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INTEGRATED BRAIN ACTIVITY AND THE MANAGERS JOB: UTILIZING THE 'TROIKA' MODEL

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ABSTRACT

The manager's job is becoming more complex and will, in the future, require a higher level integration of left-brain (logic) and right-brain (intuition) activity.

A "troika" model may be used to capture the necessary interrelationships between the thinking (logic) and feeling (intuition) inputs into "doing" (managerial behavior)

The American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) is currently researching the feasibility of shifting the bases of program accreditation and guideline from inputs to outputs. A major part of the research is focused on defining twenty non-cognitive attributes and developing methods of measuring behavioral changes for selected attributes.

It is suggested that new and refined simulation and experiential methods will need to be developed pertaining to key non-cognitive attributes.

INTRODUCTION

As a generalization, in any right-handed person in our verbal-scholastic society, the two brain hemispheres may be likened to the claws of the cannon lobster. The left hemisphere, as the assumed seat of logic and intellect, is over-emphasized and over-utilized. The right hemisphere, as the commonly believed locus of intuition and judgment, is "atrophied" to varying degrees.

TABLE 1
SELECTIVE COMPARISON OF LEFT/RIGHT
BRAIN ACTIVITIES

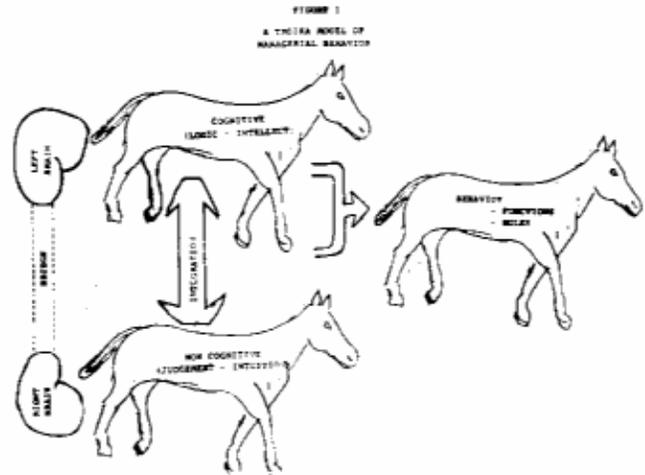
	LEFT BRAIN ACTIVITY	RIGHT BRAIN ACTIVITY
DESCRIPTION	OBJECTIVE	SUBJECTIVE
DECISION STRATEGY	PARTIST	WHOLIST
BOUNDARY CONDITION	FIXED	SHIFTING
KEY DECISION PARAMETERS	DOES IT ADD UP?	+DOES IT SOUND OKAY? +DOES IT FEEL RIGHT?
DECISION FOCUS	SYSTEM	SYSTEM/ENVIRONMENT
MODE OF PROBLEM ATTACK	LINEAR	NON-LINEAR (CIRCULAR)
TIME UTILIZATION	PREMATURE CLOSURE	TEMPORAL ATTUNEMENT
LEADERSHIP BASES	TIME-SPACE REALITIES	TIME-SPACE REALITIES +ABSTRACTION OF IDEAS
PROVERB: FOR PLANNING	"THE MOUSE WITH BUT ONE HOLE IS EASILY TAKEN"	
PROVERB: FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN	"DO NOT THROW STONE AT MOUSE AND BREAK PRECIOUS VASE"	

Adapted from: Ralph G.H. Siu "Management and the Art of Chinese Baseball" Sloan Management Review, Spring 1978, pp. 83-89.

Table 1 contrasts a series of propositions and observations with regard to these two orientations. For effective, highly "successful" management both hemispheres need to be integrated. Working together, they cover an immense range of "cognitive" and "non-cognitive" phenomena which, via various mechanisms, may be translated into effective management behavior.

A troika is a three horse drawn sleigh commonly associated with Russian culture (see Figure 1). The driver via mainly the lead horse (call it behavior) provides direction and fine tuning aimed toward pre-determined, ambiguous and

constantly shifting goals; managerial behavior is commonly viewed in terms of functions (plan, organize, lead, control)



and roles (leader, monitor, resource allocator)

The trailing left-hand horse (call it thinking or cognitive) represents the entire domain of logical, intellectual, quantitative activity and knowledge. As seen in Figure 1 it is linked back to the over-utilized left brain. The trailing right-hand horse (call it feeling, intuition or judgment) encompasses the entire domain of non-cognitive phenomena.

An over-developed "thinking" horse (see Business Week, November 10, 1980, pp. 61-2) and a week or atrophied "feeling" horse can veer the sleigh to the right unless the driver compensates. Yet, compensation treats symptoms rather than the underlying problem; the problem is a lack of full integration of the two brain hemispheres or, in terms of the "troika", of the two trailing horses.

This, then, is a "quick and dirty" diagnosis of the ills existing in both managerial process and in business and management program structure and delivery.

AACSB/EFMD TASK FORCE

A three year AACSB/EFMD (American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business/European Foundation for Management Development) has extensively commented on this dilemma. Because expectations of society with regard to managerial effectiveness will be greatly increasing over the next 30 years and because the job of the manager will be radically restructured, the training and development of managers will require more intensive and extensive non-cognitive inputs. Such training must move toward a greater integration of left brain and right brain activity.

BASES OF ACCREDITATION RESEARCH

The AACSB, under increasing pressure from organizations of all types, might well evolve its bases of accreditation and guidelines for future Oriented business and management programs. The AACSB is currently undertaking

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research on the feasibility of shifting its bases of accreditation from inputs (number of Ph.D.'s on the faculty) to outputs (degree of cognitive knowledge and non-cognitive skills acquired by the graduate)

NON-COGNITIVE ATTRIBUTES

Phase I of the AACSB project has identified and initially defined six "clusters" of non-cognitive attributes as follows:

- (1) administrative: organizing/planning, decision-making, creativity.
- (2) interpersonal: leadership, oral communication, behavior flexibility, personal impact, social objectivity, perception of threshold social cues.
- (3) intellectual ability: range of interests, general mental ability, written communication.
- (4) stability of performance: tolerance of uncertainty, resistance to stress.
- (5) work motivation: primacy of work, inner work standards, energy, self objectivity, career orientation.
- (6) values of business.

What a "shopping list of opportunity" the above list of attributes presents for the development of simulation and experiential techniques and exercises to teach non-cognitive skills in such a way as to permit a determination of competency gained in each attribute.

For example: perception of threshold social cues' is defined as: the readiness of a person to perceive minimal cues in the behavior of others. Such traits as social skills, empathy, perceptiveness, and people-awareness were mentioned. .The ability to sense reactions of others and respond appropriately.' (AACSB Bulletin, Winter 1980, p. 13).

This one defined example and the nineteen others present major challenges to professional educators in management and business to develop the teaching/learning tools so necessary to training and developing professional managers for the twenty-first century.

CONCLUSION: TWO PROVERBS

To return to Table 1, the proverb for planning states: "The mouse with but one hole is easily taken. The over-emphasized left brain probably would plan using a linear approach with but one main objective in mind. Integrated brain activity (the proverb spans the two columns in Table 1) would take a contingency approach to planning and have available a "network" of objectives each feasible under (1) a different Set of assumptions and (2) a different unfolding of environmental/organizational events.

The proverb for implementation of plans is: "Do not throw stone at mouse and break precious vase". This can be translated into the common utilization of left brain tools/techniques (computers, mathematical models) to solve problem A or make decision B. Integrated brain activity (think-feel) may more effectively utilize "active listening" to solve the same problem A or make the same decision B.