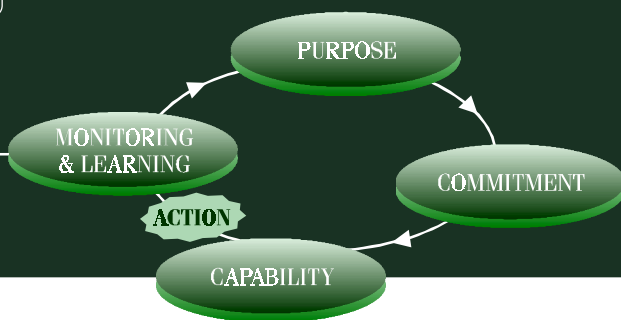


connections



A newsletter for people committed to enhancing decision-making and improving performance through control, risk management and governance

DECEMBER 1999

Canadian CA Competency Map Project

CAs who are active in the fields of control and risk management can make an important contribution to their profession over the next few months. A major project is underway to develop a “competency map” for future CAs. Comments are being sought on a prototype. Read on to see how you can get involved.

The *Canadian CA Competency Map Project* aims to develop a detailed map of the competencies of the “Vision CA” – that is, the professional of the next century. Competencies describe what a CA can do, rather than a list of topics that a candidate has studied.

In the current prototype of the Map, Control and Risk Management is identified as one of six specific competencies (the others being Finance, Performance Measurement, Taxation, Information Technology, and Assurance). Organizational control seems like an ideal avenue for a CA to develop an expanded command of big picture issues. That’s why the Vision Task Force Report recommended that the profession sustain

the focus and investment in control as a dimension of strategic importance to the profession.

The Control and Risk competency is seen as having five aspects

- Developing an understanding of the organization
- Evaluating commitment
- Evaluating capacity
- Evaluating monitoring and learning processes
- Evaluating board leadership

A prototype Competency Map has been developed and the abbreviated version is now available for consultation in November and December. Valuable input can be provided by CAs who are already active in the field of control and risk management. To obtain a copy of the prototype and a questionnaire for recording and submitting your feedback, please contact Nicole Degagne by e-mail at nicole.degagne@cica.ca

WHAT'S INSIDE

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What's new and interesting in multiple perspectives?

Traditionally, models or techniques targeted at solving specific problems or processes did not look at all the interconnections. Viewing these specific problems in isolation, without the benefit of multiple perspectives, results in solutions which are only temporary at best, and, at worst, eventually result in crises or catastrophes.

MIT is currently experimenting with "**Learning Histories**" which look at specific problems/processes from multiple perspectives. The Learning Histories seek to solve the conundrum of collective learning by telling a story. Approximately seventeen have been completed in major US corporations. (home page: <http://ccs.mit.edu/LH/overview.html>)

The Learning History Model is in two columns – with stories from members of

the organization on the right and comments and themes developed by a Learning Historian on the left. This is used as the basis for group discussions for those involved in the event, and those who might learn from it. Learning Histories build trust, they are effective in raising issues, they are successful at transferring knowledge, and help build a body of generalizable knowledge about management, what works and what doesn't. Learning histories are commissioned to analyze one event, but their lessons often supersede it.

For more on Learning Histories, watch for an upcoming article in The Harvard Business Review, "Learning Histories: A New Tool For Turning Organizational Experience Into Action". Authors Kleiner and Roth have also posted a version of this article at (<http://ccs.mit.edu/LH/21cwp002.html>)

Local forums

Are you interested in getting together with others who are interested in CoCo? Local forums are self-organizing groups that get together periodically to exchange experiences and learn from each other. Leaders can be contacted in the following cities.

Vancouver Hugh Lindsay, (604) 732-0366

Calgary Murray Wolfe, (403) 319-7516

Edmonton Fred Dunn, (780) 441-6843

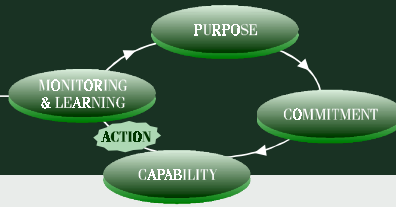
Winnipeg Lloyel Hull, (204) 256-6516

Toronto Roger Merkosky, (416) 361-5166 or Chris Scammell, (416) 756-8507

Vivienne Livick-Chan (514) 285-5034 is exploring interest in forming a local forum in Montreal. She will also be pleased to hear from anyone interested in leading the formation of a local forum in other cities.

Don't forget the web site as a source of CoCo news

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New directions

The CoCo Board has confirmed three major areas of focus: governance, supporting the existing community of CoCo practitioners, and growing that community. These were proposed by a Task Force led by Marnie Kinsley based on some intensive thought and consideration of market research conducted over the summer:

Governance

Directors' responsibility gives them reason to advocate a CoCo assessment. As well, CoCo governance publications are well received. *Dealing with Risk in the Boardroom* represents a pivotal opportunity.

Community of practice

A number of CAs are using CoCo in their work as employees and service providers. By nurturing this growing community, CICA can learn from it, and over time help more CAs join it and help change the stereotypical view of accountants, which limits them.

Growing the community

Cementing CoCo into the competency map and syllabus for the Vision CA will help ensure that future CAs are in a position to reap the benefits of CoCo throughout their careers. As well, it will permit current CAs to benchmark their own competencies and encourage more to join the "community of practice".

"CoCo has published world-class intellectual capital," says Board chair Jack Rose, "and major organizations around the world are using the ideas. We believe that over the next couple of years we can maximize the benefit of our current efforts by building our activity plans around these three areas of focus."

Comings and goings

1999 sees Chris Bart, David Holt and Carmelo Leung completing their terms as CoCo Board members, each having made a valuable contribution to its work. The four members newly appointed by the CICA's Board of Directors are identified by asterisk in the following listing of the current CoCo Board.

Mr. Robert Di Sante, CA, President, Canadian and International Operations, Financial Collection Agencies (International) Inc. *

Mr. Michael Gunns, CA, Senior Vice-President Internal Audit, Zurich Canada

Mr. Fred Jaakson, CA, Director General Audit, Consulting and Audit Canada

Ms. Marnie Kinsley, FCA, Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer, mbanx

Mr. Sean Latimer, Chief Audit Executive, CGU Group Canada Ltd.

Mr. Richard LeBlanc, President, University Centre for Management Studies Inc.*

Ms. Amy Lee, CA, Manager, Financial Review & Audit, BC Hydro

Mr. Colin Lipson, CA, Partner, Ernst & Young LLP *

Ms. Mary Jane Loustel, CA, Director, Audit Services, The University of Manitoba *

Mr. Jack Rose, FCA, Partner, KPMG LLP

Mr. Peter Valentine, FCA, Auditor General, Province of Alberta

Ms. Cairine Wilson, MBA, Vice President, Innovation, CICA

Staff member Ashley Dafel has left CICA employment to work more closely with clients. Director Peter Jackson is leaving to begin his own business helping organizations to implement CoCo guidance. "It was a tough decision," says Peter, "I am proud of what we have accomplished with CoCo and aware of how much remains to be done. I am looking forward to fresh opportunities and plan to stay connected."

"Peter has played a big part in bringing CoCo thus far, and we will miss him even as we wish him success in the next steps he has chosen," says board chair Jack Rose. "Now, others of us are taking up the charge. The Board is strong and diverse and committed to taking the CoCo initiative forward. Cairine Wilson – the CICA V-P responsible for CoCo – is working with me to ensure we continue to have staff resources of the required calibre. There is much to be done and we are excited by the prospects ahead!"

From the bookshelf

***Coming to our senses*, Ron Knowles, Forbes Custom Publishing, 1999**

Reviewed by Peter Jackson

Organizations bring out the best in us, but they also bring out the worst in us, says Ron Knowles, drawing on a lifetime of experience as a manager and as a consultant. In this book he explores what it is about of organizations that spawns vicious rivalries, petty despotism and even dishonesty. "It can be dangerous to express the dark underside of contemporary organizations. But scratch the surface and you quickly discover widespread stress, alienation and cynicism."

Knowles outlines twelve strategies for helping organizations do more good and less harm – both for people who work for them and in the wider world. But he does not position them as a "magic bullet". "Pat solutions we find all around us are dangerous," he says. One thing he does urge is that we take a less simplistic view of people as good or bad, lazy or tireless, principled or self-interested. "If we accept that a person's behaviour results from the

interaction between the system and the individual, then we should avoid making sweeping value judgments and instead begin to address the systemic and individual problems that can be solved."

Knowles' humane and systemic view of organizations is in line with the values that underlie CoCo guidance. His book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in exercising the leadership to put those values into action.

***Birth of the Chaordic Age*, Dee Hock, Berrett-Koehler Publishers**

Most organizations today are based on concepts no longer relevant to the vast social and environmental problems we face, says Dee Hock. In this book, he describes the founding of the VISA credit card and his personal life journey as the backdrop to developing a new form of organization. A chaord combines elements of chaos and order. The book combines visionary philosophy with practical, real-life examples of multi-stakeholder chaordic institutions that are helping to build a livable future.

Dee Hock was the keynote speaker to the 1998 CoCo conference and author of two pieces in *CAMagazine*, and he has noted the congruence between his thinking and CoCo. This book is Dee's masterpiece and a compelling read.

FEEDBACK

Copies of *Connections* can be obtained: off the CICA web site at www.cica.ca; by e-mailing janice.turner@cica.ca; or by calling Janice Turner **(416) 204-3241**. If you have any comments on the newsletter, please fax them to Janice Turner at **(416) 977-8585** or e-mail her at the above address.

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277 Wellington Street West
Toronto, Ontario, M5V 3H2

I am interested in contributing to the newsletter and would like someone to contact me.

I would like to receive a hard copy of *Connections* on a regular basis.

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