

In support of 'organic' management, more living than digital

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One of the main features of continuing digitalisation and the development of artificial intelligence – currently claimed to be the only and inevitable means of "progress" in the future – is the desire to

conquer and "ideologically" transform managers and organisations that are portrayed as "ill-adapted," or even obsolete.

The transformation is presented as a non-choice, as digital determinism and big-data fatalism. Binary logic takes the lead: either adopt the principles of digitalised processes, information systems and practices, or die and disappear.

No more work, no more management?

The threat that [work will almost entirely disappear](#) in the near future should be considered as neither a groundless utopia nor an inescapable truth forcing us to [accept the unacceptable](#).

This globalised movement tends to show that most organisations are incapable of innovating when it comes to developing new business management and transformation practices. And so, gradually, the idea has taken hold that we should eliminate the very notion of management, now judged "outdated."

Conversely, if we turn this logic around, it has never been more necessary and worthwhile to sharpen managerial thinking and to make the sense of community more concrete, lively and dynamic, since these two dimensions are closely linked today.

Questioning the notion of agility

There is an urgent need to rethink our conception of the notion of agility, which is too often linked solely to an organisation's ability to generate results. This agility, presented as a "divine" source of future growth, becomes a dogma, thereby losing its potency.

This almost "priestly" power, overly confined to the idea of flexibility and responsiveness, is essential in the face of entrepreneurial realities, which may lack inspiration. It becomes the answer, the only adaptive skill with which to develop organisational innovation.

Reducing companies' future strategic successes to the simple idea of an ever-faster reaction time overlooks the abilities, resources and skills that organisations are able to deploy. Companies have the ability to draw on human intelligence, the organic capital involved in shaping their future.

Collective intelligence should serve the common good by resisting the pressing restrictions placed on us all by digital technologies and algorithms. This form of mobilisation must be able to overthrow the obsession with overall digitised performance, so difficult to reproduce in real life. This voluntary enslavement to big data and the instrumentation of "social" networks should also warn us of the risk of social disillusionment.

Reintroducing a human aspect into the digital world

Let's be ambitious and bold in our turn. Be "disruptive" by proposing moderate use and a clear vision of the provision and consumption of these interconnected tools, respecting human values.

The key idea of this disruption, or destruction to adopt the language of Schumpeter, should not absolve us from asking the price of this intelligence revolution.

If the fundamental objectives of the digital society promised to us should result in a "cyberworld" (see Daniel Cohen, [*The Prosperity of Vice*](#), 2008) that lacks solidarity because it is unable to understand the role of human interactions, we would undoubtedly become mere tools devoid of critical thought.

We are in the process of changing from "people" into "adjustment variables," solely serving an algorithmic culture. This social trend, fuelled by numerical codes, moves us almost inexorably away from a tangible vision of social relationships.

To attempt to reintroduce a human aspect into the [digital world](#), to face up to the disarray of big numbers that may well lead us straight to a devastated, tormented and bewildered vision of humanity and possible social chaos, we must re-appropriate the purpose and the design of the role played by data and by statistical information. It is vital to better understand the issues and challenges imposed on us by algorithms while maintaining control, rather than the opposite.

Maintaining control

"Aim high to hit the mark" argues historian [Patrick Boucheron, echoing Machiavel](#). (In fact, it seems that we turn to Machiavelli every time a storm brews in history.) The relationship with power and with ethics is at the heart of these battles of wits. Our ability to reinvent ourselves will always remain our greatest ally for confronting this 4.0 resurgence of Taylorism, Fordism and Toyotism. Does the "one best way" obsession now demand a *Matrix*-style (1999) diaphanous world, with dematerialised bodies and objects? Is [big data](#) a new form of scientific work organisation?

Today, it is important to develop strategies and cognitive and organisational frameworks that simultaneously redefine sense-making and the place and role of actors. The living dynamic of human groups and the ways in which talents and contributions are valued are at the very heart of regaining trust.

This first involves collectively understanding the different realities of each organisation. To achieve this, it is necessary to create a genuine

profusion of ideas, without barriers and without hierarchy of thought. Sharing experiences and applying this mind-set should help each company to understand the challenges it faces in order to define its role, its culture, its habits and its cohesiveness.

The mind-set of the future is not vertical. It does not conform to the silo mentality.

Developing new organisational forms, resources and skills and new combinations of organic interactions becomes a highly creative act in itself. We now need to understand why and how can we "identify" our new challenges, remain focused on the real needs of our organisation, of our development and of the people who bring it to life.

Constructing identities

Management science and strategic management research consider the construction processes of organisational identities and social capital to be productive resources.

Deploying these identities will help to initiate the rehabilitation, or even the transformation, of the psychosocial dimension of work.

The threat that [work will almost entirely disappear](#) in the very near future should be considered neither a groundless utopia nor a new total and inescapable truth enabling us to [accept the unacceptable](#). It is up to the actors of today to define the vital choices of a tangible economy and of a humanly viable society, wherever they are found.

In short, the quality of organic management lies in its ability to disrupt the ambitions of this "digital and artificial substance" so as to encourage the emergence and "implementation" of genuine human resilience in the present, conscious of both its limitations and its strengths.

Living management exists to reflect, share, listen, restore and move with its entourage and its environment. The objective is therefore to woo back real management, the creative experience that participates in an organisational culture based on each living contribution and on each idea that is designed and shaped, rather than to destroy this tangible vitality of life for the benefit of a new form of Taylorism.

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