Aston Strategy-as-Practice Development Workshop
Key Points Summary
13th May 2011, Aston University, Birmingham, UK.

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Evaluation of the current situation of the s-as-p community
(Chair: Paula Jarzabkowski)

1. Conferences with established s-as-p tracks, such as an interest group or working group
   a. AoM
   b. BAM
   c. EGOS
   d. SMS

2. Conferences that sometimes have an s-as-p track
   a. APROS/ANZAM
   b. CMS
   c. EURAM

3. Special issues published or in progress
   b. European Management Review 2004
   c. Human Relations 2007
   d. Revue Francaise de Gestion
   e. Long Range Planning 2008
   f. Journal of Management Studies – in progress

4. Some complementary special issues were also noted, such as Advances in Strategic Management 2010; Business History (forthcoming); and a collection of papers in Accounting, Organizations and Society

5. Books on s-as-p
   a. Jarzabkowski, Sage, 2005
   b. Golsorkhi (Ed), Vuibert, 2006
d. Golsorkhi, Rouleau, Seidl, Vaara (Eds), Cambridge University Press, 2007

e. Paroutis – Forthcoming text book

6. Complementary books, such as that by Chia and Holt (2009) were also noted

7. Complementary groups were noted that we might like to have closer engagement or discussion with

a. Micro-foundations of strategy people
b. Strategy process people
c. Stewart Clegg and his associates, such as Carter and Kornberger
d. Chia, Holt
e. Institutional work people
f. Strategizing and accounting people

8. Suggestions were made that we need to:

a. Avoid complacency, even in our established conference tracks and areas, as there are a number of interesting complementary groups that compete with us for numbers

b. Ascertain the numbers and demographics of conference participants at each conference, so that we build an idea of our strengths and where, and towards whom, we need to target our efforts

c. Coordinate our ‘branding’ across conferences and websites
d. Be consistent and focused in advertising of conferences, special issues, etc.
e. Think about what services we can offer to people who participate in our tracks and themes – such as a community, a website, good quality written reviews, etc.

f. Build a reviewer list for conferences and journals and recognize our best reviewers in some way

Future Directions for the Strategy as Practice Community
(Chair: Richard Whittington)
1. **Proposal for national SAP-nets**, where no institutional member (e.g. France). Institutional members to establish criteria. Then Chazza to pursue Brazil; Damon/Stephanie France; Richard New Zealand

2. **Establish reviewer list**: Chazza


**Group Sessions Summary**

**Group A – Main Conferences and links between them (Mike Zundel)**

Our group discussed ways of unlocking greater potential from conferences. Our first discussion point related to possibilities of attaining a degree of coordination between different conferences. Focusing in particular on the 'big' events, EGOS, AoM, and SMS, the idea was to try and discuss how invited speakers, calls for papers and topics, and also attendance by SasP researchers (esp. at faraway conferences) could be managed. This is not to suggest top-down coordination, but merely communication about 'who goes where' and 'who does what', so that the overall utility of the conferences and schedules may be enhanced. As an action point, we suggested that communication between conference track chairs prior to the drafting of calls for papers and to the invitation of speakers could be attempted.

A second action point was the generation of short descriptions of the track chairs about the 'flair' and style of the conference. Our group discussion indicated that academics tend to hold preconceived opinions about different conferences, and that these opinions may not always relate to what we, in the SasP, track (try to) do. Such descriptions could focus on the format (e.g. workshops, roundtables, etc.), or the content (key speakers, ways of getting feedback, etc.). We could also try to collect short vignettes of conference
attendees, perhaps relating to their own experiences, learning points, contacts made, etc., so as to provide a 'feel' for what is going on at different conferences for those academics who would otherwise, perhaps, not consider submitting papers there. These could be posted on the SasP website/forum.

A third point related to the generation of feedback for submitted conference papers. While there is already a considerable community of reliable and enthusiastic reviewers, it may be beneficial to collate names and preferred topics (perhaps centrally, on the forum/website). This may both make it easier for conference/track organisers to 'pick' suitable reviewers as well as encourage the involvement of junior researchers in these processes. Attached to this could be information about possible new track/conference chair opportunities and who to contact about these. Finally, we also thought that a 'best reviewer' prize could be awarded by track chairs for different conferences. This does not need to be remunerated, but should be publicised on the website.

Group B – Community building outside the main conferences
(Charlotte Cloutier)

Participants:
Gary Burke (Aston)             Katharina Dittrich (Zurich)
Garry Carr (York)              Violetta Schritter (Zurich)
Andrea Herepath (Cardiff)      Charahzad Abdallah (Birkbeck)

Community building is about give and take. Members’ desire and motivation to invest time and effort in a community will be a function of how much they feel they benefit from being a member of that community. The following outlines the interests and needs of newcomers (PhD students) and early career researchers that the community might be in a position to meet, and which would provide sufficient value to members in exchange for which they would willingly invest time and effort in the community. The needs and interests of senior researchers are not listed here as no representative of that group participated in
this discussion. It would probably be a good idea to consult on this topic with senior researchers at some point and add their interests to the list.

In large part, all the suggestions put forward during our group discussion revolved around the following theme: “Creating spaces for meaningful engagement.” Respondents talked about having “safe, congenial and informal spaces where they can generate ideas, voice concerns and ask for advice” with the overall objective of enhancing their skills (analysis, reviewing, fieldwork, writing, etc.), improving the quality of their work and increasing their chances of getting published. It was also noted that in this, as in many other professional communities, a lot happens “socially” on the fringes of more formal events, so anything that might facilitate one’s integration into relevant networks was also mentioned as being of considerable interest to participants.

List of proposed ideas/activities:

Training – in the form of PDWs or workshops on the following themes: reviewing, data analysis, writing research grants, for example. Initiatives could be national, or international (piggybacking on the major conferences, for example).

Writing/paper development support – mainly in the form of small group informal and engaged discussions aimed at helping someone improve ongoing work. Again, this could be done within local networks (e.g. OTREG in the UK) or in the form of half-day and/or full day workshops held on the fringes of larger events (such as the Talk, Text, Tools workshop held the day before the AOM conference in Montreal).

Short-term visiting opportunities (1 to 3 mths) – institutions involved in the SAP network could offer short-term visiting opportunities to PhD students, post-docs and researchers. Although participants would need to secure their own funding to cover travel and living expenses, the welcoming institution would match the visiting scholar with a local “host” who would actively introduce them to students and faculty locally, invite them to social activities, include them in ongoing institutional activities. Ideally the host institution would also provide
(shared) office space and access to resources (internet, library). A list of such visiting opportunities could be put up on the SAP-IN website.

**Buddy/mentoring system** – and other private spaces (closed email lists, Facebook groups) to allow for more direct and personal support and interaction, notably spaces where topics not suitable for public posting (such as on a forum) can be discussed.

**Teaching materials and support** – this could go on the website, where cases, exercises, course outlines, etc. can be posted so that other scholars wanting to integrate strategy-as-practice topics in their lectures can find appropriate resources.

**Group C: Building collaborative research**

- **Joint Funding Applications**
  - Network Grant: It has been suggested to explore the possibilities to apply for a network grant (EU, European Science Foundation) in order to further grow the Strategy-as-Practice network. The grant could be used to finance S-as-P activities in various countries such as joint meetings, workshops, etc. It has also been discussed that the institutional members should take a lead in orchestrating funding applications.
  - Research Grants: S-as-P community members could also form consortia in order to apply for large-scale, international research projects (for example EU Projects, ESRC, etc.)

- **Strategy-as-Practice Summer School**
  The S-as-P community could provide workshops and seminars for PhD students on methods and central topics around S-as-P in the form of a summer school. This could attract an international group of PhD students / young faculty members. In several countries, PhDs students need to do credit points as part of their PhD programs. The idea was to get the S-as-P summer school accredited, for instance via the institutional members of
S-as-P. The European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management (EIASM) has been suggested as a platform that could be used to realize that.

The summer school could comprise app. 20 students. Realistically, fees would need to be around £600 (excluding hotel, travel) in order to be able to provide appropriate remuneration for tutors.

- **Special Issues**
  Several potential journals have been discussed that could be targeted as potential outlets for future S-as-P special issues: Organization Studies, Journal of Management Inquiry, British Journal of Management. An objective should be to involve younger scholars as editors. Stephanie Dameron agreed to investigate possibilities for special issues with Organization Studies and the British Journal of Management. As a potential topic “Tools and Technologies” was discussed.

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**Final Summary and Responsibilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Points</th>
<th>Persons responsible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group A</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve communication among SAP conveners</td>
<td>Mike Zundel (and others tbd.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invite engaged scholars to become conveners</td>
<td>Mike Zundel (and others tbd.)</td>
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<td>Post information on different conferences on SAPIN website</td>
<td>Tbd.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group B</strong></td>
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<td>Host early career researchers at SAP members’ institutions</td>
<td>Tbd.</td>
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<td>Organize training for reviewing papers</td>
<td>Tbd.</td>
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<td>Organize workshop on qualitative research</td>
<td>Tbd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Responsible Parties</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>Set up a “buddy system” (for conferences)</td>
<td>Tbd.</td>
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<td>Collect/create teaching material on SAP</td>
<td>Tbd.</td>
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<td>Organize social events (at EGOS 2011)</td>
<td>Curtis LeBaron, Richard Whittington, Katharina Dittrich</td>
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<td><strong>Group C</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organize SAP Summer school</td>
<td>Tbd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inquire for special issues</td>
<td>Stéphanie Dameron (and others tbd.)</td>
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<td>Find funding to develop the SAP community</td>
<td>Tbd.</td>
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<td>Build research proposals for EU Funding</td>
<td>Tbd.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>General</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Build reviewer base, including a base for friendly reviewers</td>
<td>Chahrazad Abdallah</td>
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<td>Celebrate outstanding reviews (e.g. announce on website etc.)</td>
<td>Tbd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support bibliography/forum (on SAP-In website)</td>
<td>Tamim Elbasha, Gery Burke</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build national SAP networks</td>
<td>Institutional members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper development workshop</td>
<td>Sotirios Paroutis, Gerry Carr, Richard Whittington</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SAP-IN Website</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep your member profiles and institutional profiles up-to-date</td>
<td>All</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submit your new publications to the bibliography</td>
<td>All</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participate in the forum</td>
<td>All</td>
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