



TOPIC LEADERSHIP CIRCLES

BACKGROUND

This year the Peter Drucker Society Europe (PDSE) in conjunction with the newly established Vienna Center For Management Innovation announced a new research initiative under the title “Topic Leadership Circles” (TLC), which aims to survey current trends and prospect future directions. The initiative will bring together some of the brightest minds to share insights and develop fresh perspectives. Self-organizing and self-driven, TLCs are intended to bridge the gap between academic research and management practice.

The PDSE is launching the program with two TLCs on **‘Digital Humanism’** and **‘Risk, Uncertainty and Complexity’** – more will be added in 2023. Each TLC will comprise 7-10 invited cross-disciplinary experts with topic leadership competencies from relevant academic disciplines and management practice, alongside trend-watchers and public organizations. The purpose is to constitute a diverse group of thought and practice leaders with strong and different views.

TLC GENERAL APPROACH

- The participants commit to participate in four virtual TLC sessions of 90 minutes (one per quarter), for the duration of two years (unless the group decides otherwise). Should the circle wish to hold in-person meetings, attendance will be optional.
- An acting Executive Lead will be responsible for TLC content and facilitation.
- Elena Stelzig, Drucker Society Program Manager, will be responsible for the process, which will benefit from administrative and technical support.
- Expert guest speakers may be invited to some of the meet-up calls.

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DIGITAL HUMANISM, LED BY IMAGINATION LAB FOUNDATION

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Digital Humanism, aimed at ensuring that technology development remains centered on the human, is attracting growing interest among scholars, policymakers, and commercial enterprises. While the topic is compelling at the theoretical level, and highly relevant to the 2022 Drucker Forum theme, it is felt that this emerging body of knowledge could benefit from more management-grounded thinking to realize its potential impact. The following questions will serve to inspire the group's initial explorations:

- What conceptual foundations already exist with respect to Digital Humanism?
- What are the emerging core concepts of DH, and how do they relate to established theories?
- What are practical models and approaches to DH?
- Who are existing and upcoming thought leaders on the subject – individuals and institutions?
- What are counter-forces to DH and how to balance these?
- How far can the digital transformation of organizations/society be reconciled with human-centered processes?
- What are the specific implications for change management practices?
- How can we effectively disseminate and share the ideas and practices of DH?

Swiss-based Imagination Lab Foundation will fund the TLC on Digital Humanism.

RISK, UNCERTAINTY AND COMPLEXITY (RUC) BY PI-CHAIR COMTESSA

BACKGROUND

When the black swan becomes commonplace: while a pandemic of historic proportions, major international supply-chain disruption or war in Europe were all possible, they lay outside any probability distribution, especially in quick succession and in parallel. Uncertainty has become a standard expectation rather than a rarity. General preparedness for rare events and risk scenarios are certainly in the purview of generic management, typically addressed by established approaches such as risk and issue management, emergency planning and the like. Risk scenarios appear to have moved from the edge into the center of the bell curve. The recent Property & Casualty Insurance World Report 2022 (Capgemini/Efma, 2022) reported that natural catastrophes led to a 3.6-fold increase in insured casualties and a doubling of non-insured casualties in the past 30 years.

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While we may often have little influence on the occurrence of system shocks, increasing emergency preparedness is always to be recommended. Policymakers, businesses and academic researchers are all interested in developing mechanisms and management practices that take us beyond readiness. Boosting resilience (getting back up again) seems an overly defensive approach in the face of permanently shifting threats. There is an urgent need for more proactive strategies. Systems large and small are concerned to build resistance (avoid being knocked down in the first place) and persistence (the ability to prevail) into their DNA.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As with the previous topic, RUC is interesting theoretically, relevant to the annual Drucker Forum themes, and its scope could be usefully extended to include management-related approaches. The following questions will serve to inspire the circle's initial explorations:

- What conceptual foundations already exist with respect to Risk, Uncertainty & Complexity (RUC) on levels relevant to businesses and governments alike?
- What are emerging core concepts in the field of RUC, and how do they relate to established theories?
- What are practical models and approaches to RUC?
- Who are existing and upcoming thought leaders on the subject – individuals and institutions?
- What are counter-forces to RUC and how to balance them?
- Will the conditions of permanent RUC conceivably lead to a transformation of organizations and society for the better?
- In what ways will digitalization and artificial intelligence be instrumental in tackling the challenges associated with RUC?
- What are the specific implications for changing management practices?
- How can we effectively disseminate and share ideas and practices related to the management of RUC?

The generated output will be made publicly available. In addition, it is expected that the conclusions will generate further outcomes, such as round tables, workshops, or input for subsequent Drucker Forums.

If you have any further questions, want to sponsor or join a TLC please feel free to contact us at any time. More Information will be provided at the online kick-off event for the Vienna Center for Management innovation.



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