Mission Statement: 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.

Current Trends in Management Consulting 2001
Edited by Anthony F. Buono, Bentley College

The introductory volume in the Research in Management Consulting 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. The chapters offer ample insight into and differing perspectives on the multi-faceted world of management consulting.


ISBN 1-930608-18-7 Paperback

Developing Knowledge and Value in Management Consulting 2002
Edited by Anthony F. Buono, Bentley College

The volume focuses on the processes and challenges involved in 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. The book’s contributors explore the changing world of management consulting, examining a broad range of forces, pressures and changed from different competitors and different types of projects and assignments, to different skill sets and different fee structures, to different client expectations.

Interorganizational relationships – mergers and acquisitions, partnerships and strategic alliances, and networks of organizations – hold significant promise for gaining competitive advantage, leveraging critical capabilities, gaining access to new competencies, technologies and markets, enhancing innovation, and providing increased flexibility and agility. The effectiveness and ultimate success of these interorganizational forms, however, rests largely on collaborative efforts and coordinated activities across organizational interfaces – the difficulty of which is painfully apparent in the wake of all too many failed ventures. The volume contains twelve chapters that explore these challenges, providing an array of tools, techniques, processes and perspectives that can help managers, consultants and their organizations and clients to better understand the dynamics underlying these interorganizational strategies, pointing to ways in which these inter-firm relationships can be strengthened.

Creative Consulting: Innovative Perspectives on Management Consulting

Edited by Anthony F. Buono, Bentley College

Creative Consulting explores the new corporate reality for management consulting, one of cutbacks and consolidation, with many traditional client firms even using centralized gatekeepers to control and limit the entry of management consultants. Although the industry has gone through such recessionary periods before, many analysts argue that fundamental change is taking place. Yet, despite these pressures and changes, there is still demand for highly useful, focused and meaningful consulting engagements. The volume presents 15 chapters that explore these challenges, focusing on positive and negative aspects of the management consulting industry itself, trends and techniques in management consulting, and reflections on consulting theory building and intervention. As the contributors underscore, management consultants and consulting firms are becoming increasingly creative in the ways in which they attempt to engage clients and in the range of interventions and approaches they use to facilitate client success.

Challenges and Issues in Knowledge Management

Edited by Anthony F. Buono, Bentley College and Flemming Poulfelt, Copenhagen Business School

Challenges and Issues in Knowledge Management presents sixteen chapters that focus on knowledge management within the context of the management consulting industry, the dynamics associated with knowledge sharing and dissemination, methodological approaches to studying knowledge in organizations, and reflections on knowledge management and management consulting. As the chapters underscore, it is important to ensure that KM initiatives are aligned with the needs of the organization and its members, that the KM system is “owned” by organizational members with particular emphasis on executive sponsorship and team member acceptance, and that it be understood as an ongoing process rather than simply another management objective or faddish consulting tool. Emphasis is placed on how knowledge processes can be facilitated, leveraged and utilized in organizational value creation.


ISBN 1-59311-419-2 Paperback

Socio-Economic Intervention in Organizations: 2007
The Intervener-Researcher and the SEAM Approach to Organizational Analysis

Edited by Anthony F. Buono, Bentley College and Henri Savall, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR

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.

Mastering Hidden Costs and Socio-Economic Performance

By Henri Savall, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR and Véronique Zardet, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR

Preface by Anthony F. Buono, Bentley College

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. 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.


Board Members and Management Consultants: Redefining the Boundaries of Consulting and Corporate Governance


Preface by Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University

Boards and Management Consultants explores the growing complexity associated with the increasing demands on boards of directors and the challenges raised by evolving expectations of
what constitutes "good" governance. As a way of better understanding the ramifications for management consulting, particular – and timely – emphasis is placed on the evolution of expectations and needs in relation to boards and their operation. The chapter authors, a truly international group of experts, raise the reader’s 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?


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 book 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. The chapters, which capture the dual nature – the possibilities and challenges – associated with management consulting, add 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.


ISBN 978-1-60752-051-1 Paperback
Client-Consultant Collaboration: Coping with Complexity and Change
Edited by Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University and Flemming Poulfelt, Copenhagen Business School

Client–Consultant Collaboration 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 chapter authors explore a broad range of questions and concerns that illustrate the scope and complexity of the consultant–client relationship. The chapters capture the richness and excitement that takes place not only in research on consulting but also in its application as the varied analyses of consulting in practice portray.

Work and People: An Economic Evaluation of Job Enrichment 2010

By Henri Savall, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR

Preface by Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University

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 commitment 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 “hidden costs.”

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 continue to hold great promise for our attempts to create truly integrative approaches to management and organizational improvement efforts.

Consultation for Organizational Change  
2010

Edited by Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University and David W. Jamieson, Jamieson Consulting Group Inc.

The 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.


ISBN 978-1-61735-086-3 Paperback
The Changing Paradigm of Consulting: Adjusting to the Fast-Paced World
Edited by Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University, Ralph Grossmann, University of Klagenfurt, Hubert Lobnig, Lemon Consultants, and Kurt Mayer, M/O/T School of Management, Organizational Development and Technology

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.

The Qualimetrics Approach: Observing the Complex Object

By Henri Savall, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR, and Véronique Zardet, University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and ISEOR.

Preface by Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University
David Boje, University of New Mexico

The volume is a translation and modest updating of Henri Savall and Véronique Zardet’s original work on the “qualimetrics” approach, initially published in French in 2004. Much like we have done with Savall and Zardet’s other works – Mastering Hidden Costs and Socio-Economic Performance (2008) and Work and People (2010) – an underlying goal is to continue to enhance our insights into the complexities and nuances associated with organizational life, helping to create a more comprehensive foundation for our insights into, work with, and intervention in organizations.

The impetus for this work emerged from Savall’s belief that there is a double-loop 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 to go deeper, to fully understand the narratives underlying the numbers and the social construction of our financial assessments.


An Evolving Paradigm: Integrative Perspectives on OD, Change, Strategic Management, and Ethics

An Evolving Paradigm: Integrative Perspectives on OD, Change, Strategic Management, and Ethics was prepared specifically for Benedictine University’s doctoral program in organization development (OD) and is composed of selected chapters from volumes in the RMC series. 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.

The volume is divided into three sections, with a mix of chapters by practical scholars and scholarly practitioners from the U.S. and abroad. Beginning with a look into the “dark side” of the management consulting realm, we begin with a cautious assessment of the dangers and limitations inherent in the consulting field, where ethical challenges and attempts at image management abound, and potentially useful interventions and frameworks are turned into fads and management fashion. The next section builds on these concerns, laying out the challenges we face, even when we are trying to be thoughtful and conscious about what we are attempting to do. An unpleasant reality is that there are numerous contextual factors and forces that as change agents we need to grapple with in our interventions. The volume concludes with a look to possibilities, integrative perspectives on the dynamics that permeate change and OD interventions, and how we might effectively deal with them.

Facilitating Collaboration in Public Management

By Ralph Grossmann, University of Klagenfurt, Hubert Lobnig, Lemon Consultants, and Klaus Scala, University of Graz, with the assistance of Michael Stadlober, MelangeC Sustainable Consulting

Preface by Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University

The 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 volume documents and illustrates, 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.


Exploring the Professional Identity of Management Consultants
Edited by Anthony F. Buono, Bentley University, Leon de Caluwé, Twynstra Group and Vrije Universiteit, and Annemieke Stoppelenburg.


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Tetranormalization

Contact Information

Publisher:

Information Age Publishing, Inc.
11600 North Community House Road
Suite 250
Charlotte, North Carolina
Tel: 704-752-9125
Fax : 704-752-9113
Web : www.infoagepub.com

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