

# STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT JOURNAL

## Call for Papers for a Special Issue

### STRATEGY AND THE DESIGN OF ORGANIZATIONAL ARCHITECTURE

Submission Due Date: December 1, 2009

Guest Editors:

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#### Special Issue Purpose

Design choices about an organization's architecture represent some of the most powerful strategic levers available to the top management of the modern corporation. However, we know surprisingly little about the antecedents and consequences of those choices. We accept that optimal design choice is contingent on environmental and internal fit considerations, but we suggest that the precise connections need revisiting. Most of the theoretical knowledge base in this area is decades old, but this situation has begun to change due to conceptual and methodological innovations in the study of organizations in recent years. This special issue offers an opportunity to build on these developments and offer significant, new advances.

#### Background

We define organizational architecture in terms of both explicitly mandated formal structure (incentives, information processing structures, authority relationships) and emergent informal structure (e.g. culture, social networks, communities). We seek papers in this special issue that can achieve one or more of the following objectives:

a) deepening our understanding of how managerial actions shape both formal and informal components of organizational architecture; b) understanding not only individual corporations, but also inter-firm architectures and their implications for the architecture of firms that enter into them; c) producing novel understanding of the factors that shape organizational architecture as well the mechanisms that underlie the consequences of organizational architecture; and d) analyzing the precise relationship between a firm's strategy and its organizational architecture.

#### Research Questions

We hope to spur such contributions by offering below a few questions or issues that might be covered in this special issue. They range from questions pertaining primarily to new theory development, as well as to the refinement and application of existing knowledge to phenomena of strategic importance. These are suggestive, rather than exhaustive, of course:

\* How do the different elements of an organizations' architecture interrelate and shape each other? For instance, how does the formal organization influence the emergence of informal organization? How does an existing informal organization shape design choices about the formal organization? What are the levers by which organization designers can influence the formation of social networks and culture? How do physical co-location decisions complement/substitute formal structure in influencing the emergence of the informal organization?

\* What are important contextual influences and constraints on organizational architectural choices? How are the choices about organizational architecture shaped by social processes such as diffusion, imitation and bargaining among key stakeholders?

\* How do choices of organizational architecture shape the development of organizational capabilities? Does the adoption of a particular organizational architecture have consequences for the creation of certain kinds of capabilities (or disabilities)? What are the dynamic aspects of this relationship?

\* How can the different elements of an organizations' architecture enable or impede adaptation? More generally, how does organization design look different when the goal is ongoing dynamic adaptation by the organization to its environment, rather than a series of periodic adjustments?

\* How can we extend what we know about organizational architectures to the inter-organizational context (e.g. the organization of joint ventures and alliances)? What are the architectural elements of such ties? What are the antecedents and consequences of architectural choices for those ties? How is the architecture of firms that are increasingly connected to others changing? What are the consequences of such shifts and the enabling and disabling conditions related to these shifts?

\* What role can organizational architecture play in supporting new and complex business models that disrupt the traditional bases of competition in an industry? When does business model innovation co-occur with changes in organizational architecture, and when are these independent?

\* How can our knowledge of different elements of an organizations' architecture help to refine our understanding of specific phenomena, such as subsidiary-parent relationships in MNC's, ambidextrous organizations, product and organizational modularity, value chain unbundling and M&A integration? What does the study of these phenomena offer in terms of the refinement of core concepts in the study of organization design, such as interdependence, information processing, organization differentiation and integration, the basis for grouping etc.?

#### **Deadlines and Submission Instructions:**

The deadline for submission of papers is Dec 1, 2009. Please submit your papers online at Wiley's *Strategic Management Journal* website and make sure to follow the Submission Guidelines available at:  
<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/2144/home/ForAuthors.html>.

**Review Process and Special Issue Conference:** The Guest Editors are seeking reviewers for this issue and are soliciting nominations and volunteers to participate in the review process. Reviewers are invited to contact the guest co-editors. Papers will be reviewed following the regular Strategic Management Journal double-blind review process. After the first round of reviews, the authors of the most promising submissions will be invited to a Special Issue Conference on "Designing Organizational Architecture," to be held in the first quarter of 2010 (date and venue to be announced).

#### **More Information:**

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