Research and theory building in management consulting have grown rapidly during the past several years. Complexity and uncertainty in today's fast-paced business world are prompting a growing number of organizations - profit and not-for-profit alike - to seek guidance in their concomitant change efforts. External and internal consultants and change agents have become increasingly visible in most, if not all, organizational change initiatives. Individual consultants and consulting firms are becoming increasingly involved in not only providing organizational clients with advice and new ideas but in implementing those ideas and solutions as well. Yet, despite this rapid growth and influence, management consulting is still often criticized for its mystery and ambiguity.

The basic objectives of this research series are to further the links and dialogue between applied scholars and scholarly practitioners in the consulting field, capturing innovative empirical and conceptual research and field experience, and disseminating the resulting insight to a broad range of practitioners, academicians and organizational executives. Targeted articles will focus on a wide range of topics, encompassing research on: the consulting industry itself, including the management, marketing and expansion of professional services firms; critical examination of current trends in the consulting field; conceptualization and evaluation of intervention techniques and strategies; and reflections on consulting experiences. Interdisciplinary and international perspectives on these different topics are strongly encouraged, as are perspectives from both internal and external consultants and change agents.

Books in this series:

- Intervention Research
- La Recherche-Intervention Dans les Entreprises et les Organisations
- Strategic Engineering of the Reed
- Consultation for Organizational Change Revisited
- Decoding the Socio-Economic Approach to Management
- The Socio-Economic Approach to Management Revisited
- Facilitating the Socio-Economic Approach to Management
• The Dynamics and Challenges of Tetranormalization
• Exploring the Professional Identity of Management Consultants
•Facilitating Collaboration in Public Management
• An Evolving Paradigm
• Preparing Better Consultants
• The Qualimetrics Approach
• The Changing Paradigm of Consulting
• Consultation for Organizational Change
• Work and People
• Client-Consultant Collaboration
• Emerging Trends and Issues in Management Consulting
• Board Members and Management Consultants
• Mastering Hidden Costs and Socio-Economic Performance
• Socio-Economic Intervention in Organizations
• Creative Consulting
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• Developing Knowledge and Value in Management Consulting
• Current Trends in Management Consulting

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This volume continues to build on the relationship between the Research in Management Consulting series and the intervener-researchers at the Socio-Economic Institute for Firms and Organizations (ISEOR) in Ecully, France, extending that partnership to our recent work with the French Foundation for Management Education (FNEGE), a foundation dedicated to closing the gap between the teaching and practice of management in France. As part of the Foundation’s multifaceted activities—which range from seminars and an advanced training initiative for French doctoral students to joint programs with international organizations an associations—FNEGE partnered with ISEOR to sponsor a series of workshops on developing high quality intervention-research. This volume is one of the results from that endeavor.

Although intervention-research helps to uncover valuable insight into organizational dynamics and performance, the challenge of capturing and disseminating that insight to both academics and practitioners is entrenched in the rigor-relevance debate. While we are witnessing increased calls for “actionable knowledge,” this ideal, unfortunately, remains a rather elusive concept as critics contend either that rigorous academic research falls well-short of relevance to the practitioner world or research that proves to be valuable to practitioners falls short of the rigor expected in academic life. This volume is intended to help bridge that divide. Drawing on the FNEGE-ISEOR intervention-research workshop, the volume contains 18 chapters that explore the intervention-research process, from initial conceptualization, to implementation, to publication.

The volume is published in French and English.


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The volume will be published in French and English


PART III: CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS ON INTERVENTION-RESEARCH. Recurrent Participant Questions: Thoughts and Recommendations, Henri Savall and Laurent Cappelletti. About the Contributors.

Strategic Engineering of the Reed

Reflections on Socio-Economic Strategy and Implementation

Henri Savall, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR; Veronique Zardet, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR


This volume is part of an ongoing partnership between the Research in Management Consulting book series and the Socio-Economic Institute for Firms and Organizations (ISEOR), located in Ecully, France, on the outskirts of Lyon. The socio-economic approach to management (SEAM) provides a pathway to creating more engaged, more responsible and responsive, and more productive organizations. In many respects this volume reflects a culmination of ISEOR’s work, drawing together Henri Savall and Veronique Zardet’s insights and framing them in the context of strategy creation and, just as if not more important, strategy implementation.

This volume casts SEAM in the context of strategy development and implementation. Reflecting on the changing nature of work and the workplace, the potential power of—and need to develop and build on—human potential has never been greater. Savall and Zardet have always thought that the Western concept of human resources was misguided, that people
are not a resource to use up but rather a source of potential to invest in, develop, and nurture. People bring their potential to the organizations in which they work—and it is their choice as to whether they will apply it in their jobs. Thus, a core managerial challenge is to create an environment in which that potential can be maximized.

SEAM-based strategy builds on this premise, developing an approach to economic and social performance, providing direction as to how managers can create and implement strategies that enhance organizational effectiveness and efficiency. As Savall and Zardet argue, strategic vision does not have to be limited by constraints in the external environment—companies “are not compelled to enter in a ‘strategic’ tunnel” that mimics the competition and the market. Instead, companies can experience breakthroughs, turning constraints into opportunities by unleashing their internal energy, power, and cohesion, working and succeeding as a team. The SEAM approach to strategy is grounded in innovation and creation far more than imitation—and, as convincingly illustrated in the volume, that creativity can be self-financed through the value-added created by the elimination of organizational dysfunctions and the hidden costs they generate. The volume provides an insightful guide for enhancing economic and social performance, with a useful mixture of specific tools and techniques—grounded in a conceptual view of organizational life—interspersed throughout that illustrate how it can be done.


Consultation for Organizational Change Revisited

David W. Jamieson, Jamieson Consulting Group, Inc; Robert C. Barnett, MDA Leadership Consulting; Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University


As a follow-up to a 2010 volume on organizational change-related consulting, the book continues to push our thinking about the dynamics involved in consulting with change leaders and intervening in the change process. Consulting for organizational change is a special type of consultation, with its own complex set of conditions and needs for a broad range of skills and competencies, which include distinct needs for the client-consultant relationship, superior consulting/facilitation skills, an expertise in human and organizational systems, and, as emphasized in the volume, the masterful “use of self.” As with our prior edited collection, this volume is a joint publication in the Research in Management Consulting and Contemporary Trends in Organization Development and Change book series. The dual focus is intended to reflect the importance of quality consulting for change across both the management consulting and Organization Development (OD) fields. It follows a long history of interest in how consulting affects organization change, what works, and, perhaps most importantly for generating theory and insight into the change process, why it works.

The book contains fourteen chapters that frame the changing nature of the organizational change challenge, explore the use of self in intervening in organizations, and examine different change frameworks and perspectives, sharing various reflections and personal insights into the underlying challenges of consulting to bring about organizational change. Our underlying goal is to advance the theory and practice of effective organizational change consultation, stimulating thinking and discussion among change practitioners and researchers so that this work and profession continue to grow and evolve.

ENDORSEMENT: "Consultation for Organization Change Revisited offers a clear map of the dominant thinking about how consultants intervene to help organizations create an alternative future. It nicely answers the question of "What is Organization Development." It also has a memory so that you see the arc of the field over time, which gives an important perspective. Organization change is complicated work, this book makes it clearer." – Peter Block Author of Flawless Consulting

Decoding the Socio-Economic Approach to Management
Results of the Second SEAM Conference in the United States

John Conbere, University of St. Thomas; Henri Savall, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR; Alla Heorhiadi


In May 2014, the French research laboratory ISEOR (Socio-Economic Institute for Firms and Organizations) and the University of St. Thomas co-sponsored a second conference on the application of the Socio-Economic Approach to Management (SEAM) paradigm and methodology in the United States. SEAM is a scientific approach to consultancy that focuses on uncovering the dysfunctions and hidden costs that exist in organizations, “hidden” in the sense that they are not captured by traditional accounting methods and financial analyses. Through intervention that encompasses the entire organization – what the ISEOR team refers to as the HORIVERT approach (combining horizontal and vertical intervention) – the underlying goal is to enhance organizational performance by attacking the “TFW virus,” a vestige of the early work by Frederick Taylor, Henri Fayol, and Max Weber that has sufficiently infiltrated our thinking about management and organization to the point where we are falling well short of our own potential. The resultant dysfunctions this virus unleashes creates hidden costs that readily destroy a firm’s value-added possibilities. The volume captures the ideas, applications, and exchanges of that meeting, attempting to bring the reader into the conference itself. Chapters include the contributors’ presentations (“Chapter Prologue: Conference Remarks”), revised conference papers, and the question and answer dialogue for the session.

This volume is part of the ongoing collaboration between the RMC series and the Socio-Economic Institute for Firms and Organizations (ISEOR), a French intervention-research think tank co-directed by Henri Savall and Véronique Zardet. Building on an earlier collaboration on the ISEOR approach – Socio-Economic Intervention in Organizations: The Intervener-Researcher and the SEAM Approach to Organizational Analysis (IAP, 2007) – Buono and Savall bring together over 30 talented intervener-researchers to explore and examine the ongoing evolution of the Socio-Economic Approach to Management (SEAM).

This volume revisits the application of SEAM in the context of intervention challenges in the wake of the recent economic crisis and the disruptive change that has taken hold across the world. The basic foundation of SEAM – built on the idea of strategic patience, the need to undertake holistic intervention in organizations, and the challenge to get organizational members to listen to themselves (through what they refer to as the mirror effect) – has remained the same. In response to economic and organizational pressures in the current environment, however, there has been a concomitant emphasis on helping client organizations achieve short-term results while still maintaining focus on the long term. Many ideas that have become part of the current discourse within ISEOR today were not as explicitly addressed in the initial volume – from the destructive effect of the Taylorism-Fayolism-Weberism (TFW) virus, to the need to focus on ways to ensure the sustainability of a SEAM intervention, the growing importance of collaborative interactions between external and internal consultants, and the growing importance of cocreating knowledge with client firms and organizations.

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Facilitating the Socio-Economic Approach to Management
Results of the First SEAM Conference in North America
Henri Savall, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR; John Conbere, University of St. Thomas; Alla Heorhiadi, University of St. Thomas; Vincent Cristallini, ISEOR; Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University

This book is the 20th volume in the Research in Management Consulting series and the sixth major collaboration with Henri Savall, Véronique Zardet, and their team of intervenereachers from the Socio-Economic Institute for Firms and Organizations (ISEOR) in LyonÉcully, France. In 2013, for the first time, ISEOR co-sponsored a conference on its Socio-Economic Approach to Management (SEAM) paradigm and methodology in the United States. The volume captures the ideas, applications, and exchanges of that meeting hosted by the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The book attempts to bring the reader into the conference itself. The different chapters include the contributors’ presentations (“Chapter Prologue: Conference Remarks”), revised conference papers, and the question and answer dialogue for the session. For those interested in delving further into the SEAM approach, the volume also contains a general bibliography on the development, critique, and application of the framework.


The Dynamics and Challenges of Tetranormalization
Henri Savall, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR; Veronique Zardet, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR

This volume continues the collaboration between the RMC book series and the French management research think tank ISEOR (Socio-Economic Institute for Firms and Organizations). Those familiar with Henri Savall’s and his colleague Véronique Zardet’s earlier work on the socio-economic theory of organizations will recognize their assessments of organizational dysfunctions and hidden costs – but in a different context. In their current work, the emphasis is on the tensions created by the wider environment – the idea of tetranormalization – and how those tensions shape and influence organizational life. Drawing on a wide range of examples from the news media and popular press, Savall and Zardet paint a disturbing picture of the underlying dynamics and challenges posed by a literal avalanche of standards and norms – which are often ambiguous and conflicting – that literally encompasses all that we do.

Their analytic framework is composed of four “poles” – two social dimensions and two economic dimensions – that capture social norms and quality, safety and environment standards (the social dimension), and trade-related norms and accounting
and financial standards (the economic dimension). Throughout the volume, Savall and Zardet’s analysis captures the myriad ways in which these dimensions interact, shaping the “rules of the game” that dictate how organizations compete and collaborate. Differentiating the “rules of the game” from “playing” those rules, they delve into the subtleties and nuances that underlie these “poles,” providing further insight into how these forces are manipulated through lobbying and the seemingly 24/7 cycle of exposing, publicizing and rule-making surrounding social and economic as well as scientific and technological controversies.

As Savall and Zardet argue, we are in the midst of a profound upheaval that will play havoc with our economic and social lives for some time to come. If we are going to exert influence on that reality, the challenges that we face moving forward must be conceptualized, constructed and implemented today, for, as they argue, “the road to durable prosperity will be a long haul.” Yet, moving beyond these challenges per se, they underscore that we are also presented with an exceptional opportunity – the very real opportunity to create a sustainable commitment to responsible and responsive organizational performance, one that can be fuelled and financed by our ability to translate the hidden costs that exist in all our organizations into productive, value-added activities and true wealth creation. Their analysis presents an intriguing challenge to traditional notions of corporate social responsibility, delving into the idea of “durably acceptable” responsibility, ways to facilitate greater stakeholder engagement, and how we can capture ongoing and sustainable improvement in organizational performance.


Exploring the Professional Identity of Management Consultants

Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University; Léon de Caluwé, Vrije Universiteit; Annemieke Stoppelenburg, Tilburg University and SIOO


The volume is based on the presentations and discussions from the Fifth European Conference on Management Consulting sponsored by the Management Consulting Division of the Academy of Management, which took place June, 2011 at Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The conference theme – Exploring the Professional Identity of Management Consultants – attempted to capture the highly ambiguous social status of this young and emerging profession. Management consulting does not have professional standards or accreditation criteria like those found in medicine or law, there are low barriers to entry, and a broad range of tasks are undertaken in the name of consulting. As a result, a crucial aspect of what constitutes such a loosely defined profession is the identity of its members. The professional identity of management consultants is continuously developing through the interplay of how consultants are seen and valued by clients as well as in the larger society, and how consultancy firms and consultants identify and position themselves.

This theme includes a variety of topics, ranging from the interaction between consultants and their clients, consultant rhetoric and self-presentation, and the plethora of books, media and public discourse on consulting, to human resource policies and practices, knowledge development activities of consultancy firms, career and life stories of consultants and consultancies, and consulting associations, accreditation bodies, and education programs. All of these factors contribute, either directly or indirectly, to identity construction in the field of management consulting.

This volume investigates the potential and challenges inherent in collaborative ventures. It is based on the authors’ rich experiences derived from consulting engagements and research projects in publicly-funded service organizations, non-profit organizations, public-private partnerships, and for-profit enterprises. The focus is on the role that management consultants can play in facilitating such collaborative ventures. Especially within the European context, this particular organizational form is becoming an increasingly common and powerful type of organizational system, and, as such, interventions that can ease and expedite their performance demand our attention and scholarship.

As the authors skilfully document and illustrate, cooperative relationships and networks function according to their own underlying logic, which is typically grounded in a spirit of collaboration and negotiation. As they argue, the resulting dynamic reflects a different perspective on building interpersonal, intergroup, and interorganizational relationships, one that is removed from historic attempts at coordination through tight hierarchical control, which, as they underscore, is often “inflexible, bureaucratic, and incapable” of achieving the level of commitment and dedication necessary for success.

Collaborative ventures involve goals that must be jointly pursued, the partnerships must strive for levels commitment, involvement and motivation from their members that go well beyond those that hierarchical top-down structures typically provide. As the authors convincingly demonstrate, such high levels of collaboration do not emerge on their own. Mergers, acquisitions, joint ventures, partnerships, and strategic alliances are often launched with great fanfare, only to fall well short of pre-venture expectations. To truly work in practice, collaborative relationships and networks must be deliberately formed, developed, organized, and guided. Yet, as this volume amply illustrates, the underlying process is infused with a number of tensions – from the challenge of balancing collaboration and competition, to the appropriate mix of loose-tight controls and linkages, to ensuring commitment from members to the partnership while they maintain allegiance to their primary organization.

This volume appeals to an international market. It is part of an effort to continue to learn across cultural perspectives, focusing on current thinking in the European context. The reader will become intrigued by the Austrian approach to...

An Evolving Paradigm: An Evolving Paradigm: Integrative Perspectives on Organizational Design, Change, Strategic Management, and Ethics—was prepared specifically for Benedictine University’s doctoral program in organization development (OD). In addressing the myriad strategic considerations that underlie intervening in organizations, questions of posturing, image management, and ethics raise significant challenges for how we think about our role as change agents and the unique set of responsibilities that we assume in that role. An earlier volume in the Research in Management Consulting series—Emerging Trends in Management Consulting—focused on the Janus-faced nature of management consulting. Janus, the Roman god of doorways and gateways, looking backwards and forwards with contrasting perspectives—beginnings and endings, comedy and tragedy, good and evil—is a useful analogy to capture the multidimensional nature—positive and negative—of the consulting realm. For all the challenges and shortcomings the field of OD and change might encompass, there are also those magical moments when our interventions succeed, when our efforts truly enhance organizational performance, and when organizational members grow, develop, and become more satisfied with their roles and activities. The reality is that the latter demands our conscious attention, commitment, and, to some degree, sacrifice. When we are less thoughtful than we should be, when we are distracted by other commitments and obligations, or when we find ourselves in situations where we are less than prepared is when Janus’ other face materializes. The volume explores the possibilities and challenges inherent in OD intervention and change initiatives.

Preparing Better Consultants
Susan Adams, Bentley University; Alberto Zanzi, Suffolk University

This volume focuses on a relatively neglected area of management consulting, the education of consultants. In today’s business world, we find training programs provided by consultancies, certification programs provided by professional organizations, on-the-job training of consultants with formal or informal supervision, self-taught professionals, and some academic programs and courses. Is that enough? No, better consultants are needed to handle the complexity and changing nature of business. Academe is in the best position to provide the critical thinking preparation necessary. Yet, academic institutions have been slow in embracing this challenge. The role of academia needs to grow in magnitude and in certain directions that educate consultants beyond industry training practices. Chapter authors provide examples of innovative programs, topical approaches for courses, and thoughtful reflections on the role academia can play in preparing better consultants. There are lessons for business schools, consultancies, and aspiring and practicing consultants.


The Qualimetrics Approach
Observing the Complex Object
Henri Savall, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR; Veronique Zardet, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR

The impetus for this work emerged from Savall’s belief that there is a doubleloop interaction between social and economic factors in organizations, between behaviors and structures, and between the quality of life in organizations and their economic performance. When managers underestimate this dynamic interaction, the resulting tension ultimately manifests in lowered performance and increased costs, what he refers to as the “hidden costs” of organizational life. Only by delving into the depths of these organizational dynamics can we hope to fully understand – and create the basis for improving – organizational performance.

The Qualimetrics Approach presents a different and challenging way of thinking about analyzing organizations, one that draws together quantitative information, financial analysis and qualitative insights into organizational dynamics. As Savall and Zardet argue, to gain a true understanding of what is happening in organizations, intervener-researchers must focus on all three perspectives, as ignoring any one of them will lead to incomplete understandings. Their approach underscores the importance of using qualitative data to validate quantitative depictions (“the numbers”) of organizational performance in understanding the construction of financial statements. The strength of Savall and Zardet’s approach is that it pushes us
The 13th volume in the RMC series, The Changing Paradigm of Consulting, is based on the best papers presented at the Academy of Management’s Management Consulting Division’s fourth international conference (2009) on the underlying dynamics within the fast-paced world of business and management consulting. Held in Vienna, Austria, the conference brought together academicians, consultants and organizational practitioners to examine the changes taking place within the consulting field. The book’s 19 chapters are divided into five sections that explore the emergence and implications of this new paradigm, delineating and illustrating the paradigm shift taking place within consulting, exploring the ramifications for global consulting, examining the challenges inherent in attempts to capture collaboration and cooperation in inter-organizational networks, analyzing the push toward the professionalization – and professionalism – of consultancy, and assessing new approaches to management consulting, focusing on innovative instruments, tools and intervention frameworks. The book captures the myriad complexities and uncertainties faced by consultants and their clients and the concomitant search for appropriate mindsets, attitudes and orientations as well as methods, tools and techniques. As each of the chapters indicates, while there are significant challenges facing the consulting industry, there are also a number of promising frameworks and approaches that can help us successfully meet these challenges.

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The Changing Paradigm of Consulting Adjusting to the Fast-Paced World

Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University; Ralph Grossmann, University of Klagenfurt, Austria; Hubert Lobnig, Lemon Consulting, Austria; Kurt Mayer, REFLECT - Sustainable Organization Development

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Consultation for Organizational Change

Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University; David W. Jamieson, Jamieson Consulting Group, Inc


This volume is a joint publication in the Research in Management Consulting and Contemporary Trends in Organizational Change and Development series. This dual focus reflects the reality that consulting for organizational change is a special type of management consultation, a complex field of endeavor that requires a broad range of skills and competencies. To be truly effective, change-related consulting requires a unique client-consultant relationship, a special set of consulting skills, an expertise in human and organizational systems, and significant personal qualities. It is in high demand in a world full of change. Yet, we still know relatively little theoretically about this type of consulting and have relatively little empirical evidence about what actually works and why.

As the contributors amply illustrate, the Organization Development (OD) field has a well developed set of frameworks, technologies, and models of change. Still we need to focus on and learn more about the role of the OD consultant as a special kind of change agent. A goal of this joint volume is to increase that specific body of knowledge and provide an illustration of much needed collaboration in bringing all possible resources to bear on our understanding of an increasingly critical and essential form of consulting.

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PART I: FRAMING THE CHANGE CHALLENGE.
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Work and People
An Economic Evaluation of Job Enrichment

Henri Savall, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR


The reprint of Henri Savall’s classic Work and People, originally published in French in 1974, is part of the Research in Management Consulting series effort to look backward as well as forward in examining trends, perspectives, and insights – especially from different countries and cultures – into the world of management consulting. Savall’s insights into the complexity of organizational life were groundbreaking, articulating the need to examine both economic and social factors as part of the same analysis, assessing technical and behavioral patterns through the lens of an integrated framework. As he has argued, there is a double-loop interaction between “the quality of functioning and economic performance,” and underestimating this socio-economic “tension” leads inevitably to reduced performance and losses, which he refers to as
This approach, referred to as the socio-economic approach to management (SEAM), has significant potential for our thinking about organizational diagnosis and intervention. As Savall emphasizes, the North American tendency to cast people as human “resources” misses the essential point that human beings cannot be considered as simply another resource at the organization’s disposal. People are free to give or withhold their energy as they desire, depending on the quality of formal and informal contracts and interactions they have with their organizations. As such, the SEAM approach focuses on human “potential,” underscoring the need for managers and their organizations to create the conditions under which people will want to maximize their talents on behalf of the organization.

Work and People focuses on the ramifications of this reality, as dysfunctions – the difference between planned and emergent activities and functions – can quickly lead to a series of costs that are “hidden” from an organization’s formal information systems (e.g., income statements, balance sheets, budgets). As his insightful work underscores, as organizations begin to accumulate dysfunction upon dysfunction, they inadvertently undermine their performance and create excessive operating costs, with lower productivity and less efficiency than they could achieve. As readers will discover, the frameworks, tools and ways of thinking about organizations, people and management in this volume - in essence the background to the socio-economic approach to organizational diagnosis and intervention – continue to hold great promise for our attempts to create truly integrative approaches to management and organizational improvement efforts.


Client-Consultant Collaboration
Coping with Complexity and Change
Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University; Flemming Poulfelt, Copenhagen Business School

The tenth volume in the Research on Management Consulting series—Client–Consultant Collaboration: Coping with Complexity and Change—draws on papers presented at the Academy of Management’s Management Consulting Division International Conference on this theme in Copenhagen, Denmark in June 2007. The volume presents twelve chapters that explore a broad range of questions and concerns that illustrate the scope and complexity of the consultant–client relationship. The chapters illustrate the richness and excitement that takes place not only in research on consulting but also in its application as the various empirical analyses of consulting in practice portray.

The ninth volume in the Research in Management Consulting (RMC) series—much like the volumes that preceded it—underscores that management consulting is a multifaceted field with a truly eclectic nature. Management consultants range from sole practitioners and those working in small boutique firms to members of global consultancies that literally span the world. Their interventions can consist of relatively simple, commonly available services focused on mid- to lower level organizational members, to those that are far more esoteric in nature, providing vital assistance and direction to key players at the upper echelons of the corporate hierarchy. As consultants we can have individuals, groups and work units, or organizations as our “client,” and engagements can be dominated by junior-level specialists or guided by senior-level gurus and advisors.

The volume contains 11 chapters that continue the RMC series’ commitment to enhancing our understanding of and insight into management consulting and the consulting process from a cross-cultural, global perspective. The book is divided into three sections that explore emerging issues and challenges in the management consulting industry, trends and techniques in management consulting interventions, and reflections on consulting and the consulting process.

This volume, which captures the dual nature—possibilities and challenges — associated with management consulting, adds to the Janus-faced portrayal of the field. Drawing on the interplay between practice and scholarship, the volume adds to the series goal of gaining a fuller understanding of management consulting theory in practice and practice in context in a quest for actionable knowledge about consultants, consultancies and the consulting process.

awareness of the consequences that the evolving nature of corporate boards are having on the function of directors, how this function is being redefined by the players themselves—and what all of this change means for consultants and the realm of management consulting. Significant questions are raised and explored throughout the volume, from the extent to which these changes will lead to new social, moral, ethical, and professional challenges and opportunities, to how the relationships between consultants and their traditional clients—managers, administrators and employees—might evolve. As management consultants become more actively involved in governance issues, their role will clearly change, but will such changes enhance or constrain the role they have traditionally played in organizations?


Mastering Hidden Costs and Socio-Economic Performance

Henri Savall, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR; Veronique Zardet, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR


This volume is a first for the Research in Management Consulting series. As research and theory building in management consulting have grown rapidly during the past several years, the series is dedicated to capturing the latest thinking from applied scholars and scholarly practitioners in this field. Complexity and uncertainty in today’s fast-paced business world have prompted a growing number of organizations—profit and not-for-profit alike—to seek guidance in their concomitant change efforts. External and internal consultants and change agents have become increasingly visible in most, if not all, organizational change initiatives. Individual consultants and consulting firms have become increasingly involved in not only providing organizational clients with advice and new ideas but in implementing those ideas and solutions as well. While the series will continue to seek out and explore emerging trends, innovative perspectives, and new insights into the world of management consulting, it is also useful to look back—especially in different countries and cultures—to recapture and revisit past frameworks, intervention models and contributions. This volume is a translation and modest updating of Henri Savall and Véronique Zardet’s original work on mastering “hidden costs,” initially published in French in 1987.

The volume begins with a chapter by Henri Savall, founder and director of the ISEOR Institute and creator of the SEAM methodology, that presents an overview of the development of the socio-economic approach to management, and its guiding frameworks and methodology. The chapter’s detailed explanation of the underlying thinking, tools, and techniques of socio-economic management serves as the primer for the remainder of the volume. The book is then divided into three sections. The first part presents illustrations of SEAM interventions in different types of organizations, including industrial and service companies, and not-for-profit organizations, including cultural institutions and sports clubs. The next section looks at cross-cultural applications and assessments of SEAM experiments in Africa, Asia, Mexico, and the United States, with a concluding chapter on intervening in multinational corporations in general. The volume concludes with a section that examines different issues and challenges in SEAM intervention, ranging from the impact on and role of middle managers in the SEAM process, intervening in small organizations, SEAM’s facilitative role in operationalizing and institutionalizing information technology, conceptualizing, and implementing organizational change, facilitating merger and acquisition integration, and the application of socio-economic management in sales and marketing. The book also contains a combined glossary and chapter index that provides a definition of key terms and concepts in the SEAM methodology and where they appear in the volume. These key terms are highlighted in bold italics throughout the volume, illustrating their application in different contexts.

Enhancing Inter-Firm Networks & Interorganizational Strategies

Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University


The focus of this volume is on the myriad dynamics associated with these interorganizational ventures. Emphasis is placed on (1) understanding the nature of these different interorganizational forms and (2) ways to enhance their effectiveness, creating and sustaining complex problem-solving capabilities and collaborative tendencies in a multiorganizational environment. While the orientation of many of the initiatives and interventions in this volume reflects a traditional organization-development (OD) focus, emphasis is placed on working across organizational interfaces, attempting to create the capacity and systemic potential for greater interorganizational learning and performance, rather than releasing human potential solely within an organization (see, e.g., Cummings, 1984). Consultants and researchers in this realm thus focus on spanning organizations, creating and modifying networks of participants that (1) have a stake in particular interorganizational outcomes and (2) depend on those inter-firm relationships and networks to accomplish their goals.

Developing Knowledge and Value in Management Consulting
Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University

The second volume in the Research in Management Consulting series focuses on developing knowledge and value in management consulting. While there has been an exponential explosion in both the presence and role played by management consultants, the exact nature of their contribution—to client organizations, to our understanding of management and organization, to our comprehension of the increasingly complex dynamics associated with business in a global marketplace, and to the development of their own firms—remains ambiguous. Just as the business world is experiencing rapid and, at times, volatile change, the consulting industry itself is also facing unprecedented change and challenge. Over the next decade, forecasts suggest a world of difference for management consulting, from different competitors and different types of projects and assignments, to different skill sets and different fee structures, to different client expectations.


Current Trends in Management Consulting
Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University

Volume One in this series focuses on current trends in the management consulting industry. It is divided into three sections: (1) a look at some of the broad changes taking place in the management consulting industry, (2) an examination of recent trends and techniques in the practice of management consulting, and (3) reflections on the current state of affairs in the industry. As this brief overview has hopefully captured, the first volume in this series provides ample insight into and differing perspectives on the multi-faceted world of management consulting. Thanks are due to all the authors for their thoughtful work, good-natured colleagueship, and willingness to contribute their thoughts and insights about the consulting field. This volume would not have been possible without their efforts.
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