

ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT JOURNAL EDITORS' FORUM ON RICH RESEARCH

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

At last summer's annual Academy of Management meeting in Atlanta, I participated in a pre-conference Professional Development Workshop called "The Power of Rich," organized by Diana Day and J. Peter Murmann. The intent of this PDW was to try to remedy the paucity of formal instruction in qualitative methods at many universities. Diana and Peter sought to reach individuals who were interested in conducting qualitative research but had little idea about how to get started. Their idea was "to have the best of the best in each of the qualitative methodologies talk about them and to have editors explain the problems they see and possible ways to overcome them."

So many people showed up for this session that it would be inadequate to describe the turnout as "standing room only." People were not only standing in the back and sides of the room, but spilling out into the lobby. Extra audiovisual equipment was engaged to broadcast the speakers' voices into the lobby. Enthusiasm was high, and many people lingered long after the session was over.

Shortly after this session, it occurred to me that it would be wonderful to share some of the insights presented that day with a much larger audience. Unrestricted by the physical constraints of meeting rooms, scholars worldwide can have access to "the best of the best."

In this spirit, we are very pleased to present essays by some of the world's best qualitative researchers in the field of management and organizations. In "The Generative Properties of Richness," Karl Weick uses his own experiences in studying wildland firefighters and the teaching methods of zoologist and geologist Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz to generate five lessons for building richness into one's own work. In "Persuasion with Case Studies," Nicolaj Siggelkow draws on talking pigs, neurological research, and his own work with Liz Claiborne and Vanguard to discuss three distinct uses of cases—as motivation, as inspiration, and as illustration—and the opportunities and challenges associated with each. Finally, in "Theory Building from Cases: Opportunities and Challenges," Kathleen Eisenhardt and Melissa Graebner discuss why building theory from cases "is one of the best (if not the best) of the bridges from rich qualitative evidence to mainstream deductive research."¹ I hope you enjoy (and learn from) these essays as much as I did.

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¹ This essay was not presented at the original workshop, as Professor Eisenhardt had a scheduling conflict.