



Journal of Organizational Change Management

Making strategic change: a critical discourse analysis

Steve Jaynes

Article information:

To cite this document:

Steve Jaynes , (2015), "Making strategic change: a critical discourse analysis", Journal of Organizational Change Management, Vol. 28 Iss 1 pp. 97 - 116

Permanent link to this document:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-04-2013-0053>

Downloaded on: 11 November 2016, At: 01:48 (PT)

References: this document contains references to 64 other documents.

To copy this document: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

The fulltext of this document has been downloaded 1968 times since 2015*

Users who downloaded this article also downloaded:

(2015), "Diffusion of changes in organizations", Journal of Organizational Change Management, Vol. 28 Iss 1 pp. 134-152 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-04-2014-0081>

(2015), "Integrating the organizational change literature: a model for successful change", Journal of Organizational Change Management, Vol. 28 Iss 2 pp. 234-262 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-11-2013-0215>

Access to this document was granted through an Emerald subscription provided by emerald-srm:563821 []

For Authors

If you would like to write for this, or any other Emerald publication, then please use our Emerald for Authors service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit www.emeraldinsight.com/authors for more information.

About Emerald www.emeraldinsight.com

Emerald is a global publisher linking research and practice to the benefit of society. The company manages a portfolio of more than 290 journals and over 2,350 books and book series volumes, as well as providing an extensive range of online products and additional customer resources and services.

Emerald is both COUNTER 4 and TRANSFER compliant. The organization is a partner of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and also works with Portico and the LOCKSS initiative for digital archive preservation.

*Related content and download information correct at time of download.

Making strategic change: a critical discourse analysis

Making
strategic
change

Steve Jaynes

Deakin Graduate School of Business, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia

97

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to present the findings from a discourse model that was developed for an empirical study of a strategic change program.

Design/methodology/approach – The perspective informing the discourse model is that discursive processes are central to strategic change in organizations, and that strategic change works by constructing a particular organizational reality in which the possibilities for change are preconditioned. This perspective offers a discursive understanding of how strategic change is formed, articulated, engaged, and contested by managers and employees.

Findings – The paper reports the findings from a study in which the discourse model was applied to a strategic change program in a Bank. The findings demonstrate the inter-discursive nature of strategic change in showing how different levels of discourse, from the grand to the local, were intertwined in an organizational and situated context.

Research limitations/implications – This paper builds on the small but growing body of empirical work that studies organizational strategy as a discourse. In this paper it has been argued that discursive processes are central to strategic change in organizations - central to the understanding and the practice of how strategic change is formed, articulated, and engaged by managers and employees. This argument was informed by a post-structuralist definition and articulation of language and an understanding of language as discourse in organizations.

Practical implications – The paper demonstrates the central role of language and discourse in the formation of a strategic change program. The findings reported in the paper show the importance of strategy discourse in providing a framework for strategic change, for mobilizing change in an organization, and for legitimizing the change imperative.

Social implications – A critique of the management of emotional intelligence is set out. The centrality of employee identity and subject position to the processes of change is illustrated.

Originality/value – The discourse model made possible an investigation of how a program of strategic change was formed through the discursive framing of organizational reality.

Keywords Strategy, Culture, Discourse, Change

Paper type Case study

Introduction

Since the 1960s the language and tools of strategy have become integral to the way in which many organizations are made sense of, managed, and talked about (Mintzberg, 1994; Knights and Morgan, 1995; Whipp, 1996; Barry and Elmes, 1997; Palmer and Hardy, 2000; Samra-Fredericks, 2005; Greckhamer, 2010). As a consequence strategy is often employed as a body of language and set of analytical tools to frame organizational change. Much of the management and organization studies literature presents strategy as a natural and inevitable aspect of organizational life. In this literature the dynamics and processes implicit in the formation of strategic change are largely taken for granted and unexamined. This view is based on an objectivist premise that treats strategy as a framework for describing the “truth” of the organization. To address the limitations of these assumptions this paper sets out a discourse approach that was developed to study discursive processes that are fundamental to strategic change. This paper departs from the more conventional approaches in much of the literature to examine strategy as a discourse that constitutes or makes up, rather



than reflects, the organization. This paper aims to contribute to an understanding of localized phenomena within a broad social context, as part of a strategy-as-practice approach in which it is argued that: “[...] micro-phenomena need to be understood within their social context [...] We must thus look to those social structures, such as tools, technologies and discourses, through which micro actions are constructed [...]” (Jarzabkowski and Siedl, 2008, p. 1391).

Discourse approaches have developed in recent times to constitute an important school in the study of organizations (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000; Heracleous and Hendry, 2000; Osrick *et al.*, 2000; Putnam and Fairhurst, 2000; Vaara and Tienari, 2002; Fairclough, 2005; Greckhamer, 2010; Jian, 2011). This school is characterized by the study of text, talk, and context to make sense of organizational phenomena. In this paper these approaches are drawn on to argue that discourse is integral to strategic change because it is in discourse that reality and meaning is constituted and that this process structures the possibilities for new actions and practices. As argued in Jian’s (2011) study of communication in an insurance business: “Organizational talk, instead of being marginal activities *about* change, was shown to be discursive actions that *constitute* change” (p. 60). This approach is informed by a post-structuralist view of language and an understanding of language as discourse, opening up a study of discursive aspects placed at the center of the strategic change process.

A discourse approach opens up an examination of the strategy concept itself, enabling a study of strategy as a body, or system of knowledge in which problems and their solutions are made up (Knights and Morgan, 1991). In so doing a discourse approach enables a study of how strategy works in constituting organizational reality, which is not captured by the more conventional literature embodied in the rational and processual approaches. This paper contributes to the body of literature that draws on discourse theory to undertake a study of the construction of a strategic change program.

The paper begins with a brief review of discourse studies of strategy. Following this the value and insights of a discourse approach to strategic change are presented. A discursive model of strategic change is used to explore the framing of organizational reality. Findings are presented from the application of this model to the strategic change program of a financial services organization, hereinafter referred to as “Transform.”

A discourse approach to strategy

As with many concepts that represent complex phenomena, the notion of discourse is nebulous. There are a range of definitions of discourse and a variety of discourse approaches (Phillips *et al.*, 2004). Discourse is commonly understood as a form of language use, or as the ideas or philosophies of a movement (Van Dijk, 1997). Van Dijk (1997, p. 2) makes the point that discourse analysts: “[...] try to go beyond such common-sense definitions [...] They want to include some other essential components in the concept, namely *who* uses language, *how*, *why*, and *when*.” According to Van Dijk (1997), there are three main dimensions to the concept of discourse. These are language use, the communication of beliefs, and interaction in social situations. Van Dijk argued that an important task of discourse studies is to provide integrated descriptions of these three dimensions, and to formulate theories that explain the relationships between language use, meanings, and interaction.

The development of critical discourse analysis from the 1970s (Fowler *et al.*, 1979; Fairclough, 1989) is characterized by the view that discourse is central to the production and change of social practices and relations (see Fairclough, 1989, 2005); in

which social, political, and cultural contexts are imbricated. This approach to discourse understands “[...] humans as socialized; human subjectivities and language use are produced within particular social and cultural contexts” (Pennycook, 1994, p. 123). Critical approaches define discourse as a pattern of statements that provide a language for talking, and a way of producing a particular knowledge. Patterns of discourse produce an interlocking set of assumptions that shape what members of a community understand as fact and taken-for-granted common sense. Practices are embodied in discourse because: “[...] the term refers both to the production of knowledge through language and representation and the way that knowledge is institutionalized, shaping social practices and setting new practices into play” (du Gay, 1996, p. 37). Also referring to its performative effects, Kress (1985, in Pennycook, 1994, p. 123) defined discourses as: “[...] systematically-organized sets of statements [...] that define, describe, and delimit what it is possible to say and not possible to say (and by extension – what to do or not to do) [...]” In his critical approach, Kress (in Fowler, 1996, p. 7) described a discourse as a systematic and organized grouping of statements which articulate the meanings and values of an organization, and provide a “[...] set of possible statements about a given area, and organise and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is talked about.” This conception of discourse argues that actors are constituted by the discourses that they have access to, and that texts construct positions for readers. For example organizational texts are often written or spoken in a way that positions employees in a particular organization, with a presupposed identity and perspective. These employees, however, bring to the text other discursive perspectives, which may reject, appropriate, or accept the textual position.

A discourse approach is also taken within the strategy-as-practice school, which is concerned with the intersection of situated practices at the local level that draw on the macro level of social structures and practices (see Siedl, 2007). Studies of this phenomena reflect: “[...] a growing interest in applications of general social theory to the field of strategy” (Siedl, 2007, p. 197). One stream within the strategy-as-practice literature takes a discourse approach and examines the interplay of macro level and micro level self-referential discourses in the construction and enactment of strategy. The interplay of discourses has been referred to as an ecology: “Conceptualizing a field as a kind of ecology places great emphasis on the interdependencies between its various components [...] every discourse is affected by the processes in other discourses and vice versa. There is a co-evolution between the discourses” (Siedl, 2007, p. 209). In constructing a reality an organizational or local discourse typically draws on grand discourses, defined as macro-bodies of language that produce systems of knowledge. These systems of knowledge are generally assumed to be universal, natural, and inevitable, and are drawn on in a local discourse to construct and legitimize an organizational “truth” (Foucault, 1974; Fairclough, 1992; du Gay, 1996; Alvesson and Karreman, 2000, Hardy, 2004). For example the grand discourse of “globalization” is often drawn on in local discourses as a taken for granted characteristic of the world that is assumed to be driven by advances in information and communication technologies and the development of international trade and finance.

This paper takes up the position set out by Jarzabkowski *et al.* (2007, p. 6) that: “In order to understand human agency in the construction and enactment of strategy it is necessary to re-focus research on the actions and interactions of the strategy practitioner.” The strategy-as-practice approach investigates localized phenomena in its broader social context, examining how local actors draw on macro level discourses to perform strategy: [...] practice refers both to the situated doings of the

individual human beings (micro) and to the different socially defined practices (macro) that the individuals are drawing upon in these doings (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007, p. 7). This paper presents the findings from a study of organizational actors who drew on macro level discourses, at the intersection of which was formed a local discourse of strategic change. These discursive resources were utilized in a systematic and self-referential manner to construct a strategic change program and to “accomplish collective activity” (see Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007, p. 9). Empirical research in the strategy-as-practice field is regarded as a priority (see Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007). The study shows the relationship between the practices derived from larger social fields to shape and legitimize the localized practices of a strategic change program. This approach accords with practice theory that “[...] emphasizes the extra-organisational too – the practices deriving from the larger social fields or systems in which a particular organization is embedded” (Whittington, 2006, p. 620).

The perspective taken in this paper is that language change is central to strategic change. As Dunford and Jones (2000, p. 1208) argued: “Strategic change involves the constituting of a new reality in the minds of organizational members. Language is heavily implicated in this process.” This perspective makes it possible to study how organizational members, managers in particular, can be understood as actors that construct and employ strategy in an attempt to shape and effect change, as distinct from simply being reactors or processors of an independent and naturally occurring body of strategic change knowledge. At the same time it is argued that organizational actors are constrained by being positioned in discourse. In this sense discourse is at a broader level constitutive of, and at a local level constituted by, organizational actors. This view is illustrated in Knights and Morgan (1991, p. 252) work on the discourse of corporate strategy, which focussed on: “[...] the way in which individuals are transformed into subjects whose sense of meaning and reality becomes tied to their participation in the discourse and practice of strategy.”

Strategy works, not as a set of “rational” tools that objectively analyze the organization and the environment “out there,” but as a discourse that makes up the organization and its environment and preconditions the possibilities for action. In terms of making up the organization, Fairclough (2005, p. 931) argued that the implementation of strategy: “[...] is a matter of the operationalization of new representations and imaginaries (new discourses and narratives) in new ways of acting and being and new material arrangements.” This process occurs as strategy discourse is translated from an overarching framework, often produced in vision and mission statements, to the processes of measurement, change and control over individuals and groups. In so doing the effect of strategy discourse is to order, integrate, and monitor the functional areas of an organization: “Strategy becomes the lens through which all aspects of the functioning of the organization are refracted” (Morgan and Sturdy, 2000, p. 150). This rearticulation enables an examination of how the problems and opportunities that an organization confronts, and the analytical tools and techniques that are “essential” in developing solutions to those problems, are constituted in strategy discourse. It is in this way that strategy discourse shapes and influences the conditions that make it possible. The research questions that emerged from the discourse approach to strategy described in this paper were:

RQ1. What were the grand discourses drawn on in constructing a local discourse as an organizational truth and a strategic change imperative?

RQ2. How have these grand discourses been drawn on and constructed in the local discourse?

RQ3. What was the local discourse and how was it constructed?

The Bank

The organization investigated in this study is an international banking and financial services group based in Australia. At the time of the study the Bank employed approximately 30,000 people who worked in 16 business units. These business units included, among others, retail banking; investment banking; corporate banking; wealth management; and foreign exchange trading. The Bank was an established and major competitor in the Australian banking industry, competing in particular with three other national banks and with the expanding operations of regional banks. As with a number of industries, the banking and financial services industry was characterized as competitive and subject to the challenges of deregulation and developments in information technologies. The Bank's strategic change program, Transform, was articulated as a response to the challenges and opportunities identified above. Many senior managers in the Transform group attributed the genesis of Transform to the CEO's ambition for the Bank to become a high performing organization. The CEO worked with a consulting firm (hereinafter referred to as the "Consultants") to employ a "Performance Ethic" model in the Bank. This model was developed from the Consultants research into large companies that had performed consistently well over a number of years. It was stated in Bank documents that Transform was designed to improve the Bank's performance by first working at the individual level of thinking, emotions, and interactions with others in order to enhance performance.

Obtaining access to a wide range of Bank employees, Transform events and documents was important in the decision to study the Bank. The suitability of Transform for the study was evident in its strong focus on change at the personal level and therein on the management of identity. Identity is defined in this paper as particular characterizations, types of personality, or sets of traits that make up the individual characteristics by which a person is recognized, described, and evaluated. Discursive approaches treat identity as constructed, contingent, and fluid (du Gay, 1996; Brown and Humphreys, 2006). Such approaches seek to denaturalize assumptions about identities, to explore how identity is constructed and transformed, and to investigate how the "[...] appearance of naturalness has been constituted" (Butler, 1990, p. 110). According to Hall (1996, pp. 5-6) identity is:

[...] the meeting point, the point of suture, between on one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to "interpellate," speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be spoken.

Transform had a peculiar body of language, terms and expressions that lent itself to a discursive study. From a data collection perspective, Transform had a rich source of data types for analysis. These data sources included documents, interviews, and observations.

Data collection and analysis

An important task for this study was to gain and negotiate access to a research site, in this case a financial services organization implementing a major strategic change

program. First-hand experience in the organization was necessary to gain an understanding of the context of the strategic change program and the ways in which it was articulated and communicated among organizational members. It was important to get close to organizational members in order to explore their thoughts, ideas, and practices in an organizational context. This was particularly important given this study's focus on identity processes, as set out in the discursive model of strategic change. To some extent this study had to be "sold" to management by convincing them of the value and insights that would be gained from a study of their strategic change program. The selling point was pitched from the perspective of a researcher offering to provide an independent and "free" assessment of the program in terms of its effects on employee practices.

Setting the boundaries of the study entailed identifying and accessing a manageable corpus of data that related to the strategic change program. Given the time and resource constraints of the study, it was important to select a research site that was appropriate in terms of the size and the types and volume of data it promised in the context of investigating this study's research questions. The empirical parameters were refined as more was learnt about the circumstances and characteristics of the organization that became the research site. Much of the empirical focus narrowed to a study of the employees involved with the formulation and implementation of the strategic change program. As Fairclough (1992, p. 227) argued, the context of the research site and its participants should be considered in making: "[...] decisions about which samples are typical or representative of a certain practice; whether the corpus adequately reflects the diversity of practice and changes of practice across different types of situation [...]" For this reason a sample of employees whom were directly involved in the strategic change program were interviewed. These employees were designated by management to embody and represent the values and practices of the strategic change program throughout the organization.

Discourse analysis is suited to subjective and qualitative methods that explore different categories of data, rather than quantitative methods that tend to compress and consolidate data. Accordingly, qualitative research methods were used to capture the nuances, the context, the ambiguities, the richness, and complexity of phenomena in the Bank's strategic change program. In broad terms this study investigated a discourse of strategic change and its implications for employee practices by investigating the texts produced by organizational participants in relation to the discourse. In particular, this study focussed on a range of organizational texts to investigate their part in constituting a strategic change program, and the effects of this program in terms of employee identity and practices. Texts can be understood as the linguistic elements of social events and processes (see Fairclough, 2005). In this study texts were defined as written records in the form of documents and the transcripts of interviews, and the recorded observations of a Transform workshop. The Bank's discourse of strategic change was investigated by analyzing the production, dissemination, and consumption of different texts (Fairclough, 1992). The analysis of texts entails a reading of them for their clues to discourse practice: "[...] as 'traces' of the processes of text production [...]" and as 'cues' in the processes of text interpretation" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 198). It also involves locating texts in their wider social processes and context, which in this study involved the investigation of references in the strategic change discourse to grand discourses of business and science. Following Fairclough (1992), texts have an activity feature in that they may describe a series of actions and the participants involved in the activity. Such texts

may arrange participants in a subject position, such as the Transform Champion position in this study, whom are connected to these activities in a particular way.

The first stage of data analysis was the identification of grand discourses invoked in the texts produced by the Bank in relation to its strategic change program. In this study a range of Bank texts were searched for references to grand discourses. In the main these texts were produced by either senior management or the Transform Group. They included six internal management reports, five Transform Group documents, four Transform workshop documents, three CEO and analysts power point presentations, three videos, and two media texts. The identification of grand discourses entailed a search of these texts for references to broader systems of knowledge, presented as natural and inevitable and used to state truths or imperatives about the Bank. Once these grand discourses were identified they were then labeled and categorized within tables. References to grand discourses of science and business were consistent and thematic throughout the range of Bank texts listed above. An examination was made of how these texts described the outcomes of each of the elements of these grand discourses for the Bank, in terms of the “reality” that these grand discourses implied. A detailed analysis was carried out for each Transform or Transform-related document, scoring the number of times a grand discourse was referenced. The documents were labeled in terms of audience, i.e. a management audience, or a general employee/organization wide audience. Each paragraph or dot point of text was considered in terms of whether it drew on or resonated with an aspect or element of a grand discourse, or described the implications or outcomes of the discourse in relation to the Bank.

The second stage of analysis was to investigate how these grand discourses were translated into a local discourse that was specific to the program. Accordingly, this second stage of analysis examined texts for evidence of a local discourse. Analysis of the data required careful reading to establish patterns in the form or content of accounts, and to establish consistency in the form of similar features identified across a range of accounts. As Potter (1997) argued, there is not one established analytical method but rather the approach is to apply one’s particular research questions to investigate the constitutive and functional effects of discourse in the research setting. A local discourse of the self is a discourse directed at the level of the individual in a particular context and set of circumstances, such as the Bank in this study. Managerial discourses are sometimes directed at the self and are enacted through discursive practices that draw on grand discourses (see Knights and Morgan, 1991). Accordingly Bank texts - in particular those related to the Transform Champions and Transform workshops – were examined for references and descriptions of ways to understand and manage the self. Most of the attributes and practices of the local discourse of the self were drawn from the grand discourse of science. An analysis of Bank texts discovered a coherent body of knowledge about understanding and managing the self. This body of knowledge contained frequent references to the attributes and practices set out in the Table I, such that a local discourse of the self was clearly discerned.

The construction of transform

The Transform strategic change program was woven together in the relationships between the grand discourses of business and science, the local discourse of the self, and the Transform Champion subject position. Through these relationships the Bank’s senior managers attempted to govern employees.

Table I.
A local discourse
of the self

Attributes	Practices
1. Emotional intelligence	Personal mastery. A developed sense of awareness of yourself and others; and an ability to understand, motivate and manage yourself, and your interactions with others, in accordance with the Transform performance culture
2. Talented and skilled	High levels of performance, measured in terms of improved productivity and growth
3. Values driven	Attitudes and practices based on the five core Transform values - and not on rules, formal systems, or mindsets. A values-based culture that meets operational goals and is accountable, with decision making based on the Transform values
4. High performance mind	A mind that can: “[...] enter at will the state of consciousness that is most beneficial and most desirable for any given circumstance” (Anna Wise, in <i>Transform in the Business</i> , p. 22). Such a mind is capable of mastering brainwaves (β , α , θ , and δ) in order to attain a desired state of consciousness
5. Leadership	Leaders that can perform and grow, motivate others, and foster creativity and a productive environment
6. Manager of resistance and conflict	Being able to understand and identify forms of resistance, and being able to work through and resolve resistance through a process of conflict resolution. Using the “I” message, “Withholds,” and “Amygdala hijack” techniques
7. Trust	Being reliable, accepting of others, open, and congruent (i.e. what you say is what you do)
8. Creative mindset	Exercising reflective action in order to master creative cause

A grand discourse of business

References to the grand discourse of business in Bank texts were found in descriptions of three related themes of business. These were a changing environment, bureaucracy, and the Bank’s culture. These themes, described below, emerged as coherent elements in the texts.

(1) *A changing environment.* The constitution of Transform drew heavily on texts that invoked themes of a changing business environment, which was argued to be driven by three forces: increasing liberalization and deregulation, the increasing scale and mobility of capital markets, and developments in digital technology. In relation to the opening up and integration of capital markets, together with increased capital flows around the world, it was stated that: “[...] the performance of companies is being compared on a global basis. The performance of Banks in Australia is being regularly compared with that of those in the US and Europe” (*Towards a Transform culture for the Bank*). In terms of liberalization, it was stated that greater deregulation, together with increasing international trade, had escalated competition among corporations that were entering new markets and rivaling local players. Digital technology was argued to have enabled new forms of information and communication within and between corporations, and these developments in information and communication technologies had changed the way corporations interact with one another. The articulation of these forces relates to Greckhamer’s (2010) description of economic development discourses “[...] evoked as historically inevitable natural laws of progress that benefit humankind” (p. 843).

(2) *Bureaucracy.* The second theme of a grand discourse of business was invoked in a negative sense as an impedance to change. In a survey of the Bank’s culture it was

also reported that there was a: “[...] prevalence of political games, mistrust, a revisiting of decisions, a lack of clarity as to the specialised businesses model, and perceptions of bureaucracy” (*The Journey*). The “shackles” of bureaucracy were described as controlling information, silo mentality, preoccupation with costs and efficiency, and cost cutting (*The Journey*). This description resonates with elements of Weber’s definition of rational-legal bureaucracy, including the establishment and enforcement of rules and regulations that bind all employees (Perrow, 1986, p. 3). Negative references to bureaucracy were cited in a section of *Transform Performance Leadership* entitled “What’s Holding us Back? Key Themes from Deep Structure Interviews.” These included:

There is a strong focus on status and hierarchy – I’d rather see connectedness and less status [...] We still have a “my island” approach [...] I’m still seeing one-upmanship, politically motivated moves and self protection [...] The MD clique is very hard to break into [...] People still want to see what others, especially the CEO, are saying and in the meantime sit on the fence.

According to the CEO, the Bank had to shift its center of gravity toward a values-based culture and away from the constraints of rules: “That centre of gravity stands at the heart of what we want rather than a rulebook of one thousand pages that no one can understand” (*The Journey*). These “dysfunctions” of bureaucracy were presented as a contextual imperative for Transform. In establishing the “shackles” of bureaucracy the Transform imperative was presented as necessary to break these shackles. In this way Transform de-legitimized the bureaucratic culture, similar to a finding in Vaara’s *et al.* (2010) study of strategic planning in a city council, in which the official strategy was used to de-legitimate specific projects.

(3) *Bank culture.* A strong causal link between the possession of talented people and the achievement of strong financial performance was presented as the rationale for a Transform culture: “One important implication of this change is the significance of having a culture that attracts and brings the best out of talented people [...] Having outstanding talent is the key to creating intangible assets, which is the key to creating wealth in the globalised economy” (*Towards a Transform culture for the Bank*). These points were presented as taken for granted assumptions about the changing landscape of business, as defined in the changing environment theme. Intangible assets were noted to be talented people, demonstrated “smarts” in ways of working, knowledge management, brand, and reputation. A new culture was articulated as one in which employees would live Transform aspiration and values, transforming themselves and the way they work. This view of culture accords with Florida’s view of culture in the creative class, in which: “[...] the role of culture is much more expansive, that human beings have limitless potential, and that the key to economic growth is to enable and unleash that potential. This unleashing requires an open culture – one that does not discriminate, does not force people into boxes, allows us to be ourselves [...]” (Florida, 2005, p. 5). A culture of open communication, pleasant working conditions, fair rules and positive values will foster creative work, and a more effective organization.

The conclusion drawn from the three forces outlined above was that the Bank’s environment had become significantly more global and more competitive. As a result the way wealth was created had changed to a more intangible form than that of having and controlling capital assets. The implication of these changes in the “globalised business environment” was that organizations had to work smarter rather than harder, and to do so required a depth of talented people. The changing environment and

bureaucracy themes of a grand discourse of business constructed particular problems and challenges that faced the Bank, in response to which a particular type of organizational culture and quality of talented people was presented as an imperative. Hence, the problems and challenges defined in the changing environment and bureaucracy themes provided the rationale for drawing on the business theme of culture. The culture shift described above produced new modes of description for how to be and act in the Bank, and were directly linked to actions sanctioned in Transform. In defining many of the problems and challenges facing the Bank a space was opened up for a body of knowledge and set of tools to provide the requisite solutions. Many of these solutions were drawn from a grand discourse of science.

A grand discourse of science

References to a grand discourse of science were found in descriptions of a range of scientific concepts and related practices. These scientific concepts were physics, morphic fields, psychology, and neurology, and they were introduced as a set of natural world truths that underlie beliefs about the nature of reality. It was argued that science plays a key role in the development and evolution of a society's worldview, and that scientific discoveries and events have "[...] a profound impact on the way we behave and the way we think about things." A discussion of these concepts that made up the grand discourse of science follows.

(1) *Physics*. The science of physics was drawn on to demonstrate the role of consciousness in the physical world, and provided the "scientifically proven truth" that is the premise for "creative cause." The implication of the creative cause practice was that employees would assume greater responsibility in the performance of their work, both individually and through their interactions to help develop others.

(2) *Morphic fields*. The morphic field concept was drawn on to describe and prescribe an ideal culture for the Bank. The practice of open-hearted connection with others was prescribed on the basis that the more we are connected with others the greater the flow of information and the more "potent" the forces for transformation. For example Transform Champions: "[...] holding a common vision for the future can become the 'strange attractors' who set the pattern within the chaos" (*Individual Mastery*). Transform Champions were to live the new culture and to attract like-minded people to them in order to strengthen this pattern, and to be open to transformation. Based on the principles of dissipative structures and self-organizing systems, Transform Champions were to support an environment receptive to new ideas, to encourage people to be open to new ways of doing things, and to welcome challenges as a way of achieving growth and evolution.

(3) *Psychology*. A repertoire of techniques and practices were drawn from the concept of psychology. Employees were asked to develop an awareness of the impact of small actions. Transform Champions in particular were obliged to bring full awareness to every action: "It could be the flap of the butterfly wing in China that creates the tornado in Florida" (*Individual Mastery*). Transform Champions were also to practice reflective action and to learn the bigger picture. Transform Champions were required to be genuine and open, aware of how to break down the barriers between people, to have empathy with others, and to be able to offer people creative suggestions for their highest growth. Transform Champions "of change" should:

[...] use a joy of self discovery to care and nurture the concerns, worries, and restlessness of others, and to be finely attuned to the flows of energy around them. Transform Champions

should know that their vision contributes to the new paradigm emerging in business. Transform Champions need to free themselves from the need to control or have power over others, to transcend the security mode of consciousness that creates illusions of power and control. In so doing they can be freed from reactive behaviour and be able to master creative response.

In general, Transform Champions were to bring all their faculties to bear in perceiving what is going on in the Bank, in order to see the patterns, the “strange attractors,” that are a bigger picture of what is “going on.”

(4) *Neurology*. The main practice for the self related to the science of neurology was described as developing a high performance mind. A high performance mind was defined as a mind “[...] that can enter at will the state of consciousness that is most beneficial and most desirable for any given circumstance” (*Transform in the Business*). To achieve such a mind requires the mastering of brainwaves. Another practice was “managing withholds.” Withholds were defined as that which we keep from doing, hold back from, defer, or refrain from giving or allowing. Withholds should be released by “[...] simply making the choice to let go, by writing a letter, talking it through, or changing our behaviour” (*Transform in the Business*).

A local discourse of the self

In Bank texts the grand discourses of business and science were drawn on in constructing a local discourse of the self. This construction of a local discourse at the intersection of two grand discourses resonates with the argument that “[...] the production of discourse is not contained ‘within’ a setting, but is shaped by intersecting (con)texts [...] the locale of organizational operations can be reframed as providing Discourse(s) to practice” [...] (Kuhn, 2006, p. 1342). In this local discourse the possibilities for acting in the Bank were preconditioned, prescribed, and presented as imperative to the Bank’s survival and success. The local discourse of the self was invoked in a range of Bank texts on the premise that organizational transformation is generated by individuals making personal transformations, and that changes in individual mindsets are prerequisite to changes in the organization. The local discourse of the self required employees to be emotionally intelligent, talented, and values driven, possessed of high performance minds, and capable of leadership and creativity.

The concept of emotional intelligence, for example was concerned with developing an ability to understand and manage one’s emotions, made up an important part of the local discourse of the self that was constructed in the Transform program. This was evident in the frequent references to emotional intelligence that were found in Bank texts. The ideas and practices associated with emotional intelligence drew on the grand discourse of science, in particular the concepts of morphic fields, psychology, and neurology. Emotional intelligence was defined as being made up of personal and social competencies (*Transform Performance Leadership*). Employees were expected to develop their emotional intelligence through the practice of “personal mastery.” This practice was set out in references to the self that were concerned with developing personal awareness so that employees would be able to better understand and manage themselves and their interactions with others. The intention was for employees to have: “The confidence to draw on and trust their intuitive knowingness in decisions and actions that support the *Achieve, Develop, and Transform* program” (*Individual Mastery*). References to the grand discourse of science, in psychological and spiritual

terms, authenticated and naturalized this practice, particularly in respect of relationships. For example:

A HUMAN BEING is part of the whole, called by us [sic] “Universe,” a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of our consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty (*Individual Mastery*).

This quote posits that human beings are a natural part of a whole, the Universe. Despite this natural state we suffer from an “optical delusion” that we are separated. This quote, drawing on Einstein and the concept of morphic fields described in the grand discourse of science for its authenticity, claims that people and the world are innately united and inter-connected, and that this is a natural and fundamental condition, even though our sensory perceptions lead us to think otherwise.

References to the need for talented people comprised another element in the local discourse of the self. Drawing on the culture theme in the grand discourse of business, the environment in which the Bank operated was described as one that competed on intangible assets, requiring talented people, and the management of knowledge. As noted above, employing and retaining skilled people was characterized as significant in its implication that organizations had to work smarter rather than harder, and to do so required a depth of talented people. The *Achieve Develop and Transform Strategy Map* characterized recent Bank history as a “strategy labyrinth,” in which:

We made some mistakes, lost some talented people and our focus on putting in place new systems to survive distracted us from providing service to our customers, shareholders and the community. This part of our journey has made one thing clear: whatever direction the Bank takes, it needs talented people.

It was argued that having “great people” was necessary to generating and exploiting the types of intangible assets needed in a changing business environment: having outstanding talent is the key to creating intangible assets, which is the key to creating wealth in the globalized economy.

As well as being talented, Bank employees were also to be “values-driven.” This requirement also drew on references to the culture theme in the grand discourse of business. The five Bank values were listed as: put our customers first, perform and grow to create value for our shareholders, lead and inspire each other, earn the trust of the community, and transform, be bold and have the courage to be different (*Restoring Customer Faith*). Transform was characterized as a culture in which all activities were based on living these values. The implications of the values-driven element of the local discourse of the self was that employees were asked to embrace the key role that values play in achieving personal and organizational performance, and to recognize and take personal responsibility for living the values (*Transform Workshop Folder*). This required: an ability to stay connected with one’s own values and passion; an ability to connect with others as value driven individuals; knowing what it means to live values in practice (and catch oneself when one is not). Living the values meant that values were widely discussed and owned; values counted when it mattered; behavior inconsistent with values was questioned; living the values was fundamental to succeeding; and: “I can and should intervene when values are abrogated” (*Transform Workshop Folder*).

The local discourse of the self included the concept and practices of a “high performance mind,” which drew on the discussion of neurology in the grand discourse of science. A high performance mind was defined as an ability to manage “your mind” as appropriate to the situation in order to optimize performance. Employees were urged to learn how to achieve an “awakened mind,” in which all four types of brainwaves are combined - α , β , θ , and δ . In this state of consciousness: “[...] you experience that sense of Ah ha! Things fall into place; you experience creative insights into problems or possibilities” (*Transform in the Business*). The argument was made that it is possible to develop an ability to control our brainwaves, in order to induce a state of consciousness we desire.

Discussion and conclusion

Strategy has become a dominant discourse in organizations, however, there are few empirical studies of the discursive elements involved in the strategy process in specific organizations. This paper has built on the small but growing body of empirical work that studies organizational strategy as a discourse, and adds to the research that explores the connections between different levels of discourses operating in a particular context. In so doing the paper has taken up the empirical and analytical challenge of investigating: “[...] the ways organizational members observe/invoke a constellation of discourses to ‘instantiate’ strategic practice” (Samra-Fredericks, 2005, p. 811). This investigation has opened up for scrutiny the taken for granted assumptions and premises upon which a strategic change discourse draws its power. In particular Transform was shown to have been formed from a nexus of grand discourses. The Bank’s senior managers mostly reproduced these discourses rather than initiated them – and in this way they framed and shaped the construction of Transform. However, these managers did exercise agency in drawing selectively on the grand discourses and reframing and linking them in new ways. This study has connected the macro level, in its examination of the use of grand discourses, with the micro level in its examination of a local discourse formed from these grand discourses and operating in an organizational context. This addresses a shortcoming in the literature pointed out by Chia and MacKay (2007): “The possibility that strategic change and the directions taken may be brought about by culturally and historically shaped tendencies and dispositions acquired through social practices internalized by the actors remains relatively unexamined” (p. 226). The boundaries between the grand discourses of science and business were crossed to construct and mutually reinforce the Transform discourse. In this sense the grand discourses were used in a complementary way.

In this paper it has been argued that discursive processes are central to strategic change in organizations - central to the understanding and the practice of how strategic change is formed, articulated, and engaged by managers and employees. This argument was informed by a post-structuralist definition and articulation of language and an understanding of language as discourse in organizations. This articulation opened up a study of discursive aspects that were placed at the centre of the strategic change process, enabling an investigation of how strategic change was discursively constructed and enacted. The importance of studies such as this one was noted in Laine and Vaara’s (2007) observation that: “[...] discursive practices are among the most important social practices defining our social reality and are still overlooked in many areas such as mainstream strategy research” (p. 34).

The findings reported in this paper described the discourses drawn on and constructed in Transform, demonstrating how discourses at a grand level have been

referenced to define an organizational reality in which the construction of a local discourse of the self is presented as both natural and necessary. The grand discourses of business and science were invoked to define particular problems and challenges for the Bank and its employees, and a local discourse of the self was constructed as “the” solution to these problems and challenges. In this respect the discourses constructed in Bank texts were self-referential, solving problems, and exploiting opportunities of their own issue. The local discourse of the self, drawing on the grand discourses, defined an ideal employee type with a range of attributes as described above.

The invocation of two grand discourses – business and science – not only legitimated the need for the Transform program but also provided a definitive way in which the self had to be understood and managed. The weaving together of elements of both discourses produced a reality that the Bank would have to respond to in order to survive and grow, while at the same time it produced a solution to the challenges of this reality in terms of how employees could better understand and manage themselves in order to improve their performance. In short, the two grand discourses were interwoven in the sense that the science discourse was drawn on to set out how the self can be and the business discourse was drawn on to set out a reality in which this particular self becomes an imperative. In other words, the grand discourse of business defined the problems and opportunities facing the Bank, and the grand discourse of science defined the knowledge about individual performance necessary to solve these problems and exploit these opportunities.

In relation to the Transform program, these findings show how this referencing of grand discourses constructed a Bank with particular problems and opportunities that made Transform a natural and inevitable imperative for the Bank’s survival and growth. More specifically, these findings demonstrate how the grand discourses were drawn on in texts to frame “the” conditions in which the Bank “must” operate and to construct a particular type of Bank and employee that these conditions made imperative. The Transform program was constituted at the nexus of both of these grand discourses as “the” imperative for change. This construction illustrates the stretch (Greckhamer, 2010) of a discourse through interpolating and weaving in the doctrines of business and science to establish legitimacy in the shaping of the Transform strategic change program. This paper also provides an empirical example of organizational change as “intertextual phenomena” (see Grant *et al.*, 2005) and in this way contributes to the social constructionist approach: “[...] by recognizing that the organization consists of a variety of multiple texts that may be brought to bear on the current context” (Anderson, 2003, pp. 65-66). This demonstration of the relationships between the different contexts of discourse supports Fairclough’s (2005, p. 920) claim about the importance of inter-discursivity:

[...] one important way in which (types of) texts are different from one another and distinctive is in how they draw on and combine together relatively stable and durable discourses [...]. This entails an “inter-discursive” analysis of texts, i.e. an analysis of how they articulate different discourses [...].

The pervasiveness of the grand discourses, as manifest in the scientific and business texts embedded in Transform, reflects what Phillips *et al.* (2004, p. 643) referred to as: “[...] the extent to which texts are adopted and incorporated by other organizations to become part of standardized, categorised, generalized meanings [...] a text has become embedded when it is used as an organizing mechanism across individual situations.”

In respect of the local discourse of the self, each of the elements described personal qualities that required employees to understand and manage themselves in particular ways. The prescribed practices were linked to attributes of the grand discourses of business and science, and were contextualized in terms of the Bank's performance requirements and the Transform program. In relation to this study's discourse model of strategic change, this local discourse of the self provided the framework for a new subject position that was constructed to engage employees in Transform thinking and practices. Scientific concepts were drawn on in the local discourse to establish a body of descriptive and prescriptive knowledge about how individuals think, behave, and interact with others. Drawn from the grand discourse of science, this knowledge offered solutions to the problems and challenges identified in the themes of the grand discourse of business. The goal was to improve both individual and group performance.

Emotional intelligence was a central aspect of the local discourse of the self. Particular concepts and attributes of emotional intelligence related to personal and social competencies were described and their origins were referenced to the grand discourse of science, making these attributes of emotions appear to be natural truths about the human condition. The notion of emotional intelligence was described as a journey of self-exploration and discovery, to do with finding out whom you are as an individual. Despite this claim, many of the attributes of emotional intelligence were expressed in prescriptive and normative terms, specifying how individuals could and should understand themselves and understand and interact with others. The "freedom" of self-discovery contradicted this particular type of person that was carefully prescribed and delineated from the body of emotional intelligence knowledge drawn on in Transform. The way in which a person was to understand their emotions and to think and interact with others was very specific. In other words, employees were prescribed with a specific array of emotions and were to understand themselves and others in very particular ways, usually measured in terms of performance and effectiveness. "Negative" emotions were to be guarded against by pushing the "pause button," or were described in pejorative terms as being "below the line." In this way these other emotions, such as anger or resentment, were defined out either by their absence from the description or by the presence of other emotions such as empathy and happiness.

The emotional intelligence constructed in the local discourse of the self was of a particular and carefully specified type – employees were not encouraged to discover emotions that fell outside this type – rather they were steered precisely toward a Transform model of emotional intelligence. This knowledge about emotions was packaged in the practice and techniques of "personal mastery." These techniques were offered as a solution to the problems of "negative" emotions and as a way of enhancing positive feelings about yourself and others in order to build better working relationships.

In Transform the aspects of emotional intelligence concerned with developing an understanding of oneself offered employees a path to self-realization, achievement, and a life of greater moral and ethical worth. However, as argued above, this self-understanding was more prescribed rather than open and was designed to improve performance in particular ways. This focus on emotional intelligence demonstrates the importance of emotion to the enactment of change, and managerial attempts to control employees by specifying how they should feel and interact with others. In Transform the focus on emotional intelligence was about developing a means of self-regulation for governance purposes.

The “high performance mind” element of the local discourse of the self was another form of self-discipline prescribed for employees. This element comprised a set of techniques for controlling and managing one’s mind in order to enhance performance in “any situation.” As with the treatment of emotional intelligence, these techniques asked employees to work on themselves – their minds – in particular ways to achieve particular outcomes. These outcomes were expressed in performative terms, for example to improve problem solving and creative thinking in the workplace. Similarly, the Inspiring Leadership program asked employees to develop a mindset and a set of skills to develop their leadership in the Bank. Techniques such as open communication, value-based decision making, creating a vision, and caring and supporting others were prescribed in this program. Again the outcomes were expressed in performative terms and were related to growth and profit targets.

In showing how a localized and context-specific discourse was formed from grand discourses, this study has explored the relationship between the institutional context and localized action:

Micro-phenomena need to be understood in their wider social context: actors are not acting in isolation but are drawing upon the regular, socially defined modes of acting that arise from the plural social institutions to which they belong. Much of the social infrastructure, such as tools, technologies and discourses, through which micro actions are constructed, has macro, institutionalized properties that enable its transmission within and between contexts [...] (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007, p. 6).

The transmission referred to above took place in this study as senior managers, in the local and situated setting of the Bank, drew on grand discourses to construct and validate strategic change through the Transform program. This finding provides an empirical example of the connection between macro and micro levels in the formation and enactment of strategy.

This study has demonstrated two implications for understanding the practice of strategic change: The dynamic of inter-discursivity in the construction of a new discourse, and the connections between different levels of discourse manifest in the order of a strategic change discourse. In particular, Bank management drew on diverse science and business discourses: “[...] in innovative ways which, subject to certain conditions [...] contribute to changing the character of and relations between social practices” (Fairclough, 2005, p. 926). In the case of Transform the grand discourse of science was drawn on to set out the moral and spiritual basis for employee relations and conduct in the Bank, with the imperative for these relations mandated by the grand discourse of business.

The discourse perspective developed in this study opened up for examination the “bedrock” upon which the strategy discipline has been formed. As Laine and Vaara (2007) have argued: “[...] a discursive perspective provided opportunities to map out and critically examine some of the most fundamental questions in strategy and strategizing that are not easily approached with more traditional perspectives” (p. 30). The findings discussed above have provided such an examination in showing how a strategic change discourse is formed and constructed, helping to “denaturalize [the] hegemonic accounts” (Johnson and Duberley, 2003) of the rational and processual approaches. These approaches, in taking the idea of “strategic change” for granted, overlook the formative processes that are fundamental to the composition of strategic change.

In summary, the findings reported in this paper have significant implications for practice, showing how managers can draw on grand discourses of business and science

as resources to frame and legitimize a program of strategic change. In so doing managers are able to destabilize traditional culture and norms of performance in order to introduce new thinking and practices. Managers of strategic change programs can influence practices by providing positions that offer employees to a way of thinking, talking, and acting. Transform placed much of the onus for change on the individual, similar to the discourse of individual responsibility described in the Vaara *et al.*'s (2010) study. In this respect a contribution is made to the strategy-as-practice literature, the agenda for which includes a: "[...] call for empirical studies into the way that social practices, such as tools, technologies or discourses, are implicated in situated strategizing activities" (Jarzabkowski and Siedl, 2008, p. 1416).

The value of this paper's discursive approach to strategic change is that it draws managerial attention to the fundamental and formative power of language in producing and transforming ways of thinking and understanding in organizations. Language is central to, and not merely a tool of, strategic change. Change can be legitimized and managed through strategy by producing a new or altered view of an organization's future, which, as it becomes accepted as the truth, shapes and influences new practices. Strategy has become a powerful discourse in the context of change because it offers a framework of order and rationality in the face of uncertainty. This order comes in the form of tools of analysis, control, and monitoring. Strategy discourse is durable because it has taken the form of this ordering framework in organizations and:

Once the basic framework is accepted, it becomes possible to move on from one specific set of strategy ideas and practices to another as circumstances change. Every failure can be explained as a failure not of the framework per se, but of its specific embodiment in a particular set of ideas and practices. Organizations can move on from one failing (or even successful) strategy to another without ever challenging the idea that they need strategy (Morgan and Sturdy, 2000, p. 151).

This malleable and flexible quality of strategy has been critical to its proliferation throughout the organizational world.

The contribution that this paper makes is in its study of language to explore how discourses pervade and inform the lives and experiences of people in organizations, in ways that are often taken for granted. This study builds on an alternative approach that examines strategy as an ordering discourse of change, providing a new way of interrogating, and making sense of a discipline that has become widespread and pervasive in the language and practice of management. As argued by Greckhamer (2010) "[...] to analyse the colonization of domains of knowledge and areas of social and economic life through applications of strategic management discourses and to deconstruct the truth effects their models produce are vital projects for organization studies" (p. 864). An aim of this paper was to add to an emerging discourse school in a field that is both dominated and constrained by realist approaches that overlook the effects of the social construction of knowledge and practices on strategic change. In this paper it has been shown how a discourse of strategic change has been formed and enacted with wide-ranging effects, in part by claiming "the" truth through grand discourses drawn on to establish legitimacy and authority so that a particular reality was positioned and presented as "the" reality. An investigation of the processes in which a discourse is positioned and presented to claim the truth was made, following from the perspective that "truth" is a construction rather than something that is objective and external to the human experience. In the case of the Bank, the realities of the business environment and science, as invoked in the grand discourses, have been

drawn on and constructed in Transform in order to provide the status and power of a regime of truth (Foucault, 1980).

References

- Alvesson, M. and Kärreman, D. (2000), "Varieties of discourse: on the study of organizations through discourse analysis", *Human Relations*, Vol. 53 No. 9, pp. 1125-1149.
- Anderson, D.L. (2003), "What you'll say is [...]: represented voice in organizational change discourse", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 63-77.
- Barry, D. and Elmes, M. (1997), "Strategy retold: toward a narrative view of strategic discourse", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 429-452.
- Brown, A.D. and Humphreys, M. (2006), "Organizational identity and place: a discursive exploration of hegemony and resistance", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 43 No. 2, pp. 231-257.
- Butler, J. (1990), *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, London.
- Chia, R. and MacKay, B. (2007), "Post-processual challenges for emerging strategy-as-practice perspective: discovering strategy in the logic of practice", *Human Relations*, Vol. 60 No. 1, pp. 217-242.
- Du Gay, P. (1996), *Consumption and Identity at Work*, Sage, London.
- Fairclough, N. (1989), *Language and Power*, Longman, London.
- Fairclough, N. (1992), *Discourse and Social Change*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Fairclough, N. (2005), "Discourse analysis in organization studies: the case for critical realism", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 26 No. 6, pp. 915-939.
- Foucault, M. (1974), *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Tavistock Publications, London.
- Foucault, M. (1980), *Power/Knowledge*, Pantheon, New York, NY.
- Fowler, R. (1996), "On critical linguistics", in Caldas-Coulthard, C.R. and Coulthard, M. (Eds), *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*, Routledge, London.
- Fowler, R., Hodge, G., Kress, G. and Trew, T. (1979), *Language and control*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
- Grant, D., Michelson, G., Oswick, C. and Wailes, N. (2005), "Guest editorial: discourse and organizational change", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 6-15.
- Greckhamer, T. (2010), "The stretch of strategic management discourse: a critical analysis", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 31 No. 7, pp. 841-872.
- Hall, S. (1996), "Who needs 'identity'?", in Hall, S. and Du Gay, P. (Eds), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Sage, London.
- Hardy, C. (2004), "Scaling up and bearing down in discourse analysis: questions regarding textual agencies and their context", *Organization*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 415-425.
- Heracleous, L. and Hendry, J. (2000), "Discourse and the study of organization: toward a structural perspective", *Human Relations*, Vol. 53 No. 10, pp. 1251-1286.
- Jarzabkowski, P. and Siedl, D. (2008), "The role of meetings in the social practice of strategy", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 29 No. 11, pp. 1391-1426.
- Jarzabkowski, P., Balogun, J. and Siedl, D. (2007), "Strategizing: the challenges of a practice perspective", *Human Relations*, Vol. 60 No. 1, pp. 5-27.
- Jian, G. (2011), "Articulating circumstance, identity and practice: toward a discursive framework of organizational changing", *Organization*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 45-64.

- Johnson, P. and Duberley, J. (2003), "Reflexivity in management research", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 40 No. 5, pp. 1279-1303.
- Knights, D. and Morgan, G. (1991), "Corporate strategy, organizations, and subjectivity: a critique", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 251-273.
- Knights, D. and Morgan, G. (1995), "Strategy under the microscope: strategic management and IT in financial services", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 32 No. 2, pp. 191-214.
- Kuhn, T. (2006), "A 'demented work ethic' and a 'lifestyle firm': discourse, identity, and workplace time commitments", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 27 No. 9, pp. 1339-1358.
- Laine, P. and Vaara, E. (2007), "Struggling over subjectivity: a discursive analysis of strategic development in an engineering group", *Human Relations*, Vol. 60 No. 1, pp. 29-58.
- Mintzberg, H. (1994), *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*, Prentice Hall, Hertfordshire.
- Morgan, G. and Sturdy, A. (2000), *Beyond Organizational Change: Structure, Discourse and Power in UK Financial Services*, Macmillan Press, Hampshire.
- Oswick, C., Keenoy, T.W. and Grant, D. (2000), "Discourse, organizations and organizing: concepts, objects and subjects", *Human Relations*, Vol. 53 No. 9, pp. 1115-1123.
- Palmer, I. and Hardy, C. (2000), *Thinking about Management: Implications of Organizational Debates for Practice*, Sage Publication, London.
- Pennycook, A. (1994), "Incommensurable discourses?", *Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 115-138.
- Perrow, C. (1986), *Complex Organizations: A Critical Essay*, 3rd ed., Random House, New York, NY.
- Phillips, N., Lawrence, T.B. and Hardy, C. (2004), "Discourse and institutions", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 29 No. 4, pp. 635-652.
- Potter, J. (1997), "Discourse analysis as a way of analysing naturally occurring talk", in Silverman, D. (Ed.), *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*, Sage, London, pp. 144-160.
- Putnam, L.L. and Fairhurst, G. (2000), "Discourse analysis in organizations: issues and concerns", in Jablin, F.M. and Putnam, L.L. (Eds), *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication: Advances in Theory, Research and Methods*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 235-268.
- Samra-Fredericks, D. (2005), "Strategic practice, 'discourse' and the everyday interactional constitution of power effects", *Organization*, Vol. 12 No. 6, pp. 803-841.
- Siedl, D. (2007), "General strategy concepts and the ecology of strategy discourses: a systemic-discursive perspective", Vol. 2 No. 28, pp. 197-218.
- Vaara, E. and Tienari, J. (2002), "Justification, legitimization and naturalization of mergers and acquisitions: a critical discourse analysis of media texts", *Organization*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 275-304.
- Vaara, E., Sorsa, V. and Palli, P. (2010), "On the force potential of strategy texts: a critical discourse analysis of a strategic plan and its power effects in a city organization", *Organization*, Vol. 17 No. 6, pp. 685-702.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1997), *Discourse as Structure and Process*, Sage Publications, London.
- Whipp, R. (1996), "Creative deconstruction: strategy and organizations", in Clegg, S.R., Hardy, C. and Nord, W.R. (Eds), *Handbook of Organization Studies*, Sage, London, pp. 261-275.
- Whittington, R. (2006), "Completing the practice turn in strategy research", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 27 No. 5, pp. 613-634.

Bank references: unpublished and anonymous

Individual Mastery.
Transform in the Business.
Transform Champion Information Session.
Transform Workshop Folder.
Transform Performance Leadership.
Achieve Develop and Transform Strategy Map.
Restoring Customer Faith.
The Journey.
Towards a Transform Culture for the Bank.

Further reading

- Ansoff, I. (1965), *Corporate Strategy: An Analytic Approach to Business Policy for Growth and Expansion*, McGraw Hill, New York, NY.
- Dunford, R. and Jones, D. (2000), "Narrative in strategic change", *Human Relations*, Vol. 53 No. 9, pp. 1207-1226.
- Florida, R. (2005), *Cities and the Creative Class*, Routledge, New York, NY.
- Hardy, C., Palmer, I. and Phillips, N. (2000), "Discourse as a strategic resource", *Human Relations*, Vol. 53 No. 9, pp. 1227-1248.
- Mintzberg, H. (1978), "Patterns in strategy formation", *Management Science*, Vol. 24 No. 9, pp. 934-948.
- Mintzberg, H. (1990), "The design school: reconsidering the basis premises of strategic management", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 171-195.
- Quinn, J.B. (1978), "Strategic change: logical incrementalism", *Sloan Management Review*, Fall, pp. 1-21.
- Rajagopalan, N. and Spreitzer, G.M. (1996), "Toward a theory of strategic change: a multi-lens perspective and integrative framework", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 48-79.
- Sminia, H. (2009), "Process research in strategy formation: theory, methodology and relevance", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 97-125.
- Van de Ven, A.H. and Poole, M.S. (1995), "Explaining development and change in organizations", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 510-540.
- Whittington, R. (1993), *What is Strategy – and Does it Matter*, Routledge, London.
- Whittington, R., Molloy, E., Mayer, M. and Smith, A. (2006), "Practices of strategising/organising: broadening strategy work", *Long Range Planning*, Vol. 39 No. 6, pp. 615-629.

About the author

Dr Steve Jaynes teaches strategic management and business strategy at postgraduate level. His research interests include discourse, culture, strategy, and change management. Dr Steve Jaynes can be contacted at: jaynes@deakin.edu.au

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm

Or contact us for further details: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

This article has been cited by:

1. Alberto Felice De Toni Department of Electric, Management and Mechanical Engineering, University of Udine, Udine, Italy Giovanni De Zan Department of Electric, Management and Mechanical Engineering, University of Udine, Udine, Italy Cinzia Battistella Faculty of Science and Technology, University of Bolzano-Bozen, Bozen, Italy . 2016. Organisational capabilities for internal complexity: an exploration in the Coop stores. *Business Process Management Journal* **22**:1, 196-230. [[Abstract](#)] [[Full Text](#)] [[PDF](#)]