

California Management Review

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Call for Papers for a Special Issue on:

“Management Innovation in an Uncertain World”

by the deadline of January 1st 2017

Guest Editors:

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BACKGROUND

The acronym “VUCA” has been coined for the mix of significant volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity observed in today’s business environment. VUCA is both an outcome of disruptive innovation and a driver of it. This creates an acute challenge for management - in innovation, organizational structure and managing talent.

The rationale for the Special Issue springs from the growing interest in how decision makers across the breadth of institutions in society are facing up to the disrupted and arguably unforecastable environment brought about by a number of interrelated phenomena

- the disruptive effect of very rapid changes to the global business environment, driven both in the product market arena and as a result of governmental, regulatory and social actions
- disruptive technologically driven product and business model innovation in industries
- the disruptive effect of new modes of applying and benefitting from technology in business and society.

The internet boom that started almost 20 years ago demonstrated the promise of disruptive technology in a speculative bubble. Although it subsequently appeared to have been unjustifiably hyped and been put in its place by more rational business fundamentals, the frenzy over innovations proved to lay the digital foundations for much bigger structural change: today, many of these technologies are becoming mainstream, interconnected and mission-critical. Meanwhile they are being overlaid, potentiated and repurposed by other potentially even more disruptive technologies, for example quantum computing, artificial intelligence, the ‘internet of things’, cyber currencies,

gamification, virtual reality, neuro-technology, multi-sided digital platforms and innovations like robotics, drones and driverless cars.

How do disruption and innovation-related uncertainties in the business world, including challenges of global ageing resulting in worldwide labor and talent shortages, affect the way management work is done (e.g. leadership), how organizations are re-structured (e.g. organic vs mechanistic designs), how business processes and strategies are adapted and with what effects?

Bennett & Lemoine's 2014 paper on understanding threats to performance in a VUCA world puts the four words of the acronym into a matrix, analyzing both the distinctiveness and interaction of the phenomena, yet it needs to be further researched and developed into models that are actionable for practitioners.

Although prior research emphasizes the importance of pursuing management innovation, both as a complement to technological innovation (Damanpour et al., 2009) and as an independent phenomenon (Mol & Birkinshaw, 2009), a better understanding of how VUCA environments lead to management innovation in different organizational settings is needed. Equally, attention needs to be given to the effects of management innovation in different settings - both on an individual (e.g. wellbeing, creativity, purpose, agility, etc.) and on an organizational level (financial and operational firm performance, organizational commitment and employee involvement, capability ambidexterity, etc.).

Managers themselves are affected by the VUCA environment, as volatility may have a detrimental effect on wellbeing and the (mental) health of CEOs, managers and entrepreneurs. Research in this area is only just scratching the surface, mainly focusing on tangible or partial effects such as in dealing with innovation, on leading change, etc. Perhaps significant of the need for new thinking in the face of uncertainty is the development of servant, authentic and recently humble leadership theories to supplement or displace transactional and then transformational leadership theories, and the great management inspirational leadership stories. A further possible connection may be the "thriving at work" material of the positive organizational scholarship community (Dutton et al. 2010; Sonenshein et al. 2013).

CONTRIBUTIONS

Although not exclusive, the following questions include issues that could be addressed:

Introduction & Thought-Provocation

- The view from Silicon Valley, Berlin, Tel Aviv, Bangalore and Shanghai: how disruptors think, why they do what they do and how they do it globally
- Two scenarios for a perpetually self-disruptive future for individuals, organizations and society
- Resulting learning and change agenda for general managers seeking to adapt their organizations.

Individuals

- Human-centric design philosophies and practices based on and in response to disruptive technologies and the VUCA environment
- The role of data analytics and disruptive attention and engagement technologies in maximizing and managing toward full human potential, talent management
- Leadership, wellbeing and innovative success in volatile times

Organizations & Industries

- The relationship between VUCA, data and/or disruptive technologies and business model innovations, e.g. big data driven multi-sided platforms and predictive analytics
- The future of innovation and data driven strategy in a VUCA world
- Planning techniques to address risks, gaps and opportunities arising from emerging disruptive technologies on a continuous basis
- The role of big data intermediaries and how they melt industries into converging digital arenas
- Strategies for organizations to identify, acquire and exploit disruptive technological resource
- Mastering the challenge of creating new dynamic digital capabilities for heretofore analogue “bricks-and-mortar” organizations
- New organizational structures and governance mechanisms for boards and management faced with VUCA-innovation and disruption
- Organizational resilience, agility, ambidexterity, and optionality in the face of through disruptive technology and innovation
- The role of ethics, responsibility, sustainability and diversity in the face of and through disruptive technology

Societies

- Promise and peril of technology disruption for societies: reassessing and regrouping socio-political and socio-economic priorities and relationships
- Exercising foresight on the potential for social displacement and novel solutions and designs for the role of the human being in growth and society
- Global comparison of ‘smart growth’ initiatives (e.g. Europe 2020) in such areas as knowledge, innovation, education, ICT and their promise for building technology-intensive skills and competencies
- Adoption of ‘smart cities’, smart infrastructure, smart transportation, e-health and similar systemic solutions for social challenges and diverse sets of stakeholders
- New forms of organization and governance for societies’ institutions, to frame challenges, facilitate the opportunities and manage the fragility presented by disruption.

Importantly, the guest editors will keep in mind that CMR primarily publishes original articles that are both research based and address issues of current concern to managers, faculty teaching current and future managers, and the students assigned CMR articles as course readings.

SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCESS

Submission is required in the form of a **full draft no later than January 1st 2017** to the attention of AIRC5-CMR@ashridge.hult.edu, cc. c.millar@utwente.nl

CMR SUBMISSION GUIDELINES for Prospective Authors can be found online at: <http://cmr.berkeley.edu/submit/requirements.html>. Please use these author guidelines for your draft submission and **DO NOT SUBMIT DIRECTLY TO CMR.**

Ensure your draft paper is between six and nine thousand words, double-spaced, font-size 12. It should clearly state

- 1) the aim of the paper;
- 2) the particular aspect of management in a VUCA world addressed in your study;
- 3) theoretical grounding;
- 4) methodology, applied research methods and data gathering process (if applicable);

5) the relevance of your work for practitioners, academics, and CMR readership

6) areas for further research and areas for implementation.

The authors of approximately 12 draft submissions will be invited to officially submit a final draft through CMR's online submission/review portal before the summer of 2017 for further review. Those invited will be the most likely to result in first-rate, high impact articles.

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