

# THE AMBIDEXTROUS ORGANIZATION: INTEGRATING MANAGERS, ENTREPRENEURS AND LEADERS

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** We argue that three basic archetypes – managers, entrepreneurs and leaders – must exist within the “ambidextrous organization” where a balance must be found between managing the present while preparing for the future. We introduce the MEL-Index, a measurement tool that represents the managerial, entrepreneurial and leadership capabilities of both individuals and institutions.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** Our conceptual framework suggests that the interactive roles of the MEL archetypes have a profound impact on the innovation profile of the organization. To test this idea we conducted in-depth, case studies with a sample of SME’s and large companies in North America and Western Europe.

**Findings:** Although still at an early stage of data collection, initial findings suggest that – a) it is difficult for strong managers to co-exist with visionary entrepreneurs without the facilitating role of leaders; b) there may be a difference in the balance of archetypes needed in private vs., publicly owned companies; c) the measurement tool was easy to administer and has strong face validity.

**Research Limitations/Implications:** The findings of this project are not generalizable to the greater population of businesses in Europe and North America due to the convenience nature of the sample. However, as we continue to collect data confidence will grow at the inferences drawn from our case-based examples.

**Practical Implications:** By using the results from an MEL project, companies can adjust their balance of capabilities through more targeted recruitment, focused executive development programs and better internal allocation of personnel.

**Originality/Value:** Very little applied research has been undertaken to explore the *combination* of skills required of executives to guide the ambidextrous organization. Exploration of the MEL interface opens an exciting, applied research stream within management studies.