Homa Bahrami • Stuart Evans

Super-Flexibility for Knowledge Enterprises

A Toolkit for Dynamic Adaptation

Second edition

4y Springer

Contents

1 Super-Flexibility: A Toolkit for Dynamic Adaptation 1
1.1 Revision-Triggers and Super-Flexibility 4
1.2 Silicon Valley and Dynamic Adaptation 5
1.3 The Concept of Super-Flexibility 7
1.4 The Organization of the Book 9

2 Conceptual Foundations of Super-Flexibility 15
2.1 Flexibility: Multi-Disciplinary Contributions 16
2.2 Flexibility: Related Concepts 20
2.2.1 Adaptability 22
2.2.2 Agility 23
2.2.3 Ambidexterity 24
2.2.4 Hedging 25
2.2.5 Liquidity 26
2.2.6 Malleability 27
2.2.7 Mobility 28
2.2.8 Modularity 28
2.2.9 Plasticity 30
2.2.10 Resilience 32
2.2.11 Robustness 34
2.2.12 Versatility 36
2.3 Integrating Different Senses of Flexibility 36
2.4 Conclusion 40

3 The Research Laboratory: Silicon Valley's v Knowledge Ecosystem 43
3.1 Conceptual Underpinnings 44
3.2 The Evolution of Silicon Valley 45
3.3 The Building Blocks 47
3.3.1 The Knowledge Originators 48
3.3.2 The Knowledge Hatcheries 50
3.3.3 The Knowledge Generators 51
3.3.4 The Knowledge Lubricants 53
3.4 The Ecosystem's "Climate" 54
3.4.1 Goal-Driven Work Ethic and Eternal Optimism 55
3.4.2 Limited "Safety Net" and Minimal "Life Support System" ... 56
3.4.3 Collaborative Partnerships and Recombinant Innovations 58
3.5 Super-Flexibility and the Ecosystem 59

4 Super-Flexible Ecosystems: Innovating by Recycling 61
4.1 Recycling Catalysts 62
4.1.1 Recycling by Re-Creating: High Birth Rates for New Ventures 63
4.1.2 Recycling by Cross-Pollinating: Talent Re-Deployment and Information Diffusion 66
4.1.3 Recycling by Recursive Learning: Exploring, Prototyping and Failing 68
4.1.4 Recycling by Re-Inventing: Re-Financing, Re-Packaging and Re-Purposing 69
4.2 Case History 71
4.3 Recycling and Super-Flexibility 75

5 Super-Flexible Strategies: Shifting Gears and Maneuvering Swift Turns 77
5.1 Conceptual Underpinnings 77
5.2 Revision-Triggers 79
5.3 Maneuvering: The "Time" Dimension 81
5.4 Maneuvering: The "Intent" Dimension 82
5.5 Maneuvering to Achieve Super-Flexibility: A Conceptual Framework 84
5.5.1 Pre-emptive Maneuvers 85
5.5.2 Protective Maneuvers 89
5.5.3 Corrective Maneuvers 91
5.5.4 Exploitive Maneuvers 93
5.6 Maneuvering and Super-Flexibility 95

6 Super-Flexible Execution: Experimenting, Iterating and Recalibrating 99
6.1 Conceptual Underpinnings 99
6.2 The Framework: Recalibration 103
6.3 Case History: ROLM Corporation 106
6.3.1 Phase 1: Experimentation 108
6.3.2 Phase 2: Escalation 110
6.3.3 Phase 3: Integration 112
6.4 Recalibration in Action 114
6.5 Guidelines for Implementation 116
6.6 Recalibration and Super-Flexibility 119

7 Super-Flexible Organizations: Orgitechting Geo-Distributed Federations 123
7.1 Conceptual Underpinnings 123
7.2 Organizational Challenges of Knowledge Enterprises 125
7.3 Contrasting Static and Dynamic Architectures 126
7.4 Diagnostic Framework: Building Blocks of Dynamic Organizations 128
7.5 Organizational "Anatomy" 129
7.6 Organizational "Circulation" 134
7.7 Organizational "Personality" 141
7.8 Illustrative Case Study 144
7.9 Implementation Guidelines 146
7.10 Geo-Distributed Organizations and Super-Flexibility 150

8 Super-Flexible Leadership: Aligning Knowledge Workers Through Peer-Peer Practices 153
8.1 Who Are Knowledge Workers? 153
8.2 What Makes Knowledge Workers Tick? 154
8.3 Peer-Peer Leadership 156
8.4 Front-Line Practices 158
8.4.1 Ensuring Knowledge Worker Fit 160
8.4.2 Providing Structured Freedom 161
8.4.3 Creating Shared Reality 162
8.4.4 Orchestrating Distributed Teamwork 164
8.5 Aligning and Super-Flexibility 166

9 Becoming Super-Flexible: The Enterprise in Motion 169
9.1 New Game/ Old Rules 169
9.2 Concluding Thoughts 173

10 References and Additional Readings 177

11 Index 205

12 Biographies 209