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Dissertation Overview

Managing the Invisible Obvious: How to See, Construct and Drive Our Assumptions, Expectations and Knowledge to Shape the Emergence of Our Innovation Opportunities

"Leading and innovating during this current period of uncertainty requires not only good leadership and expansive resources; it also requires the ability to manage the underlying assumptions, expectations and knowledge about your organization and the environment you operate - those things that, while invisible, drive your company's overarching behaviors and way of thinking. How to make this invisible obvious and how to manage it is the aim of this dissertation. I introduce three essays that help guide the executive manager in managing the "invisible obvious". I start with understanding a few of the cognitive frames that guide people's understanding of innovation and uncertainty, and I show how this can be used by executives to become more aware of their organization's invisible obvious. Second, I demonstrate through a case study on a new technological innovation just how understanding and managing one of these more fundamental assumptions and factors of organizing - time - can be used to foster new innovations within the established organization – What is time? How am I bound to it? How can I break free of my own pace? Lastly, I discuss the process of uncovering the invisible obvious at the level of practice by examining a strategic planning team in their day-to-day activities, making salient the requirements and processes to becoming strategically-aware and turning that awareness into actions. Together, these three essays suggest both why, what, and how to manage this overlooked but critical component that is needed for leading in these uncertain times and for driving innovative."