Philosophy *of* Management

Reason in Practice: a unique role for a 'Philosophy of Management'

Volume 11 Number 3 2012
ISSN 1740-3812

Philosophy: Today's Manager's Best Friend?

Laurent Ledoux

The purpose of this paper[1] *is to rationalise why and how philosophy can help today's managers in their daily practices.*

I will first explain why today's managers particularly should engage themselves in profound and enduring dialogue with philosophers. To this end, I will present the close links between the major managerial activities and the major philosophical domains.

In the second section, I will sketch out how such a dialogue can be facilitated. To this end, I will present some of the methods and conditions used to ensure the success of the practice of philosophy in organisations.

1. Why Do Today's Managers Need Philosophy?

FOR MANY PEOPLE, PHILOSOPHERS AND managers have so little in common that a constructive dialogue seems impossible. For others, it is precisely these radical differences of opinion which makes them so complementary. While it is true that dialogues between philosophers and managers are often difficult, they have much more in common than first meets the eye. Mary Parker Follett (1949), one of the 'mothers' of management theory, describes "management as philosophy". To understand what she means, I will

1 The arguments presented in this paper are not just a generalisation of my own brief experiences in this field, but also draw from the rich vein of experience of the Belgian association, Philosophie & Management (www.philoma.org), which I currently lead.

hereafter present the main domains of management and of philosophy and how they link[2].

Let us start with management. In her classic *What Management Is*, Margretta (2002) writes that "management's business is building organizations that work". I propose to distinguish three managerial tasks essential to achieving this:

1. To ***create representations*** of the world and ***meaning*** for their organisation;
2. To make ***value judgements*** and ***decide*** accordingly;
3. To ***share***, through ***conversations***, their representations and values with their colleagues.

Of course, managers perform many other tasks in order to "build organizations that work", such as execution control or people coaching. I believe however that these tasks are not essential and/or can be delegated. The best proof of this is that many successful managers simply don't bother with them[3].

Just like 'management', the word 'philosophy' has countless possible definitions. I propose the following one: *philosophy is an attempt to clarify our relation to the world and how to live accordingly, through a discursive and rational thought practice producing concepts.*

This definition allows us easily to distinguish three generally recognised domains of activity in philosophy:

- *'Critical'* philosophy, mainly concerned with the formulation and the criticism of thought concepts and systems;
- *'Practical'* philosophy, mainly concerned with the art of living; and
- *'Technical'* philosophy. This refers to philosophical domains such as hermeneutics or epistemology, in which we find thinking 'tools' such as radical interrogation, socratic dialogue, problem building... (often collectively called 'philosophical practice', to be distinguished from the 'practical' philosophy mentioned hereabove). 'Technical' philosophy enables us to judge knowledge processes and their validity, and to distinguish well-founded from weakly founded knowledge and knowledge processes.

Figure 1 synthesises how the three domains of philosophy can help managers to perform better their three essential tasks. In subsections 1.1 to 1.4, I will explain why.

2 For a more detailed presentation of the main domains of management and of philosophy, and their links, see Ledoux (2011).

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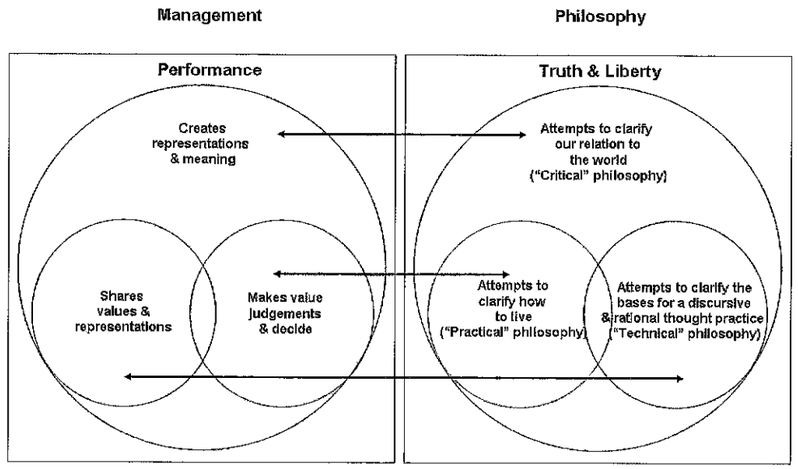
Figure 1. The three main domains of management and philosophy, and their relationships

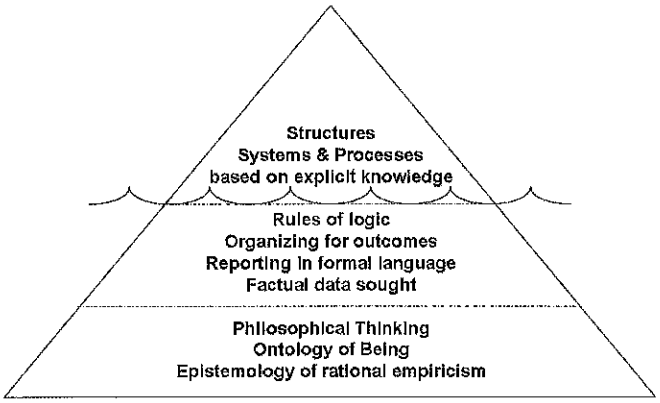


1.1. Philosophy can help managers to keep relentlessly clarifying their relation to the world

Faced with the complexity and opacity of the world, our mental representative capacity is limited. Our boxes are always too small, too few or not in the right place. Nor do we succeed in grasping globally the organisation's world. Hence, there are always residuals left out from one's representation of the world: things which have not been or which cannot be thought through. Typically, the main field of investigation of philosophy is precisely what remains in the dark, in the shadows of our representations of the world.

To illustrate this, let's try to describe what organisations are made of. We might first notice the 'iceberg tips' that are common to many organisations: hierarchies of authority, position, pay, competence, decision-making rules. When we see these things, there is an air of stability. Most of us have experienced how difficult it is to change them. This leads to a very natural expectation of continuity, stability and predictability. Now, those rules, systems and processes, which are transparent and usually available in written form, depend on assumptions, rules of logic and objectivity that allow them to be designed in factual, objective ways. These assumptions are themselves firmly anchored in philosophical thinking, which is even less accessible but underpins the next two levels, as Figure 2 shows.

Figure 2. The three levels of the iceberg, above and below sea level



What all this means is that if you want to change your organisation in a profound way, you cannot just change the rules, structures, systems or process which make up the tip of the iceberg. You must go deeper and address the philosophical ideas underpinning it all. As long as the deep systemic thinking is hidden from view, there can be no serious challenges to the dominant way of thinking in a given organisation or society. Note that these philosophical ideas underpinning the rest are often themselves a confusing and contradictory patchwork of fragments of various philosophers' representations of the world. For example, Whiteley and Whiteley (2006) argue that the current positivist paradigm within which most organisations evolve today is deeply tied to an aspect of Aristotelian thinking which, for managers, is highly desirable in terms of its ability to predict, control and acquire some certainty about the future.

This being said, for the managers, there is no alternative: in order to manage, they need to form a representation of the organisation's world and, to do so, they needs to put reality into boxes, even if they realise their representation is not fully adequate. Realism and the necessity to perform oblige them to keep on looking for the most adequate representation. And that is just right. But the problem is not so much the unavoidable limitations of the manager's representation at a given moment in time. After all, inadequate theories still help people to make decisions and pursue actions that are not necessarily catastrophic. For example, we know Keynesian theories to be flawed, but this did not prevent them being effective in past crises. The real problem is that, often pressed to perform in the short term, managers have a tendency to let their representations 'freeze' and, as reality changes, to become increasingly 'out of tune'. Change can be blocked or made difficult because representations of the organisation's world are devitalised and lack energy. Frozen representations induce an illusion of permanence, stifling creativity and hampering innovation.

So, philosophy's main contribution to management is the relentless questioning of the adequacy of our representations. It invites managers, always, to put work once more on the table and change their representations pro-actively, before they hit 'the wall'. This is all the

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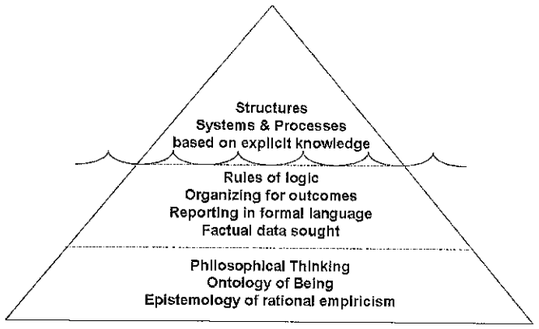

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more important today given the importance management has acquired in our societies. Margretta (2002) argues that "management has emerged as the dominant concept in our time" and "is the alternative to tyranny and our only protection against it". But management might also be seen as a tyrant, intruding into previously autonomous fields such as culture and education, health care and political government, and imposing increasingly a rather uniform representation of the world, focused on concepts such as 'utility maximisation' or 'efficiency'; driving away or smashing alternative representations of the world, pursuing other goals.

In a globalised world where new media allow dominant ideologies to spread fast and quickly eradicate others, philosophy is more than ever crucial as it relentlessly stimulates alternative representations of the world.

1.2. Philosophy can help managers to take decisions when confronted with dilemmas

Besides stimulating more adequate representations of the world, another fundamental task of managers is to make value judgements and decide accordingly. This is not only true in critical situations, but also in daily operations. In that sense, every decision a manager takes is in fact 'ethical': each one sends signals throughout an organisation about what might be considered acceptable or not.[4]

This being said, in the wake of so many scandals and abuses by managers in recent memory, business ethics, codes of conducts, ethics charters, corporate social responsibility, corporate governance, integrity, transparency and so forth are all hot topics in most organisations today. The evidence of this is so overwhelming that it alone could be taken as sufficient argument to demonstrate the relevance of philosophy for today's management. But of course, things are never quite so simple. Most trainings and actions related to business ethics and CSR have little to do with philosophy – they often serve as PR fig leaf or compliance tools and are little concerned with 'how to live well'. Currently, there is even a very well-founded fear that ethics could be 'instrumentalised' as the latest marketing fad.

This uncoupling of business ethics and CSR from serious philosophical ethics and thinking acutely undermines the former pair's long-term relevance to management in two crucial ways.

First, if business ethics and CSR are not grounded in a deeper philosophical reflection regarding our relation to the world, they may lead to well-intentioned but ineffective actions.

Second, philosophical reflection can help managers understand that, contrary to what

4 As philosopher and Harvard professor Joseph Badaracco (1997) writes, "managers are the ethics teachers of their organisation. This is always true, whether they are good men or thugs, whether or not they want to be an example to the members of their organisation". Obviously, the value judgements and decisions a manager takes are always determined by his representation of the organisation's world, even if this is not made explicit and clearly shared with all members of the organisation.

some organisations' ethical charters or codes of conducts might lead them to believe, there are often no clear-cut answers to the many ethical problems they face. To be conscious of this is crucial to the taking of lucid decisions. Sandbu (2011) remarks:

> Moral philosophy, done well, can help counteract cognitive dissonance: the tendency, when the reality of what one does grinds too unconfortably against one's beliefs, of the beliefs to creep so as to fit one's conduct rather than the other way around. ... Moral philosophy sharpens the mind, ferrets out sloppy thinking, and clarifies the ends one aims for and the means by which one may pursue them. What are these if not leadership qualities?[5]

Moreover, in today's globalised world where ever-more people with different cultural backgrounds and values are brought together to work and do business, the frequency and complexity of implicit or explicit ethical dilemmas is likely to increase. As they can help managers to develop common values and resolve ethical dilemmas, moral philosophy and ethics are more than ever crucial for today's managers.

1.3. Philosophy can help managers to share knowledge and stimulate collective intelligence through the practice of discursive and rational thinking

The third fundamental task of managers is to share, through rational conversations (and not just through their decisions or lack thereof), their representations and values with their colleagues. Strom (2007), for example, identifies three key clusters of "life patterns" to which the leader of a group must learn to pay attention and become skilled in:

- *Conversation*: the way people create a new understanding in the subtle ebb and flow of conversation;
- *Naming*: the way language shapes meaning and life;
- *Speaking into darkness*: the way to face with integrity the uncertainty and fear that inevitably accompany responsibility and choice.

Beyond the meaning which courageous conversations help to create, stimulating the sharing of tacit or implicit knowledge and thereby stimulating collective intelligence is also an essential task of today's managers. Most research suggests that it is not too difficult to access tacit knowledge when the conditions are right, but if formal methods and language are used to try to access tacit knowledge, it is unlikely to emerge.

The role of the manager is therefore essential in creating the conditions for the optimal sharing of implicit knowledge and development of the collective intelligence within his or her organisation.

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Now, philosophical practice is a discipline of clarification and precision of language. Through the theory of knowledge and epistemology, it can contribute to a better understanding of the cognitive processes of management in organisations and to the improvement of management's performance.

For example, group philosophical practice within organisations can help question and put into perspective words that are commonplace, totemic, almost incantatory and constantly used in professional jargon. Such words have become so familiar, so evident and so unquestionable that they have acquired the status of absolute truth. Philosophical practice helps to bring them back under the spotlight, to share the meaning they might have for all members of the group, possibly to discuss them in reference to some authors, to understand the practical implications for different people.

By giving heterogeneous and 'live' meanings to these words, they can be revitalised and thus invigorate action once again. Similarly, philosophical practice helps people to think once again for themselves. It also facilitates the sharing of our implicit knowledge with others. Indeed, familiarity with philosophy can make it easier, and pleasurable, to think, to analyse, to synthesise, to isolate or link ideas, to bring back the diversity of practical experiences under the unity of a concept, to define, to argue logically.

The result is the transformation of people and their ways of interacting and behaving, through a restructuring of the sense of their action. It triggers processes, such as, among others, a broadening of viewpoints and an increase in active and productive listening, that all lead to an output which fosters an increase in creativity, flexibility and participation.

These attempts to clarify relentlessly the basis for a discursive and rational thought practice are particularly important in today's world: indeed they are a critical antidote to the adoption of 'politically correct' languages, full of words that seem so frozen and meaningless that they could be the primary tools of the next totalitarians.

1.4. The essential difference between philosophy and management: their finalities

Despite all the links we have just discussed between management and philosophy, the two should not be confounded. Where do their fundamental differences reside then? In their finalities: the *raison d'être* of management is performance while philosophy pursues the truth, and its corollary, liberty, in the sense of freedom from illusions and alienations. Beyond all the possible positive contributions from philosophy to management we have seen so far, the contribution it may bring by having such a radically different objective is perhaps its greatest.

Truth should not be considered here as something absolute but, as Greek philosophers understood it, as "intelligence's adequateness with reality": the way we accept to confront reality and perceive ourselves in our environment. In this sense, liberty is closely linked to truth.

The Greek concept of *parrêsia* is the capacity to speak freely about what is true without fear. As Foucault (2001) wrote, "philosophy is... a free interpellation of men's conduct by a truthful discourse which accepts the risks that such a discourse may entail".

Philosophy goes inevitably against certainties, 'the unsaid', powers, authority and censorship. It will always fight for gratuitous activities, liberated from performance, from the need to be productive and profitable. Such activities (poetry, literature, music...) far from being idle are essential to being human – i.e. to being an individual who can never be reduced to a function, a role, a performance. In this sense, even when helping managers as we have seen it, philosophy will always foster an authentically liberating thinking. That is the reason why a philosopher or a serious philosophical consultant will never fear *not* to please, to lose or refuse a contract.

For this reason, philosophy is therefore more than just useful. It is absolutely necessary for the enterprise precisely because it is not concerned with being useful. This allows philosophy to ask candid questions on the meaning of the actions of every person in the organisation, not just as an employee but as a person. Philosophical dialogues provide a platform for a true exchange of views, unhindered by the pressure of being profitable, not focused on the latest 'best practices'.

By so doing, philosophy can help managers to balance 'financial' and 'human' performances better, to pursue the development of employees as an end itself rather than as a means finally to increase financial performance. Philosophy can hereby truly have a strong and positive impact on the performance of organisations because an organisation composed of free, lucid, positively critical and responsible spirits is in principle likely to function more harmoniously and be more productive. But, paradoxically, such positive impact on performance does not result from the pursuit of performance; it results indirectly from the pursuit of truth and liberty.

2. How to Facilitate the Dialogue between Philosophy and Management: Lessons from the Field

In the preceeding section we have seen how philosophy can help management today. What needs to be done for this to happen? At first, it might seem rather simple: philosophers and managers have to meet and engage in dialogues. But it is often more difficult than it seems.

Indeed, despite our sophisticated means of communication, this seems to be more difficult today than in ancient Greece. Back then, Socrates would go to the market daily and question the businessmen and politicians of his time. Philosophers and managers today occupy two divergent worlds and have almost no opportunity or even occasion to meet. There are at least three impeding factors to this, each of which should be removed:

- Their *working hours* are often different and allow them few opportunities in which to meet. There is therefore a need to envisage a specific timeframe within which both parties can meet.
- Their *places of work* are different. Philosophers rarely visit enterprises. They don't know their rules and habits. They feel awkward there. There is therefore a need to provide specific spaces for them to meet.

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- Most *themes of interest* to philosophers seem, in apparence at least, remote from the preoccupations of managers. But stripped of their scholastic trappings, many philosophical works are highly relevant for managers. There is therefore a need to help philosophers adapt their discourse to make it easier to understand for non-philosophers. Equally, there is a need to stimulate managers to learn how to read philosophy progressively, and not to fear dialogue with philosophers.

One of the key objectives of the association Philosophy & Management is to do away with these obstacles.

Typically, we organise philosophy seminars on Saturday mornings when managers are fresh and more relaxed. We also do this in a pleasant, convivial and easy-to-reach location. We spend a lot of time with our speakers, most of them academic philosophers, to adapt their discourse for the participants, most of whom are managers in small or large organisations. We clarify with them the guiding questions, ensure presentations are accessible in terms of visuals, wording and so forth. We also limit participation to about 35 people in order to ensure good dialogue, not only between the speaker and the participants, but also amongst the participants themselves.

Moreover, there are many other forms of philosophical interventions in enterprises: philosophical workshops, philosophical coaching for professional practices, philosophical mediation in crisis situations, and creativity workshops driven by philosophical questions, to mention a few.[6] Without detailing these different practices, let us just remark that all of them are in fact mediation exercises between people, between functions, jobs, institutions, between different representations of the world and different sensibilities. Through a questioning without 'taboos' and a constructive dialogue, they constantly aim at a different relationship to the world and to others, for the persons or groups concerned. In practical terms, the outcomes may take the most diverse forms, such as more explicit shared values or a consensus on working principles.

Drawing on the association's experience of the last 10 years, with a 'smile and a wink', you will find below a list of do's and don'ts for philosophers willing to engage in dialogue with managers, either in the form of a seminar, a training program or consultancy mission. Afterwards we'll provide a similar list for managers who are willing to enter into a dialogue with philosophers and 'get the most out of it'. I'm fully aware of the dangers I run by writing such lists. Needless to say, you shall not follow them blindly but question them critically, philosophically.

6 For more details, see among others de Borchgrave (2006), Vegleris (2006) or Cervari and Pollastri (2010).

2.1. *The do's and don'ts list for philosophical consultants*

About selling philosophical seminars or interventions for managers or organisations

- **Don't be too blunt or agressive**

  The majority of people don't appreciate the difficulties standing in the way of applying philosophy to the business world. Companies seek the advice of consultants because they want answers and solutions. They are driven mainly by the needs of the moment, the need to compete and survive. If you tell your clients that the ethical dilemmas they face have no answers, you will quickly be shown the door. So while always telling the truth, be nuanced in your presentations and reveal gradually the truth with measured and adequate parsimony.

- **Be very selective with your prospects and clients**

  Despite what has just been said, it should be noted that things *are* changing. As big corporations increasingly realise the value of co-operation – even while they compete to sell their goods side by side in the market place – the proponents of the traditional warlike virtues are beginning to look more and more out of touch with reality. The tactics and strategy of today's global marketplace dictate a more subtle approach, one where the traditionally feminine virtues of empathy and conciliation come into their own. At the same time, most requests for a philosophical intervention come from individuals and not from 'the collective', as a result of a strategic and/or group decision. In order not to waste precious time, it is therefore wise to choose carefully first your prospects and then your clients.

- **Be relaxed about money**

  As Hénaff (2002) shows, most philosophers have always had, since Socrates at least, an uneasy relationship with money. And indeed without a doubt, the biggest hurdle for any would-be philosophical consultant is grasping how the world appears from the business perspective. This is probably harder for the philosopher than for any other professional and, for all we have written before, this is perfectly normal. Still, there must be a way to operate in a relaxed way with money, without letting the money game and its intensive focus on profit take over. With his practical experience, Klempner (2004) notes: "If you are one of the lucky few with the right combination of talents, you can indeed have your soul *and* sell it."

- **Always respect confidentiality**

  In the business world, anything resembling personal information about a business person is potential dynamite. Knowledge is power and, as a business person, any information you intentionally or unintentionally let out is ammunition for your competitors. When information is released you can be assured that it is carefully PR vetted. Even so, it is evidence of a kind, if you know how to read it: testimony to the ideology and often distorted self-image of business people. The worry about confidentiality is a source of very considerable resistance that any philosophical practitioner

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  Despite what has just been said, it should be noted that things *are* changing. As big corporations increasingly realise the value of co-operation – even while they compete to sell their goods side by side in the market place – the proponents of the traditional warlike virtues are beginning to look more and more out of touch with reality. The tactics and strategy of today's global marketplace dictate a more subtle approach, one where the traditionally feminine virtues of empathy and conciliation come into their own. At the same time, most requests for a philosophical intervention come from individuals and not from 'the collective', as a result of a strategic and/or group decision. In order not to waste precious time, it is therefore wise to choose carefully first your prospects and then your clients.

- **Be relaxed about money**

  As Hénaff (2002) shows, most philosophers have always had, since Socrates at least, an uneasy relationship with money. And indeed without a doubt, the biggest hurdle for any would-be philosophical consultant is grasping how the world appears from the business perspective. This is probably harder for the philosopher than for any other professional and, for all we have written before, this is perfectly normal. Still, there must be a way to operate in a relaxed way with money, without letting the money game and its intensive focus on profit take over. With his practical experience, Klempner (2004) notes: "If you are one of the lucky few with the right combination of talents, you can indeed have your soul *and* sell it."

- **Always respect confidentiality**

  In the business world, anything resembling personal information about a business person is potential dynamite. Knowledge is power and, as a business person, any information you intentionally or unintentionally let out is ammunition for your competitors. When information is released you can be assured that it is carefully PR vetted. Even so, it is evidence of a kind, if you know how to read it: testimony to the ideology and often distorted self-image of business people. The worry about confidentiality is a source of very considerable resistance that any philosophical practitioner will encounter in taking on business people as clients. As a rule, the higher up you go, the more resistance you will encounter, and the greater effort you will have to make to establish trust. If you liberally season your published articles with case histories, you will quickly find yourself out in the cold. Discretion is paramount.

About the potential "interventions"

- **Only become involved in interventions that address problems that can be reformulated in philosophical terms**

  This is fairly obvious in theory but less so in practice. The reformulation of the problem should be at the very least partially possible.

- **Make sure that there is a guaranteed minimal acceptance by participants of a philosophical approach and that you have the full backing of management**

  Again, fairly obvious and difficult to ensure beforehand; but in any case, make sure the participants will have all the necessary information beforehand in order to understand the internal context of the problem.

About your "attitude"

- **Know your loyalty**

  Always remain independent and be perceived as such. If you don't, participants will quickly believe philosophy is a camouflage to mask some idea or project from the management or a lobby group... You should therefore clarify, from the outset, that you will not be at the service of the organisation but only at the service of truth and liberty, for the benefit of the individuals with whom you will work during the intervention, coaching.

- **Be neutrally engaged**

  I have repeated often enough the role of philosophy in taking 'a step back'. This might imply different attitudes to adopt or to avoid, to remain 'neutral', to avoid preaching or trying to be a rule maker. The philosophical consultant is not there to sell something or to tell what the 'truth' is. He or she is there to accompany a thought process, providing their conceptual and dialogic capabilities. The thinking of other philosophers might be used, but only to facilitate the dialogue, not to put an end to it. At the same time, the philosophical consultant is not a simple facilitator ready to espouse any discourse, not even that of the manager of the organisation. He is there to question meanings, practices, certainties, to highlight gaps between principles and reality, to destabilise, to revitalise.[7] He is an innocent

7 Barthes writes that he is there as "a stranger with a burning neutrality, a neutral person with a burning desire to unmask crucial questions".

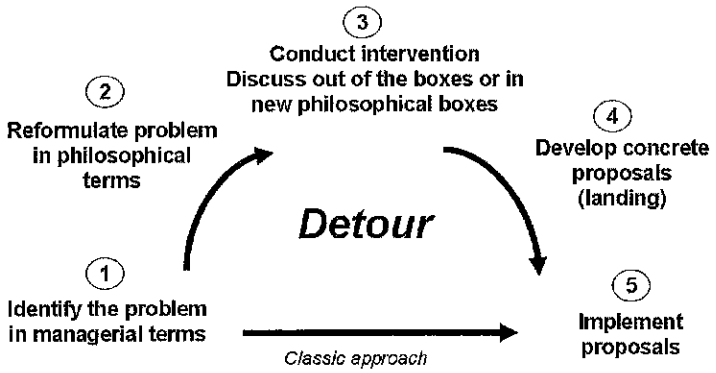
bystander who does not know or understand all that is going on, but who has the audacity to formulate the questions which everybody has but might not dare to recognise. He puts the question there, on the table, just at the precise moment when the group must decide.

About your "methodology"

- **Always make sure you land**

  Philosophie & Management's interventions typically follow five basic methodological steps. We call this the "methodology of the detour" (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. The association Philosophie & Management's methodology of the detour



1. Identify the problem in managerial terms. For example, the launch of a new product, the acceptance of a new technology, the repositioning of the organisation in CSR terms. Based on information provided mainly by the organisation, you must make sure you agree with the organisation on how to formulate the problem.
2. Reformulate the problem in philosophical terms. What are the underlying philosophical questions to the managerial problem? For example, are the implications of the new technology well understood? What is social responsibility? What does the identity of an organisation mean? The content for this step is mainly issued from the philosophical consultant.
3. Conduct the intervention itself. This might take various forms, as we have seen earlier.
4. Prepare the landing of the ideas developed during the intervention, i.e. translate them into practical proposals for the organisation. This is the most delicate and difficult step in any approach, and the one for which academic philosophers often have little experience or feeling. The ability to reformulate managerial questions

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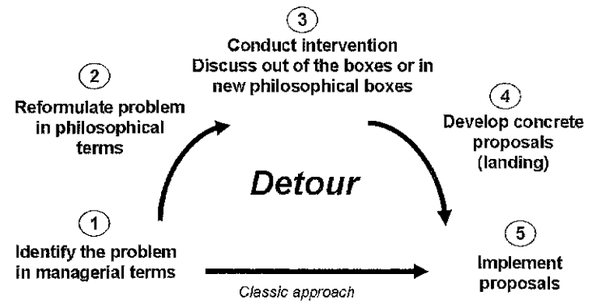

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into philosophical ones and to translate the result of the questioning into concrete proposals is rare; this is what really makes all the difference.

5. Implement the concrete proposals or accompany the organisation to do so.

- **Combine practices if necessary**

  The philosophical consultant may have all kinds of 'thinking tools', but the application of these instruments alone is insufficient. The point is to question and to use the tool with subtlety, if using any at all, or to find a combination of tools (some of which might even be more 'sociological' or 'psychological' etc.) that might be the most appropriate to stimulate deep questioning. Similarly, try to find the most appropriate tension between abstract thinking and thinking based on practical field experience.

The table hereunder provides a synthesis.

The philosophical consultant's do's & don'ts	
Selling • Don't be too blunt • Be very selective with your prospects and clients • Be relaxed about money • Always respect confidentiality	***Interventions*** • Only become involved in interventions that address problems that can be reformulated in philosophical terms • Make sure there is a guaranteed minimal acceptance by participants and full backing of management
Attitude • Know your loyalty • Be neutrally engaged	***Methodology*** • Always make sure you land • Combine practices if necessary

2.2. *The do's and don'ts list for managers*

These do's and don'ts can be synthesised as follows:

Do's	Don'ts
• **Be ready to engage yourself in the long run and let go** As manager, you are conditioned to be apparently in charge, to be in control. But to really philosophise, you need to let go and be ready to be destabilized. In particular, you need to abandon what Emmanuel Mounier (...) calls "the sad habit of thinking by delegation" and to be ready to engage in a form of ascesis which may include regular retreats, readings, meditation,...You must be ready to get to know yourself (what are your main questions in terms of your relation to the world? What is your philosophical position?). And give yourself time: it will takes time to grow on you. • **Choose your friends** At the start at least, choose easily readable authors on themes closely related to your current preoccupations; expand later. Also, meet academic philosophers: listen to them, don't be afraid to start a dialogue with them. Focus and concentrate on short texts • **Accept detours and gratuitous actions** Accept the risks of "wasting" your time with gratuitous actions, with what comes your way, of exploring without a specific objective, of apparently wasting time. • **Manage your expectations** Don't overestimate philosophy.	• **Try to go as fast as possible** • **Study the whole story of philosophy** Don't attempt to read entirely all great thinkers or to develop an exhaustive knowledge • **Try to maximize your return in the short term** • **Learn by yourself** • **Underestimate philosophy**

To conclude, in a nutshell, here is what I have learned so far and what still drives my passion for both philosophy and management.

- Avoid arrogance in any shape or form and beware of vanity: it will sidetrack you from your mission and philosophy's tantalising mist will vanish. If you succumb to these all-too-human perils your job will not be a success, even if you get well paid. Come to the table as though you too are going to learn, or take home something that will have enlightened you.
- Remember Socrates' teaching that "the fact that we are coming together to discuss questions is of greater value than any solutions we might ever reach" (Plato, 2005). In this sense, philosophy can be the compass we need to find our way back to what it is to be truly human.

Having said that, please don't believe a word I say. Just question it.

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Acknowledgements

I wish to thank warmly for their useful comments on earlier drafts of this article: Xavier Pavie, Eugénie Végleris, Stephen Sheard, Mark Dibben, Quentin Depret, Ian Swan, Serge Pegoff, Richard Elsner, Luc de Brabandère, Marcel Bolle de Bal, Roland Vaxelaire, Emmanuel de Lutzel, Isabelle Guetta and Muriel Hanikenne.

LAURENT LEDOUX

Laurent Ledoux is Head of the Public Banking Dept of BNP Paribas Fortis and has worked in the company in numerous senior roles since 2006. He is Managing Director of the consulting firm EQUIS SPRL, specialising in SME start-up and change management with a focus on CSR and Business & Leadership Ethics. He served as Chief of Staff for the Belgian Minister of Scientific Research and Higher Education from April 2005 to July 2006, co-managing a team of 110 advisors and assistants, and served as Personnel Director of the Belgian Ministry of Economic Affairs from August 2003 to March 2005. Prior to this he was Associate Director and Partner at Artgur D. Little and before this Task Manager for the European Commission, based in Belgium and the former Soviet Union. He serves as a Board Member for a number of firms including: Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique; Agence Wallonne de l'Exporation; Pag-Asa (Assistance to victims of human trafficking); and Microstart. He is also Director of Asbl Philosophie & Management (www.philoma.org). Since 2011 he has been Academic director for two Executive Masters, bringing together Solvay Brussels School, the Louvain School of Management and HEC Liège. In his academic work, he specialises in Ethics, CSR and Leadership.

Email: Ledoux.Laurent@gmail.com

Philosophy *of* Management

Volume 11 Number 3

Designed and typeset by Carnegie Book Production

Published by Libri Publishing 2012 ISSN 1740-3812

www.libripublishing.co.uk

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