Concluding Panel

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Practice Research
“Leading for execution is not rocket science. It’s very straightforward stuff. The main requirement is that you as a leader have to be deeply passionately engaged in your organization and honest about its realities with others and yourself. This is true whether you’re running a whole company or your first profit center. Any business leader, at any company or any level needs to master the discipline of execution.” (Bossidy et al., 2002: 8)
Context

- Airline company in Europe
- Artistics organizations
- Automotive safety firm
- Biotech firm TMT meetings
- Brand development projects
- Consulting organizations
- Commercial marketing division
- European furniture logistic firm
- Evangelical church
- European insurance company
- Fast moving consumer goods firm
- Fighter pilots in Afghanistan
- Freight transportation firm
- French radio stations
- FTSE-100 firms

- Game developer firm
- Higher education institutions
- Hospitals in Brazil
- Hospitals in the U.S.
- Information and communications firm
- Infrastructure firm’s service roll-out
- Insurance company’s claims handling
- Local indigenous people
- Meat processing company
- Mining merger discourse
- Ministers’ political assistants
- Mobile operator
- Mountain climbing expedition
- Newspaper classifieds
- Non-executive directors
- World of Warcraft
At present, the approach resembles unfocused, albeit fashionable, consumption in which, despite the attractions of the individual pieces, the collection as a whole lacks thematic unity. Strategy is irremediably political; for this reason, far more attention needs to be paid to the politics of practice in an oeuvre somewhat more theoretically coherent yet no less entrepreneurial institutionally.”

"...the most important difference between our approach and the processual theorists. It concerns the way in which we see power to be productive of subjectivity. Managers and staff are not just passive victims of strategy discourse; through it they are constituted as subjects either in support of, or in resistance to, its plausibility." Knights and Morgan (1991: p. 269)
Process/Practices

Characteristic

Power dynamics
Discourse, Conflicts

Relationships

Structures

External actors
Process/Practices

Characteristic

Power dynamics
Discourse, Conflicts

Relationships

Structures

External actors

Agency
Identity
Individuality
Subjectivity
Process/Practices

Power dynamics
Discourse, Conflicts

Characteristic

Relationships

Structures

External actors

Agency
Identity
Individuality
Subjectivity

Emotions
Content

- There is less emphasis on strategy content that would go beyond the contextual setting.
- Is strategy content always irrelevant when focusing on strategy practices as "something that people do"?
- Can strategy content have implications for strategy practices beyond its political repercussions?
- Does strategy content matter in S-A-P?

Performance

- There is relatively little emphasis on performance implications of the strategy practices beyond their consequent organizational effects. Does performance matter then in S-A-P?
- Are intermediate performance variables enough? Is there a danger that our avoidance of the performance implications and instrumentality becomes a blind spot for S-A-P?
- This could help us address e.g. the questions relating to the appropriateness of practices in different contexts.
Looking forward
Processualists  Subjectivists  Structuralists  Instrumentalists
"Leading for execution is not rocket science. It’s very straightforward stuff. The main requirement is that you as a leader have to be deeply passionately engaged in your organization and honest about its realities with others and yourself. This is true whether you’re running a whole company or your first profit center. Any business leader, at any company or any level needs to master the discipline of execution.” (Bossidy et al., 2002: 8)"
Processualists

Instrumentalists

Subjectivists

Structuralists

S-A-P
Practice research may be interested in organizational performance, but strategy’s wider repercussions need analysis too. Strategy-as-Practice can problematize the performance issue at a more micro level as well. In a Goffmanesque sense, Strategy-as-Practice can appreciate the performance of strategy praxis as an achievement in itself. At stake here is the competence and credibility of individual practitioners in performing their roles, rather than some notion of organizational performance. Whittington (2007: pp. 1583)
Future Opportunities
1. Search for connections and relationships
2. Recognize embeddedness
3. Pursue irony
4. Problematize performance
5. Respect continuities

Whittington (2007: pp. 269)