

24th EGOS Colloquium - Amsterdam - July 10 - 12, 2008

Sub-theme 32:

The (co-)consumption of management ideas and practices

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Call for papers

During the last two decades, management scholars have witnessed the expansion of what can be dubbed as the 'management knowledge industry'. Here, particular attention has been given to the increased economic and ideational significance of the, so called 'supply-side' - 'knowledge 'producers' or 'entrepreneurs' such as management consultants, business schools, the mass-media, management gurus and others. From a variety of different perspectives researchers sought to provide explanations and accounts of how they interact with their consumers in the dissemination of management ideas. While recognising the scepticism and criticism that many ideas or 'fads' attracted and that many promoted ideas failed to develop and grow, others succeeded in gaining widespread managerial popularity.

But what can we say about the 'upsetting' impact of this growing management knowledge industry on management and organisational praxis? While some attention has been given to the specific and generic 'demand' factors for management ideas, such as competitive change or the problem of organisational control, the focus of much research continues to be on the creation and promotion of management ideas. Their 'consumption' is still a poorly understood element in the current research, beyond an assumption that producer rhetoric is successful. Are management ideas as upsetting as been often claimed or do they have other, less obvious, impacts? We do know from different functional management literatures such as HRM and marketing, as well as from studies of management education and corporate culture, that organisational actors are rarely passive recipients, but typically ambivalent and creative in their adaptations of new ideas and practices and it has been argued that they are becoming increasingly sceptical towards simplified and generic management knowledge. Indeed, they can be seen as knowledge producers in themselves and certainly, as co-producers and co-consumers of management knowledge. But many questions are still unanswered about what happens at the various points of interaction between the various knowledge mediators

The present sub-theme will focus on the impact of the management knowledge industry on praxis and how management ideas are 'brought to life' in organisations and in the knowledge industry as *co-consumers*. To advance understanding about this important topic and to provide a forum for a widely researched topic in the scholarly community, this sub-theme seeks to bring together researchers with an interest in learning about how management ideas are enacted, adapted and appropriated in practice and how these processes feed into the ongoing processes of producing and cannibalising management knowledge in, among other spheres, management practice, academia and management consulting. Central in this sub-theme is the question: how do different knowledge carriers come together in the 'workplace' and how are they involved in the consumption-production of management ideas in organisational practice? In other

words, this stream seeks studies of the active consumption of management ideas within user and producer organisations and/or of the ways in which management practice is not simply a response to the promoters of management ideas, but intimately linked with the production/formation and proliferation of these ideas through the interactions of different knowledge carriers. We invite papers that deal with the topics listed above as well as the following, non exclusive list:

- Comparisons of internal and external sources of management ideas in organisations (eg consultancy; peers)
- Back stage consumer-producer interactions
- Rejection of knowledge entrepreneurs such as gurus, consultants and MBA recruits
- Management education as an arena for knowledge co-production in organisations
- The dynamics of co-producing/co-consuming relations (e.g. in the consultant – client relationship)
- Cross-national differences and institutional effects on knowledge consumption within organisations
- Historical and contemporary perspectives on the co-consumption of management ideas in praxis
- Managers' appreciation and attitudes towards new ideas and their associated practices
- The selection and use – consumption - of management ideas by those traditionally seen as knowledge producers.

We expect that we will be able to organize a special issue in an ISI journal based on a selection of the papers. The deadline for submissions of abstracts to the sub-theme is **January 13, 2008**. See the EGOS website for further information:

http://www.egosnet.org/conferences/collo24/colloquium_2008.shtml

About the convenors:

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