

sibilities and employer rights and responsibilities is a liability of the book. I believe it is difficult to present a clear analysis when the focus is on only one-fourth of the interlocking system. More attention to these issues would make this first collection more valuable for practitioners and researchers, who do not necessarily view the field solely from a management perspective.

Is this book worth buying? Yes. For organizational managers, this book will heighten awareness and cause them to scrutinize their own communication delivery system. For researchers, this collection of essays is an introduction to the area of employer and employee responsibilities and rights. This book represents a first synthesis, although the focus is clearly on employee rights. Osigweh was instrumental in developing the Council of Employee Responsibilities and Rights and continues to contribute to its current activities. Those interested in research or application in these areas are advised to seek out this organization to further their understanding of the issues this collection raises.

— Joann Keyton  
University of  
Southern Alabama

Quinn, Robert E., *Beyond Rational Management: Mastering the Paradoxes and Competing Demands of High Performance*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988, 191 pages, index, hardback.

Managerial and organizational effectiveness stems from the ability to balance creative tensions, to work from a variety of competing frameworks, to think simultaneously in opposite ways. This theme is foundational to Robert E. Quinn's philosophy of management. In *Beyond Rational Management: Mastering the Paradoxes and Competing Demands of High Performance*, Quinn presents a new management theory that challenges managers to identify and manipulate carefully the paradoxes, competing demands, and contradictions of organizational life. Quinn appropriately calls his theory "the competing values framework." This

framework may help us manage some of the paradoxes, competing demands, and contradictions we encounter in management communication, as well as those encountered by managers in organizations.

Basically, Quinn's competing values framework is a management theory that integrates present findings on managerial performance and past theories of organization into a multidimensional model. Using research on high performance and leadership, including the work of Streufert and Swezey (1986), Torbert (1987), and Dreyfus, Dreyfus, and Athanasion (1986), Quinn proposes that "master managers" characteristically view their work environment as a complex, dynamic system in which there is no one right answer. "Ultimately, the mastery of management," Quinn writes, "hinges neither on intuition nor on rationality alone but on the constant movement between the two" (p. 24). Master managers, he posits, "pursue one set of values while looking for cues that will signal the need to shift to another, sometimes directly contradictory, set of values. They are able to see and work with the contradictions in organizations" (p. 43).

Quinn's framework incorporates theories of organizing that have developed since the turn of the century, theories ranging from the idea of organizational hierarchy, as seen in Max Weber's (1921) writing on bureaucracy, to the notion of teamwork, as seen in certain flagship Japanese organizations. Rather than dismiss some organizational approaches as dated or contradictory, Quinn suggests the advantages of each. For example, organizational hierarchy may hamper involvement and creativity, yet offer stability, predictability, and well-defined roles; on the other hand, teamwork may reduce speed and certainty, yet foster affiliation and self-determination. Rather than treating these organizational perspectives as separate orientations, Quinn asks us to see them in an integrated framework: a "competing values framework."

Quinn posits that all individuals and organizations adopt values from hierarchical, team-focused, and other approaches; however, they tend to overemphasize some values at the expense of others. Most people, Quinn contends, carry around "an ideal set of prefer-

ences about organizing” and, consequently, overlook the “advantages to be gained in directly opposite preferences” (p. 45). Quinn suggests this results in what Bateson (1979) called *schismogenesis* or perspectives that are split (schismo) at the onset (genesis). When too much emphasis is placed on a given set of values, they become institutionalized or formalized, and other approaches are seen as just plain wrong. While schismogenesis may eliminate troubling contradictions, Quinn argues, it also produces a uni-dimensional mental set that tends to overlook emerging cues that require another perspective (p. 26). This inability to recognize opposing values or approaches, Quinn concludes, may eventually drive an organization “into an ineffective negative zone and eventually into crisis” (p. 65).

To illustrate the disastrous results of schismogenic thinking, Quinn shares his observations of an organizational crisis at a New York State mental health center. Recognized as leaders in the “deinstitutionalization movement,” the center’s director and staff became so intensely committed to participation, cooperation, and innovation in the treating of patients that they could not see the merits of other approaches. Openness and flexibility became overvalued, bringing sharp attacks from the media for a perceived lack of organization and accountability. This led to months of controversy, and eventually the resignation of the director and his staff. By obsessively pursuing one set of values, Quinn concludes, these managers created an out-of-balance culture—a culture without “positive tensions” (p. 106).

To help managers recognize the competing values of organizational life, Quinn offers a multifaceted, circular model. Basically, the model has two axes that define four quadrants as shown in the figure. The horizontal axis ranges from an internal focus on one side to an external focus on the other. The vertical axis ranges from flexibility to control. Each quadrant represents a major approach for individual/organizational effectiveness. For example, the upper-left quadrant represents the “human relations approach,” which values flexibility, cohesion, and training; whereas, the lower-right quadrant represents the “rational goal approach,” which val-

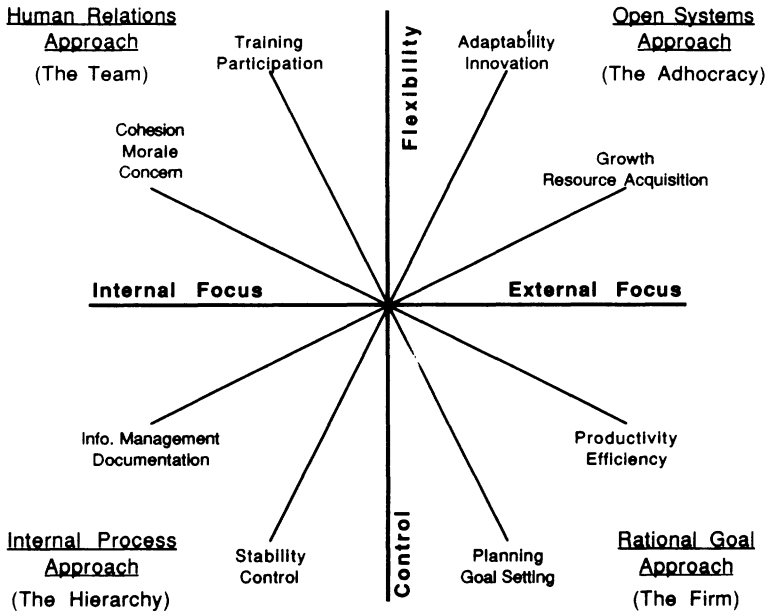


Figure 1: Simplified Rendering of Quinn's Competing Values Framework

ues control, planning, and efficiency. The polar and parallel relationships of the quadrants illustrate the values on which various approaches converge or diverge. The resulting model suggests a dynamic interplay between competing notions of individual and organizational effectiveness.

Granted, Quinn's model is simply drawn, for that is the nature of such abstractions, as Quinn himself suggests when he states that "descriptions are always an approximation at best" (p. 162). At the same time, Quinn's model is not simplistic for several reasons. For one thing, Quinn applies the model variously, using the same structure to illustrate competing notions about problem-solving, leadership roles, power, influence, and culture. Quinn also modifies the model to illustrate the danger of formalizing or overemphasiz-

ing one set of values — when the values in any one quadrant are extended, he shows, the model loses its symmetry. In addition, Quinn explains how readers can use the model for personal and organizational analysis. He provides worksheets that allow readers to construct profiles and to chart personal and organizational preferences using the model. Through these various applications, Quinn reinforces the idea that theory informs practice and vice versa.

Quinn designed *Beyond Rational Management* to attract a diverse audience: researchers, managers, and teachers. He includes (a) a theoretical model, (b) research instruments and results, (c) self-help tools for personal and organizational assessment, and (d) a chapter describing the multimillion-dollar “competing values” instructional project administered by the Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at The State University of New York at Albany. Academics who consult, teach, research, and design management training programs will discover insightful information throughout the book.

The trade-off of such diverse content is what, for some readers, may be an underdevelopment of ideas. For instance, I wanted more discussion of the theoretical framework, particularly its philosophical underpinnings, and could have done without the discussion of the instructional project. At the same time, Quinn provides more theoretical background in his other writings, particularly in *Paradox and Transformation* (Quinn & Cameron, 1988). All in all, Quinn’s innovative ideas (enriched by colorful examples, many of which are applied and reapplied throughout the book), and his lucid, conversational style, will engage scholars and practitioners alike.

Quinn’s competing values framework may help us understand some of the particular dilemmas facing researchers and practitioners in management communication. An admittedly eclectic field, management communication appropriates foundational theories, research methodologies, and heuristic approaches from diverse disciplines; therefore, we enjoy rich and diffuse influences and the potential for experimentation, while we face a plethora of alternatives, often contradictory, which can create conflict and uncertainty for any one pursuit. As Quinn incorporated past knowledge into a

dynamic model, so in management communication we might develop an integrated framework for the diverse theories and approaches from which we draw. His notion of competing values seems applicable to some of our ongoing concerns, such as the desire to better understand the interplay between quantitative and qualitative research methodologies (e.g., Halpern, 1988) or to better integrate theory and practice (knowledge and skill) in our pedagogy (e.g., Shubert, 1989). In the classroom, interjecting Quinn's vision of effective management, including his rich vocabulary, into our case analyses or performance evaluations can further our endeavor to confront students with the multiplicity and complexity of communication issues. Exploring how conflict management, collaborative decision-making, negotiation, and presentation fit into Quinn's organizational framework may also prove useful. Moreover, scholars such as Lannamann (1983) and Shelby (1988), who find the old hierarchical models inadequate for their new, dynamic communication theories, might replicate some features of Quinn's model. We might even develop a competing values model for management communication to illustrate the complex and contradictory issues managers face while trying to speak and write effectively in various business situations. For instance, the idea recently helped me reassess the relationship between business writing pedagogy and managerial writing practices (Rogers, 1989). Treating writing rules and writing choices as "competing values" rather than as either/or propositions provides a way to avoid over-emphasizing one at the expense of the other. The fact that in Quinn's experience business leaders find the notion of "competing values" useful for management suggests it is also intrinsic and applicable to management communication.

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— Priscilla S. Rogers  
University of Michigan