



Editor's note: In this year-end piece, author Michel Saloff-Coste notes that we exist in a period of deep change – the end of an age – and "must find a fresh example of the company." To do that, he presents three themes: In-depth characteristics of the change that we are living through; Adaptation period required for any company seeking to adapt; and the Process of change to be implemented to modernize the company.

Saloff-Coste writes that the discovery and management of one's "genius and the genius of one's coworkers" require getting past the automatic reaction that we have all incorporated in ourselves of making being different the scapegoat of our woes. He identifies four steps to create the right atmosphere and explicitly explains what holds individuals back in their discovery of their genius. He also identifies four steps, a holistic system of management, that gives value and anchors a company in its genius. Beyond these steps, his process aims at activating – throughout the company – circulation of creativity and communication, which makes the whole company become a laboratory of the future where new, living processes are constantly being invented.

Strategies of the Future

By Michel Saloff-Coste

(Read about Mr. Saloff-Coste at the end of this piece)

Introduction

We are in a period of deep change, but paradoxically, at the same time, we seem to have forgotten all our capacity for in-depth understanding of the social and business revolution we are undergoing. In the face of rapid modifications, we often have a tendency to focus on the short-term and thereby get ourselves stuck in the quicksand of fashions.

While many roads of thought are opened by people trying to retain a detached attitude regarding the dimension of ever more tumultuous phenomena, two ways of reading the situation intersect. There is the deeper, global one involving the evolution of societies and human activities. Then there is the one entailing evolution of businesses, which gives the appearance of being more concrete in a world that has become essentially commercial.

At a time when companies are collapsing while others are witnessing performances never seen throughout the entire industrial era, will we not have to reverse the reflexes that we have built up over hundreds of years? If so, we might then find it easier to understand the immense capabilities offered by the new post-industrial information era, the creation-communication era¹ where the role of the individual once again becomes the centerpiece. We will have to explore new cultural, managerial and systemic paths, while simultaneously keeping in mind that the three periods preceding us (hunting and gathering, planting and rearing, and industry and trade) continue to impregnate our cultures and our types of organization.

It is in relation to this new illumination – that of the end of an age – that we must find a fresh example of the company. Companies can no longer take pride in themselves for fitting into a fully controllable, or much less foreseeable, future. Nevertheless, no matter how unforeseeable the future is, it will partly be the result of what people, individually or working in teams of various types, will imagine and want to create.

The era of uncertainty

These days, no one can pretend to "earn in the context of uncertainty" without first acknowledging that this action basically consists of managing more complexity and of going beyond the approach which three

¹ See Michel Saloff-Coste, "*Le Management du troisième millénaire*", (Management in the third millenium), *op. cit.*

centuries of Cartesian thinking left us. Managing complexity also means knowing that there is no longer a single reality, but a complex fabric that is both virtual and real, and that one can only effectively comprehend through a vision devoted to global thinking. When we talk about learning companies, in fact, we implicitly understand that there are "unlearning" companies — meaning one has to "unlearn" old reflexes in order to really work to the benefit of people and their skills. Let peoples' imagination take over. That is the challenge being offered to you: it is up to them, up to us, to remain the masters of what modern technology can do.

A new vision is indispensable

It is in relation to the new perspectives offered by this switchover to an information era — where informed, creative and communicative individuals can finally let their own genius take its course — that new liberating visions will prove essential. It is these new visions that will give all their meaning and weight to individual and group projects, in the framework of organizational and societal undertakings, taken in the global sense.

New game rules

Some companies – the fourth type² – while there are still too few of them, understood that the rules of the game changed, rules that directly concern individuals and their relations with their equals in their "producer" activities, rules that we will break down into four categories: culture, management, systems and structures. These new game rules bring about a new type of civilization, one that is radically different from the ones we have known up until now.

At the time of the industrial takeoff, the pioneers of the new age, that is the age of industry and trade, knew extraordinary opportunities. Today we also have exceptional opportunities for development, if we know how to anticipate things, while at the same time remembering that the real, concrete future never corresponds to a simple extrapolation of the past. What is important to discern is the heavy tendencies, the general outline of the emerging era: the post-industrial era. It is the general characteristics, the invariants of this era, that we must highlight by differentiating them from characteristics of previous eras.

From meta-strategy to operational management

In this article, three main themes will be presented, going from meta-strategy to practice, and including strategic diagnostics:

- I. in-depth characteristics of the change that we are living through
- II. adaptation period required for any company seeking to adapt
- III. process of change to be implemented to modernize the company

I. IN-DEPTH CHARACTERISTICS OF CURRENT CHANGE

The crisis that we are going through is not cyclical, but structural. In this environment, projections made by extrapolating tendencies are not of much use, since they only extend the "currents" of the moment, so it is the breaking away that need to be examined.

Nevertheless, now more than ever, individuals, teams, companies and society in general need points of reference, anchors floating in the vastness of the ocean, often pulled apart by uncertainty.

In periods when action tends to lose its frame of reference and become insignificant, social-historical reflection can put the change that is taking place in a different light. This new perspective gives an effective meaning back to the action.

Above and beyond the formal level of appearances, it is in fact at the level of meaning that the full contribution of the grid we propose for decoding the evolution of human activities will be appreciated. The objective of this "macroscope" is to shed light on our current evolutionary position and fundamental breaks that we can expect, by giving a few "leads" for answering the following three questions:

- How did we get to the current situation?
- What are the characteristics of our age?
- What are the coming tendencies?

² See B. Lemaire, "*Vers l'entreprise du quatrième type*" (toward a company of the fourth type), *Expansion Management Review*, March 1994.

Breaks and cultures

In its evolution, humanity has witnessed a few major breaks. Are we currently living through another one, or are we simply witnessing the full development of tendencies existing for a long time now?

It is difficult to answer these questions because we all see things from our own background and cultural point of view. Cultures have a great capacity to mutually ignore each other and discredit each other. Because cultures are grids for decoding the world, they are the very origin of our relationship with reality. The question of knowing what major steps humanity has gone through represents another question. What culture should we put ourselves in? What is a beginning for some cultures and an end for others?

The concept of dominant activity

One way to approach the major steps in human evolution is to construct a breakdown based on the modifications recorded in dominant activity. The term "dominant activity" means the activity that most of humanity carries out at a given time.

For nearly three million years, humans' dominant activities were hunting and gathering. Cultivation and rearing then took over for 30,000 years, and 300 years ago, gave way to industry and trade.

Finally, today, creation and communication – fields in which a little more than 50% of the active populations in the most advanced countries work – are gaining ground. In the United States, actual production activities already only represent 1/6th of jobs.

When an activity engages most of humans' forces at a given time, it becomes the foundation of the values that drive the society. The values of a hunter-gatherer, who has to move around quickly in order to follow seasons and animals, are therefore different from the values of a planter and blender, who has to protect his or her territory and stay close to it at all times.

Every time humanity has changed dominant activities, tools and ways of thinking, its way of perceiving, organizing itself, exchanging and communicating also underwent change.

Thinking about history helps us build a concrete tool that can shed light on the present. This tool is a "grid" that offers a clear, summary view of the evolution of history and current change.

Characteristic domains of each age

In order to analyze the characteristics of each step and the evolution of culture and corresponding values, we defined seven characteristic domains:

1. Tool: evolution of tools, as exteriorizations and extensions of our organic functions
2. Power: evolution of the factor determining material and social power
3. Exchange: evolution in ways used to exchange goods
4. Thought: evolution in the way of thinking and understanding reality
5. Communication: evolution in the way of communicating
6. Organization: evolution in the way of organizing things within society
7. History: evolution in the way people comprehend time and history

By intersecting dominant activities and characteristic domains, we obtain a grid made up of 28 elementary meshes. It is made up of seven vertical columns, corresponding to the characteristic domains, and of four horizontal columns, corresponding to the dominant activities.

Evolution grid³

ACTIVITY	TOOLS	POWER	EXCHANGE	THOUGHT	COMMUNICATION	ORGANIZATION	HISTORY
HUNTING and GATHERING 3,000,000 years	Nails Teeth	Osmosis with nature	Bartering	Intuitive Animist	Oral By word of mouth	Myth Tribe	Prehistory Circular Time
PLANTING and-REARING 300,000 years	Arms Legs	Possession of territory	Metal coins	Analogical Monotheist	Writing Handwriting	Monarchy Kingdom	Sacred history Linear Time
INDUSTRY and TRADE 300 years	Senses Viscera	Availability of capital	Paper money	Rational Scientist	Audiovisual Mass media	Democracy Country	Profane history Homogenous Time
CREATION and COMMUNICATION ?	Brain Nerves	Mastery of information	Computer swapping	Holistic Spiritual	Interactive Computer	Sensitivity Networks	Post-history Fragmented time

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The concept of "territory", already shaken up over the course of the three centuries of the industry and trade era, will attenuate during the course of the creation and communication age, which will obviously bring about de-territorialization. This is how the interactive communication systems will make it possible for individuals to exchange, communicate and work in real time with any other point on the planet. These are indeed the functional and cultural stakes of the information highways, which will surpass the problem of infrastructure — which is only the formal level — as well as the visible level of things. It is around common activities and values that people will meet and communicate by means of special networks. The success of the Internet and everything associated with e-commerce acts as a shining example of this.

Furthermore, the emergence of the creation/communication era is going to have a forceful effect on all cultures and on previous values.

The industrial and trade wave transformed cultivation and rearing, moving in the direction of industry and trade. Likewise, the new wave of creation and communication is radically changing industry and trade themselves.

By equipping itself with robots, industry is freeing itself of human labor – and releasing human labor – thereby acquiring flexibility that brings about constant growth in the number of creation and communication jobs. Plants are only massively transforming instruments, just as in Charlie Chaplin's "Modern Times" as theorized by Taylor, Fayol and the scientific management experts. Under the influence of Japanese companies or what we might call "Toyota-ism", it tends to become a nervous system that drives an ever more diversified and subtle production, giving rise to what is sometimes qualified as "industrial customization". With regard to this "production," the customer passively becomes and more a "partner."

From mass duplication to customized production

As material production is taken over by sophisticated, flexible robots, humans' dominant activity is focused on domains specific to humans, that is, creation and communication.

Creation and communication of products with an essentially immaterial value are now going to become human beings' main occupations.

Though duplication characterized the industrial and trade age, and although this phenomenon of duplication is still important today, it is no longer the major characteristic of our times. The phenomenon of mass

³ See Michel Saloff-Coste, "Le Management du troisième millénaire" (Management in the third millenium), *op. cit.*

consumption is now counterbalanced by the development of interactivity and by the emergence of a new consumer who is more and more prone to technological surfing. In the face of this consumer, companies want to be recognized for their specificity and their singularity.

This interactivity is already making it possible for some consumers to draw a customized object and order it directly from a plant which, through the flexibility of its robots, can supply this unique object without excessive overcost. A key element in the evolution of marketing is one-to-one marketing, which tends to handle each customer in a specific manner and make each customer a full partner.

Likewise, in the field of communication, interactivity allows individuals to have more and more freedom of expression. They are no longer passive recipients of messages. At all points in time they can intervene, making themselves transmitters of messages. The "customization" of the creation and communication era also means striving to create spaces that make interactive communication easier. Once again, the exponential success of the Internet is a good example of this, and, in fact, it is in this field that the true stakes of the information highways lie.

The mass media, broadcasting to a multitude of passive consumers from one point, is going to give way to a multitude of networks where consumers of "prosumers" (consumer-producers) will be connected to each other in a non-hierarchical manner, where each one can choose to be either a sender or a recipient, a producer or a consumer.

The industrial and trade age was – through mass-duplication of objects, messages and music – an age of unprecedented uniformity. This uniformity is to be matched up with the idea of universalism and of a mechanical reality in a space-time that is linear and homogenous and in the Western world reigned for 30 glorious years. Today, on the contrary, tendencies are reversing.

This is difficult to accept and understand, because the entire educational system from which we come dates from the industrial and trade age. Our training does not give us the conceptual tools adapted to understanding the creation and communication age into which we are switching over.

What is becoming certain today is the discovery of a universe that is not homogenous and uniform, but instead is made up of a multitude of incomparable micro-realities and breakaways. Today, social reality has burst: each individual is looking for his or her own roots, which tends to loosen the ties of pre-established groups. At the same time people are seeking their own identities through alliances that are often ephemeral.

Physical science, which was the strongest promoter of the concept of a homogenous, linear space-time, is itself calling these premises into question. Modern physics lets us penetrate into a fractal universe where each event is in keeping with a space and time all its own. Nevertheless, these independent micro-realities, each in a way on a different plane, all interact with each other.

II. DIAGNOSTIC OF A COMPANY USING AN EVOLUTION GRID

We have two objectives here: to give the keys necessary to run a diagnostic of a company, using concepts developed in the evolution grid, and to give "mutant" companies some lines of support, since these are companies that will not be content to "suffering" history, but which will themselves be the true laboratories of the future.

A holistic approach to evolution of the world

We will start from the principle that each of the ages, each of the eras, that humanity has gone through constitutes a structural whole, a system of coherence, and makes reference to a system of belief. It is in relation to each of these respective "systems" that one will be able to run a diagnostic on the position of each individual and entity:

The four levels of civilization have more or less been assimilated, depending on the country, company or individual. Some have stayed at one step, while others integrate two, three or four steps. By summarizing the key concepts that preside over each stratum of development, the characteristics associated with the four phases of development of civilizations can be pinpointed in an individual, a company, or a country.

This diagnostic detects the blockages in each stratum that prevent any individual, company or entity from moving into the creation and communication age.

Each time, new functionalities or functions are added to the previous ones, and each of the steps of development corresponds more particularly to certain types of activity.

In a general manner, an increasing capacity for abstraction can be observed, i.e., for creation of concepts that are further and further from simple sensory perceptions entailing sight, hearing, smell and taste.

The hunting and gathering age is the age of a relationship that blends with nature. The cultivation and rearing age is the age of the hierarchical naming of each object. The industry and trade age is one of making uniform theories of reality. The creation and communication age is the age of discovery of the radical otherness of what we are becoming. It is this alterity and the consciousness of our differences that undoubtedly constitutes one of most destabilizing factors of our society. How to live and develop relationships with other people, while at the same time accepting their differences and the idea that they are unique. This is of course one of the major problems in horizontal companies that do not have any managerial structure⁴: making "unique" people work together in a harmonious manner.

The evolution of positioning humans and their points of reference

The first step is essentially perceptual with, however, a development of the senses that we later on have a tendency to lose. This sensory hyper-development creates a blended relationship with the world and others.

The second step is the one where we gave names to each object with the invention of writing, which made it possible to codify and assign a name. The universe, stars, minerals, plants, animals and people were distinguished and put into hierarchical order in vast analogous systems, which legitimized the specific order of the large cultivation and rearing-type empires.

Therefore, during this period, astrology, acupuncture, alchemy and religions developed, based on similar principles of hierarchy. This similar organization into hierarchies gave rise to the belief in a principle of transcendence, which explains this organization; hence the switch from animism, then to pantheism, and finally to monotheism.

The third step is that which entails theories. Human beings left the magic universe of analogy to invent theories reporting phenomena.

This does not simply consist of naming and putting things in order, but rather of finding, above and beyond this apparent order, "laws" that preside over sequencing.

We search out these "laws," using the development of "exact sciences," which establish themselves as a breakaway from the analogic knowledge of the cultivation and rearing era. The civilization of industry and trade was built from a critical position regarding any form of *a priori* organization into a hierarchy.

Reality was no longer perceived as a product that arises through transcendence, but instead became the emanation of an immanence: chance and necessity. The king who found his legitimacy in God was replaced by a president elected by all citizens. The right of hierarchy made way for a demand for the right to equality.

The fourth step is the age of meta-theory. Human beings feel for their cognitive capacities and try to understand the process of knowledge as such. In this approach, humans discover the principle of otherness.

Above and beyond homogenization, from "everything is equal" in the "exact sciences," post-modern thinking discovers the indissoluble nature of the observed and the observer (interiority-exteriority, optimizing orientation, egocentric, or customer orientation, extroverted).

All "reality" is lived as being contingent, with the "reality of reality" becoming relative to an inter-subjective code and feeding back the *a priori* of observers.

In this way, the world is fractalizing with the basic principle of semantics – the map is no longer the territory – yet we only have maps as territory. It is through our own system of representation, which we know to be contingent – and which depends both on our system of values, our paradigm and the context – that we will make decisions that will give meaning to our action. An efficient team will be a team that knows how to access, as quickly as possible, and in an unknown territory, other territories with the "right" map, where

⁴ See B. Lemaire, "*Des entreprises sans hiérarchie ?*" (companies without a managerial structure?), Expansion Management Review, September 1994.

"right" is still relative and contingent. The GaultMillau map is not necessarily suitable for discovering the wonders of Romanesque art in French Catalonia, for example.

Waves, corpuscle, energy and information: reality is represented in different types of cartographies and models, which draw their legitimacy from their relative operationality, and no longer from any claim on truth.

Bachelard analyzes this epistemological break by pointing out that science is now going from "why?" where experience precedes theory, to "why not?" where theory precedes experience. At corporate level, apart from renouncing, sometimes, the totalitarianism of scientific management, the question of "what" – an eminently strategic question – is going to be asked before trying to find out, which is a more operational question, "how" one can do this "what." This calling into question will furthermore justify or be made concrete by a certain number of approaches of new "methods," including that of reengineering.

The creation and communication age is seeing a multitude of models, models of models and meta-models flourish. This new era has a vision which is neither imminent nor transcendent. Here, reality is perceived as a process of creating alterity, that is to say, something that brings with it something other than the known.

The right to equality gives way to the claim to the right to be different, which is manifested in the most advanced companies by the right to error and, therefore, to experimentation and prototyping.

The four relational principles

Using all these considerations, the four principles orienting each of these eras can be seen more clearly.

- Hunting and gathering = Blending + osmosis
- Cultivation and rearing = Putting into hierarchical order + pyramid
- Industry and trade = Equality + competition
- Creation and communication = Alterity + unity = complexity

Human beings come out of their blend with nature through a process of putting things into hierarchical order, both mentally and socially. This hierarchy is then revolutionized by the right to equality. Finally, equality is itself overridden by the right to radical freedom, the right to alterity or otherness, and the right to be different.

Using this synthesis of the key idea that presides over each of the strata of civilization, an accurate analysis of individuals, companies, societies, systems, structures, cultures and management types can be made. To grasp the subjacent representation to which stratum of civilization it implicitly makes reference, it suffices to ask yourself: does "this" take part in strengthening "blending," "hierarchy," "equality" or "alterity?"

Therefore, the ways in which a company or an association or a system is going to recruit one of its co-workers, welcome them, train them or promote them, and the approach, interview, management style, training policy, etc. will largely depend on the subjacent system of representation and values.

In a very general manner, it can be estimated that a system, structure, management or culture is of the hunter-gatherer, cultivation-rearing, industry-trade or creation-communication type in that they value or discredit the processes of blending, putting into hierarchical order, making equal or recognizing alterity.

Management, structure, system or culture will be hunter-gatherer when the parts cannot be distinguished from the whole. Things will converge so as to leave no initiative or freedom, no reflection, but will bring about the necessity of total blending with the group's interests.

They will be cultivation and rearing when they make reference to a methodical organization of everything into a hierarchy and organize themselves in the form of a pyramid-shaped tree structure. In this sense, Taylorian companies, even if they witnessed their full rise in the industry and trade era, still have an archaic organizational structure, which can explain the decline or even death of a number of gigantic companies.

They will be industry and trade when they seek to bring about equality and give value to what most quickly adapts to outside evolutions, the principle of natural selection. "Toyota-ian" companies are rather representative of this type of organization, which is relatively egalitarian; this explains their success at the end of the industrial era.

They will be creation and communication when they value positions that break away from established methods and anticipate by developing new visions of the world. Reebok is a good example of this, and so

are Federal Express, Body Shop, Camañeu, Benetton and Motorola; they are more visionary and creative, and are often associated with companies referred to as "neuronal" or self-learning⁵.

Culture, management, systems and structures

Culture

A hunter and gatherer-type culture is highly centered on itself and ignorant of others. It is a highly compulsive, clan-type culture, which maintains itself by reproducing rituals and ancestral customs.

A cultivation and rearing-type culture is a culture that has deep respect for the order established by the chief; writing plays a primordial role in this, and everything is done through circulars. How can we not think of the number of government offices or organizations, which we refer to as bureaucratic, and which are highly focused on maintaining the internal organizational structure, which has almost no contact with the outside world.

An industry and trade-type culture is a mercenary culture where each person negotiates his or her claim and does what there is to be done, in their role as specialist, and nothing more than that.

A creation and communication-type culture is a culture based on interaction as synergy. In this sense, it might appear to be highly chaotic, and it is indeed always verging on chaos. The only way it can find its balance is dynamically. If it stops, it is lost. What is valued is that each person can define his or her own personal project in harmony with the company's development. This is a culture that respects other people even though they are different, and respects their desire for autonomy and creation, but which is at the same time turned toward development of interior creativity and adaptation to exterior evolutions. It is an approach where each person's skills are pooled, but contrary to the previous culture, to the service of common values and vision.

Management

Management which relies above all on instinct, enthusiasm and fascination is typically hunter and gatherer. Management which relies on a hierarchical organizational structure, order and control is of the cultivation and rearing type. The gigantic American companies of the middle of the century were for the most part managed this way, which shows the time lag there can be between the type of management and the general evolution of the society. This problem is still more crucial in numerous government departments or offices, where the gap between their in-house functioning and the expectations of their users-customers is more and more evident⁶.

Management that relies on competition, negotiation and profit-sharing will be more or less industry and trade. Numerous Japanese companies meet these managerial characteristics, and therefore prove to be more in sync with the market demands of the industrial era.

Management that relies on listening, giving value to personal characteristics, fulfillment of the group or of individuals, play, humor and distraction, but also controlled use of the three previous methods for the benefit of the creative process is creation-communication management. These "type 4" companies – the ones of the creation-communication era – are not yet existent in numbers. And when it comes to large companies, they are rare, and it is even surprising if they occur.

⁵ cf B. Lemaire, C. Nivoix, "Gagner dans l'incertain" (Winning in the context of uncertainty), op. cit.

⁶ The problem posed by a certain archaism in in-house functioning and the need for renewal are recognized by the government offices themselves. In this light, the C.N.A.F., the French national fund for family income support, recently wrote the following in a call for research proposals ("*Performances et efficacité sociale d'un service public: le cas des Allocations Familiales*" (performance and social efficiency in a government department: the case of family income support), May 1994): "*Two factors strongly contribute to this mutation [in our employees' working activity]: multiplication of relations and interactions with those receiving income support, whose expectations and requirements are diversifying, and the accelerated development of technologies and information systems... How are the intervening parties throughout line management accepting these new tools that require... more independence, sharing of information, initiative?... The people taking part bring along strong bureaucratic and professional backgrounds, so they are well prepared... for developing direct relations with those receiving income support... Has industrial engineering... been able to get rid of its Taylorian principles?*"

Systems

A system of recruitment will be hunter-gatherer if it is based on selecting the person who is easiest to get its hands on. It will be cultivation-rearing if it is based on ethnic, birth, diplomas or the family one comes from, independent of the person's current values. It will be industry-trade if it is based on the individual's current capacity to be a specialist or on his or her capacity to generate money. It will be creation-communication if it is based on the degree of development of the applicants' personality, his or her capacity to respond in a creative, autonomous and critical manner. At Reebok, even though they are looking for skills, capacities and motivation in their applicants, it is the last two characteristics – capacities and motivation – that are quite openly preferred by the human resources and corporate management.

Structures

A hunter-gatherer structure is an informal "troop". A cultivation-rearing structure pools vast administrative, mechanical and static pyramids. A sports analogy could be found in an American football team. An industry-trade structure is closer to an inverted pyramid, where the customer is king. It is a structure that is highly reactive to market changes, but not very creative. A creation-communication structure verges on alterity and the creation of new concepts. It functions in the form of flat networks, where each person makes exchanges in a dynamic manner, following the flow of things, according to the inspiration of his or her genius, author and actor, teacher and student, or one might say, co-creator. In the music world, this can be a jazz band, where each person can affirm his or her otherness by improvising, while at the same time remaining connected to their co-musicians.

COMPANY EVOLUTION				
TYPE OF COMPANY	CULTURE	MANAGEMENT	SYSTEMS	STRUCTURES
HUNTER and GATHERER	Instinctive blending	Bonding Fascination	Recursive Closed	Informal troop
CULTIVATION and REARING	Analogical cast	Organize Impose	Formal Mechanistic	Organized pyramid
INDUSTRY and TRADE	Logical equality	Adapt Negotiate	Deductive Reactive	Inverted pyramid
CREATION and COMMUNICATION	Creative complexity	Generate Lead	Inspired Proactive	Interactive cells

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SYSTEM STRATUM	HUMAN RESOURCES FUNCTIONS
HUNTING and GATHERING	TO MAKE AN ELITE EMERGE End purpose: to make best representatives from group have access to the top Career: recognition through social body and by equals Function: it does not exist as such Mobility: little recruiting from outside; one carves out a career and the beginning is traumatizing
CULTIVATION and REARING	TO MANAGE PROGRESS End purpose: to maintain an identical managerial structure Career: to be promoted, status Function: structured and focused on application of procedures Mobility: low between functions, no recruiting from outside, very low turnover
INDUSTRY and TRADE	"THE RIGHT MAN AT THE RIGHT PLACE" End purpose: to place each person so they can contribute the most added value Career: to advance in terms of professionalism and pay Function: structured, focused and equipped with high power Mobility: lots of recruiting from the outside, admittedly high level of turnover
CREATION and COMMUNICATION	EACH ONE HAS A PROFESSIONAL PLAN End purpose: to develop each person's personal potential Career: to realize oneself at professional level, to extend skills Function: decentralized in operational units; role of information, advice and support Mobility: strong in-house mobility (notably inter-function), recruiting from outside as a function of professional plan

CULTURE STRATUM	ATTITUDES TOWARD CUSTOMER ⁷
HUNTING and GATHERING	"OBJECT" CUSTOMER <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The product is <i>a priori</i> considered as excellent and must satisfy the customer • No monitoring of market, not analysis of demand • The customer is a follower, a person in the know, a member of the club
CULTIVATION and REARING	"USER" CUSTOMER <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The product and services that accompany the product are standard and not called into question • Customers' requirements, known through polls, are rarely integrated into the company's offer • The procedures for interfacing with the customer are bureaucratic
INDUSTRY and TRADE	"KING" CUSTOMER <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The product and services accompanying the product are adapted to customers' requirements • Customers' requirements are known through sophisticated, segmented marketing studies • Interface procedures are diversified and flexible
CREATION and COMMUNICATION	"PARTNER" CUSTOMER <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements are directly brought up to date with the customer • The customer's comments and criticisms are immediately taken into account and integrated at all levels • The idea of service, carried to the extreme, makes business be pushed into the background

⁷ Here we find the classification of "customer segments" into four types; this is the classification used for the most part for the reengineering that is taking place at IBM (see B. Lemaire, C. Nivoix, "*Gagner dans l'incertain*" (earning in a context of uncertainty), op. cit.

Right of priority and avant-garde organization

It seems highly difficult or even impossible to skip a step. You have to be in the know with regard to hierarchical organization in order to be capable of appreciating equality, and you have to have lived through the values of equality in the industry and trade era in order to appreciate the concept of otherness in the creation and communication era.

During the course of evolution, the highest performing individuals, companies or governments are the ones that anticipate, insofar as is possible, the next step.

The creation and communication age has the double characteristic of using previous methods in a controlled, conscious and distanced manner, but also of making the use of former methods of functioning completely inefficient and obsolete.

The role given to the individual – the return of the individual and not of individualism – therefore appears to be essential, hence the importance given to developing personality and looking for meaning. Strongly developed personalities, linked to the creation and communication age, are very well informed and one step ahead. They are, therefore, the first ones to take off as soon as a company or a product stops being avant-garde. Without these personalities, a company or a product will have a lot of trouble surviving in this post-industrial, information age.

To succeed in the environment of the creation and communication era, one has to constantly make sure he or she is presenting a valorizing space, where all the human beings surrounding the company feel carried away toward the avant-garde of the development of human knowledge.

III. PROCESSES OF CHANGE TO BE IMPLEMENTED TO MODERNIZE COMPANIES

Human beings' imagination and creativity is unique

By becoming industrialized, agriculture multiplied its productivity; at the same it freed human beings from agrarian tasks. Likewise, the industrial and business world is in the process of becoming computerized, thereby making the specializations of the old days obsolete. Algorithmic intelligence is taken over by robots and computers; human beings are brought back to what distinguishes them most radically among the living: *their capacity to create and communicate* new concepts. Already, the material production cost for a product is infinitely less than the cost generated upstream by its design (creation) and downstream by making the public aware (communication).

For ten years now, unemployment in France has been rapidly increasing in the closed-in, repetitive purely industrial world, but this world undoubtedly is still lacking the genius it needs for taking up the incredible challenge of creation and communication at the end of the century. This is a paradoxical situation, where illusion of over-abundance conceals the deficit in human resources! But can we in fact consider genius as being a resource?

The role played by human resources

The fact that in ten years' time, one moved from "director of personnel" to "human resources leader" is doubly symptomatic. On the one hand, this can be interpreted as a clear-cut attempt to give value to what finally seems to be the main resource of companies. On the other hand, one sinks still deeper into a sort of mechanistic instrumentalization of human resources in the image of what we knew so well how to do for other mineral, plant and animal resources. What is important with human beings is not just their mineral, plant or animal dimensions; it is their genius, their capacity to create otherness, difference, new things. It is this capacity with which computers cannot compete. It is this capacity that definitively makes the difference in the value that an individual or company has today. Nevertheless, the creative act is a leap into the void; it has its origin in another world of order and disorder; it is in keeping with a process of inspiration, where one has to accept the fact of getting lost in order to find. It is for this reason that the instrumentalization of human beings as a company's intricate machinery is now obsolete, and the actual concept of human resources contributes to the confusion of the past.

Beyond analytical thinking

It is surely not with more of the same old thing that we will escape from the divisionism and reductionism of analytical thinking. Einstein noted that one cannot solve a fundamental problem at the logic level of the

problem. It is the nature of mankind's imagination, dreams and genius that lets human beings look at things from a different angle. Today, we have to have more complex thinking that takes into account that the whole is more than the sum of its parts and respects human beings in their three dimensions of consciousness: spiritual, emotional and intellectual. We have to change our ways of thinking and acting, our systems of reference, change paradigms, and switch from a mechanistic vision to a holistic vision. Instead of making what we are, let us be what we do, and in this way, let our dreams and our imagination help us build our own future.

CHANGE OF PARADIGM	
Mechanistic vision	Holistic vision
We are separate from what we want.	Every desire is one with its realization and is one with us.
One has to find the cause of the effect.	Synchronicity is a sign revealing the path to be taken.
This requires force and effort for things to get done.	The more coherent we are, the less effort we have to make.
We are insignificant and have to work hard if we want to be noticed.	We are attractive and magnetic. We attract the necessary resources and people we need to know toward us.
We are continually focused on what is rational and observable.	Information is holographic. Intuition and feelings are powerful means of discovering what is in reality happening.
Finally, we live in a world consumed by failure. Success is difficult and one has to fight to get ahead of the others.	Finally, there are only processes. The process is the end aim and ultimate reward. Success is as simple as a smile.
What we do is what we are.	We are what we do.

From specialization to putting value on each person's genius

One of the constants that stands out from step to step is the increasing diversification of the jobs that human beings fill and of the increasing complexity of these jobs. Already during the cultivation and rearing age, human beings witnessed a certain specialization of tasks in relation to the hunting and gathering age, but we had to wait for the industry and trade age for the concept of specialist to become both explicit and the basis of social integration.

Today we know that 90 percent of tomorrow's trades are unknown and that we will undoubtedly change fields more than five times during the course of an active life. The hyper-specialization of these last few years is running into something entirely different.

Beyond trades, let's rethink human beings' activities based on their "genius"

Can we still talk about changing trades when what we see emerging calls into question the actual concept of trade? As the industry and trade age obliged humans to specialize, the creation and communication age involves humans in their own "genius."

When we talk about genius, we are not talking about such or such feat performed with an out-of-the-ordinary slick talker, like the great specialists know how to do. We are talking about being capable of contributing this very particular trait to the world, this trait that means that we do not resemble anybody else. Our genius is our blind point, because it is this posture, without any difficulty, which is the essence of our being in the world. In a world where changes only lead to still more radical changes, it is essential to survive with a feeling of completeness, to reach in oneself this point of no return, where one continuously has access to self.

It is starting from this anchor in our genius that we will be capable of inventing our "trade" which will undoubtedly have the curious characteristic of being unique. The concept of genius must not be interpreted as bringing about elitist attitudes; we are all unique. The problem is simply that this unique, inspired dimension is often effaced, suppressed in a desire to blend in with others and by our imitative desire to compare and compete.

We are leaving the mechanistic universe of the dialectic of oppositions, where the world is experienced in a contradictory, bi-polar logic. It is no longer a matter of staying in one's place, but of *making a place for oneself*. This is not an angelic vision. The holistic vision brings with it conflicts that are undoubtedly even more radical than the mechanistic vision, because opposition is no longer between different times, but instead between different identifies. Each person contributes a unique world. Creating fertile communication therefore requires being capable of moving outside of oneself and stepping into someone else's world. This *multi-“membership”* capacity is a key component of future success for each of us, and for the planet in general. It requires each and every one to be capable of looking at their point of view in a relative manner. Since human beings have always had some difficulty in doing this, the holistic vision will require human beings to mature, which will undoubtedly be done through multi-dimensional conflicts, where basic preconceptions will come face to face with each other.

Integrating the three levels of consciousness

One of the most difficult things to overcome for individuals – as well as companies – seeking to adapt to this new environment brought about by the creation and communication age is as follows: How to integrate, in an in-depth manner, the various layers of one's personality. If discovering your own genius might be the simplest thing in the world, you also have to learn to allow yourself to do it and to accept being radically different from the people around you. As René Girard demonstrated, we are conditioned by all our atavism to want to blend into imitative arrogance. To feel that we are the best presupposes that we are comparable, which implies that we are looking for, as priority, what others hold against us, and therefore what distances us from our own specificity.

Therefore, in this desire to do right, individuals move further away from their genius, and what they do not allow themselves, they obviously do not allow others. Which means that behind the scenes of a quite ordinary, spell-binding lecture on the necessity of innovation, experience in companies remains the eternal observation that the best way of being excluded is to contribute a really new idea.

Managing one's genius and the genius of one's co-workers requires getting past the automatic reaction that we have all incorporated in ourselves of making alterity, being different, the scapegoat of our woes – woes that are directly linked to our imitative limits. Therefore, we see the one who is in the process of making a breakthrough in the midst of a hopeless situation being repeatedly abused.

Why do human beings often prefer dying or killing to accepting their own genius and the genius of others? We have to become fully aware of the extraordinary suffering that this fundamental deterritorialization linked to genius brings about, and which means that we no longer have any criteria other than the ones we develop for ourselves.

In this context, the formal mask that we built in the social environment explodes into pieces. What peeks its head up from behind – still preventing us from putting our finger on our genius – is the agitation of feelings, desires and hatred, likes and dislikes, and it is only after having incorporated this “agitation,” after stilling it, that one can gain access to the “void,” which makes it possible to reach the level of inspiration and the deep anchoring of being in all its genius.

Three levels of consciousness

There are, therefore, three relatively distinct levels of consciousness used to measure the more or less major integration of the personality of a human being:

- formal intellectual level: binary logic (yes or no).
- turbulent affective level: integrative logic (yes and no).
- empty spiritual level: paradoxical logic (neither yes nor no).

It is clear that traditional education mainly deals with level 1. In the years to come, human beings' stakes will consist of permitting for as many people as possible to gain access to logic levels 2 and 3. A person who has not properly integrated levels 2 and 3 cannot assert his or her genius, nor even come into contact with someone expressing his or her own genius. This person takes this as a nightmare.

Development of individual potential

Over the years, we perfected procedures that facilitate the process of integrating the personality, as well as access to the systemic method of thinking, allowing a holistic approach to problems. It is clear that we are quite far from conventional teaching processes: how could we teach someone to be unique? On the other hand, one can create the right atmosphere and explicitly explain what holds individuals back in their discovery of their genius. We can identify four steps:

1. Open-mindedness. This is a self-diagnostic step, where the person takes stock of himself or herself, and replies to questionnaires giving him or her a “photograph” of his or her current situation.
2. Skill. Second step, where individuals start identifying their major general tendencies and “breaking ground” as to the zones the most likely to contribute to their genius.
3. Consistency. Third step, where people come face to face with the consistencies of their values or inconsistencies depending on the various levels of consciousness they fall into. Premises for identifying blind spot that makes up their genius.
4. Creativity. Fourth step, consisting of an essentially individual job, using paradoxical games likely to bring out the individual’s genius.

Development of company potential

Like individuals, who can learn to live comfortably with their genius and value it, a company can, at group level, be more or less open and positive when they come face to face with their originality as well as with the originality of its members. We perfected a holistic system of management that gives value and anchors the company in its genius. There are also four steps here:

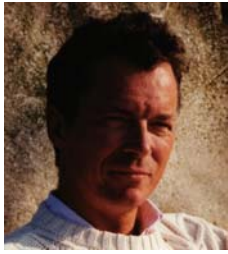
1. Diagnostic. In this first step, the company, using questionnaires and interviews, learns to run its own self-diagnostic, to see at which levels it falls in terms of the levels of consciousness, and determine what types of mentality (hunter-gatherer, cultivation-rearing, industrial-trade, or creation-communication) drive it.
2. Strategy. In this second step, the company learns to refocus on its strong points and to launch a strategy for putting value on its strong points, in conjunction with the typical opportunities of the creation and communication age.
3. Polarization. In this third step, the various members of the company learn to clarify the formal, turbulent, empty motivations that link them to the company and negotiate their support of the strategy that seems best to them.
4. Tactical: In this fourth step, the company creatively produces the “articulation” of its computer system, its communication and its training, which are companies’ three spearheads in the creation and communication age. The problem in these three fields is to come to a point where it is the personification and extension of the company’s genius, rather than overrated, exogenous specializations.

Above and beyond these four steps, the process aims at activating – throughout the company – circulation of creativity and communication, which makes the whole company become a laboratory of the future, where new, living processes are constantly being invented. The quantity of information circulating on the planet doubles every year. The value of your “self” and your company depends only on your capacity to become a “source” in this whirlwind that inexorably swallows up everything that is not unique, original, and exceptional. Being excellent becomes absurd, and having a quantitative vision of quality does not guarantee you anything. Only the quality of your quality, of your own genius, can save you.

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Michel Saloff-Coste has been passionate about technological, economic and social stakes in going from the industrial society to the information society for 20 years now. He works at the Crossroads of strategy, management and research into the future evolution of humanity. He is devoted to better understanding of the major transformation vectors that metamorphosize our civilization. How can individuals, companies, countries and the planet join together in a viable, harmonious future? How can we build learning organizations and implement knowledge management? Michel Saloff-Coste led monthly meetings at the assessment and future evolution center of the French Ministry of Research and Technology and was consultant and research director for the Bossard group.

He currently teaches at the *Centre de Recherches et d'Etude des Chefs d'Entreprises* (CRC), a research and development center for company managers, and is president of MSC et Associés, a consulting firm specialized in management, strategy and communication. In this framework, he heads think tanks for numerous management teams. In France, he is the initiator of the laboratory of the future and the Budapest Club, and a board member of the risk capital company, Newcap Invest.

Bibliography

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The newspapers *Le Monde* and *La Tribune* praised these books, and devoted major interviews to them.

"My objective is to make a wide number of people aware of the major societal transformations that we are going to live through so that everyone can get prepared and seize all possible opportunities by positively participating in building the future civilization".

Lines Of Intervention

What are the major tendencies that transform development of our civilization at planetary level?

What changes are needed in companies in terms of cultural, management, system and structure?

How is your line of business going to change in the context of the information society?

Why and how can your company rethink its strategic development?

How can economic development and social development be harmonized?

What are the stakes of e-commerce and its latest developments?

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