

# PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

by

**David K. Hurst**

***"I don't know who better integrates the material of contemporary management."***

Henry Mintzberg, Cleghorn Professor of Management Studies at McGill University

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

David Hurst is a speaker, consultant and writer on management. As a reflective practitioner and educator he has a unique niche in the field. He spent twenty-five years working in the corporate world as an effective manager and extracted from his experience some highly innovative ideas about leadership, the management of change and the dynamics of organizations that promote creativity and learning. He communicates these ideas to audiences around the world in the form of creative presentations, in-depth seminars and articles that have been published in leading business publications such as the Financial Times, Harvard Business Review, Strategy+Business, Globe and Mail, Strategic Management Journal, Organizational Dynamics, Academy of Management Executive, Business Quarterly, and Organization Science. For the past six year he has been designing and delivering executive development programs in Hong Kong and China. His first book, *Crisis & Renewal: Meeting the Challenge of Organizational Change*, was published by the Harvard Business School Press in 1995 and was reprinted in paperback in 2002. His second book, *Learning from the Links: Mastering Management Using Lessons From Golf* (The Free Press 2002) broke new ground in understanding what it takes to create excellence through practice. His new book, *Architects of Choice*, a tour-de-force integration of management thought from a systems perspective, is forthcoming.

For ten years David Hurst was Executive Vice-President of a large North American industrial distributor. With sales of over CDN \$1 Billion, the company employed 1600 people. Here, in addition to his operational line responsibilities, he handled the Group's Management Development and Management Information Services.

He began his career in retail distribution, but soon became involved in mergers, acquisitions and business turnarounds, particularly in the steel industry. He immigrated to Canada in 1977 and, after two years as a management consultant, joined an industrial distribution company. He was appointed Executive Vice-President in 1982 during a tumultuous period when he, as part of a senior management team, saved the organization from bankruptcy during a severe business recession.

David Hurst was born in England but grew up in South Africa. He holds an MBA (Finance) from the University of Chicago and a BA (Psychology) from the University of the Witwatersrand. He is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Regina's Kenneth Levene Graduate School of Business and Adjunct Faculty with the Center for Creative Leadership. He is also a Contributing Editor to Strategy+Business.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

These presentations can be delivered either as self-contained modules or as part of a longer seminar or development program. They are ideal either as "frame breaking" introductions or "frame making" conclusions. All presentations make use of numerous practical examples and can be tailored to show the history of particular industries and individual firms. **Note: Each of the major presentations is PC-based multimedia "show" which can last up to 2 hours, depending on the content selected. Each comprises several modules that allow the content to be directed toward specific topics.**

### **Major Presentations**

#### **"Crisis & Renewal: Finding Opportunity in Adversity"**

No one likes crisis, but despite our wishes to the contrary the course of civilization's progress is neither smooth nor sure. To a considerable and largely unacknowledged extent society and its component organizations advance strategically by accident, economically by windfall and politically by disaster. Armies are reformed only after defeats; safety regulations are introduced after accidents; and firms only change strategies after significant reversals. On the other side of the balance, blockbuster products seem to emerge from nowhere and companies you have never heard of ride trends to fame and fortune. This isn't just chance. It seems that human organizations don't change when they *want to*; they change when they *have to*, when they feel compelled to change. At the personal level this thought is captured in the old adage that "People don't change when they see the light; they change when they feel the heat." This presentation which can be customized to fit any organization's situation examines why crisis is such a powerful catalyst for change and how you can harness its power in your organization with practical actions. Economic meltdowns create opportunities for change and it helps if you can find the opportunities in adversity.

#### **"The Creative Organization: The Ecodynamics of Leadership and Creativity"**

Why are so many organizations innovative and creative when they begin their lives but become hidebound and conservative as they age? This presentation uses a novel conception of the creative process derived from looking at organizations as natural systems. In the numerous modules that make up this presentation, the 'ecodynamics' of leadership and creativity become clear. It shows clearly how successful firms can become 'scale-bound' as they grow – operating at progressively higher levels of abstraction. Their processes can work well for some time provided the environment does not change! When it does they may find themselves in territories for which they have no strategic maps and facing risks of which they are unaware. Now they have to 'rescale' their organizations, getting back to their innovative roots to find the processes of learning and creativity that they can use to renew themselves. Suggestions are made as to how creative tension can be reintroduced into organizations that have lost their ability to learn. The objective is to create small communities of practice, who can immerse themselves in experimentation at the edges of the organization.

## **Major Presentations (continued)**

### **“Learning from the Links: Mastering Management Using Lessons from Golf”**

(This series of presentations is based on my second book, published by The Free Press in 2002.)

Management was, is, and always will be about getting things done. Yet while today the challenge of implementation remains central, we hardly understand the issue at all. Our pervasive “think-then-act” model of the mind does not match the way in which effective people and successful organizations actually work. The implementation of strategy is no different systemically from an athlete performing a complex action. Conscious intentions formed in the brain have to be transformed into unconscious competencies performed by the body. We know the world through our bodies, yet their role is much neglected in management thought. As these presentations make clear, body movement is a resource to the mind and none makes a better resource than the game of golf. Golf instructs us not through concepts, but through structured experience. It teaches us to think strategically about the complex webs of cause-and-effect that lie between thought and action. Golf reminds us of the importance of execution and the danger of letting one’s plans diverge too far from one’s abilities. Golf also inculcates values for living – those common courtesies and sensitivities that underpin all effective groups, from families to teams to companies. Lastly, golf teaches us to live in the present, to stay in the moment, the only place and time where success and happiness can be found.

#### **(a) Beyond the Quick Fix**

Many management initiatives, like ‘quick fixes’ in golf, deal with the symptoms of problems without getting to their underlying causes. This is understandable given the intricacies of cause-and-effect in all complex systems, but the unfortunate outcome is often a series of better-before-worse activities. The only way to improve the performance of a complex system in a sustainable way is to fix problems at their source and reduce the solutions to organizational habits that don’t require conscious intervention. But this is easier said than done. The worst culprit in most organizations is the annual budgeting process, which compels managers to commit to financial results without necessarily understanding their causal basis. The consequence is often lip service, with the production of financial results that are not only unsustainable, but are often accompanied by outright manipulation, if not falsification. This presentation shows managers how to ‘scale’ their strategies so that the webs of cause-and-effect are uncovered and made meaningful to all those who must participate in their realization.

#### **(b) How Leaders Learn**

What and how **do** leaders learn? The evidence is clear. Leadership is a cluster of skills that is learned through special kinds of experience **not** lectures in classrooms! The skills themselves are complex bundles of perceptions and actions that cannot be learned in abstract. In the workplace the key factors seem to be challenging work assignments, significant bosses and hardships. But what are the fundamental processes and can they be duplicated in development programs? The answer is that they can, but the conditions are demanding. New competencies come only from new sensitivities developed through timely, specific **feedback**. And creating the commitment and discipline to achieve mastery requires contexts that are often difficult to duplicate.

## **Major Presentations (continued)**

### **“Crisis & Renewal: Meeting the Challenge of Organizational Change”**

(This series of presentations is based on my 1995 book published by the Harvard Business School Press and reprinted in paperback in 2002.)

This presentation presents a radical view of how all successful organizations evolve and renew themselves, and what managers need to do to lead the revival. It argues that there are often times when managers must create deliberate crises in acts of “ethical anarchy” in order to break the constraints of success. Organizational renewal involves going back to the founding principles of an organization to reconnect the past with the present and restore the excitement and emotional commitment that are often missing from large enterprises. It is the integration of these renewal activities with conventional management practices that allows managers to lead their organizations to new life.

#### **(a) "Boxes and Bubbles: the Management of Change"**

Based upon my best-selling Harvard Business Review article, this presentation covers the experiences of the management team of a fast growing, acquisition-oriented conglomerate who were themselves taken over in a wildly over-leveraged buyout on the eve of a serious business recession. The presentation deals with management's reactions to the bewildering world in which they found themselves and how they changed their concepts and their practices to successfully handle the turbulence. The lessons drawn have wide application to all kinds of organizations undergoing rapid, discontinuous change.

#### **(b) "Hunters and Herders - The Challenge of Organizational Renewal"**

The nomadic hunting/foraging band, self-organizing and resilient, was mankind's original learning organization and an understanding of their dynamics is directly relevant to organizational issues today. In this presentation, the hunter's egalitarian mode of life is contrasted with that of the herders and their hierarchical structure. The social dynamics and physical contexts which compel hunters to become herders are shown to exist within our modern organizations. The best illustration is that of the venture capital firm, Kleiner, Perkins, Caulfield and Byers in Silicon Valley, who use hunting techniques to ‘manage their luck.’ This leads participants to a new understanding of the requirements for organizational renewal and the difficulties they may encounter on the way.

#### **(c) "Courageous Leadership"**

There is growing evidence that human organizations, like many complex living systems, require ongoing challenges if they are continually to renew themselves. This presentation looks at the role that leaders must play in this process of creative destruction. For it is not enough for managers merely to “shake-up” their organizations and then stand outside the process. The defining characteristic of all effective leaders is to be “one of us,” to be seen to share a common fate with their followers. It is the heart of what we mean by integrity – for the only purpose that can redeem the process is the renewal of the total system.

## SEMINARS ON STRATEGY, LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE

Three kinds of management experience are known to be effective in developing leadership skills: challenging assignments, significant bosses and hardships. Unfortunately these experiences cannot be left to happen by chance and they don't work automatically – organizations need to create career paths that expose young managers to these kinds of events as well as prepare them to benefit from those experiences. This is where management concepts have their place – in the preparation of managers to learn from their experience. Even then, concepts are best taught experientially, that is, in simulations that are relevant to the business and contexts where managers can get timely, specific feedback on their behaviors and their actions, preferably from peers and mentors. I use a wide variety of cases from leading business schools, videos, simulations and feedback instrumentation, each of which is tailored to the needs of the organization and the specific learning objectives to be accomplished

One advantage of an ecological or systems approach to management is that concepts can be presented as parts of an integrated whole, avoiding the fragmented approach so prevalent in many organizations, where initiatives are often introduced piecemeal. I like to take the frameworks with which an organization is working and show how they are related to each other – systemically – this makes for a much more coherent implementation process. Some recent management innovations such as the Balanced Scorecard are designed to be systemic but their systemic nature has to be understood in depth i.e. by people at every level, if organizations are to avoid mindless data gathering and number-crunching.

The second advantage of systems approach is the importance attached to the organization's history and to learning in general. Many management experts have a tendency to represent corporate competencies – capabilities developed through processes of learning – as strategies – courses of action that can be imposed on organizations without the need for learning. Similarly, I have seen many change efforts that tried to start with a “clean slate,” pretending that little of importance has happened in the past and that organizations could redesign their processes, values and even their cultures from scratch. These interventions rarely lead to sustainable change because deeply embedded habits have a way of reasserting themselves when the focus of change moves off them. Despite its popularity, much corporate benchmarking falls into this trap. Benchmarking against other organizations can show a firm *that* change is possible; it rarely shows *how* that change can be realized in the particular firm.

I like to prepare a sound historical perspective of the organization's past so that everyone can understand the present situation – understanding the present as well as the dynamics of natural systems is the key to understanding the future – not for the purpose of prediction but to create a shared context for taking action. This usually requires a study of annual reports, marketing and planning documents and corporate histories and cases, if available, on both the firm and the industries to which it either belongs or against which it compares itself.

A third advantage of a systems approach to management is the ease with which it allows management concepts to be understood across cultures. I find that concepts travel much better when they are embedded in a systems framework, allowing participants to understand both the strengths and weaknesses of every framework. This is particularly true of the work I have done in Europe, Hong Kong and China.

## PUBLICATIONS

"Of Boxes, Bubbles and Effective Management" *Harvard Business Review*, May-June 1984, pp. 78-88. This article has become **one of the "best sellers"** for HBR and has been reprinted in several books in Canada and the US.

"Why Strategic Management is Bankrupt" *Organizational Dynamics*, Autumn 1986, pp. 4-27.

"Creating Competitive Advantage: Welding Imagination to Experience" *Academy of Management Executive*, 1989, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 29-36.

"Top Management Teams and Organizational Renewal" written with James C. Rush and Roderick E. White, *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 10, 1989, pp. 87-105. **Selected for reprinting in "Historical Evolution of Strategic Management", Ashgate/Dartmouth, 1996.**

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"Thoroughly Modern - Mary Parker Follett" *Business Quarterly*, Spring 1992, Volume 56, Number 4.

"Breaking the Boundaries: the Fractal Organization", written with Professor Brenda J. Zimmerman, *Journal of Management Inquiry*, December 1993, Vol.2, Issue 4.

"From Life Cycle to Ecocycle: a New Perspective on the Growth, Maturity, Destruction and Renewal of Complex Systems", written with Professor Brenda J. Zimmerman, *Journal of Management Inquiry*, December 1994, Vol.3, Issue 4.

"Crisis and Renewal: Ethical Anarchy in Mature Organizations" *Business Quarterly*, Winter 1995, Volume 60, Number 2. **Winner of the Deloitte & Touche Award for Best Article 1995/6.** Reprinted in the "Managing for Success" supplement to the *Globe & Mail*, October 3, 1997.

"The Quest for Empowering Organizations: A Response" *Organization Science*, Nov/Dec 1995, Vol. 6, No.6.

"Lessons at Sea" *Financial Times* (London), March 29, 1996.

"Good News: We Have a Crisis", *Report on Business Magazine*, April 1996.

"What's Wrong With Motherhood", *Globe and Mail*, May 13, 1996, page B7.

"When it Comes to Real Change, too much Objectivity may be Fatal to the Process", *Strategy & Leadership*, Vol.25, No.2, March/April 1997.

"Quand les gens sont désorienté, racontez-leur une histoire", *ICOMmunication*, Vol.7, Num.4 Septembre 1997.

**PUBLICATIONS (continued)**

“Veranderen is niet alleen voor anderen”, *Nijenrode Management Review*, NR 7, November/December 1997, pp. 38-43.

“Managing Change: Checking the Red Queen”, *Managing For Success*, Globe & Mail Supplement, May 15, 1998, page C5.

“Learning from the Links: What Systems Thinking Teaches About Golf and Management,” *Strategy+Business*, Issue 21, Fourth Quarter, 2000 pp. 40-48.

“Making Up The Numbers,” *Supply Chain & Logistics Journal*, Fall 2000 pp.14-16.

“Monomaniacs with a Mission,” *Strategy+Business*, Issue 22, First Quarter, 2001 pp. 179-185.

“Strategy,” *Strategy+Business*, Issue 25, Fourth Quarter, 2001 pp. 71-74.

“Straight from the Brain,” *Strategy+Business*, Issue 26, First Quarter, 2002 pp.109-113.

“The Swing of Things: Keys to Learning Golf and Management,” *Leadership in Action*, Center for Creative Leadership, Volume 22, Number 3, July/August 2002.

“Management from the High Ground to the Swamp,” *Strategy+Business*, Issue 29, Winter, 2002 pp.109-113.

“Weapons of Managerial Destruction,” *Strategy+Business*, Issue 33, Winter, 2003, pp. 79-84.

“Doing The Right Thing,” *Strategy+Business*, Issue 37, Winter, 2004, pp. 81-86.

“The Good, the Bad and Jack Welch” *Strategy+Business*, Issue 41, Winter, 2005, pp. 107-111.

“The New Sobriety” *Strategy+Business*, Issue 45, Winter, 2006, pp. 123-127.

“Strategic Renewal as Improvisation: Reconciling the Tension between Exploration and Exploitation”, written with Mary M. Crossan, chapter in *Ecology and Strategy: Advances in Strategic Management*, Volume 23, 275-301, Elsevier 2006.

“The Full Nelson: Leadership Lessons from a British Naval Hero” *Learning in Action*, Center for Creative Leadership, Volume 26, No. 6, January/February 2007 pp. 20-22.

“Seven Steps for Showing Your Organization’s True Colours” *Globe & Mail*, February 9, 2009.

**Book:** *Building the Strategically-responsive Organization*, **edited** with Thomas, H., O’Neal, D. and White, R., John Wiley & Sons, New York, N.Y. 1994.

**Book:** *Crisis & Renewal: Meeting the Challenge of Organizational Change*, Harvard Business School Press, 1995/2002. **Selected by Business Journal as one of the 10 best books of 1995/96, it has now been translated into five languages.**

**Book:** *Learning from the Links: Mastering Management Using Lessons from Golf*, The Free Press, 2002.

## **ORGANIZATIONS WORKED WITH**

### **Business Organizations:**

Allied Signal Aerospace, American Express, Ault Foods Limited, Bell Canada, Bristol Aerospace Limited, CGI, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Cara Inc., Coley Porter Bell Limited, Cossette Communications Group, de Havilland Inc. Dofasco Inc. Dow Corning, Drummond McCall Inc. F & P Manufacturing, Federal Industries Ltd. Fletcher Challenge, Framatome Group, General Motors University, Goldman, Sachs & Co., Gemini Consulting Limited (London), Genesys Consulting (London), Genesis Media Inc. Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Imperial Life, Imperial Oil, Jannock Steel Fabricating Company, Johnson Electric Ltd. Kraft Canada Ltd. Managerial Design, Laidlaw Educations Services, Manitoba Hydro, William M. Mercer, Meritor Automotive, Inc. Milltronics, Neo Industries, Nike Inc. Nokia Consumer Electronics, Nokia Switching Systems, Nokia Transmission Systems, A/S Norske Shell, Nortel Broadband Networks, Norwich Union, Novartis, Ontario Hydro, PartnerRe, People Tech, Petrosar, Philip Morris International, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Procter & Gamble, RMC Group p.l.c. Rochester Tel, Rolls-Royce Industries Canada Inc. Royal Bank, RSM International, Russelsteel Inc. SaskPower, Scarborough Public Utilities Commission, Scotia Capital, Sears Canada, Sidbec-Dosco, St. Lawrence Cement, State Farm Insurance, Steelcase Inc. Sysco Corp. Tesma International Inc. Vickers & Benson, Texaco Inc., Watson Wyatt, Xerox Inc.

### **Trade Associations:**

Academy of Management, Access To Success, Association for Creative Change in Organizational Renewal and Development, Association of Steel Distributors, B.C. Human Resources Management Association, Canadian Association of Chain Drug Stores, Canadian Association of Supply Chain & Logistics Management, Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors, Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, Canadian Pensions and Benefits Institute, Canadian Steel Service Centre Institute, Conference Board, Construction Industry Manufacturers Association, CMA (Alberta), Design Management Institute, Ecotech III Conference, The Future 500, Groupe Innovation: "Managing the Knowledge Revolution", ICOM (Quebec), Intercorporate Futures Group, Interior Lumber Manufacturers' Association, International Creativity and Innovation Networking Conference, International Iron and Steel Institute, International Personnel Association, Ivey Alumni Association, Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare, Management Accountants of Saskatchewan, Management Centre Europe, Metro Toronto Board of Trade, NACDA, National-American Wholesale Grocers Association, National Association of Wholesalers, National Conference on Health Infostructure, Northeast Correctional Industries Association, Norwegian Institute for Human Resources Development, Ontario Society for Training and Development, Produce Marketing Association, Planning Forum, Personnel Association of Ontario, Profit Sharing Council, Quality Health Care Network, Quebec Association of Export Trading Houses, The Right Place: Grand Rapids, Michigan, Rubber Association, Speakers' Spotlight Showcase, Stafford Beer Foundation, Steel Service Center Institute, Strategic Leadership Forum, Strategic Management Society, 1996 World Congress of Associations.

### **Academic, Government and Other Institutions:**

Binghamton University, Center for Creative Leadership, University of Cape Town, University of Chicago, Corcan (Correctional Services Canada), Council of Senior Administrative Officers Universities of Ontario, Eastern Region Ontario Provincial Service, Emory University, ENAP Innovaction 2005, Executive Development Network, Frontier College, George Brown College, George Fox College, George Washington University, Harvey Mudd College, IDEA Fellows Program, University of Illinois Institute of Government and Public Affairs, INSEAD, Lawrence University, Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans, Lifetime Success Institute, London Business School, McMaster University, Memorial University, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, National Academy for Superintendents, Church of the Nazarene, Nijenrode University, Ohio State University, Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion, Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Centre for Leadership (Ontario Public Service), Public Health Agency of Canada, Queen's University, University of Regina, Rutgers University, Stockholm School of Economics, Teikyo Loretto Heights University, University of Toronto, Trillium Health Centre, Vanderbilt University, University of Western Ontario, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, U.S. Department of the Interior, York University (Canada).

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