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EDUCATION

Stanford University

Ph.D. in Management Science and Engineering, *Expected 2008*

Affiliated with Center for Work, Technology & Organization and Stanford Technology Ventures Program

University of Florida

M.B.A. Warrington College of Business, *2002*

Certificates in Entrepreneurship and Technology Management

Northwestern University

B.S. in Communication Studies, *1998*

DISSERTATION SUMMARY

Title: *Tweaking the Iconic: The Management of Continuity-Constrained Resources*

Committee: Robert Sutton (advisor), Kathleen Eisenhardt, Riitta Katila and Fred Turner

My dissertation examines how firms manage the use of resources that also function as cultural icons. These resources, which I term *iconic resources*, are traditionally associated with competitive advantages such as improved market share, customer loyalty and firm status. Firms that possess these resources, however, are also subject to considerable constraint that largely stems from the perceived need to maintain temporal continuity with past uses of the resource (e.g. new Mini automobiles must evoke past versions). Even while innovating, firms thus seek to preserve the cultural meaning and historical essence of the resource. We know very little, however, about the particular organizational processes and strategies by which this is accomplished.

I address this gap through an inductive, qualitative, multi-case study of the development of feature films based on intellectual property originating in the comic-book industry. Many comic-book characters have a well-accepted cultural status and are economically consequential resources, generating large licensing revenues in a variety of media. I chose feature films as my particular lens because films have the largest perceived effect (to the owning firms) on the long-term economic health of the characters. My data consist of ethnographic interviews with executives, directors, editors, producers and writers along with substantial archival material surrounding six film franchises (fifteen total films).

My findings show how the multiple constituencies that are vested in the fate of the source material (e.g. fans, filmmakers, investors) gently push the films in different directions. I identify particular processes by which owning firms skillfully ‘shepherd’ resources through these competing influences and preserve their iconic status. When these processes are not employed, long-term negative impact on the resource’s financial viability can occur even when short-term financial gains are achieved. These findings enhance our understanding of cultural industries, innovation under constraint and the management of especially valuable and inimitable firm resources.

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND AWARDS

Lilly Fellowship (2005)
General Motors Research Fellowship (2002-present)
Stanford University Research Fellowship (2001-2002)
Poe Center for Business Ethics Education and Research Fellow (2000-2002)
University of Florida Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation Research Fellowship (2000-2002)
Northwestern University School of Speech Undergraduate Research Fellowship (1998)
Corliss Lamont Award for Dedication to the Freedom of Speech (1994)

PUBLICATIONS / UNDER REVIEW

Maurer, R. E. (2007). Innovation as Negotiation: The Impact of Cultural Status on the Development of a Film Franchise. *Stanford Center for Work, Technology and Organization*, under review at Administrative Science Quarterly

Maurer, R. E. (2006). Variations on a Theme: The Social Context of Reinvention and Renewal. In Davila, Epstein and Shelton (Eds.) *The Creative Enterprise: Vol. 3 – Execution* (pp. 95-114). Westport, CT: Praeger.

WORKING PAPERS

Maurer, R. E. (2007). The Problem with Sequels: Status, Autonomy and the Liability of Prior Ties. *Stanford Center for Work, Technology and Organization*, in preparation

Butler, M. E. & Maurer, R. (2007). Material Culture and Network Theory. *Stanford Archaeology Center and Stanford Center for Work, Technology & Organization*, in preparation

Maurer, R. E. & Cox E. (2007). Status Dynamics and the Dissolution of Creative Networks. *Stanford Technology Ventures Program*, in data collection phase

PRESENTED PAPERS

Maurer, R. E. (2007) Iconic Resources and the Cultural Life of the Firm. Presented to *European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop on Exploring Symbolic Value Creation in Organizations*, Milan, Italy

Maurer, R. E. (2007) Comic-book Films and the Shepherding of Iconic Resources. Presented to *Stanford Critical Studies in New Media Mellon workshop*, Stanford, CA

Larsen, E., Maurer, R. E. & Butler, M. (2006) Understanding the Third Age. Presented to:
a. *Mercedes-Benz marketing and strategy groups*, Stuttgart, Germany
b. *Chrysler marketing group*, Auburn Hills, MI
c. *Chrysler office of the CEO*, Auburn Hills, MI

Maurer, R. E. (2006) Managerial Cognition of Long-term Futures: a Case Study in the Automobile Industry. Presented to *Stanford Technology Ventures Program colloquium*, Stanford, CA

Maurer, R. E., Shanks, M., Platt, D. & Butler, M. (2006) Scenarios for the Future of In-Vehicle Media Use. Presented to:
a. *Chrysler Strategy group*, Auburn Hills, MI
b. *DaimlerChrysler Research and Technology North America*, Palo Alto, CA

Maurer R. E., (2005) Social Networks and Innovation in the Valley. Presented to *Stanford Center for Professional Development affiliate roundtable discussion*, Stanford, CA

Maurer R. E., (2005) A Sociological Perspective on the Production of Derivative Works. Presented at *University of Michigan Conference on Creativity, Copyright and Plagiarism*, Ann Arbor, MI

Maurer R. E., (2005) Rhetoric, Citizenship and Public Discourse. Presented at *San Francisco State University Seminar on Classical Culture*, San Francisco, CA

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Service:

Reviewer, AOM Annual Meeting (BPS, TIM and OMT), 2005-present

Discussant, ESF Workshop on Symbolic Value Creation, 2007

Website Administrator, Stanford Center for Work, Technology and Organization, 2003-2005

Chair and discussant, University of Michigan panel on Pedagogy and Creativity, 2005

Resident assistant, Northwestern University, 1996-1998

Residential life planning committee, Northwestern University, 1997-1998

Consortia and Workshops:

AOM OMT Division Doctoral Students Consortium (Philadelphia, PA), 2007

AOM TIM Division Doctoral Students Consortium (Atlanta, GA), 2006

Stanford Mellon Workshop, *Critical Studies in New Media*, 2005-2007

Stanford Mellon Workshop, *Ancients and Moderns*. 2005-2006

Stanford Humanities Lab, 2005-present

Stanford Metamedia Lab, 2005-present

Memberships:

AOM OMT Division

AOM BPS Division

INFORMS

TEACHING AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistantships:

Organizational Behavior: An Evidence-Based Approach 2007-2008
Co-Designer, Lecturer and Course Assistant

Developed a new masters-level course with Professor Robert Sutton that employs an evidence-based approach to organizational behavior education. Syllabus can be viewed at www.evidence-basedmanagement.com/teaching.

Organizational Behavior 2003-2006
Lecturer and Course Assistant

Handled grading and logistics for masters-level course taught by Professor Robert Sutton. Developed and gave lecture on social context of creativity and innovation, emphasizing the role of markets and fields in determining what is considered innovative. Lectured on cultures of implementation.

Research Projects:

Affluence in the United States/Understanding the Third Age/DC 2015 2006-2007
Lead Ethnographer

Project collaborations with Prof. Michael Shanks (Stanford Humanities Lab) and Eric Larsen (DaimlerChrysler Society and Technology group). Funded by DaimlerChrysler LLC.

Evidence-Based Management 2006
Site Co-designer and Research Assistant

Co-designed website on evidence-based management (www.evidence-basedmanagement.com) for Professors Robert Sutton (Management Science & Engineering) and Jeffrey Pfeffer (Organizational Behavior).

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

New Venture Consultant, US Biomaterials (Alachua, FL), 2001

Systems Analyst – Creative Industries, Lapin Systems (Evanston, IL), 1999-2000

Leadership Development Program Associate, The Rank Group (Chicago, IL), 1998-1999

Student Representative – Northwestern University, Apple Computer (Chicago, IL), 1995-1998

Multimedia Journalist, NUTS Technologies (Hong Kong), 1994

REFERENCES

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