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View from the Chair
Teresa Covin, Kennesaw State University

LOTS OF WORK TO DO
The last few months have been very busy for Managerial Consultation Division members. I'd like to begin by thanking all of you who submitted papers, symposia, and/or workshops for our 1998 annual meetings in San Diego. Also, thanks to all of you who assisted with the review process. Tony Buono has put together an outstanding pre-conference program and Jeff Kerr is currently pulling together what promises to be the best conference program ever from over 40 submissions (a special thank you to Georges Trepo for coordinating international submissions). We are honored that Professor Warren Bennis has agreed to speak at our members and guests dinner on Sunday (details on making reservations for this event will follow in our next newsletter).

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The WEB-- The Revolution is Underway
By Brian Peach, University of West Florida

The Managerial Consultation Division developed a website at http://www.uwf.edu/~bpeach/mc. The history of the website begins prior to the Academy's 1996 Annual Meeting, when several MCD Board members were charged with establishing a website for the division, believing it could be an additional way to communicate with its membership, to attract new members, and to disseminate information about the Division to anyone interested in management consulting.

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Viewing Consulting from Europe.
By Flemming Pouflet
Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

"Clients' interests come first" or "The customer is a king" are among the most prevalent statements management consultants put forward when it comes to describing their client view. From many talks with consultants during the years this client perspective has been repeated and intensified. The interpretation has typically been that consultants make an effort to accommodate the clients' specific needs by adapting their problem solving approaches and methods to the client context in order to ensure value added consulting.

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WRITE TO US-- Have a comment about the news articles or about general consulting you'd like to see published? Send a note to Editor, Bill Vroman (bvroman @ Loyola.edu) or call or fax 410/628-0380.
You'll be receiving an important mailing from the division in March. The mailing will contain: (1) a ballot asking you to approve a new domain statement for the division and (2) a ballot asking you to approve a change in name for the division from the "Managerial Consultation Division" to the "Management Consulting Division." I'd like to thank Terry Armstrong for leading our domain statement review team. If you'd like to review the domain statement now, check out the division's website at http://www.uwf.edu/~bpeach/mc/ or link to us through the Academy of Management website at http://www.aom.pace.edu/.

The mailing will also include a ballot for you to cast your vote for our new Program Chair-elect, as well as new executive board members. Kurt Motamedi (Pepperdine University) and Bill Vroman (Strategic Planning Inc. and Loyola College) are candidates for the Program Chair-elect position.

Candidates for our three executive board positions include: Thomas C. Head (Tennessee State University), Miriam Y. Lacey (Pepperdine University), Jeanne D. Maes (University of South Alabama), Aaron J. Nurick (Bentley College), Alyson Parham (President, Partek Enterprise Group), Jonelle Roth (independent consultant), and Ken Weidner (Loyola University-Chicago).

The Division is continuing to work with the Institute of Management Consultants (IMC) and the Association of Management Consulting Firms (AMCF) to provide unique opportunities for Managerial Consultation Division Members. You can learn more about the IMC and AMCF through links on our website. In fact, you'll find links to a number of consulting organizations and resources on the comprehensive website that Brian Peach has created for the division.

Thanks again to all of you who have helped and will help with our 1998 program. Thanks also to Bill Vroman for producing another excellent edition of the Consulting Practice Communiqué. If you have any suggestions for the program or for the MC division, please feel free to contact me at (770) 423-6406 or tcovin@ksumail.kennesaw.edu. Finally, please take a few minutes to respond to our upcoming mailing. Your participation in the division is vital to our success!

WEB—Continued from P 1

Marilyn Harris, consultant in residence, assumed leadership in getting approval for the site. A division was made to develop the site using division volunteers. Then Division Chair, Terry Armstrong, decided to house the site at the University of West Florida and asked me to be the webmaster.

At last year's board meeting the decision was made to use the site more effectively to attract members and keep our members up-to-date. A task force was appointed to form strategies to increase Division members' awareness of the site and to find a way to increase the quality and quantity of content.

Today the website provides the latest messages from MCD Chair Teresa Covin, information about the Division and its leadership, future meeting schedules as they become available, and links to related websites. The links include the Academy's home page and our two major consulting organization partners (IMC and AMCF). An archive of all past newsletters and a chat room are in development.

Why don't you look us over. If you have any ideas about how to improve the site, or want some material posted on our site, please contact Brian Peach through links at the website, or e-mail him at bpeach@uwf.edu, or call him at 850-474-2312.

Consulting Web Sites

Jeff Kerr, (U of Miami) Program Chair, sent the URLs of some good consulting sites for your enjoyment.

Maragl Consulting Div  www.uwf.edu/~bpeach/mc**
Anderson Consulting: www.ac.com**
Booze Allen & Hamilton www.bah.com**
EDS www.eds.com
Bain & Co. www.bain.com
Gemini Consulting www.gemcom.com
Arthur D. Little & Co. www.arthurlittle.com
Mercer Mgt. Consult. www.mercercmc.com
Price Waterhouse www.pw.com
Holland & Davis www.hdinc.com
Mitchell Madison Group www.mmgnet.com
Ernst & Young LLP www.ey.com
** Especially Recommended

Newsletter items?—bvroman@loyola.edu
In addition, it has been argued that in a constantly more competitive market, the need to individualize projects and approaches to meet the specific client needs has increased. Another, and probably a more unusual and peculiar exegesis, was given recently by a management consultant from one of the major international consulting firms at a presentation in which “the customer is the king” was emphasized. Asked about this in practice, he answered: “To ensure a high billing rate!” Hopefully, this perspective is quite exceptional.

However, analyses of the client adaptability show contradictory results when looking at the client side. A number of studies undertaken in the Scandinavian countries during the last five years has shown that consultants have not been especially outstanding when it comes to adjusting their problem solving modes to the specific client situation. In fact, approximately 50% did not agree to the statement that consultants are adaptive. Although many clients, in general, are more positive towards management consultants nowadays, they still complain about consultants trying to impose their services in an unreflective manner. As a CEO of a major international insurance company said recently: “I feel a little uncomfortable when consultants present a prepackaged problem solving a key problem in our company before knowing too much about our organization.”

At the same time, analyses show that an important feature of successful consulting assignments is adaptability. How to tune into the uniqueness of a client situation, and how to handle the client in a unique way, seem, therefore, to be critical items in the client-consultant cooperation.

The embedded dilemma is not new. For years there has been a struggle between offering “ready-made solutions” or “tailored problem-solving approaches” within the consulting business. What triggers the scope and relevance of the discussion in 1997 are grounded in two items. First, more and more products are finding their way to the shelves in consulting firms. Development of information technology and software packages are examples of products. At a recent management consulting conference the warning was “Watch out for ‘productization’ of consulting.” A challenge will be to exploit gained knowledge.
and gained experiences without standardizing and stereotyping the services being offered. Secondly, developing a client-focused attitude among the consultant staff is a major, and crucial task. This requires a framework that makes it possible for a consultant to tune into the client situation. Not only from an analytical and technical perspective, but also from a behavioral point of view. While the first mentioned elements have received much attention and are preached frequently, the latter perspective seems to be harder to implement in practice.

What seems to be lacking in the training of consultants and in practicing consulting are more focus on "emotional intelligence." Consulting in the future should put more emphasis on the social dimension of consulting. Within this arena is an important challenge for the consulting world—improving the capabilities for understanding the clients and being more responsive to clients’ real interests.

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**Jeff Kerr, 1998 Program Chair -- Reviewers for 1998 Annual Meeting**

_"We appreciate the excellent reviewing you did for the division. Thank you."_

Terry Armstrong
Kurt Matrare
Walt Wheatley
Jeanne Maes
Craig Lundberg
Kamil Kellner
Tom Kolenko
Francoise Chevalier
Rafael Ramirez
Gaston Gonzalez
Allan H. Church
Georges Trepo
Mark Lee Briercrest
C. Ken Weidner, II
Dennis J. Cahill
Miriam Y. Lacey
Prof. Mette M'nessed
Flemming Poufelt
Marilyn Harris
Bill Werther
Aaron Nurick
James J. Carroll
Albertro Zanz
Kevin Sightler
Teresa Covin
Joanne Preston
Larry Greiner
Robert T. Golembiewski

Univ. of West Florida
Pepperdine University
Univ. of West Florida
U of South Alabama
Cornell University
South Bank University
Kennesaw State University
HEC School of Management
HEC School of Management
Universidad Simon Bolivar
W. Warner Burke Asso., Inc.
HEC School of Management
Graduate School
Loyola University Chicago
North Union Associates
Pepperdine University
Copenhagen Business School
Copenhagen Business School
Central Michigan University
University of Miami
Bentley College
Georgian Court College
Suffolk University
Kennesaw State University
Kennesaw State University
Pepperdine University
U of Southern California.

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**The Mother of All Pandora Boxes**

_Vroman- Continued from Page 6._

This wasn’t the only surprise. Along with the spaghetti code, the state of internal processes showed evidence of poor management decisions, incomplete problem-solving, and bad planning.

This is the “Pandora legacy” that will overwhelm weak managements, and even some stronger managements. If they have the resources, they will have to use consultants to get the company on track. The challenge is awesome. We’re talking about companies deep into the slumber of bureaucratic inertia. Experiences in such critical areas as change management and project management are rare.

Some managements will downsize out of weak subsidiaries. Others will sell units. Some will merge and others will suffer a slow agonizing death at the hands of competitors and litigators shortly after the Year 2000.

Some will clean out their Pandora’s Box. Right now, some companies are not updating old code, but replacing their old programs with new enterprise-wide software. This has the promise of updating the firm with the newest technology and integrated, Y2K compliant, software. This is a major consulting full-employment phenomenon. The Big 5 (at last count) are beating here.

The ripples from the enterprise software phenomenon will go on for years. There is integration, re-engineering, change management and strategic issues galore that will have to be dealt with years into the future. What is happening now is a frenetic effort to avoid a catastrophe in the Year 2000. What will happen is the realization that the wrinkles have to be ironed out following the Year 2000.

Those companies just remediating old code will find that they avoided one “bullet,” but still have Pandora’s Box to clean out to survive. They just have another “bullet” to deal with. This is the fact that old code and old processes aren’t flexible enough, or responsive enough, in today’s marketplace. Today’s customer demands problem-solving and decision-making at the front-line that mandate creative uses of people, information technology and structure. Keeping old systems for financial or other reasons isn’t viable. Consultants will be needed well into the new Century.

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*Sign up for Pre-Convention Activities—Also Warren Bennis will be at our "Friends and Members" dinner*
Take your consulting skills to a higher level. Spend a day and a half with Marilyn Harris (consultant in residence) and her entourage of international consultants. The skills learned, insights gained, and networking opportunities will be a highlight of your conference. This workshop is popular and a standard in our pre-convention. It is highly recommended.

David Jamieson, a long-time consultant and ex-president of the company hosts (with Craig Lundberg) another MCD's core programs. It features high level discussion about consulting on Sunday (9-11). This is a best-in-class, don't miss it, program. Ernest Gilmont, an MCD board member, has an important program Saturday (3-5) on ethics. This will be a powerful program.

Thomas and Nurick (S 1-3) are presenting on interventions and training on diversity issues. Both of these presenters have long experience in the area and are polished presenters. Ralph Kilmann's Sunday program (Sun 10-12) promises to capture insights on corporate transformation.

MCD co-sponsors some fascinating programs this year. Dan Twomey hosts a series of three programs on Saturday and Sunday and has a star-studded cast of academics and practitioners. Not least, is the Case Critique Workshop that MCD co-sponsors yearly. Case enthusiasts will want to check in with Tim Edlund on Saturday (1-5). The insights into case writing from Tim's session are invaluable.

The Consulting Process: Diagnostic Tools and Intervention Strategies

$10 pre-registration to cover the cost of materials. Contact Marilyn Harris at (313)-393-5163 or marilyn.harris@cmich.edu.

Coordinators:
Marilyn Harris, Central Michigan U.
Georges Trepo, Ecole des hauteurs tudes Commercial-France

Presenters:
Terry Armstrong, U. of West Florida
Marc Bonnet, U. of Lyon, France
Anthony F. Buono, Bentley College
Beverly Jones, Mott Community College
Lynne C. Levesque, Levesque Learning Resources

Charlene D. O'Brien, O'Brien & Associates
Michael Peron, U. of Lyon, France
Flemming Poulsift, Copenhagen Business School
Steve Savia, The Sage Group/IMC
James Ross Warren,
Center for Collaborative Management

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9

9-11 -- Consultation Clinic: Issues, Concerns and Challenges
Coordinators: David Jamieson, Pepperdine U.
Craig Lundberg, Cornell U.

10-12 -- Achieving Corporate Transformation: Integrating TQM, Re-engineering, and Learning Organizations
Presenter: Ralph H. Kilmann, U. of Pittsburgh

8-12 -- Practitioner Series III: Reviewing Action and Reflecting on Learning (with MED, HR, ODC)
Facilitator: Jeanna Witterenberg,
Public Service Electric and Gas
Consulting URLs Inside - A view from Europe

The Y2K problem is a boon for consulting. A colleague, a sociologist, told me at dinner the other night, that his son, a recent graduate in philosophy, had just been hired by McKinsey for over $120,000. It was double my colleague's salary.

Anyone with a rudimentary COBOL background is earning around $100,000. If you have project management experience and a reasonable technical background, a $200,000 figure is negotiable. The opportunity is even broader than that. Major consulting firms are stocking up on strategy experts, human resource and organization development competencies, as well.

As everyone is aware, many ills are being forecast to result from the Year 2000 problem facing companies world-wide. I don't believe the recession forecast; many of the resulting failures will be embarrassing and not fatal; however, many companies will either fail or fall further behind in the competitive battle in their marketplaces. This I do believe, and think simultaneously, that it is serious as well as being an ultimately healthy period for the business community world-wide. Survivors will clean out their Pandora's Box of accumulated problems, while failures will be overwhelmed by the accumulated ills of the past.

Cleaning up decades of covering up problems and chucking them in Pandora's Box, is the reason many companies are facing real difficulty. Keep in mind many firms are on top of their Y2K problems. They began reengineering processes long ago and installing new software systems to support those processes. This is evidence they plan, decide and problem-solve pretty well, too.

Many laggard firms, as well as those in relatively protected (high barriers to entry and regulated) industries, along with government, are in a different situation. They were shocked at how little they understood about their computer and software systems. This part of their Pandora's Box yielded inefficient and undocumented code, along with ancient hardware. As the cost of just remediating code came to light, many managements realized they weren't any more competitive. They simply met Y2K minimal requirements.

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