

IT'S ALREADY THIRTY YEARS NOW!

Guest Editor: Bernard Pras

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- 7 *It's already thirty years now!*
Bernard Pras
- 13 *Skillfulness and proficiency, are they twin sisters?*
Ewan Oiry

The present article concerns the notion that skilfulness and proficiency concepts diverge up-to the breaking off. Using the great flow of literature dealing with skillfulness, it shows that since the fifties, three definitions of skillfulness have been given successively. The most recent one does not use as its main feature the concept of work station. Following a similar course, an analysis is carried out concerning the proficiency concept. This latter shows a breach in its definition. In France, the first skillfulness model disputed the continuity with the traditional definition modes of skillfulness. On the other hand, the second one is very close to the most recent definitions of skillfulness. This twofold lesson has strong managerial consequences since it explains certain failures of the proficiency approach and suggests managerial action principles in order to cope with.

- 35 *Collective perceptions and linked diversification*
Joanne M. Roch

The disappointing performances of enterprises who have undertaken linked diversification have urged the searchers into a deeper investigation through the integration challenges leading to the identification of a bound passage enabling the shift from potential synergies to synergies already achieved. Fitting with the cognitive outlook, the present survey considers that the set-up of synergies is essentially streamlined through the reconciliation of collective perceptions of the organisations involved, rather than limited amendments to technical and operational actions.

49 *Enterprise governance, its ideology and philosophy*
Stephane Trebucq

Corporate governance, as a subject, has long been marginalized. The number of articles dedicated to it has also dramatically increased in the past ten years. The field has been investigated in several dimensions, mainly in corporate strategy, in corporate finance and in organizational behavior. Thus, each academic discipline has set up some rather different theoretical views. But these differences also can be explained by old ideological and philosophical conflicts. Philosophic ideas from authors like Machiavel and Kant, or Locke and Marx are essential to understand the contemporaneous theories of corporate governance. They have irreconcilable points of view about the nature of man, and the optimal way to organize society. For this reason, a unification of governance theories will probably be a hard task.

69 *Characteristics and operation of the French boards of directors.*
An inventory survey
Laurence Godard, Alain Schatt

This survey describes the 97 major French boards of directors in 2002, their mode of operation, (number of meetings, and attendance) as well as those of specialised committees (audit committee, remuneration committee, promotion and appointment committee, strategical committee). The results of the survey reveal significant evolvement of the boards of directors in France during these last twenty years, especially further to the publication of Vienot's (1995-1999) and Bouton's (2002) reports.

89 *Supplier, you must show flexibility and keep quiet!*
Carole Donada, Isabelle Dostaler

This scanning survey shows that suppliers can indulge in being adamant towards their almighty customers. Based upon the power-subjection literature, the relational approach, the works carried out on the organisational slack as well as two researches concerning actual facts, "the relational slack" concept is analysed. The relational slack would be within the purchaser-supplier relations frame the result of the exploitation of production, organisation or relational over-competency, making possible the offspring of a margin of freedom with respect to a mastering partner.

105 *Dual aspect of the co-operative work*
Stephanie Dameron

The scope of the present article aims to demonstrate the intimate relation between similar actions and time serving behaviours of the co-operative work. Through the longitudinal survey of interactions inside two project teams, two

ways of operation of the co-operative action are involved and analysed, featured respectively as complementary co-operation and common co-operation. Far from being incompatible, the two ways of co-operation are mutually self-generating. Three paths are relieved for shifting from one mode of co-operation to the other one. A conceptual approach of the co-operation offspring presented as a dual phenomenon concludes the analysis.

- 121 *Design modular strategy. An interpretation in terms of communities*
Patrick Cohendet, Morad Diani, Christophe Lerch

The present article scans the stakes underlying the choice of a modular strategy while setting-up the design process of a product. This process, a network of heterogeneous communities, focuses the authors towards the organisational trend as well as to the cognitive dimension of modularity. Four patterns are thus defined for a design process. This typology renews the interest for the works of Sanchez and Mahoney (1996) suggesting the opportunity of a modular pattern overlooked by these authors.

- 145 *Conflicts in distributive fairness standards in mergers of two equal parts. The case of Biomerieux-Pierre Fabre*
Philippe Monin, Ouafa Ben Fathallah, Eero Vaara

Mergers of two equal partners, in its strict meaning are very rare phenomena. However many rulers convey information over the levelled aspect of the mergers and acquisitions they design. In this present article the authors explain the reasons why the rulers “fiddle” their M&A as “mergers between equal parts”; they show the way in which the initial levelled assumption increases the probability of eventual conflicts between two standards of distributive fairness which are nevertheless complementary: equality and equity; they explain their point of view through a spectacular case: the levelled merger, followed by the separation of the enterprises Biomerieux and Pierre Fabre. Paradoxically, the mere wording in terms of levelled rights of the M&A favours the spreading over of distributive unfairness feelings which *in fine* prejudices the performance of the operation.

- 163 *A tradeoff between environment and competitiveness or the quest of eco-efficiency*
Olivier Boiral

The reduction of the environmental constraints often represents a considerable investments for industrial undertakings. Faced on the one hand to the statutory or social welfare pressures which favours efficient cleansing, and on the other hand to economical stresses which fix a limit to unyielding investments, a very narrow margin of manoeuvre avails to these undertakings. Grasping the economical consequences of environmental actions, is a rather

difficult task since the studies pertaining to this subject often lead to contradictory results.

187 *Environmental management and working knowledge dynamic*
Thomas Reverdy

This survey describes the organisational dynamics associated to the setting into operation of the environmental management standard system. This system suits differently according to the undertaking strategy and to the organisational and institutional background. In the undertakings under survey, the integration of the environmental strategy to the normal course of the industrial activity, fits with the setting into operation of these standards and directs the associated organisational actions. New managerial instruments designed for these specific circumstances, smooth the co-ordination and the cross work knowledge between the environmental functions and the daily running of the undertaking. In certain cases, these instruments are also involved in the development of the relations with the Public Services in charge of the environment protection.

207 *Marketing through Internet. A comparison survey of pricing in the French market*
Frederic Jallat, Fabrice Ancani

For the time being, the pricing strategies of on-line markets seem to reveal counter intuitive results: contrary to the initial forecasts, Internet did actually neither reduce the discrepancies nor the gap between the prices observed off-line. The Authors present an empirical analysis of the levels and discrepancies of prices in the French market between the three main possible distribution circuits, –pure players, traditional distributors and multi-channel distributors (operating both on-line and off-line)– develop managerial proposals concerning “hybrid pricing” strategies together with opportunities allowed to the multi-channel distributors.

225 *Bringing out in the stock exchange. A decisive action for the undertakings*
Patrick Sentis

Initial public offering implies many choices for the firm. The aim of this paper is to provide a recent literature review shedding light on the choice to take at IPO stage. A fine analysis of questions and divergent interests of actors of IPO is conducted in order to determine the most relevant choices for the operation succeeds and the future floatation.

245 **Summary**

249 **Instruction for authors**