The Networks Secrets of Change Agents

Battilana, J., & Casciaro, T. (2013). The network secrets of great change agents. *Harvard Business Review, 91*(7/8), 62-68.

Authors' Battilana and Casciaro of Harvard Business School and Rotman School of Management respectively focus on a topic that occupies most of my waking hours. As an Organizational Change Management consultant, I spend my days in organizations "which size, complexity, and tradition make it exceptionally difficult to achieve reform (Battilana & Casciaro, 2013, p. 1). Past the banal opening line, "Change is hard" I found this a very helpful reading (p. 1). I particularly appreciated their predictors of change agents' success which are, being central in the organization's informal network, their ability to bridging disconnected groups, and staying close to fence-sitters (p. 4). The last point in particular is personally one of my main tenets of leading change – I make it a point to identify and stay close to the fence-sitters as well as ensure we have a plan to win them over. I also liked the article's delineation between *divergent change*, one that violates deeply entrenched roles and nondivergent change, one which builds on rather than overturns existing norms and practice (p. 5). Overall this article highlights the necessity of being attune to the informal networks within an organization and provides practical methods to engage internal change agents.

Key Words: Change agent, divergent change, fence-sitters, informal networks, bridging and cohesive networks

Deconstructing Executive Presence

Beeson, J. (2012). Deconstructing executive presence. *Harvard Business Review, 90*(7/8), Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2012/08/de-constructing-executive-pres

While a brief reading, I appreciate any information that demystifies 'executive presence'. It is a term that is over-used, but poorly defined. To paraphrase Justice Potter Stewart – I cannot define it, but I know it when I see it. President Obama has it. Sheryl Sandberg has it. Jerome Griffith, the President of Lands' End, has it – as did my late husband. Any of them can (or could) walk into a room and make it known they are an executive and, if need be, 'take charge'. John Beeson outlines five characteristics that create executive presence, which include: Mature self-confidence, an ability to take control of difficult situations, make tough decisions, and hold their own with strong-willed people (me) on the executive team (usually not me). As I read the three executives' profiles, I actually assigned real names of people to each profile. Frank equaled Mike, Alicia mirrored Anne, and Lydia resembled Sonia. However, the question that remained with me was, as a woman, how do I remain unrushed, straight forward, and unflappable and still be acknowledged when I decide to interject? In any event, his conclusion offered great advice, "Find your voice as an executive: that is, identify your assets and leverage them to the hilt" (p. 4). John Beeson wrote the article – he is a management consultant who has also authored a book called, *The Unwritten Rules: The Six Skills You Need to Get Promoted the Executive Level* (Jossey-Bass).

Key Words: Executive presence, mature self-confidence, C-suite, leadership, leadership development, managing yourself

Grounding in Communication

Brennen, S. E. & Clark, H. H., (1991). Grounding in communication. In J. M. Levine, L. B. Resnick, & S. Teasley (Eds.), *Perspectives on Socially Shared Cognition* (pp. 127-149). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association Publications.

Candidly, I never considered grounding and common ground to be complex concepts, however I was proven wrong after reading chapter seven of Perspectives *Socially Shared Cognition,* which is edited by Lauren B. Resnick, John M. Levine and Stephanie D. Teasley. Chapter seven, "Grounding in Communication" written by Herbert H. Clark (of Stanford University) and Susan E. Brennan (of the State University of New York) introduce the notion that two people must coordinate both the content and process to accomplish even the simplest goal. In order to coordinate on content development, the actors must share mutual knowledge, mutual beliefs, and mutual assumptions, which is referred to as shared information or common ground (p. 127). The chapter discusses the concept of least collaborative effort and its flaws – mainly that to demonstrate minimal effort in communication, one must be free of time pressure, speak without error, and have an infinite understanding of your partner's knowledge. These three factors rarely occur, so we spend time grounding people in the content and the process. These are referred to as grounding costs of which there are eleven named in the chapter.

Key Words: Common ground, shared understanding, grounding, grounding costs, least collaborative effort, communication

Chapter Eight: Revealing Change

Cairo, A. (2016). Revealing Change. In T. Croom & C. Lane (Eds.), *The truthful art: Data, charts, and maps for communication*. (pp. 200-231) San Francisco, CA: New Riders.

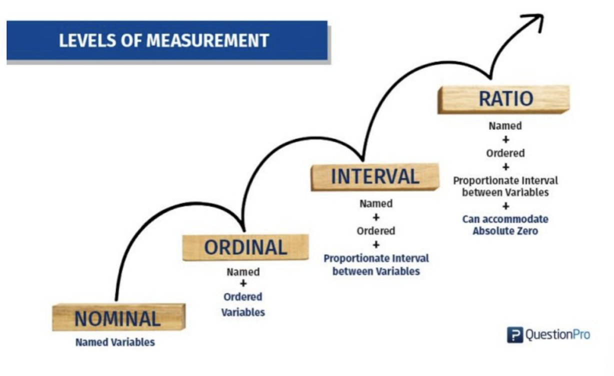
Albert Cairo is a renowned Information Designer and Professor at the University of Miami; this was my first introduction to him, but I learned his expertise after paging through his book and doing research about him. For the most part, this book is far removed from my personal knowledge or experience with data visualization, but he writes in an accessible manner and used plenty of pictures, which helps me. In Chapter Eight he discusses the use of a log transformation when depicting large numbers; such as billions, trillions, etc. He explains, "All logarithmic calculations start by deciding on a "base," which in visualization is commonly 10 but could be any other number" (p. 216). For example, in a log10 scale each increasing increment does not represent one, but a tenfold increase. This was my second, or third run at trying to understand this concept, but the examples he provides snapped on the lightbulb for me. He also suggests Google's online calculator for computing logs, especially because you are working with HUGE numbers. Basically, by using a logarithmic calculation you distill the data to tell a more digestible story when visualizing it. I'm nowhere close to using this in my daily work, but I was delighted I finally had my arms around the concept.

Key Words: Logarithmic calculations, data visualization, data points, transformation

Chapter One: Basic Data Types

Castello, M. (n.d.). Basic data types. In T. Chiasson & D. Gregory (Eds.), *Data + design: A simple introduction to preparing and visualizing information* (pp. 20-27). Available from http://orm-atlas2prod.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf/13a07b19e01a397d8855c0463d52f454.pdf

This was a rough read for me – as mentioned (or perhaps not) I am terrified of any kind of data. I have Dyscalculia, which is kind of the math equivalent of Dyslexia. Among the symptoms and signs are an inability to hold numbers in one's head, inverting numbers, struggling to understand basic math symbols (e.g., +, =, <, >, etc.), and spatial relationship issues. I was not diagnosed until my 40's, so I spent much of my life thinking I was missing a magic math gene, which I guess I was! In any event, I struggle in this area, so I avoid it, but my reckoning day finally arrived. This chapter explains the levels of measurement – nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratios. I thought I paced with it until page 14 when we were presented with a quiz. I could not make sense of it AND the answers were not in the book! I just needed a hint, so I googled levels of measurement and found this illustration, which helped me, but was still frustrated.



I realize avoiding things because I'm not good at them is an immature response, so I slogged through the reading knowing I needed to slow down and be patient with myself. Ultimately, overcoming the anxiety math, data, and Excel typically causes me was an important step in my learning.

Key Words: Levels of measurement, nominal, ordinal, interval, ratios, data types

How Pixar Fosters Collective Creativity

Catmull, E. (2008). How Pixar fosters collective creativity. Boston, MA: *Harvard Business School Publishing*. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2008/09/how-pixar-fosters-collective-creativity

Ed Catmull is the former president of Pixar and Walt Disney Animation Studios; and a noted computer scientist. This reading discussed community and the importance of constructing "an environment that nurtures trusting and respectful relationships and unleashes everyone's creativity" (Catmull, 2008, p. 66). I completely agree but it begged the question: how? Catmull answers the question by sharing a "what not to do" story and some hard lessons learned in the rescuing of *Toy Story 2.* It is here he reiterates the notion of "primacy of people over ideas" (p. 68). Meaning that an average team can wreck a good idea, but a great team can take an average idea and either fix it or throw it away and develop something that works. That concept resonated with me. I have always believed a good team can trump a mediocre idea given the right latitude. I had a chance to put this concept to the test in a work situation. We had a few folks working on a rather opportunistic partnership with another niche consulting firm – when I found out about it, I asked to be included because I suspected there were several things we had not thought through, which could negatively impact the firm long term. What came out of that discussion was a gathering of a "fresh set of eyes" to talk through the pros and cons of the partnership and discuss alternate approaches. Hence, the principle of "safety for everyone to offer ideas" came to life (p. 71). What was also interesting was the grouping of people – it was not our usual leadership team. There were a mix of roles and levels, which helped facilitate a more robust conversation. I have suggested that we continue this practice as we review new ideas, partnerships, and tools because it helps us become a better at operating as a productive team and works our collaboration muscles (so to speak), so we're better able to model the behavior for our clients.

Key Words: Collaboration, collective creativity, brain trust, culture, community, conversation

Crisis Management and Communications

Coombs, W. T. (2014). Crisis management and communications. *Institute for Public Relations*, *30*.

This article is an updated version of *Crisis Management and Communication,* which delineates between an operational and reputational crisis and shares key concepts in working with both types. Timothy Coombs, a respected scholar in crisis management, breaks crisis management into three phases, pre-crisis, crisis response, and post crisis. The first phase is where one prevents and prepares for different types of events, phase two involves how the organization actually responds to the crisis, and the third phase speaks to ways of correcting or bettering the situation. He also acknowledges the impact social media has had on crisis management in that (among other things) it's created a new form which Coomb's terms "Paracrisis". This isn't an operational or reputational crisis, but if mishandled could morph into one if not managed well. He cites epic customer service fails as an example of a paracrisis. In this updated publication he layers on two new areas of research. The first is internal crisis communication and the second is a notion called 'stealing the thunder'. Internal crisis communication is perhaps one of the most important pieces of the crisis management puzzle especially if you are a service organization with employees on the front lines facing customers. These people can be the best ambassadors you have during a crisis, so make sure they're in the position to speak empathetically and honestly with customers and know now to guide them in finding out more information. The second new area of research is referred to as "stealing the thunder" which I equate to "owning it". Coomb's states, "In a crisis, research consistently demonstrates that a crisis does lessen reputational damage if the organization is the first to report the crisis". The balance of the article provides detailed information on each of the three crisis phases and provides infographics for key concepts and best practices.

Key Words: Crisis management, paracrisis, internal communications, stealing the thunder, crisis management best practices

Chapter Five: Corporate Identity, Branding and Corporate Reputation

Cornelissen, J. (2017). Corporate identity, branding and corporate reputation. In M. Waters (Ed.), *Corporate communication: A guide to theory and practice* (pp. 84-106). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

This chapter strives to clarify how corporations maintain their reputations by overseeing their corporate identities; it delineates between corporate image, corporate image management, and defines the nuances of corporate, social, and organizational identity. Ultimately, it emphasizes that any corporation has to safeguard their reputation among their different stakeholder groups. The reading is a chapter from a book, which is intended for students as well as practitioners. It is written by Joep Cornelissen who is a well-respected professor of Corporate Communication and Management at the Rotterdam School of Management. I appreciated the delineation between corporate image versus personality and the further definition of corporate, organizational, and social identities.

Key Words: Corporate Image, Corporate Reputation, Stakeholders, Organizational Identity, Social Identity, Corporate Identity

Why Teams Don’t Work

Coutu, D. (2009). Why teams don't work. (The HBR Interview: J. Richard Hackman) [Interview]. *Harvard Business Review, 87*(5), 98.

My favorite quote from this article is, “I have no question that a team can generate magic. But don’t count on it” (p. 100). HBR’s senior editor Diane Coutu interviews J. Richard Hackman who is a Harvard professor and what I describe as a “teamwork realist”. While so many others are quick to embrace teams and teamwork, Hackman cautions that certain mandates need to be respected to form a functioning team. One of those mandates is “Small teams that stay together for long periods of time perform best” (p. 100). For me that was an interesting notion and rang true because many of the most successful teams I have worked on have been together for 10-12 months and were usually five people or less. He also discusses the courage a team leader needs because simply being appointed as a team leader raises the anxiety level of the others. They need to be deft at observing and listening to how the team interacts and pay attention to not only what is being said, but also, what is not. I believe they also need the courage to get out of the way of way of team members and let leadership shift to others when appropriate. That is a big ask for someone who has been appointed the “leader” because they need to relinquish control and trust their team.

Key Words: Teams, leadership, authority, courage, trustworthy, collaboration, teamwork

Gorgias, Encomium of Helen

Dillion, J. (Ed.). (2003). Gorgias, encomium of Helen. *The Greek sophists*. London, England: Penguin Books (pp. 76-84).

Encomium of Helen is one of two surviving display speeches by the Greek Sophist, Gorgias. It is an homage to the power of persuasion using the augmentative tactic of enumeration; this speaker dismisses each “undesirable” option until only the speaker’s intended choice is left. This argumentative tactic is used when the speaker wants to isolate the reason(s) something happened and then eliminate each of them. Gorgias provides four reasons for why Helen left her home: the gods made her do it, Paris (pseudo-lover) forced her to leave, she was persuaded to leave, or she actually loved Paris – regardless of which reason Helen had no choice, so Gorgias encouraged all to forgive and forget Helen’s transgression. In his words, “I have tried to end the injustice of blame and the ignorance of opinion” (p. 84) as it pertained to Helen.

Key Words: Persuasion, enumeration, Sophists, Helen of Troy, argument of probability, forensic format

Teamwork on the Fly

Edmondson, A. C. (2012). Teamwork on the fly: how to master the new art of teaming. (Spotlight on the Secrets of Great Teams). *Harvard Business Review, 90*(4), 72.

Amy Edmondson of Harvard University has done substantial research on 'teaming' and what it takes to make successful teams. In preparation for our third in-residence I read this article and subsequently started listening to one of her books because I found them both so informative. Admittedly, teaming and collaboration are both skills I needed to consciously develop because I default to doing it myself – that way I know it is "correct" and it is faster. But, as Edmondson points out while it can be challenging, "The most challenging attributes of teaming can also yield big organizational and individual benefits" (p.74). Challenges range from teams being geographically dispersed to having to start from scratch with every project because no two projects are ever the same. She also notes that "teaming is more chaotic" which is exactly why I used to avoid, however without diverse teams I lose the insight and perspective of others, which does not serve me well professionally or personally for that matter.

Key Words: Teaming, collaboration, decision-making, innovation, leadership, organizational learning

Wicked Problem Solvers

Edmondson, A. C. (2016). Wicked problem solvers. *Harvard Business Review*, *94*(6), 52-59. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2016/06/wicked-problem-solvers

Amy Edmondson of Harvard University is renowned for her research and work on cross-functional teams. For instance, in this article she describes the success behind the Lake Nona project by outlining four key imperatives; foster an adaptable vision, promote psychological safety, enable knowledge sharing, and foster execution as learning. One example she provides is how the Lake Nona leaders (LNl) took the time to clearly communicate the project vision to their potential partners, but did not elaborate on how each team would participate, instead "Leaders launched a conversation around possibilities and how the various partners might enrich and alter the vision" (Edmondson, 2016, p. 56). Rather than present a completely "baked" plan, the LNl presented the project concept and then engaged their partners in an open exchange of how (together) they could expand the vision. The leadership prepared the teams for potential project pivots and encouraged them to not only be open to them, but to actively embrace them. loved this concept because it promotes a collaborative environment where people are energized to contribute to the project. I believe that demonstrates a certain amount of courage from any leader because you need to step aside and let the team do what they were hired to do. Seems simple, but it is not.

Key Words: Lake Nona, psychological safety, learning, leadership, collaboration, decision-making

How to Pitch a Brilliant Idea

Elsbach, K. D. (2003). How to pitch a brilliant idea. *Harvard Business Review, 81*(9)*,* 117-123.

Kimberly D. Elsbach of the Graduate School of the University of California, Davis offers interesting insights into the ways that great ideas get sold. She introduces the notion of tropes or stereotypes that "pitchers" get separated into especially by people who are accustomed to being presented with the next great innovation *all day long* (e.g., Hollywood agents, Venture Capitalists, CEOs, etc.). The receivers or catchers adopt short-cuts when assessing the people presenting the ideas; meaning for good or for bad, the catchers make snap judgments "in less than 150 milliseconds" of others and place them in one of three categories, the showrunner, the artist, and the neophyte (p. 118). *(Please note, the article focuses on assessing creative potential.)* The showrunner is the slick, charismatic sort of person who radiates confidence, without being obnoxious. The artist is the socially awkward nerd who just wants to tell a great story, and the neophyte is the bright-eyed young start-up who sweeps everyone up in their enthusiasm. The author points at that regardless of what trope you are assigned, the key to having people respond well to your idea stems, in part, from letting them feel like they participated in the idea's development (p. 118). She does not advocate jamming yourself into one of the three stereotypes, but simply makes you aware it happens, so she advises we find the role we are the most comfortable playing and use it to our advantage.

Key Words: Creativity, stereotype, trope, showrunner, artists, neophyte, influence

Getting Past Yes: Negotiating as if Implementation Mattered

Ertel, D. (2004). Getting past yes: Negotiating as if implementation mattered. (Cover Story). *Harvard Business Review, 82*(11), 60.

Dan Ertel is the co-founder for Vantage Partners, a global consultancy. I was immediately drawn to this article because of the title. As a business consultant everything I do is related to successfully implementing something (e.g., a new organizational structure, a new technology, etc.) He separates negotiation styles into two kinds, one of deal-minded and the other is implementation-minded; he outlines the five phases of negotiation and compares and contrasts the two styles throughout the phases (Ertel, 2004, p. 63). Overall the deal-minded negotiator is all about closing the deal no matter what it takes without thinking about the aftermath of implementation. Conversely, the implementation-minded negotiator is in it for the long game. They negotiate as if they will be part of implementing the deal, so they are more collaborative and less likely to pull any tricks or plot surprise attacks. They work to build long-term relationships and ensure the deal crafted is legitimate and can actually be implemented. This is critical in business consulting and one of the reasons my firm does not have a separate business development team; it is very easy to sell a client a pie in the sky project, but it is a very different experience when you are the one that needs to deliver the unrealistic product. We always know what we commit to in a negotiation can be accomplished.

Key Words: Ethical negotiation, deal-minded, implementation-minding, collaboration, integrity, professional

The Five C's of Mastering Media Interviews

Fathi, S. (2018). The 5 C's of mastering media interviews. *PRDaily.com.* Retrieved from https://www.prdaily.com/the-5-cs-of-mastering-media-interviews/

The phrase "be a better version of yourself" jumped off at the page at me because it speaks to staying authentic and not adopting someone else's style. Sandra Fathi, who is the president of Affect, writes about the 5 C's of mastering media interviews which include conviction, conversation, composure, confidence, and color. Of the five, color is the most interesting to me because it talks about the telling stories rather than just answering the questions. This reinforces the message Jason DeSanto made in his December 7, 2018 lecture at Northwestern University. We love stories and Fathi says that, "There is an overwhelming amount of research that illustrates how storytelling helps our brains become more active, improving recall". Providing details sharing analogies, or telling a personal story (if appropriate) can improve your changes of a successful interview.

Key Words: Media interviews, five C's, storytelling, sound bites, TV segments, media, reporters

Chapter Six: Finding External Data

Foo, J. (n.d.). Finding External Data. In T. Chiasson & D. Gregory (Eds.), *Data + design: A simple introduction to preparing and visualizing information* (pp. 90-96). Available from http://orm-atlas2prod.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf/13a07b19e01a397d8855c0463d52f454.pdf

One of our first assignments in Information Design was to find an external data set, download it, and cleanse the data. The reading provides a matrix to use when you begin looking for data (p. 91).:

Scope	What is the scope of the data you're looking for? What are the: • geographic boundaries? • specific data attributes (such as age range)? • time periods?
Type	What type of data are you looking for? Do you need: • statistics? • research data? • raw data? • data that have been collected using a specific method?
Contribution	How will the data contribute to your existing data analysis? Do you need several external datasets to complete your analysis?

It categorizes questions into three groups: the scope, type, and contribution of the data set. Similar to a decision tree, how you answer the questions better defines where to start looking for external data sets. It helped me think through what I wanted to accomplish, so I avoided wasting time on irrelevant data searches. This chapter also provides a Data Directory of sites that are reliable; I have since referenced it for school and work. It explains metadata "data about the data" in a way that made more sense to me than other readings. Examples of metadata are, "Time and date of creation and the context in which the data is presented" (p. 93). Finally, another vetting tool called the CRAAP test is provided to assess the quality of the data (p. 94):

Currency	Is the information up-to-date? When was it collected / published / updated?
Relevancy	Is the information suitable for your intended use? Does it address your research question? Is there other (better) information?
Authority	Is the information creator reputable and has the necessary credentials? Can you trust the information?
Accuracy	Do you spot any errors? What is the source of the information? Can other data or research support this information?
Purpose	What was the intended purpose of the information collected? Are other potential uses identified?

Overall, great information packed into seven pages.

Key Words: Metadata, external data sets, data repositories, CRAAP test

An Introduction to Data-Driven Decisions

Frick, W. (2014). An introduction to data-driven decisions for managers who don't like math. *Harvard Business Review*, retrieved from https://hbr.org/2014/05/an-introduction-to-data-driven-decisions-for-managers-who-dont-like-math

This title shouted "READ ME" because I am terrified of data. And a data-driven decision? Don't be ridiculous. In any event, at this time of this writing in 2014, Walter Frick was a Senior Associate Editor at the *Harvard Business Review.* His writing engages you and offers practical advice to non-math people. The article shares Thomas Davenport's six questions (actually more than six) ta manager should ask when handed any type of research report. They are:

1. What was the source of the data?
2. How well do the sample data represent the population?
3. Does the data distribution include outliers? How did they affect the results?
4. What assumptions are behind the analysis? Might certain conditions render your assumptions and your model invalid?
5. Why did you decide on that particular approach? What alternatives did you consider?
6. How likely is it that the independent variables are actually causing the changes in the dependent variable? Might other analyses establish causality more clearly?

Frick also shares his advice when visualizing data, "Rule #1: No more crap circles" instead he links us to an article on how best to visually display data (The Quick and Dirty on Data Visualization) which, although dated, provided some basic rules for presenting data. Finally, he counsels readers to get their hands dirty with the data set rather than reading about it. This led me to start a Lynda.com series on Excel Basics, which I desperately needed for my career and my own peace of mind.

Key Words: Analytics, data sets, Thomas Davenport, causation, correlation, data visualization

When Teams Can't Decide

Frisch, B. (2008). When teams can't decide. *Harvard Business Review*, *86*, 121-126.

Bob Frisch is the Managing Director for the Strategic Offsite Group, which is a Boston based consultancy. His article introduces the notion of the "dictator-by-default" concept (Frisch, 2008, p. 122). This dilemma arises when the executive leadership team looks to the CEO to make the final decision and the CEO really wants his team to make the decision, so by default he becomes the "dictator" and has the last word. He/she resents it as does their team. It is an all too familiar occurrence in c-suites across the world. Everyone is expecting everyone else to be mind-readers. This article laid out a pragmatic framework for remedying the situation when preparing for and facilitating the meeting. Preparing for the meeting:

1. Select a meeting room with the desired layout, technology, and collateral (white boards, flip charts, etc.)
2. Allow enough time for each agenda topic; if need be, schedule a series of meetings
3. Ensure all team members are available and can attend the meeting
4. Circulate the agenda, or attach it to the meeting invitation; include the objective of the meeting, ground rules, and pertinent definitions
5. Circulate any prep material or pre-reads at least seven days prior to meeting

And facilitating the actual session:

1. Briefly review the objective of the meeting, ground rules, and pertinent definitions (e.g., growth = profit, headcount neutral = no new hires, but people can shift to other areas if necessary)
2. Introduce the decision-making process that will be used (e.g., nominal group making technique, weighted preferences, etc.)
3. As noted in our reading, "Keep discussion of the desired outcome distinct from the discussion about how to achieve it" (Frisch, 2008, p. 123).
4. Use a parking lot when people move off-topic to capture ideas, comments, etc.
5. Make sure everyone is heard, even the more introverted people – I use index cards all the time; instead of talking, they write an idea or proposed solution and we gather and record them.

This reading has been invaluable to me and I have referred back to it and my assignment for it often. Just to keep myself honest when participating in and facilitating decision-making sessions.

Key Words: Dictator-by-default, decision-making, C-suite, meeting preparation, facilitation, collaboration

What you Don't Know About Making Decisions

Garvin, D., & Roberto, M. (2001). What you don't know about making decisions. *Harvard Business Review,* 79*(8),* 108-116.

This article by David Garvin and Michael Roberto (Professor and Assistant Professor respectively at Harvard Business School) introduces the notion of inquiry versus advocacy when making decisions. It resonated with because I am continually in positions where I need to facilitate sessions to help teams make decisions. For many of my clients going against the popular opinion (or advocate) brings an inherent tension. Too often in design sessions people advocate for what they think is best for their particular area without thinking through the long-term implications – the loudest voice in the room consistently wins out because voicing am opposing view appears as if the person is being difficult. For that reason, "structuring the debate" made sense to me (Garvin & Roberto, 2001, p. 4). I love the idea of breaking the team into two sub-teams (intermingling points of view), so they can debate in a more structured and constructive manner.

We need to give them permission to generate several ideas and then debate the merits of them. That way, they are not being stubborn – they are being a responsible team-member. Both approaches (Point-Counterpoint, Intellectual Watchdog) would serve many of my client teams, sense because the teams are not good at generating options and then debating their merits. This clears up the "procedural justice" issue. Over the course of a project quiet resentment builds because many team members feel as it their voice are never heard or considered (p. 6). Lastly the authors describe the litmus test for closing the decision, which can help the team evaluate if they completed a thorough decision-making process (p. 7-8):

1. Had they surfaced and considered multiple alternatives?
2. Did they test their assumptions (aka facts)?
3. Were there well-defined criteria on which to base a decision?
4. Did the unemotionally debate and dissent when appropriate?
5. Was there a perceived fairness to the process (even if their preferred path was not chosen.)

Key Words: Decision-making, inquiry versus advocacy, point/counter-point, intellectual watchdog

Choice, Happiness, and Spaghetti Sauce

Gladwell, M. (Speaker). (2004, February). *Choice, happiness and spaghetti sauce* [Ted Talk]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/malcolm_gladwell_on_spaghetti_sauce

I love Malcolm Gladwell. I read every book he's written, but never watched him deliver a Ted Talk. I knew he was a quirky guy and "wicked smart" as one of Tina Fey's characters would say, but watching him speak drove both those points home. This Ted Talk outlines how one of his mentors (Howard Moskowitz) made a career out of developing spaghetti sauce(s); his mentor ultimately helped one company develop 38 different types of sauce including chunky-style. This particular Ted series had a "happiness" theme, so Gladwell demonstrates how providing a myriad of choices in spaghetti sauces delivered years of happiness to a thankful public. But, I know Gladwell well enough to know he's a consummate storyteller and packages complex information into funny and clever stories even a mere mortal can understand. At the end of the day, he demonstrates how Moskowitz flipped consumer testing sideways. Moskowitz helped companies discover better ways to conduct consumer research by stepping outside the accepted norms. He also developed a notion called "horizontal segmentation" which Gladwell explains through the telling of how Grey Poupon revolutionized the mustard category, "Mustard does not exist on a hierarchy. Mustard exists, just like tomato sauce, on a horizontal plane." This talk challenged me to consider different ways to approach a common situation instead of relying on the usual choices.

Key Words: Ted Talk, Howard Moskowitz, choice, consumer research, Pepsi Challenge, spaghetti sauce, Gladwell

Wakefield's article linking MMR vaccine and autism was fraudulent

Godlee, F., Smith, J., & Marcovitch, H. (2011). Wakefield's article linking MMR vaccine and autism was fraudulent: Clear evidence of falsification of data should now close the door on this damaging vaccine scare. *BMJ: British Medical Journal*, 342*(7788).* 64-66. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.turing.library.northwestern.edu/stable/25766651

All the readings and lectures around this topic opened my eyes to how easily we glance at a statistic and take the information as gospel without digging deeper. But this article was the mothership (so to speak). It chronicles how Andrew Wakefield's fraudulent study was (finally) debunked and outlines the far-reaching consequences it continues to have today. The authors describe how quickly critics called out the flaws in the study, but were ignored, "It has taken the diligent skepticism of one man, standing outside medicine and science, to show that the paper was in fact an elaborate fraud" (p. 64). The article kicks off a series by Brian Deer, who "Drawing on interviews, documents, and data made public at the GMC hearings" demonstrates the various ways, "key players failed to investigate thoroughly in the public's interest when Deer first raised his concerns" (p. 64). Bottom line: Wakefield's study was published in 1998 and today, twenty years later, we still see the tragic effects of it. I was stunned by the unethical methods Wakefield used and alarmed at how little facts meant to the general public who accepted the findings at face value.

Key Words: MMR, Autism, vaccine, Brian Deer, Andrew Wakefield, assumptions

My Job Sucks: Examining Counterinstitutional Web Sites as Locations for Organizational Member Voice, Dissent, Resistance

Gosset, L., M, Kilker, J. (2006). My job sucks: Examining counterinstitutional web sites as locations for organizational member voice, dissent, resistance. *Management communication quarterly.* 20*(1).* 63-90.

This article appeared in the August 2006 Edition of *Management Communication Quarterly* and was written by Loril M. Gossett (of University of Texas, Austin) and Julian Kilker (of University of Nevada, Las Vegas). It was the first time I'd seen the term "counterinstitutional", but I quickly grasped the concept as I started reading. That same week we also learned about Hirschman's Model of the Member Voice, which has four components:

1. Remain loyal and passive and hope for improvement (passive)
2. Neglect the organization; wait to be fired (watch the problem get worse do nothing) passive
3. Leave the organization; speak w. their feet
4. Voice concerns – most valued voice; care and concern

This particular article examined almost two thousand posts during a one-month period on RadioShackSucks.com, a counterinstitutional site. The appeal of such sites is their ability to provide a forum for a community of shareholders (in this case current and former employees) where they can "Engage in voice and resistance efforts outside of formal organizational boundaries" (p. 63). It is an employer/organization's worst nightmare especially if it gathers momentum. But, often they are dismissed by the organization – written off as a community of poor-performers, or malcontents. The article points out these sites can help the employer improve ***if*** they can set aside their judgment and engage in authentic dialogues with their employees. Often organizations never know the truth about their flaws until people leave the company and start voicing their issues on public forums. As a business consultant who works with (predominantly) service organizations, it is important to for me to remind my clients to ask the hard questions of employees now – not before they leave the organization and splash it onto a social media site.

Key Words: Counterinstitution, employee voice, employee dissent, member voice, boundaries

Defining Strategic Communication

Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., Van Ruler, B., Vercic, D., & Sriramesh, K., (2007). Defining strategic communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication, 1*(1), 3-35.

This article examines the evolution of strategic communication, which is summarized as any communication function (or individual) that engages in deliberate communication practice on behalf of organizations, causes, and social movements (p. 4). The article was written by five academics from across the globe and partly based on a panel discussion with the *International Journal of Strategic Communication's* editors at the International Communication Association in May 2005 in New York (p. 3). The density of strategic communication was new to me – I hear the term so frequently, but did not really understand it. The article introduced the notion of strategic as a negative word. Again – new news to me. I love the word even if it is over-used. It also discussed the rationale for strategic communications:

1. Ability to differentiate communication functions and the effects of each has disappeared.
2. Changes to PR are being driven by technology and media economics; what is advertising vs. publicity vs. sales promotion, or ecommerce? ***Blurring.***
3. Organizations have expanded methods to influence the behaviors of their constituencies – how they feel, know, and act relative to the company (p. 10).
4. Strategic communications recognize that *purposeful influence is the fundamental goal of communication by organizations* (p. 10). ***Melding of disciplines.***

Key Words: Strategic communications, melding, blurring, organizational communication disciplines

Ethnography

Issacs, Ellen. (Speaker). (2013, March). *Ethnography* [Ted^{x} Broadway]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nV0jY5VgymI

Ellen Issacs was an unusual choice for this Ted^{X} series because it focused on developing a commitment to the future of Broadway; hardly the place to find a Ph.D. in cognitive science and an User Experience Designer (ethnographer) who works for Google. She shares some clever stories about how ethnography's form of research solved some sticky technology design issues (providing "just in time" loading zones in Manhattan). She also contributed to (and holds the patent for) a gadget for communication via instant messenger and she's accomplished this through a technique she calls "a naïve state of mind" where you look for the "hidden obvious". She builds a case for using ethnography to improve the Broadway experience for a family. She suggests everything from observing how a family plans their trip to how they spend their day leading up the Broadway show. What happens when they arrive at the theater? How easy is it for them to navigate it? Are the seats adaptable for various ages and sizes? I'm a Broadway nerd and also find the ethnography a fascinating area of research; I love being by myself in a restaurant, or movie and observing how people respond and react to the environment. I suspect applying this research method to a Broadway theater environment would surface valuable insights.

Key Words: Ethnography, Broadway, families, observation, hidden obvious, environment

How to Read a Journal Article in Social Psychology

Jordan, C. H., & Zanna, M. P. (1999). How to read a journal article in social psychology. In R. F. Baumeister (Ed.), *The self in social psychology* (pp. 461-470). Philadelphia, PA.: Psychology Press.

Where has this article been my entire life? was my first thought when I read the title of it. It lays out the anatomy of a research report describing each section of a report as well as explaining what sections and information on which to focus. I found it especially helpful as I began my literature review for my capstone project. I reviewed dozens of research reports and could parse the "keep" versus "reject" reports much faster. The most helpful advice was, "What problem was studied and why?" and "What questions do the researchers hope to answer with this study?" (p. 2). The reading helped me vet reports by scanning the abstract, introduction, and discussion section(s), which determined if the research was valid and/or useful to me. Most importantly, it reminded me to look for a story when reading a research report; either through narration of the story, or recounting what happened in the story and why.

Key Words: Storytelling, research reports, social psychology, journal, peer-reviewed

The Discipline of Teams

Katzenbach, J. R., & Smith, D. K. (2005). The discipline of teams. *Harvard Business Review*, *83*(7), 162. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2005/07/the-discipline-of-teams

Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith are both partners at the prestigious consulting firm of McKinsey & Company and have written extensively on creating high-performance teams. In this article I kept going back to the beginning of it – Katzenbach and Smith reinforce the importance of the team taking enough time at the outset of their endeavor to explore, shape, and agree on a purpose that belongs to them both collectively and individually (2005, p.113). Additionally, the authors clarify a common purpose is just the start – the purpose has to be translated into specific performance goals that relate back to it. The 'purpose' of any team can appear obvious; deliver the project on time and budget, win the race, get the product to market before the competition, etc. What's to discuss? Let's get going! This is where I saw my opportunity to become a more effective leader. I only work in 'teams' or what are referred to as teams, so I want to focus on what I can do at the onset of a project – to slow down and take time to define our purpose, specific goals, and create ground rules with the team. I envision beginning this at the internal project kick-off meeting. I've mentioned before I am a big fan of nominal group activities – I like people to write down answers to key questions individually and then post or otherwise document them to facilitate the discussion around purpose and goals. I found this reading exceedingly helpful in furthering my collaborative skills.

Key Words: Discipline, teams, working groups, collaboration, problem-solving, decision-making

Stay on the Q&A Offensive

Kirby, J. (2007). Stay on the Q&A offensive. *Harvard Business Review,85*(4). Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2007/04/stay-on-the-qa-offensive

"The speaker must have a strategy for the question and answer segment – it shouldn't be just an afterthought". Typically, the question/answer segment for me is always an afterthought, which basically means I leave it to chance. That is a silly thing to do. As I've progressed in my career, I've gotten less disciplined with preparing for presentations, let alone the Q/A portion. I appreciated the advice given as it pertained to "What's the story line?" and using the Q/A "as the second tier of communication" to build upon key points. The example of Bill Gates also resonated with me, "Often (he) radiates an attitude in his Q&As that make him seem to be thinking, "Oh, that reminds me of big idea I wanted to share". It's an attitude of *I'm so glad you asked about that.* The article also reinforced the need to listen to the entire question rather than formulating your response. Jason DeSanto reinforced this point in his presentation as well. Listen for the real concern behind the question – what is it they're really asking and why? The article is written by a Senior Editor at the Harvard University Press who shares insights from, "Michael Sheenan, the renowned communications consultant who worked with Bill Clinton throughout his presidency".

Key Words: Q&A format, message, communication, offensive, LIE, executive, corporate communications, executive presence

Applying Social Psychological Theory to the Problems of Group Work

Kraut, R., E. (2001). Applying social psychological theory to the problems of group work. In J. Carroll (Ed.), *Theories in human computer interaction.* (pp. 325-356). Pittsburgh, PA: Carnegie Mellon Publishing.

This particular reading was a chapter from *Theories in Human Computer Interaction,* written by Robert E. Kraut of Carnegie Mellon University. Its focus is on Computer-supported cooperative work (CSCW) and introduces several group behavior models based on social psychological and organizational behavior research. Included in these are the Input-Process-Output Model which categorized personnel, tasks, tools and technologies as “inputs”. Communication, conflict, conformity, socialization, leadership, status, and in-group-out-group differentiation comprise the interaction “process” (p. 336). And finally, production, member needs, and group maintenance form “outputs” or outcomes. The chapter also discusses process loss. Process loss is the notion that states, “The mere fact of being in a group degrades performance from what the members could be capable of producing” (p. 339). I live process loss every day, so the concept resonated with me. However, my favorite construct introduced is social loafing, which is described as the potential for decreased effort within a group as the group size increases. Interestingly, people will continue to work harder if they think their contribution is unique, of if they like the group members (p. 342). This is important for me to remember as I work with my colleagues and clients – it will help the entire team stay as productive as possible.

Key Words: Social psychology, organizational behavior, social loafing, process loss, computer-supported cooperative work

Social media dilemmas in the employee context

Lam, H. (2016). Social media dilemmas in the employee context. *Employee Relations.* 38*(3),* 420-437.

This paper is a general review of issues that prompt employment-related legal and ethical dilemmas. Written by Helen Lam, of Athabasca University, it sets out to discuss the legal risks employers may encounter when vetting potential candidates for hire – these include "discrimination, infringement on personal privacy, and/or interference with employees' concerted activities protected by US law" (p. 420). But it's a double-edged sword because an employer may be deemed negligent if their employees post unsavory, or derogatory messages. Further, if employees do post negative information about the company, it still could be used as evidence in support of disciplinary actions (p. 420). So, what's an organization to do? Embrace social media? Eschew social media? There is no right answer. Ultimately, common sense needs to prevail: using social media as a screening tool for a perspective applicant opens the organization up to accusations of discrimination. Even using social media to assess whether an existing employee is ready for promotion feels sketchy. But, if an employee agreed to and signed an employee handbook that clearly states the consequences of posting negative comments about their employer, then the organization is within its rights to bring disciplinary action. My consulting firm has social media guidelines and we sign a contract agreeing to them. While we have never had an issue, this is good information for me to know, so I can advise my firm appropriately.

Key Words: Social media, business ethics, employees, hiring practices, employee disciplinary actions

Is the press release a genre? A study of form and content

Lassen, I. (2006). Is the press release a genre? A study of form and content. *Discourse Studies.* 8*(4),* 503-530.

In this article I learned about the “three different and yet overlapping” types of analysis for the non-literary genre (p. 503) These are:

1. Rhetorical tradition
2. Systemic Functional Linguistics
3. English for Specified Purposes

The author, Inger Lassen of the Aalborg University set out to prove the argument of “Although the press release may be seen as a genre on the basis of textual form, it does not qualify for the genre label if analysed (sic) in terms of content or rhetorical objectives” (p. 503). Admittedly, I was perplexed by the statement, so I hacked my way through the reading striving to translate the academia-speak into understandable terms. A press release, according to Inger Lassen is “A disembedded genre because of its potential as a carrier of a variety of at times conflicting rhetorical objectives” (p. 527). HUH? Here’s how I translated it – it is referred to as ‘disembedded’ because one press release can serve several rhetorical objectives (e.g., review, viewpoint, rebuttal, etc.) I can disembed a part of the press release and embed it somewhere else. What helped me the most was “Table 3. Six different stage combinations – six different genres” (p. 524). Here the author details the stage combination, the possible rhetorical objectives, and the preliminary genre labels. I didn’t realize that genres were so tightly defined, nor did I know that some scholars define genres by “different levels on abstraction” (p. 527). These labels include pre-genre (most abstract), disembedded genre, and situated genre (p. 527).

Key Words: Genre, rhetorical objectives, press release, disemedded genre, pre-genre, situated genre

Better People Analytics

Leonardi, P., & Contractor, N. (2018). Better people analytics. *Harvard Business Review,* Nov/Dec 2018, 70-81.

Contractor and Leonardi (of Northwestern University and University of California, Santa Barbara) focus this article on the benefits and risks of using people/relationship analytics with an organization. The introduce the term "digital exhaust" which is my new favorite phrase – digital exhaust is the digital trail or footprint we leave behind as we navigate among our organization's various technology platforms (e.g. email, shared collaboration tools, instant messaging, etc.) (p. 73). By leveraging this information relationship analytic tools can help an organization identity who the informal internal influencers are and how they can could be enlisted to rally the troops or get communications pushed faster through the organization. There is a concern over the ethics of using digital exhaust to learn more about the informal networks within an organization, however I believe of the organization is transparent about how and why they are mapping the networks, I think it is a fabulous way to help individuals build their organizational social capital and bridge groups and teams with whom they may not have interacted. When used for good, I think it is a brilliant tool and one that would benefit me when working with clients. We could accomplish so much more in less time if we knew who the informal connectors were from the start. Usually, we go about it the old-fashion way, which slows us down.

Key Words: Relationship analytics, digital exhaust, informal influencers, ideation, efficient

Strategies for Regulated Business Environments

Morris, R. (2019) Strategies for regulated business environments [Class handout]. *MSC 521-6_SEC1 Current Issues in Law, Technology and Strategy*, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.

Professor Morris provided us with this handout early on in our class and I found it indispensable; I referenced it throughout this particular course and after its completion because it details valuable types of strategies to use during a negotiation, presentation, or any type of conversation where you need to inform and persuade others to come over to your way of thinking. One of my particular favorites is "make it easy for them to rule in your favor" which Professor Morris describes as the "Do it for the children" strategy; meaning the ruling is in the best interest of the children, or other groups who rely on others for protection (2019, p. 2). During the class we experienced several of the strategies in play and often time they were used in concert. A mix of strategies was used during a particular negotiation or case. For instance, the 23andMe case used a blend of the strategy of delay, strategic use of innovation, and the strategy of being in control. Ultimately, they worked closely with the FDA, so 23andMe developed the terms they found acceptable in partnership with the FDA (2019, p. 5). It was really quite brilliant.

Key Words: Strategy, 23andMe, FDA, strategy of delay, negotiation, persuasion, convincing

The Power to Oblige: Power, Gender, Negotiation Behaviors, and Their Consequences

Nelson, N., Bronstein, I., Shacham, R., & Ben-Ari, R. (2015). The power to oblige: Power, gender, negotiation behaviors, and their consequences. *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research, 8*(1), 1-24.

Gender negotiations have been of interest to me for several years – as a woman I know the pitfalls women are prone to for no other reason than we are women. I know historically women are poorer negotiators compared to men; we either don't ask for more, or we give in too quickly. We are judged equally harsh whether we negotiate with another woman or a man but for different reasons. The only time it is considered palatable for a woman to negotiate assertively is if we do it on someone else's behalf. We need to be seen as an advocate for others, God forbid I advocate on my own behalf. In any event, this article digs into this and other aspects; for instance, it discusses agentic versus communal traits, the former being seen as more masculine and the latter as more feminine. They also explore the double-bind women frequently deal with – it is a bit of a "damned if I do and damned if I don't" experience. Ultimately this study introduces a few ideas to off-set the usual traps. One of those is what they call the "unique female voice" which turns out to have its own kind of power (Nelson, Bronstein & Ben, 2015, p. 19). They also suggest a judicious mix of leveraging both feminine and masculine behaviors at the negotiation table regardless of gender. I found this study somewhat hopeful in that we may finally be making tiny steps of progress.

Key Words: Gender bias, negotiation, agentic, communal, unique female voice, feminine, masculine

Ethnography: Is Your Company Missing the Train?

Ohler, M., Samuel, P., McMurray, M. (2013). Ethnography: Is your company missing the train? *Industry Week*, Retrieved from http://turing.library.northwestern.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/docview/1442131839?accountid=12861

The three authors of this article are all senior level executives at BMGI Consulting; all are either Ph.Ds, or certified Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belts, so all evidence points to their expertise in business process and performance improvement. Embedded in the Six Sigma model is the notion of customer-centricity, meaning a company strives to build their products or services using the "voice of the customer" (VOC). Because many of my clients are retailers, ethnography is used as one method of consumer research. The article illustrates the benefits of ethnography by applying it to a fictitious train station manager who observes one visitor's struggles in trying to get from the train station to their destination. The authors describe ethnography as "an inductive field research method" that came out of the social sciences. Instead of starting with a hypothesis that a researcher tries to validate, this research method starts with fresh eyes and attempts to identify and define patterns, or trends. For example, tracking one customer through a store to understand their shopping journey. After repeating the tracking many times with different customers, you can chart the journeys to find common patterns. Are certain departments always shopped first? Do shoppers start on the ground floor and go up, or vice versa? It is a fascinating area of research that shapes store configurations, product and promotional placement, and customer service standards.

Key Words: Ethnography, inductive, reasoning, research methods, tracking, retail

How to Make Distance Work

Olson, G., M., Olson, J., S. (2014). How to make distance work work. *interactions. 21*(2), 28-35.

This article written by Judith S. Olson and Gary M. Olson, both of University of California, Irvine, share four key issues that impact dispersed teams; they may work in separate buildings, states, or countries. Because I work with a dispersed team, this article was helpful to me. These types of teams have become more common in the last several years, there are still some inherent issues. Olson and Olson define these as “out of sight, out of mind, trust, culture, and time zones” (p. 29). For a dispersed team to thrive they need individual assignments, so they can minimize communication, be comprised of people who have worked together or have common work styles, adopt an explicit management style, use technologies to support communication/coordination, and have a corporate infrastructure with robust systems to support networking and collaboration. The authors “Provide recommendations at three levels: to a member of a distributed team, the manager of a distributed team, and to the organization that supports distributed teams” (p. 30). Ultimately, they conclude that, “Distance work can work” (p. 35).

Key Words: Distributed teams, out of sight out of mind, distance work, collaborative technology, culture

23andMe: Genetic Testing for Consumers

Quelch, J. A., & Rodriguez, M. L. (2014). 23andMe: Genetic testing for consumers (A). *Harvard Business School*. Case 514-086.

This case written by John Quelch and Margert Rodriguez, both of Harvard Business School and Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health respectively details the dilemma 23andMe faced when the FDA stepped and to prevent the company from selling their personal genome service (PGS) claiming it was a diagnostic tool and "subject to the agency's regulations for medical devices" (Quelch & Rodriguez, 2014, p.1). Interestingly, the company opted to engage in the strategy of delay and continued to sell their kits. The co-founder of the company Anne Wojcicki stated, "The great loophole in all of healthcare is that you own your own data and ultimately you can direct your care" (Quelch & Rodriguez, 2014, p. 1). No stranger to federal regulatory groups (her husband is a co-founder of Google) Wojcicki simply carried on with the business until the FDA finally put their foot down some 18 months later. Only then did Wojcicki and her executive team decide to cooperate with the FDA. They spent the next few years only selling their genetic testing kits (similar to Ancestry.com) while they partnered with the FDA to gain the necessary approval of their PGS. It was a brilliant strategic move on the company's part because they set the regulatory standard for these types of services and once again provide the population with a realistic ability to determine the fate of their healthcare. I am a passionate believer in defending our right to choose our own healthcare providers and treatments, so I categorize this case as a "WIN".

Key Words: Regulatory affairs, FDA, genetic testing, consumer rights, 23andMe, medical devices

Medical Marijuana Industry Group: Outdoor Advertising in Denver

Seaborn, P. R. & Miller, W. (2014) Medical marijuana industry group: Outdoor advertising in Denver. *Case Research Journal,* 34*(4),* 1-9.

With the rise of CBD and other off-shoots of marijuana, this reading was interestingly timed. I struggle with the thought that substances like alcohol or tobacco, while tightly regulated, are accessible to adults (with their known down-sides), but in this case legalized marijuana was in a "bickersons" about its advertising mediums, which were already quite limited. Let us pause and remember that marijuana has proven capabilities to reduce pain for people dealing with acute and chronic illnesses and has no valid research to support it is as addictive as alcohol or tobacco. That said, I find a "sign-spinner" near my children's school far more offensive than a billboard advertising where cannabis may be obtained. When compared to other regulated industries marijuana should be held to similar advertising constraints, but unfortunately alcohol and tobacco had a head start on the advertising regulations, so both industries had years to embed themselves in our psyches; what is more chic than the tableau of a tall, sinewy Katherine Hepburn as she sips her Crown Royal and smokes a Camel? I find it all an absurd twist of irony.

Key Words: Medical marijuana, tobacco, alcohol, addiction, pain relief, government regulation

Ultimate Fighting Championship: License to Fight

Serafeim, G., & Welch, K. T. (2012). Ultimate fighting championship: License to operate (A). *Harvard Business School Accounting & Management Unit Case* (112-081).

I was new to the mixed-martial arts world; I knew of it, but only as a niche cult-like sport similar to the World Wide Wrestling Federation (WWWF) show my brothers used to watch on TV. They loved the theatrics of it and would replicate some of the more popular moves. I found the whole thing idiotic and ignored it as much as I could. However, this case study proved an interesting read and shed insight into this whole new world. The brutality of the UFC combined with the athleticism was staggering to me. However, the response from the regulators and knee-jerk reactions of the various cable and network stations was equally interesting. While I find the whole thing unpalatable, if an adult wants to pay to watch the spectacle than (to me) that is their right. In the meantime, the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) spiraled down and lost much of its luster and market value. But, when Lorenzo Fertitta made the call offering to invest in or buy out the company, he knew there was a lot of risk involved and that there was also a lot of upside. It challenged me to consider my perspective; you do not have to love an industry to see a potential winner and invest in it.

Key Words: Regulatory issues, mixed-martial arts, Ultimate Fighting Championship, UFC, case study

Netflix

Shih, W. C., Kaufman, S. P., & Spinola, D. (2007). Netflix. *Harvard Business School.* Case 607-138. (Revised 2009).

This was a fascinating case because, as I consumer, I remember the uproar Netflix's strategy pivot caused. We were avid users of Netflix and I loved receiving the red envelopes in the mail. It was creative approach to the dreaded "Now I need to schlep to Blockbuster to return my movie." Instead we just dropped it in the mailbox and that was that. I also found Netflix's ability to maximize their efficiency by engaging in time and motion studies and careful hiring practices extraordinarily clever. "Netflix's employees could open and restuff an average of 800 DVDs per hour, allowing the distribution center network to ship 1.6. million DVDs per day" (Shih, Kaufman, & Spinola, 2007, p. 8). However even with those operational efficiencies, I never understood how Netflix could sustain their logistical web, not to mention forecast and maintain appropriate inventory levels for a given movie. Then video on demand entered the scene and challenged the notion of even needing a DVD. So, Netflix was faced with a strategy conundrum. The case outlines the three paths the company could take; we know from history their ultimate choice was not well received AT ALL. But, subsequent case studies detail Netflix's return from its near-death experience, and blessedly Netflix with its movie selection and original programming have saved us from a life of late fees and provided us with hours of binge-watching enjoyment.

Key Words: Netflix, video on demand, VOD, operational efficiency, Reed Hastings, Blockbuster

The Forgotten History of Autism

Silberman, S. (Speaker). (2015, March). *The forgotten history of autism* [Ted Talk]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/steve_silberman_the_forgotten_history_of_autism?language=en

I love Ted Talks because the best ones push me to think differently, and/or illuminate a subject or topic *I thought* I knew. In Steve Silberman's Ted Talk on autism, he presents information that explains why the diagnosis is so misunderstood. "But to really understand [autism], we have to go back further to an Austrian doctor by the name of Hans Asperger, who published a pioneering paper in 1944. Because it was buried in time, autism has been shrouded in misunderstanding ever since". It struck me because I suspect my step-son (now in his twenties) has Asperger's but was never properly diagnosed because his mom did not want him "stigmatized". I met him when he was three – he was never a typical youngster. He was wise beyond his years, an old soul, yet struggled to learn his left from right hand, and how to read a white board, so he could write down a homework assignment. He knew he wasn't like the other kids, but he didn't know why. He just thought he was weird, or wrong. I always wondered if a diagnosis would have helped him understand and navigate his world easier. He has had a long and lonely journey all these years.

Key Words: Asperger's, autism, spectrum, diagnosis, stigma, Ted Talk

Internal Crisis Communication: An employee perspective on narrative, culture, and sensemaking

Strandberg, J. M., Vigso, O. (2016). Internal crisis communication: An employee perspective on narrative, culture, and sensemaking. *Corporate Communications.* 21(*1),* 89-102.

The authors, Julia Matilda Stranberg and Orla Vigso of the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, strove to unpack (via a case study) how employees communicate with each other during a crisis influences their sensemaking of the crisis. The article offers three implications – that the difference between internal and external communications must be considered, a crisis can strengthen dysfunctional patterns in an organization, and avoid blaming one person or circumstance. The authors comment that "Sense-making in a workplace is created in contact with the closest co-workers" which means that the, "Actual facts don't have meaning until they are discussed and contextualized" (p. 95). In other words, hearing the message is one thing but making sense of it is another. Another piece that stood out to me was the notion that employees already have narratives constructed about the organization and its practices. In this case, the leadership ignored these existing narratives and presented their own version of the truth. This, among other things, led to one of their conclusions – that, in this example, the crisis actually strengthened existing dysfunctional patterns within the culture (p. 99). At the end of the day it was about a collision of narratives (leadership versus employees) and demonstrated how the mis-match influenced the way employees made sense of the crisis.

Key Words: Internal communication, crisis management, culture, narratives, sensemaking

The Importance of Strong Ties: Understand Your Network and Let Knowledge Flow

Tortoriello, Marco. (2012). Understand your network and let knowledge flow: The importance of strong ties. *IESE Insight*. 58-65. 10.15581/002.ART-2274.

At first glance, I found this article a bit simplistic – early on the author states, "This suggests that "strong ties" even in cyberspace, may be more likely than "weak ties" to influence behavior" (p. 58). That does not seem like ground-breaking information to me, but as I continued reading, I found his slant very enlightening. The author Marco Tortoriello of IESA expands on his thinking by providing examples of how informal networks can be leveraged to further the knowledge-sharing in an organization – he refers to it as "boundary-spanning operations" or actions that identify the people in the organization (regardless of level) who are recognized as influencers and can act as conduits to move information around the organization in a more efficient and effective manner. However, this is where the strength of the tie matters, in essence "The strength of the tie has the most notable impact in terms of building effective cross-unit knowledge transfer relationships" (p. 62). In other words, your influencers not only need network breadth, but they need a high frequency of interaction with their network. Surely, the time investment and sheer energy it takes to become one of these informal influencers must be substantial, so as an organizational leader, you are well served to find these people, learn from them, and allow them to show others to way.

Key Words: Strong ties, network breadth, boundary spanning, informal influencers, collaboration, networks

Chapter Eight: Sampling

Treadwell, D. (2013). Sampling. *Introducing communication research: Paths of inquiry*. (3rd ed., pp. 216-235). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Donald Treadwell, Professor Emeritus at Westfield State University unravels the mystery of sampling in this reading. I have never understood the topic, so I loved this reading because of how Treadwell parses information into digestible chunks. The chapter defines probability versus non-probability sampling, the types of sampling methods for both, sample sizes, and sample/sampling frames. The discussion and explanation for random sampling and stratified random sampling fascinated me because I felt like I was finally one of the "cool kids". I hear these phrases all the time, but never understood what they meant. Through the reading, I also found a few online randomizers, which I have since used to build my very own random sample set. Overall, this is one of the most helpful readings I've completed because it clarified so many small details that help me better interpret research and ask better questions.

Key Words: Sample frame, probability sampling, non-probability sampling, sample size, convenience sampling

Chapter Nine: Survey Research

Treadwell, D. (2013). Survey Research. *Introducing communication research: Paths of inquiry*. (3rd ed., pp. 216-235). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Donald Treadwell, Professor Emeritus at Westfield State University discusses a variety of topics related to survey research. I have created a handful of surveys throughout my career and typically avoid doing them because I know how carefully the questions need to be structured and sequenced to gather any meaningful information. This reading helped me better understand the different types of survey questions, the pros and cons of using a survey as a research method, and best practices for conducting surveys. I have referred back to it a few times since completing the course because of its thorough explanation of the five types of survey questions: Nominal, ordinal, interval, ratio, and open-ended. (Interestingly, these terms would be used again in our Information Design course.) I needed to develop surveys since then and feel far more confident in structuring them.

Key Words: Survey, questionnaire, unit nonresponse, question types, data collection

Chapter 12: Big Data

Treadwell, D. (2013). Big Data. *Introducing communication research: Paths of inquiry*. (3rd ed., pp. 287-306). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Donald Treadwell, Professor Emeritus at Westfield State University helped demystify Big Data for me. The chapter focuses on explaining the difference between human and machine generated data, identifying the distinctions among terms such as Big Data, machine learning, data science, and data analytics, and introduces Doug Laney's Three V's of Big Data (Volume, velocity, and variety). I found the chapter somewhat arduous, but incredibly helpful in understanding how Big Data is used on our daily lives. I am a change management business consultant who works predominantly with retail and Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) companies; while I don't use Big Data in my work, my clients do, so understanding their language helps me better pace with the conversations and stay more engaged. I frequently have to translate/simplify their communication for others, so the more accurate I can be in my first draft means less re-work for me and a faster transfer of knowledge.

Key Words: Big Data, metadata, data analytics, data mining, Internet of things (IoT)

Social Media Use in Organizations: Exploring the Affordances of Visibility, Editability, Persistence, and Association

Treem, J. W., & Leonardi, P. M. (2013). Social media use in organizations: Exploring the affordances of visibility, editability, persistence, and association. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, *36*(1), 143-189.

This article is written by Jeffrey W. Treem and Paul M. Leonardi (both of Northwestern University). This reading was very similar to one of Michelle's, so the concept of affordances was not new information to me, but I was better grounded in the content, so I could appreciate it more. In essence, Treem and Leonardi argue "That social media are of important consequence to organizational communication processes because they afford behaviors that were difficult or impossible to achieve in combination before these new technologies entered the workplace" (p. 143). Among those behaviors are visibility, editability, persistence, and association. Each of these has pros and cons for the organization, but ultimately if an organization allows employees to engage in social media on behalf of the company than there is much to be learned. Both, where improvement is needed and where they are succeeding.

Key Words: Social media, affordances, visibility, editability, persistence, association, internal communications

Make Your Enemies Your Allies

Uzzi, B., & Dunlap, S. (2012). Make your enemies your allies: three steps to reversing a rivalry at work. (Managing Yourself). *Harvard Business Review, 90*(5), 133. doi:10.1515/jpem-2011-0364

This article was beautifully timed for me – the last several months I have been in a ‘friendly’ tough-of-war with a colleague at work. We have gone around and around regarding an external resource whom he recommended to my firm as a potential collaboration partner. The issue is her service offerings are duplicative of ours and often times in direct competition with us. I tripped across the conversation several months ago and after three separate conversations with him and my firm leadership, I believed we had reached a resolution. However, he continued to pursue the dialog with her, which was upsetting to me when I discovered it. While I do not view him as an enemy, I am not a fan of his right now and do not trust him. This article helped me calm the emotion and provided me with some practical tips I could use to interrupt our pattern. For instance, Uzzi and Dunlap suggest the three “R”s – redirection, reciprocity, and rationality (2012). After reading the article I was able to develop an idea to off-set his “loss” by offering him another potential partner for him to pursue. This way I was able to redirect him to the alternative and offer him the opportunity to connect with my contact (rather than me), so he could be the “hero”. Thus far it seems to be working, but time will tell.

Key Words: Redirection, rationality, reciprocity, partnership, pivot, collaboration, alternatives

Digital Presence as an Indicator of Digital Capital

Watling, S. (2019). Digital presence as an indicator of digital capital. [Blog Post]. *Digital Academic.* Retrieved from https://digitalacademicblog.wordpress.com/2019/03/01/digital-presence-as-an-indicator-of-digital-capital/

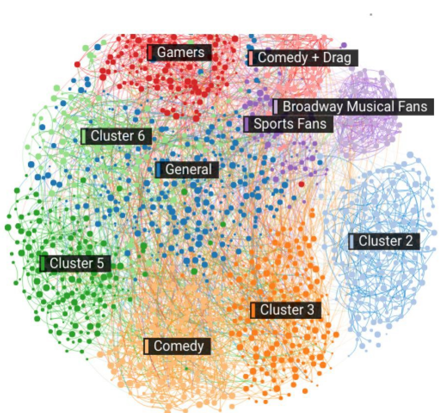
Amy gave us this reading during our third in-residence in preparation for some of our capstone assignments. I know digital branding is important and have done a reasonable job with it, but this article came at it in a very different manner. The author states, “Society privileges the digitally fluent and marginalizes others” (Watling, 2019, np). While I am painfully aware of the digital divide, I never considered that a digital presence also perpetuates the status quo of this concept. People who are digitally savvy gain in popularity and marginalized groups remain exactly that. They reside in the analogue world, which is far too contained to allow them access to building a presence and a reputation of any kind. The author describes capital (social, cultural, etc.) as the “knowledge and skills which bestow status and power” (Watling, 2019, np). I DO NOT consider myself to be high in either status or power, but when positioned in this context, I guess I am. One of the most important things I have learned during this program is the extraordinary access I have. While raised with modest means, I had access to education, the arts, and sports. I had the option to continue my education and even though there were times I felt marginalized; I was anything but. This reading reminded to use my influence for good. To not take it for granted and support others less resourced.

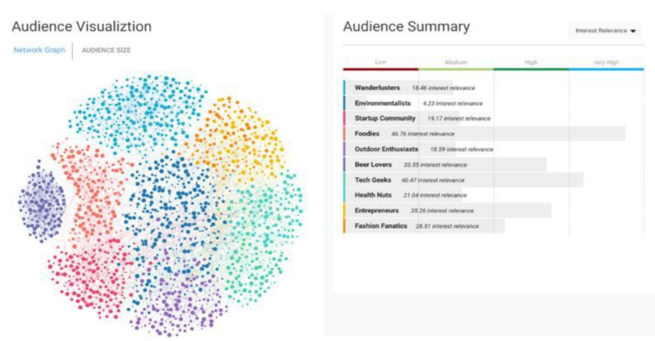
Key Words: Digital divide, digital capital, marginalized, under-resourced, status, power, influence

Demographic Targeting is Irrelevant and Netflix Agrees

White, I. (2016 May 18). Demographic targeting is irrelevant and Netflix agrees. [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://www.affinio.com/blog/2016/05/18/18-demographic-targeting-is-irrelevant-and-netflix-agrees/

The blog title caused me pause– how could demographics be irrelevant? Consumer research is built around demographics. *Product X is playing well with the 18 to 24-year-old segment*. Or, *Our older demographic base (45-60) are our target customers.* I thought most, if not all, research was built off of demographic and social economic status (SES). However, with the plethora of data available companies can move past the basics of demographics and SES and dig deeper. India White maintains "demographics don't matter, interests do" (p. 2). She argues that consumers are more complex and less cookie-cutter than they use to be; sweeping generalizations and stereotypes won't work any more – I'm not sure they ever did. White uses the example of the "Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt". She refers to it as a comedy with Broadway appeal that has several "interest-based clusters" (p. 4). Of course, she works for a marketing software company, so her company's magic bullet was able to identify clusters like, "Broadway Musical Fans, Comedy + Drag, to Gamers, to Sports Fans" (p. 4). There is a pretty slick image in her post and when I visited Affinio I found another example with the visualization on the left and the audience summary on the right. It's an interesting point of view and prompted me to think differently about any type of research.





Key Words: Interest-based clusters, demographics, Affinio, Kimmy Schmidt, data visualization, consumer research

Chapter Nine: The Essentials of Typography

Williams, R. (2014). The essentials of typography. In N. McDonald (Ed.), *The non-designer's design book*, *Fourth Edition* (pp. 151 -166). San Francisco, CA.: Peachpit Press.

I loved everything about this book, but perhaps the biggest stand-out(s) were the quizzes (with the answers provided in a separate section of the book). Typography fascinates me and quickly overwhelms me, especially when I move past a serif versus a sans serif font, but I digress. This chapter ***truly*** outlines the essentials of typography; proper quotation marks, the difference between the en and em dash, and why one never underlines a word, or phrase. Williams explains, "The underline was originally a visual cue on a typewriter to tell the typesetter who was creating the project that the underlined word was to be turned into italic for print" (p. 162). Who knew? [Note to self: Remove all underline(s) on these pages.] The author discusses leading, kerning, widows, and orphans and does it in a funny and straight-forward manner. I carry the book with me when I travel (every week) because I reference it at least once a day.

Key Words: Special characters, underlining, kerning, leading, widows, quotation marks

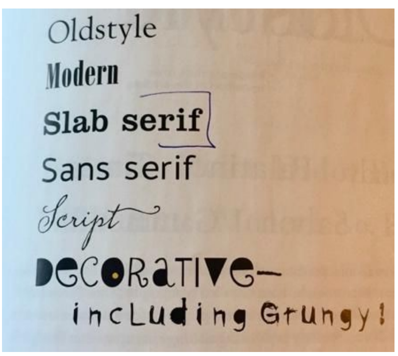
Chapter 11: Categories of Type

Williams, R. (2014). Categories of Type. In N. McDonald (Ed.), *The non-designer's design book*, *Fourth Edition* (pp. 175 -186). San Francisco, CA.: Peachpit Press.

In this chapter Williams does an excellent job of explaining and depicting the most common typefaces:

1. Oldstyle
2. Modern
3. Slab Serif
4. Sans Serif
5. Script
6. Decorative

But, she does so visually showing each typeface:



In the previous chapter Williams discussed how to use different typefaces together, so these examples reinforced how I could do that. She also reviews each typeface by highlighting their vertical or horizontal stress, think/thin transitions in strokes, and serif types. Yet, my favorite part (as mentioned in my earlier annotation) were the quizzes, and other 'games' to validate my understanding. She also provides six or seven examples of font names for each typeface. Again – I put those into immediate use.

Key Words: Typeface, serif, sans serif, Memphis, New Century, fonts