Tomorrow's SEM Organization:
New Perspectives and Priorities
for a Changing Workforce

David H. Kalsbeek

Introduction
Across the diverse spectrum of American colleges and universities, strategic enrollment management (SEM) is defined and implemented today with great variability in models, approaches, structures, and strategies. While commonalities have emerged as the SEM profession has evolved and matured (Huddleston, 2001; Henderson, 2001), the development and definition of the SEM process is perhaps more idiosyncratic to the institutional context than are other areas of professional or administrative activity in higher education administration, such as student affairs or fund raising. Yet one inescapable common denominator is that SEM requires careful attention to the development of the organization’s human resources. Development of the SEM workforce is one key to success in the face of the increasing challenges, complexities, and competition in higher education today. The future of the SEM workforce is worthy of thoughtful consideration and planning.

Such planning occurs in the context of tumultuous change in the global workforce—change that not only is shaping the future of American higher education but that also may be rendering traditional models of American
higher education obsolete (Dolence and Norris, 1995). Some of the challenges are the increasing wage disparity between those with and those without a postsecondary education, demand for postsecondary education worldwide that far exceeds capacity, an economy where the greatest job growth is in fields requiring a college education and beyond, and the workforce implications of a knowledge-driven society and information economy.

Surely, strategic enrollment planning requires such future-oriented thinking. Yet while enrollment managers consider how these workforce issues will affect their institutions’ enrollment future, they must simultaneously plan for how these very same trends will affect tomorrow’s enrollment management workforce—the shape and staffing of the SEM organization of tomorrow. The purpose of this chapter is to explore some perspectives for understanding the workforce that drives tomorrow’s SEM plan. This necessarily begins with understanding the nature of tomorrow’s organizations and extends into some provocative implications for SEM as evidenced by the lessons now being learned in other industry sectors.

Understanding Today’s Organization

Enrollment management is about effecting change in complex organizations. Doing so strategically, systemically, and effectively requires a considerable breadth and depth of understanding of organizations, an appreciation of why and how they work the way they do. Fortunately, a great body of both theoretical and practical literature exists that explores the many different perspectives on organizations and organizational development (see Morgan, 1986).

One thing becomes apparent from any review of that literature: “Our [primary conceptual] models of organizations and the way we talk about them has hardly changed for a century” (Handy, 1996). As countless organizational theorists have pointed out, for some time now the dominant, prevailing, most commonly held images of organizations have been as “pieces of engineering, flawed pieces, maybe, but capable of perfectibility, of precision, of full efficiency” (1996). Because organizations have their evolutionary roots in the industrial age, we usually have in mind, when we talk and think about organizations, something that by definition has some determinate order; some clear structure; specific divisions of labor across the horizontal axis and a clear hierarchy or chain of command up the vertical axis of our omnipresent organizational charts.
And because we speak of organizations as if they were machines, we tend to expect them to operate as such: in a routinized, reliable, and predictable way. The job of managing our organizations therefore becomes, quite naturally, driving that machine. Our management approach amounts to a process of planning, organization, command, coordination, and control. We set goals and objectives; organize rationally, efficiently, clearly; specify every detail so everyone will be sure of what job he performs; we engineer the pieces to be finely tuned, tightly meshed cogs in the organizational wheel, as reflected in the tremendously precise job descriptions and clear performance criteria which we as managers so often demand.

But listen carefully to the language being used today to describe organizations and our roles in them: It is very different from this celebration of designs and structures, tools and techniques. Read *Fast Company*, a magazine about “today’s organizations” for “today’s managers.” The talk there is of alliances and teams, empowerment and initiatives, learning and partnerships. Today’s organizations are “dropping the title of manager and replacing it with terms such as team leader, project coordinator, lead partner, facilitator…” (Handy, 1996). It seems we are beginning to recognize that organizations are not populated by “human resources to be deployed” (a mechanistic phraseology that replaced the previous industrial notion of labor) but rather “communities of individuals” coming together to achieve some mutually beneficial goals and purposes.

What has changed? It has been suggested that this change in how we talk about our organizations is a result of other changes—specifically, in the revolution in the means of production. Bridges (1996) reminds us of Karl Marx’s observation that “the manner in which a society gets its work done shapes most of the other things the society believes and does” (p. 12). Marx’s insight was that we look first and foremost to the way we work—i.e., the means of production—for insight into the way we think about our organizations and our roles in them. To understand what our *sem* organizations are today and the responsibilities we as *sem* leaders have for developing them and the people who make them up, we have to look carefully at how the nature of work is changing.

Bridges (1996) suggests three trends that characterize the changes in how our work is done today—three new realities that together are shaping the
kind of organizations we inhabit, the nature of our workforce, and, consequently, the kind of leadership we require now and for the future.

**TREND #1: THE PACE OF CHANGE AND THE “DE-JOBBING” OF THE ORGANIZATION**

We work in organizations and industries that change quickly and often. The pace of change and the impact of that accelerating pace are something we all experience, encounter, endure, and occasionally embrace. In our technologically high-speed and connected economy, the pace of change creates a constant blur (Davis & Meyer, 1998) that we try to understand, respond to, even anticipate. But we seldom think through the implications of what Peter Drucker pointed out some time ago—notably, “that every organization has to build the management of change into its very structure” (1992). Too many organizations are trying to become more flexible and responsive to change without first recognizing how much inflexibility and unresponsiveness is built into their very structures and systems. We try to teach personnel to be more responsive, agile, entrepreneurial, adept at change management even as we fail to recognize that our recalcitrant and “concretized” organizations lack agility and adeptness at their structural levels. “Who Moved the Cheese?” (Johnson, 1998) has become a best-selling text for helping people in an organization understand how they respond to change; unfortunately, managers seeking such a shallow, quick fix fail to realize that the real resistance to change is not in their personnel but in the molecular, genetic fabric of their organizations and their organizational systems. It’s not the mice, it’s the maze that resists change.

Bridges (1996) suggests that it is the very rigidity of our staffing structures, the very nature of jobs themselves, that is at the root of the challenges we face in dealing with change. Jobs are not nearly as flexible and adaptable as the persons who occupy them; more often than not, the job itself is the problem rather than the solution. An executive once observed, “I just can’t move the boxes around the org chart fast enough to keep up with our new strategies, challenges, and staffing needs” (paraphrased, 1996). Most SEM leaders face that very challenge daily.

A workforce defined through jobs indeed makes it hard for an organization to respond effectively to change. Though the challenges and opportunities we face may change quickly, people keep doing their jobs rather than
shifting their attention to what most needs to be done. We have designed entire human resources systems to reinforce that process: people are hired to do a job, evaluated and promoted on the basis of how they do their job, paid according to some classification schemes for that job, and it is the job of the supervisor to see that they do their job. But as Bridges (1996) notes, “In a rapidly changing environment, a company can go bankrupt while all its employees are doing their jobs perfectly.”

The challenge to the SEM leader is this: Planning for the future SEM workforce must begin with increasing the capacity of the organization to respond to rapid change and doing so through a more fluid and flexible staffing structure than typically exists today. Naturally, this runs counter to what most managers have learned over the years as HR offices have instituted policies and procedures to create consistency, equity, clarity, and hierarchy in tightly boundaried staff positions. Again, read Fast Company and it is clear that organizations that are building change into their very structures—into their genetic, molecular natures—are engaged in making jobs more porous and malleable, even to the point of “de-jobbing” (Bridges, 1996). Jobs—a “more-or-less set task you do every day”—will be extinct and will be replaced by projects (Stewart, 1997, p. 202); project management will replace job supervision as the quintessential function of the SEM manager in tomorrow’s organization. Boston College’s Delta Project, an organizational transformation requiring the “broadbanding” of job classifications, is an excellent example of preparing an enrollment management organization to better manage change by building greater capacity for responsiveness into the way staff positions are structured.

**TREND #2: KNOWLEDGE WORK AND THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF TODAY’S ORGANIZATION**

The second trend in how we do our work today is that whatever business we are in, most of us spend much more time manipulating information about things than manipulating the things themselves. While notions of a “knowledge economy” and a “knowledge company” are a bit abstract, knowledge work is anything but an abstraction (Stewart, 1997, p. 41). Today’s SEM leaders realize that knowledge work is what SEM is; information is the most important raw material driving SEM; and knowledge management is what they do as SEM leaders. We all have seen the statistics on the ever-growing percentage of people...
in today's economy who are "knowledge workers." But the point is not just that more people are doing knowledge work but rather that the knowledge content of all work is increasing. All across today's organizations, whether the work is blue collar, clerical, or professional, the extent of work that is mental versus manual is increasing dramatically, forcing managers to attract, develop, and retain a more educated staff to perform increasingly complex knowledge-intensive tasks (Stewart, 1997).

As noted at the outset of the chapter, the irony for enrollment managers is inescapable: On the one hand, the long-term future for enrollment in higher education is determined directly by changes in our global society and information economy that require that the future workforce be more educated; on the other hand, the very emergence of knowledge work typically is given little attention as we discuss the future of how we manage higher education enrollment and develop the staffing model for tomorrow's SEM organization. Yet all across enrollment management organizations, from front desk receptionists to application processors, from transcript reviewers to career counselors, from academic advisors to advertising managers to market researchers, we find that the SEM workforce is doing work that is increasingly knowledge intensive and that our organizations are changing accordingly, presenting an entirely new range of management and leadership challenges.

When work was primarily physical, or manual, or in human services, it was easy for the manager to divide that work into separate jobs, each with its different job description. Those jobs in turn were clustered into separate departments, each with its different function. Knowledge work is harder to divide that way; it often is accomplished necessarily in cross-functional teams, further eroding the outlines of the traditional job (Bridges, 1996). Knowledge work further "de-jobs" the organization. Instead of narrowly defined jobs carefully arrayed and deployed through a mechanistic organizational design, we have in our knowledge-based organizations an explosion in the professionalization of work. Quinn, Anderson & Finkelstein (1998) discuss at length the nature of professional work in a knowledge-based economy.

The professionalization of the workforce in the knowledge-based organization is one of the daunting challenges faced in the management of human resources for SEM. As our workforce becomes more professionalized and as those professions spawn specialties that create work that is increasingly esoteric, our
workforce and our human expertise become more balkanized. Organizations begin to resemble confederacies of professional communities rather than sleek, structured pyramids of command and control. “Because professionals have specialized knowledge and have been trained as an elite...they generally hesitate to subordinate themselves to others or to support organizational goals not completely congruous with their special viewpoint. That is why most professional firms operate as partnerships and not as hierarchies and why it is difficult for them to adopt a unified strategy” (Quinn, Anderson & Finkelstein, 1998, p.184). Organizations thus become Towers of Babel where professional communities with a vernacular and lexicon all their own (what Quinn, Anderson & Finkelstein call “discipline-based cocoons”) make interdisciplinary conversations and collaboration extraordinarily difficult. The emergence of teams as the primary way work gets done in the knowledge company is perhaps the most visible attempt to address this challenge.

If knowledge workers’ primary allegiance and affiliation is with their professional community, and not necessarily their employer, the result will be an increasingly transitory workforce of independent talent. “Me, Inc.” describes this emerging character of professional work life where a person’s career is more like a series of independent professional engagements for various clients than a long-term advance up a ladder of increasing responsibilities in a single organization’s hierarchy. A career is now “a series of gigs, not a series of steps”; consequently, the professional vitae will change, since rather than reflecting someone who “has had few changes of company but many changes of title, a resume will show fewer titles but many more employers” (Stewart, 1997, p. 206). Our knowledge-based workforce is characterized by the “free agency” (Davis & Meyer, 1998) of highly mobile professionals. The mantra of the new professional seems to be “Rather than being managed by the organization you join, you manage its contribution to your career” (Davis and Meyer, 1998, p. 155).

All STEM leaders now face this irony of life in the Information Age. As Stewart (1997) points out, “A paradox lies at the heart of the Information Age organization: at the same time that employers have weakened the ties of job security and loyalty, they more than ever depend on human capital.... Compounding the problem is the fact that the most valuable knowledge workers are also best able to leave their employers, taking their talent and their work with them” (p. 101). Drucker (1993) also notes that because knowledge
workers by definition own the knowledge—the very “means of production” in knowledge-based organizations—they are highly independent and mobile, more like volunteers than employees (p. 12).

The challenge this second trend presents to the SEM leader planning the future workforce is twofold: First, in a free agent workforce, how do you increase the investment and ownership of your most valuable independent professionals in the SEM initiative? In industry—particularly the intensively knowledge-based, high-tech sector—this challenge typically is met through employee stock ownership. Stewart (1997) offers an outstanding illustration of how MicroSoft went public, not to raise capital but rather to monetize the investment the workforce had in the company; it was a strategy designed to elevate the role of the knowledge worker from employee to manager to owner in an effort to retain the knowledge base that represented the firm’s most valuable asset. While such options generally may not be available to the SEM leader, managing the churn in today’s professional workforce is nevertheless a challenge of the first order. The winners in the “war for talent” (Chambers et al., 1998) now being waged will have found ways to “make talent management a burning priority” (p. 48).

Second, how should one organize, manage, and engage communities of professionals in the kind of systems change SEM requires? This challenge is addressed largely through the use of cross-functional, interdisciplinary, self-directed teams. The rapidly expanding literature on using teams to leverage the strengths of the professionalized organization offers many ideas for consideration by the SEM leader.

**TREND #3: UNBUNDLING THE ORGANIZATION**

The pace of change and the increasingly specialized professional workforce introduce the third characteristic way in which how we work is changing. A whole range of activities that used to be integrated within a single organization now are more and more frequently “unbundled” and parcelled out among different organizations with more specialized focuses. Increasingly, the work of today’s organizations is done through partnerships between and among multiple organizations, each delivering a highly specialized function; less and less often does a single company oversee all production functions.
The unbundling that is so characteristic of today’s organization is not new to higher education. For some time, we have realized that it is not economical to employ all the staff needed to do all the work that needs to be done. Contracting for the management of food services and campus bookstores, for example, has long been standard practice. Likewise, we hire professional talent for no more time than necessary when we select firms to develop our recruitment viewbooks, do market research, or provide legal counsel. SEM organizations today are outsourcing a widening array of tasks and functions to partners that specialize in a type of work, to include financial aid and enrollment verification, transcript review, hosting Web sites, inquiry management, fundraising, information systems support, and so on.

Tomorrow’s SEM organizations will be unbundled, with significant operations performed more effectively and efficiently by “outsiders” than they could have been by ourselves. But outsourcing is only one way in which today’s organizations are shifting from full and independent ownership and managerial control to interdependent partnerships. Today’s organizations more aggressively seek out alliances, co-ventures, and partnerships with other firms—even competitors. The notion of co-opetition (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996)—the blending of cooperation and competition—is increasingly prevalent as businesses partner with businesses that may be competitors at one level but that are strategic partners at another. In higher education, this is evident already in purchasing alliances, joint sponsorship of new Internet ventures (e.g., U-Next, Western Governor’s University), and student services (e.g., shared housing cooperatives).

So the way our work is changing is that the organization “unbundles” its activities, relying on its full-time workforce to meet only part of its needs and outsourcing or subcontracting the rest—particularly those functions that provide little or no value added in the knowledge business (a point we will re-visit). Similarly, organizations “outsource” work when they simply turn work over to the customers themselves. As banks do with ATMs, as gas stations have long done with self-service pumps, so higher education redistributes some work to the customer. Through Web registration, on-line applications, virtual career fairs, automated degree audit, and even on-line instruction, students are managing more of their own transactions, enabling faculty and staff to focus on the more knowledge-intensive process of helping students through transitions.
Planning for the future of the SEM workforce requires addressing the challenge presented by this third trend: Colleges and universities will continue to expand the scope of SEM, the range of functions, processes, and activities that must be more tightly integrated (i.e., bundled) in order to do enrollment management strategically (e.g., Huddleston, 2001). In other words, the organizational umbrella of SEM will continue to grow as universities seek a more seamless, tighter coupling of previously disintegrated functions and processes. Simultaneously, however, the organizational structure itself will be an increasingly unbundled network of partnerships among professional specialists, contracts with outsourced providers, coventures or alliances even with competitors. Managing tomorrow’s SEM workforce will require leadership less like a line manager supervising subordinates and much more like a general contractor coordinating an ever-growing number of subcontracted specialists in performing their professional roles in a tightly coupled, intricately orchestrated, highly complex construction project.

**Leading the Future Workforce**

So Bridges (1996) and many others prompt us to ask: What does it take to lead an organization comprising a revolving door of free agent professionals, some of whom are employed by your organization in traditional sense and some of whom are not? What does it take to lead an organization where work is not organized into finely scripted job descriptions, that is not arranged like a human pyramid at the circus but consists instead of loosely affiliated communities of highly autonomous professionals? What does it take to develop the workforce dimension of today’s SEM organization when its value to the organization lies less in what the staff do (the traditional labor model) than in what they know?

First, it requires a willingness to embrace these emerging challenges and explore new opportunities and alternatives not readily available or even apparent in our current reality. Because the rules of the game are changing, methods that may have worked in the past are rendered obsolete. In doing SEM, “the problems we face today cannot be resolved at the same level of thinking that created them in the first place” (Kalsbeek, 1999). Second, some responses to these new challenges and answers to these questions can be distilled from emerging frameworks for understanding the work of organizations in the changing
economy. The implications and applications of what is being learned in other sectors of the economy are very real for higher education, for the SEM organization and the SEM leader. The following discussion addresses three relevant arenas: intellectual capital; learning organizations; and knowledge management.

**Intellectual Capital**

As much as we may talk about it, what does it really mean to be part of a knowledge economy, or the Information Age? In common parlance, these phrases often refer to the emergence of new high-tech industries, to the pervasive impact of information technology on today’s economy, to the fundamental changes in our lives resulting from “being digital” (Negroponte, 1995). “You would be hard-pressed to find a single industry, a single company, a single organization of any kind that has not become more information intensive” (Stewart, 1997, p.18). SEM clearly is not at all immune to the pervasive impact of information technology (Black, 2001), and any strategic staffing plans now are focused increasingly on the need for a workforce competent in such technology.

But the core premise—and promise—of today’s information economy is not that information technology is transforming business, but that knowledge constitutes the primary capital resource or asset which gives competitive advantage and creates wealth. The knowledge-driven economy is one in which ideas and knowledge replace physical assets and labor as the source of value or wealth in an organization. In fact, knowledge is today’s organization’s only resource with unlimited potential for growth, the only organizational resource whose asset value appreciates the more it is used, shared, and distributed. Knowledge is the only resource that can provide a sustainable competitive advantage since it can generate and regenerate continuing advantage for the organization. Therefore, “the capacity to manage human intellect—and to convert it into useful products and services—is fast becoming the critical executive skill of the age” (Quinn, Anderson & Finkelstein, 1998). Certainly that is the challenge in planning tomorrow’s SEM workforce.

Intellectual capital can be defined as the sum of everything everyone knows that gives the organization a competitive edge (Stewart, p. ix). Because it is difficult to separate the value of the knowledge from the value of the knower, intellectual capital is at the core of our human resource planning for tomorrow’s SEM workforce. It is all too common to talk in rather sentimental terms about
staff being “our most valuable asset”; it is not nearly as common for leaders to take a disciplined look at staff as the source of their organization's intellectual capital—that most strategic asset that creates competitive advantage in a knowledge-intensive business. Stewart's (1997) is a cogent, provocative, and highly recommended exploration of “intellectual capital” in today's business economy; it has powerful implications for an approach to SEM that recognizes that success tomorrow will be a result of what is known more than what is done.

With intellectual capital as a core value in the workforce, we are compelled to more fully appreciate how knowledge can be a means by which a business creates wealth. In the world of SEM, illustrations of the real valuation and competitive advantage of knowledge are obvious and numerous.

For example, at DePaul University in 1997, a freshman class of 1,200 students was the five-year average. Asked at that time what would be required to achieve a goal of 2,000 freshmen over six years, a staff response driven by the typical enrollment management tactical planning process would have been a laundry list of additional resources and activities: more counselors, expanded direct mail, more travel, and the like. Instead, investment in research, predictive modeling, staff development, program evaluation, and process redesign (i.e., a strategic investment in knowledge) resulted in the desired 60 percent increase in just three years, with no increase in human resources, no increase in the discount rate, and with an actual reduction in direct mail and travel expenses. Clearly, this represents the direct financial return on the investment in knowledge, a real and demonstrable valuation of intellectual capital. Forty percent of the total freshman enrollment (and therefore, 40 percent of the tuition revenue) was the result of knowledge, not labor—of developing and deploying intellectual capital. The value to the university was gleaned not from what staff did, but from what staff knew. As Ben Franklin is oft quoted, “An investment in knowledge pays the best interest” (Kalsbeek, 2000).

This is an example of the impact and real value of what some refer to as leveraging professional intellect.

Professional intellect creates most of the value in the new economy. Its benefits are immediately visible in the large service industries, such as software, healthcare, financial services, communications, and consulting. But in manufacturing industries, as well, professionals generate the preponderance of value—through
activities like research and development, process design, product design, marketing, or systems management (Quinn, Anderson & Finkelstein, 1998, p. 182).

There is no shortage of examples of how professional intellect or intellectual capital represents a critical asset and value for the SEM organization. Intellectual capital or professional intellect is what the SEM leader must identify, nurture, and capitalize upon; it therefore is the primary focus in any planning for the future workforce. (See Figure 10.1.)

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<tr>
<th>Assessment Tools</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive knowledge</td>
<td>The core knowledge base that defines the professional discipline, the result of the professional education, training, and certification. The financial aid professional, the marketing professional, the systems analyst all bring professional content knowledge to the SEM organization, a critical component of the professional intellect that builds intellectual capital for the organization.</td>
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<td>(the know-what)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced skills</td>
<td>How professionals translate and apply their specific disciplinary knowledge and experience to a wide range of challenges faced by the organization.</td>
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<td>(the know-how)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Systems understanding</td>
<td>What moves professional effort beyond executing tasks to solving the complex, systemic problems that Senge (1990) identifies as our most pressing challenges; this part of professional intellect is often reflected in finely tuned professional intuition.</td>
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<td>(the know-why)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-motivated creativity</td>
<td>The will that drives professionals to renew their other bases of intellectual value, embrace change, and adapt to new challenges and innovations.</td>
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Workforce development requires the SEM leader to ensure that the organization capitalizes on what the staff knows. The SEM leader must leverage these broader dimensions of professional intellect, striving tirelessly both to attract and retain those who possess this asset as well as creatively managing the attrition of those who do not. Survey the staff roles and contributions across the entire spectrum of any SEM enterprise, and various staff positions and personnel doubtless will represent a wide range of value to the organization's intellectual capital. Stewart (1997) presents an intriguing construct for understanding, appreciating, and planning workforce roles from a knowledge capital point of view, using a fourfold taxonomy based upon the replaceability of staff and the value added in their role—particularly the value added for a customer.

The lower left quadrant represents "semi-skilled" labor; in the EM organization, examples may include mailroom staff, data entry operators, and the like. Every EM operation needs such work to be done (and done well), but
success does not depend upon these staff as individuals, and they are readily replaceable. Their value lies primarily in what they do rather than in what they know, and their work does not in and of itself present a high value to the customer.

![Figure 10.2: Value to the Customer](image)

Table: Value to the Customer

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1. The upper left quadrant represents those skilled staff who have mastered a complex and important role and therefore are difficult to replace, but whose work may present or create little real direct value for the customer. Advertising staff who develop and manage ad placements and marketing campaigns for academic programs contribute specialized and valued professional skills, but their activity in and of itself neither provides direct value for the customer nor translates to intellectual capital for the enterprise.

2. The lower right quadrant represents staff who perform tasks highly valued by customers but who are easy to replace. For example, credential reviewers perform a critical service for transfer students, but their work is largely by rote as they apply rules to data; thus, they are replaceable.

3. The upper right quadrant includes those extraordinarily valuable staff who exercise irreplaceable roles and likewise are irreplaceable as employees. They may be innovative financial aid managers, employer relations coordinators, the community college liaison, etc. Their value lies directly in their personal knowledge of things critical to the organizational mission. The strategic goal is to move more staff positions to the upper right, which is how the
SEM leader creates value and competitive advantage from the intellectual capital represented in the organization's human resources. "When the CEO says, "People are our most important asset," he is speaking of those in the upper-right quadrant—people who know how to serve customers in ways that give the company an edge" (Stewart, 1997, p. 93).

If SEM is a knowledge business, then human capital in the SEM workforce is in the upper right quadrant; all the other quadrants represent labor costs. "Smart organizations...will spend and invest as little as possible in work that customers do not value and whose workers' skills are easy to replace" (p. 91). Planning for the future SEM organization from an intellectual capital perspective therefore requires deliberate steps to move the workforce to the upper right of the grid; Stewart offers several recommendations for doing so.

First, those activities and functions in the lower left quadrant should be automated, and staff positions thereby eliminated. For example, the data entry positions so critical in yesterday's admissions and registrar offices are being eliminated as students engage in more self-managed, Web-enabled transactions. Workforce planning in a knowledge-driven SEM organization requires automation and the consequent elimination of related staff roles; this must be done not to reduce cost but rather to create a workforce that represents greater value. In an intellectual capital framework, the SEM leader should accelerate that process.

In contrast, roles in the lower right quadrant should not be eliminated, because they provide high value to the customer; rather, they should be outsourced to partners who can ensure high-quality service and value without adding directly to the SEM organization the costs of staffing and directly managing these roles. Examples include the processing of financial aid credentials, international transcript reviews, inquiry fulfillment, or career placement services for alumni. These services are highly valued by the customer; the talent required to provide the services is replaceable; and the most efficient, effective way to manage this dimension of the workforce may be through an outsourced, "unbundled" partnership.

Staff positions in the upper left quadrant can be developed so they offer greater value to the intellectual capital of the organization—a process Stewart calls "informating." For example, the goal is to ensure that the transcript
review specialist whose value lies in her knowledge of community college articulation brings her knowledge to bear on academic program planning with transfer students (or academic program development with faculty), thereby using her accumulated knowledge—her human capital—and creating greater "value added." The challenge in "informing" that role is to capitalize on what the specialist knows, not on what she does. Another example is redefining the role of the advertising placement specialist, who coordinates the logistics of the university's print ad campaign, in order to capitalize on her knowledge—for example, by providing routine intelligence to the organization on the advertising trends of key competitors. Both of these are examples of increasing the strategic value of the workforce by capitalizing on professional intellect (moving staff roles into the upper right quadrant).

If intellectual capital is the sum of everything everyone in an organization knows that provides a competitive advantage and enables the organization to be more responsive to change, then increasing the intellectual capital of the organization and leveraging its professional intellect is the primary challenge the SEM leader faces in planning for the future workforce. Two key questions therefore demand the attention of today's SEM leader:

1. How to ensure that staff know more of what is useful?
2. How to use more of what staff know?

The answers to these questions lie in two emerging arenas of organizational innovation and insight: the learning organization and knowledge management.

**Helping People Know More of What Is Useful: Developing a Learning Organization**

Since Senge published *The Fifth Discipline* in 1990, the core principles and premises of the “learning organization” have been recognized as valuable perspectives for defining and developing SEM (Kalsbeck, 1998; Black, 1999). Neither information nor the technology for managing information will be the key to the success of tomorrow’s SEM, since in this competitive era access to information and the emergence of new technology continuously level the playing field. Information and technology alone present no sustainable competitive advantage because advances in both areas are quickly shared throughout the industry, thereby constraining any competitive edge. Rather, the
“critical strategic advantage for the 21st century will be the relative capability of the members of an organization to learn from that information and to apply those learnings to create a strategic advantage” (Thompson, 1995, p. 94, emphasis added). Learning is the lifeblood of the SEM workforce committed to ensuring strategic advantage.

While there really is no such thing as a “learning organization,” it represents nevertheless a compelling vision for the kinds of change that must occur in order to overcome the debilitating dysfunction that characterizes most organizations today (Kofman and Senge, 1995). Many—if not most—SEM organizations and managers are consumed by a problem-solving mentality; their basic metabolism—what provides and consumes their energy—is solving problems and responding to crises. But simply solving problems—even big problems—can never really leverage strategic advances for the organization, since today’s solutions inevitably become tomorrow’s problems (Kalsbeek, 1998). The real transformational power of learning in today’s organizations is unleashed only when we realize that “there are no problems ‘out there’ to be solved independent of how we think and act in articulating these problems” (Kofman & Senge, 1995).

In the face of constant change, the organizations that succeed will be those that continuously expand their capacity to learn, to identify and challenge existing assumptions and paradigms, to ensure that everyone in the organization can be a source of useful ideas and is capable of making the organization more “change agile” than “change fragile” (Rolls, 1995). “Organizations that have acquired the learning habit are endlessly questioning the status quo, are forever seeking new methods or new products, forever testing and then reflecting…” (Handy, 1995, p. 49). Like intellectual capital, all this seems fairly abstract at the outset. But as Thompson reminds us, “An organization itself doesn’t learn—people learn…. In order to understand how organizations learn, we must understand how people learn and share knowledge, the processes that support attitudes and behaviors essential to learning, and the psychological issues that underlie resistance to learning” (1995, p. 86). Garvin (1993) extends this a bit further, insisting that a learning organization is “skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights” (1995, p. 94). In short,
organizational learning is defined according to measurable improvements that stem directly from new ideas generated through the learning process.

The irony again is striking: In an industry that has human learning as its core business, our work in SEM too seldom is guided by what we know about learning and how to improve the way in which our workforce learns. Yet this is the critical challenge in developing tomorrow’s SEM workforce: ensuring that the entire workforce is learning and, therefore, developing new capabilities, creating new strategic advantage, building intellectual capital.

The integration of work and learning is at the core of realizing the vision for a learning organization. A learning organization affirms this simple tenet: We work when we learn, and we learn when we work (Morris, 1995, p. 328). Too often, the learning process is separated from core business processes; for example, most SEM organizations would describe their professional development plan by presenting a list of professional conferences to attend, journals to subscribe to and circulate, resource libraries to collect and build, skill training seminars to sponsor. But the kind of learning that matters occurs as we weave work and learning together; learning should not be seen as something separate in either time or place from the core work or responsibilities of the staff. In a learning organization, “workplace becomes classroom, supervisors become coaches, and fellow employees serve as cross-peer tutors at the work site” (Dilworth, 1995). The SEM organization committed to continuous learning has regular staff discussions driven primarily by these four basic questions:

Working: How can we work more efficiently so we can spend more time thinking?
Learning: What have we learned in the last 30 days?
Teaching: What new knowledge did we create and share?
Applying: How did we translate what we learned into increased competitiveness?

Dilworth suggests several strategies that should characterize the organization that is committed to learning; two are described below:

Cross-functional teams and self-directed teams. Teams are at the center of a learning organization because it is only through the small learning group that divergent thinking can effectively lead to solutions that lie outside the bounds of any individual’s professional perspective. Senge argues that teams, not individuals, are the fundamental learning units in today’s professionally balkanized organizations and that unless teams learn together, organizations
cannot. Drucker (1993) further asserts the necessity of teams in a knowledge-driven organization: “Because the modern organization consists of knowledge specialists, it has to be an organization of equals, of colleagues and associates. No knowledge ranks higher than another...therefore, the modern organization cannot be an organization of boss and subordinate. It must be organized as a team” (p.13). A wealth of literature is now available on the “team approach” to today’s workforce. In Bennis and Beiderman’s (1997) Organizing Genius, the SEM leader finds a compelling exploration of the power of the collaborative team approach in a knowledge-based enterprise. In the SEM world, this approach is found most frequently in the process of software systems implementation. For example, DePaul University’s successful implementation of the PeopleSoft suite of administrative software was directly dependent upon the team approach to that project, the learning outcomes of which have been as apparent and far more consequential for the university than the impact of the software systems themselves.

**Job rotation and employee exchange programs** are effective ways of broadening staff members’ knowledge of complex processes that transcend the function of any given unit. Senge (1990) identifies systems thinking as one of the core characteristics of the learning organization. Because most of the challenges in our SEM organizations are systemic in nature, they require an appreciation of a complex whole in order to effect change. Job rotations and exchanges facilitate staff members’ appreciation of interdependencies and interrelationships between and among different functions. At DePaul University, professional positions are created that formally bridge structurally independent yet strategically interrelated functions in order to create a more systemic approach to key enrollment development strategies; formalize the systemic integration (often through job exchange programs); and enhance organizational learning. The position of assistant director for admission and financial aid is funded, filled, and functions in a way that broadens the learning and integrates the efforts of two independent units. An assistant director of the career center works in the alumni office and manages a large corp of alumni volunteers in a career mentoring program which crosses “boundaries” between the career and alumni relations offices. While a growing number of SEM organizations pursue functional and strategic integration by having previously independent units report to a single SEM officer, the functional and strategic integration that matters.

In many ways, knowledge management parallels some of the core principles of learning organizations and team learning; increasingly, these two literatures and practices seem inextricably intertwined. Some have suggested that “knowledge management” in corporate America may have taken hold more readily and rapidly than it has in “learning organizations” because it connotes a more concrete, actionable, tangible, manageable asset whereas “learning” is an abstract, “slippery,” and diffuse process which is harder for the management mindset to grasp or hold accountable.
most is embedded in the connectedness of staff roles, responsibilities, and perspectives that cross traditional boundaries.

Using More of What People Know: Knowledge Management

Increasing the return on the value of an organization's intellectual capital and the outcomes of organizational learning is the goal of "knowledge management," a rapidly expanding specialty in organizational development. Stewart reminds us that the intellectual capital of a SEM organization is an asset only when some useful order is forged from the "free-floating brainpower" possessed by staff. It is usable only when it is given coherent form; when it is captured, described, shared, and exploited; and when it can be deployed strategically in ways it could not be if it remained scattered.

The goal of knowledge management is not the mere collection of information but rather the connection of sources of expertise with those who need it; more than the development of usable knowledge, it is the effective dissemination and distribution of knowledge. The goal is to use more of what is currently known in the organization by expanding access to that knowledge and enabling efficient knowledge exchange. Knowledge management, in other words, is how we take the intellectual capital generated through the learning process and make it an organizational asset by structuring, sharing, and applying it for organizational improvement or competitive advantage.

Knowledge management thus comprises both an information technology (IT) and a human resources (HR) dimension. The IT dimension uses today's powerful databases coupled with global Internet access and communications to achieve scalability in providing an entire workforce with real-time access to information. The HR dimension recognizes that identifying and applying usable knowledge is fundamentally a human process since "knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers" (Davenport & Prusak, 1998, p. 5). Such a perspective clarifies how knowledge management is necessarily a workforce development effort, not just a technologically enhanced information dissemination strategy.
Stewart (1999) suggests that the single greatest knowledge management tool ever devised is the office water cooler (or perhaps the departmental coffee pot) around which colleagues routinely gather in a knowledge management ritual. This imagery helps frame what a knowledge management system is designed to do. The coffee pot promotes cross-functional and interdisciplinary sharing of information; it facilitates the non-hierarchical flow of information across the organization; it is part of everyone’s daily routine; and it allows for serendipitous and unstructured interchange of knowledge. But the office coffee pot has some limitations as a knowledge management strategy: it lacks scalability in large organizations; it has no capacity for memory; it is unpredictable as a source of usable knowledge; and there is no guarantee of the validity of the information shared (as everyone is well aware).

The knowledge management challenge for the SEM leader is to integrate staff development (the HR component that identifies usable content knowledge and promotes learning) and new technologies (the IT component that records, structures, and provides access to the knowledge) in order to create a scalable enterprise-wide “coffee pot”—one that encourages the percolation of usable knowledge and intellectual capital throughout the organization (Kalsbeek, 2001).

Today, “new technologies and management approaches are changing the traditional economics of managing professional intellect” (Quinn, Anderson & Finkelstein, p. 190) The best practices in knowledge management have emerged, quite naturally, in industries for which knowledge is the core business and in which the huge scale of the organization makes the coffee pot inadequate. Large business and technological consulting practices such as Arthur Andersen, KPMG, HP, McKinsey, etc. have extended the boundaries of leveraging professional intellect for organizational gain and corporate value. Expert systems for capturing, coding, integrating, and sharing the knowledge base of professionals are being developed in all major consulting firms and other knowledge-intensive industries. New systems and knowledge databases leverage professional intellect by sharing throughout a worldwide enterprise the solutions, experiences, and insights of professionals across the workforce. Consultants charged with solving a problem in Bangkok have immediate and efficient access to the professional intellect and experience of colleagues in Bahrain who have addressed similar problems. An electronically connected network of professionals reduces the need to reinvent the wheel, increases the

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efficiency of problem solving, and thereby leverages the intellectual capital of the entire organization.

Naturally, the HR dimension is as critical as the IT dimension. In fact, the challenges of knowledge management go far beyond the cultivation of staff learning and the development of usable knowledge. Knowledge management requires “overcoming professionals’ natural reluctance to share their most precious asset, knowledge; because professionals’ knowledge is their power base, strong inducements to share are necessary” (Quinn, Anderson & Finkelstein, 1998, p.193). Organizations that have successfully employed knowledge management techniques have developed ways to encourage interaction, collaboration, knowledge sharing, and knowledge use throughout the workforce.

At most universities, corporate relationships are multidimensional and fragmented. Employer or corporate relationships may exist through the career center, the admissions office, corporate giving, faculty consulting, alumni networks, governing boards, and so on. Tremendous potential value and leverage may be gained through the strategic integration of these otherwise distinct areas. At DePaul University, a goal of the enrollment development strategy is to better integrate and leverage university relationships with key corporate partners. University leaders envision a knowledge management solution to this challenge, a readily accessible database of the full range of contacts, relationships, and interactions with selected corporate partners. Such a system would enable the university’s leadership to cultivate strategic relationships with the corporate leadership of ABCD, Inc., for example, by building on current knowledge of the extent to which professional staff in the career center are working with recruitment representatives of ABCD, Inc.; development or financial aid staff are using corporate-funded scholarships; alumni employed at ABCD are involved at the university; and ABCD provides tuition assistance for its employees currently enrolled at the university. Developing the technology for such data sharing and knowledge management is a relatively minor hurdle compared to the challenge of getting staff and faculty to share and record this information in their daily work routines. Kidwell, Vander Linde and Johnson (2000) describe other potential applications of knowledge management practices in higher education.

The emergence of a literature on and the growing practice of knowledge management in the consulting industry can be a tremendous asset to higher
education—and certainly to the leader envisioning the next iteration of the evolving SEM organization, including how to define the roles and responsibilities of staff in such an organization. Davenport & Prusak (1998) outline how, in an organization committed to making knowledge a sustainable advantage, every job is affected by and should be redefined in terms of knowledge management.

The most successful organizations are those in which knowledge management is part of everyone’s job. … While [knowledge management] specialists are clearly critical to the success of knowledge management, even more important are the activities and attitudes of those who are paid to do something other than manage knowledge. Planning managers, business analysts, design and manufacturing engineers, marketing professionals, and even secretaries and clerks are the most important managers of knowledge. They all need to create, share, search out, and use knowledge in their daily routines (Davenport and Prusak, 1998, p. 108).

Conclusion

Envisioning and developing tomorrow's workforce in the SEM organization is a daunting challenge for the SEM leader. The pace of change shortens the shelf life of any innovation and renders usable knowledge obsolete in shorter and shorter time cycles, often making today’s competitive advantage tomorrow’s liability. The workforce described in this chapter is not on some distant horizon; it is today’s workforce—and its impact on and relevance to higher education administration in general and SEM organizations in particular are real and immediate. Planning the future workforce for SEM requires leveraging the intellectual capital of the organization by cultivating a learning process inextricably intertwined with work processes; making the development of talent a strategic priority; and ensuring that knowledge is managed in such a way that organizational expertise and professional intellect are constantly on call.