



Interactive Media Roundtables Summaries

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Imagining, Leading, and Governing the Future of Mobility

Organizers:

- Violina Rindova, University of Southern California
- Luis Martins, University of Texas at Austin
- Joseph Porac, New York University

The goal of our IMR was to explore questions of strategizing and governing in contexts of significant disruptions driven by technological changes, new stakeholder demands, and a range of other sources of uncertainty and ambiguity. In particular, the session focused on the challenges associated with imagining the future, leading and shaping the development of the industry, and the governance issues that must be considered in strategizing in such contexts.

Our kick-off prompt emphasized that the future is non-existent and indeterminate, a source of both anxiety and opportunity, and collective construction shaped by imagination and narratives. We used two examples of “futurescapes” (Rindova & Martins, 2022) represented in speeches of auto industry executives about the future of mobility. Six panelists representing a range of theoretical perspectives offered multiple theoretical lens on the topic offered theoretical provocations and reinterpretations of the executive speeches and their implications for understanding firm future-oriented strategizing. Our panelists included Laura Ingrid Maria Colm, Bocconi University, Sam Garg, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, David Kirsch, University of Maryland, Sandeep Pillai, Bocconi University, Mary Tripsas, University of California at Santa Barbara and Tiona Zuzul, Harvard University. Collectively the panelists raised issues about the role of history and identity, brand positioning and competitive advantage, failure of prediction and the materiality of innovation and experimentation, as well as the role of framing under uncertainty, and ultimately “how futuristic should futurescapes be.”

We continued the conversation in three breakout groups around three core themes that emerged from the panelists’ provocations Identity, history and innovation; the role of leaders; and reality checks (role of materiality and corporate governance). We discuss key research questions that might define the research agenda in each of these areas: At what level of analysis should we study future-oriented strategies – products, companies, regions or ecosystems? How do firms maintain competitive advantage in rapidly evolving and indeterminate ecosystems? How do differences in contexts affect future trajectories of action? What is the balance of bottom-up and top-down activities in creating the future? And how are stakeholder interests represented in futurescapes? We concluded by observing how much asking questions together advanced our thinking and our research agendas on these topics.

Conference Session Link: <https://www.strategicmanagement.net/milan2022/tools/session-details?sessionId=2247>

Harnessing life experience into organizational success: Evidence from practice and research

Organizers:

- Giada Di Stefano, Bocconi University
- Lamar Pierce, Washington University in St. Louis

The session brought together a team of academics and practitioners to discuss how firms can help employees learn and grow through lessons learned from life outside of work. Riccarda Zezza (Founder and CEO) and Chiara Bacilieri (Head of Data) represent Lifeed, a VC backed edtech scale-up that uses web-based learning methods to help employees transform life experience into business skills

Professor Di Stefano framed the challenges facing individuals and the organizations that employ them. The separation between personal and professional life has become much weaker. The intense connection between these two has always been there, but several trends are bringing this interplay to the forefront of organizational life. Organizations are finally recognizing that this connection has always existed, and are only now starting to recognize that both they and their employees can benefit from acknowledging this. Furthermore, both social trends and technology such as generational attitudes and remote work make personal life even more tied to work than ever before. Professor Di Stefano explained that life experiences, transitions, and disruptions don't simply interfere with work, but can generate new abilities and knowledge that can make people better professionals and managers.

Ms. Bacilieri introduced the technology-based solution offered by Lifeed that helps employees in life transitions based on health, family, and other events or conditions to recognize which strengths, talents, and expertise they possess and how those can be applied to other contexts such as work. Session participants then completed one of Lifeed's online assessments to understand their own strengths and characteristics and where those are applied across different life areas. In doing so she also explained the scientific basis in personality psychology as well as the importance of learning through private and self-guided technology.

Ms. Zezza explained how her own experiences with motherhood during a successful corporate career inspired her to found Lifeed, based on the recognition that organizations were not approaching life transitions in the right way and that their approaches could produce poor outcomes for both them and their employees. A core principle of Lifeed is that the personal and professional are both important, and can be complementary because they share many of the same talents and attributes for success and meaning.

Professor Di Stefano then tied this industry practice to an emerging body of literature in the fields of organizations and strategy that helps explain precisely why Lifeed's principles of reflection and personal-professional interplay can produce better personal and organizational outcomes. She noted that the role

of organizations in employee personal lives is not obvious because even if such involvement can produce better outcomes and is socially beneficial, privacy and other individual rights are constantly at risk as organizational objectives are prioritized. Professor Di Stefano explained how organizations have the ability and responsibility to create opportunities for personal growth as well as to shape the discourse around life disruptions, transitions to normalize individual challenges, disabilities, and needs. As she concluded, shifting the emphasis from employees to individuals means acknowledge the complete person, not simply the hours and tasks that are assigned to the employer.

Finally, Professor Pierce provided an application of this principles to his own life journey and the inextricable link between life disruptions and his personal and professional outcomes. He emphasized several important aspects. First, he explained why it is important for all of us to acknowledge how disruptions and transitions can affect our work life, and why such acknowledgement can improve empathy and ultimately personal wellness and professional success. Second, he focused on how people naturally want to simplify, generalize, and categorize the experiences of others, and how that can alienate those undergoing disruptions rather than empower them. Third, he emphasized that life disruptions and transitions do not end as quickly as most organizations and people believe. The impact of new parenthood or illness does not end when parental or medical leave ends. Organizations, peers, and leaders must recognize that individuals do not return from such events as the same people, and that patience and accommodation can allow these individuals to transition back to their careers in ways that lead to better long-term outcomes for all. Finally, Professor Pierce explained why technologies such as Lifestream are private, low-cost entries into self-awareness, and that they send strong signals to employees that their experiences are unique, valued, and accommodated.

Conference Session Link: <https://www.strategicmanagement.net/milan2022/tools/session-details?sessionId=2248>

Smart Restart: Recovering from Breach of Contracts & Trust Stemming from Global Disruption

Organizers

- Russell Coff, Wisconsin School of Business
- Libby Weber, University of California, Irvine

How can interfirm relationships recover from major disruptions? Recovery from major disruptions, like a widespread cyberattack (e.g., 2020 US federal government data breach impacting thousands of companies) or the supply chain interruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is a fundamental problem for management and organizational theory. Such disruptions create discontinuities where inter-firm partnerships must adapt to sudden changes that may be temporary or they may represent long-term shifts. Unanticipated disruptions can put most contractual relationships under extreme strain as parties cannot meet contractual responsibilities. The organizations, then, must navigate the disruption as well as the aftermath which may involve adaptation to a new normal. It is likely that the partnership can be an asset, helping firms move forward. However, rebuilding a productive relationship after a breach may not be so simple.

This session began with a negotiation exercise designed to simulate the context of such restarts ([posted in the CarpenterStrategyToolbox](#)). The context is a UK-based office equipment company (SmartTech) and their alliance with an Italian chip manufacturer (ChipComm). Italy was closed down by the pandemic, while the UK remained open, and the supplier could not meet obligations. The parties must determine if ChipComm is culpable and if so, what penalties apply. Then, they need to identify how they might revise the contract to move forward. Of course, building trust to move forward after assessing penalties is no easy task.

The remainder of the session used the negotiation context to focus on how and when alliances can recover from such disruptions. This included:

- How is blame/liability ascribed?
 - More widely spread disruption vs single firms affected
 - Generous interpretations of effort (Benefit of the doubt...)
- What is deemed to be fair?
 - How is the pain shared across firms?
 - Asymmetric disruption (different impacts on the partners)
- What is the existing level of trust and how can it be nurtured?
 - Informal or relational elements of the contract
 - Transparency in information sharing
 - Specific assets may solidify relationships & encourage a successful restart
- Contracting process
 - Purpose of contract (manage risk or nurture problem-solving?)

- Which stakeholders are involved in forming contracts (lawyers vs. mgrs.)?
- Tone: Focus on achieving positives not avoiding negatives

Multiple theoretical perspectives apply in exploring this problem including:

- Regulatory focus theory (Contractual language/framing)
- Attribution theory (assignment of blame)
- Cognitive frames: Different sources of information/facts
- Trust formation and maintenance
 - Relational contracting
 - Stewardship theory
- Negotiation & conflict resolution theory
- Learning theory

Conference Session Link: <https://www.strategicmanagement.net/milan2022/tools/session-details?sessionId=2246>

Remote Sensing Data in Strategic Management Research and Practice

Organizers:

- Michael Hudecheck, University of St. Gallen
- Charlotta Sirén, University of St. Gallen
- Nina Zachlod, University of St. Gallen

The interactive media roundtable on “Remote Sensing Data in Strategic Management Research and Practice” discussed the potential of satellite-based remote sensing data for strategy research. The session outlined available satellite data sources, discussed their strengths and weaknesses, and provided use case examples. The session offered an interactive walkthrough of the University of St.Gallen’s Global Monitoring Platform (satellite.globalmonitor.ch), a free open-access data source that researchers can use to access remote sensing data for their own research interests. During brainstorming and Q&A session, session participants outlined potential research questions that could be researched with satellite data. We discussed amongst others the utility of satellite data as a replacement for otherwise unavailable or unreliable data sources.



Conference Session Link:

<https://www.strategicmanagement.net/milan2022/tools/session-details?sessionId=2250>