

4. Management rationalities

Introduction

We begin with what is a classical theme in sociology which has been given a distinctive cast in studies of economic organisations, namely the institutionalisation of innovation. Even a quick browse through the entrepreneurial literature is likely to reveal the importance of two strands: first, the mythology of the entrepreneur as a self-made man, or these days, woman; and second the stereotype of entrepreneurs as difficult people to work for and with. These two themes are often conjoined in a third. This is the repeated observation concerning the fragility of entrepreneurial success and its resistance to being incorporated within large scale 'bureaucratic' structures. Here for example is a comment made by one successful entrepreneur.

The entrepreneur who starts his own business generally does so because he is a difficult employee. He does not take kindly to suggestions or orders from other people and aspires most of all to run his own shop.....His idiosyncracies do not hurt anybody so long as the business is small, but once the business gets larger, requiring the support and active co-operation of more people, he is at risk if he does not change his approach. It has been correctly stated that the biggest burden a growing company faces is having a full-bloodied entrepreneur as its owner. (D. du Toit quoted in Kets de Vries 1985, p. 160)

The reasons for this are felt to stem from the peculiarities of the entrepreneurial personality (Chell 1986). They seem to be precisely those characteristics which militate against the collegial forms of management necessary for the successful operation of large scale

enterprises. As Kets de Vries summarises them

Entrepreneurs seem to be achievement oriented, like to take responsibility for decisions and dislike repetitive routine work. Creative entrepreneurs possess high levels of energy and great degrees of perseverance and imagination, which, combined with willingness to take moderate, calculated risks enable them to transform what often began as a very simple, ill-defined idea into something concrete. Entrepreneurs can also instill highly contagious enthusiasm in an organisation. They convey a sense of purpose and, by doing so, convince others that they are where the action is. Whatever it is - seductiveness, gamesmanship, or charisma - entrepreneurs know how to lead an organisation and give it momentum.

Along with their mystique, however, entrepreneurs may have personality quirks that make them hard people to work with. For example, their bias towards action, which makes them act rather thoughtlessly, sometimes can have dire consequences for the organisation. Moreover, some entrepreneurs I have known have had great difficulty in taking direction. (Kets de Vries 1985, pp. 160-167)

As we say, in the conventional wisdom of business administration, this combination of aggressive self assertion and motivation is held to threaten the survival of the entrepreneurial firm after it has "taken off" in the market place. The reason for this appears to be quite obvious. Considered as a type for managing economic activities - as Kets de Vries summarises it, say - the entrepreneur does not fit the pattern of role requirements, the 'organisation man', more usually associated with large scale and hence mostly bureaucratic structures. The rationality of profit orientation couched in terms of the calculability of outcomes runs up against managerial rationalities associated with the operation of the organisation. Calculation and organisation pull in different directions. As many commentators have suggested, unless the entrepreneur, or those who acquire his business, are able to adapt to an increasingly managerial context and develop a flexible organisational structure fairly rapidly, the fertility, energy and vitality which gave the entrepreneur his original success can soon dissipate.

As we have discussed it so far, the problem has been defined as one expressing a theoretical contradistinction. That is, it is a problem which is specifiable because of the theoretical conceptualisations of, on the one hand, the entrepreneurial firm and on the other the large scale enterprise. The one is organised around the personal insight, motivations, force and drive, *charisma* to use the term offered by Kets de Vries, of the founder. The other is organised around patterns of structurally defined sets of role relations, be they hierarchical, matrix, network or organic in form. Turning the success of entrepreneurial flair into permanent profitability is a problem given by the theory since the transformation from one to the other form of organisation is held, in the theory, to be inevitable and necessary if success is to be maintained. It is generally introduced as what we might call the routinisation of entrepreneurial charisma¹ and is characterised, more often than not, as the successful depersonalisation of "the entrepreneurial eye".² The problem is constituted out of the contradistinction of two theoretical types, 'the self made entrepreneurial business' which places an emphasis on personal qualities and insight, and 'the administratively structured enterprise' which is

felt to be more conscious of and concerned with administrative efficiency. The contrast provides a way of glossing organisational histories so that particular cases and events can be instanced as part of a general process. The types are used to indicate stages or forms through which the evolving Company must pass (Pettigrew 1985, Lawrence 1985 and McKelvey 1982).

The whole issue, though, could be formulated in an entirely different way. This would be in terms of a view of the structure of social relations within the evolving firm and attempts made to locate the entrepreneurial function at a specific level of managerial functioning rather than with the idiosyncracies of individuals. To those working within a business, the routinisation of entrepreneurial charisma appears as a problem of organising and maintaining stable, non-personalised patterns of working practices. That is to say, it is a problem defined by the need to achieve consistency of decision making outcomes, continuity of treatment of cases, and proceduralisation of administrative practise. It is encountered day in day out within the flow of organisation life, as the specification of the grounds of effective organisation action and its justification. In other words, at the level of day to day administration of the firm, during the transition from the entrepreneurial business, pure and simple, towards the large scale firm, what management involves as a scheme of interpretation for grounding one's actions and interpreting those of others (that is, as a designation of typical ways of acting), is something which is subject to constant review. In that sense, what management involves is defined commonsensically for actors. It is a construct which while located in Sociology's and Administrative Science's theorising, is also deployed in the day to day affairs of the firm as a global summation for all kinds of actions and strategies encountered in numerous contexts of justification, interpretation and explication. Our interest in this chapter is in exploring these.

In the theoretical literature, management is used to designate both a set of functions (the organisation of activities) and the personel who carry them out. It is thus tied to other theoretically defined concepts such as the division of labour, organisational rationales, hierarchies of power, responsibility and supervision, and so forth. If its requirements are to become unproblematic for daily organisational life, this can only be done as an outcome of management's project. That is, as the outcome and as part of activities carried out within the flow of ordinary working life. The routinisation of charisma and with it depersonalisation of administration and control, is not achieved and then the firm organised and administered differently. Achieving a different form of organisation and administration is the routinisation of charisma. At the level of senior executives, management is used to circumscribe not just what they do, but what demands are made of them, what responsibilities they have and the rights they feel they can exercise. Obviously, in the context of an entrepreneurial firm in transition from being a one man business to a large scale enterprise, the character and distribution of the activities, expectations and values may well be evolving, indefinite and contestable.

At LTC, these issues were shaped by the specifics of the local organisational environment. This environment is one still heavily dominated by Lawrence Hunt. Thus the issue of depersonalisation was, in effect, nearly always couched as one of how much Lawrence had to be told, how far he had to agree with everything that was going on, in what areas was discretion allowed, what was it thought he would expect, and so on. This environment provides a normative order within which actions are located and a series of responses to that

order shaped by the processes of transformation we have outlined.

In the rest of this chapter we will explore how management of LTC involves the definition, description and resolution of tensions and conflicts consequent upon the necessity to routinise Lawrence's entrepreneurial charisma. What we will be describing are the lineaments of 'commonsense management at LTC' at this point in its development. What any manager at LTC has to know, learn, and is made aware of, in order to 'see what is going on' and 'how to get things done' in the firm. Such conflicts and tensions are thematised by those involved in the business as the practical problems of working with people like Lawrence in a company like LTC. Elsewhere things would be different. As a commonsense construct at LTC, management is praxeological in its application.

Management as a transformation of role identities

Part of the transition which we have been discussing, involves an awareness of changes in the ways in which individuals are perceived and related to. In the case of the entrepreneur, from being both the controller, "the boss", and at the same time day to day colleague of most people, he becomes a distant figure, the Chairman of the Company, the Managing Director, one of a chain of supervision and authority. This can be quite difficult to accomplish, particularly if, as at LTC, the processes bringing about this re-orientation are in fact resisted by some the personnel most closely involved. While the transition is taking place, people working within the company may have to orient to a number of role identities at once, juggling with them and locating their activities and those of others within multiple frames of meaning which ground the identities in play at any one time. Take Sandy Green, for instance. As the Company has grown larger, she has taken over responsibility for two distinct spheres, COUNTRY KITCHENS and financial administration. In that sense, these are "her" parts of the Company. However, as we shall see in detail in a moment is true for all parts of the Company, Lawrence takes a proprietorial attitude to everything, and her awareness of this is constantly at the horizon of her consciousness. She never forgets that he is "the boss" and that, as he once said, it is his Company and he can do what he likes with it. In fact, he once used almost exactly those words when she objected to his re-organising the work of one of her staff without consulting her. But, it would be unwise to see this awareness as some kind of expression of repression or domination. There is an imbalance in power, to be sure, but it is an imbalance which is worked out in very particular ways.

Look, for example at the proposal that since Lawrence is the boss, he is in control. He takes major decisions, he controls initiatives and resources, he hires and fires senior staff. This dominance might appear indubitable, until one asks about the day to day running of the Company. At the level of mundane activity, no-one is in control, since it is not a matter of exercising control, just as no-one is doing the administration and co-ordination, since no-one person is charged with or could do those functions either. Control, administration, co-ordination are achieved within the course of daily activities in running the business. Certainly, Lawrence does make major decisions; certainly, he can refuse to allow some lines of action to take place. But at the level at which most people experience company life, in the fetching and carrying of files and reports, in the picking up of decisions and implementing

them, in the allocation of staff to functions, buying supplies and paying invoices, selling food and dealing with customers, Lawrence is as dependent upon them as they are on him. Whether he likes it or not, LTC is now an extensive organisation, and Lawrence could not do everything. Thus, to change the image a little, and use one which Giles Davies once used in describing his relationship to Lawrence, Lawrence may own the ball and so be able to decide which game they play, but he can only do so in so far as, for whatever reasons, they are prepared to play with him. If they were not, then he would have to do all the fetching and carrying himself.

This interplay of lines of reciprocal dependence emerges in daily working life in schemes of interpretation by which people orient to the role identities ascribed to both themselves and others: who, at that moment in that context, they are. Thus, again to use Sandy as an example, during many meetings she has performed the social role of colleague, employee, friend, organiser, with no apparent difficulty, while Lawrence moved through the gamut of colleague, boss, friend and ally, each organised with similar ease. Indeed, so rare were the occasions when they were out of tune with one another that they were specifically noticeable and made accountable. For instance, when Sandy expressed a need for a highly experienced assistant, Lawrence's intransigence led to Sandy leaving the room in tears. Lawrence and Giles put it down to her being just a bit "emotional" about these things, and Lawrence later apologised. Sandy explained it, again in terms of her being "emotional", but also in terms of the difficulty of dealing with Lawrence. "When he is like that he tends to become unreasonable."

A second way of viewing this notion of management as the transformation of identities is through the teasing which goes on at Lawrence's expense. At LTC everyone teases Lawrence. That is, Lawrence's well known foibles: his obsessiveness with detail; his pre-occupation with profits and costs; his tendency to drive somewhat recklessly; the reluctance to take decisions, are all the subject of teasing comment by members of staff, both to his face and "behind his back". Lawrence is the butt of these jokes and this teasing and only now and again does it ever seem to rile him. Then, of course, for a short while at least, it stops. The rest of the time, though, he accepts it as it was meant; an affectionate reminder that, at times, he can be more than a little difficult to work for. Here is an example of what we mean.

Part of the formalising of office routines involved getting all the staff to compile a job description of their work. These were then to be put on file so that if anyone left, a job advert could be put together reasonably quickly. Gill, Lawrence's secretary, compiled and circulated her job description and its "shadow". The one is an explication of what the other means. She circulated it so other other people could offer their amendments and contributions, several of which were added. It was also circulated as a way of bringing it to Lawrence's notice without having to give it to him, since other people were bound to comment on it. Not surprisingly, it was Sandy who first mentioned it to Lawrence. Gill had given her a copy. In that sense, then, Gill's "shadow job description" was not a challenge to Lawrence but 'a bit of fun' in which he could join simply by laughing at Gill's version of himself.

The way in which this was managed, says a great deal about the way that role identities are managed in the firm. It was done indirectly in that the circulation of the description was carried on without telling Lawrence, and Gill left it up to one of the Directors (it could only be Sandy or Giles) to tell Lawrence about it. And, of course, given that it had to do with

Lawrence's working practices it was always likely to be Sandy. Further, she is on the chatting network of the office staff in a way that Giles is not and could not be. There was, therefore, an institutionally available device by which the teasing could be made. For Gill had simply put it together and then just handed it to Lawrence, or leave it around for him to see, would have been to fail to make the point. It was an public ribbing and reminder, and was taken as such by Lawrence. He thought it was funny, too.

Management as a Normative Order

Once in a discussion of sales strategy, and in particular the best method by which LTC should promote its public image, Lawrence reminded Giles, Sandy and Colin Dunbar that cost effectiveness should always be paramount. "Image is fine," he said, "As long as it doesn't cost us money." One could hardly find a better summation of the ethos to which Lawrence ascribes in business life nor a dimension along which that general attitude serves to generate tensions within the Company. The expectation which Lawrence has attempted to enshrine in all aspects of LTC's activities, that costs should be minimised and expenditure tightly controlled, has contributed towards a particular way of defining and evaluating lines of action, what earlier we called a scheme of interpretation, which at times seems to be at odds with what might be seen as the requirements for running a large scale operation. As the Company moves towards a more diversified structure, the normative order to which Lawrence subscribes appears to those around him more and more to create problems for them.

At this point, we want to introduce an analytic device. In the discussion which follows, we will talk of Lawrence and how other's see him and his attitudes. To emphasise the socially constructed character of this body of beliefs, attitudes, norms and values (what we have called a scheme of interpretation) we will enclose all such references in brackets { }. The point of this is to draw attention to our analytic suspension of any judgement on the 'truth', 'veracity', 'soundness' or 'reasonableness' of these ascriptions. {Lawrence} is a social construction, a cultural object.³

The orientation towards the tension we have discussed is made visible in a number of ways. By and large, they all involve an orientation towards Lawrence's position in the firm, and hence to {Lawrence} himself as a scenic feature of the organisational landscape. One dimension, perhaps the predominant one, is the ascription to {Lawrence} of a rationale for business activities which puts a primacy upon profit and hence with strict commercial instrumentality. He is associated with attitudes which encapsulate the orientation of the one man entrepreneurial business. Sandy, for instance, has often accused Lawrence of thinking that running LTC was "no different to selling ladies knickers from a barrow in the market". And, in the way that he feels he necessarily has to be personally involved in the pricing of contracts, selection of suppliers, and reduction of costs, it is no surprise that many people describe {Lawrence} in terms resonant of the huckster.

One incident in particular makes this point. When one particular outlet (the Spectrum Centre at Richmond, c.f. Chapter 6 for a full discussion of this) was under threat, it was discovered during an audit check that they had great deal of surplus stock which they would never sell. The obvious thing to do was to move it to another centre. As a consequence, Lawrence had the stock moved to Telford prior to being distributed elsewhere. It was brought

in by Mike Santo late one evening as he was on his way South and discovered by the office staff early the following morning. For the next three or four days while the cartons of crisps, sweets and chocolates sat on the stairways in Telford, the story circulated that {Lawrence} intended to sell them on the following Saturday morning in the local market. While no-one actually believed that he would, they all went around saying that they would not be surprised if {he} did.

This conception of what it is thought {Lawrence} embodies and requires, is used as a scheme of interpretation both inside and outside the Company. Colin Dunbar and Giles Davies think of it as the Company's "cowboy" image. That is to say, from the way that the Company is seen to deal with others, LTC appears to put ensuring profits above all else. However it is not merely that profits are what are sought, but the concomitant impression that profits are all that is wanted, which is being referred to. A commitment to the primacy of profit making would, of course, be endorsed by both Giles and Colin. Without profits the business would not survive. And everyone wants it to survive, if only for the sake of their own livelihoods. But, the tensions which we have mentioned emerge not because of the necessity for obtaining profit, but the perceived expectation concerning the style, the manner in which they are to be achieved. Here the executive as huckster associated with {Lawrence} is out of kilter with the executive as manager.

A second dimension along which this particular tension is made visible is the degree to which Sandy, Giles and Colin orient to {Lawrence} and take their leads from {him}, while {Lawrence} himself is seen as much more autonomous. What we are pointing to is a series of reciprocated expectations with regard to what can be expected of others and what they can expect of you, as well as what it can be expected you will provide for them. As a normative structure, this is very strongly tied to the different value and ethical orientations which all the executives display in their activities. {Lawrence}, for instance, wants to run a successful business, and measures {his} success in terms of profitability, market share, improved performance on a series of given indicators. From the point of view of those who work for {him}, {he} appears to give little weight to what others think, either of {him} or of the way {he} runs the Company. As long as {he} thinks {he} is successful, it seems, that is all that counts. Sandy and Giles, too, are achievers. They too are concerned with profit. But, from the way in which {they} approach problems, difficulties and dealings with others, {they} look as if personal evaluation involves a responsiveness to what others think of you. At one level, this is just a matter of managerial style. But the managerial style which is attributed to a manager is part of the scheme of interpretation through which that manager's actions will be interpreted and understood. Thus, if there appears on the one hand to be a powerful thrust towards rational calculation pure and simple in all dealings with others, both inside and outside the Company, this might well be perceived as being antipathetic towards managerial styles premised on more administrative criteria. Furthermore, these antipathies and the tensions which they generate may become more and more problematic as the Company moves away from its dependence on the original entrepreneurial owner. In large part, de-personalising the entrepreneurial function may involve a relinquishing of rational calculability in its pristine form.

Nothing expresses this tension more than the contractual arrangements which LTC has with many of its concessions outlet managers. These are the "agency agreements". For Colin Dunbar in particular, the agency agreement is the biggest source of disaffection and

discontent within the company. As a consequence, it is the cause of most of the complaints which managers make about the company to Leisure Centre staff and Council officials.

To the outsider, the agency agreement appears to be the *épitome* of rational calculability as a ground for business activity. The agreement is designed to do two things. First, it is designed to minimise on-costs (food and labour costs) to the Company. Second, it is designed to reward efficient managers by giving them a share of profits. Managers of outlets who can satisfy certain conditions, act as agents for LTC by employing their own staff. Thus, if they are prepared to work long hours themselves, cuts costs and are efficient, they can generate profits for their units, up to 25% of which are returned to them as commission. Agents only get paid commission. The agency agreement, then, serves both what is viewed as LTC's interest of achieving increasing profitability, and at the same time operates a particular set of motivations and incentives which might be defensible as being in the best interests of (individual) managers. The way in which the agreements incorporate both a motivational value system and mechanisms of cost control is obvious. Agents get what they work for. Some managers have, by selective innovation, long hours, hard work, and because they took advantage of favourable local conditions, achieved annual commission payments in excess of £15,000 (which in terms of a low salary industry and at 1984-5 prices were generally regarded as quite reasonable). Others have not. The problems are that (a) if the context changes through no fault of the manager, for example if the opening hours of the facility vary, or the facility is closed for some reason, or if alternative attractions are put on locally, or (b) if Company policy with regard to purchases and sales changes, the managers are the ones who suffer. Thus, two of the biggest problems that managers point to are the quality of the goods being sold and the way staffing effects levels of sales. The food lines are cheap (what Colin calls "rubbish") versions of standard brand names. Although they have the 'right' food costs, they can be very difficult to sell. In addition, cutting back on staff costs can be achieved by closing down cafeteria early or running at an "undermanned" level. Such staff levels also mean causing lines to form in rush periods and hence both outcomes may mean lost sales. The net effect is that while the profitability of an outlet for the company (percentage of costs covered by sales) may be increased or remain steady, throughput declines. Thus, the managers may actually be worse off because they are paid on an actual profits not a percentage profitability basis. In one case, a combination of declining throughput and poor food costs meant that the manageress was taking home less than £20 per week. Within the generalised outlook enshrined in the agency agreements, the immediate response to this might be to suggest that labour and food costs can be got under control with a bit of effort. With imagination, sales can always be generated. Although this might be true, it is open to some doubt whether other people have the drive, ambition and sheer skill which {Lawrence} has to achieve such things. The agency system expresses a set of constraints which others see as ideally suiting {Lawrence}. In that sens, it implements {his} norms. It provides just the sort of challenging environment in which {he} would thrive. But, not everyone is {Lawrence}. And, as the Company employs more and more people who operate outlets on its behalf while at the same time seeking to retain tight supervisory control over them, it is necessarily less and less likely to attract entrepreneurial spirits such as {Lawrence}. For Sandy and Giles, it could well be time to recognise this divergence and to provide some kind of supportive net for managers of outlets who find the agency agreement asks too much of them.

What we are talking about, of course, is how {Lawrence} is perceived and the attitudes, values, norms and beliefs which are attributed to {him} on the basis of what {he} does. This appears to be a strategy of seeking to do things as cheaply as possible and thereby maximising profits. While they can understand the need for profitability, at times those around him seem to feel that, as a business ethos, it places them in difficult positions. They have to try to balance the forces and constraints within which they work. This is what we meant by the tensions which it generates. What is crucial here is that their view of {Lawrence} makes the primacy of profit not a matter of choice but an unquestioned requirement of sensible business practice. They see it as normative for him. It is what {he} feels {he} has to do. {He} could not operate otherwise. If we put it that way we can see just how the problem of transition is expressed in this aspect of the routinisation issue. What we have highlighted is how attitudes towards business life and management operate as the basis upon which lines of social action are drawn up, justified, made understandable, rationalised; in short made accountable. They have to do with conceptions of oneself and others, expressed or encapsulated in a conception of what appropriate management is. Here, although Sandy and Giles are orienting to very different groups, they share a common view. Giles would like to see a more formalised, hierarchical, broader based administrative structure with clear lines of responsibility and spheres of action. Such a structure would match those of the organisations with which he most often deals. Sandy would like to see a little more freedom of movement for the managers, a little less appearance of penny-pinching and more caring for and understanding of their problems: a kind of kinship structure. To them, the set of attitudes identified with {Lawrence}, appears almost to view those who work for {him} at the unit level as interchangeable factors of profit production. Both Sandy and Giles feel the tensions might be ameliorated if only it appeared that {Lawrence} accepted the changing nature of the Company and, perhaps, interfered a little less. Of course, Lawrence's response is that when he does that, the business profits begin to slide!

At the mundane level of daily working life, in the midst of this complexity, administrative staff find their way through the confusion of contrary normative demands by orienting to the particularities of just who is making them and just what the demands are. That is to say, they instantiate schemes of interpretation in particular management styles.

Management as the achievement a segregation of spheres of action

An essential element in the classical theory of the routinisation of charisma is the segregation of spheres of action. This process can be seen in the differentiation of normative structures oriented to by the senior executives at LTC. The growth of the Company has led to the emergence of a division of labour of administration and responsibility. Giles, Lawrence and Sandy are increasingly operating in segregated spheres of action. However, this is not a straightforward and uniform process. While everyone recognises the need for such a division of labour, nonetheless they all deeply aware of the need to equilibrate the centrifugal forces which it engenders with the centripetal forces deriving from the Company's origin as a one man business. Hence this process of segregation takes place in the context of a countervailing tendency towards centralisation. Again, as with the normative orientation to profits, Giles and Sandy are very well aware of the advantages which flow from, in particular, Lawrence's involvement in all aspects of the business. However, they also see that such involvement has

costs. It is, then, a question of seeking to balance costs and benefits on a continuing day by day, case by case basis. In this sense, the calculative and the social are not so much disentangled and held apart, as combined, in that a different order of rationality, that is in essence administrative rationality, is pragmatically incorporated into the calculation.

Much of the working life of Lawrence, Sandy and Giles expresses and is oriented to managing this pair of possibly contradictory forces. The way in which they organise or attempt to organise their spheres of operation, their involvement with each other, their daily and weekly time-tables, their personal managerial styles are all bound up with the process. Since it is Lawrence who is the central figure here, we will have to describe the orientation to management activities which we have in mind here, by describing the patterns of some of their working relationships with him.

There is an important point which has to be made at this point. The segregation of spheres of action refers to the way in which ideal typical courses of action and arenas of interest are gradually being seen promoted and managed within the Company. Because these are often associated with the spheres of responsibility held by particular individuals but not necessarily executed by them, we will adopt the same device used in the previous discussion of Lawrence. Thus, when for instance we talk about what Giles might be expected typically to do, how his activities are seen to be typically organised, we will refer to {Giles} doing this or that.

To most people within the Company, at least those who have anything to do with the central figures at Head Office, the active, working units are {Lawrence and Sandy}, and {Giles}. That is to say, when people deal with the senior management, they either deal with Lawrence and Sandy or they deal with Giles. As a pair, Lawrence and Sandy have operational control over most of the business. The closeness of the relationship between Lawrence and Sandy is not merely a consequence of the length of time she has been with the Company and the fact that she is, as Financial Director, in charge of office management. Giles has been with Lawrence almost from the start but for various reasons does not operate in the same way as {Lawrence and Sandy} do. The {Lawrence and Sandy} unit is the consequence of the reliance which Lawrence places upon Sandy's business sense, expertise and judgement and the way he gets her involved in almost everything he does. Quite simply, whenever he has a business problem, whenever he has to make a decision, he nearly always talks it over with Sandy. He may not accept her advice necessarily, but he asks. The extent of this close working relationship, can really only be appreciated if you spend some time in the office. It is part of the office folk lore that Lawrence is always "harassing" Sandy, rushing in and out of her office, asking for information, reporting the results of phone calls, keeping her up to date on developments, phoning from across the corridor to seek her advice on all manner of things from the colour combinations of table linen and the prices of particular suppliers, to how to deal with the personal problems and difficulties of individual managers. In this sense, Lawrence does not "interfere" in the spheres for which Sandy has responsibility, or at least not all that much, but simply incorporates her into his spheres of action. The {Lawrence and Sandy} unit appears then as a consequence of the constant blurring of the boundary between their specific spheres of action. The upshot is that while she has areas where she acts independently in that she hardly consults or ever refers to him (eg in the organisation of office routines) over large areas of his working life, Lawrence involves Sandy in what he is doing. To those observing this unit in action, the way in which Lawrence relies on Sandy is seen as yet another indication of how closely he wishes to be involved in everything and how much

he identifies the Company with both himself and other key personnel.

The way in which this involvement is both produced and oriented to can be seen from one of any number of similar cases. When a problem arose with the management of a very important and prestigious outlet, Lawrence immediately set about trying to organise a trip to the Centre concerned to see for himself what was going on. At the same time he wanted to meet the Council officials from whom the complaint had originally derived. He took it for granted that Sandy could go, would want to go and would want to take part in the meeting. It did not occur to him to ask himself (or her) if there was anything that she particularly could say or do, or whether her time would be most effectively spent there. He was well aware of the difficulties posed by the outlet and the solutions seemed relatively straight forward. Her being there would make little or no difference and would take her away from the office for a day at what was a busy time of the year. Nonetheless, when the arrangements had all been set up, Sandy did not openly question the need for her to go.

Lawrence explains this reliance on Sandy's presence and judgement is in an interesting way which brings out the interplay between personal relationships and the orientation to profitability. There is, of course, the financial management side. She ought to be involved in anything which affects the Company's profitability in a serious way. Also she knows about the detail of the accounting practices used by the Company, where to find figures in the accounts as well as how they have been arrived at. She set the paperwork system up; she knows it. Apart from the way in which Lawrence perceives this specialist expertise permeating the whole business, he has a profound respect for her operational sensitivities. Sometimes, a little disparagingly perhaps, he refers to this as "the housewife viewpoint". But he claims, in fact, that she notices things about the way operations run which he would not spot. Her eye for detail complements his. He has what we will call "the entrepreneurial eye"; she often sees things from the point of view of the customer. It is this combination of administrative and financial know-how and commonsense acuity that Lawrence has come to rely upon. It complements his own rather more rumbustuous attitudes to business practice and his operational insights. Because he relies upon her advice so much, Sandy has more than once been able to pour cold water on some scheme which Lawrence has dreamed up for marketing a new product, squeezing costs a little more, or increasing profitability.

The coalescing of spheres of operation and the way in which this expresses the transition between the entrepreneurial and the managerial structure and the rationalities associated with them, condense in Lawrence's unwillingness to make instant decisions. He prefers to worry at things, turning them over and over, around and around. He has found over time that using Sandy as a sounding board enables him to get things clearer and to be a little bit more positive. He still doesn't like making decisions, especially final decisions, but it is a way he can muddle through. Because, as the business has grown, Lawrence has had to move away from direct involvement in actually running the outlets and become more and more of an administrator (which he loathes) he has had to become more and more of a decision maker rather than an action taker. All of which is, of course, precisely what the routinisation issue is a gloss on. Getting things done (usually by doing them himself) is what Lawrence is really best at. What he is not good at (and this is another element in the Company folklore) is making up his mind what to do. For that reason he has come to rely more and more on Sandy, and thereby turning {Lawrence and Sandy} into the visible decision making unit in the Company.

Sandy's response to the coalescence of spheres of action has been resigned tolerance. Giles has gone in the other direction. He has, in one way or another, sought to distance his operational sphere from {Lawrence and Sandy's} daily involvement. By and large, {Giles} has a separate organisational base within the Company. This is something {Lawrence and Sandy} are very well aware of. While the separation can be justified in terms of efficiency, none the less the fragmentation it might lead to is a cause of concern. Giles joined Lawrence from a large hotel chain soon after LTC had been set up and was very much involved in the expansion of the Concessions Division. More recently he has concentrated on building up the Airports Division. His personal relationship with Lawrence is particularly interesting because their styles differ so much. As we have said, Lawrence is a mixture of the abrasive huckster and the persuasive salesman. At any one time, either aspect may be on show. Giles is a much more low key character. He tends to place an emphasis on efficient management and administration. This difference is often expressed obliquely in the lines of action which they propose in order to raise profitability. {Giles} tends to take the form of what we might call a line-management style of delegation and consultation, trying to explain initiatives to managers and involve them and their staff in them. As we saw with the agency agreement, Lawrence tends to think in terms of constraints and rewards. The benefits and penalties should be clear enough for the managers to work out for themselves what they should do.

Both Lawrence and Giles are very well aware of the differences in their management styles and in the image of the Company which they have and portray. However, yet again they value these differences as complementary. {Giles} would no more strip a machine down, mend the electrics, serve the food or fit furniture in an outlet (as {Lawrence and Sandy} have often done) than he would fly. But then Lawrence admits that he could not negotiate the contracts with suppliers which Giles does. Just as with Sandy, the expression of the reciprocity of dependence colours the apparent power differentials between them. These differences form part of a set of mutual orientations which provide distinctive solutions to the problem of segregation from those which Sandy and Lawrence have worked out. One such led to what appeared at first to be an overt exercise of authority but which ended up as an agreed preservation of operational spheres. It occurred over an accounting procedure that Giles had allowed at Luton Airport. Giles felt that the procedure (it had to do with the way the cost of non-returnable plastic crockery was treated. It was written off to "repairs and renewals" rather than against operational costs.) prevented his staff from being penalised because of the costs imposed and loss of profits incurred during building work that was taking place. Lawrence felt the procedure was unnecessary and made the management accounting system meaningless. The issue came up during a routine Board meeting. Lawrence kept insisting that the correct procedures be used; Giles resisted. At this point, there seemed to be no way to prevent the thing from getting out of hand, and becoming a public row. Lawrence in the end refused to talk about it any more and requested Giles to see him privately (ie without the fieldworker present). The upshot was that from then on the plastic non-returnables would be accounted in the usual way but that this would not be retrospective. Lawrence gained the principle: Giles gained the case he wanted to make.

The existence of an organisational separation between {Giles} and {Sandy and Lawrence} is reinforced by two things. The first is the physical location of the Airports administration. This was on a separate floor from the rest of the main offices with its own toilets and kitchen facilities. Lawrence and Sandy had to find out whether Giles was in and whether he could

see them. There was no popping across the corridor for a quick chat. It has since been reinforced even further by the removal of the Division to the North Wales Hotel which Giles now partly owns and runs for the Company. (The finance for this venture was put together in collaboration with LTC, and LTC hold a large share in the enterprise.) The second aspect is the way the office was run while it was at Head Office. {Giles'} staff very much identify with him. That is to say, unlike the rest of the office staff at Telford, they worked directly for him rather than Sandy. He selected and trained them. He organised their work loads. The impression which one got when watching the way the office runs was that it was built up around a conscious management style, one of delegated administration. This is in very direct contrast to Lawrence in particular, and hence to the way that {Lawrence and Sandy} work. To run the seven airports and deal with contracts Giles has two secretaries cum administrators. In addition, he has Greg Bailey as Group Manager of the airports together with a high calibre General Manager in each airport. Lawrence ran the whole of Concessions with one secretary who also worked for Colin Dunbar, and two regional managers.

Where {Giles} tends to want to expand the number of people around him to a level he feels will make the operation work smoothly, Lawrence gets by with the minimum, and sometimes less even at the cost of smoothness. As can be imagined, this difference in management style sometimes surfaces as a strong disagreement about the image which the Company projects, and the aims which it sets itself. In such disagreements, the role which Sandy adopts as a part of {Lawrence and Sandy} and the way she orients to it are fascinating. She is acutely aware that the Company has to keep costs under control if it is to maintain any level of profitability. Like many such businesses, despite its size and turnover, it operates along a knife edge of profitability. At the same time, she is aware that expansion into novel areas may be hampered by what Giles once called the "under-resourced" management structure. The lack of a career structure often forced ambitious and able managers out of the Company with the result that outsiders felt the whole business was far too heavily dependent upon the very real but hard pressed and finite gifts of a small number of people.

We have been talking about spheres of action in terms, largely, of areas of Company activity for which individuals are responsible and the extent to which Lawrence involves Sandy in {theirs} and Giles manages to distance Lawrence from {his}. This is not the only dimension along which management as segregating zones of action is manifest. It is also very easily seen in the ways in which the shape of {Lawrence and Sandy's} working days impact upon those around them.

When Steve Hopkins who was working for Lawrence as a regional manager in Concessions decided to leave, he wrote his own job specification. In it he warned prospective candidates that the LTC was a "stimulating" but at the same time "demanding and competitive" environment. Lawrence wasn't very pleased by this. He never asks anyone to do any more than he would do himself. In fact, often he asks less of them than he asks of himself. But that does not take into account the size of his own work load and especially what it looks like to others. He has no need to do so, of course, because it is his load and he organises it himself. The time he spends in the office or on the road travelling to meetings, outlets etc regularly amounts to well over 10 or 11 hours a day. His routine is somewhat unusual in that he often does not get into the office until after 9:30 am but then he is nearly always the last one away at gone 9:00 pm. When you talk to him about this, Lawrence doesn't see what the problem is. He works long hours, sure, but he is doing what he wants to do and enjoying himself. The

business is, as he put it, his livelihood and his hobby. And anyway, if he didn't put the hours in, he could not be certain that the profitability of the Company would be sustained.

The shape of his working day has unintentional knock-on effects for other people and thus is defined by them in particular ways. This is expressed in terms of their feeling that they are required to act in particular ways because {Lawrence} does what he does. Often the only time that one can be sure to be able to see him without being constantly interrupted is after normal office hours. As a consequence, those who work directly for him find themselves scheduled for meetings that never start before 6.30 or 7 pm. Certainly it is the case that if Sandy, Giles and Lawrence want to discuss something together, it has got to be when the rest of the office is closed. It also affects his secretary, Gill. She has a similar working pattern to Lawrence, coming later than the rest of the office staff and working until 8 or 8:30 at night. In fact, she is very well aware that she has to make an effort to keep the hours she works within limits, otherwise Lawrence will just make more and more demands. Perhaps the person it most affects, though, is Sandy. Given the way in which she has got used to being relied upon and the obligations which she feels towards Lawrence, she very rarely leaves before he does. In fact, when occasionally she has to leave early, Lawrence tends to too. She has deliberately organised her family and outside life so that it hardly impinges upon her business life. In doing so, she recognises the sacrifices she has had to make. She also realises the rewards that it has brought. She would not hold the position she does in another company. The tensions which this can generate are most often seen during project developments like those we discuss later. The time which Lawrence and Sandy put into the detail of a project has to be sacrificed from elsewhere. When they are off viewing sites, at meetings with possible suppliers or clients, the work still piles up on the desk in the office. Since control is so centralised, it is they who have to do it when they get back in. And that is usually when everyone else has gone home. The centrality of {Lawrence and Sandy} is such that no-one can take over when they are out of the office.

The demands which we are talking about refer not just to the volume of work which Lawrence takes on and gets through, or to the effects of the shape of his working day. It also has to do with the way in which he is presumed to work. {Lawrence} is meticulous almost to a fault. {He} is expected to pay close attention to every thing and spend inordinate amounts of time (or so it can appear) fussing over details which one might feel he could well leave to others. It is quite common for him to write and rewrite a tender statement 5 or 6 times, each time having it re-typed, before he is satisfied it says what he wants it to say. This concern for detail leads those who work directly for him to become wary of seeming not to have a similar grip on their own areas. The consequence is that "report-back" meetings drag on interminably as the subordinates trek through all the operational details which they think {Lawrence} wants.

The general grounds for attributing this meticulousness are, of course, defined as an important part of his success and pointed to as facets of his "entrepreneurial eye". It is the same trait which allows him to be able to "raid" an outlet and put together a list of faults a page and a half long simply by walking around it. Such lists range from missing light bulbs, dirty cutlery, drinks sold in the wrong sized cups, to food in the wrong fridges, the bar store unlocked, keys left in the open. It also enables him to spot where cost savings can be made by manipulating the menu, the method of serving, or presentation. In a later Chapter we will spend some time discussing this aspect of Lawrence's entrepreneurial skill.

The difficulty arises when it is felt that the working practices are taken to be normative. One angry comment was made by Sandy during a discussion of the re-organisation of the company. Lawrence simply failed to see why, if she was to run COUNTRY KITCHENS and keep a general eye on the administration (which was the plan at that time) she needed more than a relatively inexperienced assistant. If he didn't have to run the Company as well, he could do it on his own. It was, he said, "a doddle". And, of course, operational genius that he is, he almost certainly could. But what Sandy felt he failed to appreciate was that not everyone else was as good, or efficient, or committed as he was. In her view, {he} thought everyone was the same as him, but they are not. At that point, if her assistant, Roger Mulaney, had to run all the COUNTRY KITCHENS on his own, he might very well have found the task too great. Lawrence remained unconvinced.

The point of this, of course, is not that differences of opinion and attitude arise, but how sets of standards are derived. {Lawrence} is seen as setting his own standards for himself, while those around him come to feel that they may be constrained to accept these for themselves. The standards appear, to them, to be implicitly normative and thus being used as the basis of evaluations.

The strains introduced by {Lawrence's} attention to detail and also the gains with regard to profitability to be made from it are best seen in the context of the non-food invoices. These are invoices which do not concern orders for standard supplies. They cover all repairs, all miscellaneous purchases, expense accounts and so on for the whole Company. The processing of non-food invoices is on a fortnightly cycle just like the rest of the paperwork (cf Chapter 7). The invoices are batched in 70's and put on the computer for payment. However, payment can only be made once both the Divisional Director and Lawrence have authorised it. As with all paper work, Lawrence dislikes going through the invoices. He puts it off for as long as he can. Indeed, every month there is a little game played where Sandy reminds him to do them and he complains about her nagging. But, when he goes through them, even though they have already been checked, he invariably finds mistakes, wrongly coded items, items that have been overcharged and so on. He finds these things simply because only he has the required knowledge to spot them. Going through the invoices gives him "a feel" for what is going on in the company and enables him to keep on top of costs. As Sandy willingly admits, it can save thousands of pounds a year. In managing {Lawrence}, in orienting to {his} preferred working practises, she tries to optimise the pay-off between what uniquely {he} can provide and what organisationally she needs. His dislike of the boringly routine checking that it requires, together with the length of time it takes, means that payments are often delayed to the very last minute or beyond. The net effect is that Sandy and the rest of the office staff are the ones who get the calls from irate creditors or who have to short circuit the system to ensure that essential services are paid for. The very thing which makes {Lawrence} a success and hence one of the ways that the Company ensures it is profitable, has the consequence of generating trouble for them.

CONCLUSION

Our argument in this chapter has been a fairly straightforward one. The phenomenon which

sociologists describe as “the routinisation of charisma” is visible to and recognised in daily working life as as the problem of managing a transition of management styles from a highly personalised to a depersonalised one. In fact, it is that the problem is recognised and dealt with at the level of practical organisational life that the phenomenon is available for sociological reflection and theorising in the first place. What the concept “the routinisation of charisma” expresses, at least in the context of its application to the business enterprise, is a sociological gloss or transformation of what we can think of as commonsense management theorising in practice. The roots of this sociological concept are very firmly located in that commonsense theory and its component commonsense constructs. As we have explored it, the commonsense construct ‘management’ takes a number of forms. The collection of these forms or types constitutes a commonsense managerial interpretive scheme by which those engaged in day to day administration and management activities can make sense of their own and others activities. In the next chapter, we will look at how the practical manager how the determination of possible profit opportunities is managed as a practical activity.

NOTES

- [1] We have adopted this term from Weber’s classic studies of political power. Cf. Weber (1948). The theme is a common one in studies of organisations. Cf. Collins and Moore (1970) .
- [2] This term was offered by one of the management staff at LTC to describe the distinctive flair which Lawrence brought to the business.
- [3] The possibilities inherent in the use of this device were first introduced to us in a talk given by Harold Garfinkel in Paris, September 1987. Its use can be discerned, albeit implicitly, in the discussion contained in his paper, co-authored with Michael Lynch and Eric Livingston (1981), where the first optically discovered pulsar is defined and described as a “cultural object”.