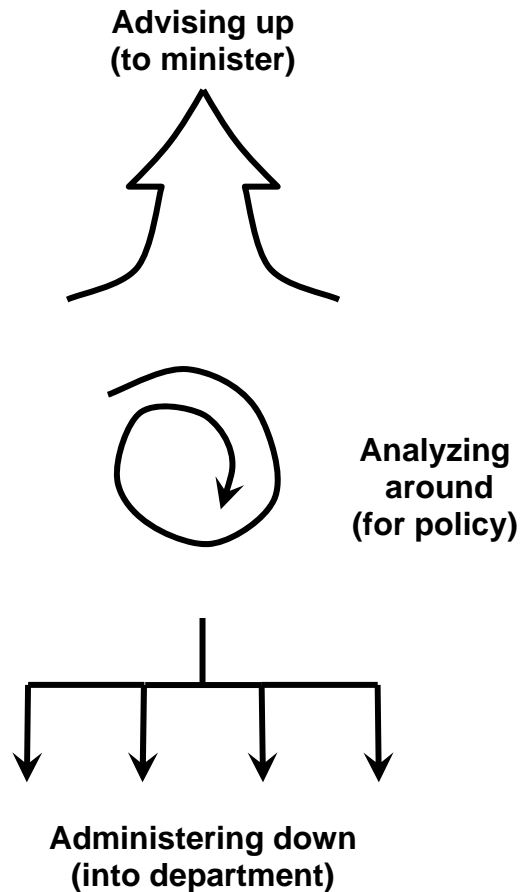
**Split Management** This job was very much involved with the intricacies of government, as opposed to the administration of it. John was a manager, to be sure, but as an expert on the law, also an important player in the political system of Ottawa, with regard to both policy analysis and the management of legislation. And that, I believe, profoundly influenced how he practiced his management.

Deputy ministers in Ottawa have two rather different jobs to perform, which can require two different styles. One is to manage the department, as its most senior full-time employee, whether as a kind of de facto chief executive officer, or else a chief operating officer reporting to an active minister. Either way, this person is responsible for the administration of the department and the implementation of its policies. The other role is to serve as adviser to the minister on matters of policy, plus to brief him or her for Question Period in Parliament—generally a sensitive and time-consuming role. It may not be fair to ask the same person to do both jobs, but that has been the nature of the civil service in parliamentary democracy.

John's job was complicated by a third role. Because policy was so important in this department, and because the deputy minister of justice is often an expert policy analyst, as was John, that too became a key part of the job. Here the leader cannot just sit and delegate, and so John was seen to be a rather hands-on manager this day.

These three roles are illustrated in Figure 2—advising up, to the minister; administering down, into the department; and analyzing policy, all around. These roles look different because they are different, which should raise fundamental questions about this job. Good policy analysts may not necessarily be good managers, and vice versa, while good advisers may be something else again. Should such jobs be split up in some way?

*Figure 2*



**Managing the Law** Perhaps because of the key needs for policy analysis and advising, and partly because of the incumbent's own background, there was a strong emphasis on *conceiving* and *framing* during this day. John's background and his own training as a lawyer, naturally brought the framing part of the job to the fore. But this seemed, on this one day at least, more focused on specific issues than on general strategy. The frame of the job might thus be described as clear with regard to these specific issues and very much determined by the incumbent himself, in accordance with the wishes of the government and its minister, to be sure.

In a sense, the framing connected closely to the doing, because what a Justice Department does, among other things, is to frame specifically policy positions. Of course, much of what any government does is to frame policy positions and then turn them into legislation. So here doing is thinking, and thinkers can be thought of as doers! And because John seemed to play a rather hands-on role in this, some of his framing seemed to get close to doing.

All managerial jobs focus on issues, but few in a more concerted way. That is in the nature of policy analysis. But this may also have to do with the practice of law itself, which is not only among the most analytical of professions, certainly the most verbal, but also one predisposed to decomposing its work into specific "cases" (which, in common law, determine policy through precedent). Of course, the same is true of legislation itself, which requires extensive decomposition, not to mention articulation, in the most

analytical of ways. But, then again, it is lawyers who write most of the legislation. So a number of factors converged here to encourage decomposition and a rather analytical style of managing \*

This, I believe, had an effect on the interplay of *leading* and *controlling* (compared with the other managers I observed). There was not as much affect or emotion in John's exchanges with his people, more of what I would call informing and advising—closer to the information plane, and the controlling role in particular. John's managerial style seemed to be one of conveying his specific wishes and beliefs and sometimes issuing more specific directives. He appeared to push his preferred positions along, issue by issue, in a manner that might be described as deductive.

The role of *leading*, pushed to the limit, is all affect and no content. *Controlling*, pushed to the limit, is the opposite. John was not at the other extreme, but closer to it than most of the other managers. Of course, as one gets closer to the specifics, controlling becomes doing.

*Linking* and *dealing* were a part of this job too. Networking was important, and there were apparently numerous contacts, especially with policy-makers in government. But again, much of this seemed to concern specific issues, so that it connected the *framing* role of the job with its dealing role.

## **Glenn Rivard, General Counsel, Family and Youth Law Policy Section, Department of Justice (Ottawa, 23 September 1993)**

Glenn Rivard ran the "Section"—thirteen people in all—concerned with policy about family and youth law in the Canadian Department of Justice. He used to do this specialized work himself, and was instrumental in creating the section when the work increased.

This would seem to be a classic staff function—conducting analyses and advising on policy—except that because this was part of the very mission of the department ("Provide high-quality legal services and counsel to the government and to client departments and agencies"), the unit was clearly and centrally line.

### **Description of the Day**

The day began at 8:30 a.m. We chatted for awhile, Glenn commenting that policy analysis "is the point where the bureaucracy hits the political process." This was close to election time, which was quiet, he said. There was no Question Period in Parliament now: the politicians were focused more on party policy than on government policy.

Glenn described policy analysis as a tricky business. At the outset of new legislation, it is difficult to know what the thinking is in the minister's office, since the people there tend to play their political cards close to the chest. "You really have to be literate on where this party—and other parties—stand on the issue," as well as where the Canadian public stands. So it is necessary to read press clippings every day. "You're guessing—where does the government come from on this—and you're sending up options."

Justice is "somewhat removed from the fray," Glenn said [compared with Parks Canada, as we have seen earlier], although "the issues you deal with are just as intense." Trade-offs have to be made, even if positions can be rather "absolutist." Hence the consultation process can be used to broaden the competing points of view, to achieve some kind of consensus—which is characteristic of Canadian politics in general. "Often you see your role as looking past the interest groups to see broader consensual feeling," Glenn said. He also noted that positions on some issues seemed to have become more ideological and political in recent years.

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\* With reference to research on the two hemispheres of the human brain, which has found that verbal processes and so, presumably, analytical thinking, tends to be concentrated on the left side of the brain, which controls the right side of the body, it may not be coincidental that the French word for law, *droit*, is also the word for right



Glenn managed a portfolio of policy studies around “children files”: child support, custody, child abuse, trafficking in children, marriage and family relations, even new reproductive techniques, which required a medical/legal expert on his staff. Beside his work in policy analysis for new legislation, more and more people were coming to Glenn for advice.

Forty minutes had passed, and the phone rang, at 9:10, about a presentation concerning the use of his personal computer. He then turned to his voice mail and called an officer in the Department of Health to discuss an upcoming meeting about a corporal punishment issue that had suddenly surfaced. They discussed the need to keep the discussion focused (for example, not to get into “spanking”!), and to coordinate their positions vis-à-vis the external contact groups that would attend, as well as with the media. The issue could obviously be delicate, especially with the election looming, and they were trying to pre-empt a blow-up.

Glenn was off the phone by 9:30, and one of his legal counsel dropped in momentarily on a scheduling issue, while another called about the consensus reached in a new steering committee. A few minutes later, she came back, and they discussed various people and how they were reacting to situations, etc.

At 9:45, the section’s medical legal/specialist appeared for his bi-weekly meeting. They reviewed the case of Sue Rodrigues, a woman in British Columbia dying of Lou Gherig’s disease who had very publicly challenged the government in the courts on her right to euthanasia.

At 10:03, another legal council came in about a meeting of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Like the other legal counsels, she seemed knowledgeable, informal and confident, briefing Glenn while he asked some questions and gave advice, at times becoming more directive (“I think it should be put in there”). She left at 10:24.

Then Glenn reached the head of the Statistics Section in the Justice Department on the telephone. They chatted for about ten minutes on a variety of issues, including some statistical material for a book being done on Young Offenders. After a couple of other calls, at 10:43 two people who dealt with family violence and child sexual abuse in the section came in. Glenn asked them to look over a document concerning a repealing of the prohibition on anal intercourse, went over a set of reports to check which they had seen, and listened to a briefing on a meeting with police chiefs and judges out west. They informed him of a talk show one was doing at noon, about the role of legislations, and about someone visiting from Scotland, and asked Glenn if he had succeeded in getting some money to reallocate to another account, etc. The meeting ended at 11:48, a little over an hour in all.

“I just have to get through these few things,” Glenn said as he signed a briefing note for the minister and went through the daily departmental press clippings. After a brief drop-in for him to meet a guest, and the taking of a couple of voice messages, we left for lunch at 12:10, where the two of us talked about Glenn’s job. “I can give people a lot more freedom if I know what’s happening,” he said. Some people inform naturally, he explained, while others don’t, so you need to see them regularly. Glenn read proposals to ensure they didn’t “go off the rails” and to factor in the broader perspective that he had in his job, although he did claim to monitor some of the more important files closely, such as that concerning young offenders.

Asked about other work he did, Glenn discussed answering questions for other government departments, or other units in his own department, as well as for the minister’s office, which he did less regularly. He said he did not see lobbyists much, who tended to “go above” him, to the minister, or “below,” to the person working on the issue itself. He was involved with the Canadian Bar Association, which examines law reform and comments on it, and sat on various interdepartmental committees, including ones on family violence, child support, and marital and family issues, which he chaired, as well as on a departmental group on new reproductive techniques, which he also chaired.

We returned at 1:35, and after Glenn took a personal call, we looked over his agenda a few months back. On April 1, he had an all-day meeting on juvenile prostitution with a federal and provincial umbrella criminal law group, and on April 2 the agenda showed an afternoon meeting to wrap up an earlier conference, “Legal Trends,” which Glenn had chaired.

The following week had begun with a morning staff management meeting, followed by an afternoon ad hoc working group concerned with legislation about stalking. The minister had made this issue a priority and wanted something done before the election, so they had to introduce legislation quickly. All day that Tuesday, as a consequence, they had met with women’s groups. Wednesday’s agenda included a section meeting, which happened every two weeks, a meeting with provincial representatives on the stalking legislation, and another on tax and child support guidelines. The week’s section meeting occurred on Thursday, plus there was a lunch with Glenn’s boss and a person from a minister’s office about the young offenders legislation. Nothing was scheduled for the Friday.

Things had continued more or less like this for the following two weeks, except for meetings about annual evaluations of his people—that part of his job he “hates the most,” because he found the process artificial, preferring instead to meet with and review his people informally, which he said he did. Other activities included a press conference to listen and then hand out and explain a document on the stalking legislation to key journalists, and a financial management course, part of the required training program for managers—“So I took that one.” Glenn commented that “When the minister is here and things are humming a little faster, more people will drop in and there are more phone calls.”

While we were reviewing the April agenda, the Justice Department visitor dropped in with the man from Scotland, who was particularly interested in the young offenders and sexual abuse legislation. They shared their knowledge of practice and compared procedures in the two countries. That meeting lasted seventeen minutes.

It was now 3:15, and Glenn went to work on some yellow folders—another of his least favored jobs: questions that came from the minister’s office where they could not be answered. A number of telephone calls followed, about scheduling and one to approve a staffer’s trip, and then Glenn turned to the mail: an approval he had to sign, a paper entitled “Rounding Out the Manager’s Job” that an academic had sent him, the record of a deputy ministers’ meeting, law reports, a request to do a presentation and another to attend a conference in Australia—just a “mixed bag,” said Glenn, “nothing really profound in it.”

Glenn commented that “when you are a specialist, you get a narrow range of documents and you read them all,” but, now, “one of the most important tasks is knowing what not to read.” At first, he tried to manage strategically, dealing with the broader, more abstract issues. But that didn’t work, so now he found himself more involved. He orchestrated some of the bills himself, and, for others, chose people to take the lead, although he believed there was very much of a “teamwork approach” in his unit—“we’re all in it,” he said.

At 4:05, Glenn had to leave to go to his son’s school.

## Interpretation of the Day

**Conceptual Project Management** This seemed very much to be a job of project management in a rather delicate area of government legislation. Yet the fact that the projects concerned policy instead of specific applications took a good deal of the heat off.

Glenn managed lawyers and other professionals who did part of their work individually—writing reports, drafting legislation, etc.—but who also had to work in teams. And so the structure of his unit, and probably the whole policy side of the department, seems to look much like an adhocracy—project management in teams, producing customized outputs. As Glenn noted near the end of the day, that rendered his job of managing, not detached and abstract, but involved in the project work itself—overseeing it, reviewing it, pushing it along, sometimes also doing it himself. In a sense, Glenn’s unit always had many balls in the air, and Glenn had to ensure that none fell down, rather that each sustained energy and eventually ended up where it was meant to be.

Beyond that, however, Glenn dealt with competent experts who knew what to do and did it, albeit with guidance from him. Among art, craft, and science, Glenn’s style could perhaps best be described as craft.<sup>3</sup>

**Craft Blending** So on one side, the inside, there seemed to be a considerable amount of what Andy Grove (1983) called “nudging,” and on the other, outside, the work involved a good deal of networking, informing, being informed, getting advice, etc.—into other parts of the department and the rest of the government, as well as to various interest and expert groups in the society at large. And then the two sides came together as Glenn factored the political and other dimensions into the work done in his section. As Glenn noted, he invested “a great deal of effort to make linkages.” Someone had to keep track of all the external factors that had to be considered for legislation. (Carol Haslem, the head of the London film company, also sat between the projects done by her people and the external relationships that determined these projects. But she seemed much more hands-on externally and hands-off internally. She “did the deals” outside, whereas for Glenn there were no outside deals as such, or at least they were perhaps “done” in the political process. But unlike Glenn, she seemed only to oversee the projects internally, perhaps because film making requires much more tightly integrated teams that handled somewhat less politically sensitive issues.)

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<sup>3</sup> Glenn commented in a letter in response to this report: “Your characterization of my managerial style as ‘craft’ would conform with my own view (although, with pretensions I suppose, I have always thought of it as an ‘art’). ‘Craft’, however, is the better term, for it connotes a degree of functionality which ‘art’ does not. I think to some large extent this may be the product of the fact that I am managing the law and legal professionals. One cannot simply be a manager. One must also be a lawyer. And in the blending of the two, perhaps one gets ‘crafty’, pun intended.” (November 29, 1994)

Among the managerial roles of the model, *communicating* clearly stood out, alongside *linking*. This was expert work, requiring a great deal of detailed knowledge about all kinds of concerns, especially ones external to the unit: the law in general; a host of specialized areas of the law pertaining to children and the family in particular; conditions and sentiments in society concerning all of these areas; the wishes, moods, and inclinations of the politicians in power; related activities in other government departments and other governments, in the Canadian provinces and around the world; and much more. Glenn also had to keep all kinds of external people informed about the activities of his unit, both to prepare them for and promote to them its solutions.

Consistent with the craft style of managing, the other roles here seemed to blend together. Glenn clearly *did* the projects too, and there was no absence of *controlling* here, in the sense of issuing directives about his wishes on how certain work was to be carried out (although control through systems was less in evidence, except, of course, standard ones used by the government at large).

Project work is necessarily somewhat opportunistic, in that each project has to be responsive to its unfolding situation. But the manager in charge of it can still impose his or her own beliefs on it. Glenn managed a portfolio of projects within an overall perspective that was partly his own, but also significantly influenced by the political processes around him.

## **Is Policy Management?**

We can conclude from these two reports on the Justice Department with a brief comment about policy versus management—an issue that was especially evident here, although endemic to government in general. That explains the common debates about whether senior civil servants should be managers or analysts, and why the schools to train them have been labeled both public administration and policy science. In business, managerial skills are generally thought to be key, although the advent of so many MBAs is pushing business in the direction of more analysis, with perhaps similarly problematic consequences.

These two days of observation showed two jobs in the same department of government, one at a middle level with a more natural blending of the managerial roles, the other at a senior level more split between the work of advising, analyzing, and administering. Part of this difference may have reflected the styles of the two incumbents in these jobs. But another part seemed to reflect the levels in the hierarchy at which they worked, and this could be cause for concern.

Historically in government, perhaps policy mattered most. Today, perhaps management matters more. But has this been properly reflected in the appointments to senior positions in government? And if—or when—it does, will that actually help matters?

Government is not business: policy is critical, and good policy analysts as well as good policy advisers must be put into senior positions in the government. But management is becoming more important as well as more complex. Government will have to develop its own approaches to management, or at least reinforce the effective approaches it already has developed. That means it must imitate business less, in structure at least as much as in style, and in the arrangements by which managers work together to analyze, advise, and administer in a coordinated fashion.

## **Facilitating Beyond the Hierarchy**

**Doug Ward, Director of Programming,  
CBC Radio, Ottawa (8 March 1993)**

*A manager who knew the hierarchy of his complex organization well was able to act in interesting ways to “nudge” up and lead out, the latter toward reports who were not quite reports. This enabled him to put his own clear stamp on the creativity of his unit.*

Farther from government yet, but still within government, is a manager with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), the state owned national broadcaster (radio, television, etc.). This is true public broadcasting, yet the word “Corporation” conveys another meaning too, since the CBC is a “Crown Corporation,” that is, a state-owned enterprise. The ambiguity of this relationship is perhaps best reflected in advertising: the television network accepts advertising; the radio network does not.

Although officially called “Director of Programming,” Doug Ward actually managed the CBC English-language radio station in Ottawa, part of the national radio network. Its prime-time morning show had risen to first place among adults in the local ratings, but extensive competition fragmented that market. The CBC generally offered more intelligent radio—more talk rather than less—and more Canadian flavor than its competitors. This included thirteen hours daily of network broadcasting, with the Ottawa station producing the remaining eight hours, which involved much more than putting on music or having a talk show host with a telephone. Stories had to be developed and researched, interviewees and commentators lined up.

Doug had many years of managerial experience with the CBC; in fact he had been Vice President of the corporation in charge of all the regional stations, English and French, radio and TV. But five years earlier, he voluntarily and happily moved to this position, which took him from a rather broad and vague managerial job to one that was most pointedly focused—a single, self-contained unit with its own city and audience.

The station was a small unit in the CBC—television was obviously of greater concern to senior management, and so was radio in the larger markets of Toronto and Montreal. Thus, from the center of a corporation whose political battles were sometimes legendary, Doug moved into one of its smaller enclaves where he could promote focused excellence with considerable autonomy.

The station had been located for decades on the top floor of Chateau Laurier, a hotel that is a landmark in Ottawa, next to the Parliament buildings. As you got off the elevator, you went down a corridor where the facilities were located, including broadcast studios and offices.

## **Description of the Day**

I arrived at 8:40 a.m., moments after Doug did, and found him in an open neck shirt lugging a computer around. They had cleaned the carpets over the weekend, and he was putting things back in place. Doug’s secretary Kelly, looked in, as she did on and off all day. Doug turned on the PC, first replying to messages from his staff, then making notes on what he wanted to discuss with the programmers. He worked around the offices, between the PC, the telephone, and Kelly coming and going, initially to discuss the day’s and week’s schedule, dates for an Ottawa show of a comedy group “The Royal Canadian Air Farce” that the station was organizing, and various budgeting issues. (The station had a \$3 million dollar budget, and had to absorb 1% budget cuts for each of the next four years.) Doug handed Kelly a series of files he had worked on during the weekend, including a disk with some long memos he had prepared. Many of these items concerned tangible programming issues, or the people who were to do it.

Doug dictated a number of additional memos, concerning ways to save money and spend the bits left over at year end. Another memo dealt with a central computer system commissioned by the network: he was concerned that if it went down, the effects could be devastating for live daily programming on the entire network.

Issues in the morning mail included a variety of items. One letter came from one of his technicians who had gone to the high arctic and made a difficult satellite connection, and another came from an ethnic organization requesting the filling out of a questionnaire on policies with regard to multicultural programming (which Doug decided to do, also to send a message to his boss encouraging her to coordinate replies from all the Ontario stations). Another letter concerned a ruling about a contract

termination, and there was a poem on marital violence sent to Doug by a listener in the hope that it could be read on the air. (Doug decided not to act on it.)

The time was now 9:49, and Doug turned again to his PC to develop agendas for his meetings of that day. But part of this time was also spent discussing with me Doug's efforts over his five years in the job to remake the programming team, by moving certain people out (including one delicate case resolved by an early retirement), and bringing in others who could be more effective. Doug was quite clear about his goal of making Ottawa the best local CBC radio station in the network. (It might be added that many knowledgeable people outside of Canada considered the CBC one of the best radio networks in the world.)

A call then came from a friend in the CBC who had quit a prime time show in difficulty, asking if Doug would act as a reference for him. Doug agreed and they discussed CBC issues at some length, before he turned back to his PC.

At 11:00 there was a conference call. The President of the CBC wished to encourage more cooperation across English and French language stations, and so the head of the Ontario region had arranged for all Ontario station managers to discuss it. Doug was joined in his office by Denis, the head of the Ottawa French-language station, whose offices were on the same floor. After some light telephone bantering, Doug and Denis were asked to comment first on what they had done, since the two of them sitting together exemplified the very issue of the call. They talked in turn, about sharing stories, using each other's staff, etc., before others on the line spoke.

The call ended at noon. Doug and Denis chatted for a few minutes, making arrangements to meet monthly to maintain the momentum. Kelly came in for a few minutes on arrangements, and then Doug looked at some correspondence for the noon meeting, and placed a call about filling a vacancy in a senior editor's job, commenting "We will have the best local newsroom in two years."

At 12:15, we headed for a meeting room down the hall, where the producer of the morning show and the station's publicist were joined by two other women from the board of Interval House, a married women's shelter. One such organization was chosen every two years to receive the proceeds of the annual Air Farce performance, and this was to be Interval House's second year. The meeting was held over sandwiches, to confirm Interval House's participation and to make necessary arrangements. Doug led the discussion, taking notes and appeared to be very knowledgeable of the details. The meeting ended at 1:20.

Rhonda, the publicist, then came to Doug's office to discuss marketing strategy for a parenting show, based on a twenty-page report she had prepared for him. Again Doug was quite involved in the details, acting here as the client for Rhonda's help and advice.

At 2:15 she left, and Wayne came in, the technical chief. He was actually the reason Doug was called Director of Programming. Officially a "station manager" had control of the technical as well as programming aspects of the operation. But since Wayne was shared by both the French and English stations in Ottawa, Doug, Denis, and Wayne were officially shown as equal, although it was clear from the discussion that Wayne's function served those of Doug and Denis. Doug described this weekly meeting as "crucial, because I do not manage the plant here but I am utterly dependent on it."

Doug had printed up an agenda of eleven specific items to review, some quite technical (e.g., "Mobile Receive Antenna Quality"), others to do with programs or administration (e.g., "Newsroom Technical Staffing"). They reviewed them all, as well as items Wayne added to the agenda, and identified who had follow-up work to do. The meeting ended at 3:40.

Kelly brought in some telephone messages, and then Doug and I chatted for a few minutes, mainly about whether his "hands-on" involvement extended to programming. "My job is to set the goals for the programs, with the producers. The actual daily program work is delegated. I meet the producers weekly to discuss station direction, and I'm part of the annual, formal program evaluation. Beyond that, I let them know what I think of particularly good or bad programming when it happens, and I'm always there to discuss contentious issues being prepared for broadcast." As for his relationship with Wayne, Doug noted that there had been many complaints about the lack of cooperation between the production and technical departments when he arrived. Wayne was hired soon after, and "I decided the day he arrived that we should meet every week." Later he added, "I know our weekly meeting is very important support for him too...I can be a sounding board for him."

After a bit more work on the PC, Laurence, the new head of the newsroom, came in at 4:00. Doug was proud of this appointment, and was meeting with Laurence daily for his first few months on the job. As Doug put it to me before Laurence came in, "I want him to build the best local newsroom in the country, but it doesn't have to be by October."

Their informal discussion ranged widely, about a gaff in the morning news, the staffing of open positions in the newsroom, and Doug's request that Laurence draft a list of his priorities for the immediate, intermediate, and longer term future. They also discussed Doug's specific concerns, so "You'll know what I'm expecting and not expecting." Laurence left at 4:20.

Doug said that normally he would write up the results of these meetings on his PC, but because his wife and baby were ill with the flu, he would leave earlier than usual and do the minutes on his computer at home. (He said his normal day was 8:30 to 5:30, with lunch at his desk. But because his best thinking time was early morning, he worked at home, uninterrupted, from 6:00 to 7:00 a.m. In contrast, the evening was "slow thinking time" for him, and so it was committed to family, reading, and radio listening.)

A friend dropped in and then Doug took a call from someone interested in producing a new, national program from Ottawa. After signing various documents on his desk (time cards for his staff, petty cash vouchers, etc.), the day ended at 4:45 with Kelly bringing in the files Doug was to take home for early morning perusal.

## Interpretation of the Day

**At the Interface** Doug sat right at the interface in the hierarchy between managing up and managing down, connected to both the tangible operations of radio programming and the intricacies of the formal hierarchy that sat over it. “It’s nice having a job at the interface,” Doug said in response to my comments about this.

Two things made this connection especially interesting. First, his experience elsewhere in the organization and further up the hierarchy made him especially attuned to the pressures it exerted on him, and so in the *linking* role, he could not only fight back (buffering), but actually challenge the rest of the system (transmitting), and even act in ways beneficial to the system at large.

**Insiders as Outsiders as Insiders** Second, insiders and outsiders could get all mixed up here, meaning that *leading* and *linking* got substituted for each other. The technical manager, who would normally have reported to him, was officially his peer; his publicist actually reported to the same regional administration he did; and while some of the programmers clearly worked for the station, others answered to network program managers in Toronto. All of this reflected the fact that creative work depends on functional working relationships far more than on the authority of hierarchy. Creative people contract their labor more than consecrate it.

If this made Doug’s job difficult, I saw no evidence of it during the day. He linked naturally to people one might otherwise think he should have led, while he did not hesitate to lead people who did not officially work for him, encouraging and even coaching them. Advice, help, and information seemed to be parceled out according to need rather than relationship.

**Managing as Facilitating** Overall, perhaps, Doug can logically be described as a facilitator. In this sense, running a radio station of creative programmers and skilled technicians, embedded in a large, which could ultimately be a rather casual bureaucracy, is perhaps a most contemporary form of managing, perhaps even a harbinger of what more conventional organizations might expect in the future.

**Doing and Dealing Together** On one side were the programmers. Doug’s job seemed to be to select the best ones, really the best possible team of them (*leading*/controlling by deciding), and then support and protect them as much as possible (buffering). Doug was clearly a hands-on manager—very much a doer—but apparently not with regard to regular programming. His *doing*, this day at least, concerned plans for special programming as well as all kinds of other issues that supported the programming.

There was *dealing* too—in fact, much of the day concerned working outside and inside the unit concurrently (e.g., the lunch meeting). Indeed, his proudest “done deals” seemed to be his replacements of weak staff. This could have involved considerable negotiations over long periods of time, not only with the inside individuals to be replaced, but also with other parts of the CBC, to place those people in more appropriate positions elsewhere in the corporation. Doug noted that “this place [the CBC] has become very entrepreneurial, much more deal oriented,” with a philosophy of “If you can help me, I’ll help you.” Doing and dealing therefore seemed to be Doug’s main means of facilitating effective programming.

**Linking Externally** Outside the network of course sat the world at large, and for a radio station with serious intentions about news and events, that was a large world indeed. Stations of course have news reporters, etc. to make these connections. But Doug did that too, in his own ways, for example to link to listener groups, as could be seen during the day. Doug's noon hour meeting, to take one example, was an interesting mixture of *linking*, *doing*, and *dealing*. Doug was connecting Interval House to the Royal Canadian Air Farce (itself a contractor to the CBC) through his station's own programming activity, for purposes of gaining audience. (Only one person at that meeting technically worked for the Ottawa station, the producer of the morning show.) Doug orchestrated the whole set of relationships, and ensured that they were clear before turning the situation over to one of his people (who was not technically one of his people).

As for linking to the rest of the CBC, Doug's experience served him especially well here: as noted, he seemed especially able to mediate at this interface. They "nudged" him, as the conference call and the budgeting sessions made clear, but he knew what to pass through and what to hold back, even how to "nudge" back. So his buffering was nicely nuanced. If the President of the CBC wanted better cooperation between French and English stations, a worthwhile goal in Doug's opinion, then he could act to encourage that. But if they were creating an information system he believed to be fallible, he knew how to challenge that too.

**Less Overt Controlling, but a Clear Frame** *Controlling* has barely been mentioned here, yet it was clearly not absent. There were all kinds of systems and budgetary pressures at the CBC, and Doug's managerial style did not reflect any shyness about being directive (including "nudging up"). But controlling did not seem to be the central either to this job or to the man who filled it, not compared with leading, linking, and doing.

Doug agreed with me that the frame of his job was largely one of adapting (compared with creating the frame on one side or maintaining it on the other). He made serious improvements while not revolutionizing the unit. We also agreed that the frame was rather clear and was his: he knew where he wished to take the CBC English-language Ottawa radio station.

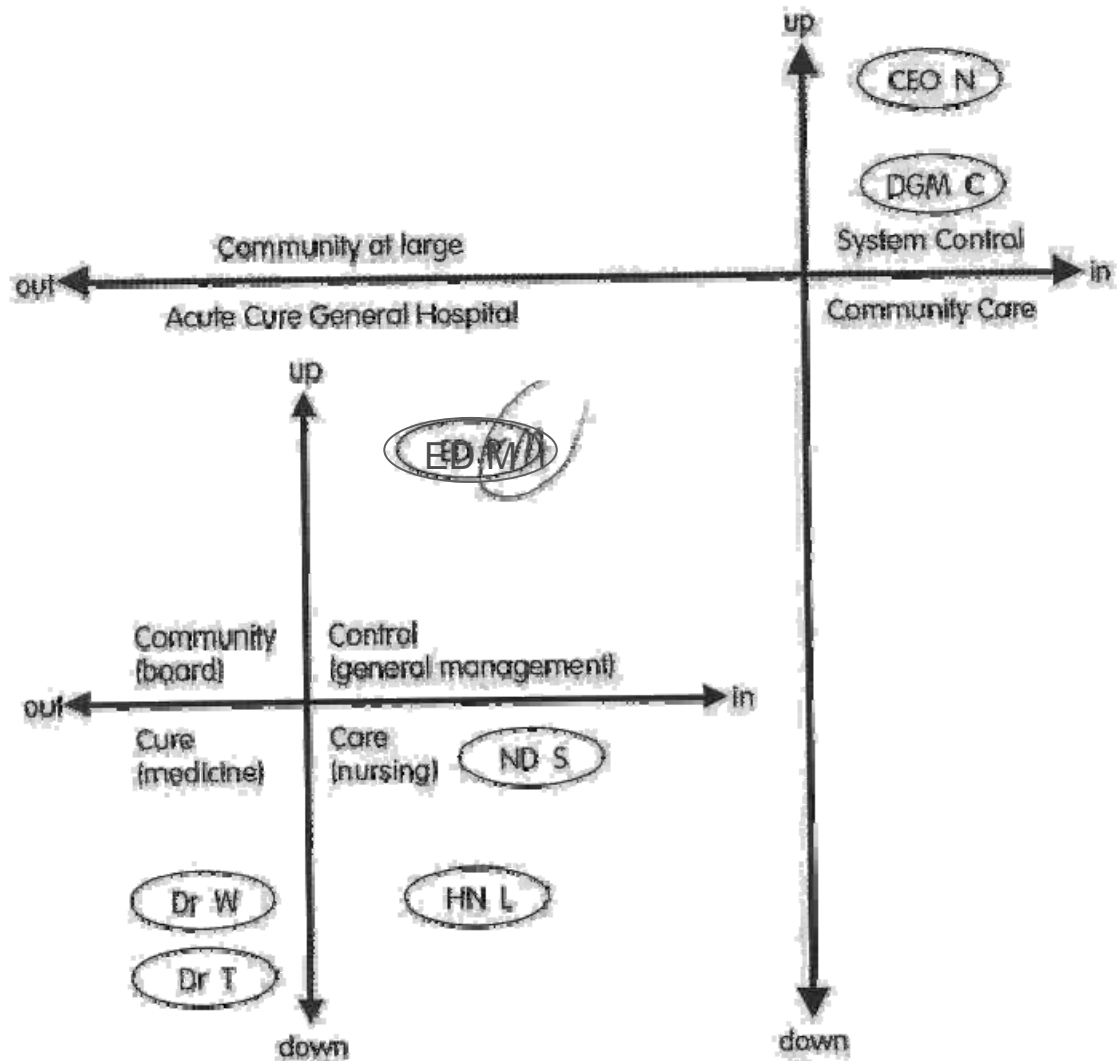
### III. MANAGING IN HEALTHCARE

Early on, with my colleague Sholom Glouberman, I observed five managers in the National Health Service of England (NHS), ranging from top to bottom in the conventional hierarchy (although physicians are hardly at the bottom of the status hierarchy). The juxtaposition of these five days proved rather revealing, at least about the management of healthcare in a state system, not least concerning a disconnect between the clinical operations and the management, as one moved up that hierarchy. Separately, in Montreal, I observed the head of a tertiary hospital and the head nurse of a surgical ward in a hospital. These two days were no less revealing—in similar and other ways. This chapter presents, first the five in England, together, and then the two in Montreal, apart.

The title of the first study, below, derives from a framework, shown in Figure 3 (from Glouberman and Mintzberg 2001a). The cross in the lower left describes the acute cure general hospital, divided into four quadrants, according to whether people manage up or down and in or out. *Down* refers to direct connections to the delivery of service, while *in* refers to functioning within the formal hierarchy. Thus *cure*, for which the medical function is significantly responsible, is shown as down but out (linked to the patients but outside the hospital's hierarchy), while *care*, for which nursing is significantly responsible, is shown as down and in. General managers, concerned with *control*, can be described as up and in (integral to the hierarchy but removed from the clinical operations), while members of the board, representing *community*, are both up and out.

*Figure 3*





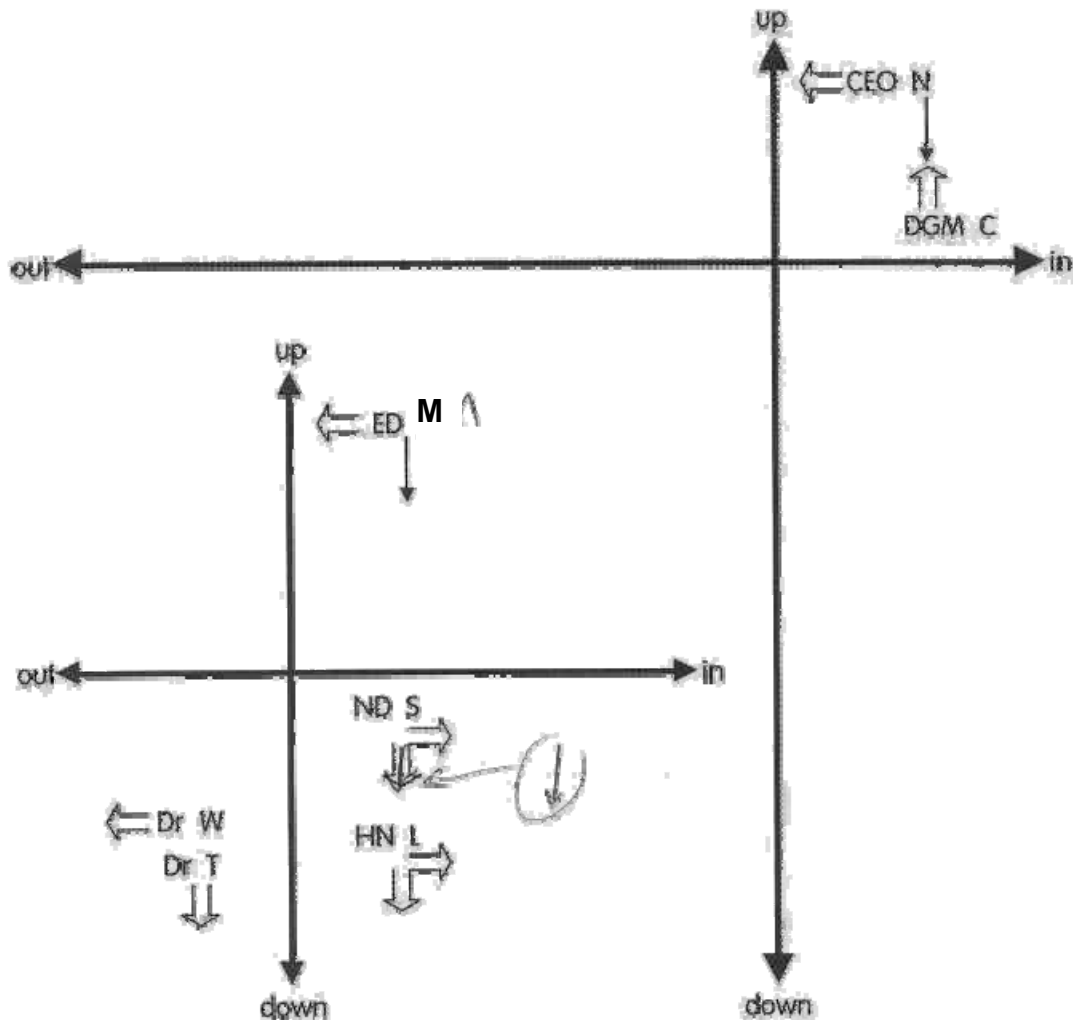
Looking beyond this, to the bigger cross of Figure 3, the same four quadrants are repeated for the system at large. This time the *acute cure general hospital* is itself described as down but out (delivering service directly, often in a quasi-autonomous way, called "trusts" in England, "voluntary" hospitals in the United States). What is called *community care* (other services, outside the general hospitals) tends to function more down and in, while *system control*, whether public or private (exercised by the state, insurance companies, HMOs, etc.), is up and in, and the *community at large* remains up and out.

Figure 4 positions the seven managers discussed here in these various quadrants, two in medical cure, two in nursing care, one in hospital control, and two in system control. They are identified by their position (e.g., HN means head nurse) and by their name (L for that head nurse, Fabienne Lavoie). The two from Montreal were HNL and EDM; the rest were from the NHS.

## Managing Up and Down, In and Out<sup>4</sup>

*Managing may be managing, but how it is practiced in different places of one large public health service reveals a coherent picture of the varieties as well as the discontinuities in managing what is expected to be an integrated system. Most notable was the truncation of hierarchy between operating clinically on the ground and managing abstractly in district offices.*

Figure 4



Managing may be managing, but when practiced in the so-called "system" of "health care", it takes on a wide variety of forms. For example, the head of a liver transplant team manages a long way from the chief executive officer of the National Health Service of England (NHS). Indeed, much of this managing is about disease cure—whether diseases of people or those of large organizations—which is a long way from "health care". Yet all of this takes place in a system that is supposed to be integrated.

<sup>4</sup> Published in a similar form by this title in *Health Services Management Research*, (15, 2002: 193-206).

This study probes into the varieties of management practiced in this "system". All or in some cases part of a day in the lives of five managers of the NHS are described briefly, one by one, and then interpreted, alone and later together. These include the head of a liver transplant and a research team, a clinical director of geriatrics, both in London hospitals, a director of nursing of two hospitals in Redding, a district general manager (as the NHS was organized at the time), and the chief executive officer of the whole NHS. My colleague Sholom Glouberman joined me in these days of observation. The descriptions vary in detail, but taken together they seem to present a consistent picture of the varieties as well as the discontinuities of managing this system of care and cure. (Please note that the brevity of these descriptions reflects the fact that this research was just getting underway: two of these were the first managers observed and the others followed soon after.)

## **Dr Michael Thick, Surgeon and Head of a Liver Transplant and a Research Team, St. Mary's Hospital (London, May 1992)**

### **Description of the Day**

We arrived about 8 am, Dr Michael Thick a few minutes later. He seemed relaxed and low key, almost like an academic (which he partly was), with plenty of time for us. (He was not operating that day.) He started his rounds in the ward at 8:30, when the full team of nine had arrived. This included another medical specialist, two senior house officers (interns), a registrar and a senior registrar (residents), and three nurses.

The whole group surrounded each bed, one by one, with one of the senior physicians typically taking the lead in this discussion. (At one point, amusingly, they all lined up around an empty bed and discussed the patient as if he were there; in some cases with real patients, they pulled back for more intensive and confidential conversation.) There was also considerable evidence of "hands-on" behavior, for example to feel lumps or particular organs, and, especially in Dr. T's case, simply for soothing care. At the end of each discussion, they decided on the next step in the treatment.

At 9:40, the rounds ended, and we headed into Dr T's research unit, called "Cosmos," which was doing rather ambitious work: seeking to develop "a conceptual model of medical practice." A team of four sat around a table, including another physician (who ran the group), a systems analyst, and a support person. They were not so much solving problems as administering—going over agendas, scheduling presentations, planning the research, etc.—with Dr T appearing to be in the role of being briefed, in order to authorize certain actions. Mostly he listened and commented occasionally. At 10:45, he asked, "Is that it?" and at 11:00 left.

Back in his office, Dr T interviewed a woman about a nursing job, as transplant coordinator (which involved the difficult work of "harvesting organs", including travel to the source, anywhere in Europe, to arrange to get the organ, bringing it back to London, and preparing the operating rooms on both ends, etc.) That meeting ended at 11:20 and Dr T then prepared to open mail and make his phone calls. "We have a hiatus, I'm afraid," he said of the free time, pointing out that he was effectively on call—a liver donor could appear at any time, from anywhere, at which point the team would spring into action.

We had lunch together in Dr T's office, and since he was going to settle down to work on his research over the computer in the afternoon, after some general discussion about his job and medical practice in general, we departed at 1:30.

### **Interpretation of the Day**

Dr T was a clinician as well as a manager, indeed only minimally a manager. His scheduling "hiatus" was indicative of that: full-time managers seem rarely to have these, or at least they can always do their own "rounds", namely "managing by walking around." Nonetheless, Dr T did manage a clinical team as well as a research team. These were rather different, in terms of the focus (cure in the clinical work, versus knowledge in the research team), intensity (the former highly so, the latter far more reflective), and the work itself (tangible hands-on and abstract hands-off).

*Doing* would seem to describe Dr T's key managerial role at the start of this day, in the sense of "hands-on" managing of a team (alongside, of course, medical doing as a clinician). Other evident roles included *controlling*, in the sense of overseeing and authorizing the work of the research team, which Dr T also infused with a certain amount of *leading* as he encouraged teamwork (and had

evidentially built the team in the first place.) All three of these roles focused into the units being managed: there was little evidence of external *linking* or *dealing*. (*Communicating* obviously accompanied all the activities.) Dr T could, therefore, be described, on this day at least, as managing *down*—into the basic clinical and research operations.

## **Dr. Stewart Webb, Geriatrician, Cardiologist, and Clinical Director, St. Charles Hospital (London, May 1992)**

We seemed to spend the morning with two people when we observed Dr. Stewart Webb at the St. Charles Hospital in London, one in his clinical role as geriatrician, the other in his managerial role as clinical director of one of the geriatric wards.

### **Description of the Day**

We arrived early, as Dr W was going over work with his business manager. She asked the questions, he gave the answers, she took the notes. The process looked like passive authorizing more than active administering. Dr T was dictating choices rather than engaging in full-fledged decision-making. In effect, she seemed to be administering without authority, while he seemed to be managing without enthusiasm. All the while, Dr W drank one cup of coffee after another and smoked a steady chain of cigarettes.

After almost an hour of this, Dr W grabbed one last cup of coffee—“to get me through the morning”—and left for his clinical rounds. There a remarkable transformation took place. After the first two or three patients, Dr W settled down as a calm clinician, responsive to his patients, with time for all their needs, and relaxed with the accompanying staff as well. Coffee and cigarettes were neither consumed nor mentioned during his two hours in the wards.

Dr W knew all the patients, and, on occasion, telephoned members of their families (once greeting a daughter on a first-name basis). His work was largely diagnostic—fine-tuning medication, also discussing needs for more radical interventions with the staff—but care appeared to be strongly integrated with cure in Dr W's mannerisms as well as in these diagnoses.

At one point, he turned to his staff and said, “We’ve got to make some decisions here.” The contrast with his earlier decision making behavior was marked: here Dr W was intimately involved as he worked out the next step in patient care, in comparison with his earlier pronouncements of “yes” or “no”.

### **Interpretation of the Day**

Dr W's work was marked by a sharp separation of the clinical from the managerial, which raises a disturbing question about hospitals in general. Clearly medicine and management need to be linked. Dividing up decision making about the purchase of equipment, for example, between clinicians charged with the technical aspects and managers with the financial ones, has often proved dysfunctional.

Yet here was medicine meeting management within a single individual, with a similar problem. In his clinical work, Dr W was *doing*; in his managerial work this morning, he was *controlling*—not leading, not linking, and certainly not doing in the managerial sense, but overseeing and authorizing. As discussed in the model of managing, this is decision making in the narrow sense of making choices for purposes of control. Or, perhaps more to the point, Dr W was *remote* controlling: taking *himself* “out” of the broader organization, more than just plain *managing* out.

Managerial work is necessarily fragmented. Integration requires not only an intimate understanding of the work being managed, but also a deep commitment to the process of managing itself. Medicine by its very nature is interventionist—that is in the nature of cure (the French word for surgical operation is “intervention”)—but management cannot afford to be interventionist. It has to be more like care, flowing smoothly, steadily involved rather than appearing sporadically, preventative more than curative—like Dr W on the floor, not back in his office.

Medicine and management can be quite different in orientation. While management requires a holistic view of the organization, doctors are trained and practice in increasingly specialized ways. Medicine carves its work into discreet categories, by body part, type of patient, or type of intervention—all very clearly categorized. And so the practice tends to take on a decidedly analytic orientation, while management requires synthesis.

Moreover, physicians are mostly in the habit of making decisions individually and decisively. They generally do their clinical work alone and seldom hesitate to take clinical decisions. Yet management, especially in a hospital, has to be a collective effort, and that often means protracted deliberations. "Who opens?" goes a cartoon picturing a group of surgeons around a patient. In much of management, this is a serious question! Such management must be intensely frustrating to some physicians.

A word on part-time management is in order here, for we have seen it in the last two descriptions, where physicians practiced it alongside their clinical work. This can be problematic, because of a phenomenon we can call *distraction*. Much as a parent can be distracted by trying to do his or her work with a child nearby who requires attention, ending up neither working nor parenting very well, so too can managing with significant clinical responsibilities lurking nearby lead to similar problems. Management, like medicine itself, needs firm commitment.

### **Ann Sheen, Director of Nursing Services, Reading Hospitals (May 1991)**

We met Ann Sheen at Battle Hospital, where she was spending about half her time as head of nursing of this and the Royal Berkshire Hospital, a few miles away, the two having recently been merged to form one "unit". Her concern was to integrate the nursing operations of the two institutions. Ann exuded an enormous amount of energy in the exercise of her managerial duties, symbolized by the click of her heels as she marched down the corridors (which, she admitted, was perceived as her trademark). "I love those games," she said of some negotiations to get a share of space on the hospital's postboard.

As an experienced nurse as well as nursing manager, Ann obviously knew the operations intimately. Indeed, one could hardly tell that she had only taken charge of the nursing function at this particular hospital three months earlier. But her comfortable confidence with her own staff—she had a personal word for every nurse she passed—belied a certain reticence toward the doctors, hardly any of whom she spoke to. (She commented later that she had not yet had the time to meet all the medical staff in the new hospital.)

#### **Description of the Day**

This was an inside day; Ann spent little time with people outside her own unit. She met first with her assistant to review a host of issues briefly, then engaged in a lengthier meeting with a group of eight nurses, young and bright, half of them working in first-line supervisory positions, the other half seconded into staff assignments. Here Ann was energizing a team she had been assembling to build up the nursing function and enhance its professional status. Later Ann met a nurse with some health problems to ease her transition into retirement, and then spent some time touring the wards, as she apparently did daily, before leaving for the other hospital.

Several times during the day, Ann was asked by nurses to convey messages up the hierarchy, and other times she chose to respond to requests of her nurses by announcing that she would convey them up the hierarchy. She also responded to questions by interpreting the wishes of the central administration as well as by conveying its requests to the nurses. But the use of higher authority seemed as much a convenience for her as a real need, indicated by the fact that she answered questions quickly, with the expression of clear preferences. Ann's agenda was dominated by one issue, imposed by the merger of the two hospitals: to knit the two operations into a single managerial unit.

#### **Interpretation of the Day**

Again, the different roles of managerial work were evident here, and again too was their blending into a single job, in contrast to the sharp differentiation in the days of the two doctors. For example, Ann's quick answers to the questions concerning the administration and her own wishes could be seen as a natural flow from *communicating* to *linking* and *controlling*.

Much of this day could be seen as a blend of *leading*, *controlling*, *doing*, and *communicating*, especially the first two. Ann seemed to work by making rapid-fire choices, also by energizing her people individually and in teams. She exhibited great energy and presence, but was hardly practicing a country-club style of leadership. This was a tough lady, and people knew it. If her work is to be located at one place on our model, it would seem to be where controlling meets leading. "Tough stroking" may best describe her leadership style, which could also be characterized as pragmatic and insightful.

Ann might have enjoyed managing up and managing out (except to the physicians perhaps), but managing down and managing in seem to capture this day (and perhaps most) best. Her concern was to help keep the operations of the hospitals functioning on a daily basis, including overseeing the merger of the two nursing services. That was the frame of her job and it was clear and imposed, encouraging a "driven" style of managing. Ann seemed to integrate on the run because her knowledge was deep and intimate, reinforced by a strong sense of purpose and commitment.

Ann and her team used the word "spot" for the nursing manager on site, especially during nights and weekends. She said it referred to the dog in a children's book—"Spot, come out of the cupboard" is the phrase she recalled. But before she said that, this observer thought it meant being "on the spot." Ann was certainly the manager on the spot.

## **Peter Coe, District General Manager, North Hertfordshire**

**(May 1991)**

Now for something really different: a day in the work of a manager of a district of the NHS, well into the administration and removed from clinical operations, in the midst of dealing with a major shift in how the NHS worked.

### **Description of the Day**

The taxi from the train station, upon our arrival from London at 10:30, dropped us at a freestanding building—it must have been constructed as a private residence—somewhat out of town, headquarters of the North Hertfordshire District of the NHS. (There were almost two hundred such geographic districts in the NHS at the time.) We were ushered into a small meeting room where Peter Coe's main morning meeting was about to begin. He had been in the office since 6:30, he said, dealing with the mail, which he showed us. This included a large number of press clippings and news notices, circulated by his office daily. He had also discussed with one of his managers a routine appointment of a consultant (i.e. a medical specialist), and had talked with his director of finance.

Three of his reports soon joined Peter. With a fourth (not there), they constituted his main team: one concerned with quality, another with purchasing, the third with information systems. All seemed relegated by the nature of the organization, and especially the changes it was undergoing (discussed below), to being advisory staff, seeking to influence the "units", such as a hospital, that delivered health care. Although technically subordinate, they appeared to be quite independent. Thus the isolation of the headquarters' building of the district seemed to reflect the isolation of its management. (Health care services are delivered in hospitals and doctors' offices, etc., not geographical "districts.")

The main meeting of the day was about to begin. An official from the department of health (referred to here as DH) had come from London to be informed about the progress the district was making in the implementation of new NHS initiatives.

The districts were becoming "purchasers", to negotiate for the provision of services with the "providers" (hospitals, etc., some as independent 'trusts'). At least this was the intention at the time, but it was not well specified. North Hertfordshire was considered to be on the cutting edge of figuring all this out and so DH had traveled here to capture and

diffuse the learning of Peter and his team. Peter, however, saw this meeting as an opportunity to gain credibility and so get some hard cash for the district. Thus, the jargon of “purchasers” and “providers” was used extensively throughout the day, with an air of unreality, as some kind of abstraction they were trying to make real, while health care remained in the background.

After general discussion, each of the staff people described what they were doing. The discussion of “quality”, for example, revolved around “ten key indicators”, which apparently came out of a consulting study; this seemed (to this observer at least) unrelated to the actual delivery of health care, as did the discussion of getting “consumer” input. (The person in charge of purchasing said at one point, “I’m interested in how you get in to talk to the people.” And DH added at another point, “I don’t think that any of us talked to consumers properly,” to which the purchasing person replied, “I did...about ten years ago.” Yet all the participants in the room were these “people” and “consumers”, since the NHS served the entire population of England.) Issues of control came up in various respects, for example the problems of public control of the health care system and the system’s control of the public users. The central theme of “purchasing” also seemed to revolve around control, namely how to get other districts of the NHS to make the changes work.

The meeting continued less formally over lunch in a pub and then, back at the office, there was a discussion of risk—“two minutes on risk,” as someone put it. They discussed what risk meant, with one person saying “I don’t understand it” and DH replying, “I have a view of it: we need to build some kind of decision analysis process that takes into account political risks.”

The discussion then turned to information systems, which someone called the “intelligence function.” The person in charge of purchasing, in reference to the changes, said that she “spent more time negotiating the ground rules than negotiating the contract.” Perhaps she captured much of this discussion best with her comment that “it doesn’t feel right.”

Peter left the district headquarters after this long meeting and drove to the regional headquarters in London. (He pointed out a hospital along the way, which turned out to be the only one in the district.) Here he joined a meeting in progress to make a presentation on his district’s experiences in developing contracts to purchase care services for the elderly. Before his working day ended, as he displayed various statistical findings, and discussed “consumer strategy” and “value for money”, etc., a siren wailed outside at one point, reminding anyone who cared to listen that there was more than this to “health care.”

## Interpretation of the Day

There was an air of unreality to this day. It was about a set of abstractions—purchasers, providers, customers, quality, value, etc.—that seemed distant from the tangible work of caring and curing. Peter was certainly doing his job on this day—probably quite well, in fact—which involved managing *up* into the hierarchy of the NHS in support of his district. But the observer could only leave bedazzled about what any of this had to do with sickness and health, indeed what these people ostensibly at the cutting edge of reforms really understood about the procedures they were using to implement those reforms. The problem was not with Peter, but with the organization within which he had to manage—the assumption that professional health services could be controlled by managerial abstractions and re-engineered from the top of a distinct hierarchy.

Peter’s work this day was about *linking* and *dealing*, but ostensibly for the purpose of *communicating*. *Doing* was precluded by his distance from the operations. And *leading* was not particularly evident, presumably because beyond the building of his own team, Peter had few other reports who could be directly led.

*Controlling* was an interesting role here. There might have been more of this had not the units of the district been converted into “providers”—namely suppliers. Hence, even the relationships with the units became ones of *dealing* from the outside more than *controlling* on the inside—although, as noted, talk about controlling was very much in evidence, perhaps because it was so difficult to do.

Moreover, the controlling influence of the ministry *on* the district, in the person of DH, could hardly have been missed. Other than the obvious hierarchical relationship, the new initiatives were very much a frame imposed on the general manager of each district (although Peter certainly made the best of that situation). But transferring that influence down, into the district’s units, was far less evident. Perhaps Peter was managing up because of the futility of managing down. In other words,

perhaps the district was caught in the middle of an old hierarchy that had just been truncated beneath the district. This might explain the prevalence of the abstractions—as substitutions for real control, for specific service, for tangible quality.

All this seemed to lead to a more analytic, cerebral style of managing, based on data that was more hard than soft, except, of course, for the political aspects of the job, which were expressed by all the ambiguity.

## **Sir Duncan Nichol, Chief Executive (London, June 1992)**

Sir Duncan Nichol ran what the English liked to call the largest organization in Europe outside the Red Army, the National Health Service of England. It employed 800,000 people at the time (including the four managers described above), providing public health services for all of England through 14 regions and 175 districts, not to mention the hundreds of hospitals, community care activities, and so on. Sir Duncan was a regional general manager before taking on this job, and had been the respected “chief executive” of the NHS for three years.

### **Description of the Day**

We arrived at 8:30 as requested, to find Sir Duncan working with his personal assistant going through a variety of issues. The atmosphere seemed calm; indeed he was able to chat with us on several occasions. After she left, he told us that he went over the press clippings first thing in the morning. Another woman, working as an assistant, came in, and Sir Duncan took one telephone call briefly, about a nomination from a chair position and an IT project out of control.

Early in the day, an emphasis on hierarchy became apparent; in one comment about an issue being “a thousand miles down the system”, and another about “working with truly competent people down to fifth level.” Sir Duncan discussed working with the regions on issues of “consumer voice”, “quality”, and “the national agenda” that “has to be delivered.” He described his own facility in Whitehall as “management head office,” comprising 600 people, most “facing upward to the minister” and occupied with the literally tens of thousands of questions that might have been asked of the minister in the House of Commons.

At 9:40, six people entered for a “pre-meeting” about the larger meeting to come. All were full-time employees of the NHS, including Sir Duncan’s own deputy, two civil servants, and three medical officers, one the chief medical officer of England. They discussed various agenda items, with Sir Duncan taking the lead, particularly on how to work things out at the larger meeting. At 10:00 they all headed into the larger meeting.

That took place in a large room with tables set out in a rectangle, involving seventeen people in all, including representatives of the main medical consultant and general practitioner bodies, and several regional and district managers of the NHS. This was the second meeting of the “Chief Executive’s Working Group”, created amidst some publicity to help iron out problems between the physicians and the administration of the NHS, especially with regard to those purchaser/provider reforms.

There was a good deal of posturing at the meeting, particularly by the representatives of the medical consultants. Many of the other people seemed to play more of a conciliatory role, including the representatives of the general practitioners.

In the terms of Figure 3, there seemed to be two cure clusters here, one of the more specialized physicians, acting conventionally partisan (almost literally “managing out”), the other of general practitioners, acting in a more meditative role (in a sense, representing care). In contrast, those general managers from the control quadrant seemed more concerned with connection—between cure and community, also between cure and care. (The chief medical officer seemed somewhat caught between cure and control.) Sir Duncan was central to each issue, typically listening through most of the discussion and then summarizing it and seeking some kind of resolution while nudging the result in a particular direction. He defined most of the final actions to be taken. At 12:20, the meeting ended.

Back in his office, Sir Duncan met again with his personal assistant. She had ordered a set of issues for him, and he was nuancing the consequent actions—shift this one a bit here, speed that one up, etc.—while overlaying his own personal style on each (e.g., “Let’s do it low key”). This meeting was very similar in intention to that first one of Dr. Webb, but wholly different in tone because of Sir Duncan’s approach to it.

Sandwiches arrived at 12:40, and two people came in from the Performance Management Directorate, three or four levels below in the NHS hierarchy, but being “the connect” (in Sir Duncan’s words) to the performance issue. These people



discussed an action program, particularly how to implement it, while Sir Duncan listened and then provided advice. After they left, at 1:00, he commented that they “didn’t need much of a steer from me.”

After that, we chatted briefly about the nature of Sir Duncan’s job, which he described as “steering through a minefield,” and about the remainder of his day, since he had to catch a 2:00 train to Liverpool for a dinner there. He had his “agenda” for the train, commenting that “I need to sit down and think.” In particular, he was to go over the required performance appraisals for his four reports, evaluating them against the stated objectives. He also had several policy papers to read, what he called “think” rather than “action” stuff, including one on quality, a second the personal statement of one of his directors on the “trusts” being created by the reform, and a third on strategic directions in purchasing.

In Liverpool, Sir Duncan was to attend the annual dinner of the regional health authority. There, as he described it, he would do some networking as well as “take the opportunity” to find out about some problem districts. He also planned to have a few words with the guest speaker about some current general practitioner issues.

## Interpretation of the Day

The chief executive of the NHS obviously has to manage in, out, up, and down—up to the minister, out to all sorts of interest groups, in to the whole NHS, and down to his own particular reforms—all with firm determination. But there seemed to be an apparent asymmetry here, for the managing *out*, on this day at least, seemed to be intense and nuanced, while the managing in and down seemed to be more formalized—about hierarchy, performance evaluation, and the like (no managing up, to the minister, was observed on this day). Indeed, the managing down seemed almost truncated, between the “head office”, with its reforms, and the rest of the NHS, much as Peter Coe’s district seemed disconnected from the delivery units.

To what extent did the influence of this “head office” penetrate beyond the regions and districts into the units and their actual operations? That people there had to play “providers” and “purchasers” was evident enough; that this changed anything fundamental in the practice of health care was not. One can only wonder about all the social engineering undertaken by governments in fields such as health care and education, when everything is so dependent on the actual delivery of the services by the professionals on the ground.

Again, in this job, on this day, *linking* and *dealing* appeared most strongly, and *leading* and *doing* less so, with *controlling* more formalized and limited. The chief executive was clearly in a position of authority over the administrators of the NHS—in other words, he controlled the controllers—but far less clear, more subtle at best, was his influence over the providers of the basic medical services (bearing in mind that he also had to deal with their associations as *outside* bodies). Again the roles seemed to be more ones of *linking* than *leading*, *dealing* than *doing*.

Concerning leadership, there was, of course, Sir Duncan’s need to build his immediate team at headquarters. And culture building could have been crucial, because of the nature of health care, much as we saw of policing with the RCMP: highly technical, increasingly complex, and significantly professional, such that it could remain relatively impermeable by conventional administrative controls. No matter how much administrators try—and who more than in the NHS?—the practices of health care just seem to carry merrily along. Thus the reforms of the NHS may have depended more on rendering a change in culture than on exercising formal control. But how to have done this effectively, with nuance, seemed to remain an open question.

As for *communicating*, information of the softest kind seemed to figure prominently in Sir Duncan’s job, especially for managing up and out. The more formalized information associated with the NHS’s many systems may have been important for the controlling done by others, but it hardly seemed as important in this particular job at the top of this tall hierarchy.

The frame of this job was sharp and well integrated: implementation of the reforms that Sir Duncan himself championed. At least the *what* was sharp, even if the *how* remained vague. So just as all sorts of influential people revolved around Sir Duncan, so too did his work revolve around these reforms.

With regard to these, Sir Duncan listened, negotiated, nudged, and steered in order to bring things together and try to move the massive bulk of the NHS in his desired direction. He may have been trying to recreate the organization, but probably he realized that at best he could only adapt it.

*Linking* seemed to be the most important role here—to ministers, the rest of government, medical associations, the press, the public, and so on—carried out with a managerial style that seemed to be primarily deductive—to execute the given reforms—also significantly cerebral, albeit with a great deal of nuancing and negotiating. This could be called “synthetic linking” in two senses, since Sir Duncan was the great synthesizer, while his greatest danger was that the reforms may have proved to be synthetic.\*

## Managing In and Down versus Up and Out

These five days offer an interesting glimpse into managing at different “levels”, so called, of the same “system”, also so called. What we saw were very sharp ruptures, or disconnections, most notably as managing moved out of the specific institution, such as a hospital, or its clerical operations, and into the administrative hierarchy, even within the work of a single individual.

At the base of the system, in Dr W’s work, this disconnection was reflected in his shift from managing to clinical work, while in that of Peter C, at the distinct level, and Sir Duncan as head of the whole system, the disconnect appeared as a kind of truncation, with the descending hierarchy seeming to stop short before it reached the clinical operations. In effect, there appeared to be two worlds at play here—clinical operations on the floors and managerial abstractions in the offices. Some of this is inevitable in all managerial work, but it could also be argued that managing becomes effective when it connects the operations with the abstractions. Making these connections is not easy, especially as management tends to be practiced these days, but it must be especially difficult in fields such as health care, where the operating employees are not only professional, but in some cases also, whether de facto or de jure, not employees at all so much as independent contractors of a sort,

As this observation moved along the diagonal of Figure 3, from medical management and overall nursing management in a hospital to system management, the managers seemed to become more comfortable in their roles even as they become more distant from the subjects of it. Certainly Sir Duncan at one end seemed very much at ease in his managerial job compared with Dr W at the other end. The emphasis on hierarchy also increased along this diagonal, perhaps because it functioned decreasingly well. Hierarchy among the physicians, in contrast, works well indeed, but it is a hierarchy of professional status, not of formal authority.

**Nurses as the Natural Managers?** In nursing, where both forms of hierarchy are evident, there seemed to be a blending of managerial energy with clinical delivery. Perhaps this is because nursing tends to be more facilitative than directive, and less concerned with looking up than with facilitating down.

Might, then, managing come more naturally to nurses than to physicians, indeed maybe even than to professional managers? More to the point here, might nursing be the appropriate model for the management of the health system? After all, nursing is itself managing of a kind: nurses have to manage the workflow around the patient—an intricate job of coordination to be sure—and in doing so

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\* In a letter to the author dated 11 November 1993, Sir Duncan raised the following issues which he felt reflected the “broader context” of his work: " a. my responsibility for regulating and shaping the nature of the market and of developing the purchaser’s expertise in that market is crucial; b. controlling the operating variables of balancing income and expenditure, meeting a pre-determined return on assets (currently 6%) and not exceeding external financing or borrowing limits indicate our loose/tight management of the provider side of the market; c. promoting and monitoring success criteria to test the achievements of the reforms in terms of ends rather than means is central—in other words the litmus tests of improving health status for populations, improving the quality and responsiveness of services for individuals, and increasing efficiency."

have to provide committed and continuous care. Moreover, nurses are used to teamwork, and cooperation in general. And when nurses move into managerial positions, starting on the ward, they tend to do so firmly—with commitment rather than distraction, leaving their direct clinical responsibilities behind yet retaining their connections to those operations.

**Controlling or Collaborating?** Bear in mind the differences between up and down compared with in and out. Up and down refer to formal authority and official position, that is, to conventional management along conventional hierarchy, concerned with formal *control*, specifically of *subordinates*. In and out, in contrast, relate more to affiliation, whether within the unit or connecting it to the outside world. This is a more contemporary view of management, based on *co-operation*, with *colleagues* and *partners*.

We talk so much about “top” and “middle” management these days (but never “bottom” management). Maybe we need to talk more about “central management,” “inner management,” and “outer management,” to reflect the growing importance, especially in knowledge work, of linking over leading, and convincing over controlling. Imagine an organization in which the management sees itself as “in” instead of “up,” at the “center” instead of on “top”. Such a management could consider itself to be making tangible connections every which way. Then perhaps it might be less inclined to engage in all that centrally imposed social engineering, which so often fails, instead of facilitating change processes by those who are dealing with the tangible issues on the ground.

In Figure 5, Dr T is shown as managing down—to the clinical and research activities—and Dr W as managing out. Nursing director Ann S is shown as managing down and especially in. In general management, district manager Peter C is shown as managing up, while CEO Sir Duncan as managing largely out. Perhaps, therefore, it is time to reconceive management so that the arrows move together rather than apart.

## **Managing as Blended Care\***

**Fabienne Lavoie, Head Nurse, 4 Northwest, Jewish General Hospital  
(Montreal, 24 February 1993)**

*Everything hummed on this hospital ward as its manager blended a great deal of leading, communicating, and some linking (with little need for controlling) in short energetic bursts—all day long, on her feet. There is something to be said for management standing up, and in the open rather than behind closed doors, also for women, whose brain chemistry may be more naturally suited to managing.*

Here and in the next description we fill in the boxes of Figure 3 a bit more, looking more deeply into the work of two other kinds of managers in hospitals (in Canada), one the head of a ward (she would have reported to Ann Sheen had she been in Redding), the other the head of a hospital (he would have been a provider to Peter Coe’s district had he been in North Hertfordshire).

“Through the control process, we can stop managers falling in love with their businesses.” This quote was attributed to the planning manager of a large British Corporation.\* Fortunately, this person had no influence over Fabienne Lavoie, who was in love with her business, namely nursing, her

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\* Published in another form under this title in *The Journal of Nursing Administration* (24, 9, September 1994: 29-36)

\* In Michael Goold, “Strategic Control processes” (working paper, Strategic Management Centre, London, 1990).

“passion not profession,” as she put it. She ran 4 Northwest, a surgical unit (pre- and post- operative care) at Montreal’s Jewish General Hospital.

I met Fabienne during a study I was conducting for the management of her hospital. She was completing a master’s degree in nursing, and was doing her thesis on how management itself could, like nursing, be a caring kind of work. She viewed her role in managing as a natural extension of her role in nursing: caring for her nurses the way she cared for her patients. She was especially concerned about pressures to the contrary as one went up the nursing hierarchy.

Her’s had to be among the smoothest and most natural practices of management I saw in this research. Partly this had to do with Fabienne’s own style as well as her experience—she had spent years as a nurse on this particular ward. But it also had to do with her particular practice of management: she worked mostly on her feet, with nurses, doctors, and others flowing all around her, so that linking, leading, and all the rest happened spontaneously and interactively.

4 Northwest almost literally hummed this day, all the activity revolving around one central place, the nursing station. This was a small place—perhaps 9 meters long by a little less than 2 meters wide—with tables all around, at which the nurses sat to do their paperwork. It was especially Fabienne’s territory. She had a private office next to the station, but spent—and claimed this was common—relatively little time there, reserving it for her end-of-day paperwork. Mostly she was on her feet, in the station, near reception, and occasionally in the halls and patients’ rooms, with people coming and going continuously—nurses, doctors, orderlies, the receptionist, and the occasional patient’s relative and hospital officer. At one point in the early morning, I counted 15 people inside that little room. Management happened on the run—“I go with the wind” is how Fabienne described it to me—with the conversations coming and going every which way, many so brief as to almost weave themselves into a smooth, continuous flow.

## Description of the Day

Fabienne suggested that I come at 7:30 a.m., but she was already there when I arrived (she came in at 7:20). Around 5:10, she said she was tired and would leave soon, at which point we sat down and chatted about the day. When I left at 6:00, she said she was just going to review something with her assistant. The next day she told me that she left at 6:45, so she worked a total of 11 ½ hours on this day. But that was better than the previous day, she said, when a personal problem with a nurse kept her there until 7.

These long hours reflected her predispositions as well as her conscious choices. Thirty-one nurses who staffed the ward around the clock reported to her, as well as seven orderlies and three receptionists. Fabienne made a habit of arriving early in order to interact with the night shift nurses, and did the same thing with the evening shift nurses, who arrived at 3:30 pm, saving her paperwork for after that.

Fabienne had some scheduled activity that day, but mostly she was present and seemed to pick up on what was happening around the station, filling in free time with administrative responsibilities such as the scheduling of nursing assignments. The pattern pace, and style were evident from the moment I arrived. Fabienne stood in the middle of it all—she hovered—mostly inside the room, with people and activity swirling all around. It was hardly even possible to record all the interactions, for most, in the early part of the day at least, lasted seconds—a comment here, a question there, a request behind. It all seems to flow together, as questions on one side were converted to answers on the other—concerning staffing, medication for a particular patient, patient scheduling for operations and discharge, etc.

The room at this hour was filled mostly with nurses, their shifts overlapping, working intently, while the doctors came and went in shorter, more casual visits, to chat or get information (before or after their main work in the operating rooms). Coordination across all these groups was effected by Fabienne on the run, so to speak, with the pace energetic, to be sure, but not frenetic.

One minute Fabienne discussed a problem about a dressing with a surgeon, next minute she was putting through a patient’s hospital card, then she rearranged her schedule board and looked in the pigeonholes for nurse information, after that she was out of the room to chat with someone in reception, then she went down the hall into a patient’s room who “has fever,” in between making several telephone calls to evening nurses to see if one could fill a staffing vacancy that day. She said “I just want to grab Chantal” about giving some medication in 01D, and then a phone was handed to her for an outside

call, and next she was chatting with a relative about special medication for a patient. All of this in just a few minutes. As Fabienne put it with regard to herself, this place “needs someone who knows and can direct the traffic.” Things went on, more or less like this, for half an hour, at which point the pace slowed (relatively).

As this happened—soon there were only five people in the room—Fabienne’s movements seemed to widen a bit, and to last somewhat longer. She went into the medication room to do some work there, sat down with a nurse to go over the psychological problems of a particular patient, gave advice to the receptionist who was “upset with S \_\_\_\_\_,” asked a doctor if Mr. A “is still under your service,” and then went to “say hello to a few patients,” especially ones about to enter surgery. All the while, her style was straight, to the point, and warm without being soppy. Things happened quickly yet did not feel rushed.

At 8:30, the nurses assembled in a room—eventually nine in all—for their daily meeting, to review the different patients. This they did systematically, in turn, and rather holistically, with regard to condition, medication, particular problems, family situation, plans for discharge, and so on. Fabienne led the discussion (glancing at her own records occasionally), asking questions and occasionally giving advice, also volunteering help. (“I’ll speak to her” [a patient], she said. “You speak Italian?!” asked the nurse. Not perfect...but!”). Each nurse had a sheet of paper on her lap, and took the lead in discussing her own patients.\* But there was a good deal of the sharing of information, with up to three nurses and sometimes Fabienne too frequently discussing a single patient.

At 9:10, the meeting ended, abruptly, with everyone leaving at once. Fabienne was supposed to attend the hospital’s Pharmacy Committee meeting, as one of its nursing representatives, from 9-10:30, but it had been unexpectedly cancelled, so she found herself with ninety unexpected free minutes. I was curious to see how she would fill them in. But they too seemed to pass quickly and naturally, partly by her joining the nurses at a coffee break, otherwise in all the usual happenings around the nursing station.

At 11:00, Fabienne slipped into the hospital’s amphitheatre for the “Nursing Rounds,” a weekly presentation, during which a nurse she knew well was discussing a new procedure. There were about fifty nurses or nursing administrators in attendance, and one doctor. That ended at 11:30, and after several other contacts on the floor. Fabienne did rounds with the Chief of Surgery as well as a resident and a medical student. This she did only with this chief, she said—he was a senior physician in the hospital, long used to this routine. That took about fifteen minutes, and then she turned to some paperwork in her office, explaining the budgeting procedures to me.

She did thirteen budgets a year, and was responsible for costs in her unit, so that the pressures for cost control met patient care right here. She showed me procedures worked out by herself, including a form she designed and had printed, a modification of one of the hospital’s major reporting forms to make it more suitable to her needs. She was also preparing a presentation for the next week’s Nursing Rounds, on the impact of new government legislation on the hospital’s nursing function.

I had to leave to attend a Medical Executive Committee meeting, which took me away for about three hours. Fabienne said that during this time things proceeded more or less as I had seen in the morning around the station, except that, at the request of an overwhelmed nurse, she agreed to arrange a discharge, including a call to the local community health center about home visits. She said she did this kind of thing very rarely—it was the first time in two months. After that, the day did continue in a similar fashion, with Fabienne later spending time with the nurse in charge of the evening shift to review the patients, while the nurses who were arriving listened in, on and off. The room began to fill up again, this time with more surgeons just out of the operating rooms, reaching 16 people momentarily on two occasions.

Sometime after 4, that quieted down, and Fabienne turned to her paperwork (but this particular day, as it turned out, more to conversations with me about the work). Asked who she had contact with outside the hospital (besides the community health center), she mentioned convalescent hospitals (also about patient discharge), patient families, Jewish aid groups, and the occasional student nurse and salesperson. But she referred to being “not crazy about the whole PR thing,” describing a “good day” as one when she was not much drawn away from 4 Northwest.

I left about 6 o’clock, since Fabienne claimed she was about to leave, although she stayed for another forty-five minutes to review things with her assistant.

## Interpretation of the Day

**A Remarkable Flow** The remarkable thing to me about this day is how everything just flowed together in a natural rhythm. When I considered the model of managing, I could find clear examples in Fabienne’s day of each of its component parts, yet I had trouble isolating any of this in her work. If she did not always *communicate*, *control*, *lead*, *link*, *deal*, and *do* all at once, and if doing seemed most

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\* All the nurses I encountered that day were female, and all but one doctor was male.

evident and leading most important, with the inside roles looming larger than the outside ones (as discussed below), then certainly she mixed these in such short snatches that time they all just blended together. With a comment (communicating internally) she was on the telephone to a patient's relative (linking); a short conversation with a nurse seems to combine subtle controlling with sympathetic leading; she was constantly doing, yet that was difficult to distinguish from her leading and her communicating.

*Linking* in this job seemed to be limited to her relations with doctors (especially), the rest of the hospital, and the relatives of patients, as well as occasional contacts with outside agencies about discharges, etc. The same could probably be said for *dealing*, although I did not really see much of this—an example perhaps in that phone call about discharging a patient. Hers was thus a rather well defined and circumscribed network of contacts, at least by most managerial standards.

Fabienne apparently needed to do little formal networking or external representing (that PR she disliked), as well as buffering (except, perhaps, of overzealous surgeons or administrative cost cutters).

*Leading* thus seemed to be key to Fabienne's job—the development of her nurses individually as well as into a smoothly functioning team. Yet it would be difficult to isolate many of the distinct activities observed that day as devoted to leadership per se. They, too, blended in with the doing and the communicating.

I could not describe much of what Fabienne did as *controlling* either. She certainly had firm ideas, and her staff certainly seemed to appreciate her signals. Perhaps that is why she didn't need to depend on the commands of conventional control. The one exception to this was the set of formal administrative duties—the budgeting and other forms to fill out—which were not so much for the purpose of her controlling internally as for her *being* controlled externally, by the bureaucracy that health care has become, both within and beyond the hospital.

*Scheduling* seemed to be less important than usual in this job. Besides the formal meetings that drew Fabienne away from her station, and her one scheduled meeting with the nurses, she just went with the wind, doing what seemed appropriate at the time, even if that added up to twelve hour days.

The frame seemed to be rather set in this job. Fabienne was not here to reinvent 4 Northwest, or, at least after her early period in the job, adapt it to any major change. She was here to maintain the flow. She did not choose the frame, but certainly fit in with it, and so exhibited the style labeled *driven*, much like Ann Sheen. Fabienne, too, was a determined person, with very definite ideas about how she wished to manage her unit.

**Managing Standing Up** The potency of practicing management standing up, with so much in speaking range, is not to be underestimated. It makes for holistic and probably very effective practice. Of course, few managers are lucky enough to have most of their contacts so close at hand. But this is by choice too: the Japanese sometimes put even rather senior executives in open areas, with their reports sitting all around them, presumably for this very reason. So we should wonder why so much managing takes place in isolated offices and circumscribed meeting rooms. (One Japanese company, kao, became famous for holding meetings in the open, and allowing company passers-by to join in as they wish. They, like Fabienne, had no need for an open-door policy.)

**Conceptual Skills** What helped to make Fabienne rather unusual was her conceptual skill, enabling her managerial style to be more insightful than cerebral. As noted, she designed a number of her own systems, and redesigned one of the hospital's major control systems for her purposes. She had also articulated clearly a “caring” style of managing, which was the subject of master's thesis.

**Women as Natural Managers** Some research suggests that women are less differentiated in their brain functioning than men, who tend to favor one hemisphere at a time, while women are more inclined to activate both the verbal left and the special right simultaneously (Moir and Jessel, 1991; Helgesen, 1990). This suggests that women may be more predisposed to the practice of management, at least if one believes that it has to be a balance in the use of analysis with intuition.

Perhaps there is more truth to this in health care, and surgical units in particular, where men tend to do the highly programmed, carefully worked out procedures, clipped in more ways than one, while women tend to “administer” the continuous care, blending technical requirements with personal needs. Fabienne said that the doctors wanted to spend their time in surgery, and leave the rest to nursing: pre- and post- op care as well as administration, even the resolution of difficult conflicts about the allocation of beds. Fabienne, and perhaps nurses in general, may thus step into managerial roles more comfortably, and perhaps more readily, than many doctors.

I tried this set of conjectures on the members of the hospital’s Medical Executive Committee (all doctors but one) at their meeting I attended this day, and a number did not take kindly to it. They resented claims by the more aggressive members of the nursing community that they don’t care for their patients; one (not a surgeon) disagreed that nurses know more about the family situation, claiming that doctors know their patients before and after hospitalization; another questioned the assertion that management was better perceived as continuous care than intermittent cure. Some of their points were fair, but the confrontational attitudes they expressed were discouraging (reflecting like attitudes on the part of some of the nursing staff, to be sure). Doctors cure, and the good ones also care; nurses care, the good ones humanely. But the two care differently, and in complementary ways. I saw this happening on 4 Northwest. The issue, therefore, is not who cares more, but how different kinds of caring can be combined for the benefit of patients.

To this end, I doubt that I could have talked those doctors on the committee into spending a day watching Fabienne Lavoie, as I did. But they could read what is written here. 4 Northwest might be only one ward in one teaching hospital, but I suspect that anyone interested in health care in particular and a caring style of managing in general has a good deal to learn from its head nurse.

## **Managing Asymmetrically**

### **“Marc”—Executive Director of a Quebec Teaching Hospital**

#### **(17 February 1993)**

“Marc” had been the executive director of this teaching hospital in the province of Quebec for just under a year. (He asked that his name not be used in this report). This was an independent hospital, with it’s own strong board of directors, but extensively funded by the government of Quebec in the highly socialized Canadian Medicare system.

### **Description of the Day**

I arrived at 8:15, at the executive director’s office, off a corridor to the main entrance of the hospital. Marc had been in since 7:40, going over the mail. This included letters from the Director of Professional Services about a reimbursement; a government official about a patient complaint; the university dean about a process in need of approval; the regional health council questioning plans for expansion; and a note from the Quebec Hospital Association about updating bylaws etc. Much of this mail was forwarded to other people in the hospital.

At 9:00, Marc left to attend the opening of the hospital’s Staff Appreciation Week, to honor the support staff of the hospital. There were perhaps fifty employees in attendance, but at most one physician. On arrival, Marc met “Paul,” the

Chairman of the Board of Directors, and after a brief tour of the displays, interrupted by chats with various people, each of them made a brief speech and then listened to the speeches of others.

At 9:50, Marc was back in his office with Paul to discuss various issues, including Paul's contacts with the university dean, a "little lunch" with another dean, a letter of complaint (that Paul passed on to Marc), and a question about Marc's progress in hiring a "#2" (deputy). Paul left by 10, and Marc made a couple of telephone calls, concerning a delicate issue of some doctors' maneuver with regards to palliative care beds and a new chair in medicine that the hospital wished to fill. Then at 10:20, the Director of Professional Services, who held the second most important position in the hospital, came in to announce his resignation after 16 years. Five minutes later, Marc tried to call the head of research to discuss the resignation, and then received another call on the palliative care bed issue from the executive director of another hospital. Mid-morning and the state of siege in this job was evident!

Marc's administrative assistant came in at 10:35, for 45 minutes. They discussed a "special" board meeting about the palliative care beds, and a variety of other issues, including some government statistics, while being interrupted by more telephone calls.

Marc went back to the mail at 11:20, including reading the recommendations of a consulting report, interrupted by more calls: one on the severe problem of overcrowding in the hospital's emergency room; another from the Director of Research about possible candidates for the vacated position; a third from an outside doctor heading up a government task force on the hospital's emergency room problem—Marc said the last call was to "inform" the doctor, but he seemed very much to be lobbying him. This ended at 12:15.

As Marc had no lunch appointment, we ate and talked in the cafeteria, followed by a brief tour of part of the hospital, which Marc said he would like to have done anyway. At 1:40, it was back to telephone calls: to ask questions of a candidate for a job; to inquire about membership at a government meeting in Quebec City; and to an executive of the regional council about the palliative care beds. At 2:00, the Director of Human Relations came in, to discuss various things: a letter to a consultant questioning that man's integrity; the use of various human relations techniques; the resignation of the Director of Professional Services; etc. He left at 2:25.

Marc was then back on the telephone again, lobbying with a doctor about a meeting the next day, more calls on palliative care issue, one to inform him that another anesthetist was leaving, further aggravating a crisis in surgery. Marc put in a call to the person in question, to find out why he was leaving. Other calls went to the chief of a medical department on a variety of issues, to the ministry in Quebec about a meeting on the palliative beds issue (with Marc lobbying for a change that the hospital wished to make), and to a government official about the anesthetist in order to get permission to bring in a foreign doctor. Some mail was processed, including the response of the Board Chairman to Marc's proposal about how to proceed at a meeting, some bylaws sent by Community Services (which were scanned), a draft agenda for a foundation board of trustees meeting (with a consequent call to its director to "ensure that we are on the same wavelength"), a memo about the renegotiation of the hospital's vending machine contract, two more complaints forwarded by the Board Chairman (one responding to a doctor's complaint, another from an employee about the parking situation), and some board minutes (which were read carefully).

At 4:00, the Director of Finance came in for an hour, to discuss various concerns, especially the choice of consulting firms for an information systems study. After an attempt to reach Paul, the Board Chairman, at 5:00 about the resignation of the Director of Professional Services, it was back to the mail, including one from a nurse about the hazards of a particular piece of equipment, which was forwarded to biomedical engineering to be checked out.

At 5:50, Paul dropped in, just as Marc was about to leave. They discussed the resignation and a variety of issues, including the Chairman's recent meeting with the university dean about various key teaching positions the hospital wished to fill. Marc left his office at 5:56.

## **Interpretation of the Day**

**State of Siege** This was no easy job! In addition to the regular pressures of any managerial job, Marc was embedded in a very tricky political context, both within and outside the hospital. Pressures of all sorts were flying around, in, and past this office, creating states of siege looking both out and in.

This hospital (like most others in Canada, and probably most everywhere else) sat in a web of intense forces. These came especially (but not only) from a government intent on cutting its expenditures, through the imposition of systems, measures, and rules of all kinds as well as ad hoc restrictions on various initiatives of the hospital. Internally, again like most hospitals, this organization comprised a mixture of all kinds of semi-autonomous forces, medical specialists and others, each lobbying for its own needs and prepared to bypass formal authority to satisfy them. Added to all this



was a tradition in this hospital of deep community involvement, which meant that the doctors especially, but others too, were prepared to communicate freely around the Executive Director, especially to board members and other stakeholders.

**Advocating Out. Integrating In?** This highlighted an interesting problem, shown at the top of Figure 6. Looking out, the head of the hospital had to be an "advocate" (Marc's word)—to lobby vigorously for its interests, especially in a public system with other hospitals competing for the same resources. But turning around and looking in, that person faced a whole host of other advocates, whether individuals or departments, especially but not only medical, lobbying him for their interests. So there was a certain symmetry here. But it required an asymmetry in managerial style: the advocate out had to be a reconciler in—the partisan out, the integrator in.

Marc appeared to be more comfortable facing out, less so facing in. (Contrast this with Fabienne, who had exactly the opposite inclinations.) All his negotiating, juggling, and political skills—and they seemed to be significant—that served him so well out may in fact have been in his way when he had to face in. In other words, advocacy which have worked so well facing out could have been problematic where having to face all those competing advocates on the inside.

It should be noted, however, that Marc had been in this job for not quite a year, and was new to the field of health care (but not senior management). So the outside negotiating and lobbying, etc. were probably easier for him at this stage. Running hospitals are just not like running other organizations.

While his work may have been awfully taxing, Marc seemed almost to like the external "state of siege," carrying the banner for the hospital very effectively. But the internal "state of siege" required a very different managerial style, more smoothing and conciliatory, which seemed to be less his nature. Of course, holding the line against the disparate forces that make up any hospital takes a pretty tough individual. But it takes something more too, which was why the Chairman was pushing him to hire that #2.

So here was a managerial day rather different from the others (except, perhaps, that of Charlie Zinkin in the Banff Park). Marc was mostly in the office during this day, trying to arrange things from his desk and his telephone. He likely spent more time outside the office on other days, but there was something rather symbolic about him being there, on the receiving end of all the pressure and trying to battle his way out. Perhaps the office of the head of most hospitals is like a fort surrounded by a moat of authority (as suggested in the depiction of the model), but easily crossed by any professional with a complaint.

Marc's day and style certainly looked different from those of Peter Coe and Sir Duncan Nichol at the English NHS. But in one prime respect—managing up and out versus down and in—it looked rather similar. Indeed this day illustrated rather well a side of managing that those did not: the difficulties of managing down and in from atop a hierarchy of authority in a system with such a strong hierarchy of professionalism. (Contrast this with Fabienne's day at the bottom of the hierarchy of authority, where managing down and in was so harmonious; note, too, her disdain for managing up and out.) If corporations have glass ceilings, then perhaps hospitals have impenetrable concrete floors, at least to some of the less senior, non-medical managers, if not to the physicians themselves.

**A Driven Frame** The frame of this job was one of adapting, particularly to enhance the reputation of this hospital as a teaching institution. That frame was fairly clear, to the incumbent, his influential board of directors, and many of the influential physicians as well. That puts Marc's work

into the style labeled *driven* in Chapter 4, which certainly seemed evident in his work this day. But the pressures in and around the hospital could also interfere with the clarity of this frame.

**An Outside Job** In terms of the management roles, this seemed very much to be an outside job, with an enormous amount of *linking* and *dealing*. (Contrast this with Fabienne's inside job.) The hospital director generally sits at the interface of an institution with a voracious appetite for funding and an environment that can be awfully demanding as well as limiting. Insurance companies and governments these days see their role in health care as keeping the lead on the spending. Moreover because the physicians can be well protected from outside forces (sometimes even from complaints by the patients, who may write to the head of the hospital or the board instead), much of the pressure from the outside falls on the person formally in charge of the hospital. *Dealing* thus becomes central to this job, and so managing as care, as described for Ann Sheen and Fabienne Lavoie, gave way here to managing as cure. The hospital director is pulled by a plethora of disparate issues every which way, and has to respond to them.

Marc seemed to be remarkably effective at gaining support out while blocking the incoming pressures—he appeared to be a buffer par excellence. Pressures allowed to seep in could only have aggravated an already difficult situation, for if the Executive Director acted as the government's agent, or even that of the board, the institution's difficulties in coming to grips with the disparate forces inside could only have multiplied.

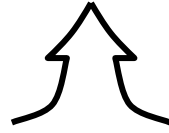
**Other Roles** Internal *doing* was much less in evidence this day—unlike Fabienne Lavoie, but like Peter Coe and Sir Duncan Nichol, Marc seemed remote from the doing. *Leading* per se was also not much in evidence, except concerning that Staff Appreciation Week event (with the physicians notably absent). Maybe all that necessary linking and dealing outside left little for leading, if not doing, inside.

*Controlling* was in evidence, for example in the many requests for authorization, etc., some with regard to the physicians. But because the latter function in their own hierarchy, of professional status (labeled "down and out" on Figure 3), hospital management had to deal with them as quasi-outsiders, even contractors of a sort: in other words, more by *linking* and *dealing* (especially negotiating) than by *leading* and *controlling*. Non-professional and less professional employees of the hospital can, of course, be more conventionally and easily controlled. But the physicians set the tone, thus rendering all forms of control, no matter to whom they apply, a tricky business in hospitals.

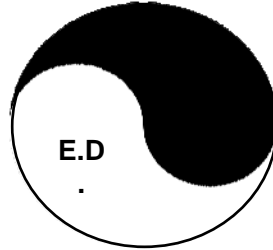
**Too Big a Job** This study raises questions about the dysfunctional pressures imposed on senior managers of hospitals (and perhaps ones as other professional-type organizations as well), and the asymmetry of the styles needed in response. Is this too big a job for one person, or at least too varied? Perhaps co-management would work better here: one person facing out, to advocate, another facing in, to reconcile, so long as the two are able to work as a team.

In fact, I proposed this idea to the Board, which already wanted Marc to find that #2 (see Figure 7). Comprising mostly businessmen (really entrepreneurs) and horrified at the thought of breaking the unitary chain of command, they insisted that the term "co-management" be purged from my report. "Cooperative management" was an acceptable substitute: someone was in charge. But Marc was in no rush for that either.

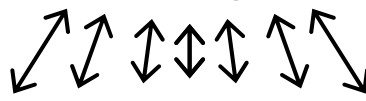
*Figure 5*



Advocating out

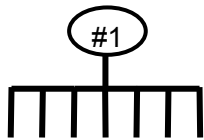


Reconciling in

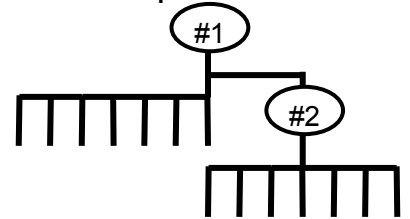


Advocates within the hospital

The Hospital as it was



Acceptable to the board



## IV. MANAGING IN THE SOCIAL SECTOR

We have all heard about “NGOs” (non-government organization), and “not-for profits”, and “civil society”, all inadequate labels for a sector that should rival the private and public sectors in importance. It does not, because it has been lost in a century of debate between those two. Here we call it the *social sector*, and give attention to the range of organizations that can be found within it: Greenpeace, Doctors Without Borders, the International Red Cross, a Museum in Paris, and an orchestra in Winnipeg.

These are all rather interesting, and each quite unique. We begin by comparing the yang of a day with the head of Doctors Without Borders with the yin of the head of a fashion museum, both in Paris. There we look at a day with each of two managers in the Greenpeace headquarters in Amsterdam: its Executive Director and the head of one of its main policy units. There follows two days, again in succession, with two managers on the ground in Red Cross refugee camps: the head of delegation and the manager of two of the camps. Finally, we end by taking a look at the myths, and the music, of conducting a symphony orchestra.

### **The Yin and Yang of Managing\***

*This contrast of two days of managing in Paris turned up sharp and interesting contrasts: managing as aggressive, interventionist yang and “God is in the details” yin. If these two “great cosmic forces” must co-exist, then perhaps we need to rethink much of the management that is practiced today.*

It has been said that there are two kinds of people in this world: those who believe there are two kinds of people and those who don’t. Few will deny, however, that there are men and there are women. Might they symbolize two faces of managing?

One face can be described as more aggressive, more interventionist, more like medical cure. That face has become ever more dominant in recent years, especially in popular depictions of the heroic corporate leader. We can call it the yang face of managing, masculine in style, but practiced by a goodly number of women too. The other face is more engaging, more inclusive, more like nursing care. It is the yin, or feminine face, but practiced also by many men.

A day in the working lives of two managers is described below. Both were heading up small, rather well-known organizations in Paris. But that is where the similarities end. One preferred to race around Paris on a motorcycle; the other was inclined to glide through it on a scooter. The rest will similarly speak for itself.

### **Rony Brauman**

#### **Président, Médecins sans frontières (Paris, 5 October 1993)**

Rony Brauman had, for eleven years, been Président (chief executive) of Médecins sans frontières (Doctors Without Borders, or MSF), the organization founded in France to send medical teams to problem areas around the world. In France, this was a highly visible organization, deeply embroiled in some of the most intense political issues of the day, as will be evident. At the time of observation, MSF, as they call it, was announcing the pullout of its staff from Somalia, to protest the aggressive role the United Nations forces had taken there; it was also active in the long-running conflict in Bosnia, and

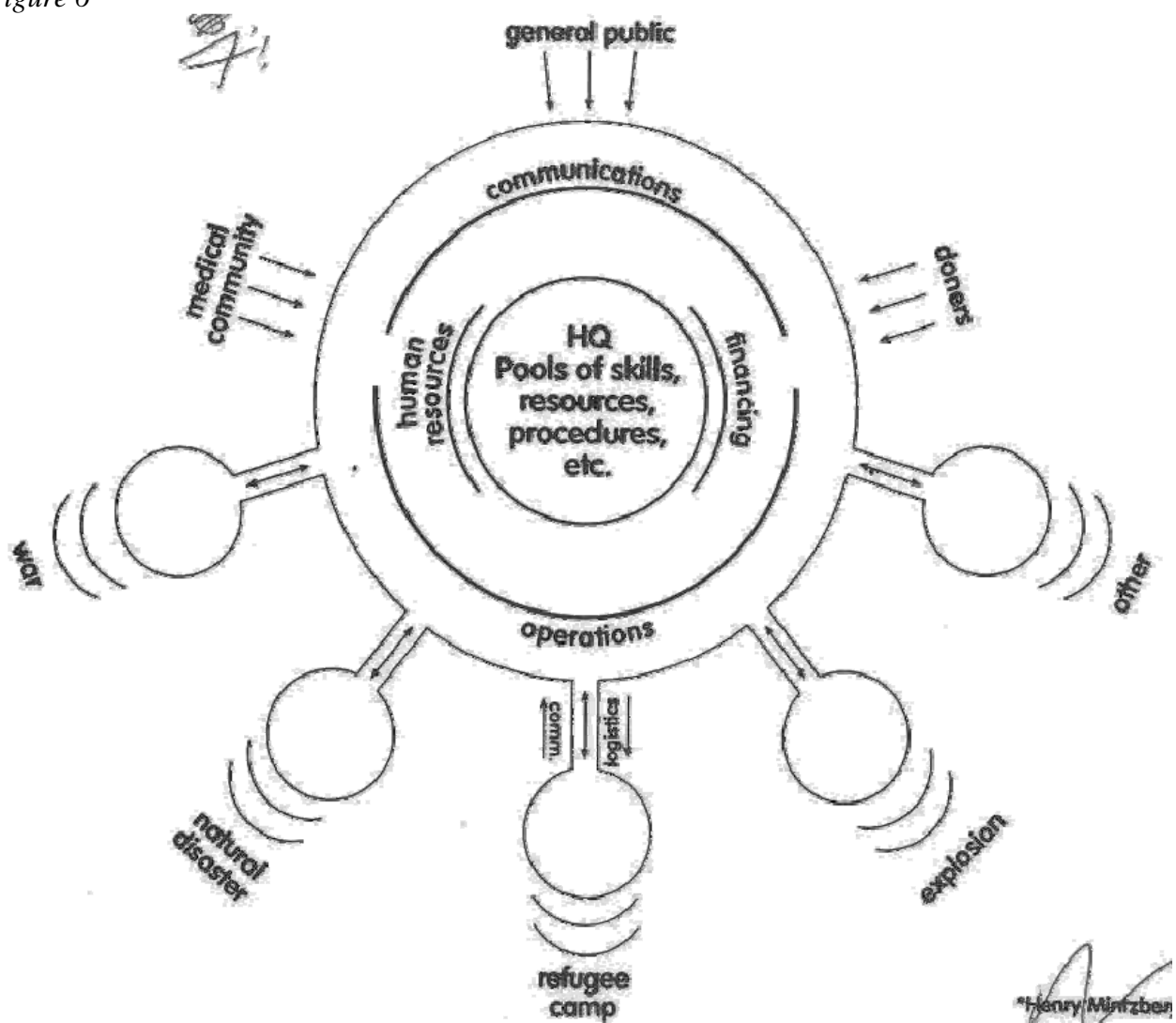
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\* Published in a similar form by the title in *Organizational Dynamics* (29,4, 2001: 306-312)

had just rushed medical teams to India after a devastating earthquake there. The organization's latest annual report listed long-term missions in 41 countries, short-term missions ("catastrophes/emergencies") in 15, and "exploratory" missions in 12.

Figure 7 shows an "organigraph" for MSF. (Organigraphs illustrate the interrelationships of the various activities in an organization. See Mintzberg and Van der Heyden, 1999 and 2000.) At its central core is the headquarters, charged with the critical function of maintaining the infrastructure and the pool of resources needed for operations. MSF raises the funds, secures the facilities, hires the staff, and ensures the procedures by which the operations function. This happens through "missions" or "programs," shown by small circles—satellites emanating from the core, as field hospitals. Each is temporary, created during a crisis and sustained only so long as the crisis situation prevails ("from fifteen days to fifteen years," according to its head, referring to an earthquake in one area and a displaced person camp in another).

Figure 6



These programs are shown connected to headquarters by lines—umbilical cords of a sort—through which are sent the people and resources (medical and support staff, equipment, materials, etc.), with information going back to the headquarters.

## Description of the Day

This “day” in fact began the evening before, at Rony’s conference to explain why MSF had decided to pull its people out of Somalia—partly because of the danger to them, but also to express its opposition to the United Nation’s role there. He was clearly not happy with a humanitarian mission that had become military, and said so clearly, at one point referring to “un veritable carnage” on the part of the U.N., at another to the MSF’s need to “amputate” its activity because a kind of gangrene had set in—not something doctors like to do, but sometimes necessary. After spending about a half-hour briefing the ten or so journalists, mostly from African-related publications, Rony took questions, almost all about Somalia rather than the MSF. The press conference ended after about 80 min, at which point he gave a taped interview to an African radio journalist.

I arrived at 9:30 the next morning, as suggested, at Rony’s small office in MSF’s own small but modern building, just off the Place de la Bastille. Like most everyone else there, he was dressed casually—in jeans and an open shirt—but a tie and jacket hung in his office. Dr P, the director general who dealt more with internal matters, was in his office when I arrived, informing him about the safety of the MSF staff in Somalia, including the problem of snipers on the roofs. “Et alors, decision quand?” Rony asked, concerning the sending of someone to assess the situation, to which he received the reply, “Decision hier!” [“So, decision when?”...”Decision yesterday!”].

At 9:55, Rony joined the meeting he was to have attended at 9:30, of eight people, the main headquarters management group, all with their agenda books open, scheduling. The meeting then moved into the agenda items, ranging far and wide—sending people to the former Yugoslavia, legal issues, the plans for a management retreat, a new AIDS treatment, the spread of a new wave of tuberculosis in France, a visit to Paris by the U.N. Secretary General, and so on.

People came and went, or periodically ambled to the door to light a cigarette and blow the smoke into the hall, Rony included. He mostly listened, occasionally took the lead, and intervened a few times to express opinions or values—for example, that the plans for the retreat be kept loose. At 12:20, he moved toward the door to leave, stood there for a few minutes listening (and smoking), and finally left.

“I hope you don’t mind riding on a motorcycle—it’s the quickest way to cross Paris,” he said as he grabbed his jacket en route to his next meeting, a live interview on French television. “Don’t worry, I’m careful,” he promised. (To make up for being late, he drove on the other side of the concrete abutment several times, into the oncoming lane, before tucking back in “just in time” at the next light.)

A woman met us at the door of the France 2 television station and rushed Rony into a makeup room and then into a studio, to be briefed by the host before being seated. The host then read the news and then questioned him on the situation in Somalia. This lasted about two minutes, and then it was back to remove the makeup, while a journalist friend from the station dropped in to say hello and discuss various issues. We left at 1:35.

After a fast trip back to the office, and a check with his secretary (“nothing urgent”), Rony looked around for people, found no one, and headed to the nearby bistro to join a group of three MSF staff at a table. The discussion was general at first, but then focused on a book one of them had been asked to prepare for a publicity day. Rony guided him through the outline and explained what he wanted, while the other two people at the table took notes. “So, you’ve got the idea?” he asked near the end.

At 3:07 p.m., the secretary of a relaxed Rony came in to ask if he had forgotten about his 3 o’clock appointment with a journalist from *l’Humanité*, and with that the hectic pace resumed.

Again for about a half hour, there was another interview about Somalia, with a photographer shooting pictures. Then, for the first time (short of shouting between helmets), I had a few minutes to chat with Rony. “A humanitarian organization has to go against its own interests sometimes,” he said in reference to his lobbying activities on public issues.

Soon the pace picked up again. For the next 60 minutes, callers came and went, encouraged by the open door next to the glass wall of his office. Dr P dropped in about a scheduling matter and a direct-mail campaign; an administrative person came by to clear a letter that Rony found not sufficiently explicit; and then he looked over some other MSF outgoing mail while a computer person came in to fix his machine. Various telephone calls followed, including one for an invitation to a public debate. After that, it was off to Dr P’s office for a minute before entering (at 4:40) a scheduled meeting already in progress. A number of the younger staff were being briefed on the situation in Somalia, at that point about their hospital in an old prison, and so well protected. Twenty minutes later, Rony, having listened, left.

A few minutes after 5:00, it was back to telephone calls (about requests for meetings and the pullout from Somalia), scheduling with the secretary, and looking over more correspondence. There followed another race across Paris for a 6:00 live interview on the France Inter radio station, arriving at 5:58.

A few minutes before the interview, I asked Rony what he did when in Somalia. Meet his own people and others, he said, including United Nations personnel, mostly to help his team formulate their problem and reorient their mission if necessary, but also to develop teamwork and get himself informed.

Then he went on the air, answering more questions about Somalia, this time at greater length and with more challenge. That ended by 7:00, and we then threaded our way through rush-hour traffic.

Back at the office, we had some time to talk about the structure of MSF, fund raising (in which Rony claimed to be not much involved), his writing of articles and books on political issues, and his trips to the trouble spots—which had to last a minimum of a week, he said, and took up to three months of his year. Picking up on what I had heard during the day, I asked why at the very same time that he was announcing the MSF pull-out from Somalia, which happened three days earlier, the organization was now, in fact sending some of its people back in. There was a new outbreak of fighting, he said; violence was up and the injuries had begun again.

Rony was supposed to leave at 7:30, but when I left at 8:20, he was just going to have a final look at what was happening in Somalia.

## Interpretation of the Day

We consider first doctors as managers and then Rony as a manager this day.

**Doctors as Managers** In some earlier work on healthcare, Sholom Glouberman and I (2001 a and b) discussed doctors as managers. In several ways, they seem less intrinsically suited to the practice of management than, say, nurses or general administrators, because of the very nature of their profession.\*

Medicine is fundamentally interventionist in nature (“intervention” is in fact the French word for medical operation), more oriented to curing the sick than to caring for the well. Yet most organizations need a good deal of care—to sustain their strategic positions and steady operations. To quote from a related report to a hospital:

First...doctors are in the business of making decisions, individually and decisively. They do not generally work collectively, and they do not generally hesitate. Every time they see a patient, some kind of [explicit] decision is usually made... Sitting on committees and debating the nuances of vague issues without deciding anything must not only be intensely frustrating to them but also terribly unnatural. Second, much of medicine, increasingly, is not synthetic. Doctors don't generally treat the whole person... Third... the nature of medical practice is interventionist. Doctors intervene intermittently, sometimes preferring...patients who are really sick. But this is not a good model for management... Organizations...need devoted, continuous, synthetic, and preemptive care, not intermittent, interventionist, specialized, and radical cure. (Mintzberg, 1997).

MSF is fundamentally interventionist and crisis driven, racing out to trouble spots around the world—in effect, where the world is sick. It deals not with the whole problem of these crises but with one specific aspect of them, medical service for injury and illness. This, of course, it does with a strong sense of mission and deep ideological commitment, Thus MSF does not just work *as* doctors work but exactly *on* what doctors work, and with the same sense of purpose. (It should be added that the doctors themselves are interventionist with regard to MSF, typically signing up on contracts for six months or a year, often early in their careers, or else between jobs later on.) And MSF has to make its decisions decisively and often dramatically, not only whether to send its teams to various trouble spots, but also whether to keep them there as situations become tense, and when to bring them back—exactly as doctors decide in treating their sick patients. So MSF is an unusual organization, to be sure, and perhaps naturally suited to management practiced like medicine.

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\* This repeats some material in an earlier interpretation, but is included here because often these different reports will be read separately, not all together.

**Rony's Roles** Most of what I saw was external to MSF, sending influence out rather than receiving it in, standing at the interface of *communicating* and *linking*. Rony was representing his organization, with a political position that it (and he) had taken on a particular issue. Partly this was public relations, partly it was being a spokesperson to a broad audience. But he was speaking *out* more than just speaking, so lobbying might be a better label.

Discussions we had during the day suggested this to be characteristic of his work in general, with a lower posture taken on inside operating and administrative issues, where Rony seemed to exercise more general guidance than specific supervision. Put another way, there appeared to be little *doing* or *leading* or *controlling* per se, except perhaps sometimes the latter two by his very presence. The most pointed illustration of all this was the energy he invested in lobbying in the media about the reasons for the pullout (external) at the very same time that some staff was being sent back in (internal).

MSF is an organization of professionals, with medical people in operating and many administrative positions. It carries out medicine in regular ways, but hardly under regular circumstances. So MSF requires quite a different structure, more flexible and project oriented (adocracy), compared with the more stable professional bureaucracy of most hospitals (Mintzberg, 1979, 1983). Either way, MSF is hardly an organization in which people are inclined to look for orders from a boss.

Thus, much of Rony's internal work this day had to do with *communicating*—some briefing on his part, but more listening and being briefed by others, mostly, it would appear, to support his role as spokesperson for the organization. Needless to say, almost all of this communicating was oral, reflecting his overall managerial style and the volatility of the situations in question.

MSF had a clear mandate and clear goals that were well known and well represented by its chief executive, who had been with the organization for fifteen years, eleven of them as Président. That, too, meant less need for Rony to convey internally MSF's basic values and overseeing their manifestation in practice.

### **Catherine Join-Diéterle, Conservateur en chef Le Musée de la Mode et du Costume (Paris, 26 October 1993)**

In a large white room, a tiny piece of cloth is being dried on a glass table. Light shines up through it, so that the weaving can be lined up with the marks on the table. This cloth is part of a fashion garment that was recently donated, or else bought for as much as \$15,000. It will take from four hours to four days of full-time work to clean it. Then it will be put into a special cloth bag and stored in a brand new temperature and humidity-controlled underground facility. Later, it may become part of an exhibition, in which case someone will spend at least four hours arranging it on a mannequin.

This is Musée de la mode and du costume (Museum of Fashion and Dress), guardian of the legacy of high French fashion. It pursues a unique mandate with a sense of detail and attention that is rare in contemporary society. Its director for many years, Catherine Join-Diéterle, not only championed this mandate, but also reflected it in her own style of managing, including her concern for the institution. Her title, "conservateur en chef," was most appropriate.

The museum was housed in the elegant Palais Gailliera, built as a palace for a duchess, and owned, together with the museum, by the city of Paris. Its administrative offices were there as well as its exhibition space, library, and offices of graphics and photography. The collection of 30,000 costumes (plus another 40,000 accessories, including hats, shoes, gloves, even umbrellas and canes) was housed in another part of Paris, where the cleaning and restoration of garments also took place.



## Description of the Day

I arrived at 8:50 a.m. Catherine had asked me to come at 9:00, but she was already in her small office, tucked under the roof of the museum, organizing her day. We chatted until 9:15 about the museum and its founding in 1918. In France, painting comes first and sculpture second, she said, although clothing is most personal, “the relationship to the body.”

At 9:15 we left briskly for the basement, with a Christian Dior bag full of clothing to be turned over to someone for initial preparation (including sewing over labels to discourage stealing). Along the way, Catherine encountered various people in the halls, discussing clothing donations, the need for a child mannequin, and a Givenchy dress.

Back in the office at 9:30, her assistant, Sylvie (“my right arm”) called and came in. They discussed the retirement of a staff member while a pile of administrative papers was turned over to her. Then she was on the telephone to the staff member about a date for the retirement, before the press attaché appeared to show her some clothing given by a friend. She and Sylvie then discussed meals for a visiting group, flowers for an evening reception to honour the donor of a collection of fashion photographs, what kind of person she wanted for the switchboard job, and someone who had offered his candidature for a post in the museum. “Oh, no, I know this guy. I don’t want him,” she said, to which Sylvie responded quietly that perhaps she might wish to meet him anyway. They continued on a range of issues, including Catherine’s request for someone to clean the glass at the entrance.

At 9:57, the mail was brought in, which was reviewed immediately with Sylvie: bills, invitations, catalog, “another woman who wants to sell a wedding gown—I’ll call her.” There followed some scheduling, then a series of telephone calls: about a child mannequin, someone to take catalogue photographs of a show going to Japan, to Sylvie about having lined up the photographer, and so on.

At 10:35, we took the Metro to the other facility. (Normally Catherine went on her scooter, she said, but as it had no place for me, she left it at home). We arrived at 11:00 to find a number of people milling about outside. Catherine gathered the group, about twenty-five people in all, for a scheduled tour of the facilities.

For about ten minutes she explained the nature of the museum and of the tour that was to take place, before turning it over to Jean-François, the press attaché. He took the group from room to room—“restoration,” cleaning, the actual storage facilities, etc. Catherine mostly stayed with the group, interspersing her comments periodically (e.g., describing a particular dress being cleaned on a table and saying that it was about to be sent to an exhibition in Japan, or explaining that the lights were low because strong lightening can burn the materials). She also slipped out from time to time, using the occasion to make contact with her operating staff on a variety of issues. When the group went down into the storage facility (“50% humidity, 20°C”), one of its members was afraid of taking the elevator, so Catherine accompanied her down the ramp. The tour continued, but at 12:37 she decided to leave, and we found a small restaurant nearby to have lunch and talk.

“Everything is in the head,” she commented; “you have to get it out.” She said her door was always open, and considered herself there to be interrupted (although sometimes she had to go to the library to get things done). She took charge of a number of the exhibitions herself and handled contacts with the municipal government, while she tried to leave more and more of the internal administration—such as hiring—to Sylvie. In the evenings, she did what she called her “scientific work”: giving courses (e.g., on the history of fashion), and preparing catalogues and the like, while trying to avoid telephone work. (Her son was nine years old.)

Back at the office at 2:05, Catherine met a woman coming in the door (“a fan of clothing”), checked for messages at reception, and made several telephone calls, including one to find someone to write the text for a German show. Then the information technology person came in with some old drawings: “I need some information: is this 16<sup>th</sup> century?” Catherine thought not—too bad, because that would have made it the oldest document in the place. “Why not mark it with a question mark?”

After some other brief comings and goings in her office, Catherine went downstairs at 2:40 to meet a man who wished to donate some prints and invitations to the museum. She took them and had him sign a document acknowledging the donation. Ten minutes later, she was back in her office, on paperwork, interrupted by telephone calls about a number of small issues.

Sylvie came in with a man at 3:17. Catherine explained the job to him (including the fact that he needed muscles to carry boxes—“We’re all women here!”), and told him about the rules of the system, including the need to call in when sick. When they left after about fifteen minutes, I asked how she could have just agreed to hire the very person she was so negative about in the morning. “He’s been through a hard time—had to give him a break,” she said. She didn’t need to add that she had enough trust in Sylvie to accept her advice.

At 3:40, as she was about to take me on a tour of the museum, Jean-François appeared, and Catherine began to tell him how she wanted a particular garment displayed in a window. Another call followed, to an expert about storage conditions for the photography collection being given to the museum, so that she could discuss it with the donor that evening. Or at least, as she put it to Sylvie, who walked in during the call, “This way I have something to say to him about it” (which

followed, “Bon, j’ai fait mon boulot”—“Good, I’ve done my duty”). Sylvie had come in with the flowers for the evening, and they discussed the detailed arrangements.

At 4:07, we finally left for that tour, spending almost an hour seeing the facilities and the current exhibition. Along the way, Catherine met a woman in the foyer who wanted to sell some clothing to the museum. They went behind the entrance, where she examined the garments. She couldn’t use them, but feeling sympathetic to someone who had obviously fallen on hard times, she gave her the names of other possible buyers.

Back in the office at 5:00, Catherine worked on a proposal for an exhibition in the spring. There were some other calls and mail, and then we had time to talk before the reception.

There was no board of directors, Catherine said. She reported directly to the cultural affairs directorate of the City of Paris. Particularly important, she believed, was the city’s perception of the museum, which was formed directly by the people who attend the shows and indirectly by how the museum was seen in the press. This particular evening, a politician was to do the speaking, but Catherine had written the comments for editing by his staff. She would be there, circulating.

I left at 6:15 so that Catherine could change into an elegant garment of her own for the 6:30 reception.

## Interpretation of the Day

**Managing in the Details** Ludwig Mies van de Rohe is reported to have said, “God is in the details.” Not only architecture, but management too, if this day is any indication.

Catherine Join-Dieterle looked this day like a “doer” above all, intimately involved with a great many of the details of her organization. But Konosuke Matshishita, who founded the company that bears his name, is reported to have said that “Big things and little things are my job. Middle level arrangements can be delegated.” Like a great chef in a French restaurant, Catherine did not seem to lose sight of the big things in managing so many of the little details.

The frame of this job was crystal clear, and the incumbent bought into it totally: the preservation and presentation of a particular aspect of the French heritage. At one point during the tour, I said to Jean-François “Elle vive son travail” (She lives her work), and he smiled and replied with a most definite “Oui.” This, of course also included maintaining the organization on its established course. One could say that Catherine helped her organization adapt so that it could sustain its heritage.

**Revolving Around Doing and Dealing** ”There was little activity during the day that could be described as *leading* per se, although “leading in passing” was certainly in evidence, especially with regard to maintaining the culture of the place.

*Communicating* in all directions was evident, although perhaps no more so than in most other managerial jobs (except that Catherine was truly expert in the domain of her organization, and used that expertise). There was some *controlling* this day, but not so much about systems or structure (this was a small organization), but about issuing directives and especially authorizing requests. (Much of the important information, as she noted, was in her head.) That put it rather close to *doing*, as did some of her leadership efforts.

*Linking* was well in evidence this day, but again close to doing, and *dealing*—as with the group that was touring the facilities (was Catherine “doing” as tour guide, or “linking” as figurehead?), preparations for the evening, and in other things she talked about, for example relations with the city of Paris and the press, where linking and dealing appeared to be important parts of her job. Catherine had to maintain the museum’s financial support, which she presumably did by lobbying directly, as well as indirectly by maintaining good press and political relations. So networking was important in this job too. But buffering may not have been, since the external pressures were probably not extreme.

Ultimately, then, all seemed to revolve around the roles of *doing* and *dealing*. Catherine played a major role in the bringing in of new garments and in reviewing each as it arrived, was personally involved in the public tours, wrote the proposals for new exhibitions and then managed these projects themselves. This was unlike Carol, head of the London film company, who did the deals and then let

others handle the consequences. Catherine's day was much more “hands on” all around, like Max in the retail chain, with all the roles connected together.

**Is Doing Managing?** Does so much doing really constitute managing? Most decidedly yes. The very way Catherine worked (like Max) was most appropriate for a small organization such as this. The leader holds things together by personal energy and activity, including involvement with the details. All management has to be connected to context, but especially so here.

**“The Insightful Boss”** If a comparison is to be made between “boss,” “professional,” and “craft” styles of managing, Catherine would seem closest to the “boss” style. But judging by the expertise and enthusiasm of her people, as well their respect and affection for her, this style hardly seemed dysfunctional here. The boss listened—as when that fellow she had doubts about was hired—and so seemed to “empower” people, despite keeping such a close rein on so many of the details.

At one point Catherine tried to make a telephone call to the archives and couldn't remember the number. She said she used to remember better when the phone “numbers” had words at the beginning. If managers can get their information through words, numbers, images, and feel, then it is interesting how important the last two, images and feel, seemed to be for Catherine—most tangibly, in fact. This was a job about image: the garments themselves, the exhibitions of them, the museum as a symbol of status and of heritage, and Catherine was deeply and tangibly involved in all this. As for feel, it was no less important, literally in the case of the garments, figuratively in that of the organization every part of which she kept in close “touch.” If words and numbers represent a *cerebral style* of management, and images and feel an *insightful style*, then Catherine's has to be described as the “insightful” boss. This was a day of managing the details, seeing and feeling, doing and dealing.

## Yin and Yang

As I observed Rony and Catherine nine days apart, it was natural to make comparisons. Both were in Paris, heads of visible institutions for long periods of time (but operating in very different domains). Both occupied tiny offices. Both commuted on two wheels, but such different wheels, reflecting the pace of their work. And both were deeply involved, but one far less driven, so to speak. So despite the similarities, these were two very different days.

One organization runs around the world dealing with crises on an intermittent basis. It goes where the world is sick, trying to cure, or at least palliate it, and then leaves. The other organization stays put, and collects heirlooms, which it may keep forever.

Management on these days followed suit: in one case intensive, aggressive, intrusive, in the other, careful, nurturing, infusive. One was yang, about short-term intervention, the other yin, about long-term involvement.

Indeed, all this works rather nicely even as metaphors. MSF is not just *about* medicine but *like* medicine. It makes its decisions decisively—to treat a crisis or to withdraw treatment from it—and it prefers the acute to the chronic, tending to leave when the condition stabilizes. Not coincidentally, its chief was a physician. He too practiced management like medicine—as interventionist cure—with words as his prescriptions.

The museum conserves both garments and a legacy. Its leader was called the “chef conservator”, and her work was about image and feel. She operated with her hands on, literally as well as figuratively. Just as she selected garments by sight and feel, so too was she in touch with the details of

her organization. When she talked about the intimate relationship of clothes to the body, she might well have used that as a metaphor for the relationship of her organization's mission to its own body, namely to preserve the heritage of clothing within this carefully woven structure.

Rony's work this day was thus largely external, networking and promoting, while Catherine's work was more internal, doing and detailing.

Of course, there is more to the symbolism of yin and yang. Yin may be absorbing, but it is said to be dark, obscure, mysterious. Yang is said to be clear, light, white— maybe a little too much. And while yang is active, yin is more passive (although Catherine hardly so, nor dark, obscure, or mysterious for that matter). But perhaps we can use a little more passivity in management, to enable everyone else to be more active.

Above all, these two “great cosmic forces,” we are told, cannot exist without each other. In the duality is found the unity: there has to be light in the shadows and shadow in the light (as illustrated in the yin and yang figure). If harmony is achieved when yin and yang are balanced, then is there some rebalancing to be done in management?

The yang face of managing, the drama of MSF and the corresponding style of its leader, would seem more representative of how management is practiced today. At least, that is how the press depicts it, in stories written by journalists who need readers. The drama, not the daily routine, is what attracts and sells. But most managing is about the daily routine—about trying to establish and sustain excellence, amidst the details. In that respect, we need to pay more attention to the mysteries of yin. If there really are two faces of managing, then we have been neglecting one of them.

## **Sustaining the Institutional Environment\***

*A day each with the executive director and a program director of Greenpeace takes consideration of managerial work beyond the obvious doing, planning, thinking, and politicking, to the question of how an institution intent on sustaining the physical environment can sustain itself.*

Greenpeace needs no introduction. It is certainly the most viable and likely the most effective environmental NGO. It may also be the only truly “global” organization, since it has activities on all seven continents as well as on the high seas. (Thanks partly to its own efforts, commercial organizations are precluded from mining and drilling in Antarctica.) In fact, Greenpeace is a multinational organization with a vengeance, experiencing in great degree the most common problems of such organizations: global versus local conflicts and broad mission interests that clash with more focused country concerns.

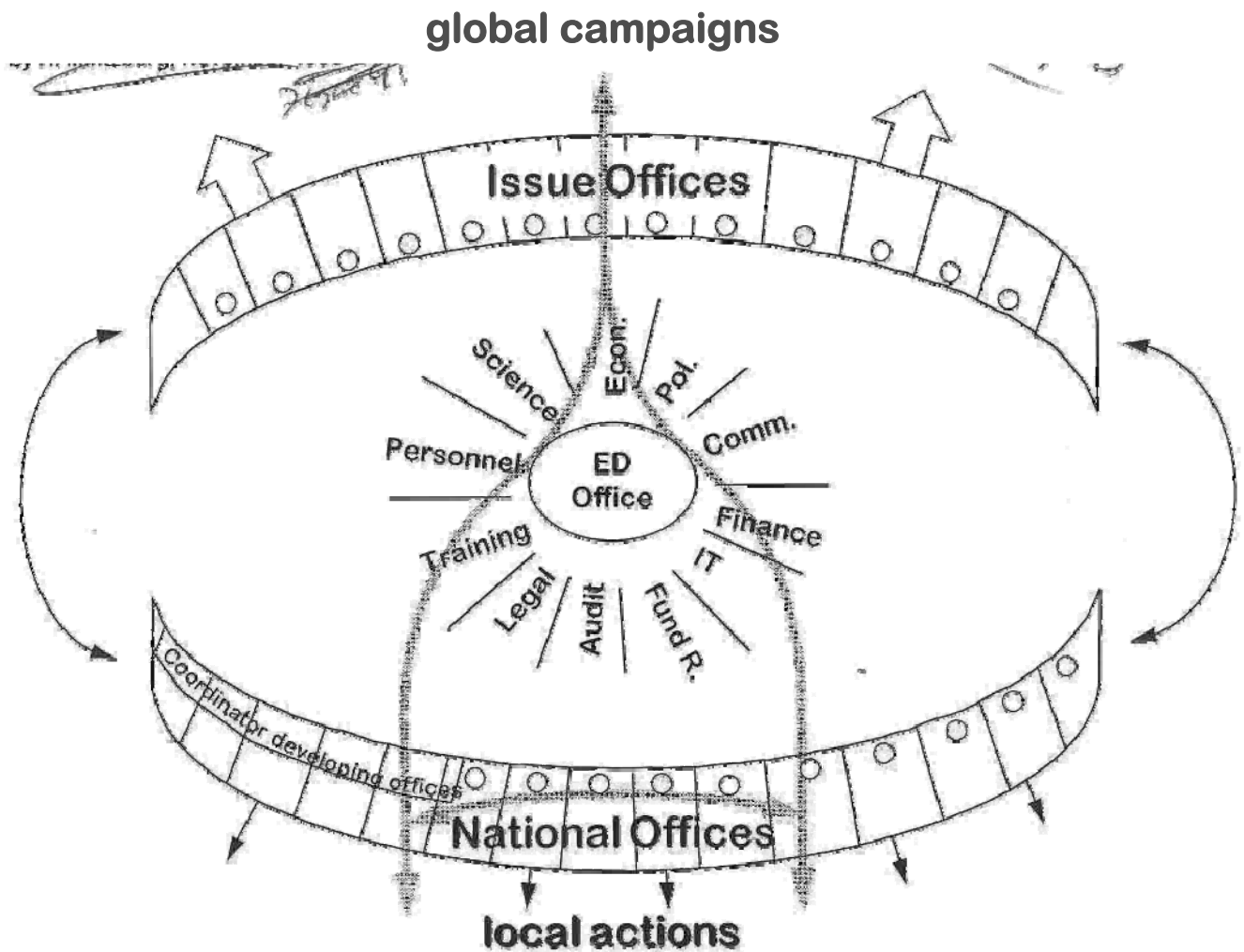
The conventional organization chart (here called “organigram”, after the French) for Greenpeace International (the world headquarters, located in Amsterdam) changed often, as will soon become evident. As of July 1, 1993, it showed Paul Gilding as Executive Director, supported by two Assistant Executive Directors, Steve D’Esposito and Annelieke Zonne, overseeing seven directors who divided up responsibility for the various issues (or programs) and some of the central staff units. One of these was Paul Hohnen, who was responsible for Toxic Trade and Forests as well as the Economic Unit and the Political Unit. The national offices were not shown on this organigram, or the Board of Directors, with its full-time Chairperson, Uta Bellion, in the London offices.

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\* This report was published by this title in *Organizational Studies* (2000: 71-94), co-authored with Frances Westley, who contributed especially to the conceptual interpretation

I rearranged this as the organigraph shown in Figure 9, which depicts the actual flow of Greenpeace activity as a clamshell, with the issue offices on top and the national offices at the bottom. But the essence of the operation is to be found in the campaigns and the actions, which are depicted on the organigraph as well. Large “global campaigns” are shown emanating upward from the issue offices, to describe their intended broad impact, while smaller “local actions” are shown extending downward from the national offices, to describe their intended focused impact. Of course, these two are not meant to be independent of each other: local actions are often tangible manifestations of global campaigns, and they can also set precedents that create those campaigns in the first place. So the chart shows the two connected by shaded lines, which run through the central staff functions that support and encourage these activities.

Figure 7



Greenpeace occupied a middle-sized building in central Amsterdam, alongside a canal, with a large circular staircase in its core, around which, off the rectangular corridors, through closed doors, could be found its various banks of offices. Paul G’s office came directly off the corridor on the fourth floor, with that of his assistant, Becky, right behind; Paul H’s office was in the corner of the third floor, shared with his assistant, Iris. That door was generally closed, and Mozart music was played in the morning.

A day each was spent with Paul Gilding and Paul Hohnen. The complete interpretation is saved for the end, considering the two days together.

## **Paul Gilding, Executive Director Greenpeace International (Amsterdam, 1 November 1993)**

### **Description of the Day**

I arrived at 9:00, as arranged, to find Paul [I will drop the G in this section] sitting at the table, beside his small desk, chatting with someone. “Criminal charges haven’t been laid yet?”, was the first thing I recorded, concerning news that a Greenpeace ship, out to protest oil drilling, had been seized by the Norwegian authorities. The other person soon left, and Steve, who had headed up Greenpeace in the United States before becoming Assistant Executive Director here, came in, at 9:10. They chatted about the “Strategic Plan”, a reorganization, and whether this should go to the Board. Becky slipped in, listening to the conversation and having been asked her opinion about the reorganization, suggested the material be circulated to the directors.

At 9:13, there was a heavy knock at the door, and Mara came in, visiting on her way back to the Australian office from the Annual General Meeting (AGM) that had taken place in Crete the previous week. (Paul, who had been Executive Director for one year, was previously head of Greenpeace Australia.) They gossiped a bit about the AGM, and Steve left while Paul asked Mara how she was doing, gave some advice on connecting with the international office and some information on a “mover and shaker,” and requested information about someone in finance.

Mara left soon after (they had a dinner meeting planned that evening), and Paul chatted with me for a few minutes. “I’m pushing for more ‘hands-on’” activity, he said, citing the upcoming trip by Paul Hohnen to British Columbia for an action on the clear cutting of forests—to connect the analyses at headquarters to the actions in the field. The problem, as he saw it, was how to knit the system together without creating a big control structure at the center. He added, about structure, that he “used to be a boxes man” but now realized the key was in knitting people together in how they worked.

Then Becky came back in and they discussed what they had to do that day. She conveyed the “good news” that the U.S. government had announced a ban on some substance. Paul said they had to call Richard, the head of the Communications Unit, stationed in London, right away.

Bouwe, the acting finance director (temporarily appointed, on a consulting basis), came in at 9:50 and talked about a good meeting he had had that morning with his people, to clear the air and open up communication in the unit. Bouwe talked about the complaints of the finance people—their “insecurity”, and “underlying frustration”—and about the hand-over to a permanent finance director. Paul referred to the situation as “very tough,” but told Bouwe “I think you’re handling it right” as he left at 10:00, commenting to me after that there had been some serious problems in finance.

Paul reminded Becky about the call to Richard, and asked if he would like to join someone lunching with an environment minister, but Paul felt he had to concentrate his attention on the structural plan. He made another brief call, looked at the email and then asked Becky again about the call to Richard, who said she missed him at home but that “he’s desperate to speak with you.” At 10:12, Paul tried Richard at work, but had to leave a message. Then he worked on his PC, and wrote up some notes on a flip chart about what to do for the AGM next year. “Most of our job is to monitor what everyone else does,” he said, adding “I’m trying to avoid doing ‘hands-on’ work myself.” Another call came, informing Paul of a donation, and they discussed whether or not to “make it public.”

At that point, Annelieke opened the door and came in with a big pile of flip charts, as well as some cookies and apples. Paul hung up moments later and Steve appeared too. While they chatted, about a Danish documentary soon to be released that was critical of Greenpeace, and how to react to it, Annelieke put up the charts, the first titled “Basic Planning Exercise,” with the four of them (Becky included) assembling for the meeting (all, incidentally in their mid 30s, and all in jeans, but Paul with a dark blue shirt and bright tie).

Annelieke began explaining the charts, but Paul asked, “Before we start, what’s the aim of the whole exercise?” “To have a work plan for the whole organization—who does what,” Annelieke answered, and Paul then asked about the time frame and was told 6-9 months. Annelieke continued to explain the nine charts she had put up on the wall, so that they could discuss what needed to be done in each as a result of the strategic plan. (That “Strategic Plan” was displayed on the organigram as a kind of flower connected to the Executive Director’s office. These charts covered different areas of Greenpeace operations, with labels such as “Fleet and Fundraising,” “Finance and Implications of Strategic Planning,” “Political Structure,” “Communication Structure.” The discussion, however, revolved most evidently around organization structure.

As they discussed the issue of planning, Paul G commented that “We need to think through the Strategic Plan before implementation” and “We should have performance targets for the Strategic Plan.” Then Annelieke listed on the board: 1.

Objectives/mission; 2. Break down targets; 3. Communication, and they discussed how to proceed, with Annelieke taking the lead. “Are we brainstorming or just going through it systematically?”, she asked at one point, clearly favouring the latter, while Steve favoured the former. At one point, Annelieke said “I think we should move on; we can discuss [Campaigns, the first chart] for two days, I’m sure. Resource Allocation: [the second chart].” So they discussed this continuing to seek “action” programs.

Then the phone rang (it was 11:13), and Becky handed it over to Paul—it was Richard, finally. While the others continued with the charts, Paul and Richard discussed the Danish documentary, Paul mostly listening, and commenting occasionally on who might be able to do what. They discussed the ship seizure by Norway and how to get the right press angle. The call ended after 25 minutes, at 11:38.

The conversation continued much as before. Annelieke commented at one point that “The long-term feedback should be finished by April (six months later), noted who had to do what, getting more deeply into structural issues such as line vs. staff and the formation of teams, while Paul commenting: “ We mustn’t forget this is all new—and there are other things we need to do.” “Let’s go through the current organizational chart and see where we’ll fit things,” Annelieke said, but as if to respond to Paul they were soon into a discussion of a conflict at the Crete meeting between the full-time Board Chair, Uta, in London, and Paul as Executive Director in Amsterdam, and how to deal with it. Paul said he would give her a call. With an “OK” from Annelieke, they all rose, at 12:07, and soon left.

Then Paul put in the call to Uta, telling her what he was working on that week, including “prioritizing” things to get to the Board. “I’m working on a draft, [of the strategic plan, “to ensure a consistent line”], will get it to you later today, but it won’t have details of the implementation. You should get it back to me by tomorrow at the latest.” The call took six minutes.

Like everything at Greenpeace, it’s a question of “personalities,” Paul said, adding that the “problem is structure,” stemming from “political decisions,” to have a full-time Board Chair alongside an Executive Director. Concerning the relationship with Becky, Paul said they had started to work together three or four months ago (she had been with Greenpeace for several years), and that it had been working well for about a month now, “a flowing, chaotic relationship.”

At 12:30, Paul called Uta again, about dealing with the Danish documentary: “I think you should do it,” he said, adding later, “Honesty always works.” Paul said after the brief conversation that normally he would do the external media interview, but felt Uta had been around longer and knew Greenpeace better, also that it might be preferable for him to defer to her, given the tension.

Paul placed another call to Annelieke, while continuing to type (thanks to a headphone), asking about budgeting and a missing statement, and then Iris put her head in for Paul to sign a cash advance for Paul Hohnen’s trip to Canada.

At 1:03, Ann de Wachter, the Chair of Greenpeace Australia came in (she was chair when Paul was Executive Director there), also on her way home from Crete, and they headed downstairs for lunch (in an environmentally-friendly, freezing environment).

Ann briefed Paul on how things were going in Australia and New Zealand mostly concerning people and personalities. She also handed him a proposal from an ex-board member in Australia who was about to parachute out of a balloon into the stratosphere and wanted Greenpeace’s help, not necessarily financial. They also discussed the conflict between Paul and Uta and how Ann was trying to help in her discussions with Uta, which led them into discussion about board activities in general.

Paul and Ann chatted easily, as old friends. While she reviewed the problems of the U.S. Board, Paul said “You’re bringing lots of good news for me,” and she replied “Well, if I don’t, who will?” Suddenly Becky appeared to give Paul permission to be five minutes late, a gentle reminder that he had a meeting starting. They left the cafeteria at 2:05.

Paul joined the meeting in progress—Annelieke was talking—to review the AGM for those who had attended, eleven people in all. After her review, Steve took the chair and they went around the table to share impressions, beginning with someone who had attended for the first time. Then Paul responded to various comments, for example that the meeting seemed “boring” to one person because they were trying to get away from the old, conflictual style. They discussed means to enhance communication with the national offices, and there was reference to “post-AGM depression.”

That meeting ended at 3:07, and another meeting began in the same room with seven of the same people. Paul was discussing the “next steps” concerning the implementation of the strategic plan, especially with regard to structural redesign, when Ulrich, a director whose responsibilities included the Climate, Nuclear Industry, Disarmament, and Marine Services Units, intervened rather aggressively: “You have to make your choices soon, not wait to February or March... People trust you, but you have a year—then you could be in trouble... Don’t misread support for you as support for your plan.” He was referring to a number of related issues, including staff appointments that Paul had to make and the direction Greenpeace was headed with regard to the radicalness of its campaigns. Paul agreed, but argued that the key was not to clarify structure but to do things. Annelieke added that it was not just a question of appointing the right people, but Ulrich disagreed and suggested they had better take action soon, that people wanted clarity. Paul said “We have to have concrete

accomplishment soon, pick the symbols, pick the targets we want to focus on.” Ulrich raised two other issues in the same way, including the need to raise the salaries of the senior staff—now! The meeting ended at 3:50.

Afterward, Paul commented to me on the meeting, and the difficulties of managing an organization like Greenpeace. The people reject systems, yet without systems, the finances, etc. get messed up. So there is conflict between the activists and the systems people. If the activists run Greenpeace, they drive everybody crazy, but if the systems people run it, they drive everyone out! Paul felt the leader had to be someone who could do both. Plus there was the need for vision and professionalization of the work. He said he was appointed because Greenpeace was becoming slow and bureaucratic after not being organized enough. He referred to himself as an activist who could also be a bureaucrat—he liked structure and planning. But he had been backing off structure—realizing the need for loose structuring—and he was coming toward the same conclusion about planning, saying he was uncomfortable about the morning exercise but not quite against it yet.

Then Becky came in on scheduling matters and Steve appeared, wanting “to discuss that meeting with you.” Paul asked “With or without Henry?” and since Steve had no problem with my presence, Paul said “then now.” Steve was sympathetic but straight with Paul. He basically agreed with Ulrich, said there was “something real” in what he had said, that Paul did need to show decisiveness. Pointing to the charts on the wall from the morning meeting, he said “In a sense, this stuff worries me.” I asked if they thought it sped them up or slowed them down, and Steve said “I was wondering what we were doing this morning; I suspect it slows us down,” and Paul added “But it helps me too,” providing a sense of “order and what has to be done.”

Steve left at 4:15, and Paul went back to work on the memo from Uta and himself to the staff about the AGM, but complained to me that, as a joint memo, there was “no oomph to it.” At 4:21, Paul called his wife to discuss Mara coming to dinner and Ann coming for drinks beforehand, and then turned back to his PC, as before typing like mad, fully concentrated between the interruptions, the next one from Becky about scheduling. She also said “I think at some point you have to be clearer about this salary stuff.”

Then he went into his email: about the seized ship in Norway, requests for follow-up on the strategic plan, a letter to be signed about an issue in Australia, four messages in a row about the Danish documentary (and later a fifth), two messages on the role of council chairs at the AGM, a note on a campaign victory concerning nuclear dumping, and a request about raising money in Japan.

At 4:56 Paul went out to see Pail Hohnen on the latter’s “personal career development,” and came back shortly after to find Steve and Annelieke back to continue their morning meeting.

“Can I say something?” Steve said. “I think we are confusing the establishment of the structure with this project” (nodding to the planning sheets on the wall); “See what I’m saying?” Paul answered with a vague “Ya”, and Annelieke with an “I do,” so Steve clarified: “People may have responsibility on projects, but that’s not the structure.” Paul argued for an interim structure that would offer people some security. At that point, ignoring the Heisenberg principle, I introduced the idea of the organigraph, to show the workflows of the organization. Paul turned to an empty sheet on the flip chart and we began to develop one, with Paul commenting at one point that “What’s gone wrong [referring to the conventional organigram] is that we have had this nice neat system,” instead of a looser, more flexible one. When Mara opened the door and waved, at 5:30, that discussion and Paul’s day ended.

**Postscript** As promised, I continued to work on the organigraph on my way home, and faxed a primary version to them the next day, and the revised effort reproduced at the start of this report two days after that. But nothing that I know of came of that. Six months later, Uta won the battle and Paul was gone as Executive Director of Greenpeace International. Steve was named to a controlling executive committee that included one person from the German office and another from the Dutch office, while Annelieke took off on maternity leave, later to return on contract.

*Time* Magazine wrote (on June 12, 1995: 42) that the board “faulted [Paul Gilding] for moving too quickly on cooperation with business and government,” characterizing this as a fight between the new “modernizers” and the old “confrontationalists.” After pressure was brought to bear on the international board by some of the national offices, Uta Bellion resigned, and Paul’s position was finally filled, after having been vacant for more than a year, by Thilo Bode, a “modernizer from the German office.”\*

## Paul Hohnen

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\* He wrote to me on 27 August 1996, describing my report on Paul as “fascinating to read but terrible to contemplate.” He described his “challenge” as “how to transfer the job so that it is closer to political reality and therefore more exciting. I am not so concerned about the structure of the organization; my philosophy is to try to change behavior and to define objectives, and somehow the real structure will develop.” Thilo Bode remained in office until 2001.



## **Director III, Greenpeace International (Amerstam, 31 October 1993)**

My arrangement with Annelieke, whom I knew from conducting an earlier workshop with some Greenpeace staff, was that I should arrive at 10:15 and she would tell me with whom I was spending the day. It turned out to be Paul Hohnen, Director for Toxic Trade and Forest issues as well as the Economic Unit and Political Unit. [The next day had already been arranged with Paul Gilding.]

### **Description of the Day**

Paul [as I shall call Paul H here] had been reading the newspapers for about half an hour. He spent the next half hour explaining to me his work and his background, 17 years with the Australian Foreign Service, before he left to address broader issues, and had been with Greenpeace for four years, almost half as a director.

An issue was brewing in Canada this day, Paul said, concerning the clear cutting of 600 year old trees in Clayoquot Sound, British Columbia, and he would be leaving for there in a day or two. "This is where the line has to be drawn" on forest issues in the Northern Hemisphere, he said.

At 10:45, Paul placed a call to Steve Sawyer, founding Executive Director of Greenpeace, who still lived in Amsterdam, and was involved in social issues. Paul left a message. Then he and Iris (whose desk faced his) went into what he called the "morning meeting mode." She briefed him on her World Bank meeting in Berlin and the AGM in Crete.

The phone rang and Paul told Nanette "I need to talk urgently to you about Canada." She knocked on the door a few minutes later. Paul needed to make financial arrangements for the campaign in Canada, and they discussed how funds could be moved there quickly (by the next day). Nanette briefed him on the options and promised to get back to him by lunchtime, leaving at 11:00.

Paul turned to Iris, but then said, "No, let me ring Sawyer first," who was also going to Canada. They arranged lunch, and discussed the financing problem. Another call, to Dave, in finance, produced another option for getting the money (about \$80,000) through the Seattle Office. Paul explained this to Iris. At 11:07, a call came from Robert, who was asked to come in at 11:30.

Iris had meanwhile been accessing the email, which they discussed. Paul decided to fly to Canada on Wednesday, and asked Iris to make these and other arrangements, including an effort to meet the Canadian Prime Minister, or Minister of the Environment, and "some of the parliamentarians" and "media types" to "do some lobbying" in Ottawa on his way back to Amsterdam.

Their discussions then opened up to what they were doing that day, more briefing on the AGM, a meeting someone was to have with the Prime Minister of Portugal, and then "All right—papers, research: anything there—are we writing any papers this week?" It was now 11:18 and Paul called Becky, Paul Gilding's assistant, to tell her he was going to Canada, before he and Iris turned their attention to scheduling.

After a brief sortie in the hall, Paul returned as Robert, an American lawyer who was volunteering two days a week of his time to Greenpeace in the Political Unit, came in, at 11:37. Paul briefed him on the AGM ("Paul [G] in a sense got more than he wanted"; there was a "good atmosphere" despite "a major outburst," etc.). Paul asked Robert to check out the position of the new Canadian government, and they discussed issues of freedom of information and liability, including that of space vehicles reentering the earth's atmosphere. (All the while, the printer was pumping out emails.)

Robert was to do a report on liability. He explained the nature of some of the international treaties, and Paul commented on the "costs of previous pollution now coming home to roost," with the states "running for cover, as are the banks and insurance companies"(with reference to Exxon's futile attempts to transfer some of the Valdez spill costs to the insurance companies). At one point, Paul referred to the "legal blocking of the pipes, forcing the issues upstream," as a metaphorical reference to Greenpeace's own activities. After discussing Robert's personal plans for the future, as his term at Greenpeace was ending, the meeting concluded at 12:00.

Then Nanette was back in for a couple of minutes to review the money problem before Paul took up conversation again with Iris while glancing through the mail. He called Colin, head of the Economics Unit, located in London, with "great news" about a headline in *The Independent*, before they discussed a variety of current issues for almost twenty minutes, including the trip to Canada and how to develop an instrument to analyze trade policy. Paul then turned to a paper he was reading and editing on his desk, while Iris, who had travelled through the previous night, went home. Paul also took some time to show me some overheads from an address he had given the previous June to the board of directors or Royal Dutch Shell.

It was now 12:45, and Paul went out of his office, stopping to chat briefly with Ana, the head of the Political Unit, before heading downstairs to the small Greenpeace cafeteria to meet Steve, who was still very much involved in Greenpeace. They discussed Canada—"It's just going to be another land action"—but mostly campaigns, in a general,

analytical way, especially the political dimensions (for example, “how to ‘string out a story’ for weeks, using action for political impact”).

Paul was back in his office in just over half an hour, and started going over papers and working on his computer, on memos to send to Canada about arrangements for the trip. Then he put in a call to Becky to arrange to see Paul G later in the afternoon, “on the forest issue,” and went back to the keyboard for a few minutes before calling Blair, Head of Communications, in London, and reaching Richard instead. They discussed “political activities in Canada next week,” a film team over in British Columbia, and Paul’s wish to have a particular individual, an “images person,” involved on the communications front (“on the ground there, better than in London”: “If we’re going for an issue as big as this...”) They also discussed the Greenpeace International reorganization, and Paul’s own future in it. At 13:55, Paul turned back to his computer, a letter about the chances of making political contact in Ottawa, which was done at 14:10.

Talking about his mobility, Paul said he took his computer and printer along on trips, “take the office with you” [unusual at the time]. He said that Greenpeace was famous for the effectiveness of its communications systems—at conferences, they got reports to the media quicker than governments did; in fact, government officials often came to them to find out what was happening. “We’re in the business of making democracies work better,” Paul said.

A call then went out to Jeremy, a climate scientist, and they chatted for 15 minutes (until 14:35), about the AGM and the “strategic plan” that, as viewed there, was really an “organization plan.” Paul took a break until 15:05 (going upstairs to “check a few things”), and then was back on the telephone, another long conversation (15 minutes), in particular how to get the right balance in campaigns.

At 15:25, Ana came in. She was appointed only a few weeks earlier to head the Political Unit, and they discussed a host of issues, including some scheduling, while Paul gave specific advice, such as who to speak to on particular issues. (Iris slipped back in at 15:30.) With Paul’s final comment of “Let’s continue to have half a hour a day just to go over what’s been happening,” Ana left at 15:45.

More calls followed, including one from the Australian Embassy in Amsterdam, where Paul said he kept good contacts. “How can I help you?”, he asked, and talked in rather measured diplomatic terms for about ten minutes, telling the person on the line who from Greenpeace would be attending a conference. (Paul said, after hanging up, that she had rung to seek an understanding of Greenpeace’s position at an upcoming conference in London, and to ask for more time for an Australian company to stop a hazardous chemical dumping practice. They know about the problem, she said, and were dealing with it.) Then Paul left a message for someone in the Greenpeace office in London about this. Several brief activities continued: someone came in with a *New Scientist* review of a colleague’s book, and at 16:06 there was a trip to the fax machine to try to recover a missing document.

While waiting, we discussed the rest of the day, as I had to leave at 16:45. There was to be a conference call at 18:00 with Steve and others on the Canada trip, which would probably last for a hour, and then Paul would go home and make some phone calls (to other time zones), spending the office time from 17 to 18h with “whatever happens” as well as doing the expense claims for his last three trips. Paul said he tried to limit his travel, although recently this had not been the case. (The Canadian trip would probably last ten days.) As a rule, he said he tried not to be away more—or less—than one week in four. We also discussed Greenpeace as a multinational enterprise, with Paul claiming that “the way we operate and the way others operate is very different.” I concurred that “*what* you operate about is different,” but not “*how* you operate.” As an example of this, he pointed out that Greenpeace too had a dress code, except that here the uniform was not a suit so much as jeans and Reeboks.

At 16:27, Paul was back working on his expense account when a call came to see Paul G at 17:30 to talk about Canada. After a couple of other brief calls (scheduling, personal), we chatted a bit more until it came time to leave. “I’ll try to be as consultative as possible,” Paul said. He was involved in Canada because “it has very significant implications for Greenpeace.” The whole future of the forest campaign, in his view, depended on the outcome and so it needed very careful attention and, due to its complexity, rather sophisticated thinking.

On his own role, Paul said “I provide the framework for discussion—I force the pace—and try to contribute my share of intellectual capital concerning our position.” He factored in a certain political capability with respect to the national offices and led by example, he felt. Internally, he tried to intervene only when there was a problem, saving his time for groups outside the organization.

## **Interpretation of the Two Days**

**Beyond the Obvious “Doing”** Each day seemed to be remarkably focused: Paul H as a director, on project management, Paul G as Executive Director, on planning and organizing. However, there is reason to look beyond the obvious.

Paul H could be described as a kind of division manager charged with headquarters’ responsibility for a particular product line, so to speak. He would thus have been expected to oversee other

managers' work. On this day, however, in evidence was a kind of direct project management, rather than managerial overseeing in the form of *leading* and *controlling*. He almost seemed to be operating on his own, with the usual things managers do in their units hardly in evidence, except in small occasional snatches (such as coaching Ana). Perhaps this meant that Greenpeace had less of the divisionalized structure, as shown on its own organigram, and more of the structure of an adhocracy—a project organization geared to global campaigns and local actions—as shown on the organigram.

As noted, the campaigns drove the local actions deductively, as the organization targeted a broad environmental issue (such as deforestation) and pursued it in local activities (as in British Columbia). The latter could also evoke the former inductively, as local actions were generalized into global campaigns. Paul H worried that local actions were becoming less common, yet they seemed to be very much in the “genes” of Greenpeace. No matter how global the concern, it always seemed to manifest oneself in some sort of dramatic local action. So there had to be a natural flowing back and forth between the conceptual and the concrete: blocking pipes and hugging trees on one hand, conceiving broad stances with regard to global pollution on the other (symbolized by that comment about the “legal” blocking of pipes).

Greenpeace, in fact, originated in a living room in Vancouver, when a newspaper reporter called to ask if it was true that the group sitting there was going to try to stop an approaching, nuclear-armed U.S. aircraft carrier. A spontaneous “yes” led to the photograph of a tiny dingy in front of a massive hull that became Greenpeace legend.

And so, decades later, at the more recent United Nations diplomatic conference on global environment in Rio de Janeiro, which saw Greenpeace in its increasingly important role as worldwide representative of the advocates for environmental concerns, with no local component at all, its people could not resist unfurling their largest banner ever, from the top of Sugarloaf Mountain.

Correspondingly, Paul H's day was not about deforestation, but about action on a specific forest in Canada. But it was only *about* that action. His day was actually spent planning and organizing his role in the upcoming actions. The day may have concerned *doing* (and *dealing*), but it was actually a form of *controlling* of his own work, which might be seen as *scheduling*.

Of course, all project work involves prior planning, organizing, and scheduling. But the impression left, on this observer at least, reinforced by a number of Paul G's as well as Paul H's comments, was that engagement in the local actions did not come particularly naturally to the managers at the Greenpeace headquarters, not at this juncture at least. They had to be encouraged to “do” and felt there should be more of it (in Paul G's own words: for others, not himself).

Even Paul H's trip to Canada seemed to be less concerned with “hands on” doing than with lobbying, which means *linking* and *dealing* in our model. As Paul H himself put it, he was not going to Canada to “hug the trees”; he was going to meet the ministers and the press.

He was also going as a strategist of sorts—to develop a better sense of the forests program. This aspect of his work also came out during the day—in his lunchtime conversation with Steve as well as in that comment about the “legal blocking of pipes”. In this new Greenpeace, the literal blocking of pipes becomes a metaphor for a much more complicated set of concerns, backed up by all the analytical paraphernalia at the headquarters: a science unit and an economics unit and a legal unit and a political unit, etc. All this must, of course, have been as frustrating to the old activists as it was necessary to the new lobbyists.

It is surprising, then, that this day, in fact both these days, bore almost no evidence of direct *linking* with outsiders or direct *dealing* with them (although the independence of many of the staff, as discussed later, meant relating to them through *linking* and *dealing* as much as *leading* and *controlling*.) Perhaps these were just inside days, after the return from the AGM.

Still, the business of the new Greenpeace was lobbying governments, planting stories in the press, pressuring multinational corporations, and helping to negotiate international agreements, not to mention impressing donors. *Linking* and *dealing*, in other words, had become Greenpeace's key roles, if not those of its managers on these two days—its core mission, if you like. Greenpeace had to draw attention to and influence environmental issues that it believed threaten the world.

Of the other roles, only one stood out in Paul H's day. There was not much evidence of direct *leading* (his meeting with Ana being an exception), or of the *controlling* of others. There was, however, a great deal of *communicating*, which corresponded with his comment about the importance of that function in Greenpeace (except that in this day, it was far more oral than electronic). Perhaps keeping everyone fully informed is the best kind of leadership and control in an organization such as Greenpeace.

All this suggests a rather *cerebral* style of management, rather than an *experimental* one, which corresponded to Paul H's background in diplomacy, as well as with the mission that Greenpeace had set for itself.

In this organization, with its pressures and politics, these could have looked like hectic days indeed. They did not—not to this observer. Often interruptions, characterize managerial work, as discussed on Chapter 2 of the book. Here, especially in Paul G's day, they just looked like interruptions. (Contrast this, especially, with Alan Whelan's day at BT.) Instead of the "calculated chaos" discussed in Chapter 2 of the book, we seemed in Paul G's day to have snatches of chaos in an overall effort—perhaps a forced effort—to get organized.

**Beyond the Obvious Planning** Turning to Paul G, much of his day seemed almost like a leaf taken out of a classic textbook on the principles of management. He was planning and organizing, for purposes of coordinating and controlling, mostly about the organization itself.

The active issues of Greenpeace were certainly present during this day, indeed at times with a vengeance. But they seemed strangely distant in his work, more like interruptions. This was perhaps best reflected in Paul G's comments about avoiding hands-on doing himself, while wanting to encourage it in others.

There was evidence of most of the other managerial roles this day—for example, some *leading*, as in the briefing meeting about the AGM for purposes of team building, some *doing*, as in the fire fighting about the Danish documentary and the Norwegian ship seizure, some *framing*, especially in the concerns expressed around the Strategic Plans (more than in the planning exercise itself), and certainly, again, much *communicating*, in every way. (There seemed to be no *linking*, or *dealing*, *per se*, although there was clear reference to it, for example in having to deal with the Danish television people.) With the possible exception of communicating, however, all these activities seemed subordinate to the overriding emphasis on planning and organizing, which, in the model, falls under the label of *controlling*, since that is what these behaviors are really all about.

On a personal level, Paul G came across as a warm, involved, adaptable human being—indicative, above all, of a *craft* style of managing (perhaps best demonstrated by his approval of all this written here for publication). Yet this was a day of activities that were largely unconnected, abstract, and categorical, much closer to a style that could be labeled *technocratic*.<sup>\*</sup> Then again, a key characteristic of the craft style is malleability, the willingness of the incumbent to go with the forces at hand, and this Paul did as Annelieke set the agenda.

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<sup>\*</sup>See Pitcher (1995, 1997), on Artists, Craftsmen, and Technocrats, also Mintzberg (1994b) on 'boss', 'professional', and 'craft' styles of managing.

What was this informal planning and organizing all about? The classic literature of management (e.g., Fayol 1916) provides a clear answer: to encourage the doing of others. The higher levels of the hierarchy plan so that the lower ones can do, in a coordinated fashion. This is how this “top management team” saw their purpose, at least at the outset.

However, another interpretation could be advanced as well, quite evident in the behaviors observed. This was an effort to get order in their own heads, to come to grips with the complexities of their own needs as senior managers to set direction in Greenpeace. In other words, the planning could be described as an effort at *framing* as much as *controlling*. Of course, that should come as no surprise. These activities were, after all, labelled as an exercise in *strategic* planning.

Yet strategy, whether as broad perspective or even specific positions, was barely mentioned. The whole exercise seemed to reduce, as often seems the case (see Mintzberg 1994c), to decomposition: of the organization into a collection of parts, and the charts into a collection of wishes. The managers were not getting strategy from structure, any more they were getting ideas from organizing. Analysis does not provide synthesis, even if it may sometimes be a useful first step in that direction.

A closer look suggests a third interpretation, different from controlling and framing. These meetings were really about “prioritizing”—getting things into order for the purposes of deciding what had to be done when. In our model, that is called *scheduling*, namely agenda setting, and this is exactly what, in my opinion, also stood at the center of what Paul H did that day.

Here was a new management team trying to bring order to its intentions, rather than action to its programs. Maybe that is what planning is really all about—agenda setting to create order inside heads. As Aaron Wildavsky (1973:151-152) has put it: “Alone and afraid, man is at the mercy of strange and unpredictable forces, so he takes whatever comfort he can by challenging the fates. He shouts his plans into the storm of life. Even if all he hears is the echo of his own voice, he is no longer alone. To abandon his faith in planning would unleash the terror locked in him.”

But does the bringing of such order stimulate action in the organization, or does it deter it? People need order to act, no doubt, but how much, and of what kind? Can this kind of order breed a formalization that discourages real action?

Using planning to create a checklist of what needs to be done, in terms of a vision—a sense of “what for”—is one thing. But nine big sheets of paper on the wall to break a complex organization into neat categories so that they can be reviewed in brisk linear order is quite another. According to the conventional literature, strategy is supposed to drive structure—that is, strategy sets the direction so that structure can be designed to get there. Here, though, we may have had a glimpse of an opposite reality: that the over-formalization of structure (including the planning process itself) may inhibit strategic thinking, as well as action taking, since people get their cues from how their managers behave, not what they claim. That was what Ulrich seemed to be telling Paul G: people may need order, but only if it is infused with personal energy.

That is not to deny Paul G’s role as a strategist, only the manifestation of it in these particular meetings. With regard to the structures and processes of Greenpeace, Paul G was quite articulate about what was needed. In other words, he seemed to have a clear frame of his own. The question is whether it was advanced by this planning activity.

To conclude this section, it is ironic that in one of these days I saw an effort to plan in the guise of doing, while in the other I saw an effort to frame in the guise of planning. Yet both, in the final analysis, seemed to reduce to scheduling, so that the organization could get done what these managers themselves happened not to do these days: linking and dealing. Perhaps both Pauls needed to hug some trees.

**Beyond the Obvious “Thinking First” or “Doing First”** It may be helpful to explore what thinking, doing, and seeing, mean in the context of Greenpeace. In another article (Mintzberg and Westley, 2001), about decision making, we called these "thinking first", meaning conventional step-by-step decision making; "doing first", or acting in order to think, by experimenting to learn; and "seeing first", namely decision making as the search for insights.

Looking across these two days of observation, we heard about “doing first” in the campaigns themselves—the activist dimension of Greenpeace. It is interesting to note, however, that most of the “acting” associated with Greenpeace campaigns carries a double message: it concerns the taking of action, but also acting in its theatrical sense. Thus Paul H spoke of “staging of events”, “managing perceptions”, “creating images”, and Paul G of “getting a story out” and “getting the right press angle”. From the earliest photograph of the people in that dinghy framed against the aircraft carrier, one of Greenpeace’s core competences has been the staging of events that could be depicted in compelling photographs. In this way, “doing” for Greenpeace has always meant “acting” for the media, in order to capture the imagination and support of a broad public. In this sense, Greenpeace has used the media much as do effective politicians.

“Thinking first”, in contrast, permeated the discussions of organizational structure and strategy during Paul G’s day: for example, in the need to create a “work plan for the whole organization,” to carry on “organizational analysis,” to specify “what needs to be done.”

There is evidence that Paul G was not entirely comfortable with this “thinking first”. He described the orderly AGM meeting as “boring”, and he spoke positively of the “chaotic flowing relationship” he had with one member of his group, and of wanting to “knit people together” as opposed to being a “boxes” person. Most notably, he responded to the organigram with “What’s gone wrong is that we have had this nice neat system, instead of a looser, more flexible one.” Yet he spent most of this day “thinking first.”

And what of “seeing first”? There were few examples of this, in these two days at least (despite Greenpeace’s own orientation to “creating images” and “managing perception”): at times there could obviously have been more. For example, when Ulrich confronted Paul G: “You have to make your choices soon, not wait to February or March ... People trust you, but you have a year—then you could be in trouble... Don’t misread support for you as support for the plan.” Paul replied: “We have to have concrete accomplishments soon, pick the symbols, pick the targets we want to focus on.” Ulrich’s message was later reiterated by Steve, who said Paul needed to show “decisiveness” and that “this stuff [the planning process] worries me.” Ulrich and Steve’s comments could be interpreted as the activist confronting the planner, the tension between “doing first” and “thinking first”. But another interpretation is possible: these were calls for clarity, making things clearer, more transparent, meaning more visible. People, it was claimed, could not *see* where Paul G was going.

It could be that while Greenpeace had for years been pulled between a “thinking first” and a “doing first” approach (the systems people and the activists, as Paul G put it), what made that tension workable was the *vision* of Greenpeace—the clear sense of mission and direction, in other words, above all, of “seeing first.” Thus the tensions of “doing first” versus “thinking first” may not have been resolved by putting the emphasis on one or the other so much as fortifying the ground between them, by “seeing first.” Maybe that is why the senior managers readily accepted the idea of the organigram—a way to see the flows, the connection between the components.

**Beyond the Obvious “Politicking”** Greenpeace, as indicated on the organigram (but hidden in the organigram), sits squarely between reflection above and action below, one abstract and conceptual, more global in nature, the other tangible and specific, more local in nature. The organization’s success

would thus seem to depend on connecting them. Yet these two managers, at senior levels in the headquarters, seemed almost to be caught between the two. Maybe that was because of their location at headquarters, disconnected from the actions on the ground, as well as because of the nature of Greenpeace itself.

Why the intense politics here? First, doing at Greenpeace is intrinsically political. This is a lobbying and event staging organization: politics is its essence and the mass media its chief tool. It worries about the natural environment by playing the political environment, and if you play politics outside, politics is going to play with you inside, especially in a place with walls as permeable as those of Greenpeace. That “environment” is, after all, everywhere.

Just as the natural environment can get polluted, so too can the political environment. The people of Greenpeace were all deeply committed to its mission, without any doubt, but not necessarily to its management. There were few “subordinates” here. The organization attracted independently-minded people, who themselves were attracted to the high profile “acting” that became Greenpeace’s signature. That is why so many of them quit ordinary organizations to come here. As in most “voluntary” organizations, however, because people are ideologically committed as well as modestly paid, they can hardly be controlled like employees of conventional organizations.

In fact, Greenpeace faced a delicate dilemma here. Acting requires these very kinds of people, but they have to be controlled and coordinated because for any one of them working under its banner can seriously damage the whole institution. One foolish act anywhere in the world and many of the donations could disappear overnight. Greenpeace dealt with this by restricting campaigning and acting (not fund-raising) to its full-time staff. This was easier to do, however, when the place was small. As it grew larger and more visible, and as environmental concerns shifted from local actions to global campaigns, controlling—of thoughts and people and actions—became that much more critical.

There seemed to be two kinds of Greenpeace people, the more sensitive types and the more angry types, the latter dogmatic, strident and explosive. Both appeared to share rather flexible, often impulsive lifestyles: they hardly seemed obsessed with security, at least compared with people from other, so-called “global” organizations. Most people seemed rather mobile, and many seemed to be unabashed lobbyists *within* the organization, no matter how the lines were drawn on the organigram. All of this weakened hierarchy significantly—the “boss” could not so easily hold over people that dreaded fear of being fired. Indeed, that people were instantly prepared to leave, or at least wished to give that impression, was articulated on a number of occasions in just these two days. (Presumably the angry ones stalk out, while the sensitive ones sulk out.) This, of course, hardly discouraged conflict, which seemed to permeate the organization.

Some of this conflict must certainly have been functional. Ulrich’s outburst and Steve’s support of it, sympathetically, in private, did not question Paul G’s intentions for Greenpeace so much as his slowness in realizing them. So perhaps the challenge was constructive, although apparently it came too late for him.

Nevertheless, there is a limit to the amount of conflict any organization can sustain. Everything in Greenpeace seemed to be up for grabs all the time, with people coming and going at a frequency that could have rendered the environment of Greenpeace itself unsustainable. The issues of a sustainable physical environment are highly complex: they demand thinking, doing, and seeing. So too does the sustainability of an institution that wishes to protect that environment.

## **Managing Exceptionally\***

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\* Published in similar form under this title in *Organizational Science* (12 6, November–December 2001: 759-771).

*Here we have two managers of Red Cross refugee camps in Tanzania whose activities concentrated on communicating and controlling, in order to hold a potentially chaotic situation in steady state, at least temporarily. While many other managers appear to be moving away from such conventional forms of managing—toward more linking instead of leading and convincing instead of controlling, etc.—these two managers seemed to go the other way precisely because their situation was so unconventionally risky. This story is entitled “Managing Exceptionally” for three reasons. First, it is about the classic view of management by exception. Second, it is about managing in exceptional circumstances. And third, most importantly, it is about exceptional people in an exceptional institution, dedicating themselves to making the world a better place.*

There are two Red Crosses. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies—more simply the IFRC, or the Federation—brings together about 175 national societies for purposes of development and disaster relief. The International Committee of the Red Cross—ICRC—is concerned with human rights, most famously concerning prisoners of war. Both are headquartered in Geneva, but while the latter is almost entirely Swiss, the former comprises staffers from all over the world.

This report is about two of them, who were sent as the Federation’s “delegates” to run refugee camps in Africa. In total, 700,000 people populated the six refugee camps in the area of N’gara, Tanzania in October of 1996, having escaped the chaos that was Rwanda and Burundi in the aftermath of slaughter of Tutsis by Hutus, followed by the former regaining power.

The Red Cross Federation played a role in these refugee activities from the beginning in 1993, setting up two other camps besides the two it continued to run: Benaco, with 175,000 Rwandans, and Lukole, with 29,000 Burundians. It also worked closely with the other NGOS, of which there had been as many as 150 on site, at this point numbering 15. Running a camp meant running a municipality and more including food distribution, sanitation, road construction and maintenance, housing, and health care.

The Red Cross Federation was at this point the world’s oldest and largest humanitarian aid organization, with a world-wide budget of \$20 billion and a full-time employment of 280,000, besides its 150 million volunteers, and including 250 people in its Geneva headquarters. On its disaster sites, members of the local Red Cross or Red Crescent societies often worked alongside Federation “delegates”: in N’gara, the Tanzanian Red Cross Society (TRCS) supplied local workers as well as one “counterpart” to be trained by each of the Federation’s delegates. The operation in October of 1996 under Abbas Gullet’s responsibility included 17 Federation delegates from eight different countries, including himself (a Kenyan) and Stephen Omollo (from Ireland, originally Africa), who managed the two camps directly, plus 516 full-time people from the TRCS and 1500 paid part-time workers from the camps themselves.

Delegates, on contract, who arrived on the Red Cross flights that came in twice a week, turned over rapidly. (At eleven months, Abbas was the longest-standing.) They lived in a “compound” that was pleasantly but modestly appointed: a small room for each delegate, lined up in motel-like fashion, with a common hot shower that had just replaced the use of buckets. (The Tanzanian Red Cross people lived in another compound nearby.) In a sense, this was what Goffman (1961) has called “a total institution”: the delegates lived, ate, socialized, and worked there (or nearby). The weather, at 1800 meters altitude, was pleasant, in a beautiful setting that belied the butchery that had recently taken place just across the nearby borders of both Rwanda and Burundi. On one particular day in April 1994,



250,000 people crossed from Rwanda, which Abbas thought to have been the largest cross-border movement of refugees anywhere ever to that time. The German Red Cross Society had water available for them in 18 hours.\*

The compound was fenced and guarded, but without firearms. To enforce the Red Cross's strict neutrality, signs were installed on all of its vehicles and compound gates that showed a machine gun with a red slash through it. But that did not always work: some months earlier, a band of drunk refugees and Tanzanians invaded the compound, held some of the delegates (including Stephen) at gunpoint, and shot up some doors and locks before they found some money and left.

One part of the compound contained the administrative area, where the offices (plus telecommunication equipment) were laid out in a quadrangle, with labels such as Radio Room, Security, Relief (which included Stephen's desk), Logistics, Transport, Health Department, and Head of Sub-Delegation (Abbas' office).

Abbas had spent most of his life in the Red Cross, including as a youth volunteer who made trips to Germany, Britain, and later Canada. He had been with the Federation for six years, including a recent stint at the Geneva headquarters. At that point, he was sent on our International Masters in Practicing Management (IMPM.org), and that is where we met. We became friends, and I was invited to visit N'gara. The idea of following Abbas for a day came up when I was there, during which came the idea to follow Stephen the next day. Later he too went on the IMPM. Each of their days is described before the two are interpreted together.

## **Abbas Gullet, Head of Sub-Delegation (N'gara, Tanzania, 8 October 1996)**

### **Description of the Day**

The day began with breakfast at 7:25, then a short walk to the office, where Abbas looked through the new "pactors" on his desk—printed correspondence, much like Telex. These concerned an invoice, a shipment of material, and a report to be sent. He then turned to his computer to prepare his weekly news report to the Desk Office in the Geneva headquarters. At 7:45, several people came in for the daily meeting of his key direct reports: Gier, a Norwegian in charge of Health, Georges, a Canadian in charge of Finance and Administration, Sasha, a Russian in Logistics, and Stephen on Relief.

They went around the table, with Sasha talking about the supply and demand of the SUV vehicles (a carefully guarded resource in N'gara), and Georges mentioning that the budget was completed. The discussion revolved mainly around Abbas, who had to explain many of the details ("Who to sign?", "Where does this form go?"): Gier and Georges were relatively new, while Sasha and Stephen were sitting in for their bosses, who were away.

When his turn came, Abbas briefed the others on a "camp management" workshop taking place in the Tanzanian compound, to share experiences among various East African Red Cross Societies. An American named Bill and a Mexican named Juan were also attending on behalf of the Federation. Abbas explained why he was reluctant to release his staff to attend for the three days, due to work pressures, and was also concerned that Sasha be careful about excessive demands on the vehicles. He gave staffing news, including replacements who had been approved. There was, however, no news yet about the replacements for himself, Stephen, and Frank (Stephen's boss, in Relief), whose assignments were coming to an end. Abbas also explained the "tougher stance" of the Tanzanian government concerning the four-kilometer ring it had recently placed around the camps. (The refugees were free to move about, for example to work the land assigned to them, trade in the local markets, and forage for cooking firewood, but now only within four kilometers, although how this was to be enforced was not clear.) Then Abbas turned to Stephen and said, "You just need to put your ear to the ground Stephen, and find out more about what the feelings are among the refugees."

The meeting ended at 8:13, and Abbas went back to work on his report for Geneva, with many people coming and going. That report was sent by 8:30 and then Abbas walked over to the much larger Tanzanian compound next door for the opening of the workshop. He formally welcomed the participants to the area and explained a bit of the recent history. After the huge

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\* For more information on the personal side of the compound and the camps, see "Depressing' is hardly the Word," on [www.mntzberg.org](http://www.mntzberg.org).

movement, things had settled down, but with renewed tensions in Burundi, the Red Cross was ready to act quickly again. After about ten minutes, Abbas turned the meeting over to Juan, and with a "We go back to business" to me, headed out.

Business was in Benaco. Abbas's vehicle was waiting outside the hall, and we arrived in the food distribution area at 9:55. Refugee porters were milling about, awaiting the arrival of UNWFP (United Nations World Food Program) trucks, which were apparently late. Abbas went into the "stores"—large plastic sheet buildings, which were almost empty (except for "balances")—where he inquired about the "rat problem" ("still a problem," he was told) and other details.

As the trucks arrived, the food, in 50 kg sacks, was carried directly to the "chutes"—flat-covered areas, nineteen in all. Through them the food passed for weekly distribution to "team leaders", who in turn distributed it to their "family group" waiting behind a fence. But today Abbas found the system *too* efficient, because the food was supposed to go into the stores first, for purposes of counting and control. So he raised a number of questions about this with the person who managed the food distribution, also about the fact that the staff was not wearing Red Cross bibs. They had to be clearly identified, Abbas insisted, and he encouraged her to have regular meetings with her staff.

Abbas also chatted with a woman from the UNWFP about the food distribution and problems they were having with a contractor. At her request ("Maybe they will listen to you"), he promised to speak to the UN people. We then walked past one of the chutes and through a gate, where the many people milling about, awaiting the food, opened up a space for us to pass, into an open area of the camp. (This was obviously the most animated area of the camp, followed perhaps by the market area, where fresh food, grown or bartered beyond the gates, was sold alongside a surprising array of other things.)

After walking around, we returned to the car, and drove to another area of the camp, where Abbas pointed out the living arrangements: rows of small houses, off a large central road, with latrines on one side and cooking facilities (two to a household) on the other. Earlier, seen from a distance, this camp had looked vast, but close up, away from the food distribution gates, it did not seem crowded. We left the camp, and after a brief visit to the water treatment facility that served the compound, we returned to Abbas' office at 12:30.

There was the usual chatting with people going past, and a look at a few pactors that had arrived, one from someone needing a new passport, another concerning hotel bookings, a third about the possibility of getting some oil tanks from a departing Italian company—if Abbas moved fast. Sasha happened to drop by just then, and Abbas, charged him with checking out the tanks.

A succession of people and pactors followed (about flight bookings, budgets, pay rates, and a broken machine part), and then Abbas joined several people at lunch, at about 1:00. Hans, from the workshops, asked Abbas if he could help him secure some needed generators, and Bill went over the plans for the workshop, seeking Abbas's approval on the participation of his people. "It's okay with me. Just tell them to talk slowly, clearly." At 1:30, he took a break to rest, and returned to the office at 2:00.

Gier came in then with "a number of small concerns and a few big ones": do refugees working for the Red Cross have five-day weeks; are there evacuation plans for Benaco; did Abbas plan a salary increase for "the professor" (a Rwandan refugee academic who was working on software for health monitoring); what about drainage and the installation of night lighting for the "Gulf Hotel"—their nickname for the hospital. Abbas explained various things carefully to Gier, who had only been there one month. He took a stand on a few of these issues, especially concerning expenditures, but mostly sought Gier's opinion and encouraged him to decide.

The biggest issue concerned the matron (head nurse) at the hospital. She had upset the Tanzanian staff for a variety of reasons, and they wanted her out. Gier also reported an apparent lack of Tanzanian "counterpart-ism" in the hospital. He offered a short list of candidates, none of whom was the assistant matron, whom Gier said was also apparently on his way out. Abbas told Gier what he knew of the situation (which seemed to be considerable), including the fact that it had been a problem since he had arrived eleven months earlier. He suggested that since the matron had been in her job for eighteen months, they could simply view this as a normal rotation, and she could keep her job as a nurse.

At 2:34, with "Okay, now for my side," Abbas raised several other issues. There was the question of the production of concrete slabs for the latrines in Benaco, which had fallen behind plan, and they discussed how to increase the rate. Gier commented on the state of sanitation in the camp, which he called remarkable: "There is a lack of smell, a lack of flies, a lack of garbage all over." Diarrhea was not a major problem, but more water would have helped, at which point Abbas discussed difficulties in dealing with the United Nations people. They noted an increase in skin disease in one camp, and Abbas wondered if soap was being pilfered and sold.

Then they came back to the Gulf Hotel, touching briefly on medical staffing, including whether or not to hire an anaesthetist. (Nurses were doing that job.) They discussed costs, especially the large expenditures on drugs and the possibilities of pilferage, and a problem with a driver for the hospital who apparently tried to bribe a security officer. Abbas told Gier that the wrong person had been fired in this circumstance, and the decision had to be reversed. Gier left at 3:18

Sasha was waiting outside and came in, concerning several issues: vehicles arriving from Doctors Without Borders Holland, stocking fuel where it could not be pilfered, and "not so good news—an engine [on one of the vehicles] went kaput." Abbas asked him to check if the engine had been overhauled. Sasha went out at 3:42 to find a memo, and Abbas, seeing some

people walk by carrying pillows, went out quickly and spoke to them. He was concerned about pilfering, but it turned out they were acting at the request of the workshop people. Then Sasha reappeared with the memo, about a request for vehicles for the workshops, to which Abbas replied "no way". He also explained how to charge the fuel costs to the workshop. Sasha left at 3:47.

From here, with no more scheduled meetings for the day, pactors and other messages were reviewed, (concerning chlorine tablets not available in the desired size, flight arrangements for outgoing personnel, a visit from a Bonn desk officer, a note from the TRCS office in Dar-es-Salaam advising of a physician who would be flying in for a job interview, etc.) At 4:17, Gier walked by and Abbas asked him about the physician's visit: had Gier or anyone else proposed this? The writer of that message had apparently not even checked with Abbas's direct report in Dar-es-Salaam. "I will be nasty with him hope I won't get into trouble!"

At 4:25, Abbas began work on a "mid-term" written evaluation of a delegate, but with the comings and goings picking up in frequency as well as intensity, he was not going to finish this today. Felicitus, who ran the Gulf Hospital on behalf of the German Red Cross, dropped off a memo stapled closed, which Abbas, luckily, happened to open and read immediately. He discovered that a new Assistant Matron, as well as a new Matron, was to be selected. He called her and Gier back into his office.

"Why do you want to move the Assistant Matron out of the hospital?", he asked Felicitus. Gier, unaware of what Felicitus had written, replied "No, there's no rush on this one", but Felicitus said, "He will not be accepted as the Matron." Apparently there was some sort of misunderstanding between them. Then Abbas, in his most forceful tone of the day, said he knew the man, also named Stephen, well, that he was an excellent person, and that "I will protect him as long as I am here." Felicitus left, looking dejected, and so Abbas added, "Unless you have already told him." Felicitus was back in a flash. "I have." She had apparently misinterpreted something Gier said earlier as meaning she should remove him.

Abbas offered to speak to the Assistant Matron to help resolve the confusion, and Felicitus, obviously relieved (and stating that she, too, appreciated his talent), said, "I wish you could do that." So it was agreed that Abbas would try to work it all out the next day. Indeed, they ended up agreeing that Stephen would be promoted to "Acting Matron"! "Why not Matron?", Felicitus asked, and Abbas said, "One step at a time." He wanted to speak to his own counterpart (who was away) first.

Then Abbas, commenting on how he liked this quiet time at the end of the day to get some work done, turned back to his computer and the mid-term report. He hit barely one key when the telephone rang from Nairobi, about flight arrangements. That call lasted 20 minutes, after which Sasha poked his head in to report on the trucks that had been offered. They started to discuss this when, at 6:00, Felicitus put her head in with: "Stephen is here!"

So Abbas sat down at his table with Stephen, the Assistant Matron, who looked concerned. "How is your hospital these days?" Abbas asked, and they discussed a small outbreak of meningitis, among other things. "Is there any special reason to say you are exhausted, overworked?" Abbas asked, and Stephen said no. He did express concern about Felicitus's upcoming departure and the absence of a replacement, and Abbas urged "you guys" to be more proactive. He continued to probe on administrative arrangements at the hospital, and the role of the Tanzanian staff.

Then Abbas turned to the issue at hand, to clarify Stephen's letter of appointment and understand exactly what Felicitus had told him. Stephen said that he understood he would no longer be Assistant Matron, but not that he would lose his job; he hoped to go back to his old nursing position. Meanwhile, Stephen said he had helped Felicitus draw up the list of names for possible new Matron and Deputy Matron. They reviewed the names. When Abbas asked about the problem of management in the hospital, Stephen looked very uncomfortable, Abbas proposed they talk in Swahili (the common language of both Kenya and Tanzania, followed by English). Even so, as Abbas reported to me afterward, Stephen was hesitant to discuss his concerns about the Matron, although later (back in English), Abbas urged him to be more forthcoming with Felicitus on these issues. "If you're not giving her the information, what's she to do?"

After clarifying what Stephen had been told, and who else had been told what, Abbas said: "I'll suggest that you keep your old post as Deputy Matron and prepare for you to act as Matron... But you need to be up front with Felicitus. We know stuff is going on at the hospital—the driver who tried to bribe someone is being fired." Stephen said he understood. Abbas asked, "What else do you have?" With an "Actually nothing", a very relieved Stephen left a very relieved Abbas at 6:44, whose day, aside from an evening party for one of the departing delegates, then ended.

## **Stephen Omollo, Red Cross Camps Manager (Benaco and Lukole, N'gara, Tanzania 9 October 1996)**

The next day began almost like the last, but from a different perspective. At 7:45, Stephen joined the daily co-ordinators meeting in Abbas' office. They went around, as the day before, Stephen following Gier, and reporting that six accused bandits had been arrested at one of the camps and three more were still at large. He asked Gier about an illness in the hospital, and Abbas asked Stephen about the source of some meningitis in the camp. Stephen also reported about the state of food distribution in the camps, and about a meeting of refugee team leaders called to express concerns they had about the camp's internal management.

At this point, Abbas complained about the bib situation of the day before. "I hope you'll give instructions this morning that everybody wear identification." He also expressed concern about the food going straight into the chutes, and implored Stephen to "get answers" on this. The go-around continued, to Sasha, Georges, and Abbas, before the meeting ended, at 8:06.

Stephen then went into the nearby office, called "Relief," where he met his own staff, all from the Tanzanian Red Cross Society, including his two counterparts, Geoffrey, in charge of Benaco, and Kibari, in charge of Lukole. This was also a daily meeting, corresponding to and following that of Abbas.

They discussed a problem of road maintenance (including speed bumps that were too high), digging pits for the latrines, the chute problem, and the meningitis cases at Benaco, among other things, with Stephen doing some briefing but mostly the two camp managers talking. The man in charge of construction joined the meeting and raised a problem with the plastic sheeting, also commenting that "The situation in the construction unit is pretty bad...We have no materials." Stephen said he would take up both issues with others, and then raised the problem of the bibs, telling them of Abbas' concern. They discussed how many bibs they had and how many they would need to order. The availability of vehicles was the next issue, which Stephen believed required "a polite discussion with Sasha."

The meeting ended at 8:52, and a few minutes later the group of them marched across the quadrangle into the Logistics office to discuss the need to order bibs, one of them commenting at one point about "Logistics always promising." At this point there were eight people in this small office, all in on the conversation, while the communications radio was going incessantly. Then Stephen, Geoffrey, and Kibari headed to the Transport office to meet Sasha. They explained their vehicle problem while he looked at his screen to see what was available. Sasha concluded that "without specification, I will not sign", and they left.

Discussion continued in the Relief Office, with people coming and going, while Stephen took any spare time to fill in some administrative forms at his desk. He had commented earlier that normally he would have been in the camps by this hour, but a special ten o'clock meeting was keeping him here today.

At 9:52, Abbas put his head in, and they went to his office. Their discussion concerned the "management style" at Lukole, and some concerns about it being "very tough on" the refugees. Stephen told Abbas of a meeting he called on Saturday of the refugee community leaders, to sort the problems out, and of an official complaint lodged with the UNWFP. "Why didn't they write to you?" Abbas wanted to know, and Stephen said that when the refugees are not happy with the Red Cross, they write to the UN and vice versa. Abbas was concerned: he wanted to see a copy of the letter and to ensure that Stephen was pursuing the matter vigorously.

Abbas wondered why Geoffrey was still in the compound and not at the camp, and Stephen explained the problem of transport. "It's 10 o'clock", Abbas shot back. "He's meant to be a camp manager; he's sitting there, the distribution is going on; I need feedback immediately. I want the guy out of here as soon as possible." Abbas also felt that Geoffrey should have been tougher about keeping his vehicle, and he expressed concerns about hiring procedures and some transfers that had taken place: "Don't be taken for a ride." They also discussed plans for Stephen's next assignment, as his posting, too, was coming to an end.

At 10:08, Stephen headed back to the Relief (!) office. A few minutes later, his appointment appeared, a fellow named Ben from ECHO, the European Community Humanitarian Assistance Office, one of the main funders of personnel for the Red Cross operation here. Ben had been in this area for two weeks, to audit the operation and find out its needs for the coming year. They headed over to the conference room, and were later joined by Geoffrey.

The meeting took place in a tone entirely different from that of the earlier part of the morning. Ben's knowledge of the operations, the detail of many of his questions, and the conscientiousness with which he pursued his responsibility were impressive indeed. The same could be said of Stephen's responses, which seemed to be highly informed, articulate, and straightforward. This remarkable conversation lasted an hour and a half.

Ben opened with: "What kind of assets do you need to do food distribution in the camp? I have to tell Brussels how effective the NGOs are at that." Stephen explained his job and the co-ordinating activities, and they went more and more deeply into every aspect of the operation, including the precise number of people and what each did, with Steven, for example, explaining each step in the food distribution chain. "So, two days of preparations for four days of distribution?" Ben asked at one point.

"Food monitoring" came in for some discussion, after Steven said that 98% of the householders got what they were supposed to get. Ben was suspicious. He wanted to know, "What actually ends up in their stomachs?" as opposed to up for barter or sale, or perhaps "taxed" away. "That, for me, is 'food basket monitoring'," he said. They discussed biweekly instead of weekly distribution, and construction—how permanent should buildings be, mud bricks or cement bricks, etc. Then Ben launched into the "soft sector," such as the distribution of management duties. Stephen said that the Red Cross tended to end up in the co-ordinating role among the different NGOs in the area. With a "Gentlemen, that's it. Thank you very much for your time," Ben left at 11:41. Stephen and Geoffrey then headed off to Benaco in one of the Red Cross vehicles.

Lunch was at Le Petit Mathieu, a restaurant established in the middle of the Benaco camp by an enterprising refugee with tables set up on the red earth and plastic sheeting overhead. At 12:55 we headed to the food distribution area. The activity had finished in the morning, as it was supposed to, although a number of the refugee porters were still hanging around. Stephen chatted briefly with the warehouse manager, and then left at 1:10. No problems, he reported to me in the car: "I used to work

here from eight until six, when there were all kinds of problems, so if anything was wrong, they would be telling me." In other words, he felt that just his presence was enough to flag difficulties: the refugee workers knew him well enough to let him know.

We arrived at Lukole at 1:33, a "settlement camp," Steven explained: older, more established, Burundian, and much more spread out. With each family allotted a half acre around its home, usually constructed of red mud bricks, this hardly felt urban, let alone like a refugee camp. Twenty thousand refugees lived in the very spacious area, with sections designated for the market, recreation, schooling, the church, and the dispensary.

We went into the central camp office, a small building with a couple of rooms. Here, Stephen explained his role to me: coordinating the work of the different agencies and dealing with the various camp activities, such as water, food distribution, sanitation, and the health facilities. On the wall was posted a big sheet called "Lukole Camp Refugee Leadership", which showed a hierarchy of roles. Stephen explained that meetings took place fortnightly for about three hours, which included the Red Cross managers, the refugee camp leaders, and other NGO people. We then headed out on foot at 1:53.

Normally, when he arrived earlier, Steven said he would have visited the other NGOs to see if there were any problems. Today he would have a look at various installations, including the reconstruction of a fence that had been blown over in a recent windstorm.

Steven was utterly transformed here. He had loosened up during the late morning meeting, and here, in the camp, he seemed to be totally in his element. As he walked around, he greeted absolutely everyone he passed, smiling and laughing, some in front of their homes, others on the roads or in the fields, the men repairing that fence, and people in the public places—the market and the dispensary. No few came up to shake his hand and chat, most of whom he seemed to know well. The conversations took place in Swahili and sometimes in English, as well as in what Stephen had learned of the Burundian language.

"My job is to assist and train the local staff", he said "But there is a need to tour on foot. You need to laugh with the people." Perhaps this lay at the root of the concern about his counterpart's "management style," he suggested.

We arrived back at the central camp office at 2:55, where Steven met François, Chairman of the Camp Refugee Committee. They talked at length, in Swahili, mostly with Steven listening, taking notes, and posing the occasional question. François had a list of issues to which he referred. The meeting ended at 3:25, and Stephen explained to me on the way back to the compound that the meeting was about that "management style," specifically the bad relations between the refugee committee and the camp manager. Stephen characterized the conversation as "very frank": "I wanted François's views before Saturday's meeting so that I don't float in it."

We were back at the compound at 3:46, and went into the Relief office where it was back to the routine of people dropping in followed by paperwork. Steven had to go over staffing arrangements for the next year, to draw up a plan to be submitted immediately. So with his need to concentrate on that, he suggested my day of observation end there; he intended to carry on for 45 minutes on the report.

## Interpretation of the Two Days

This begins with a review of the managerial roles before turning to some of the particular issues of managing in this context.

It was noted in Chapter 3 of the book that all managers generally perform all the roles of the model, and these two days were no exception. But every managerial job has its own circumstances and needs that drive the incumbent to favour some roles over others. Let us consider each.

**Communicating** Just as *communicating* is shown in the model all around the manager, so Abbas and Stephen could be seen gathering information all around their world and likewise sharing it widely—with their own staff and various others. In Abbas's case, communicating has to be described as central, perhaps dominant. He was most decidedly the "nerve center" of this operation, with information flowing around him relentlessly. Especially important was his dissemination of information to train and develop his staff, both delegates and counterparts (which connects communicating to leading).

Abbas clearly saw his capability to manage, and so to keep things on course, as utterly dependent on the extent and currency of his information about the operations. So he dug constantly for every scrap of information he could get. And then, in his response to almost every situation that arose over the course of this day, he exhibited a rather remarkable command of the detail.

But Abbas and Stephen received their information on these days differently, Abbas, in a sense, more verbally, in the compound, Stephen, more visually, and viscerally, in the camps. Hard information was clearly present—Abbas could cite all kinds of statistics, as did Stephen in his meeting with Ben, the ECHO representative—but soft information, about people, events, and operations, appeared to be more important. The grapevine was especially active here, although, because of language and cultural differences, it was not always accurate (as was most evident in the matron issue).

It was delightful to watch Stephen roam through Lukole, picking up information so easily and enthusiastically. Particularly intriguing was his comment about there being no problems in the food distribution area because no one came up to him. This could be called *surveillance management*, and it took place, not only by "walking around" (Peters and Waterman, 1982), but also by just "being there".

**Controlling (and Convincing)** The classic view of management was perhaps first conceived in the French mines of the nineteenth century, where Henry Fayol, as manager, formed his ideas before publishing his famous book of 1916. But it was in the conventional manufacturing of products such as automobiles that the concept really flourished. Increasingly, however, Fayol's notions of planning, organizing, co-ordinating, commanding, and controlling have been displaced in the literature by ones such as crafting, linking, negotiating, and facilitating. Clearly both sets of behaviors were evident in this Red Cross delegation. Yet, of all the managers observed, none reflected the classic side better than these here, especially Abbas. Henri Fayol's ideas remain alive in the refugee camps of N'gara! And well too!

To begin, the Red Cross did not lack for systems, procedures, rules, and regulations, some imposed by (or for) the donor agencies. All organizations, of course, have these, but the Red Cross appeared to have them in abundance. And hierarchy, that ultimate manifestation of control, was also very much in evidence here, from frequent comments about who was supposed to communicate with whom to that chart on the wall in Lukole showing the levels of "Camp Refugee Leadership."

This control was also reflected in some of the support functions that sat close to these managers, Finance and Administration most obviously, but not only. If Georges policed the expenditures, then Sasha policed the vehicles, as noted a much contested resource.

The use of directives, another manifestation of the controlling role, was also very much in evidence. Clearly on a number of occasions, Abbas was not shy about stating his wishes, or about ensuring that his people pursued them, for one particular reason beyond the obvious concerns about the camps themselves. Much of the staff was inexperienced, either new to management or new to managerial posts in N'gara. Abbas, in contrast, was highly experienced, in Red Cross procedures in general and camp management in particular. Plus, at eleven months, he was one of the oldtimers of N'gara. Training was therefore important, and he seemed to spend a great deal of time on it. But the work had to be done too, and often that meant directing people to do it.

The controlling role was less evident in Stephen's day (except on the receiving end, from Abbas). Perhaps this was just the nature of that particular day, perhaps it reflected his shorter tenure in the job. Or else controlling might have been less important here, one notch lower in the hierarchy. (Recall that the big problem in Lukole camp was a counterpart management style perceived to be excessively controlling.) But this might also have been a reflection of Stephen's less directive style, as he worked with his own people as colleagues and was more at ease in lateral meetings, as with Ben, and in his walk through the camp. Steven was probably happier to be convincing than controlling, which may have been better suited to managing the camps themselves, as compared with Abbas's need to hold the whole delegation together. Not that convincing was absent from Abbas's day, especially in his dealings with the health professionals, his counterparts in the Tanzanian Red Cross, and refugees in the camps (whom the Red Cross called

“beneficiaries.”) Here and elsewhere, both Stephen and Abbas had to walk a rather delicate line between controlling and convincing.

**Leading** Managing at the people level—leading internally and linking externally—could be seen on both days, although not nearly to the same degree as the information roles.

*Leading* appeared in Abbas' activities in three respects. The most significant was training and development. At a meeting I attended in Europe a few weeks after this experience, to discuss management development, several representatives of large corporations described their rather elaborate portfolios of training programs. A representative of the Red Cross Federation then described its activities as rather sparse in comparison. I suggested that if N’gara was any indication, the Red Cross may well have been investing far more in management development than almost any other organization. It just took a different form.

Abbas seemed to be devoting enormous amounts of time to coaching, training, mentoring, and developing, plus reviewing, interviewing, staffing, and posting, thanks to the frequency of people moving in and out of his delegation. Certainly the chain of Red Cross command, from Geneva through Dar-es-Salaam to N’gara, appeared to be strong, down through which passed a great deal of established procedures, packaged in a strong culture. That would seem to be a major strength of the Red Cross. But all of this had to be delivered by people on the ground, who needed much more than these formalities could provide, certainly given the turnover. So thanks significantly to that training, their success was remarkable, especially in the rather steady state of the operations amidst the unsteady state of the staff.

Anyone who came to this operation with no idea of what to expect (such as me) had to leave not only impressed but also inspired. But the price, in the enormous amount of effort invested in training, and problems encountered before its completion, was high.

A second aspect of leadership is culture building, or at least culture diffusion. Abbas, especially, was the carrier of the Red Cross culture in N’gara, both as head of delegation and as the person most steeped in that culture. This too was important, especially for delegates new to the Red Cross. Indeed, for those delegates with established expertise (such as Gier, in health services), it may have been far easier to get them to believe in the Red Cross culture than to understand the Red Cross rules.

Abbas was raised in the Red Cross, as a youth, and had been involved with it ever since. Part of his job in N’gara was to ensure that its culture was reflected in whatever happened, whether strict enforcement of the organization's neutrality or the simple fact of wearing its bibs. Symbols matter, especially one as renowned as the logo of the Red Cross.

A third aspect of leadership seeks to ensure that people work together harmoniously. Again, there was no shortage of this in Abbas' day, and, again, for much the same reason. Short tenures coupled with the mixture of cultures, nationalities, backgrounds, and languages, caused misunderstandings to abound. And so conflicts arose, many of which found their way to Abbas, who seemed particularly adept at diffusing them, even on this one day. Here was not the global manager, but the cross-cultural, worldly one, who knew his own culture well yet could switch so easily between people of different languages, origins, needs, and experiences.

That seemed true of Stephen too, although leadership activities were less in evidence during his day, perhaps because he spent so much of it with Ben and in the camps. Yet on his walk through the camp, Stephen was collecting information and looking for possible problems to be sure, but he was also showing the flag, so to speak. The importance of “being there”, as a representative of the organization, especially in Stephen's charismatic way, is not to be underestimated.

**Linking** *Linking* with outside stakeholders may not have dominated these two days, but its importance was evident. Stephen had his long meeting with Ben, and he connected laterally around the quadrangle and through the camps with all sorts of people, while Abbas had his contacts with various Tanzanian counterparts, NGO people, and other Red Cross officials in Dar-es-Salaam, Nairobi, and Geneva, by mail and by phone.

The various agencies in N'gara formed a complex web of relationships. Some supplied others (as the UNWFP shipped food to the Red Cross for distribution, and ECHO funded the Red Cross), while a number worked in parallel to serve the same beneficiaries in the camps (as in the provision of education). And then there were the many Tanzanian authorities present as well as the Tanzanian Red Cross Society, also the German Red Cross Society that provided health care and water. Somehow all of this had to get co-ordinated, and the Red Cross seemed to play a central role in this, albeit informal, which involved more linking than leading, more convincing than controlling, more dealing than doing.

Linking means not only to ensure that influence flows out, as when Abbas had to speak to the UNWFP about delays in the receipt of the food. It also means dealing with the influence that flows back in, as when the refugees complained about the camp manager, or when that TRCS official in Dar-es-Salaam announced the uninvited visit of the physician. Here Abbas especially had to walk a delicate line, blocking some of the external influence (extending the "compound" beyond its physical boundaries, so to speak) while letting some in. So he had to combine a certain toughness with a certain sensitivity, best illustrated in Abbas's handling of the matron issue.

Mention should be made here again of Abbas's ability to bridge not only between English and Swahili as well as Africans and Europeans, but also between a head office in a wealthy European city and the site office in an impoverished African township. In sociological terms (Gouldner, 1957-58), Abbas was a rare breed here: a cosmopolitan *and* a local. He was able to combine his formal knowledge of the institution with his tacit knowledge of the situation. How fortunate, then, that in the Red Cross, kids from Kenya or Canada can become more worldly without forgetting their roots, and so eventually take their place as bridges from a world of plenty to one of need.

**Doing and Dealing** Neither of these jobs seemed to be primarily about *doing* or *dealing*. Yet both roles were in evidence these two days, for example when Abbas himself handled the problems of the matrons and the direct delivery of food to the chutes, and when Stephen worked on the complaint about camp management. Immediacy was crucial.

Another side of doing was revealed in a story Abbas told about an experience some months earlier, when a boat overturned on Lake Victoria, causing almost a thousand deaths. As soon as he heard the news, Abbas called the Tanzanian Red Cross Society office in Dar-es-Salaam. Realizing that they were unprepared, and being relatively close (many hours, nonetheless, over land), he took nine others, three delegates and six Tanzanians (including Stephen, the Assistant Matron, who was trained as a psychiatric nurse—that is how Abbas came to know him so well). They grabbed what supplies they could—body bags, stretchers, disinfectants, etc.—and headed there by road, arriving one day after the accident, the first NGO on site. They stayed two solid weeks, working very long hours, arranging for body recovery, setting up a morgue in the nearest stadium (to which 40,000 people came the first day), and dealing with the bereaved families.

So there was important doing here too. The Red Cross was in N'gara to deal with a crisis, and until steady state was achieved, its managers had to engage in a good deal of doing (more of which I would have seen at the start of this mission, and did hear about at the end of it, as reported in the postscript). But in steady state, much of the doing was replaced by communicating and controlling—in fact, to preempt more managerial doing.



It might be concluded then that the less “doing” done by these managers, the clearer the indication that things were running smoothly—and, therefore, that they were succeeding. That, of course, is why these managers spent so much effort getting themselves informed: to be able to catch problems early, before they exploded out of control, as could so easily happen in such circumstances. The apparent calm and order in N’gara only camouflaged tremendous forces below the surface.

Turning to *dealing*, we can conclude that despite their best efforts, these two managers had to be ready to engage in this role on a moment’s notice. Their jobs, like that of the whole federation, could thus be likened to a fire department: ready to move with well-defined, pre-arranged procedures, but never sure when or where.

To conclude this review of the management roles, we find the different ones to be rather balanced in importance, if not in actual attention. Communicating seemed to be of central concern in both jobs, although done differently, and controlling especially in Abbas's job. Leading was reflected especially in the training Abbas did, and linking was obviously critical to both jobs. On the action level, doing and dealing were also important, but represented as much by their absence as by their presence.

As management theory might suggest, Abbas managed more from his office than did Stephen, exhibited more of a top-down deductive style, and got his information more verbally. His job could be described as more cerebral—certainly he was much more comfortable with office procedure than Stephen—although there was certainly a mixture in both jobs of the formal with the informal, the analytical with the intuitive, and the cerebral with the insightful. Management, as always, but highlighted here in the refugee camps, may have its artistic side and may make some use of science, but it is ultimately a craft.

**Conventional Management in an Unconventional Setting.** Mass-production “machine bureaucracies” might be described as conventional organizations, and project-oriented “ad hocracies” as contemporary ones (Mintzberg, 1979, 1983). Conventional management belongs more in the first, in the form of controlling to maintain steady state, reinforced by so-called “management by exception,” a term seldom used these days. And contemporary management, concerned with teamwork, facilitating, networking, venturing, and so on, seems to belong more in the second. We certainly hear a lot about this now.

So here were two days of rather conventional managing, old-fashioned practices if you like, fully compatible with Fayol et al. Yet the context was not conventional at all, not in its place, not in its pressures, not in its purpose. This was a project for the Red Cross, a temporary intervention to stabilize a crisis by instituting the mass delivery of services. Abbas, Stephen, and the others had to turn a wilderness of multitudes of displaced people into a smoothly functioning city, and quickly. At this they succeeded brilliantly. How many cities of 175,000 get built and settle down in so little time?

Yet that remarkable steady state could only be temporary. As noted above, Benaco and Lukole were projects; indeed, Abbas and Stephen were “delegates” to a temporary “delegation”, namely, an ad hococracy, even if its purpose was to create a machine bureaucracy. So here we have conventional management practiced in a most unconventional setting.

Indeed, it could be argued that it was the very unconventional nature of the setting that made the management so conventional. Because N’gara could explode at any time, from the least, or least expected of events, maintaining the steady state had to become almost an obsession. Here were hundreds of thousands of displaced persons, having recently lived through (or engaged in) horrendous experiences, all of them literally walking distance from repatriation and possible annihilation. (In fact, at this very time, the camps on the other side of these two borders, in Zaire, were in turmoil—under attack by rebels. A hospital at one camp, very much like the Gulf Hospital in N’gara, had been infiltrated, and all of the patients as well as some of the Swedish nursing staff had been murdered.) So control, order, communication, and preparation for fast reaction became absolutely critical in this context of potential

instability. Because the structure had to be about standardization, management had to be highly responsive, and so itself non-standardized.

## Afterward

On a Sunday afternoon in November of 1996, a little over a month after these days of observation, the Tanzanian government announced that all the Rwandan refugees had to be repatriated. In ten days, the city of Benaco, with 175,000 people, no longer existed. No one was allowed into the camp except Red Cross officials, who found children, the sick, and elderly people left behind, as well as many dead bodies.

The refugees headed out of the camps, grabbing what they could carry, but went the other way, deeper into Tanzania, some as far as a hundred kilometers. The Tanzanian authorities gathered them up, and sent them home. The line-up at one point was reported to be sixty kilometers long.

Abbas, who was supposed to have finished his mandate, stayed on site to try to deal with the resulting chaos, personally providing first aid and water, and assisting the helpless. When I reached him toward the end of this period by satellite telephone, he was in a state of disbelief. "I'm a little bit tired", he said, only later admitting to being "physically and mentally worn out. I thought this would never happen", said the man who had seen just about everything. The camp that, weeks earlier, had been "thriving and full of life," was now "an empty ghost town."

## **The Myths and Music of Management\*** **Bramwell Tovey, Conductor of the Winnipeg Symphony** **(11 April 1996)**

*Addressing the metaphor of the managers as orchestra conductor by observing a real orchestra conductor reveals all kinds of myths of managing—about control, leadership, structure, power, and hierarchy, not to mention the metaphor itself. Beyond these myths, managers and their organizations may be able to make beautiful music together.*

The metaphor of manager as orchestra conductor has been a popular one. Here is how Peter Drucker used it: (

One analogy [for the manager] is the conductor of a symphony orchestra, through whose effort, vision and leadership, individual instrumental parts that are so much noise by themselves, become the living whole of music. But the conductor has the composer's score: he is only interpreter. The manager is both composer and conductor. (1954: 341-342).

Sune Carlson, who did the first major study of managerial work, of Swedish managing directors in business, came up with a rather different metaphor to describe what he saw:

Before we made the study, I always thought of a chief executive as the conductor of an orchestra, standing aloof on his platform. Now I am in some respects inclined to see him as the puppet in the puppet-show with hundreds of people pulling the strings and forcing him to act in one way or another. (1951: 52)

Finally, Leonard Sayles, who studies middle managers in America, came back to the orchestra conductor, but not as Drucker saw it:

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The manager is like a symphony orchestra conductor, endeavoring to maintain a melodious performance in which the contributions of the various instruments are coordinated and sequences, patterned and paced, while the orchestra members are having various personal difficulties, stage hands are moving music stands, alternating excessive heat and cold are creating audience and instrumental problems, and the sponsor of the concert is insisting on irrational changes in the program. (1964: 162)

Of course, the manager as conductor is not just a metaphor: conductors are managers too. So why not observe one, during Sayles' rehearsals as well as Drucker's performance, to explore, and maybe explode, the myth of the manager as orchestra conductor—the leader in complete control.

When I heard Bramwell Tovey during an interview on CBC radio, sounding very sensible and articulate, I wrote to ask if he would let me observe him for a day. He replied with enthusiasm (eight months later), and two years after that, the observation took place, followed by a public forum the next day that allowed the two of us to share our reflections on “The Music of Management,” followed by an evening concert.

I met Bramwell when he picked me up at the hotel for the day of observation. When I used the word “maestro,” he expressed his discomfort with the term, which he said in Europe was reserved for the most eminent conductors. He mentioned a book called “The Maestro Myth” (Lebrecht, 1991). Excerpts from its first two pages follow:

Every age invents heroes... literally mythical, in the sense that they are either insubstantial or wholly fictitious.... The “great conductor” is a mythical hero of this kind... [who] exists because mankind demands a visible leader or, at the very least, an identifiable figurehead. His musical *raison d'être* is altogether secondary to that function.

He plays no instrument, produces no noise, yet conveys an image of music making that is credible to let him take the rewards of applause away from those who actually created the sound....

Yet, when work has to be provided and a season organized, it is the players themselves who elect conductors and invent them. The myth begins with their mute submission. Orchestral musicians are a hardened lot who melt at the wave of a wizard's wand. They would say that Arthur Nikisch had merely to enter the room for an orchestra to sound better.... By some wordless impulse, an exceptional conductor could change the human chemistry in his orchestra and audience....

## Description of the Day

I was picked up, not by a myth (although maybe a maestro), but by a perfectly nice man in a perfectly ordinary car. We drove the five minutes to the concert hall, where Bramwell was greeted with a big smile from the parking lot attendant, reflecting the warmth he exuded throughout the day. We went into the administrative offices, which were empty and dark (although bustling a few minutes later), and down a corridor to a small windowless office at the end. “I don't actually work in this room,” Bramwell said, referring to his preferred office at home. The furniture was nondescript; indeed, a member of the orchestra's board was so bothered by the previous furnishings that he sent these desk and chairs instead.

Bramwell described his job as including the selection of the program, the choice of guest artists, the staffing of the orchestra and positioning of the players (within union constraints), and the rehearsing and conducting of the orchestra, as well as some fundraising, marketing, and public relations.

Conductors apparently vary in their propensity to engage in this latter, external work, but Bramwell was renowned for his enthusiasm in dealing with the public, especially in Winnipeg, a city he took to heart after his arrival there seven seasons earlier. (Sometimes he plays the piano informally at local events, which I saw him do this evening and the next day.)

The administrative and finance aspects of the orchestra, he explained, were handled by its Executive Director, Max Tapper, who co-managed the orchestra with Bramwell (officially titled Artistic Director). Their relationship, as Bramwell described it and as I saw it this day, seemed well-balanced and constructive.

Max looked in at 9:05, commented about “Prince Charles in town for dinner” later in the month, and they discussed arrangements for a band. Max left soon after, and Bramwell continued to discuss his job. “The hard part,” he said, “is the rehearsal process,” not the performance. I mentioned something I had read about musicians being trained as soloists only to find themselves subordinated to the demands of a large orchestra, and he added: “You have to subordinate yourself to the composer. Being a player is “just another kind of subordination.”

Leadership, clearly a tricky business for Bramwell, was very much on his mind in our discussions. He pointed out the qualifications of many of the players (trained at Juilliard, Curtis, with doctorates, etc.), and expressed his discomfort at having to be a leader amongst ostensible equals. “I think of myself as a soccer coach who plays,” referring to rehearsals as “the field of battle!” ... There are moments when I have to exert my authority in a fairly robust fashion... although it always puzzles me why I have to.” In contrast, “When I play the piano, I become more of an artisan: Then their support for me is more akin to their mutual support... I am more a part of things when I play the piano.” But “I get a different reaction when we play my stuff [his compositions]—I become the authority.” Perhaps most telling was how Bramwell summed up the whole issue of leadership: “We never talk about ‘the relationship’!”

At 9:30, two women came in to discuss an evening event—the St. Boniface Hospital Awards Dinner. José Carreras, the famous tenor, was to fly in to receive an award, and Bramwell was being asked for help in making the arrangements. They discussed the layout of the hall and then the playing of three national anthems, for which Bramwell volunteered to arrange a string quartet and a choir. (He hummed a few notes of “The Stars and Stripes Forever,” to which one of the women responded: “This is intimidating!”)

About the music to be played, Bramwell was full of ideas and suggestions: “We should do an Andrew Lloyd Webber song called ‘Friends for Life’; it would fit perfectly... I could do an arrangement for you,” and, on another point, “Oh, don’t have canned music. Use your string quartet.” After having gone through the whole sequence of events for the evening, Bramwell concluded with “Seems to me you’ve done everything just fine” and they laughed. “I’ll talk to Tracy, I’ll talk to Milly, I’ll do it over the weekend and I’ll call you on Monday.” They left at 9:47.

Kerry King, Bramwell’s Personal Assistant, came in. They arranged sandwiches for lunch, since there was only a brief time between rehearsals, and discussed some scheduling. Then it was off to the rehearsal, through the office now busy with people, a number whom greeted Bramwell. He introduced me to the Music Administrator and her assistant, “my left and right arms.” We passed by the stage into what Bramwell called “my room,” for changing, empty except for a couch and make-up table, plus a private bathroom. I retreated into the hall in front, taking my place in one of the 2,222 empty red velvet seats, while about seventy musicians chatted and tuned their instruments.

Bramwell arrived a few minutes later, greeting one person as he passed through. The tuning abated, except for some strings, and stopped as he mounted a high chair and took out his baton. “Good morning. I’d like to start with Hindemith,” he said rather curtly, unlike his manner off the stage. (The piece was “Mathis der Maler,” a symphony banned by the Nazis as subversive.)

The baton went up and seventy musicians instantly played as one. It was thrilling to see it all come together like that, so immediately—for a few seconds, at least: they were stopped just as quickly. And started and stopped again repeatedly. Anyone mesmerized with the power of management would have found his absolute control over the ensemble just as thrilling.

Bramwell conducted with great energy, and likewise performed with great affect, sounding out the notes—“ba ba,” “po po pa pa pam”—as he called for changes of emphasis and accent, etc. Occasionally someone commented, and after about fifteen minutes, he stepped down, chatted with some of the viola players and checked their scores before continuing. The rehearsing continued, with his own comments throughout, sometimes directed at particular sections, sometimes at the whole orchestra, such as “Just give a little more B double flat—a little more crescendo.” There were also occasional comments by the musicians and bits of discussion. On the whole, however, the conductor remained rather formal up there.

Bramwell had suggested that I get hold of some of the music ahead of time and listen to it, so that my ear would be attuned to it at the rehearsal. The Hindemith piece was one I played several times at home, liking it no less as I got more used to it. But here, as the music played out, and reached its climax in the empty hall, with the conductor standing up there, arms outstretched (but not theatrically), I was absolutely thrilled by it all—and not least by the beauty of Hindemith’s music!

At 11:20, Bramwell announced a break of 25 minutes, and Max, who must have been listening in the wings, walked in. They chatted about schedules and various people, and then Bramwell retreated to his room, where we talked some more.

He can’t socialize with the players at private parties, Bramwell said; there are just too many agendas. (He added that when he first took over the orchestra, at the request of the musicians, there had been hardly any personnel changes for years. He had to drop five players, which was obviously agonizing for him, and not easy, given the opposition of the powerful North American union, although its Winnipeg local supported his moves under the contract.

Comments during rehearsals have to be directed at sections, rarely at individuals, he told me. Indeed that was technically forbidden, in certain union contracts (not Winnipeg). But “Two or three times a year—if someone doesn’t get the overall message,” it happened. Conducting had changed significantly since the days of the great autocrats, Bramwell said. (It should be added that this job is not very old: about a century and a half. Before that, usually one member of the orchestra simply assumed the role of “time beater” [Rubin, 1974:45]. In Bramwell's view, that made for less harmony, although it provided other qualities. A symphony orchestra is obviously not a jazz quartet: with that many people, someone has to take the lead.)\*

After more chatting in the hall, Bramwell was back in the chair in precisely 25 minutes (the break time specified by union contract, as was the rehearsal time overall). He announced: “Stravinsky!” (The Fairy’s Kiss: Divertimento), and the rehearsing began again, more or less as before, but with fewer interruptions. (Bramwell said later that the beginning of the Hindemith piece is especially difficult.)

At one point something sounded awful. Everyone looked up, and Bramwell commented jokingly, as did someone else, and they continued. Later Bramwell said to the violinists in the back left, “A little more length on the top accent,” and shortly after that, the Concertmaster rose, turned around, and said, “You should not be able to hear anyone. I hear someone. It should be very soft and very fast.”

They broke at 12:30 sharp, with “We’ll be resuming this straight after lunch.” But there was no lunch for Bramwell. He chatted with the Concertmaster, and they were soon joined by Judith Forst, the opera soloist for the performances which were to take place the next two evenings. At 12:40, she and he went into another room, large and rather empty, except for a grand piano. He sat down and played while she rehearsed her two pieces, interspersed with discussion mostly about timing—pauses, pace, synchronization—so that Bramwell could conduct according to her preferences. They finished at 13:07 to Bramwell’s “Fantastic!” and her “It’s one of my favorite pieces!”, and chatted for a while about people and some issues in music before Bramwell went straight into the 1:30 rehearsal. Here the two vocal pieces were repeated with the whole orchestra, pretty much straight through, with the musicians expressing their appreciation after each song by stomping their feet.

Another break followed at 2:25, with Kerry meeting Bramwell briefly to ask about scheduling. His wife and son were waiting to meet him in his room, where lunch was finally eaten, at least in part. Back at 3:00, the orchestra rehearsing continued, with one comment, about a half hour later, that stood out as unique during the day. “Come on guys—you’re all asleep. You need to do this. It’s not good enough.” Later, Bramwell said that this made a huge difference. Otherwise there would have been need for a “contrived eruption! If I had to do this all the time, it would be intrusive.” Critical to all this was “gesture” and “covert leadership,” Bramwell explained. The fear of censure by the conductor is very powerful: “Instruments are extensions of their souls!”

At 3:59, with a “Thanks. See you tomorrow,” everyone was off. We headed back to his office, where Max dropped in to discuss various issues, including the party that evening, and at 4:30, the Toveys left for home, with me in tow, invited for tea.

There we had a chance to review his diary, to give me an idea of some of his other activities. These included, for example, seeing a player who was having difficulty with his contract; meeting someone who was to narrate “Peter and the Wolf”; auditioning a violinist whose teacher wanted advice; giving a speech about Winnipeg as a cultural center in the 21st Century; and spending seven hours listening to 27 different trombonists in order to hire one.

At 7 p.m., we headed for the house of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Kozminski, the most generous supporters of the orchestra, who were hosting “The Maestro’s Circle.” Perhaps fifty people attended. There the “maestro” socialized with the orchestra’s supporters, gave a short speech, and then entertained them at the piano while Judith Forst sang a light operatic piece.

## Interpretation of the Day

The conductor is no more than a magnifying mirror of the world in which he lives, *homo sapiens* writ large. As such, his development reveals more about the nature of twentieth-century society and morality than it does about twentieth-century music. (Lebrecht, 1991:5).

Perhaps “The “Music of Management” can be heard only when we get past its myths. At least, that was one of the messages to come out of the session Bramwell and I did by this title the following day.

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\*Fellini did a film called “Prova d’Orchestra” in which the musicians fight the conductor, create chaos, and finally yield to him when they realize they need him to make beautiful music.

So let me use this day of observation to question some of the myths of managing—about control, about leadership, about structure and power, about hierarchy, and, of course, about the manager as conductor.

**The Myth of Control** In the symphony orchestra conductor we have management captured perfectly in caricature. The great leader stands on the podium, with the subordinates neatly arranged all around, ready to respond to every command. The maestro raises the baton and they all react in perfect unison. Another motion and they all stop. Absolutely in charge—a manager’s dream. Yet all a perfect myth.

For one thing, as Bramwell was quick to point out, this is an organization of subordination, and that includes the conductor. To use Carlson’s metaphor, Hindemith and Stravinsky were pulling the strings. Even that greatest of maestro myths, Toscanini, was quoted as saying: “I am no genius. I have created nothing. I play the music of other men” (Lebrecht, 1991: Ch.4, p1). After all, they start with the composer’s score; the conductor started with a blank sheet of paper.

So Carlson may have had it more accurately than Drucker. But Sayles probably described it best. Bramwell thought so; indeed, he had a big laugh when I read the Sayles quote, because he had personally experienced all the problems Sayles listed. (For example, one of his rare outbursts occurred when a stage hand noisily moved music stands during a rehearsal.) He added that his comments during rehearsal this day were influenced by his knowledge of a major rift between two of the key players.

So what choices did Bramwell Tovey really have? Well, he chose the program, and he chose the way the pieces were played. But these were constrained by the music that exists and the degree to which it can be interpreted, as well as the sounds his audience was prepared to hear and his orchestra was able (and perhaps willing) to play. So the frame of this job can be seen as clear enough, with some moderate degrees of freedom.

In our model, *controlling* includes designing systems and structures, and directing choices, etc. There are systems galore in symphony orchestras, all meant to control the work. But these are systems of the profession, not of the conductor. Bramwell inherited them all, indeed had internalized them all. The same can be said about the structures, in fact, even more so (a point continued later): just look at how everyone sits, prearranged in rows, according to strict, imposed pecking orders, also how the players tune their instruments before rehearsal and stomp their feet after it; etc. All that ritual implies a very high degree of structure, yet none of it is determined by the “manager” on the podium. It all comes with the job.

As for “directing,” one of the oldest and most prominent words to describe managerial work, that seems to apply to the work of orchestra *director* hardly at all. In the management literature, directing means issuing directives, and as Bramwell made quite clear, that was highly circumscribed in his job. He hardly ran around this day giving orders, delegating tasks, authorizing decisions—all those traditional things managers are supposed to do.

Controlling is described in the model as being on the information level. This whole level seemed circumscribed in this job. To the extent that information processing appeared this day, it was more concerned with the harmony and rhythm of the right hemisphere of the human brain than with the words, let alone numbers, of the left. When Bramwell read on the job, it was scores, not budgets. Indeed, how could he have measured the things that most mattered in his job? In fact, why would he have to? Just by listening with a trained ear, the conductor knows immediately how well the orchestra is doing. We might, therefore, wonder how much of the music of conventional managing gets drowned out by the numbers.

Of course, there was a need to count here too—for example, the number of seats occupied in the hall. But Max did that, so that Bramwell could concentrate on the real music of this management.

**The Myth of Leadership** Does the image of the conductor on the podium really constitute the exercise of leadership? In our model, managers are described as being able to intervene on three levels—information, people, and action. I have just argued that the information level does not seem to be terribly significant here. Now I should like to argue likewise for leadership on the people level, or, perhaps better stated, that it is largely hidden behind the action level.

Watching those rehearsals, I saw a lot more action than affect. Bramwell was *doing*: rehearsals were the work of the organization, and he was managing them directly, like the projects that in a sense they were. So he was a “hands-on” project manager. He was managing for results, not leading for attitudes: about pace, pattern, tempo, sound—smoothing it, harmonizing it, perfecting it. (Bramwell wrote to me later, in response to these comments: “In the traditional sense, I do most of my *leading* during performance, when, by means of physical gesture, I completely control the orchestra’s timing—and timing is everything.” For him perhaps, but hardly for most other managers.) This, if you like, was orchestra *operating*, not orchestra leading or orchestra *doing*, not even orchestra *directing*.

Yet if we have to get part leading in the foreground, then perhaps we need to embrace leading in the background. Bramwell himself used the label “covert leadership” (which so appealed to the editors of the *Harvard Business Review* that they used it for the title of the article based on this report [Mintzberg, 1998]). Leadership certainly seemed to be perpetually on his mind: All that “doing” was influenced by all those affective concerns—a feud between players, their sensitivities, elements in the union contract, fear of censure in his role of first among equals, the instrument as the extension of the player’s soul, and so on. That “relationship” they never discussed was “a foundation on which everything is based,” to use Bramwell’s words. Perhaps, therefore, we need a greater appreciation in all managerial work of this kind of covert leadership—not leadership actions that can be seen *per se*, but leadership concerns as they infuse all the rest of managing (see Weick 1974: 147).

Leadership, as discussed the model, can happen on three levels: individual, concerning coaching and motivating, etc; group, concerning team building; and organization, concerning culture building. In most managerial work, these levels can easily be distinguished. Not here.

As Bramwell made clear, direct leadership acts on the individual level were largely precluded during rehearsals. This may have been true even beyond rehearsals, given the expertise, and often egos too, of the musicians. Indeed, after rehearsals, where was Bramwell to find the musicians to exercise leadership: they all dispersed.

At the *group* level, we find something most curious here: a team of seventy people. In most organizations, teams usually have about five to eight members. Beyond that, communication becomes difficult, and another team, with another manager, is usually formed. Here, with little need for words, they all quite literally formed a single “ensemble” (which in French means “together”). They all coordinated harmonically, not verbally.\*

Of course, there are “sections” within an orchestra, each with its own leader. But each is a player, not a manager. When the orchestra plays, or even rehearses, there is only one manager, and only one team. Mozart said about creating his symphonies that “the best of all is the hearing of it [in my head] all at once.” Here is an organization whose members sit together to be heard all at once. Where else can thousands of customers sit and see the whole product being produced before their eyes by the entire operating functions of the organization?! (Of course, there is a great deal of support work to be done behind the scenes. But that was the world of Max, not Bramwell or the musicians.)

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\*Research on the human brain (Ornstein, 1972) has indicated that while the seat of verbal activity is located in the left hemisphere of most right-handed people, that associated with harmony and melody as well as gesture tends to be found in the right hemisphere. So there may well be a fundamental physiological difference between getting seventy people to harmonize musically compared with coordinating verbally.

Finally, there is the level of culture building for the entire *organization*. What does this mean here? Seventy people come together for rehearsals and then disperse. Where is the culture built? Again, perhaps covertly: through the energy, attitude, and general behaviour of the conductor.

Complicating matters is that about half the time, symphony orchestras are not even led by their own conductors. An outsider comes in to perform this job—a so-called “guest conductor.” Imagine a “guest manager” coming into almost any other organization. How does that affect a culture?

Indeed, there is a key message in the fact that this works at all. For here, the work, the workers, their tools, almost everything, and therefore the manager too, are interchangeable, because they are so highly standardized. This obviously includes the music they play; in fact, it is *because of* the music they play, which is so clearly specified. How many professionals (as compared with factory workers, or clerks) receive specifications which are that clear? (One person I met on this trip told me about sometimes finding himself meeting the whole student orchestra he was to conduct for the first time at the performance.)

Guest conductors draw large audiences and lead perfectly reasonable concerts, sometimes even great ones. Does that mean they are overpaid? Or that they should really be recognized as media stars? Or is it true, as Lebrecht claimed, that the “exceptional conductor” can “change the human chemistry in his orchestra and audience”? If so, what might that tell us about leadership? (One of the players to Bramwell’s immediate left played with energy and motions that seemed to mirror his own. Whether or not he was actually imitating Bramwell, his behaviour led me to wonder about leadership as a form of cloning—the passing of a leader’s psychic energy to others.)

But another explanation, mentioned earlier, may be more plausible: the culture is built into the system. This was largely a culture of symphony orchestras, not that of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra—that is, a culture of the profession at large. So a new player can join days before a concert and still harmonize—socially as well as musically. And guest conductors can appear and look as if they are leading their own orchestras, because most of the chemistry is already there.

Of course, charismatic-type individuals can help the chemistry. But to what degree does this come from them, and to what degree from the recipients? Several centuries of established cultural development in orchestras should make leading them on the cultural level that much easier. The culture does not have to be created so much as enhanced. People come together knowing what to expect and how to work. Someone with a bit of charisma can thus leverage all this—as Lebrecht suggested, sometimes almost instantly. But bear in mind what range of performance we are considering here: not between a Lada and a Lexus so much as between one Lexus better turned than another.

**The Myth of Structure, and of Power** Zubin Mehta, when asked about the difficulties of conducting the Israeli Philharmonic, quipped: “I am the only Indian; they are the chiefs”

What kind of organization is this? What kind of an organization forces a Bramwell Tovey to be so reticent about exercising leadership? As we have seen in some of the other days, the answer is quite simple: *professional bureaucracy* (Mintzberg, 1979: Ch. 19). Physicians, for example, work in medical cultures that are remarkably similar across hospitals, rendering these people just as mobile as musicians. These are organizations structured around the work of highly trained experts who know what they have to do and so hardly require time study analysts, let alone managers, to tell them how to do it. And that, as we have seen throughout this report, changes just about everything to do with the management process.

There is a great deal of discussion these days about the management of “knowledge workers.” But little of it, unfortunately, distinguishes two fundamentally different kinds of knowledge work. There are experts who experiment and create (as in research laboratories, or advertising agencies), and so



whose work has to fluid and highly adaptive. As a result, they usually have to combine their different capabilities in small teams and task forces that rely on a great deal of informal communication—namely adhocracies, which consist of ever shifting projects (see Mintzberg, 1979: Ch. 21). Symphony orchestras hardly fit this model.

In the other kind of knowledge work, professionals apply rather standardized operating routines (such as a musical score, or the steps in a surgical operation). Their primary job, in other words, is to perfect some given procedure, not create a new one. (Imagine being offered a “creative surgeon”.) And that changes the form of the structure entirely. Hence, the label is “professional bureaucracy,” for work that is highly *skilled* on one hand, yet extremely stable and *programmed* on the other. (Compare this with *machine* bureaucracy, involving unskilled work that is stable and programmed, as in an automobile assembly line: [see Mintzberg, 1979: Ch. 18, also all of these structural forms in 1983 and 1989). Thanks to the extensive training of the players and the reliance of the composers’ scores, symphony orchestras fit this model rather well.

In the professional bureaucracy, the experts work largely on their own, free of the need to coordinate adaptively with their colleagues. (How perfectly fitting, then, the concertmaster’s comment at rehearsal that “You should not be able to hear anyone”.) A doctoral student of mine once sat through a five-hour open-heart operation during which the surgeon and anaesthetist did not talk to each other. They coordinated by virtue of the standardization of their skills, through their training. The coordination can thus happen almost automatically, by virtue of what they have learned to expect from each other. In the orchestra, therefore, we have a smoothly functioning team of seventy members. (Imagine if they had to *write* the music together.)

Of course, by the same token, the professionals require little direct supervision from their manager. Indeed, hospital physicians and university professors like to describe their structures as up-side-down, with themselves on the top, in charge, and the managers on the bottom, to serve them. This image is overdrawn, but hardly more so than the ubiquitous one of “top management.”

The seventy members of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra certainly played together. But they also played alone. Each owned his or her own instrument, and knew from the score when to play it. Bramwell’s comment about the instrument being the extension of the musician’s soul was not casual. The instrument not only identifies each player; it also isolates him or her from all the others—protects or buffers the person, making each a little island unto him or herself.

But all of these instruments have to play in perfect harmony too, and so the role of conductor has emerged, which is quite unlike management even in most other professional bureaucracies. As Bramwell commented, “timing is everything”. It is hardly so for most managers, but for him "everything." So right in the center Bramwell had to be, all the time, in the midst of the operations. Talk about micromanaging! (In all my years of teaching conventional courses in university, I cannot recall a dean ever coming into my classroom.)

The work of the symphony orchestra, to use Karl Weick's (1979) term, is “tightly coupled.” Indeed, it is about as tightly coupled as work can get: a single note off by a fraction of a second can spoil a whole concert. And this strengthens the hand of the conductor, moving the organization closer to another form that I labeled entrepreneurial, where the leader calls the shots. The conductor does this, but in the very limited way, thus rendering the symphony orchestra a hybrid of the professional bureaucracy and the entrepreneurial form—which, of course, causes many of its conflicts.

How could Bramwell remain true to his profession, namely music, while performing his job, namely management? There appeared to be little comfort for him in the tension between the two. Indeed he seemed inclined to escape, when possible, back to music, whether to play or to compose (both free of the need either to manage or to be managed).

So here, in the symphony orchestra, we have perhaps the most visible form of management imaginable—this seeming crescendo of managerial power, the great leader on the podium: and it is significantly an illusion. How many business executives who have felt glorified by Peter Drucker’s description above, would change places with a real conductor once they understand what the job is really like? Directing a business the way a great maestro directs an orchestra is thus an image best left on the pages of those business books.

**The Myth of Hierarchy** Bramwell Tovey is a doer, on the floor (or at least, just above it). As noted, he didn’t spend much time reading reports in some lofty office. (He took almost two years to give me feedback on this report.) He didn’t take his team off to some retreat to climb ropes so that they would magically come together. Indeed, he barely exercised overt leadership on the floor. All he did was ensure that they played beautiful music together. In that sense, like a foreman in a factory, or a head nurse on a hospital ward, he practiced “first line supervision.” He kept the operations humming.

Yet he could turn around (at the end of this day) and maintain close relationships with key outside stakeholders of the organization. The foreman on the factory floor by day became the chief executive networking at night. The whole hierarchy got compressed into this one job. So there was no obvious disconnect, as we saw in the NHS and elsewhere, between managing in and managing out.

In our model, the external work is identified by the roles of *communicating* with regard to information, *linking* with regard to people, and *dealing* with regard to action. Clearly all orchestra conductors have duties associated with all three. But the one that stood out this day was *linking*. There were obviously outsiders to be convinced and deals to be done, but mostly I saw networking and representing the orchestra in the community, to gain it legitimacy and support. For Bramwell, unlike Fabienne on the hospital ward (also a front-line supervisor), this seemed quite natural.

**The Myth of Conductor as Manager?** So: Is Bramwell Tovey really a manager? Does he even want to be? Will they let him be? The answer has to be “sure” to all of these questions.

Uncomfortable as he may have claimed having to lead such a group of talented people, Bramwell seemed to love it. After all, he still got to play often enough—and when he did, no-one was waving a baton at him. He got to conduct the musical pieces he liked best, at least much of the time, and he experienced the extraordinary joy in seeing it all come together at the wave of his hand, even if he realized that some composer was pulling the strings. How many managers get to experience that? (*That* is why they love the metaphor—even if they would hate the job.)

And not only did the musicians let him do this; they actually encouraged him (however reluctantly). After all, they needed him as much as he needed them. Bramwell said in his remarks the next day, on the “Music of Management”: “I don’t see my job as a manager. I look on it more as a lion tamer.” It was a good line, that got a good laugh, and it echoed the popular description of managing professionals as “herding cats.” But it hardly captured the image of seventy rather tame sheep sitting in neatly ordered rows ready to play together at the flick of his wand.

So, even if he may not have considered his job as being a manager (which I doubt), I certainly do. It just did not seem like your usual manager. Indeed, in comparison with the usual *New Yorker* cartoon of an executive sitting in a neat office issuing orders, orchestra conducting may seem like a rather quirky form of management.

But beware, all you conventional managers, because one day you may wake up to find that Bramwell Tovey, and not you, is what a good deal of contemporary managing is really all about. Then you will have to step down from your hierarchical podiums, get rid of your budgetary batons, and go down on the floor, where the real work of your organization takes place. For only there might you

appreciate the myths of the manager up there as well as that of the conductor down here. Then, perhaps, you and your organization will be able to make beautiful music together.