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Business Fiction: A Flexible Learning Approach

Learning process in business education is using case based approach

The normal learning process in business education is rooted in facts, i.e. based on empirical research and case studies. The actual experiences of various organizations can be used for inductive learning of various models and tools in different areas of management, such as finance, marketing, operations, human resources, etc. This case based approach of learning has proven to be very effective in conveying the theory rooted in practice. However, this has a major limitation that it deals with past and to some extent current practices. This may divorce the learner's mind from futuristic outlook and dreaming capabilities.

It is desirable to incorporate futuristic vision and out of the box thinking

Thus, in order to provide a wholesome learning experience it is desirable to incorporate futuristic vision and out of the box thinking. An experiment in this regard is carried out at Department of Management Studies, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi to teach a course on 'Global Strategic Management' by incorporating 'business fiction' as a mode of learning.

Business fiction means learning by fiction about business

The term 'business fiction' means learning by fiction about business, particularly into the future. The learners are supposed to write a 'business fiction' about any topic under investigation. For example, in the experiment mentioned above the students of MBA course were supposed to write 'business fiction' about 'Managing Globally in Future'. They were supposed to take any area of business activity or a fictitious/real firm and dream about it 15 to 20 years in future.

Business fiction can be a scenario, innovation, or a story of fictitious firm

The 'business fiction' can be of various types, viz. a scenario about a sector, e.g. agricultural business, an integration of science or technology fiction leading to new businesses, new innovations in products/services by a company, a story about a fictitious firm created by the learner to project its journey into the future, a biography to be lived and so on.

Business fiction helps in blending past and current reality with dreaming about future

Though, by very name, it gives the feeling of very much away from the reality and may not have any meaning for a practical learner, in reality every fiction is rooted in facts. If a learner has to write the future of a sector like banking, he/she is supposed to first collect facts about its current operation, new developments and trends. Then only the learner will be able to dream about the future of banking forcefully. Thus, the process of writing the 'business fiction' helps the learner to go through a journey of a mix of past and current reality coupled with the dreaming about future mixed with fun. This kind of learning makes it very enjoyable and wholesome. The learner is able to absorb more facts in the process and is able to integrate them in the thinking process.

There is a need to evolve a more holistic and enjoyable learning approach

The initial feedback of the learning experiment at IIT Delhi has been very positive. There is a need to develop and utilize the 'business fiction' approach in many situations to evolve a more holistic and enjoyable learning approach covering the deficiencies to the current business education and developing dreaming capabilities in executives.

Sushil

Editor in Chief





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Guidelines for Authors

Aim

The journal is intended to share concepts, researches and practical experiences to enable the organizations to become more flexible (adaptive, responsive, and agile) at the level of strategy, structure, systems, people, and culture. Flexibility relates to providing more options, quicker change mechanisms, and enhanced freedom of choice so as to respond to the changing situation with minimum time and efforts.

It is aimed to make the contributions in this direction to both the world of work and the world of knowledge so as to continuously evolve and enrich the flexible systems management paradigm at a generic level as well as specifically testing and innovating the use of SAP-LAP (Situation- Actor - Process-Learning-Action-Performance) framework in varied managerial situations to cope with the challenges of the new business models and frameworks. It is a General Management Journal with a focus on flexibility.

Scope

The Journal includes the papers relating to: conceptual frameworks, empirical studies, case experiences, insights, strategies, organizational frameworks, applications and systems, methodologies and models, tools and techniques, innovations, comparative practices, scenarios, and reviews.

The papers may be covering one or many of the following areas: Dimensions of enterprise flexibility, Connotations of flexibility, and Emerging managerial issues/approaches generating and demanding flexibility.

Coverage

The journal is organized into various sections to include following types of contributions: Research papers, Short notes/correspondence, Applications and case studies, Book reviews, Book summaries, Interviews and round tables, Information about relevant conferences and seminars, Educational and learning experiments, and any other relevant information related with the theme of the Journal.

Manuscript Submission

Manuscript should be submitted to the Editor-in-Chief electronically through web to avoid delays. Please submit the "Word" file attached to email on the following address: giftjournal@giftsociety.org. At the time of final submission, an autobiographical note and a passport size photograph of all the authors will be required.

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Language

All papers will be published in English and manuscripts must be submitted in that language.

Reviewing Process

Each paper is reviewed by the editor and if it is judged relevant for publication, it is then sent to referees for double blind peer review. The papers are reviewed for relevance, focus on flexibility, innovation, practical considerations, quality of evidence, contribution, methodology, readability,

and organization. Based on the recommendations of the referees, the editor then decides whether the paper should be accepted as it is, to be revised or rejected. The reviewing time will normally be 10-12 weeks.

Manuscript Requirements

Length: No maximum length for a paper is prescribed, however, authors should write concisely.

Title: The title should be brief and typed on a separate sheet.

Format: The paper should have a cover page giving title, author's name, complete address, telephone number, fax number, and email of the author. In case of co-authors, these details should also be provided for each co-author. Correspondence will be sent to the first named author unless otherwise indicated.

The second page should contain the title and an abstract of 100-150 words. It should also include upto eight keywords about the paper. The authors

may attach the category sheet to define the relevant categories to which the paper belongs (available on the website-www.giftsociety.org). The second page should not include the authors name. The paper should begin from the third page.

Headings: should be short clearly defined, and numbered.

Footnotes: should be used only when absolutely necessary and must be identified in the text by consecutive numbers placed as superscript.

Text: The main text should be more readable and mathematical models, if any, should be provided in Appendix. The ideas proposed should preferably be supported by real life case examples from business situations.

Tables and Figures: All tables and figures should be kept to a minimum and numbered consecutively using arabic

numerals. Each table should have a brief title written on the top of the table, and each figure should have a brief caption written on the bottom of the figure.

Photos and Illustrations: must be supplied as good quality black and white original with captions. Their position should be shown in the text by typing on a separate line the words "take in Plate n"

References: to other publications must be in standard style. That is shown within the text as the author's name followed by a comma and year of publication, all in round brackets, e.g. (Volberda, 1997). At the end of the paper a reference list in alphabetical order must be given as follows:

For books: Surname, initials, (year) title publisher, place of publication. e.g. Mckenzie J. (1996) *Paradox: The New Strategic Dimension*, McGraw -Hill, Berkshire.

For journals: surname, initials, (year) title, journal, volume (number), pages. e.g. Volberda H.W. (1997) Building Flexible Organization for Fast Moving Markets, *Long Range Planning*, 30 (2), 169-183.

Proofs

Page proofs for correction of printer's errors only will be sent to the author specified on the typescript. Proofs should be returned to the printer within the specified time period.

Offprints

Twenty offprints of each paper will be provided free of charge to the principal author. Additional copies may be purchased through an offprint order sent along with proofs.

Checklist

- * The paper is original, not submitted anywhere else.
- * The length of the paper is commensurate with content.
- * The title and headings are brief and catchy.
- * The author(s) name and affiliation are given only on cover page.
- * Abstract and keywords are provided.
- * Focus on flexibility in management is kept.
- * The paper incorporates innovative ideas/models in a practical framework.
- * Mathematical models, if any, are given in Appendix.
- * Tables/Figures are properly placed and numbered with brief titles/captions.
- * References are in standard style.
- * Few highlights (8-10) of two-three lines are provided to put in boxes.
- * Few key variables (3-5) are identified for flexibility mapping on a continuum.
- * Some key questions (2-3) are provided to reflect the applicability in real life.
- * Autobiographical notes and passport size photographs of all authors are provided.

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