CALL FOR PAPERS
BRITISH JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT
SPECIAL ISSUE: CHALLENGING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE RESEARCH

The British Journal of Management (BJM) announces a special issue focused on challenges facing organizational change research, guest edited by Gavin Schwarz (University of New South Wales) and George Huber (University of Texas at Austin).

The attention accorded change in organizational studies offers a rich and long-standing intellectual tradition, and multiple theories useful to organization scientists and practicing managers have been set forth and validated. But social science theories are temporally bounded, meaning that their validity is limited to particular time periods. In the rapidly changing environment of today’s organizations, theories about organizational change are especially vulnerable to changes in their validity. Psychologists remind us that changing one’s beliefs – particularly about the validity of in-vogue theories – is difficult and discomforting. Hence any articulated challenge to the temporal validity or current usefulness of change theories potentially presents uncomfortable questions for comfortable change researchers. Ultimately, the rate of knowledge growth in any area of research eventually declines unless and until new disruptive ideas or research methods are introduced. These disruptions to current paradigms may have nothing to do with changes in the environment of the entities to which they apply. For example, Kahneman and Tversky’s disruptive introduction of heuristics and biases to the then aging field of decision analysis in the early 1970s was not a consequence of change in the social or psychological environment of judgment-making humans. Rather, it was a fresh and well-grounded insight into the identity of an important and under-researched issue. Similarly, it seems that the field of organizational change research is losing some of its earlier vitality and would benefit from the appearance of new and disruptive ideas. Unless change researchers consider and act on the need to challenge existing paradigms, the field risks obsolescence.

In sum, all fields need to rejuvenate themselves from time to time or else they cease to be relevant. The objective of this special issue, therefore, is to consider the sustainable relevance of change theory in the context of the obsolescence of specific change theories. Papers submitted for consideration should address specific themes and issues related to the extent to which organizational change research needs to examine the current and/or projected validity of currently held beliefs. We seek manuscripts that address any of the wide range of issues congruent with our objective. Empirical pieces that address this focus are especially encouraged. Our aim is to create a forum for critical discussion of where organizational change research currently stands and how it might itself change in order to make continuing consequential contributions to organization science, management practice, and wider society. Manuscripts suitable for publication will engage directly with these concerns.

All submissions will be subject to double blind refereeing, using BJM’s normal review process and selection criteria. Submissions will be taken to imply that a paper contains original work that has not previously been published and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. Authors should follow regular BJM guidelines, as published in every issue of the Journal. To submit a manuscript, attach to an email message an electronic copy of your submission emailed simultaneously to g.schwarz@unsw.edu.au and bjm@lubs.leeds.ac.uk clearly marked ‘Special Issue’. For additional queries regarding this special issue, please contact Gavin Schwarz or George Huber George.Huber@mccombs.utexas.edu. The deadline for submissions is 30 April 2006.