Blending Leadership Efficacy and Organizational Design Agility in a Multinational Enterprise

Joel Bigley
Assistant Professor, Business Administration
California Baptist University
Riverside, CA

Abstract

This research attempts to contribute to organizational theory by exploring the impact of leadership efficacy on an innovative multidimensional organizational design that has the advantage of collaborative opportunity exploitation in a dynamic global market. In the company case, the design includes dimensions that relate to products and services, geographic locations, support functions, and clients. This multidimensional organizational design is applied to a multi-unit business that includes a global value chain. A multinational enterprise must be competitively agile in its dynamic market while managing through an otherwise complex organizational construct. The author proposes a minimalist role of the corporate center with the addition of secondary work structures, or collaboration platforms, that exploit capabilities across business units. These lateral integrative mechanisms reduce costs that would otherwise be overhead in a traditional M-form structure.Structure does not in and of itself solve all problems. Leadership through an effective structure will lead to a much more robust and agile organization that will be more profitable along a longer organizational life-cycle.

Keywords: leadership efficacy; work structures; organizational design; proactive leadership;execution

Leadership in an MNE

The organizational structure that is the M-form has come into question with regard to its relevancy in modernmultinational enterprise's (MNE's) (Bartlett &Ghoshal, 1993; Berggren, 1996; Ruigok, Achtenhagen, Wagner &Ruegg-Sturm, 2000). Even Alfred Chandler (1962), the economic historian from Harvard who documented the emergence of multidimensional organizations in the first half of the 20th century, suggests that structure must follow strategy to avoid inefficient results. In the 1970's there was interest in organizing MNE's along several dimensions in a number of publications that were concerned with the dynamic markets in which multi-national corporations operated (Ackoff, 1977; Bartlett, 1982; Coggin, 1974; Prahalad, 1980; Prahalad&Doz, 1979). The M-form design drives high employee costs, internal battles over resources, the lack of standardization, the lack of collaboration, and the loss of market opportunities contributing to tension about synergy exploitation (Strikwerda &Stoelhorst, 2009). This tension needs to be resolved, at least partially, through an organization design that involves multiple dimensions without exacerbating issues around resources and market opportunities. Furthermore, the structure needs to drive clarity and accountability which is an inherent weakness in matrix structures due to the disparate interests of multiple bosses (Galbraith, 2009). Further organizational design evolution is needed for moving MNE's from a resource-centric industrial economy, focused on exploiting tangible physical resources, to a customer-centric, service-oriented

economy that is focused on exploiting intangible knowledge-based resources (Davis & Thomas, 1993; Grant, 1996; Markides& Williamson, 1994).

This research attempts to contribute to organizational theory by exploring the impact of leadership efficacy on an innovative multidimensional organizational design that has the advantage of collaborative opportunity exploitation in a dynamic global market. In the company case, the design includes dimensions that relate to products and services, geographic locations, support functions, and clients. Each dimension is not *flat*, as a layer might imply, but rather is intrinsically variable. For example, products within this dimension are different in complexity, volume, capacity consumption, quality rigor, seasonality, and sensitivity to penalty or liability. Within the support functions there is variability in team expertise and the nature of the support, as examples. Support could be present in the form of enterprise resource planning (ERP) enhancements or module creation, or storage, and the availability of workflow assets. There is variability in the client dimension with regard to size, rate structure, administrative load, *hunter vs. harvest* activity, and the quality of relationships. Geographic locations vary in culture, size, and mix of products used in local markets, further strengthening the idea of a dimension rather than a layer (Armstrong & Cole, 2002). This multidimensional organizational design is applied to a multi-unit business that includes a global value chain. The MNE must be competitively agile in its dynamic market while managing through an otherwise complex organizational construct. The author proposes a minimalist role of the corporate center with the addition of secondary work structures, or collaboration platforms, that exploit capabilities across business units (Wiessmeier, Axel, & Christoph, 2012). These lateral integrative mechanisms(LIM's) reduce costs that would otherwise be overhead in a traditional M-form structure.

Structure does not in and of itself solve all problems. Leadership through an effective structure will lead to a much more robust and agile organization that will be more profitable along a longer organizational life-cycle. In the typical M-form organization, top-level managers formulate strategy to set direction and then manipulate resources to fulfill objectives. Mid-level managers then assume the role of administrative controllers and are in the middle between control from above and implementation of strategic tasks below (Bartlett &Ghoshal, 1997). The message of empowerment has spread through organizations as they realize the limitations of this construct, especially in an environment where behaviors and relationships have not changed. While MNE-type organizations need top leaders, there is the tendency for them to drift into familiar and traditional roles with the assumption that boundaries are still present and that all leaders are similar. A study by Barlett and Ghoshal (1997) showed that leaders within the complex, networked dimensions of a multidimensional organizational structure (MOS) are different, unique, and environmentally situational. In fact, the transition to an organization of empowerment must be enforced through a structure that anchors new behaviors and relationships (Bartlett &Ghoshal, 1997). This is the intent of the MOS organizational framework as it provides objective alignment around growth synergy realization, and as it redefines roles and norms. For example, a norm that has been a cultural pillar at MediaCorp (an actual company using a fictitious name for this case study) is entrepreneurialism, for purposes of growth and operational excellence.

Cultivating an existing norm is easier than embedding a new one. Leadership behaviors and the organizational design liberate embedded but unharvested capability to enhance operating profitability. The network in an MOS is exploited through LIM's that enhance communication channels, increase the frequency of their use, and accelerate the value-based ethical decision-making process that entrepreneurial leaders stand behind (Jayaraman& Min, 1993). The MOS also allows for the system-wide exploitation of expertise on-demand. As this approach is holistic, responsibility and innovation are brought to the 'coal-face',where the action is, encouraging participation and inclusion in an evolutionary

change process. This creates a strong relational link between the employee and the organization (Joensson, 2008). Nested roles are homogenized through decentralization and linkage in the framework. Any node in the network can influence another. It is the responsibility of leaders to create or discover leaders that are tenacious and thrive in an environment conducive to growth synergy realization (Bartlett &Ghoshal, 1997). While most MNE's officially show their structure in the traditional M-form, they behave as if they were an MOS to achieve growth objectives.

Leadership and synergy. To experience growth synergy realization at MediaCorp, the leadership roles had to be recalibrated at all levels. For example, the role of operating manager at a location had to become optimally and aggressively entrepreneurial. The value-add of this role comes from driving business performance, focusing on productivity, meaningful innovation, and growth in local territories. This leader attracts talent and customers in local markets. They also assist and share in the network. The value-add of this role came from bringing the large company advantage to the local geographic unit. This is accomplished by dispersing knowledge, skills, and best practices across units. The role of a senior-level manager had to become substantially supportive through coaching and advocacy. Top-level managers had to become institutional leaders. The value-add of this position comes from embedding a sense of direction and commitment. This comes from challenging embedded assumptions, institutionalizing an appropriate set of norms, and from setting an overarching ambitious purpose. Leaders liberate their people to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities in a growth-oriented culture that fosters commitment along with a strong emotional attachment to the organization. They are also connected to the purpose of the organization (Phelps, Rogg, Downey, & Knight, 1994). This is enhanced by a belief and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). As a result, other offers for employment are not attractive. Specific drivers of commitment from today's workers may include contract terms, emotional attachment to the industry, entrepreneurial involvement, the nature of the work, job challenges, role clarity, confirmed expectations, reward systems, skills training, and succession planning. Leaders enable invested and committed stakeholders to exploit growth opportunities through advocacy for resource fluidity and the enablement of timely execution (Doz&Kosonen, 2008). They must see untapped potential in resources available to them while assisting with the coordination of disparate but relevant sources of support. This support-based management is augmented by applicable organizational development for operator-level entrepreneurs so that they (a) become a critical source of support and guidance for front-line entrepreneurs, (b) link resources and competencies, (c) assist with the development, documentation, and defense of plans, and (d) resolve the many tensions and conflicts that are a part of realizing growth synergies (Bartlett &Ghoshal, 1997).

*Multidimensional design.*An MOS can be described using a visual as represented below in Figure 1. In this case, the horizontal leaders represent the products (Prod #) and services (Serv #) dimension of the MOS. They identify best practices, coordinate research and development (R&D), and apply performance management through cross-unit linkages. They create and manage communication channels and decision forums to capture differences of opinion and interests turning them into exploitable opportunities. Where applicable they connect vertically between product and service workflows to leverage infrastructure or other workflow-based resources as applicable. Concurrently, they absorb demands in a capacity construct that is cross-geographic.
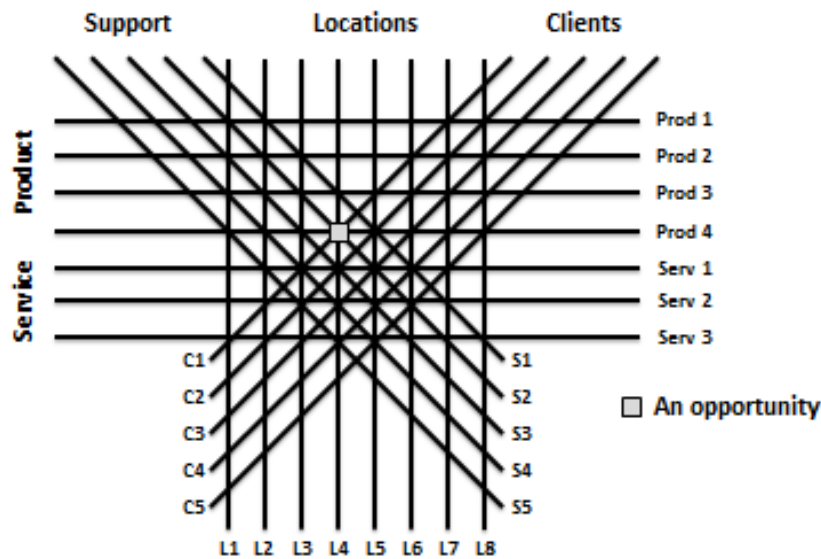
Figure 1. The multidimensional organizational structure. This figure illustrates the structure of the MOS including all four dimensions and the location of opportunities.

Distance and leadership.Leadership at a distance, a substantial aspect of this role, was originally identified by Bogardus (1927); however, distance is not only physical, but social. The perception of distance relates to interaction frequency, for example, but also can be measured by status, rank, authority, social standing, and power (Antonakis& Atwater, 2002). Napier and Ferris (1993) describe distance between leaders and those who are influenced, as psychological (demographic, power, similarity, values), structural (physical, organizational), and functional (closeness, quality of working relationship). Similarly, Howell and Hall-Merenda (1999) found that leader-member exchange (LMX) theory positively affects follower performance but that distance is not a dependency. Other authors have also found that the supervisory relationship is not distance related by rather more related to job satisfaction levels (Ramos-Sanchez *et al.,* 2002) or situationally dependent on goal commitment (Klein & Kim, 1998). Furthermore, physical distance, or leadership in a distributed context, has been shown to influence the commitment employees have to the organization (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Fetter, 1993). Horizontal leaders, therefore, have the unique challenge to keep location leaders from becoming overwhelmed by demand, capability needs, ambiguity, complexity, cultural inconsistencies, conflicting messaging, isolation, and potential conflicts. The networked horizontal organization allows location leaders to focus on harvesting as much profit from local markets through shared technology, information systems, and entrepreneurial tasks (Avolio&Kahai, 2003; Bartlett &Ghoshal, 1997). All things considered, Northouse (2013, p. 5) suggests that "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal." This sums up the function of leadership in all functional areas.

In the construct of the MOS, vertical leaders are geographic, or location based leaders (L#). These leaders are charged with running the location facility efficiently, with the support of the horizontal line of business (LOB) oriented leaders, while harvesting as much profit from local markets as possible. They discover, create, and pursue growth opportunities. Employee commitment to their employer was much stronger in the past. Now they are more mobile, they can pursue their dreams, and they have to balance multiple dimensions in their

own lives (Phelps et al., 1994). Location leaders have to be able to attract skilled resources locally. They also manage continuous performance improvement at their location. The attributes of vertical leaders would include, but not be limited to, creative, intuitive, persuasive, engaging, competitive, resilient, and persistent. They have detailed operating knowledge of the businesses' competitive capabilities as well as their customers' expectations and needs. Vertical leaders focus their energy on opportunities and are able to recognize potential, make commitments for delivery, motivate local labor to meet expectations, and focus organizational energy around demanding objectives (Bartlett &Ghoshal, 1997).

In the MOS, the diagonal leaders are designated as leaders within the support functions (S#) from top left to bottom right and similarly within client relationship based functions from right to left (C#). Support functions could include, but not be limited to, information technology (IT) support, human resources (HR), finance, R&D, system support, etc. Client relationships are allocated by client, sector, or client cluster/sector assignment. These assignments are based on volume of work, product type, leader tenure, complexity of the product, market trends, market saturation, and other relevant factors. A client and support function line can meet on a node where a location could experience a product that requires technical assistance for the product launch. While diagonal leaders do not 'touch' the product, they do make sure that the product comes into the workflow and leaves it on time through the influence of their support.

Corporate leaders have historically been focused on strategy, structure, and systems rather than purpose, process, and people (Bartlett &Ghoshal, 1997). The primary responsibility of top corporate leaders is to make sure that organizations are working effectively together to realize growth synergies (Doz&Kosonen, 2008). While management systems are critical to the operation, they may isolate corporate leaders from the organization by encouraging them to think of employees as factors of production rather than factors of growth critical to the rapid deployment of strategic initiatives (Doz&Kosonen, 2008). Leaders in the MOS should be thought of as agents of strategic agility (Doz&Kosonen, 2008). Top corporate leaders need to be optimally in touch with MOS leaders so that they can focus MOS leaders on influencing growth through a work environment that fosters entrepreneurial initiative and innovation, rather than just monitoring collective inputs and compliant implementation. Respect for the individuals and their ideas that can grow the organization profitably come through trust, support, and listening while questioning and challenging mindsets. Influential entrepreneurs want change in an environment that achieved equilibrium quickly and that is marked by sustainable economic growth, and a positive impact on society (Bartlett &Ghoshal, 1997). They want a sense of purpose and are proud, and motivated by belonging to an organization that is living out its purpose through its top leadership (Bartlett &Ghoshal, 1997). Frequent communication encourages participation which contributes to higher job satisfaction, lower levels of conflict, while strengthening commitment (Cummings &Teng, 2003; Semmer, 2015). Top corporate leaders create an entrepreneurial environment conducive to growth synergy realization that is sensitive to market trends more through inspirational influence than positional authority (Doz&Kosonen, 2008). Leadership roles in the MOS are critical to the success of the organization. As this structure is somewhat novel, all leaders must be open minded, capable, and flexible to enable growth synergy realization within this construct.

Structure variety. The role of location leaders is critical to the effective application of an MOS. These leaders influence and control the vertical dimension in the MOS model. There is variety in each dimension and the vertical dimension is no exception. These leaders and locations are divided into three categories: storefront, semi-storefront, and off-load.

'Storefront' basically means that the operational part of a high-cost location (ex. New York, Tokyo, or London) is extracted and a dependency is created for operational services with other locations that have a lower cost. The storefront location then, ideally, has only two main functions: outward facing coordination with clients and coordination with other locations within the production network where operational capacity is leveraged. This establishes a presence in high-cost locations where customers typically have offices and a capability to produce within an optimal cost structure. To be clear, the objective of the storefront model is not about cost reduction, but rather about growth and profitability. The idea is to exploit the addressable market in the high-cost location. Without the deployment of the model, the capacity is limited by what the location team can process. With the deployment of the network production plan, the capacity can be exceeded as the location can tap into the capacity of the network. This influences the profitability of the location because labor is 'on-demand' when needed and so is only a cost when needed. This virtually eliminates carrying costs. Additionally, the labor that is used is cheaper, as it is from a low cost center, and so it creates a margin. The location leader, not limited by the capacity of the location team, is now able to aggressively pursue the addressable market. The leader is able to augment his outward facing staff to help with the project management of the increased volume by pulling people from the 'back' to fill these needed positions in the 'front'. This works well because they are already known, they perform well, they know the product, and the recruiting effort for the high-cost location is eliminated. This model typically allows for a 50% to 70% reduction in total labor cost at the location and allows for lower pricing models with as good or better margins. The location is then able to aggressively pursue clients where pricing is a barrier to entry. The client wants to see the person who runs the operation. In this case, most of the operation is run virtually from the high-cost location. This model invigorates the sales effort.

The execution of the model is challenged by confidence that needs to be built between the off-load location and the sending location. Corporate bias might infer that this is simple and thus, results may be required quickly. It is more of an evolution with a high degree of complexity that must be pursued over time, but at an optimal pace. The off-load location needs to understand the client's unique requirements from each sending location. There are nuances that the off-load site will not understand as they are not on-site and client facing. There are also known and defined nuances, even between clients at the same location, increasing execution complexity. The stakes are high, as failure results in the client redirecting work to another vendor. This is resolved by having key people come from the off-load facility to the high-cost storefront location so that they can know the local team, acquire the culture, feel the 'heat' from the client, and create internal and external client relationships. These people typically function well as location representatives back in the off-load site. They are a single point of contact and help with the implementation of requirements. Once the off-load team has established confidence, then the storefront location becomes dependent and the work can be moved gradually with the associated benefit to profitability. Once the team at the storefront is minimized, it is easier to move them, allowing for real-estate consolidation and reduced facility cost. From there it becomes a capacity scheduling and utilization exercise across all storefront locations. Capability, compatibility, expertise, and collaborative ability come into play.

The semi-storefront is a location that will off-load significantly, while retaining the higher-end work. They will also support local markets to perform high-end tasks. For example, if a client wants a special feature on a deliverable, the semi-storefront will have the expertise to complete the task on time. An off-load site is a location where labor is cheaper. Work shifting happens in accordance with the complexity and the associated skill set at the off-load location. This does not relate to work that can be automated, as there is no need to move the work if this is the case. There are some additional constraints that need to be

overcome with the off-load model. For example, recruiting speed may be a challenge as the work volume shifts. Space availability, training capacity, capital availability for infrastructure improvement, and the rate of knowledge acquisition or transfer are constraints to be managed. With this structure variability in mind, the study at MediaCorps reveals meaningful information about how leadership blended with a variable structure as described can produce profitable growth. First, the methods of the study are discussed and then the findings from the study are revealed.

Methods
Quality of the Research

Creswell (2014) describes validity in qualitative research as being the determination of whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the author, the participant, and the readers of an account. In this case, language and meaning are the data. Creswell (2014), in parallel with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) approach, offers qualitative authors eight possible strategies for checking the accuracy of findings; triangulation, member-checking, rich descriptions, clarification of bias, the use of negative or discrepant information, prolonged time in the field, peer debriefing, and the use of an external auditor. The author selectively used these strategies to ensure data validity with a focus on triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking.

Endogenous validity refers to the validity of established causal relationships (Yin, 1994; Lamnek, 1995) or internal logic of the research (Punch, 1998). This was achieved by establishing a clear thematic focus that guided the case selection, abstracting and comparing, conducting peer reviews of causal relationships, and by having an open and comprehensive explanation building. A thematic focus was evident in a clear definition of an overarching research theme (cross-unit synergies), a narrowing research focus (operative synergies), and a specific research question (the sustainable realization of growth synergies) along with a compatible case selection in which the constructs of interest could be discovered. Continuous abstracting and comparing (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1996) occurred as the author continuously compared data sets to build higher order constructs, preliminary results to emerging data to confirm or refine results, and observed causal patterns within the existing literature. This improved the validity of causal relations (Yin, 1994). Peer reviews of causal relationships were discussed with research colleagues for the purpose of capturing and testing additional perspectives based on experience in the field. Additionally, it enabled the validation of internal consistency and theoretical relevance of the author's arguments. The final technique for internal validity was through open and comprehensible building of explanations and causal relationships. The results were documented in such a way that the reader could reconstruct the causal relationship (Mayring, 1996). Openly, the author indicated initial ideas, deducted assumptions, and challenged potential inconsistencies.

Exogenous validity refers to the generalizability of research results critical for robust theory development (Sutton & Straw, 1995; Weick, 1995) and depends on the research approach (Yin, 1994). Single case study empirical findings are difficult to generalize. Yin (1994) emphasizes that case studies do not allow for statistical generalization. More specifically, it is difficult to make inferences about a population based on empirical data collected in a sample. While issues of generalizability from case studies is severe (Denzin, 1989; Yin, 1994), single-case studies are recognized to be substantial from an evolutionary perspective (Stake, 1995). Single case studies can also provide new ideas and new thinking paradigms. They can help modify existing theories by exposing gaps and helping to fill them. There are several facts about this study that support the author's conclusions that the findings and propositions will be at least somewhat generalizable. Several of the constructs can be confirmed as being present in existing literature, indicating general theoretical relevance of

the research (Eisenhardt, 1989). The findings were confirmed through consultation with participants, who are operationally capable with varied experience in the industry, suggesting the potential transferability of the claims. Finally, the findings were somewhat generalizable due to the continuous comparison of similarities and differences within case items across different levels of analysis.

Reliability refers to the possibility that authors can replicate the research activity and produce the same findings (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994). A challenge for this replication is the attribute of qualitative research, in that it is bound to the context in which it is conducted (Lamnek, 1995), including time. Reliability in qualitative studies is best served by presenting sufficient information so that the reader can draw his/her own conclusions (Yin, 1994). The author attempted to ensure reliability through the explicit disclosure of the research design, including a detailed description of the research process, case selection criteria, interview guide, and methods for collecting and analyzing empirical data.

Data and Analysis

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study, using Moustakas,(1994) modified van Kaam method, was to explore the real-time experiences of stakeholders, or co-authors, as they lived and influenced events occurring around them. Awareness is a transient experience (Freeman, 2000) that may involve exerting influence, letting go, and redirecting energy and attention (Depraz, Varela, &Vermersch, 2003). It also involves being present physically and mentally in daily life. Stakeholders have to anticipate events, make sense of existing environments, and exert influence over future trends. Weick (1995) suggests that sense-making is a retrospective cognitive process that explains unanticipated events. He also suggests that events in a socially-created world both support and constrain action. Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005) later suggest that individuals form both assumptions and conscious anticipations of future events. By examining sense-making and the development of mental models through actual lived, shared experiences, this study captures the subjective processes that have been largely ignored in the context of the connection between organizational design and growth in a multi-unit firm. Using the experience of stakeholders, the author presents a conceptualization of how individual participants in this study made sense of their lived experience. This was an ongoing process for participants as they refined their understanding of lived experiences and established new equilibriums.

The resultant data included individual textual descriptions as well as composite descriptions concisely oriented and illustrated in a theme map structure. Moustakas (1994) suggested that the integration of textual and structural descriptions into a composite description, such as a relational table, is a path for understanding the essence of an experience. The composite description is an intuitive and reflective integrative description of the meanings and essences of a phenomenon, of which the entire group of individuals is making sense. The participants create meaning through their awareness of the environment, reflection on their experiences, consultation with others, focused response to an enquiry, and iterative refinement to these enquiries.

Coding

Data collection was facilitated by an interview protocol with specific questions oriented in a sequenced schema. Participants were solicited as volunteers from a pool of leaders based on a willingness to share information about the transformation of the case company division. Each volunteer co-author participated in the changes personally. Following each question, the participants' response was determined to be linked to the question asked and was determined to be meaningful prior to continuing. An answer could

trigger a clarifying question, or a question formed to solicit a more fulsome answer, if needed. The additional information modified the answer and once again was determined to be fulsome or not. The data was added then to the data sheet and coded. Sub-code themes were also determined and grouped by code and sub-code. The data was surveyed by the author, who, due to personal experience, was able to apply an *analysis for good* (ANOG). Slight modifications were made as needed to reduce the noise in the data and ensure completeness and clarity. This was accomplished by consolidating like data points and simplifying others by stripping out noise and redundancy in the answers. The data was then re-sorted and generalized through categorizing. A pivot-table was used to extract themes in the wording. The curated raw data was then posted in a table. In some cases most of the themes were unique, in which case a table was not used. From this data, dependencies, relationship, and the sequence of events were determined and organized into a theme relationship map. In some cases the data collected appeared as though the participant was confused about the question. In these cases the Author followed up with the participant and then added the newly acquired information to the raw data previously collected.

The raw data was collected from each participant for each data domain and sub-domain in the sequence in which it is presented to promote a progression of thought. The data is separated into exogenous and endogenous domains as well with selected focus in both areas. In some cases, like roles, the participants offered information on themselves while commenting on data provided by their peers. Patterns that emerged in the data are presented as textural responses (what happened), structural responses (how did it happen), or composite descriptions (what the group experienced). Data responses that occurred most frequently within the theme category were given more significance and were typically mentioned first. Data was interpreted into theme patterns. These were broken into themes and then concisely into propositions, or findings of the study. Data items that referred to individuals, functions, line of business, locations, systems, or company names were obfuscated, eliminated, or given a pseudonym. The propositions, or findings, were formed and listed numerically. Within each proposition, a two-word summary was formed along with a statement that sums up the finding. For example, a central theme, norm strategy, or trigger may have emerged from the data as a result of coding. This data could then be categorized or filtered through the constructs being discussed that may include the strategic frame, horizontal strategies, or a narrowed scope as examples. This was the beginning of the theme map, or the outermost layer. The layers could then be elaborated on by breaking the outermost layer into sub-layers until it was reasonable to stop. This theme map was created to better describe the themes in the data and to show relationships and sequences between unique data items.

Findings

In order to discuss the impact of leadership efficacy on a variable organizational design a number of critical leadership topics are discussed. The attributes of leadership are critical to efficacy. The application of these attributes is where value is created. Value relates to exogenous (market share, customer satisfaction, etc.) and endogenous (employee retention, capabilities, etc.) factors. With proactive leadership the potential severity of a risk is mitigated. Furthermore, action can be taken in anticipation of an environmental shift that would otherwise result in a threat-based loss or a missed opportunity. Couples with proactive leadership is the ability to execute. All of these aspects of leadership will be discussed in light of the data that emerged from the study.

Leadership attributes. Ultimately the MOS leader is a stakeholder and must exhibit strong leadership skills to achieve the goals of the organization and the production network that supports it.

[I] partner with local leaders to develop strategic plans for ... services with timeframes and measurements of improvement. The strategic plans should support the business goals of local facilities and be developed in coordination of each group and in alignment with the strategies/operations of the broader Global ... team. (RH11)

The desirable attributes of leadership from MOS stakeholders that emerged in the data include (a) strategy, (b) learning management, (c) culture, and (d) alignment. Additional data for a suggests that horizontal leader strategy must include change momentum, deployment capability, and a global influence. Additional data for b suggests that learning management includes the creation of knowledge, curriculum development, and the execution of the training activities across all locations. Additional data for c suggests that alignment includes collaboration between leaders, with internal clients, and with external clients. Collaboration is also dependent on decision-making skills. Leaders in an MOS need to be influential and effective in a network of dependent leaders. This requires well-honed leadership skills. Additional data for d suggests that the horizontal leader is responsible for the culture of the organization. This responsibility includes creating a culture that is attuned to meeting both client expectations and company goals (Kotter &Heskett, 1992).

"[I provide] coordination ... influence ... [and] development [so we] will be more effective and efficient [as] we stay aligned with our priorities." (RH131)

A culture of awareness is required so that effective decisions can be made. Alignment in the culture assures a 'one-ness' (1MC is the One MediaCorp strategy) as experienced by the organization and the client. This culture is then both aligned and collaborative. The leadership themes that emerged from the data are mapped in Figure 2 below.
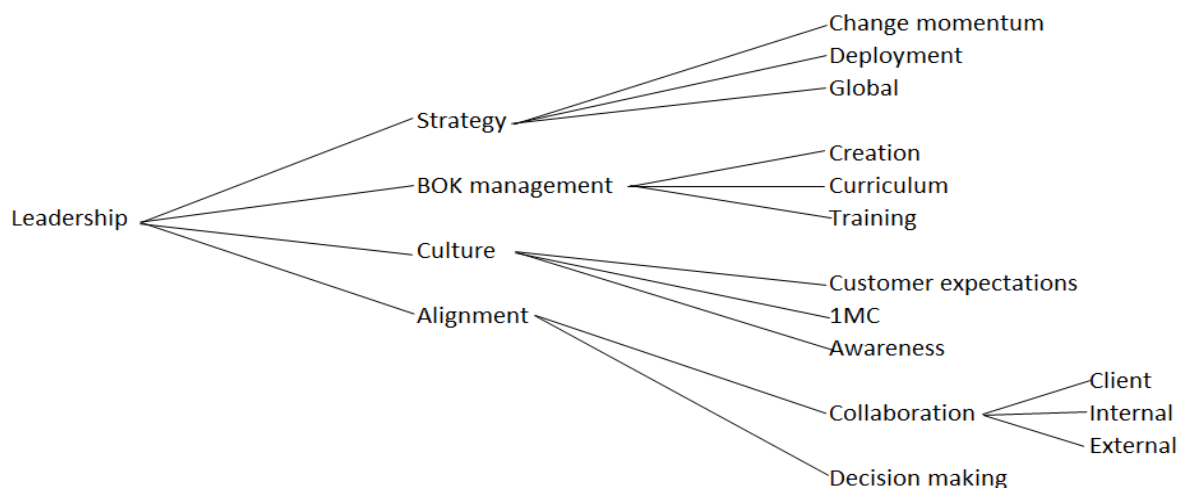

Figure 2. Leadership theme map. This figure maps leadership as a theme category into descriptive sub-groupings.

In summary, the data suggests that leadership is a strong component for MOS leadership success. Horizontal leaders have indicated from the data that they need to manage their business unit culture, exploit a managed body of knowledge, have alignment within their staff, and execute an effective strategy. The strategy that is deployed, along with the managed culture, need to be aligned with the values and norms of the MNE as a whole. Alignment facilitates speed with regard to decision making. Decision robustness and timing

are enhanced through a culture of collaboration. The following propositions summarize the key findings of this section:

Proposition 1 (strategy momentum): The strategy for a global deployment must include consideration for change management momentum and the organization's capability to effectively deploy.

Proposition 2 (augmented awareness): Leadership efficacy is dependent on environmental awareness augmented by a culture of purpose-driven learning.

This section exposed data collected from horizontal leaders about attributes needed to be successful in an MOS. It is clear from the data that horizontal leaders are primarily concerned with the consistent usage of a business system for transparency, effective capacity utilization, cost mapping and management, standardization, an effective communication strategy, a revenue growth strategy, and leadership that results in effective operational performance. The evidence from this study suggests that horizontal leaders that effectively influence the horizontal dimension in an MOS are critical to growth synergies in a multi-unit global enterprise in a moderately dynamic market. 'Horizontalization' through effective focused strategy also leads to improved profitability.

Leadership application. Leadership issues in the MOS that emerged in the data included leadership attributes, awareness, cohesion, inspiration, and failures regarding relationship building. These are illustrated in Figure 3 below. Leadership comments included a lack of oversight, insufficient arbitration, behavior control, a heavy-handed approach, and the mandate that the entity that is buying dictates the way things have to be done.

> *"Going in with a heavy-handed, arrogant 'we know best' approach [when] we don't always know [what is] best." (S132)*
> *"Emphasizing 'We are MediaCorp, and this is the way MediaCorp does this'." (S133)*

Many stakeholders are naturally guarded during a transition or a crisis situation because they do not know what to expect and they may expect not to be supported. Consequently, when leaders do not listen to high performers on either side, or do not understand the collateral damage associated with decisions, the plan execution is needlessly stressed and potentially flawed. Leaders are expected to be aware. They must be acutely aware of the change environment during the intense activity that surrounds a significant transformation. In addition, when there is a lack of cohesion among the leaders, there are disconnected agendas leading to further stress on the plan execution, thus, leading to change fatigue. A failure to develop relationships prior to the execution and then maintain them during the execution was also mentioned by MOS leaders as a contributor to plan failure.
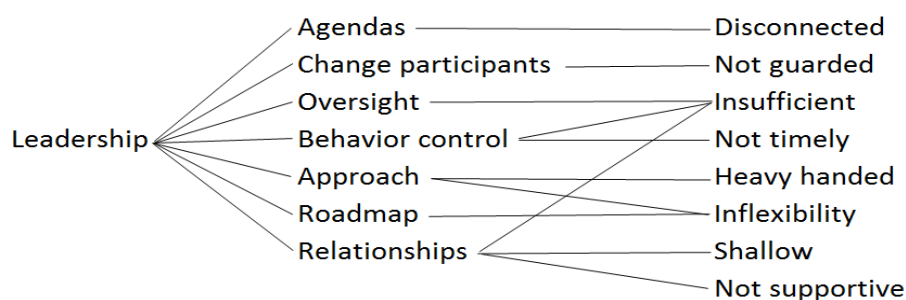

Figure 3. Negative change: leadership theme map. This figure maps leadership as a theme category into descriptive sub-groupings.

In summary, the data suggests that leadership factors influence change effort needed to achieve desired outcomes. The effort needed to accomplish a transformational change is significantly increased when agendas are multiple and conflicting. Leaders may exclude their direct reports from being active in the change process. This results in a lack of oversight and minimized interaction between stakeholders. The relationships then are shallow and leadership may take a heavy-handed approach to accomplish the roadmap. The following propositions summarize the key findings of this section:

> Proposition 3 (relationship performance): Relationship performance is linked to transformational change through attributes such as connectedness, adaptability, protection, and depth.
>
> Proposition 4 (performance outcomes): Performance outcomes are influenced by the approach used, the timeliness of behavior controls, and the achievement of an appropriate level of oversight.
>
> Proposition 5 (stakeholder alignment): The degree to which the change leader and stakeholders are in alignment of purpose correlates to the effort needed to execute the change roadmap.

Proactivity and execution. An MOS that leverages a network-based production scheme requires a proactive leadership component on the part of vertical leaders, as they are internal and external leaders. The themes that emerged from the data relate significantly to leadership. They were broken into proactive leadership and execution leadership categories. Each will be discussed separately. Proactive leadership has a data table that represents 53 themes extracted from 106 rich data descriptions, as seen in Table 1 below. Ahead of a change, proactive vertical leaders need to be able to show their employees that they have a rational roadmap for change. This gives employees the opportunity to participate in, rather than resist, a change event. These are not just plans, but include executable roadmaps. Ideation is one thing, while the development of an executable plan is another. Strategic planning is simpler if done on a platform of unification. Vertical leaders know that fragmented methods add complexity and are hard to build on. Making sure that the right people are being promoted is also critical to plan success. Depending on the wrong people to accomplish plans, creates significant inertia. Once workflows are standardized, vertical leaders need to be able to see and eliminate capacity constraints so that local markets can be served efficiently. Capacity is also managed by capacity optimization and resource redeployments. Suggesting enterprise resource planning(ERP) enhancements can be a significant contributor to efficiencies that free up capacity. Continuous improvement enhances reliability. This reduces non-conformities against requirements and rework that consumes capacity better allocated towards growth. For all work, requirements need to be understood to assure customer delight. Proactive leadership includes selecting and maturing leaders at the location. These leaders need to be able to suggest and deploy system enhancements. The team is effective if it can make sure work is completed using established best practices. Data and metric driven leadership is needed to create local strategy and optimize capacity effectiveness. This valuable data can be used to determine growth strategies and set the direction for the location.

> *"[Location leaders] implement a manufacturing/supply-chain philosophy to ensure consistent service levels and [meet] release dates to customers." (RV110)*

Continuous improvement. Continuous improvement must be accomplished ahead of workflow capacity being sold, in order to avoid early disappointment in the workflow. Performance requirements may be achieved with less effort through the use of applicable tools that improve reliabilities. Through close contact with other leadership in the

organization, the location leader is a role model for developing leaders and a strong team. It is expected that local leaders be capable of authoring plans, including budgets. The vertical leader initiates and leads initiatives that may relate to systems, resource management, workflow streamlining, and knowledge sharing or enhancement.

"[Location leaders] develop synergistic opportunities that can be aligned with overall enterprise-level business strategies." (RV88)
"[Location leaders] drive the process of planning, orchestrating, and evaluating operations activities and procedures in support of new and future business internally and externally to the division." (RV90)

Contingency planning is the proactive responsibility of the location leader. This is essential for business continuity and profitable growth. Vulnerabilities in location organizations are exacerbated when a leader leaves the organization. Backup leadership is needed to assure business continuity. Consequently, mentoring and training are critical to the location leader's responsibility. A location leader needs to have a backup plan for leadership capacity in the event that leadership capacity is lost.

"[I] lead the cultural effort at the location to drive leadership and career path[s] for staff." (RV39)

Finally, a location leader needs to accomplish typical leadership tasks, including creating an understanding for the vision and mission of the location and how it aligns with the MNE vision and mission. The vertical leader, according to the data, needs to hire people who can work within the vision and help the leader execute the mission of the location. The hired person needs to fit in with the culture. This is a culture of centralization, quality, and security. The new hire will be trained and will be expected to train others. The new hire will be expected to work within policies, but will be able to influence them as the location evolves ahead of the market. It is also hoped that the new hire will eventually contribute to synergy realization both at the location and more broadly in the MOS.

Table 1
Proactive Leadership Themes

Leadership: Proactive Themes	Count
Execution plan	10
Drive unification	7
Strategy creation	6
Drive succession planning	5
Strategic planning	5
Eliminate capacity constraints	4
Share/Redeploy capacity	4
Suggest ERP enhancements	4
Optimize utilization	3
Drive quality	3
Drive continuous improvement	2
Drive growth	2
ERP 'deployer'	2
Mature leads	2

Strong team	2
Adopt best practices	2
Provide data	2
Future planning	2
Create requirements	2
Growth strategies	2
Set direction	2
Curriculum development	2
Streamline	1
Workflow enhancements	1
Workflow maturity	1
Recommend tools	1
Drive improvement	1
Cultural leader	1
Define mission	1
Define vision	1
Drive centralization	1
Drive culture	1
Drive hiring	1
Drive leadership	1
Drive profitability	1
Drive security	1
Lead initiatives	1
	(continued)
Leadership: Proactive Themes	**Count**
Staff Training	1
Backup leadership	1
New leaders	1
Best practices	1
Policy evaluation	1
Policy management	1
Leverage metrics	1
Create budgets	1
Support planning	1
Strategy alignment	1
Recommend business systems	1
Point of control	1
Enable centralization	1
Identify synergies	1
Cross-training	1
Documentation	1
Total	**106**

Proactive leaders must be able to deal with capacity situations, must adopt and embed best practices, must be able to improve the overall performance of the location to be effective in the market, must apply leadership directly in critical areas, must be a mentor to raise up

new leaders, must be metrics- and fact-driven, must have a strategy that is ahead of the competitors, and must embrace training as a means to keep employees knowledgeable about their work and market.

The themes that emerged from the data suggest that a proactive leader at MediaCorp needs to manage capacity well. This includes anticipating capacity constraints and eliminating them before projects are in the workflows.

> "[I will] support MediaCorp facilities at the other locations to load balance and workload share support storefront activities coming out of [location 1], [location 2], and [location 3]." (RV42)

Capacity can also be optimized while in use to achieve optimal cost performance. Efforts to optimize capacity may include asking for work to be brought on or giving it away, or redeploying, to another location that needs it. Idle capacity hurts financial performance. All capacity must be exercised within best practices to minimize rework, which is capacity lost. In the event that a policy needs to be modified, this should be done carefully so as to minimize capacity loss during the transition. Contingency plans should be made to roll back the policy if it does not work. Periodically or when there is an issue, policies should be reviewed as they can stagnate in a dynamic market.

> "[I am the] control point for evaluation of policies and procedures ensuring quality and profitability." (RV84)

Proactive leadership has a strong continuous improvement component. Improving beyond the current business horizon enables growth into new areas. These improvements include system improvements that reduce work needed to perform tasks and ensure performance reliability. Other workflow enhancements can be done that do not involve a system. The discovery of 'waste' in the workflow enables streamlining. Whenever non-conformities are discovered, a corrective action will improve the reliability of workflow. If ignored, the non-conformity will reoccur. Tools may be developed to make workflows more robust. Process data may be leveraged to proactively target process areas for focused improvement, thereby eliminating non-conformities before they occur.

> "[I will] look for opportunities to align workflows [and] drive the program of quality and continuous improvement." (RV282)

A proactive leader is a mentor and trainer. First, a leader candidate needs to be discovered in the population. The proactive leader needs to know what to look for. When found, skills training needs to center around documented knowledge within an organized curriculum. Workers and leaders need to be cross-trained for nimbleness. Leadership skills come from being a role model and mentoring. Succession planning will create a backup in the event that leadership capacity is less than required. The proactive vertical leader will need to engage capable location leaders in strategic development. An aligned growth strategy needs to be created with input from key leaders at the location to assure buy-in and participation. The vertical leader is the point of control that will set the direction. A typical strategy will include knowledge of product present and future requirements, the enabling of synergy exploitation, the recommendation of systems, and the centralization of certain functions for capacity management.

> "[I will] lead priorities for cross training, talent retention, and succession planning." (RV315)

Finally, the proactive vertical leader, according to the data, will need to apply hands-on direct leadership to various critical areas. This role model will need to establish norms that are applicable to the market and what employees expect. This may include a culture that embraces security, with regard to client assets handled by MediaCorp, and quality of product such that client expectations are met. It starts with hiring the right people who will thrive in the needed culture. They will thrive in a growth environment and be able to adapt and execute roadmap-based initiatives. The unification of methods and the centralization of capacity will likely be a part of the plan intended to optimize profitability. The proactive leadership theme map in Figure 4 shows that there are several key components to success in this theme category.

"[I will] partner with WW product line leaders to drive unification, standardization, centralization and operational efficiencies across WW locations." (RV5)
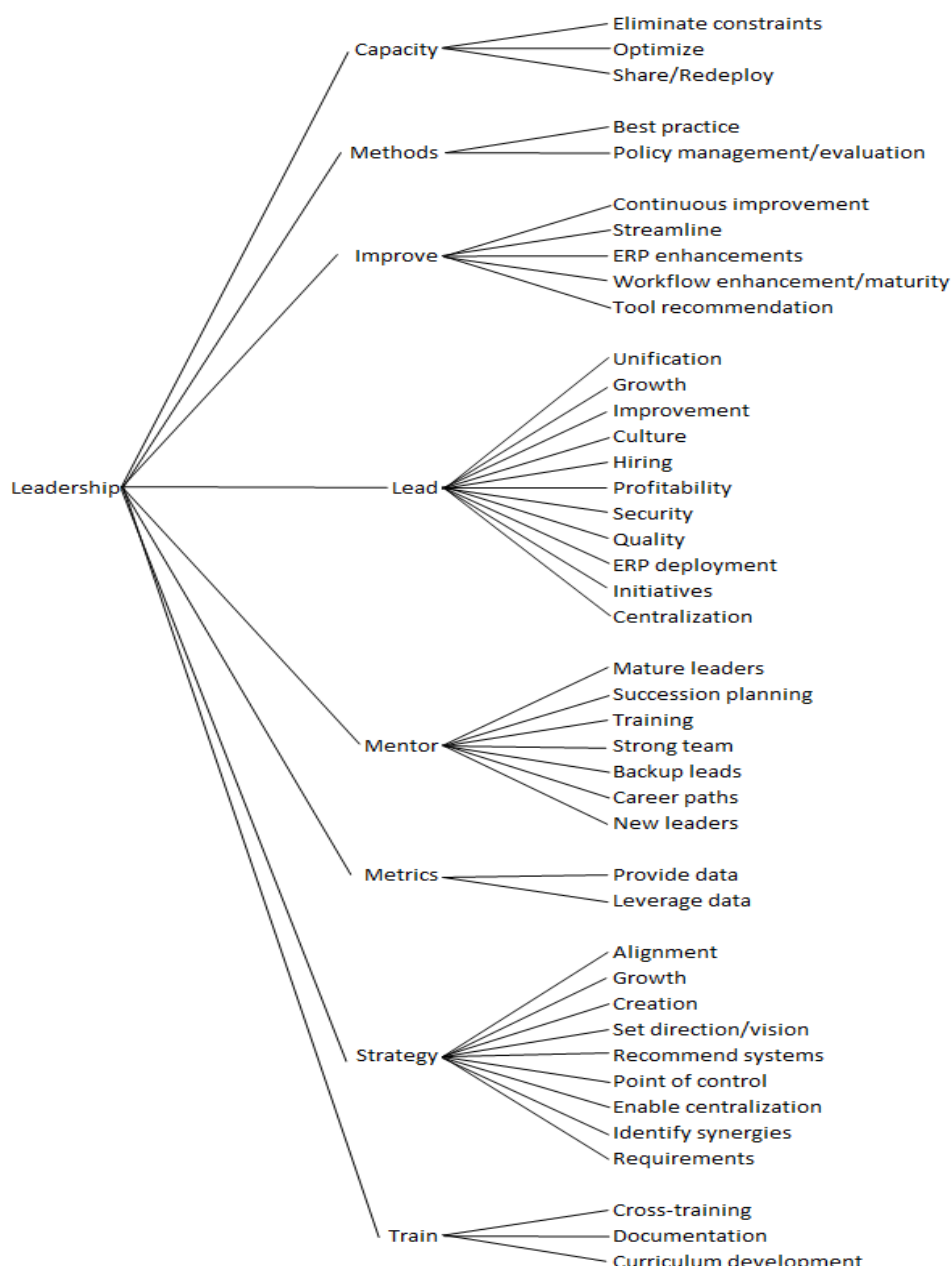

Figure 4. Proactive leadership theme map. This figure maps proactive leadership as a theme category into descriptive sub-groupings.

In summary, the data suggests that proactive vertical leaders need to be able to lead and make leaders. Being a role model, a trainer, and a leadership-selection expert are necessary. While standing on a platform of suitable norms and excellent performance, a vertical leader can set strategic growth plans proactively. Typically these plans are reactively conjured up and they are less effective. The vertical leader needs to be a steward of the capacity given while continuously improving its effectiveness. Finally, the proactive leader needs to be present and 'hands-on' to deal with critical issues. The following propositions therefore summarize the key findings of this section:

> Proposition 6 (location capacity): Location capacity, as it relates to existing and pending work requirements, is something that a proactive vertical leader must be keenly aware of so that constraints can be mitigated or circumvented.
>
> Proposition 7 (improvement rate): Continuous improvement must occur at a rate that exceeds market and competitor evolution in order to seal price points and gain revenues.
>
> Proposition 8 (future culture): Vertical leaders need to proactively select and mentor leaders that match the culture of the future, as defined by the strategic plan roadmap.
>
> Proposition 9 (leading ahead): Proactive leaders make their leadership teams capable to achieve 'what is about to happen' in the marketplace.
>
> Proposition 10 (entropy risk): The proactive leader must personally engage in critical tasks that would otherwise compromise future performance potential by mitigating organizational entropy risk.
>
> Proposition 11 (better practices): The proactive maintenance of best practices enables a gap between the current competitive landscape and an advanced position ahead of potential revenue opportunities.
>
> Proposition 12 (large orders): Sharing or redeploying capacity can enable the execution of large overcapacity orders that competitors are unable to execute, which would otherwise be referred to another vendor or split between vendors.

Leadership centers on execution for growth according to the second leadership category of emerging themes in the data. A vertical leader is responsible for executing plans.

> *"[I have] responsibility for outlining the strategic plan, budgeting and executing on those plans with approved staff and resources." (RV81)*

The theme pattern from the comments on execution focused on capacity management and executing strategic plans. This may include rolling out a new business system or new feature deployments. It may include technology enhancement rollouts or space optimization measures. By promoting leadership in the organization, the vertical leader is encouraging P&L accountability. This leads to involvement in pricing negotiations and cost reduction initiatives to promote profitability. While a leader oversees and directs the local operation, he or she also exploits support functions as needed to support growth initiatives. The vertical leader engages local leadership and encourages employees to be engaged in and influence internal/external service excellence, as well as growth initiatives thereby encouraging a performance culture. The success of the P&L would be measured by process-cost and service-performance levels. The local leader oversees all products that flow through the business unit. On the one hand, the leader needs to minimize cost and on the other, negotiate the best price for services to create margin. This leader needs to develop reliable leaders to oversee product reliability and the resources needed to deliver the desired configuration. This may include leadership selection, mentoring, and succession planning. The local team will need to embrace a supply chain culture of collaboration and sharing which includes offshore support. The location evolves as improvements are made in technology, policy, and process.

As effective leaders are engaged, they can solve problems, production, or system issues. The team needs to be resilient to handle the challenge of large projects with help from the network. The 44 themes that emerged from 94 rich data descriptions are included in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Execution Leadership Themes

Leadership: Execution Theme	Count
Leverage network capacity	13
Execute plans	8
Coordinate ERP deployment	6
Lower costs	5
Exploit support	4
Local operational effectiveness	4
P&L accountability	3
Labor allocation	3
Promote leadership	3
Negotiate pricing	3
Mitigate capacity constraints	2
Manage KPIs	2
Leadership	2
Oversees product line	2
Resource oversight	2
Mature leads	2
Drive succession planning	2
Fact based decisions	2
Offshore support	1
Supply chain culture	1
Create culture	1
Manage operational performance	1
Space optimization	1
Evolve technology	1
Policy management	1
Evolve the organization	1
Handle large initiatives	1
Implement solutions	1
Lead initiatives	1
Engagement	1
	(continued)
Leadership: Execution Theme	Count
Inventory management	1
Backup leadership	1
Lead training	1
Talent retention	1
Engage leads	1
Production issues	1

Resolve problems	1
Resolve system issues	1
Life-cycle exploitation	1
Negotiate contracts	1
External servicing	1
Internal servicing	1
Special quotes	1
Support direction	1
Total	94

The theme map for execution leadership that is illustrated in Figure 5 shows the emergent data in eight categories; capacity, culture, financial, execution, mentor, sales, strategy, and issue management. In the geographic locations, leadership drives profitability. The data suggested that profitability is influenced by lower cost structures, effective pricing negotiations, and financial accountability as the leader oversees each line of business. Lower costs structures relate to shared allocations and the optimization of space and capacity. The vertical leader needs to anticipate capacity needs, deal with constraints by leveraging the network, and support the network to return the favor. The second pattern in the data was culture. Vertical leaders suggested that they need to establish and manage the culture and that it should be supply-chain centric. Keeping talent is a challenge. Finding the right talent is a start. Mentoring and being a role model helps to mature this talent. When this talent is retained, there is good 'bench strength' in the event that a leader decides to leave.

> *"[I will] lead priorities for cross training, talent retention, and succession planning." (RV315)*

Within the location, the leader promotes leadership capability and creates a suitable culture. Team efficacy is driven by skills training and leadership coaching, while capacity is hampered by leaders who are not engaged. The location leader assures engagement by leaders and encourages leaders to promote engagement within their team leaders. Continuous performance is critical, as full financial accountability for the P&L falls on this leader. The location leaders, therefore, need to be aware of the current state and be mitigating costs where possible to enhance their financial position. Good talent can help with this.

From a sales perspective the vertical leader needs to engage in quoting for work requested and pushing for overages based on special requests outside of the quoted workflow. Involvement in contracts is critical, as terms can directly affect profitability. Each line of business has a life-cycle. This should be understood and pricing strategies should be used depending on products' positions in the life-cycle. Furthermore, a proactive leadership stance promotes growth and profitability in the following ways according to the data: they evolve technology, deploy and enhance business systems, implement current and create future strategic plans including budgets, manage requirements, mitigate capacity constraints, create strategy ensuring alignment, and mature, enhance, streamline, and deploy points of control in workflows.

> *"Drive growth at [location] office toward increased market share by leveraging global resources." (RV17)*

The leader plans for contingencies including resource redeployment, alternate workflows, and leadership-on-demand. Proactively, a location leader can enhance resource utilization through redeployment to the point of need or through appropriate local allocation.

Location leaders are responsible for executing plans, or roadmaps. They exploit operational data and metrics to determine plans and monitor changes in capacity utilization. They exploit support functions to get what they need to complete projects. This could be capital to increase capacity, as an example, to execute large client initiatives. As problems are solved and new enhancements are rolled out, the organization evolves to a better performing state. Local operational excellence is required and execution includes coordination with other business units to ensure plan completion. Daily performance excellence includes meeting internal and external client expectations. They exploit resources and manage assets with care. To do this they have to be engaged.

"[Location leaders] monitor and manage operational performance." (RV25)

The last pattern that emerged in the data for execution leadership was strategy. Strategy is by nature proactive if it is executed with the desired results achieved. To start, the vertical leader needs to support the general direction and be aligned with it. All ideation needs to conform to the goals of the MNE, while achieving local objectives as well. The leader needs to make sure that plans are executed effectively. The task list may include system enhancements or physical enhancements to the workflows.

"[I will execute] strategic analysis and placement of market opportunities by identifying and implementing solutions to maximize profit." (RV76)

In summary, the data suggests that leadership is proactive and execution based. Proactive leadership occurs ahead of revenue, producing activities that may have been otherwise lost. Consequently, proactive leadership is, by its nature, promoting growth synergies. While execution leadership does the same, it promotes growth synergies by accomplishing needed tasks while work is flowing. It sustains the flow and helps to ensure that it too can grow. It is the platform on which proactive efforts can be made. The following propositions summarize the key findings of this section:

Proposition 13 (negotiation leadership): Pricing negotiation leadership includes an awareness of cost reduction opportunity, regardless of current margin, and a profitability enhancement strategy.

Proposition 14 (predictive processes): Effective leaders act such that their processes predict the dynamic changes in the marketplace.

Proposition 15 (influential contingencies): Unanticipated influences may be controlled by contingencies that increase or replace lost capacity.

Proposition 16 (roadmap engagement): An executable roadmap is based on performance data and is rapidly accomplished in coordination with effective and engaged leaders.

Proposition 17 (facility network): Vertical leaders support the production facility network through a supply chain mindset that reduces carrying costs, enables the execution of high volume, and, therefore, mitigates capacity constraints.

Proposition 18 (operational effectiveness): Local operational effectiveness is based on leadership efficacy as evidenced by focus, optimization, and deployment.

Figure 5. Execution leadership theme map. This figure maps execution leadership as a theme category into descriptive sub-groupings.

Contributions to Theory

The primary contribution of this article is new empirical insights about the nature and impact of proactive and execution-oriented leadership in a global multidimensional organizational structure. These results arerelevant to the achievement of sustained

profitability and competitive advantage by focusing a multi-unit firm on leadership attributes and application, including the negative and positive effects of the application.Eighteen propositions were extracted from the participants instigated by a precipitated event that contribute to theory on leadership in an MDD. These outcomes that influence change efficacy are described and useful for sustained corporate advantage.

The author anticipates that these propositions will stimulate further research as organizational behavior is significantly complex and situational. These observations are also meant to stimulate further thinking. By studying the distinctive features of leadership across cultures and distance in an MDD, the author hopes that interest has been sparked towards researching the design and application of more effective and efficient applications of leadership.

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