



## The work of strategizing and organizing: for a practice perspective

**Richard Whittington** Saïd Business School, Oxford, UK

It takes a lot of work to make a strategy or design an organization. Consider just the formal side. Data are gathered and analysed, documents are written and presentations made. There are project meetings, board meetings, conferences, workshops and away-days. Midnight oil is burnt and weekends lost. The work is expensive. It calls on senior managers, middle managers, strategic planners, organization development experts, management consultants, communications specialists and sometimes lawyers and investment bankers. And there is even more work in getting these strategies or organization designs actually implemented. The work of strategizing and organizing is a serious business.

My argument here is for the importance of this work to the remit of *Strategic Organization*. Seeing strategy and organization as achieved by the labour of highly skilled workers brings to the new journal at least six sets of research questions: briefly, where and how is the work of strategizing and organizing actually done; who does this strategizing and organizing work; what are the skills required for this work and how are they acquired; what are the common tools and techniques of strategizing and organizing; how is the work of strategizing and organizing organized itself; and finally how are the products of strategizing and organizing communicated and consumed?

These questions are practically important. They are also in tune with the 'practice turn' in contemporary organization and social theory (Brown and Duguid, 2001; Orlikowski, 2002; Schatzki et al., 2000). The next section introduces the practice perspective on strategizing and organizing, distinguishing it from the process tradition and making the case for starting with the formal side. I shall then return to the six questions around the who, where, how and what of strategic and organizational work. Besides offering rich opportunities in terms of research, I shall argue that these kinds of questions are particularly pressing for those of us who are workers in business schools ourselves. My closing remarks start with a personal confession; they go on to consider the implications of the practice perspective both for testing theory and for the relationship between strategy and organization.