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Renata Petrevska Nechkoska

Tactical Management in Complexity

Managerial and Informational Aspects

 Springer

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*This book is dedicated to my family,
To my parents, Vesela and Dragi Petrevski,
And to my beautiful daughter, Noela.
Wholeheartedly, with love and endless
gratitude and in awe,
Yours,
Renata*

Foreword

Renata Petrevska Nechkoska has a prodigious talent for finding, assimilating and building knowledge from an almost alarmingly broad spectrum of disciplines and sources. She consistently and successfully integrates her learnings from these into original and important contributions to managerial theory and practice.

This work is an exceptional document by a formidable talent, and I am fortunate to have her as an S&R carrier and extender in both the academic and business worlds. Publishing it for an international audience is a logical next step.

This book is a product of research about helping individual managers accomplish their purpose(s). It was inspired through practice (both from researcher's own experience and by interviewing professionals), where middle managers face tremendous challenges and need tailored support on the socio-technical nature of people, resources and problems they face. With this motivation, the author provides overarching managerial guidance and personalized information system structure throughout time. The Design Science Research methodology enables relevant, rigorous and applicable research that results with an artifact implementable enough to be applied in a variety of environments and generic enough to contribute to the knowledge base of management and management information systems.

Renata Petrevska Nechkoska contacted me early in her PhD dissertation process to learn about S&R from its source. This is a framework she used—among others—that fit her objective of addressing tactical management issues in times of complexity and unpredictability. After numerous coaching sessions, discussions, challenges and reflections we shared in the virtual space, I can attest to her qualifications to teach and apply the concepts and prescriptions of adaptive enterprise and sense and respond. She has made original and significant contributions to the application of sense and respond at tactical levels. I consider her level of understanding of sense and respond to be at the expert level.

The DENICA method, based on the sense and respond framework, guides the person on what to think, consider, observe, configure and reconfigure in order to reach goals in unpredictable and changeable environment. In its essence, this means incorporating adaptability at the core of tactical management—in both managerial and information system contexts. In companies, this translates into guidance for the

managers on tactics—how to effectively manage what is given towards what is expected in dynamic context. In private life, this translates into a rigorous framework for what we must pay attention to and how we should reason and act in pursuing our individual and collective purpose(s).

Sense-and-Respond Managerial
Framework: Designing and Governing
Adaptive Organisations Adaptive
Business Designs, Pound Ridge,
NY, USA

Stephan H. Haeckel

Acknowledgement

From time to time, there comes a chance to give an official written acknowledgement to persons to whom you would prefer to shout ‘Thank you for all your help and everything you have done for me!’ But, I have to clarify that saying the words of thankfulness is just a drop in the ocean. To the ones who have been my partners in this journey, I would like to say, show and sustain my most sincere gratitude in words and deeds in present and future times, for which I hope I will have a chance in life. It has been a turbulent road of sensemaking, hard work, finding and losing yourself so many times and bitter-sweet conquering of hills just to find abundance of new valleys and elevations before the mountain. No one can do it alone, without being taken care of by partners (even someone like me, confident in reading the stars of strategy and tactics, effectuating once in a lifetime opportunities and enjoying work and brain pain). It is a beautiful thing when a career and a passion come together—I am pursuing that through the personal examples of the people I worked with.

Just like the genesis of this work, I would like to start with my PhD mentors—I have the two most one-of-a-kind mentors in the world: Prof. Dr. Gjorgji Manceski, who facilitated my migration to the Academe, to complete me as a practitioner and researcher, and supported all my big and small, regular and special endeavours within this project, and Prof. Dr. Geert Poels, who facilitated my international research horizons and supported all the specific personality traits and ideas in remarkably delicate, individualized and purposeful manner. I am obliged with the time, effort and energy my mentors invested in me. They have given me roots and wings, both of them acting with utmost professionalism and true heart and enabling me, their student and friend think and feel once again that the sky is the limit.

To continue with the ones who have given me guidance, I would like to thank Stephan H. Haeckel, who has coached me in proper use of his sense-and-respond framework. It served in many directions—I could originally understand and apply it and, furthermore, shape and enhance it for tactical management. The endless Skype sessions with Steve have been of primary importance for this work to have clarity and no hesitation when facing the real world.

I would like to thank my Prof. Dr. Ljupco Pecijareski, for all the support and mutual understanding we have achieved, in our pursuit for the perfect collaboration.

To my PhD jury members and this book's reviewers, I extend my sincere thank you for the priceless viewpoints, constructive criticism and richness of feedback I have received. The knowledge and the both strong and subtle manner of transferring to me, improving the work and broadening the prospects that I received from each of them are remarkable—Prof. Dr. Patrick Van Kenhove, Dean, Prof. Dr. Frederik Gailly and Prof. Dr. Ir. Jan Devos, Ghent University, Belgium; Prof. Dr. Jelena Zdravkovic, Stockholm University, Sweden; University Prof. Mag. Dr. Walter Schwaiger, Vienna University of Technology, Austria; Prof. Dr. Marjan Angeleski, Prof. Dr. Marika Baseska-Gjorgjieska, Prof. Dr. Snezana Mojsovska Salamovska and Prof. Dr. Pece Mitrevski, University St. Kliment Ohridski, Republic of North Macedonia; and Prof. Dr. Bekim Fetaji, University Mother Teresa, Republic of North Macedonia.

To my colleagues at UGent, Belgium, and UKLO, North Macedonia, I would like to thank the tolerance and calmness in hard times and cheers in good ones. To my students, I would like to thank the endless energy and inspiration their youth brings along, their attempts to uptake and improve the components of this research and for giving me the honour of being part of the construction of their future.

I thank my true friends whose reasoning and life wisdom have cleared any doubt that you can pursue your dreams and sometimes succeed—and that I can rely on their support in need.

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I owe special gratitude to the European Commission for the Basileus PhD exchange scholarship that made the double degree possible and for the another priceless experience they have given me through the relation as evaluator for Horizon2020 projects with ICT disruptive innovation core—a role I find unique and important for anyone bridging academia and business; to the UGent and UKLO

rectorates, FEB deconates and International Relations Departments who enabled prospects and ensured smooth flow of all activities in their power, so that this research becomes a reality; and to the Springer team whose professionalism and kindness make anything possible, bridging distances, cultures, intellects and improvements, Christian Rauscher, Philipp Baun, Irene Barrios-Kezic and Ralf Gerstner. The author would like to thank Mr. Abdus Salam, project coordinator (Springer Nature), and Ms. Krithika Shivakumar, project manager, for their support in the production of this book. It was a journey of collaboration in which one feels the added value is in the outcome of the project but also even more in the selfless support to enable everyone's growth and satisfaction. Sincere thanks to Nikola Sikijovski for assisting me with the images of arm and shoal of fish. Thanks to Ian Copestake for the professional proofreading services.

Finally, the most heart-warming reason for my challenges and strive to improve this world—my beautiful family and my beloved parents who have taught me self-sacrifice, honesty and hard work, along with cosmopolitanism and tolerance, in whose arms everything is possible for me. My mother's and father's selflessness and devotion to me and my family are something I will try to amplify through my being and my heritage. I live in awe every precious moment with my daughter, Noela, whose early childhood paralleled a condensed double PhD degree with all its ups and downs and because of whom I am giving my best in life with hope to incept better future for our children. Her precious existence gives me strength to fight many battlefields, and looking with love in her eyes makes me recharge for many more.

Living and working in this moment in time, in a global village still unsettled among its members and within its natural environment, are in the very least intriguing. I have been privileged with the support of the right people and awesome circumstances to carry out something fulfilling and make a positive difference. My gratitude keeps me humble and challenged.

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February 2019

About the Book

This book contains research about helping the individual manage towards the accomplishment of purpose(s). It is inspired in practice (both from researcher's own experience and by interviewing and collaborating with professionals), where **managers in the middle** are facing tremendous challenges and need tailored support on the socio-technical nature of people, resources and problems they are dealing with. With this motivation, the researcher aims to contemplate overarching managerial guidance and personalized information system structure, throughout time. The **Design Science Research methodology as foundation for methodological kaleidoscope for Action Design Research, nested problem-solving and CIMO logic** has enabled making a relevant, rigorous and applicable research that results with an artifact which is implementable enough to be applied in the appropriate environment and generic enough to contribute to the knowledge base of management and management information systems, in the very least of its core.

The DENICA method for tactical management guides the person on what to think, consider, observe, configure and reconfigure in order to reach the goals in unpredictable and changeable environment, interrelated with others. This means tactical management and its **core characteristic—adaptability**—both in managerial and information system senses and both towards what is 'given' and what is initiated as desired change in order to improve towards a purpose. In companies, this translates into guidance for the managers on tactics—how to effectively manage with what is given towards what is expected in dynamic context. In private life, this translates into roadmap on what we need to pay attention to and how we should reason and act in pursuing our individual and collective purpose(s).

The artifact development has been carried out through the stages of Action Design Research in 4 companies with 11 managers in Belgium and North Macedonia. The knowledge and practical questions of the nested problem-solving guided the researchers throughout the project, and the CIMO logic provided the basis for the realist evaluation.

The research attempts to parallel the real world by being **multidisciplinary**—incorporating **management, information systems and complex adaptive systems** as subject being managed; **complexity theory** to describe the current context of

living and working; **social network analysis** as the manner to visualize, describe, communicate and get everyone on board around a purpose; and **sense and respond framework** for providing adaptability that properly responds to the unpredictable environment. This research sheds different light on the management information systems nature as perceived from the side of the manager as user and the nature of work (i.e. information flows) as dynamic, changeable and living matter.

Hopefully, *the DENICA managerial method* and *the tactical management research* (as part of management control) will *reintroduce the perception of tactics* as important managerial function that provides and necessitates adaptability and *uncovered source of competitive advantage and of its information system distinctive profile and needs*.

Please find additional materials, dynamic visualizations, practical implementations and further contact about tactical management in complexity and the author on: <http://tactical-management-in-complexity.com>

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About the Author

Renata Petrevska Nechkoska is a researcher, lecturer and practitioner with considerable experience both in rising economies such as in Western Balkans and in Western Europe. After a decade of middle management experience in banking (being HR manager, branch manager, project coordinator, etc.), she moved to the academic world in order to approach tactical management from a multidisciplinary perspective. She holds double PhD degree in Business Economics from Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium, and PhD in Management from the University of St. Kliment Ohridski, Bitola, North Macedonia. In her role as a project evaluator for the European Commission, she applies strategic, tactical and operational management thriving in an unpredictable global environment in order to yield sustainable, context-appropriate business models and disruptive innovations. As head of research team in the Western Balkans Alumni Association (facilitated by the Directorate General for Education and Culture), she works with Western Balkans alumni towards improving the higher education in the region, the integration into the European Union, the brain circulation and the overall Western Balkans research and educational but also socio-economic context. As Ghent University Western Balkans ambassador, she disseminates the ‘Durf Denken’ or ‘Dare to Think’ mindset of cutting-edge research and education, win-win mentality and utmost professionalism from developed Europe to the Western Balkans. Under the guidance of Harvard’s Center for International Development, she led a team towards introducing a strategy for solving complex problems, such as improvement of the air quality in the region, iterating the project towards real outcomes. Her current ambition is to assemble a proper combination for complexity—strategy, tactics and operations—both in managerial and informational senses. She is fascinated by complexity science and complexity economics. Her passion in environment, circular economy, societal issues and overcoming challenges of developing countries is spread into diverse volunteering efforts, citizen movements and supportive affirmative actions. She believes that in order to properly address this complex, interrelated, information-rich world, we need multidisciplinary, multi-stakeholder, MultiCreation managerial approach—and she aims for real, visible, satisfactory outcomes, quick wins but also (and

especially) positive roadmaps that will fruit in the future. She commits restlessly and creatively her unique worldview to diverse range of domains and activities to facilitate coevolution among students, peers, academics, businesses, economies and disciplines. She is filled with gratitude to her mentors, supporters, friends and family and is challenged to make this world a better place for her child and all our future generations.