

Departmental Research Seminar



Changing Strategy:
the Recursive Work of Practice Change
in a Permeable Profession
By

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Date : 8 May 2019 (WED)
Time : 10:30 am – 12:00 nn
Venue : M802

Abstract

This paper examines how practices change within the professional field of Strategy. It argues that the permeable structure of the Strategy profession imposes strong recursivity on practice change. By comparison with more impermeable professions such as accounting, practice change is therefore characterized by high levels of reinvention, reiteration and reintegration. The paper draws on company archives, interviews, job advertisements and secondary literature to examine three crucial change episodes in the historical development of the Strategy profession: the introduction of strategic planning in the 1960s, the rise of strategic management in the 1980s, and the emergence of open strategy since around the start of this century. The paper considers implications of recursive practice change both for future innovation in the Strategy profession and for public policy with regard to the strategic moves of today's largest corporations. Please see attached for further background reading.

Prof. Richard Whittington's research focuses on Strategy as Practice and in particular Open Strategy. He has two books coming out this year: *Opening Strategy: Professional Strategists and Practice Change, 1960 to Today* (Oxford University Press, 2019) and *The Cambridge Handbook of Open Strategy* (with David Seidl and Georg von Krogh, Cambridge University Press, 2019). He is currently co-editing an Organization Studies special issue on 'Open Organizations in an Open Society' (submissions due November, 2019). He is also author of two influential textbooks on strategy: *Exploring Strategy* (Pearson, 11th ed 2016), the biggest-selling textbook in Europe, and *What is Strategy—and Does it Matter?* (Thomson, 2nd edition, 2000), past winner of the Management Consulting Association prize. He is also an Associate Editor of the *Strategic Management Journal*. He has recently served on the Board of the Strategic Management Society, and as Chair of the Strategy as Practice interest group at the Academy of Management. He has held full or visiting appointments at Harvard Business School, HEC Paris, Imperial College, the University of Technology Sydney, the University of Toulouse and Warwick Business School. Alongside his current role at Saïd Business School, he is a Fellow in Management at New College, Oxford.

All interested are welcome.

