



Corporate DNA

Using Organizational Memory to Improve Poor Decision-Making

Arnold Kransdorff

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For more than half a century the developed world has been chasing productivity. It's financed our wealth but that part of output on which our continued prosperity depends - productivity growth - is petering out. The traditional scapegoat has been the dearth of worker skills. But the worker skills base has never been higher! The other explanation is that it is managers who are not giving full value to their employers. The way they're making decisions is conferring virtually no upside potential, which means they're leaving us wide open for experience-poor competitors to step into our experience-rich shoes. Exactly as Japan did in the 1960s and the so-called BRICK countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China (especially China) and Korea - are threatening now.

If creeping uncompetitiveness is not to overtake us, from where are the next round of productivity gains to come from? Identifying some gaping holes in the way managers are taught to manage, this book outlines both the size of the problem and a solution.

Businesses and other organizations, the author says, have to substantially raise the quality of their decision-making. For this to happen, they need to be much better experiential learners. And for experiential learning to take place, companies and other institutions have to better manage their corporate DNA, the institution-specific experiences otherwise known as Organizational Memory. OM, which characterizes any organization's ability to perform, is the single biggest influence on decision-making excellence. It is a factor of production that has already been paid for at great expense, yet is readily discarded in the backwash of the biggest change in workplace practice for more than a century - the actively-encouraged flexible labour market.

Corporate DNA explains why this key component of intellectual capital should be better managed, can be better managed and, particularly, how it can be used to help organizations reduce the pandemic of repeated mistakes, reinvented wheels and other unlearned lessons that litter modern living. In so doing, productivity growth could be resumed, enabling industry and commerce to more easily fend off their pushy pretenders. Of course, the pretenders could also continue to become even better experiential learners ... but then, that's what competition, the free market - and experiential non-learning - is all about.

Contents

Introduction: The boiler is running out of steam; When experience-rich falls short of experience-poor; How more equals less; The gaping holes in business education; Productivity - The new corporate imperative; Where failure is not delayed success; Going for 20:20 vision; Cutting the workload; Talk Talk; From hagiography to a powerful management tool; Lighting the lamp; Epilogue - The future of the past; Appendices; Index.

About the Author

Arnold Kransdorff is the innovator of the business concepts known as 'corporate amnesia' and 'experienced-based management'. His book on the former, *Corporate Amnesia*, published by Butterworth Heinemann, was short listed for the MCA Management Book of the Year prize in 1999. A former financial analyst and industrial commentator for the Financial Times, he has won several national and international awards for his work in management, among them 'Industrial Feature Writer of the Year (1981)'. Arnold is a Visiting Fellow at the University of Nottingham Business School and a guest lecturer at many UK and overseas business schools. Arnold is also a member of the Association of Business Historians, The European Business History Association and the Business History Conference. He runs London-based group Pencorp, a knowledge management consultancy and leaders in the use of oral debriefing for management development, succession planning and post-implementation reviews. Websites: www.pencorp.co.uk and www.corporate-amnesia.com

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